

## DDS sees deliberate design in allowing FDI in food, agriculture

The Deccan Development Society (DDS) alleged that there was a 'deliberate design' and orchestrated attempts to make the country food dependent in allowing foreign direct investments in food and agriculture related segments.

"This is not an accident, but a design to gradually handover lands of food crops to industry. Walmart has become the first beneficiary in the decision to allow FDI in multi-brand retail as expected," DDS convener P.V. Satheesh said.

## Bt cotton

Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, he explained how Bt Cotton had already become 'major invader' on the food crop area threatening the food security in several States. "Bt cotton symbolises a trap that genetically engineered crops are laying around the food sovereignty of Asia, India in particular, and West African countries," he said.

Referring to the crisis in the State, he said 30 per cent of food production area had been occupied by Bt Cotton in the past decade. This was symptomatic of a trend of domination of GM crops over food crops which eventually would drive out all ecological, organic and safe foods produced by communities in order to achieve their food sovereignty.

## Faulty policies

The designs coupled with 'faulty policies' of the government would turn India into a net food importing country, he said. The adverse impact of Bt Cotton dominance would be felt in cattle rearing as it would adversely impact food and fodder production.

US-based writer and winner of Alternative Nobel Prize Francis Moore Lappe, who was present, referred to the spread of GM crops in the US claiming it had resulted in the loss of biodiversity, family farms and the nation's health.

### **Nabard funds for RIDF**

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development has sanctioned Rs.362 crore for the State from the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF XVIII). The fresh allocation takes the total allocation made to the State under RIDF up to October this year to over Rs. 15,000 crore. In the process, AP received highest sanctions in comparison with other States, Nabard Chief General Manager K.R. Nair said.

### **Farming activities set to witness a boom**

Farming activities in areas coming under the newly constituted Amaravathi river basin system is set to witness a boom as Rs 1.73 crore have been sanctioned to improve yield and farming skills during the current financial year.

Under the package, the Department of Agriculture will give away field implements, inputs like seed and fertilizers, and set up demonstration plots to propagate latest farming techniques in Dharapuram, Madathukulam, Vellakoil, Kundadam, Udumalpet and Mulanur blocks free to almost 2,000 farmers.

### **Productivity**

“Our aim is to increase productivity as well as income of farmers from per unit of land/per unit of irrigation water,” Joint Director of Agriculture Mohammed Kalimullah Sherif told *The Hindu*. Using the project expenditure, it has been planned to set up a total of 765 demonstration plots to promote System of Rice Intensification (SRI) technique, 315 plots to promote maize, 150 plots for pulses, 40 plots for groundnut and 222 demonstration plots to popularise integrated nutrient management in coconut cultivation. Each demonstration plot will be of one hectare in size.

This apart, 215 vermin compost units will be set up in the areas under the basin system and 105 units to prepare farm waste de-compost using pseudomonas bacteria. “We will also be

distributing 500 hand-operated sprayers and 300 power sprayers to farmers to help them spray pesticides,” Mr. Sherif said.

On scale of assistances, the Joint Director said that Rs. 9,000 worth of seeds, bio-fertilizers and chemical fertilizers will be distributed for each of the demonstration plots planned for dissemination of SRI methodology.

Similarly, Rs 4,000 worth of inputs will be disbursed for each of the plots planned to raise groundnut and maize, Rs 2,500 towards plots under pulses and Rs 10,000 for every plot to popularise nutrient management in coconut cultivation.

A portion of the project outlay will be used to enhance the skills of farmers after dividing them into groups. “Each group will have 15 to 20 members,” Mr. Sherif said.

### **Notice to State, Centre on petition seeking MSP for all agricultural crops**

The Karnataka High Court on Tuesday ordered issue of notice to the State and Union governments on a public interest litigation (PIL) petition seeking directions for fixing minimum support price (MSP) for all agricultural crops and also for setting up agriculture price commission.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Vikramjit and Justice B.V. Nagarathna passed the order on the petition filed by H.T. Huchchappa, a farmer from Hassan. The petitioner pointed out that MSP had been fixed only for turmeric and copra.

The petitioner also pointed out that the government spends more than Rs. 6,000 crore a year to irrigate areas under various projects. However, no such financial allocation had been made for dryland areas or rainfed areas he said, and pointed out that the number of farmers in dryland areas was more compared to irrigated areas.

Pointing out that Karnataka stood third in the country in terms of number of farmers’ suicide, the petitioner said various short-term and long-term measures, including fixing of MSP, were essential to protect farmers from committing suicide.

The Bench adjourned further hearing to November 5.

## **Flag issue**

The Bench gave last opportunity for the State government to take a decision on withdrawing the circular issued to various authorities to hoist red-yellow flag on the Rajyotsava Day (November 1).

The government has been saying since April this year that the circular, issued based on the announcement made by the then Chief Minister in the budget earlier this year, would be withdrawn and the Cabinet would soon withdraw its earlier proposal to hoist the flag on November 1 this year.

Even on Tuesday, the government counsel submitted that the Cabinet was yet to withdraw its earlier decision. Following this, the Bench said that a decision would have to be taken by October 31. The Bench was hearing a PIL petition complaining about the “misuse” of this flag by Karnataka Rakshana Vedike and other organisations. During earlier hearing, the government had accepted before the court that this flag had not been given the status of “State flag” in view of the National Flag Code.

## **Nafed centre to be opened on October 20**

The National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited (Nafed) is going to open a centre along with the Andhra Pradesh Cooperative Oilseeds Growers Federation Limited (Oilfed) on October 20.

Speaking to mediapersons here on Tuesday, Oilfed representative from Hyderabad Chandra Sekhar, along with Agriculture Market Committee Chairman Cherukuri Rama Rao and MLA Rowthu Suryaprakasha Rao, said the Nafed centre would procure milling copra from farmers in Rajahmundry, Rampachodavaram, and Peddapuram revenue divisions as also from West Godavari district.

Mr. Chandra Sekhar said they would procure only prime quality copra. He said they intend to buy FAQ grade copra for Rs.5,100 per quintal.

Mr. Rama Rao said the Nafed centre was being restored after a gap of one decade, thanks to the intervention of MP Vundavalli Arun Kumar and Mr. Suryaprakasha Rao.

## Market cess

He said the six acres of land of the Agriculture Market Yard, popularly known as mango market, and the market committee had earned Rs.1.88 crore as market cess in last six months as against Rs.1.53 crore earned in last one year.

Mr. Chandra Sekhar, however, said he had no data to share on the Nafed centre.

## Farmers arrive to talk about buying wet waste



Hanumatha Raju, a farmer from Nelamangala, is open to receiving wet waste from the city to be converted to compost on his land. "It will help us farmers in the end. However, we will accept only pure wet waste from the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP)." Meaning, strictly segregated organic waste.

He was among 35 farmers who had come to the BBMP on Tuesday to meet Mayor D. Venkatesh Murthy and Commissioner Rajneesh Goel evincing interest in buying wet waste that is generated in the city. Farmers came from the neighbouring taluks of Nelamangala, Chickballapur, Hoskote, Thalaghattapura and Tavarekere and also met Karnataka State Organic Farming Mission Chairperson A.S. Anand and Karnataka State Pollution Control Board Chairperson Vaman Acharya.

## Costly organic manure

They are interested in composting wet waste, as the cost of organic manure has spiralled. This would be a win-win situation for both them and the BBMP. The farmers need compost, while BBMP needs to dispose of the wet waste which it intends to sell at Rs. 66 a tonne. To begin with, the BBMP will send around 30 loads of garbage to the farmers, Mr. Goel told presspersons

later. After segregation was made mandatory, it is able to collect 1,200 tonnes of just wet waste daily.

The 30 loads can be easily collected from the BBMP's markets. "K.R. Market alone generates around 80 tonnes of wet waste. Around 200 tonnes is generated by BBMP's markets. Sending the waste to the farmers is the first phase of our waste management plan," he said

### Curbing corruption

The BBMP, which will bear the transportation cost, will soon introduce a foolproof system to curb corruption. "Authentication slips with quantum of wet waste, vehicle number, driver's name and address of the farmer will be made mandatory."

Mr. Goel said in three months, the BBMP would set up transfer stations where wet waste will be collected, shredded and sprayed with EM (effective microbial) solution. "This will stabilise the waste for effective composting in just seven days. This waste will be then sent to the farmers' fields directly in special trucks with liners."

The BBMP will also conduct raitha jathas in the nearby taluks where the farmers can register themselves so that the wet waste will be sent to them. "We will send waste to farms in a 100 km radius around the city," he added.

### Residents fear Cauvery won't reach them anytime soon



The Hindu Residents in the suburbs had hoped in vain of getting Cauvery supply when their areas were included under the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) was formed. File photo: K.Gopinathan

The ongoing Cauvery protests are likely to take the fizz out of the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board's (BWSSB) prestigious Cauvery IV Stage 2nd Phase project.

Although the trial runs began mid-September, the BWSSB — which was all set to commission the project in the first week of October — is now keeping its fingers crossed before deciding on the inaugural date. The project has been executed to augment the city's supply of 900 million litres of water per day (mld) by another 500 mld.

Meanwhile, residents of new areas, who are eagerly waiting for the Cauvery IV Stage 2nd Phase to be commissioned, are worried the water-sharing row may further deprive them of the precious commodity.

### **The long wait**

“All these years we have been waiting for Cauvery water. Some of us paid the beneficiary capital contribution way back in 2003-2004 when the Greater Bangalore Water And Sanitation Project (GBWASP) was planned. Now [with all this trouble], we are doubtful whether Cauvery will actually come to our homes,” said A.V. Shama Rao, president of Ramamurthynagar Residents' Welfare Association.

Residents of new areas, who have been depending on borewells and tanker supply all these years, were hopeful of getting Cauvery supply when their areas were included in the city limits when the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) was formed.

“But when this did not happen, we were told Cauvery IV Stage 2nd Phase will solve our problems. Now we don't know whether this will actually happen,” Mr. Rao said.

### **Farmers first?**

Kenche Gowda, general secretary of Nagarika Hitarakshana Vedike in T. Dasarahalli, said even if the Supreme Court pronounced a favourable verdict, the government would give preference to farmers in the Cauvery basin.

“The officials have been extending deadlines for commissioning the project. None of them are able to give us an exact date for the commissioning. The Cauvery protests are a good excuse for them now,” Mr. Gowda said.

V. Satyamurthy, president of Sanjaynagar Residents' Welfare Association, said supply to his area had been cut down to hardly an hour now. "We were hopeful that the Cauvery IV State 2nd Phase will give us adequate supply. But if the water-sharing issue impacts Bangalore's water supply, we fear our supply will be further reduced," he said.

### 'No need to worry'

Allaying such fears, BWSSB officials in charge of Cauvery project said the additional 500 mld coming through was well within the tribunal's allocation limit for drinking purposes. "At the most, the inauguration date may get a little delayed. But water supply will definitely start. There is no need for people to worry as the project has been completed and water is flowing through the pipelines on a trial basis," a senior official added.

### Deve Gowda extends invitation to T.N. leaders

The former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda has extended an invitation to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalitha and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam president M. Karunanidhi to visit Karnataka and see for themselves the plight of people dependent on Cauvery waters.

