

THE HINDU

TODAY FARM NEWS

23.11.2012 A.M

U.P. waives loans of 7.2 lakh farmers

Acting on its election promise, the Samajwadi Party government in Uttar Pradesh on Thursday waived the loans of farmers who had taken up to Rs. 50,000 from the cooperative rural development bank. The decision would benefit 7.2 lakh farmers.

The announcement comes on a day when the party is celebrating its chief Mulayam Singh Yadav's 74th birthday here.

"The Samajwadi Party, in its manifesto, had promised to waive loans of farmers up to Rs 50,000 which is being done today," Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav told reporters.

He said the loan waiver would be given to farmers, who have been sanctioned loan up to Rs 50,000, and have deposited at least 10 per cent of the actual amount by March 31.

"There remaining loan, including interest, is being waived," he said.

He said that as a result of the decision taken by the government, loan amounting to around Rs 1650 crore would be waived off and would directly benefit around 7.2 lakh farmers.

Akhilesh said that a provision of Rs 500 crore had already made in the state budget and another Rs 500 crore would be made available. — PTI

Meet on organic farming to create awareness

A conference on 'organic farming' will be held at Sai Baba Trust opposite to the TTD kalyana mandapam here on Friday to create awareness on the benefits of using organic fertilisers in place of chemical inputs to avoid damage to crops and the environment.

Agriculture officials and scientists from Nellore, Guntur, West Godavari and other districts will address and deliver speeches on organic farming.

Presentations

There will also be presentations by farmers, who are already following organic cultivation in different districts.

Open to all

“Interested farmers can take part in the conference,” said Rythu Seva Sangham district president Ram Mohan.

NREGS works: K-E canal ayacut farmers feel the pinch

Bias in implementation of NGNREGS works the cause of crop loss, says WUA chief



Crying for attention: The condition of the Madepalli-Jalipudi branch canal of the Krishna-Eluru main canal near Jalipudi in West Godavari district.- Photo: A.V.G. Prasad

The farmers under the Madepalli-Jalipudi branch canal of the Krishna-Eluru main canal, victims of the recent floods caused by the Tammileru, seem feeling the pinch of the ‘skewed’ preferences by the official machinery in executing the works under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

An inquiry was held by the District Water Management Agency (DWAMA) at this Kolleru belt village on Thursday over the complaints of the alleged bias in implementing the MGNREGS works which was allegedly the cause for loss of agricultural crops worth Rs. 5 crore in the village. Magani Prasad, president of the Madepalli-Jalipudi Water Users Association (WUA) complained to the DWAMA stating that the paddy in most of the canal ayacut with 2,500 acres

was submerged in view of the bad condition of the canal and the drainage channels. Even as the irrigation and drainage channels covering the farm fields in the village were crying for attention, the official machinery allegedly diverted the workforce from the village for engagement in developing a housing colony under the Indiramma Housing Programme in the neighbouring Venkatapuram Gram Panchayat. Clogged with thick weed, the flooding canals and drains engulfed the farm fields after the breaches made to the Tammileru river at western locks and YSR Colony.

“Had our irrigation and drainage canals been given a facelift under the MNREGS well in advance of floods, we would have been saved from a huge crop loss”, he bemoaned while deposing before Ch. Venkateswara Rao, Additional Project Director, G. Suryanarayana Reddy, Assistant Project Director, of the DWMA who conducted the inquiry.

The village has 1080 jobless people with job cards who were reportedly engaged in executing earthworks at the housing site at the neighbouring Venkatapuram gram panchayat.

The official records said 70,000 mandays were created on the housing colony site and Rs. 1.33 crore incurred towards wages by mobilising a huge number of jobless workers from the neighbouring villages allegedly under pressure from the ruling party, Mr. Prasad said.

In course of inquiry, the officials tumbled upon misuse of funds amounting to Rs.16 lakh under the job scheme by wrongly maintaining records by the official machinery dealing with the NREGS at the field level which stated 166 works were executed to improve the condition of drains and irrigation canal under the MNREGS in November, December last year. The official version however runs counter to the claims of the WUA members that the canals and the drains covering the village were in bad need of a facelift.

Don't sell paddy below MSP

Commissioner of Civil Supplies Harpreet Singh said decentralised procurement of rice was underway, through the A.P. State Civil Supplies Corporation in seven districts including Karimnagar, Warangal, Nalgonda, Guntur, Prakasam, Nellore and Chittoor. He urged farmers that under no circumstances should they dispose of their paddy less than the MSP. They could bring the paddy to the Agricultural Marketing Complexes and paddy purchase centers set up by

different government agencies, and that arrangements were made for making payment through cheques within 3 days.

Farmers to block transport of sugar

Farmers' organisations fighting for a higher price for sugarcane have decided not to allow sugar mills to transport sugar out of their godowns. The agitating farmers, however, have decided to allow sugar mills to crush cane, but insisted the rate to be fixed at Rs. 2,500 for crushing a tonne of sugarcane. The decision was taken at a rally of farmers belonging to "Swabhimani Shetakari Sanghatan" of Raju Shetty M.P. "Shetakari Sanghatana" of Sharad Joshi M.P. and the organisation led by Raghunathdada Patil. The rally demanded apology from the Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar for his remarks against Mr. Shetty. The rally demanded CBI inquiry into the firing on the agitating farmers. — Correspondent

Strike by

farmers

The dispute between traders and workers at the APMC market in Kolhapur worsened on Wednesday when farmers involved in the production of jaggery locked the office of the committee. The workers have been on strike demanding higher wages causing chaos. The farmers warned that they would not bring their produce for auction to the committee premises if the row was not resolved. — Correspondent

Man arrested over Facebook post

A 21-year-old man was arrested by the police at Kabnur in Kolhapur district on Wednesday on the charge of posting on Facebook material which could "disturb communal harmony". Afzal Mujawar was produced before the local magistrate, who remanded him to police custody for three days. The police swung into action following a complaint against the post by Dilip Mangaonkar, a local resident. — Correspondent

Establish fodder bank in every village

Collector S.Natarajan has appealed to farmers to establish fodder bank in every village to reduce imbalances in the availability of fodder in the district. He inaugurated a one-day district-

level awareness campaign in the development of fodder at the KVK at Needamangalam. Eighty farmers from various parts of the district participated in the campaign.

The Collector said that farmers should earmark certain part of their land for growing fodder. Nutritious fodder enhances the health status of animals.

A traditional rice variety, 'kalarpalai', rises again

A village near Tiruvannamalai shows the way



The crop requires less water and is pest-resistant too.— Photo: D.Gopalakrishnan

An endangered traditional rice variety, 'kalarpalai,' is cultivated and conserved in a village near here.

The variety gets its name as it is suited to be cultivated in alkaline soil (called 'Kalar Nilam' in Tamil). The drought-resistant, pest-resistant variety that produces nutrient rich brown rice has gradually gone into oblivion. However, this variety is being raised in abundance in this village of Nagappadi. Activists and experts concerned about biodiversity and traditional seeds have been surprised that farmers here cultivate this crop on a huge area.

P.T. Rajendran, district secretary of Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, who stays active in the protection of traditional seeds, said, "Kalarpalai, once a favoured rice variety of alkaline soil, gradually disappeared and is in the brink of extinction. I visited the Nagappadi and was surprised to see that they cultivate Kalarpalai on about 100 acres. Disappearance of the variety elsewhere resulted in vast tracts of fields with alkaline soil lie fallow."

Subashini Sridhar, Project Director, Centre for Indian Knowledge system (CIKS), an expert in traditional seeds, now based in Sirkali, said, "Kalarpalai is the only rice variety that is successful in alkaline/saline soils. Two hybrid varieties created by Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, viz. Tiruchy-1 and Tiruchy-2, for these soil types, failed. Hence, we can say lands with alkaline/saline soil earlier cultivated with kalarpalai became fallow."

In Nagappadi, this reporter found kalarpalai being cultivated on large tracts of land using the direct seeding method rather than re-plantation method.

Arunachalam, a farmer, said fields located on the rear side of the village irrigation tank are alkaline in nature, where this variety is cultivated the most. "I have one hectare of land in this alkaline pocket and always prefer Kalarpalai. I tried to cultivate the fine rice variety, 'Ponni,' sugarcane and oleander flowers on and off, but failed. "

P. Arumugam, another farmer, said kalarpalai requires less water and withstands drought. "Even if an adjacent field where other variety is cultivated is pest affected, it doesn't affect my crop. Kalarpalai does not require fertilizers too. If you apply fertilizers, it overgrows and leads to loss. As I extract seeds from my own produce, I don't have to buy seeds as in the case of hybrid varieties. As direct seeding is enough for this variety, I don't need to form a seed bed and replant saplings. Growth of weed is comparatively less as well. These factors help farmers to minimise input costs when compared to hybrid varieties planted in normal soil," he said.

