

Input subsidy hiked to Rs.10,000 per hectare

The government has increased the input subsidy sanctioned to farmers for the damaged paddy, groundnut, cotton and other crops from Rs.6,000 per hectare to Rs.10,000 per hectare.

Committee report

Announcing this in the Legislative Council at the end of short discussion on Relief and Rehabilitation taken up after Neelam cyclone here on Monday, Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy said the decision was based on the report by the Cabinet sub-committee that studied the need to increase input subsidy to help farmers.

The increase in input subsidy is about 67 per cent, highest so far in the State, he said. The last time the government increased the input subsidy to Rs. 6,000 per hectare was in 2010 and of it, the State government bore Rs. 1,500 per hectare. The input subsidy increase for other crops would be on the pro-rata basis.

On modernisation of drainage in the delta, he said Rs.7,500 crore had been sanctioned. Last year Rs.500 crore was spent but work slowed down due to sand shortage. This year also priority would be given for cleaning up of drains and canals.

Though Jalayagnam projects were delayed, they were now being executed in a focused manner. While 23 lakh acres were given water so far, another 30 lakh acres would be irrigated in the next two years with Rs.16,000 crore.

“Our aim is to release water to canals by June 1 so that crops could be harvested by October 15 in Circar areas and to prevent damage of crops in cyclone season. This is the only permanent solution to save crops inundated every alternate year,” he said.

Earlier, the Leader of Opposition Dadi Veerabhadra Rao criticised that the government saying the relief and rehabilitation steps were tardy. The Chief Minister and Ministers took their own time to tour the affected areas. The Collectors released only Rs. 9.67 crore towards ex gratia, relief and rehabilitation of the flood-affected though they were authorised to draw money directly under the Treasury Rule 27.

Ex gratia

He and other opposition leaders demanded Rs.5 lakh ex gratia each to the families of the deceased and speedy restoration of damaged roads and breached tanks.

Revenue Minister N. Raghuvveera Reddy said that the State was seeking Rs.3,566 crore in addition to Rs.1,000 crore aid sought for repairing the damages caused by the recent cyclone and floods. Compensation was paid to families of the 58 deceased persons and in three cases, legal heirs were being ascertained.

Crop insurance: farmers in a quandary



With just five days left for registering for the agricultural insurance, farmers who have taken land on lease are in a quandary as to whether they will be benefited anyway by the insurance for which the State Government is prepared to pay the entire premium. With prospects for samba crop looking bleak, this assumes great significance.

Leasing cultivable land is a common practice. Besides, there is another system called “vaaram” under which the landowner shares the cost of cultivation.

While the farmers who have availed of crop loan from the banks need not have any worry because the insurance premium is deducted even as the loan is granted, it is the non-loanee (who have not borrowed) farmers who have got to register themselves for the insurance by December 15.

Rajachidambaram, general secretary of the Tamilaga Vivsayingal Sangham, estimates that at least 25 per cent of the farmers in the State have taken land on lease while an equal number would be those who function under the “vaaram” system.

Puliyur R. Nagarajan, vice-president of the Agriculturists Wing of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, laments that the major problem confronting those who have taken lease is that since long this lease has not been registered at all.

It is given in good faith that the tenant would return the land after a period mutually accepted. And it is the lessee who makes a lump-sum payment to the land owner and then cultivates against all odds. In case of crop failure, which looks almost certain this year, it is he who would lose the entire investment.

Here lies the hitch. As there is nothing in writing regarding the lease, the insurance company would make the payment only to the landowner and not the tenant because it is the former who has the land document, argues Mr. Nagarajan.

He says that such instances had taken place leaving the tenant high and dry while the landowner, who invested nothing as far as that particular crop was concerned, had taken undue advantage of the situation.

Insurance sources told *The Hindu* that “it would be impossible for the insurance company to make the payment to someone who does not have any document to show that he was the one who has raised the crops.

In case of a tenant, first of all we seek a self-declaration. It is imperative that he should get a certificate from the Village Administrative Officer (VAO) that he was the one who has raised the crops on that particular land.”

Mr. Rajachidambaram says that even in case of “non-partitioned land,” co-operative society is prepared to extend loan if the farmer produces a certificate from the VAO.

Hence, without making the farmer who has actually incurred the cost of cultivation lose his investment, the system could be simplified by directing the VAO to give certificates regarding the raising of the crops on a particular land.

Mr. Nagarajan demands that the district administration should help the farmers in this regard by instructing the VAOs or Assistant Agricultural Officers to identify the real tiller of the land.

Project on drip fertigation

The Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM) has been sanctioned a demonstration and research project titled “Farmer participatory demonstration and evaluation of drip fertigation technique in Kerala” by the Department of Science and Technology of the Union government for three years, a release says.

K. Madhava Chandran, scientist at the centre, is the principal investigator of the project being implemented in collaboration with the Agriculture Department. The State Agricultural Engineer is its co-investigator.

Drip fertigation is an irrigation-cum-fertilizer application technique, which saves water and fertilizer and enhances the yield and quality of the crop.

The project involves farmer participatory demonstration and evaluation of drip fertigation technique in selected farmers’ plot in nine districts for crops such as coconut, areca, banana, vegetables and cardamom.

MLAs express concern over distress sale of paddy

Legislators cutting across party lines expressed concern over distress sale of paddy in several regions of the State in the State Assembly on Monday.

The issue was raised by Leader of Opposition Bhupinder Singh during the zero hour after which legislators belonging to the opposition as well as ruling Biju Janata Dal stressed the need for opening more procurement points to enable the farmers to sell their paddy.

Mr. Singh blamed the government for its alleged failure to open mandis in different districts in time. The government had failed in coming to the rescue of the farmers despite making tall claims in this regard, he said.

Several legislators who spoke on the plight of the farmers said that the farmers were not getting the minimum support price of Rs. 1,250 per quintal and were being forced to sell their paddy at a lower rate.

With the legislators belonging to both sides taking up the issue of distress sale of paddy, Speaker Pradip Kumar Amat said that he would convene an all-party meeting to discuss the matter.

It may be recalled that a marathon discussion had taken place in the Assembly over the issue of distress sale of paddy last week.

In another development, opposition legislators staged a walkout expressing dissatisfaction over the government's reply at the end of a discussion on an adjournment motion on the issue of irrigation facility in the State.

IOB plans to set up special agri branches in the region



BIG PLANS:Chairman and Managing Director of Indian Overseas Bank M. Narendra addressing the media in Visakhapatnam on Monday as Chief Regional Manager S. Krishna Prasad looks on.— photo: C.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

Banking on agriculture sector the Indian Overseas Bank plans to explore the possibility of setting up two specialised agriculture loan branches in East and West Godavari districts, Chairman and Managing Director of IOB M. Narendra said.

The bank has 40 special agricultural branches across India with most of them in Maharashtra and Karnataka. Given the tremendous scope in the district the bank is exploring the possibility of opening new branch here, he said addressing the media after inaugurating the new premises of the bank's regional office here on Monday.

The bank is exploring another exclusive segment – urban horticulture – and is promoting the scheme aggressively.

