

'Private sector will have a big role in agriculture'

Pawar for private-public partnership for better extension and marketing services

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 has told the National Development Council that met 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.

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.

Continued efforts

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."

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.

Heavy rain brings cheer to farmers

Heavy rain on Friday brought cheer to farmers in Thanjavur and Tiruvarur districts as it breathed life into the standing samba crop starving for water.

The showers continued for over two hours in the morning, and the sky remained overcast for most part of the day. "This is a welcome rain and is timely. But, we expect more rain," said S.Ranganathan, secretary, Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association. "Kottur and Thiruthuraiipoondi in Tiruvarur district received showers. We expect rain on Saturday and Sunday too," said P.R.Pandian, State council member of Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam. The rain was widespread in the two districts.

Samba and thaladi had been raised in 1.15 lakh hectares in Thanjavur district and 1.50 lakh hectares in Tiruvarur district.

While the government has brought all farmers, including non-loanees, under the crop insurance cover by paying the entire premium, the farmers have been demanding relief to the tune of Rs.20,000 an acre if there is a crop loss.

Milk procurement has increased: Minister



Healthy and disease-free:A new crossbreed 'Namakkal Chicken-1' suitable for backyard rearing displayed at the regional exhibition on ' Livestock and Fisheries' in Coimbatore on Friday. -

Photo: K. Ananthan

The Chief Minister distributing free cattle to eligible below poverty line families had led to increase in milk procurement for the milk cooperative societies, said T.K.M. Chinnayya, Minister for Animal Husbandry, in Coimbatore on Friday.

He was speaking at the exhibition on cattle and fish rearing, organised by the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University.

The procurement had increased by 80,000 litre a day. In the coming years it was likely to increase further and exceed one-and-half lakh litres a day. Mr. Chinnayya said that the State Government let beneficiaries select the cattle and also paid travel expenses.

Animal Husbandry Department, in the past two years alone had received more than Rs. 1,500 crore in budgetary allocation. This was much more than what the DMK government had allotted

in the past five years. The Chief Minister's interest in the Department reflected the increase in applications for the veterinary doctors' posts. The applications had touched 12,000.

S. Damodaran, Minister for Agriculture, said that the Chief Minister schemes in agriculture were aimed making agriculture profitable. The latest was integrated farming, which the Government would introduce in every panchayat union. If the farmers adopted the techniques, they would be able to save between Rs. 1 lakh and Rs. 2 lakh.

The Agriculture Department was in the process of promoting bio-manures. It also focussed on disseminating information on schemes available, something that the previous DMK government failed to do.

K.A. Jayapal, Minister for Fisheries, spoke about Ms. Jayalalithaa's efforts in setting up fisheries research institute and a university.

Collector M. Karunakaran spoke about what the district administration had achieved in animal husbandry. R. Prabhakaran, Vice Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, welcomed the gathering.

Bleak prospects for betel vine growers

Farmers pin hopes on Pongal festival season



A betel leaves farm.

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.

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.

Farmers demand gazettement of Cauvery Tribunal order



state of affairs:A group of bare-bodied farmers staging a demonstration in the city during the agricultural grievances meeting on Friday.PHOTO:R.M. RAJARATHINAM.

: Demanding immediate gazettement of Cauvery Tribunal's final order by the Centre, dismissal of Karnataka Government for denying Tamil Nadu its due legal share of water, and adequate compensation for withered crops, farmers staged a dharna for over an hour at the agricultural grievances day meeting here on Friday.

Write off crop loans

Farmers wanted the district administration to prevail upon the State government to take steps for writing off crop loans due to the failure of monsoons aggravated by power shortage. They wanted the State government to declare Tamil Nadu drought-hit and provide a compensation of Rs.35,000 an acre. Flanked by Deputy Commissioner of Police S. Selvakumar and other senior officials, Collector Jayashree Muralidharan gave a patient hearing to the agitated farmers.

The meeting was preceded by a massive demonstration by several farmers belonging to villages in Pullambadi panchayat union in front of the collectorate for nearly two hours. Farmers surging forward to get past the main gate of the collectorate had to be pushed back by the police. They demanded adequate compensation for damaged cotton and maize crops cultivated in several thousands of acres in rain-fed areas of Peruvalappur, Kallakudi and Pullambadi.

A group of bare-bodied farmers holding aloft withered plants was led by P.Ayyakannu, State vice president of Bharathiya Kisan Sangam. As they attempted to proceed in a procession to present petitions to the Collector, a posse of police personnel led by the Deputy Commissioner stopped them.

After a lengthy dissuasion, they wore their shirts and were permitted inside the premises.

The farmers presented petitions stating the cotton crop on 40,000 acres and maize on 25,000 acres under cultivation had withered due to lack of water and power shortage and that the stunted growth had diminished the yield drastically. Having invested up to Rs.25,000 per acre for cotton, and Rs.20,000 per acre for maize, they wanted crop loans to be written off in order to prevent suicides by farmers.

The petition said their livelihood was at stake as cotton was procured for only Rs.3,700 per quintal as against Rs.5,500 last year.

In its petition, the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam affiliated to All India Kisan Sabha led by district unit president C. Masilamani sought compensation of Rs.10,000 for each agricultural labourer who had lost work and livelihood due to failure of crops.