"Irrigating the crop once in 10 days is enough. Even if it wilts owing to lack of water, it will recover once it gets water. But, hybrid varieties do not recover in such a manner. I feel safe when cultivating kalarpalai though its yield is less. It yields 10 to 15 bags per acre. Though hybrid varieties fetch 25 to 30 bags per acre, input cost and risk are higher. That apart, they always fail in our soil," he said.

But farmers deplore the low price offered for this variety in the market. They get only Rs.500 to 600 per bag of 75 kg. Ms. Sridhar said that kalarpalai is as an important variety and deserves conservation. "CIKS has formed self-help groups in Sirkali and is encouraging farmers to cultivate traditional rice varieties. As they are mostly raised through organic farming, we help them in value addition and marketing. As far as we know, only 50 to 60 farmers spread over four districts cultivate kalarpalai. As coastal salinity is extending to newer areas due to borewells, kalarpalai could be vital in maintaining productivity of those lands. But, availability of seeds is a

problem as it is rarely cultivated. Since this is not a notified variety, seeds will not be available in government depots. Hence, a village like Nagappadi conserving the variety is good news,” she added.

Enhance procurement price for sugarcane to Rs.2,500

Tamilaga Eri Matrum Aatrupasana Vivasayigal Sangam, while welcoming the announcement of the Chief Minister on the procurement price for sugarcane, has pleaded that it should be enhanced to Rs.2,500 a tonne.

In a statement here, State president of the association P.Viswanathan, said that AIADMK had promised in its manifesto that it would fix Rs.2,500 a tonne for sugarcane if elected to power.

But, all it fixed during 2011-12 was only Rs.2,100. While cane farmers had been clamouring for Rs.3,000, the State government had fixed only Rs.2,350. “Though this does not give cent per cent satisfaction, it gives a measure of happiness and satisfaction,” he added.

Though the State government announced Rs.2100 for 2011-12, sugar mills did not bother to implement it for three months saying that they had not received the Government Order.

Hence, he appealed to the State government to enforce its announcement by sending the order to the mills immediately.

Mr.Viswanathan pointed out that due to lack of water in the Cauvery and the acute scarcity of three-phase power supply, it would be impossible for the farmers to raise sugarcane and get a yield of 40 tonnes an acre.

“We trusted that we would be given Rs.2,500 a tonne last year, but it has not happened . If the State gives at least Rs.2,500 a tonne now, we would be happy,” he added.

Increase power supply: farmers

The district has registered low rainfall this year and hence power supply to the region should be increased to save standing crops, said farmers at the monthly grievances redress meeting held at the Collectorate on Thursday.

Logabiram of Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam said that the district administration should ensure this. Normally the district gets 835 mm rainfall every year. But this year it received only 680 mm so far. Power supply should be increased to pump water to save standing crops.

Collector Pooja Kulkarni presided over the meeting. She promised to take up it up with the government. Farmers said sugarcane cultivated at Kelamangalam Union was destroyed by wild elephants. The farmers should be given compensation under the crop insurance.

Agriculture Department officials said that crop insurance could be provided only in case of natural calamities. Ms. Kulkari said that if the entire union was affected, the administration could recommend for compensation to the government.

Farmers wanted an Agriculture Extension Centre established at Anchetti, compensation paid for the loss of coconut trees on the banks of Mankandeya River in Veppanapalli Union, subsidy for replanting of mango saplings, and compensation for farmers who lost their crop in rain and heat.

Some of the farmers complained that excess toll was being collected from farmers for their produce at the Krishnagiri Municipal Market. Ms. Kulkarni said that action would be initiated against toll collector if found true.

On Mulayam's birthday, Akhilesh's bonanza to farmers

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday presented a Rs. 1650 crore loan waiver gift to over seven lakh farmers on the occasion of his father, Mulayam Singh Yadav's 74th birthday.

Only those who had taken a loan up to Rs. 50,000 from the U.P. Sahkari Gram Vikas Bank (earlier, the Bhumi Sudhar Bank), and repaid 10 per cent of the amount till March 31, 2012 will be entitled for the loan waiver.

The announcement comes a day ahead of the beginning of the winter session of the Legislature.

On the delay in the State Advised Price (SAP) for sugarcane for the 2012-13 crushing season, Mr. Yadav said it would be announced soon after considering all the aspects that would benefit the farmers.

Mr. Yadav said a budgetary provision of Rs. 500 crore was made for the loan waiver scheme and an additional Rs. 500 crore would also be made. A decision to write off farmers' loans up to Rs. 50,000 taken from the cooperative banks would be taken later. Mr. Yadav said his government had taken a decision to give irrigation water from canals and government tubewells. Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav was not present, but senior Ministers Shivpal Singh Yadav, Ahmed Hasan, Ambika Chaudhary, Ram Gobind Chaudhary and Anand Singh were there when the announcement was made by the Chief Minister

CACP suggests Rs.40 "bonus" on wheat MSP linked to liquidation of stocks

Facing a hue and cry over its recommendation to freeze the minimum support price (MSP) of wheat for 2012-13, the Commission for Agriculture Costs & Prices (CACP) has now suggested that the Centre pay a "bonus" of Rs.40 to farmers over and above the last year's price of Rs.1,285 per quintal. The Commission has, however, linked this to the liquidation of wheat stocks to the tune of 15 million tonne before March 2013 through exports or sales in the domestic open market.

The Union Agriculture Ministry will now take a call on whether it will stick to its earlier suggestion of raising the MSP to Rs.1,400 per quintal or accept the CACP idea of a Rs.40 per quintal "bonus" on last year's MSP, which will set the support price at Rs.1,325 per quintal. The revised proposal will go back to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs for approval.

Well placed sources indicated that the Ministry has reservations on the suggestion of linking a rise in the MSP with liquidation of stocks and feels there is ambiguity in the CACP's suggestion of "sharing the profits" with farmers. "Liquidation of stocks is not in the hands of the Agriculture Ministry [that sets the MSP based on the recommendation of the CACP]. Besides, trade does not take place on the basis of intention. It is hard commerce," said an official source.

"Freezing MSP and linking it to wheat exports will send a wrong signal," Planning Commission member Abhijit Sen told *The Hindu* .

Noting that wheat prices had increased abnormally in the last year (by about 20 per cent), he said the correct thing would be to do regular sales in small quantities in the retail market rather than release large lots for the wholesalers and roller flour mills.

While recommending freeze on the MSP, the CACP had said the government should liquidate its wheat stocks and share the profits with farmers. It also asked the Centre to review its policy of open-ended procurement for the public distribution system and limit its purchases, especially from high taxes States like Punjab and Haryana and leave them to market forces — a move that will benefit private trade.

The average cost of wheat production is around Rs.1,130 per quintal, which is well-covered under last year's MSP, the CACP maintained.

The Cabinet had asked the CACP to review its recommendation after the Agriculture Ministry suggested an upward revision to Rs.1,400 per quintal. The Ministry sought a review in the wake of higher input costs including in the price of diesel and to keep parity with the MSP of kharif prices.

The government has so far exported 2.5 million tonne of wheat and is planning to export another 1.5 million tonne. It has already released about 9.8 million tonne of wheat for sale in the open market. Despite the offloading of stocks in the open market, however, wheat prices continue to rise and are now ruling at Rs.19 per kg in the Delhi retail markets.

Borlaug Award for IARI scientists

This year's Borlaug Award has gone to K.V. Prabhu and Ashok Kumar Singh, scientists at the Indian Agriculture Research Institute (IARI), for their contribution to food security through Basmati rice research and development.

Announcing the award, Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, Chairman of the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation and chair of the five-member jury for the award, said the two scientists had been instrumental in producing high-yielding strains of Basmati rice that have significantly boosted farmer incomes and helped them compete in the international market.

While Dr. Prabhu has been associated with crop improvement programmes of wheat, barley, brassica and rice leading to the development of 14 varieties of rice, including Pusa Basmati 6 and Pusa Basmati 1121, Dr. Singh has pioneered changes in basic and applied research in rice genetics and breeding and was instrumental in improving the Pusa Basmati 1121 for resistance to blight and salinity tolerance.