Mr. Gowda told *The Hindu* on Tuesday that Tamil Nadu leaders should come to Karnataka and assess the ground realities in the Cauvery basin. The people of Karnataka were facing a shortage of Cauvery waters, not only for irrigation but also for drinking.

"I will personally receive them if they come," Mr. Gowda said.

The former Prime Minister argued that the lower riparian State of Tamil Nadu was demanding water for the next crop of the year, while Karnataka's farmers were struggling to save their first crop, and residents of several towns and cities were facing uncertainty over drinking water supply.

Mr. Gowda's invitation comes after the conclusion of a visit by a Central team that took stock of the situation in the Cauvery basin.



## PAWAR-FDI



### Sharad Pawar welcomes FDI in multi-brand retail

Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar on Tuesday welcomed foreign direct investment (FDI) in multi-brand retail, saying it will help in providing good prices to farmers and better choice and low prices to consumers. “This (FDI) should benefit all stakeholders across the entire value and supply chain,” Pawar said addressing the Economic Editor’s conference here.

“Farmers will gain on at least two counts: significant reduction in post-harvest losses, and better prices. Consumers will gain from lower prices, greater choice, and higher quality,” the minister noted. PTI

## Possibility of early polls, says Mayawati



In her first public rally since losing power to the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh in March this year and with her sights now set on the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, Bahujan Samaj Party president Mayawati on Tuesday said there was a possibility of the poll being held earlier, even as she launched a scathing attack on the Akhilesh Yadav government.

“Uttar Pradesh under the present regime has been transformed into a crime Pradesh,” she said.

On the crucial issue of continuing support to the UPA government in the light of the “anti-people” measures such as diesel price hike, FDI in multi-brand retail and a cap on LPG cylinders, Ms. Mayawati said she would take a call on the issue on Wednesday, at the national executive meeting of the BSP here.

However, in contrast to her vitriolic attack on the Akhilesh government, the BSP chief appeared soft in her criticism of the UPA regime. Even as she dubbed the decision on FDI in retail a suicidal move, Ms. Mayawati said the “BSP would welcome FDI in retail if the move benefits farmers and small traders; at present the party does not support it.”

### **“Political vendetta”**

Addressing the “sankalp maharally” to mark the sixth death anniversary of the party’s founder, Kanshi Ram, at the Ramabai Ambedkar Maidan, the former Chief Minister condemned the Samajwadi Party regime for cancelling the public holiday on October 9.

Slamming the Akhilesh Yadav government as “anti-Dalit,” the BSP president accused it of political vendetta. “Unlike the present regime, the BSP government did not change the names of districts, welfare schemes, hospitals, parks and memorials,” Ms. Mayawati said.

In a strong attack on the Samajwadi Party president and her bete noire, Ms. Mayawati said: “Mulayam Singh Yadav and his ‘samaj’ should express their gratitude not to Ram Manohar Lohia, but to Bhimrao Ambedkar, who was born in a Dalit family, who was instrumental for including Article 340 in the Constitution, which enabled the OBCs to get quota benefits.”

While she rubbished all the welfare schemes launched by the Akhilesh government and panned it for taking credit for schemes like the Yamuna Expressway “which was launched by the BSP government,” Ms. Mayawati’s focus was on the law and order scenario. Kidnappings, murders, loot, dacoity and robbery had reached a new high under the present regime.

Even as she exhorted her partymen to pull their socks up in the “likelihood of the LS poll being held before the scheduled time,” Ms. Mayawati stressed that persons with criminal antecedents would not be given ticket.

## Groundnut farmers in crisis

Groundnut farmers of Chittoor district who have sown the crop on 76,000 acres appear to be heading for trouble with the prolonged dry-spell.

Of the 76,000 acres where the crop is grown, according to official reports, crop raised on nearly 28,576 acres was almost withering due to deficit rainfall while the ones grown on another 20,000 acres were destroyed by the wild-bores, elephants, pests etc, especially in the western track of the district.

Sources further said that against the normal 1.6 lakh acres for the kharif season, the diffident farmers have till the end of September sown the seeds for the crop hardly on 76,000 acres which is less than half of the normal acreage under the crop in the district.

This is expected to badly hit the over all oil seed production besides leaving the already debt-ridden farmers in the lurch, said a farmer.

What has reportedly further aggravated the problem for the farmers was the steep escalation in the cost of cultivation.

According to sources the cost per acre which used to be Rs.6,000 to Rs.7,000 in 2010 had reportedly shot up to nearly Rs. 20,000 to Rs.25,000 at present due to the steep increase in the cost of the farm inputs like seed, fertilizers, pesticides, labour etc.

But no official initiative was reportedly taken so far by the district administration to provide succour to the demoralised farmers. Farmers are also complaining about the reported non-payment or delayed-payment of the crop compensation announced by the government further burdening them.

## Promoting diversity in organic horticulture in Agency

Naandi Foundation decides on species in consultation with stakeholders



WaY TO GO: Delegates from member countries of the Global Livelihoods Network looking at the nursery of the Naandi Foundation at Pedagaruvu in Hukumpeta Mandal in the Paderu Agency Area of Visakhapatnam district. —Photo: C.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

After promoting horticulture, including coffee plantation, pepper, and vegetable growing, for a decade among the adivasis in the Paderu Agency area, the Naandi Foundation was given a challenging task by Union Minister for Rural Development Jairam Ramesh to help create diversity in the organic horticultural programme.

The task was to encourage farmers to cultivate plants that would fix carbon in the soil, chief executive officer of Kallam Anji Reddy Chair of the Naandi Foundation Manoj Kumar explained, and said the Foundation held consultations with the stakeholders on the choice of species.

While jackfruit, tamarind, and some varieties of mango were endemic to the region, the farmers preferred other fruit-bearing plants that would not only give them diversity but also get them significant returns, horticultural coordinator of the Foundation V. Gautam Chakravarty said. The farmers sought the popular mango varieties such as Banganpalli, Mallika, Dasehri, and Suvarnarekha, and totapuri, amla, jamun, citrus, guava, custard apple, lime, papaya, drumstick, sapota, bamboo, and teak, he added.

The Foundation developed a nursery at Pedavaguru in Hukumpeta mandal of the Paderu Agency area in the district to supply saplings to the farmers and also train them in the cultivation.

**Bio-pesticides**

The farmers were also provided with neem cake and other bio-pesticides and encouraged to compost the biomass to be used as fertilizers, the horticulture coordinator said. The Government of India approved the programme under the Clean Development Mechanism. The Foundation approached the Global Livelihoods group for funding such a project.

The Livelihood network agreed to provide majority of the funds. For the balance, the Foundation tied up with Mahindra & Mahindra. The farmers had to not only cultivate plants but also ensure they survived. In case the saplings died, they had to be replaced, Mr. Manoj Kumar said.

Farmers under the umbrella of Chinna Sannakara Girijana Ryotu Paraspara Sahayaka Sangham (Small and Marginal Tribal Farmers Mutually Cooperative Society) took the challenge. Last year, they planted 10 lakh trees. This year, they added another 10 lakh, he added. The 2 millionth sapling was planted by Mr. Jairam Ramesh on Sunday. The target for the five-year programme is 60 lakh trees in 6,000 ha.

Bouyed by the success of the Araku Model, the Global Livelihoods team took the opportunity to bring together the 60 odd Livelihood Network Members — all experts on farm or agro-forestry based livelihoods creation and living in isolation in far flung parts of the globe and other supporters keen on studying the model.

A three-day Livelihood Camp is going on at Araku to study the model and share the knowledge, Foundation's senior manager Prakash Babu said.

### **Honour for IICT scientist**

B. Mahipal Reddy, Chief Scientist of Inorganic and Physical Chemistry division, Indian Institute of Chemical Technology has been elected as Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences, India-2012.

Dr. Mahipal Reddy was nominated for the award by the NASI in recognition of his contribution in both basic and applied sciences knowledge related catalysis, physical chemistry, materials science, reaction engineering and process development.

### **Biryani gets dearer as price of basmati rice increases**

Biryani aficionados are now shelling out more money to savour their favourite dish. The reason: increase in the prices of basmati rice.

The fine variety of basmati rice is now sold at Rs. 95 a kg in the market, 40 per cent higher than the price prevailing some three months ago.

### **'Low profits'**

As a result most of the biryani joints in the city have increased the prices by at least ten rupees per plate in the last one month.

"We took the decision after carefully examining various factors like increase in prices of rice, meat, oil etc., We are running the business on low profits," says Mohammed Saleem, president, Twin Cities Hotel Owners Association.

The price rise is attributed to export permission given by government to basmati traders.

After the government announced relaxation on export, most of the mill-owners have diverted large quantities of rice to international market.

Hence the city has received short supplies leading to price increase, it is said. The basmati variety of rice is mainly sourced by the traders from Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

### **Off season**

Generally its prices surge from May to November which is considered an off season. "But this year the prices have shot up steeply breaking the record in the last three years," says Raj Kumar of Kashmir House, a store which deals in basmati rice in Begum Bazaar.

The finest variety is now priced at Rs. 95 a kg while other brands are available between Rs. 55 and Rs. 90. Usually basmati rice can be had for Rs. 35 to Rs. 70 a kg, adds Mr. Kumar.

### **Preferred ingredient**

Biryani, if cooked using basmati rice tastes good and is quite aromatic.

“Therefore, most of the hoteliers prefer it over other variety of rice”, says Mohammed Irfan of Shah Ghouse Hotel.

### Steps to ensure higher price for coconut sought

The Congress-led Kerala Pradesh Karshaka Congress has launched an indefinite satyagraha at Kuttiyadi, demanding immediate intervention by the government to ensure higher price for coconut that at present is a measly Rs.3 per nut.

Even as Karshaka Congress State general secretary K.J. Joseph began his fast at Kuttiyadi, considered by many to be the ‘coconut capital of Kerala,’ on Tuesday afternoon, Lal Varghese Kalpakavadi, president of the Karshaka Congress, said at a press conference that the protest at Kuttiyadi would trigger State-wide agitations for a better deal for farmers and action for rejuvenating the agricultural sector.

### Warning

He also warned the Congress leadership that the UDF would be swept away by a “political tsunami” if it failed to find effective solutions to farmers’ problems.

“It is sad many have turned a blind eye to this grave issue. Neither the UDF nor the LDF has done anything substantial to improve the fortunes of coconut growers in the past three decades. There has been no earnest attempt to manufacture value-added goods from coconut either. The case of other farm produces, including cardamom, vegetables, and paddy, is no different,” he said.

The Kozhikode district committee of the Karshaka Congress had been observing a relay satyagraha for the past one week.

“It is sad the government is cold to our demand though the agitation is being held even in Thiruvananthapuram,” Mr. Varghese Kalpakavadi said.

### Other demands

The Karshaka Congress has also demanded rights for coconut growers to manufacture ‘neera’ drink from coconut palms as has been promised in the UDF election manifesto, a special

meeting of the KPCC to discuss farmers' problems, immediate payment of procurement price to paddy growers, implementation of Central government agricultural development packages for Idukki and Kuttanad, fair price for cardamom, settlement of disputes about title deeds and adequate returns from milk producers.