Apprehending a situation of hunger deaths in the near future, Mr. Masilamani wanted the State government to avert the eventuality by recommending 200 days of work per year under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

Lauding Chief Minister Jayalalithaa for taking a decisive stand on the Cauvery issue to secure rights of Tamil Nadu, N. Veerasekaran, Coordinator, Ayyan Vaikal Pasanathar Sangam, sought effective implementation of the crop insurance scheme.

Floral treat awaits city



IN FULL BLOOM:Visitors at the Cochin Flower Show on Friday.— PHOTO: K.K. MUSTAFAH

Dressing the city in vivid and vibrant hues, the Cochin Flower Show 2013 commenced at the Ernakulam Temple Ground here on Friday. The show was inaugurated by Minister of Excise, Fisheries and Ports K. Babu and the flower show pavilion was inaugurated by Mayor Tony Chammany. The inaugural function was also attended by District Collector P.I. Sheik Pareeth, Deputy Mayor B. Bhadhra and Mission Director State Horticulture Mission Kerala K. Prathapan.

The flower show seemed to attract a lot of attention right from the first day as there were people swarming in to witness the visual treat even before the inauguration. The flower show has a greater significance this year as the central government declared 2012-2013 as the 'Year of Horticulture'.

The distinct varieties of roses, chrysanthemums, marigolds and orchids adorned the flower show venue with various shades of yellows, violets and pinks. Another attraction on the opening day was the cultural feats performed by children.

A star attraction at the show was little Ashok, a UKG student of Naval Kindergarten, who proudly declared to the media, "The District Collector is my friend." True to his words he ran up

to the Collector and got chatty. Ashok, son of T. Joseph and Gigi Joseph, said, “I have met him at another programme where I sang”. At the flower show, however, this little talent had come to make a speech. Apparently, Ashok had a busy day as he had already been to two programmes to speak.

The pre-schooler also went up to Mr. Babu and introduced himself. “I am the son of T. Joseph. We have met at another programme.” He even reminded the minister about a complaint he had addressed when they last met.

Meet to encourage love for farming in children

Short videos made by students on their farming initiatives will be the highlight of the fourth Balakrishni Sastra Congress (Children’s Farm Science Congress) that will be held in the Museum compound here on January 24 and 25.

More than 500 school students are expected to take part in the congress, which encourages children to love farming and gives them exposure to the world of farming. Agri-Friends, a community of farming enthusiasts, is organising the event in association with the Department of Agriculture.

Theme

The main theme for this year’s congress is ‘Krishi — Nattarivum Sastravum.’ Teams of students will present various projects based on topics such as ‘Research in agriculture science,’ ‘farm models in schools and at home,’ and so on.

Last date

The last date for registration is January 10.

The Green Touch Krishi Media will present a cash prize of Rs.10,001 and trophy for the best seven-minute video on farming shot by students.

Child scientist

The best child farm scientist will be awarded a cash prize of Rs.11,111 and the best school will get a cash prize of Rs.7,777.

A team of judges comprising agriculture scientists, farm journalists and experts in this field will select eight teams with the best farm projects.

The teams will get the opportunity to present their projects to senior researchers at the College of Agriculture, Thrissur.

At an exhibition to be held as part of the congress, students will get the opportunity to showcase their projects and the agriculture produce from farming activities at school or at home.

Handwritten magazines, journals and study models on agriculture and farming will be displayed at the exhibition, according to the organisers.


Training for women in tractor driving

DRDA Project Director P. Rajanikanta Rao on Friday launched a training programme for women in tractor driving at Kotturu in the district.

He said women should also learn tractor driving so that they could actively participate in the agricultural activity.

Sriranga Automobiles executive partner Y. Geeta and territory manager Ratan explained the operation of tractors to women. They said light model vehicles were suitable for women. The officials congratulated a girl Rajani, who was helping his father by driving the tractor while continuing her studies.

weather

Chennai 

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Saturday, Dec 29

Max Min

29.3° | 22.9°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 94

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:30

Sunset: 05:52

Barometer: 1008

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Sunday, Dec 30

Max Min

29° | 23°

Extended Forecast for a week

| Monday Dec 31 | Tuesday Jan 1 | Wednesday Jan 2 | Thursday Jan 3 | Friday Jan 4 |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | | | | |
| 29° 23° Cloudy | 26° 25° Overcast | 26° 24° Overcast | 25° 23° Overcast | 27° 24° Overcast |

Airport Weather

Delhi 

Delhi

Rain: 0

Humidity: 72

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 07:13

Sunset: 05:33

Barometer: 1013



THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

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Cauvery issue: Jayalithaa steps up pressure on Centre

CHENNAI, DEC 29:

Mounting pressure on Centre, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J. Jayalithaa today insisted that the final order of the Cauvery Tribunal be notified considering the withering crops in the State even as she expressed doubts over DMK's intentions on the issue.

Recalling the recent meeting of DMK MPs with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at the behest of party chief M. Karunanidhi, she expressed doubts if they really took up with him the issue of gazette notification of the final award of the Cauvery tribunal as mentioned by the DMK patriarch.

