

CUDDALORE, February 10, 2012

Broodstock bank set up for marine ornamental fishes



Cuddalore Collector Rajendra Ratnoo releasing hatchlings in a tub at the Centre of Advanced Study in Marine Biology of Annamalai University at Parangipettai on Thursday.

The Centre of Advanced Study in Marine Biology at Parangipettai, a unit of Annamalai University, has set up a “broodstock bank for marine ornamental fishes” to tap the potential in this sphere and improve socio-economic condition of fishermen, said P.Krishnaiah, Chief Executive, National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB).

After launching the facility near here on Thursday, Mr. Krishnaiah told reporters that the Marine Biology Centre had developed technology for breeding good quality and disease-free marine ornamental fishes.

Ornamental fishes have good domestic and international demand. At present, the share of India in the international ornamental fishes market is hardly one per cent. With the setting up of the facility, it is likely to go up.

Mr. Krishnaiah said that as of now, too many fishermen are depending on traditional fishing and the catch had become scarce. The situation has driven them to far off places in search of fish, braving risk.

If they take up ornamental fish breeding in their backyard, it would provide them additional income. Citing the Kerala Aqua Ventures International Ltd. (KAVIL) model, promoted on a public-private participation mode, Mr. Krishnaiah said that besides breeding freshwater ornamental fishes, it had created an export hub at Kochi.

Parangipettai was the ideal place to have a cluster of villages to breed ornamental fishes. For it to go on a project mode certain common facilities such as mechanism for supplying filtered seawater ought to be created with the participation of the district administration, private organisations and local bodies.

The NFDB would provide a grant of 100 per cent to the Marine Biology Centre for creating the infrastructure, 50 per cent to individuals (up to a maximum of Rs. 1.5 lakh) who would take up fish breeding and 90 per cent for creating common facilities, Mr. Krishnaiah said. Vice-Chancellor of Annamalai University M. Ramanathan said the university was consciously focusing its research activities for the benefit of society. Its Agriculture Department had already launched a scheme to supplement the income of villagers and the new facility was the second in line to improve the livelihood of rural people, particularly fishermen. T. Balasubramanian, Director and Dean, Faculty of Marine Sciences, said that the broodstock bank, at present, had 13 varieties of clown fish (of which 10 have been standardised), 11 varieties of damsel fish (five species standardised), angel and cardinal fishes.

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Waiver of farm loans sought

Welcoming the Rs. 790-crore package for cyclone-hit farmers in Cuddalore and Villupuram district, the Kollidam-Keelanai Paasana Vivasyigal Sangam has suggested putting in place a proper mechanism to ensure that the complete benefits reach the target groups.

At a farmers' meeting chaired by P. Vinayagamurthy at Kattumannarkoil, the Sangam adopted a resolution calling upon the government to waive farm loans obtained from nationalised and

cooperative banks for the samba crop season and settlement of crop insurance claims within three months.

It requested the government to construct at least seven barrages from the Coleroon to the Lower Anicut and two bed-dams in the downstream of the Lower Anicut to arrest seawater incursion.

The Sangam made a plea to the government to deepen the Veeranam tank bed to augment its water storing capacity. It pointed out that 700 acres of farmland lying at a lower level than the western bank of the tank were prone to water seepage, thus causing damage to standing crops. Therefore, to save the future crops, the Sangam put forth the view that the level of the farmlands on the western side of the tank be raised.

It made a plea to the government to supply at subsidised rates small harvesting machines to small and marginal farmers and also continue free power supply scheme.

UDDALORE, February 10, 2012

Project to improve fish landing centres planned

A proposal for a Rs. 16-crore project for improving facilities in fishing villages in Cuddalore will soon be sent to the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), according to Rajendra Ratnoo, District Collector.

He made this observation after visiting some facilities in the Old Town area along with Chief Executive of the NFDB P. Krishnaiah on Thursday. Post-Thane, infrastructure in fish landing centres and wharfs where fishing vessels were being berthed have suffered heavy damage.

Moreover, there were no proper approach roads to these places. As fishing activity normally happens during nights, fish landing centres ought to be well lit for the convenience of vendors.

With a view to improving such facilities, Mr. Krishnaiah and Mr. Ratnoo inspected the areas near the Cuddalore Port. They also visited boat repairing sheds, fish net weaving hall and fish auction centre there.

They interacted with fishermen to get their views about the utility of setting up of a new wharf to a length of 250 metre on the left bank of the Uppanar. They also discussed the prospects of

desilting the Uppanar. Assistant Director of Fisheries Department Vivekanandan was present.

KRISHNAGIRI, February 10, 2012

'KVKs should focus on improving income of farmers of the area'

The main focus and activities of the Krishi Vigyan Kendras should be 'Plough to Plate' concept, said S. Prabhu Kumar, Zonal Project Director, Zone VIII of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), here on Wednesday.

Addressing the Scientific Advisory Committee meeting of the Dr. Perumal Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Elumichangiri, near Krishnagiri, to discuss the action plan chalked out to address the problems of the farmers being faced in the region, Dr. Kumar urged the KVK to give impetus for demonstrations on Integrated Farming System to improve the income and standard of living of the farmers.

He also suggested that the activities of the KVKs should focus on all stages of agriculture production rather than increasing the yield per unit. The kendra should give proper training to the service providers so as to empower them to address the needs of the farming community.

