

## Cardamom auction resumes at Spices Park

Cardamom auction resumed at the Spices Park at Puttady on Wednesday after a gap of one month. Twenty-four traders took part in the auction, though those from Tamil Nadu were conspicuous by their absence.

The auction had been boycotted by the traders since September 25 after the Spices Board increased the bidding rate from 50 paise to Rs.5 and reduced the payment date from 21 to 12 days.

The Spice Board last week convened a meeting of cardamom growers and traders' representatives in an effort to find an amicable solution to the problem, and decided to revise the bidding rate to Rs.2. It also announced that the auction would begin on Wednesday.

The traders were sticking to the stand that any decision to raise the bidding rate from Re.1 was not acceptable to them and there was uncertainty about whether they would participate in Wednesday's auction. Nearly 90 per cent of the traders are from Tamil Nadu.

### Fall in price

An official of the Spices Park said that of the 15 tonnes of cardamom that was put up for auction, 9.7 tonnes was sold. The average price a kg was Rs.678.50, the maximum price was Rs.1,020, and the minimum Rs.473. He said the traders participated in the auction as usual, and two agencies from Kumily and Vandanmedu held the auction.

In the open market, there was a fall in price of Rs.20 a kg and the average price was nearly Rs.700 before the auction began on Wednesday. There was also apprehension that the prices were falling.

However, the official said the fall in the average price could not be construed as a downward trend. It was due to poor quality of cardamom traded on Wednesday.

An average 45 to 50 traders usually participate in the auction, but it was nearly half that on Wednesday. Though the issue had not been resolved, it was expected that more traders would arrive for auction in the coming days.

A traders' representative from Tamil Nadu said they could not take part in the auction at a bidding rate higher than Re.1.

However, they had taken the stand that those who preferred the bidding rate of Rs.2 were free to participate in the auction.

### **Schemes no panacea for coconut farmers**

The various projects and schemes designed to strengthen coconut farming seem to be failing to cheer farmers who see flagging prices for the crop while an unrestrained escalation of production costs mars their spirits to carry on cultivation.

Even as schemes to procure virgin coconut through Krishi Bhavans by April next year was announced recently, the coconut farming fraternity continues to be apprehensive, with a host of measures declared earlier having turned unrewarding. The formation of producers' societies and federations and many other earlier schemes were received with anticipation by farmers, but nothing has helped improve the coconut prices, a farmer says.

While the price of dehusked coconut has come down from Rs.11 per kg to Rs.9, the price for plucking the nuts has gone up from Rs.15 per palm to Rs.18-20. Changing weather leads to lesser yield as years pass, all these adding up to their woes, he said.

When the production involves tending the palms with fertilisers and labour, the final yield goes through a series of processes like plucking, picking, transportation, weighing and dehusking, and after deducting the costs, the farmer is left with a paltry sum of Rs.1 per nut.

The authorities, meanwhile, have a different point to make. The 'friends'coconut tree,' a project to train coconut pluckers, formation of societies and federations, and schemes for many value-

added coconut products are part of the government plan to better the prices and boost the industry.

The district has 181 registered producers' societies and three federations. The government has planned to install one more copra dryer in addition to the existing ones, they say.

But the farmers say the schemes, many a time, remain on paper and have never been implemented. The criteria for utilising the benefits of the schemes are revealed only when a farmer approaches the authorities. The farmers say that engaging in coconut farming alone is non-profitable, and many of them go for alternative jobs to make a living.

### **Development works worth Rs. 157.64 crore taken up'**

Animal Husbandry Minister Revu Naik Belamagi, who represents the Gulbarga Rural Assembly constituency, said development works worth Rs. 157.64 crore has been taken up in the constituency.

He told presspersons here on Wednesday that the works include construction of bridge-cum-barrages across the Bennethora and Gandorinala, drinking water projects, construction of roads and repair of existing roads and bridges.

Mr. Belamagi said the construction of 14 bridge-cum-barrages, costing Rs. 45 crore, would be taken up across the Bennethora. This will provide irrigation facilities to 2,100 hectares of parched lands, he said. Similarly, works on four bridge-cum-barrages across the Gandorinala and eight across the Upper Mullamari would be taken up at a cost of Rs. 8 crore and Rs. 18 crore respectively. This will provide irrigation facilities to 1,700 hectares of land, he said. Apart from this, drinking water projects worth Rs. 4.56 crore in Kamalanagar, Bodan, Ambala, V.K. Salagar, Chinchansur, Naron, Karahari Tanda, Lengeti, Belagunda, and other villages have been taken up, he said. Mr. Belamagi said works pertaining to the construction of new roads and repair of the existing ones has been taken up at a cost of Rs. 82.8 crore.

## Persistent pests worry paddy growers



The paddy crop which was attacked by brown plant hoppers in Bellary taluk.

Paddy growers in Bellary and Sirguppa taluks are a worried lot, after their crops were attacked by brown plant hoppers.

“Despite spraying pesticides, we are unable to control the pests,” says Hampanagouda, in Moka village. Enquiries revealed that the pest, also known as ‘burning hopper’, attacks the stem of the crop to suck the sap, because of which the supply of nutrients from the roots gets cut off and the crop starts drying.

Paddy is cultivated in over 73,000 ha, as against a total targeted area of 75,000 ha in the district, with major coverage in Bellary (26,671 ha), Sirguppa (24,845 ha) and Hospet (12,989 ha).

When contacted, a senior official in the Agriculture Department told *The Hindu* that these pests attack most often during the winter. Effective water management and the use of proper pesticides as suggested by agricultural experts would help control the pest, the official said.

He said that farmers should reduce the water level in the field, and ensure that the land was dry for about a week. In the meantime, phorate granules or any other pesticide, as suggested by experts, should be sprayed which to control the pest.