### **Auction boycott hits cardamom sector**

The ongoing crisis in the cardamom sector has brought to light some inherent issues plaguing the sector. The traders had been boycotting the auction from September 25 after the Spices Board issued a circular raising the bidding rate from 50 paise to Rs.5 and reducing the payment period from 21 days to 12 days.

Though cardamom prices have not so far been affected, it is likely to have an impact on the export prospects, if traders are unable to deliver the goods in the stipulated period and the clients abroad seek traders in an alternative country to meet the demand.

The export of cardamom and the prices in the international market are decided by the demand and supply factors in Guatemala, the main competitor for India. Though the Indian small cardamom is known for its quality, the disturbance in the internal market is likely to have an impact in the long run.

At present, cardamom is in the negative list and it is unlikely to reach Indian market to be exported. Indian cardamom was traded at a high rate in the international market and as the prices were ruling high here, low quality cardamom was not likely to reach the country, said a trader who has also the licence to export cardamom.

### **Internal consumption**

Moreover, the export of cardamom is nominal in terms of its internal consumption and the increase in prices in recent years is attributed to an increase in internal consumption. At present, in the trading sector, about 90 per cent of the cardamom traders are from Tamil Nadu and the auction is being conducted on all days by eight recognised auction agencies.

A major reason stated for less traders from Kerala is the disparity in the sales tax in the two States where Tamil Nadu charges two per cent and Kerala five per cent as sales tax. "If a trader



from Tamil Nadu participates in the auction, he has to pay a very less charge as tax and this is the reason why traders from Kerala are not interested in participating in the auction," said Cardamom Growers Association president K.S. Mathew.

By unifying the sales tax, smuggling of cardamom to Tamil Nadu could be completely eliminated. Moreover, more traders from the State would participate in the auction, he said.

With a marginal increase in the production, the bidding is a time-consuming process and by increasing the bidding rate, time could be saved and would have a filtering effect as only interested traders would participate in the auction, he said.

"More licence could be given to auction agencies and two auctions could be conducted in a single day," said Mr. Mathew.

### **Not genuine bidders**

According to him, there is a cartel formed by traders who are not genuine bidders but work as representatives of business houses in North India. "By raising the bidding rate to Rs.5, there will be high competition and transparency in the entire process," he said.

He said the boycott strike by traders had not so far affected the prices of cardamom. He said the average price a kilogram when the boycott strike started was Rs.650 and now it was Rs.750.

He, however, pointed out that the production in the coming season would be considerably affected due to unfavourable weather condition and an erratic monsoon.

However, K.P. Raju, a former trader, said if the auction block continued, there would be no competition and the farmers would be forced to sell the produce at a price decided by businessmen and agents of traders in the open market.

It is alleged that agents have already reached the cardamom plantation areas to purchase directly from farmers to be taken to Tamil Nadu. After the crisis started, there was an increase in smuggling of cardamom through many routes across the border.

Smugglers carry it through many routes to safely bring it to the prosperous trader. Unconfirmed reports said that traders' agents collected cardamom directly from farmers evading taxes.

The cardamom sector has a direct link with the economy of the district as it is one of the largest providers of direct employment and one of the produces in high demand abroad. It was during the last financial year that there was a record export in cardamom and the crisis could create a negative feeling in the international market.

P.T. Thomas, MP, who has been holding discussions with the planters and traders for finding an amicable solution to the crisis, told *The Hindu* on Tuesday that efforts were still on and alternative arrangements were being considered. Efforts were on to find a solution acceptable to both parties, he said.

### **Project to revive 'kaipad' farming**

The proposal to revive traditional paddy and shrimp farming in the 'kaipad' areas (brackish-water areas) in Kasaragod, Kannur, and Kozhikode districts is expected to get a boost with the Fisheries Department approving a project to bring 90 hectare of land under rice-cum-shrimp cultivation in an organic way.

The project would be implemented under the aegis of the Agency for Development of Aquaculture, Kerala (ADAK) through self-help groups (SHGs).

As many as 16 SHGs had been formed, including 10 in Kannur and three each in Kasaragod and Kozhikode. Each group consisted of at least five members to undertake farming in 2012-13 on five hectare of land each. Land would be made available to the groups on lease for a period of not less than five years.

The project would cover 'kaipad' areas in Mogral-Puthur, Kumbala, and Manjeswaram panchayats in Kasaragod; Ezhome, Taliparamba municipality, Puzhathi, and Mundery panchayats in Kannur; and Atholi and Ulliyeri panchayats in Kozhikode.

The traditional brackish-water paddy-shrimp system of north Kerala or 'kaipad' farming is an integrated organic system in which rotational and simultaneous farming of paddy and shrimp were practised. During monsoon, when the salinity was very low, a crop of paddy was grown, and shrimps were grown during the rest of the year. The farming practice followed was a traditional 'capture-based' aquaculture system known as shrimp filtration.

ADAK Deputy Director and Farm Manager Dinesan Cheruvat said the main objectives of the project were enhancement of productivity of the wetland ecosystem, promotion of sustainable aquaculture practices, sustenance of paddy cultivation, and reduction of cost of production and increase in the income of farmers, among others.

### **Expected yield**

He said the simultaneous cultivation of rice and shrimp would yield 3,000 kg of rice and 400 kg of shrimp per hectare. After harvest of rice, 600 kg of shrimp per hectare was expected. Input in the form of shrimp seed, fish seed, and feed would be minimal, he added.

Under the project, new bunds would be constructed and sluice gates with shutters provided to regulate water flow into the 'kaipad' land at appropriate places.

The estimated cost for implementing the project was Rs.2.71 crore of which the State's share as grant would be Rs.2 crore. The remaining would be mobilised as beneficiary contribution or bank loan. A 60 per cent subsidy would be provided on construction of bund and sluice and a 75 per cent subsidy on cultivation of rice and shrimps.

### **Flower auction centre to come up in Udupi**

Farmers from four districts will be able to sell their flowers



SCENT OF PROGRESS:A view of the Flower Auction Centre which is under construction in Udupi.

Come January, and a flower auction centre will start functioning here if everything goes according to the plans of the Department of Horticulture.

The construction work of the flower auction centre building is expected to be completed in a month and a half. After completion, farmers from Udupi, Dakshina Kannada, Shimoga, and Chikmagalur districts can sell their flowers here. Udupi is among the four places where such flower auction centres are coming up, the others being Sira in Tumkur district (already constructed), Belgaum (under construction), and Sirsi in Uttara Kannada district (tender process on).

The Centre is built at Doddanagudde here at a cost of Rs. 2.5 crore made available under the Rashtriya Krishi Yojana of the Union Government.

Of the Rs. 2.5 crore, Rs. 1.96 crore will go towards building while the remaining amount will be used for purchasing other equipment.

The ground floor of the Centre will have 16 shops and a cold storage unit room while an auction hall and two guest rooms will be located on the first floor.

The construction of the centre, which began in August 2010, has been delayed by six months.

Guruprasad, Assistant Director at the Department of Horticulture, told *The Hindu* that the main objective of the Centre would be to streamline the marketing of the popular Udupi “mallige” or jasmine also called as “Shankarapura mallige”, which has the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

“At present, the marketing of the Udupi mallige is based on demand and supply, which provided a higher margin to the middlemen. But farmers can directly sell their flowers at the centre,” he said.

There is more demand for “Udupi mallige” than the other local variety of jasmine called “Jaji mallige”, not just in coastal districts, but also in other places. Besides “Udupi mallige”, farmers cultivating anthuriums, orchids, chrysanthemums, heliconia, bird of paradise, and other flowers in the four districts can sell their flowers at the auction centre.

But farmers can make profits only if they formed groups. The department had formed the “Udupi Mallige Belegarara Sangha” (Udupi Jasmine Growers’ Association). “When groups are formed,

it takes care of travelling and other charges. Since there are no middlemen involved, the profits made go directly to farmers,” Mr. Guruprasad said.

Admitting that there was reluctance among farmers in Shankarapura and surrounding areas in Udupi district growing the “Udupi mallige” about the centre, Mr. Guruprasad said they had got used to their present system. “With the passage of time, they will shift to the Centre,” he said.

### **Crops on 350 acres under water**

Heavy rain causes breach in canals near Srirangapatna



Damage: One of the canals near Srirangapatna that breached following heavy rain on Monday night.

Heavy rain caused breaches in two major canals near Srirangapatna early on Tuesday, and standing crops on about 350 acres were inundated.

While the Right Bank Low-level (RBLL) canal developed a breach near Belagola village, the Virija canal was breached near Naguvanahalli.

These two canals help irrigate nearly 300 villages.

### **Good rain**

The canals were in full spate thanks to good inflow from the Krishnaraja Sagar and a downpour in the catchment areas on Monday night.

The area near Srirangapatna recorded an average of 145 mm rain on Monday night, sources in Cauvery Neeravari Nigam Ltd. (CNNL), said.

According to residents of Belagola and Naguvanahalli, the water that gushed out of the canals inundated fields where paddy, pulses and vegetables were being cultivated.

They said they noticed the breach at 5 a.m. and alerted officials of CNNL and the Irrigation Department.

Water release from the reservoir was immediately stopped to prevent further flooding, CNNL officials said. Later, officials stopped water to canals in the district, Vijay Kumar, CNNL executive engineer, said.

### **Compensation**

Farmers in Belagola and Naguvanahalli said the crop damage would cause them financial loss. The district administration should immediately release compensation, Nanjundegowda, a farmer at Belagola, said.

Ramesh Bandisiddegowda, Srirangapatna MLA, Deputy Commissioner B.N. Krishnaiah and Mandya Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer P.C. Jayanna were among those who inspected the canals on Tuesday.

The Mandya district administration has formed a committee to assess the crop loss. "Officials will estimate the extent of damage and crop loss," Mr. Krishnaiah said and assured farmers of suitable compensation.

### **Mettur water level**

The water level in Mettur dam stood at 71.51 feet on Tuesday at 4 p.m. against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 12,427 cusecs and the discharge 18,399 cusecs.

## Egg export from Namakkal doubles in a month

(Values in lakh)

Monthly egg export from Namakkal in 2012	
April	- 415.64
May	- 240.88
June	- 89.74
July	- 136.97
August	- 212.54
September	- 415.64

Reopening the export market in Oman has helped egg export from Namakkal almost double the figures in September, compared to August 2012.

Statistics from the National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC) shows that 212.54 lakh eggs were exported in August, which increased by 196 per cent to 415.64 lakh eggs in September.

Egg export from Namakkal zone touched its lowest figures of just 89.74 lakh (19 containers with 4.72 lakh eggs in each container) in June 2012, a month after Oman banned procurement of eggs from India, citing the bird flu outbreak in North India as the reason. Export in September has equalled the highest egg figure for the financial year 2012-13. Monthly export stood at 415.64 lakh eggs (88 containers) in April.

Poultry farmer and exporter Dr. P.V. Senthil told *The Hindu* that the export market in Oman opened only on September 21, but in just 10 days the country imported 20 containers - 94.4 lakh eggs. "Oman was the biggest export market of eggs from Namakkal before the ban came to effect in March," he noted.

Farmers and traders initially feared that export would drop after egg price soared to a record high of Rs. 3.65 (till September 23), but they said that export increased as the price hike was nullified by the rupee depreciating against the US dollar. "This has a direct impact on export because we quote export orders in US \$," he said.