He suggested to the Dr. Perumal KVK to undertake measures to improve quality production of mango in the zone as it was considered to be one of the largest mango growing clusters in the State, he added. In his address, P. Kalaiselvan, Director, Extension Education, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), urged the KVK to demonstrate the concept of 'easy to operate coconut operators' available with the varsity.

With the limited resources and the staff strength, the KVK can scale up the technology through convergence of various schemes existing in different departments, he said.

A.K. Mani, Professor and Head, Regional Research Station of TNAU at Paiyur near here, appreciated the efforts taken by the Dr. Perumal KVK to popularise mechanisation of paddy production.

In his address, V.S. Chandrasekar, Principal Scientist, Central Institute of Brackish Water Agriculture, Chennai called upon the KVK to empower farmers in the region on ornamental fish culture.

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Orissa farmers get a taste of local cultivation practices

Given an overview of the system of rice intensification



beyond borders: The farmers team from Orissa inspecting an oil palm farm near Lalgudi.

Picking up inputs on latest agricultural practices from the region, a group of 15 farmers from Orissa undertook an exposure visit to the district over the past four days.

Farmers from Ganjam, Koraput and Malkangiri districts in Orissa were part of the team that was on the visit organised under the Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize (ISOPOM) that concluded on Thursday. The team was accompanied by S.P.Samantaray, Agronomist, and Mahes Kumar Padhy, Agriculture Officer, from Orissa.

Agriculture Department officials, led by J.Sekar, Joint Director of Agriculture, Tiruchi, briefed the team on agricultural practices adopted in the district, the different crops and the productivity trends. The farmers were also given an overview of the system of rice intensification technique in paddy cultivation.

First hand account

The team visited oil palm plantation of Naryanan, a farmer at L.Abisekapuram village near Lalgudi to get a first hand account of cultivation methods. They were also briefed on oil palm cultivation methods, taxonomy, yield prospects, the price and profitability to farmers by R.Chandrasekaran, Deputy Director of Agriculture (Central schemes), Tiruchi.

The team also visited an oil extraction unit at Varanavasi village and the oil palm plantation maintained by the Cauvery Oil Palm Ltd, where they were briefed on the oil extraction methods and by-products of oil palm.

At the Government Coconut Nursery and Coconut Crossing Centre, the team studied process of producing hybrid coconuts seeds and raising of coconut seedlings in the nursery.

The team was also oriented to groundnut cultivation through visits to the fields at Valaiyur village near Manachanallur and the seed processing unit at Manachanallur.

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Harness technology to protect crops from ravaging diseases

Programme on 'diagnosis and management of nematode diseases'



Nip it in the bud: V. Jayabal, Dean, Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute of the TNAU, delivering the inaugural address at the three-day farmers training programme on 'diagnosis and management of nematode diseases.'

Farmers should make use of latest techniques developed by scientists of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) in protecting crops from the ravages of pests and diseases, said

V.Jayabal, Dean, Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute of the TNAU here on Wednesday.

Delivering the inaugural address at the three-day farmers training programme on 'diagnosis and management of nematode diseases' organised jointly by the ADAC and RI of the TNAU and the National Agricultural Development Project of the State government here recently, Dr.Jayabal emphasised the impact of nematode diseases on cultivated crops. The ADAC and RI is organising many such training programmes for the benefit of farming community and the farmers should take advantage of this, he added.

E.I.Jonathan, Director, Centre for Plant Protection Studies, TNAU, Coimbatore, in his special address explained that training is necessary as awareness among the farmers about nematodes causing damage to cultivated crops is very low. Unlike insects and disease, where the farmers can identify the organism or damage easily, nematodes and their damage symptoms are difficult to diagnose. He also explained the various eco-friendly methods of nematode management in crops.R.Chandrasekaran, Deputy Director of Agriculture, explained that the various state and centrally sponsored schemes. R.Pandiarajan, Assistant Director of Agriculture, R.Shanmugam, Assistant Director of Horticulture, G.Gajendran, professor and head, Department of Plant Protection of the college, offered felicitations. In the training programme, scientists imparted training to diagnose the nematode diseases of various crops and their integrated management to the farmers.


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Mettur level

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 83.52 feet on Thursday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 925 cusecs and the discharge, 1,000 cusecs.

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 Fri, 10 Feb 2012

water






Delhi - INDIA

Today's Weather

Tomorrow's Forecast

 Sunny	Friday, Feb 10 Max Min 19° 11°	 Sunny	Saturday, Feb 11 Max Min 20° 4°
Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs Humidity: 75% Wind: Normal	Sunrise: 7:14 Sunset: 17:48 Barometer: 1016		

Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday Feb 12	Monday Feb 13	Tuesday Feb 14	Wednesday Feb 15	Thursday Feb 16
				
19° 5° Sunny	21° 7° Sunny	23° 6° Sunny	25° 9° Cloudy	27° 14° Cloudy

New Delhi, February 09, 2012

First Published: 16:05 IST(9/2/2012)

Last Updated: 16:07 IST(9/2/2012)

Efficiency in food distribution can save Rs 7,000 cr: Montek

Asking the states to streamline procurement, storage and distribution of foodgrains, Planning Commission deputy chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia on Thursday said with 10% improvement in efficiency Rs 7,000 crore can be saved every year.