## Training

Horticulture farmers were given training under the comprehensive watershed development programme at Mehkar village in Bidar district on Wednesday, according to a release. Resource

person M. Moijoddin spoke about horticulture and the economic use of water. Around 85 farmers participated. — Special Correspondent

### **Sugarcane to fetch Rs. 2,400 per tonne**

The State government has fixed the sugarcane price for 2012-13 at Rs. 2,400 per tonne in the sugarcane growing areas coming under the jurisdiction of Mandya and Pandavapura sugar factories, a press release said. A meeting chaired by Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar on Monday fixed the sugarcane price. The Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha had sought Rs. 2,500 per tonne of sugarcane. Forest Minister C.P. Yogeshwar, who is in-charge Minister of Mandya district, held a meeting with Mr. Shettar in this connection.

### **Dam levels on the rise**

Water touched 50-foot mark in Vaigai dam here on Wednesday, thanks to increase in discharge from Periyar dam and sizable rain in the catchment areas as well as at the dam site. Inflow into the dam was 1,874 cusecs and the discharge 60 cusecs.

Storage level in Sothuparai dam was going up at a rapid pace and was expected to surplus in a day or two. Water level rose to 123.7 feet (total level 126 feet) with an inflow of 59 cusecs. Heavy downpour in Kodaikanal hill and in the catchments shot up water level to this mark from 36 feet a week ago.

Storage level in Periyar dam has been increasing steadily for the past one week. Now, the level stood at 123.7 feet. Inflow into dam was 1,586 cusecs and withdrawal went up to 1,372 cusecs. Storage was 3,361 mcft. Marginal increase was recorded in Manjalar dam level as it was at 47.1 feet. Inflow was 96 cusecs and the discharge two cusecs. Rainfall was very poor in many areas. Rainfall recorded at various places in the district in mm: Periyar 3.6, Gudalur 3, Uthampalayam 5, Shanmuganadhi Dam 3, Thekkady 3.8, Veerapandi 5 and Vaigai dam 2.

## Unsold banana plants hinder vehicle movement



Waste material: People collecting unsold pumpkins were not interested in banana plants that were abandoned on the busy Mohanur Road junction near the Namakkal Bus Stand on Wednesday. -Photo: M.K. Ananth

Roadside vendors did not have the expected sale for *Ayudha Pooja* this year, as unsold banana trees and pumpkins were found abandoned alongside the busy roads in Namakkal on Wednesday.

While they were found abandoned in many places across the town, dozens of pumpkins that had been heaped alongside the busy Mohanur Road and Paramathi Road hindered vehicle movement.

In addition to the drizzling that kept the roads wet and slippery, it was very difficult for two-wheeler riders as they had to avoid the slippery banana leaves that occupied a major portion of the road near the Namakkal Bus Stand.

By afternoon conservancy workers and roadside dwellers picked up the pumpkins, but they were not interested in the small banana plants.

Conservancy workers in the municipality cleared the garbage close to the heaps of banana plants, but they left these plants untouched as they would have to pull several loads of their handcarts filled with the leftovers to clear the entire road.

Road users said that police and the local body officials should ensure that such shops – which mushroom for the one-day sale – are not put up near the junctions and narrow roads.

### Industries pose threat to farming

Farmers allege that their complaints are not being attended to: MLA



K. Balakrishnan, Chidambaram MLA (second from right), inspecting water-logged farm land at Parangipettai.

The proposal to set up a host of industries along the coastal area of Cuddalore district is fraught with danger as it would have impact on the livelihood of farmers and fishermen, said K. Balakrishnan, Chidambaram constituency MLA.

Mr. Balakrishnan of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) told *TheHindu* that already signs of the impending danger to agriculture had started showing up.

It came to light when he along with district executive committee member of the party G. Rameshbabu visited about 10 villages in the region in the past two days.

Mr. Balakrishnan said that for setting up a textile park 1,000 acres of lands had been acquired in the region at a rock bottom price. Later, the level of the land had been raised by 5 feet by indiscriminate dumping of red soil.

For a cursory look, it may look a routine exercise. But it was engendered with problems for the farming community. Since the level of this particular stretch of the land had gone up, the very ecology of the region got affected.

The MLA said that before the land level was altered, the rain water would automatically drain into the sea by natural gravity, without resulting in any stagnation.

But, with the raising of the land in that particular stretch, an artificial plateau had come up now. The cause for concern was that it was surrounded by paddy fields stretching over 1,100 acres and casuarinas groves on 200 acres.

In the recent spell of rain all the 1,300 acres of farmland were inundated with knee deep water. Such a phenomenon could be noticed in villages such as Periyapattu, Thachampalayam, Periyapandikuzhi, Chinnadikuzhi, Vandiyapalayam, Gopalapuram and Silambimangalam.

Mr. Balakrishnan further said that the paddy crops, grown through the direct sowing method, were now standing only half-a-foot height. The water-logging had posed threat to their survival. He further noted that it was the anguish of the coastal community that the authorities were least concerned about their plight. It was their allegation that any valid complaints about the problems faced by industrialisation and diversion of farm lands for industrial purposes were not paid due attention.

Mr. Balakrishnan said that Chidambaram Sub-Collector S. Subramanian and tahsildar Dhansingh had promised to take arrangement for draining stagnating water.

The MLA opined that adopting ad hoc measures would not mitigate the sufferings of the farmers. "The authorities must ensure that industrialisation does not happen at the cost of agriculture and the interest of farmers is not given a short shrift," Mr. Balakrishnan added.

### **Food safety training to be imparted**

A training in food safety and quality will be held in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University on October 30 and 31.

According to a release, it will cover topics, viz., nutritional qualities of fresh and processed food, food additives and adulterants, microbial food safety and management of microbial hazards, identification and detection of insect contamination in food, food standards, and National Food Control System and Certification Procedures. Those interested can attend by paying Rs. 1,000 in the form of a Demand Draft. For details: 0422-6611268.



## Downpour continues, vegetable prices go up

This festive season, rains played spoilsport to crops, and fewer arrivals to the Koyambedu market have led to a hike in the cost of vegetables and fruits.

However, since the demand has been minimal and sales have only dipped by 30-40 per cent, wholesale prices have not rocketed very high.

The Koyambedu market, which usually bustles with activity, had fewer visitors on Wednesday than usual, as the market turned slushy and the produce was expensive. Traders said that every year, the festive season sales extend for about a week. But this time, rains shrunk the sale period to two days.