There are already 100 applicants for the scheme in the city and four of the applicants received their letters from the bank CMD. Under the scheme customer can take a loan for raising kitchen garden, roof garden, flower garden and small orchards in urban areas. The beneficiary can be individuals, professionals or businessmen having steady income. The loans for individuals is from Rs 25,000 to Rs 2,50,000 and for institutions the loan amount is between Rs 2,50,000 and Rs 25 lakh, the bank CMD said.

The bank is also promoting educational loans and is offering loans to students of nearly all the courses, including nursing, diploma, evening courses, and also for management quota seats, he said and clarified that the bank was not bound by service area limits.

The bank is taking up a campaign to recover outstanding and bad loans, he said. The non-performing assets of the bank grew in the last quarter, he pointed out and said that the borrowers should have exhibited prudence in restructuring their loans when it was offered in 2008-09 and not wait for the loans to go bad. If they had taken the opportunity for restructuring their loan by now they would have had more investible funds and been on a path of recovery, he opined. Bank's Chief Regional Manager S Krishna Prasad and a number of senior bank officials were also present.

Canara Bank's CED training yields results

Canara Bank is ushering in a silent economic revolution among urban based women Self Help Groups (SHG) in nine coastal districts from Srikakulam to Nellore. The launch pad for the silent revolution is the Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED) which offers integrated training in skill development, establishment of self employment units and marketing of the products.

The three-pronged integrated training holds the key for the success of the self-help movement. The bank's integrated approach towards economic emancipation of women is carrying the movement to its logical end. All the 34 circle offices in the country have CED training centres which are focussing on both urban and rural women.

Chief trainer of CED programs B.V.M.Rani of Jana Sikshana Samsthan told *The Hindu* that she had trained innumerable women in multiple trades and the training programs financed by the bank have several success stories to its credit. The key to success lay in the marketing initiative of the bank. The bank organises 'Can Utsavs' and 'Can Bazaars' periodically for marketing the products of women who set up self employment units with bank funding. The utsavs connect the women with scores of customers who after the exhibition period maintain contacts with the women who mostly run home-based units for giving fresh orders of products liked by them. Many customers call the women and give product orders for different occasions. Canara Bank Deputy General Manager S.Krishnan says that the bank's CED program had trained 20,000 women in the nine coastal districts in 2010-11.

Rice, ginning mills protest power surcharge

Cotton ginning mills and rice mills in Karimnagar district remained closed on Monday to protest against the imposition of power surcharge and power cuts during the peak harvesting season.

Around 50 cotton ginning mills and over 540 rice mills located in the district participated in the protest. Following the closure of ginning mills, traders did not buy cotton from the farmers causing commotion in the market.

In Karimnagar agricultural marketyard, the farmers staged a 'dharna' and 'rasta roko' demanding procurement of the cotton produce. However, they called off their agitation after the authorities assured them of procuring the cotton through Cotton Corporation of India (CCI).

District cotton ginning mills secretary Sudhakar accused the Northern Power Distribution Corporation Limited (NPDCL) authorities of failing to fulfil the promise made by Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy to exempt the cotton and rice mills from the power surcharge and providing 24-hour power supply during the peak season of procurement.

Cotton farmers protest suspension of trading

Cotton farmers on Monday staged a 'rasta roko' at Punjab Chowk protesting the suspension of trading following closure of cotton processing units.

The processing units at the major cotton markets of Adilabad and Bhainsa were closed as the owners across the State protested imposition of huge surcharge on electricity bills.

A large number of cotton-laden vehicles arrived in the market yards as trading opened after the weekend.

The protest by owners of the processing units was unannounced due to which farmers were subjected to hardship. About 100 of them gathered at the Punjab Chowk and blocked traffic flow seeking opening of the ginning mills.

Meanwhile, owners of ginning and pressing mills took out a rally seeking waiver of the surcharge. They submitted a memorandum to APTransco officials listing their demands. They started trading operations after a few hours following the APTransco agreeing to defer collection of surcharge amounts.

Market price of rice lower: merchants

The charge that foodgrain merchants are creating artificial price rise is baseless, Calicut Foodgrains and Provisions Merchants Association secretary A. Shyam Sundar has said.

In a press release issued here on Monday, he said the price of rice in the open market in Kozhikode was less than that in government's Consumerfed and Maveli stores.

Rice brought from Andhra Pradesh was priced at Rs.31.50 per kg in Maveli and Consumerfed stores while it was only Rs.30.50 in the market, Mr. Shyam Sunder said.

While government-controlled shops took a profit of eight per cent for rice, wholesale merchants made a profit of hardly 30 paise on every kg of rice sold, he said.

If the government really wanted to keep the prices under control, it should withdraw permission granted for indiscriminate rice exports. Bringing rice from West Bengal by rail should also be regulated and the public distribution system streamlined, he said.

“These are facts. The government, politicians, and the media should stop defaming rice merchants,” Mr. Shyam Sunder said in a statement here on Monday.

Sharp decline in paddy production

Though the price of paddy has reached an all-time high, the farming community in Wayanad district has little to cheer owing to the sharp decline in production of the crop this season.

The spot price of the ‘matta’ variety was Rs.1, 800 to Rs.1,850 a quintal at the Meenangadi open market on Monday as against Rs.900 to Rs.950, a quintal, during the corresponding period last year. The price of the white variety rose to Rs.1, 750 a quintal, as against Rs.800 to Rs.850 during the same period.

“We are getting a better price now but, many of us would not get the benefit as production has declined by up to 60 per cent owing to the scanty rain this year, said K.N. Viswanathan, secretary, Chekadi Padashekhara Samithi in Pulpally grama panchayat. Last year, farmers got 35 quintals of paddy from one acre of land, but this time it had dipped to 16 quintal, he said.

Raman, Cheruvayal , a tribal farmer at Kammana, near Mananthavadi, who has been cultivating nearly 26 varieties of indigenous varieties of paddy on his 5.50 acre of land, said he might lose many variety of seeds this year owing to scanty rainfall

There was high incidence of crop diseases such as sheath blight and smut disease this year in various parts of the district, said M.C. Narayanankutty, Associate Director of Research, Regional Agriculture Research Station (RARS) , Ambalavayal.

It was reported that close to 100 acres of paddy cultivated at Thannikkal Padashekharam under the Mananthavadi Krishibhavan and Mathurvayal Padashekharam under Panamaram Krishibhavan were destroyed in white-backed hopper attack.

The rainfall data of the RARS recorded 1,311mm rainfall this year as against 2,069 mm during the corresponding period last year, deficiency of 37 per cent. Rainfall was deficient in Pulpally, Mananthavadi and Mullamkolly, especially during the paddy transplanting season, said Mr. Narayanankutty.

According to the data of the office of the principal agriculture officer, the Nanja crop has been cultivated on 10,271.50 hectares this year as against 13,000 ha during the previous year. Close to 1,000 ha of land could not be utilized for farming, though farmers had prepared paddy beds for the purpose, owing to deficient rainfall.

Agricultural student unveils solar-powered sprayer

A third year student of the Agricultural Engineering College of the University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur, has brought out an innovative solar-powered, multi-purpose sprayer system for farmers.