"A 10% improvement in efficiency could save Rs 7,000 crore. This will also reduce the cost to the exchequer while expanding the entitlement system as formulated in the food security bill," Ahluwalia said while addressing a conference on Targeted Public Distribution System and Storage in New Delhi.

The two-day conference, which saw participation of ministers and senior officials from all the states, was marked by brainstorming in the run up to the expected enactment of the government's ambitious food security bill.

The food bill, pushed by UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi, has been introduced in Parliament and is being examined by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Food.

"We are on the verge of moving to a further stage with the food security bill. However, a lot of work has to be done like modernisation of storage, increasing foodgrain production further and using latest technology for efficient distribution," Ahluwalia said.

He said the state governments will have to play a key role in all these steps.

"In the 12th Plan (2012-17) we should put in place a monitorable set of ideas to see how much progress we have met in the field of food security," Ahluwalia said.

"Besides increasing production even further, we also need to spread procurement and this is a very important aspect of food security. Eastern states will have to take special steps in this regard," the plan panel chief added.

He said use of end-to-end computerisation has led to elimination of bogus ration cards and with use of the Aadhaar unique national card the the distribution system could be built up further.

"Besides technology will ensure efficient management of the supply chain and grievance redressal," Ahluwalia said.

According to him, with the enactment of the food security bill there will be an increase in the storage requirement.

"Every year some or the other TV channel go somewhere and find rotting grains. While some rotting could not be avoided in such a big country as ours, we have to develop storage capacity and also go for modern storage systems to ensure greater efficiency," he said.

Ahluwalia called upon the state governments to adopt a more flexible approach on the issue of land acquisition for developing silos and storage facilities.

"It is not unreasonable to say that state governments should not view this as a demand for land as in other issues. Availability of land should not become a constraint," Ahluwalia said.

The Planning Commission will raise the issue with chief ministers of states during discussion for the next annual Plan, he said.

According to Ahluwalia, the recent government decision approving setting up of silos with capacity of 2 million tonne is a very positive step.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/808969.aspx>

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Groundwater shrinks in 60 per cent of State

FRIDAY, 10 FEBRUARY 2012 01:10

STAFF REPORTER | BHOPAL

Groundwater table is sinking fast in 60 per cent districts of the State, which is casting an adverse impact on piped water supply schemes and drinking water situation can assume worse proportions in years to come.

Therefore, joint efforts are the need of the hour for replenishment and stability of water sources. Notably, the situation of water is not uniform in different districts of Madhya Pradesh due to its topology. Somewhere water comes out from earth at a depth of 20 feet only while not a single drop of water is found upto 50 feet depth somewhere else.

In some villages upto 100 tube-wells run round the year while in some villages even the lone hand-pump stops gushing water after Holi.

All the 9,892 piped water supply schemes have been handed over to Gram Panchayats. Eleven percent of them are defunct due to several reasons. Out of these, 32 per cent piped water schemes are closed due to snapping of power connection and 16 percent due to drying up of

water sources. The Public Health Engineering Department has chalked out a plan to rid Gram Panchayats of the concern for paying outstanding power bills. Under the plan, a proposal is under consideration to make direct payment of bills to the concerning power company.

Besides, the department has also proposed to constitute drinking water sub-committees at the village level under Madhya Pradesh Panchayat Raj Evam Gram Swaraj Adhinyam for effective running and maintenance of piped water supply schemes. Half of the committee members will be women.

The workshop will deliberate on all these issues. Besides, a strategy will also be chalked out for more effective work in future.

NABARD promises Rs 10,000 cr for MP

FRIDAY, 10 FEBRUARY 2012 01:10

STAFF REPORTER | BHOPAL

NABARD chairman Prakash Bakshi consented to provide funds to the tune of Rs 10,000 crore to Madhya Pradesh under NABARD's refinancing scheme during a discussion with Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on the State's development priorities here on Thursday.

The limit of refinance made available to Madhya Pradesh will be increased to Rs 20,000 crore. This will facilitate extension of loan at one per cent interest rate to more farmers. Besides, NABARD will also extend assistance in the construction of rural roads, irrigation projects and godowns in the State, informed the NABARD chairman.

The Chief Minister said that the State Government is making efforts for carrying Madhya Pradesh forward with total authenticity. Its priorities include flow of canal water to the tail-end farmers, cent percent exploitation of established irrigation potential, increase in agricultural production and its systematic storage and implementation of practicable suggestions mooted at the panchayats of various sections of society.

A decision has been taken during the meeting to make free of cost land available to primary cooperative societies for construction of godowns. Irrigation will be included in Rural Infrastructure Development Fund.

According to suggestions put forth at panchayats, credit cards will also be made available to street vendors and fish breeders. Efforts are also afoot to strengthen primary cooperative societies so that they can meet every requirement of farmers.

The Chief Minister informed that Vaidyanathan Committee recommendations have been implemented in cooperative banks of Madhya Pradesh. He urged the NABARD to allocate Rs 667 crore during the current fiscal as per the committee's recommendations.

Chief Minister Chouhan urged the NABARD to assist the State Government in its initiatives for completing irrigation projects, asphaltation of rural roads, construction of new colleges and Industrial Training Centres and making Swarojgar Credit Cards available to beneficiaries.

Lauding better and higher position of Madhya Pradesh in agriculture sector at the national level, Bakshi said that NABARD will extend cooperation in construction of godowns for safe storage of agricultural products to prevent any decay.