Every day, at least 1,000 vehicles transport vegetables from the market to various retail stores across the city. But only half that number of vehicles has visited the market for the past four days, S. Chandran, a wholesale trader said.

The number of lorries bringing produce to the market has also dipped owing to the downpour in the State and adjoining areas. Even on Wednesday, only around 300 lorries unloaded produce, compared to the usual 500 that come in daily.

Drumsticks and broad beans were the most expensive as the market received only 30 per cent of its daily share.

Many customers said they bought only those vegetables that were absolutely necessary and were surprised by the sudden spurt in prices.

M. Palani, who runs a retail vegetable shop in Peravallur, said that onions were priced at about Rs. 200 more per sack this week. One sack contains 150 kg. Cabbages, cauliflowers and tomatoes, however were still relatively affordable. Pumpkins too, are priced low this year.

Fruits are at least 40 per cent more expensive this season. S. Srinivasan, a wholesale fruits merchant said. However, bananas are cheaper this year, as more people have harvested.

## New technology to breed Cobia in farms, ponds

Those who regularly watch channels such as National Geographic and Animal Planet must have noticed a black fish (not suckers) with a prominent white bar on its body swimming alongside sharks and scavenging on remnants of fish hunted by the big predator. A decade ago, Cobia ( *Rachycentron canadum* ) known as Black King Fish, Lemon Fish and Crab Eater, was not taken very seriously. People in Tamil Nadu would not prefer the species, which is called *Kurangu Meen* .

Today, it is one of the important food fishes and Chennai-based Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (CIBA) has achieved success in the controlled breeding of Cobia from pond-reared broodstock at its experimental station at Muttukadu near here.

“Cobia farming is done in cages erected in calm sea waters in countries like Vietnam. But in a country like India, where the sea is always turbulent, setting up cages is a difficult task. It is here our technology has paved a new path,” said A.R.Thirunavukarasu, Principal Investigator of the project and Head, Fish Culture Division of the CIBA.

On Monday, M. Sakthivel, former chairman of the Marine Products Export Development Authority, handed over the juveniles of Cobia to two beneficiaries.

“Ten years ago the fish was nowhere in the picture. Now it has a bright future as a commercially valuable fish,” Mr Sakthivel said.

Mr. Thirunavukarasu explained that owing to its fast growth (up to 10 kg in a year), better adaptability, excellent texture and flavour, and the fact that it fetched a good price in the domestic market and its potential for export, Cobia has been identified as a fish for diversified farming in cages and ponds in marine and brackishwater ecosystems.

Dr A.G. Ponniah, Director of the CIBA, said the fish grew very fast and the growth was quite visible.

“Since it is not easy for hatchery owners to set up cages in the sea, CIBA’s technology will enable them to rear the fish in farms,” he said.

Farmers can harvest a tonne a year from 100 juveniles while in the case of Seabass, it will require 1,000 juveniles to achieve the same result. The fish is called sea-chicken and in the market it costs around Rs. 300 per kg.

Mr. Thirunavukarasu said a Cobia would release millions of eggs during each spawning and these were fertilised externally by the male.

“At the experimental station, we keep the female and male at the ratio of 1:2 and subject them to induced spawning. For accelerating ovulation, female fish are given hormone injection. When the female releases eggs, the males fertilise them by releasing a milk-like substance,” he explained, even as workers at the experiment station caught the giant broodstock parents for displaying them to visitors.

The hatching takes place after 20-22 hours and 30 days of rearing.

The juveniles reach a length of 10 cm and can be reared in nursery and grow-out systems in cages and ponds.

### **Sugarcane price: a test for Akhilesh**

With farmers demanding a price of more than Rs. 300 per quintal and mill owners opposing it, the Akhilesh Yadav government is weighing all the options before announcing the State Advised Price (SAP) of sugarcane for the 2012-13 crushing season.

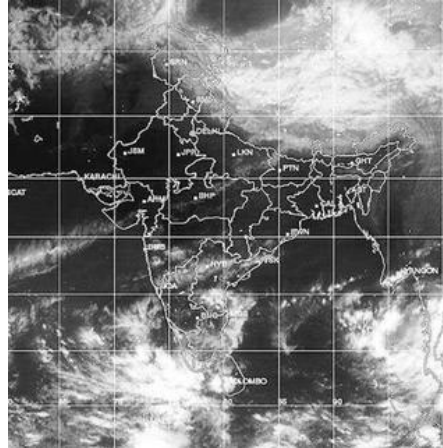
The crushing season, which normally begins in October, is yet to start as the sugar mills have not started their operations, perhaps waiting for the government to take a decision on the price.

Farmers' organisations have demanded that the government take a decision at the earliest. The Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU), which has championed the cause of the cane farmers in western Uttar Pradesh, urged the government to ensure that the sugar mills become functional from the first week of November. The BKU has also demanded a procurement price of more than Rs. 350 per quintal as the prices of diesel and fertilizers have gone up.

Sources in the Uttar Pradesh Cane Cooperative Federation said that its officials are likely to meet Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav next week to impress upon him the need to announce the new price. The Federation has demanded a SAP of Rs. 320 per quintal.

For Mr. Yadav, who has the Sugar Promotion and Sugarcane Development portfolio with him, it will be his first shot, and a test at fixing the procurement price.

## weather



The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (tr-trace) and total rainfall in mm since 1st October.

## Rainfall

Rain/snow has occurred at a few places over Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. Rain/thundershowers have occurred at isolated places over Haryana, Punjab, east Rajasthan and west Uttar Pradesh. Weather was mainly dry over rest of the region. The chief amounts of precipitation in cm are: HARYANA: Narnaul 3 and New Delhi (Palam and Safdarjung) 1 each, HIMACHAL PRADESH: Kangra 1, JAMMU AND KASHMIR: Kathua 2 and Rajouri 1 and PUNJAB: Pathankot 1.

## TEMPERATURES :

**MAXIMUM** : The maximum temperature fell in Jammu and Kashmir, rose in Himachal Pradesh and changed little elsewhere. They were appreciably below normal in Jammu and Kashmir, below normal in Haryana and normal over rest of the region. The highest maximum temperature in the region was 36.6°C recorded at Kota (Rajasthan).

