

THE HINDU

TODAY FARM NEWS

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COSCO widens scope of direct purchase of cotton

The Cotton Sourcing Company (COSCO), a special purpose vehicle (SPV) floated by textile entrepreneurs in the region to source cotton in bulk quantities, have now widened the direct purchase of cotton beyond Gujarat and also commenced the transportation of cotton in huge volumes by sea mode.

On procurement, S. Dhananjayan, technical advisor to COSCO, told *The Hindu* that the 53 members units had now started sourcing from ginners/farmers in Maharashtra also.

“As a starter, we commenced the sourcing with Gujarat.

The procurement base will be soon widened to states other than Gujarat and Maharashtra with samples of cotton already been coming to us from Andhra Pradesh for finalising the purchase deal,” he said.

A significant development subsequent to the launch of the SPV took place recently as the cotton purchased in very huge volumes from Gujarat had started getting transported by sea to Tuticorin port en route to the doorsteps of the member units of COSCO.

“With the help of a logistics partner, we are now lifting the load through Mundra Port to Tuticorin since sea transportation of huge volumes could bring down the net cost significantly,” Mr. Dhananjayan pointed out.

Subsidy to 16 mulberry farmers

Farmers of Nannilam, Kodavasal, Needamangalam, Mannargudi have taken up mulberry cultivation

Collector S.Natarajan distributed subsidy to the tune of Rs.2.03 lakh at the rate of Rs.18,000 per acre to 16 farmers who have taken up mulberry cultivation in the district on Tuesday.

41 acres

The Collector said that mulberry cultivation has been taken up on 41 acres in the district. Farmers of Nannilam, Kodavasal, Needamangalam, Mannargudi have taken up mulberry cultivation which is catching up well in the district. Saravanan, a farmer of Kodavasal, a pioneer in this field, has earned Rs.2 lakhs through mulberry cultivation and silk worm rearing.

With efforts taken by Collector, farmers of Nannilam, Kodavasal, Needamangalam and Mannargudi areas were taken on tour to Pazhani and Udumalaipettai where mulberry cultivation and silk worm rearing is done on a large scale, and educated by the farmers of those areas.

Rubber licensing system goes online

As part of its ongoing e-governance programme, the Rubber Board has launched an online platform for filling applications for licences.

Board chairman Sheela Thomas launched the 'Rubber Board Business Information System (RUBIS)' at a function held at the headquarters on Tuesday.

Ms. Thomas handed over the first manufacturing licence generated through the system to N. Dharmaraj, Executive Director, Harrison Malayalam Ltd.

The system, which has been developed by the Bangalore-based Alpha Linx Technologies Ltd., will also enable the submission of online applications for registration-cum-membership certificates and their renewals, and filing of all statutory returns.

The various modules of RUBIS can be accessed through the website at www.rbegp.org.in.

Plantation crops symposium

The United Planters' Association of South India (UPASI) Tea Research Institute will host the plantation crops symposium, PLACROSYM, between December 12 and 15 in Coimbatore. A release from UPASI says that various institutes under the aegis of the Indian Society of Plantation Crops will conduct the symposium.

UPASI TRI is hosting the PLACROSYM for the fourth time and the theme of the symposium is 'Mechanisation for Sustainable Productivity'.

Over 300 delegates representing various plantation research institutes across the country will participate. As part of the symposium, the organisers will also hold an exhibition on plantation crops and allied corporate industries.

Plan to raise coconut procurement price: Chandy

The government is thinking of increasing the procurement price of coconut, Chief Minister Oommen Chandy told the Assembly on Tuesday.

Intervening in the debate on a calling attention motion by M. Chandran (CPI-M), he said the government had decided to procure raw coconuts directly from farmers because the State lacked the necessary infrastructure for conversion of coconuts to copra. He said the State had asked the Central government to declare a subsidy for coconut oil.

Minister for Agriculture K.P. Mohanan told the House that the procurement of coconuts through Krishi Bhavans was expected to begin by December end. He said the government would consider an increase in the procurement price after a revision of the support price by the Centre, due in January.

Shoddy procurement

Earlier, moving the calling attention motion, Mr. Chandran said the shoddy procurement of coconut and copra in the previous years and the palmoil import policy of the Union government had resulted in a steep fall in the price of coconut, forcing farmers to switch to other crops. The procurement price of Rs.14 a kg was too low to make an impact on the price of coconut, he said, urging the government to enhance the price to at least Rs.26.

Minister for Fisheries K. Babu informed the House that the government had sanctioned Rs.650 crore for the development of infrastructure in 32 coastal villages.

ICFRE to help market casuarina trees

The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) will provide support for marketing casuarina trees to help promote agro-forestry. It will help in providing bio-fertilisers for the plantation, Director-General of ICFRE V.K. Bahuguna said.