The award, instituted in honour of Nobel Laureate Normal Borlaug by Coromandel International, an entity of the Murugappa Group, will be presented to the scientists on November 28 at a function in Delhi.

The award carries a gold medal and citation and a cash amount of Rs. 5 lakh which will be shared between the recipients.

TN seeks 52.8 tmcft of water from Karnataka

Tamil Nadu on Thursday filed a fresh petition in the Supreme Court for a direction to Karnataka to release 52.8 tmcft of water till February 2013 to save crops raised in 15 lakh acres.

In its petition the State also wanted the court to properly define the `season' to ensure that adequate water was released to protect the interests of farmers.

Explaining the outcome of the 30 meeting of the Cauvery Monitoring Committee held on November 15, the State said "it was accepted in the meeting that Tamil Nadu should receive a

Total of 100.85 tmcft of water as per the method of pro rata sharing during the months from June to October in terms of the Interim Award dated June 25, 1991 passed by the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal. It had come to the conclusion that there is a deficit of 37.13 TMC ft. upto October. However, the CMC had not decided the issue of backlog quantity from June to September but merely ordered on the quantum of flows to be received by Tamil Nadu for the period from November 16 to 30 adopting the method of pro rata sharing."

It said "the CMC failed to take a decision as to making good the shortfall during the south west monsoon period on the pretext that it is unable to take any decision as to how to define a `season' and come to any finding in this regard. The said reasoning is wholly erroneous and defies the very object of framing of a scheme under Section 6A of the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 to implement the interim award dated June 25, 1991 in letter and spirit."

Tamil Nadu contended that the Central Water Commission (CWC), the apex Technical Organisation of Government of India under Ministry of Water Resources, had clarified the term "season" referred to in the order of the Tribunal as early as in 2002. "The contention of Karnataka that monsoon season ends in December and that distress has to be calculated at

that time, would be of no avail since the farmers are required to be ensured water during the period when the crop is grown i.e. during the cropping season viz., June to September for Kuruvai and August to January for Samba / Thaladi. There is no question of making good the shortfall after the end of North East Monsoon as averred by the State of Karnataka since the crops cannot be grown on expectation but only by ensuring timely releases from the Mettur Reservoir.”

Tamil Nadu said “the storage in the Mettur Reservoir is very critical and it will be barely sufficient to effect supply for irrigation for about 10 days. It is imperative for the State of Karnataka to make good the shortfall quantity of 52.8 tmcft that had accrued during South-West monsoon period as per the pro rata sharing, for sustaining the Samba crop in Tamil Nadu failing which the entire extent of crop raised in about 15 lakh acres would be under severe stress affecting the livelihood of about 15 million population in the areas served by Mettur reservoir, in addition to the further quantum of water due as per the Interim Order of the Tribunal till the irrigation season is over since the crop period may have to be extended upto February 2013.”

Weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Thursday, Nov 22

Max Min

32.8° | 24.5°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 75

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:11

Sunset: 05:39

Barometer: 1007

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Friday, Nov 23

Max Min

30° | 25°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday Nov 24	Sunday Nov 25	Monday Nov 26	Tuesday Nov 27	Wednesday Nov 28
30° 24° Cloudy	32° 25° Overcast	32° 25° Overcast	32° 25° Overcast	32° 25° Overcast

Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 06:49

Humidity: 25

Sunset: 05:25

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1012



THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

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Farmers halt crushing at NCS sugar factory

Crushing has been halted at the NCS sugar factory at Latchaipeta near Bobbili in Vizianagaram district for the past four days following an agitation by the farmers over the notices received by them from commercial banks seeking them to repay loans.

The unit has a crushing capacity of 6,000 tonnes per day and there is also a co-generation unit in the factory with a capacity of 20 MW. The agitation by the farmers began on Monday, as they started protesting against the notices. They said they had not taken the loans from the two commercial banks.

The leaders of AP Rythu Sangham, the farmers' association, alleged that the management had taken loans to the tune of Rs 21 crore from the two banks in the name of farmers and they had unofficially learnt that the amount may be over Rs 70 crore from different banks. The farmers wanted the management to come clean on the total loan amount taken in the name of farmers and to give a written undertaking that it would pay the amounts. They said the farmers should not face any harassment from the banks.

Further, the farmers' association wanted immediate payment of arrears of Rs 4 crore due to farmers by the management and hiking of cane price from the present Rs 2,300 per tonne to Rs 3,000.

Several rounds of talks have been held so far, but to no avail. Farmers are insisting that they will not allow crushing unless the demands are met by the management.

Export inquiries perk up jeera



Some fresh export inquiries and domestic demand pulled up jeera prices on Thursday. Slow sowing progress in jeera producing areas also support the price to move up.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, jeera for December delivery rose by Rs 75, or 0.51 per cent, to Rs 14,835 a quintal, with an open interest of 14,808 lots.

The NCDEX January contract increased by Rs 60 to Rs 15,665 for 100 kg with an open interest of 5,700 lots.

NCDEX-accredited warehouses stocks dropped by 87 tonnes to 8,230 tonnes.

New jeera medium quoted higher by Rs 20-25 to Rs 2,420-2,530 for 20 kg; NCDEX quality raw quoted at Rs 2,720-2,820 at the Unjha market of Gujarat.

Arrivals stood at 6,000-7,000 bags and traded around 8,000-9,000.

Traders said apart from some export enquiries, reports of slow progress of sowing in the key producing State, Gujarat, due to inadequate soil moisture, influenced the prices at the futures trade.

According to markets sources, about 75 per cent exports target has already been achieved due to a supply crunch in the global markets.

Supply concerns from Syria and Turkey still exists.

Expectations are that export orders may still be diverted to India from the international markets due to lack of supplies from Syria on back of the ongoing civil war.

Oil millers face groundnut shortage on exporters buying

The bullish trend continued in groundnut oil and imported edible oils while rapeseed oil declined by Rs 8 on selling at producing centres on Thursday.

Groundnut oil gained Rs 25 for 10 kg in Mumbai, tracking movements in Saurashtra where it zoomed further by Rs 50 for 10 kg. Soyabean refined oil improved sharply by Rs 10 and palmolein increased by Re 1. Sunflower refined oil inch up by Rs 5.

Sources said that shortage of nuts in main producing areas of Saurashtra and demand from oil millers in the market pushed up groundnut oil tin near to Rs 2,000.

Fear of lower kharif arrivals and delay in rabi crops turn sentiment bullish in ingenuous edible oils.

Groundnut exporters are actively buying nuts resulting lower availability for crushing.

In Saurashtra groundnut, almost one and half months have passed but arrivals are yet to pick up as expected.

Currently, daily arrival is about 25,000-30,000 bags. Only in cotton, offloading are sufficient. Soyabean arrivals in Madhya Pradesh also stagnated to 3-3.50 lakh bags. Globally, lower crop forecasts for soyabean in Argentina and Brazil and possible buying by China for reserve may lead to rally in soyabean in the coming days.

In Mumbai market, Ruchi sold 250-300 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 516 ex JNPT and then quoted Rs 2 higher.

In ready, 50-100 tonnes palmolein were traded in resale at Rs 513-514. Liberty sold 40-50 tonnes of soyabean refined oil at Rs 688.

Towards the end of the day, Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 518 and super palmolein Rs 572. Soya refined oil Rs 690 and sunflower refined oil Rs 775. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 518; soyabean refined oil Rs 690 and sunflower refined oil Rs 768. Allana's rates for palmolein was Rs 518 and super palmolein Rs 572.

In Saurashtra – Rajkot market, groundnut oil shot up by Rs 70 to Rs 1,950 (Rs 1,880) for a *tellia tin* and up by Rs 50 to Rs 1,270 (Rs 1,220) for loose 10 kg.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, soyabean refined oil December shot up to Rs 710.10 (Rs 705.35), January Rs 705.80 (Rs 698.80) and February Rs 702.00 (Rs 694.95).

Malaysia's crude palm oil December futures settled lower at MYR 2,300 (2,340), January MYR 2,373 (2,402) and February at MYR 2,411 (MYR 2,443) a tonne.

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates were (Rs/10 kg): Groundnut oil 1,225 (1,200); soya refined oil 685 (675); sunflower exp. ref. 705 (705); sunflower ref. 770 (765); rapeseed ref. oil 848 (855); rapeseed expeller ref. 818 (825); cotton ref. oil 675 (675) and palmolein 516 (515).

