

THE HINDU

TODAY FARM NEWS

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Private sector will have big role in agriculture'

The 12th Plan will strategise on a greater role for the private sector in agriculture. With 58 per cent of the population dependent on agriculture, the growth of the sector is imperative not only for ensuring food security but to achieve inclusive growth, Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar told the National Development Council here on Thursday.

The meeting was convened to discuss the Approach Paper to the 12th Plan.

Favouring the private-public partnership model for better extension and marketing services, Mr. Pawar said the need of the hour was "to overcome technology fatigue" by giving an impetus to research efforts in agriculture and intensify extension activities.

Stressing development of markets along with extension services, soil testing and product quality testing facilities, he said an enabling legal framework, by amending the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Act, would need to be put in place to encourage the setting up of private markets and contract farming.

Allaying fears that the APMCs would become redundant with the entry of FDI in multibrand retail, the Minister said that on the contrary, their role would enlarge from a "regulatory focus" to promotion of grading, branding, packaging and development of markets for local produce.

Step up investment

Mr. Pawar called for higher investment in agriculture and allied sectors, including irrigation, to achieve food security and improve farm incomes.

The Plan strategy would include diversification and research and development efforts; facilitating greater role for the private sector in agriculture, distribution of more institutional credit

equitably; greater focus on small and marginal farmers, improving productivity in rain-fed areas and creating a more competitive environment for agricultural marketing.

The GDP growth projection of eight per cent in the 12th Plan envisages a four per cent growth in agriculture and allied sectors, which was 3.3 per cent in the 11th Plan. “This calls for continuing the 11th Plan initiatives with added vigour and while addressing issues of food security, we must take care of the nutritional needs of the population with greater attention to improving productivity of oilseeds and pulses and development of animal husbandry and fisheries.”

Elusive issue

Noting that drought proofing of the agriculture sector remained elusive, the Minister said 55 per cent of the cropped area was rain-fed and production there was dependent on the vagaries of nature. “Therefore, issues of improving water use efficiency, micro irrigation and efforts of various agencies have to be coordinated in the coming years.”

On farmer suicides, Mr. Pawar said though the declining trend was a matter of some satisfaction, the government could not remain complacent. “We have to redouble our efforts to address the problem of agrarian distress in certain parts of the country.”

The new initiatives during the 12th Plan would include retaining youth in agriculture, and funding for research and innovations in the sector.

Rice mills in deep trouble owing to likely failure of samba

: The immediate result of the anticipated failure of the samba crop in Tamil Nadu would be the closure of 400-odd rice hulling units in the State.

In a statement here, Puliur R. Nagarajan, vice president of Tiruchi District Rice Hullers’ Association, laments that a number of units have already closed down because of their inability to compete with hullers of Karnataka who have invested heavily in technology.

More than 400 units, who have registered themselves as hulling agents of the government for hulling paddy procured by Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation (TNCSC), have been functioning till recently. However as the corporation had no stock of paddy by October this year, it could not apportion any paddy to these hulling agents.

This has resulted in the closure of many units.

Mr. Nagarajan estimates that at least one lakh workers, directly, and an equal number of workers indirectly, have been rendered unemployed.

He apprehends 2013 to be far worse for hullers as both the kuruvai and samba crops have virtually failed.

Hence, he has demanded that Food Corporation of India (FCI) come to their rescue.

He said FCI has been dispatching two lakh tonnes of rice a month to Tamil Nadu for public distribution system. "Instead of sending it as rice, it could very well send the same quantity in terms of paddy".

This quantity could be hulled in the rice mills here and supplied to the TNCSC.

Also, there would be absolutely no problem for the people to get rice through the PDS.

At the same time, he pointed out that the FCI was hesitant to send paddy to Tamil Nadu because of transportation charges.

According to the FCI officials, if they were to dispatch paddy, it would be three lakh tonnes while the rice would be only two lakh tonnes.

He pleaded that the FCI should not look at it from the angle of profit and loss. It should consider the plight of two lakh workers dependent on this industry.

Besides, it is imperative to help modernize the rice mills. Tamil Nadu has been facing rice shortage for over 50 years and the day is not far when the price of rice might shoot up to more than Rs.50 a kg.

Hence, he pleaded that rice mills should be exempted from power cut apart from providing subsidy for diesel.

Prospects of betel vine growers wither with glut in the market

Farmers pin hopes on Pongal festival season



Oh mercy!The problem of plenty has adversely affected betel growers who say nature, in a way, has contributed to their woes.File photo

Betel vine growers in the Krishnarayapuram and Kulithalai belt of Karur district are feeling the pinch of a glut in the market as the price of the leaf plummeted significantly over the past few months putting the growers to peril. Now they are pinning their hopes on the Pongal festival season ahead for an upswing in their fortunes. With River Cauvery irrigating several areas of Karur district, the region is a fertile ground for raising betel vine as one could find several betel vine yards abutting the river in villages, including Thalavapalayam, Thavuttupalayam, Velayuthampalayam, Vangal and Nerur in Karur region as also in Krishnarayapuram, Thirukkampuliyur, Mahadanapuram and Lalapet villages in Kulithalai region of the district.

At nature's mercy

Being tender in nature, the extremely fragile vines must be tended to carefully and growers are usually at nature's mercy.

Besides, fluctuation in prices depending on market conditions affects the income of growers. That apart, the gradual decline in betel leaf chewing among the rural populace has caused a steep reduction in the area under betel vine cultivation in the district over the years.

Another major factor is the scarcity of manual labour and even when they are available, the growers many a time find it difficult to realise profitable returns alleging that the sale price during certain seasons hardly could meet the leaf picking cost of the labourers.

But now the growers in Kulithalai region are faced with a unique problem that has caused a crash in betel leaf prices.

