

Published: February 3, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: February 3, 2012 04:28 IST

Karshakajyothi honours seven farmers

A Correspondent

The Karshakajyothi, a farmers club sponsored jointly by the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) and NABARD, has honoured seven farmers in the district for their achievements.

Eldo Baby at Settukkunnu near Pozhuthana, an intensive integrated farmer; Degol Thomas at Mananthavadi, a farmer who produced 5.5 ton vegetables from his 25 cents of land by adopting precision farming techniques; M.P. Ashok Kumar at Pariyaram near Muttill who had set a model for the coffee farmers in the district by increasing coffee production fourfold from a plant by adopting an innovative grafting technique on coffee stumps; Raman of Kammana, a tribal farmer at Mananthavadi who has been conserving 30 species of paddy varieties indigenous to Wayanad; Sosamma Abraham, who adopted a less expensive method in her fisheries farm at Arincherimala near Panamaram; Babu Thomas at Poothadi who has set a model in zero-budget farming; and Muraleedharan at Chundale, a progressive dairy farmer, were honoured here recently. N.S. Sajikumar, Deputy General Manager, NABARD, inaugurated the function. N. Anilkumar, director, MSSRF, presided over the function. A. Ratnam, former chairman, MSSRF, presented gifts to the farmers.

KOLLAM, February 3, 2012

Cashew training programme

The Cashew Export Promotion Council (CEPC) in association with the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) and the Cashew Special Office is organising a two-day training programme on “Value addition of cashew apple” at the Cashew Bhavan here on February 16 and 17. Principal scientist and head of the CEPC Laboratory V.P. Potty said that various value-added products could be made from cashew apple and the methods developed by the Cashew Research Station of the KAU would be imparted at the training programme. An exhibition of various value-

added products of cashew apple would also been arranged. Training would be provided to 25 persons in two batches. Those interested in attending the programme should contact Ph: 0474-2761003 for details and registration. Applications addressed to Mr. Potty in plain paper should reach the Cashew Bhavan, Mundakkal, Kollam-691001 by February 10.

Published: February 3, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: February 3, 2012 04:24 IST

National seminar on biotechnology begins

Staff Reporter

A two-day national seminar on 'recent trends in biotechnology' organised by the Department of Zoology at Catholicate College began at the college auditorium here on Thursday.

Kuriakose Mar Cleemis Metropolitan, college manager, inaugurated the seminar held in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.

George Varghese Koppara, Principal, presided over the inaugural function.

Balagopal, Director of Bio-campus at the Mar Athanaseus College For Advanced Studies Thiruvalla (Macfast), delivered the keynote address and G.John, college bursar, spoke.

As many as 70 delegates from different colleges across the State are attending the seminar, M.J. Elizabeth, head of the department, said.

M.R. Unni, Registrar of Mahatma Gandhi University, will deliver the valedictory address on Friday afternoon.

Published: February 3, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: February 3, 2012 04:31 IST

State to make massive paddy procurement

Special Correspondent

Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy has said his government will undertake a massive paddy procurement from farmers hereafter as a strategy to bring down rice prices in the open market besides ensuring MSP to them.

The present plan is to increase the government paddy purchases from 25 per cent to 50 per cent. A big beginning was made last year when a record of 24 lakh tonnes of rabi paddy was

procured, he said at a media conference here on Thursday following discussions with Union Minister of State for Food K. V. Thomas, accompanied by Civil Supplies Minister D. Sridhar Babu.

Mr Thomas heaped praise on Andhra Pradesh, saying it contributed the largest quantity of paddy/rice to the Central pool (158 lakh tonnes procured last year) and helped Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. He complimented the Andhra farmer for this but ruled out any “special treatment” to him by way of allowing a higher MSP or a special incentive. However, he asked the State to go for higher production targets, especially in the light of bringing 30 lakh acres of additional ayacut.

At discussions, Kerala Labour Minister and in-charge for Civil Supplies Shibu Baby John, who was present along with Union Minister of State for Defence M. Pallam Raju, sought increased supply of Andhra rice to his State.

Answering questions, the Chief Minister said the Centre was extending a heavy subsidy to his Rs-one-per-kg rice scheme. As such, one “should not belittle the Centre in this connection lest the State should face problem”. A foolproof system would be adopted to ensure MSP to farmers.

To start with, payment would be made through cheques/online now in three districts as an experiment. He warned of severe action if any miller failed to pay MSP to the farmer.