Mustard oil seen firm on winter demand

Mustard oil ruled firm in mandis across the central parts of the country and Gujarat despite subdued demand.

It ruled at Rs 792 for 10 kg in Indore mandis. In Rajasthan mandis, also mustard oil ruled. Compared with last week, mustard oil, however, is ruling Rs 5 higher in Indore and Rs 15 higher in Neemuch and Morena mandis.

Rise in mustard oil prices in the past one week has mainly been attributed to weak arrival and improved buying support. Traders said mustard oil prices are unlikely to drop sharply due to lower inventories of mustard and higher demand during winter.

Mustard could turn bearish sentiment if the sowing figures in December point to higher acreage, said a trader.

Compared to oil, mustard seeds are ruling stable for the past few days on slack demand. Currently, mustard seeds in Indore are ruling stable at Rs 4,600-4,800 for the past few days.

Similarly raida also ruled stable at Rs 4,000-4,100. In futures, however, mustard seeds traded higher on improved buying support with its December and January contracts on the NCEDX closing at Rs 4,190 (up Rs 35) and Rs 4,234 (up Rs 26) respectively.

Plant deliveries in seeds also ruled stable at Rs 4,380-4,400.

Rally in aromatic rice catches market off-guard

An unexpected rally in the market pushed aromatic rice prices up by Rs 50-450 a quintal on Thursday, while non-basmati varieties ruled firm on good buying interest.

An uptrend in the market was expected but a rally at this time of the year was not expected, said Amit Chandna, proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company.

Though, sentiments are largely positive at present, the market's future is uncertain, he said.

Apart from low stocks and rice mills holding on to their stocks, high demand for aromatic paddy in this season is a reason behind the price rise, said Amit. Rice millers are expecting that rice prices may go up further and hence, they are building up inventories, he said.

In the physical market, Pusa-1121 (steam) went further up by Rs 250 and quoted at Rs 6,000-6,150, while Pusa-1121 (sela) at Rs 5,150-5,350, Rs 450 up from the previous level. Pure basmati (raw) increased by Rs 100 at Rs 7,000-7,100; pure basmati (sela) Rs 5,500-5,650, up by Rs 50 ; duplicate basmati (steam) improved by Rs 150 at Rs 5,000-5,150 .

On the other hand, PR and Sharbati varieties ruled firm after witnessing an uptrend earlier this week. PR-11 (sela) sold at Rs 2,550-2,650; PR-11 (Raw) at Rs 2,600; Permal (raw) at Rs 2,100-2,250; Permal (sela) at Rs 2,200-2,300; Sharbati (steam) at Rs 3,800 and Sharbati (sela) was at Rs 3,500.

Paddy Arrivals

About 50,000 bags of PR variety arrived and sold for Rs 1,150-1,225 a quintal; 5,000 bags Sharbati arrived and quoted at Rs 1,800-1,850; while 10,000 bags of DB variety sold at Rs 2,550-2,650.

About 20,000 bags of Pusa-1121 arrived and quoted at Rs 2,450-2,750; pure basmati paddy 5,000 bags were sold at Rs 3,250-3,350.

Sugar steady despite bearish futures

Sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale market ruled steady on Thursday, tracking weak sentiment at the mills level, The futures market was, how ever, bearish.

Sugar prices on domestic futures market declined further by Rs 20 taking a total loss of Rs 65 in the last three days. In the physical market, spot and naka rates ruled unchanged while mill tender rates dropped by Rs 10-20 a quintal on lower demand and weak futures.

A Vashi-based wholesaler said month end will further reduce retailers lifting.

Mills seems to be under pressure to sell the free sale quota before the month-end.

Latest data of Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) said 2012-2013 sugar production till November 15 would be higher by 27 per cent to 9.85 lakh tonnes.

Higher sugar production figures also weighed on the sentiment.

On National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, December futures were down by Rs 22 to Rs 3,271 (Rs 3,293); January by Rs 20 to Rs 3,294 (Rs 3,314) and February Rs 3,315 (Rs 3,334).

In the Vashi market, arrivals were 66-67 truck loads (each of 100 bags) and local dispatches were about 62-63 truck loads.

On Wednesday evening, 17-18 mills offered tenders and sold about 45,000-47,000 bags (each of 100 kg) to the local traders in the lower range of Rs 3,320-3,380 (Rs 3,330-3,380) for S-grade and Rs 3,370-3,480 (Rs 3,380 - 3,500) for M-grade.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs 3,466-3,542 (Rs 3,466-3,542) and M-grade Rs 3,502-3,721 (Rs 3,502-3,721). **Naka delivery rates:** S-grade Rs 3,410-3,450 (Rs 3,410-3,450) and M-grade Rs 3,450-3,550 (Rs 3,460-3,560).

Quality issues pound turmeric

Spot turmeric prices dropped on Thursday with rates of even hybrid variety dropping on arrival of only fair average quality produce.

“For the past three days, the demand for the hybrid variety was high due to arrival of the fine variety. But on Thursday, only fair average quality arrived and prices decreased sharply,” said traders.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,906-5,410; the root variety Rs 3,711- 4,900.

Salem hybrid crop: The finger variety fetched Rs 4,777-5,856; the root variety Rs 4,630-5,396. Of 1,183 bags that arrived only 129 bags were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,472-5,545; the root variety Rs 4,369-5,069. Of 905 bags on offer, 832 found takers

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,039-5,429; the root variety Rs 3,939-5,089. All the 586 bags put up for sale got sold.

At the Gobnichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,489-5,689; the root variety Rs 3,672-5,069. All the 336 bags on offer were sold.

Pepper recovers on rising demand

Pepper market recovered on rising domestic demand amid short supply of physical pepper on the spot market on Thursday. Consequently, all the active contracts ended above the previous day closing.

‘There were no sellers of physical pepper on the spot market and, in fact, primary market dealers were ready to buy farm grade pepper from the hedgers at Rs 7 to 8 below the December price. Some were even ready to buy valid stocks at December prices in the morning,’ market sources told *Business Line*.

Inquiries were coming from upcountry markets. But, availability is only on the exchange platform. At the same, the high fluctuation in the prices has created an uncertainty in the market and that in turn is said to be dissuading the trade from making any commitment, they said.

December contract on the NCDEX increased by Rs 510 a quintal to close at Rs 38,120 a quintal. February and March went up by Rs 310 and Rs 290 respectively to close at Rs 35,225 and Rs 34,680 a quintal.

Turnover

Total turnover decreased by 14,394 tonnes (483 per cent) from that of yesterday to close at 2,979 tonnes. Total open interest moved up by 42 tonnes to close at 8,167 tonnes.

December open interest dropped by 65 tonnes to close at 6,527 tonnes while that of February and March rose by 94 tonnes and 10 tonnes respectively to close at 1,255 tonnes and 326 tonnes. There was some switching over and additional buying.

Spot prices in tandem with the futures market trend increased by Rs 300 a quintal to close at Rs 37,500 (ungarbled) and Rs39,000 (MG 1) a quintal.

There were no activities on the spot in the absence of any arrival, they said.

Cotton ruling in Rs 3,500-3,945/quintal range

Cotton prices are ruling in the range of Rs 3,500 to Rs 3,945 a quintal in different markets in Andhra Pradesh on Thursday morning.

At Asifabad market (Adilabad), unginned cotton is priced in the range of Rs 3,500 to Rs 3,900, while Bhainsa market in the same district is quoting Rs 3,900-Rs 3,945 a quintal for the commodity.

Arrivals in Bhainsa are put at 1,200 tonnes against 390 tonnes in Asifabad market.

In Krosur (Guntur), cotton is being sold with a minimum of Rs 3,500 and a maximum of Rs 3,900.

Weather woes delay potato sowing in Bengal

Potato sowing in West Bengal has been delayed by over a fortnight this year on account of unfavourable weather conditions.

Sowing, which usually starts by end-October or early November, has just begun, said potato farmers and traders. Sowing usually gets completed by December 15.

“There were untimely rains this year in October and early November. This led to the delay in sowing of the tuber,” said Sahu Sufi Mondal of Abhirampur village near Burdwan – approximately 90 km from Kolkata. Mondal plans to sow Jyoti variety of the tuber on about 8 bighas (2.64 acres) of land. Close to 40 quintals can be cultivated on one bigha of land.