Sangappa Sankannagowda, of Siruguppi village in Jamkhandi taluk of Bagalkot district, has invented a solar-powered sprayer which can be operated even at night using powerful lights charged through the solar panels installed atop a three-wheeled frame. The power generated in the solar panels allows the sprayer to operate for a minimum of 10 hours.

The sprayer was displayed at the three-day Krishi Mela which concluded on Monday. It was organised by the Agriculture Research Station, the Agricultural College, the Krishi Vigyan Kendra and the Agriculture Department here.

Mr. Sankannagowda said that the three-wheeled frame was adjustable and could be moved around fields without much difficulty. The height of the wheels could be adjusted to the height of the crops, he added.

He said that the sprayer would prove useful for crops such as red gram, sugarcane, cotton, groundnut, Bengal gram and vegetables. The sprayer could also be used during the night, with two powerful lamps installed in the machine to provide power.

He said that the production cost of the sprayer was Rs. 12,000, and with government subsidies it would be cheaper for farmers. Mr. Sankannagowda added that with the machine, farmers could spray one acre of land in 45 minutes and the advantage would be uniform spraying.

Mettur water level

The water level in the Mettur Dam stood at 47.86 feet on Monday morning, against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 10,162 cusecs and the discharge, 10,000 cusecs. Water released from Karnataka had reached the dam at 11.30 a.m. on Sunday.

Farmers' club gets NABARD recognition

The Chinnamanali Integrated Farmers Club on Friday became the first integrated farmers' club in the State to be recognised by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development as a NABARD Farmers Club. The club has been a model club that demonstrated how profits could be reaped from farming and allied amidst acute draught conditions that don't favour conventional farming.

It was started earlier this year with 17 members, with technical support from the Namakkal Krishi Vigyan Kendra that is functioning under the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University. The club's model is to reap big returns without any heavy investment and approach agriculture in an integrated manner.

President of the club S. Thyagarajan told *The Hindu* that the members are making profits to the tune of up to Rs. 7 lakh annually through integrated farming. "So far, we have been successfully rearing goats, cows, buffalos, carp fish, harvesting honey from artificial beehives, rabbits, egg laying and desi chicken and conventional farming in a small area."

One of the key reasons for success was less dependence on paid labourers as the members work in each other's farms. The members want to take agricultural and allied farming activities to the next level by implementing the latest technology to suit the system.

Facilitation centres to help farmers get subsidy

In line with the State government's announcement of 100 per cent crop insurance premium subsidy for samba crop, farmers can submit their testimonials for registration.

According to an administration release, farmers are required to submit testimonials with details of field survey number and extent of area, duly attested by the village administrative officer, to primary agricultural cooperative societies concerned.

Special facilitation centres have been set up at all primary agricultural cooperative societies to provide requisite documents to farmers.

The special centres would be functioning up to December 15. Farmers, who have registered their fields and or have partly registered their fields, may register the area unregistered so far.

December 15 is the last date for submission of testimonials supported by requisite documents for non-loanee farmers.

Further, those who have already made crop insurance premium, shall be reimbursed of premium made through bank accounts.

Further details on the crop insurance premium payments may be got from the Assistant Agricultural Officers concerned: Nagapattinam(7373088008); Tirumarugal(7373088009); Keezhvelur(7373088010); Keezhayur(7373088011); Vedaranyam(7373088012); Thalainayar (7373088013); Mayiladuthurai(7373088014); Kuthalam(7373088015); Sirkazhi(7373088016); Kollidam (7373088017); and Semmanarkoil(7373088018).

TNAU-CII Yi join hands to promote carbon-neutral schools, colleges



A Government university and the industry have come together with an aim to facilitate educational institutions neutralise their carbon emissions themselves. The initiative 'Vision Carbon Neutral' will encourage school and college students to work towards making their campuses carbon neutral in five years.

Pilot project

The novel initiative, said to be the first of its kind in the country, was launched here on Monday. As a pilot project, the initiative is being extended to seven schools and three colleges for five years. It will be implemented jointly by the Forest College and Research Institute (FC&RI) of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) and Confederation of Indian Industry – Young Indians (Yi), Coimbatore Chapter. While the institution will extend scientific support, the Yi will collaborate between the institution and participating schools and colleges.

Speaking during the launch, K. Ramasamy, Vice-Chancellor of TNAU, said the country, which had to have a stipulated forest cover of 30 per cent, now had only 19 per cent. However in Tamil Nadu, the 17 per cent forest cover had increased to 22 per cent.

“Water is the best carbon sink and Coimbatore is blessed with seven water bodies. A Rs. 48-crore allotment for Noyyal under the cleaning of water ways scheme in the State could be expected in the XII Five Year Plan,” he said.

Good sign

P. Durairasu, Dean of FC&RI, Mettupalayam, said the initiative promised concrete results and that this was a good sign because even though people were aware of global warming, climate change and carbon footprints, nothing had been done in terms of any activity.

P. Subbian, Registrar of TNAU, and Annush Ramasamy, Chairman of CII-Yi, Coimbatore Chapter, inked a memorandum of understanding to formally launch the initiative in the presence of heads of participating school and college heads.

Message

The initiative was aimed at schoolchildren so that the seeds of environmental sustainability were sown when they were young to enable them spread the message to their families and their workplaces when they grew up, according to Mr. Annush.

Appreciating the initiative, T. Vijayalakshmi Menon, Principal of The Western Ghats International School, said that the school had planned to involve students from the very first step of the programme. Only if the students became well-versed with the neutralising methods with the help

of experts, would it be possible to sustain the practice after five years, when the agreement between the stakeholders ended.

A. Balasubramanian, Associate Professor, FC&RI, who is the project officer of 'Vision Carbon Neutral', outlined the project details. Ashok Bakthavathsalam, Chairman of CII Coimbatore Zone, felicitated.

Weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Tuesday, Dec 11

Max Min

30.8° | 21.6°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 94

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:21

Sunset: 05:43

Barometer: 1013

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Wednesday, Dec 12

Max Min

31° | 22°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday
Dec 13



31° | 23°
Partly Cloudy

Friday
Dec 14



25° | 23°
Overcast

Saturday
Dec 15



25° | 23°
Overcast

Sunday
Dec 16



25° | 23°
Overcast

Monday
Dec 17



24° | 21°
Overcast

Airport Weather

Delhi

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 07:04

Humidity: 63

Sunset: 05:25

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1013



THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

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10^hdec 2012 P.M

Cane price hike dries up sugar stocks

Most of the sugar company stocks, especially from Uttar Pradesh, fell sharply. Balrampur Chini and Dhampur Sugar Mills were down 9 and 7 per cent each to Rs 55 and Rs 60. Shree Renuka Sugar dipped 2 per cent to Rs 33 and Bajaj Hindustan fell 1 per cent to Rs 28. Triveni Engineering plunged 5 per cent to Rs 20 and Dwarikesh Sugar Industries dipped 4 per cent to Rs 40.

Profit squeeze

The rise in sugar cane prices in Uttar Pradesh is likely to squeeze the profitability of sugar companies.

On Friday, the Uttar Pradesh Government increased State-advised price of sugar cane by Rs 40 a quintal for the current sugar year 2012-13 (October-September).

