

TNAU to help Government formulate policy on organic farming



Nature Scientist G. Nammalvar (right) releasing a book at the State-level meet on organic farming at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in Coimbatore on Tuesday. K. Ramasamy (left), Vice-Chancellor of the University, receives the first copy.- Photo:K.Ananthan.

A first-of-its-kind interactive meeting of organic farmers, agricultural scientists, and forums associated with organic farming, took off in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University here on Tuesday.

Nearly 150 organic farmers from all over the State will be attending the three-day meeting that is aimed at collecting information about their best practices, visiting organic certified farmers' fields, and receiving feedback from the farmers. This is to help TNAU draft the Research Policy and Organic Policy for the State Government. The university will function as the via media between the organic farmers and the State Government.

According to Vice-Chancellor K. Ramasamy, though alternative farming has been in use for the last 12 years in the State, it has not been formalised yet.

"Since the XII Five Year Plan is going to have a major thrust on organic farming, there is a need to collect information from the various stakeholders to consolidate the findings that will be submitted to the State Government. There are factors relating to the authenticity of 250 inputs that are termed as 'organic', grading system, and certification," Mr. Ramasamy said. Once the outcome of this meeting was documented, a next level of meeting with planners and executers

from the Government would be held after a few weeks to discuss the future plan of action, the Vice-Chancellor added.

Sharing their experience, successful organic farmers said that they were not against science, but against chemicals. They urged that a separate standard be set for organic farming in Asian countries, and that this should be done by TNAU. Their grievance was that though organic farming was being done in India, the produce was being sent to foreign countries, and was not being used for “our own children who are being fed on produce grown using pesticides”.

Organic farming scientist K. Nammalvar, said at the meeting that climate change was threatening the world and was also influencing agriculture adversely.

“While climate change is a common threat, the poor in poor countries are going to be affected more than the others. India with 37 per cent of its population living below the poverty line is going to put up with these effects with difficulty. Scientists are suggesting the processes of mitigation and adaptation to face the effects,” Mr. Nammalvar said. Even if people refrained from activities that led to climate change, it would take 150 years for the earth to recover from the damage caused till now. The alternative option seen is adaptation – this means changing lifestyles according to the changing environment.

“Soil contains physical, biological and chemical properties. When we ignore the first two properties and concentrate only on the third, then we make it lose its natural content,” he said.

A.S. Anand, Chairman, Organic Farming Mission, Bangalore, spoke on the success story of Karnataka’s organic farmers since 2008.

He pointed out that the initiative of Karnataka would be strengthened only if farmers of other States, especially from Tamil Nadu, extended their support.

Poultry farmers incur huge losses as chicken prices dip

Poultry farmers in the State have been going through major losses for the past few weeks with chicken prices dipping steeply on account of a fall in demand. Andhra Pradesh process 3.5 crore live birds a month, one-third of the nation’s production and six crore eggs a day and the industry is estimated at Rs. 20,000 crore.

Andhra Pradesh Poultry Federation president D. Sudhakar said at a press conference here on Monday that a similar trend was being witnessed across the country. Farmers were forced to sell live chicken at Rs. 43 to Rs. 45 a kilo now, while the cost of production was about Rs. 60 a kilo in A.P. The prices had fallen to Rs. 27 a kilo at the farm level a few weeks ago and they expected the demand to pick up in the coming weeks, he said.

At the retail level, prices of dressed chicken in most parts of AP had fallen to Rs. 80 a kg from Rs. 120, two months ago, he said, adding it was a nation-wide trend, with the domestic poultry industry reeling under spiralling prices of key feed ingredients like maize and soya meal.

It was learnt that the price of soya cake had risen from Rs. 1,800 per quintal three months ago to Rs. 4,000 now. The phenomenon was attributed to the recent increase in exports, tightening domestic supplies.

Mr. Sudhakar said a two-day international exhibition of poultry equipment was being conducted here from November 28 and the organisers were expecting a footfall of 20,000 visitors, against 18,500 last year.

Lax PWD may have to share blame for farmer's suicide

For a week, Rajangam slept on his paddy fields with a spade by his side, hoping that water would eventually flow into the field. But, when the chances waned on Friday, the last day under the turn system, he lost the will to live.

On Saturday, when the 35-year-old farmer of Koorathangudi panchayat in Keezhvelur chose to end his life consuming pesticide, he unwittingly became a symbol of the water crisis that has sapped agriculture in the lower reaches of the Cauvery delta.

Early on Sunday, the clouds opened up for the first spell of showers in over three weeks.

But for Devi, the 28-year-old inconsolable wife of Rajangam, they had come a few hours too late.

Rajangam, an emaciated but proud farmer, was defeated thrice during this season.

The rain that preceded cyclone Nilam decimated his marginal holding of six acres, including 2.5 acres of leased temple lands. The nurseries he had raised were 70 days old but could not be

transplanted owing to lack of water. He purchased nurseries at Rs. 300 a bundle and had them transplanted, but they began to wither.

With no access to institutional credit, Rajangam made multiple borrowings to the tune of Rs. 90,000 at interest rate five times that of the bank.

For people in the know, Rajangam was not a victim of interstate politics and water war. The blame for his suicide could well be laid at the doors of Public Works Department officials responsible for maintaining irrigation channels.

The Koorathangudi panchayat with its 248 hectares is irrigated by the Paandayar channel under the Vennar division of the Cauvery. The channel that holds the last shutter to the sea has not seen water under the turn system (alternating system of water sharing for six days each in field channels of the Cauvery and Vennar divisions).

According to S. Ranganathan, General Secretary, Cauvery Delta Farmers Association, the problem began with the centralisation of desilting works with the PWD, and its failure in maintaining the channel.

Mr. Ranganathan has, for long, been demanding independent treatment for the coastal areas in the delta. "Channels should be opened up for two days exclusively for the lower reaches and closed for the upper reaches."

Under the present system, water is pumped out by farmers in the upper reaches with political clout, leaving those in the lower reaches high and dry.

Irrigation channels were never viewed in totality and there lies the problem, says Annie George who, under the erstwhile NCRC (NGO Coordination Research Centre), set up Water Users Associations, on pilot basis, for select river systems in the lower reaches.

The project helped create a decentralised set up with community partnership to address the alternating vulnerabilities of flooding, salinity and drought in the river systems.

According to Giridharan of the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, the PWD has been rendered weak in the past two decades, mainly due to local politics and corruption. The farmers are never consulted on the desilting of channels or repair of shutters and regulators and decisions are

made unilaterally.” He alleges costs are projected in excess to provide margins to local political affiliates on the panel of contractors.

“Earlier, desilting, and channel maintenance was under the control of irrigators’ associations. The day, the government stepped in, farmers as primary stakeholders lost their agency,” says Kaveri Danapalan, General Secretary, Cauvery Farmers Protection Association.

On Monday, when *The Hindu* met the family, the six-year-old and four-year old sons of Rajangam believed their father was on the fields waiting for the elusive water.

“Hike sugarcane procurement rate”

The Tamil Nadu Sugarcane Farmers’ Association has placed a demand to increase the procurement prices of sugarcane.

N. Palanisamy, state president, in a statement, has said that the AIADMK government has fixed the price for sugarcane at Rs.2,350 for the year 2012-13, this means that not even a single rupee has been increased for the current season and the farmers have been completely deceived.

He further said that, the election manifesto of AIADMK had stated that sugarcane procurement rate would be made Rs.2, 500 per tonne if voted to power. Last year, AIADMK government taking into account sugarcane price and rent had announced the procurement price as Rs. 2,100.

Under the Sugarcane Control Act 1966, when the minimum price announced by central government was not found to be reasonable for the farmers, the state government used to convene tripartite committee and fix prices. However, during the past two years the state government has not convened any such meeting to fix prices.

The plight of sugarcane farmers has increased in the recent past with frequent power cuts, increase in prices of pesticides and fertilizers. Supreme Court in a judgement in 2004 had said that the state government, apart from the fixed minimum price announced by the centre can increase the procurement price.

The association flayed the Rangarajan Committee recommendations stating that if implemented it would lead to a situation where the farmers would become farm labourers. The association alleged that the present government is biased towards private sugar companies and requested that their demand of Rs.3, 500 per tonne should be announced.

If the government fails to fulfil our demand we will take a decision at the state conference of Sugarcane Farmers Association and will announce a protest.

Work on new foodgrain market to begin in Jan



The new market will be similar in design to the fruit and vegetable market —Photo: S.S. Kumar

The design of the new wholesale foodgrain market at Koyambedu will be similar to that of the existing fruit and vegetable market. The new market structure will have ground plus one floor with chiselled dressed granite cladding, a sloped roof and decorative tiles.

The Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority on Tuesday cleared the finalisation of tender for construction of the market at a cost of Rs.69.17 crore with similar design. The contractor will begin the construction work by January 1, said an official of CMDA.

The market will start functioning by June 2014.

However, as the market is coming up at an alternative site between B-Road and E-Road in Koyambedu with the land originally earmarked for the project being taken over by Chennai Metro Rail, all the traders who wish to relocate will not get shops as the demand is four times that of proposed shops in the existing design of the market.

Even though the administrative sanction for the market was given in May, the tendering process took time on account of various issues pertaining to the demand of traders in George Town, who will have to shift businesses from the existing wholesale foodgrain market in George Town to Koyambedu.

As the new structure is located close to the upcoming metro station in Koyambedu, residents and small businesses will be able to purchase products such as cereals, pulses and spices at an affordable cost. However, the project covering 364 shops measuring 280 sq ft, 92 shops measuring 740 sq ft and 36 shops measuring 1,200 sq ft will not be enough to meet the demand.

The land available with the CMDA is limited because of the metrorail land acquisition and there is no scope for expansion of the market in future in Koyambedu, said officials.

The project is aimed at decongesting the central business district of George Town by shifting the business to Koyambedu where phase-I of the market for vegetables, flowers and fruits has over 3,194 shops. According to CMDA officials, Over 2,000 of the traders are part of the bustling market of foodgrains and spices in Kothwal Chavadi.

The total area of the built up space of the market will be 2,13,200 sq ft. Some traders have already paid a portion of the shop cost and those who get the shops will pay the rest in instalments, said an official.

