

Published: March 28, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: March 28, 2012 04:20 IST

## **'Water management, key to sugarcane productivity'**

Special Correspondent

Water management was one of the good agricultural practices for any crop raised during any season, S. Natarajan, Collector, said at the inauguration of the training on 'sustainable sugarcane initiative' for cane officers and sugarcane farmers of Sivagangai, Pudukottai and Tiruvarur district at Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Needamangalam, near here recently.

Mr. Natarajan said though the district accounted for a large cultivable area with compact irrigation facility, agriculturists did not opt for commercial farming. The State government has chalked out various programmes for imparting training on farming techniques and providing agricultural implements and inputs at subsidised rates.

The current programme on sugarcane cultivation too formed an initiative towards this direction to boost sugarcane cultivation.

He explained the advantages of drip irrigation programme. Cane growers should adopt this technique not only to save water but to enhance productivity.

Emphasising the need for conserving soil fertility, he called upon farmers to protect the nutrients of soil through careful application of soil-friendly fertilisers.

Application of green manure in large measure periodically would step up soil fertility, he said explaining the importance of soil for higher agricultural productivity.

T. Senguttuvan, professor and head, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, N. Ilanchezhian, Deputy Director of Agriculture, and Thanga Damodaran, associate professor, spoke.

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## **Copra procurement to be strengthened**

Staff Reporter

*No upper ceiling on quantity to be procured*

The Kerala Kerakarshaka Sahakarana Federation, Coconut Development Board and the Kerala State Warehousing Corporation have decided to strengthen procurement of milling copra in view of the start of the season.

A meeting of the officials of these agencies here this week decided that there would be no upper ceiling on the quantity of copra to be procured during the season, said a press release here.

It was decided that procurement through the primary cooperative societies would be strengthened and that the around 1,000 farmers registered with the Coconut Development Board would be involved in the procurement process.

The procurement process would continue till the market price of copra moved above the support price, and infrastructure for procurement would be strengthened.

Steps would be taken to ensure the quality of the copra procured and that agencies concerned would follow norms and involve independent surveyors. The system of rejecting a whole load of copra because of the inferior quality of a sack of copra would be abandoned.

It was also decided that the primary cooperative societies and coconut production societies that procured the highest quantity of quality copra would be given awards in recognition of their services.

Another of the key decisions at the meeting was to improve and enhance the godown facilities in all the districts for copra procurement. It was pointed out that godown facilities in Kozhikode, Thrissur, Ernakulam, Alappuzha, Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram needed to be enhanced and improved.

The State Warehousing Corporation has godowns in Thiruvananthapuram, 700 tonnes; Kollam, 500 tonnes; Alappuzha, 7,150 tonnes; Kottayam, 850 tonnes; Palakkad, 3,200 tonnes; Kozhikode, 540 tonnes; and Kannur/Kasargod, 5,150 tonnes, the press release said. It was also decided to set up a 500-tonne godown facility in Idukki.

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- *Procurement till price surpasses support price*
  - *Plan to improve, enhance godown facilities*
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Published: March 28, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: March 28, 2012 04:26 IST

### **Ornamental fish exhibition from Friday**

The National Aquari Culture Society and Theera Desa Raksha Social Welfare Society will jointly organise a month-long ornamental fish exhibition on Marine Ground in the city from Friday.

The exhibition is aimed at introducing the latest ornamental fish varieties to people besides helping them in every possible way to acquire the new varieties at minimum prices, coordinator of the event V.P. Prince said. Along with ornamental fishes, some rare varieties of pigeons, cats, ducks, white rat, rabbits, dogs, fowls etc. would be exhibited. Separate competitions were also being arranged by the organisers for different species of animals during the show.

#### **Contests**

Competitions would be held separately for different fish varieties and also for setting planted aquariums, marine rock setting, plasma setting, and artificial pond setting. Those who would like to participate in the competitions may register their names through a text message along with other details such as the variety of bird or animal to be enrolled for contest to Ph: 09562253093. Those interested in setting up stalls for exhibiting their pets may contact the organisers at Ph: 09400190421.

Published: March 28, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: March 28, 2012 04:18 IST

### **Farmers' grievance meet on March 30**

The district administration will hold the monthly farmers' grievance meeting on March 30 at the meeting hall at the Collectorate at 10 a.m. A release asks farmers in the district to make use of the opportunity to air their grievances.

Published: March 28, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: March 28, 2012 04:35 IST

### **Farmers advised to adopt ecologically sustainable practices**

There is a shared belief among all sections of society that agriculture returns to the days when it used to be productive, sustainable, clean and healthy.

Natural farming means have shown that those halcyon days are not yet over and there is the real possibility that healthy agriculture produce can be secured, District Collector V.Shobana said here on Tuesday.

Addressing the Confederation of Indian Industry sponsored workshop on Zero Budget Natural Farming, Ms.Shobana observed that farming has come to be a burden on many of the agriculturalists and that the State and the Central government have to heavily subsidise agricultural inputs such as seed and fertilizers, besides insecticides to help farmers remain tethered to the practice.

Still there was concern in a lot of quarters that farming has never been resourceful.

It was in these circumstances that the Chief Minister Jayalalithaa has initiated long-term steps and laid out schemes to double farmers' income and create better living standards to benefit famers and farm labourers.