According to Ram Pada Pal, President, West Bengal Cold Storage Association, the delay in harvesting of paddy on account of poor monsoon this year has also led to a delay in sowing of potatoes in the State.

“Though the early varieties of the tuber have been sown in some districts (such as Bankura and Howrah, however, the sowing of the major crop is yet to gather steam,” Pal said.

Enthusiastic farmers

The remunerative prices the tuber fetched this year is encouraging farmers to sow the crop this season despite the increase in input costs.

Potato prices had been on an upward trend since February this year on account of a dip in production. Potato production dropped to about 85 lakh tonne in 2011-12, against 95 lakh tonne last year.

Wholesale price of the tuber was seen fetching anywhere between Rs 950 and Rs 1,250 a quintal during various times of the year.

“Seed and fertiliser prices have more than doubled this year. This is, however, not discouraging farmers from sowing as they are expecting to get good prices this season also,” Pal said.

A farmer spends about Rs 11,000-12,000 to cultivate Jyoti on one bigha (0.33 acre) of land. The costs have gone up by 40-50 per cent this year.

Though it would be difficult to estimate the production of the tuber, however, the sowing of the crop could be almost at par or a little more than that done last year, he said.

Harvesting of potatoes gathers steam by the end of January or early February and is complete by March 15.

Wheat prices for open sale hiked again

(* in Rs/quintal)

SOARING OFFER PRICES*



Zone	State	July 4	July 27	Aug 31	Sept 14	Sept 28	Nov 16
North	Delhi	1170	1285	1324.46	1325	1328	1527
South	Kerala	1170	1285	1553.14	1554	1580	1778
East	Bihar	1170	1285	1527.93	1528	1552	1750
N.E.	Assam	1170	1285	1489	1490	1510	1708
West	Chhattisgarh	1170	1285	1459.3	1460	1477	1675

The Union Food Ministry has raised the price of wheat offered under the open market sale scheme to bulk users such as flour mills and small traders for the fifth time in as many months.

The latest hike makes the increase in the price almost 50 per cent to the rate at which wheat was offered in the open sale on July 4.

Wheat was offered at a uniform Rs 1,170 a quintal on July 4. Following protests from mills in North that complained that they will become uncompetitive in the market if the price were to be uniform, the Ministry began to fix prices State-wise, including local taxes and freight charges with Chandigarh as the base.

Under the current scheme of things, the Food Ministry will sell 65 lakh tonnes of wheat from its stocks. Currently, it has released a quota of one lakh tonnes for most of the States barring

Himachal Pradesh, North-Eastern States, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadar and Nagar Haveli, Daman Diu, Lakshadweep and Puducherry. For these, the allotment is 25,000 tonnes.

Once this quota gets exhausted, the Centre will decide on the disposing of the remaining quantity.

The Centre is offering stocks from its warehouses as part of its efforts to create storage space for rice and wheat that will be procured during the current marketing season to September.

As on November 1, the Centre had 40.57 million tonnes of wheat against a buffer norm stock of 14 million tonnes.

Under the new pricing formula of the Food Corporation, States in the South and North-East have not to shell more. For example, wheat will now be offered to Tamil Nadu at Rs 1,721 a quintal. In Assam, the foodgrain will be available at Rs 1,822.

Flour mills unhappy

The price hike had resulted in the user industry, mainly flour mills that make wheat products, voicing its disapproval.

“The problem is that wheat is not available in the open market and all wheat stocks are with the Food Corporation of India. Though one wonders how exporters are getting wheat for shipments abroad, it is no secret that this is because of leakage from the public distribution system,” said a South-based miller.

“The price of Rs 1,580 earlier this month itself was high. The current price of Rs 1,778 for Kerala is unaffordable for the mills and consumers,” said P.K. Ahammed, President of Kerala Roller Flour Millers Federation.

According to sources, the problem is the disparity in prices between the North and South. In Punjab, wheat will be offered at Rs 1,484, while it will be offered at Rs 1,750 plus taxes in Karnataka and Rs 1,780 in Kerala. Freight charges are around Rs 200 a quintal but the Food Ministry seems to have charge more, leading to the disparity, they said.

“This itself is leading to artificial rise in prices,” a source said.

“For Kerala from an offer price of Rs 1,170 in July to now, the increase is 52 per cent,” said Ahammed.

“This periodic hike has resulted in prices going up in north Indian markets sharply. The price of Lokwan wheat from Rajasthan has increased to Rs 2,100 a quintal now from Rs 1,520 in April,” he said.

Govt buying

Industry officials such as Ahammed express concern over the rise despite a record production of 93.9 million tonnes (mt) of wheat this year. “The Government has procured a major portion of the record crop,” the Kerala flour mills official said in a letter to Union Minister of State for Food K.V. Thomas.

The Food Ministry has procured a record of over 38 mt of wheat from farmers. This, industry players say, is the main reason why wheat is not available in the open market.

“At this rate, wheat and its products will become unviable for hotels, bakeries and the common man,” Ahammed said.

The Centre should cut the price to Rs 1,580 a quintal for southern states until February, he demanded.

On Thursday, wheat futures for December delivery were quoted at Rs 1,613 a quintal and for January ruled at Rs 1,601.

At the Lawrence Road market in New Delhi that serves as a benchmark, wheat was quoted at Rs 1,620-1,625 a quintal.

Exports of around 3 mt of wheat till now and is projected to ship out 5.5 mt by the end of the current fiscal. Private exporters have shipped out around two lakh tonnes, while Government agencies such as the PEC have exported the rest. Poor crop in the US, Argentina and the Black Sea region (Ukraine, Russia) has led to demand for Indian wheat in the export market.

Poppy seeds soar on short supply

Prices of poppy seeds continued to zoom in the domestic and international markets following short supply due to reduction in area under its cultivation in India and other producing countries.

“Poppy seeds jumped from Rs 290 to Rs 340 a kg. Best white seeds fetches Rs 375-450 a kg. Uptrend continued”, upcountry market sources told *Business Line*.

no imports

They attributed the rise to short supply to no imports for the past five months while import cost has soared due to rise in prices at origin.

“Import costs are above Rs 400 a kg, so here the markets would soon touch Rs 450. On the other hand, the investment is very high and one full container load of 17 tonnes of poppy seeds would cost over Rs 1 crore,” they claimed.

“Next year crop is going to be very small, new crops will come only in next Sep and hence a long way is to go. So markets will soon see more and more shortage, pushing the prices up”, they said.

demand-supply

According to them, demand normally increases in winter months, as consumption increases three-fold then following an increase in food intake. Such demand exists till next June, they said.

Production of opium, a by-product of poppy seeds, has been reduced worldwide and consequently the area under poppy seeds cultivation too has been trimmed.

domestic market

India produced 18,374 tonnes of poppy seeds in 2012 and is estimated to be around 4,400 tonnes in 2011. The average Indian annual requirement is estimated at somewhere between 35,000 tonnes and 40,000 tonnes.

During the fiscal 2011-12, India imported 24,075 tonnes of poppy seeds valued at Rs 268.48 crore against 9,050 tonnes valued at Rs 127.64 crore the previous fiscal, according to official

sources. Availability, according to the trade, during the period from May 2012 to Apr 2013 is estimated at 10,576 tonnes.

The Indian Narcotic Control Board (NCB), Gwalior is said to have granted permits for cultivating in 5,700 hectares (ha) only this year as against 24,000 ha last year.

Sugarcane price row: Maharashtra farmers threaten to stop sugar trucks



Farmers associations in Maharashtra, that have been agitating for higher sugarcane prices have threatened to stop trucks leaving sugar mills, with processed sugar and other by-products.

Due to the substantial increase in the input cost of sugarcane, farmers are seeking Rs 3,000 a tonne from co-operative sugar mills. The price offered by a number of mills is in the range of Rs 2,300.

Farmers association are being led by three units – Member of Parliament Raju Shetti of the Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghtana, Maharashtra Shetkari Sanghtana of Raghunathdada Patil and Shetkari Sanghtana of Sharad Joshi. Raghunathdada Patil told *Business Line* that the three associations have decided to block the movements of trucks, so that there is a shortage in the market.

This, he said, will force the sugar mills and the State Government to come to the negotiating table. Patil said that blocking of trucks is a part of a new strategy and it would be launched after November 29. Earlier, the associations were asking farmers not to sell sugarcane to the mills, “Now farmers can sell sugarcane, but we will ensure that sugar does not leave the mills,” said Patil.