At the interactive meet with farmers at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra here on Monday, Mr. Bahuguna said it would give demonstrations to farmers. Often, companies formed cartels to lower the price of agro-forestry produce. This was true of the paper industry.

In India, around 32 million acres of forest was found around farmers fields. Therefore, the integration of Van Vigyan Kendra and Krishi Vigyan Kendra would help to improve food security, water security and even facilitate better technology to reach farmers.

This year, the Minister for Environment and Forest Jayanthi Natrajan announced in Coimbatore that they would distribute one crore free seedlings in areas affected by Cyclone Thane.

This was the first time the ICFRE was interacting with farmers to ascertain their needs. Earlier, they would distribute the seedlings through the Forest Department. The programme would start with farmers from Puducherry, Cuddalore and Villupuram, and will extend it to the other parts of the country.

At the function, Director of Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding N. Krishnakumar said 33 per cent of India should be forest area. So, in each district there was a move to improve the forest cover. There are over 600 companies selling agricultural seeds in India. There should be a move to start community seed orchards in many areas to improve agro-forestry. Around 145 trees having domestic value should be cultivated extensively to improve forest cover and to provide income. There was also a need for decentralised orchards to cater to the requirements of industries. They are currently working with the Indian Paper Manufacturing Association to provide good seeds, he said.

At the function, 100 farmers were given casuarina seedlings. The ICFRE is an autonomous organisation of the Ministry of Environment and Forests. It has established a Van Vigyan Kendra (Forest Science Centre) to disseminate technologies and technology products related to cultivation and management of important tree species.

Officials give tips to farmers in promoting agro-forestry

Dilution of public shareholding in sugar mill ruffles farmers

Rs.24.75 crore interest converted into government's share



heavy load:Perambalur is one of the 12 mills where cogeneration was proposed.File photo.

The 35th general body meeting of Perambalur Sugar Mills, a public sector unit, scheduled for Wednesday, is likely to be stormy with farmers determined to rake up the issue of diluting the shareholding of the public to just about five per cent from the original 46 per cent. Writing off of the penal interest of Rs.24.75 crore, which has been converted into the share of the government, and fixing Rs.3,000 a tonne as procurement price for sugarcane would be among the major demands.

Rajachidambaram, State general secretary of Tamilaga Vivasayigal Sangham, told *The Hindu* that a number of cane growers' associations and farmers' bodies have decided to oppose the "dictatorial" attitude of the management.

N. P. Anbazhagan, secretary, Sugarcane Growers' Association, Perambalur, pointed out that farmers invested as much as Rs.1.94 crore in 1978 and thus had 46.41 per cent share in the mill while the State government had invested Rs.2.24 crore to hold 53.59 per cent share.

A. Venugopal, Perambalur district president of Tamilaga Vivasayigal Sangham, said the mill was declared "sick" on April 4, 2000, and referred to the Bureau of Industrial and Financial Reconstruction. As the management refused to heed the suggestion of the ITCOT to put the mill back on the rails, the interest burden kept piling up.

Mr.Rajachidambaram alleged that the management chose to convert that penal interest of Rs.24.75 crore, which was met by the loan from the State government, into share and thus “the government now has 94.23 per cent share in the mill whereas that of the farmers has shrunk to just about five per cent. We have been opposing this for the past three years.”

He pleaded for restoring the situation prevailing before the conversion of the penal interest into share. “After all, it is the government, which is the de facto management and is responsible for the losses. When the mill got loans at 17 per cent interest and failed to repay within the due date, it had attracted penal interest also.” Hence, he appealed to the State government to write off the penal interest and thus restore the shareholding of the public.

Another major grievance is that cogeneration work at the mill is at standstill. Perambalur is one of the 12 mills where cogeneration was proposed. The total generation planned in the 12 mills was 183 MW for which Rs.849 crore was sanctioned in 2010.

“While work is going on in some mills, nothing is happening at Perambalur mill because of non-allocation of funds despite the arrival of the machinery,” he alleged. “We have paid our share towards the project costing Rs.91crore. Similarly, the proposed modernisation works remained halfway through at the mill,” he added.

Farmers are furious over the decision to stop distribution of two kilograms of sugar to the shareholders at the general body meeting citing a Central government circular. “We have been getting sugar at the general body meeting for the past 15 years and we don’t know why it should be stopped now.”

They also propose to demand early payment of Rs.135 a tonne, which is the additional price for the cane suppliers of 2004-05 season.

Registration for weather-based insurance

Agriculture Department has advised the farmers to register for weather-based insurance on or before December 14 (Friday).

According to a release from P. Sankaralingam, Joint Director, Agriculture, Perambalur, the district is one among the five in the State where weather-based insurance scheme is being implemented by the Agriculture Insurance Company and the United India Insurance Company.