The numerous schemes announced in the Vision 2023 document and in the Budget 2012-13 would spur agriculture practitioners, Ms.Shobana opined.

The best form of any agriculture practice would be to maintain its ecologically sustainable nature, Ms.Shobana pointed out hailing the initiative of the CII in organising the zero budget natural farming workshop which she hoped would benefit participants.

To increase productivity healthy means to preserve the soil's richness and variety must be practiced.

Farmers could take recourse to integrated farming practices that would increase their revenue and improve their livelihood for which schemes such as the free goat and milch animals were the route, Ms.Shobana said.

Joint Director of Agriculture G.Soundaram, Deputy Director V.Sadasivam and other officials accompanied the Collector.

## **Share**

Published: March 28, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: March 28, 2012 04:35 IST

## **Mettur level**

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 79.05 feet on Tuesday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 573 cusecs and the discharge 1,337 cusecs.

Published: March 28, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: March 28, 2012 04:36 IST

### **Turmeric procurement centre opening today**

The district administration is setting up a turmeric procurement centre at the market yard in Duggirala. It will be open from March 28 to April 20, Collector V.N. Vishnu said in a meeting with officials of Agriculture and Marketing Departments on Tuesday. Turmeric grown around the district, mainly in Bhattiprolu, Duggirala, Kollipara, Kollur and Tadepalli mandals, will be purchased at the price stipulated by the government. Mr. Vishnu said village level purchase committees are also being constituted to help farmers.

THENI, March 28, 2012

### **There is better yield but paddy price is very low**

*Farmers hit by inadequate purchase centres, stringent norms*



**PAINFUL REAPING:**Harvest is in full swing at Chinnamanur in Theni district.

: Even as nature god blesses farmers to get better yield in the second harvesting season, those in the Cumbum Valley are not happy as traders buy paddy at very low price. The procurement price is less when compared to the price prevailed during the previous year.

At present, harvesting of second paddy crop on 45,707 acres of double cropping area in the Cumbum Valley stretching between Goodalur and Veerapandi, has commenced. To begin with, harvesting is in full swing in Chinnamanur block and will begin in other parts of the valley in the coming weeks.

At present, traders from different parts of the state have started thronging the district to procure paddy from farmers directly. They procure paddy from the field itself irrespective of distance. But procurement price of paddy offered by traders is not palatable to farmers.

Traders offer Rs.500 or Rs.550 a bag containing 63 kg of paddy, which was Rs.650 a bag, minimum price for paddy last year. The present procurement price will not match even production cost. Mechanisation to meet labour shortage, escalation in prices of fertilizers and other input costs had scaled up production cost. Moreover, acute power crisis forced farmers to shell out a sizable amount for fuel to operate diesel generators to protect standing crops. Mechanisation from transplantation to harvesting increased diesel use, said S.K.M Raja, a farmer from Chinnamanur.

Traders not only scale down prices but also press farmers to pack 63 kg of paddy in one bag, instead of regular 61 kg.

Such measure escalates quantum of loss. Inadequate procurement centres in the district and stringent procedures and other cumbersome formalities for paddy procurement are the main reasons for such pathetic condition of farmers, said P. Ganesan.

While traders procure grains from harvesting spot, farmers have to transport paddy to procurement centres at distant places. We have to bear the transport costs. Above all, we have to wait for more than a day or two for weighing, completing other formalities and get payment.

Farmers appeal to the government to do spot procurement or set up procurement centres near the fields to enable them to get decent price for their produces.

They worry that the massive harvesting at various parts will slash procurement prices further.

KOLKATA, March 28, 2012

### **Mamata asks farmers to look for alternative crops**

Addressing a gathering in Burdwan, a district that has been beleaguered by incidents of farmers' suicides in recent months though the State Government pegs the death toll at just one, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Tuesday that farmers should go in for growing alternative crops in some segment of their plots rather than devote them entirely to paddy cultivation.

“Earlier other States would purchase paddy from West Bengal, but now it is grown in many other places. As compared to paddy, the cultivation of pulses is much more profitable. There is

a market for pulses,” Ms. Banerjee said advising farmers to switch over to growing pulses in their fields.

Ms. Banerjee also said that the varieties of potatoes grown in the State did not have a market in international trade.

“From next year on, we will tell you which varieties of potatoes to grow so that they are assured a market,” she said.

Ms. Banerjee said that production of 157 tonnes of paddy in the kharif season had surpassed all earlier records of paddy production.

The earlier record for paddy in the State was 133 tonnes of paddy, she added.

Contrary to claims made by the Left-backed peasant organisations that the State Government had restricted the process of procurement of paddy only from rice mills that was leading to farmers resorting to distress sales, Ms. Banerjee said that her government had increased the channels of procurement.

At the function, credit worth Rs.110 crore was distributed in the form of Kisan Credit Cards to farmers. It is the first of several “massive camps” for the distribution of agricultural credit, she said adding that similar events will be organised in other districts as well.

She urged farmers to repay the loans, given at seven per cent interest in the first year, pointing out that if they are prompt in the repayment of their loans, they will be able to avail loans at a lower rate of four per cent.

“Today you can avail Rs. 50,000 as loans, but in the coming days you can expand your enterprise to Rs 50 crores,” she assured them.