The order raises the cane price for the normal varieties to Rs 280 a quintal from Rs 240 a quintal paid last year and that of the early maturing varieties will go up to Rs 290 from Rs 250 a quintal.

For the rejected varieties, the SAP has been raised to Rs 275 from Rs 235 a quintal. At these prices, the landed cost of cane (including freight) cost to be about Rs 290-295 a quintal. Sugar cane production in Uttar Pradesh is expected at 6.8 million tonnes this year.

Gaurang Shah, Assistant Vice-President, Geojit BNP Paribas Financial Services, said it will be difficult for the sugar companies to pass on the increase in cost as the sugar price is controlled by the Government by calibrating supply on a regular basis to maintain prices.

The cane cost for UP sugar mills is expected to increase by about Rs 3,500 a tonne to Rs 30,500-32,000 a tonne.

Crushing may offset

The impact of higher cane cost may be partially offset by increase in crushing volumes (about 15 per cent growth) and jump in recovery rates (an improvement of about 0.3 per cent), said an ICRA report.

With the expected sugar price (ex mill, net of excise) for most UP sugar mills at about Rs 33,000 a tonne this year, most efficient and integrated mills are likely to report modest operating profits, it said.

Cotton blooms on export hopes, limited arrivals



Cotton prices traded marginally higher in Gujarat and other parts of the country with demand being nominal from mills.

Hope of export demand kept the sentiment positive in the market.

According to traders and brokers, cotton may gain in the coming days on expected export demand.

Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton increased Rs 100 to Rs 33,700-33,800 a candy of 356 kg.

About 40,000 bales (of 170 kg each) cotton arrived in Gujarat and 140,000 bales arrived in India.

Kapas price stood at Rs 840-870 for 20 kg at Kadi delivery in Gujarat.

About 15,000 -16,000 bales from Maharashtra arrived in Gujarat quoting Rs 850-875.

A Rajkot-based cotton broker said: "Mills demand was normal today and we are expecting good demand on the export front in coming days. Moreover, restricted arrivals in the State may support the price to go up in coming days."

"Demand from Bangladesh emerged last week as factories there are ramping up production to meet expected rise in orders from Europe and the United States during approaching Christmas and New Year holidays," said a trader based in Ahmedabad.

According to a Kadi-based trader, many farmers are holding on to their produce in the hope of better returns and this has given some support to prices so far.

Indigenous edible oils drop on higher inflow



The sentiment in the edible oils market improved slightly on Monday tracking a rebound in futures markets. On the heels of need-based demand in the spot market, imported palmolein and soyabean refined oil dropped by Rs 2 each. Higher arrivals and selling pressure pulled down cotton refined oil by Rs 6 and rapeseed oil by Rs 5 for 10 kg. Domestic soya oil futures closed Rs 2.50 higher. A broker said that routine demand kept the volume thin. During the day, Liberty sold 200-250 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 488-490 and 70-80 tonnes of super palmolein at Rs 543. Ruchi sold 150-200 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 488. Resellers offloaded 40-50 tonnes of soyabean refined oil at lower rates of Rs 680-682, while refiners quoted soyabean refined oil Rs 20 higher. Towards the day's close, Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 490-492, super palmolein at Rs 543 for Jan 15, soya refined oil at Rs 700 and sunflower refined oil at Rs 785. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 488 for Jan, soyabean refined oil at Rs 700, sunflower refined oil

Rs 785 for Dec and Rs 790 for January. Allana offered palmolein at Rs 488 and super palmolein at Rs 543. In Saurashtra and Rajkot, groundnut oil remained unchanged at Rs 1,960 for *telia* tin and Rs 1,270 (Rs 1,280) for loose (10 kg).

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, soyabean refined oil's January contracts closed higher at Rs 709.25 (Rs 706.65), February was Rs 698.40 (Rs 696.30) and March Rs 693.50 (Rs 692.45).

Malaysia's crude palm oil's January contracts settled higher at MYR 2,221 (MYR 2,211), February MYR 2,313 (MYR 2,297) and March MYR 2,377 (MYR 2,356) a tonne.

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg): groundnut oil 1,260 (1,260), soya refined oil 695 (697), sunflower exp. ref. 720 (720), sunflower ref. 785 (785), rapeseed ref. oil 810 (815), rapeseed expeller ref. 780 (785) cottonseed ref. oil 632 (638) and palmolein 487 (489).

Vikram Global Commodities, Chennai quoted Rs 558 for 10 kg (ex-chennai - ready delivery) for Malaysian super palmolein.

Aromatic rice gains steam on demand hopes



The rice market witnessed a mixed trend on Monday. Prices of aromatic and sharbati varieties witnessed an uptrend while PR varieties declined on reduced offtake.

Expectations of an increase in demand pushed aromatic and sharbati varieties upwards, said Amit Chandna, proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company. While slack demand coupled with the arrivals of new rice in the market dragged PR varieties down, he added.

“It is unlikely to see any major alteration in the prices of aromatic and non basmati rice this week,” said Amit Chandna.

In the physical market, Pusa-1121 (steam) went up by Rs 300 and sold at Rs 6,300-6,400 a quintal while Pusa-1121 (sela) sold at Rs 5,350 , Rs 50 up.

Pure basmati (raw) improved by Rs 250 and quoted at Rs 7,250 while pure basmati (sela) sold at Rs 6,600 a quintal, up Rs 100. Duplicate basmati (steam) traded at Rs 5,000-5,100.

On the other hand, PR-11 varieties eased by Rs 100, PR (sela) sold at Rs 2,450-2,550 while PR-11 (Raw) quoted at Rs 2,500. Price of Permal (raw) went down by Rs 50 and sold at Rs 2,050-2,200 while Permal (sela) went for Rs 2,100-2,200 , Rs 100 down.

Sharbati (steam) improved by Rs 200 and quoted at Rs 4,000 while Sharbati (sela) was at Rs 3,900 , up Rs 400.

Paddy Arrivals

About 15,000 bags of PR variety arrived and went for Rs 1,150-1,200 a quintal, Sharbati arrived with a stock of around 5,000 bags and quoted at Rs 1,750-1,850 , around 5,000 bags of DB variety arrived and sold at Rs 2,550-2,800.

About 20,000 bags of Pusa-1121 arrived and quoted at between Rs 2,750 and Rs 3,000, pure basmati paddy arrived with a stock of around 3,000 bags and sold at Rs 3,200-3,600.

Bearish trend in soya oil; bean gains



The sluggish trend in soya oil continued today on weak buying support even as KLC closed higher. Bearish sentiment in soya oil has mainly been attributed to rise in buying support in cotton and super palmolein and palm oil which are being sold in Indore mandis at lower prices, said Mukesh Purohit, a local soya oil manufacturer.

Contrary to prices in the physical market, soya oil closed higher in the futures market with December contracts on the NBOT closing at Rs 712.50 for 10 kg.

On the NCDEX also, soya oil futures closed higher with December and January contracts closing at Rs 720.35 (up Rs 3.35) and Rs 711 for 10 kg (up Rs 4.25).