Good riddance of bad water hyacinths



Clean-up job The PWD and Kancheepuram district administration are removing floating vegetation from the Pallavaram lake in an effort to protect it —Photo: K. Manikandan

To save what is left of one of the biggest water bodies in the city's suburbs, the government has recently begun removing floating vegetation from it.

For nearly a month now, the Public Works Department (PWD), along with the Pallavaram municipality has been clearing water hyacinths and other vegetation from the Pallavaram periyari (lake), in what is believed to be a first-of-its-kind initiative in the southern suburbs.

P. Dhan Singh, Pallavaram MLA, who inspected the ongoing work on Tuesday morning, said that the project began after they appealed to senior engineers of the PWD and the Kancheepuram district administration to protect the lake.

When not controlled, water hyacinths ('aagaya thaamarai') can cover lakes entirely, impacting water flow, blocking sunlight from reaching native aquatic plants, and starving the water of oxygen, often killing fish. The plants also create a prime habitat for mosquitoes, which are vectors of several diseases.

Many residents in the locality had submitted petitions on the urgent need to protect what was left of the northern fringes of the lake, following which Mr. Singh had taken the matter to the district administration.

Explaining the work done, a PWD staff member said a catamaran had been hired and that workers rode in it to bring clusters of water hyacinths close to the shore. Earth-moving equipment then picked up the floating mass of vegetation and debris and dumped it on the margins.

"Once the entire mass of floating vegetation is cleared and also after the lake bund along the eastern side is strengthened, we plan to create a walkers' pathway," Mr. Singh said.

PWD engineers said that the work currently on at the Pallavaram lake was on of many other projects taken up in several other sprawling water bodies in Kancheepuram district.

Water hyacinth obstructs free flow in Bhavani, Cauvery rivers

The Bhavani and Cauvery rivers in Erode district have become a fertile ground for the water hyacinth, a free floating aquatic weed.

The invasive plant, described as the world's worst aquatic weed, has covered large swathes of water in the two rivers, obstructing the free flow. The weed, which grows into a thick bed of waxy leaves and multiplies with astounding rapidity, has turned out to be a major problem for

the farming community and the power generation barrages of Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (TANGEDCO).

The leaves clog bridges in the two rivers. When water is released from the reservoirs, the leaves also enter into the irrigation canals and clog the regulation structures, farmers here point out.

The leaves also choke the power generation barrages of the TANGEDCO, affecting the generation activities. The Corporation employs fishermen to remove the water hyacinth near its barrages.

The weed, according to officials in the Public Works Department, grows rapidly in places where sewage is discharged into the water courses. For instance, the weed can be found covering a long stretch of the Bhavani river near Kooduthurai as sewage from the Bhavani town is being discharged there, they point out.

Take away emus from us, farmers to government

The victims of multi-crore emu scam once again took to streets on Monday.

This time, they did not urge the authorities to take steps to retrieve their investment. Instead, they wanted the government to provide feed or take the emu birds away from them.

Unable to bear the cost of rearing the emu birds, more than 100 investors gathered at the Collectorate and submitted a petition to District Collector V.K. Shanmugam urging the administration to supply feed for the birds free of cost. If the government could supply the feed, then it should take care of the birds. We are not able rear the birds, the petitioners, who were members of the recently-formed All Emu Farmers Welfare Association, said.

“The emu birds eat so much everyday and we are not able to buy feed for them with out meagre income. We do not know the real market value of these birds,” said S. Ramalingam, a farmer said.

“The government supplies feed to the birds at the Susi Emu Farms in Perundurai. It should help the farmers rearing the birds as well,” Durairaj, a farmer from Paramathi Velur said.

A few investors said there were very few takers for the birds in the local market. Disposing them off soon was not an easy option.

Traders who buy the birds in the local market were offering Rs. 2,000 or less for a fully grown bird. We invested Rs. 1.50 lakh to rear six birds and owners of the emu farms claimed that each bird was worth over Rs. 20,000, they said.

Two weeks ago, a few frustrated investors abandoned more than 70 birds on a field near Gobichettipalayam.

The contract emu farming firms allegedly swindled more than Rs. 300 crore from 15,000 investors in the district and the Economic Offences Wing police registered more than 20 cases against the promoters of emu farms.

Water level

Water level in the Periyar dam on Tuesday stood at 117.60 feet (136 feet) with an inflow of 94 cusecs and a discharge of 300 cusecs. The level in the Vaigai dam was 53.48 feet (71 feet) with an inflow of 218 cusecs and a discharge of 1,460 cusecs. The combined Periyar credit stood at 3,882 mcft.

1,916 to benefit under goat and sheep distribution

Beneficiaries from 24 panchayats in the district would benefit under the free goat\sheep distribution scheme in 2012-13. A release from Collector Darez Ahamed said the State government has allocated Rs.2.38 crore to the district for the current financial year to provide free goat\sheep to 1,916 beneficiaries in 24 panchayats..

Of that, till November, 6,512 goat\sheep had been distributed to 1,628 beneficiaries identified by the 19 gram sabhas and the total expenditure incurred for procuring them so far was Rs.2.08 crore.

On Monday a special gram sabha meeting was held at the remaining five panchayats for identifying 288 beneficiaries who would get 1,152 goat\sheep at a total cost of Rs.36.72 lakh. The meeting was held at Kizhumathur and Kolappadi (Veppur panchayat union), Kolakkanatham (Alathur union), and Mettupalayam and Malayapatti (Veppanthattai union). Applications are received from persons from November 26 to November 30, and list of

beneficiaries would be finalised on December 1. It would be ratified at gram sabha meeting on December 3. While 74 beneficiaries would be selected at Kizhumathur, 35 would be at Koalpadi, 49 at Kolakkanatham, 62 at Mettualayam, and 68 at Malayalapatti.

Go in for hybrid paddy cultivation, farmers told



learning the ropes: A farmer undergoing training in cultivation of hybrid paddy seeds at Krishi Vigyan Kendra at Vamban.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra at Vamban has advised farmers to go in for cultivation of hybrid paddy seeds to boost productivity. It has specifically advised them to raise the CORH (R)-3, a hybrid paddy variety introduced by Tamil Nadu Agricultural University a few years ago for registering more profits.

Inaugurating a training programme at the kendra on Tuesday, K. Vairavan, professor and head, said that paddy was the major crop in the district, but farmers preferred regular varieties to hybrid seeds. He said that paddy productivity would be at least twice the present yield. Lack of awareness of the cultivation technique in hybrid paddy seeds has been a bottleneck.

S. Kavitha, assistant professor of seed technology department, said farmers should exercise caution in selection of the field for hybrid seed cultivation. Suitability of season and maintenance of isolation distance for the rows were some of the important factors which should be properly attended for registering a good yield in paddy seeds.

D. Dinakaran, professor of plant pathology, and S.K. Natarajan, assistant professor of agronomy, spoke on various protection methods, the type and timing of fertilizer application, and prevention of pest attack.

An interactive session was held in which farmers raised several questions. Ms. Kavitha replied that the hybrid cultivation should be taken up on a field where paddy should not have been raised the preceding season. "A non-paddy field is preferable for the hybrid variety." Farmers could go in for hybrid cultivation during the khariff (May and June) and Navarai (December and January). It should not be raised during the samba season.

Training on tuberose cultivation

Mr. Vairavan said that parts of the district were ideally suited for tuberose cultivation. A large area had been brought under tuberose cultivation at Alangudi and a few clusters at Viralaimeilai and Kundrandarkovil taluks. Pest management posed a serious threat to cultivation. The KVK would organise a training programme on pest management in tuberose cultivation on Thursday (November 29). For details interested persons could dial 04322-290321.

Press Karnataka to release water: farmers

Farmers associations of Cauvery delta districts on Monday urged the Union government to ensure the release of Tamil Nadu's share of the Cauvery water by Karnataka.

CPI (M) MLA K. Balakrishnan, who presided over a meeting, where a resolution to this effect was adopted, told reporters that if no amicable solution was arrived at the meeting between the Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka on November 29, the farmers would hold demonstrations before Central Government offices in taluk headquarters in the Cauvery delta districts on December 7.

"We will organise bandhs in delta districts and resort to other forms of agitation if the Centre and the Karnataka Government continue their indifferent attitude on the issue."

S. Ranganathan, secretary, Cauvery Delta Farmers' Welfare Association, said that the requirement for the standing samba crop was 60 tmc of water. Karnataka should release at least 20 tmc till the third week of December when rains could be expected. There was an urgent need to save the crop, which was withering for want of water.

Ulaganathan, Thiruthuraipoondi MLA (CPI); Durai Manickam, general secretary of the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, affiliated to the CPI; Shanmugham, general secretary of the Tamil

Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam affiliated to the (CPI-M); and representatives of the Federation of Farmers Associations of Cauvery delta districts participated.

Hopes of farmers wither along with samba crop

Farmers in the delta are facing a dire situation with the fate of the samba paddy crop hanging in balance as release of water from Mettur dam was reduced to 2,000 cusecs on Tuesday.

“The discharge is just to maintain only drinking water needs of some districts and irrigation needs cannot be met unless storage at the reservoir improves,” said a PWD engineer. The discharge was drastically reduced to 2,046 cusecs on Tuesday from Monday’s discharge of about 9,940 cusecs.

Water level in Mettur dam stood at 46 feet while the storage was 16 tmcft on Tuesday. While six to seven tmcft has to be retained as dead storage, remaining storage is used for meeting drinking water purpose.

Meanwhile, samba crop raised in Thanjavur and Tiruvarur districts require water. While direct-sown samba crop needs at least one wetting for survival, transplanted crop is in different stages and needs water. In Thanjavur district, the crop has been raised in 82,000 hectares. Out of this direct sowing has been done in 10,000 hectares while the rest are transplanted crops.

“We require 60 tmcft of water for sustaining samba crop in the delta districts,” farmers say.

As farmers were eagerly awaiting release of water from Karnataka, it is getting delayed, as the Supreme Court has asked the Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka to meet and talk. As there has been no rain as predicted in the third week of November by Meteorological Department, farmers are dependent only on Mettur water and that could fulfil the demand of farmers only when Karnataka released water.