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## weather

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### Today's Weather



Sunny

Wednesday, Mar 28

Max Min

34.5° | 19.2°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Sunrise: 7:14

Humidity: 63%

Sunset: 17:48

Wind: Normal

Barometer: 1014

### Tomorrow's Forecast



Sunny

Thursday, Mar 29

Max Min

34° | 16°

### Extended Forecast for a week

Friday Mar 30	Saturday Mar 31	Sunday Apr 1	Monday Apr 2	Tuesday Apr 3
35°   16° Sunny	37°   16° Sunny	38°   20° Sunny	39°   20° Sunny	40°   22° Sunny



Sugar scrips gain on govt export byte

**Agencies** Posted online: Tue Mar 27 2012, 13:24 hrs



**Mumbai** : Shares of sugar companies today soared by up to 7 per cent in the morning trade as the government allowed exports of additional 1 million tonne (MT) of the sweetener.

Empee Sugars and Chemicals was trading 7.42 per cent higher at Rs 13.60, while Sakthi Sugars shot-up 4.67 per cent to Rs 25.75 on the BSE.

Other major gainers were Shree Renuka Sugars which was up 3.28 per cent, Bajaj Hindusthan climbed 2.10 per cent, Balrampur Chini Mills went up by 0.84 per cent, while Dwarikesh Sugar rose by 0.63 per cent.

Further, Triveni Engineering was up 0.31 per cent and Dhampur Sugar Mills gained 0.58 per cent.

The government yesterday allowed further 1 MT of sugar exports in view of surplus production and to help mills clear mounting cane arrears, that have reached Rs 8,409 crore till February, to farmers.

India is the world's second-largest producer of sugar and is also the biggest consumer. It had produced 24.3 MT and exported 2.6 MT in the previous marketing year.

India needs to raise annual foodgrains output by 1.34%: Govt  
Agencies Posted online: Tue Mar 27 2012, 20:01 hrs



**New Delhi :** The country needs to increase its annual foodgrains production by 1.34 per cent to meet the output target of 280.6 million tonnes (MT) by 2020-21, Parliament was informed today.

This assessment has been made by the National Centre for Agricultural Economics & Policy Research (NCAP) of agri research body Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Minister of State for Agriculture Charan Das Mahant said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

"Taking into account the current year's estimated production of 250.42 million tonnes of foodgrains, the average annual increase of 1.34 per cent would be required to achieve the production level of 280.6 million tonnes of foodgrains by 2020-21," he said.

To another question, Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar replied that the demand for rice and wheat for terminal year of 12th Five-Year Plan (2016-17) is estimated at 110.21 MT and 89.06 MT, respectively.

He said as per the second advance estimates for 2011-12 against the demand of 98.79 MT of rice and 77.36 MT of wheat, the production would be at 102.75 MT and 88.31 MT, respectively, during the year.

Pawar said in order to enhance foodgrains output, a number of crop development schemes and programmes, including National Food Security Mission (NFSM) and Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, pulses, oil palm and maize (SOPOM), are in operation.

To achieve higher agricultural productivity, ICAR is also conducting basic and strategic research related to crop improvement, production and protection technologies in pulses and other crops, Mahant said.

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### **Hi-tech dairy plants in Lucknow**

TUESDAY, 27 MARCH 2012 21:38

NS | LUCKNOW:

With an aim to give a boost to daily production in the state Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav has announced setting up of hi-tech dairy plants in Lucknow that could handle 5 lakh litre milk per day.

Budgetary allocation for this plant would be made in the next fiscal.

Besides, Chief Minister also asked officials to tone up administration of Saifai dairy plant. While reviewing the progress made in dairy sector Chief Minister asked the Pradeshik Co-operative Dairy Federation (PCDF) to strengthen its marketing and managerial strategies.

"The packaging designs of the PCDF products should also change. The National Institute of Designing, Ahmedabad should be entrusted with the job to design packaging," he said and added that agencies should open Parag Milk Parlours all major educational institutions including IIM (Lucknow).

In another meeting of Mandi Parishad Chief Minister asked officials to revive Lohia Gram Yojana and asked them to review rice export policy and give the report at the earliest. "Under Bundelkhand package construction of Mandis in Lalitpur, Banda and Hamirpur should start earliest. Land has already been made available in these districts," he said.

### **State to soon have flood forecasting system**

TUESDAY, 27 MARCH 2012 21:32

PNS | LUCKNOW:

Uttar Pradesh might soon have the flood forecasting system courtesy World Bank as its team assured all help to the state government to strengthen early warning system.

A three-member team from World Bank held a series of meetings with the officials of the Revenue and Rehabilitation department to assess UP's preparedness over disaster management. The World Bank team said that it would provide facilities of remote sensing and would help UP Government to set up GIS cell. "Under the Agreement flood forecasting system would be strengthened in UP," the WB team headed by Mr Winston said.

Principal secretary Revenue and Relief Commissioner K K Sinha represented UP in this deliberation.

