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## Vegetable prices

S. Sandeep Kumar

It is an important ingredient in meals but since last few days it is being avoided deliberately by women in most houses in the city. Curry leaves that are usually offered as compliment by vendors are now offered at a price of Rs.40 per kilogram.

Curry leaves that were offered for Rs.30 per kg at different Rythu Bazars during the last fortnight, is now being sold at Rs. 40 per kg. "It is shocking. I have never purchased curry leaves spending Rs. 40 per kg," says Rukmini, a visitor at Kukatpally Rythu Bazar.

Authorities are clueless as to whether there would be any price correction in the next few days. "Not just households, even we are shocked. It is perhaps for the first time in the recent past that curry leaves have been so costly," admits an officer in Kukatpally Rythu Bazar. He cites low production as the main reason.

Curry leaves are cultivated in Nawabpet, Shankerpally, Zaheerabad and other villages in Ranga Reddy district. But due to poor water supply and germ infection in most fields, the production was hit adversely this season, explains the officer.

Everyday about 15 quintals of curry leaves is bought to Kukatpally Rythu Bazar but since last few days only 10 quintals is being sold. There were few days when they were bought from Vijayawada and other coastal districts, he informs.

Its not just curry leaves, prices of other vegetables, particularly French beans, field beans, lady's fingers etc have also increased considerably in the last few days. French beans that were sold at Rs. 28 two weeks back, are now offered for Rs. 34 per kg. Likewise, field beans price has increased from Rs. 22 per kg to Rs. 28 per kg, bitter-gourd from Rs. 17 to Rs. 22. Lady's fingers price continues to remain at Rs. 34 per kg.

Poor water supply, lack of storage facility and other factors contribute to low production of vegetables. Farmers from Vikarabad, Shankerpally, Moinabad, Shamshabad and other regions offer vegetables for sale at different Rythu Bazars.

Usually, 1,200 quintals of vegetables are bought to Kukatpally Rythu Bazar everyday but since last one week, the arrivals rocked to 900 quintals a day. This season, however, the production levels have gone down drastically and it is still early summer. The situation could get worse in the coming days, says an officer.

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### **Mettur level**

The water level at the Mettur Dam stood at 80.80 feet on Sunday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 516 cusecs and the discharge 1,280 cusecs

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MANGALORE, March 5, 2012

### **Workshop on soil processing**

The Krishi Vignan Kendra, Kankanady (Ekkur), will conduct a one-day workshop on soil processing at its campus on March 14. Experts will speak on various issues of soil processing including ways to maintain nutrients in the soil and importance of soil testing. Those interested should register with the Kendra by March 12. For details, call on 2431872, 9482194057.

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KODAIKANAL, March 5, 2012

### **Garlic harvest in full swing**

With bumper harvest, garlic harvesting is in full swing at many villages on upper Kodaikanal Hill. Effective post harvesting and packaging technologies are need of the hour to minimise loss and boost profit.

With good climate condition and other facilities, farmers have got better yield this season.

Now, farmers follow traditional post harvesting methods. Fresh garlic has to go through many processes for converting them into mature and quality bulbs. Fifteen to 50 per cent of loss occurs owing to poor and improper post-harvest management practices. Proper curing, sorting

and grading, transportation and storage are essential to minimise loss of which drying and curing plays a crucial role.

Total area under garlic in the hill is 370 hectares. Poomparai, Gundupatti, Mannavanur on the upper hill are major garlic production centres with an annual production of 2,250 tonnes. Total garlic cultivation area in the State is 528 hectares and the total production 3,139 tonnes. Garlic is cultivated on 88 hectares in The Nilgiris, 57 hectares in Cuddalore and 30 hectares in Erode districts.

It is being cultivated on 2.09 lakh hectares with an annual production of 12.64 lakh tonnes in the country, next to China, a global leader in area and production. Madhya Pradesh tops in the country with 26 per cent of total production, Gujarat follows with 19.11 per cent, Uttar Pradesh 16.77 per cent, Rajasthan 11 per cent, Odisha 5.25 per cent and Bihar 2.03 per cent, the lowest in the country.

Farmers should pay special attention from drying and curing to sorting, grading and packaging to get better price, says Deputy Director of Horticulture (Central Schemes), S.Raja Mohamed.

While drying will remove excess moisture from outer skin and neck to scale down storage rot, curing will ensure colour development and helps bulbs become compact. It takes a week in the field for drying and 48 hours to complete curing, if humidity is between 60 and 75 per cent, he adds. Sorting is very important for ensuring quality and better price. Farmers adopt manual grading in the hill. Thick-necked, split, injured, diseased and bulbs with hollow cloves must be sorted out.

Such measure will minimise loss and prevent decay. In package also, farmers use mesh jute bags for domestic use. As garlic needs less ventilation compared to onion, suitable packaging to reduce drying loss is needed.

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CHENNAI, March 5, 2012

### **More milk products, parlours from Aavin this summer**

Summer is here and Aavin, the Tamil Nadu Co-operative Milk Producers' Federation, plans to increase availability of its products, including milk, butter, ghee, buttermilk, ice cream, lassi and curd. Already around 15,000- 20,000 litres of milk a day is being made available at all its 56

parlours, 51 automatic milk vending outlets, which also sell other Aavin products, and 140 franchise outlets in the city. "We plan to add another 80,000 litres of milk daily," said sources.

