

Centre to offload 65 lakh tonnes of wheat in open market

The decision will help Punjab tide over shortfall in storage capacity

As Punjab grapples with high foodgrains procurement amid a shortfall in storage capacity, the Centre has decided to offload 65 lakh tonnes of wheat in the open market.

The State will create an additional storage space for 40 lakh tonnes at eight locations by March 2013. Each godown can store 50,000 tonnes of wheat that will be procured in the coming rabi season.

In a relief to the State, the Centre has decided that of the 27 lakh tonnes to be offloaded first under the Open Market Sale Scheme before February 2013, Punjab will release one lakh tonnes at a reserve price of Rs.1,484 a quintal (against the minimum support price of Rs.1,285).

The State, which is at the end of its paddy procurement season, is grappling with a shortage of storage space. As a result, 108 lakh tonnes of the 205 lakh tonnes of foodgrains is kept under the cap and plinth (CAP) storage. On November 1, the State had 192 lakh tonnes of rice and wheat in its godowns, despite the movement of 15 lakh tonnes every month.

Preparations are under way to create an additional storage capacity of 40 lakh tonnes under the Private Entrepreneur Godown Scheme. The Food Corporation of India (FCI) gives a 10-year guarantee for full occupancy of warehouses to help the investor break even.

FCI Deputy General Manager A.S. Arunachalam told visiting journalists here that of the 51-lakh tonne capacity sanctioned for Punjab, storage had already been created for nine lakh tonnes.

Modern silos

Though the FCI owned four silos in the State capable of handling 1.2 lakh tonnes, bulk handling in silos was more expensive than the traditional system, he said. Even so, the FCI planned to build modern silos in the State with a capacity of 4 lakh tonnes.

Punjab has two more state-of-the-art silos, at Kaithal and Moga, owned and run by Adani Agri Logistics under a public-private partnership programme. The government pays an annual rent of Rs. 45 crore for each. Every year, about 2 lakh tonnes of wheat is handled at these silos, which are sited next to rail sidings. However, they do not handle rice, a sensitive produce with a lower shelf-life. The Kaithal silo, for instance, has some wheat stocks stored in its containers since 2008. But rice cannot be stored that long.

Adani Agri Logistics associate general manager Pradeep Sabharwal said the company estimated that it would recover Rs. 750 crore it had invested in the silos in 20 years. Till then, the FCI would pay the company Rs. 90 crore a year for bulk handling of wheat and services such as quality control, storage and quicker despatch with reduced losses. "Fifty per cent of our expenses are on rail freight."

Explaining the State's storage woes, FCI Additional General Manager (Storage) S.K. Dhawan said that as against a mammoth wheat and rice stock of 192 lakh tonnes, the storage capacity available was for 205 lakh tonnes.

The current paddy procurement, which has already reached 122 lakh tonnes and is expected to go up to 130 lakh tonnes, was putting pressure on storage, he said. "The situation for wheat [storage], which is kept under the CAP, is tight."

Popularly called the granary of India, Punjab accounts for 40 per cent of the wheat and 30 per cent of the rice procured by the government for the Targeted Public Distribution System, with the FCI responsible for keeping the stocks as fresh and healthy as possible.

Minister blames Centre for fertilizer price rise

Cooperative Minister Sellur K. Raju has blamed the Centre for the sharp increase in the prices of chemical fertilizers, particularly di-ammonium phosphate (DAP).

He was speaking at the 59th All India Cooperative Week celebrations held here on Saturday. Mr. Raju said that prices of DAP that stood at Rs. 850 for a 50-kg bag last year shot up to Rs. 1,200 this year.

The Minister attributed this to the “failure of the Union Ministry for Chemicals and Fertilizers” to replenish stocks through imports. It resulted in shortage of fertilizers, leading to price rise.

However, realising the plight of farmers, Chief Minister Jayalalithaa sanctioned a sum of Rs. 150 crore for the purchase of fertilizers. Because of such a timely measure, the supply of DAP improved considerably.

Mr. Raju pointed out that in the 18-month-rule of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, the Cooperative Departments had made impressive strides. As the farm sector was facing acute shortage of labour, small and marginal farmers were facing hardships. To mitigate their lot, the Chief Minister had allotted a sum of Rs. 80 crore that could be utilised for the purchase of farm implements through cooperative societies.

Each cooperative society had been sanctioned Rs. 20 lakh from the funds.

The Minister also disbursed financial assistance to the tune of Rs. 1.41 crore to farmers for the purchase for tractors, power tillers, setting up drip irrigation system, etc.

Environment Minister M.C. Sampath, Collector Rajendra Ratnoo, Joint Registrar of Cooperative Societies P. Renukambal, and Special Officer of the Cuddalore District Central Cooperative Bank R.Brinda were present.

Over Rs.70 crore disbursed as crop loan to farmers

Cooperative institutions are strong in the district and are extending a huge amount of credit at subsidised interest regimes to various sections, Transport Minister V. Senthil Balaji said on Sunday.

At the 59th cooperative week celebrations, Mr. Balaji said that till the end of October, cooperative institutions have disbursed a total of Rs.70.56 crore as crop loan to farmers.

That apart, another Rs.3.14 crore has been granted as medium-term loan while the institutions extended Rs.92.42 crore as jewel loan and another Rs.29 lakh as agricultural produce pledge loan to farmers this year.

The Minister pointed out that in a bid to help the 55 self-help groups established under the aegis of the cooperative institutions a sum of Rs.1.19 crore has been granted as direct lending while another Rs.1.89 crore has been granted to 97 joint liability groups.

Aside those, for ensuring the development of minority community members the cooperative institutions extended Rs.30.93 lakh to 72 persons through TAMCO, while another Rs.8.75 lakh was granted to 31 persons under the aegis of Department of Backward Classes and Most Backward Classes Welfare, the Minister said.

On orders from Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, the cooperative institutions have accommodated and helped differently abled by extending Rs.2.85 lakh as job-oriented credit to 26 persons. There were 133 cooperative institutions, 55 weavers' cooperative societies, 242 milk producers' cooperative societies, and 54 other varieties of cooperative organisations in the district.

Through the cooperatives department, free rice to the needy scheme was being channelled to eligible families attached to 556 cooperative fair price shops, even as those shops deliver essential commodities to an estimated 2.5 lakh families.

Collector S. Jayandhi, Karur MP M. Thambi Durai, MLAs A. Pappa Sundaram (Kulithalai) and S. Kamaraj (Krishnarayapuram), and Joint Registrar of Cooperative Societies M. Santhanam, spoke.

Farmers oppose decontrol of sugar

Sugarcane farmers have opposed the recommendation of C. Rangarajan Committee to decontrol sugar. At a meeting here on Saturday, farmers affiliated to Tamil Nadu Sugarcane Farmers' Association and attached to the National Sugar Mill, Alanganallur, expressed fear that the move would lead to closure of government and cooperative sugar mills, opening up the field for private players.

The meeting, presided over by N. Palanisamy, State president, called upon all sugarcane farmers to resist decontrol of sugar. The recommendation, if implemented, would mean that any mill could procure sugarcane from anywhere. The present practice was that farmers secured a surety from a sugar mill in their area based on which they got bank loans for raising the crop. The recommendation was against farmers and favoured private mills. It would also lead to contract farming in sugarcane. The association appealed to the government to announce a procurement price of Rs. 3, 500 per tonne of sugarcane and form a panel to study the sickness of sugar mills.

Revoke the turn system of water release to save samba: farmers

Water is given in turn to Vennar and Cauvery from Grand Anicut

Farmers of Thanjavur and Tiruvarur districts have demanded the turn system of water release from Grand Anicut to be revoked to save the standing samba crop.

