

Culling begins, State government bans movement of poultry

Outbreak source still a mystery, focus is on containment, say authorities

Culling of chickens is under way at the Central Poultry Development Organisation (CPDO) at Hesaraghatta near here, which has been hit by an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1). The government on Tuesday extended the ban on marketing and movement of poultry and poultry products to and from the surveillance zone, which lies in a 10-km radius around the CPDO, till November 15.

Following Monday's decision to cull more than 33,000 birds (chicken, duck and emu) at the unit, 19,154 chickens were culled on Tuesday. The remaining, officials said, will be culled and disposed of over the next 8 to 10 days.

Mass culling

The government had announced culling of 19,235 chickens, 13,673 ducks and 392 emus besides sanitising 52 poultry sheds after 206 chickens died over the weekend. On October 25, the Union government had notified the outbreak of avian influenza at the turkey unit after about 3,600 of the birds turkeys died over the past fortnight.

"The culling process for each bird is different. While it is easier to cull chickens, it is different for emus and ducks. Besides, sheds that housed these birds have to be thoroughly sanitised. It may take about 10 days or a little more," Arvind Jannu, Principal Secretary, Department of Animal Husbandry, told *The Hindu*. The culled birds, he said, were being buried within the CPDO premises with proper procedure. "Birds are buried with multi-layered chemical process to prevent any further contamination," he added.

Surveillance work

Six teams, involved in the surveillance work, collected 175 samples in the surveillance zone on Tuesday. No unnatural deaths of birds were noticed in the surveillance zone or in any part of the State, a department communiqué said.

Mr. Jannu said the source of the outbreak was yet to be ascertained, and currently the Government was working towards containing the spread of the flu.

On the ban of poultry movement from Karnataka to Andhra Pradesh and Kerala, he said: “The commercial aspect of the ban can be dealt with later. We don’t want the virus to cross into the civilian areas, which can cause much more damage than the current ban by neighbouring States.”

Business as usual

Meanwhile, some chicken stalls *The Hindu* visited in Bangalore did not report any decline in business. Sources in the National Egg Coordination Committee confirmed sale of chicken and eggs has not been hit in the city, which consumes about 200 tonnes of chicken and about 50 lakh eggs daily.

No human case

Health Department sources said no case of H5N1 among humans had been reported in the State so far. “While workers in the CPDO were being screened on a daily basis, villagers in the surveillance zone are being screened regularly,” an official said.

Farm department to suggest changes to land utilisation Bill

No diversion of farmland will be allowed, says Minister



K.P. Mohanan says the present Bill will be detrimental to farm sector
Farm sector has been witnessing shrinking acreage

Minister for Agriculture K.P. Mohanan has said the department will suggest amendments to the land utilisation Bill to prevent the diversion of farmland for other purposes.

Responding to queries from reporters at a press conference here on Tuesday, he said the Agriculture Department had a difference of opinion on the provisions of the Bill.

“In its present form, the Bill would be detrimental to the farm sector, which has been witnessing shrinking acreage over the years. But there is still time. The government will take an appropriate decision after discussing all aspects of the issue. There is no question of allowing farmland to be diverted”.

Project

The Agriculture Department, he said, has formulated a project to bring 400 hectares of fallow land under cultivation over the next year to produce an additional 1200 tonnes of paddy. The farmer would be given an assistance of Rs.25,000 per hectare while the landowner would get Rs.5,000 per hectare as lease. He said an amount of Rs.120 lakh had been earmarked for the scheme during 2012-13.

Mr. Mohanan said the department was ready to launch a slew of projects from November 1 to improve agricultural productivity and ensure better returns for farmers through technology inputs and promotion of entrepreneurship.

The month-long programme was timed to coincide with Kerala Formation Day celebrations. As many as 17 projects including five in the animal husbandry sector would be launched during the period.