Earlier, around 10.50 lakh litres of milk per day used to be supplied by the Federation. Now with increased procurement of milk, large quantities of butter and ghee are available. "Two tonnes each of butter and ghee are consumed by Chennaiites everyday," a source said.

In order to cater for the growing demand, Aavin is adding more parlours in the city. "Three new parlours are shortly coming up at Padikuppam, Choolai and Mogappair West. Our existing parlours are being spruced up. We are installing boards, listing stocks and also advertising the parlours for better visibility," said a source.

Aavin is also taking steps to increase availability of ice cream from 800 litres per day to 1,300 litres per day.

Around 10,000 200-ml packets of buttermilk and 7,500-8,000 cartons of lassi are also sold in the city.

Nearly 3,000 sachets and 2,000 cups of curd are purchased by those who do not have time to make curd at home.

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COIMBATORE, March 5, 2012

### **Anamalai block sets record in cocoa cultivation**

Anamalai revenue block has achieved the distinction of being first in area coverage for cocoa in single revenue block across India.

#### **Yield**

Assistant Director of Horticulture Eapan Vettah said that the last year coverage for the block under cocoa as per the Revenue Department records was 15 hectares and presently it has gone up to 760.20 hectares.

Cocoa is preferred by the farmers of Anamalai region as it gave a yield of 1 kg per tree even without adding chemical fertilizers.

The credit for this achievement is due to the climate and about 800 kg of cocoa leaf falling from the tree from 500 plants in a hectare. The leaf acts as manure and also in mulching.

The temperature of maximum 36 degrees centigrade, elevation of more than 300 metre from sea level, rainfall of more than 1000 mm, soil ph of 6-8 level, relative humidity of 80 per cent without dry spell of more than 3 months and normal wind speed coincides to make this area more suitable for the crop than other areas of Tamil Nadu.

## **Loss**

Hundreds of hectares came under cocoa besides hundreds of hectares for gap-filling to compensate the previous year loss.

Banana is also being planted at Anamalai for harvesting it during Onam.

Horticulture Department in Anamalai block is also being credited with achieving the largest area under tea in Valparai block as it had crossed 11,000 hectares.

The area under tea plantations had also increased unlike other parts of Tamil Nadu where it was cultivated.

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**hindustantimes**

Monday, March 05, 2012

**Press Trust Of India**

Chandigarh, March 03, 2012

First Published: 19:27 IST(3/3/2012)

Last Updated: 01:34 IST(4/3/2012)

## **FDI in retail will harm small farmers: Agri marketing body**

State agriculture marketing boards on Saturday said FDI in multi-brand retail will harm farmers, particularly small and marginal peasants.

"Farmers are certainly going to be affected if FDI into multi-brand retail is given a go-ahead. It

will mainly cause concerns to small and marginal farmers who have less than four hectares of land," the National Council of State Agricultural Marketing Boards (COSAMB) managing director SS Randhawa said while addressing a farmers' meet on the issue organised by CII in Chandigarh on Saturday.

Noting that foreign direct investment (FDI) into multi-brand retail would come with only "profit motive", he said the presence of foreign retailers in the sector would create a monopolistic situation that would yield lower realisations to farmers.

"Purchasing will be at low prices, while selling will be at higher rates. As a result, farmers will not greatly benefit from the arrangement," he said.

He further said buying of only high-quality farm produce through contract farming arrangements would have a negative impact on other farmers who could be harassed to become part of the foreign retailing system.

"The sudden halt of procurement of a particular crop by a retailer from a farmer will also lead to a vacuum as there will be no other alternative for the farmer at that time to produce another crop," he said.

Randhawa said that retailers must purchase commonly-grown crops only through contract farming at a price linked with market rates.

COSAMB has a mandate to bring efficiency in agricultural marketing system.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/820331.aspx>

weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Monday, Mar 5

Max    Min

35.7° | 24.5°

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy






Tuesday, Mar 6

Max    Min

31° | 20°

**Rain:** 00 mm in 24hrs      **Sunrise:** 6:35  
**Humidity:** 66%              **Sunset:** 18:03  
**Wind:** Normal                **Barometer:** 1006

#### Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday Mar 7	Thursday Mar 8	Friday Mar 9	Saturday Mar 10	Sunday Mar 11
				
31°   19°	32°   19°	33°   19°	32°   21°	31°   22°
Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy	Cloudy

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## THE ECONOMIC TIMES

### Tokyo rubber futures slip; drop in supply should give support

BANGKOK: Tokyo rubber futures slipped on Monday, tracking falls in share prices, but limited supply and firmer oil prices should lend support, dealers said.

The benchmark rubber contract on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange <0#JRU:> for August delivery fell 3.5 yen, or 1 percent, to settle at 338.4 yen (\$4.15) per kg.

The most active rubber contract on the Shanghai futures exchange dropped 430 yuan to finish at 28,920 yuan (\$4,600) per tonne.

The front-month April TSR20 rubber contract on SICOM was last traded at 381 U.S. cents per kg, down 2.6 cents.