Under the programme, rabi paddy could be insured for Rs.10,000 per acre for which the premium is Rs.200.

Similarly, for maize, the insured amount is Rs 10,000 and the premium is Rs.200. Also groundnut could be insured for Rs.10,000 per acre paying a premium of Rs.200.

Onion could be insured for Rs.15,000 per acre remitting a premium of Rs.900.

The premium could be paid through one's bank or drawing a cheque in favour of the United India Insurance Company Ltd at Pallivasal Street, Perambalur.

For further details, contact P. Stalin, branch manager, United India Insurance Company Ltd in 9600779291/04328-276926.

PepsiCo sows the seed, farmers reap the benefits

Water bodies in three villages of Sangareddy mandal restored

Innovative programmes like rainwater harvesting for irrigation and efficient use of water have changed the life of farmers in the Sangareddy Mandal of Medak district. An initiative by the PepsiCo India, which has a large plant at Pothireddypally Chowrasta here, of cleaning the water tanks in three villages of the Mandal -- Kashipur, Cherial and Kothlapur -- is helping the farmers reap the benefits of a second crop where they could not even think of an assured yield for first crop.

Farmers in Medak district are completely dependent on rainfed cultivation. A large number of tanks in the district are defunct due to various reasons, including accumulated silt, non-clearance of channels and not enough rainfall that would increase the groundwater table. But here in these three villages, some farmers can now dare to think about second crop.

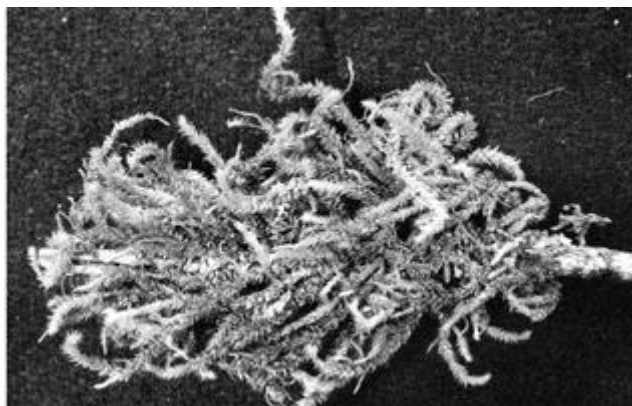
Some of the farmers of Kashipur, Cheriya and Kothlapur in Sangareddy mandal are happy as the water level in borewells has considerably increased giving them some hope. Removing the silt and clearing channels are said to be the main reasons for increasing the groundwater table.

“Though water was not flowing from these tanks, the increase in the pond storage capacities has helped the borewells nearby yield more water for our crops even during the distress period. The situation is far better now as compared to earlier when we were unable to think about even the first crop,” said Pedda Chandraiah, a farmer from this village. He said that about 600 acres of land in these villages has benefited after the restoration of these three tanks. The project was initiated by PepsiCo India, which has a large plant at Pothireddypally Chowrasta. According to PepsiCo India Chairman Manu Anand, the project interventions revolved around twin planks - rainwater harvesting for irrigation and value-added support through self help groups (SHGs) for efficient use of water and income generation. “Due to increased availability of water in non-monsoon months, the farmers can now plant an additional crop thus increasing their income by Rs 15,000 per acre,” Mr. Manu Anand said.

“Due to increased availability of water in non-monsoon months, farmers can now plant one more crop”

New moss species found in New Amarambalam forests

Characterised by long, drooping primary branches, ridged leaves



Researchers have named the new plant *Symphysodontella madhusoodanii*.

Botanists at the Zamorin's Guruvayurappan College, Kozhikode, have reported a new species of bryophyte (moss) from the New Amarambalam Forests in Nilambur, strengthening the case for declaration of the biodiversity- rich region as a wildlife sanctuary.

The researchers, Manju C. Nair and K.P. Rajesh, have named the new plant *Symphysodontella madhusoodanii*, after their guide Prof. Madhusoodanan, former Head of the Department of Botany, University of Calicut, and now Emeritus Scientist at the Malabar Botanical Garden, Kozhikode.

The paper authored by Dr. Manju and Dr. Rajesh has been published in the recent issue of *Phytokeys*, an open access journal dedicated to biodiversity research.

The new species was found growing on the branches of trees in the upper reaches of the Amarambalam Forests. "It is unique in many features," says Dr. Manju, a bryologist, also associated with the Malabar Botanical Garden, Kozhikode.

Earlier, the bryophyte genus *Symphysodontella* was represented in India with three species, mostly from the north-eastern part of the country. One species, *S. involuta*, was known to occur in the Western Ghats also.

S. madhusoodanii is characterised by long, drooping primary branches, short secondary branches and two costate (ridged) leaves. It is confined to the New Amarambalam Forests and the Mukuruti National Park across the border in Tamil Nadu, both of which harbour a fragile ecosystem, home to a unique assemblage of plants and animals. The New Amarambalam forests is also the home of the Cholanaikar tribe, a nomadic aboriginal group of few members.