Though farmers associations have announced agitations, the immediate need is water for saving the samba crop. If water was not ensured, then government should look for alternative programmes like giving three-phase power supply for agriculture pumpsets for 10 hours, diesel for motors in subsidised price, and sanctioning more motor connections.

Government took a calculated risk by opening Mettur dam on September 17. It pinned its hopes on northeast monsoon. But, 50 per cent of the total rain due from northeast monsoon has so far been received. If water was not available at this juncture, all the efforts made by the government by providing samba package would go waste.

Water level

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Tuesday stood at 71.60 feet (maximum level is 143 feet).

The dam had an inflow of 405.09 cusecs and 604.75 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam.

The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 64.10 feet (118 feet) with an inflow of 102 cusecs and 35 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam.

A rich harvest of awards for innovative farmers

The University of Agricultural Sciences-Bangalore presented awards to 205 innovative farmers, including 96 women. A horticultural scientist and an extension official were also honoured for their contribution to the welfare of farmers.

In the past, these annual awards were presented in the presence of thousands at the annual Krishi mela. However, the award presentation was low-key this year as the mela was not held owing to drought in the State.

But this did not deter the spirit of the farmers, who with their families, turned up at the ceremony. Governor H.R. Bhardwaj presented the State and district-level awards.

The Dr. M.H. Mari Gowda National Best Horticultural Scientist Award went to Nazeer Ahmed of Shimoga district, who is at present serving as Director of the Central Institute of Temperate Horticulture in Srinagar.

Their feats

The Dr. M.H. Mari Gowda State-level Best Horticultural Farmer Award was presented to Devendrappa Honnakerappa Goneppanavar of Hosalli village in Gadag district, who has not only reaped rich harvests on four acres of dry land through organic and integrated farming, but

has mentored a large number of farmers. He shared the award with Ashok Kumar of Rampura village in Kolar taluk, who is known for his experiments with water conservation while growing vegetables and horticultural crops.

The Corporation Bank-sponsored Corp awards were presented to N.R. Surendra of Nijayappanadoddi in Ramanagaram taluk, who has excelled in integrated farming and K.B. Pratibha of Jyothi Mallapur of Arsikere taluk who found success in dairy farming.

Dr. Dwarakinath Best Extension Worker Award, instituted by the former Vice-Chancellor of UAS-Bangalore, was presented to B. Raghu, Senior Assistant Horticultural Director of Kanakapura. The Dr. Dwarakinath Best Farmer Award went to a farmer couple from Kundapur — Thimmanna Hegde and B.M. Vijaya Hegde — for their success in integrated farming and for inspiring others.

Young get recognition

As many as 33 innovative farmers, including 16 women, were honoured with district-level Best Farmers' awards. In addition, 166 young farmers, including 78 women, were honoured with taluk-level Best Youth Farmer awards, introduced from last year to inspire and retain youth in farming.

A scientists-farmers' interaction meet was also held in which farmers spoke of various problems affecting their crops with experts.

Speaking on the occasion, UAS-B Vice-Chancellor K. Narayana Gowda stressed the need for retaining farm youth in agriculture. Dr. Gowda, incidentally, heads a committee constituted by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research to suggest ways to retain youth in farming.

Dairy farmers flay 'milk holiday' decision

The decision of the AP Dairy Development Cooperative Federation to declare milk holidays twice a month has come in for sharp criticism from the Progressive Dairy Farmers Association, Andhra Pradesh.

In the days when more farmers are seeking to look at dairy as an alternative livelihood and hundreds of crores of rupees are invested in it, lack of strategy and planning to build capacity to

handle improved milk production has led to the present crisis, the association alleged through a press statement. The input cost of dairy farming rose sharply due to the steep increase in prices of cattle-feed ingredients, the association claimed. However, dairy processors have reduced procurement price by 27 per cent, from the earlier Rs.22 to the present Rs.16 per litre. In addition, farmers are threatened with rejection of milk.

While the procurement price is slashed, it is rather strange that the consumer price has been increased by Rs.2 to Rs.4 this year.

Lack of control and regulation on milk trade is making the lives of farmers and consumers miserable, the statement said, and cited a promise from the Minister for Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development P. Viswaroop towards fixing Minimum Support Price (MSP) for milk.

Contrasting the federation's daily procurement of five lakh litres with the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation's procurement of about 1.25 crore litres of milk per day, the association said it hardly amounted to four per cent of the latter.

By merely tying up with the Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanam for supply of VAT-free ghee, the government could ensure procurement of over three lakh liters of milk, the association suggested.

As of now, TTD is commissioning milk from Karnataka where the VAT is only two per cent as against 14.5 per cent charged here.

Incentives to farmers

Incentives to farmers, supply of milk to schools and Anganwadis, temporary moratorium on purchase of animals under government schemes, and encouragement for establishment of processing plants were suggested by the association as measures to cope with the increased production.

'By tying up with TTD for supply of ghee, procurement of over three lakh litres of milk is ensured'

International meet on plant health management

Addressing the concerns of climate change, loss of crop biodiversity and policy issues concerning plant health management through unconventional methods, an international conference on 'Plant Health Management for Food Security' is being held in the city from November 28 to 30.

Plant Protection Association of India (PPAI) president and Director of Oilseeds Research Directorate K.S. Varaprasad said that emerging trends in biotechnology and GM crops will be discussed by international experts with variety of ideas on a common single platform which in turn should help understand and develop better plant health management technologies for global food security.

Experts from abroad

Experts from seven countries and farmers from various States apart from officials are participating in the conference being held at the Directorate of Rice Research, Rajendranagar.

Quality control wing in paddy collection centres

A quality control and analysis wing is being set up by the Civil Supplies Department at paddy collection centres in seven districts where decentralised paddy distribution is being taken up.

This will enable the department to ensure that only quality grain reaches the godowns, G. Varaprasad, Managing Director, Civil Supplies Corporation, said in a press conference here on Tuesday.

He said the department was contemplating several steps to streamline its working. Among them was the launch of a grievance redressal mechanism. Steps are being taken to ensure payment of MSP to farmers.

Earlier, addressing a meeting of millers and department officials where he reviewed paddy procurement, Mr. Varaprasad asked millers to maintain quality, something which the department would not compromise on.

He warned of launching criminal action if PDS stocks were diverted into the open market.

He said the department would shortly issue a circular on procurement of raw rice by millers and non-acceptance of boiled rice.

Joint Collector Hari Jawaharlal said that one lakh tonnes of rice would be procured in the district by the year-end. So far 31,000 tonnes of grain had been procured.

District Millers' Association president Govardhan assured the department of the organisation's support. District Supply Officer Padmanabha Reddy, officers Karunakar, Prasada Rao, Chatru Naik, Venkateshwarlu attended.

Vegetable prices soar after Nilam



CYCLONE EFFECT:The prices of vegetables soar in the markets following torrential rains in the wake of Nilam cyclone that hit the district recently, in Vijayawada. —PHOTO: V.RAJU.

Thanks to Cyclone Nilam, the vegetable prices are soaring in the market and have gone beyond the reach of common man.

In the face of the soaring prices, the arrivals have also come down drastically, leaving the common man with no other choice but to restrict his consumption to plantains and leafy vegetables.

The prices of essential vegetables like onion, tomato, potato and green chilli have skyrocketed in the last few days. Wholesalers and retailers say that the cyclone has halved the number of loads arriving at the market.

Onion is currently retailing at Rs.30 to Rs.35 per kilo as against the Rs.20 a week ago. Tomato hasn't been spared either, as price has doubled.

A kilo of tomato is currently sold between Rs.10 and Rs.12 at the rythu bazaars, while carrot and beans are priced at Rs.34 and Rs.36 a kilo, respectively. The price of green chilli has also gone up by a whopping Rs.25 a kg in the retail market and is currently selling at Rs.11 in rythu bazaars. High-end varieties cheaper The prices of usually high-end varieties like capsicum and carrot are coming down with the arrival of local produce. The price of capsicum is now Rs.28 a kg. Its price crossed Rs.38 a kg last month. Carrot price has also come down to Rs.24 a kg as against Rs.34 last month, point out buyer K. Syamsundar Rao of Patamata.

Patamata Rythu Bazaar Estate Officer R. Ajay Kumar says that the prices have skyrocketed after the Nilam Cyclone. However, there has been a downward trend in last two days. The prices are likely to come down further within a week.

The lady's finger, which is now sold at Rs.14 per kg, is expected to be available at Rs.6 to Rs.8. The price of lady's finger touched Rs.28 immediately after the cyclone, he says.

Delayed kharif production to impact rabi sowing

The delayed onset of the southwest monsoon affected the kharif oilseed production, while it is likely to leave a serious impact on rabi sowings too, raising fears that the prices of pulses like groundnut, soybean, maize, bengal gram and black gram could be affected.

The area of oilseeds in the State under rabi 2012-13 is estimated to be at 2.5 lakh hectares.

However, the delayed harvest of kharif crop could push rabi planting further by a fortnight. With an econometric analysis of modal prices prevailing for the last 15 years in Kurnool market, the Agricultural Marketing Intelligence Centre (AMIC) at Sri Venkateswara Agricultural College, Tirupati, estimated the groundnut price to prevail at Rs. 4,800-5,000 per quintal during the rabi harvest.

The case of soybean is different. The increased palm oil reserves in Malaysia and the perceived enthusiasm in mustard-growing states are likely to dampen soya expectations.

The analysis of soya prices in Nizamabad market pegged the price at Rs. 3,000-3,300 per quintal up to March 2013. The AMIC advises farmers to sell the crop on harvest, as stockists are inclined to buy and store.

Buoyed by the high prices of bengal gram (chickpea) that soared up to 30 p.c. in 2012, farmers of producing states are ready for sowing, but are quite inquisitive about the prices prevalent on harvest. Farm scientists put the price at Rs. 3,500-Rs. 3,700 per quintal. For black gram, Andhra Pradesh is the largest producing State, contributing to 19 p.c. of country's output.

"Going by the market sentiments and a study of Tenali market, the black gram price could be around Rs. 4,200-4,000 at the harvest," says agricultural economist P. Raghuram of the AMIC.

