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M.Kulaivaipatti villagers demand fair distribution of milch animals

fair and fair enough: Villagers staging a demonstration demanding fair distribution of milch animals in Pudukottai on Monday.

A section of residents of M. Kulaivaipatti village submitted a petition to Collector V. Kalaiarasi seeking fair distribution of free milch animals to the economically weaker sections.

Streamline

The villagers said that the scheme has come as a boon for economically weaker sections, but its implementation should be streamlined at M. Kulaivaipatti.

Display names

Hailing the significance of the scheme in alleviating poverty, they submitted a memorandum alleging that the names of beneficiaries should be prominently displayed at the village panchayat office.

The Collector said that she would initiate action in this regard.

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Tribals spice up their lives by growing black pepper

Ravi.P.Benjamin



Pepper being grown as an inter-crop in coffee plantations in agency area of Visakhapatnam district.

Government agencies working in the agency areas among the tribal communities which are in coffee production in the district are being encouraged to grow black pepper as an inter-crop and make more lives spicy in the world, as pepper is in huge demand globally and particularly in the western and European countries.

An estimated 150 tonnes of black pepper is being produced by the tribal farmers working under various government and private agencies but the potential for pepper production is a whopping 5,000 tonnes from the district alone. The country's annual production is 50,000 tonnes. India at one time stood on top in pepper production but now Vietnam wrested the position from it.

Intercrop

Pepper is grown as an intercrop by the Andhra Pradesh Forest Development Corporation (APFDC) along with coffee in 4,010 hectares and producing 19 tonnes per year. Coffee Board which has tribal farmers producing coffee in 55,000 hectares are also producing something like 50 tonnes of pepper annually. Under the ITDA and NREGS coffee plantations pepper is also produced to an extent of 50 tonnes. Altogether pepper is being grown in 1.24 lakh acres of tribal holdings and an approximate 150 tonnes of pepper production. 1 tonne of pepper costs Rs.3.5 lakh. Pepper growers in the district are supplying pepper to the Pepper Board of India and doing a business of around Rs.5.25 crore annually.

APFDC general manager A.N. Guru Murthy told *The Hindu* that the potential for boosting pepper production is huge and according to estimates 5,00 tonnes can be produced every year from the district if the coffee producing tribal community is properly motivated.

Pepper is an important ingredient in non-vegetarian food products as well as in some vegetarian food products. It is in great demand in India as well as in almost all the countries globally. It is a sensitive crop and cannot tolerate climatic and moisture stress. Water stress would result in dropping of spikes of the pepper plant which experiences pollination through moisture.

Black pepper or otherwise called piper nigrum is native to India and other South East Asian countries. Black pepper, white pepper, green pepper, pink pepper and red pepper are all differently preserved berries or seeds of the piper nigrum plant.

Processing of white pepper is a difficult proposition but it is in demand in the western countries and costs five times more than black pepper.

Although black pepper has been used as spice for millennia, it has also been traditionally used in India to treat diarrhoea. Recent laboratory studies indicate that black pepper may also be beneficial in pain and Alzheimer's disease. Inhalation of black pepper might cause respiratory irritation and endemic and even respiratory arrest, severe anoxia and even death.

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Egg price continues to soar

The wholesale price of egg increased by two paise on Monday to Rs. 3.28 to reach a new record high price as it broke its previous highest price of Rs. 3.26 on Saturday.

The decision to marginally increase the price was taken at the Rate Fixation Committee Meeting of the National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC), Namakkal zone, at its office here on Monday.

Chairman of the NECC, Namakkal Zone, Dr. P. Selvaraj said that the increase in egg price was due to continued demand for the commodity.

"The price is expected to go up further for the next few days but it will only be a very marginal revision like how it was increased in the last 10 days – by two or three paise," he said.

From May 26 to June 25, the wholesale price of egg has been increased 14 times from Rs. 2.75 to Rs. 3.28 on June 25 (an overall increase by more than 19 per cent). But for two occasions the price revision has been only by 2 or 3 paise.

On the slow and steady revision, the Chairman said that it was based on analysis of the prices in other NECC zones.

"A couple of weeks ago, price of egg in Kolkata reached a record high Rs. 3.50 and was rolled back by 10 paise on the day. We did not give room for such roll back due to the steady revision," Dr. Selvaraj said. According to him, the price is expected to maintain in this range for the next three weeks, after which it may come down.

The price of layer birds (egg laying birds) that was maintained at a record high price of Rs. 54 a kg for nearly three weeks was brought down to Rs. 50 a kg during the end of last week.

This drop came a couple of days before the wholesale price of broiler chicken came down by Rs. 6 from Rs. 76 a kg till Sunday to Rs. 70 on Monday.

The Zonal Chairman said that the price of layers had come down as the production of broiler chicken – that dropped in the summer – had started picking up with mercury levels coming down with the onset of the monsoon in Kerala, recently.

“This has led to drop in the price of broiler and layers as layer bird prices are based on the demand and price of broiler chicken,” he added.

Published: June 26, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: June 26, 2012 04:22 IST

Palar Porundhalar dam water released for irrigation of first crop

Staff Reporter

Water was released from Palar Porundhalar dam for irrigation of the first crop of twin cropping areas in its ayacut here on Monday. Releasing water from the dam, Collector N. Venkatachalam said that 15 cusecs of water has been released from the dam. The release will continue for the next 100 days as per the instructions from the Chief Minister. Water level stood at 37 feet in the dam. Water will be released up to October 2, he added. If there was any failure of monsoon or slump in rainfall and storage level, turn system would be introduced to distribute the available water. Introduction of turn system would depend on water storage in the dam, he added. The Collector also appealed to the farmers to use water judiciously and raise short term crops for better yield and profit. Palani MLA K.S.N. Venugopal, PWD Executive Engineer Chandramohan and farmers took part. Earlier, special pujas were performed at the water release point. The officials sprinkled flowers on the channel as part of the ceremony.

“If there was monsoon failure, turn system would be introduced”

COIMBATORE, June 26, 2012

Training on preparing spice powders and pickles

The Tamil Nadu Agricultural University will organise a training programme in preparation of spice powders and pickles on June 26 and 27 on the university premises.

The training will cover the preparation of the following aspects: spice powders, ready-to-use pastes, mushroom pickle, mixed vegetable pickle, banana flower pickle, bitter gourd pickle, brinjal pickle and drumstick pickle.

Those interested can attend the training by paying a fee of Rs. 1,000.

For details, contact Head, Post Harvest Technology Centre, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore – 641003.

For details, contact 0422-6611268.

COIMBATORE, June 26, 2012

TNAU's Adipattam price forecast

The Domestic and Export Market Intelligence Cell (DEMIC) of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has said that the prize of maize during the harvest in October-December will be around Rs. 1,150 a quintal.

The forecast was made based on the analysis made at the Udumalpet market of Adipattam maize, according to a release from the university.

The price of gingelly, based on the analysis made at the Sivagiri Regulate Market, is expected to be between Rs. 5,500 and Rs. 5,800 a quintal during September -December.

The price of small onion, which will be sowed in July during the Adipattam, is expected to be between Rs. 15 and Rs. 18 a kg during the harvest period September-October. Groundnut, another popular Adipattam crop, is expected to cost around Rs. 48 a kg of kernel for oil extraction during the harvest period October-November, the release says.

For details, contact DEMIC at 0422-2431405.

DHARWAD, June 26, 2012

Lnd acquisition plans will lead to food crisis: KRRS

If the State government goes ahead with its plan to acquire 2.16 lakh acres of land for industries, it could lead to a food crisis, Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS) and Hasiru Sene general secretary Badagalapura Nagendra has said.

Speaking to presspersons here on Monday, Mr. Nagendra said the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board had notified 40,000 acres of agrarian land for acquisition.

MANGALORE, June 26, 2012

Marketing strategy varies for each agricultural product

These products need to respond to changes in the market



Areca plates:As the demand for chewing areca has decreased, attempts are being made to find alternative uses.— file PHOTO: R.M. RAJARATHINAM

Marketing every agricultural crop (not just rubber) requires a system that would respond to changes in the market and this requires to be looked at the State- and national-level, G.V. Joshi, member, State Planning Board, told *The Hindu* .

Rubber cultivation (which is picking in Dakshina Kannada) requires an appropriate institutional arrangement. It must be set up now as there had been a sudden switch to growing rubber which in itself was a challenge, he said.