The Chief Minister instructed offices to prepare and send proposals for godown within a week. Rs 20 crore will be sanctioned under special package for weavers. Financial assistance will be given by NABARD for the construction of ITIs.

Business Standard

Friday, Feb 10, 2012

To stop price slump, Andhra seeks Centre's approval to buy turmeric

Sharleen D'Souza & B Dasarath Reddy / Mumbai/ Hyderabad February 10, 2012, 0:18 IST

The Andhra Pradesh government has sought central approval for procurement of 25,000 tonnes of turmeric under the market intervention scheme, to stop the fall in prices of the spice.

Turmeric is not covered under the Minimum Support Price mechanism. The state

government (60 per cent of the country's output comes from Andhra) has suggested procurement at Rs 4,500 a quintal (Rs 45 a kg), according to officials. Last year, farmers got Rs 120 a kg; today's price at Nizamabad in Andhra is Rs 47 a kg. Last month, many farmers kept away from market yard auctions to protest against the low price and push for procurement by state agencies. The cost of production is around Rs 40 a kg.

The central government has to approve the quantity proposed and also the procurement price. Its approval would mean it shares 25 per cent of the loss, if any, that the procuring agency makes when it resells the produce in the market at a later date, according to officials. "We will open purchase centres at major turmeric markets like Nizamabad once we receive orders from the state government," D Vimalakar Rao, government consultant at AP Markfed, told Business Standard. The idea is that AP Markfed and the Centre's Nafed would each procure half the 25,000 tonnes. This year's production is estimated at nine million bags (a bag is 75 kg), a record, compared to 6.5 million bags last year. The carryover stock at end-January was 1.5 million bags, taking the current available stock to 10.5 million bags.

Including export demand, consumption is expected to be close to 5.5 million bags, leaving a big carryover stock. All this has depressed prices and with the new crop already coming in, traders and analysts say the price can fall further. "The government should provide farmers with well-equipped cold storage facilities to store their produce," traders in Mumbai said. If nothing is done, the price will fall further and farmers next year will not sow enough, said Manubhai Shah, a Mumbai-based trader.

Exports from April to November were 58,000 tonnes, compared to 35,000 tonnes last year, according to the Spices Board of India.

AP seeks union govt's permission to procure turmeric

Sharleen D'Souza & B Dasarath Reddy / Mumbai/hyderabad February 09, 2012, 14:50 IST

As the turmeric prices falling near to cost of production, farmers are likely to get support from government procurement. Turmeric is not covered under minimum support price mechanism and hence state agencies procure this saffron from south on commercial basis

only.

Last year turmeric farmers realized Rs 120 per kg which is today quoted at Rs 47 for Nizamabad turmeric. Last month many farmers kept away from market yard auctions to protest against low price and push forward demand for procurement by state agencies to support the prices. Turmeric cost of production is around Rs 40 and they will find it difficult to sale at those levels.

In this context, Andhra Pradesh government has sought Government of India's approval for procurement of 25,000 tonnes of turmeric from open market under the market intervention scheme in a bid to stabilise the prices of the spice.

The state government has suggested the procurement of turmeric, which has no support price mechanism, at Rs 4,500 per quintal, according to government officials. Government of India has to approve the quantity proposed and also the procurement price.

"We will open purchase centers at major turmeric markets like Nizamabad once we receive the orders from the state government," D Vimalakar Rao, government consultant at AP Markfed told *Business Standard*.

Of this 25,000 tonnes, AP Markfed and Nafed will procure 12,500 quintals each, Government of India's approval would mean it will share 25 per cent of the loss, if any, the procuring agency makes when it resells the produce in the market at a later date, according to officials.

Farmers who cultivated turmeric in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have asked the central government to buy their stocks as the price of the spice has fallen significantly as this year's production is at an all time high.

This year the total production is estimated to be around 9 million bags (1 bag = 75 kgs) compared to 6.5 million bags last year.

Carry over stock as on 31 January was 1.5 million bags taking the current available stock to 10.5 million bags. This year, along with exports the total consumption of turmeric is expected to be close to 55 lakh bags, thus the next years carry over stock to be higher.

Fresh crop arrival has already hit the market and traders and analysts say that the price of the commodity can fall further as arrivals will increase.