The problem of plenty has adversely affected the growers in the region who say that nature in a way has contributed to their woes. "Usually unseasonal rain causes root withering and leaf rot diseases besides unleashing pest attack on the leaves . But this year there has been no significant rain and the climate was neither sunny nor windy nor humid. Such a climate has helped in increasing the yield and productivity, though the area under betel vine has shrunk. That has caused a glut in the market leading to a crash in the price of the leaf," explains a grower K. Nagamuthu Pillai of Mettumahadanapuram.

A particular variety of betel leaf popular in the Krishnarayapuram belt used to fetch Rs. 3,500 to Rs. 4,000 a bundle of 100 kaulis till a few weeks back. But now the same variety gets the grower only Rs. 1,200 to Rs. 1,800 . There is a possibility that the price might plummet further and the growers fear the worst but pin their hopes on the fast approaching Pongal season that might help prices pick up.

PAP pact: farmers seek Manmohan's intervention

A delegation of farmers' representatives who met Chief Minister Oommen Chandy in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday urged him to seek the intervention of the Prime Minister to prevent violation by Tamil Nadu of the inter-State Parambikulam Aliyar Project (PAP) to share the waters of the Bharathapuzha, Periyar and Chalakudypuzha.

In a statement here on Thursday, Desheeya Karshaka Samajam general secretary Muthalamthode Mani said under the PAP agreement Chittur should get 7.25 tmcft water every year. However, Chitturpuzha had got only 3 tmcft water this year. At the Joint Water Regulatory Board meeting of the PAP at Pollachi on Wednesday, Tamil Nadu had agreed to release 1.45

tmcft water. This would not be sufficient to save the stand paddy crops spread over 45,000 acres.

He said Tamil Nadu had violated the PAP agreement and denied Kerala its due share of water from both Chitturpuzha and Kerala Sholayar for use at the Chalakudy river basin.

Flower show is a huge draw



sturdy stuff:A pavilion of the Forest Department at the Kollam Flower Show teaches visitors how to identify different species of timber.—Photo: C. Suresh Kumar

The Asramam Maidan here has been brought to life with a carnival of flowers by the Kollam Rose Society. The Kollam Flower Show has been drawing huge crowds since December 20.

“Though a good number of visitors are not avid gardeners, the show urges them to grow plants and see them bloom,” said M.M. Azad, general convener of the event. The parade of cheerful flowering plants is simply a feast for the eyes.

There is a huge collection of roses, with the Summer Snow variety stealing the show. The other floral treats include chrysanthemums, petunias, phlox, celosias, gerberas, dianthus, daisies, marigolds, various cacti, colias, and climbers. There is also a big collection of medicinal herbs.

One of the star attractions of the show is a stunning bonsai section set up by the Thiruvananthapuram-based Pakku’s Bonsai. It comprises trees aged from 10 to 40 years. A fruiting bonsai tamarind especially charms the visitors. A kennel section with breeds ranging

from the ferocious Rottweiler to the cute Pug is another attraction. There is also a food festival as part of the show that concludes on New Year Day.

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‘Cold wave is good for wheat; can harm vegetables, fruits’

The intense cold wave currently sweeping North India is favourable for the wheat crop as it helps in higher yield, but it can impact vegetables and fruits adversely if foggy and overcast conditions continue, experts said on Thursday.

“There is not going to be any adverse impact of the cold wave on wheat crop at this stage. Rather the cold conditions will help in tillering of crop which will ultimately result in higher yield,” said Karnal-based Directorate of Wheat Research Project Director Indu Sharma.

However, she said if foggy weather conditions prolong, then it may have some impact on the crop as fog restricts solar radiation or photosynthesis activity of wheat which is necessary to achieve high yield.

A brutal cold wave swept most parts of Punjab and Haryana on Thursday as the mercury remained several notches below normal level in various parts of the two States.

Ms. Sharma also asked wheat growers not to irrigate fields unnecessarily in prevailing weather conditions.

“I have observed in Amritsar that some farmers are watering wheat crop which is not required at this stage as there is enough moisture in the environment. Therefore, farmers should irrigate crop while keeping in mind weather conditions,” Ms. Sharma said.

Wheat sowing in Punjab and Haryana is almost complete as the area under the winter crop is expected to cross a targeted 35 lakh hectares in Punjab while acreage in Haryana may reach the targeted area of 25.05 lakh hectares.

Horticulture experts, however, feel that if dense fog and mist continue to occur for some more days then it can cause diseases like late blight on potato crop.

They also say that minimum temperatures should not go below zero degrees as extreme cold conditions can cause severe damage to vegetables like potato, tomatoes and peas and fruits.

“Prevailing weather conditions are quite conducive for late blight disease which can damage potato crop,” said Punjab Agricultural University Director (Extension) M.S. Gill.

The Director suggested that farmers spray recommended doses of chemicals on their crops to prevent disease attack.

They should also be ready to save the crop from extreme cold conditions if the mercury goes below zero in the northern region, he added.

“If temperature goes into negative, then it cause frost which is damaging for crops,” said Haryana Horticulture Director Satyavir Singh. - PTI

Punjab Govt. announces diversification plan

As a part of its diversification plan, the Punjab Government will lay emphasis on rearing of pigs and goats to tap the market for pork and mutton in North India, especially in the National Capital Region.

Prospective farmers will be given training by the Department of Animal Husbandry in the vocation opted by them and helped to get loans from banks at subsidised rates, an official spokesman said here on Thursday.

Agricultural production has already reached its plateau and there is no further scope of increase in growth rate of this sector, he said.

But the growth rate of the animal husbandry sector could be as high as six to eight per cent by laying greater focus, whereas growth rate in crop production is only two per cent at present.

Veterinary Polyclinics at district level and sub-divisional hospitals will work in double shifts so as to provide quality veterinary services to livestock farmers round the clock in Punjab, the spokesman said.