At present 12,000 cusecs of water is drawn from Mettur dam and this water is given in turn to Vennar and Cauvery from Grand Anicut. Under the turn system, either Cauvery or Vennar will get 5,000 cusecs of water for a week while the other river will get only 1,000 cusecs.

With no rain after Nilam cyclone, farmers are solely dependent on the mettur water to save their crop. Transplantation has been done in nearly 1.5 lakh hectares in the two districts and the crop is only 25 days old.

The duration of the crop is 130 days and there is need for water to sustain the crop. In such a situation, turn system results in drying up of crop in one area before it gets its turn.

To avoid this turn system can be lifted and continuous supply can be given in Cauvery and Vennar.

Delta areas irrigated by Cauvery and Vennar are Thanjavur, Kumbakonam, Papanasam, and Thiruvaidaimaruthur in Thanjavur district (irrigated by Cauvery) and Mannargudi, Needamangalam, Tiruvarur, and Thiruthuraiipoondi areas in Tiruvarur district (irrigated by Vennar).

"When 5,000 cusecs is released into Vennar continuously for a week and Cauvery is provided only 1,000 cusecs, crops dry up in Cauvery irrigated areas before it gets its turn. Vennar area will get affected when Cauvery gets the turn.

To avoid this 5,000 cusecs each can be released in Cauvery and Vennar continuously and the 2,000 cusecs released in Grand Anicut canal can be maintained. This is possible with the 12,000 cusecs being drawn from Mettur dam," said V.Jeevakumar, a farmer of Budalur.

Going by the release of one tmc per day, the storage in Mettur dam will last for another 19 days only. The storage in Mettur dam on Sunday was 24.309 cusecs.

If a dead storage of six tmc is left in the dam, 18 to 19 tmc alone is available for cultivation. "Even this available water for 19 days is not given without turn, it is not possible to save the standing samba crop," say farmers. They pin their hopes on northeast monsoon. Water level in Mettur dam stood at 59.49 ft on Sunday. Inflow was 1,073 cusecs. Storage was 24.309 tmc. Discharge from the dam was 12,000 cusecs.

Seaweed production training

The Directorate of Research and Extension (Fisheries) of Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University has proposed to conduct a 30-day training programme on 'Seaweed production' at Tharuvaikulam near Tuticorin.

In a statement, M. Venkatasamy, Director of Research and Extension (Fisheries), Fisheries College and Research Institute, Tuticorin, said Maritech Research and Extension Centre, Tharuvaikulam, about 10 km from Tuticorin, which is functioning under the Directorate of Research and Extension (Fisheries), has proposed to offer a month-long certificate course on 'Seaweed production' from November 28 to December 27.

During this course, techniques on sea weed production will be taught as theory for 7 days and on-farm demonstrations will be held for 21 days.

Course fee for this programme is Rs. 1,000. At the end of the course, a certificate issued by TANUVAS, will be presented to all successful candidates.

Aspirants should register their names with the Associate Professor and Head, Maritech Research and Extension Centre, Tharuvaikulam, on or before November 26.

For more information, the candidates may contact 0461 - 2910336, 2340576, 2340554 or 94422 88850, the statement added.

Campaign to demonstrate DAP foliar spraying begins

Spray has to be used during flowering stage of red gram crop



A demonstration of DAP foliar spray for red grams under way at Pallikuppam in Madhanur block

The Department of Agriculture has launched a campaign to demonstrate two per cent Di Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) foliar spraying to provide nutrients to red gram crops, to farmers in Madhanur and Jolarpet blocks.

Under the Accelerated Pulses Production Programme (A3P), 2,000 hectares of land - 500 each in Madhanur, Anaicut, Jolarpet and Alangayam blocks - are under red gram cultivation under the National Food Security Mission (NFSM)-Pulses and National Agricultural Development Programme (NADP), according to Joint Director of Agriculture, Vellore K. Tamilselvan.

A total of Rs. 54 lakh has been disbursed as subsidy to farmers who have taken up red gram cultivation under NFSM-Pulses in Madhanur and Anaicut blocks and under NADP in Jolarpet and Alangayalam blocks, he said.

In addition to this, 596 hectares of land have come under transplanted red gram cultivation that was introduced this year.

“DAP contains 18 per cent nitrogen, 46 per cent phosphorus and zero per cent potash. Phosphorus is key to getting more yield. This is why we are advocating the use of this spray among farmers who have taken up red gram cultivation,” he said.

The spray has to be used during the flowering stage of red gram crops.

“This will be absorbed through the leaves, flowers and buds. It will help in inducing growth in grain formation and avoid flower shedding. There will be increase in pods and increase in the number of grains per pod. This will give better yield. The crops will get nutrients through the spray,” Mr. Tamilselvan said.

Farmers to get certified seeds at subsidised rates

Pulses production, which hit a bad trough in the district during the last financial year, is finally ready to get a booster dose as the Department of Agriculture is set to procure and distribute 116 metric tonnes of improved varieties of seeds to farmers at subsidised rates.

According to official statistics, the area under pulses varieties like green gram, black gram, cow pea, red gram, and Bengal gram came down from 25,261 ha in 2010-11 fiscal to 20,776 ha in 2011-12 financial year.

The initiative now planned of extending attractive incentives to farmers both during procurement and distribution of seeds by utilising funds through convergence of various government-sponsored schemes, is expected to enthuse the farmers to expand the area coverage significantly.

“We will be procuring the certified seeds directly from select farms by paying farmers 20 per cent above the local market rate (LMR) in the case of certified seeds and 30 per cent above LMR in the case of foundation seeds,” Joint Director of Agriculture Mohammed Kalimullah Sherif told *The Hindu* .

These seeds, totalling 116 metric tonnes will then be distributed through agriculture extension centres in the block-level to almost 5,900 farmers across the district at subsidised rates.

“For each kg of seeds, we will be giving distribution subsidy of Rs. 43, meaning that a kilogram of black gram seed available at the local market for a price of Rs. 75 a kg can be procured by the farmers from us at just Rs. 32 a kg,” Mr. Sherif said.

Agriculture department set to procure and distribute 116 metric tonnes of seeds

Red grams being a six-month-crop, flowering begins at 145 days. Once the first spraying is done during the flowering period, the second round of spraying should be carried out after 15 days, he added.

The department has already distributed 25 kg DAP per hectare to farmers for two-time spraying.

“The farmers should spray 12.5 kg of DAP for the first-time spraying and the remaining 12.5 kg of DAP after 15 days,” he said.

The demonstration was held for farmers at Pallikuppam in Madhanur block and Ramanur near Ponneri in Jolarpet block on Saturday. Officers of the Agriculture Department explained the method of preparing the spray and how to spray it on crops using hand sprayers. Farmers were asked to take up spraying during the flowering stage as it was key to providing nutrients to red gram crops.

Rs. 54 lakh subsidy disbursed to red gram farmers in 4 blocks

Cluster approach to be adopted in 2 villages to enhance crop yield

Two villages in Villupuram district have been brought under the cluster approach to widen the area under plantation crops and enhance income level of farmers, according to K. Rasu, Deputy Director (Horticulture), Villupuram.

He told *The Hindu* that under the National Agriculture Development Programme, Sengurichi in Thirunavalur block and Vakkur Melpathy in Vikkiravandi block had been identified for cluster approach implementation.

In Sengurichi, 40 farmers with a total land-holding of 60 acres and in Vakkur Melpathy 35 farmers with 54 acres of contiguous lands have been brought under the scheme.

Mr. Rasu said that they were asked to give up the practice of raising conventional cashew crop that yields hardly 10 to 15 kg of nuts per tree to take to the cultivation of VRI-3 cashew grafts to increase the yield manifold.

The official further said that the objectives of the programme were to revitalise rural economy, create job opportunities for the villagers, encourage farmers to take up modern cultivation practices and enhance crop yield three fold and farmers' income two fold.