**MINIMUM:** The minimum temperature fell in Punjab and west Rajasthan and changed little elsewhere. They were below normal in Jammu and Kashmir and normal over rest of the region. The lowest minimum temperature in the plains was 11.3°C recorded at Bhatinda (Punjab).

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 26th OCTOBER 2012:** Rain/snow would occur over at few places over Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand and at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir during next 24 hours and mainly dry weather thereafter.

Rain/thundershower may occur at one or two places over east Uttar Pradesh during next 24 hours and mainly dry weather thereafter. Weather will be mainly dry over rest of the region.

### Management of rice blast disease

Rice blast is a fungal infestation known to occur in all the rice growing areas of the county. The disease attacks all the parts of the crop growing above the soil. It is broadly classified into three types, leaf, collar and neck blasts.

Initially elliptical or spindle shaped lesions occurs with brown borders and grey centers. Under favourable conditions, lesions enlarge and coalesce eventually killing the leaves. Leaf blast usually increases early in the season and then declines later as leaves become less susceptible.

#### Black colour

Collar blast occurs when the pathogen infects the collar that can ultimately kill the entire leaf blade. The pathogen also infects the node of the stem known as node blast that turns blackish and breaks easily.

Neck blast occurs when the pathogen infects the neck of the panicle. The infected neck is girdled by a greyish brown lesion and the panicle falls over if the infection is severe. If neck blast occurs before the milk stage (rice forming stage), the entire panicle may die prematurely, leaving it white and completely unfilled.

Later infections may cause incomplete grain filling and poor milling quality.

Varietal resistant to blast is the most practical and economical approach for management. The most common resistant varieties are Aditya, CSR27, IR64, KRH2, Krishna, Hamsa, Naina, Pusa

sugandha3, Rasi, Vasumati, PA6129, DRRH2, Dhan80, PR113, Swati, Narendra, Sumati, Swarnadhan, Triguna, Tulasi, IR-36 etc.

### **Disease resistant**

Use disease free seeds. Apply recommended dosage of nitrogen application in 3 to 4 splits and avoid final application in infested plots.

Burn previous crop residues if the crop is found infested. Early sowing helps prevent this infestation spread from neighbouring fields. Avoid water stagnation.

Treat seeds with *Pseudomonas fluorescense* 10g/lit of water for 30 min, dip the seedlings in *Pseudomonas fluorescense* 5gm/lit for 20 minutes before transplanting. Foliar spray of the *Pseudomonas fluorescense* 5gm/lit can be done at an interval of 15-20 days after transplanting.

(Mallikarjun Kenganal & V. R. Joshi, Assistant Professors, Plant Pathology, Agricultural Extension Education Centre, Koppal, Karnataka: 583 231, Ph: 09845364708, email: mallikarjun\_nss@rediffmail. com)

### **THIS WEEK'S QUESTIONS**

How do citrus fruits like lemon/orange reduce vomiting sensation when smelled?

Sophia Xavier, *Chennai*

Why is a choke required in a tubelight but not in a CFL?

Ram Poojan Chaurasia, *Sultanpur, Uttar Pradesh*

Why do we feel relief when we gargle with salt hot water when suffering from throat pain?

S. Revathi, *Neyveli, Tamil Nadu*

Do fishes communicate with each other, and if they do, how?

G. Sachin, *Hyderabad*

Why do precious metals like gold and platinum not rust?

Rachana S. Yajur, *Bangalore*

### Integrated duck and fish farming pays rich dividends

In a year, the group earned Rs. 12 lakhs from sale of fish alone



Natural formation: The pond has water in it throughout the year.- Photo: Special arrangement

A number of large water bodies and vast stretches of paddy growing in wet lands dot Allepey district, Kerala. Geographically the presence of several ponds and lakes in the region make it ideal for rearing fish and ducks other than the regular, paddy.

To double income, farmers were advised by scientists from CPCRI (Central Plantation crop research institute), Kasaragod KVK to grow both fish and ducks in an integrated model.

Accordingly, seven farmers from Pachakkad farmers club at Thamarakulam panchayat in Alappuzha decided to try it out in a 110-acre public water body in the village which was a paddy field some 20 years back, now filled with rain water throughout the year.

The activities started when a Gulf returned person took a water body on lease from the grama panchayath. He was joined by another six persons and they all approached the scientists for technical advice and visited several model units before initiating their venture.

The water body has one and a half metre depth of water uniformly throughout the year and its bottom is covered with sand naturally, which made it suitable for fish farming.

Through their own efforts, the seven partners managed to strengthen the bund on all the sides and solved the acidity problem by adding lime powder to the water.

Initially grass carp variety fingerlings were introduced since the water body was filled with algae and grass. This variety of fish feeds mainly on grass and algae in the water up to seven folds of its body weight.

Within three months of the introduction of this fish variety in the pond, the water became crystal clear. Later catla, rohu and mrugal fingerlings were introduced. These three fish species feed in different layers of the water body.

### **Different levels**

“While catla feeds in the upper layer with its peculiar lips, Rohu feeds in the middle portion and Mrugal feeds on the bottom portion of the water body with its parrot beak like lips,” says Dr. S.Ravi, scientist working with the CPCRI, KVK.

Since the demand for local varieties was high, varieties such as varal, pearl spot, poomeen (milk fish), thirutha etc., which were present in the reservoir were retained.

Recollecting from previous experience, the partners introduced tilapia fish which can be marketed at 4-5 months time.

Since the water body was not used for several years the growers did not have to invest money for feeding fishes throughout the season.

“For farmers seeing is believing and personal interaction with those who are already in the venture aids in clearing many doubts for them. Hours of talking to them and giving suggestions will not serve much compared to a personal field visit,” says Dr Ravi.

The group had invested about three lakhs for the venture that could be recovered only after a period of 10 – 12 months. In the meantime based on the experts’ advice they planned to rear ducks as it would speed up their income.

### **Indigenous breed**



They attended training on scientific freshwater fish farming and integrated duck and fish farming.

As per the standard models developed by KVK, about 150 numbers of low cost duck sheds were erected above the pond and three months old chara and chemballi breed ducks (150 numbers) which are indigenous to the region introduced.