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## Business Standard

Wednesday, Mar 28, 2012

### Summer groundnut sowing up by 56%

GAD data shows 177, 000 hectares covered under groundnut crop so far

**Vimukt Dave / Mumbai/ Rajkot March 28, 2012, 0:43 IST**

Leaning back on the tried and tested cash crop, farmers in Gujarat have increased summer groundnut sowing by over 50 per cent this year. Compare to last year's total summer groundnut sowing the state has covered almost 77 per cent this year.

As per data provided by Gujarat Agriculture Department (GAD) so far 177, 000 hectares area has been covered under groundnut crop which was 114, 000 hectares in 2011 at this time. Hence, compared to last year summer groundnut sowing in 2012 has increased by 56 per cent.

"Good availability of water for irrigation and lucrative return attracts farmers to opt for groundnut crop this year. In fact, groundnut sowing may cross over 200,000 hectares this year," said JH Suthar, deputy director, GAD.

Currently, due to good export demand farmers are receiving lucrative prices of groundnut. Already during the current season groundnut has been reaping good return for farmers. As of now, groundnut is being traded at Rs 77,000-78,000 per tonne for exports. At Rajkot and Junagadh itself, average price of groundnut has been noted between Rs 850-1050 per 20 kg.

"The present weather condition has been favorable for summer groundnut crop. So far there have been no signs for any diseases or crop damage," said NC Patel, Vice Chancellor, Junagadh Agriculture University (JAU).

This, despite the fact that the summer crop sowing began a bit late as winter prolonged till late February and early March. "However as far as groundnut is concern, sowing area has increased mainly in Saurashtra area as farmers received good price for Kharif groundnut," Patel added.

Meanwhile, JAU has been working on developing new variety of groundnut in the state. Last year the agri varsity developed two new varieties of groundnut namely GJB-17 and GJB-22. According to JAU, these two varieties are not yet so popular among farmers since most of them prefer G-20 groundnut seed for summer crop sowing.

### **Spice exports rise 0.9% in April-January**

**George Joseph / Kochi March 28, 2012, 0:14 IST**

Spice exports increased 0.94 per cent in the April-January period of the current financial year. A total of 436,175 tonnes, valued at Rs 7,849 crore were shipped in the first ten months of FY12, as compared to 432,115 tonnes valued at Rs 5,354 crore in the same period of the previous financial year. The rise was 47 per cent in rupee terms and 40 per cent in dollar terms.

Spice exports from India have already achieved 121 per cent of the target set for 2011-12 in terms of value and 87 per cent in terms of quantity.

India exports pepper, cardamom (small and large), ginger, turmeric, cumin, celery, fenugreek, nutmeg, mace, tamarind, asafoetida and value-added products like curry powder and paste. All these registered an increase in both, volume and value, in the current financial year.

A total of 22,300 tonnes of pepper valued at Rs 721 crore were exported, as against 14,950 tonnes valued at Rs 296.56 crore in the April-January period. There was also an increase in the unit value from Rs 198 a kg in April-January 2011 to Rs 323 a kg now, according to the Spices Board data . There was also a considerable change in cardamom (small) exports, which hit an all-time high of 3,900 tonnes, worth Rs 308 crore. In case of large cardamom, there was a 10 per

cent increase in quantity and 52 per cent in value. The unit value has increased from Rs 538 a kg to Rs 743 a kg.

A total of 710 tonnes of large cardamom valued at Rs 53 crore were shipped, as against 645 tonnes at Rs 35 crore last year. Turmeric exports increased both in value and volume terms. A total of 67,000 tonnes valued at Rs 644 crore were exported, rising 69 per cent in quantity terms and 14 per cent in value terms.

### **Pepper tumbles on profit-booking**

**Press Trust of India / New Delhi March 27, 2012, 14:17 IST**



Pepper futures prices today tumbled by Rs 410 to Rs 42,600 per quintal, as speculators booked profits at existing higher levels amid sluggish demand in the spot markets.

However, estimates of lower output this year capped the losses.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, the May contract for pepper tumbled by Rs 410, or 0.95%, to Rs 42,600 per quintal, with an open interest of 2,648 lots.

The April contract lost Rs 325, or 0.77% to Rs 41,790 per quintal in 5,774 lots.

Analysts said besides profit-bookings by speculators at existing higher levels, sluggish demand in the spot market kept pressure on pepper prices at futures market.

### **Poor show at auctions, high inventory hit tobacco prices**

**D Gopi / Guntur March 28, 2012, 0:12 IST**

Unsold stocks with traders have become a bane for tobacco growers in Andhra Pradesh this season. Traders are not taking active part in auctions and even if they do, the prices quoted are at low levels, when compared with those offered last season.

The auctions, which started in the northern black soils in east Godavari and parts of Khammam districts, the central black soils (CBS) in Krishna and Guntur districts, and northern light soils in West Godavari district, are doing well, but the product from the southern light soils (SLS) and southern black soils in Prakasam district are not getting the expected price for this season.

While tobacco was sold at the highest price of Rs 120 a kg earlier, it is now quoted at Rs 98-100 a kg. This is a cause of concern for growers, who are blaming the Tobacco Board. Farmers allege the Board could have intervened when the prices were falling. Instead, it was absent from the auction platforms, leaving it to traders to decide the prices.