Other than rubber, the district was known for cultivation and trade in areca, coconut, paddy, and spices such as pepper. Today, the marketing of these products was a study in contrasts. While areca growers were dealing with a demand slump, coconut was marketed directly to sellers. Paddy was no longer cultivated on a commercial scale in Mangalore and vegetables were cultivated only for self-consumption.

Following the decline in chewing areca, growers were trying to find alternative uses so that they could market it. “There is a decreasing demand in usage and some other way has to be found to use it,” Shridhar Bhide, Director, Mangalore Agriculture Sahakari Sangha (MASS), told *The Hindu* . Meanwhile, attempts are on to find alternative uses for areca. Badanaje Shankar Bhat is part of a team that was working on industrial, medical, and pharmaceutical applications of areca. Areca soft drinks and soaps were some products.

Areca wine is waiting for investors who could manufacture it on a commercial scale. A notable change in marketing of agricultural products in the district is “doorstep agricultural marketing” enabled through mobile phone, said G. Giridhar Prabhu, former president of KCCI. One instance is that of marketing coconut (and copra) which used a low-cost system where the buyer and seller decide prices over phone. There was no need for a physical market or for transporting the bulky produce and no product was left unsold. Over the years, some crops that the region was known for, was no longer cultivated. In Mangalore, paddy was grown only for home consumption, as a ritual and “respect to the land”. It was grown very marginally for sale as scarce labour had made it unviable to grow. Instead, farmers have moved on from cultivating paddy to providing services such as rice mills that cater to paddy from north Kerala too. Pepper is currently in good demand. P.B. Abdul Hameed, a Bunder-based trader, said there was shortage of pepper worldwide. “At present, availability of the commodity is all that matters,” he said.

Meanwhile, the Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC), which is supposed to facilitate farmers so that they get the best prices for their produce, has left many traders unhappy. The yard in Baikampady is quiet and there is very little activity evident.

After APMC shifted from Bunder to Baikampady, it lost control of the functioning of the Bunder sub-yard. Earlier, auctions of commodities were held ending with APMC declaring the highest bidder. “Now, we voluntarily give (update) the APMC,” Mr. Hameed said.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, June 26, 2012

Kepeco to take poultry farming to cities

Advancing the benefits of the schemes implemented by the Kerala State Poultry Development Corporation (Kepeco) to urban areas as well is the focus of the ‘Kepeco- Nagarapriya’ programme.

Chief Minister Oommen Chandy inaugurated the scheme on Monday at the Kepeco Poultry Complex at Pettah.

The Chief Minister said that the government aimed at promoting self-sufficiency in meat and egg production.

The achievements of Kepco in bringing about “revolutionary changes in poultry farming” in villages were noted by Minister for Agriculture K.P Mohanan, who presided over the event.



Tue, 26 Jun 2012

weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Tuesday, Jun 26

Max Min

38.3° | 27.8°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Sunrise: 6:35

Humidity: 66%

Sunset: 18:03

Wind: Normal

Barometer: 1007

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

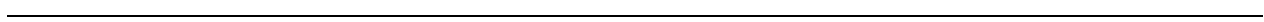
Wednesday, Jun 27

Max Min

35° | 28°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday Jun 28	Friday Jun 29	Saturday Jun 30	Sunday Jul 1	Monday Jul 2
32° 28°	32° 27°	32° 27°	32° 27°	32° 27°
Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy



Farmers' rights authority office to be opened in Kerala soon

Author: A Satish Published Date: Jun 25, 2012 12:51 PM Last Updated: Jun 25, 2012 1:08 PM



The Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority is planning to open its South India office in the state which will benefit the farmers of the state in the certification of indigenous and traditional varieties of crops.

The Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority (PPV&FRA) is planning to open its South India office in Kerala which will benefit the farmers of the state in the certification of indigenous and traditional varieties of crops.

The office will cater to the needs of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh and the Union Territory of Puthucherry.

The centre is likely to function at Kerala Agricultural University at Mannuthy in Thrissur. In a letter to state Agriculture Minister K P Mohan on June 18 registrar general of the PPV&FRA R P Agarwal said that the authority had recently opened branch offices in Guwahati and Ranchi and

has decided to open an office in Thrissur preferably on the Kerala Agricultural University campus and steps may be taken to provide four rooms.

The authority encourages fresh research and helps breeders, farmers and people at large, the letter said.

“It is to fulfil the international commitments under the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) that India enacted the PPV&FR Act in 2001. The Act confers intellectual property rights to plant breeders, farmers and researchers who have bred, evolved or developed new or extinct plant variety,” said P Narayanan Unny of Chittur, member of the PPV&FR Authority and the first recipient of the Plant Genome Saviour Recognition Award in 2008 for conserving the traditional navara rice which had unique medicinal properties.

The Government of India has established the Gene Fund for supporting the activities of conservation and preservation of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. It recognises farmers’ communities and their work for Plant Genome Savior Community Awards instituted under the Gene Fund. “In May 2012, we honoured four farming communities with a cash prize of `10 lakh, a citation and a memento. Of the four communities, two belong to Kerala,” Agarwal said in the letter.

A group of pokkali rice farmers under the aegis of Varappuzha-Kadamakkudy Jaiva Pokkali Society, Kochi, received one of the awards comprising `10 lakh and a citation. The other group which received the award is the Wayanad District Development Action Council which has been engaged in the overall development of the tribal communities of Wayanad and conserving traditional varieties of rice and encouraging traditional agricultural system.

Narayanan Unny said that the authority identifies and recognises institutions and organisations engaged in farming and helps to develop guidelines for DUS (Distinctiveness, Uniformity and Stability) testing. These institutions work as DUS centres supported by the authority. Registration certificates for plant variety protection are issued by the authority. It has developed gene bank facilities and supports selected institutions to develop such facilities in the field known as field gene banks.

Narayanan Unny who represents farmers in the 15-member PPV& FRA said that the chairperson is of the rank of secretary of which 11 members are above the rank of joint secretary. The remaining four members represent NGOs, farmers and seed companies. He said the decision to open an office in South India under the 12th Plan had come up at the meet of the PPV&FR on May 23 in New Delhi.

Though initially it was planned to be set up in Coimbatore, it was later shifted to Thrissur after consultations.

Former MLA and state secretary general of the Socialist Janata (Democratic) K Krishnankutty said that he had held talks with Agriculture Minister K P Mohan in this regard and the centre will be opened in the state.

Rise in input costs keeps farmers worried

Author: Express News Service Published Date: Jun 25, 2012 11:38 AM Last Updated: Jun 25, 2012 11:38 AM

The input cost of cultivation of cotton, chilli and paddy has increased by about 50 percent this Kharif season when compared to last year.

The prices of seed, fertiliser, pesticide and other inputs has increased exponentially which has become a major cause of concern to farmers in Guntur district where paddy and chilli crops are major crops apart from tobacco and cotton.

Kancharla Narasimha Rao, a farmer at Kolakaluru in Tenali mandal, said that he had purchased three DAP (fertiliser) bags at Rs 550 each last year, two urea bags at Rs 380 each and two 20-20-0 complex fertiliser bags at Rs 735 each apart from pesticides worth Rs 5,000. Seeds, planting, cutting, harvesting and other labour expenses cost him Rs 8,000.

The total input cost per acre for cotton crop was Rs 16,000 last year. The land lease was for Rs 15,000.

This year, the price of a DAP bag has reached Rs 1,100, complex fertiliser Rs 1,050 and urea Rs 462. The cost of pesticide has also doubled to Rs 10,000. "Considering the latest prices, my input cost will go up by at least 50 per cent for cultivating paddy. I have to suffer severe losses

unless there is a good crop,” said Narasimha Rao. The tale is no different for most of the farmers in the district.

While the input cost is increasing considerably, they are not sure of recovering the investment, leave alone making any profit. Cotton is being raised in 1.65 lakh hectares in the district this year.

“Last year I cultivated chilli in three acres by investing around Rs 2.25 lakh. The cost this year has almost doubled and I have to invest about Rs 4 lakh,” said E Venkata Krishna, a chilli farmer from Vatticherkura. He said the yield is hardly 15 to 17 quintals and given the current market price of Rs 4,000, the investment on chilli is unlikely to be recovered. According to another farmer, D Govinda Rao of Medikonduru, the investment on paddy has also doubled this year and reached Rs 30,000 due to increase in the prices of inputs.

Officials admit that though they are making all efforts to bring down the input costs by seizing illegally hoarded fertilisers and seeds, they are only able to control black-marketing of seeds and fertilisers.