Soyabean gained on improved buying support and quoted at Rs 3,090-3,200 a quintal amid arrival of around 2 lakh bags.

Soyabean prices in Indore mandis were quoted at Rs 3,090-3,190 amid arrival of 7,500 bags.

Arrival in Ujjain and Dewas mandis was recorded at 7,000 bags and 6,000 bags respectively. Plant deliveries in soyabean also gained to Rs 3,250-80 (against Rs 3,160-80 last week) on rise in buying support from crushers.

Soya seeds futures also closed higher on improved CBOT projections with its December and January contracts on the NCDEX closing at Rs 3,273 (up Rs 50) and Rs 3,306 (up Rs 44) respectively.

Soya DOC gained marginally from last week at Rs 27,000 in the domestic market on improved buying support. Last week, soya DOC in the domestic market was ruling at Rs 26,500 a quintal.

Ample supplies hold sugar steady



Sugar prices ruled steady after extending last week loss by Rs 2-15 a quintal on Monday. Naka rates declined by Rs 10-15, while mill tender rates were unchanged.

Markets have started receiving new season 2012-13 crop at slightly higher rates. Sugar futures were range-bound in the absence of any cue.

A Vashi-based wholesaler said that continuous selling by mills in local markets kept supply ample in physical market and prices under check amid lack of demand from neighbouring States.

Expectation of higher demand in the beginning of the new month could not be realised due to higher supply and sufficient stocks held in the market.

Stockists preferred to stay away from fresh inventory buying.

The market carries about 100 – 110 (each of 100 bags) truckloads of stocks currently, he said.

Analysts said price will not go down from the present level on account of higher production cost due to increase in cane price and other inputs. In Vashi market, arrivals were higher at 66-67 truck loads (each of 100 bags) and local dispatches were 63-64 truck loads.

On Saturday 18-20 mills offered tenders and sold about 70,000-75,000 bags (each of 100 kg) at Rs 3,200-80 (Rs 3,190-3,280) for S-grade and Rs 3,290 - 3,350 (Rs 3,300-70) for M-grade.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs 3,350-3,431 (Rs 3,352-3,432) and M-grade Rs 3,416-3,566 (Rs 3,421- 3,632).

Naka delivery rates were: S-grade Rs 3,290-3,350 (Rs 3,300-3,335) and M-grade Rs 3,360-3,510 (Rs 3,360-3,520).

84% of tea sold at Coonoor auctions

About 84 per cent of the 19-week high volume of 14.93 lakh kg offered at Sale No: 49 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions was sold.

Homedale Estate tea, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped the CTC market when Raj Traders bought it for Rs 159 a kg. Among orthodox teas from corporate sector, Highfield Estate fetched Rs 249.

“Orthodox leaf market was dearer by Rs 2-4 a kg. Mixed trend was seen for high-priced CTC leaf. Better mediums gained Rs 1-2 while plainers lost up to Rs 2. Primary orthodox dusts eased Rs 3-4. High-priced CTC dusts lost Rs 2-5, mediums Rs 1-2 and plainers up to Rs 2,” an auctioneer said.

Pakistan bought for Rs 84-103 and some European ports for Rs 88-98.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 82-84 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 105-135 for brighter liquoring sorts. They ranged Rs 82-86 for plain dusts and Rs 105-145 for brighter liquoring dusts.

Coffee exports to S. Korea up five-fold

South Korea has become a key market in Far-East for Indian coffee exports.

“Indian coffee exports to South Korea have seen a five-fold jump in volume in the last three years,” Jawaid Akhtar, Coffee Board Chairman, told *Business Line*.

Exports to South Korea is expected to cross over 2,000 tonnes in crop year 2011-12 compared with 2,051 tonnes (in value terms Rs 33.87 crore) in 2010-11. In 2009-10, exports stood at 366.1 tonnes (Rs 3.51 crore).

Korea is a market for mild coffee and India fits well due to its geographical advantage compared to South American coffee-growing countries.

Also the success of Korean big business such as Hyundai, Samsung, LG and others brands in Indian market has added to the comfort level in doing business with Indian growers.

Aktar said: “Korea is a good follow-up country for us. Exports have been steadily going up. It rose sharply ever since we took part in ‘Seoul Cafe Show’ in Korea last year and this year.”

“We want to cultivate and build this emerging market. As a step towards achieving it, we have been taking exporters along with us to showcase our diverse coffees,” he said.

This year, three Indian exporters took part in the ‘Seoul Cafe Show’ as compared to five exporters last year.

Nishant Gurjer, KPA Chairman and managing partner of Kaapi Royale Coffee and the Sethuraman Estates, who took part at the ‘Seoul Cafe Show’ said: “Korea in terms of consumption has suddenly emerged as a big importer of coffees in the last five years.”

“Ever since I started exports to Korea, I am seeing home grown café chains like ‘Caffé Bene’, ‘Angles in Us Coffee’, ‘Hollys Coffee’ and ‘Paris Baguette’ expanding. In all they have over 1,000 stores,” he added.

South Korean coffee buyer is also well aware of coffee quality which he is buying as most of them are Q-certified tasters.

According to Gurjer, Indian coffee is also getting good prices as well. Indian coffees with quality cupping taste profile and certification has got good premium for they appreciate and have tasted good quality coffees.

Covering buys lift spot rubber prices



The domestic rubber prices improved further on Monday. The local market witnessed covering purchases at selected counters following a better closing on NMCE.

A steady recovery in the trendsetting Japanese indices extended further support to the sentiments.

The trend was mixed as the remaining grades were steady in a lacklustre trading session.

Sheet rubber increased to Rs 162.00 (Rs 160.00) a kg according to traders.

The grade closed firm at Rs 161.50 (Rs 160.50) both at Kottayam and Kochi as reported by the Rubber Board.

The December series recovered to Rs 164.00 (Rs 162.60); January to Rs 166.25 (Rs 164.79); February to Rs 168.98 (Rs 167.43), March to Rs 170.50 (Rs 169.56) and May to Rs 175.00 (Rs 175.90) while the April series remained inactive on the National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE).

RSS 3 Dec futures firmed up to ¥253.05 (Rs 167.95) from ¥250.9 during the day session and then to ¥254.0 (Rs 168.59) in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM).

Spot rubber rates Rs/kg were: RSS-4: 162.00 (160.00); RSS-5: 156.00 (156.00); Ungraded: 152.00 (148.00); ISNR 20: 155.00 (155.00) and Latex 60%: 106.00 (106.00).

Cardamom loses aroma on arrival of old stocks



The cardamom market recovered at auctions in the last two days after easing during the middle of last week.

The individual auction average dropped to below Rs 800 a kg on Thursday and Friday but picked up on Saturday and Sunday to Rs 817 and Rs 826 a kg respectively, trade sources said.

Compared with the last season, prices are ruling at moderately higher levels and that is reflected on the faces of the growers, trade sources in Kumily said.

They attributed the marginal decline in prices last week to the presence of 30 per cent of last year's crop in the arrivals which has created apprehensions among the buyers about the stock of old crop held by farmers.

Exporters were covering to meet their commitments and an estimated 30 tonnes of cardamom were bought by them.