Similarly, maize could rule between Rs.1,250 and Rs.1,300 per quintal at the harvest (Feb. 2013).

Chemistry postgraduate's experiments with dairy farming



K.B. Pratibha

At a time when people believe agriculture is not a profit-making career move, here is a postgraduate in chemistry who quit a well-paying job in Bangalore to take up animal husbandry.

Twenty-nine-year-old K.B. Pratibha of Jyothi Mallapura in Arsikere taluk has already made her mark in her chosen field. Mixing entrepreneurial skills with animal husbandry has not only ensured handsome earnings, but has also earned her Statewide recognition by winning the Corporation Bank-sponsored Corp Award, given by the University of Agricultural Sciences-Bangalore, for progressive farmers on Tuesday.

"I was heading the quality wing in a private pharmaceutical firm for a salary of Rs. 60,000 a month. But I started feeling the urge to do something eco-friendly as I was dealing with chemicals every day in my job. Since we had eight acres of ancestral land in Arsikere taluk, I

decided to take up animal husbandry,” Ms. Pratibha, the youngest farmer to receive the State-level award, said.

“I didn’t know anything about animal husbandry. So I took some basic training and then began with five cows. Now I have about 100 cows of which 20 yield milk, accounting for about 400 litres a day,” she said. She now plans to venture into milk by-products when production touches 1,000 litres a day.

While learning about dairy farming, she realised that most of the cattle feed had a low energy component. As a challenge, she started home production of cattle feed to suit her requirements. She now sells it under the brand name *Akshaya dhaarini*. There is a huge demand for it from farmers around the village. “I sell about 10 tonnes of cattle feed a month,” she said.

She has also set up a biogas unit that generates 15 kilowatts of power to take care of her dairy’s power requirements. She uses the bio-slurry for growing various horticultural crops. What she does not need, she sells at a rate of 60 paise a litre.

“I earn an average of Rs. 3 lakh a month,” she said. Even before you can compliment her, she added, “Rs. 3 lakh is not enough as my investment is also huge. I hope to go beyond the breakeven point next year,” she said.

She has no regrets of quitting her job to move to the village. “I would not have earned this much if I had continued in Bangalore. More importantly, I would not have got this much job satisfaction.” She recalls how her friends had thought that it was a crazy idea to take up dairy farming in a village. “But today, they admire me,” she said proudly.

Seminar on price risk management to be held in Hubli, Belgaum

BusinessLine
Commodity
concepts

Partnered By



An awareness and education seminar on agribusiness and commodity price risk management will be held here at 6 p.m. on Thursday at the Chandravadan Desai Hall, Karnataka Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

This will be followed by a similar event in Belgaum on Friday at Kshema Inns on Khanapur Road, at 5.30 p.m.

The events are part of the ongoing initiative by *The Hindu Business Line* along with the Forward Markets Commission, the commodity futures market regulator under the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, and the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, India's largest agri-commodities futures exchange.

Commodity producers, processors, traders, importers, exporters and others face price risks in the volatile marketplace. If not managed scientifically, volatility and adverse price movements can hurt current business profits and future growth prospects. The seminar intends to create awareness among market participants about the need to follow price risk management. Hedging is a scientific way of managing commodity price risks.

The seminar will feature presentations on 'Commodities as key driver of India's economic growth', 'Exchange perspective and benefits of commodity futures trading and price risk management', and 'Role of banks in agriculture'. There will be a question-answer session too.

State Bank of Mysore is the event's banking partner. The event is supported by the Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry and its affiliates.

N.P. Javali, president, Karnatak Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Hubli, will deliver the welcome address and Vishwanath S. Ginimav, honorary secretary, will propose a vote of thanks in Hubli.

Satish Tendolkar, president, Belgaum Chamber of Commerce and Industries, will deliver the welcome address in Belgaum.

To participate in the event, prior registration is solicited. For details, contact V.B. Srikrishna on 8880880268 (Hubli) and Nagaraj Phatak on 9731400992 (Belgaum).

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Tuesday, Nov 27

Max Min

31.0° | 23.8°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 84

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:13

Sunset: 05:39

Barometer: 1014

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Wednesday, Nov 28

Max Min

31° | 23°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday Nov 29	Friday Nov 30	Saturday Dec 1	Sunday Dec 2	Monday Dec 3
31° 22° Partly Cloudy	32° 25° Overcast	32° 25° Overcast	32° 25° Overcast	32° 25° Overcast

Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Humidity: 59

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:53

Sunset: 05:24

Barometer: 1016



Asia's biggest cattle fair 'Sonepur mela' starts

The month-long Sonepur mela, Asia's largest cattle fair which has attracted international attention, got off to a colourful start on Tuesday at Sonepur in Saran district amidst tight security.

Elephants, horses, dogs, donkeys, ponies, rabbits and goats are sold from the mela, which is also known as the Harihar Kshetra Mela.

The mela has its origins in ancient times when emperor Chandragupta Maurya used to buy elephants and horses from across Ganga.

Bihar tourism minister Sunil Kumar Pintoo inaugurated the fair which begins during the full moon of the Hindu month of Kartik at the confluence of rivers Ganga and Gandak.

It will end on December 26.

The tourism department has been assigned the job of reviving the charisma of the Sonapur mela, which is also famous for its theatre and folk dances.

The organisers have this year broadened the concept of the fair creating dedicated zones for different segments like automobiles, FMCG, electronics, entertainment and kids zone.

Swiss cottages blending rural ambiance with modern amenities have been arranged for foreign tourists, organisers said, adding, most of them having a tariff of Rs. 4000 per day have already been booked.

News Asia, the most popular news channel of Singapore, has come to the mela to make an exclusive documentary on it.

Famous travel writer Sharell Cook of New York has also arrived to write exclusively on the mela, the organisers said.

THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

27.11.2012 P.M

28.11.2012 A.M

27nd nov 2012 P.M

eFresh launches training programme for mango farmers

eFresh, an information support service to farmers, has tied up with Jain Irrigation Systems Ltd and Coca-Cola India under Unnati project to help mango farmers improve productivity, quality and safety of the produce.

Training will be conducted in select villages in Andhra Pradesh by using mobile bus that can seat 20 farmers. It has audio-visual facilities to screen demo programmes.

“We will disseminate good agricultural practices with emphasis on application technologies for the mango crop cultivators,” Srihari, Managing Director of eFresh, said here in a press release on Tuesday.

First of the training programmes was held in October in Chittoor district. “We will extend this to other districts like Kadapa. We will train about 700 farmers every month,” he said.

Sugar dips on higher sales, poor buying

Sugar prices in the Vashi terminal market declined by Rs 10-20 due to weak local demand and higher sales by producers. *Naka* rates were down Rs 10-20 a quintal as mill tender rates fell by Rs 20-30. In the ready market, prices improved by Rs 5-10. Millers continue to sell in the local markets in absence of demand from neighbouring States. Local retail offtake has dropped after Diwali. Futures were range bound with a bearish trend. Over the last week, spot and futures prices have declined by Rs 50-60 a quintal in absence of demand. There is scope for exports as of now and North India mills are worried where they will sell their stock, as white sugar is reportedly being imported from Pakistan to Punjab. Sugar in Uttar Pradesh is ruling on a par with Maharashtra.

At present, Vashi has more than 110 truckloads, more than the demand seen during the month. The Union Government has declared 70 lakh tonnes of non-levy sugar quota to be sold between December and March. The allocation comprises 66 lakh tonnes of normal quota, 2 lakh tonnes of unsold non-levy stocks from the October-November allocation and 2 lakh tonnes of levy conversion quota.

According to the Directorate of Sugar's press release, the sale and delivery-despatch period will be from December 1 to March 31, without any monthly restrictions. The extended period for the sale and delivery-despatch of the unsold stocks of October-November quota will be up to December 10.

The release said 62 lakh tonnes of the normal quota would be immediately prorated and released to the 502 mills which have reported data regarding production, despatches, stocks, etc., up to November 23. The balance will be prorated and released around January 20 to meet requirements of the mills which have not yet registered with the Directorate, have not submitted the production data as on October 31, have opened recently, or have reopened for production.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, December contracts were at Rs 3,290 (Rs 3,290), January at Rs 3,299 (Rs 3,295) and February at Rs 3,315 (Rs 3,314).

In Vashi, 65-66 truckloads (each of 100 bags) arrived and local despatches were lower at 62-63 truckloads. On Monday, 12-13 mills offered tenders and sold about 14,000-15,000 bags (each of a quintal) to local traders at Rs 3,290-3,350 (Rs 3,300-3,370) for S-grade and at Rs 3,340-3,430 (Rs 3,350-3,450) for M-grade.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs 3,432-3,512 (Rs 3,415-3,510) and M-grade Rs 3,486-3,701 (Rs 3,480-3,700).

Naka delivery rates: S-grade Rs 3,360-3,400 (Rs 3,360-3,410) and M-grade Rs 3,400-3,500 (Rs 3,410-3,480).

Flour demand keeps dara wheat firm

Dara wheat and flour ruled firm on Tuesday on local demand.

Despite the Food Corporation of India resuming sale under the open-market scheme, wheat remained firm, said a commodity expert. Demand for flour is keeping *dara* wheat firm and prices are unlikely to change much this week, the expert said.

In the physical market, around 650 quintals of *dara* variety arrived from Uttar Pradesh which were directly offloaded at the mills. Mill delivery was at Rs 1,540-1,545 a quintal, while delivery at *chakki* was Rs 1,550.

Desi varieties ruled flat and quoted at Rs 2,500-2,550 a quintal.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat for December delivery decreased by Rs 4 at Rs 1,588 a quintal after touching a high of Rs 1,600 earlier in the day and for January was down Rs 2 to Rs 1,584. Spot wheat on the exchange was Rs 1,570 a quintal. According to market experts, contracts are likely to remain bearish.

FLOUR PRICES

Flour too ruled unchanged on steady buying and quoted at Rs 1,750 a quintal. After ruling flat last weekend, *chokar* improved by Rs 50 to Rs 1,550 for a quintal. Tight supplies of fodder pushed up *chokar*.