In a statement here, she indicated that the DMK government in 2007 did not adopt proper steps to get the final order notified even as her party had made a strong pitch for it, besides moving the Supreme Court against some provisions, though the Karunanidhi Government approached the Tribunal once again, but unsuccessfully.

However, she had not only written to Singh after coming to power last year urging that the order be notified, but had also taken up with him the matter in person.

She recalled her government had moved the court early this year and following this Centre gave an undertaking that the award will be notified by December end.

Following a delay, she had twice written to the Prime Minister, she said, adding, in the meantime Karunanidhi had asked his partymen to make a representation with Singh.

“If the DMK MPs had indeed sought notifying the order, it must have been given in writing and Karunanidhi should have released that to the media. But (he) has not released it so far. This makes it clear there was no written representation,” she said.

Jayalalithaa indicated that despite having been a part of the ruling UPA coalition and previously ruling the State till last year, DMK MPs had not met Singh on this matter.

“With Karunanidhi, whose party has been in power in Centre and state for four years not insisting his MPs to meet the Prime Minister all the time, and the fact that AIADMK MPs have not been allotted time with the Prime Minister to discuss the issue.... seeing this now there is a strong suspicion in the minds of people if the DMK MPs had orally demanded that the final order should not be notified,” she said.

Taking a dig at Karunanidhi’s practice of writing letters to the Prime Minister or issuing statements on various issues, she said he had, however, been silent on the controversy surrounding her walkout of the National Development Council meeting in New Delhi on Thursday where she had alleged she was humiliated.

She once again demanded that the Centre, considering the welfare of the state’s farmers and taking into account the undertaking given in the apex court, notify the final order and constitute the Cauvery Management Board.

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NEW DELHI, DEC 28:

Amid disputes between states over water-sharing, Karnataka on Friday demanded setting up of a permanent water dispute tribunal in the Supreme Court and revisiting the Inter State Water Disputes Act to remove “loose ends” in the legislation.

“Permanent water dispute tribunal should be established in the Apex Court and its benches at all the States’ High Courts on the lines of the Green Bench,” Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar said in his speech at the sixth meeting of the national water resources council here.

He suggested that it should have a sitting Supreme Court judge as its chairperson with multi-members from technical, environmental, geological, economical and legal fields.

Noting that present laws “create more disputes because of several loose ends” in the existing Acts, Shettar said that Inter State Water Disputes Act should be revisited.

“None of the present laws are able to establish a just water regime to the satisfaction of all the stakeholders,” he said.

Without referring to Cauvery water sharing dispute between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, Shettar said in some cases Government of India stand has delayed the projects which can be otherwise.

“The absence of a water regime had been forcing us to go to the Supreme Court, by which Government of India is trying to absolve its conciliatory role which is prescribed by the Indian Constitution, which is an expected role being the Head of the federal structure, which need to be strongly established,” he said.

Shettar said he made this statement because Karnataka “as a mid and upper riparian state suffered in both utilization and construction of projects which resulted in depriving the people of Karnataka their due and legal right of their share of water.”

Haryana moots setting up of national fund for water conservation

NEW DELHI, DEC 28:

Asking National Water Resources Council to deliberate on modalities for resolving inter-state water-related issues, Haryana today advocated setting up of a national fund to promote measures for conservation of water.

Haryana also rejected Punjab's suggestion that neighbouring states sharing river waters should also share the cost of flood management.

At the 6th Council meeting here, Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda said Haryana has suffered in this regard as it neither got water from Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) canal despite Supreme Court orders nor did it get its share in Ravi-Beas waters, as its tribunal's final award has not been published.

On his Punjab counterpart Parkash Singh Badal's suggestion made yesterday that neighbouring states should share flood management expenses and cost of repair of flood damage, Hooda rejected the demand as "absurd" and said each state has to deal with its floods and other calamities.

Hooda lamented that Punjab enacted a law terminating water related agreements and the Centre has allowed the Presidential Reference on it to linger on for more than eight years. "This is unfair to the people of Haryana. The people of Haryana have several other grievances also," he said.

He welcomed the proposal to set up a permanent Water Disputes Tribunal at the centre to resolve disputes, but sought timely implementation of orders/directions of various tribunals and courts in this regard.

Welcoming the proposal to constitute River Basin authorities, Hooda said representation should not be made only from those states which have only nominal area in the basin.

The Haryana Chief Minister also welcomed the setting up of Water Regulatory authorities.

Nabard sanctions Rs 210 cr for rural infra in Karnataka

BANGALORE, DEC. 28:

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) has sanctioned Rs 210.08 crore as loan assistance to Karnataka under RIDF XVIII.

S.N.A. Jinnah, Chief General Manager, Nabard, Karnataka Region, said in a release, "The loan assistance is for construction of four polytechnic colleges by department of higher education (Rs 21.25 crore), 71 rural road and 45 bridge projects by state public works department (PWD) (Rs 96.06 crore), four fish jetty projects by fisheries department (Rs 4.75 crore), 93 irrigation projects by water resources department-minor irrigation (Rs 36.38 crore), 48 veterinary institutions by department of animal husbandry (Rs 9.48 crore), 64 Raitha Samparka Kendras by agriculture department (Rs 23.10 crore) and 22 ayacut road projects by water resources department - MMI (Rs 19.05 crore) in different districts of the State."