Last month, Indian eggs were exported at 28 US \$ for a box of 360 eggs. This price was much cheaper than the price quoted by exporters in United States, Europe, Brazil and Taiwan - the biggest competitor for Indian eggs. Those countries priced a box of egg between 38 and 40 \$ - about 40 per cent more than the price quoted by exporters from India, Dr. Senthil observed.

However, increasing export has not brought much smile on the face of poultry farmers, as they claimed that they are not reaping any big returns out of exports. They claimed that they sell eggs to exporters at the price that does not match the cost of production. "At present, we get Rs. 2.70 per egg when the cost of production is around Rs. 3.40," they said. Traders make good profit in export as they fix a margin before exporting. This is unlike the European market where farmers and traders fix a profit of at least 1 \$ per carton (360 eggs), farmers said. On the other hand exporters claimed that they are quoting around 26.5 \$ per carton due to local competition. Farmers felt the need for farmers and traders to sit together and fix the price of export eggs in a manner in which farmers also get a marginal profit.

Farmers said that their only consolation is that increasing export has stopped the wholesale price of egg from dropping further in this dull season.

### **Heavy rain lashes Erode district**

Heavy showers over the last two days have wreaked havoc in Erode district with several areas reporting water logging and disruption of power supply.

Life was thrown completely out of gear in the Erode town and many other parts of the district on Monday night due to heavy rains accompanied by strong winds.

The Erode town registered the maximum rainfall in the district (126.5 mm), which left most of the low-lying areas waterlogged.



The drainage system in the town gave up within a few minutes after it started pouring. Almost all the drains overflowed flooding several roads including Brough road, Gandhiji road, Perundurai Road, Nethaji Road, streets in the bazaar area, roads in Periyar Nagar, Kollampalayam street and Samabth Nagar road.

People were seen wading through knee-deep water in Surampatty, Veerapanchatram, Karungalpalayam, Moolapalayam, Solar, and several other parts in the town.

### **Sewage**

Rainwater mixed with sewage entered into more than 50 houses in Kamaraj Street, MMS Compound, Sasthri Nagar, Kollampalayam, Vendipalayam and a few other areas.

Rainwater also entered into the Periya Mariamman temple. Several shops in Gani market and Thiruvenkatasamy street were flooded. The shopkeepers were seen moving the textile goods to safer locations following the heavy showers.

Most parts of the district were plunged into darkness as power supply remained disrupted throughout the night.

Vehicular movement was affected in a few parts in the district as trees and hoardings were uprooted. The rainfall recorded in other parts of the district in the last 24 hour period ended at 8.30 am on Tuesday is as follows: Gobichettipalayam – 52 mm, Mangalapatti – 52, Kavunthapadi – 32, Elanthakuttaimedu – 27, Modakurichi – 21.5, Sivagiri – 17, Arachalur – 11 and Perundurai – 9 mm.

### **Vaigai dam level goes up**

Heavy rain in Theni and Dindigul districts



pool:Rainwater flooding Chinnalapatti near Dindigul on Monday.— PHOTO: G.KARTHIKEYAN.

Torrential showers that rocked the district on Sunday night cheered farmers bringing the mercury level to the bottom. People in urban and rural areas, who suffered from the scorching heat, heaved a sigh of relief.

Rainwater flooded prime roads in Theni and nearby areas. The total rainfall in the district was 160.7 mm and the average 13.39 mm. Good news to farmers was the marginal increase water level in the Vaigai dam. After a gap of three months, the dam registered a marginal increase in storage. Water level rose to 31.86 feet from 31.73 feet (level on Sunday.) Inflow shot up to 130 cusecs from mere 26 cusecs. However, discharge was restricted to 60 cusecs.

Inflow to other major dams in the district and in the Periyar dam in Kerala too increased sizably. Water level in the Periyar dam reached 117 feet. Inflow to the dam was 402 cusecs and 400 cusecs being discharged to meet irrigation needs of first crop on 5,000 and odd acres and also of second crop in other parts of the double-cropping area in Cumbum valley.

Transplantation of paddy crop, second crop in the double cropping areas at Veerapandi and nearby areas, is in full swing. (The district administration encouraged farmers to advance the second crop in October as the first crop was failed in the Cumbum valley, owing to poor storage in the Periyar dam.) Water level at Sothuparai rose to 26.73 feet from 26.51 feet and storage in the Manjalar dam was 37.2 feet.

Rainfall recorded at various places in the district at 8 a.m. in mm: Periyakulam 15, Vaigai dam 12, Manjalar 24, Andipatti 38.2, Aranmanaipudhur 5.6, Veerapandi 21, Thekkadi 15.6, Periyar 12, Goodalur 3, Bodi 5.6, Uthamaplayam 7 and Sothuparai 12.

### **Dindigul**

Heavy rain hit many parts of the district flooding main roads in Dindigul and surrounding areas and disrupting normal life on Sunday night.

The district received 388.8 mm rain on Sunday and the average rainfall was 38.8 mm. Kamatchipuram recorded 81.8 mm rain, highest in the district.

Moderate to heavy rain was recorded in Palani, Kannivadi, Natham Batlagundu, Vadamadurai, Nilakottai and other parts of the district.

### **Notice to State, Centre on petition seeking MSP for all agricultural crops**

The Karnataka High Court on Tuesday ordered issue of notice to the State and Union governments on a public interest litigation (PIL) petition seeking directions for fixing minimum support price (MSP) for all agricultural crops and also for setting up agriculture price commission.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Vikaramjit and Justice B.V. Nagarathna passed the order on the petition filed by H.T. Huchchappa, a farmer from Hassan. The petitioner pointed out that MSP had been fixed only for turmeric and copra.

The petitioner also pointed out that the government spends more than Rs. 6,000 crore a year to irrigate areas under various projects. However, no such financial allocation had been made for dryland areas or rainfed areas he said, and pointed out that the number of farmers in dryland areas was more compared to irrigated areas.

Pointing out that Karnataka stood third in the country in terms of number of farmers' suicide, the petitioner said various short-term and long-term measures, including fixing of MSP, were essential to protect farmers from committing suicide.

The Bench adjourned further hearing to November 5.

#### **Flag issue**

The Bench gave last opportunity for the State government to take a decision on withdrawing the circular issued to various authorities to hoist red-yellow flag on the Rajyotsava Day (November 1).

The government has been saying since April this year that the circular, issued based on the announcement made by the then Chief Minister in the budget earlier this year, would be withdrawn and the Cabinet would soon withdraw its earlier proposal to hoist the flag on November 1 this year.

Even on Tuesday, the government counsel submitted that the Cabinet was yet to withdraw its earlier decision. Following this, the Bench said that a decision would have to be taken by October 31. The Bench was hearing a PIL petition complaining about the “misuse” of this flag by Karnataka Rakshana Vedike and other organisations. During earlier hearing, the government had accepted before the court that this flag had not been given the status of “State flag” in view of the National Flag Code.

### A 777-day-old farmers’ protest against power plant



Farmers’ protest against the proposed power plant in Karchhna tehsil of Allahabad district entered its 777th day on Tuesday. PHOTO: Omar Rashid

Farmers’ protest against the proposed 1,980-MW power plant in the trans-Yamuna Karchhna tehsil of Allahabad district entered its 777th day on Tuesday.

While the district administration recently served a month’s ultimatum on the farmers to return the compensation they had received for land acquisition, the farmers told *The Hindu* that they would not be able to repay the amount, regardless of the ultimatum.

Meanwhile, they say they will continue agitating at the proposed site, where they assemble daily under the banner of Punrvas Kisan Kalyan Sahayata Samiti. “On Tuesday, it is 777 days,” said Kisan Andolan president Raj Bahadur Patel.

The project was conceived in 2007 under the Bahujan Samaj Party government and about 2,500 bighas of land was acquired from 2,286 farmers in eight villages -- Devari, Kachari, Katka-Medhra, Dehli, Dohlipur, Bagesar, Kachara and Bhtar.

However, the project, handed over to an undertaking of Jaypee Group in 2009, could never take off due to consistent and often violent protests by farmers over compensation, leaving one

dead. The farmers cited that Rs.3 lakh per bigha offered to them was much lower than the circle rate.

On April 12, the Allahabad High Court allowed the writ petitions of the farmers and stalled the project. The Court order stipulated that farmers who had already taken the compensation for their land should either return the money and take back the land or willingly hand over the land for the project.

The farmers, however, say that the land has not yet been transferred to them. And the compensation received by them, they say, was spent in clearing debts, conducting marriages, and procuring farming equipment and medicines.

Surya Bali (52) says: "I gave them one bigha. The money was spent on my daughter's marriage and younger son's treatment. How will I pay them Rs. 3 lakh? We are left without land or money." Yet the farmers say that they are willing to repay the compensation but on certain conditions. They want their land to be restored to its 'original condition' and suitable for cultivation.

Then, they say, they will look to repay the money in instalments from the crop produce. Sesh Mani (20) has done no farming for the last four years and now works as a labourer. "Around 1.5 bighas were ours.... they are barren now. See all this wild grass!" he says, standing on a helipad where he says he once grew arhar and chana.

The farmers allege that their land was wrongfully shown as barren. "How can it be barren when we have government-installed tube-wells here? They destroyed our land," says a woman. The farmers also seek justice for the alleged psychological torture and boycott faced by them at the hands of officials and police in the tehsil.

"Once they know we are from Kachari, our work is not done, or we are asked to pay a huge bribe even for ordinary work. We are yet to receive compensation for the damage done by rain. The BPL cards issued in our names have been given to the rich 'thekedaars'. We demand a compensation for this too," says Mr. Patel.

Mr. Patel also alleged that the police refuse to hand over FIR copies of the cases he was booked under when the protests had turned violent, asking him to file an RTI.

Station House Officer of Karchhana Police did not respond to phone calls.

However, a police officer from Beerpur speaking on condition of anonymity denied demanding an RTI. "They will get the FIR copies if they approach us through the right channel. They must first surrender to the Court."

The local officials involved in the issue were not available for comment since they have been transferred.

District Magistrate Raj Shekhar said if the farmers had any grievances they could approach the Court, adding that further steps would be taken after instructions from the High Court.

Asked what would be the administration's move once the ultimatum was over, Mr. Shekhar said the farmers would be given another notice on grounds of justice and the status report would be submitted to the Court.

The farmers also say that certain "motivated goons" had been threatening them to give up their land or face consequences and these threats had increased after the ultimatum.

However, the opinion seems divided, with some farmers expressing no qualms about giving up land. Mohan Lal Mishra (24) says his family gave land for the area's development. "Only those who are not happy with the compensation are protesting. The big landlords are not protesting, it's only the petty farmers who are politicizing the issue."

Another farmer, belonging to the Thakur community, said: "This land is barren and not even worth Rs. 25,000. Those protesting are just greedy."

"Why will anyone trouble them? On what basis should they get higher compensation? If they get Rs 13 lakh per bigha then farmers in Bara will also demand same. Just for personal gains some of them are involved in 'netagiri'," he says.