During the day time the birds scavenged the water body and at night roosted in the shelters. The birds started laying eggs at 5-6 months of age and the daily egg production was in the range of 100 – 120.

The eggs were sold at Rs. five at the site itself providing a daily income of Rs. 500 – 600. Half the money earned through sale of eggs was spent for feeding ducks and the remaining amount was spent towards the labour charges.

A total income of Rs. 1.8 lakhs was obtained through sale of duck eggs in one year (2011-2012).

The fish were also ready for netting and marketing by 10 months. Skilled persons were engaged for netting the fishes.

### **Marketing**

Selling commenced everyday in the morning at 6.00 am. Local variety of fishes was sold at Rs. 200 per kg and carp variety for Rs.130/kg. Marketing was not a problem since the consumers preferred the local varieties because of their taste.

“They never used ice or ammonia for preserving the fishes” making it more healthy and tastier” says Dr. Ravi.

Excess fishes remaining after local sale were transported in a hired vehicle to adjacent local markets and sold within two hours.

The group also supplied the fishes based on booking within 10 km surroundings.

From the sale of fishes the group collected a total income of Rs.12 lakhs in one year.

The entrepreneurs have deposited six lakhs fingerlings this year in the water body for harvesting in 2013.

For more details readers can contact Dr. S. Ravi, KVK- Alleppey, Krishnapuram PO, Kayamkulam, email: From: kvkalapuzha@hotmail.com, mobile: 9447021205.

### **Auction of turmeric to begin in Tirupur**

There is some good news for turmeric farmers raising the crop over 3,000 ha in the district as Department of Agriculture Marketing and Agri Business is set to commence 'turmeric auctioning' for the first time in Tirupur district.

Till now, the farmers from the predominant turmeric belt of Avinashi, Sevur, Karaipudur and Pongalur areas in district are dependent on the auction markets situated in far off places in Coimbatore and Erode districts.

The auctioning, to start from November 7, will be held regularly on the Regulated Market, near the Old Bus Stand here. A Shanmugam, superintendent of Regulated Market, told *The Hindu* that closed tender system would be followed in the auctioning process with trading to take place on every Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

"To start with, auctioning is to be carried out manually which soon will be upgraded to online process," he said.

Farmers selling the produce will get 'on the spot' payment for the goods sold.

To help the farmers avoid distress sale, the Department of Agriculture Marketing and Agri Business has arranged 10 godowns on the Regulated Market premises so that farmers who are not able to fetch good price realization could store their produce till getting remunerative prices.

"We will be charging just 5 paise a day as rental for every quintal of turmeric a farmer stores at the godowns. Each of the 10 storage yards offers space to stack 400 tonnes," Mr. Shanmugam said.

As an added attraction, the produces stocked at the godowns will be provided with free insurance coverage against fire and theft.

“Besides it, the farmers can store the goods in the godowns for a maximum period of six months and get ‘pledge loans’ up to 50 per cent of total value of produces stored in the godowns subjected to a maximum of Rs. 2 lakh for their working capital needs to raise the next set of crop,” Mr. Shanmugam said.

“An interesting feature of the loan is that no interest would be levied for first 15 days and after that at the rate of 5 per cent, he added.”

### **Bahuguna denies charge of misusing farmers’ land**



in defensive mode Uttarakhand Chief Minister Vijay Bahuguna. photo: PTI

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Vijay Bahuguna on Wednesday refuted allegations that the state government is acquiring fertile agricultural land of farmers in the name of industrial development, saying the acquired land belonged to the state and was lying unused for years.

Bahuguna described as unfounded the opposition’s charge that fertile land of farmers was being acquired for SIDCUL phase II to be launched by him today (Thursday) at Sitarganj, his constituency.

The Chief Minister said the land in Sitarganj jail premises had been acquired by the previous BJP government in Uttarakhand for Rs 30 crore to develop a special economic zone in 2008 and was lying in disuse since.

He said there was nothing wrong in utilising a piece of land lying unused for the industrial development of the state.

BJP leader Ajay Bhatt, who is also the Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly, had accused the state government of acquiring fertile land of farmers for the second phase of State Industrial Development Corporation of Uttarakhand Limited (SIDCUL—II) on Tuesday.

He had also demanded a document on the activities undertaken by the state government under SIDCUL-I before going ahead with the launch of its second phase.

The chief minister said investment worth thousands of crores will be brought to the state without any industrial package or Central aid.

Big industrial houses and the Centre had given their nod for largescale investments in the state and a mega industrial policy will soon be launched to woo investors, he said.PTI

### Live it up with olives

FOOD A chef and an agricultural scientist reveal the nutritive benefits of olive oil



The key to healthy livingOlivesPhoto: Reuters

One of the hottest areas of current scientific research involves one of the tastiest ingredients of Mediterranean cuisine—olive oil.

'Oliveitup' is a three-year campaign financed by the European Union, in collaboration with Italy, for the promotion of European olive oil in India. Accomplished and produced by the Consortium of Guarantee for Quality Extra Virgin Olive Oil, this campaign provides a series of training activities and information services to disseminate correct knowledge of olive oils of European origin, in terms of their quality and healthy attributes.

Shedding light on the role played by olive oil in one's diet, Maria Luisa Ambrosino, a PhD in food biotechnology, said, "Olive oil contains more mono-unsaturated fatty acids (MUFA) compared to all other edible oils. The antioxidants in extra virgin olive oil acts as scavengers in the blood, scoop out all the free radicals that we produce every single minute. MUFA protects us from heart disease while antioxidants shield us against many types of cancer."

Commenting on Indian eating habits, she said "Indians are fond of ghee, but people who are aware of its harmful side effects are drifting from it and using olive oils. Olive oil these days is very much accepted in Indian kitchens also." Explaining the properties of olive oil, Chef Angelo Franchini, a professional chef with over 25 years of experience in the hospitality industry, said "Flavours of olive oils depend on which oil you are using and how you are using it. It may create fruity or sometimes bitter or pungent flavours as well".

When it comes to storage, olive oil is very sensitive. "I have seen people storing olive oils in transparent jars with open lids. It's the worst way to keep olive oils. These oils should not be exposed to heat and light as exposure can deteriorate their quality and nutritive value and oil can become rancid. It is best stored at room temperature as its aroma, flavour and quality stays intact,"said Maria.