These projects have been sanctioned under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF XVIII) by the project sanctioning committee at its meeting on December 20. With these sanctions, the cumulative sanction to the State under RIDF XVIII has touched Rs 474.75 crore.

The assistance extended for construction of 299.84 km length of road projects and 1,670.8 meters of rural bridge projects is expected to benefit more than 10.73 lakh rural population in 24 districts of the State.

The road/bridge projects is expected to connect 683 villages with 258 marketing centres and generate non-recurring employment to the tune of 41.05 lakh man days and recurring employment of 411 jobs per year.

The sanction of 93 minor irrigation projects in 13 districts would benefit 3457.81 hectares by way of ground water recharge, increased storage, and restoration of command area and generate non-recurring employment of 11.34 lakh man days and recurring employment of 170 jobs per year.

The minor irrigation projects are expected to help in increase of GDP by Rs 371.71 lakh per annum. The assistance of Rs 23.10 crore extended to state agriculture department for construction of 64 Raitha Samparka Kendras in 25 districts will benefit 2,823 villages and assistance of Rs 9.48 crore extended to animal husbandry department for construction of 48 buildings for veterinary institutions will serve 390 villages in 29 districts.

Spot turmeric gains with futures



Spot turmeric prices increased on Friday following a rise in the futures market. “Suddenly, the turmeric futures increased to Rs 6,700 a quintal which has reflected in local market also. Because of such increase traders and stockists quoted a higher price and purchased 70 per cent stock. The price increase is expected to continue for another 10-15 days,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said that after some months traders have started buying the turmeric and prices are also higher. Arrival increased due to higher realisation. Farmers also brought higher quantity for sale. The arrival of best quality turmeric is also on the rise.

The price of the turmeric in all the markets increased by Rs 150-250 a quintal. The Salem Hybrid variety fetched Rs 6,809 a quintal, which is Rs 350 more than Thursday’s day’s price. As usual stockists procured 20 per cent of the stocks put up for sale. Totally 6,500 bags arrived for sale and 70 per cent stocks were sold.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,599-6,217; the root variety Rs 4,399-5,555.

Salem Hybrid Crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,999-6,809 and the root variety Rs 5,291-5,799. Of the 1,150 bags that arrived, 410 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety fetched Rs 5,519-6,409; the root variety Rs 5,499-6,049. Of the arrival of 1,276 bags on offer, 1,029 found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety quoted Rs 5,369-6,299 and the root variety Rs 5,400-6,046. Of the arrival of 500 bags, 392 bags were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,011-6,499 and the root variety Rs 4,769-5,851. All the 153 bags put up for sale found takers.

Sugar slips on slack buying



MUMBAI, DEC. 28:

Sugar prices dropped by Rs 6-10 a quintal for S-grade while M-grade ruled unchanged on the Vashi wholesale spot market on Friday. Due to routine business, naka and mill tender rates ruled steady.

Very few mills came with tender offer previous day evening and sold little quantity due to poor/weak quality. As local demand is slack due to month-end, there were no big activities at retail level.

The morale was steady with routine volumesaid sources.

On expectation of higher demand in the coming days very few mills offered “sale tenders” previous day and sold very small quantity at prevailing price. The quality was not as expected and hence, the buyer’s response was poor.

On the other hand, local demand is also lower due to month-end but traders were optimistic about rebound from the next week, said sources.

Sources added mills have started quoting new sugar but at higher rates. Sugar prices in other main producing centres rule at par with Maharashtra, keeping neighbouring States buying away from the State. Bearish world market has also lower the chances of sugar exports from India. In Vashi market, arrivals were 60-62 truckloads (eof 100 bags) while dispatches were 58-60 loads.

On Thursday evening, only 4-5 mills offered tenders and managed to sell merely 4,000-5,000 (each of 100 kg) bags in steady price range of Rs 3,170-3,220 (Rs 3,170-3,220) for S-grade and Rs 3,280-3,350 (Rs 3,280-3,350) for M-grade.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs 3,286-3,381 (Rs 3,392-3,391) and M-grade Rs 3,342-3,531 (Rs 3,342- 3,531).

Naka delivery rates were: S-grade Rs 3,250-3,300 (Rs 3,250-3,300) and M-grade Rs 3,330-3,450 (Rs 3,330-3,450).

Imports rein in uptrend in masoor



INDORE, DEC. 28:

Sluggish demand in pulses has dragged masoor prices in the past one week by about Rs 200 a quintal. Even as domestic stock in masoor has declined, arrival of large quantity of imported masoor has reined in uptrend in masoor.

Masoor (bold) in local mandis on Friday was quoted at Rs 3,400-50 a quintal (Rs 3,500-25). Similarly, masoor (medium) declined to Rs 3,250-75.

Cashing on poor crop output and decline in domestic stock, big stockists and importers last week had lifted masoor prices in local mandis to as high as Rs 3,625.