Monsoon blues: Vegetable prices skyrocket

Author: Express News Service Published Date: Jun 25, 2012 1:32 PM Last Updated: Jun 25, 2012 1:33 PM



Vegetable prices will burn bigger holes in the pockets of common man across Sundargarh district. Many of the commonly consumed vegetables cost between Rs 40 and Rs 60. The new crops are likely to hit the market only after two months. There is no hope of early relief.

Sources said all through the summer vegetable prices troubled consumers and the situation aggravated with the onset of monsoon. Production of vegetable was less due to lack of irrigation, causing price rise in summer.

Cauliflower is selling at Rs 60 to 70 a piece, beans at Rs 120 a kg, capsicum Rs 60 and drumstick Rs 80. Green chilly is the dearest of all with Rs 200 a kg.

Moreover, 'parval' (pointed-gourd), bitter-gourd and another variety of beans (barbatti) were available for Rs 40 a kg. Carrot, lady-finger, tomato, brinjal and cabbage were selling between Rs 25 and Rs 35. Even the less preferred pumpkin and 'kundru' (little-gourd) were available at Rs 25 a kg and bottle-gourd was Rs 20 a piece. Similarly, price of a lemon also jacked up to Rs 3.5. Potato went up to Rs 18 a kg.

Retailer Mohan Parida said they had no control as vegetables were procured from outside at high cost.

Nuagaon-based farmer Gajendra Sahu said usually during monsoon vegetable prices go up, but he admitted the prevailing prices were too high. "The vendors fluctuate prices as per demand and availability," he added.

Restaurant owner Sambhunath Barik said he was facing difficult times and had no option but to increase price of his meals if the situation continued for sometime.

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Groundnut oil prices fall on increased supplies

BS Reporter / Mumbai/ Rajkot June 26, 2012, 0:59 IST

With increase in the availability of groundnut for crushing and a fall in the export demand for peanuts, groundnut oil prices have witnessed a fall of about Rs 50 per tin (15 kg) over the past one week. According to millers and traders, lower demand would further cause a slide in groundnut oil prices over the coming days.

On Saturday, groundnut oil loose traded in the range of Rs 1,195-1,200 per 10 kg and groundnut oil new 15-kg tin traded around Rs 2,045-2,050. The prices have declined by Rs 50 per tin from Rs 2,095-2,100 per tin on Tuesday. About 50-60 tonnes of groundnut oil is traded every day. "Millers can get good stock of groundnut as demand for peanuts has declined. Moreover, price of groundnut is also falling for past couple of days," said Ravjibhai Mandanaka, president of Gondal Oil Mills Association. With increased availability, several millers have resumed their production. Till May this year, only 5 to 7 groundnut oil mills were working. But now about 20-22 mills are engaged with groundnut oil production in Saurashtra region. However, still more than 275 mills are closed across the state. The daily arrival in the state is over 60,000-65,000 bags, out of which millers consume around 35,000-37,000 bags daily. Currently, groundnut price is running at Rs 890-1070 per 20 kg.

Weather plays spoilsport with Assam tea industry

Supratim Dey / Kolkata/ Guwahati June 26, 2012, 0:34 IST

Weather woes continue to haunt Assam tea industry this year as rainless weather condition has resulted in 20 per cent dip in overall tea production till May. Things weren't any better till mid-June either, making the industry worry as the Second Flush (the premium tea producing period which generally starts from mid-May and goes till June) got affected.

Though Tea Board hasn't yet come out with the production figures for April and May, the estimate of 20 per cent dip in production till May has been put forth by tea industry based on inputs from the ground. Further, industry captains have termed the production till mid-June too as "very bad". According to Tea Board figures, there was a dip of almost 27 per cent in tea production in the state till March till year as compared to the same period of last year. This year till March Assam produced around 19 million kgs of tea as compared to 27 million kgs produced during the corresponding period last year.

Harsh weather condition has been continuing since October last year and had resulted in sharp decline in the initial months of 2012, the sharpest being 43 per cent in the month of January this year as compared to January last year.

However, though the tea industry had hoped that the production would improve in the latter months as the weather condition improved in the initial days of April; it soon turned harsh.

"Prolonged drought from mid October, 2011 to end March, 2012 reduced production of Assam tea in the First Flush (production till April) period. Tea production up to April end was about 28 per cent less than 2011. The premium Second Flush (generally from mid-May to June) production has also started with a negative cropping trend and the production remained behind by about 20 per cent up to end of May. Even, the June crop till the middle of the month was very bad," said Bidyananda Barkakoty, chairman of North Eastern Tea Association (NETA).

Being dependent almost wholly on rain, its quantity and distribution control the production of tea. Persistent rainless condition causes drought and prolonged drought has proved to be lethal for the tea plantation. The drought like situation had taken the highest toll of production in Upper Assam which is uncharacteristic for the region, Barkakoty said.

According to P Bordoloi, a tea scientist, in tea growing areas of Assam, 90-94 per cent of the total annual rainfall is normally received during 7 rainy months (April to October).

During the remaining 5 months (November to March), only about 6-10 per cent of rainfall is normally received which causes the problem of moisture stress. Maximum moisture stress was in Mangaldai, Borsola, Tezpur, Nagaon, Golaghat and Karbi-Anglong tea circles this year

Bordoloi added: "Drought is a normal, recurrent feature of climate and is observed in all tea growing zones. It is still largely unpredictable and varies with regard to the time of occurrence, duration intensity, and extent of the area affected from year to year. But a rainfall departure of about 20 per cent from normal during November to March results in severe drought as it happened in the current production year."

Tea plantation of Assam is also exposed to high temperature during the major growing period of April to October, said Bordoloi.

"The rise of temperature year by year is causing another stress. Leaf temperature of 350 C in tea bushes is the upper critical limit for food manufacturing and growth. Above this temperature, production declines sharply and between 390 C and 420 C, there is no net growth. Leaf temperature above 480 C damages leaf tissues which is also experienced in many a times," he said.

Why your omelette's getting costlier

Komal Amit Gera & Vijay C Roy / Chandigarh June 26, 2012, 0:03 IST

The price of eggs is heading northwards —33-38 per cent rise in the last one month. Contrary to the usual trend of prices starting to moderate in summer, these are registering an upward trend across India this year.

There are sundry reasons, the increase in prices of bird feed being prominent. D Chandrasekharan, a senior scientist at the department of animal nutrition, Veterinary College and Research Institute, Namakkal (Tamil Nadu) said, "In the past year, the price of soybean has increased from Rs 18 to Rs 30 per kg, maize from Rs 10 to Rs 13 per kg and rice bran from Rs 6 to Rs 9 per kg."

At such prices, experts say old birds are being culled and many farms are operating at 50-60 per cent of capacity. The prolonged summer this year has also affected production. States in the north might see a 30-40 per cent drop and in the south, output is less by eight to 10 per cent.

"In the north, there is intense heat, so bird mortality went as high as 15 per cent and egg production was hit by 30-35 per cent," said Mohit Raja, director of the Rajpura (Punjab)-based

Raja Farms.

According to P Tamil Arsan of Pepe Farms, Namakkal, having a little over 500,000 birds, "In the last three months, feed prices have shot up by 30 per cent. So, farmers are culling the birds for better returns. The birds are being culled at 17 weeks against the earlier 72 weeks, which could even stretch to 80 weeks."

A dozen eggs are being retailed at Rs 40-50, compared with Rs 30-36 a month before. The National Egg Coordination Committee, the association of poultry farmers (most of the eggs sold in the country come from its members), has asked the government to help.

State to have first potato dehydration centre soon

Press Trust Of India / Mumbai/ Ahmedabad June 26, 2012, 0:01 IST

In a bid to enhance shelf-life of potatoes, Gujarat will soon set up its first potato dehydration centre in Palanpur town with a handling capacity of 500 kg per hour.

The Centre has proposed to invest Rs 19.5 crore in Palanpur town of north Gujarat, accounting for the highest potato output in the state. "

A potato dehydration centre has been planned for Deesa near Palanpur, the potato hub of state. It shall have state-of -the-art machinery to be imported from overseas (possibly Switzerland), which can enhance shelf-life of potatoes," Gujarat Agro Industries Corporation (GAIC) MD N K Singh said.

The site for project has been finalised and the construction work will commence soon after the monsoon, according to officials. The dehydrated potato flakes can be used in place of mashed potatoes. They are functionally like fresh potatoes and could be used for making traditional snacks like samosa, dosa, tikki and parathas, industry experts said.