"Rubber prices fell in line with share prices, but rubber should still be supported as supply is falling and oil prices remain firm," said a Bangkok-based dealer.

Japan's Nikkei share average dropped 0.8 percent on Monday due to profit-taking by domestic investors near key chart levels and as Asian shares in general dropped after China announced its lowest annual growth target in eight years.

Supply in two big producing countries, Thailand and Malaysia, has fallen significantly since late February because the countries are in their dry season, when rubber trees produce less latex. Supply will tighten further in April.

Brent crude climbed to near \$124 on Monday, rebounding from a drop of 2 percent the previous session as another refiner announced cuts in Iranian imports, feeding fears of a supply crunch as the West presses ahead with sanctions on Tehran.

5 MAR, 2012, 12.44PM IST, REUTERS

**Govt bans cotton exports effective immediately**

MUMBAI: The government has banned cotton exports with immediate effect, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said on Monday, as the world's second-largest exporter of the fibre moves to conserve supplies for local mills.

"Export of cotton has been prohibited till further orders," the DGFT said in a statement. India is the world's second largest producer of cotton and most of its shipments go to China, the world's largest user of the fibre.

"Export against registration certificates already issued will also not be allowed," the notification said.

India had already exported 8.5 million bales, higher than government estimates made in January of 8.4 million bales of 170 kilograms each for the year, on strong demand from China. Over 80 percent of exports so far have headed to the Asian giant.

Traders in India had signed contracts for nearly 10 million bales in total for export at \$1.01-\$1.03 per lb, including those already shipped.



Domestic textile makers were worried that such large quantities of exports would cut availability in the domestic market, traders said.

"(It's a) very regretful decision and this will permanently damage the reputation of the country in the international market," said Dhiren N. Sheth, president of the Cotton Association of India. "Prices are likely to touch support price levels very soon."

Cotton prices in the domestic market are hovering around 34,000-35,000 rupees per candy of 356 kg each. They hit a record high of 61,700 rupees per candy in March 2011.

The federal government raised the minimum support price for long staple cotton for 2011/12 season by 300 rupees to 3,300 rupees per 100 kg.

International cotton prices rose with the May cotton contract on ICE up 4.33 percent to \$0.92 per lb.

In January, the state-run Cotton Advisory Board cut its estimates for cotton harvesting in the 2011/12 season ending Sept. 30 to 34.5 million bales of 170 kg each from its earlier projection of 35.6 million bales.

The government may revise that down again because arrivals of cotton at local markets are still lower than expected, said Arunbhai Dalal, a Rajkot-based trader.

Cotton arrivals from the new crop in Indian spot markets have dropped 4.4 percent in the current cotton year until Feb. 26, to 22.33 million bales, state-run Cotton Corp of India said on Monday on its website.

5 MAR, 2012, 05.04AM IST, ET BUREAU

### **Low stocks may keep pepper prices high**

KOCHI: Pepper prices, which peaked to a new high of Rs 387 per kg on Wednesday, have cooled on selling pressure. Farmers have released almost their entire stock to make the most of the rally. Earlier, an acute shortage in the market spurred rumours of pepper price touching Rs 400 per kg.

After dropping to Rs 373 per kg, prices started climbing again, reaching Rs 386 per kg on Saturday. The April contract for delivery on NCDEX touched Rs 390 per kg the same day. Given the scarcity in the market, pepper prices are predicted to remain high till fresh stocks arrive from Karnataka. The Vietnam crop that has started to filter in may contain the rally once it reaches full swing.

"The arrivals into the domestic market and the Vietnam crop may lead to a price correction later in the month. But even then, they are likely to hover in the Rs 325 to Rs 350 per kg range," said Kishor Shamji, a leading exporter and former president of the India Pepper and Spice Trade Association.

High pepper prices have squeezed exports too. The Indian parity is around \$7,000 per tonne, which is more than the prices offered by other origins like Vietnam and Indonesia. Up to December 2011, Indian pepper exports had risen 46% at 19,500 tonne. But rising prices hit exports in February. Farmers have sold all their saved stock to cash in on the high prices. Most of it has been bought by large traders in the local market. India's pepper production is expected to be 5% lower at 43,000 tonne in 2011-12, so the stock for next year is expected to be thin which could push up prices in the domestic market, said a grower. But globally, prices will ease on arrivals from Vietnam in March-April. Reports say the Vietnam produce to be anywhere between 1.1 lakh tonne to 1.4 lakh tonne.

5 MAR, 2012, 04.49AM IST, SUTANUKA GHOSAL & JAYASHREE BHOSALE, ET BUREAU

### **Onion prices in Bengal, Northeast rise due to low supply from Nashik & wily traders**

KOLKATA/PUNE: Onion prices in West Bengal and the Northeastern states are rising. Though the wholesale price is hovering between Rs 9 and Rs 9.50 per kg, consumers are being forced to shell out Rs 18-20 for a kilogram of onion. The supply from Nashik has dropped over the last one week to these states and some unscrupulous traders are using this to sell the vegetable at high prices.