• *State contributed the largest quantity of paddy to the Central pool, says Union Minister Thomas*

• *Chief Minister warns of severe action if any miller fails to pay MSP to the farmer*

ARIYALUR, February 3, 2012

Exposure visit for farmers

A group of 50 farmers, mainly constituting women, left Ariyalur on Thursday for ‘Abinav’ village in Attur Taluk of Salem district, on a two-day exposure visit organised by Animal Husbandry Department, under the National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas.

Efficient farmers and livestock rearers in Senthurai Panchayat Union's Anaivari stream project area, for which an allotment of Rs.36.33 lakh has been made for watershed development during

2007-2013, were chosen for the visit. The farmers will observe agriculture related techniques, method of rearing of high-quality milch cows, fodder cultivation, and ways to prevent animal diseases during the visit.

KANNUR, February 3, 2012

'Nattukoottam' to share farm methods

Indigenous agricultural practices, rural technologies once popular among farmers, and home-grown farming methods will be featured at Kottiyur here on February 4 in connection with the first 'Nattukoottam 2012' programme being organised jointly by the Agriculture Department and the Kottiyur grama panchayat. Panchayat president Saju Vathyat and principal agricultural officer P.P. Rasheedali said at a press conference here on Thursday that the 'Nattukoottam,' being organised for strengthening agriculture through extension programmes, would be held at Mannamcheri near Kottiyur Temple.

PATHANAMTHITTA, February 3, 2012

State for productive use of farm land

Next phase of Munnar mission to begin soon

Revenue Minister Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan has said the United Democratic Front Government will take every possible effort to conserve nature. The Minister was talking to reporters at Cherukolpuzha, near Kozhencherry, on the government's approach towards wetland conservation on World Wetland Day on Thursday. Referring to the recent High Court directive regarding paddy field conversion, Mr. Radhakrishnan said the government was for the productive use of land, especially the land that had been identified as unsuitable for cultivation. However, there was no question of permitting illegal conversion of paddy fields and wetlands in the name of development, he said.

Munnar mission

The Minister said Thursday's order of the Kerala High Court upholding the acquisition of a multi-crore private resort in Munnar was a shot in the arm for the UDF government. Mr. Radhakrishnan said the order would give moral strength to the government in its mission to clear all encroachments in Munnar. He said the government would soon launch its second

phase of action against the encroachments and illegal possession of government land in different parts of Munnar. The government would soon set off its "bulldozer of law" against all encroachers in Munnar, he added.

Aranmula issue

The Minister said the Revenue Department had received certain complaints regarding illegal conversion of paddy fields and wetlands in the name of a private airport at Aranmula. The government would look into the matter in all its seriousness. The UDF government had never permitted any illegal activity at Aranmula, he said. Mr. Radhakrishnan said if the Agriculture Department came out with schemes for launching cultivation in fallow lands, the Revenue Department would extend all support to it.

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- *High Court order upholding takeover of Munnar resort hailed*
 - *Minister to look into complaints of land conversion in Aranmula*

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Govt discontinues weekly WPI release

Agencies Posted online: Thu Feb 02 2012, 12:20 hrs



New Delhi : The government today announced discontinuing releasing weekly primary and food inflation data based on the Wholesale Price Index.

"Weekly WPI is discontinued henceforth," the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, which releases the inflation data, said.

The government, however, will continue releasing the monthly headline or overall inflation data, which also contains the break-up for all segments including food, non-food, fuel and manufactured items.

The headline inflation figures for January are scheduled to be released on February 14.

Besides, from this month the government will also come out with a retail inflation data based on the all-India Consumer Price Index. The first nationwide CPI numbers, for the month of January, will come out on February 21.

The government has last month decided to do away with the practice of releasing the weekly primary and food inflation data as the figures were not portraying the "holistic" picture of the price situation.

The decision was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Senior officials had said that the reason for doing away with the weekly figures was because there used to be lot of variation in the weekly primary and food inflation numbers and the monthly data.

Besides, according to government sources, the weekly data were not giving any "clear and holistic" picture of the inflation situation.

Business Standard

Friday, Feb 03, 2012

Fungus boosts veg crop

Baldev S Chauhan / New Delhi/ Shimla February 03, 2012, 0:33 IST

Scientists have discovered a cultivable fungus that is found to possess the powers to increase the growth and productivity of vegetables in the hilly areas of Himachal Pradesh. The mycorrhiza-like micro organism, called *piriformospora indica* (PFSI), can boost the yield of vegetables including cauliflower, capsicum and tomato, according to K S Bains, director general of Amity University, Noida.