With decline in spot masoor, masoor dal in the past one week has also declined by about Rs 200 a quintal with masoor dal (average) was at Rs 3,850-75, masoor dal (medium) at Rs 3,950-75, while masoor dal (bold) declined to Rs 4,050-75 .

Poor demand has also dragged urad and its dal by over Rs 150 a quintal in the local mandis in the past one week with urad (bold) at Rs 3,450-3,500, while urad (medium) ruled at Rs 3,000. Urad dal was stable with urad dal (medium) ruling at Rs 4,100-50, urad dal (bold) at Rs 4,700-4,800, while urad dal (bold) ruled at Rs 5,700-6,000.

Similarly, moong and its dal also ruled stable with moong (bold) being quoted at Rs 5,000-5,200, while moong (medium) ruled at Rs 4,400-4,500. Demand in moong and urad is expected to rise during the Makar Sankranti next month. Traders have attributed poor demand in pulses also to cheap vegetables during the winter season.

Wheat rules bearish in listless market

Wheat futures and spot markets remained bearish on Friday.

After witnessing some recovery earlier this week, January contracts on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange decreased by Re 1 and traded at Rs 1,587 a quintal; it had touched a high at Rs 1,590 earlier in the day. While the February contracts went down by Rs 6 to Rs 1,559 .

Wheat spot prices on the exchange eased by Rs 20 and traded at Rs 1,500.

Demand for Indian wheat, especially from South-East Asian countries, has risen sharply and strong export demand is giving some support to the market and limiting the downtrend, said market experts.

In the physical market, after witnessing a fall earlier on Wednesday this week, dara wheat and flour prices are ruling unchanged, since then. Dara quoted at Rs 1,515-1,525 a quintal.

Around 700 quintals of dara variety arrived from Uttar Pradesh and the stocks were directly offloaded at the mills.

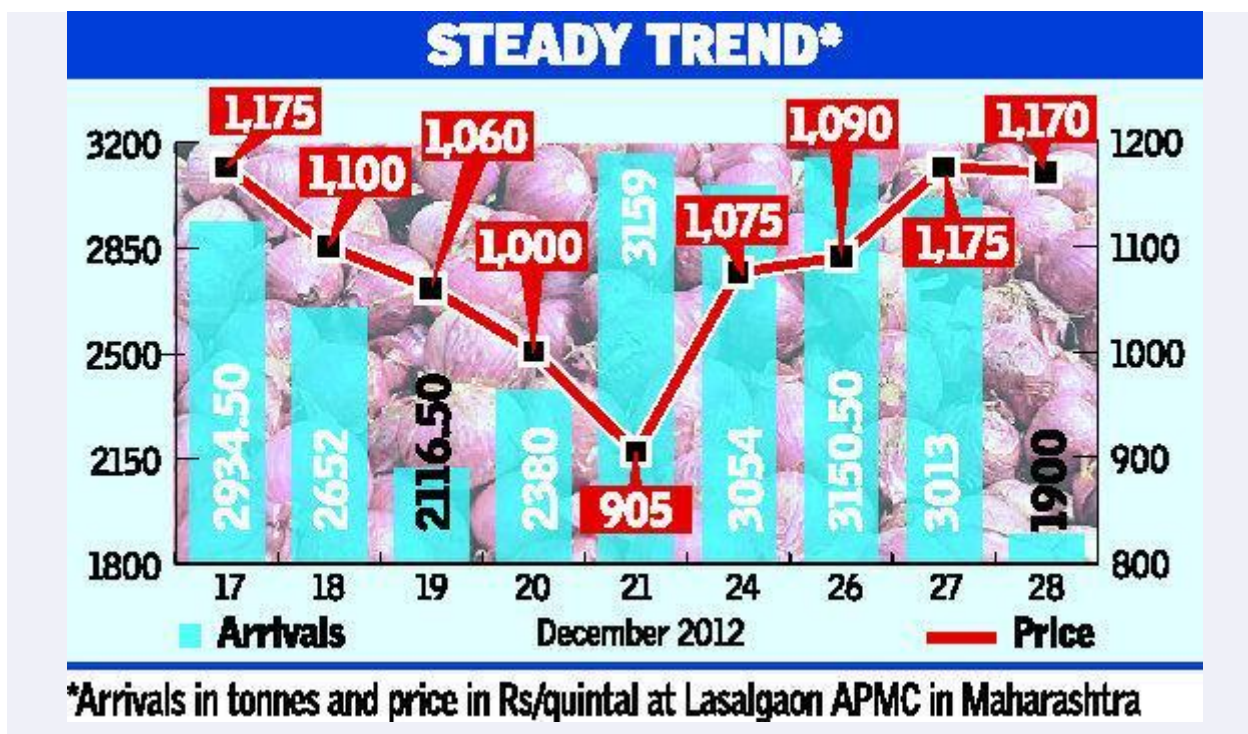
Mill delivery was at Rs 1,515-1,520 while delivery at the chakki was Rs 1,525.

Similarly, desi wheat varieties ruled flat and quoted between Rs 2,500 and Rs 2,550 .

FLOUR PRICES

Steady domestic demand kept flour prices flat and quoted at Rs 1,725.