Gautam Sinha, general secretary of Co-ordination Committee of the Onions Merchants Association of Greater Calcutta, said: "At present, the wholesale price of onions that are coming

from Nashik are available between Rs 900 and Rs 950 per quintal. But the quality of some stock is not good so we have to reject them. This may be a reason for the rising prices. Supply from Nashik is declining. However, Bengal's Sukhsagar variety has entered the market. Once the flow of these onions increases, prices will come down. Sometimes traders and farmers do not release onions in the market in anticipation of a better price. This also pushes up prices." Wholesale onion prices in Maharashtra are ruling below Rs 3 per kg for over two months now. In other onion growing regions, wholesale prices range between Rs 4.50 per kg to Rs 6 per kg. Lasalgaon and Pimpalgaon are the two biggest wholesale markets for onions. However, the movement of onion out of the state has been hit by the decline in availability of rakes on goods trains.

"The availability of railway rakes has reduced over the last 10-12 days. It is not possible to transport onions by road over such long distances because the freight rates are 3-4 times more," said Nandkumar Daga, president, Lasalgaon Traders' Association.

Currently, most of the onions from Nashik are going to West Bengal and the North-East because of ample local supply in other states. Though supply from Nashik to Kolkata has been affected, total onion arrival there has been constant at around 15,000 tonne from the last fortnight. Wholesale onion price is also constant between Rs 7/kg and Rs 8/kg from January.

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## Business Standard

Monday, Mar 05, 2012

### Guarseed hits upper circuit on speculation

Press Trust of India / New Delhi March 05, 2012, 14:50 IST



Guarseed prices hit daily upper limit of 4% to Rs 21,568 per quintal in the futures market today, due to speculative buying by traders.

Marketmen said rising demand in spot markets amid reports of lower output estimates this season mainly pushed up the commodity prices sharply.

Strong export demand was another reason behind price rise, they added.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, guarseed for delivery in March gained Rs 830, or 4%, to Rs 21,568 per quintal, with an open interest of 17,750 lots.

The April contract, too, froze on a daily limit of 4%, gaining Rs 841 to Rs 21,856 per quintal, with an open interest of 3,480 lots.

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### **Barley falls on selling pressure**

**Press Trust of India / New Delhi March 05, 2012, 14:38 IST**



Barley prices fell by Rs 31.50 to Rs 1,548 per quintal in the futures trading today as traders preferred to off-load their holdings on the back of increased supply and reduce offtake in physical markets.

Marketmen said rising inventories and slackness in demand in spot markets largely led the fall here in futures price of barley.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, barley price in June slipped by Rs 31.50, or 1.99%, to Rs 1,548 per quintal, with an open interest of 100 lots.

The most active April contract shed Rs 28, or 1.80%, to Rs 1,528.50 per quintal, having an open interest of 3,460 lots.

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### **Chana dips almost 2% on higher arrivals**

**Press Trust of India / New Delhi March 05, 2012, 14:17 IST**



Chana prices dropped by Rs 69 to Rs 3,619 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators offloaded their positions, triggered by rising arrival of new crops in the spot market.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, chana for delivery in March dropped by Rs 69, or 1.87%, to Rs 3,619 per quintal with an open interest of 80,630 lots.

The April contract moved down by Rs 29, or 0.78%, to Rs 3,668 per quintal in 1,04,260 lots.

Market analysts attributed the fall in chana futures prices to rising arrivals of new crop from producing regions.

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### **Jeera declines on sluggish demand**

**Press Trust of India / New Delhi March 05, 2012, 14:09 IST**



Jeera prices fell by Rs 195 to Rs 13,470 per quintal in the futures trade today due to the sluggish domestic demand against increased supplies from the producing regions.

Mounting supplies of the new crop and estimates of higher output this season mainly kept pressure on the jeera prices at the futures trade.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, jeera for delivery in March fell by Rs 195, or 1.43%, to Rs 13,470 per quintal with an open interest of 9,495 lots.

The April contract lost Rs 187.50, or 1.35%, to Rs 13,717.50 per quintal in 13,137 lots.

Analysts attributed to fall in jeera futures to increased arrivals of new season crop in the physical market against the sluggish demand.

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### **Potato climbs 3% on spot demand**

**Press Trust of India / New Delhi March 05, 2012, 11:27 IST**

Potato prices spurted by 3% to Rs 998 per quintal in the futures trading today as speculators enlarged their positions, driven by pick-up in demand in the spot market.

Restricted arrivals from producing region also supported the uptrend in potato futures prices.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, April potato spurred by Rs 29.10, or 3%, to Rs 998.20 per quintal in business turnover of 67 lots.

The March contract moved up by Rs 24.10, or 2.73%, to Rs 908 per quintal in 512 lots.

Marketmen said increased buying by speculators due to pick-up in demand in the spot market amid restricted arrivals from producing region mainly led to rise in potato prices at futures market.

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## THE HINDU Business Line

### **N. India tea auctions see fair local interest**

Our Bureau

Kolkata, March 4:

Last week at Sale No. 9, the total offerings (packages) at three North Indian tea auction centres at Kolkata, Guwahati and Siliguri were 1,96,518 as compared with 1,80,995 in the corresponding sale of the previous year, according to J Thomas & company Private Limited, the tea auctioneers.