The national centre of organic farming has recommended the use of this fungus for all Himachali crops, particularly horticulture plants, grain crops and vegetables. The scientists in the university have conducted successful trials on vegetable crops in Kangra and Kullu districts in varied temperature.

The endeavour, under which around 125 farmers were provided free samples of the fungus for use in around 150 kanal area crops, has been successful in both places, with the crop yield, quality and productivity rising "manifold" due to use of PFSI, says Bains.

The fungus has also improved the growth and overall biomass production of diverse hosts, including legumes and plants that are important from medicinal and economic angles. Amity, Bains informs, will now provide free samples of the fungus to the apple orchardists in Himachal Pradesh to ensure that the crops are disease-free, and that there is an increase in their content and quality.

The institute has appointed Manali's Lahaul Potato Society as the nodal agency for the promotion of PFSI among the farming community. There is a move to form more such

agencies in the state in the near future, he adds.

Global coffee exports decline 1.4% in Oct-Dec

Press Trust of India / New Delhi February 02, 2012, 13:54 IST



World coffee exports declined by 1.4% to 24.39 million bags in October-December 2011, the International Coffee Organisation (ICO) has said.

The world-wide shipments of the brew stood at 24.74 million bags of 60 kg each in October-December 2010.

The said quarter is also the first quarter of a coffee year that runs from October to September.

Following a fall in exports in the first month of the current crop year, global shipments of coffee had witnessed a marginal rise in November.

However, world coffee exports fell marginally to 9.14 million bags in December 2011 from 9.20 million bags in the year-ago period.

While, coffee exports in November 2011 rose marginally to 7.78 million bags from 7.75 million bags in the same period of the previous year, shipments of the brew had declined by 9% to 7.11 million bags in October 2011 as against 7.79 million bags in October of the 2010.

However, coffee exports in calendar year 2011 rose by 8% to 103.68 million bags compared to 95.85 million bags in 2010 calendar year.

The global body on coffee has also revised its production estimate for the brew in the 2011-12 coffee year.

Coffee output is expected to decline by 1.3% to 132.4 million bags in the 2011-12 coffee year from 134.2 million bags in the 2010-11 coffee year.

In December last year, the ICO had revised the global coffee production estimate for the current coffee year to 128.6 million bags, 1.2 million bags more than the forecast it made in November, 2011.

According to the ICO, coffee production could be affected in the 2011-12 crop year due to adverse weather.

Fertiliser firms in two minds on price cut

Sitting on high inventory when the agricultural season has come to an end, they decide to watch global rate movements

Anindita Dey / Mumbai February 3, 2012, 0:58 IST

The Indian fertiliser market is laden with stocks at a time when the agricultural season has come to an end and inventory should be low.

Most companies are focusing on spot purchases since global prices are low, said an official from a national fertiliser company. The rupee is also strengthening, which works in favour of imports, so there's wait and watch, officials said.

Usually when global prices fall, bulk purchases get attractive discounts. Companies stock inventory towards March–April to meet demand for the kharif season, which starts in June–July. This is also to meet unseen demand, since March–April is the period for annual plant shutdown by many companies for maintenance.

However, officials added, this year there is huge piling of inventory across products at various ports. “Dealer discounts and rebates are likely to go up to push offtake in the market down the line in a few months,” said fertiliser manufacturer sources.

However, there seem to be divergent views among companies on reduction in the retail price. Those not supporting a price cut argue that a downward revision will be a loss for companies, since demand for fertiliser has anyway come down substantially this year.

Second, farmers would expect the same price to continue for the kharif season, the peak

one for fertilisers. Third, since plant shutdown will be there for many production facilities in March- April, demand and supply will be managed.

Usually a dealer gets a rebate of Rs 250-400 a tonne, which may go up now by another Rs 200-400 a tonne across complexes. Globally, the price of the main raw material, ammonia, has crashed from a high of \$575-625 a tonne to \$470 a tonne including freight. The price of diammonium phosphate, the main fertiliser has come down from a high of \$675-685 per tonne to \$525 per tonne.

At the beginning of last year in India, average prices were Rs 650-680 per bag and are now Rs 1,000 per bag. DAP was Rs 11,000 a tonne at the beginning of the kharif season in May-June and is now Rs 18,500 a tonne. Since April 2010 when the government decontrolled non-urea fertilisers, of DAP has almost doubled from Rs 9,350 a tonne at the time.