GAIC is the state government's arm which promotes agricultural activities and fosters development of agro industries in the state. The move is expected to ease problems of wastage during the time of potato glut in the largest growing region of the state."If a potato dehydration facility is set up here it will benefit the farmers and shall help them fetch a better price for their produce," Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC,) Deesa's Director Babu Mali said.

'Ministry preparing Plan B for food Bill'

Thomas promises way forward for stuck legislation in a fortnight discussion on with Planning Commission, others

BS Reporter / Mumbai June 26, 2012, 0:59 IST

Union food minister K V Thomas on Monday said a 'Plan B' was being prepared for getting the stuck Food Security Bill cleared, but would not explain what this consisted of.

The Bill, to provide subsidised grain to a majority of the population, is being examined by a standing committee of Parliament. Its passage has been delayed for a long because of several differences between ministries and policy makers.

Thomas said his ministry was discussing an alternative plan with the Planning Commission and the Prime Minister's economic advisory panel, to reduce the differences among ministries and departments. He said he expected 'Plan B' to be ready in a week or two, to be then presented to the Prime Minister and then sent to the standing committee for hastening the process of getting the Bill cleared.

He said the alternative plan will consider the numbers below and above the poverty line and address all the relevant concerns, but would not divulge any more details.

The proposed Bill seeks to cover 75 per cent of the rural population and 50 per cent of the urban population in the country. Initial estimates suggest the annual food subsidy bill could be upwards of Rs 1 lakh crore. A minimum of 46 per cent of the rural population and 28 per cent of the urban population will get seven kg of foodgrain per month per person. Rice would be provided at Rs 3 a kg, wheat at Rs 2 and coarse grains at Rs 1 a kg.

Among the issues being debated are the subsidy burden, which has been rising steadily in recent years, with crop support prices having been doubled, while central issue prices for foodgrain have not. There is also the issue of procurement and storage.

Rajiv Agrawal, secretary, department of consumer affairs, recalled the food ministry had proposed a new law to regulate national spot commodity exchanges. Three such exchanges are presently operational.

The department is also to set up an advisory committee of all stakeholders, including farmers and even media personnel, to suggest improvements in the regulations for commodity futures. The committee will be formed within a couple of days.

Despite rain worry, minister hopes for normal grain output

BS Reporter / Mumbai June 26, 2012, 0:01 IST

Despite three weeks of below normal rainfall this monsoon, foodgrain production is likely to remain the same as last year, says food and public distribution minister K V Thomas.

On the sidelines of a seminar here on Monday, he said, "We are concerned with the lower rainfall estimates. But, foodgrain production would remain the same as last year."

During the July 2011 to June 2012 season, total foodgrain production was recorded at around 253 million tonnes (mt) as against 235 mt in the previous year.

This season's rainfall was 36 per cent below the long term average (LTA) in the first week, followed by 50 per cent and 24 per cent lower in the second and third weeks. The impact of such a deficiency on kharif sowing can be severe. Uneven distribution of rain and delay holds back sowing of major kharif crops such as cereals (paddy) and oilseeds such as soybean and groundnut. Around 60 per cent of the area under major crops across the country is rain-fed. Also, the distribution of monsoon rain sets the trend for rabi sowing, which controls sensitive commodities, such as pulses and wheat.

The India Meteorological Department has revised its rainfall forecast lower from the earlier 98 per cent of the LTA in the first week of June to 96 per cent in the second. Thomas hinted at a further decline in the forecast.

The food ministry says it has allocated Rs 5,000 crore to states this year to start the process of creating 31 mt of additional storage. It had allocated Rs 2,000 crore last year for creating nine mt of storage. Under the scheme, state governments would be an intermediaries, lifting grain from Food Corporation of India godowns and holding stock until channellised distribution takes place. States are also being urged to lift a quantity equivalent to six months' distribution from the ration shop system.

As on June 1, as much as 82 mt of foodgrain was in the central pool controlled by the FCI, as against the scientific storage facility of 64 mt. The requirement for the Public Distribution System and the Food Security Bill's requirements would be a combined 60-61 mt.

Rajiv Agarwal, secretary to the ministry, said the government had planned to allow 1.5-2 mt of additional rice exports but not in a hurry. "We would focus on our domestic supply first," he added.

THE HINDU Business Line

Edible oil prices up on dry weather

Suresh P. Iyengar



Mumbai, June 27:

The prevailing dry weather in main oilseed growing states such as Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra boosted edible oil prices on Monday.

Rainfall has been 24 per cent below average so far this season. Edible oil prices in the spot market were also up following a firm trend in global markets.

Dry weather in the US also pushed up prices at the Chicago and Malaysian futures markets.

Malaysian BMD CPO (crude palm oil) futures closed higher, tracking gains for Chicago soya oil and could rise further as the premium of soya oil over palm oil has gone up to \$180 a tonne.

The price difference may drive cost-conscious buyers to shift demand to cheaper palm oil.

The Indian rupee fell to near a record low. A weak rupee makes edible oil imports expensive forcing domestic refiners to raise the rate.

Rising demand for palm oil ahead of the fasting month Ramadan in July-end also added to the bullish mood in the market. Demand may stay healthy because of forthcoming festivals.

Mixed trend in spot rubber

Our Correspondent

Kottayam, June 25:

Spot rubber trend was mixed on Monday. The market activities were in an extremely slow pace tracking another weak closing on the National Multi Commodity Exchange while leading counters finished unchanged amidst scattered transactions. Major consuming industries seem to be comfortable with their stocks following heavy imports and the chances for an immediate rise in demand are quite remote.

Sheet rubber finished flat at Rs 186 a kg according to traders. The grade slipped to Rs 186 (186.50) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi as quoted by the Rubber Board.

RSS 4 weakened at its July series to Rs 184.50 (186.21), August to Rs 181.45 (183.60), September to Rs 180.20 (181.96), October to Rs 179.98 (180.22) and November to Rs 180.30 (182.36) a kg on NMCE.

RSS 3 (spot) declined to Rs 185.19 (187.48) a kg at Bangkok. The June futures expired at ¥239 (Rs 170.77) a kg while the July futures dropped to ¥239 (240.7) during the day session and then to ¥233.8 (Rs 166.88) a kg in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 186 (186); RSS-5: 181 (181.50); ungraded: 174 (174); ISNR 20: 181 (181) and latex 60 per cent: 133 (133).

Sugar trade awaits free sale quota allocation



Mumbai, June 25:

Sugar prices at Vashi market rule steady with thin volatility on Monday. Spot rates improve by Rs.25 for S-grade premium quality while M-grade fine variety decline by Rs.10 on higher selling. Naka prices by Rs.10 – Rs.25 on expectation of higher selling by reseller this week. Mill tender rates show mixed trend. Market trend will take lead from announcement of new quarterly free sale quota and progress of monsoon. Sentiment in physical market was steady tracking firmness in futures market said traders.

Mr. Mukesh Kuwadia Secretary of Bombay Sugar Merchants Association told Businessline “Overall sentiment of the market is positive but futures trend will be depend upon the announcement of new quarterly free sale quota for July to September and progress of monsoon as it is already delayed. Further delay may lead to fear about the crop. So far more than 51 lakh hectares area has been covered under sugarcane but lack of rain may lead to lower yield and production”.

Mr. Jagdish Rawal a wholesaler said local demand is need based due to month end time and there is no noticeable active buying from neighboring states in Maharashtra since long as prices are ruling at par with Maharashtra in other producing centers. Traders are bullish about higher demand in coming days as Ramadan starts from July and crushing season got over. Millers are

not very keen to sell at lower rates as they are not under pressure. Mills have continuously sold commodity this month.

Traders said Government has declared total 46 lakh tones of free sale quota for the quarter April- June 2012. Next quarterly free sale quota is expected slightly higher due to start of festival seasons in India. Sugar production this year expected at 260 lakh tonnes compare to 245 lakh tonnes last year. For next season 2012 – 2013 initial estimate is more than 260 lakh tonnes but it will depend upon the progress of rain.

In international markets, sugar futures closed sharply lower last week on eased supply. On Friday, August -12 futures closed lower by \$21.30 to \$585.80 (\$607.10) and October-12 futures down by \$21.80 to \$547.30 (\$569.10) per tones.