The protesting farmers, however, denied that they were agitating merely for higher compensation. "We don't have any other means of livelihood. What will we do with the money? We need employment. We are ready to work anywhere. We can't buy our own land for six lakh even," says Mr. Mani.

Meanwhile, the family of Gulab Chand Bishwakarma, who was killed during the protests last year, is reeling under poverty and forgotten promises. While they received initial compensation, his widow Sona Devi says she is yet to receive his pension.” I have four children. Who will feed us? We were told we would get work,” she says.

# Hindustan Times

TODAY FARM NEWS

10.10.2012 A.M

## Weather

Chennai

### Chennai - INDIA

#### Today's Weather



Sunny

Wednesday, Oct 10

Max Min

33.5° | 24.2°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 66

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:58

Sunset: 05:52

Barometer: 1009

#### Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Thursday, Oct 11

Max Min

31° | 24°

#### Extended Forecast for a week

Friday Oct 12	Saturday Oct 13	Sunday Oct 14	Monday Oct 15	Tuesday Oct 16
31°   26° Rainy	29°   26° Rainy	31°   26° Rainy	32°   25° Rainy	32°   25° Partly Cloudy

#### Airport Weather

Delhi

Rain: 0

Humidity: 65

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:19

Sunset: 05:56

Barometer: 1013





# THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

09.10.2012 P.M

10.10.2012 A.M

## AP sugarcane farmers demand Rs 3,500/t support price



Sugarcane farmers in Andhra Pradesh have asked the Government to declare a support price of Rs 3,500 a tonne against Rs 1,700 currently paid to the farmers.

“The cost of production has gone up enormously. The recent increase in diesel price would increase the cost of production by at least Rs 5,000 an acre. As it is, the cost of production had gone up to Rs 1.30 lakh an acre. The yields are not crossing the 30-tonne mark,” members of the Federation of Sugarcane Growers Associations (Andhra Pradesh), said.

The members, who met at Vijayawada on Tuesday evening, have asked the Central and State Governments to take measures to ensure a support price of Rs 3,500.

It also asked the State Government to announce a State Advisory Price (SAP) of Rs 1,000 a tonne, taking a cue from the examples in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab and Haryana.

“With the cost of labour shooting up, the meeting has passed a resolution, calling the Governments to encourage a unit each in all sugar factories with all machines required for sugar cane farming and harvesting,” N.S.V. Sharma, Secretary of the Federation, told *Business Line*.

9<sup>th</sup> oct 2012 P.M

## Domestic roasters juggle to maintain retail coffee price



Domestic roasters have been mixing high-priced Robustas with low cost Arabicas while retailing it to customers. Through this juggling, they have maintained coffee retail price stable for the last four to five months.

Roasters are expected to take call on increasing the coffee prices after assessing the new crop, which will hit the market in December.

“Currently, we have been juggling inputs without hiking the selling price.

“By doing it, we are well within the price band to retain customers and sales,” said R. Srikanth Rao, Director, Bayar’s Coffee.

Roasters in Karnataka have also been able to absorb the sudden increase in value-added tax (VAT) rates. VAT rates were hiked recently to raise money to tackle drought in the State.

“In the last three months, VAT has gone up and other input costs at the estate level are also up. We have managed prices efficiently without passing it to the customers,” said Dhiraj Prabhu, partner Kalmane Coffee.

Price of raw Arabica coffees is down by 20 per cent and is trading around Rs 220 a kg, from a high of Rs 240-250 a kg couple of months ago.

Raw robusta prices have gone up steeply by 33 per cent and are currently trading at Rs 160-165 from a low of Rs 120 couple of months ago. Robusta parchment is trading at around Rs 220.

Robusta supply is very crucial for roasters and retailers; they use it in creation of various blends and also to make instant coffees.

Roasters are expecting a good crop this crop year (2012-2013) and are hoping that rain should not play spoil sport.

Prabhu said: "We may take a call to increase prices only after assessing the new crop. Price hike will be in the range of 10-15 per cent."

### Demand outlook still hazy for cashew



The cashew kernel market last week witnessed a little buoyancy following some business activity with the US and the European Union.

Notwithstanding, the "cashew market is continuing to pass through the longest quiet and steady period in many years," Mr Pankaj N. Sampat, a Mumbai-based dealer told *Business Line*.

Despite this, there has not been much change in prices in the last three months, he said adding "the current prices are W240 \$3.55-3.75 ; W320 \$3.20-3.35; W450 and SW320 \$3.00-3.15 ; SW360 \$2.70- 2.90; Splits \$2.05-2.25 ; Butts \$2.10-2.30; Pieces \$1.60-1.75/lb (f.o.b.).

There has been a slight pick up in activity in the Indian market as well in the last few days, he said. Demand outlook continues to be hazy – especially in the US and the EU. Kernel prices can come down significantly only if raw cashew nut (RCN) prices come down

There have been some sales from stocks of West African RCN in Vietnam and India. Good quality Indonesia RCN continues to trade at a significant premium. There is no change in the news from Brazil where expectations are for a crop below 2.5 lakh tonnes for third year in a row.

Conversion into kernels in the last quarter of 2012 is likely to be less than normal. If kernel activity picks up, processing in first quarter of 2013 may be higher than normal. Given the prevailing overall scenario, it would be reasonable to expect a steady market in the last quarter moving in the current range with limited downside and some possibility of a price increase if activity picks up in next 4-6 weeks, trade sources said.

### Mixed trend in rubber

Spot rubber was mixed on Tuesday. The market made a marginal recovery in selected counters following the moderate recovery in domestic futures. According to observers, the under current was weak though covering purchases kept the commodity firm on late trades.

Sheet rubber improved to Rs 192 (190) a kg, according to traders. The grade finished unchanged at Rs 191 a kg at Kottayam and Kochi, as quoted by the Rubber Board.

The October series recovered to Rs 192.20 (188.15), November to Rs 186.79 (182.49), December to Rs 185.28 (180.74), January to Rs 185.50 (181.88) and February to Rs 187.10 (184.04), while the March series dropped to Rs 187.05 (192.75) a kg on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 firmed up at its October futures to ¥265.9 (Rs 179.05) from ¥264.2 a kg during the day session but then slipped to ¥264.5 (Rs 178.20) in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange. The grade (spot) bounced back to Rs 174.17 (172.75) a kg at Bangkok.

**Spot rates were (Rs/kg):** RSS-4: 192 (190); RSS-5: 186 (187); ungraded: 180 (178); ISNR 20: 174 (175) and latex 60 per cent: 126 (128).

## Curbs likely on diversion of fertile land

The Government is planning to initiate measures to curb diversion of productive agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes, according to Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar.

Pawar, who heads the Group of Ministers on land acquisition, said there was a broad thinking among the members on preventing conversion of agriculture land, except for public purpose.

Rapid urbanisation, driven by rising population, is exerting pressure on diversion of productive agriculture land for housing and industrial purposes, triggering a wave of protests by the farming community across the country.

Terming the diversion of agriculture land as a serious problem, Pawar said there was need to take steps to prevent its for non-agriculture purpose.

“As arable land shrinks, we have to focus on improving productivity through higher output and irrigation” he said in reply to a query.

## Canola oil import on the rise

The use of canola oil in India seems to be fast catching up with about 56,000 tonnes imported in the last nine months. Canola oil, which is said to be good for the heart, is extracted from canola seeds, which are grown largely in Canada.

Cory McArthur, Vice-President, Canola Council of Canada, said the demand for canola oil in India has witnessed a steady rise since it was introduced in 2007.

Since 2010, at least 500-700 tonnes of canola oil have been imported regularly. Early 2012, import reports indicated that 56,000 tonnes of canola oil moved in the Indian marketplace, he said.

“Experts estimate that the demand could be as high as 1,00,000 tonnes. This growth will primarily be driven by the demand for heart-healthy cooking oil,” he said.

Apart from demand from health-conscious youngsters, the demand for canola oil is driven by the rise in living standards of people in rural India.

## Survey

In a survey, conducted in April by the Nielsen Company, among 1,900 consumers in Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore and Kolkata, 55 per cent of consumers said they valued health when it comes to selecting cooking oil.

Since 2009, 15 per cent of them have changed their primary cooking oil because it was not healthy, versatile or pleasant-tasting or gave out a smell when heated. About one-fifth of the survey respondents said they would be willing to pay about 10-30 per cent more for healthier oil.

“As the world capital of diabetes where heart disease is the leading cause of death, India can benefit from the availability of heart-healthy canola oil. When used in the place of saturated fat, canola oil can reduce the risk of heart disease,” said McArthur.

Canola oil has the least saturated fat amongst all common edible oils and is a good source of omega-3 fat and vitamin E.

Canola oil is also extremely versatile with its neutral flavour, light texture and high heat tolerance.

However, canola has a long way to go in India before it can topple the most popular sunflower oil.

India is the world's second largest edible oil consumer and importer.

It consumes about 15 million tonnes of oil a year, but produces only 6.5 million tonnes.

Vegetable oil consumption in India has witnessed an annual growth of four per cent or about 4,00,000 tonnes.

## Spinning mills join hands to form firm for sourcing cheaper cotton

A little over 50 spinning mills have come together here to form Cotton Sourcing Company (COSCO) in an effort to streamline procurement of cotton in the Coimbatore region and safeguard them from price vagaries.

At a conservative estimate, the procurement by COSCO might touch Rs 3,000 crore in the current season that began this month.

The company is also forming a joint venture with Aries Logistics Ventures Ltd styled Transco for transportation of cotton.

The prime reason for the formation of COSCO is that though Tamil Nadu accounts for nearly 40 per cent of cotton consumption, it produces much less. This has necessitated procurement of cotton from States such as Gujarat, incurring huge transportation costs and supply delays.

COSCO is a newly formed public limited company that will function as a one-stop shop to meet the entire cotton sourcing requirements of its member companies. Currently, it has 51 members.

According to M.S. Rajarathinam, CEO, COSCO, the company will aim at sourcing quality cotton at a cheaper price. Collective bargaining will also help it.

Farmers will benefit from timely payment for the cotton procured 'within five working days' as COSCO has tied up with bankers.

The member mills will periodically inform COSCO about their requirement. COSCO has opened branches in cotton growing States such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra and Karnataka for sourcing.

Rajarathinam said that with the procurement set to commence from November, it would not be possible to quantify the cotton to be purchased for the current season. But keeping in view the capacity and requirements of its members, COSCO might procure cotton valued at Rs. 3,000 crore. COSCO has begun trial procurement and full fledged operations will commence next month.

Rajarathinam said the procured cotton would be directly delivered to the mills with the logistics partner taking care of lifting goods from the ginners and delivering them to the mills. Currently, the transportation cost amounted to Rs 4.80-5 a kg.



## Govt disburses Rs 1.36 lakh cr as farm credit in Q1

The Government has disbursed about Rs 1.36 lakh crore of agriculture credit to farmers in the first quarter of the current financial year.

“The target of credit flow for the year 2012-13 has been fixed at Rs 5.75 lakh crore and achievement as on June 30, 2012 is Rs 1,35,956.49 crore,” according to the background note prepared for the Economic Editors conference.

The target of credit flow for the year 2011-12 has been fixed at Rs 4.75 lakh crore and achievement as on March 31, 2012 is Rs 5,11,029.09 crore, forming more than 108 per cent of the target, the note added.