These measures would usher in second Green Revolution in Tamil Nadu.

Mr. Rasu further said the programme was being implemented under the direct supervision of Santhosh Babu, Commissioner of Horticulture and Plantation Crops.

Federation formed to resolve farmers' issues

In order to make a collective effort to resolve issues of the farming community, several organisations came together and formed the Belgaum District Farmers Organisations' Federation recently.

The executive committee members of the federation are Rudrapanna Mokashi, Sureshbabu Patil, A. Shashikant Naik, Mohan Shah, Lingaraj Patil, Kalyanrao Muchalambi, T.T. Murkatnal, Sidgouda Modgi, Y.H. Patil, Basavaraj Malali, Chonappa Pujeri, Kasturi Honappanavar and Appasaheb Desai.

According to Mr. Kalyanrao Muchalambi, an awareness rally will be organised in Belgaum on December 1 and a memorandum would be submitted to both the Union and State governments demanding judicious pricing mechanism for all farm produce and protection of growers from exploitation by MNCs and foreign companies. He said neither the Centre .

Other demands to be placed before the governments includ fixing of sugarcane support price at Rs. 3000 a tonne for the current crushing season, implementation of the C. Rangarajan Committee report.

Ahead of the proposed rally, federation members will tour Hukkeri, Chikkodi, Gokak, Ramdurg, Savadatti, Bailhongal, Khanapur, Belgaum and Athani taluks to mobilise farmers from November 19 to 28.

State trying to go organic, says Agriculture Minister



Promoting local breeds: Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Minister K.P. Mohanan at an exhibition of indigenous cattle species in Kottayam on Sunday.

Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Minister K.P. Mohanan has said that efforts were being made to ensure that Kerala could be declared an 'Organic State' by the year 2014. As part of such efforts, Kasaragod will be declared the first organic district within a short period, he said.

He was inaugurating an exhibition organised as part of the launch of the Kerala Local Cattle Breeders Society here on Sunday.

On the occasion, Mr. Mohanan elaborated on the various projects that the State government has embarked on in an attempt to create self-sufficiency in agriculture and dairy sectors.

According to him, the 'Govardhan' scheme aimed at rearing a minimum of 100 cows in at least 1,000 grama panchayats to increase milk production and availability of manure for promoting organic farming.

He added that the responsibility will be shared by veterinary doctors.

He also said that the Karshaka Raksha Bhakshya Suraksha scheme will aim at enhancing the benefits of farmers even while ensuring the development of the State. As part of the scheme, produce from organic farms will be procured through Krishi Bhavans.

In its initial stage, coconuts will be procured through 600 selected Krishi Bhavans that have been provided Rs.2 lakh each to pay farmers.

Aid to set up jackfruit processing units

The Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) will conduct a training programme on processing jackfruit on industrial basis, at the Kanhirapuzha Farm Club at Irumbochola, near Mannarkkad, on November 21.

Talking to *The Hindu*, James P. Mathew, president of Farm Club, said the SFAC managing director, district development manager of NABARD and other officials would train and guide entrepreneurs on taking up industrial production of jackfruit.

He said the State government had allotted Rs. 425 lakh for 2012-13 for value addition schemes of fruits, vegetables and spices. The SFAC had been chosen as the implementing agency.

A Government Order (GO (Ms) No.199\2012\AD of August 10, 2012) said “the main objectives of the projects are promotion of value addition of fruits, vegetables and spices and ethnic crops of the State, promotion of agro industrialisation, diversification of horticulture product, commercialisation of value-added products, enabling small and marginal farmers to obtain better price for their produce, generating employment opportunities, especially in the rural sector, reducing potential horticultural imports, providing crucial farm industry linkage which helps accelerated economic progress, better flow of credit to the value addition sector, avoiding wastage of agriculture produce and ensuring its optimum utilisation, motivating the farmers for better productivity and ensuring improvement in their socio-economic status.”

Mr. Mathew said the Farm Club had received enquiries even from the U.S. the UAE, etc., on bulk supply of jackfruit products. But, jackfruit farmers did not have the technology or finance to go in for industrial production of jackfruit. He said there was also a Centrally sponsored scheme of Horticulture Missions in States providing 55 per cent subsidy to set up jackfruit processing units for value addition. A unit would get a grant up to Rs.14 lakh.

If the State and Union governments took up industrial production of jackfruit it would become an important food product, said Mr. James, one of the pioneers among promoters of jackfruit products.

Union Minister of State for Agriculture K.V. Thomas had directed all State Horticulture Missions to implement schemes to develop jackfruit.

Cotton growers unhappy with low prices

Although the remunerative price is around Rs.4,000, farmers settling for around Rs.3,000



Tough times: A cotton grower with her stock at the Halia Market Yard on Sunday.- Photo: Singam Venkataramana

Cotton farmers bringing stocks to Halia Market Yard, the only yard in the district where traders make direct purchases, on Sunday complained about getting a less price, ranging from Rs.3,000 to Rs.3,800 a quintal, less than the remunerative rate of Rs.4,000.

“If we get Rs.4,000 and more it amounts to a no-profit, no-loss deal for us. It will be better for us,” says farmer A. Balu of Lavuri thanda, Damaracharla mandal, who brought three quintals.

“I have come from as far as 100 km and also had to pay transport charges. I had thought of getting more if the stocks are brought to the market yard. I could have avoided the transport charges had I sold at Damaracharla,” says R. Maisaiah of Marrigudam in Peddavura mandal, who brought six quintals. He is in distress as the yield per acre fell this year to less than three quintals, as against six quintals previously ‘despite our best efforts’.

Maisaiah attributes the reduced yield to lack of rain and quality of the seed. J. Srinu of Nellikal and Saidaiah of Kondrapol complain about having to pay more towards labour charges and inputs such as fertilizers.

Labour shortage

They have been experiencing problem of labour shortage, because of persons getting more working under the MGNREGS. As against less than Rs.100 each a day, labourers are getting more than double of the amount.

Besides, farmers point out that they have to be content with 'cheating' by traders who are from 'syndicates' or groups and deprive them of a good price.

A market yard official told *The Hindu* that 580 quintals of cotton had been purchased from 253 farmers during the day. The rates ranged from Rs.3,410, Rs.3,840 and Rs.3910 a quintal. He said ryots were getting a lesser price because of the effects of the recent rain on the cotton crop.

Biodiversity meet ignored interests of farmers: expert

Agriculture scientist G.V. Ramanjaneyulu has criticised that the recent international biodiversity conference in Hyderabad focussed only on how business could be done with bio-resources instead of suggesting measures to protect biodiversity.

The deliberations completely ignored farmers and their interests and also their role in the protection of biodiversity. The conference deliberately sidelined the need to protect biodiversity, he said while delivering a lecture on 'Farmer in Biodiversity' organised by the Jampala Chandrasekhara Prasad Trust in memory of the late student leader, here on Saturday night.

State role

He said the government should have a major role in protecting biodiversity, environment and eco-balance for which it should involve the farming community. On the contrary, it was encouraging farmers to use dangerous pesticides and chemical fertilizers, he added.

In pesticides only one per cent was useful to kill pests and the rest would mix in soil and air polluting the environs. So also, in fertilizers only 45 per cent was useful to protect plants and the remaining 55 per cent would mix in soil and water. Dr. Ramanjaneyulu said pests were gaining resistance and the farmer was getting caught in a vicious circle by investing more money.

Excessive use of fertilizer and pesticide make the food grains poisonous with their residues remaining in them. Pesticide residues were creating fat in human bodies, he said.

GM propaganda

In this backdrop, governments and corporates were resorting to propaganda on the necessity of GM crops for food security, but behind this lay business interests rather than human interests, he said cautioning that, "Our food habits are getting spoilt with such a false campaign."