To strengthen the ‘Semen Bank’ at Nabha and for progeny testing of Murrah buffalo bull, a grant of Rs. 32.88 crore has been approved. It will give a lift to the cow and buffalo breed

improvement programme of the department and thereby increase production of milk, he said. -
PTI

Collector checks samba harvest



Watchful eyes:Collector K.Baskaran inspecting the harvest in a field at Orathanadu taluk.

: Samba harvest began in pumpset irrigated areas in Thanjavur district on Thursday. Collector K.Baskaran inspected paddy being harvested using harvesters at Vettikadu, Karukkadi and Pinnaiyur villages in Orathanadu and Thiruvonam taluks.

“We gave three phase electricity supply to agriculture pumpsets of these farmers under special samba package,” Mr.Baskaran said.

Mohammed Yahiya, Joint Director of Agriculture, said farmers have recorded 5 to 5.5 tonnes per hectare as yield. However, samba crop in canal irrigated areas is in need of one or two more wettings and farmers hope that it may rain on December 28 and 29.

“If there is rain, we will save 90 per cent of canal irrigated crop. Crops under pumpset irrigated areas are safe,” officials said.

Earlier the Collector attended the mass contact programme at Panikondan Viduthi village in Orathanadu taluk. He distributed benefits to the tune of Rs.3.80 lakh in the programme.

Botcha inaugurates sugarcane crushing at Bhimasingi unit

Transport Minister Botcha Satyanarayana formally inaugurated crushing at Bhimasingi Cooperative Sugars in Jami mandal on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, he said the factory would to crush 1.20lakh metric tonnes this season in 110 days. He said the rate per tonne of sugarcane transported to the factory had been fixed at Rs. 2,000 and an additional sum of Rs. 50 would be given to each farmer.

He claimed that dues of all farmers were being settled every year in time and there were no arrears pending till date. He announced Rs. 10,000 as contribution for marriage of a girl-child of growers who had been transporting sugarcane regularly for the last two years to the factory.

Collector and Chairperson of the factory M. Veerabrahmaiah asked factory workers to cooperate with the management for successful crushing. Stating that crushing at the factory had begun last year on December 4, the Collector said the factory had so far accumulated losses up to Rs. 42 crore and last year the crushing done was 1.29 lakh metric tonnes (approximately). Gajapathinagaram MLA Botcha Appala Narasaiah, factory managing director D. Narayana and others participated. Meanwhile, A.P. Rythu Sangham district secretary M. Suryanarayana demanded the factory to implement at least the support price of Rs.2,600 per metric tonne, if not Rs. 3,000 per tonne, which the government had announced for this season.

weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Friday, Dec 28

Max Min

29.1° | 23.5°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 83

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:29

Sunset: 05:51

Barometer: 1009

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Saturday, Dec 29

Max Min

29° | 24°

Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday Dec 30	Monday Dec 31	Tuesday Jan 1	Wednesday Jan 2	Thursday Jan 3
29° 23° Cloudy	27° 25° Cloudy	26° 24° Overcast	27° 24° Overcast	26° 24° Cloudy

Airport Weather

Delhi **Delhi**

Rain: 0

Humidity: 100

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 07:12

Sunset: 05:33

Barometer: 1013



THE HINDU Business Line

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Pawar for greater private sector role in farming



Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar has called for a greater role for private sector in agriculture during the 12th Plan (2012-17) period to sustain the high growth in foodgrain production.

“The public-private partnership (PPP) model in agriculture should be explored on a wider and larger scale”, Pawar told the National Development Council on Thursday.

Higher investments in agriculture and allied sectors including irrigation would help ensure food security and boost incomes. Further, the Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Acts need to be amended to encourage setting up private markets and contract farming, he said.

“Doubts on APMCs becoming redundant on entry of foreign direct investments in retail are misplaced. On the contrary, role of APMC will increase from a regulatory focus to promotion of grading, branding, packaging and development of markets for local produce” Pawar said.

The Agriculture Minister said that the oilseed sector continues to be an area of concern where the country's dependence on imports of edible oil was rising.

To overcome the technology fatigue in the farm sector, Pawar said his ministry will be taking up a number of new initiatives to foster innovation, encourage research, attract and retain youth in agriculture.

“Our strategy for 12th Plan would comprise of assuring stable and remunerative prices to farmers, ensure supply of quality seeds and planting material at reasonable prices and make other inputs available on a timely basis,” he said.

Further, the Centre will also push for crop diversification and R&D, provide greater focus on small and marginal farmers through promotion of farmer interest groups, commodity interest groups and make concerted efforts to improve productivity in rainfed areas in general and Central and Eastern/North Eastern regions in particular while creating a more competitive environment for agricultural marketing.

To address the challenges in the livestock sector, the Centre will launch National Livestock Mission during the 12th Plan with the main objective of achieving sustainable development and growth of livestock sector by providing greater flexibility to the states.

Seeking fair value for cotton, AP farmers walk out of seed price meet



The cotton crisis in Andhra Pradesh has cast its shadow on the meeting convened by the Andhra Pradesh Government to discuss the cottonseed price.

Farmers’ leaders, non-governmental organisations and farmers’ associations affiliated to all political parties have refused to take part in the discussions on the seed price.

To solve marketing issue first

They walked out of the meeting held at the Agriculture Commissioner's Office here on Thursday, demanding the Government to intervene to ensure fair price to cotton farmers.

They asked the Government to set up AP Markfed (marketing federation) counters in all the market yards to buy the commodity at the minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 3,900.

Flaying the Government for convening a meeting to discuss seed pricing at a time when cotton farmers were facing a severe crisis, they insisted that the Government should first solve the cotton marketing issue.

Farmers have suffered heavily in kharif this year as the dry spells and Cyclone Nilam hit the crop across the State, dashing their hopes to reap good returns.

increased acreage

Keeping in mind last year's good price, farmers had increased the acreage to 52 lakh acres, far exceeding the normal area by converting area under paddy.

"The cost of production has shot up and they should get at least Rs 5,000 a quintal.