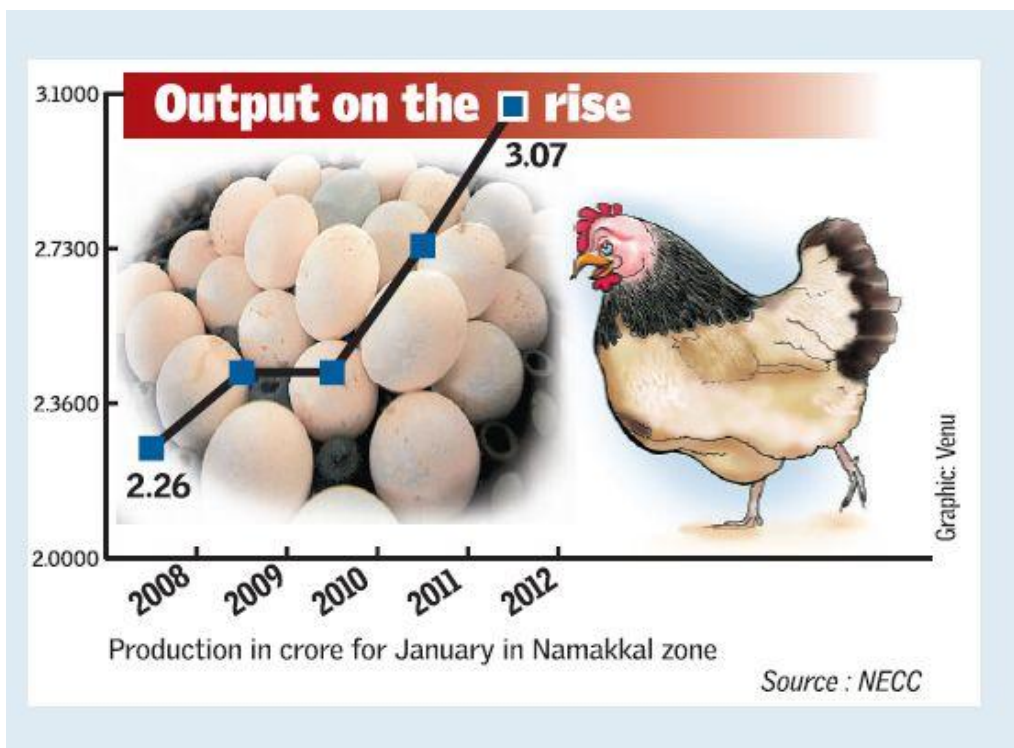
"The government to provide farmers with well equipped cold storages facilities so that the farmers can store their produce and their crop will also not get affected," turmeric traders in Mumbai said.

If nothing is done, then price of the commodity will fall further due to which farmers next year will not sow the commodity causing acreage to fall by 40%, said Manubhai Shah, a Mumbai based turmeric trader.

In the financial year turmeric exports from April to November has been 58,000 tonne compared to 35,000 tonne last year, according to Spices Board of India.

THE HINDU Business Line

Egg price hiked on increased offtake



Chennai, Feb. 9:

The price of an egg has been raised to Rs 2.46 from last week's Rs 2.35 by the National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC), Namakkal zone, following a rise in consumption.

Egg prices, after scaling a record Rs 3.13 a piece last December, cooled owing to buyers' resistance and winter coming to an end. To perk up poultry consumption, the NECC slashed the price to Rs 2.35 last week.

Industry sources told *Business Line* that this move (the price cut) has lifted off-take and hence the industry wanted to cash in on the demand and hiked prices gradually.

Egg production in Namakkal, the country's poultry hub, stood at 3.07 crore in January this year against 2.74 crore during the same period a year ago. The cold wave in North India was the main reason for prices to touch a record during the fag end of last year. The seasonal market attracted an average 25-35 lakh eggs a day of Namakkal's average daily production.

exports

With the exports dwindling slowly, the industry is focussing on the home turf.

Meanwhile, NECC has retained last week's prices for layer birds at Rs 29 a kg while the Broiler Coordination Committee's rates for cull birds is down by Rs 3 a kg to Rs 45.

Edible oils gain on lower arrivals



Mumbai, Feb. 9:

Despite lower-than-expected local demand, edible oils rose on Thursday as local refiners increased prices tracking firm overseas markets. Arrivals of oilseeds dropped in producing centres and soya oil futures firmed up.

Malaysian palm oil futures fell amid worries over Greece's debt-restructuring talks. In Mumbai, sunflower seed and rapeseed oils rose by Rs 5 each for 10 kg, cottonseed refined oil by Rs 6, imported soyabean refined oil by Rs 10 and palmolein by Re 1 for 10 kg; groundnut oil declined by Rs 5.

Resellers traded about 100-150 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 558-560. Stockists stayed away from the market as they had covered enough quantity on Tuesday.

Irregular arrivals of groundnut hit its oil production in Saurashtra. Output is likely to be around 11-12 lakh tonnes, lower than 15-16 lakh tonnes that was expected. Export demand for groundnut has left little for millers. Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 566. Ruchi offered it at Rs 560-562, soya refined oil at Rs 665 and sunflower refined oil at Rs 668. Allana quoted palmolein at Rs 566. In Saurashtra and Rajkot, groundnut oil was unchanged at Rs 1,655 for a *telia* tin and at Rs 1,075 for loose (10 kg). **Malaysian palm oil's** March contract settled at 3,145 ringgit (3,158 ringgit) and April at 3,148 ringgit (3,155 ringgit) a tonne. On the National Board of Trade in Indore, soya refined oil's February contract closed higher at Rs 704.20 (Rs 701.50) and March at Rs 699.60 (Rs 694.30).

Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg): groundnut oil — 1,050 (1,055), soya refined oil — 665 (655), sunflower seed exp. ref. — 610 (605), sunflower seed ref. — 675 (670), rapeseed ref. oil — 762 (757), rapeseed expeller ref. — 732 (727), cottonseed ref. oil — 621 (615) and palmolein — 560 (559).

Firm rupee may neutralise sugar export move



Mumbai, Feb. 9:

Sugar fell on Thursday on need-based demand and higher sales by millers.

On the Vashi wholesale spot market, S-grade dropped by Rs 10 a quintal, while M-grade was unchanged. *Naka* price for S-grade declined by Rs 40 on the higher side and M-grade lost Rs 20-50 because of poor quality. Stockists said mill tender rates gained slightly by Rs 5-10 as on expectation of higher demand.