Listing out the ill-effects of fertilizers and pesticides, he said the Green Revolution in Punjab destroyed biodiversity and today one in every third family in that State was suffering from cancer. He said for the protection of biodiversity farmers should have freedom in cultivation.

'Meet focussed on how business can be done with bio-resources instead of suggesting measures to protect biodiversity'

Ganja crop destroyed in 20 acres in Agency

In a major action to stop cultivation of ganja in the reserve forest of the Agency area, Excise officials on Sunday destroyed the plants in about 20 acres.

Officials set part of the crop afire in villages of Gomangi, Kuntalli, Moyyilagomma and Mangeta in Pedabayalu mandal and destroyed the rest in an operation that lasted from morning till evening.

About 300 Excise personnel drawn from all over the district assisted by the police took up the operation under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner (Excise) M. Satyanarayana following instructions from the District Collector and the Superintendent of Police.

Of late police in the district seized big quantities of ganja being transported from the agency by several clever methods in the district

Students design farm vehicle

The innovation by two engineering students will come in handy for small farmers and those who can't afford additional hands for ploughing their agricultural fields, finds R. RAVIKANTH REDDY



Laudable work:Prakasam Engineering College students design vehicle that is based on mechanical advantage and runs without using fuel.

An innovation by two engineering students will come in handy for small farmers and those who can't afford additional hands for ploughing their agricultural fields.

The multi-purpose agricultural vehicle designed by Fayaz, final year EEE student, R. Sai, a third year ECE student and Komala, a final year CSE student of Prakasam Engineering College with the help of their principal, Prof. M. Lakshman Rao can be used comfortably by a single unskilled agricultural worker of any gender.

Inexpensive

“The vehicle is designed based on mechanical advantage without using fuel. The vehicle costs less than Rs. 5,000 and farmers can cultivate their land without using tractor or animals.

It is helpful for ploughing between plants, carrying and sprinkling of seeds, fertilizer, pesticides and hay measuring up to 50 kgs,” says Prof. Lakshman Rao.

The earlier version available was not handy for the small farmers owning about two or three acres. It had to be operated with the help of minimum two people as it had two cycles.

The new version has two tyres attached to a wheelbarrow. Two pipes are attached to it plough and sprinkle seeds at the same time. It can be easily lifted and pushed by two horizontal shafts attached to it.

It is also helpful for women who don't have male support in their families and at the farm.

Prof. Rao said that functioning of this vehicle was tested successfully in several villages in Prakasham district and farmers found it extremely useful and easy to operate.

"Formalities are under process for applying patent rights," Prof. Rao said acknowledging the valuable suggestions from social scientist, Veerabhadra Rao. He says such low cost vehicles will be in demand in the country where agriculture plays a major role in the economy of country as well as the people in the villages.

Farmers opt for paddy variety that needs less water



One of the farmers who is cultivating the KRH-4 paddy variety in Matada Doddi village near Malavalli in Mandya district.

Farmers in at least six districts, who were affected by deficient rainfall this year, have come forward to cultivate a hybrid variety of paddy, KRH-4, developed by the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Bangalore, which requires less water compared to other varieties.

The paddy variety, developed after several years of research and field trials, is expected to yield 7.8 tonnes a hectare, which is more than double the yield from traditional varieties, according to UAS-B authorities.

Hundreds of farmers have expressed their willingness to cultivate KRH-4 paddy in over 5,000 acres of land in Mandya, Mysore, Hassan, Tumkur, Shimoga and Ramanagaram districts, N. Shivakumar, a breeder at the Paddy Division at the V.C. Farm here, told *The Hindu* on Sunday.

Promoting the variety

To promote the KRH-4 paddy, the UAS-B is cultivating the variety in 125 acres of land in various districts using the innovative and water saving method of System of Rice Intensification. Standing crop in most of the fields is in the 'milky' stage, which will be followed by grain-filling and maturity stages.

Scientists at the Zonal Agricultural Research Station, V.C. Farm, are expecting that yield from the KRH-4 variety to be at least two times more than that from the other varieties.

Crop demonstrations

UAS-B and V.C. Farm authorities have conducted live crop demonstrations in several villages in the six districts which were attended by hundreds of farmers cultivating traditional paddy varieties.

Mr. Shivakumar said more than 20 districts in the State had been badly affected owing to deficient rainfall. KRH-4 was a boon for farmers as it requires less water and fertilizer.

Cultivation of the variety in the 125 acres had been taken up in association with V.C. Farm, Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) and Karnataka State Seeds Corporation, he said.

"Hundreds of farmers have placed orders for the KRH-4 variety to take up sowing in about 5,000 acres in the next season. The variety may be cultivated in over 15,000 acres in the next two seasons," he said. The variety has also evoked curiosity among researchers in different parts of the country.

The paddy variety is being cultivated in 15 acres of land at Matada Doddi village near Malavalli.

Puttaswamy, who has been growing traditional paddy varieties since the last 19 years, is cultivating the KRH-4 variety in nearly 4 acres. He said the new variety had drastically reduced the input costs as it requires less water. The yield was expected to be three times more than that from the traditional varieties, he said.

"Farmers in Hadya, Katte Doddi, Channanke Gowdana Doddi, Kyathanahalli, Naguvanahalli and others villages have decided to take up cultivation of the KRH-4 variety in a big way. In

Matada Doddi itself at least 100 farmers are ready to sow the hybrid variety,” Mr. Puttaswamy said.

Farmers in the surroundings of Malavalli and Mandya cultivate paddy varieties such as MTU 1001, BPT 5204, IR 64, Thanu and IR 3864. With uncertainty over the release of Cauvery water and owing to deficient rainfall many of them were willing to opt for the new hybrid variety, scientists at the V.C. Farm said.

Students take up farming



Young farmers

A group of students of C. Achutha Menon Government College, Kuttanellur, has taken up summer vegetable cultivation on their college campus. Around 25 farmers from near the college also joined in to provide support. Around 4,000 cabbage and cauliflower saplings will be cultivated in an acre of land inside the college campus.

Hindustan Times

TODAY FARM NEWS

19.11.2012 A.M

Weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Monday, Nov 19

Max Min

31.4° | 20.5°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 58

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:09

Sunset: 05:39

Barometer: 1011

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Tuesday, Nov 20

Max Min

31° | 19°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday Nov 21	Thursday Nov 22	Friday Nov 23	Saturday Nov 24	Sunday Nov 25
31° 19° Partly Cloudy	33° 25° Sunny	33° 25° Overcast	33° 25° Overcast	33° 25° Overcast

Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 06:47

Humidity: 64

Sunset: 05:25

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1016



THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

18.11.2012 P.M

19.11.2012 A.M

Nabard sanctions Rs 236.2 cr to Karnataka

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) has sanctioned Rs 236.18 crore as loan assistance to the Government of Karnataka for building 82 minor irrigation structures, 189 rural roads and 42 rural bridges in different districts.

These projects have been sanctioned under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF XVIII) by the Project Sanctioning Committee at its meeting earlier this month, S.N.A. Jinnah, Chief General Manager, Nabard, Karnataka Regional Office, said.

With this, the cumulative sanction to the State under RIDF XVIII has reached Rs 264.68 crore, Nabard said.

“Implementation of 189 road projects with a total length of 728.59 km and 42 rural bridge projects with a length of 910.57 metres is expected to benefit 23.17 lakh rural population in 30 districts,” according to a Nabard statement.

The projects will connect 1,049 villages with 379 marketing centres and generate non-recurring employment to the tune of 54.93 lakh mandays, it said.

The construction of 82 minor irrigation structures is expected to enhance the irrigation potential to the extent of 5,852 hectares, the statement added.

18th nov 2012 P.M

Punjab paddy purchase to top record 13 million tonnes



Storage capacity to be expanded in the northern State by March

Paddy procurement in Punjab is expected to exceed a record 13 million tonnes (mt) during the current marketing season (October 2012-September 2013) on higher arrivals.