The plant was collected by Dr. Rajesh during a Rapid Biodiversity Assessment survey in the New Amarambalam Reserve Forest area. The study was organised by the Malabar Natural History Society (MNHS) of Kozhikode for the Kerala Forest Department, under plans to designate the forest as a high value biodiversity area.

The survey supported by the Kerala Science, Technology Environment (KSCSTE), revealed the rich biodiversity of the area, and the need for better protection.

“There was a plan to designate the forests of New Amarambalam as a wildlife sanctuary. That proposal has failed to materialise due to various reasons. We strongly feel that this area deserves better conservation status, taking into account the rich biodiversity waiting to be discovered,” says Dr. Rajesh.

Paddy procurement turns controversial

Supplyco faces a hard grind in Wayanad



A rice mill lobby from Kalady in Ernakulum district has been allegedly trying to torpedo the paddy procurement by the Supplyco in Wayanad.

While the Supplyco has been procuring paddy from the farmers at the minimum support price (MSP) fixed by the government, the lobby started procuring paddy at Rs. 2 more a kg through small-scale traders. The spot price of the Matta variety was Rs.19 a kg in the open market at Meenangadi on Tuesday but, the Supplyco was procuring it at Rs.17 a kg. When the ‘Nanja’ harvest had started by the middle of November, the open market price was Rs.10 to Rs.12 a kg and within a few weeks it went up to Rs.19 a kg, an all-time high price for the crop.

The Agriculture Department has been anticipating a production of 33,897.7 tonnes paddy from 10,271.9 hectares in the district during the season. But the Supplyco could procure only 15 tonnes so far as against 2,250 tonnes during the Punja season this year. However, the small-scale traders procured nearly 30 tonnes of paddy on Tuesday itself, Agriculture marketing sources said.

As many as 1,750 farmers have registered online to supply paddy at MSP rate to the Supplyco through Krishi Bhavans before the harvest. “We have expected a record procurement this season but, now we are in a tight position to deal with the unexpected situation,” M.K. Promod, District Paddy Marketing Officer, told *The Hindu*. Supplyco had entered into a contract with three rice mills at Koduvally (in Kozhikode), Palakkad, and Kalady to process the produce procured from the district. The government had collected a security deposit of Rs.1 crore each from the mills for the purpose, he said.

Payment

It was reported that the rice mill lobby had paid Rs.50 lakh to the small-scale traders to procure paddy at a higher price to torpedo the paddy procurement project of the Supplyco. If the lobby procured paddy at Rs.20 a kg, they would get a huge profit from the business as now they were selling branded rice varieties at Rs.45 a kg, a marketing source said.

“A drastic fall in the production of the crop in the neighbouring States shot up the price of the produce in three weeks,” K. Ibrahim, a paddy trader at Meenangadi, said. The arrival of the product from the major paddy-growing States such as Tamil Nadu and Karnataka to the rice mills in Kalady and Palakkad was thin owing to a sharp fall in production, he added.

Not only the prices but also the formalities of the Supplyco are deterring the farmers from selling their produce to the agency, said Gopi Keezhanikkal, president of the Arumad - Murani Padashekham under Meenangadi Krishi Bhavan. “Most of the farmers prefer to sell their produce to the government agency, though the price was comparatively low, but, we have to wait one to three months to get the price from the agency,” he added.

State plans to increase tank irrigation potential

Minor Irrigation Minister Govind M. Karjol has said the government proposes to use the water in 150 minor irrigation tanks in Gulbarga district and 71 in Yadgir district to irrigate 26,870 hectares in Gulbarga and 6,528 ha in Yadgir.

In 2010-11, the same water was used to irrigate 3,500.34 ha and 2,380.25 ha in the two districts respectively, Mr. Karjol said in a written reply to Allamprabhu Patil, MLC, in the Legislative Council.

Encroachment

To another question, the Minister said the government had taken up a survey on encroachment of minor irrigation tanks in the two districts.

It was found that 0.9 ha in Afzalpur tank had been encroached upon and houses constructed on it. Efforts to clear the encroachment had hit a block as the residents had obtained a stay order.

Among the number of tanks taken up for restoration and removal of silt, Mr. Karjol said that under the 'repair, rehabilitation and restoration' programme, supported by the Centre, work on 22 tanks in Gulbarga had been taken up at a cost of Rs. 7.84 crore. Twenty-one tanks had been restored, while work on one was suspended following objections raised by farmers nearby.

Weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Wednesday, Dec 12

Max Min

31.0° | 21.0°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 89

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:21

Sunset: 05:43

Barometer: 1014

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Thursday, Dec 13

Max Min

32° | 23°

Extended Forecast for a week

| Friday Dec 14 | Saturday Dec 15 | Sunday Dec 16 | Monday Dec 17 | Tuesday Dec 18 |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | | | | |
| 33° 23° Partly Cloudy | 25° 23° Overcast | 26° 24° Overcast | 26° 24° Overcast | 26° 24° Overcast |

Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 07:04

Humidity: 77

Sunset: 05:25

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1015



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TODAY FARM NEWS

11.12.2012 P.M

12.12.2012 A.M

11thdec 2012 P.M

Chana rules range-bound on bumper crop hopes



Weak buying support and prospects of bumper crop have kept chana prices range-bound between Rs 4,100 and Rs 4,200 in the past 15 days. Chana (kanta), which had gained marginally to Rs 4,200 a quintal on Monday, declined to Rs 4,100-4,150 today on decline in buying interest at higher rate. Chana (desi) also fell to Rs 4,000.

With the present weather condition proving to be conducive , farmers are expecting bumper production this year. As a result of this, traders and stockists who had built up inventories anticipating higher yield, are releasing their existing stock leading to steep fall in its prices. Added to this, arrival of imported chana from Australia has also lent support to the bearish sentiment.

Weak demand in chana has also dragged its dal in local mandis by about Rs 25 with chana dal (average) being quoted flat at Rs 4,975-5,000 , chana dal (medium) at Rs 5,025-5,100 , while chana dal (bold) ruled at Rs 5,350-75.

Sluggish trend also continued in dollar chana on weak demand both in the domestic and export market. On Tuesday, dollar chana prices in local mandis ruled flat at Rs 4,000-6,200 amid an arrival of around 4,000-4,500 bags.

In container also, dollar chana ruled flat with the 42/44 count at Rs 7,250-75 , 44/46 count at Rs 6,900-25, 46/48 count at Rs 6,500-25, while the 58/60 count ruled at Rs 4,325 a quintal.

Edible oils cool on higher arrivals



Edible oils market ruled weak on Tuesday on lack of technical and fundamentals factors to support the prices even at lower levels probably due to peak production season.

Cotton refined oil dropped further by Rs 7 taking total loss of Rs 45 for 10 .

Imported palmolein declined further by Rs 2. Other edible oils remain unchanged but morale was weak as demand was lacking and stockists preferred to stay away, said sources.

In absence of demand, volume remained subdued and isolated. Towards the day's close, Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 490-492 ex-Ghatkopar and Rs 488-490 ex-Shapur, 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, soyabean refined oil at Rs 700, sunflower refined oil Rs 785 for Dec 20-31 and Rs 790 for January. Allana offered palmolein at Rs 488 and super palmolein at Rs 543.

Malaysia's crude palm oil's January contracts settled lower at MYR 2,187 (MYR 2,221), February MYR 2,291 (MYR 2,313) and March MYR 2,365 (MYR 2,377) a tonne.

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg): groundnut oil 1,260 (1,260), soya refined oil 695 (695), sunflower exp. ref. 720 (720), sunflower ref. 785 (785), rapeseed ref. oil 810 (810), rapeseed expeller ref. 780 (780) cottonseed ref. oil 625 (632) and palmolein 485 (487).

Selling pressure holds sugar on leash



Sugar prices ruled steady on routine demand-supply on Tuesday. Domestic sugar futures were slightly weak tracking bearish mood of physical markets.

The volume was thin as producers continued selling ample in local markets.

Jagdish Rawal of B. Bhogilal and co, said: "There is ample supply from producers in the local markets. Mills are continuously selling with current market trends. Most of the quantity they are offering is of old season's sugar".

"There are very few producers who have started offering new crop but at a higher rate of Rs 60-70. In the absence of active consumer demand in the middle of the month, stockists are keeping away from inventory buying. Hence, overall sentiments remain dull," he said.

A broker said that demand from neighbouring States is lacking in Maharashtra since long as prices there are at a par with Maharashtra forcing producers to depend on local markets.

The Vashi market currently stocks about 10,000-11,000 bags forcing traders to keep away from fresh bulk inventory buying. On the export front also there is no positive sign for shipments from India as world markets are bearish tracking higher production and offering from Brazil.

In Vashi market, arrivals were 65-67 truckloads (each of 100 bags) and dispatches were 60-62 loads. On Monday 18-20 mills offered tenders but due to poor response they managed to sell about 67,000 - 68,000 (each of 100 kg) bags at a steady level of Rs 3,200-3,280 (Rs 3,200-3,280) for S-grade and Rs 3,290-3,350 (Rs 3,290-3,350) for M-grade.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs 3,350-3,421 (Rs 3,350-3,431) and M-grade Rs 3,416-3,566 (Rs 3,416- 3,566). **Naka delivery rates:** S-grade Rs 3,290-3,350 (Rs 3,290-3,350) and M-grade Rs 3,360-3,510 (Rs 3,360-3,510).