The sector faces a huge demand and supply gap in India. While urea is completely regulated, supply and pricing of two other major varieties, DAP and muriate of potash, is deregulated.

The total installed capacity is 17.7 million tonnes. According to 2009-10 data, annual domestic consumption has increased from 70,000 tonnes in 1951-52 to 26.4 million tonnes in 2009-10. Currently, the annual fertiliser subsidy stands at Rs 90,000 crore.

Sources in fertiliser companies said the global outlook for all categories was bearish, as is evident from forward swap rates in the market.

Mentha oil up 1% on industrial demand

Press Trust of India / New Delhi February 02, 2012, 13:29 IST



Mentha oil prices gained by Rs 15.50 to Rs 1,594.30 per kg in futures trade today as traders indulged in creating fresh positions, driven by pick up in spot market demand.

Mentha oil prices rose in the domestic markets due to pick up in the spot market demand and speculators enlarging their positions

supported by rising industrial demand. Restricted arrivals from Chandausi in Uttar Pradesh also influenced the mentha oil prices at futures trade. At the Multi Commodity Exchange, mentha oil for delivery in February gained Rs 15.50, or 0.98%, to Rs 1,594.30 per kg, with a trading volume of 1,133 lots, while the March contract rose by Rs 11.90, or 0.74% to Rs 1,615 per kg, with a business turnover of 177 lots.

April menthol oil was up Rs 11.10, or 0.69%, to Rs 1,615 per kg, with a business turnover of 11 lots.

Marketmen said fresh buying by traders following pick up in spot demand and lower arrivals from Chandausi in Uttar Pradesh mainly pushed up mentha oil prices at futures trade.

THE HINDU Business Line

Govt discontinues weekly release of WPI inflation

K.R. Srivats



The Hindu

New Delhi, Feb 2:

The Centre has discontinued with immediate effect the weekly release of wholesale price index (WPI) for the commodities/items under the groups 'primary articles' and 'fuel and power'.

This follows the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) decision to this effect at its meeting on January 24 this year. WPI will henceforth be released on a monthly basis only, an official release said.

The monthly WPI for January 2012 will be released on February 14. The last weekly WPI for the week ended January 14 was released on January 27.

Spot turmeric gains despite heavy inflow



Erode, Feb. 2:

Spot turmeric prices increased by Rs 100 a quintal on Thursday on demand from North India.

“Noticing the increase in price, more farmers brought their produce for sale. About 9,800 bags arrived for sale. Of this, 60 per cent was new crop. Bulk buyers purchased almost all the new crop and 40 per cent of the old crop quoting a higher price. Despite heavy arrivals, prices increased due to demand from North India,” said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association. He said sales were encouraging with 70 per cent.

He said buyers purchased mainly the Mysore variety by quoting increased price, but for the Number 8 variety, they purchased a minimum quantity at a lower price. He said that from Monday onwards heavy stock will arrive.

Regarding arrivals and sales in Nizamabad market, he said on Thursday 6,000 bags of new crop arrived and all the bags were sold. Prices are almost at a par with Erode price. The Salem Hybrid variety decreased by Rs 150 a quintal due to arrival of low quality.

After 20 days, the Regulated Marketing Committee witnessed the arrival of 2,000 and odd bags on Thursday and sales were 1,587 bags. Prices did not improve.

Salem Crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 4,788-5,089 a quintal while the root variety Rs 4,100-4,309. Out of arrival of 1,425 bags of new crop and 1,310 bags of old crop, 1,531 bags were sold.

Nabard to implement negotiable warehouse receipt system



Mr S.N.A. Jinnah

Bangalore, February 2:

Nabard plans to implement Centre's Negotiable Warehouse Receipt (NWR) system along with interest subvention scheme in Karnataka to prevent distress sale by farmer.

According to Mr S.N.A. Jinnah, Chief General Manager, Nabard - Karnataka Region, "Under the NWR scheme, loans can be availed by farmers at 7 per cent against the negotiable warehouse receipts. Small and marginal farmers can benefit through interest subvention on loans for storage of agriculture produce."

Storage benefit is available for an additional period of six months to small farmers / marginal farmers having Kisan Credit Cards (KCCs). This is expected to benefit the eligible farmers in Karnataka to store and realise remunerative prices for their agriculture produce.