Under pressure from farmers, some mills have decided to offer more than Rs 2,300 for the sugarcane. But the associations are adamant and are demanding Rs 3,000 . “In order to further unify the farmers for this agitation, the urns carrying ashes of the two farmers, who were killed in the agitation, would be taken across the State. It will further galvanise the farmers against the mills,” Patil said.

He said that the associations were also in touch with similar farmers association across the State and groups in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Patil added that a consensus would be taken on carrying out a protest march on December 13, at Jantar Mantar, in New Delhi.

A senior management member of a co-operative sugar mill said, on the condition of anonymity, that buying sugarcane at Rs 3,000 a tonne was not viable. He said farmers were not adding value to the sugarcane and the sugar recovery from the cane was stagnant at 11.5 per cent.

Spot rubber inches up on global cues

Spot rubber continued to make moderate gains on Thursday. According to observers, the market reacted favourably to the early gains in domestic futures and it managed to sustain at higher levels though the latter shed a major part of the initial gains on late trades. Positive reports from the Japanese markets and the absence of quantity sellers at the prevailing levels kept the buyers comparatively active during closing hours.

The TOCOM rubber futures rose for the fourth straight session to hit the highest in three weeks tracking a weak Yen against the Dollar. In fact, a weaker Yen makes TOCOM rubber more attractive to holders of other currencies.

Sheet rubber improved to Rs 173 a kg at Kottayam and Kochi from Rs 171 and Rs 170 a kg respectively, according to traders and the Rubber Board.

Sheet rubber closed unchanged at Rs 173 (171) a kg, according to traders. The grade increased to Rs 173 (170) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to Rubber Board.

In futures, the December series finished higher at Rs 176.75 (175.17), January at Rs 178.90 (177.29), February at Rs 181.40 (179.92) and March at Rs 183 (181.70) a kg, while the April and May series remained inactive on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) firmed up to Rs 167.32 (166.17) a kg at Bangkok. The November futures improved to ₹248.5 (Rs 165.98) from ₹243.5 a kg during the day session, but then slipped to ₹247.3 (Rs 165.20) in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 173 (171); RSS-5: 169 (167); ungraded: 165 (162); ISNR 20: 161 (159.50) and latex 60 per cent: 113 (113).

TN sets up 84 centres for procuring paddy; more likely

Over 84 paddy procurement centres have been opened in Thanjavur and Thiruvarur districts for the ongoing kharif season, according to an official press release.

More such centres will be opened to support the farmers. As of now 1,367 tonnes of paddy has been procured, said the release quoting the Food Minister R. Kamaraj's address at a zonal managers' meet to review the operations of the public distribution system.

Till paddy procurement for the 'samba' (long-term paddy crop) starts in three months, officials have to ensure that adequate stocks of rice are available under the PDS from the Food Corporation of India, suggested the Minister.

Every month over 1.85 lakh families get about 3.10 lakh tonnes of rice free through the system. Tamil Nadu is unique in supplying free rice to beneficiaries. In addition, essential commodities such as pulses, sugar, wheat and fortified palm oil are sold at subsidised rates through 33,456 outlets.

This month, as of November 19, over 2.85 lakh tonnes of rice have been supplied. In addition, 9.134 tonnes of toor dhal out of the monthly allocation of 13.91 tonnes; and 9,129 tonnes of urad dhal out of the allocation of 10.430 tonnes have been supplied. The balance will be moved by November 25.

Also, palm oil imported by the Central Public Sector Units is also coming in. A ship carry carrying 6,000 tonnes (70 lakh packets) of oil has reached the Chennai Port and another vessel

carrying 7,500 tonnes (83 lakh packets) of oil will reach the port this week. Another ship carrying 4,000 tonnes of oil (45 lakh packets) will reach Tuticorin port in a couple of days.

As of November 18, over 44.20 lakh packets of fortified palm oil has been distributed to the family card holders, the release said.

Tamil Nadu's food subsidy bill is about Rs 4,900 crore annually and it also operates a Rs 50 crore fund as a market intervention to control spiralling increase of prices of essential commodities.

Borlaug award for two IARI scientists

Coromandel International Ltd has conferred the 'Borlaug Award' for 2012 on two Indian Agriculture Research Institute (IARI) scientists.

The award has been given to K.V. Prabhu and Ashok Kumar Singh for their contribution to basmati rice research and development.

A five-member jury headed by M.S. Swaminathan, Father of the Green Revolution in India, has named these scientists for the award.

Coromandel has instituted the award in 1972 to honour Nobel Laureate Norman E. Borlaug. The award is given in recognition of outstanding research and contribution in the field of agriculture, environment and extension by Indian scientists.

The award carries a cash prize of Rs 5 lakh, a gold medal and a citation.

Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission, will present the award to the winners in New Delhi on November 28.

According to a statement, Coromandel lecture on 'Cutting edge science for food security, economic growth and environment protection' will be delivered by Robert S. Zeigler, Director General of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) at the event.

ICO pegs coffee output at 148 million bags

Global coffee production is expected to rise by 10 per cent to about 148 million bags in the current coffee year, which began last month, the International Coffee Organisation (ICO) has said.

Global production in 2011-12 coffee year (October-September) stood at 134.5 million bags (of 60 kg each).

“Crop year 2012-13 is now in progress. On the basis of available information from member countries, early indications are that the total production is estimated to be around 146 to 148 million bags,” ICO said.

Crop year 2011-12, which ended in September, is estimated to have produced 134.5 million bags, a 0.8 per cent increase on the previous year.

The drop in output associated with the Brazilian biennial cycle was offset by strong increases in Vietnam, Honduras and Peru, among others, it added.

The global body pegs higher output in 2012-13 crop year on expected rise in Arabica coffee production in Brazil. Strong performances are also expected in several other exporting countries, it said.

According to ICO, global coffee exports rose 3 per cent to 107.8 million bags in 2011-12 coffee year compared with 104.7 million bags in 2010-11 crop year on the back of increased shipments from Vietnam, Indonesia, Mexico among others.

Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

23.11.2012 A.M

Onion, potato, banana, pulses price might rise in 2012-13: NCAER

Demand pressure would be more on available supplies of edible oils and pulses. Potato production growth would be well below the trend

Sanjeeb Mukherjee / New Delhi November 23, 2012, 0:54 IST



The southwest monsoon in 2012 might have left Indian shores a couple of months back after having a rather uneven run during the four-month season, but its after-effect in pushing up prices of onion, edible oils, pulses, potatoes and banana is likely to be felt all year long.

According to an assessment made by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), under the guidance of the Union ministry of agriculture, the deficient monsoon in the early half of the southwest monsoon season this year could have an adverse impact on the production of onions, potatoes and banana.

Demand pressure would be more on available supplies of edible oils and pulses, the report added. It said potato production was expected to register a growth of five-seven per cent in 2012-13, well below the trend growth of about nine per cent in the recent years.

“Taking into view factors like the negative impact of below normal rains in some major potato growing parts of India which could be negated by high prices during planting, potato output growth in 2012-13 is expected to be five-seven per cent over the previous year at 44.6-45.6 million tonnes (mt),” it said. India’s annual potato production rose by almost 9.4 per cent between 2005-06 and 2011-12.

On bananas, the NCAER report said production in 2012-13 was not expected to rise as compared to 2011-12, which could have an adverse impact on prices as domestic

consumption was expected to rise on account of increase in population and more importantly from increased per capita demand.

“The overall wholesale price index (WPI) for banana did not see the usual decline in the summer months of May and June this year, reflecting the production conditions and if the decline in September-November there could be some relief to consumers,” the report said. India, the world’s largest producer of bananas, cultivates around 30 mt of banana annually.

The report, “Quarterly Agricultural Outlook Report July-September 2012”, has been prepared under the guidance of Union Department of Agriculture and eminent agricultural economists like Ashok Gulati and Mahendra Dev.

On onion, the report said low rainfall in Maharashtra and Karnataka during the monsoon season, which account for almost 50 per cent of the total onion produced in the country, could pull down overall production by at least 20 per cent in 2012-13.

As compared to the harvest of 15.7 mt in 2011-12, overall output is expected to be around 13.6 mt in 2012-13 as early and late kharif crop that accounts for 40 per cent of the total onion production is expected to be impacted due to uneven rains this year, the report said.