From kharif 2006-07, farmers are receiving crop loans up to a principal amount of Rs 3 lakh at 7 per cent of interest.

In 2009-10 fiscal, the Government provided an additional one per cent interest subvention to those farmers who repaid their short-term crop loans as per schedule.

The Government raised this subvention to two per cent from 2010-11 and to three per cent from 2011-12, it added.

Agriculture credit plays an important role in improving farm production, productivity and mitigating the distress of farmers, it said.

Agriculture and allied sectors, as per the revised estimates released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), is expected to grow at 2.8 per cent during 2011-12 fiscal, the note said.

This averages to a growth rate of 3.3 per cent during the 11th Five Year Plan (2007-12), which is higher than that achieved during the 9th Five Year Plan (2.5 per cent) and 10th Five Year Plan (2.4 per cent) at 2004-05 prices, it added.

The Gross Capital Formation (GCF) in agriculture as a proportion to the total GCF showed a decline from 10.5 per cent in 1999-2000 to 7.2 per cent in 2010-11 at 2004-05 prices, it said.



The GCF in agriculture relative to GDP in this sector improved from 13.1 per cent in 1999-2000 to 20.1 per cent in 2010-11 at 2004-05 prices, it added.

The average share of GCF to GDP in agriculture and allied sector in the first four years of the 11th Five Year plan was 18.8 per cent at 2004-05 prices, it said.

### **Pawar pitches for long-term farm Exim policy**



Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar today pitched for a long-term export-import policy as the country's farm output had largely stabilised.

Stating that the constant now-on, now-off policy on exports was showing the country in poor light, Pawar said the "time has come to accept and introduce the long-term export-import policy for farm commodities".

India's current policy was largely influenced by the fluctuations in production and prices of agri-commodities.

Speaking at the Economic Editors Conference, Pawar said stability in farm output had helped India emerge the second largest exporter of agri-commodities in the past one year.

India has emerged a large exporter of rice and wheat after it lifted a ban on exports of the cereals.

“We have exported 10 million tonnes (mt) of rice, including 3.5 mt of basmati rice, besides 2.5 mt of wheat, 3.5 mt of sugar and 40 lakh bales of cotton last year,” Pawar said.

The Minister said that the country had ample stocks to meet domestic requirements.

### **Foodgrain production**

Foodgrain production in the current year would definitely be lower than last year’s 257 mt as poor monsoon had hurt the kharif output, he added.

“However, we will be able to recoup the losses in the coming rabi season” he said.

Late rain in August and September has enhanced the moisture content in soil, which should help expand rabi acreage.

The first advance estimates indicate that India is likely to produce 117.18 mt of foodgrain in the kharif season, a decline of about 10 per cent over previous year’s 129.94 mt.

### **12th Plan Estimate**

Pawar said his Ministry was looking to accelerate farm sector growth to four per cent in the 12<sup>th</sup> Plan.

“Our endeavour in the 12<sup>th</sup> Plan would be to consolidate the gains and gear up to enhance the growth to four per cent.

We recognise this challenge and will do all that is necessary to improve the required level of gross capital formation in agriculture,” he said. In the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan period, the sector grew 3.3 per cent.

### **Caution on GM Crops**

To a query on genetically modified (GM) crops, Pawar said the Government had adopted a cautious approach on the issue and allowed the technology to be commercialised only in cotton.

“GM is a technology that needs to be explored, taking all safety norms to meet the rising food dem

## Turmeric traders await fresh N. India orders



With no fresh export orders and lack of quality crop arrivals, turmeric is losing its colour day by day.

“During the corresponding period last year, we sold turmeric at Rs 6,000 and odd a quintal. Sales were high but now prices are on the decline. No upcountry orders were received by anyone. Instead some North Indian merchants are placing orders in Nizamabad where it is cheaper than Erode. But we are still hopeful that within a couple of days fresh orders may be received from North India”, said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said if they do not bag any orders before October 20 there will be no fresh order till November-end.

Traders said for the past few days only medium variety turmeric is on sale .

Some local masala firms prefer fine variety turmeric for grinding purposes.

On Tuesday, because of arrival of second variety hybrid turmeric, prices were down by Rs 100 a quintal.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,011-5,638 a quintal; the root variety Rs 3,819-5,111.

**Salem Hybrid Crop:** The finger variety was sold at Rs 4,796-6,006; the root variety Rs 4,695-5,304.

Of the 952 bags put for sale, only 102 were sold.

At the Regulated Marketing Committee, the finger variety fetched Rs 4,340-5,431 and the root variety Rs 4,339-5,321.

All the 358 bags on offer were sold.

### Coconut oil futures set to revive from Oct 20



Coconut oil trading community are pinning their hopes on the re-launch of futures trading in coconut oil shortly for a better price recovery.

According to Prakash B. Rao, Vice-President, Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA), the coconut oil market is expected to revive in the near future with the move to re-start futures trading.

He said that the First Commodity of Exchange of India, which is a subsidiary of COMA, will revive futures trading in coconut oil from October 20 after getting necessary approval from the Forward Market Commission.

The resumption of futures trading is likely to balance prices for coconut oil and copra. The market expects better participation from traders, exporters as they can hedge their contract for the next four months, he added.

Meanwhile, the market after a recent crash in the last two days is ruling steady. Prices in Kerala are ruling at Rs 54 for a kg (Rs 57) and Rs 50 in Tamil Nadu (Rs 52). Prices are likely to stabilise at the current level, he said.

Copra arrival, he said, is likely to be short in case if there is further fall in prices. Farmers will not disburse their stocks at lower levels compared with the support price of the Government at Rs 5,100 a quintal. Copra prices both in Tamil Nadu and Kerala markets are at the same level quoted last week at Rs 3,700 and Rs 3,900 respectively.

Rao said that palm oil prices after touching a new low at Rs 48 kg in the last two days bounced back to Rs 51 this week against Rs 54 last week. However, palm kernel oil prices are ruling steady at Rs 47, which is a major concern to coconut farmers, he added.

P.G.K. Koshy, President, COMA, said that the market is witnessing a buying trend as soap and hair oil manufactures started purchasing at lower level. There is a heavy arrival from Tamil Nadu to the central parts of Kerala due to reasonably good stock.

Bharat N. Khona, former Board Member, COMA, said that market is showing a slight improvement in the last few days. Due to attractive pricing, the corporates and upcountry buyers are active in the market. However, the prices of palm kernel oil, which is ruling low is a matter of concern, he said.

### Castorseed futures spike up on buying interest



Castorseed futures rebounded from last week lows and gained by the maximum permitted level on the NCDEX as traders created fresh positions. Good export demand also aided the positive trend.

October futures increased 4 per cent to Rs 3,602 a quintal on the NCDEX. November and December contracts gained by Rs 142 and Rs 144 to Rs 3,671 and Rs 3,732, respectively.

Most of the castor growing areas have reported steady progress in sowing. Yields are also expected to be better. However, prospects of higher production on the back of improved rainfall in the major producing regions may cap gains.

India is the largest producer and exporter of castor seed and its oil, meal. According to the latest data from the Solvent Extractors' Association of India, India's total castor meal exports during April-August were reported at 1.12 lakh tonnes, up 58 per cent from the last year in the same period. Export of castor oil reached 30,963 tonnes for August 2012, against 35,130 tonnes for July.

The SEA's castor crop survey estimates domestic production at 1.61 million tonnes for the 2011-12 season (October-September), showing a growth of about 30 per cent over the 1.25 million tonnes recorded in 2010-11.

The spot market was steady and at Disa (Gujarat) castorseed was quoted at Rs 3,639.3 a quintal.

### Cotton futures continue uptrend





Cotton futures on the Multi Commodity Exchange were trading on the positive note after gaining nearly two per cent on Monday on the back of strong demand.

October contract opened higher at Rs 16,220 a bale on Tuesday against the previous close of Rs 16,140. It was up 0.62 per cent at Rs 16,250 a bale at 12.45 pm.

Cotton output estimates were recently lowered to 334 lakh bales against 352 lakh bales registered last year. The area under cotton cultivation was down at 114 lakh hectares against 120 lakh hectares registered last year.

Cotton prices in major spot markets were close to the minimum support price of Rs 3,600 a quintal set by the Government. This will cap any sharp spike in cotton prices.

### Flour mills' unexpected buying lifts wheat



A sudden demand for flour pushed up its prices as well as that of dara wheat on Tuesday. Dara wheat and flour prices increased by Rs 50-100 for a quintal and 90-kg bag, respectively.

“The uptrend was not anticipated but frantic buying by the flour mills to meet the current demand led dara wheat and flour prices upwards,” said Satish Kumar, a wheat trader.

Lower supplies in the market are also a reason behind the uptrend, he said. After witnessing a fall of around Rs 100 a quintal last week, market has recovered on Tuesday and is likely to rule stable this week as traders are expected to hold their positions, said market sources.

In the physical market, dara went up by Rs 50 and quoted at Rs 1,460-1,470 a quintal.

Around 500 quintals of dara variety arrived from Uttar Pradesh the stocks were directly offloaded at the mills.

Mill delivery was Rs 1,460-1,465 while delivery at the chakki was Rs 1,470 a quintal.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat for October delivery increased by Rs 37 and traded at Rs 1,588 .

November contracts went up by Rs 16 to Rs 1,564 .

Wheat Spot prices on the exchange ruled at Rs 1,440 a quintal.

### **Flour Prices**

An increase in domestic demand for flour coupled with an uptrend in wheat prices, pushed flour prices up by Rs 100 and quoted at Rs 1,490 for a 90-kg bag.

On the other hand, Chokar ruled flat and sold at Rs 670 for a 49-kg bag.

### **Mills continue selling sugar**



Sugar prices were mixed on Tuesday on the Vashi wholesale market with the prospects of settling down at current level.

The volume in the physical market was routine and continuous selling by mills kept demand – supply ample in the market. In physical market, prices were unchanged, while naka rates improved by Rs 10 for fine S-grade variety.

Mill tender rates were down by Rs 10-30 on higher selling, said traders.



A Vashi-based wholesaler said that mills are continuously selling as combined open sale quota for October and November is considered to be higher. Second, local demand is also as usual due to middle month. But traders are very optimistic about rebound in demand from next week ahead of Dasara.

He said that on Monday evening Maharashtra's mills sold more than 1.10 lakh bags including one rail rake (about 27,000 bags).

The beginning of new crushing season will add more pressure in the coming days as producers are carrying sufficient carryover stocks.

Sugar prices in other centres are at par with Maharashtra limiting their demand in the State. On expectation of higher demand, mills are not very keen to sell at lower price. They expect buying interest of Eastern States may continue in the coming days. Arrivals in Vashi continued to be higher. In Vashi market, arrivals were about 65-66 truckloads (each of 100 bags of quintal each) and local dispatches were about 62-63 loads.

On Monday evening, about 22-24 mills offered tenders and sold 88,000- 90,000 bags (each of 100 kg) to the local traders and one rail rake – 27,000 bags to eastern buyers in the range of Rs 3,350-3,440 (Rs 3,380-3,440) for S-grade and Rs 3,450 - 3,540 (Rs 3,460 - 3,540) M-grade.