The offerings at Kolkata during the week were 1,55,599 (1,34,027) comprising CTC/Dust 1,43,882 (1,24,226), Orthodox 11,350 (8,920) and Darjeeling 367 (831)

No sale was reported in Guwahati, the same as the corresponding sale of last year, while the figures for Siliguri (Sale 7) were 40,919 (46,968).

Few Assam CTC teas maintaining quality sold at around last levels. The remainder were lower following decline in quality, particularly browner sorts. Well-made Dooars sold around last levels while the remainder tended easier following declining quality. There was selective support from Hindustan Unilever and Tata Global. Western India dealers were active for the liquoring sorts. There was fair enquiry from North India and local sections. Exporters were quiet.

Orthodox varieties eased in value with stalkier sorts seeing withdrawals. North India buyers operated on the bolder whole leaf. Hindustan Unilever operated selectively. There was fair interest from local dealers.

Nominal weight of Darjeeling teas on offer sold in line with quality and were supported mainly by the local dealers.

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### **Govt bans cotton exports**

M.R. Subramani



Cotton production this season ending September is projected to be a record 35.5 million bales against 32.5 million bales last year.

Chennai, March 5:

The Centre on Monday banned with immediate effect exports of raw cotton, catching shippers, industry and growers by surprise.

In a notification issued early in the morning, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade said even exports of cotton for which registration certificates have been issued will not be allowed.

The ban follows registration of over 12 million bales (of 170 kg each) of cotton for exports.

At a meeting last week, when the issue cropped up, the textile industry said that it had no problem in such large exports since it was facing recession.

Textile mills in the South, particularly Tamil Nadu, have been affected badly by power shortage. Cotton production this season ending September is projected to be a record 35.5 million bales against 32.5 million bales last year.

The export ban comes at a time when cotton prices are ruling low. During the weekend, prices of Shankar 6, mainly in demand for exports, ruled at 34800-35000 a candy of 356 kg.

The ban is likely to lead to crash in prices. "Too much of cotton will now be chasing too little demand," said Mr A. Ramani, cotton analyst. Export of at least 3 million bales will now be affected, according to trade sources.

Cotton futures price in New York are likely to gain.

### **Export potential not fully tapped**



Await the ripe season: During 2010-11, India exported processed guava products worth worth Rs 16 crore.

#### *COMMODITY FOCUS: GUAVA*

Guava or *Psidium guajava* from family *Myrtaceae*, as it is scientifically known, is believed to have originated from Southern Mexico to Central America.

The fruit is a rich source of fibre, vitamins A and C, folic acid and several other minerals and contains three times more vitamin C than an Orange.

Currently, India is the largest guava producing country, however, it is also cultivated throughout tropics and sub tropics, normally as a horticulture crop, with global production largely concentrated in India, Pakistan, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, the US, Thailand and other countries.

Guava is well adapted and can be grown throughout India. Traditionally the fruit is grown in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Orissa, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh in more than 2 lakh ha with a total production at around 25 lakh tonnes.

Guava occupies 3.5 per cent of the total fruit crop area in the country and is one of the major fruits though it is considered as a minor fruit in global trade.



The top three states, UP, Bihar and Maharashtra contribute nearly 40 per cent of the total production in India. Owing to a good demand for the guava processed products, India has started exporting various forms of guava, as fresh or dried fruit, pulp, juices, nectars etc. to various countries. It is widely used in various forms such as jams, jellies, ice creams etc.

Major cultivars that are grown in India are Allahabad Safeda, Sardar (Lucknow 49 or L-49), Lalit (Pink flesh), Anakapalli, Banarasi, Arka Mridula, Nagpur Seedless etc. Allahabad Safeda and Sardar are widely cultivated due to the commercial acceptability and demand in export markets.

### **Season**

Planting season starts from June to July and can continue to December based on the rainfall conditions of the region. Fruits can be harvested after 2-3 years from planting and usually the peak production occurs after 8-10 years.

Guava is available in abundance during the peak months of July to August in North India, November to December and from March to April in the other parts of the country. Except May and June, Guava can be found in the markets in one or the other States in India.

### **Exports**

India exports fresh or dried guavas to West Asian countries such as United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Yemen, Kuwait etc, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Indonesia among others but the export value has come down in recent years as most of the fresh fruits are either consumed within the country in fresh form or processed to various forms such as pulp and juices.

After the introduction of multi fruit processing infrastructure in India by many private entrepreneurs, processed guava product exports increased initially, however, has witnessed a slowdown in the recent years. In 2010-11, fresh or dried guava exports were valued at Rs 0.63 crore which has come down from the Rs 3.04 crore in 2007-08.

### **New Cultivation Practices**

Though India is the largest producer of the fruit, its contribution in the global trade of fresh or processed form, is minuscule.

During 2010-11, India exported processed guava products worth Rs 16 crore compared with Rs 18 crore in 2008-09.

Traditional cultivation and crop management of guava were marred by serious issues due to pests, low productivity and large canopy required to manage the orchard.

The Central Institute of Subtropical Horticulture in Lucknow has developed a new method of Guava cultivation using high density planting with meadow orchard that allows shorter plant height, better light interception and ease of cultural operations such as pruning of the branches, pesticide sprays, harvesting etc. Meadow orchard is a modern way of cultivating fruits by use of small trees having modified canopy. While traditional guava orchards can accommodate up to 300 plants in one hectare of land, meadow orchard can accommodate up to 5000 plants.