Arrivals

Upcountry buyers were seen very active and buying. Arrivals last week declined at auctions, market sources said.

Demand has started picking up in north India for the festival season, winter and wedding season, they said.

However, a bullish sentiment continued to persist in the market given the unfavourable weather conditions prevailing in the growing areas so far this year. Added to this it has become almost certain that the crop is going to be around 50 per cent of the output last season.

The crop is so short that even during the current fourth round of picking this month, the yield in the estates is looking like that of March in normal conditions, they told *Business Line*.

Arrivals last week fell to around 480 tonnes from about 545 tonnes during the previous week and one-third of it consisted of cardamom from the last crop.

MAXIMUM PRICE

At the Sunday auction conducted by the KCPMC, total arrivals declined to 66.3 tonnes from 85.5 tonnes in the previous Sunday and the entire quantity was sold out.

The maximum price was at Rs 1,149 a kg and minimum was at Rs 606. Auction average price dropped to Rs 825.74 from Rs 854.29 the previous Sunday, P.C. Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC, told *Business Line*.

Total arrivals and sales during the current season from Aug 1 to Dec 9 were at 5,162 tonnes and 4,919 tonnes respectively.

Last year, from Dec 6 to 26 auctions were suspended following agitation/ protests across the border in Tamil Nadu against the Mullaperiyar Dam issue.

Hence, the total arrivals and sales related to the corresponding period were available up to Dec 5, 2011 and those were at 8,255 tonnes and 8,033 tonnes respectively.

The weighted average price as on Dec 9, 2012 stood at around Rs 764.97 as against 569.88 as on Dec 5, last year.

Prices of graded varieties were marginally down and that in Rs/kg were AGEB: 1,000-1,010; AGB: 800-810; AGS: 765-785; and AGS-1: 740-750.

Cashew sluggish as buyers look for lower offers



Cashew market was sluggish even though there was some buying interest from the US and Europe at lower levels.

But most of the processors withdrew or were offering at the higher end of the last traded range.

Domestic market was also quiet, trade sources said.

There is not much change in the range of bids and offers i.e., W240 \$3.70-3.90; W320 \$3.30-3.45; W450 \$3.05-3.15; SW \$2.60-3.10; SSW \$2.40-2.50; Splits \$2.05-2.20 and pieces \$1.45-1.70 for a pound (f.o.b.).

During October-November, a fair amount of business had taken place for shipment up to March-April with some buyers even buying up to June.

Volumes

Volumes were much smaller than normal, which meant that steady buying should continue in the coming weeks.

Although activity in December is expected to be low, if it is very slow, it could lead to bunched up buying in Jan-Feb 2013, Pankaj N. Sampat, a Mumbai-based dealer told *Business Line*.

Although there is no good news on the economic front and uncertainties continued to stay, there is no deterioration, he said.

“Unless something dramatic happens, we can expect some revival of confidence by second quarter of 2013”.

raw cashew nut

Meanwhile, the raw cashew nut (RCN) market has been fairly active during the last 2-3 weeks. Bulk of the trader inventory in India and Vietnam seems to have exhausted. Some new shipments, therefore, are being made from West Africa to India, Vietnam and Brazil.

“If this trend continues, most of the 2012 crop will move out before the 2013 harvest starts – which will be a good thing. Tanzania has been able to sell close to 30,000 tonnes in the auctions so far”, he said.

Considering that RCN prices have moved up and movement of lower grades is slow with wider differentials, parity for W320 will be higher.

Availability of larger wholes is likely to be tight with a lower crop in Brazil and smaller nuts in Africa.

Unless demand for lower grades picks up, shellers will face the pressure of carrying costs plus higher parity.

During the last few weeks, prices for all tree nuts have been steady with a firm undertone after a smart rise in price of almonds.

If the prices remain close to the current range, it would be reasonable to expect better offtake in 2013 in all markets.

“We continue to feel that downside is limited unless there is a big increase in world supply, which seems unlikely or some major adverse economic development. If off take picks up, we can expect a gradual increase in prices in coming months”, market sources added.

Demand perks up prices at Kochi tea sale



A good demand perked up prices of all varieties of tea at the Kochi tea auction last week. In Cochin Sale No. 49, the quantity on offer in the dust CTC category was 10,26,000 kg. The market opened steady to firm and sometimes dearer by Re 1 to Rs 2. The prices appreciated further as the sale progressed. Orthodox dust was fully firm to dearer and bulk of the offerings was absorbed by exporters. The quantity on offer was 15,500 kg.

In the best CTC dusts, PD varieties quoted at Rs 96-108, RD grades stood at Rs 104-114, SRD fetched Rs 106-114, while SFD stood at Rs 105-120. The leaf sale also witnessed a good demand and the quantity on offer in the orthodox grades was 1,60,500 kg. The market for Nilgiri all varieties were fully firm to dearer following quality.

TFP grade noticed correction and declined with longer margins of Rs 10-20 and sometimes more. Corresponding fannings barely remained steady. Of the quantity of 77,500 kg in the CTC

leaf grades, the market for good liquoring brokens remained steady to firm. Others were irregular and tended to ease. Fannings were barely remained steady to tending easier. In the dust category, Injipara (Prm) SRD fetched the best prices of Rs 131 followed by Injipara (Prm) RD at Rs 128. In the leaf grades, Chamraj FOP quoted the best prices of Rs 271 followed by Chamraj OP at Rs 265.

UP sugar mills to post moderate operating profits in 2012-13

Sugar mills of Uttar Pradesh are expected to post moderate operating profits in the 2012-13 marketing year, following the state government's decision to increase cane price by Rs 40 per quintal, rating agency ICRA said on Monday.

The Uttar Pradesh government last week announced a Rs 40/quintal increase in the state advised price (SAP) of sugarcane for the marketing year 2012-13 (October-September).

The cane price for the normal varieties has been raised from Rs 240 per quintal to Rs 280/quintal. The rate for early maturing varieties has been increased from Rs 250 to Rs 290 per quintal. For the rejected varieties, the SAP has been raised from Rs 235 to Rs 275 per quintal.

Based on current prevailing prices and costs, ICRA said that the "operating margins for UP based sugar mills will moderate from the levels seen in the second half of 2011-12 sugar year unless supply-demand dynamics permit sugar mills to pass on cost increases".

ICRA said the landed cost of cane (inclusive of basic SAP, purchase tax, society commissions and inward freight costs) to be around Rs 290-295 per quintal.

The rating agency expects UP-based sugar mills to benefit from higher prices in 2012-13, higher crushing volumes and higher recovery rates, but said the higher cane costs are likely to substantially offset the positive impact of the aforesaid.

According to ICRA's estimates, with the new cane prices, the cane cost of production for sugar is likely to increase by around Rs 3500/MT and stand at Rs 30500-32000 per tonne, given that the recovery rates for most UP-based sugar mills range between 9 per cent and 9.5 per cent.

ICRA said the price of sugar for most UP sugar mills would be around Rs 33,000/tonne for 2012-13, and at these levels, most efficient and integrated mills are likely to report modest operating profits.