Domestic, export demand lifts onion



RELATED

CHENNAI, DEC. 28:

Onion prices stabilised this week at higher levels amidst lower arrivals and constant demand.

“Prices have improved this week after being volatile throughout last week. Also, there was demand from Kolkata and Bangladesh this week,” said Madan Prakash, Director of Rajathi Group of Companies that exports agricultural produce.

“Arrivals have been lower in the last couple of days,” said a trader from Nashik.

In Lasalgaon Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) yard, the modal price or the rate at which most trades took place was Rs 1,170 a quintal. About 1,700 tonnes of onions arrived at the APMC.

Quality onion is commanding over Rs 1,300, said the Nashik trader.

Prices have more than doubled this year on lower production during the kharif season. Onion cultivation was hit by indifferent monsoon this year, resulting in at least a 10 per cent fall in kharif production. Even the late kharif crop is seen lower by a similar percentage.

EXPORT BUOYANT

Demand for exports is good, says Prakash, adding that Sri Lanka was buying a good quantity.

Malaysia, too, is a buyer but exports to the South-East Asian region has been hit by problems at JNPT. "Cargo movement at JNPT have been affected by workers stir," said Prakash.

Prices could continue to rule firm on the heels of a lower kharif crop.

Kerala crushers heat up copra market

Kerala oil crushers purchased a good amount stock of first and second variety copra as prices increased on Friday at the Avalpoondurai Regulated Market Committee.

Dhandapani, Superintendent of the Committee, said: "The price of copra increased to Rs 4,805 a quintal – Rs 200 more than last week price. Similarly, the second variety was sold at Rs 4,450. Arrivals are also on the rise".

On Friday, 300 tonnes of copra arrived and were sold amidst heavy competition among buyers. He said that due to increase in coconut oil price in the market, buyers were quoted higher price and purchased all the varieties.

R.M. Palanisamy a leading coconut oil dealer, said: "Suddenly the price of coconut oil has risen to Rs 975 to Rs 1,000 for 15-kg loose pack. This is the highest price for the coconut oil during this calendar year. This trend will continue for another month".

He also said that though oil crushers are having good stock of copra and coconut oil are interested in buying the copra. He predicted that due to heavy production of edible oils in India, prices will come

down soon.

Higher arrivals keep cotton on leash



RAJKOT, DEC. 28:

Cotton price remained unchanged as mills and exporters demand remained normal on Friday. According to traders, prices may not increase in the near future as arrivals are increasing.

Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton was traded at Rs 33,800-33,900 for a candy of 356 kg while Kalyan variety stood at Rs 27,000-28,200 . Kapas price was down by Rs 10 to Rs 800-830 for 20 kg while Kadi delivery kapas price quoted Rs 835-885. About 47,000 bales (of 170 kg) cotton arrived in Gujarat and 1.75 lakh bales arrived in India.

According to Rajkot-based cotton traders, arrivals are increasing in Gujarat. During this week cotton arrivals increased about 5,000-7,000 bales a day.

New 29 MM (3.8+ micronaire) cotton traded at Rs 33,400-33,800 a candy, 29 MM (3.7+ micronaire) cotton traded Rs 33,200-33,400 in Maharashtra. Low micronaire cotton quoted at Rs 32,600-33,000.

Market sources said: "Mills and exporters buying is normal at this time as and market may not gain in near future as arrivals are increasing. Moreover, export demand is not that much as it was in last year."

Diseases force Coffee Board to cut output estimate

| Output pruned | | (in tonnes) | |
|-------------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Post Monsoon Forecast 2012-13 | | | |
| State | Arabica | Robusta | Total |
| Karnataka | 78,705 | 1,48,500 | 2,27,205 |
| Kerala | 2,075 | 61,750 | 63,825 |
| Tamil Nadu | 12,825 | 4,925 | 17,750 |
| Non Traditional Areas | 6,490 | 35 | 6,525 |
| North Eastern Region | 130 | 65 | 195 |
| Grand Total (India) | 1,00,225 | 2,15,275 | 3,15,500 |

RELATED

TOPICS

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Production pruned to 3.15 lakh tonnes from 3.25 lakh tonnes

BANGALORE, DEC 28:

The country is likely to see flat coffee production for the crop year 2012-13 at 3,15,500 tonnes compared with last year.

According to the Coffee Board's post-monsoon estimate, coffee output is pegged at 3,15,500 tonnes against last year's estimate of 3,14,000 tonnes.

The reasons for reduction in production estimate is attributed to the normal berry drop during the monsoon period and also due to black rot and stalk rot in certain high rainfall areas.

The post-monsoon crop forecast for the year 2012-13 is placed at 3,15,500 tonnes, which shown a reduction of 9,800 tonnes (-3.01 per cent) over the post-blossom estimate of 2012-13 of 3,25,300 tonnes.

However, it is a marginal increase of 1,500 tonnes (0.48 per cent) over the final estimate of previous year 2011-12 (3,14,000 tonne).

Of the total estimate, the Arabica is 1,00,225 tonnes and robusta is 2,15,275 tonnes respectively.

Arabica production estimate has shown a decline of 3,775 tonnes (-3.63 per cent) while robusta declined by 6,025 tonnes (-2.72 per cent) over the post-blossom estimate of 2012-13.