Moreover, guava plants in meadow orchard start yielding in the first year of planting itself where as traditional plants start from the third year. It is important to note that to achieve good results by this method, farmers need to train and prune the orchard at regular intervals.

Guava, though is a simple crop requiring minimal resources, has a long way to reach the market size and export potential of other fruits such as apple, mango and grapes.

### **Budget expectations for agriculture sector**

M.R. Subramani



Weather playing truant: A view of a paddy field.

But for elections to the five States, the Union Finance Minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, could have read out his Budget by this time. Maybe, the Centre was fortunate enough to have its Budget presentation delayed, as it has got some extra time to tackle any exigency or situation that could arise, particularly with regard to agriculture.

Ever since the United Progressive Alliance came to power in 2004, agriculture has been one of its focus areas.

Every year, we hear the Finance Minister say something is being done or will be done in agriculture. This year, the Budget will be presented at a time when at least two agencies abroad have forecast a not-too rosy outlook on the monsoon.

The agencies in Europe and Japan have said that monsoon could face failure, though temperatures may be lower. This is not good news for the North Block as it gets ready with the Budget for the next fiscal.

Views are almost unanimous that agriculture needs focus.

The call is now to improve production through better yield. In fact, the oft-repeated comment on Indian agriculture is that farmers should be encouraged to produce more through higher yield. It is a scenario that has been true mostly with soyabean farmers. Cotton farmers reaped such a benefit in 2010-11, though the same cannot be said this season that ends in September. In fact, this year's price for cotton has been such a let down for farmers that the International Cotton Advisory Committee sees cotton acreage decreasing next season.

### **Monsoon forecast**

The Centre could have its hands full in the likelihood of a monsoon failure. Already, many parts of the country are witnessing a prolonged dry period with 26 of the 36 meteorological subdivisions getting deficient, scanty or no rain. In fact, since the advent of North-East monsoon, weather has been playing truant in some regions.

A scenario of deficient rainfall or drought is one the Manmohan Singh Government has to tackle with its full might since 68 per cent or 136 million hectares of agricultural land in the country is rainfed. The primary focus of this year's Budget will be to prepare the country for any such eventuality. A monsoon failure could prove to be a double whammy for the Government since inflation is inherent in such an eventuality. In the last Budget, the Finance Minister allocated Rs 300 crore to develop pulses in 60,000 villages under rainfed conditions. Such focus will have to continue, perhaps with a higher allocation, this year.

A fallout of the prolonged dry season since the fourth quarter of last year has been lower oilseeds production, particularly that of rapeseed/mustard. This will lead to higher vegetable oils

import this season. Vegetable oils import has emerged as one of the key components in which precious foreign exchange goes.

Last year, Rs 300 crore was allocated to bring 60,000 hectares under oil palm cultivation. The Finance Minister may have to come up with more this Budget too to achieve the Government's objective of producing three lakh tonnes of palm oil in five years time.

### **Irrigation**

In the previous Budgets, the Centre had focussed on irrigation, particularly drip irrigation. While renewing its focus on irrigation, the Government would well do to give a thrust to micro irrigation that could be economical and workable for small and marginal farmers. This also could come in handy to focus on organic agriculture.

Besides, the Finance Minister can make a start by coming out with policy or even incentive to improve ground water levels. Reports of depleting ground water sources are scary and it is time that the Government swung into action on this.

In fact, Mr Mukherjee could focus on strengthening sources such as lakes and ponds nearby agricultural farms so that farmers could spend less on getting irrigation. Already, the Centre has raised the prices of non-urea fertilisers and subsidy on this count is on the downswing. However, the Centre can look at other ways and means that improve soil fertility and nutrients and its overall health. Logistics and transport are the major hurdle in a farmer getting his produce to the consumer. Often, problems in logistics have resulted in farmer selling his product at a throw away prices. As a result, the desired objective of better remuneration the grower remains a dream.

### **Foreign investment**

In last year's Budget, the Centre had come up with initiatives to promote foreign investment in cold chains and increase their capacity. The initiative needs to continue this year too. But if something needs better thrust this year, then it should be transport and logistics in getting the farmers produce to the end consumer. Such a thrust will cut the number of middlemen in the food chain and ensure better payment for the farmer.

### **Storages**

The Centre can also think of ways to promote farmers' initiative in developing storages and such an initiative can be promoted on an individual basis or a cooperative. The Maharashtra example of providing subsidy to onion farmers to construct their own storage is one that is worth following. There are many such things to focus on but it is important to follow up the progress that has been achieved in making such allocations. Will the Finance Minister be bold enough to read out a report on the outcome of his initiative on agriculture during the Budget presentation? Or will the Economic Survey at least record the progress?

## Monitoring

The Centre needs to regularly monitor the progress of its agricultural policy and its implementation. Results of this have to be evaluated. Some sort of transparency has to be brought in the implementation of process and accountability of the outcome is critical. An annual monitoring and evaluation report should be published. Without such a process, outlays could run the risk of being misused. The Finance Minister would also do well if he considers ways and means to cut production costs for growers. The initiative could come in the form of low interest for crop loans and lower taxes on agricultural inputs. In turn, the consumers can also gain and that, in turn, can help the Government control inflation. Besides, Mr Mukherjee should surely come out with a policy to promote research and development aggressively. He can, perhaps, announce some tax relief for corporates that come forward to spend or sponsor such efforts in agriculture.