“We expect to procure about one million tonnes more than last year,” A.S. Arunachalam, Deputy General Manager, Food Corporation of India, told reporters.

So far, Government agencies have procured 12.7 mt, some 7 per cent more than last year’s 11.9 mt through some 1,770 mandis and procurement centres across the State.

Despite deficient monsoon, farmers in Punjab planted paddy on 28 lakh hectares this year.

Paddy procurement, which started mid-October, has entered the last phase in Punjab and is expected to last another week. Punjab contributes to around 30 per cent of the rice procured by the Government for the Central pool.

In neighbouring Haryana, the procurement by State-agencies is almost complete. State agencies have procured about 3.75 mt by November 15 – 30 per cent more than 2.87 mt in corresponding last year, according to Food Ministry data.

Storage capacity

Arunachalam expects the total storage capacity in Punjab to expand by an additional 5 million tonnes by end of March, in time before the wheat procurement season.

Bulk of this capacity expansion will happen under the Private Entrepreneurs Guarantee (PEG) scheme for which tenders have been floated. Besides, silos with a storage capacity of 4 lakh tonnes are proposed to be set up in Punjab for which tenders will be finalised by December-end, he said.

The present storage capacity in Punjab is 20.5 mt, of which 19.7 mt is under use to store rice, wheat and paddy.

As on November 1, rice stocks in Punjab were estimated at 5.5 mt, while wheat stocks stood at 13.6 mt.

The State is also having a stock of 6 lakh tonnes of paddy, Arunachalam said.

Total paddy procurement across the country stood at 16.24 mt as of November 15 – a 10.5 per cent growth over corresponding period a year ago.

In terms of rice, the procurement has crossed 10.9 mt (9.9 mt) .

Coonor tea turnover hits 16-week high on Assam unrest

Buoyancy continued in the post-Diwali auction which ended on Friday with the turnover rising to 16-week high.

In addition to the increased demand for Diwali festival season, the market faced pressure from upcountry buyers for brighter liquoring teas as they preferred not to invest in Assam teas because of the prevailing unrest in that State.

Due to this increased demand, prices rose to an average of Rs 89.27 a kg from Rs 87.75 last week. This was the highest price in nine weeks. Because of the demand, as much as 96.5 per cent of the offer of 13.08 lakh kg was sold. This was the highest sale percentage so far this year.

In effect, 12.50 lakh kg was sold against 11.47 lakh kg last week. This was the highest volume sold in 15 weeks. Consequently, the turnover rose to Rs 11.06 crore from Rs 10.06 crore. This marked an increase of as much as Rs 1.10 crore or 10.93 per cent in one week, reveals an analysis of the market reports.

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Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

19.11.2012 A.M

Cardamom futures gain 1.19% as demand picks up

Restricted arrivals from producing belts also supported the uptrend

Press Trust of India / New Delhi November 19, 2012, 11:46 IST



Cardamom prices gained 2.29% to Rs 937.90 per kg in futures trade today as speculators created fresh positions, tracking a firm trend at spot market on pick up in demand.

Restricted arrivals from producing belts also supported the uptrend.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, the January contract shot up by Rs 21, or 2.29%, to Rs 937.90 per kg in business turnover of 98 lots.

The December contract jumped up by Rs 16.10, or 1.90%, to Rs 863.50 per kg in 567 lots.

Market analysts said speculators created fresh positions on the back of pick up in demand in the spot market against restricted arrivals from producing region mainly led to rise in cardamom futures.

Sugar futures up 0.30% on delay in cane crushing

Speculators enlarge their positions driven by reports of delay in cane crushing in key producing states

Press Trust of India / New Delhi November 19, 2012, 11:25 IST



Sugar futures prices today surged 0.30% to Rs 3,341 per quintal as speculators enlarged their positions driven by reports of delay in cane crushing in key producing states.

However, higher selling by mills following a government directive to mills to sell 4 million tonne of sugar in the open market during October and November, capped the gains.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, the December contract for sugar gained Rs 10, or 0.30%, to Rs 3,341 per quintal, with an open interest of 28,800 lots.

The November contract gained Rs 9, or 0.27%, to Rs 3,360 per quintal in 11,230 lots.

Market analysts attributed the rise in sugar prices at futures trade fresh positions by speculators supported by reports of a delay in cane crushing in key producing states due to a stand-off between farmers and mills over cane prices.

Mallya in govt panel on fertilisers despite being chairman of MCFL

Vijay Mallya-promoted UB Group owns over 30 percent stake in MCFL

Shaikh Zoaib Saleem / New Delhi November 18, 2012, 14:00 IST

In what can be called “a perfect example of conflict of interest”, Chairman of Mangalore Chemicals and Fertilisers Ltd (MCFL) Vijay Mallya has been a member of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilisers, in the capacity of a member of the Rajya Sabha since August 31, 2012.

Parliamentary experts said that this is a clear example of conflict of interest "unless the Doctrine of Necessity is in play", said former Chief Justice of India Justice VN Khare. Hence, it “can be an example of conflicting interest,” Khare added.

The Vijay Mallya-promoted UB Group owns over 30 percent stake in MCFL. An email sent to Mallya for his response went unanswered.

Tribal Affairs Minister V Kishore Chandra Deo, who headed a Committee to Inquire into misconduct of members of Lok Sabha on 'various facets of misconduct and basic attributes of standards of conduct/behavior expected of members' in 2008 said that "there is no doubt that it is a conflict of interest."

The report that he submitted, at one place referring to conflict of interest, reads, "The Committee are of the view that a provision may be made to the effect that if a member has a personal, pecuniary or direct interest on any subject/ matter, he should not be nominated in the first place to the Departmentally Related Standing Committee, which normally examines such subjects/matters."

The Ethics Committee of Rajya Sabha in its First Report submitted on 1.12.1998 has listed 14 points that serve as framework for code of conduct for members. "Apart from this, misconduct could include actions that lead to advancing private interest of self or others based on information received in course of parliamentary duty and responsibility," said Lok Sabha MP Nakul Das Rai to the above mentioned committee in response to a question on definition of misconduct of MPs.

According to parliamentary experts, the members are ideally to be nominated to the committees by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha or Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. However, the procedure generally followed includes political parties recommending names of members. Also, any member should declare her/his interests as and when needed, officials close to the functioning of Parliamentary Standing Committees said.

According to Vinod Bhanu, executive director of the Centre for Legislative research and Advocacy, this has remained a non-addressed issue. "The disclosure mechanism in India is not very strict. Not much scrutiny is done," he said.

He added that registering their interests should be made mandatory for MPs of both the houses and the ethics committee should scrutinize the details against their parliamentary work.

Meanwhile, Mallya has not attended any meeting of the committee on Chemicals and Fertilisers till date, according to the information available on the Lok Sabha website.

Late monsoon withdrawal delays rabi sowing

Expected To Pick Up Pace As Reservoir Levels Comfortable, Moisture Adequate In Soil

Sanjeeb Mukherjee / New Delhi November 18, 2012, 13:22 IST

Late withdrawal of southwest monsoon across most parts of the country, particularly over north India, has delayed sowing of main rabi crops like wheat, pulses and oilseeds as farmers are yet to harvest the previous crop.

According to the department of agriculture, till November 16, wheat, the biggest foodgrain sown during the rabi season has been planted in 4.96 million hectares, almost 21.4 per cent less than the same period last year.

Pulses have been sown in around 6.35 million hectares of land, almost 19.8 per cent less than corresponding period of last year, while oilseeds have been planted in 4.68 million hectares, down 8.42 per cent from last year.

Overall, rabi crops have been sown in around 19.58 million hectares of land till Friday, down 13.88 per cent compared to last year.