KARNATAKA

In Karnataka, the post-monsoon estimate has shown a decline 7,665 tonnes (-3.26 per cent) over the post-blossom estimate. However, it is an increase of 6,205 tonnes (2.81 per cent) over the final estimate of 2011-12.

Accounting this, the post-monsoon crop estimate for Karnataka is placed at 2,27,205 tonnes with a break up of 78,705 tonnes of arabica and 1,48,500 tonnes of robusta.

Kodagu district experienced a decline (of 3.88 per cent) both in Arabica (1.45 per cent) and robusta (4.41 per cent) followed by Chikmagalur (1.93 per cent) and Hassan (3.97 per cent) over the post- blossom forecast.

KERALA

In Kerala, the berry development was normal and not much adverse effect was reported with a marginal decline in Wyanad (1.76 per cent) and Travancore (3.05 per cent) over the post-blossom estimate.

But it is a decline of 4,275 tonnes (-6.28 per cent) over the previous year (2011-12) final estimate of 68,100 tonnes. Therefore, the post-monsoon forecast is placed at 63,825 tonnes (arabica 2075 tonnes and robusta 61,750 tonnes) against the post-blossom estimate of 65,000 tonnes.

TAMIL NADU

Tamil Nadu post monsoon forecast is placed at 17,750 tonnes against 17,440 tonnes of post-blossom estimate which is a marginal increase in production of 310 tonnes mainly observed in Shevroys region.

In non-traditional areas of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, the post-monsoon forecast is placed at 6,525 tonnes against previous post-blossom estimate of 7,790 tonnes showing a decline of 1,265 tonnes (-16.34 per cent) due to low rainfall, high temperatures coupled with heat waves which affected crop set. while in north eastern region, the post-monsoon forecast is placed at 195 tonnes.

Maharashtra to release Rs 250 crore for drought relief



Ganesh Mukutkar, a farmer of Shahpur village in Jalna district of Maharashtra, seen on his arid field in this file photo.

MUMBAI, DEC 28:

The Maharashtra Government has decided to release Rs 250 crore for drought mitigation in the State. The funds would be primarily used for providing drinking water in rural areas and paying electricity bill arrears of the farmers.

Relief and Rehabilitation Minister Patangrao Kadam said providing drinking water and fodder for the animals was the top priority for the Government. The drought mitigation plan would be implemented in two phases — the first phase would be from January to March while the second would be from April to June, he said.

About Rs 47 crore have already been released so far and the State Government has declared 123 talukas as drought affected.

This year, the southwest monsoon has been deficient by eight per cent, affecting the sowing of kharif crops, including coarse cereals and pulses. States such as Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh have been the worst affected.


DRINKING WATER

A senior official of the Relief and Rehabilitation Department said that providing drinking water was a matter of utmost concern for the Government; therefore, railway wagons could also be used for carrying water to the affected areas. Steps would also be taken to ensure that power connection to the agricultural pump sets remained uninterrupted, the official said.

“Kharif crops have not given a good yield. Now, our efforts are on to save the Rabi crop,” the official said.

In about 7,000 villages in the State, the crop acreage has come down drastically. In large villages across Maharashtra, the State Government has started animal shelters that provide fodder for free.

Area under rabi foodgrains trails

| ACREAGE | | (in lakh ha) | |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| | | 2012-13 | 2011-12 |
|  | Wheat | 272.79 | 276.81 |
| | Rice | 1.87 | 3.02 |
| | Coarse cereals | 56.22 | 55.16 |
| | Pulses | 132.52 | 134.14 |
| | Oilseeds | 78.86 | 77.88 |

Source: Agriculture Ministry

NEW DELHI, DEC 28:

Rabi acreage under oilseeds such as rapeseed mustard and groundnut has seen a rise, while the area under wheat sown so far, was marginally lower than last year.

Data released by the Agriculture Ministry revealed that wheat sowing, so far, has taken place in an area of 272.79 lakh ha, down marginally over corresponding last year's 276.81 lakh ha.

The hike in minimum support price (MSP) announced by the Government last week is expected to give a fillip to wheat sowing in the days ahead.

The Government has increased the MSP for wheat by Rs 65 a quintal to Rs 1,350 for the 2012-13 season over last year's Rs 1,285.

Major wheat growing states such as Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have reported an increase in area under wheat. However, the wheat acreage is lower in Maharashtra and Gujarat.

The area under oilseeds is up marginally at 78.86 lakh ha against 77.88 lakh ha. Rapeseed mustard acreage is up by about 1.2 lakh ha at 65 lakh ha. Groundnut and sunflower have also seen a marginal increase in area.

States such as Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have reported a higher area, while the acreage is down in Maharashtra.

The rice acreage was also lower at 1.87 lakh ha against 3.02 lakh ha in corresponding period last year.

The acreage under coarse cereals such as jowar, bajra and ragi is up marginally, while that the area under pulses is slightly lower than last year. States such as Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka have reported a marginally higher area under coarse cereals such as jowar and ragi. However, Maharashtra has reported a lower area under coarse cereals.

Pulses such as gram has seen an increase in acreage while moong and urad have seen a marginal decline in area.