The fourth major commodity which is expected to feel the pinch of uncertain initial rains this year will be pulses. According to the report, production of kharif pulses is expected to be around 15 per cent less than last year at 5.26 mt and assuming a normal rabi pulses output of 11.5 mt, total pulses production in 2012-13 would be 17 mt, 200,000 tonnes less than last year.

In edible oils, the report pegs the output decline in line with the first advanced estimate of the department of agriculture.

It said overall kharif oilseeds production in 2012-13 is expected to be around 2 mt less than the production in 2011-12.

“A favourable output in the rabi season might offset some of the loss, but edible oil imports will rise in 2012-13,” the report said. This could potentially have an inflationary impact as India imports more than half of annual edible oil demand.

Wheat production to be lower in 2012-13 season

Komal Amit Gera / Chandigarh November 23, 2012, 0:05 IST

Wheat production is projected to be slightly lower in rabi season 2012-13. This is due to two reasons — farmers are facing cost pressures in cultivating wheat, and acreage under wheat is stagnant.

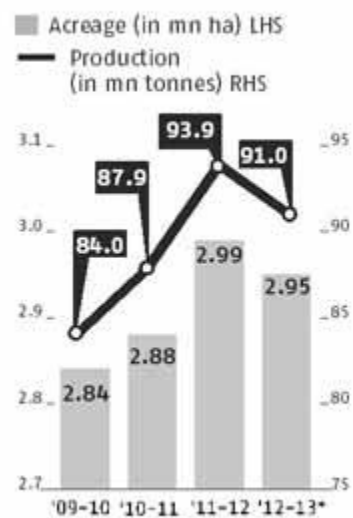


Talking to Business Standard, Indu Sharma, director of the Wheat Research Institute in Karnal, said, “Acreage is likely to remain stagnant this season and the yield is expected to be slightly lower than last year. The estimated area under wheat was 2.99 million hectares last year and keeping cognisance of the constant MSP (minimum support price) of wheat (Rs 1,285 per quintal), there is no expectation of increase in acreage. Wheat productivity is higher when the winter is strong and prolonged. A slight aberration in temperature can undermine the yield.”

The sharp increase in cost of diammonium phosphate (DAP) from Rs 470 per 50 kg last year to Rs 1,200 per 50 kg this year is also a discouraging factor for increase in acreage under wheat. The sowing of wheat, a major rabi crop, has been delayed in certain pockets

(Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh are the major wheat producing states) due to late harvesting of paddy as an aftermath of delayed monsoon.

WINDS OF CHANGE



* Projected
Source: Wheat Research Institute, Karnal

The information obtained from farmers in different states reveals that sowing is lagging by 5-20 days, depending on the size of the farms and availability of inputs.

According to Sharma, rabi 2011-12 was an exceptionally good year as the climate remained cool till the harvest of wheat. As a result, there was an unprecedented 7.5 per cent increase in yield.

Sharma said the decision on MSP of wheat may have a fallout

in the next season because for the current season, farmers have already purchased seeds and other inputs and about 80 per cent sowing is over. This season, prices in the open market are higher by 20 per cent compared to the MSP, and these are likely to remain unchanged till harvest. This will benefit farmers, although farmers in Punjab and Haryana largely depend on government procurement.

Farmers in various districts of Punjab and Haryana said they may have to look for an alternative to wheat, as the crop was highly agrochemical intensive and the cost of agrochemicals was unviable for them. But the assured market of wheat makes them stick to growing wheat. They said they were expecting yields lesser than last year, as global warming takes a toll on farm productivity. Wheat is very sensitive to temperature fluctuations and a slight increase in temperature compared to last year may have substantial effect on the yield.

As the country is grappling with a buffer stock of wheat and the maintenance cost of storage is high, a moderate crop size may be welcome.

Chilli climbs 0.94% on strong demand

The December delivery traded higher by Rs 30, or 0.58%, to Rs 5,170 per quintal

Press Trust of India / New Delhi November 22, 2012, 14:06 IST

Amid strong domestic demand and restricted arrivals from producing belts, chilli prices rose by Rs 58 to Rs 6,210 per quintal in futures trade today.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, the March chilli rose by Rs 58, or 0.94%, to Rs 6,210 per quintal, with an open interest of 1,605 lots.

The December delivery traded higher by Rs 30, or 0.58%, to Rs 5,170 per quintal, with an open interest of 5,160 lots.

Marketmen attributed the rise in chilli futures to strong demand in the spot market amid lower arrivals from producing belts.

Crude palm oil remains weak on global cues

Speculators reduced positions in line with weak global trend

Press Trust of India / New Delhi November 22, 2012, 13:05 IST



Crude palm oil fell by 0.13% to Rs 445.90 per 10 kg in futures market today as speculators reduced positions in line with weak global trend.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, the January contract declined by 60 paise, or 0.13%, to Rs 445.90 per 10 kg, with a business turnover of 129 lots.

The December contract traded marginally lower by 40 paise, or 0.09%, to Rs 440.80 per 10 kg, with a business turnover of 548 lots.

Marketmen said speculators trimmed position due to subdued global trend on concern that inventories in Indonesia and Malaysia, the largest producers, may remain high as demand slows during winter, influencing crude palm oil prices at futures trade.

Meanwhile, palm oil for February delivery lost 0.8% to \$792 a tonne on the Malaysia Derivatives Exchange.

Jeera up on slow progress of sowing, export demand

Speculators, triggered by reports of slow progress of sowing in key producing region and some export enquiries

Press Trust of India / New Delhi November 22, 2012, 13:00 IST



Jeera prices rose by Rs 65 to Rs 14,825 per quintal in futures trade today on fresh offtake by speculators, triggered by reports of slow progress of sowing in key producing region and some export enquiries.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, the December contract rose by Rs 65, or 0.44%, to Rs 14,825 per quintal, with an open interest of 15,567 lots.

The October contract gained Rs 64, or 0.42%, to Rs 15,669 per quintal, with an open interest of 5,313 lots.

Marketmen said apart from some export enquiries, reports of slow progress of sowing in the key producing state, Gujarat, due to inadequate soil moisture, influenced the jeera prices at futures trade here.

Turmeric up on spot demand

Speculators indulged in covering-up short positions amid fresh demand in the spot markets
Press Trust of India / New Delhi November 22, 2012, 12:22 IST



Turmeric prices rose by Rs 130 to Rs 5,700 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators indulged in covering-up short positions amid fresh demand in the spot markets.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, the May contract rose by Rs 130, or 2.33%, to Rs 5,700 per quintal, with an open interest of 1,630 lots.

The December contract traded higher by Rs 56, or 1.10%, to Rs 5,136 per quintal, with an open interest of 17,355 lots.

Marketmen said covering-up of pending short positions by speculators and rising demand in

the spot markets helped turmeric futures to trade higher but higher stocks positions limited the gains.

Sugar marginally up on crushing delay

Fresh positions created by speculators, driven by reports of a delay in cane crushing in key producing states due to farmers' demand for an increase in cane procurement prices

Press Trust of India / New Delhi November 22, 2012, 12:19 IST

Supported by a delay in cane crushing in sugar producing states, sugar futures prices rose marginally by 0.09% to Rs 3,296 per quintal as speculators enlarged positions.

However, weak demand in the spot markets on higher selling by mills following a government directive to them to sell 4 million tonne of sugar in the open market during October and November, limited the gains.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, the December contract rose by Rs 3, or 0.09%, to Rs 3,296 per quintal, with an open interest of 36,250 lots.

The January contract rose by Rs 2, or 0.06%, to Rs 3,316 per quintal, with an open interest of 14,160 lots.

Marketmen attributed the rise in sugar futures prices to fresh positions created by speculators, driven by reports of a delay in cane crushing in key producing states due to farmers' demand for an increase in cane procurement prices.

Sugar marginally up on crushing delay

Fresh positions created by speculators, driven by reports of a delay in cane crushing in key producing states due to farmers' demand for an increase in cane procurement prices

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Supported by a delay in cane crushing in sugar producing states, sugar futures prices rose marginally by 0.09% to Rs 3,296 per quintal as speculators enlarged positions.

However, weak demand in the spot markets on higher selling by mills following a government directive to them to sell 4 million tonne of sugar in the open market during October and November, limited the gains.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, the December contract rose by Rs 3, or 0.09%, to Rs 3,296 per quintal, with an open interest of 36,250 lots.