Officials said though sowing of main rabi crops has been delayed this year, it is unlikely to have any impact on the final yield as sowing has just started and will pick up pace in the days to come.

The comfortable water level in 84 major reservoirs across the country should also assist in pushing up acreage in the coming weeks.

According to the latest data from the Central Water Commission (CWC), water level in the major reservoirs was estimated to be around 108.1 billion cubic meters (BCM) till November 15, which was 70 per cent of Full Reservoir Level and 91 per cent of last year's storage.

The delay in sowing of Rabi crops was mostly witnessed in Punjab and Haryana where the paddy crop has not yet been harvested in full because of delayed sowing.

A PTI report said that farm secretary Agriculture Secretary Ashish Bahuguna had expressed the hope that slow start in sowing of wheat, is unlikely to affect production this year.

"Wheat sowing started on a slow note mainly because of delayed harvest of kharif crops especially paddy. Sowing of wheat would gather pace in the coming days and production will be sufficient this year," Bahuguna said.

In 2012-13, India produced a record 93.90 million tonnes of wheat, almost 8.11 per cent more than last year.

The government has fixed a target of producing 86 million tonnes of wheat this year. In general, rabi crops are planted in around 61.37 million hectares of land from October and the harvesting starts around February.

The 2012 southwest monsoon gathered pace in most parts of northern and western parts of the country only around second half of the June to September season.

Overall, for the country as a whole, the southwest monsoon was slightly less than normal at around 92 per cent of Long Period Average (LPA) during the four month period. In north India, which is critical for strong rabi harvest, rains were 93 per cent of LPA.

The monsoon recovered in August and September providing a boost to kharif, but the damage caused by low rains in initial period pulled down final foodgrains production by almost 9.8 per cent.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

TODAY FARM NEWS

19.11.2012 A.M

Nagaland signs agri MoU with US-based NGO

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed at the 3rd NER Agri Expo in Dimapur on Saturday to promote sustainable agriculture in [Nagaland](#) between the state government and Humanity International, an NGO based in [Washington DC](#), of which US senator (District of Columbia) [Paul Strauss](#) is an associate.

Senator Paul said the next step will be to implement sustainable agriculture and work on issues of climate change and biodiversity. He announced that the US will accept an intern from Nagaland every year to pursue higher studies in the US. He said it will not only provide [higher education](#) to the student, but also foster greater ties between US and Nagaland

Farmers open toll gates, free run for vehicles

The Bharatiya Kisan Union staged a protest amid heavy [police](#) presence at the DND toll plaza forcing the operator to make the flyway toll free for vehicles till 3pm on Sunday. The protesters also demanded exemption for farmers from toll tax and asked the operator to provide an account within a week of the increased revenue collected in the past eight days after the toll hike was announced on November 10.

The BKU demanded that the increased toll amount be adjusted by making the flyway toll free for all vehicles for a certain number of days or the amount be donated to charity. Hundreds of BKU activists shouting slogans reached the DND around 11am and forced open the barriers of the toll plaza.

Officials of Noida Toll Bridge Company Ltd said nearly 50,000 vehicles crossed the flyway without paying toll. Anwar Abbasi, spokesperson of DND Flyway, said that the estimated loss to the operator is about Rs 8 lakh due to the agitation. "Farmers will be exempted from toll on showing ID, BKU badges or caps," Abbasi added.

Gautam Budh Nagar SDM, Rajesh Kumar Yadav, reached the spot to persuade the activists to withdraw the protest. "As the toll company has already rolled back the hike, we asked the activists to withdraw their stir," he said.

Upbeat on mustard seed in the short term, says Naveen Mathur, Angel Broking

Mustard seed is the second largest produced oilseed in the world and is the third leading source of edible oil after palm and soy oils. Mustard seed yields around 38% oil, while the remaining 62% is converted into cake, which is used as cattle feed. Being an important source of edible oil and protein meal, the world production of mustard seed has grown at a significant pace.

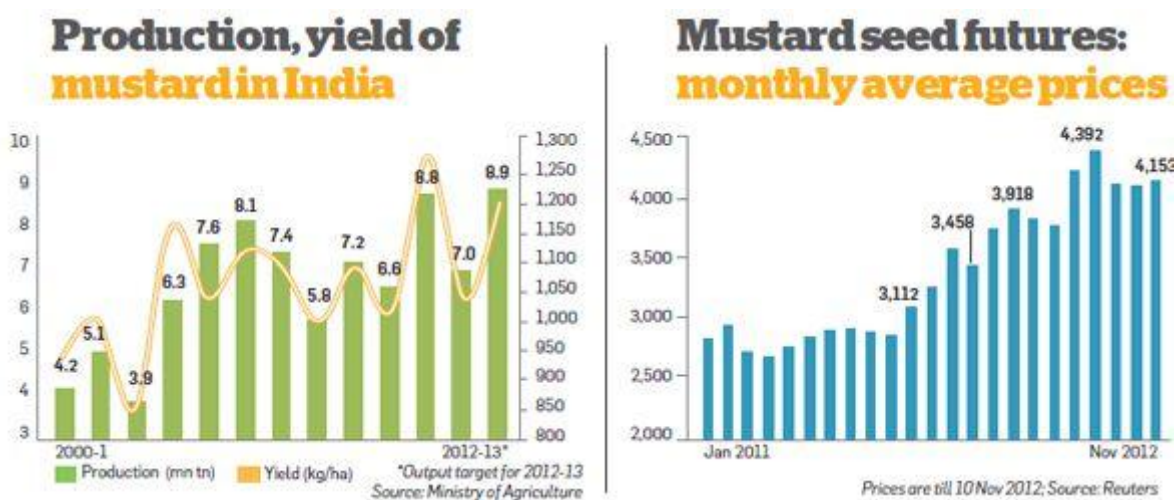
The global mustard seed production has grown at 4.08% CAGR in the past two decades and is currently 60.55 million tonne (2011-12). However, it has undergone a momentous shift with respect to countrywise contribution. During the 1990s, China and India accounted for over 28% and 21% share, respectively, followed by Canada's 13%. With spectacular growth in Canadian production at 7.01% CAGR in the past two decades, it is now the world's largest producer with a share of 24%. Meanwhile, China and India have witnessed marginal growth and now have around 21% and 11% share in the world production.

The global consumption of mustard seed has grown at 4.13% CAGR in the past two decades and is currently 63.37 mn tonne (2011-12). China is the largest consumer, accounting for a 26% share in global consumption, followed by Canada and India, with 11% each. With respect to the consumption of mustard oil, Canada accounts for only 3% share. In fact, 85% of the Canadian mustard oil production is exported globally, making it the world's largest exporter. In India and China, rapeseed oil is usually produced to meet the domestic demand.

In India, mustard seed is the third largest produced oilseed after soybean and groundnut. It has a negligible trade in mustard seed and oil, and so the prices are influenced mainly by domestic fundamentals rather than global factors. However, India has a high trade in mustard meal

exports and is the second largest oil meal exported after soy meal.

In India, mustard seed is grown as a rabi crop, which is sowed during October-December and the harvesting begins from February onwards. The largest mustard seed producing states in India are Rajasthan (45%), Haryana (13%), [Madhya Pradesh](#) (13%) and Uttar Pradesh (11%). The domestic mustard seed production has witnessed a huge fluctuation and marginal growth in the past two decades. In fact, there was a fall in production from 5.8 mn tonne to 3.9 mn tonne during 1991-2002, but shot up drastically to a record 8.8 mn tonne in 2010-11.



Mustard seed sowing tepid, extractors see pickup later

The sowing of mustard oilseed, the major rabi oilseed crop in the country, has begun on a sluggish note. [Mustard seed](#) acreage is still down by 4.35 lakh hectares as of November 15, 2012 as against last year. Oilseed acreage in Rajasthan, the largest producer of [mustard oilseed](#) in the country, is hovering around 19.58 lakh hectare as compared to 23.26 lakh hectare.