**The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates:** S-grade Rs 3,522- 3,575 (Rs 3,522- 3,575) and M-grade Rs 3,572-3,721 (Rs 3,592-3,701).

**Naka delivery rates:** S-grade Rs 3,450-3,510 (Rs 3,450-3,500) and M-grade Rs 3,530-3,620 (Rs 3,530-3,620).

### Pepper moves up

The pepper market moved up on bullish sentiments created by circular trading on Tuesday and consequently all the active contracts ended much above the previous day's closing.

Despite sharp fall in the open interest, the market moved up. As much as 602 tonnes have been marked for staggered delivery and a total of 1,061 tonnes have been marked so far, market sources told *Business Line*.

## **Bull cartel**

The bull operators' cartel appears to be desperately trying to push up the market, they said. They are allegedly trying to corner 4,000 - 5,000 tonnes of pepper by squeezing the market with the intention to monopolise it.

Arrivals from the primary markets have picked up and 38 tonnes of farm grade pepper arrived and that were traded at Rs 405, 407 and 411 a kg, depending on the quality, grade and area of production.

According to the trade on an average around 70 tonnes of pepper are being deposited in the exchange daily.

October contract on the NCDEX increased by Rs 410 to the last traded price (LTP) of Rs 43,700 a quintal. November and December contracts went up by Rs 270 and 810 respectively to the LTP of Rs 43,555 and 42,735 a quintal.

## **Turnover**

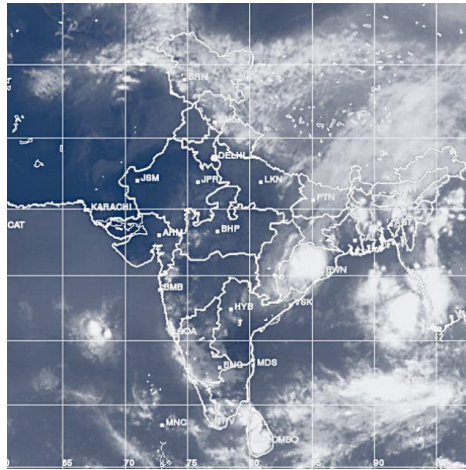
Total turnover increased by 1,733 tonnes to close at 2,619 tonnes. Total open interest decreased by 394 tonnes to 7,250 tonnes.

October open interest fell by 623 tonnes to close at 2,185 tonnes while November and December moved up by 176 tonnes and 34 tonnes respectively to close at 3,818 tonnes and 882 tonnes.

Spot prices increased in tandem with the futures market trend by Rs200 to close at Rs40,200 (ungarlbcd) and Rs41,700 (MG 1) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market declined despite increase in the futures prices following weakening of the rupee against the dollar today. Based on Oct prices it was at \$8,550 a tonne (c&f) while based on Nov and Dec prices it would be at \$8,475 and \$8,300 a tonne (c&f) respectively, they said.

## N-E monsoon may set in 'any time' after Oct 17



Rain or thundershowers have been forecast over extreme south peninsular India and along the east coast over the next week.

This is expected to gradually grow in strength to precipitate northeast monsoon 'anytime after October 17' if model forecasts are any indication.

### 'LOW' PERSISTS

On Tuesday, a rain-driving low pressure area persisted over north-west Bay of Bengal and adjoining coastal Odisha as did a circulation over east-central Arabian Sea. They threw in an east-to-west trough of lower pressure linking the Arabian Sea with south-west Bay of Bengal across Karnataka and north Tamil Nadu.

Global weather maps showed another low-pressure area having dropped anchor over extreme southeast Bay of Bengal.

An India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast valid until Friday said that thundershowers may break out over coastal and south interior Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Lakshadweep.

### PENINSULAR RAINS

Rain or thundershowers would also occur at one or two places over Rayalaseema and coastal Andhra Pradesh.

North interior Karnataka, Konkan, Goa and south madhya Maharashtra too may witness occasional rain during next two days before drying up.

This would likely help the retreating South-West monsoon to exit more areas in Central India and north peninsular India.

Weather would be mainly dry over plains of north-west India and Central India. An IMD outlook for the next three days said that heavy rainfall would occur at one or two places over the north eastern States during next three days.

### **MERCURY FALLS**

Heavy rainfall has also been forecast at one or two places over Odisha, West Bengal and Sikkim on Wednesday.

Minimum (night) temperatures have already fallen by 3 to 4 deg Celsius over parts of Bihar and isolated pockets of sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim.

Both maximum and minimum temperatures are expected to fall by another 2 deg Celsius over plains of north-west and Central India during the next three days.

Overnight on Tuesday, they were below normal by 2 to 4 deg Celsius over Jammu and Kashmir, west Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and south coastal Andhra Pradesh.

The lowest minimum of 15.5 deg Celsius was recorded at Malanjkhanda in Madhya Pradesh.

# Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

10.10.2012 A.M

## Farmers continue protest in Karnataka

A day after Karnataka government stopped release of water to Tamil Nadu citing low storage in KRS reservoir, farmers here said they would continue their dharna till the Cauvery River Authority reviewed its earlier directive.

“Till the CRA headed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh gives its verdict, we will continue the agitation,” former minister and leader of Cauvery Hitarakshana Samithi (the committee spearheading the stir) MS Atmananda told reporters here.

Karnataka has been requesting the CRA to stay its September 19 order asking the state to release 9,000 cusecs of water to Tamil Nadu daily till October 15 and keep it in abeyance till the decision was subjected to review.

The Cauvery Monitoring Committee is expected to meet in Delhi on October 11 during which the reports of the two central study teams that visited both the states are likely to be debated. Farmers claim that water was still flowing into Tamil Nadu though the irrigation department officials say crest gates had been shut. “We will continue the stir for two more days and await the outcome of the monitoring committee,” Atmananda said.

A group of farmers also blocked Mysore-Bangalore road on Tuesday demanding early review of the CRA decision. Cauvery Hitarakshana Samithi president G Madegowda also continued his dharna.

Farmers would decide their future course of action after learning from the Supreme Court, which had adjourned the state's petition on the dispute to October 12. The apex court had said its order directing Karnataka to supply 9,000 cusecs of water to Tamil Nadu will not be an impediment in the Prime Minister deciding on the review plea.

## Rabi crop's sowing advanced by a month



Farmers have advanced the rabi crop's sowing by about a month to take advantage of the high moisture left in the fields due to late rainfall this monsoon and the early onset of winter fog. While the sowing of wheat, some rabi oilseeds and pulses has begun in north Karnataka, east and south Rajasthan and eastern Madhya Pradesh, farmers are expediting harvesting of short-duration paddy in Punjab to vacate the field for wheat sowing.

Union food minister K V Thomas also recently advised farmers to commence early sowing of rabi crops. Wheat, chana, masur and rapeseed/mustard seed are grown fully in the rabi season. Also, about 13 per cent of paddy, 25 per cent of groundnut, 77 per cent of sunflower, 20 per cent of sesame and 35 per cent of urad are grown in this season.

“While short-duration crops are being harvested hastily to prepare the fields for rabi sowing, farmers have also started covering the area left unsown during the kharif season due to delay in the monsoon rainfall,” said B Venkateswarlu, director of the Hyderabad-based Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture.

## Agriculture getting resistant to change

Despite recurring droughts and floods in various parts of the country due to changing climatic patterns, Indian agriculture is gradually developing a semblance of resistance to changing weather patterns, said agriculture minister Sharad Pawar.

### Tomato can cut risk of stroke by 50%: Study

LONDON: Eating tomato and tomato-based food rich in antioxidant lycopene can halve the risk of stroke, a research has said.

Finland researchers found that people with the highest amounts of lycopene in their blood were 55% less likely to have a [stroke](#) than people with lowest amounts of lycopene in their blood. The study involved 1,031 men between the ages of 46 and 65.

The level of lycopene in their blood was tested at the start of the study and they were followed for 12 years. During that time, 67 men had a stroke. Among the men with the lowest levels of lycopene, 25 of 258 men had a stroke.

Among those with the highest levels of lycopene, 11 of 259 men had a stroke. When researchers looked at just strokes due to blood clots, the results were even stronger. Those with the highest levels of lycopene were 59% less likely to have a stroke than those with the lowest levels.

### Milk price hike is honey for farmers

KOCHI: Prices of all goods and services are headed north in this hike season. So is the price of milk by state's own milk cooperative. Predictably, the public are outraged and debates are raging on media, kitchen and the living room on whether the price hike is really inevitable or an attempt by the Milma to cash in on the mandate it secured from the Kerala High Court last year for finalising milk prices it supplies.

If you look at milk production and consumption pattern, less than 30% of households in the state depend on packed milk produced by Milma and around 35 other private milk brands.

According to Milma chairman P T Gopala Kurup, Milma supplies around 12.5 lakh litres of milk to consumers in Kerala every day. Of this, Milma's domestic procurement of milk is only 8.5 lakh litres. For the rest of milk, Milma depends on dairies from neighbouring states, mainly Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

As per the rough statistics available with Milma, other packaged milk brands together sell around 2 lakh litres of milk in the state every day. Unorganised farmers together sell around 16 lakh litres of milk to households in Kerala daily. But the number of farmers and cattle are showing a steady decline for years together. Political intervention in fixing milk prices has been cited as the main reason for making the plight of milk farmers worse in the state. The intervention does not extend to addressing core issues such as fodder price hike and other issues of dairy farmers, experts claim.

Milma authorities vow that the price hike has been mooted only to help milk farmers realise their production cost. "Milma passes 83% of the milk price to farmers. Farmers get an average Rs 23 per litre of milk that Milma sells at Rs 28. The predicament here is that the Rs 23 per litre does not cover even the production cost. As per our latest assessment, the production cost of milk per litre has crossed Rs 30, forcing farmers to leave the profession," says Gopala Kurup. The cooperative that moots Rs 5 per litre increase in milk price is also mulling to pass on the hike to farmers, completely.

Sources say that the lack of accurate data on milk production and the number of cattle are the main reasons that make the state government's intervention attempts ineffective. As per the statistics of the state government, Kerala produces above 70 lakh litres of milk a day. However, according to officials of the cooperative, milk production could only be around 25 lakh litres a day.

"Milk production was on the rise after last year's price increase. However, the scenario witnessed a drastic change as the price of cattle feed increased substantially. Milma and the



government-run Kerala Feeds together cater to 49% of the cattle feed market. Private manufacturers have increased the price of feed per 50 kg bag by around Rs 250 recently. Price hike and scarcity of feeds are forcing farmers to look for other options," Milma chairman said.

"The magnitude of milk price increase can be understood well if you compare the price of beef and milk. Five years ago, the price of beef per kg was not even Rs 50. Now it has increased to Rs 180 per kg. Meanwhile, the price of milk has not even increased by Rs 10 during this time" says Gopakumaran Nair, a milk farmer in the city outskirts here.

### **GM crops may cripple traditional form of farming'**

HYDERABAD: In what can be a disturbing trend, agriculture experts observe that after having introduced Bt cotton successfully in the state, MNCs, promoting Genetically Modified (GM) crops, seem to have taken over large tracts of land on the city outskirts to promote their varieties.