A market analyst said the Centre's move to allow 10 lakh tonnes more for exports will not have a big affect as international prices have not increased much. Besides, since January 1 the rupee has strengthened against the dollar by Rs 4.15 to Rs 49.18, making Indian sugar costlier in the global market. The 10-lakh-tonne-quota allowed for exports in November 2011 has not been completed yet.

Arrivals in Vashi were 53-54 truckloads and local dispatches were around 45-46 truckloads. On Wednesday, 23-24 mills sold nearly 75,000-80,000 bags through tender offers at Rs 2,810-2,860 (Rs 2,800-2860) for S-grade and Rs 2,920-2,960 (Rs 2,890-2,950) for M-grade.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade — Rs 2,922-2,982 (Rs 2,931-2,982) and M-grade — Rs 3,031-3,101 (Rs 3,031-3,102).

***Naka* delivery rates:** S-grade — Rs 2,900-2,930 (Rs 2,900-2,970) and M-grade — Rs 3,000-3,030 (Rs 3,020-3,080).

Turmeric rebounds to Rs 5,000 a quintal



Erode, Feb. 9:

Spot turmeric prices increased by Rs 100-150 a quintal on Thursday to touch a four-month of Rs 5,000 following upcountry demand.

“After four months time, the price touched Rs 5,000 a quintal on Thursday. Buyers quoted higher price for quality arrivals. Also, they have got demand from Patna, Delhi and Maharashtra.

“Arrivals topped crossed 10,000 bags and sales were very encouraging with 80 per cent being picked up at the auctions,” said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said after some months, the minimum price fetched for both the varieties of turmeric increased to Rs 4,000 a quintal. Very fine varieties of old crop which were brought to the market by some farmers, fetched good price.

Of the total arrival of 10,000- odd bags of turmeric, the new crop will be around 6,500 bags. In Gobichettipalayam Cooperative Marketing Society, 511 bags of old crop arrived, and because of the fine variety, prices were increased. All bags were sold.

The price of the Hybrid Salem crop also increased due to its quality. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety (old crop) was sold at Rs 3,716-4,859 a quintal, the root variety Rs 3,566-4,495.

The finger variety (new crop) was sold at Rs 3,499-4,519. The root variety Rs 3,220-4,366.

Salem crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 4,220-5,395, the root variety Rs 4,196-4,574. Totally 2,609 bags of turmeric (1,936 of new turmeric, 673 old crop) arrived for sales, of that 2,100 were sold.

At the Regulated Marketing Society, the finger variety (Old crop) was sold at Rs 4,599-4,989, the root variety Rs 4,016-4,300.

The finger variety (New Crop) was sold at Rs 4,019-4,679, the root variety Rs 3,850-4,219.

Pepper moves up despite liquidation

KOCHI, FEB. 9:

The pepper market moved up on Thursday despite drop in open interest after high volatility. All the active contracts ended above the previous day closing.

The market opened on a firmer note and traded with volatility. In the beginning of afternoon session Feb fell and touched the lowest levels. Thereafter, it traded with volatility and in the closing session it moved up and just before closing touched the highest price of the day. Then

declined but ended below the previous day closing. As the financial year end is nearing long position holders were preferring liquidation while short position holders were opting for delivery because of the taxation problems which discouraged the investors from carrying forward as the tax refund is allegedly unduly delayed, market sources told *Business Line*. Consequently, there were liquidations and fresh buying.

There was no selling pressure of farm grade pepper. Arrivals of new pepper continued to remain tight. Feb contract on the NCDEX increased by Rs 290 to Rs 29,800 a quintal. Mar and Apr went up by Rs 425 and Rs 380 respectively to Rs 30,175 and Rs 30,430 a quintal. Total turn over increased by 520 tonnes to 3,047 tonnes. Total open interest dropped by 246 tonnes to 8,398 tonnes. Open interest for Feb fell by 299 tonnes showing good liquidation to 3,979 tonnes. Open interest for Mar and Apr moved up by 4 tonnes and 30 tonnes respectively to 2,912 tonnes and 686 tonnes. Spot prices in tandem with the futures market trend moved up by Rs 200 to Rs 29,800 (Ungarbled) and Rs 31,300 (MG 1) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market was at \$6,400-6,425 a tonne (c&f) for Europe and \$6,700-6,725 a tonne (c&f) for the US.

Tight supplies lift mustard oil



Indore, Feb. 9:

Mustard oil remained bullish over the week in Madhya Pradesh *mandis* as demand outstripped supplies.

In the past one week, mustard oil prices have risen by Rs 20-35 for 10 kg. It was Rs 5 up at Rs 690 for 10 kg in Indore mandis, Rs 5 up at Rs 700 in Moorena, Rs 2 up at Rs 682 in Neemuch, Rs 5 up at Rs 715 in Kota, Rs 5 up at Rs 730 in Jaipur and Rs 5 up at Rs 715 in Ganganagar. It ruled firm in Gujarat *mandis* at Rs 680.

Dry mustard seeds gained at Rs 2,950 a quintal, while new mustard seeds ruled at Rs 2,500-2,550. Old mustard seeds at Moorena *mandis* ruled at Rs 3,325. With mustard seeds being in short supply, their April contract rose to Rs 3,423 a quintal

While 3,000 bags of mustard seeds arrived in Mandsaur, 2,000-2,500 bags arrived at Neemuch.