Singapore-based trading firm Concordia was the highest bidder at \$322.22 a tonne for an export tender floated by the State Trading Corporation last month. The Corporation had floated the tender to sell 1.5 lakh tonnes of milling wheat for export.

Turmeric continues slide as new orders remain elusive

Lack of new orders pulled down turmeric by Rs 100 a quintal on Tuesday. Prices fell in Nizamabad and Sangli too.

“Only one or two exporters received fresh orders. Besides, even those orders were small, so buyers quoted less and purchased little,” said Erode Turmeric Merchants Association President R.K.V. Ravishankar.

Of the 3,800 bags that arrived, only 40 per cent were sold. Sales were poor in Nizamabad and Sangli too. All the 80 bags of hybrid turmeric that arrived were sold.

Due to falling prices and purchases, farmers have decided to bring less stock to auction centres from next week.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,000-5,529 a quintal, the root variety at Rs 3,919-4,777.

Salem hybrid crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,567-6,179, the root variety at Rs 4,619-5,799. Of the 816 bags that arrived, 92 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,336-5,349, the root variety at Rs 4,288-5,107. Of the 263 bags that arrived, 258 were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 4,297-5,636, the root variety at Rs 4,060-5,094. All the 265 bags kept for sale were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,468-5,619, the root variety Rs 3,250-5,072. All the 67 bags kept for sale were sold.

Pepper continues downward slide

The pepper market continued its downward trend on circular trading, now by bear operators who got into the driving seat on Tuesday. Consequently, all active contracts were closed much below the previous day's closing.

December contract opened at Rs 37,870 a quintal and moved up to Rs 38,125 a quintal up by Rs 255 in the mid-opening session and continued as such till the beginning of the forenoon session.

In the noon session, it started sliding with volatility and in the afternoon and closing session it witnessed high volatility with a soaring turnover as both bull and bear operators were pushing up and pulling down the market.

In the process, it fell and touched the lowest price, down by Rs 1,375 a quintal. In the closing hour, it recovered to the last traded price of Rs 37,500. However, the closing price was given as Rs 37,280 a quintal.

TURNOVER

Turnover increased by nearly 228 per cent from that of yesterday in the circular trading. But total open interest increased by only 117 tonnes as against the rise of 5,890 tonnes in the turn over.

Meanwhile, some of the investors who were holding farm grade pepper bought back their December sales and liquidated physical pepper in the spot market. They sold the material of 500 - 525 GL bulk density at Rs 5 below the December delivery price.

An estimated 60-70 tonnes of the pepper were traded to different directions viz., Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Delhi etc, market sources told *Business Line*.

There has not been any arrivals from the primary market as sellers stayed away from the declining market. Buyers were also hesitant to buy as they were waiting for the new crop arrival which is expected to trickle in from mid-December.

Sugar futures down at Rs 3,286 a quintal



Sugar for December contract opened lower at Rs 3,288 against the previous close of Rs 3,290. It made a high of Rs 3,297 and low of Rs 3,285 on Tuesday.

MUMBAI, NOV 27:

Sugar futures on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange Ltd were down 0.12 per cent at Rs 3,286 a quintal at 1.30 pm.

Sugar for December delivery opened lower at Rs 3,288 against the previous close of Rs 3,290. It made a high of Rs 3,297 and low of Rs 3,285 on Tuesday.

The Government has allocated 70 lakh tonnes of non-levy sugar quota for sale between December and March against 59.5 lakh tonnes allocated in the same period last year. The move will curb spike in sugar prices considering lower production for the marketing year 2012-13.

According to the first advance estimates by the Agriculture Ministry, sugarcane output is expected to be lower by six per cent at 335.3 million tonnes against 357.6 mt registered last year. Sugar output is estimated to fall by two mt to 24 mt.

The opening stock for the sugar season started in October was six mt compared with 5.5 mt last year.

India may export about 3 mt of sugar in 2012-13. Domestic supply is estimated at 30 mt against consumption of around 23 mt.

Sugar prices may continue to remain down as the Government has allocated higher quota for the next four months to curb rise in prices.

However, any further delay in cane crushing in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh may provide support to the prices at lower levels.

Guntur spice park ready by December

The spice park coming up in Guntur in Andhra Pradesh is expected to be completed by December, according to Union Minister of State for Commerce & Industry D. Purandeswari. So far Rs 14.62 crore has been spent to create facilities.

The park is to empower chilli farmers to get better price realisation and get wider access to markets for their produce. The total expenditure for the park is Rs 23 crore.

The State Government had allocated 124.78 acres of land in Venkayalapadu and Maidavolu village in Edlapadu mandal of Guntur district in favour of the Spice Board, she said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha, an official release stated.

An area of 38 acres has been allotted to exporters for developing their own processing units within the park.

South East Asia could be corn hub for Asia Pacific

Following the Philippines' success with genetically modified corn, Vietnam and Indonesia are set to clear commercial cultivation of GM corn making South East Asia a major animal feed production hub, according to Syngenta officials.

Vietnam's Ministry of Agriculture hopes to "quickly introduce" genetically modified hybrids of corn next year, according to Pham Van Dhuc, Deputy Director-General in the Department of Crop Production, under the Ministry.

Addressing a group of journalists from the Asia Pacific, on a recent trip to Vietnam organised by Syngenta Asia Pacific, he said eight such hybrids have been field tested over the last two years and the Environment Ministry's clearance is awaited. "In 2013, hopefully farmers can grow them," he said.

CORN STATS

Corn is an important crop as it is a major source of animal feed. Over 1.2 million hectares of corn is under cultivation as compared with 730,000 hectares in 2001. More than 90 per cent of the area is under hybrid corn with yields ranging around 4.3 tonnes a hectare. Vietnam still imports over a million tonnes of corn annually to meet its domestic animal feed demand.

The Government hopes to enhance the yield to 6-7.5 tonnes a hectare.

According to Adam Tomlinson, Food & Agribusiness Research and Advisory, Rabobank International, Vietnam can emerge a "hub for Asia in feed production."

MAIZE DISPLACES RICE

The rapid increase in corn acreage in the last decade is an indication that maize is winning the battle as compared with rice, the staple food. This is significant as corn imports are set to increase in the Asian region.

To Syngenta and other major crop input multinationals, this is a significant announcement. In the ASEAN, corn is cultivated over 8.5 million hectares with 70 per cent market share going to multinationals including Syngenta, Monsanto and Pioneer, apart from regional market leaders.

According to Dr Hardeep Grewal, Head of Corn Marketing, Syngenta Asia Pacific, the next level of development will be in introduction of biotech traits into the crop for pest and weed control. In the South East Asia, the Philippines is a significant success story in introduction of genetically modified corn. Vietnam is the next major market followed by Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Orthodox tea prices gain at Coonoor auctions

Both leaf and dust grades of the Orthodox variety saw an uptrend in prices at the Sale No: 47 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions.

“Orthodox leaf market was dearer by Rs 2-4 a kg. High-priced CTC leaf gained Rs 4-5, better mediums Rs 1-2 and plainers up to Rs 5. Primary orthodox dusts gained up to as much as Rs 15. High-priced CTC dusts were dearer by Rs 2-3, mediums Rs 3-4 and plainers Re 1-2”, an auctioneer told *Business Line*.

Among orthodox teas from corporate sector, Highfield Estate got Rs 270, Chamraj Rs 200, Corsley Rs 185, Kairbetta Rs 184, Havukal Rs 175, Erinkadu and Kodanad Rs 166. In all, 40 marks got Rs 100 and more.

As much as 95 per cent of the 17-week high volume of 14.80 lakh kg offered were sold with prices gaining over Rs 3 a kg.

Homedale Estate tea, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped the CTC market at Rs 153 a kg.

Shanthi Supreme got Rs 147, Hittakkal Estate Rs 142, Vigneshwar Estate got Rs 141 and Singara Estate Rs 140. In all, 123 marks got Rs 100 and more.

On the export front, Pakistan bought for Rs 82-120 a kg, the CIS Rs 80-96 and for some European ports for Rs 87-96.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 81-85 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 100-135 for brighter liquoring sorts. They ranged Rs 84-87 for plain dusts and Rs 100-145 for brighter liquoring dusts.

Buyer resistance saps rubber

Physical rubber prices turned weak on Tuesday. The market lost ground mainly on buyer resistance, reacting closely to the weakness in the domestic and international futures.

Meanwhile, the TOCOM rubber futures edged lower tracking the early losses in oil and stocks.

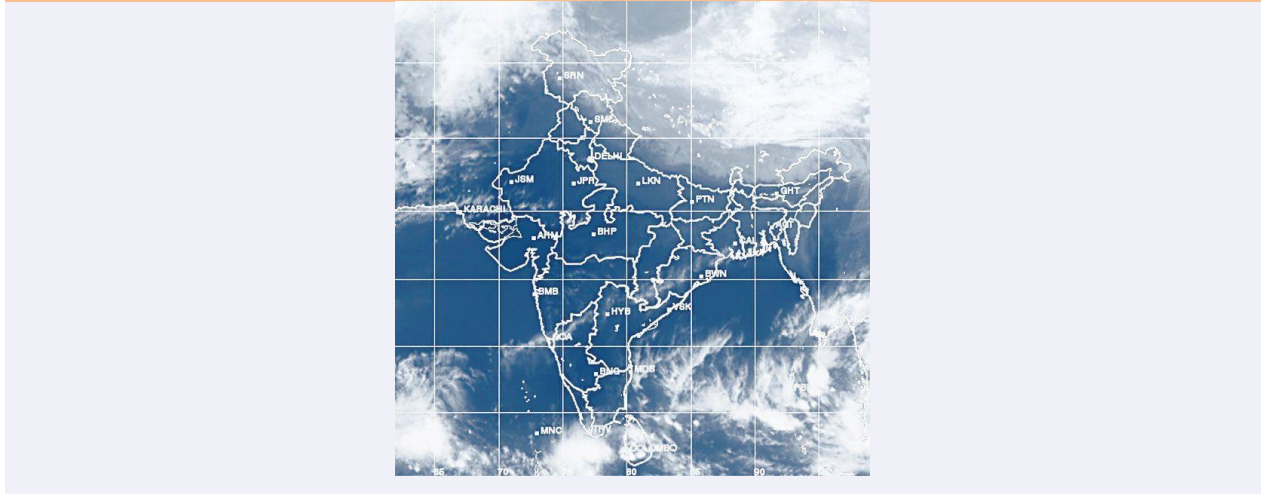
Sheet rubber slid to Rs 173.50 at Kottayam and Kochi from Rs 175 and Rs 174 a kg respectively, according to the traders and the Rubber Board. The trend was partially mixed.