She also shared some tips that may prove helpful when purchasing olive oil. "Look always for the use by date, avoid olive oils in clear glass bottles as it may not have the required nutritional value, and, if you get the chance do taste your olive oil."

# Hindustan Times

TODAY FARM NEWS

25.10.2012 A.M

## Weather

Chennai

### Chennai - INDIA

#### Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Thursday, Oct 25

Max Min

31.5° | 22.9°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 84

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:01

Sunset: 05:44

Barometer: 1012

#### Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Friday, Oct 26

Max Min

32° | 24°

#### Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday Oct 27	Sunday Oct 28	Monday Oct 29	Tuesday Oct 30	Wednesday Oct 31
33°   24° Rainy	33°   25° Rainy	33°   25° Overcast	33°   25° Overcast	33°   25° Overcast

#### Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Humidity: 57

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:28

Sunset: 05:41

Barometer: 1015



# THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

24.10.2012 P.M

25.10.2012 A.M

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

## Poultry feed prices unchanged

Poultry feed prices remained unchanged this week, despite an uptrend in prices of its key ingredients.

After witnessing a fall last week, soyameal recovered and went up by Rs 120 to Rs 2,950 a quintal on Wednesday.

Good festival demand for soya oil pushed soyameal prices up, said Aditya Mishra, a market expert. Traders expect that market may continue to trade in a positive territory in the ongoing festival season and may witness some correction after Diwali, he added.

Similarly, prices of other ingredients too went up on good buying support.

## bajra

Bajra prices increased by Rs 25 and sold at Rs 1,160 a quintal, Maize ruled at Rs 1,440, Rs 15 up from previous level, while DCP went up by Rs 2 and went for Rs 37 a kg. On the other hand, fish oil witnessed some correction and decreased by Rs 16 to Rs 66 a litre.

## Feed Prices

After witnessing a fall last week, poultry feed prices remained unchanged this week and may continue to rule around current levels for a next few days, said market sources.

Broiler concentrates feed quoted at Rs 1,860 for a 50-kg bag while Broiler Starter Mash was at Rs 1,400.

“Broiler pre-starter concentrate 30 per cent” sold at Rs 1,600 for a 30-kg bag while layer concentrate quoted at Rs 1,400 for a 50-kg bag.

Pre-lay mash quoted at Rs 980 while broiler finisher sold at Rs 1,380 for a 50-kg bag.

### Poultry Products

Meanwhile, egg recovered by 11 paise and was sold at Rs 3.17 while broiler ruled flat at Rs 64-65 a kg. On the other hand, chick witnessed some correction and decreased by Rs 2 to Rs 19.

### Spot rubber falls further



Spot rubber weakened further on Wednesday. Declines in the global markets and a holiday mood in the domestic scene kept the prices subdued during the late trading hours.

Sheet rubber declined to Rs 177.00 (Rs 180.00) a kg according to traders. The grade surrendered to Rs 178.00 (Rs 180.00) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi as quoted by the Rubber Board. RSS 3 (spot) dropped to Rs 163.43 (Rs 167.59) a kg at Bangkok.

The Oct futures moved down from ¥243.3 to ¥238.0 in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM).

**Spot rubber prices in Rs/kg:** RSS-4: 177.00 (180.00); RSS-5: 173.00 (175.00); Ungraded: 166.00 (168.00); ISNR 20: 161.00 (162.00) and Latex 60%: 120.00 (120.00).



## Amul may be handed over Delhi Milk Scheme assets



The Government is likely to consider handing over assets of loss-making Delhi Milk Scheme (DMS) to the Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) on lease basis.

Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar is meeting GCMMF officials on Thursday to discuss the modalities of such an arrangement, sources said.

GCMMF, which owns the Amul brand, had recently reiterated its willingness to acquire DMS, which comes under the Agriculture Ministry. DMS has around five per cent market share in Delhi's pouched milk market.

When asked, GCMMF Chairman Vipul Chaudhary said: "The Agriculture Minister is positive about our move. We will be seeking a long-term lease of the facilities".

DMS has a milk processing and packaging capacity of six lakh litres a day and has 400 milk vending booths across Delhi.

Chaudhary said that modalities of the takeover arrangement are likely to be discussed on Thursday.

"DMS has some 800 employees and their production is about two lakh litres a day, which is unviable. We will also discuss options to accommodate or absorb DMS employees"

Chaudhary told reporters after inaugurating India's largest dairy facility at Dharuhera in Haryana.

DMS, launched in 1959 with an objective to provide milk for Delhi citizens, has been running into losses since its inception mainly because it has been operating as a development agency, not as a commercial outfit.

Industry sources said DMS currently sells around two to three lakh litres in pouches in Delhi.

The total market for pouched milk in Delhi is estimated at 50 lakh litres, where Amul sells about 24 lakh litres.

The acquisition of DMS will augment Amul's direct presence in Delhi and also expand its processing capacity.

Delhi is the largest milk market for Amul, where it has grown its pouched milk sales to around 24 lakh litres a day from around 25,000 litres about six years ago.

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### Cardamom auction resumes in Kerala



The auction of small cardamom at Spices Board's Spice Park in Puttady resumed today after a month-long suspension forced by cardamom dealers' protest against the rise in auction bidding prices.

The dealers had abstained from the auctions since September 25 protesting the board's recent decision raising the minimum bidding rate from Re 0.50 to Rs 5.

Following directions from the Kerala High Court to resolve the issue, the Spices Board had on October 22 reduced the rate to Rs two, facilitating resumption of the auction.

The auction today saw fairly good participation of cardamom dealers from Kerala and Tamil Nadu and recorded sales of nearly 15 tonnes in the morning and 21 tonnes in the afternoon sessions, a Spices Board press release said.

A total of 24 dealers participated in the morning auction which recorded a maximum price of Rs 1,020 per kg and a minimum price of Rs 473.

The auction recorded an average price of Rs 678.50 per kg.

The afternoon session witnessed participation of 30 dealers and recorded a maximum price of Rs 906 per kg and a minimum price of Rs 366 per kg. Average price recorded was Rs 673.78.