"There has been an unusual increase of 50% of corn crop cultivation on the city outskirts and most of them are Monsanto and other MNC varieties. This is a major threat to traditional farming as these companies enter this way by acquainting and encouraging particular types of crop growth for which GM variety is already available and corn happens to be one of them." said P V Satheesh, national convenor, southern action on genetic engineering.

Satheesh along with other national and international personalities associated with food and agriculture sector raised their voice against the usage of [GM crops](#) at a side event held in the city as part of CoP-11 meet which was called 'Bt Cotton Web Around Food, Farming and Livestock Systems: Continental Perspectives from Africa and Asia'.

Satheesh pointed out that Andhra Pradesh would be most vulnerable for introducing new variety of GM crops in the future. "The farmers here have already been brainwashed into using Bt cotton extensively and they think this is very modern type of farming. But the soil in the state

has already started to lose its fertility. A study conducted in Warangal district on land, where Bt cotton was being grown, showed that in the first year the soil became 2% toxic and in the fifth year of cultivation, the soil had become 40% toxic." he said.

Another speaker, Nammalwar, chairman, Vanagam foundation in Trichy, called upon all the farmers to resist any more introductions of GM varieties. "The millet crop cultivation has decreased due to [Bt cotton farming](#) which is being widely promoted by foreign companies. As a result, the cattle which grazes on millets is not able to get sufficient feed and many are selling these cattle to slaughter houses. The traditional form of farming is being destroyed slowly and farmers are increasingly depending on fertilizers."

V S Vijayan, former chairman of Kerala biodiversity board, said that it was an absurd argument put forward by many at the helm of affairs that GM varieties were the solution to meet the food need of the country. "Studies have shown that organic farming is more efficient and productive than growing genetically modified variety. A recent survey in Maharashtra has shown that normal cotton crop per hectare had fetched a profit of Rs 29,600 while Bt cotton fetched only Rs 17,300 per hectare." He also blamed the high rate of suicides among cotton farmers on the Bt variety and said that any attempt by the government to allow GM crops will result in MNCs dictating our food habits.

[Frances Moore Lappe](#) from USA, co-founder of small planet institute, said, "The USA is the guinea pig of GM food promoting companies. We are losing our biodiversity, family farms and even our health is deteriorating due to use of these food. 70% of the processed food found in our country contains GM organisms but most Americans are not even aware of this fact because there is no labeling. The GM companies have taken over our country and are using fear tactics against anyone who try to criticise them"

### Committee set up to study onion market

NASHIK: To resolve the stand off between traders and mathadi workers, the state on Tuesday decided to form a committee to study the functioning of the onion market.

The committee will study the functioning of onion trade in Lasalgaon market and prepare a report on the same, to be presented to the district guardian minister and the labour minister to evolve an amicable solution to the trader-mathadi faceoff. "The meeting to discuss the future of the business of the Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) in Lasalgaon was held in the office of the state labour minister Hasan Mushrif, where it was decided to study the situation for a month and then prepare a report," Jaydatta Holkar, chairman of Lasalgaon APMC said.

The committee will comprise a director, a marketing federation, secretary of the labour department, MLA Shashikant Shinde (who will represent the mathadi workers), traders, directors of Lasalgaon, representatives of the farmers and the APMC chairman.

### Sweeping powers for VC in Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology Bill

BHUBANESWAR: The Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) Bill 2012, which was introduced in the assembly in the monsoon session recently, proposes to curtail the role of elected representatives in the varsity affairs while giving sweeping powers to the vice-chancellor.

If the Bill becomes an Act, incumbent vice-chancellor Debi Prasad Ray will automatically get a two-year extension after his current tenure ends in December. Ray's re-appointment for a second term for three years from December 2009 had invited a public interest litigation, (PIL) which is still pending at the Orissa high court.

Consolidating the VC's powers, the bill proposes to allow the VC to nominate three members to the varsity board of management (BoM), the apex decision making body of the university. As of now, the VC can not nominate anyone to the panel. Besides, the Bill proposes to include only one MLA in the BoM, contrary to the present custom of having two legislators on the panel.

"The BoM is the apex body to ensure checks and balances in the VC's functioning. If he or she manages to have his own people in the apex body, there would be no mechanism to scrutinize his or her functioning," said a former VC of the varsity on condition of anonymity.

According to Clause 24 (7) of the Bill, the VC will hold office for a period of five years or until he attains the age of 70 years, contrary to the existing provision of appointment for a period of three years or till the age of 65. According to Section 50 (2) (C) of the Bill, the incumbent VC would continue in his position for two more years. Ray's current term ends on December 17.

Ray is at present enjoying his second term in the office. His first stint at the varsity was from December 2006 to December 2009. Challenging his second term appointment, advocate Madhusudan Panda had filed a PIL in the Orissa high court, stating that it violated the norms of [University Grants Commission](#) (UGC) and [Indian Council of Agricultural Research](#) (ICAR). The UGC and ICAR norms prevent a second term appointment.

Dr Bhagirathi Senapati, a former OUAT VC, said the tenure of a VC should be uniform in all state universities. "OUAT should not be singled out to make the VC's term five-year-long as it is three years in other universities," he said.

When contacted, Ray said the new Bill was in accordance with the model ICAR Act. "The Bill has gone through various government departments and the state cabinet before being introduced in the assembly in the monsoon session. It is not as if I have manipulated something to get a further extension. I will leave the university after my current term ends," he said.

When pointed out that the model ICAR Act 2009 doesn't recommend VC's nominees to the BoM, he said, "The government must have introduced the Bill after properly going through all the aspects. It is now up to the government to take a decision," Ray said.

The Bill, which will replace the OUAT Act 1965, also proposes to abolish the post of ex-officio pro-chancellor, occupied by the state agriculture minister. "It is just an ornamental post with no executive role," the VC said, justifying the move.

Contrary to the ongoing practice of two MLAs being made members of the BoM, only one law maker will be a BoM member. Bhubaneswar-Ekamra MLA Ashok Panda said when the matter

would come up for discussion in the assembly, all these issues would be discussed. "I will place my views in the assembly. It is too premature to comment on the matter now," Panda said.

## Didi takes FDI to farmers

*Tamluk CM tells them their land will be 'grabbed by new set of middlemen'*



In a bid to explain her opposition to foreign direct investment (FDI) in retail to the farmers, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday warned the farmers that they will lose their lands. "They want to snatch your land and livelihood and set up Walmart here. But let me say this. As long as I am here, we will not allow Walmart to enter Bengal," Banerjee told a rally at Nimtouri in rural Tamluk as the party geared to take up the FDI issue in the panchayat elections that are scheduled for next year.

According to her, a group of middlemen will come to the fore through the FDI in retail who will "stop farmers from selling their produce and will slowly grab their land".

Ironically, at the same rally she said she was proud to announce that the Japanese-owned Mitshubishi, which has set up a chemical plant in Haldia, was going to make fresh investments in the plant.

Mitshubishi Chemicals incidentally, has made the highest foreign direct investment in the state and one of the biggest in the country. It is often shown as a feather in the crown of Bengal's industrial revival both during the Left and now under the Trinamool Congress government.

“The UPA government is trying to sell our country. In the name of reforms they are carrying out loot. Loot chalche loot, jhoot chalche jhoot,” she said repeating her new slogan that began with a post on her Facebook wall.

She also accused the media of “spreading canards” against her. “Just because I am opposed to reforms, a section of the media is spreading canard against us. But they are not Gods that whatever they say will be believed by the people,” she added.

She also distributed land deeds to farmers under her project Nijo Bhumi Nijo Griha.

‘Centre blocking investment to Haldia’

HALDIA: Expressing unhappiness over the Centre’s “delaying” in giving environmental clearance to the eco-tourism project at Nayachar in East Midnapore, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday sought immediate sanction for the project. She said the Ministry of Environment has objection to the 5,000 acres of the total 40,000-acre project. “Leave that 5,000 acres and let us go ahead with the plans of setting up eco-tourism project at Nayachar,” she added.

Mamata had opposed the proposed chemical hub at Nayachar on environmental grounds when former CM Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee mooted the proposal. After coming to power, she revived the plan and proposed an eco-tourism project instead of the petro-chemical project. After inaugurating three industrial projects here today, Mamata accused the Centre of blocking Haldia’s industrial expansion by “imposing a ban on industries” on green norms.

### **Don’t burn paddy straw, PAU urges farmers**

Director of Extension Education of Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) Dr M S Gill has urged the state farmers not to indulge in paddy straw burning “as it leads to serious health hazards and environmental pollution through emission of gases such as carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, methane, nitrous oxide and aerosols”.

Cautioning the farmers against the ill-effects of stubble burning, he said the burning of the residue ended up in the non-renewable loss of precious nutrients. The heat generated by the straw burning led to loss of useful microbes in soil, adversely affecting soil properties.

Dr Gill called upon the farmers to adopt eco-friendly technologies like the use of paddy straw for fodder, composting, energy generation and raising of mushrooms.

As per him, PAU has recommended a lighter and low-power Happy Seeder machine which helps sowing of wheat into paddy stubbles. The technology offers a number of benefits such as less weed growth and improved soil health.

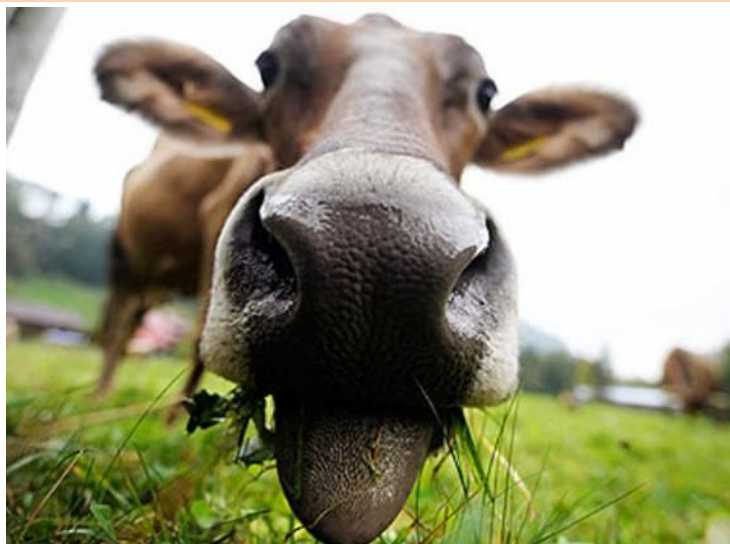


# DECCAN Chronicle

TODAY FARM NEWS

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## Udderly delicious: Indian cow milk best in world



Indian cows are better than their bovine counterparts abroad in terms of quality of milk, lifespan, fat content, and overall health, according to an expert.

"An Indian cow is a self-harvester unlike German, Canadian or Australian cows," Dr Ilse, an environment activist from Germany, said here on Tuesday.

According to Dr Ilse, an Indian cow falls prey to health complications like mastitis (infection in the udder) and metabolism sickness on fewer occasions during its average lifespan of 13 to 15 years.

It also produces a calf every year, unlike cows abroad whose life span is only five or six years and produce, on an average, three or four calves in those years, the activist said.

"Though Indian cows do not produce a very large quantity of milk every day, unlike foreign cows, their quality of milk is better than foreign ones. They also continue to produce milk throughout their life," Dr Ilse said.