The December series declined to Rs 174.99 (176.56), January to Rs 177 (178.82), February to Rs 179.70 (181.51), March to Rs 182.50 (184) a kg on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) improved to Rs 167.39 (166.79) a kg at Bangkok. The December futures dropped to ¥244.8 (Rs 165.67) from ¥247.7 a kg during the day session, but then remained inactive in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 173.50 (175); RSS-5: 169 (170); ungraded: 163.50 (165); ISNR 20: 162.50 (162.50) and latex 60 per cent: 111 (111).

Fresh 'low' forms in Bay, doesn't promise too much



THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOV. 27:

A low-pressure area has formed over Andaman Sea on Tuesday and has been put under watch for intensification straight away.

An India Meteorological Department (IMD) outlook said that the 'low' would become 'well marked' by Wednesday.

NOT PROMISING

But prognosis given out by a number of global models for subsequent phases does not indicate spectacular growth or intensification.

These models, including that of IMD, see the system as breaking up over central Bay in the face of fierce head winds.

The offspring circulations may wallow in the central and south Bay and manage to trigger scattered rain in Tamil Nadu and isolated showers in Kerala.

Odd US Navy Operational Global Atmospheric Prediction System forecast sees them converging to set up a minimal cyclone off Tamil Nadu coast by December 1.

CONVECTIVE CLOUDS

Meanwhile on Tuesday, a cyclonic circulation over south Tamil Nadu and adjoining southwest Bay of Bengal persisted from overnight.

Satellite imagery showed the presence of rain-bearing clouds over parts of south Bay of Bengal, Andaman Sea and South Arabian Sea and Comorin area.

The IMD has forecast heavy rainfall at one or two places over Andaman and Nicobar islands for next three days.

An outlook valid until Friday said that rain or thundershowers may occur at a few places over coastal Tamil Nadu. Thundershowers may break out also at one or two places over interior Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Lakshadweep.

RAIN, SNOW

Towards the north, a weather-setting western disturbance would hit the western Himalayan region and adjoining plains on Wednesday. Dry north-westerly to westerly winds would continue to prevail over Indo-Gangetic plains.

Heavy rain or snow is likely at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh on Wednesday and Thursday. Rain or snow is also forecast for Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, before scaling up in intensity. Light rain is likely Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and west Uttar Pradesh during this period.

Basmati exports gain steam on rising West Asia demand



SURGING SHIPMENTS*

	April-Oct 2011-12		April-Oct 2012-13	
	Volume	Value	Volume	Value
Basmati	1.64	8,265	1.92	10,453
Non Basmati	0.61	1,468	3.42	7,249
Total Rice Exports	2.25	9,734	5.34	17,703

*Volume in million tonnes and value in Rs crore

Source: DGCIS and Custom port data

NEW DELHI, NOV. 27:

Basmati exports for the first seven months of the fiscal – April to October – have risen 26 per cent in value terms to Rs 10,453 crore, on rising demand from traditional buyers in West Asia.

In terms of volume, the exports grew 17 per cent at 1.92 million tonnes (mt) against 1.64 mt in the same period last year.

“Higher demand from existing customers and newer markets in Africa contributed to the rise in exports,” said R. Sundaresan, Executive Director, All India Rice Exporters Association (AIREA).

For the year-ended March 2012, basmati exports stood at 3.2 mt, a growth of 45 per cent over last year.

In value terms, basmati exports in 2011-12 had touched Rs 15,450 crore.

NON-BASMATI EXPORTS

Non-basmati rice exports have seen a significant jump this year.

The Government opened up exports of non-basmati rice in September last year, after a gap of almost four years.

In the current fiscal till October, non-basmati rice exports stood at 3.42 mt, almost a five-fold rise over the same period last year.

The total value of rice exports for the April-October period this year stood at Rs 17,703 crore, almost double the value in the corresponding period last year.

Though the export trend in non-basmati rice exports is likely to be sustained for the rest of the fiscal, basmati shipments may slow down on higher prices this year, fear exporters.

BASMATI PRICES

“The prices of basmati paddy varieties are almost twice that of last year. As a result, buyers may delay or reduce their purchases that may affect the overall shipments,” a leading exporter said.

The prices of basmati paddy varieties are ruling at Rs 2,700-3,100 a quintal in mandis of Punjab and Haryana, against Rs 1,500-1,700 last year.

Basmati paddy prices are ruling higher on projected shortfall in acreage that may hurt the overall output of the aromatic varieties.

The overall production of rice is expected to be around 100 mt on lower kharif output against 104 mt last year.

International meet on plant health

The Plant Health Association of India is holding an international conference on 'Plant health management for food security (ICPHM 2012) here on Thursday.

Swapan Kumar Datta, Deputy Director-General (Crop Sciences) of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), and DDG (Horticulture) of ICAR, will address the conference.

The three-day conference will discuss on crop protection technologies to reduce damages to the crops and increase yields. "We will discuss options to deploy global position systems (GPS) to strengthening crop protection strategies," K. S. Varaprasad, President of the association, said here on Wednesday.

Govt asks Amul to submit detailed proposal to take over DMS

The Government has asked the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), which owns the Amul brand, to submit a detailed proposal for taking over operations of loss-making Delhi Milk Scheme (DMS).

DMS, which comes under the Agriculture Ministry, has been running losses for the past several years. The Ministry had moved a Cabinet proposal for corporatisation of DMS.

"The Chairman of GCMMF has written to the Government proposing to take up the operation of DMS. However, GCMMF has been requested to submit a comprehensive and detailed proposal," Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

The co-operative has to submit the proposal giving details of proposed valuation and monetisation of DMS, pending legal and liabilities, infusion of equity and terms of engagement of employees among others, he added.

Amul is keen on signing a long-term lease arrangement with DMS because it feels buying assets worth hundreds of crores of rupees would not be viable. It also thinks the issues related to employees need to be addressed, too.

Besides Amul, Bihar State Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation (COMFED) that owns the Sudha brand had also showed interest in acquiring processing and distribution units of the DMS on rental basis.

The DMS has milk production and packaging capacity of five lakh litres a day, besides a network of 1,298 outlets in the NCR. The Government-owned dairy unit has 800 employees, but the milk production is only about 2.5 lakh litres a day.

Yes Bank buoyant on cold storage market

The size of the country's cold chain market is expected to jump more than two-fold to \$8 billion by 2015 on the back of increased investment in the sector, according to a study conducted by Yes Bank.

"The size of the cold chain market in India is estimated at more than \$3 billion and is growing at a modest CAGR of 11 per cent. The total value is expected to reach \$8 billion by 2015 through increased investments, modernisation of existing facilities and establishment of new ventures via public-private-partnership," the report said.

The emergence of organised retail and changes in FDI norms provide immense opportunities for cold chain sector, the bank said in the report released by Planning Commission Member Saumitra Chaudhuri at industry body PHDCCI's conference.

The cold storage capacity in the country currently is about 30 million tonnes, while the annual transaction volume of perishable products is estimated at 230 million tonnes.

Addressing the conference, Chaudhuri said the cold chain market has been somehow lagging behind all the sectors and there is "lot of catching up to do".

Without making a guess on the value of post-harvest crop losses every year due to lack of cold storage facilities, he said there is lot of wastage, which is "disturbing".

"Despite several programmes, investment has been very weak in the cold chain sector," Chaudhuri said, adding that except potatoes, there are hardly any facilities in other crops.

The Planning Commission member emphasised on the need of cold chain facilities to store horticulture produce, fisheries and pharmaceutical products scientifically.

Chaudhuri said the investment in cold chain investment should start now to achieve perceptible change in the 12th plan period and 13th plan period.

Yes Bank's Country Head Food and Agri-business (Strategic Advisory and Research) noted that high real estate cost and gestation period in the business are the two major challenges in establishing cold chain infrastructure.

New Zealand offers jt venture with Punjab in agri, milk processing sectors

The New Zealand government today evinced interest in setting up joint ventures with Punjab government in the fields of agriculture and milk processing by offering technical know-how in these segments.

Leading a 22-member delegation, New Zealand Minister for Primary Industries David Carter also offered to set up joint farms in Punjab which would be pilot projects to showcase country's latest technology in farm sector.

The Minister today held discussion with Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Singh Badal here today in this regard, an official spokesman said here.

New Zealand Minister said Punjab and his country share common expertise in agriculture sector while New Zealand can offer it latest agriculture technology and techniques to prolong shelf life of farm products.

He said that people from Punjab have a credible contribution in the development of New Zealand and out of 4.4 million population of New Zealand, over 1.2 lakh Indian pre-dominantly from Punjab are contributing in every sector of economy.

He said New Zealand is focusing on increasing productivity and profitability to make the farm sector self-sustaining.

Punjab Deputy Chief Minister sought technical know-how from New Zealand in milk chilling and milk processing sector.

Badal said Punjab has the second largest milk cooperative in the country that was operating with the most modern technology.

He said the cooperatives of New Zealand and Punjab can work collectively to set up joint ventures in such sectors and offer latest dairy products to the world market.

Deputy Chief Minister said the state was also open to private dairy processing units of New Zealand setting up their ventures in Punjab.

Meanwhile, CII Agro—Tech entered into an MoU with New Zealand National Agricultural Fielddays' — a farm show in the southern hemisphere.

Objection against Bt cotton speculative, confusing: Pawar



NEW DELHI, NOV 27:

The objection raised by NGOs and other expert panels against Bt cotton have been “speculative, confusing and without any reasonable assessment of technological strength”, Parliament was informed today.

Bt cotton is the only transgenic crop approved for commercialisation in the country till date.