For the appropriate growth and development of the warehousing sector in the country and to bring efficiency in the conduct of warehousing business, Centre introduced NWR system by enacting the Warehousing (Development & Regulatory) Act, 2007.

At present, loans are available to farmers to raise crop at concessional rates due to interest subvention provided both Centre and the state government.

“Farmers are granted post-harvest loans against the negotiable warehouse receipts at commercial rates. To prevent distress sale of the crops by farmer, a new interest subvention scheme has been introduced by Central Government is being implemented by us,” Mr Jinnah explained.

Farmers to be paid minimum price by cheque from April



The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr N. Kiran Kumar Reddy (left), and the Union Minister of State for Food and Consumer Affairs, Prof. K. V. Thomas, at a meeting on minimum support price in Hyderabad on Thursday. — P. V. Sivakumar

Hyderabad Feb. 2:

Prof K.V. Thomas, the Union Minister of State for Food and Consumer Affairs Minister, said the Government is working towards a policy to make it mandatory for food grain procurers to pay minimum support price to farmers only through cheque from April 2012. This is aimed to ensure that farmers across the country receive the MSP for rice. He said the Centre would permit the export of additional quantity of non-basmati rice, given the comfortable stocks available and international price trends. Prof. Thomas said so far about 22 lakhs of non-basmati rice was exported from India since the Government allowed the exports since last year. Out of this, about 15 lakh tonnes was from Andhra Pradesh. “We will be allowing some more exports. After consultations with the State Governments and taking into account the stock position, we will

close the export after it reached a particular level,” he told media persons here on Thursday. He however pointed out that infrastructure at certain ports was not conducive to rice exports. The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr N. Kiran Kumar Reddy, who was present at the news conference, said the State Government would take up on-line transfer of MSP to farmers, as a pilot project in two or three districts during the ensuing rabi.

PDS

Prof Thomas said the Ministry was embarking on a programme for end-to-end modernisation and computerisation of the public distribution system. This will cover the entire chain from the Food Corporation of India's procurement to the fair price shop. “This is one of the issues that will be discussed at the two-day meet of state civil supplies and agriculture Ministers scheduled in Delhi from February 8,” he said. The meeting will also discuss how States should be provided financial assistance to take up the PDS modernisation programme. “Modernisation of the storage infrastructure so far has brought down loss from 2.5 per cent to 0.01 per cent,” he pointed out. Prof Thomas said the Ministry will “positively consider” the plea of the AP Government to provide a bonus of Rs 120 over and above the MSP to farmers.

Dairy sector seeks duty cuts to spur growth, demand



New Delhi, Feb. 2:

In a bid to promote the processing and packaging of milk in the country, the dairy sector has sought exemption of excise duty and value added tax (VAT) on equipment and machinery in the upcoming Union Budget. Besides, the industry has also sought a uniform VAT rate on all milk products at 4 per cent, which could help drive consumption of such products.

The Indian Dairy Association believes that duty exemption on equipment and machinery would encourage more investments in processing and packaging of milk and milk products. Only 15 per cent of the milk produced in India is processed and packed, thereby leaving scope for adulteration, unhygienic handling and distribution. About 46 per cent of the milk produced in India is in liquid form.

MAT EXEMPTION

The IDA also suggested income tax exemption for co-operative unions at the district and State level to promote dairying in rural areas. Besides, it has also said that the all new dairies and cold chain that qualify for income tax exemption could be further exempted from the minimum alternate tax (MAT), which is about 20 per cent of the book profits.

AVAIL LOANS

Further, the dairy sector has also sought the status of agriculture sector, as it has large potential to generate rural employment. Such a move would also help the dairy sector avail term loans from banks and financial institutions at a concessional rate of 4 per cent, which is currently available for the agriculture sector alone.

The IDA has also demanded that fiscal incentives available for the food processing sector such as reduced excise and customs duties and income tax relief should be extended to the dairy sector.

As cattle feed prices have shot up by over 40 per cent in the past one year due to hike in prices of oilmeals, de-oiled cake and molasses, the IDA has suggested that VAT and other duties on molasses used in cattle feed could be abolished. Such a move would provide relief to the farmers. The IDA has also recommended that the Government fix a special quota for supply of molasses from sugar mills to the co-operative cattle feed plants. It has also suggested that export of all oilmeals should be discouraged by imposing an additional export duty of 20 per cent ad valorem.