According to the Tobacco Board, only 4.12 million kg of tobacco was sold at various auction platforms as on March 23. Of this 3.62 million kg was from the SLS, which came from Prakasam district. Ironically, farmers from this part of the state have been on a warpath with the Board for the past season on prices. The strike forced the Board to intervene and hold talks with traders on offering better prices. However, this year, the Board is yet to step in to help growers.

“Besides the fall in quality of the product, traders have huge inventory. We have served notices to traders to give us details of the available stock. We will decide once we get the reports from them,” said G Kamalavardhana Rao, Tobacco Board chairman.

When asked about intervention, Rao said they were suggesting traders to explore export opportunities. “We are asking the traders to visit different markets in various countries to export tobacco. There are several countries looking for imports and the traders have to find those markets and move their stocks. We will have special interaction with the traders soon on this,” Rao added.

He was hopeful that growers would get a better price once traders get the export orders.

However, the Virginia Tobacco Growers Association president and former MP, Yalamanchili Sivaji, said the Board was helping the traders more than the growers. He said traders were waiting for export orders on the one side and purchasing tobacco at the lowest price outside the auction platforms on the other.

“Traders are not offering better prices at the platforms, creating panic among growers. At the same time, they are purchasing tobacco outside the auction platforms by offering low prices.

The Board remains a spectator to this game and traders are dictating terms to the Board,” Sivaji said.

He brushed aside the unsold stock claim and said traders were waiting for growers to keep their stocks at home till these get discoloured and to then buy the product at lower prices. “Traders are adopting several methods to loot farmers,” he added.

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# THE HINDU Business Line

## Oil dips to \$125 on hopes of falling US demand

PTI

Singapore, March 28:

Oil prices dipped in Asian trade today over concerns that a possible spike in US crude inventories signalled declining demand in the world’s biggest economy, analysts said.

New York’s main contract, West Texas Intermediate crude for delivery in May, shed 45 cents to \$106.88 per barrel, while Brent North Sea crude for May settlement was down 61 cents at \$124.93.

“Oil prices dropped... as investors bet that rising US stockpiles signal fuel demand may falter in the world’s biggest crude-consuming nation,” said Phillip Futures in a market commentary.

Industry group — the American Petroleum Institute — had forecast in a report issued late yesterday that US crude inventories rose 3.6 million barrels last week.

Investors’ dim view about US demand was echoed in a closely-watched survey released on Tuesday, which showed American consumers growing more pessimistic about economic conditions.

The Conference Board said its consumer confidence index dipped to 70.2 in March, in line with analysts’ expectations after a surge in February had brought it to 71.6.

Meanwhile reports of a possible release of US strategic petroleum reserves also weighed on prices, Phillip Futures said.



Industrialised nations including the United States, Britain and France have been mulling releasing part of their crude reserves to counter rising prices brought on by fears about a supply disruption in West Asia.

### Selling ahead of market holidays pounds turmeric

Our Correspondent

Erode, March 27:

Spot turmeric prices decreased by Rs 150 a quintal on Tuesday on higher arrivals.

“As expected, 21,000-odd turmeric bags arrived for sales in the four markets. Traders purchased 60 per cent the stocks by quoting lower prices,” said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

Markets will be closed for a week from April 2 for *Mariamman* festival, he said. So farmers decided to sell even at the lower prices. Mr Ravishankar said arrivals will increase from mid-April since harvest has begun in many parts of the country. Besides, exporters are waiting for orders from north Indian merchants, so sales will rise from April.

The quality Salem hybrid variety rose, whereas the new crop fell steeply. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 2,510-4,010 a quintal and the root variety at Rs 2,500-3,789.

**Salem Crop:** The finger variety fetched Rs 3,900-4,600 and the root variety Rs 3,409-3,734. Only 2,801 bags of the 6,212 bags that arrived were sold.

At the Regulated Marketing Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,573-4,086 and the root variety at Rs 3,689-3,804. Out of the 2,005 bags that arrived, 1,892 were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,217-4,004 and the root variety at Rs 3,017-3,787. All the 1,482 bags that arrived were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,269-4,111 and the root variety at Rs 2,850-3,717. All the 397 bags that arrived were sold.

## Mills buying boosts Dara wheat

Our Correspondent

Karnal, March 27:

Dara wheat and flour prices increased by Rs 20 each, while desi wheat variety prices dropped on Tuesday.

Increased off-take by flour mills to meet the ongoing domestic demand mainly pushed the dara wheat and flour prices upwards, said Mr Subhash Chander, a wheat trader. The domestic consumption of flour increases at this time of the year, he said.

After witnessing a fall last week in the physical market, dara prices recovered by Rs 20 and was quoted at Rs 1,220-1,230 a quintal. Only around 250 quintals of dara variety arrived from Uttar Pradesh and stocks were directly delivered at the mills. Mill delivery of dara was at Rs 1,220 a quintal, while delivery at chakki was at Rs 1,230 a quintal.

On the other hand with not much trading in the market, Tohfa, a desi wheat variety, dropped by Rs 30 and quoted at Rs 2,270 a quintal.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat for April delivery decreased by Rs 3 to Rs 1,249 a quintal; it had touched a high at Rs 1,255 a quintal earlier on Tuesday. Delivery for May month decreased by Rs 2 to Rs 1,276 a quintal.