While ensuring purchases at the MSP, the State Government should announce a bonus of Rs 1,100 to help the farmers to cover costs," N. Venkateswara Rao, a leader of Telugu Desam Party's farmers' wing, said.

Representatives of farmers' associations affiliated to the CPI, the CPM, the YSR Congress Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party have asked the Agriculture Minister and form joint committees at district level.

Centre's responsibility

"It is the responsibility of the Centre to address the issue of cotton pricing. It is linked with international market," Kodanda Reddy, President of Kisan Cell of the Congress Party, said.

The Additional Commissioner said he would submit a report to the Agriculture Minister, Kanna Lakshminarayana, on Friday.

The farmers' leaders too have decided to meet the Minister to discuss the cotton crisis.

Global black tea output down 2.27%

The November tea production data of Malawi and Indonesia have just come out. Accordingly, the global black tea production till this period has fallen by 2.27 per cent over the corresponding period of last year, reveals an analysis of the latest data available with producers and traders' organisations.

In the 11 months of current calendar, Malawi had lost 4.80 million kg (mkg) to total 37.80 mkg. Indonesia lost 7.50 mkg to total 48.80 mkg.

“According to our compilation, global black tea production for the latest period of current calendar has fallen to 1,539.85 mkg from 1,575.63 mkg last year,” Rajesh Gupta, Publisher of ‘Global Tea Digest 2012’, told *Business Line*.

This reduction of 35.78 mkg marks a decline of 2.27 per cent.

India's official data on tea production is confined to September. An international tea market observer has noted that internal demand has kept Indian prices hardy and its exports are lower again – hardly surprising.

Market for majority offerings has closed for the current calendar in India, Sri Lanka, China and Vietnam. Argentina and Malawi are continuing trade with some offerings.

Meteorological predictions indicate dry weather in Sri Lanka and Kenya with auctioneers expecting lower offerings till April 2013. However, most countries expect the present volume offering and price trend to prevail when the auctions re-open in January after Christmas-New Year holiday.

Kenya has expressed concern that the UK has reduced its imports of Kenyan teas. However, it has received strong support from Egypt. This calendar, Pakistan, Sudan, Kazakhstan and Somalia have been active in Kenyan tea market. Afghanistan and West Asian markets have picked up low-priced teas. Iran had remained selective but Russia had been silent mostly.

Spot rubber improves further



Domestic rubber prices improved further on Thursday. In spot, the prices strengthened on covering purchases tracking the moderate gains on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. The sentiments were also catalysed by sustained recovery in the international markets. The absence of quantity sellers kept the commodity comparatively firm during late trading hours though there had been no fresh enquiries from major consuming industries

Sheet rubber firmed up to Rs 161 (160) a kg at Kottayam and Kochi, according to traders and the Rubber Board. The trend was partially mixed as latex continued to rule flat amidst thin volumes.

The January series improved to Rs 163.30 (162.32), February to Rs 165.75 (164.71) March to Rs 168.75 (167.94) and May to Rs 172.55 (170) a kg, while the April and June series remained inactive on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) finished higher at Rs 176.39 (175.09) a kg at Bangkok.

The January futures moved up further to ¥285.4 (Rs 182.87) from ¥279 a kg during the day session but then finished unchanged in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 161 (160); RSS-5: 155 (154); ungraded: 150 (149); ISNR 20: 151 (150) and latex 60 per cent: 105 (105).

Farmers earn carbon revenue

Carbon revenue cheques were distributed to 52 farmers in Gitam University here on Wednesday evening in a programme jointly arranged by VEDA Climate Change Solutions Ltd

(VCCL), JK Paper Mills Ltd (JKPL) and Gitam Centre for Integrated Rural Development (CIRD) under Improving Rural Livelihood Project.

Gitam president M.V.V.S Murthi gave away the cheques to farmers. According to a press release, it is the first project in Asia to release the revenue to the farmers as part of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in the reforestation large scale sector.

The project has been conceptualised, developed and implemented by VCCSL in partnership with JK Paper Mills of Rayagada and BioCarbon Fund of the World Bank with the technical support of GITAM CIRD.

VCCL Executive Director Sai Kishore said that they motivated impoverished farmers to raise tree plantations on highly degraded agricultural lands in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. He said initially they selected Visakhapatnam, Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts in Andhra Pradesh and Koraput, Kalahandi, Rayagada Districts in Odisha.

He said 1,590 farmers were involved in the project and they brought under the plough 1607.7 hectares of waste land in both States.

Most of the farmers are small and marginal and around 15 per cent are from the minority community and women farmers.

JK Paper Mills General Manager B.P. Rathod said the company had taken up the project as a part of the CSR activity.

He said it would be extended to other parts of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. Vice-Chancellor G. Subrahmanyam announced that the university was planning to start a special institute to teach agricultural subjects and it would also establish a research centre in Bangalore. GITAM CIRD scientist K.Venkateswara Rao presided over the function.

Mustard oil bearish as other oils turn cheap

Mustard oil in Indore and other mandis of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan has been ruling steady on subdued buying support. In Indore mandis, mustard oil on Thursday ruled at Rs 762 for 10 kg (Rs 6 higher from last week), while it ruled at Rs 770 in Moorena (up Rs 10) and Rs

755 in Neemuch mandi (up Rs 5). In Rajasthan's Kota it was quoted at Rs 770 (up Rs 10), while it was Rs 768 in Ganga Nagar (Rs 3 higher from last week). In Jaipur, mustard oil ruled at Rs 780 (Rs 5 up from last week). Similarly in Gujarat, mustard is ruling Rs 5 higher (from its price last week) at Rs 760 for 10 kg.

Demand continues to be sluggish primarily due to relatively lower prices of soya, cotton and palm oil in local mandis. However, given favourable crop report in mustard and hopes of higher crop output as compared with the last year, long rally in mustard oil appear unlikely, said a broker Vinod Choudhary.