The January contract rose by Rs 2, or 0.06%, to Rs 3,316 per quintal, with an open interest of 14,160 lots.

Marketmen attributed the rise in sugar futures prices to fresh positions created by speculators, driven by reports of a delay in cane crushing in key producing states due to farmers' demand for an increase in cane procurement prices.

Cardamom decline on high supply

Supply pressure from producing regions against subdued demand at prevailing higher levels mainly helped cardamom prices to trade lower at futures market

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Cardamom prices fell Rs 5.80 to Rs 902.80 per kg in futures trading today on higher supplies from producing belts against subdued demand.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, the December contract for cardamom declined by Rs 5.80, or 0.64%, to Rs 902.80 per kg, with business turnover of 412 lots.

The January contract shed Rs 2.90, or 0.29%, to Rs 985.90 per kg, with an open interest of 85 lots.

Marketmen said supply pressure from producing regions against subdued demand at prevailing higher levels mainly helped cardamom prices to trade lower at futures market.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

TODAY FARM NEWS

23.11.2012 A.M

Given precarious state of UP's finances, farm loan waiver makes little sense

Given the precarious state of UP's finances, this farm loan waiver makes little sense. You almost sense that concern for peasant welfare might have been a secondary objective as the scheme was announced on the birthday of the [chief minister](#) Akhilesh Yadav's father, Mulayam Singh Yadav. This betrays the desire to celebrate Mulayam's birthday with public money and smacks of a feudal mindset of patronage. Akhilesh isn't the only politician doing this sort of gimmickry. But Akhilesh had held out the promise of ushering in a more modern political paradigm in the state. That promise is belied.

Most farmers are small land holders

With over 80% people dependent on agriculture in the state, poor government incentives to farmers have often courted controversy. The groundnut seed scam was the latest taint in the sector. Agriculture minister [Debi Prasad Mishra](#) speaks on issues plaguing the tiller of the land in an interview with Rajaram Satapathy.

Q-Where is the root of groundnut scam?

A-There is no scam per se in groundnut seed distribution. There is, however, scarcity of seeds due to which farmers are protesting. We had planned to provide 1 lakh 20,000 quintals of groundnut seeds to farmers, for which nearly 1000 quintals of breeder seed were given to the seed corporation of Odisha as against nearly 600 quintals last year. But as on date only about 27,000 quintals of certified seed could be available, which has created the resentment amongst farmers.

Q-Why is this mess?

A-The agriculture secretary has been asked to conduct an inquiry into the functioning of the seed corporation and find out why it failed to deliver the required quantity of seed on time.

Q-Are you going to fix responsibility on any one for this lapse?

A-Let the probe report come. We will review everything.

Q-Have you made any contingency plan to meet the farmers' needs?

A-We are arranging groundnut seeds from other sources. I hope the situation will improve to some extent, if not fully, in the next few weeks.

Q-You had similar problems in the recent past on fertiliser. Union minister Srikant Jena had blamed the state government for it.

A-What Srikant Jena said was a white lie, aiming to get some political mileage. The state government does not produce fertiliser nor has it major control over its distribution. There is total mess at the Central government level and the minister made the statement only to cover it. The Central government's faulty policy has proved a bane for farmers in making fertiliser costlier and causing scarcity as well.

Q-The agriculture department is always seen as a non-priority area though majority of the state's population depends on agriculture for survival. Incidents of farmer suicides are often reported.

A-Nearly 77% of Odisha's population depends on agriculture. Most farmers are small land holders. Our effort has been to bring people to allied sectors like fishery, diary, etc., to ensure

alternative sources of livelihood. As such farmers in our state do not have sufficient money to invest in agriculture. Commercial banks are totally non-cooperative. I have been on the job to give a new direction to the agriculture department in order to let it get closer to farmers. We are seriously working in that direction and some of our plans include making Odisha self-sufficient in sweet water fish production in the next three years and increase milk production from the present level of 50 lakh litres to one crore litres.

Q-You recently visited Israel. How is your visit going to benefit farmers of the state? A similar visit was made during the [Congress](#) government to Israel as well.

A-I headed a three-member delegation to Israel on the invitation of agriculture ministry there. Israel's rapid progress in agriculture sector was an eye-opener for us.

There are a lot of things to learn from them, particularly how the country is growing so much of agricultural produce in controlled conditions. We are on the job to replicate some of their experiments in our state.

Agri varsity's prediction of crop prices out

COIMBATORE: The Domestic and Export Market Intelligence Cell (DEMIC) of the [Tamil Nadu Agricultural University](#) (TNAU) has come up with the prediction for prices of [Bengal Gram](#), Corriander and Cumbu. These are among the leading food crops grown in some parts of the state during November.

The analyses of the price data of the last 10 years by [DEMIC](#) says that its price will be around Rs.42-45 per kilograms during the harvesting season which are in the months of March and April 2013. The crop grown in Coimbatore and Tirupur district is mainly used for snack purposes and the price will be higher than that used for flour, says the study.

Coriander (Dhania), a spice crop which yields both fresh leaves and spice seed, used primarily for culinary purposes is sowed during mid November. Nearly 86 per cent of the total coriander area is grown as rain fed crop in the state. The analyses of DEMIC says that the price of the coriander seed during the harvest period will be around Rs.4600-4800 per quintal. As per the econometric analysis done by DEMIC, pertaining to cumbu prices in Kovilpatti market over the last 16 years, the price of cumbu during the harvest would revolve around Rs. 1100-1200 per quintal.



TODAY FARM NEWS

23.11.2012 A.M

On Mulayam birthday, CM son gifts loan waiver to farmers

Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday announced a loan waiver for farmers who have taken agricultural loans up to Rs 50,000 from the UP Sahkari Gram Vikas Bank, commonly known as the land development bank, and repaid at least 10 per cent of the principal until March 31, 2012.

The announcement came on the 74th birthday of Samajwadi Party president Mulayam Singh Yadav in fulfilment of an election promise of the ruling party.

The waiver will benefit 7.2 lakh farmers and cost Rs 1,650 crore. Already, an allocation of Rs 500 crore has been made in the budget, which was presented by Akhilesh in June 2012.

“For the remaining amount, budgetary provisions will be made in the coming years,” the CM announced.

The waiver will include both the unpaid principal and interest. “We had announced that farmers’ mortgaged land will not be auctioned for recovery of loans. We had included this in our election

manifesto and we have now fulfilled it," Akhilesh said. However, he ruled out waiver on farm loans given by other banks.

Referring to his father Mulayam, Akhilesh said, "We all are aware that he is a great farmer leader and is concerned about the welfare of farmers. He had made an announcement for loan waiver during elections and it was also in our election manifesto. Already, other decisions for farmer welfare, like free irrigation from government tubewells and canals, have been taken by the government."

This is the third major handout by this Samajwadi Party government. Already, the party is giving unemployment allowance of Rs 1,000 per month to jobless men and women, and a cash assistance of Rs 30,000 to girls passing Class XII under the Kanya Vidya Dhan scheme. Soon, it will start payment of cash assistance of Rs 30,000 to girls from minority communities on passing Class X, and a similar assistance to girls from poor families of other communities.

UP waives loans of 7.2 lakh farmers

Acting on its election promise, the Uttar Pradesh government today waived loans of farmers who had taken up to Rs 50,000 from cooperative rural development bank, a decision that would benefit 7.2 lakh farmers.

The announcement comes on a day when the party is celebrating its chief Mulayam Singh Yadav's 74th birthday here.

"The SP, in its manifesto, had promised to waive off loans of farmers upto Rs 50,000 which is being done today," Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav told reporters.

He said the loan waiver would be given to farmers, who have been sanctioned loan upto Rs 50,000, and have deposited at least 10 per cent of the actual amount by March 31.

"There remaining loan, including interest, is being waived off," he said.

He said that as a result of the decision taken by the government, loan amounting to around Rs 1650 crore would be waived off and would directly benefit around 7.2 lakh farmers.

Akhilesh said that a provision of Rs 500 crore had already made in the state budget and another Rs 500 crore would be made available.

"The party has promised that provision of auctioning mortgaged land of the farmers on which loan has been taken would be abolished and in such a situation loan would be waived off," he said.

The CM said that the SP was of the belief that unless and until farmers prosper and they get help, state and country could not move forward on the path of development.

"It has been continuous efforts of the SP to provide facilities to farmers," he said.

Regarding cane price, Akhilesh said that it would be fixed very soon and it would be such that farmers get benefited.