[Brokens, fannings firm at N. India tea sale](#)

KOLKATA, DEC 28:

This week at sale 52, the total offerings (packages) of three North Indian tea auction centres at Kolkata, Guwahati and Siliguri were 4,08,560 as compared to 4,64,985 in the corresponding sale (No. 52) of 2011, according to J Thomas & Company Private Ltd, the tea auctioneers.

The offerings at Kolkata comprised CTC/dust 1,41,721 (1,64,059), orthodox 21,742 (32,563) and Darjeeling 4,211 (5,260). The figures for two other auction centres were: Guwahati 1,30,565 (1,45,322) and Siliguri 1,10,321 (1,17,781).

Assam CTC teas maintaining quality sold at firm to occasionally dearer rates, especially larger brokens. Remainder was irregular in line with quality. Dooars followed a similar trend.

Tata Global operated for medium sorts while Hindustan Unilever lent useful support. Western India dealers were active on the liquoring sorts. Exporters operated mainly on the bolder brokens & fannings.

Clean, well made, orthodox whole leaf grades were firm with selected lines tending dearer with competition.

Brokens and fannings were firm to dearer. There were some Continental enquiries on tippy and liquoring varieties.

Exporters to the CIS and West Asia operated actively. Hindustan Unilever lent useful support.

Darjeeling whole leaf grades sold in line with quality. There was useful support from Hindustan Unilever. Brokens and fannings were dearer owing to strong export and local enquiries.

Rake shortage hits soyameal shipments

EW DELHI, DEC 28:

Diversion of rakes to move foodgrains such as wheat and rice is hitting soya meal shipments. "Poor availability of rakes for exports is delaying our shipments," said Rajesh Agarwal, spokesperson for Soyabean Processors Association of India (SOPA), which has made a representation to the Railways seeking additional rakes.

“The soya processing industry in Madhya Pradesh is getting one or two rakes a day against a requirement of 4-5 rakes a day,” Agarwal said. The situation is a little better in Maharashtra, where there is no pressure to ship wheat, Agarwal said.

When asked, railway officials said “There might be some isolated cases.” They, however, said the demand for rakes to transport fertiliser and foodgrains had significantly gone up in recent months. This is reflected in the 31 per cent increase in loading of foodgrains by the Railways during November at 3.80 million tonnes over the corresponding period last year. Though the soyameal industry is not witnessing robust demand at present due to high prices, there is some need-based buying from several countries, Agarwal said.

The soyabean crushing industry is operating at almost half its capacity due to poor availability of beans. India exported about 4.2 mt soyameal in 2011-12. In the current financial year till November, soyameal exports stood at 1.38 mt, down 21 per cent over previous year’s 1.75 mt, according to data compiled by the Solvent Extractors Association of India.

Exporters said priority was being accorded for movement of cereals such as wheat and rice compared with other agri-commodity such as soyameal. The Government on Wednesday, approved an additional wheat export of 2.5 mt from the Central Pool stocks, a move that would help ease storage crunch at the Food Corporation of India godowns ahead of new crop arrivals in April. India, which produced a record 93.9 mt of wheat last year, is targeting an output of 86 mt in the current year.

Spot rubber gains on global cues

KOTTAYAM, DEC. 28:

Spot rubber improved on Friday. The market seemed to be reacting in tandem with the overall gains in the domestic and international futures. Though there were no genuine buyers in the commodity to catalyse the sentiments, the absence of quantity sellers as growers preferred to hold the stocks triggered short covering on late trades.

Sheet rubber improved to Rs 161.50 (161) a kg at Kottayam and Kochi according to traders and the Rubber Board. The volumes continued to be dull.

In futures, the January series concluded at Rs 165.41 (163.57), February at Rs 168 (165.87) March at Rs 170.50 (168.79) April at Rs 174.87 (180.28) and May at Rs 175 (172.55) a kg, while the most distant month June series remained inactive on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) improved to Rs 177.75 (176.39) a kg at Bangkok.

The January futures increased to ¥288.8 (Rs 183.66) from ¥285.4 a kg during the day session but then finished steady in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 161.50 (161); RSS-5: 155.50 (155); ungraded: 151 (150); ISNR 20: 151.50 (151) and latex 60 per cent: 105.50 (105).

Rice procurement up by 5% so far this marketing season

NEW DELHI, DEC 28:

Rice procurement has increased by 5 per cent to 16.05 million tonnes so far in 2012-13 marketing year that started in October, even as rice output is estimated to decline during Kharif season.

Food Corporation of India (FCI), the nodal agency for procurement and distribution of foodgrains, had bought 15.36 million tonnes of rice in the corresponding period of 2011-12 marketing year, according to an official data.

Rice production is estimated to fall at 85.59 million tonnes in the Kharif season of 2012-13 crop year (July-June) from 91.53 million tonnes.

Punjab has contributed maximum to the total procurement where FCI and other state agencies have procured 8.54 million tonnes of rice till date in 2012-13 marketing year (October-September) against 7.66 million tonnes in the year-ago period.

Procurement in Haryana has reached 2.57 million tonnes till date, whereas Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh have contributed 1.74 million tonnes and 1.39 million tonnes, respectively.