Tea prices firm up on good demand

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Leaf sales also witnessed good demand and the quantity on offer in the Orthodox grades was 1,60,500 kg. The market for all varieties of Nilgiri was fully firm to dearer following quality.

Well made Clean Black Bolder Brokens, whole leaf and smaller brokens were steady to firm and sometimes dearer. Others were irregular and tended to ease.

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Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

11.12.2012 A.M

Maha co-op sugar factories receive a breather

Maharashtra's cash trapped cooperative sugar factories have received a relief for a moment as the Supreme Court has ruled that various petition on the recovery of income tax be referred to a larger bench. The breather comes at a time when the income tax department had started the recovery of income tax from some of the cooperative sugar factories. The tax demands issued by the Pune office for the 2008-09 and 2009-10 were for Rs 2,000 crore which are in addition to tax demand during 1991-92 and 2007-08 worth Rs 2,500 crore.

A division bench comprising justices DK Jain and Madan B Lokur on December 7 during hearing on petition of Tasgaon taluka cooperative sugar factory ruled "We feel that observations in Maharashtra Rajya Sahkari Sakkr Karkhana Sangh Ltd and others vs State of Maharashtra and others, 1995 suppl (3) SCC 475, may have some bearing on the merits of the main issue, raised by the Revenue. Hence, it will be appropriate if these appeals are heard by a larger bench." The bench thereby ruled that there was no need to refer back the matter again to the Commissioner Income Tax (appeals) in Maharashtra.

The Tasgaon taluka cooperative sugar factory had argued that the expenses incurred by factories on the payment to cane growers are for ensuring adequate and consistent supply of the freshly cut sugarcane which is essential for continuous running of sugar factories. These expenses are incurred for commercial expediency and fully and exclusively for the purpose of business. It is not distribution of profit paid to cane growers.

The apex court's order comes at a time when a large number of cooperative sugar factories had received demand orders from the income tax department for the payment of tax. This had led the state chief minister Prithviraj Chavan asking CBDT not to resort to coercive actions against cooperative sugar factories.

Ankushrao Tope, director, National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories and Federation

of Cooperative Sugar Factories of Maharashtra told Business Standard "A review petition will be filed in the Supreme Court either collectively by 150 odd cooperative sugar factories or by the Federation requesting the court to take a combined hearing on income tax related matters. A representation will also be made to CBDT requesting it to direct the income tax offices in Maharashtra stop the coercive action of tax recovery from cooperatives." Tope admitted that the last week's order has been a major relief for the cooperatives.

According to Tope, the income tax department is holding a view that the payment made by factories above fair and remunerative price (FRP) is profit. However, factories and state government are opposed to the stand taken by the income tax department.

Potato falls by 0.91% on adequate stocks, low demand

Potato prices fell by Rs 6.30 to Rs 685.60 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators offloaded their positions due to low demand in spot markets.

The trading sentiment weakened further as a result of easy availability of potato in the spot markets following fresh arrivals from producing regions.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, April contract fell by Rs 6.30, or 0.91%, to Rs 685.60 per quintal with a business volume of two lots.

The March delivery declined by Rs 4.50, or 0.63%, to Rs 714 per quintal with a trading volume of five lots.

Market experts said traders offloaded their holdings at existing higher levels, tracking a weak spot market trend on fresh supplies mainly pulled down potato prices.

Sugar shares dip as UP government declares SAP for sugar cane

Shares of sugar manufacturing companies are under pressure in early morning trades on reports that the Uttar Pradesh (UP) has increased State Advised Price (SAP) for sugarcane procurement by more than 15% to Rs 275-290 a quintal for 2012-13 compared to last year. SAP is the price below which mills cannot buy cane from farmers.

“According to the government, this would translate into total sugarcane payments of Rs 21,500 crore to farmers this crushing season compared to Rs 18,200 crore during 2011-12 – a rise of Rs 3,300 crore higher,” the Business Standard report suggests.

Among the individual stocks, [Balrampur Chini Mills](#) has dipped almost 7% at Rs 57 on the BSE. Triveni Engineering and Industries was down 5% at Rs 20, followed by Shree Renuka Sugars (down 4% at Rs 33) and Bajaj Hindustan (down 2% at Rs 27).



THE TIMES OF INDIA

TODAY FARM NEWS

11.12.2012 A.M

Sonia Gandhi woos farmers in north Gujarat

SIDDHPUR: Congress president [Sonia Gandhi](#) on Monday went all out to woo the farmers and said that the Modi government had not let the center funds reach them.

She said that the Modi government has falsely accused the center of doing injustice to the farmers even it has not reached central schemes and funds to the state farmers.

"If you vote Congress to power, we will ensure that all you will get all your rights back which have been snatched away from", Gandhi said. She said that the center had a quota of 3128 mega watt power for the farmers. "The state government does not give power to you and sells off 833 mega watt. There are 4.5 lakh farmers in the state who do not have power", said Gandhi.

Gandhi alleged that even as corruption was reported in state government schemes, the Modi government accuses center of corruption and doing injustice to the people of Gujarat. She said that 40 per cent children in Gujarat were malnourished.

Ruling party, opposition wrestle over farmers' cause

BHUBANESWAR: With an obvious eye on the next general elections, both the opposition [Congress](#) and the ruling BJD have seemingly started wooing the farming community. Since the beginning of the Winter Session, farmers' issues have overshadowed everything else. And Monday was no different.

While Opposition legislators continued to come down heavily on the ruling dispensation over

alleged distress sale of paddy, lack of marketing yards and inadequate irrigation facilities, the Naveen Patnaik-led party has begun making efforts to ensure that the Congress does not walk with the farmers' cause. The Grand Old Party successfully organized a dawn-to-dusk bandh in Nuapada town on Monday, seeking Rs 300 as bonus for farmers in addition to the minimum support price for each quintal of paddy.

"The farmers belong to all of us. We are equally concerned for them," law minister [Raghunath Mohanty](#) said. Mohanty, who was deputing for chief minister [Naveen Patnaik](#) during a debate on an adjournment motion notice, said the state government was committed to farmers' welfare and would during the 12th five-year plan (2012-2017) ensure all 314 blocks in the state had at least 35 per cent irrigation coverage.

The minister's response followed the opposition hitting out at the BJD government for allegedly renegeing on its promise ever since coming to power in 2000. "In 2000, the BJD poll manifesto promised 100 per cent irrigation to farmers. Four years later, its election promise was 50 per cent coverage. And in 2009, it was further reduced to 35 per cent," Congress whip Prasad Harichandan said.

Accusing the BJD government of misleading the public by furnishing inconsistent data, Harichandan highlighted various responses elicited from the government where the information on irrigation coverage does not match. Earlier, during Zero Hour the opposition alleged distress sale of paddy, forcing Speaker Pradip Amat to say he would convene a special meeting to discuss the matter.

Apparently wary that the Congress, which had stalled House proceedings for days from the start of the ongoing session demanding special debate on farmers' issues, even treasury bench members pressed for establishment of sufficient 'mandis' (marketing yards) in the state to facilitate farmers to sale their produce at government fixed prices. "It is not just the opposition, but also our members who are concerned for farmers," said Mahanga MLA [Pratap Jena](#) (BJD).