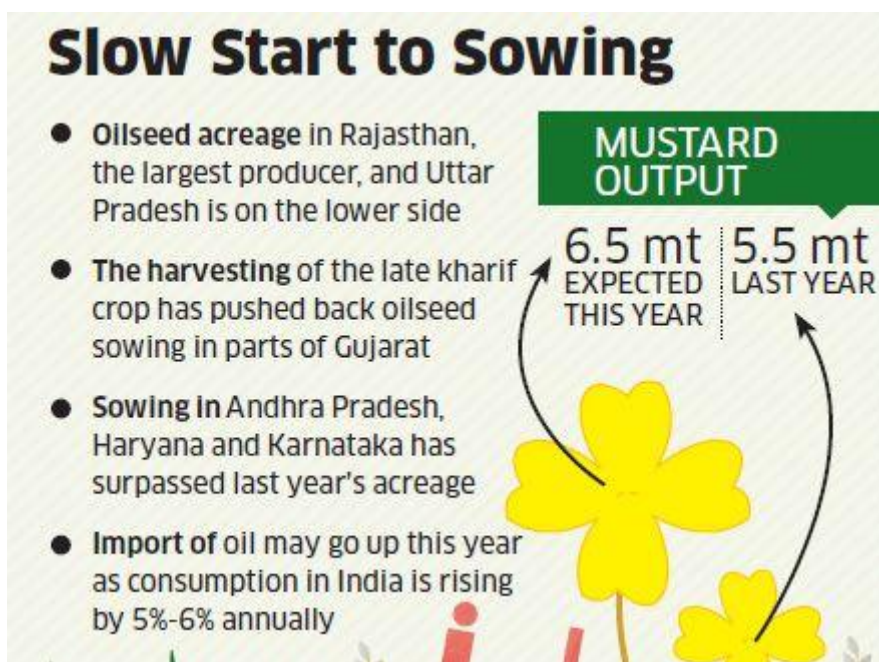
Oilseed acreage in Uttar Pradesh is also on the lower side. As against 6.11 lakh hectare sown till November 15 last year, sowing this year has been around 4.8 lakh hectare in Uttar Pradesh. The harvesting of the late [kharif](#) crop has pushed back oilseed sowing in parts of Gujarat.

Despite a lower acreage in the first phase of sowing, the oil extraction industry is expecting a 20% rise in rabi output this year. Mustard output is pegged at 6.5 million tonne against last year's 5.5 million tonne as a late revival in monsoon has created a conducive atmosphere for rabi crops.

"Mustard sowing area will be higher this year as the moisture level is good. Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan will benefit from the late monsoon as far as the rabi oilseed production is concerned," said Angshu Mallick, COO, [Adani Wilmar](#), which owns the Fortune brand.

Added BV Mehta, executive director, Solvent Extractors Association of India: "Farmers are waiting for the temperature to come down. Sowing will pick up in the next two weeks and will be completed by the end of November or early December."

The sowing of oilseeds in Andhra Pradesh, Haryana and Karnataka has picked up and already surpassed last year's acreage.



Mustard oil prices are expected not to go up in the next three months. "Demand for mustard oil will be higher between November 15 and January 15. The stock position is not much but we do not see a sudden price rise in mustard now. The ex-Alwar price of mustard is hovering around Rs 850 to Rs 860 per 10 kilo, which is a good price in the present scenario. If mustard acreage increases, it will push down prices," said Mallick.

However, there is still an apprehension whether mustard oil acreage will increase or not. "A crash in palm oil prices globally has pulled down prices of the edible oil complex. This may discourage [farmers](#) to bring larger areas under oilseed sowing," said Mehta. Incidentally, crude palm oil price have climbed down to \$760 per tonne from \$1,000 per tonne two months ago.

Mehta said the import of oil may go up in the present oil year (November 1, 2012-October 2013) as consumption in India is rising by 5%-6% annually. In the 2011-12 oil year, India imported 100 lakh tonne of edible oil, up from 86 lakh tonne in the previous year.

e-auction of tobacco a boon for farmers

With the introduction of the world's first e-auctioning system of tobacco, the process is all set become more transparent and efficient. The system introduced by the [Central Tobacco Board](#) on Friday at Periyapattana town is expected to put an end to the menace of middlemen and exploitation of farmers at auction yards.

The e-auctioning system, which will maintain the flow of the Karnataka Lighter Soil (KSL) tobacco stocks to the cigarette producers, will also check officials tampering with records.

According to sources, smokers of international brand of cigarettes will easily differentiate between the cigarettes manufactured using Virginia tobacco and KSL tobacco.

In terms of quality and taste, KSL tobacco is superior to Virginia tobacco. KSL tobacco is the

most sought after variety by producers of international brand of cigarettes.

Tobacco board director (auction) [Manju Pillai](#) told TOI that the e-auction system developed and implemented by the board is tamper proof and will totally eliminate the role of middlemen, buyers and companies from meddling or manipulating tobacco prices.

Explaining the procedure, she said as soon as the buyer quotes a price for a particular stock, it gets locked and there is no chance for the buyer or officials to reduce or increase the price.

"Earlier while middlemen tampered with the prices quoted by buyers, the purchasing companies dictated terms on fixing minimum price for the day. Under the present system, auction will start with a base price of average of the previous three days' price for a particular variety or quality of tobacco. It will end at the highest price bid by the buyer and the price quoted by the buyer is recorded and the system gets locked for that particular tobacco lot," she said.

Quoting an example of last Friday's auctioning, Manju Pillai said tobacco auction started with a minimum price of Rs 101 per kg of the best quality tobacco and it ended at around Rs 170 per kg.

Earlier, farmers used to get low prices for this variety of tobacco, she pointed out, adding that now, farmers are happy by the price they are fetching for their produce. This is the first e-auction market in the world, she claimed.

29 automated weather stations help farmers plan agro activities

As many as 29 automated weather stations installed in Akole and Sangamner talukas in Ahmednagar district give farmers local weather updates to improve crop productivity.

The initiative, taken by [Watershed Organisation Trust \(WOTR\)](#) which has tied up with [India Meteorological Department](#) (IMD) for regular three-day updates, sends weather conditions to the field through SMSs, posters and by word-of-mouth.

An automated online platform combines locale-specific meteorological advisories and agro-advisories that provide timely information to farmers to plan agricultural activities. A crop

calendar is prepared to provide details on the best practices to follow, according to soil and crop pattern.

Youths in the villages have been trained to read the data and display it on daily weather information boards installed at prominent places. This helps people be informed about local weather conditions like rainfall, temperature, humidity and wind speed.

N Chattopadhyay, deputy director general of agricultural meteorology, IMD, Pune, told TOI that the automated weather stations have been installed in Akole and Sangamner taluka on a pilot basis in association with the trust. We are generating three-day weather forecasts and WOTR prepares an agro-advisory for the farmers. If successful, we plan to take it up throughout India in other blocks too," he said.

Cristino Lobo, managing trustee (water) of the trust said that a weather automated station installed in every village gives weather updates on an hourly basis. The idea is to prepare the villagers to take preventive measures and be resilient about climate variability.

The agro advisory for crops is prepared by the WOTR experts. The trust has signed an MoU with Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth (MPKV) in Rahuri to receive inputs on sustainable farming practices and information on specific agriculture technology. "We give an advisory based on local weather, soil and crop pattern. A package of practices is advised, followed by biological practices. If both do not work, then the last option we recommend is chemical practices. We also gather feedback from the local population," he said.

"Getting informed about local weather data enables the local community to understand and use weather information for agriculture planning and management. This project is funded by [Swiss Development Corporation](#) and National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development, " he said.