The auctions witnessed participation of dealers from Tamil Nadu and noticeable was the presence of Kerala State Cooperative Marketing Federation. More Government agencies will start participating in the auctions in the coming months.

## **2 research projects on improving food security to be launched**

In a move aimed at improving food security, city-based ICRISAT along with other organisations will undertake two major research programmes to identify ways to increase food production and formulate policies.

The Fund Council of CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research), the world's largest international agriculture research coalition, had approved two 10-year research programmes aimed at improving food, nutrition and income security of billions of poor in dry-land tropics of the world, a senior official of ICRISAT said.

The CGIAR research programmes on grain legumes and dry-land cereals, led by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics, have a combined three-year budget of \$223.4 million.

“The two global research-for-development collaborations are vital in sustainably increasing production of grain legumes and dryland cereals, improving the nutrition of the poor. It also helps identify policies and institutions necessary for small holder farmers in rural communities, particularly women, to access markets and improve their livelihoods,” the official told PTI.

The grain legumes programme aims to benefit 300 million small holder farm households from an average 20 per cent yield increase by the end of its first 10-year cycle, with a projected \$4.5 billion savings as cumulative benefits of increased food production and nitrogen fertiliser saved, the official explained.

This programme focuses on improving chickpea, common bean, cowpea, groundnut, faba bean, lentil, pigeon pea and soyabean crops grown by poor families in five regions—South and Southeast Asia, Western and Central Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Central and Western Asia as well as North Africa.

Legumes are the cheapest option to improve nutrition of poor people, who rely on inexpensive but nutritionally imbalanced starchy diets. Meanwhile, dryland cereals are often the only possible crops in harsh dry-land environment where more than a billion of the earth's poorest inhabitants live.

The dry-land cereals programme focuses on millets, sorghum, and barley. Demand for these crops will increase by nearly 50 per cent by 2020 as compared to the beginning of the millennium.

According to the information available with Icrisat, about 70-80 per cent of the grain produced is consumed by the poor as food, with the remainder used for feed and other non-food uses. The challenge is to raise the productivity of these crops to meet the growing demand, while retaining or even increasing their resilience against stresses.

In 10 years, this program targets a sustainable 16 per cent increase in dry-land cereal farm-level production on at least 11.8 million hectares in Africa and Asia. Improved technologies will also be made available to 5.8 million small holder households — 34.0 million total beneficiaries in target regions, ICRISAT said.

# Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

25.10.2012 A.M

## AgriMin to mull Amul plan to run DMS plants tomorrow

The Agriculture Ministry is likely to discuss tomorrow Amul's proposal to run processing and distribution units of loss-making DMS.

The Agriculture Ministry has received a proposal from Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) on taking over DMS operations. The country's largest milk cooperative GCMMF owns Amul brand.

A meeting is scheduled tomorrow to discuss this issue," a government source said.

Delhi Milk Scheme (DMS) comes under the Agriculture Ministry which has been toying with the idea of corporatisation of DMS for some time. In 2004, the Centre had even offered to transfer DMS to the Delhi government, but the latter refused accept the proposal.

GCMMF Chairman Vipul Chaudhary said running DMS plant will help increase Amul 's presence in the national capital region.

"The ministry is positive about our proposal. The modalities are not yet finalised. We are interested in having a long-term lease arrangement with DMS," he told reporters on the sidelines of unveiling of Amul's new processing plant in Haryana.

Buying assets worth hundreds of crores is not viable and even the issues related to employees need to be addressed, Chaudhary said.

DMS has 800 employees, but the milk production is only about 250,000 litres a day.

The DMS has milk production and packaging capacity of 5 lakh litres per day, besides a network of 1298 outlets in the National Capital Region (NCR).

Delhi is the largest market for Amul with a daily sale of 2.4 million litres. Amul has processing capacity of 4 million litres per day in Delhi-NCR.

GCMMF said its annual turnover is expected to grow to Rs 14,000 crore in the current fiscal from Rs 11,668 crore in the last year.

### Farmers protest govt's 'land-grab' for lignite project

JAISALMER: Protesting against the acquisition of 4,744 bighas from seven villages for the first phase of Shivkar lignite project, affected farmers under the [Legal Mitra Sanstha](#) launched a dharna outside the Barmer district collectorate on Wednesday.

Earlier, the farmers had taken out a silent march from Gandhi Chowk to the collector's office. The general public too participated against the government's non-transparent land acquisition policy. The e farmers and Legal Mitra's secretary Ritesh Sharma submitted a 45-page memorandum to district collector Bhanu Prakash Atru and later sat for the dharna. Sharma claimed that the government on the pretext of public interest is acquiring land according to "its whims and fancies. Sharma said it is not fair to deprive farmers from animal husbandry and agriculture . "The government is not explaining the reason why so much of land is being acquired and which projects would get benefits," he added.

Chagan Singh Rathore, a farmer, said his fraternity will not fall in the "trap" of government. He said the government has been misguiding farmers in the name of national interest, but "this time farmers will give a fitting reply" . Raghuv eer Singh Tamlor, president of a students' union, said the government should acquire land as per requirement. "By snatching everything from farmers, the government is meting out atrocity on them. The government should first clarify on why the land of Shivkar belt is being acquired. The state is hiding the facts while making efforts to acquire the land," Tamlor claimed.

The administration has kept October 25, 26 and 29 for public hearing for acquiring land under Section 5, but it has not explained which projects the lignite mining will support. It aims to acquire 11,206 bighas from around 12 villages in Barmer for [Shivkar lignite project](#) and 5,000 people are expected to be affected .

## Power company told to pay Rs 6L compensation to farmers

PUNE: The Nagpur-based electricity ombudsman has directed the Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd to pay a compensation of nearly Rs 6 lakh to four farmers in Nagpur district for failing to replace a [faulty transformer](#) within the stipulated time-frame.

The transformer had not been working for three months and the farmers, who needed power to operate their water pumps, were deprived of supply during the period. As per the standards of performance laid down by the [Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission](#), the company has to make a transformer operational within 48 hours of its failing.