### Flour Prices

Following an increase in demand, flour prices went up Rs 20 and quoted at Rs 1,220 for a 90 kg bag. Similarly, Chokar improved Rs 30 due to some buying and was sold at Rs 630 for a 49 kg bag.

## Pepper slips on limited activity

G.K. Nair

Kochi, March 27:

Pepper market on Tuesday slipped on bearish activities after remaining highly volatile but with limited activities.

There was no selling pressure for ready pepper. Very few sellers were showing interest to sell but on a cash-and-carry basis.

Those who wanted cash were only selling very small quantities. In general, sellers were demanding Rs 400 a kg, trade sources here told *Business Line*.

Activities, as it appears, might pick up only from early April, they said. Turnover has dropped sharply while the open interest was thin, they said.

April contract on the NCDEX dropped by Rs 715 to the last traded price of Rs 41,400 a quintal. May and June were down by Rs 710 and Rs 605, respectively, to the last traded price of Rs 42,300 and Rs 42,790 a quintal.

### **Total turnover**

Total turnover fell by 3,180 tonnes to close at 4,207 tonnes. Total open interest moved up by 20 tonnes to 8,784 tonnes and yet the market was down. April and May open interests moved up by 6 tonnes and 20 tonnes, respectively, to close at 5,738 tonnes and 2,663 tonnes. June declined by three tonnes to 265 tonnes.

Spot prices in tandem with the futures market trend and not on any selling pressure dropped by Rs 500 to close at Rs 38,500 (ungarbled) and Rs 40,000 (MG 1) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market was at \$8,500 a tonne (c&f) for Europe and \$8,800 a tonne (c&f) for the US

### **Tight supplies may keep edible oils firm till monsoon**

Our Correspondent



Mumbai, March 27:

Groundnut oil shot up by Rs 5 for 10 kg and cottonseed refined oil by Rs 2 for 10 kg tracking bullish reports, while rapeseed oil declined by Rs 2 for 10 kg on profit booking.

Imported palmolein extended gains by Rs 5 for 10 kg, while soya oil lost Rs 5 for 10 kg. Sunflower oil ruled steady.

Malaysian crude palm oil futures rose to the highest in nine months, supported by higher exports and physical buying interest.

In line with foreign markets, local refiners raised prices of imported oils. An agitation at the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust led to tight supplies.

Experts at an international conference on oils and oilseeds in Beijing on Tuesday expected edible oils to remain bullish, further strengthening local markets as local supplies won't ease until monsoon.

Leading analyst Mr Dorab Mistry said palm oil may climb to a four-year high by the end of June to 4,000 ringgit a tonne as vegetable oil supplies are likely to remain tight due to tepid crude palm oil production growth and lower soyabean crop.

About 750-800 tonnes of palmolein were traded for ready and futures delivery. Resellers sold 150-200 tonnes of it at Rs 615- 617, while refiners sold 550-600 tonnes at Rs 612-614 and at Rs 620-621.

Liberty quoted it at Rs 620-621, soya refined oil at Rs 709 and sunflower refined oil at Rs 715. Ruchi offered palmolein at Rs 616-618, soya refined oil at Rs 705 and sunflower refined oil at Rs 705.

In Rajkot, shortage of nuts pushed up groundnut oil by Rs 15 to Rs 1,895 for a *tellia* tin and by Rs 10 to Rs 1,240 for loose (10 kg).

**Malaysian crude palm oil's** April contracts settled at 3,512 ringgit (3,482 ringgit), May at 3,485 ringgit (3,455 ringgit) and June at 3,481 ringgit (3,459 ringgit) a tonne. On the National Board of Trade in Indore, soya refined oil for April delivery closed at Rs 747.50 (Rs 751.60) while for May was Rs 749 (Rs 748).

**Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg):** groundnut oil 1,225 (1,210), soya refined oil 700 (705), sunflower exp. ref. 645 (645), sunflower ref. 710 (710), rapeseed ref. oil 843 (845), rapeseed expeller ref. 813 (815) cotton ref. oil 684 (682) and palmolein 615 (610).

## Buying by mills keeps cotton steady



Rajkot, March 27:

Cotton remained unchanged in Gujarat even as buying by mills continued. Arrivals declined as markets are closed for a week because of the ending of the financial year. Prices may fall on lower demand in coming days, said a trader here.

The Sankar-6 variety was traded at Rs 34,000-34,100 a candy of 356 kg. While about 28,000 bales of 170 kg each arrived in the State, 95,000-98,000 bales arrived in the rest of the country.

*Kapas* or raw cotton was down Rs 5 to Rs 850-855 for a *maund* of 20 kg here and was traded at Rs 865-870 for delivery at Kadi.

On the other hand, the fibre crop was firm in north India, where 37,000 bales arrived, on improved demand. J-34 RG quoted at Rs 3,530-3,575 a quintal in Punjab, at Rs 3,450-3,465 in Haryana and at Rs 3,450-3,460 in Rajasthan. Though domestic demand for cotton yarn was weak, export demand was strong.

*Kapas'* April contract declined by Rs 10.50 to Rs 828 for *maund* with an open interest of 7,483 lots.

## No plans to review ban on beef exports, says Plan panel

Our Bureau

Chennai, March 27:

The Planning Commission has deleted a controversial clause recommending a review of the ban on beef exports from its working group report for the 12th Plan.