A few months ago, the Krushi Salla initiative was started to give weather forecasts at the cluster level, some remedial measures to minimise any impending harmful impacts of the weather on crops and agro-advisories based on local weather conditions, prepared by in-house agricultural experts from WOTR. This information comes in the form of a poster that is put up in prominent places in the village.

Radha Kunke, manager (communication), WOTR said, "The advisory based on the weather forecast is given at the beginning of the meteorological week thus giving enough time to implement suggested measures. It stresses on organic and environmentally friendly sustainable agricultural practices. It gives details on the best practices with specific instructions to be followed immediately. The idea is to help farmers take informed decisions."

Give India's 'milkman' his due

Even as the demand to confer Bharat Ratna on late [Vergheese Kurien](#) is growing with each passing day, Kurien's supporters are now demanding that his birth anniversary which falls on November 26 be observed as 'Sahkarya Kranti Diwas'.

Over 10,000 people from across the country and abroad have already signed an online petition seeking Bharat Ratna for India's 'milkman', who passed away at the age of 90 in September.

Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) and Institute of Rural Management, Anand (IRMA) - of which Kurien was founder chairman - are chalking out plans to pay homage to the Father of White Revolution on November 26.

The online petition, which is seeking public support for the Bharat Ratna campaign, will be emailed to the President and the Padma award committee members once closed. The idea behind celebrating Kurien's birth anniversary as 'Sahkarya Kranti Diwas' is to start a movement for positive change and inclusive growth.

Its proponents argue that celebrating such a day is a way to re-dedicate the idea of giving something back to the society. The petition has got people to think about Kurien's towering contribution to empowering the poorest people, especially farmers. Why not to build on that for positive change, they argue.

"We are already talking to our member unions to pay special homage to Kurien on his forthcoming birth anniversary. Kurien was the man who brought focus on the co-operatives and proved that co-operatives can be successful. Amul is the biggest example of this and the man who with his professional expertise championed the cause of farmers certainly deserves a day in the annual calendar dedicated to him and the concept of co-operatives," R S Sodhi, managing director of GCMMF that markets brand Amul told TOI.

"Whatever we do will be less," said GCMMF's chairman Vipul Chaudhary, adding that celebrating his birth anniversary as the cooperative revolution day will encourage people to join the cooperative movement.

"While the private sector will continue to attract professionals with hefty salary packages, there is a big question mark on whether we (co-operative sector) will have people with the zeal and dedication of Kurien who worked throughout his life to support the co-operative movement," he said.

Last year when Kurien had turned 90, GCMMF and Anand-based Amul Dairy had launched a special campaign to mark the contribution of the architect of the Operation Flood.

Swaminathan to deliver Kurien memorial lecture

Father of India's Green Revolution will kick off a lecture series in the memory of Father of India's White Revolution. The Institute of Rural Management, Anand (IRMA) has instituted an annual Dr Verghese Kurien Memorial Lecture Series to be held on his birth anniversary.

The first lecture in this series will be delivered by professor M S Swaminathan on November 26 at IRMA. Swaminathan, Rajya Sabha MP and founder and emeritus chairman of the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation, will deliver a lecture on 'The Co-operative Pathway of Enhancing Rural Livelihood and Nutrition Security' at IRMA auditorium.

Maize prices remains stable at Rs 12,229 per tonne: USGC

Maize prices moved up marginally by 1.4 per cent during the last week on pan-India average to Rs 12,229 per tonne on the back of poor arrivals and wholesale commodity markets remaining closed for two days due to Diwali, according to US Grains Council.

"Corn in the country remain stable and moved up on pan-India average to Rs 12,229 per tonne, up 1.4 percent against last week. This week though the arrivals were poor as the whole sale commodity markets were closed for two days on account of Diwali and Govardhan puja," USGC India Representative Amit Sachdev said.

The prices were, however, higher than last year by 16.9 percent.

Prices increased in some of the key markets like Andhra Pradesh by 2.41 per cent to Rs 11,934 per tonne, Karnataka by 1.19 percent at Rs 12,278 per tonne, Madhya

Pradesh by 0.43 percent to Rs 11,790 per tonne and Tamil Nadu by 2.53 percent at Rs 13,637 per tonne.

In Rajasthan the prices were down by 0.92 percent at Rs 12,280 per tonne.

On the exchange, the prices were stable for the close by contracts of November and December, with no major change, and were at Rs 13,580 and Rs 13,830 per tonne, respectively.

For the three other contracts, the prices were down slightly.

Spot prices too went down in the key markets by the end of the week, in Nizamabad it was stable at Rs 13,035 per tonne, Davangere down at 1.41 percent at Rs 13,733 per tonne and Sangli down 0.63 percent at Rs 13,700 per tonne.

Chilli, turmeric trade lower on subdued demand

Red chilli and turmeric prices fell by Rs 100 per quintal in the national capital today due to subdued demand amid adequate stocks.

Red chilli and turmeric prices declined by Rs 100 each to conclude at Rs 6,100-11,500 and Rs 6,500-9,700 per quintal, respectively.

Marketmen said subdued demand from retailers and stockists amid sufficient stocks mainly pulled down chilli and turmeric prices in the wholesale kirana market here.

The following are today's quotations: Ajwain 10,000-15,000, black pepper (per kg) 430-560, betelnut (kg) 160-195, cardamom brown-Jhundiwali (kg) 800-900,

and cardamom brown-Kanchicut (kg) 900-1,000.

Cardamom small (kg): Chitridar 710-810, cardamom (colour robin) 710-850, cardamom bold 700-760, cardamom extra (bold) 890-1,010 and cloves (kg) 635-730.

Menthol declines on reduced offtake

Menthol prices fell by Rs 5 per kg in the national capital today owing to reduced offtake by consuming units amid adequate stocks.

Increased arrivals from producing belts in Uttar Pradesh also weighed on the menthol prices.

Menthol bold crystal, flake and mentha oil prices fell by Rs 5 each to settle at Rs 1,475, Rs 1,420 and Rs 1,370 per kg, respectively.

The following are today's quotations:

Ammonium chloride (50 kg) Rs 1,000-2,200, acetic acid (1 kg) Rs 40-48, ammonia bicarb (25 kg) Rs 400-675, boric acid technical (50 kg) Rs 5,500-6,000, borex granular (50 kg) Rs 2,400-2,800.

Caustic soda flake (50 kg) Rs 1,900-2,050, citric acid (50 kg) (China) Rs 3,200- 3,400, citric acid deshi (50 kg) Rs 3,000-3,600, camphor slab (1 kg) Rs 350, camphor powder (1kg) Rs 310,

glycerine (1 kg) Rs 150-320, hexamine (1kg) Rs 95, hydrogen peroxide (1 kg) Rs 36-50, menthol bold crystal (per kg) Rs 1,475, menthol flake (1 kg) Rs 1,420 and mentha oil (1kg) Rs 1,370.

Cashew declines on subdued demand

Cashew prices fell by Rs 5 per kg in the national capital today as demand declined considerably due to end of festive season.

Sufficient stocks position following increased arrivals from producing belts also weighed on the cashew prices. Cashew kernel (No 180, 210, 240 and 230) prices fell by Rs 5 each to settled at Rs 715-750, Rs 690-700, Rs 610-630 and Rs 540-580 per kg, respectively.

Marketmen said fall in demand following end of festive season against adequate stocks mainly led to a fall in cashew kernel prices in the wholesale dry fruit market here.

The following are today's quotations (per 40 kg): Almond (California) Rs 12,700 Almond (Gurbandi-new) Rs 7,000-7,800; Almond (Girdhi) Rs 3,200-3,400; Abjosh Afghani Rs 8,000-20,000.

Almond Kernel (California) Rs 440-460 per kg, Almond Kernel (Gurbandi-new) Rs 350-425 per kg.