In Vashi market arrivals were 50 - 52 truck loads and local dispatches were 50-52 truck loads. On Saturday 10- 11 mills offer tenders and sold about 45,000 – 47,000 bags to local traders in the range of Rs. 2,880-2,930 (Rs 2,860-2,930) for S-grade and Rs 2,960-3,040 (Rs 2,960-3,030) for M-grade.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs 2,972-3,055 (Rs 2,972-3,026) and M-grade Rs 3,052- 3,181 (Rs 3,053-3,191). Naka delivery rates: S-grade Rs 2,935 -2,970 (Rs 2,960-2,980) and M-grade Rs 3,030-3,080 (Rs 3,020-3,090).

Mills' offloading drags non-basmati rice

Karnal, June 25:

Huge stocks and low quality dragged non-basmati varieties down while aromatic varieties continued to rule flat on Monday.

After witnessing an uptrend last week, huge stocks were offloaded by rice mills, leading the prices down, said Mr Amit Chandna, Proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company. "Quality of the stocks was not good too. Traders expect it's unlikely to see any major drop from here and market may rule around current levels for next few days," he added.

In the physical market, PR-11 (sela) eased by Rs 200 and sold at 2,500-2,600 while PR-11 (raw) was at Rs 2,350-2,500 a quintal, Rs 150 down from previous level.

Permal (raw) decreased by Rs 300 and sold at Rs 2,000-2,100 a quintal while Permal (sela) went for Rs 1,900-21,00, Rs 270 down from previous level.

PR-14 (steam) went down by Rs 150 to Rs 2,650-2,850 a quintal.

Prices of Sharbati (steam) went down by Rs 50 and quoted at Rs 3,650-3,700 a quintal while Sharbati (sela) remained unchanged and sold at Rs 3,400-3,500 a quintal.

On the other hand, aromatic varieties continued to rule flat on account of slack trading. Pusa-1121 (steam) quoted at Rs 5,750-5,800 a quintal, while Pusa-1121 (sela) sold at Rs 4,800-4,850. Pure Basmati (raw) quoted at Rs 5,450-5,500 while pure basmati (sela) ruled around at Rs 5,000 a quintal.

For the brokens of Pusa-1121, Tibar sold at Rs 3,800, Dubar at Rs 2,800-2,900 and Mongra at Rs 2,100-2,300, a quintal. Duplicate basmati quoted at Rs 4,500-4,600.

Edible oils flare up on dry spell fears, weak monsoon



Indore, June 25:

Dry - Unfavourable weather and concerns about ongoing Kharif crop sowing in main producing states Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra boost edible oil prices on Monday. Rainfall in India has been 24 percent below average so far this season. The physical market has also been taken support from dry weather in the U.S., which pushed up Chicago and Malaysian futures markets higher. In Mumbai imported Palmolein rose by Rs.8. Soya refined oil, Sunflower oil and cotton refined oil increase by Rs.15 each for 10 kgs. Groundnut and rapeseed oil were steady. Malaysian BMD crude Palm oil closed higher by 77, 74, 77 ringgits a tone on weather concerns and higher demand.

Analyst said, Malaysian BMD CPO futures closed higher, tracking gains for Chicago soya oil and could rise further as the premium of soya oil over palm oil has gone up to \$180/ton and this will encourage price conscious buyers to shift demand to cheaper palm oil. The Indian rupee fell to near a record low. A weak rupee makes edible oil imports expensive forcing domestic refiners to raise the rate. Rising demand for palm oil ahead of the fasting month Ramadan starts in end-July also added to the bullish mood in the market. The dry weather is lending support. Demand should also be stay healthy because of Festivals he said.

Mumbai based wholesale broker said Volume was thin and need based in physical markets as stockiest keep away at higher price level. Late - slower sowing due to delay in monsoon will push up bullish sentiment further. Supportive factor for world edible oil sector is the dry weather in USA and India. He said about 400-500 of palmolein was traded in the market. One importer has sold about 300- 400 tonnes palmolein at Rs.612-613 for 1-10 July. Another 80 – 100 tone was resale traded at Rs.612 on CAD basis ex JNPT. There was no demand - trade in other oils.

At the end Liberty was quoting Palmolein at Rs.617-619, Super palmolein Rs.653, Soya oil Rs.740 and Sunflower refined oil Rs.745. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 618 for July and Rs.623 -625 for August. Soya refined oil at Rs 735 - Rs.740 for July. Sunflower refined oil at Rs 745-750. Allana's rate for Palmolein was Rs.615 for 20-30 July. In Saurashtra - Rajkot market groundnut oil extended loss further by Rs.10 to 1800 (Rs 1,810) for Telia tin and drop by Rs.10 to Rs 1,170 (Rs 1,180) for loose - 10kgs.

Malaysia's crude palm oil July contracts settled at MYR 3,003 (MYR 2,926), August at MYR 3,018

(MRY 2,944) and September at MYR 3,030 (MYR 2,953) a tone. On National Board of Trade – Indore,

Soya refined oil July-12 futures was ruling higher at Rs.765.50 (Rs.756.50).

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates were (Rs/10 kg): groundnut oil 1,185 (1,185), soya refined oil 735 (720), sunflower exp. ref. 675 (660), sunflower ref. 740 (725), rapeseed ref. oil

815 (815), rapeseed expeller ref. 785 (785) cotton ref. oil 705 (690) and palmolein 615 (607)

Cotton blooms as mills buy more

Rajkot, June 25:

Spot cotton prices increased by Rs 200-300 per candy on rising demand from mills and buying fuelled by export expectations.

A Rajkot-based cotton trader said, "The demand from mills is gaining but against this, ginners have had lower production as the arrivals are down. Moreover, the market is expecting demand for exports also, which is also pushing up cotton prices. The market may continue to move up this week." Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton traded at Rs 33,000-33,300 a candy (356 kg). B-grade cotton sold at Rs 32,300-32,500 a candy. New V 797 cotton was offered at Rs 26,500-27,000 a candy. About 10,000 bales of cotton arrived in Gujarat out of the 25,000 bales that arrived across India on Monday. In Maharashtra, A grade cotton low micronaire quoted at Rs 32,300-32,800 a candy and A grade high micronaire cotton 29+ MM quoted at 32,700-33,200 a candy. J-34 RG quoted in the range of Rs 3,510-3,560 a maund in Punjab, Rs 3,440-3,450 a maund in Haryana and Rs 3,430-3,440 a maund in Rajasthan. Kapas prices also rose by five to seven rupees to Rs 800-830 per 20 kg. On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), kapas May 2013 contract rose by Rs 30 to Rs 1,038.50 for a maund and the April 2013 contract gained Rs 15.50 to reach Rs 1,024 .

Poor N. India demand dampens turmeric



Erode, June 25:

Spot turmeric prices took a beating as no exporter or bulk buyer received any recent orders from North India on Monday. Sales were slow and even though only 9,250 bags arrived, just 5,800 were sold.

Usually, when arrivals decrease prices tend to rise. In contrast, prices decreased by Rs 150 a quintal. Besides, out of the total sales, 80 per cent was procured by stockists. The remaining 20 per cent was purchased by local traders to fulfil commitments.

“The present price of Rs 3,900 a quintal will continue for a few more days,” said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association. He said that turmeric farmers have huge stocks with them but are not willing to sell it because of the poor price. He said that the cost of production is high but returns are low.

According to him, some farmers are hoarding quality stock and only selling the rest, expecting prices to improve within a month.

He said that because of the arrival of the fine variety hybrid Salem crop, prices of hybrid varieties increased by Rs 300 a quintal and is currently selling at Rs 4,600 a quintal. Similarly, in the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, prices increased by Rs 200 a quintal. However, traders said that only 5-10 bags of fine variety turmeric fetched such high prices while the rest sold at below Rs 4,000 a quintal.

Exporters say that orders from North India have dwindled as turmeric is available for less than Rs 4,000 in other markets, such as Nizamabad and Sangli. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales Yard, the finger variety fetched Rs 2,309-3,869 a quintal. The root variety sold at Rs 2,300-3,610. For the Salem Crop, the finger variety sold at Rs 3,959-4,609 and the root variety at Rs 3,699-3,909. Of 1,390 bags that arrived, only 571 were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Committee, the finger variety sold at Rs 3,169-3,974 and the root variety at Rs 3,169-3,817. All 285 bags on sale found takers.

At the Regulated Marketing Committee, the finger variety sold at Rs 3,385-3,990 and the root variety at Rs 3,210-3,789. 902 bags of turmeric arrived and 856 were sold.

Pepper slips

G. K. Nair

Kochi, June 25:

The pepper market on Monday slipped in the first two active contracts despite a rise in open interest.