In a statement, the Commission said that the Chairman of the working group, Dr V.K. Taneja, Vice-Chancellor, Guru Angad Dev Veterinary & Animal Science University, Ludhiana, has informed it that the recommendation was “an inadvertent clerical mistake. He has suggested that the recommendation should be deleted.”The necessary changes have been made in the report, the statement said.In its report in November last year, one of the recommendations of the report in Chapter XII was: “The country needs to have consistent and uniform slaughter policy across different States to make the industry competitive. There is an existing ban on beef exports; therefore it is necessary to revise the EXIM Policy to allow beef export.”

Following this, a hue and cry was raised by various organisations, including the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. The Planning Commission, in its statement, said that insofar as trade in beef is concerned the ban on exports involved cultural sensitivity of millions of people and hence, it cannot be viewed purely on a ‘commodity mode.’The Planning Commission has no intention of making any recommendation to change the present position, it said.Though beef exports are banned, India, however, exports buffalo meat, processed meat, sheep and goat meat. During April-November period of the current fiscal, exports of meat and its products were to the tune of Rs 2,179 crore against Rs 1,576 crore during the same period a year ago.During 2010-11, exports of meat and its products totalled Rs 8,775.90 crore against Rs 6,288.09 crore the previous year. Of this, buffalo meat exports were 7.09 lakh tonnes valued at Rs 8,412 crore against 4.95 lakh tonnes valued at Rs 5,480 crore.

### Cashew prices drop in lacklustre market

G K Nair



Kochi, March 27:

The cashew market is witnessing a declining trend on slack demand and last week it remained, by and large, quiet.

Price range came down by 5-10 cents a pound. Current offers are: W240 from \$3.60 to \$3.75; W320 from \$3.15 to \$3.30; W450 from \$3 to \$3.15 ; SW320 from \$3.10 to \$3.15; Splits from \$2.25 to \$2.35; Butts from \$2.30 to \$2.40; Pieces from \$1.95 to \$2.05 a pound (f.o.b).

Few processors were selling at the lower end of the range, trade sources in Mumbai said.

In the first quarter of this year, kernel prices have come down by almost 10 per cent that is., from the range of \$3.40-\$3.60 to \$3.15-\$3.30 a lb (f.o.b.), Mr Pankaj N. Sampat, a Mumbai-based dealer told *Business Line*.

He said that volume traded has been smaller than normal and little business has been done for shipments beyond June. Lack of forward sales means shellers will have to come out and sell at some stage. "But, since they are not buying raw cashew nuts (RCN) so far, they may not be under too much pressure to sell unless RCN and kernel prices are in parity," he said.

Lack of forward cover means roasters/retailers will have to start buying soon to maintain inventory and keep the chain filled to meet the core demand, even though they may not buy for promotions until they see some price stability.

Cashew lost significant market share in the second half of last year due to high prices and lack of product in certain periods. It would be reasonable to expect that lower prices and better availability will help cashew regain some of the lost market share, definitely in Asia and "may be" in the US and Europe, Mr Pankaj said.

If activity does not pick up during April, "we could find ourselves in a situation leading to a squeeze in kernel supplies during the summer in Europe and the US due to reduced processing/shipments from India and Vietnam in the second quarter". This could lead to an unnatural and distorted price movement.

If there is reasonable activity in April/May, shellers will become active in RCN purchases and this will ensure reasonable flow of RCN from Africa and kernels from India and Vietnam and that in turn will give some stability to prices rest of the year.

RCN prices are steady with Ivory Coast (IVC) in range of \$850 to \$875 a tonne (c&f) and Benin in the range of \$950-\$975 a tonne (c&f). Despite very little interest or activity, Tanzania is sticking to much higher levels.

## Mixed trend in spot rubber

Our Correspondent



Kottayam, March 27:

Spot rubber saw a mixed trend on Tuesday. Sentiments were neutral in sheet rubber during closing hours following an almost steady closing on the National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE). The remaining grades except latex made marginal gains on comparatively better demand.

The market continued to suffer from low supplies owing to the ongoing dry weather. Volumes were dull.

Sheet rubber finished unchanged at Rs 199.50 a kg, according to traders. The grade improved to Rs 199.50 (199) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to Rubber Board.

In futures, the April series slipped to Rs 199.90 (Rs 200.10), May to Rs 205.22 (Rs 205.38) and June to Rs 209.45 (Rs 209.80) a kg for RSS-4 on the NMCE. RSS-3 (spot) flared up to Rs 205.14 (Rs 200.54) a kg at Bangkok.

The April futures for the grade improved to ¥319 (Rs 195.69) from ¥315.5 a kg during the day session but then dropped to ¥318 (Rs 195.07) in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

**Spot rates (Rs/kg):** RSS-4, 199.50 (199.50); RSS-5, 197.50 (197); ungraded, 193.50 (193); ISNR 20, 197 (196) and latex 60 per cent, 130.50 (131).



## Development eats into rice output, acreage in Kerala

Kochi, March 27:

Indiscriminate reclamation of paddy fields, allegedly under the disguise of developmental activities, appears to have led to a sharp fall in area under the crop, and a consequent substantial drop in rice production during 2010–11.