Farmers withdraw stir, for now

MANDYA: Though normalcy returns in Mandya district, farmers are keeping their fingers crossed as the long drawn legal battle continues over [Cauvery water](#).

On Monday, farmers withdrew their agitation following a truce between district administration and Mandya Zilla Raita Hitarakshana Samiti. Having understood that the state cannot escape the Supreme Court's directives to release water to [Tamil Nadu](#), MZRHS president G Made Gowda withdrew the agitation but with a rider that they would resume if the crest gates of the KRS were not closed after releasing the stipulated amount of water.

"We have withheld our agitation for the time being. We are very sad about not protecting the scarce water, but the court order prevails. The district administration has promised us that release of water will be stopped from Monday. If the state government releases water as per the directions of the [Cauvery Monitoring Committee](#) (CMC), violent and fierce agitation would be launched across the state," he told mediapersons.

Made Gowda downplayed the poor response from farmers to his 'KRS Reservoir Chalo' call given on Sunday. He said his call to lay siege to KRS reservoir was symbolic and farmers knew of it.

"There is no reason to suspect Cauvery agitation is dying in Mandya. [The river](#) is the lifeline of the district's economic activities. How can farmers give up their fight? Sunday's agitation was not a flop show. It was a symbolic rally, which is why a large number of farmers did not participate," he said.

Meanwhile, water level in the reservoir dipped to 92.55 ft against the maximum level of 124.84 ft. On Monday, the outflow was minimized to 7,000 cusec from 10,000 cusec. The inflow was 2,027 cusecs.

Agitating farmers lock Gr Noida collectorate

GREATER NOIDA: [Agitating farmers](#) demanding extra compensation for land acquired in 18 villages went berserk on Monday and locked the collectorate in Surajpur and even tried to hold officials hostage. The farmers, whose land was acquired at a meagre price and allegedly sold to a developer, have been sitting on hunger strike since December 5 outside the collectorate.

The farmers reached at 10am and, after raising anti-government slogans, locked the main gate of the collectorate for at least half an hour.

The city police and administration officials rushed to the scene where a heated argument occurred between cops and farmers. It was only after the city administration assured them of action that the farmers suspended their agitation.

Unhappy with cane state advisory price, RLD to protest on December 15

LUCKNOW: Unconvinced with Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav's argument that the state advisory price (SAP) declared for the cane farmers was 'good enough', the top brass of [Rashtriya Lok Dal](#) on Monday, decided to hold demonstration across various districts on December 15.

RLD national general secretary, [Jayant Chaudhary](#) said that [Samajwadi Party](#) had announced a hike of 50% in SAP in its election manifesto. But what came through was barely 16%. State president of RLD, Munna Singh Chauhan, said that they would be handing over representations, addressed to UP governor, to the district magistrates. The party also demanded roll back of the hike in transportation charges from Rs 5.75 to Rs 8.75 per quintal. These charges would be deducted from the SAP (on a per quintal basis) if the mill transports cane from the procurement centre to the mills.

The RLD MP from Mathura also said that a three-member committee comprising, former RLD MLA Hari Singh Dhillon, Sudhir Panwar and KK Tripathi would be set up to assess the recommendation of the Rangarajan committee on deregulation of the sugar cane industry. The

committee will submit its report within a month. The report, Chaudhary said, would be handed over to the prime minister.

Chaudhary also demanded the state government to hand over requisite land for development of the airports in the state. RLD chief [Ajit Singh](#), who is also the Union civil aviation minister had in November asked the UP government to expedite acquisition and handing over of the land for construction of airports, including the one in Jhansi, Mathura and Agra.

Chaudhary said that this was important for the overall development of the state.

RLD also accused the UP government of not doing enough to see that paddy is bought at the procurement centres. "It is because of this that the farmers are forced to sell off their produce to middlemen at low prices," Chauhan said.

Kejriwal seeks alliance with farmers' leader Raju Shetty

In his first attempt at striking a political alliance, just a fortnight after launching the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Arvind Kejriwal Monday sought a tie-up with Maharashtra farmers' leader Raju Shetty, founder president of the Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana (SSS). At present, Shetty is the lone MP representing the Swabhimani Paksha, the SSS's political wing.

"I am glad to say that henceforth we will work together," said Kejriwal, who was on a one-day visit to Sangli where he participated in a rally organised by Shetty's outfit.

"Shetty is a revolutionary leader and has been fighting for farmers in Maharashtra... However, farmers' issues are not limited to Maharashtra... Today, I came here with an invitation to Shetty to lead farmers at the national level," said Kejriwal.

But speaking to The Indian Express later, Shetty said while talks have begun, a final decision is yet to be taken. "We will not dissolve the Swabhimani Paksha into AAP. A committee will be formed to hold discussions before a final decision on an alliance with AAP is taken," he said.

"Our party is limited to Maharashtra so far, and Kejriwal's movement is national. Also, the issues of rural areas are very different from those of urban areas. But there is a need to create a pressure group at the national level to bring about a change in policy," said Shetty.

House meets today, govt to push retail FDI

Govt weighs administrative order option, but can't make up mind; BJP plans protests in and outside House

A day before the Assembly winter session, the Delhi government is intensely deliberating its options to allow foreign direct investment (FDI) in multi-brand retail and become the first state in the country to do so.

Even as the ruling Congress has agreed to discuss the issue in the Assembly on Tuesday, sources said the government's push for FDI in retail in Delhi might need a longer and harder effort than expected.

Soon after the Union government decided to allow FDI in retail, Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit has been reiterating her stand to make Delhi the first state to implement it.

However, just before the winter session, Dikshit was weighing options on the route to be followed to usher in FDI in retail in Delhi.

"FDI in retail is a new policy. We want to allow it in Delhi as soon as possible, but we do not want to make any mistake while doing so. We would prefer to take time and implement the policy in a proper way," a senior Delhi government official said.

He said the proposal to allow FDI in retail was on the agenda when the Delhi Cabinet met on Monday. But the discussion was deferred because it has to be deliberated if the policy could be implemented through a notification or an administrative order was required.

The government had maintained that amendments to the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Act and the Shops and Establishments Act were necessary to implement the new FDI policy.

It said the Central government has prepared a model to help the states prepare before allowing FDI in retail.

Last week, Dikshit said her Cabinet might clear amendments to the Acts and bring them up in the Assembly during the winter session, beginning Tuesday.

Amendments to the APMC Act are necessary to break the monopoly of wholesale markets. This will allow retailers to buy agricultural produce directly from farmers. However, sources said the amendments would require approval from the Union government.

"The proposed amendments are ready, but approval from the Central government is mandatory. The decision to discuss FDI in retail in the Cabinet was postponed because certain clarifications were needed," a government official said.

The Congress government is bracing for a stormy Assembly session in view of the BJP's anti-FDI stand. The Opposition party, which wants a discussion on FDI in the Assembly, has planned protests in the House and on the streets.

Leader of the Opposition V K Malhotra said the BJP would oppose any move to allow FDI in retail in Delhi. "We are ready for a fight with the Congress. The country doesn't need or want FDI in retail. We will protest inside and outside the Assembly," he said.