## Colour cotton runs into teething troubles

M. R. Subramani



Colour cotton, yarn and an apparel made out of it are on display. (file photo)

*The University of Agricultural Sciences has perfected growing cotton that is not genetically modified, with natural dark brown, light brown and green colour after almost a decade's research.*

Chennai, March 4:

The process of making cloth with colour cotton is facing teething problems, though some textile mills are showing interest.

“An understanding almost materialised with the Khadi and Village Industries Commission but talks between them and University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, got stuck over royalty,” said Dr Shreekant S. Patil, senior cotton breeder of the Dharwad agricultural varsity.

The Dharwad varsity did not agree to the royalty terms during talks.

“Some textile mills are showing interest but so far, no progress has been made,” said Dr Patil.

However, other problems such as growers reluctance fearing opposition from fellow-farmers over contamination are also cropping up.

The University of Agricultural Sciences has perfected growing cotton that is not genetically modified, with natural dark brown, light brown and green colour after almost a decade's research.

During a session on 'Cotton value chain benefits and traceability' at Nuremberg in Germany two weeks ago, the issue of colour cotton was discussed briefly. The panel on the dais was asked about why colour cotton was not catching up despite reports of better yield than Bt cotton and successful experiments in making cloth.

“Some farmers fear that colour cotton could contaminate nearby fields and hence there could be opposition from fellow-growers. It is one of the reasons why there is some reluctance,” said Mr Arun Ambatipudi, General Secretary of Secunderabad-based Chetna Organic Farmers Association.

“No doubt, brown cotton is popular but the green one is yet to become popular,” Mr Ambatipudi, who was on the dais, said.

According to Goan fashion designer, Mr Wendell Rodricks, designers would be reluctant to go in for colour cotton. “Fashion and preferences change frequently. Therefore, we would not be wanting to go for it,” he said. Mr Rodricks uses Malka cotton that is spun on the field itself.

A Swedish designer said fibre strength of colour cotton was suspect. “Remember Sally Fox? Fibre strength was the problem with it,” the designer said. Sally Fox of the US had come up with coloured cotton in 1982.

Mr Mani Chinnaswamy, Managing Partner of Pollachi-based Appachi Cotton, said that coloured cotton had to be grown in an isolated area. “When we were given the seeds to grow, we were told to grow it in isolated places so that farmers growing regular cotton will not be affected,” he said.

“Unless and until someone takes up growing colour cotton, there will be scepticism. Once someone comes forward and takes it up, things could change,” said Dr Patil.

“Again, we are careful in giving seeds to growers. We will give seeds only to an organised group of farmers and they need to have a tie-up with a textile mill before we can consider giving the seed and the know-how,” said Dr Patil.

If some textile mill comes up with a worthwhile proposal along with a group of farmers, the Dharwad university will consider providing full support, he said. The varsity is also looking at extension workers to take the lead in popularising colour cotton.

#### **Farmers should also explore alternative sources of income: AP CM**



*Business Line* Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr N. Kiran Kumar Reddy, speaking at the two-day AP-TEC — 2012 conference, in Hyderabad on Saturday. — Photo: Mohammed Yousuf Hyderabad, March 4:

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr N. Kiran Kumar Reddy, has urged farmers to explore alternative sources of income from allied sectors.

With the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, the availability of labour in the agricultural sector was a great cause for concern, he

said. "We have already urged the Centre to extend the MNREG scheme partly to agriculture works also," he added.

Calling for consistency in policies for the benefit of farmers, Mr Reddy said frequent changes were putting them at a disadvantage. The Chief Minister was speaking at the inaugural function of AP-TEC 2012, organised by the CII-APTDC, Central and State Governments, with the theme "Enhancing and optimising agricultural value chains".

### **Collaboration**

Mr Reddy sought collaboration between the industry and farmers for ensuring remunerative prices to the latter. He emphasised the need for promoting mechanisation in agriculture for enhancing growth and productivity.

Mr V. Nagi Reddy, Principal Secretary – Agriculture & Co-operation, AP said agriculture had transformed from subsistence to commercial. In this context, farmers are increasingly feeling that agriculture was not a profitable sector. The State Government is implementing an interest free loan scheme to farmers for ensuring better credit to the farmers.

Dr William D. Dar, Philippines, Director General, ICRISAT felt that developing countries should focus on an inclusive market development model to ensure better returns to the farmers. Promoting value chains in public-private partnership model and institutional insurance mechanisms are needed for ensuring growth in the sector, he said.

Earlier, Mr Anil Kumar V Epur, Past-Chairman, CII Southern Region, said that public private partnership was necessary for the growth of the agriculture sector.

AP-TEC 2012 also featured an exhibition where some of the big corporations such as JCB, John Deere, Jain Irrigation, Finolex Plasson Pvt Ltd, Coromandel International Ltd, Tata Steel Ltd, VST Tillers, Mahindra & Mahindra, Crystal Group etc took part.