Global black pepper futures trading to debut on Friday

G. K. Nair



Kochi, Feb. 9:

The world's first global black pepper futures contract will go live on February 10, with its launch by the Singapore Mercantile Exchange (SMX), the first trans-Asian multi-product commodity and currency derivatives exchange.

According to exchange sources, this would be “SMX's first agricultural commodities futures contract, aimed at creating a global benchmark for a commodity predominantly produced and exported from the Asia-Pacific region to the West.”

Vietnam is the largest producer and exporter of black pepper, with 33 per cent and 43 per cent global share respectively, and thus features as the basis delivery centre of the SMX futures

contract. The basis grade is origin-neutral 550 g/l black pepper, considering Indonesia, Malaysia and India are also major exporters of the commodity.

So far, India was the only country that conducted futures trading in pepper at the national level exchange through the electronic media, that could be accessed and viewed all over the world. However, from Friday, Singapore's international exchange would trade pepper to be delivered out of Vietnam bonded warehouses, which means the activity on that exchange would be restricted to Vietnamese pepper alone.

Vietnam has large quantities of pepper — more than 1.25 lakh tonnes — and the bulk of its exports of late have been for 500 g/l faq quality, ever since pepper prices have risen in recent times. There are certain restrictions/controls on the import of such pepper into the US in line with the US/FDA standard and, therefore, it is observed that except for the US, all the other importing countries import the 500 g/l faq grade pepper because of its competitive price in the current high-priced market, the trade here claimed.

Ever since pepper futures were started in India at the national-level exchanges, large operators as well as investors have taken interest in the commodity and, consequently, stocks at the exchange platform have increased considerably, ranging between 4,000 and 6,000 tonnes on an average, they said.

India also tried to establish an international pepper trading hub in its commodity-specific exchange, the India Pepper and Spices Trade Association (IPSTA) at Kochi in the mid-nineties. However, due to restrictions on both inward and outward foreign currency remittances, international players did not warm up to the Indian International Pepper Futures platform and, therefore, the international section was closed down, Mr Kishor Shamji, who was President of IPSTA in those days, told *Business Line*.

Now that attempts are being made to activate Vietnam pepper with Singapore as a hub, international players based in Singapore, Europe and the US are supporting it as they have their own processing facilities in Vietnam, he said. "This platform could be used by them to activate the international pepper market through this exchange. However, after the initial teething troubles, it is hoped that the Singapore-based pepper exchange could well take off," he said.

But doubts were still raised by a section of the trade as to how this exchange "would benefit the Vietnam pepper economy in general and Vietnam farmers in particular, given India's adverse

experience of its national-level pepper exchanges, wherein price movements do not have any co-relation to the fundamentals, with the money power of the operators”.

If such operators take control of the international exchange as well, then “it could benefit as well as hurt Vietnam farmers if the prices at the exchange influenced their local prices adversely”. Anyhow, only time will tell how the international pepper exchange will help the world pepper economy in general and the Vietnamese pepper economy in particular, as the exchange is totally based on Vietnam pepper tenderable through bonded warehouses in Vietnam.

The trade here expressed the hope that the new exchange will be managed and controlled properly by a strong regulator to arrest the unhealthy practices being experienced in India by all sections of the trade equally, including farmers, investors, hedgers and exporters.

Tea output falls short of 1-billion-kg mark



*January-December 2011 Source: Tea Board

Chennai, Feb. 9:

Tea production increased 2.2 per cent in 2011 to a record but lower crop in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu prevented it from touching the magic one-billion-kg figure.

According to Tea Board data, production increased to 988.32 million kg (mkg) against 966.40 mkg the previous year. The previous record production was witnessed in 2007 when the production was 986.43 mkg.

West Bengal

Output in West Bengal dropped to 226.36 million kg against 229.78 mkg a year ago, particularly with Terai region being a drag. Production in Terai dropped to 73.33 mkg against 76.35 mkg. Similarly, Dooars produced 143.23 mkg tea (144.56 mkg).

The West Bengal crop was hit by heavy rain during monsoon last year.

Darjeeling tea production increased to 9.7 mkg against 8.8 mkg a year ago.

Production in Assam increased over 28 mkg to 508.74 mkg with the Assam valley contributing an additional 31.93 mkg at 460.66 mkg (428.73 mkg). There was a 3 mkg drop in production in the Cachar region (40.97 mkg vs 51.55 mkg).

Tamil Nadu

In South India, production dropped by 2.4 mkg to 240.88 mkg (243.37 mkg) with the crop being over 3 mkg lower in Tamil Nadu. Kerala reported a better crop, while there was marginal fall in Karnataka.

Tamil Nadu's crop was hit initially by a dry spell in the early parts of 2011 and then by wet spells and frost in the latter part of the year.

The country had targeted a production of 1 billion kg by 2010 but poor crop management due to lower prices and weather combined to cause setback.

After touching a record 986.43 million kg in 2007, tea production dropped to 980.82 mkg in 2008 and further to 978 mkg in 2009 and 966.40 mkg in 2010.

Higher prices following lower crop in Kenya and Sri Lanka led to better prices in 2010. This, in turn, led to better crop management and higher production last year.