Stockists begin building turmeric inventories



With the turmeric season coming to a close, stockists have procured over a thousand bags of turmeric on Tuesday.

“Only negligible number of upcountry orders was received by the exporters and to cater the orders, they purchased few bags. Local traders purchased some bags to fulfil the masala firm orders. But stockists have purchased huge stock with an intention to build inventories and sell if prices touch Rs 9,000 a quintal. But now spot turmeric prices are declining,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said there is no possibility of increase in price, as the season has almost been completed. Within a week’s time the North will experience severe cold and after that no order will be received by bulk buyers.

On Tuesday, of the arrival of 3,000 and odd bags, 70 per cent stocks were sold. Prices declined by Rs 100 a quintal, even the hybrid turmeric slipped to Rs 6,080.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,756-5,474 and the root variety Rs 3,696-5,009.

Salem Hybrid crop: The finger variety fetched Rs 5,764-6,080 and the root variety Rs 5,011-5,432. Of the arrival of 1,082 bags, only 298 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety fetched Rs 4,479-5,572; the root variety Rs 4,399-5,399. Of the 695 bags that arrived, 665 found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,189-5,699 and the root variety Rs 4,189-5,239. All the 429 bags were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was quoting Rs 4,711-5,899 and the root variety Rs 4,210-5,372. All the 444 bags were sold.

Tight copra availability heats up coconut oil



A bullish trend resulted in the spurting coconut oil prices in Kerala and Tamil Nadu this week. Prices are ruling at Rs 67/ kg in Kerala (Rs 61.50) and Rs 66 in Tamil Nadu (Rs 59.50) due to low arrivals of copra.

According to Prakash B.Rao, Vice-President, Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA), tight supply in copra arrivals and speculative buying by local traders had boosted the sentiments of coconut oil market this week.

The prices are likely to remain upfront in the coming days due to this bullish trend, he said.

Copra prices are ruling at Rs 4,800 a quintal in Kerala (Rs 4,200) and Rs 4,700 in Tamil Nadu (Rs 3,900).

He said that people have started stocking copra in bulk quantities in Kerala and Tamil Nadu on anticipation of a further rally. However, palm oil prices are quoted at last week level of Rs 54/kg and palm kernel at Rs 53.

Bharat N.Khona, former Board Member, COMA, attributed the good demand for edible copra, which is moving towards North India, as the main reason for the market to rise.

However, he said that North Indian buyers as well as corporates are not interested in venturing into the market at this high rate as the imported edible oils are still cheaper, he said.

Wheat rules steady on ample supply, slack buying



Moderate buying kept wheat and flour prices unaltered on Tuesday. Steady domestic demand and supply are keeping wheat and flour prices stable, said market sources.

In the physical market, after witnessing a fall last week, dara prices have been ruling flat. Dara was quoted at Rs 1,530-1,540 a quintal. Around 600 quintals of the dara variety arrived from Uttar Pradesh and the stocks were directly offloaded at the mills. Mill delivery was at Rs 1,530-1,535 while delivery at the chakki was Rs 1,540.

Radhey Sham, a trade expert, told *Business Line* that the situation of the market was anticipated because the Food Corporation of India's stocks are keeping wheat prices stable. Similarly, Desi wheat varieties continued to rule flat on low stocks and sluggish demand and quoted between Rs 2,500 and Rs 2,550 a quintal.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat for December delivery increased by Re 1 and traded at Rs 1,623 on Tuesday while the January contracts went down by Rs 10 to Rs 1,598.

Wheat spot prices on the exchange traded at Rs 1,530 . According to the market experts, wheat futures are likely to ease further this week.

Flour Prices: With a steady trend in wheat, flour prices are also ruling firm at their previous levels and quoted at Rs 1,750. Similarly, Chokar ruled flat and went for Rs 1,550 a quintal.

Spot rubber steady on demand from tyre makers



Spot rubber finished steady on Tuesday. The absence of active market participants and trendsetting factors either in the domestic or international scene kept the sentiments almost neutral during late trading hours.

According to reports, Indian rubber futures are likely to edge higher this week on bargain hunting, driven by an upsurge in overseas markets and as the demand from tyre makers improved in spot markets.

Sheet rubber finished unchanged at Rs 162.00 a kg according to traders. The grade improved to Rs 162.00 (Rs 161.50) both at Kottayam and Kochi as quoted by the Rubber Board.

In futures, the December series inched up to Rs 164.99 (Rs 163.99), January to Rs 167.02 (Rs 166.14), February to Rs 169.60 (Rs 168.58), March to Rs 172.00 (Rs 170.56) and May to Rs

176.35 (Rs 175.01) while the April series remained inactive on the National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE).