### **Pepper prices move up on buying support**

G.K. Nair

Kochi, March 3:

Pepper market after remaining hot till mid-last week on strong buying support amid limited supply fell sharply in the later days of the week when bear operators pulled the market down citing slack domestic demand. However, it bounced back on Saturday with all active contracts



hitting double upper circuit levels on good buying support and bullish activities. Bull operators managed to get into the driving seat on Saturday.

In fact, slow down in domestic demand after an estimated 600 tonnes of pepper had reached some of the north Indian centres becomes insignificant when one compares it with the monthly peak season demand of 4,000-5,000 tonnes a month. Those who had commitments to overseas and domestic buyers were covering on Friday. There was strong buying support and yet the market dropped. Fundamentally, there was a squeeze in supply and that is evident from the rate of arrivals which should have been much more these days. During this time of the season, the arrivals used to be around 300-400 tonnes a day.

Whereas, it was around 25-30 per cent of it only, trade sources told *Business Line*. There was no selling pressure visible in major growing areas of Kerala even now. Any improvement in availability would depend on the current crop in Karnataka where harvesting has begun in Chikmagalur and some other areas. But the crop there is also reportedly not much.

High fluctuation coupled with tight supply position is said to be putting exporters in difficulties. All the active contracts increased significantly with rise in all the deliveries on Saturday. March, April and May contracts went up by Rs 2,420, Rs 2,530 and Rs 2,380 respectively to close at Rs 38,650, Rs 37,750 and Rs 37,755 a quintal.

Total turnover increased by 36,184 tonnes during the week to close at 86,762 tonnes. Total open interest went up by 2,894 tonnes showing good additional purchases in the week.

Spot prices on good demand and in tandem with the futures market trend increased by Rs 2,400 to close at Rs 36,800 (ungarbled) and Rs 38,300 (MG 1) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market remained out-priced.

### **Overseas trend**

Other origins follow meticulously what happens in the futures trading in India and now in Singapore. Every fluctuation in the prices is reflected on the prices in other origins, especially Vietnam.

“The Indian market for black pepper surged and Indonesia and Vietnam rode the coattails higher,” a report said on Saturday. There were aggressive bookings, as buyers finally came to the table, accepting the “competitive” Vietnamese and Indonesian offers. “At the week's close

we are seeing a correction, but it seems technical in nature as the buyers who were ready to step up seem done at this point and sellers are trying to fish out the few remaining interests. There were dramatically different reports coming from Vietnam, with some sellers now reporting substantial crop damage. Whether true or not, the current main concern is that sellers there are definitely holding back from offering quantities and that is fuelling the market". For white, levels are such now that both Indonesia and Vietnam are making offers.

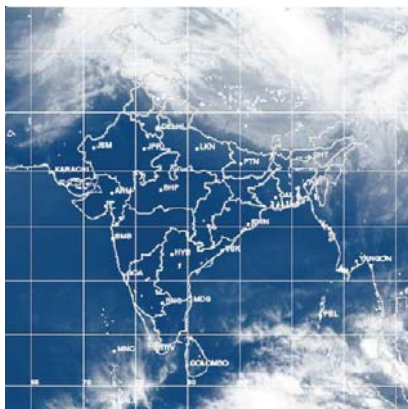
Prices quoted in dollar per tonne C&F New York were: MG1 Asta – 8,125-8,225; Vietnam Asta– 7,500; Lampong Asta – 7,475; Brazil Asta – 7,100-,150 (fob); MLV Asta – 8,000 ex warehouses New York/New Jersey.

### **White pepper**

Muntok white – 9,950-10,200 ; Vietnam double washed white – 9,875-9,900.

### **Hailstorm, squall alert stays for north and east India**

Vinson Kurian



Thiruvananthapuram, March 4:

The fresh western disturbance has moved in to set up a perch over north Pakistan, just across the Jammu and Kashmir border.

The system is endowed with some raw power and has spawned an induced cyclonic circulation over central Pakistan and adjoining northwest Rajasthan and Punjab.

The combined system will impact the western Himalayan region and adjoining plains of northwest India during the next three days, an India Meteorological Department (IMD) update said on Sunday evening.

The arrival phase of the western disturbance is expected to cause minimum as well as maximum temperatures to fluctuate by 2-4 degree Celsius over the plains of northwest, central and east India.

An IMD warning continued to suggest the possibility of heavy rain or snow at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh during the next two days and over Uttarakhand on Monday.

## **VIOLENT WEATHER**

Hailstorm may get whipped up at one or two places over Jammu division of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab and north Haryana.

Thunder squall speed reaching 50 km/hour may run up over the northeastern region through Monday with Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh getting impacted.

As for the plains of northwest, rain or thundershowers has been forecast over Punjab and north Haryana.

Meanwhile, the busying up of weather over east India has thrown down a north-south trough from west Assam all the way down to southeast Arabian Sea across northwest and west-central Bay of Bengal, north Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

## **Trough persists**

Rain or thundershowers would occur at a few places over the Northeastern States and Nicobar Islands.

Maximum and minimum temperatures are expected to fall by 2-3 degree Celsius over northwest and adjoining Central India after the western disturbance exits the region by midweek.