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar said: “From the inception of Bt cotton, there has been a sustained objection from some of the NGOs besides civil society, technical expert committee constituted by Supreme Court, Parliamentary Standing Committee, etc,”

“The objections have been very speculative and confusing, without any reasonable assessment of the technological strengths of Bt cotton. ...There is no scientific evidence to show that Bt cotton has adversely impacted the biodiversity of human/cattle health,” he said.

The NGOs and panels have opposed on the grounds that biosafety assessment of Bt cotton before its introduction and post release monitoring of it were not adequate. Secondly, Bt cotton was not suitable for cultivation for rainfed areas.

Lastly, cattle death and farmers' suicides were attributed to introduction of Bt cotton in some regions, he added.

In spite of the controversy regarding Bt cotton, Pawar said, "The ground reality is that during the last decade, area under cotton cultivation and productivity has gone up significantly. During the post Bt cotton era, Indian economy has benefited as India is the second largest cotton exporter."

The main purpose of Bt cotton was to control the dreaded insect pests — bollworms. Bt cotton effectively controls bollworms, thus preventing yield losses from an estimated damage of 30—60 per cent each year in the country, he noted.

The use of insecticides for bollworm control has come down to 222 tonnes in 2011-12 from 9,400 tonnes prior to the introduction of Bt cotton. Whereas yields are estimated to have increased at least by 30 per cent due to effective protection from bollworm damage, he explained.

Asked if steps are being taken by the government to curb its likely impact on human health, Pawar said, "The government is following a policy of case by case approval of genetically modified (GM) crops. Extensive evaluation and regulatory approval process takes place before any GM crop is approved for commercial cultivation."

A final view on the commercialisation of GM crop is taken only when there is a clear economic and technical justification besides suitability for environment and human consumption, he added.

Out of about 19 million hectare, 90 per cent is under Bt cotton. Cotton production stood at 35.2 million bales (of 170 kg each) in the 2011-12 crop year (July-June).

Loan component dropped from special purpose tea fund scheme

KOLKATA, NOV 27:

The Special Purpose Tea Fund (SPTF) scheme has been recast. The loan component has been dropped from it. This follows poor response to loan under SPTF. The new arrangement has already come into force.

“In the past five years, we’ve disbursed a meagre Rs 48 crore as loan under SPTF against Rs 134 crore of subsidy,” according to a spokesman for the Tea Board.

“As per the scheme, loan should be double the subsidy amount but that did not happen”.

Tax holiday for tea cos

The poor demand for loan is attributed to the total tax holiday the tea companies enjoy under the relevant provisions of the Income-Tax Act provided they invest their own funds for the purpose of tea plantation. The SPTF loan on the other hand attracted 9.5 per cent rate of interest.

12th Plan fund allocation

There is another reason. The 12th Plan allocation of fund to Tea Board is likely to be lower than what has been asked for — Rs 1,425 crore against the demand for Rs 2,400 crore. As a result, some of the existing subsidy schemes such as vehicle subsidy and drainage subsidy are being dispensed with.

KPMG, which evaluated the existing schemes prior to the finalisation of 12th Plan allocation, recommended it. The target for replantation too is being revised downward.

Allocation for small tea growers

A significant new addition to the 12th Plan is the allocation of Rs 300 crore for small tea growers. There are now nearly two lakh small growers in the country, together accounting for close to 30 per cent of the country’s total tea production.

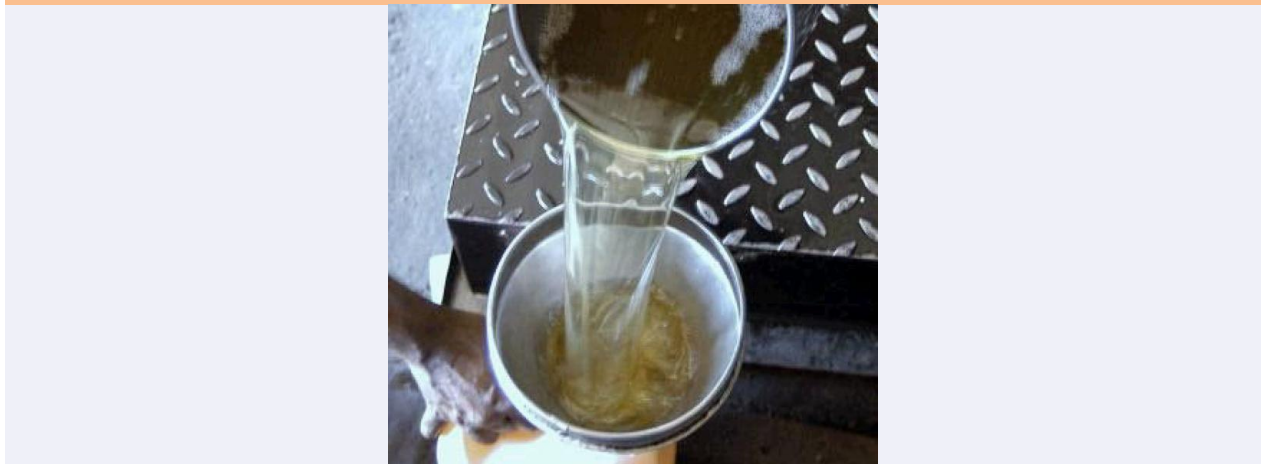
Through a small growers’ directorate, which is being constituted, the Tea Board is planning to bring them under certain discipline so that they can produce quality leaf and get the right kind of

prices. An estimated 10 per cent of the fund being allocated for small growers will go to meet the administrative expenses.

Another Rs 25 crore is being allocated in the 12th Plan for developing regulatory mechanism for the first time under the Tea Board.

The board got Rs 745 core in the 11th Plan (without allocations for small growers and regulatory mechanism).

Coconut oil, copra prices remain firm



Coconut oil prices on Monday were ruling at Rs 60 in Kerala at the same level quoted last week, while in Tamil Nadu, the prices were quoted at Rs 58 per kg the same as last week's prices.

KOCHI, NOV 27:

Prices of coconut oil remained more or less steady in Kerala and Tamil Nadu this week due to lack of interest shown by upcountry buyers and major corporates.

Prakash B.Rao, Vice-President, Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA), cited the onset of winter in parts of North India as the reason for poor demand from upcountry buyers despite at low prices.

Coconut oil prices on Monday were ruling at Rs 60 in Kerala at the same level quoted last week, while in Tamil Nadu, the prices were quoted at Rs 58 per kg the same as last week's prices.

Copra prices were also ruling at the same level quoted last week both in Kerala and Tamil Nadu at Rs 4,200 per quintal and Rs 3,900, respectively.

Palm oil and palm kernel oil prices also stood at the last week's level of Rs 58 per kg and Rs 52 per kg, respectively. It is reported that leading importers are holding large quantity of crude palm oil stock at this lower prices in Chennai and Mumbai, he said.

Sabarimala copra

According to Rao, there would be a gradual flow of Sabarimala copra at subsidised rates in the terminal markets in Kerala in the coming days on account of the pilgrim season.

The reason for subsidised price of Sabarimala copra is due to the poor quality of the commodity with high moisture content and sedimentation.

This auctioned copra is to be converted into coconut oil in local mills and sold in the market at subsidised rates because of low quality.

It could not be sold in the copra form and it is estimated that 20 per cent of such copra will come from Sabarimala into the market during the pilgrim season, he said.

Market trend

Thalath Mahamood, former President, COMA, said that the market is witnessing a buying trend at this low prices despite firm enquiries from upcountry markets.

The decision of the State Government to procure raw coconuts from farmers' societies is expected to revive the market. However, more efforts would be needed to propel the drive in order to ensure more participation from coconut farmers.

Bharat N. Khona, former Board Member, COMA, said that the market is ruling steady as other edible oils are keeping low. However, there are not much enquiries from upcountry buyers and corporates.

Slack buying cools coconut oil



Kochi, Nov. 27:

Lower purchases by upcountry buyers and major corporates kept coconut oil flat in Kerala and Tamil Nadu this week.

Cochin Oil Merchants Association Vice-President Prakash B. Rao said the onset of winter in parts of North India pulled down demand from other States even though prices are low.

On Monday, the oil was flat at Rs 60 a kg in Kerala and at Rs 58 in Tamil Nadu. Copra was also ruling steady in Kerala and Tamil Nadu at Rs 4,200 a quintal and Rs 3,900 respectively. Palm oil and palm kernel oil prices also remained flat at Rs 58 a kg and Rs 52 respectively. Rao said that reports said leading importers in Chennai and Mumbai were holding large stocks of crude palm oil, he said.

Rao pointed out that there would be a gradual flow of Sabarimala copra at lower rates in the terminal markets in Kerala during the continuing pilgrim season. Sabarimala copra is cheaper as high moisture content and sedimentation deteriorates it. Coconut oil from this copra will sell at a discount because of poor quality. According to estimates, a fifth of the Sabarimala copra will arrive during the pilgrim season, Rao said.

The decision of the Kerala Government to procure raw coconuts from farmers' societies is expected to revive the copra market. However, more efforts would be needed to propel this drive in order to ensure more participation from coconut farmers. According to Coconut Development Board officials, the pilgrim season is expected to perk up the demand for raw coconuts in Kerala. This year, the Board is expecting a sale of 1.8 crore nuts during the festival season against 50 lakhs in the previous year.

Last year, fewer pilgrims came to Sabarimala, as most people from Tamil Nadu cancelled their trips following the State's dispute with Kerala regarding the Mullaperiyar dam, the officials added.

Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

28.11.2012 A.M

eFresh to train AP farmers in mango productivity



Hyderabad-based [eFresh](#), a multi-lingual portal serving all the stakeholders in the food chain starting from the farmer, has been mandated by [Jain Irrigation Systems Limited](#) and [Coca-Cola India](#) to train and empower farmers in Andhra Pradesh for increasing [mango productivity](#), quality and safety of the produce and for sustainability.

The initiative is part of Coca-Cola and Jain irrigation's Project Unnati, a partnership with farmers to demonstrate and enable adoption of ultra-high density plantation, a farming practice that leads to mango orchards attaining their full potential in 3-4 years and also allows nearly 600 trees to be planted in an acre instead of the conventional method of planting 40 trees in an acre.