Mustard seeds in Indore mandis ruled higher at Rs 4,600 a quintal on weak arrival and improved buying support, while raida ruled flat at Rs 3,700-3,800. On the other hand, plant deliveries in mustard for Jaipur line declined to Rs 4,220-50 (Rs 4,350-70) on weak demand from millers.

Mustard seeds also traded lower on weak buying support with its January and April contracts on the NCDEX closing at Rs 4,155 and Rs 3,574. Arrival of mustard seeds was recorded at 80,000 bags with 5,000 bags being offloaded in Madhya Pradesh; 7,000 bags in Uttar Pradesh; 45,000 bags in Rajasthan; 10,000 bags in Punjab and Haryana; 4,000 bags in Gujarat and remaining 9,000 bags elsewhere in the country.

Kerala paying the price for neglecting agriculture

There have been noisy protests in Kerala Assembly over steep rise in prices of rice and other essential commodities in the State.

The price of rice increased by Rs 5 to 10 a kg following disruption in supply from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Kerala is dependent on other States for foodgrains, vegetable, milk, chicken, eggs etc.

If there are disruptions in the procuring centres or en route, there will be severe hardship in the State.

"It is a vital issue which needs to be given a serious thinking," says Thomas Peeliyanickal, Executive Director, Kuttanad Vikasana Samithi (KVS).

Shortage

When Karnataka Government stopped financial assistance to growers of 'Jyothi' rice which was being sold in Kerala market, the farmers stopped its cultivation.

Increase in export of rice, coupled with transportation problems, stopped or delayed movement of rice from Andhra Pradesh, resulting in shortage of the staple food here, pushing up prices, he said.

The area under paddy cultivation in the State has come down sharply following indiscriminate reclamation in the name of development and modernisation.

On the other hand, no steps have been taken either to improve or develop suitable paddy varieties so as to raise the productivity of paddy in the existing fields, Thomas said.

Reclamation

Vast stretches of paddy fields are reclaimed for tourism projects, airports and even cricket grounds, a senior scientist at the Centre for Earth Science Studies (CESS) said.

"Surprisingly, most of the developers are reportedly looking for vast stretches of wetlands/forestlands for creating airports/ resorts etc," he said.

Vast stretches of agricultural land in Idukki's Anakkara region are reportedly under threat of being reclaimed for a proposed airport. Even Kuttanad, granary of Kerala is also not spared. The area under paddy in this region has already shrunk to around 37,000 hectares from around 55,000, said Thomas.

No product can succeed without a good design, says Mahindra

No product succeeds without a good design, chairman of the governing board of the National Institute of Design (NID) as well as Mahindra & Mahindra group CMD Anand Mahindra said here today, while delivering the presidential address at the NID's 33rd convocation.

“I do sense a change in attitude. Earlier, the focus used to be always on big things like infra projects, big bridges and flyovers. Today the agenda includes seemingly small but equally important projects,” he said.

He said that design has started finding its importance not only in bigger projects but also in smaller ones like designs for a better looking bus stop, which can improve visual environment dramatically.

He also touched upon the issue of removal of bias in families to let their children pursue design.

There is a critical paucity of good design schools, and that is why NID has been given the mandate to set up four new institutes, he said.

Poultry products warm up to winter

Poultry producers have raised prices of their products further with the onset of winter and pick-up in retail demand.

The National Egg Coordination Committee (Namakkal zone) has increased the price of an egg by 12 paise to Rs 3.34. Last week, it effected a 33-paise hike to Rs 3.22 (2.87).

Meanwhile, broiler rates are also inching towards record levels as the Palladam-based Broiler Co-ordination Committee (BCC) has increased the rates of cull birds by Rs 9 a kg to Rs 71. Broiler prices touched a record Rs 75/kg in April last year.

Spiralling input costs, pick-up in consumption due to winter and spurt in confectioneries' demand on account of Christmas and New Year are attributed to the rise in prices.

Prices of egg feed are now ruling at Rs 22 a kg against Rs 15 last year and that of broiler feed are at Rs 2,486/75-kg bag against Rs 1,849 last year. “Poultry prices are likely to increase in the coming days because of the approaching New Year festival besides the on-going winter season,” NECC sources said. NECC has slashed layer rates (for birds of 1.3 kg) to Rs 38 (Rs 40) to boost consumption as it is a perishable product.

Namakkal and Palladam prices are the benchmarks for eggs and chicken respectively in the country.

Shipments rise

On the export front, egg shipments from India increased to 736.82 lakh in November this year against 302.28 lakh in the same period last year. This is mainly because of exporters tapping newer markets such as Afghanistan and Morocco.

Palm oil up on fears of supply disruption

Palmolein continued its bullish run tracking extended gain in Malaysian crude palm oil futures on Thursday. Soyabean, rapeseed and cotton oil dropped by Re 1, Rs 3 and Rs 4 each. Sunflower expeller refined oil dropped by Rs 10 on higher selling pressure.

Malaysian palm oil futures climbed to a five-week high on Thursday as monsoon-driven floods in Malaysia's key producing regions sparked concerns of supply disruption. Market sources said during the day, refiners sold about 3,000-3,500 tonnes of palmolein as stockists continued their inventory buying .

In Mumbai, Liberty sold about 1,200-1,500 tonnes of palmolein and super palmolein at Rs 498-500 and Rs 545, respectively, Ruchi sold about 1,000-1,200 tonnes palmolein at Rs 490-494 ex-JNPT and 200-300 tones ex-Patalganga at Rs 498. Resellers offloaded about 250-300 tonnes palmolein at Rs 488-493.

In Saurashtra – Rajkot, groundnut oil prices were at Rs 1,960 (Rs 1,955) for *telia* tin and Rs 1,280 (Rs 1,275) for loose (10 kg).