RSS 3 (spot) closed at Rs 164.97 (Rs 164.85) a kg at Bangkok.

The December futures slipped to ¥ 252.7 (Rs 166.25) from ¥ 253.05 during the day session but then remained inactive in the night session on Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM).

The physical rubber rates Rs/kg are: RSS-4: 162.00 (162.00); RSS-5: 156.00 (156.00); Ungraded: 152.00 (152.00); ISNR 20: 154.00 (155.00) and Latex 60%: 106.00 (106.00).

Coconut oil prices flare up on low arrivals



The coconut oil market in Kerala and Tamil Nadu is witnessing a bullish trend due to low arrivals of copra. This has resulted in a spurt in prices at Rs 67 per kg in Kerala (Rs 61.50) and Rs 66 in Tamil Nadu (Rs 59.50).

According to Prakash B. Rao, Vice-President, Cochin Oil Merchants' Association (COMA), tight supply and speculative buying by local traders boosted sentiment in the coconut oil market this week. The prices are likely to remain upfront in the coming days due to this bullish trend, he said.

Copra prices are ruling at Rs 4,800 per quintal in Kerala (Rs 4,200) and Rs 4,700 in Tamil Nadu (Rs 3,900). He said people have started stocking copra in bulk quantities in Kerala and Tamil Nadu on anticipation of a further rally.

However, palm oil prices were ruling weak at last week's level of Rs 54 per kg and palm kernel at Rs 53 per kg on reports of a good crop in Malaysia and Indonesia, the leading producing countries, he said.

Bharat N. Khona, former Board Member, COMA, attributed the good demand for edible copra, which is moving towards North India, as the main reason for the market rising. However, he said North Indian buyers and corporates were not interested in venturing into the market at these high rates as imported edible oils are still cheaper, he said.

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TODAY FARM NEWS

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Seed firms pin hope on better rabi sales

After an erratic monsoon in the kharif season, seed companies hope for better sales in the rabi season, on improved water availability after the late rains in key growing regions.

They see the seed demand for commodities such as mustard and wheat grow due to good sowing. Trader sources say oilseed sowing is up one per cent over this time last year, as on December 6. That under mustard seed has risen by close to two per cent, to around six million hectares.

“Demand for seeds has improved but things are still not very great, as we do not see much growth in the other crops,” said M Ramasami, managing director, Rasi Seeds.

The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham) says the seeds industry will grow at about 15 per cent yearly from the current Rs 7,000 crore to Rs 10,700 crore by 2015. “Production levels of seeds are likely to grow from the current level of about 40 million quintal to 63 mn qtls by 2015,” it said, based on an analysis titled ‘The future of Indian seed industry’.

“Seed companies are required to convince farmers to abandon conventional seeds in favour of high-yielding hybrid seeds, as the switch can help farmers get high yields, fetch better prices for the produce and almost triple their income,” said D S Rawat, secretary general of Assocham, while releasing the chamber’s analysis. “Public-private partnership, with a strong regulatory framework and collaborative research, are other key measures to ensure smooth growth of the industry.”

According to trader sources, seed demand will be driven by crops such as cotton, maize, pearl millets (bajra), mustard, rapeseed, rice, sorghum, sunflower and vegetable hybrids. “Among the rabi crops, there will be good growth in the demand for maize seeds, while that for wheat will be

low. Also, vegetable crops will do well,” said Uday Singh of Namdhari Seeds Pvt Ltd, a Bangalore-based seeds maker.

The organised sector’s share is just over half the total seed industry at Rs 3,250 crore. The unorganised sector accounts for the rest, as marginal farmers comprise a little over 60 per cent of land owners in India and opt for cheaper seeds, says Assocham.

Farmers are gradually shedding inhibitions about hybrids but the problem is that hybrids are both expensive and can’t be reused. With about 20 per cent share, cotton is the biggest component in the hybrid seed market, followed by rice (15 per cent), wheat and vegetables (over 10 per cent each). While there are a handful of state seed corporations and the Seed Farm Corporation of India engaged in production, distribution and marketing of high volume and low-value public varieties, there are about 350 private sector producers and distributors and about 300 trading firms.

In India, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal are leading commercial seed-producing states.



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CDB to market coconut-based products nationwide

KOCHI: The [Coconut Development Board](#) (CDB) is planning to market a product basket of seven coconut-based products across 96 cities in the country.

"These products are based on a consumer acceptability study conducted in metros three years ago, which identified a huge demand for coconut-based products," revealed K S Sebastian, assistant marketing officer of CDB, the Kochi-based nodal agency for promoting coconut farming and related industries in the country.

The basket includes packaged tender coconut water, virgin coconut oil, milk powder and cream, desiccated coconut powder, ball copra, coconut chips and pure coconut oil. "We plan to market these products in a phased manner, and during the first phase, we could market in seven cities with over four million population - Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad and Hyderabad," Sebastian said.