City-based Sajag Nagrik Manch provided technical guidance to the farmers in their fight against the company. Among the four farmers, Sudhakar Chaudhary, Manish Raut and Ramesh Pandav have one water pump connection each, while the main complainant, Shriram Raut, has two water pump connections. As per the decision of the ombudsman, the company has to pay Rs 1,16,400 per pump connection.

Harish Dhapodkar, an activist from Nagpur, said, "Merc has ordered the state electricity company to replace faulty transformers within 48 hours in rural areas. If the company fails to do so, it has to compensate farmers on its own, without waiting for them to lodge complaints. Though the standards of performance guidelines came into effect in 2005, few people are aware about the provision." The ombudsman's order came on October 19, and the compensation amount has to be deposited in the accounts of the farmers within the next 30 days, he added.

The new transformer is supplying power to 13 water pumps in the area. As per Merc's guidelines, all farmers who were affected due to the breakdown, are eligible for compensation. A written application to MSEDCL is enough for them to get the compensation. The Merc guidelines state that

it was not necessary for every farmer to lodge a complaint. A single complaint covers all farmers, Dhapodkar said.

"This is the second such case where farmers had to be compensated by the company. About five months ago, a farmer from Moshi in Pimpri Chinchwad had filed a similar complaint against



the local office of the distribution company and received Rs 26,000 as compensation," said Vivek Velankar of Sajag Nagarik Manch. Velankar had also assisted the farmer in Moshi to get the compensation.

Farmer Shriram Raut, from Narkhed taluka in Nagpur district, filed the case against the distribution company on November 25, 2011. The transformer had stopped working on June 28, 2011, and it was replaced only on October 5, 2011. Raut approached the ombudsman, where his case was submitted

and after hearing the distribution company's defence, the ombudsman gave the landmark decision, Velankar said.

Earlier, Raut and Dhapodkar had approached the internal grievances redressal forum of the distribution company and later, the consumer grievances redressal forum, but their plea was discarded. Both the forums rejected Raut's compensation plea on the ground of not filing written complaints with the distribution company. Another reason given was that the compensation was being sought after the transformer had been replaced.

The distribution company had earlier claimed that the transformer had failed during the monsoon when farmers don't need electricity for pumping water. This defence was rejected by the ombudsman on the ground that supplying power was a primary duty of the company.

"The ombudsman accepted the farmers' argument that the company had not followed the standards of performance guidelines laid down by Merc for replacing faulty transformers. It took almost 97 days to replace it. As per the guidelines, compensation is calculated at the rate of Rs 50 per hour basis. The distribution company also claimed that since there was load-shedding in rural areas for 16 hours, the load-shedding hours should not be considered while calculating the compensation amount," Velankar said. The ombudsman rejected this argument as well. The ombudsman pointed out saying that as per the guidelines, load-shedding hours are counted while calculating compensation amount.

### **Banks must wait for peak season to auction mortgaged crops: HC**

KOCHI: The [Kerala High Court](#) has ruled that banks should wait for the peak season rather than auctioning mortgaged commodities at the existing market prices.

The ruling by Justice Antony Dominic came on a petition by Ansar Ali of Nenmara in Palakkad and other ginger farmers who defaulted on repayment of bank loans. They had approached the court after their bank -- the agricultural development branch of State Bank of India, Palakkad -- issued an auction notice for selling their crops mortgaged to the bank. They submitted to the court that the crops couldn't be sold due to adverse [market conditions](#) and they were now being stored at the state warehousing corporation.

Advocate K [Abdul Jawad](#), who appeared for them, submitted that the peak season for the commodity is in March. He argued that the farmers would be able to sell their products when the season starts and the debts could be settled then. He also pointed out that if the bank goes ahead with the auction now, it wouldn't be able to fetch a reasonable price as the market conditions are dull.

The court held that the bank's interests will not be harmed as the crops are in the godown of warehousing corporation. Deferring the auction won't prejudice the bank as it can compensate by levying interest from the farmers, it said.

The court asked the bank to keep in abeyance the proposed auction until March next year, by which time the farmers should discharge their liabilities. The bank will be entitled to continue with recovery proceedings if the farmers don't settle their dues by then, it ruled.

### **Rains leave crops worth lakhs of rupees damaged**

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Two days of incessant rains have left around 210 acres of farmland in Vellayani completely submerged leaving the farmers with losses worth lakhs of rupees. The electric post that supplied power to the pump house here had collapsed, thus making the draining of water that had accumulated a difficult task.

The power was restored and motor could be switched on only on Wednesday morning. But, by then, the damage was already done.

The produces from the four collective farms here -- Nilamakkari, Pandarakkari, Mangilikkary and Kanjirathadi -- are routed through the government-run outlets that supply a major bulk of the vegetables that are sold in city markets.

The saplings of spinach have already begun to rot and the plantain crop was in disarray. The paddy cultivation is sparse here. The rice stalks, though rooted, were lying flat.

"Within a few days, all these will start rotting. There is nothing much we can do. Every time it rains, it is the motor that pumps the entire water out of the fields. This time it didn't happen and we have to bear the loss," said Rajendran, one among the 300-odd farmers who have taken the land on lease at Vellayani.

Rajendran wearily calculates his loss and puts it at Rs 1 lakh. The amount is huge for this farmer. But he seems more rueful about the labour he had put in. "Whatever you see here is our months' long effort. Be it rain or cold, we would be in the fields around 6am every day. In the evening, again, we would return to water the saplings," he said.

Sudhakaran, the convenor of one of the farmers' groups, said that the loss of all the farmers put together would amount to lakhs of rupees. "A farmer would lose not less than Rs 1 lakh every time his cultivation goes under water. There are over 300 farmers here. The loss for each one would be pretty much the same," he said.

The truant monsoon has made their days longer than it used to be. Earlier, they would work only on these fields. Now, they wake up early, work on the fields till morning and then they go for other jobs. In the evening, they return to the fields to water them till the night sets in.

"The unfortunate thing is that these farmers are seldom compensated. A high-level inspection is needed to assess the loss. By that time, it would be the beginning of new farming season and the farmers have no other way but to bear the loss," said Punchakkari councilor A J Sukarno.