Towards the day's close, Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 500-502 for January and Rs 512-514 for February, super palmolein Rs 550 for January, soya refined oil Rs 673 and sunflower refined oil Rs 780 for January. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 498 for January and Rs 510 for February, imported palmolein Rs 494 for January 15, soyabean refined oil at Rs 670 and sunflower refined oil Rs 770 for January. Allana's rate for palmolein was Rs 495 and super palmolein Rs 545.

Malaysia's crude palm oil's January contracts settled higher at MYR 2,350 (MYR 2,308), February was MYR 2,431 (MYR 2,386) and March was MYR 2,481 (MYR 2,430) a tonne.

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg): groundnut oil 1,275 (1,275), soya refined oil 670 (671), sunflower exp. ref. 700 (710), sunflower ref. 775 (775), rapeseed ref. oil 815 (818), rapeseed expeller ref. 785(788) cottonseed ref. oil 619 (623) and palmolein 492 (489).

Vikram Global Commodities, Chennai quoted Rs 562 ex-Chennai for 10 kg for Malaysian super palmolein.

Jeera crackles on reports of higher sowing



On the back of progress in sowing, especially in Gujarat, and weak domestic demand, jeera prices declined on Thursday. However, upcountry and Bangladesh demand remained.

Jeera prices declined by Rs 20-25 and medium quoted at Rs 2,305-2,405 for 20 kg, NCDEX quality raw quoted at Rs 2,605-2,705 at Unjha market of Gujarat. Arrivals stood at 3,500-4,000 bags and delivery was at 4,000 bags.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, jeera March contract decreased by Rs 45 to Rs 14,820 a quintal with an open interest of 14,562 lots, while April series declined Rs 55 to Rs 14,902.50 with an open interest of 2,553 lots. NCDEX accredited warehouses jeera stocks dropped by 340 tonnes to 1,996 tonnes.

According to Kedia Commodity report, jeera slid due to subdued demand from local traders in the spot market while favourable weather conditions were seen supporting sowing in the top producer Gujarat. Near-term trend for jeera looks weak.

The Gujarat State Agriculture Department data pointed out that as on December 18, coverage of jeera stands at 263,500 hectares (264,000 hectares).

New season sugar comes to market at higher price



Sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale market improved on Thursday by Rs 10-15 for S-grade as new season's higher priced sugar has started arriving at higher rates. M-grade of old stocks dropped by Rs 10-20. Producers have started offering new stocks Rs 20-30 higher. Naka rates were up by Rs 10-20 a quintal on ease resale selling pressure. Need-based demand in the physical market was slightly positive as the new month is approaching.

A Vashi-based wholesaler said: "Most of the mills tenders now offered are from new season's output and due to higher input costs producers are quoting higher rates. Stockists also have started buying new production on expectation of higher demand at start of the new month. This year, demand for Christmas was not as expected. The market witnessed ample supply from mills putting prices under pressure continuously".

Sugar prices in other main producing centres ruled steady after previous day's sharp drop. Futures prices extended further loss in the absence of cues. In Maharashtra, demand from bulk consumer and neighbouring States is still missing, said sources.

In Vashi market, arrivals were 61-62 truckloads (each of 100 bags), while dispatches were 62-63 loads. On Wednesday, about 18-20 mills offered tenders and sold nearly 78,000-80,000 (each of 100 kg) bags most of new stocks to the local traders. They sold S-grade sugar in the range of Rs 3,150-3,220 and Rs 3,170-3,220 new variety (Rs 3,150-3,220) and M-grade was sold in the range of Rs 3,230-3,340 and new variety Rs 3,280-3,350 (Rs,3,230- 3,340).

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S-grade Rs 3,292-3,391 (Rs 3,282-3,376) and M-grade Rs 3,342-3,531 (Rs 3,362- 3,541). **Naka delivery rates were:** S-grade Rs 3,250-3,300 (Rs 3,235-3,270) and M-grade Rs 3,330-3,450 (Rs 3,330-3,430).

Quality crop, N. India demand lend colour to turmeric



Spot turmeric prices increased further on Thursday as arrival of quality crop and buying by North Indian traders continued. "Though arrivals touched 6,000 bags, bulk buyers and other traders quoted higher price and purchased 65 per cent of the stocks.

This is due to the demand from North India. Further, quality turmeric arrived for sale," said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said till mid-January exporters will get upcountry orders, so the current trend is likely to continue till January 15.

After that new crop will arrive for sale, when certainly the prices may go down.

On Thursday, stockists procured good quantity to build inventories.

The price of the finger variety increased by Rs 700 a quintal in the Regulated Market Committee due to arrival of fine variety turmeric, but only 378 bags arrived, which is lower than previous days. The sale was also very encouraging.

Similarly in the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety gained Rs 250 a quintal and root variety Rs 300.

All the stocks in both markets were sold. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,477-6,094 a quintal; the root variety Rs 4,270 -5,674.

Salem Hybrid Crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,229-6,589; the root variety Rs 5,196-5,711. Of the 1,134 bags up for sale, 340 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety quoted Rs 4,939-6,310; the root variety Rs 4,739-5,627. All the 378 bags that arrived were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Committee, the finger variety fetched Rs 5,220-6,250 and the root variety Rs 5,290-5,989. All the 510 bags put under the hammer found takers.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,135-6,050; the root variety Rs 4,965-5,699. All the 136 bags on offer were sold.

Rice rules steady on slack offtake



The rice market witnessed a steady trend, with the prices of aromatic and non-basmati rice ruling firm on the previous levels, on Thursday.

After witnessing a fall earlier this week, rice varieties managed to maintain their previous quoted levels despite slack trading, said Amit Chandna, Proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company. Demand is generally low around this time of the year and prices may rule range-bound for the

next few days, he added. Traders expect that market may witness some alteration in the first week of January, said Amit Chandna.

In the physical market, Pusa-1121 (steam) sold at Rs 6,400-6,500 a quintal while Pusa-1121 (sela) sold at Rs 5,500 .