The total volume showed a decline, indicating limited activities. Bearish activities are attributed to the decline in the prices.

The fundamentals were supporting bull operators. But the bear operators were trying to pull the market down by showing easier markets in Vietnam and all.

The local arms of international operators are allegedly trying to push the prices down and hence they were ready to sell valid stocks at below the July prices. The bull operators who are ready to invest in the commodity, realising fully the tight availability situation in the country, bought the quantity at the offered prices, as is evident from the increase in open interest in July and August, market sources told *Business Line*.

July contract on the NCDEX dropped by Rs 270 to the last traded price (LTP) of Rs 41,070 a quintal while August decreased by Rs 105 to the LTP of Rs 41,270 a quintal. September slightly moved up by Rs 80 to the LTP of Rs 41,500 a quintal.

Total turnover dropped by 388 tonnes to 2,153 tonnes. Total open interest increased by 286 tonnes showing additional buying.

July and August open interest increased by 144 tonnes and 145 tonnes respectively to close at 3,209 tonnes and 1,643 tonnes. August open interest just slipped by 3 tonnes to 76 tonnes.

Tight supply situation said to have forced many to cover from the exchange platform. Arrivals from the primary markets remained very thin and activities on the spot was limited and with matching demand and supply.

The spot prices therefore remained unchanged at the previous levels of Rs 38,800 (ungarbled) and Rs 40,300 (garbled) a quintal.

A Business Line initiative: Agri-business, commodity seminars at Thrissur, Kottayam, Kochi



Mumbai, June 25:

Prof K.V. Thomas, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, will be the Chief Guest at the Stakeholder Awareness and Education Seminar organised by *The Hindu Business Line* jointly with Forward Markets Commission and the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange on Saturday, June 30, 2012 at Kochi.

Mr Ramesh Abhishek, IAS., Chairman, FMC, and Mr R. Ramaseshan, Managing Director and CEO, NCDEX, will participate and address the meeting. The seminar is part of an ongoing series to create awareness among agri-business and commodity market participants and highlight the need for commodity producers, processors and traders (domestic and international) to hedge their price risks in the face of volatile market conditions.

Expert presentations would include commodities as critical driver of India's economic growth; importance of price discovery and price risk management; benefits of futures trading and role of commodity futures exchanges; regulatory perspective; and role of brokerages etc.

The Kochi event starts at 4.00 p.m. at Beaumonde Ferne Hotel, M.G. Road.

Prior to the Kochi meet, two more events are slated to be held, one at Thrissur on Thursday, June 28, at Hotel Asoka Inn, T.B. Road; and the next at Kottayam on Friday, June 29, at Windsor Castle, Kodimatha.

NCDEX is India's largest agri-commodity futures exchange; and FMC is the national regulator for the commodity futures market.

Seats are limited. Prior registration with *Business Line* is necessary:

* Thrissur: P.P. Sanil 80897 76943

* Kottayam: Shifas Sulaiman 94476 95936 and

* Kochi: Vishnu Raghunath 98955 98894

Chana prices may remain firm due to tight supply

Suresh P. Iyengar



According to preliminary reports, pulses have been sown in 15.11 lakh hectares so far in the current sowing season against the target of 17.49 lakh hectares.

Mumbai, June 25:

Chana prices may remain firm due to lower supply in the domestic market coupled with weak rupee which has made imports costlier.

Besides tight supply, kharif pulses sowing have fallen due to delay in monsoon.

According to the India Meteorological Department, monsoon rains in 2012 would be 96 per cent of the long-term average overall, down from April forecast of 99 per cent.

About 36 per cent of the total pulses in India are grown in the kharif season.

According to preliminary reports, pulses have been sown in 15.11 lakh hectares so far in the current sowing season against the target of 17.49 lakh hectares.

Area, production

In Andhra Pradesh, the area under kharif pulses is down by 92 per cent to 0.07 lakh hectares compared with 0.92 lakh hectares in the same period last year.

Area under kharif pulses in Maharashtra is down by 6 per cent at 94,875 hectares against 1,00,431 hectares in the same period last year.

According to the third advance estimates, pulses output is pegged at 17.02 million tonnes in 2011-12 compared with 18.24 mt produced last year.

Chana output is estimated lower at 7.4 mt against 7.66 mt in the second estimate. Last year, chana production was at 8.22 mt.

Import data

According to the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, 20.23 lakh tonnes of peas, 2.03 lakh tonnes of chana, 4.32 lakh tonnes of urad and moong, 1.12 lakh tonnes of masoor and 4.26 lakh tonnes of tur have been imported between April 2011 and March 2012.

For 2012-13, the MSP of urad has been increased by 30 per cent to Rs 4,300 per quintal. The Government is yet to announce tur and moong MSP.

Food Minister to inaugurate agribusiness, commodity seminars

Businessline initiative

Mumbai, June 25:

Prof K.V. Thomas, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, will be the chief guest to inaugurate the Stakeholder Awareness and Education Seminar organised by *Business Line* jointly with the Forward Markets Commission (FMC) and National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) on Saturday at Kochi.

Mr Ramesh Abhishek, Chairman, FMC, and Mr R. Ramaseshan, MD and CEO, NCDEX, will participate and address the meeting. The seminar is part of an ongoing series to create awareness among agribusiness and commodity market participants and highlight the need for

commodity producers, processors and traders (domestic and international) to hedge their price risks in volatile markets.

Expert presentations will be on topics like commodities as critical driver of India's economic growth; importance of price discovery and price risk management; benefits of futures trading and role of commodity futures exchanges; regulatory perspective; role of brokerages, etc. The Kochi event starts at 4 p.m. at Beaumonde Ferne Hotel. Prior to the Kochi meet, two more events are slated to be held. One at Thrissur on Thursday at Hotel Asoka Inn; and the next at Kottayam on Friday at Windsor Castle, Kodimatha. The NCDEX is India's largest agri-commodity futures exchange; and the FMC is the national regulator for the commodity futures market.

Seats are limited. Registration is a must. Those interested may contact for the event at Thrissur, P.P. Sanil (80897 76943); for the event at Kottayam, Shifas Sulaiman (94476 95936); and for Kochi, Vishnu Raghunath (98955 98894).

Losing colour



No export orders: Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) kept for sale at Khari Baoli, Asia's largest wholesale spice market, in New Delhi.

Turmeric prices nosedived on Monday as no exporter or bulk buyer received any order from North India. Prices decreased by Rs 150 a quintal to Rs 3,900 a quintal.

Guar finds its way into farmland

Latha Venkatraman

Bikaner, (Rajasthan), June 25:

Guar, unknown to many just a few years ago, will soon find its way into farmlands across many States.

The guar price episode that played out during the last season could change the cropping pattern not only in western Rajasthan, a major producer of this crop, but also across many other States.

This year guar is likely to be grown in Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh apart from Rajasthan, Gujarat and Haryana. "I recently sent guar seeds for sowing to Surat and Ankleshwar," said Mr Bhagirath Jhaveri, Vice-Chairman, Agriculture Produce Market Committee of Nokhamandi. Farmers of western Rajasthan grow a number of crop – guar, moth beans, green gram (moong), bajra, cotton, groundnut.

This kharif season some of the area under moth beans, green gram, bajra, cotton and groundnut will go under guar crop, farmers and traders said.

"A crop output of 1-1.25 crore bags of guar is a good crop. But this year even if rains fail, we could see this kind of output," said Mr Jhaveri.

Rising prices

Guar seed and gum prices have been on an upward surge since November last year moving up from Rs 2,000-4,000 for 100 kg to a peak of Rs 30,000 due to supply tightness caused by shortfall in crop output and strong demand for the commodity.

The spectacular gains in prices prompted the commodity futures regulator Forward Markets Commission to finally suspend trading in this commodity. But prices continued to move up .

Guar, a 90-120 day crop, is a desert crop and requires just about three to four spells of rains with a gap of 20 days between each spell. This crop could see a three-fold rise in area under cultivation, said Mr Om Prakash Mundhra of Nokha Commodity Services.

In Sri Ganganagar, the main belt of guar seed, about 40 per cent of sowing has been completed because much of the land there is irrigated with water from borewells.

“Even if monsoon fails, crop will be higher this year,” he said. Demand for guar gum in the export market continues to be strong. In Jodhpur spot market, guar gum prices have come down to Rs 61,000 for 100 kg from their peak of Rs 1 lakh but yet considered a very good price.

“In irrigated areas where some sowing of guar took place in March, the crop is ready for harvest,” said Mr Hansraj Parakh, a guar gum miller.