The area under paddy, which had been steadily declining, increased in 2007-08 from 2.29 lakh ha to 2.34 lakh ha.

This was followed by a sharp fall of 20,828 ha from 2,34,013 ha to 2,13,185 ha in 2010-11, according to the Kerala Economic Review (KER) 2011 released recently.

### Production

Rice production has been on the decline since 1983 and last fiscal it had hit the lowest level of 5,22,739 tonnes, a fall of 75,598 tonnes from 5,98,337 tonnes in 2009-10, the KER said. It is against the estimated annual requirement of 40 lakh tonnes, official sources said.

The maximum area under rice was in 1974-75 at 8.81 lakh ha, with production at 13.34 lakh tonnes.

Two main reasons have been attributed to the continuous fall in its production are “indiscriminate reclamation of paddy fields in the name of developmental activities and shifting to other lucrative crops without making concerted efforts to increase productivity, making paddy cultivation profitable giving it the due importance and priority over others,” some of the paddy growers in Kuttanad, the granary of Kerala said.

“The food scene in Kerala is turning grim as factors both global to local accelerate scarcity and price hike of food grains,” said Prof S. Leena Kumari, Head of the Rice Research Station, Monkompuzha in Kuttanad. “The challenge facing our Government for the next few years will be to feed the escalating population, keeping prices low to benefit poor consumers and reducing production costs to benefit poor growers.” To feed a population of 3.3 crore, Kerala has to produce approximately 40 lakh tonnes of food grains every year at the minimum per capita food availability of 320 g, she said.

Among the strategies for increasing rice production in the State, area expansion needs immediate attention since Kerala cannot afford any more conversion of paddy lands, ecologically or economically.

The Kerala Conservation Of Paddy Land And Wetland Act, 2008, has to be implemented in its true sense to arrest conversion and to protect existing paddy lands. The ecosystem services provided by the rice crops need be recognised and intensive efforts have to be taken to bring back fallow land under cultivation by providing institutional support for developing the required infrastructural facilities and by promoting lease land cultivation wherever owners of paddy lands are unable to continue rice farming.

Kuttanad has become a victim of development where wetland systems including vast stretches of paddy fields are being reclaimed. The area under paddy in this region has shrunk to around 37,000 hectares from around 55,000, Fr Thomas Peeliyajickal, Executive Director, Kuttanad Vikasana Samithi, told *Business Line*.

The “Rani” kayal included in the Rs 1,860-crore Kuttanad package created by Dr M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation to bring it back to paddy cultivation has gone into the hands of a major private group engaged in financial and tourism business. About 75 per cent (420-450 acres) of the total area is said to be in the hands of the group, Fr Thomas said.

Besides the violation of laws enacted in 2008 to protect the state's paddy fields and wetland systems, the “Metran kayal” covering an area of 517 acres has been allegedly bought by a private company at Rs15 lakh an acre. It was hitherto being used for cultivation of paddy. Now, this area is proposed to be reclaimed for developing as a major township.

Add to this another 300 acres from the MN Block covering an area of 1,000 acres are also said to have been sold.

Negotiations are said to be under way for sale of nearby “Maran kayal” at Rs 9 lakh an acre while in the Marthandam kayal, around 30 acres have already been kept aside for reclamation, he said.

**India needs to raise annual foodgrains output by 1.34%: Govt**

PTI

New Delhi, March 27:

The country needs to increase its annual foodgrains production by 1.34 per cent to meet the output target of 280.6 million tonnes (mt) by 2020-21, Parliament was informed today.

This assessment has been made by the National Centre for Agricultural Economics & Policy Research (NCAP) of agri research body, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Minister of State for Agriculture, Mr Charan Das Mahant, said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

“Taking into account the current year’s estimated production of 250.42 million tonnes of foodgrains, the average annual increase of 1.34 per cent would be required to achieve the production level of 280.6 million tonnes of foodgrains by 2020-21,” he said.

To another question, the Agriculture Minister, Mr Sharad Pawar, replied that the demand for rice and wheat for the terminal year of the 12th Five-Year Plan (2016-17) is estimated at 110.21 mt and 89.06 mt respectively.

He said according to the second advance estimates for 2011-12, against the demand of 98.79 mt of rice and 77.36 mt of wheat, production would be at 102.75 mt and 88.31 mt respectively, during the year.

Mr Pawar said in order to enhance foodgrains output, a number of crop development schemes and programmes, including the National Food Security Mission (NFSM) and the Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize (SOPOM), are in operation.

To achieve higher agricultural productivity, ICAR is also conducting basic and strategic research related to crop improvement, production and protection technologies in pulses and other crops, Mr Mahant said.

### **Sugar prices stable: Govt**



New Delhi, March 27:

The prices of sugar have remained stable with the Government making efforts to maintain a balance between availability and pricing, including release of sugar quota, the Lok Sabha was informed today.

During March, with the release of non-levy sugar quota of 12.50 lakh tonne, carry-over stock of one lakh tonnes and levy quota of 2.10 lakh tonnes, the availability of sugar was sufficient in the market and the prices have remained stable, the Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Minister, Mr K. V. Thomas, told the Lok Sabha.

He said the Government was making efforts to maintain the balance between availability and pricing of sugar through a regulated release mechanism, appropriate export-import interventions and administrative measures.