Developing markets for value-added products will help curb the price fall coconut, which is now at Rs 4 per nut, believes the marketing team at the CDB. "Once, at a consumer fair in Bangalore, we were able to sell 400 packets of coconut chips within two hours' time. And most of the customers were ladies of 20 - 25 years old," Sebastian recounted. This was an eye-opener for the Kochi-based nodal agency for promoting coconut farming and related industries in the country.

However, developing coconut-based industries is a major challenge. For example, coconut milk powder is produced by only two firms in the country - one at Vathalagundu in Tamil Nadu and

the other at Thrissur in Kerala. Similarly, chips production is limited to 5 lakh packets per annum, which wouldn't even meet the demand from the top seven cities. Hence, the Board is busy developing small industries across the country and has already financed 200 units. It is also trying to sell the products through supermarkets, Khadi shops and outlets run by the consortium of coconut farmers, revealed Deepthi Nair, marketing officer of CDB.

No relief for betel leaf farmers

VISAKHAPATNAM: Still recovering from last month's Cyclone Nilam which left a large chunk of their crop in ruins, the plight of betel leaf cultivators in the state has only worsened with a host of further problems cascading down upon them. The farmers, mostly from the coastal districts of Visakhapatnam and East Godavari where the crop is widely grown, are facing hurdles in the form of rising transportation charges, falling demand in market and lack of government support.

Betel leaf cultivation provides livelihood to around 50,000 people from parts of Payakaraopeta and S Rayavaram mandals in Visakhapatnam district and a few villages from the border areas of Tuni in East Godavari.

The destruction left behind by the cyclone resulted in a steep decline in exports to Hyderabad, Chennai, Mumbai, parts of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and even Pakistan and a few Gulf countries.

Narrating the farmers' plight, T Ganga Rao, a betel leaf farmer-cum-trader at Payakaraopeta said betel cultivation was not yielding any profits for the past two years due to natural calamities and lack of government support to cultivators, particularly tenant farmers.

According to him, around 80 per cent of the crop was damaged this year due to Nilam that hit the district on November 4. As many as 5,000 farmers had cultivated the leaves in about 1,500 acres at a cost of around Rs 1 lakh per acre.

"Horticulture department officials had visited the affected areas and enumerated the losses, but the farmers haven't received a single penny in the form of compensation from the government till date. What's more, some farmers have not yet received the government grant for even the [Jal cyclone](#) of 2010," Ganga Rao said.

"After enumerating the losses of various horticulture crops due to Nilam, we estimated the input subsidy to be around Rs 3.58 crore for 13,235 horticulture farmers, of which nearly 80 per cent are betel leaf cultivators. The department is awaiting the sanction order from the government," G Prabhakar Rao, assistant director, department of horticulture, told TOI. Countering Ganga Rao's allegation, he claimed that the government's financial aid, including input subsidy for the last Jal cyclone was completely distributed among the eligible beneficiaries.

If everything goes well, a betel farmer earns nearly Rs 2.5 to 3 lakh by investing Rs 1 lakh per acre. A farmer can raise nearly 10,000 betel plants in an acre. The cultivation begins in August and is ready for harvest between May and June. The Kalli variety of betel leaves are exported to Mumbai, Hyderabad and Chennai while people in Gujarat, Jhansi and Madhya Pradesh prefer Papada variety of leaves that grow exclusively in the district.

Neatly washed leaves are packed in cane baskets for transport through trucks and trains within the country. Most of the export takes place from Tuni railway station in East Godavari.

MLAs walk out over farmers' suicides

BHOPAL: The Congress on Tuesday staged a walkout when the government refused to form a committee of legislators to probe the incidents of farmers' suicide. The issue was debated during the question hour after it was raised by Ramniwas Rawat, Congress MLA, who wanted to know from the government about the number of suicides and number of deaths in jails. As the debate progressed, farmers' suicide turned the main topic of discussion.

Rawat said that farmers have been committing suicide all across the state and the reasons are

many. He said that maximum number of suicides have taken place in the Malwa region. The leader of opposition, [Ajay Singh](#) also intervened and said that it is a serious issue and the government must constitute a committee of legislators to probe it. When the government did not agree, he said that a divisional level committee could be constituted to probe and depending on its findings, its jurisdiction can be further extended to the state level.

The chief minister said that it is a serious issue and should not be politicized. He said that there are psychological reasons behind such suicide cases. The incidents of suicides are not because of the reasons related to agriculture. First the home minister and later the chief minister rejected the opposition's demand to form a legislators' committee to probe it.

However, intervening in the debate, the speaker of the assembly Ishwer Das Rohani suggested the government to create awareness among the farmers by holding seminars. When the government refused to consider demands raised by Congress, the party [MLAs](#) staged a walkout.