Pure basmati (raw) was at Rs 8,000 . Duplicate basmati (steam) traded at Rs 5,500-5,600.

Sharbati (steam) quoted at Rs 4,200 while Sharbati (sela) was at Rs 4,100.

PR-11 (sela) sold at Rs 2,500-2,600 while PR-11 (Raw) quoted at Rs 2,550. Permal (raw) sold at Rs 2,100-2,250 while Permal (sela) went for Rs 2,150-2,250.

Paddy Arrivals

About 5,000 bags of PR variety arrived and went for Rs 1,120-1,200; Sharbati arrived with a stock of around 2,000 bags and quoted at Rs 2,040-2,120; around 1,000 bags of DB variety arrived and sold at Rs 2,700-2,800.

About 5,000 bags of Pusa-1121 arrived and quoted at Rs 2,930 and Rs 3,120 a quintal.

Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

28.12.2012 A.M

UP MILLS BITTER WITH SUGARCANE ARREARS OF Rs 1,580 CR

UP MILLS BITTER WITH SUGARCANE APPEARS OF Rs1

Uttar Pradesh sugar mills are getting worried with mounting cane arrears pertaining to the 2012-13 crushing season underway.

As per the latest available statistics, the mills have already run arrears of over Rs 1,580 crore against the total payable amount of Rs 2,675 crore. Thus the today payments to farmers had so far about Rs 1,095 crore.

The private mills account for the bulk of payments at Rs 911 crore followed by the cooperative units.

In fact, the total dues of the state mills are to the tune of over Rs 5,000 crore. However, they get 14 days to pay the outstanding cane dues, which had reduced their payable liability to Rs 2,675 crore. As crushing advances, the arrears would mount further due to the high cane price payable in the state, the sugar industry – which has already written a letter to the state government – has rued.

So far, about 1.66 million tonnes (MT) of sugar had been produced in UP compared to 1.88 MT last year.

According to official figures, about 121 sugar mills are operating in the state and had collectively crushed over 19 MT of sugarcane. Thus the recovery percentage stands at 8.72 per cent compared to 8.37 per cent last year.

On December 7, the state government, after inordinate delay, had announced the sugarcane State Advised Price (SAP) for 2012-13, which was 17 per cent higher for the common variety

compared to 2011-12.

SAP now stands at Rs 280/quintal for common variety vis-à-vis Rs 240/quintal last year, which forms the bulk of the sugarcane grown in UP. The prices for early and rejected/unsuitable varieties of cane have been hiked to Rs 290/quintal and Rs 275/quintal compared to Rs 250/quintal and Rs 235/quintal respectively.

The hike is likely to translate into total sugarcane payments of Rs 21,500 crore to farmers this crushing season compared to Rs 18,200 crore during 2011-12.

TURMERIC GAINS 1.64%



Turmeric prices gained 1.64% to Rs 6,558 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators enlarged their positions, triggered by reports of lower output this season.

Also, pick up in the spot market demand further supported the uptrend.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, the April contract gained Rs 106, or 1.64% to Rs 6,558 per quintal with an open interest of 22,810 lots.

Similarly, the May contract traded higher by Rs 88, or 1.35% to Rs 6,800 per quintal in 5,765 lots.

Market experts said speculators enlarged their positions, triggered by a fall in output this season. That mainly kept turmeric futures remain higher for the second day.

CARDAMOM FALLS ON LOW DEMAND, HIGH SUPPLY

Cardamom prices fell by Rs 11.30 to Rs 1,032.40 per kg in futures trade today due to adequate stocks position in the physical market following higher supplies from the producing belts.



At the Multi Commodity Exchange, the January contract fell by Rs 11.30, or 1.08%, to Rs 1,032.40 per kg, with a business turnover of 1,629 lots.

The February contract eased by Rs 7.20, or 0.66%, to Rs 1,076.20 per kg, with a trading volume of 259 lots.

Marketmen said the fall in cardamom prices was mostly due to adequate stocks in the spot markets and subdued demand.

POTATO UP 1.22% ON PICK-UP IN SPOT DEMAND

Potato prices moved up by Rs 9.10 to Rs 752.80 per quintal in futures trade today, on increased spot demand against restricted arrivals.

Trading sentiment improved further as traders enlarged their holdings driven by surge in demand in the spot market.



At the Multi Commodity Exchange, the March contract rose by Rs 9.10, or 1.22%, to Rs 752.80 per quintal, with trading volume of 61 lots.

The April contract also moved up by Rs 8.40, or 1.20% to Rs 708.80 per quintal with a trade volume of 17 lots.

Analysts said increased demand in the spot market against tight supplies from producing regions mainly pushed up potato prices.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

TODAY FARM NEWS

28.12.2012 A.M

AIUDF asks Centre to waive farmers' loans

GUWAHATI: The All [India United Democratic Front](#) (AIUDF) has asked the [Union finance](#) ministry to waive off loans of farmers who had suffered huge losses due to floods this year.

[AIUDF](#) chief Badruddin Ajmal recently said in Parliament that the state suffered one of the worst floods and soil erosion this year. As a result, many farmers suffered huge losses, said Ajmal.

"Lakhs of farmers who had taken loans from banks this year have suffered huge losses because of the devastating floods. They are unable to make up for the loss they suffered in the deluge. So, waiving off loans will give them some respite," said the AIUDF leader.

The AIUDF chief added that jute cultivation, for which Assam was once well known, has also declined significantly primarily because of drop in prices in the market. "Many jute farmers are now in dire straits as they are unable to make up for the expenditure in cultivation. The price of jute in the market sometime drops abnormally and farmers are at a loss. Jute growers were killed in police firing last year when they staged a protest against low market price of the produce," said Ajmal.

The MP from Dhubri also asked the Union minister to make alternative arrangements for farmers in flood and erosion-areas of the state so that banks are able to disburse loans easily.