"Training will be conducted in the villages of Andhra Pradesh by using a mobile bus, which has the facility to accommodate about 20 farmers. The bus is equipped with all tools for dissemination of knowledge to the farmers," [Srihari](#), managing director of eFresh, said in a press release on Tuesday.

The Phase-I of the programme with ultra-density mango farming has commenced in Chittoor district, which is known for its production of Totapuri mango variety, a key ingredient in the country's largest selling mango drink 'Maaza'.

"The programme will be extended to districts like Kadapa and other parts of Andhra Pradesh, on a need basis. An average of 700 farmers will be benefited under this training programme every month," Srihari said.

Food processing sector fastest-growing sub-sector

The [food processing sector](#) has emerged the fastest-growing sub-sector of the manufacturing sector during last financial year, a top official said on Tuesday.

Food processing units, being set up in [Mega Food Parks](#), would be provided with entire basic infrastructure facilities like warehouses, storage facilities, testing labs and fruit-ripening chambers, [Rakesh Kacker](#), Secretary, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, said.

After inaugurating Mega Food Parks Summit here, organised by the Ministry and Assocham, Kacker said the food processing industry has consistently registered growth rate faster than that registered by agricultural sector. “Thus the industry was consistently adding value to the agriculture sector,” he said.

On National Mission on Food Processing, Kacker said the mission was launched with the specific purpose of enhancing involvement of states in efforts to further the growth of the food processing industry. As a part of its promotional efforts to push further the food processing sector in potential states across India, Kacker said the Ministry of Food Processing Industries has already finalised four schemes on technology upgradation and cold chains for non-horticultural crops, among others.

Emphasising the need to maintain appropriate quality standards in the food industry, Kacker said a newly created body, Food Safety and Standards Authority, is playing the regulatory role in this regard.

“However, [MoFPI](#) was keen to start a process of self-regulation by industry. Towards this end, MoFPI was in touch with apex industry organisations and trying to develop a system of self-certification by food processing units. Quality Council of India has been tasked with drawing up a roadmap for this purpose,” he said.

Initially, this will run parallel to statutory certification required to be obtained by units but eventually there could be blending of statutory and voluntary certification, Kacker said.

Farmers' party to field candidates

The Praja Pragati Ranga (PPR) party, floated by [farmers](#) in the state, will field its candidates in all the 224 constituencies during the ensuing elections to the [Karnataka assembly](#).

Farmers' leader Kodihalli Chandrashekar said here on Tuesday, the farmers were forced to launch the political outfit as the [Congress](#), JD(S) and [BJP](#) which came to power in the name of farmers had failed to solve their problems.

The PPR would involve people from various organisations like the [Dalit Sangharsha Samithi](#), [Karnataka Rakshana Vedike](#), [Lok Jan Shakti](#), BSP, Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha and Hasiru Sene among others. "The PPR is holding talks with several farmers' organisations in identifying leaders to be fielded. The final decision on preparing the election manifesto and choosing the candidates would be taken up during a meeting on December 5," he explained.

A committee would be formed to scrutinise the list of candidates. Apart from highlighting the failures of all the three major political parties, the PPR would ask voters to give them an opportunity to bring in inclusive growth of the society,

Answering a query, he said, at present there is no chance of joining hands with any regional parties like KJP floated by former chief minister B S Yeddyurappa and the BSR Congress. However, the next move of the party would be decided after taking the opinions of the members, he said.

Chandrashekar revealed that he has been invited to join the KJP and BSR Congress. But, he would take a final decision after the December 5 meeting.

Farmers to picket SVS

Accusing the state government of failing to fix a remunerative price for sugarcane, Chandrashekar said, the price of sugar had increased two-fold in last couple of years, but the sugar factories had not hiked the price given to the sugarcane growers. The government is bending to the pressure from the sugar factory owners and is causing more problems to the farmers, he alleged.

To exert more pressure on the State Government to fix Rs 3,000 per tonne of sugarcane, the farmers would be picketing the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha at Belgaum on December 5. The Cabinet sub-committee headed by agriculture minister Umesh Katti should immediately implement the State Advisory Price ([SAP](#)) for sugarcane and help the growers, he added.

Badal asks President to press upon the Centre on price support for maize crop

Punjab Chief Minister [Parkash Singh Badal](#) on Tuesday called upon the President of India, [Pranab Mukherjee](#), and requested him to press upon the central government to put in place a proper price support mechanism coupled with value addition of maize as an alternative crop towards its crop diversification program in the state.

In his address on the golden jubilee celebrations of the prestigious [Punjab Agriculture University](#)(PAU), Ludhiana, the chief minister urged Mukherjee, who was here to preside over the International Conference on Sustainable Agriculture for Food and Livelihood Security, organised by PAU, to use his good office to impress upon the Centre to send sanctioned food processing industry in the state for value addition of maize, besides ensuring remunerative MSP to encourage the farmers to go for maize cultivation in a big way on one hand and bring the beleaguered peasantry out of the rut of conventional agriculture from wheat-paddy cycle.

Appreciating the splendid research work done by PAU's scientists in developing High Yielding Variety (HYV) seeds aimed at achieving buffer stock of food grains thereby making our country self reliant in food production, he requested the President to prevail upon the Gol to sanction liberal financial grant to the PAU, to enable it to carry forward its varied research programs relentlessly in the field of Agriculture especially with a focus on the second push towards Green Revolution in the form of diversification of agriculture.

Pleading that agricultural exports could boost crop diversification, the Chief Minister urged Mukherjee to advice the Gol to facilitate free trade through the Attari Integrated check Post.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

TODAY FARM NEWS

28.11.2012 A.M

Guava farming takes the organic path

ALLAHABAD: The pilot project of the district horticulture department to cultivate Allahabadi 'Surkha', also known as 'apple-colour', and Allahabadi Safeda varieties of guava through organic farming has yielded desired results in several blocks of the district.

In fact, guava cultivation is taken up on around 1,000 hectare of land in the district.

Remarkably, guava cultivators are delighted to cultivate successfully a good quantity of guavas especially Allahabadi Surkha and Allahabadi Safeda in Dhanupur, Saidabad, Bahria, Jasra, Kaurihar-II, Bahadurpur and Shankargarh after investing a reasonable amount in fertilisers.

The 'organic farming promotion programme' for cultivation of guava was launched by officials at the beginning of this year in seven blocks of the district.

More importantly, the department had imparted training to over 800 farmers under its programme with an aim to promote organic farming.

"The blocks where organic farming for Allahabadi Safeda was undertaken included Kaurihar-II, Jasra, Saidabad, Dhanupur and Bahria," said P K Shukla, district [horticulture officer](#), adding that farmers residing in other blocks had adapted to organic farming enthusiastically," he added.

Officials assured farmers all sorts of assistance and tips on growing guava organically.

Currently, farmers in Dhanupur, Kaurihar-II, Saidabad, Bahria and Jasra have more preferred to cultivate guava. The farmers have assured that they would be bringing other crops like tomato, cabbage, peas, ladyfinger, carrot, litchi under organic farming in future, informed Shukla.

"We have selected these blocks for organic farming of guava after carrying out a complete study and found parameters like soil, nature, productivity chances are suitable for organic farming of guava," Shukla told TOI.

He added that under the programme, the department was apprising farmers about methods useful for organic farming and also apprised about producing natural fertilizers and insecticides and pesticides.

3-day ITP meet to discuss study on prosperous farmers

Vadodara/Anand: The seventh annual partners' meet of IWMI-Tata Water Policy Program (ITP) that will begin from Wednesday will witness a 'Kurien Colloquium' in the memory of Father of India's White Revolution - Dr Verghese Kurien.

The Kurien Colloquium has been organized to discuss a new initiative named 'Small Farmer, Prosperous Farmer'. The three-day annual meet that will be held at the Institute of Rural Management, Anand (IRMA) will this year celebrate the 10-year long partnership between the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Colombo, and Sir [Ratan Tata](#) Trust, Mumbai.

Under the 'Small Farmer, Prosperous Farmer' initiative, IWMI-Tata researchers and NGO partners studied hundreds of farmers across the country with a farm size of one hectare who earn a net income of around Rs 2.5 lakh per year.

According to IWMI officials, viability of small and marginal land holdings is a critical challenge for Indian agriculture. A majority of India's one hectare farmers earn less than Rs 25,000 per year from crop cultivation.

"Understanding how small farmers can earn a decent livelihood and income from their limited land is essential to stem the exodus of the youth from agriculture. It is also essential to make agriculture an occupation of choice rather than a last resort," said an official, adding that farmers in the Mediterranean region earn a net income of up to US \$ 60,000 per hectare from knowledge-based high-value farming for domestic and export markets.

The Kurien Colloquium will explore how India's small farmers can learn from their experience and engage in market-oriented, high-value farming.

The annual partners' meet that will be attended by over 200 participants from government, research institutes, civil society and international organizations, will be inaugurated by IWMI director general Jeremy Bird and a trustee of Sir Ratan Tata Trust, Shirin Bharucha.

Rainwater harvesting units in Nathupur

GURGAON: HUDA is constructing four rainwater harvesting structures in Nathupur village. The site planning has been completed and designs were approved recently.

The HUDA administrator, [Praveen Kumar](#), said: "The four sites have been identified after carrying out the rainwater collection pattern in the village. The estimates for the construction of rainwater harvesting structures will be made next month." ,The [administrator](#) said that the designs for the structures have been finalized after consulting experts of both the [state government](#) and %industry.

"I have placed emphasis on the long-term durability of the structure and the cost factor. The structures have been made with the next 10 or 20 years in mind," said Kumar. HUDA had aimed to %construct over 300 rainwater harvesting structures in the city, including the area falling in village land. Another senior HUDA official said that in many villages the rainwater collection was higher than in urban areas. "Nathupur is one such village where rainwater harvesting structures were needed to recharge %the groundwater table," said the official.

The local villagers have welcomed HUDA's initiative and have pledged their support. On the rainwater structures in other HUDA sectors, the administrator said: "The structures have been completed in many sectors and it would take some time to complete the entire project," said Kumar. He said that the engineers have been told to mark the area with specific coordinates on the maps of each sector in the city.