The fortunes of guar have prompted opening of an additional four guar gum factories in Nokhataluka of Bikaner district alone. Currently, Nokha has 11 gum factories.

But the unprecedented rise in guar prices has also driven prices of seed up. Today, guar seed for sowing is available at Rs 45,000 for 100 kg compared with Rs 2,000 last year, said Mr Chandan Singh Bhatti, a farmer at Hadla village in Bikaner.

Traders at Nokhamandi are hoping that guar futures would be reintroduced for November, December, January and February contracts.

“If guar futures were not banned, prices would have come down,” said Mr Babulal Bhotada, a trader who short sold guar seed at Rs 7,000 level and suffered losses as prices continued their upsurge well beyond this level.

Camson Biotech, HDFC Bank in pact to take banking services to farmers

Suresh P. Iyengar

Mumbai, June 25:

Camson Biotech has tied up with HDFC Bank to take banking services to over three lakh marginal farmers all over the country.

By an agreement with the bank, its 3,000 dealers will be eligible to become business correspondent (BC) or business facilitators for the bank.

BCs appointed in rural areas will execute all transactions that a customer avails of at bank branches. Currently, HDFC Bank has 460 BCs. The RBI has drawn detail guidelines for appointing BCs in a bid to reach banking services to remote rural areas.

Mr Santosh Nair, Chief Executive Officer, Camson Biotech, said each dealer of the company has business relationship with about 100-200 small farmers with land holding of less than two acres.

“Farmers will now have easy access to finance at lower rate of 10-12 per cent compared with 36-40 per cent per annum they pay currently,” he said.

Camson Biotech and HDFC Bank also plan to jointly launch co-branded cards that will help farmers buy agriculture inputs at cheaper rates.

As part of its expansion plans, Camson targets adding 2,000 dealers in the next 18 months as it penetrates into new markets in 17 States including Gujarat, Kerala and Bihar.

Dealers benefit

The agreement opens up a new revenue stream for dealers as they will earn a commission from the bank for all services extended to farmers.

Besides, identifying the borrower for the bank, BCs will collect relevant documents and verify primary information before sending it to the bank for final approval.

They will also extend small value credit and collect deposits from the farmers. As value-added service, BCs will sell micro insurance, mutual fund and pension schemes.

“Dealers have the potential to earn between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 4 lakh on executing business of Rs 2 crore. They get a commission of 0.70 per cent to 2 per cent depending on the service they deliver,” said Mr Nair, who is an ex-banker.

Camson expects availability of cheaper finance to encourage farmers to use quality inputs such as branded seeds and biocides. “It is a win-win situation for the entire value chain. The success of this initiative will encourage more agriculture companies to follow and improve finance to farmers,” he said.

Olive oil imports up 52% despite weak rupee

Vishwanath Kulkarni

New Delhi, June 25:

The country’s olive oil imports increased over 52 per cent in 2011-12 fiscal on rise in consumption. This growth is despite the weakening of the rupee that has made imports costlier.

Olive oil imports touched 6,485 tonnes against 4,261 tonnes the previous year, said Mr V.N. Dalmia, President of the India Olive Association. The growth trend in imports would be sustained in the current fiscal as consumption is expected to remain strong on rising awareness

of health benefits of olive oil, said Mr Dalmia. Rising affordability and increasing exposure to western lifestyles is aiding the consumption trend.

HIGHER MFA CONTENT

Olive oil is considered a healthy cooking medium because of it has a high content of monosaturated fatty acids (MFA) that help reduce risk of heart diseases among others, he said.

Most of the leading brands have increased prices by about 15-20 per cent recently to neutralise the impact of weak rupee. The rupee has weakened 28 per cent against the dollar since April 2011. The fall in rupee against the euro, the currency in which majority of the import billing for olive oil happens, is about 13.6 per cent for the period.

DISCOUNTS WITHDRAWN

“Also the discounts and special offers on products offered as part of the promotional drive last year are being withdrawn or reduced,” said Mr Dalmia, Chairman of Dalmia Continental Pvt Ltd, which markets olive oil in India under the Leonardo brand.

Spain remains the largest exporter of olive oil to India accounting for 53 per cent of the country’s imports, followed by Italy at 42 per cent. Other producers such as Turkey, Greece, Tunisia and the US account for the remaining 5 per cent.

Mr Dalmia said the olive pomace oil, which accounts for 41 per cent of India’s total imports, is witnessing the highest growth among the categories.

Olive pomace oil, the cooking grade oil with neutral taste and flavour, is most suitable for the Indian cuisine as it does not change the food taste, Mr Dalmia said.

Olive Pomace oil is produced through solvent extraction method from the olive residue paste after the fruit has been pressed.

The highest grade Extra Virgin olive oil, used for salad dressing and flavouring accounts for 19 per cent of the India’s imports and olive oil accounting for the rest, he said.

Cardamom gains flavour as stockists re-enter market

G. K. Nair



Kochi, June 25:

The cardamom market ruled nearly steady despite some buoyancy in demand due to non-arrival of quality material at auctions last week.

Exporters are said to have orders in hand but the material that arrived in the market was not of exportable grade, and hence, they could not cover the required volume, market sources told *Business Line*.

Similarly, upcountry buyers were also keen to buy, but there too the quality of the material was pointed out as a dissuading factor, they said. Good quality material was fetching good prices. Much of the arrivals were inferior quality capsules, they said.

According to sources, the re-entry of stockists from major upcountry centres and the main cardamom trade hub, Bodinayakannur, of late, gives the impression that they have liquidated stocks and are out to replenish their inventories now. It was reflected in the market trend at Bodi on Monday, they said.

At the CPA auction held on Monday in Bodi, the auction average was at Rs 688.87 a kg. The maximum price fetched was at Rs 935, while the minimum was Rs 472 a kg. The auction average last Monday at this auction was Rs 664 a kg.

The fluctuation in the auction prices was caused by the variation in the quality of material that arrived at the auctions, they said. Wherever good quality material arrived, there the average

prices showed an upward trend, while at auctions where the material was inferior the average dropped significantly, trade sources said.

Ramzan buying has not picked up yet. An estimated 25 tonnes of material were bought by exporters, trade sources said.

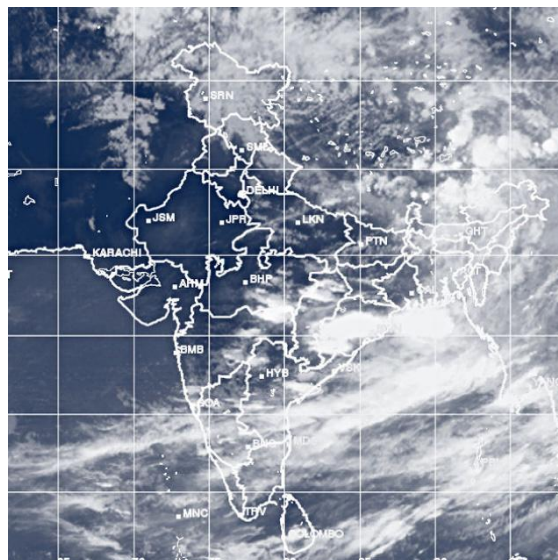
Arrivals at the Sunday auction stood at around 46 tonnes against 43 tonnes the previous Sunday. The maximum price on Sunday was Rs 1,239 a kg and the minimum Rs 400 a kg. The individual auction average was Rs 700 a kg, down Rs 701 a kg the previous Sunday, Mr Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC said. "Non-availability of quality capsules is keeping the prices at the current levels", he told *Business Line*. Total arrivals during the current season up to June 24, 2012 were at 19,293 tonnes and the sales at 18,543 tonnes as against 11,433 tonnes of arrivals and 11,142 tonnes of sales in the same period last year. Weighted average price as on June 24 was at Rs 635.27 a kg as against Rs1,014.96 a kg on the same date last year, according to market sources.

Official prices of graded varieties (in Rs/kg): AGEB 1,110-1,120; AGB 780 -790 ; AGS 760 - 770 and AGS 1: 740 - 750.

Cardamom growing areas received some rains early last week, but it stopped thereafter. Growers believe the south-west monsoon have yet to set in over the cardamom growing belt. They said that plants require good and protracted rains.

Korean agency fears monsoon may be below normal

Vinson Kurian



Thiruvananthapuram, June 25:

Busan, Korea-based Asia Pacific Climate Centre (APCC) is the latest to forecast 'near-normal to below normal' rains for the rest of Indian monsoon this year.