However, exports are estimated to have dropped by over 6 mkg in 2011 to 186.73 mkg (193.29 mkg) as Kenya and Sri Lanka made a strong comeback. Problems in exports to Iran and Iraq also contributed to the drop, last year.

Rs 110-cr budget provision for watershed, soil enrichment in Karnataka

Anil Urs, Bangalore Feb. 9:

The Karnataka Government has made budget provision of Rs 110 crore for watershed and soil enrichment ('BhooChetana') project, for the year 2012-13, which is being implemented in collaboration with the International Crops Research Institute for Semi Arid Tropics (Icrisat).

Mr Suhas P. Wani, Programme Director - Resilient dry land Systems, Icrisat told *Business Line* that the farmers who implemented 'BhooChetana' on their fields have witnessed improvement in their farm management practices and are experiencing the benefits of inter cropping on their fields and this has also boosted their earnings.

Mr K.V. Sarvesh, Karnataka Director Agriculture Department, said the State has set a target of achieving over 60 per cent under 'BhooChetana' at 50 lakh hectares for the year 2012-13 as compared to 30.79 lakh hectares achieved in 2011-12,"

"In 2011-12 kharif season, we were able to achieve 25.39 lakh hectares covering 30 districts and during rabi season, 13 districts with an area of 5.4 lakh hectares was covered," Mr Sarvesh added.

Enhanced yield

The introduction of watershed and soil enrichment methods has enhanced yields ranging from 25-50 per cent from districts in treated plots in comparison with non-treated plots in the State.

For the programme, Icrisat has given active technical support focusing on soil enrichment and productivity and in rain-fed areas.

To raise farm output

The State Government implemented 'BhooChetana' on mission mode project in 2009 to improve the livelihood of the dry land farmers by increasing agricultural productivity.

The project commenced during kharif 2009-10 was initially implemented in six districts – Dharwad, Haveri, Chitradurga, Tumkur, Chikkaballapur and Kolar.

Mr Sarvesh said "Initially an area of 2.25 lakh hectares covering four crops – groundnut, ragi, maize and soyabean was taken up. Now about 20 crops and the entire State is covered."

Global tea output falls 1.31%

P.S. Sundar

Coonoor, Feb. 9:

With all major producing countries except India reporting a lower output, the global black tea production in calendar 2011 has registered a 1.31 per cent decline over 2010, reveals an analysis of the latest data available with trade bodies and the Tea Board.

“According to our compilation, global black tea production declined to 1931.16 million kg (mkg) from 1956.74 mkg in 2010,” Mr Rajesh Gupta, Director, Global Tea Brokers, told *Business Line* on Thursday.

This reduction of 25.58 mkg marks a decline of 1.31 per cent.

Kenya posted the largest decline of 21.10 mkg to dip to 377.90 mkg, followed by Indonesia 10.70 mkg (production: 56.30 mkg); Uganda 6.96 mkg (40.28); Malawi 4.50 mkg (47.10 mkg) and Sri Lanka 3.06 mkg (328.37 mkg). Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Bangladesh have also posted a lower output.

Consequently, India was the only country recording an increase in production. Here again, South India's output declined 2.49 mkg to dip to 240.88 mkg. North India was the only major region among all tea producing zones in the world, where production of black tea had increased. It showed a significant gain of 24.42 mkg to reach 747.45 mkg. Collectively, India produced 988.33 mkg, up by 21.93 mkg over 2010.

Nevertheless, this increase was inadequate to make good the output loss recorded by all other nations.

States told to streamline procurement, distribution of foodgrains



The Planning Commission Deputy Chairman, Mr Montek Singh Ahluwalia. (file photo)

New Delhi, Feb 9:

Asking the states to streamline procurement, storage and distribution of foodgrains, the Planning Commission Deputy Chairman, Mr Montek Singh Ahluwalia, today said with ten per cent improvement in efficiency, Rs 7,000 crore can be saved every year.

“A ten per cent improvement in efficiency could save Rs 7,000 crore. This will also reduce the cost to the exchequer while expanding the entitlement system as formulated in the Food Security Bill,” he said here while addressing a conference here on ‘Targeted Public Distribution System and Storage’.

The two-day conference, which saw the participation of ministers and senior officials from all the states, was marked by brainstorming in the run-up to the expected enactment of the Food Security Bill.

The Food Bill, pushed by the UPA Chairperson, Ms Sonia Gandhi, has been introduced in Parliament and is being examined by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Food.

“We are on the verge of moving to a further stage with the Food Security Bill. However, a lot of work has to be done like modernisation of storage, increasing foodgrains production further and using latest technology for efficient distribution,” Mr Ahluwalia said.

He said the state governments will have to play a key role in all these steps.

“In the 12th Plan (2012-17) we should put in place a monitorable set of ideas to see how much progress we have met in the field of food security,” he said.

“Besides increasing production even further, we also need to spread procurement and this is a very important aspect of food security. Eastern states will have to take special steps in this regard,” the Plan panel deputy chief said.

Use of end-to-end computerisation has led to elimination of bogus ration cards and with the use of the Aadhaar unique national card, the distribution system could be built up further.

“Besides technology will ensure efficient management of the supply chain and grievance redressal,” Mr Ahluwalia said.

According to him, with the enactment of the Food Security Bill there will be an increase in the storage requirement.