"Many farmers in the flood-affected state have been deprived of [bank loans](#) because they couldn't produce the required documents which they lost in the deluge. An alternative arrangement would be of great help to these hapless farmers," said Ajmal.

The AIUDF has asked both the Centre and the state government to take immediate measures to stop erosion in the Mancachar area of Dhubri district on the India-Bangladesh border. The party said continuous erosion has posed a threat to India's territory and effective border management.

Delta farmers livid over lack of water

TRICHY: On Thursday, there was a mass uprising among farmers in delta districts against the Union government for allegedly giving step-motherly treatment to Tamil Nadu farmers by not pressuring [Karnataka](#) to release Cauvery [water](#) to salvage the dying samba crops. More than 1,100 farmers owing allegiance to the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam were arrested by the police for burning effigies representing the Central government in many places in Thanjavur, Thiruvarur, Nagapattinam and Trichy districts here on Thursday.

The farmers pointed an accusing finger at the Congress-led Central government for not insisting upon Karnataka to execute the final orders of the Cauvery River Authority (CRA) to release 192 tmcft of water in Cauvery to Tamil Nadu. Even though seven years passed since the CRA pronounced the order in 2007, the Central government remained a mute spectator, failing to crack the whip on the Karnataka government for not implementing the order.

Criticising the Centre's political look at the Cauvery water issue, Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, on Thursday, burned effigies representing the Central government in 89 places in the four delta districts. In Thanjavur, the police arrested 467 farmers including 41 women for burning effigies in 50 places. The number of farmers arrested for burning effigies in Nagapattinam, Thiruvarur and Trichy was 324, over 290 and 71 respectively. All of them were released on Thursday evening.

The farmers still hope that even if the water is released from Karnataka from now, nearly 75 per cent of the withering crops in the delta districts could be saved.

"As Karnataka failed to release Cauvery water in line with the order from CRA, almost 25 per cent of 14 lakh Samba cultivations in the four districts are withering due to water scarcity. Meanwhile, the Central government purposely did not insist upon Karnataka to go by the order. So, the release of 15 tmc ft of water for the next 15 days would prevent 75 per cent crops from withering," said P S Masilamani, district secretary of the Sangam, Thiruvarur district.

The farmers believed that such hardcore protests only would get them the justice from the Central government. "Even the interim order and the final order from the CRA were passed after vigorous protests by farmers. So, we will relentlessly struggle to get water. The Union government can crack the whip on Karnataka by invoking the Inter-state water dispute Act constituted in 1956. Unfortunately, the central government never bothered about the Tamil Nadu government as their party could not come to power in the state. However in Karnataka, they have a ray of hope to come to power. Likewise, the adamant attitude of Karnataka by refusing to release water to Tamil Nadu is highly condemnable."

Water level in Pazhassi dam a concern for Kannur town

KANNUR: The newly laid ductile iron pipeline to bring water from [Pazhassi dam](#) in Veliyambra to the distribution tanks in Thana and Mele Chowva here is expected to resolve the disruption in water supply in the town.

The work of replacing the old 700 mm asbestos cement pipes of the 32-km pipeline was completed recently and pumping has started. "With the completion of this Rs 67 crore project that took nearly 15 months, water from the pumping station will reach Kannur in less than three hours compared to seven-eight hours previously," said K Sundareshan, assistant executive engineer, Kerala Water Authority. "Also, the distribution loss owing to pipe burst and leakage will be reduced considerably," he said.

However, the depleting water level in Pazhassi dam is a concern. The water stock in the

reservoir is low after the shutters were opened following [flashfloods](#) in July. "Though authorities claimed to have taken steps to repair the shutters, only two of them have been repaired so far. Water is leaking at many places, causing concern about the water level in April-May," a [KWA](#) official said. "The water level is around 20 metres now but it is likely to come down heavily during summer and we will face difficulty in pumping if it comes below 16.5 metres."

Officials said the ongoing repair work of four shutters would take two years and shutters would have to be opened for repair work, which would bring down the water level.

The water supply chain in the city, installed over 35 years ago, also raises concern. The chain, intended to supply water to less than 5000 households, now covers over 20,000 house connections besides nearly 1,500 public taps.

However, municipal authorities said tender work was on to replace the distribution network in the town. "Though the state government had promised to get the work done, it was only recently that the project was sanctioned. A survey has been initiated and we would take all steps to start the work soon," municipal vice-chairman C Sameer said.

Two more water tanks will be constructed at Payyambalam and Kodapparambu under the scheme.

Experts stress on bringing tech support to agriculture sector

ALLAHABAD: Enhancing the quality of agriculture in the country is the need of the hour as unfortunately despite the present technological advances, peasants are forced to throw produce like potato on the roads for lack of buyers and storage facility, said [Mohan Singh](#), [Samajwadi Party](#) member of Rajya Sabha, speaking at the inaugural programme of the two-day international conference on 'food processing and development of backward regions: preparing a roadmap' with special reference to Eastern UP, on Thursday.

The MP added that unless there was positive and productive relation between intellectuals and workers of this country, no policy or technology could sustain. He said efforts should be initiated for additional production which could lead to positive approach towards food processing industry.

"We are number two in terms of potato production worldwide but we are dependent on western countries for its processing. In comparison to this, Number 1 position holder in potato production China processes potato and exports it whereas India exports unprocessed potato," said the MP. Conferences such as this, would prepare a roadmap for food processing for not only Eastern UP but for the entire country, he added.

The MP was presented a memento by officiating V-C N R Farooqi who said in the present scenario not only has the demand for finished processed products increased but people have fast adapted to the same as well.

The international conference on food processing and development of backward regions is being organised by the [Center of Food Technology](#) (CFT) of the Institute of Professional (IPS) of [Allahabad University](#) in association with American Association of Food Scientists (AAFS) for the Indian subcontinent. Many important scientists of International repute are participating in the conference, said director of the Centre G K Rai.