Spot rubber slips on buyer resistance



Kottayam, Feb. 2:

Spot rubber turned weak on Thursday. The market lost strength mainly on buyer resistance following the declines in domestic and international futures. Latex 60 per cent continued its upward journey as sellers stayed back tracking the positive reports from the international scene. Sheet rubber weakened to Rs 187 (189) a kg, according to traders. The grade dropped to Rs 188 (189.50) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, as reported by the Rubber Board.

The February series slipped to Rs 188.72 (189.89), March to Rs 192.53. (193.77), April to Rs 198.99 (200.08) and May to Rs 202.49 (203.59) while the June series improved to Rs 202.10 (201) and July to Rs 207.90 (205.79) a kg for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) declined to Rs 198.81 (202.56) a kg at Bangkok. The February futures moved down to ¥296.5 (Rs 191.18) from ¥303 a kg on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 187 (189); RSS-5: 183 (184); ungraded: 179 (179); ISNR 20: 187 (189) and latex 60 per cent: 118.50 (116).

Downside in chilli prices may continue from March



Mumbai, Feb. 2:

The downside in chilli prices, both spot and futures, is not over, traders and analysts said.

For now the commodity may trade steady or even edge upwards before it heads down when crop arrivals improve in March and April, they said.

“Chilli prices have the potential to decline by another Rs 500 a quintal from current levels,” said Mr Ashok Jain, a Guntur-based trader.

He expects prices to move down in March and April when arrival pressure would rise. Spot chilli prices were quoted at Rs 6,482 a quintal in Thursday's early trade at Guntur in Andhra Pradesh. Chilli crop is expected to be higher this year. Last year the crop was estimated at 8 lakh tonnes (lt). This year crop estimates vary between 10-12 lt and 12-13 lt. Last month, chilli farmers in Guntur held a protest rally to draw the Government's attention to the scenario of declining prices. Chilli prices declined to Rs 5,000 a quintal from a peak of around Rs 10,000 as expectations of the crop improved, analysts said. “The market moved down on reports of a good crop in Madhya Pradesh,” said Mr Jain.

Futures trend

The overall long-term trend in chilli futures is likely to be down but in the near-term prices would trade steady and probably move up slightly.

The fall in prices of the 334 variety which is traded in futures has been muted mainly because this variety is exported. "Until fresh arrivals pick up prices are likely to be slightly up," said Ms Nalini Rao, analyst at Angel Commodities. Arrivals are likely to pick up by the end of February, she said. Inflow of chilli crop in Guntur declined to 50,000 bags (one bag contains 45 kg each) and this includes 35,000 bags new crop, MangalKeshav Commodities said. Once arrivals pick up prices may decline by another Rs 1,000 more, said Mr Chowda Reddy, Senior Analyst, JRG Wealth Management. But export demand that is likely to emerge after April would be supportive, he said. He does not expect prices to fall below Rs 5,000 but there is a good support at Rs 5,500.

Ms Rao also expects March futures on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange to find good support at the same level.

Chilli futures for March delivery ended lower at Rs 5,714, down 1.11 per cent on the NCDEX.

Coconut Board to begin procuring copra next week

Kochi, Feb. 2:

The Coconut Development Board will begin procuring fair average quality copra by the second week of this month as part of the price support scheme. The decision was taken at a national-level meeting on the scheme that is in operation for milling copra. The decision assumes significance in the wake of copra prices dropping below the minimum support price of Rs 5,100 a quintal. The meeting, held by the Coconut Development Board, took stock of Kerala and Tamil Nadu's preparedness for price support operations. Mr M. Thomas Mathew, Chairman (in-charge), CDB, chaired the meeting. The meeting requested the Government of Kerala and Tamil Nadu to notify the designated agencies for procurement of milling copra from their States so as to commence procurement at the earliest.

The meeting also decided to request both Governments to permit Coconut Producers' Societies registered with the board, to procure coconut/ copra from their members and to supply copra directly to State-level agencies. .

Bihar to give bio-fertiliser with seeds



Patna, Feb. 2:

The Nitish Kumar Government has decided to make available bio-fertilisers together with the packets of seeds to keep soil productivity high and reduce dependence on chemical fertiliser in Bihar, State Agriculture Production Commissioner, Mr A K Sinha, said on Thursday.

Mr Sinha claimed that the use of green fertilisers such as Sesbenia and bio-fertilisers like compost had reduced the dependence of farmers on chemical fertiliser in several parts of the State. Therefore, it has been decided to promote Sesbenia farming in five lakh hectares, he said.

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