Near normal to below normal rainfall is predicted from northeast Asia through India, West Asia and its northern regions, an APCC spokesman informed Business Line.

STAGNATING, FOR NOW

The Indian summer monsoon has been below normal already, with stagnation in the northward progression of its northern envelope.

The APCC multi-model ensemble forecasts show that the equatorial Pacific Ocean will continue to warm into early fall.

The maximum warming is seen in the eastern tropical Pacific, indicating that an El Nino is not unlikely, the forecast said.

Above normal warm conditions are predicted over most of the globe during the July-August-September season.

In particular, there is a strong chance that western Russia, northeast Asia, and the US may experience warmer than normal temperatures.

Below normal temperature is expected over northeastern and southeastern Pacific Ocean.

ERRATIC PHASE

Meanwhile, the erratic phase of the monsoon was in evidence on Monday with east India slipping under an expansive wet phase.

This has come at the expense of practically the entire rest of the country. Heavy to extremely heavy rain pulverised parts of east and northeast India overnight.

During the 24 hours ending this morning, Cherrapunji in Assam got nearly drowned by the 46 cm of rainfall recorded during the period.

Monsoon otherwise stood still over the mainland, taking its time to revive after the latest away-sea storm, 'Talim' in the South China Sea, undid its progress.

NOT IDEAL

Aiding the heavy falls in the east was a north-south trough running down from sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim to the North Bay of Bengal.

This formation is not considered helpful for the larger cause of the monsoon for the rest of India since entire moisture is getting offloaded in the area of the trough here.

In fact, India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall to continue over Assam and Meghalaya for next two days.

Heavy rainfall has also been forecast at one or two places over Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim and coastal Karnataka.

Tea prices dip at Kochi auctions

Kochi, June 25:

Demand persisted for almost all varieties of tea at the Kochi Tea auction last week. A total quantity of 14 lakh kg were on offer in the dust category and the market opened Rs 2-5 lower.

As the sale progressed, the drop was more to the tune of Rs 6-10 in the dust category. There were some withdrawals too. However, the drop in prices was less for medium and plainer teas.

Companies such as AVT, Hindustan Unilever, etc were active in good liquoring teas along with Kerala Loose Tea Traders at easier levels, auctioneers Forbes, Ewart and Figgis said in a statement.

In the orthodox dust category, the quantity on offer was 15,500 kg. Primary grades and secondaries were lower with many withdrawals and bulk of the offerings was absorbed by exporters.

The best CTC dusts in the PD varieties were quoted at Rs 92/106, while RD varieties stood at Rs 90/103. SRD varieties ruled at Rs 90/105 and SFD varieties stood at Rs 95/110.

Of the 2.66 lakh kg on offer in the orthodox leaf category, select best Nilgiri was fully firm to sometimes dearer. Others were irregular and lower by Rs 5-10. Plainer varieties were irregular and were lower by Rs 3-5.

In the CTC leaf category, the market was lower by Rs 5-10.

Good Nilgiri Broken quoted at Rs 110/161 and Lesser Nilgiri Broken Rs 70/90.

Coir Board announces awards

Our Bureau

Kochi, June 25:

Coir Board has invited entries from exporters, producers, individuals and organisations for being considered for coir industry awards 2011-12 for outstanding performance in coir sector.

Prof G. Balachandran, chairman, Coir Board, said that awards will be presented and certificates given for 25 different categories on the basis of the performance during the year 2011-12.

The major categories for considering awards are in the fields of export of coir products, coir geo-textiles, coir yarn, coir pith and pith based products, rubberised coir, curled coir, handloom coir products etc. Details and guidelines can be downloaded from the Board's Web site.

TN flour mills welcome uniform wheat price

Chennai, June 25:

The Tamil Nadu Roller Flour Millers Association has welcomed the Union Government's move to allot 3 million tonnes (mt) of wheat to bulk consumers under the open market sale scheme at a uniform rate throughout the country. The Association President, Mr K.S. Kamalakannan, in a press release said that the decision will help bulk buyers to buy wheat at an affordable and uniform rate of Rs 1,170 a quintal for which the freight cost will be borne by the Government.

Govt not worried about monsoon, sees grain output at 2011 level

Mumbai, June 25:

The Food Minister, Mr K. V. Thomas, today said there is no worry about the monsoon and foodgrains production is expected at last year's level.

On the back of a good monsoon in 2011, the country harvested a record foodgrain production of 252.56 million tonnes.

"We are concerned about the IMD report of an average monsoon this year. However, we are not worried about it. We expect foodgrains production to be similar to last year," Mr Thomas told presspersons on the sidelines of a seminar here.

Recently, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) downgraded the monsoon rainfall marginally to 96 per cent of the long period average and forecast good rains in July and August.

Monsoon rains arrived four days late in Kerala on June 5 and are yet to pick up.

According to the Agriculture Ministry, the planting of paddy in the ongoing kharif season has been slightly delayed across the country due to the late monsoon.

As on June 22, farmers had planted paddy in 18.7 lakh hectares, the Ministry data said, adding that reports suggest sowing of other kharif crops has been on the lower side.

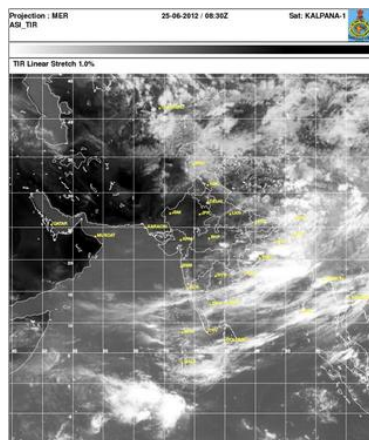
Farmers have sown oilseeds in 3.13 lakh hectares, coarse cereals in 5.59 lakh hectares, cotton in 21 lakh hectares and sugarcane in 51.52 lakh hectares so far in the 2012-13 crop year (July-June).

The sowing of kharif crops such as paddy, pulses and oilseeds begins from April but gains momentum after the onset of the South-West monsoon in June.

Monsoon rains are crucial for agriculture as only 40 per cent of the cultivable area is under irrigation. The farm sector contributes about 15 per cent to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but employs about 60 per cent of India's population.

Extreme heavy rains in parts of east India

Vinson Kurian



Thiruvananthapuram, June 25:

East India is undergoing an expansive phase of the monsoon, which has come at the expense of practically the rest of the country.

Monsoon otherwise stood still over the mainland, taking its time to revive after the latest away-sea storm, 'Talim' in the South China Sea, undermined its progress.

During the 24 hours ending this morning, Cherrapunji in Assam was near-drowned by 46 cm of extreme heavy rains.

Aiding the heavy falls was a north-south trough running down from sub-Himayalan West Bengal and Sikkim to the North Bay of Bengal.

In fact, this formation is not helpful for the larger cause of the monsoon for the rest of India since entire moisture would get offloaded in the area of the trough here.

In fact, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall to continue over Assam and Meghalaya for the next two days.

Heavy rainfall has also been forecast at one or two places over Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim and coastal Karnataka during this period.

Gujarat to have first potato dehydration centre soon

PTI



The Centre has proposed to come up with an investment of Rs 19.5 crore in Palanpur town of north Gujarat.

Ahmedabad, June 25:

In a bid to preserve and enhance the shelf-life of potatoes, Gujarat would soon get its first potato dehydration centre in Palanpur town, having a handling capacity of 500 kg per hour.

The Centre has proposed to come up with an investment of Rs 19.5 crore in Palanpur town of north Gujarat, which accounts for the highest potato output in the state.

“A potato dehydration centre has been planned for Deesa near Palanpur, the potato hub of state. It shall have latest machinery to be imported from overseas (may be Switzerland), which can enhance the shelf-life of potatoes,” Gujarat Agro Industries Corporation (GAIC) Managing Director, Mr N.K. Singh, told PTI.

“The site for the project has been finalised. The construction work shall commence soon after the monsoon,” official sources said.

Dehydrated potato flakes can be used in the place of mashed potatoes. They are functionally like fresh potatoes and could be used for making traditional snacks like samosa, dosa, tikki and parathas, industry experts said.

GAIC is the State Government arm which promotes agricultural activities and fosters the development of agro industries in the state.

The move is expected to ease wastage problems during the time of potato glut.

“If a potato dehydration facility is set up here it will benefit the farmers and shall help them fetch better prices for their produce,” Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC,) Deesa’s Director, Mr Babu Mali, said.