Tribunal

The Minister said an Agriculture Tribunal would be set up to resolve legal issues involving production, service, and marketing of agricultural products. The tribunal would be headed by a judicial officer not less than a district judge. He said the mechanism was aimed at ensuring

speedy justice for farmers who often ended up with seeds, fertilizers, farm equipment, pesticides, and organic manure of inferior quality.

Labour forces would be created in all panchayats to provide trained workers for climbing coconut trees, applying pesticide, and operating farm machinery. The labourers would be controlled by a committee headed by the panchayat president. Farmers' groups would also be established to share traditional knowledge on farming practices. Agricultural experts, researchers, people's representatives, students, women, and officials would be enlisted to support the initiative.

The Minister said the government had initiated steps to formulate an agricultural policy. "A committee chaired by former MLA K. Krishnankutty has been set up to draft the policy. The committee is holding discussions with farmers, farm workers, and elected representatives. The document will be finalised to protect the interests of all stakeholders". Hi-tech farming methods would be promoted throughout the State by setting up greenhouse demonstration units and introducing precision farming methods in 1,000 hectares.

Mr. Mohanan said 19 touch-screen kiosks would be established at different locations for farmers to access information on crops and cropping practices, processing, crop protection, and availability of seeds and planting materials.

Krishi Bhavans would tie up with the HortiCorp, Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council Kerala, Kerafed, Marketfed, and Kudumbasree Mission to procure crops apart from paddy and coconut. Another project was to restore 1,000 ponds and tanks in the State. The Rs.1,000-crore project would be implemented over a period of three years. The ponds would be deepened and provided with sidewalls and metal fencing. They would be used for rearing fish. In the animal husbandry sector, the projects include adoption of 1,00,000 hybrid calves, veterinary services at the farmer's doorstep, insurance for cows, and assistance to set up homestead poultry farms.

'Rabi crops doing well but they require rain'

We were better prepared: Meena



G. Srinivasan (left), Deputy Director, FSSAI; Prabodh Halde, Vice-President, AFST and Head, Regulatory, Manco Industries Ltd.; Bharat Lal Meena, Principal Secretary, Agriculture Department; and S. Chandrasekhar, Managing Director, Boruka Power Corporation Ltd., at a CII conference in Bangalore on Tuesday.— Photo: K. GOPINATHAN

“The rabi crops are good; but they still require rain. It is difficult to make an exact assessment of the loss due to drought during the kharif season,” Bharat Lal Meena, principal secretary, Agriculture Department, has said. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a conference on “Enhancing food safety in food retail chains” organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry here on Tuesday, he said that the department was better prepared for rabi after the losses during kharif.

“During kharif, sowing was not taken up in 10 lakh hectares due to deficiency in rain. The same is the case with rabi as well as agriculture is heavily rain dependent,” he said.

He said that the government was pushing an integrated farming initiative of the University of Agriculture Sciences, Bangalore, in Doddaballapur.

“More than 200 farmers near Doddaballapur have formed a society and are getting technical support from the Krishi Vigyan Kendra. They have also tied up with the milk society and use the (milk society’s) network to transport their produce such as fruits and vegetables to the markets. The money realised from the sale is transferred to the farmers,” he said.

The same model has been adopted by these farmers for bio fuel. The farmers also buy back the oil cake which is used as an organic fertilizer, which also acts like an insecticide. Mr. Meena added that the department would soon give away farming equipment worth up to Rs. 10 lakh to farmers' societies. "The idea is that these societies can later rent out the equipment to farmers. This will specially help the small and marginal farmers. We are in the process of identifying active farmers' societies," he said.

To begin with, around 500 societies will be given the equipment. This will later be extended to at least one society in each of the 747 hoblis in the State.

He said that setting up of an agri-business region in Bagalkot by a private group has been accorded approval by the government's single window agency. This will cover all sectors of agri-business, including storage, cold chain and processing.

"Around 2,000 acres of land has been identified by the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board. The group requires over 5,000 acres in four locations. The government has asked the group to set it up first in Bagalkot. The project investment will be around Rs. 10,000 crore," he said.

Earlier, he said food safety was relevant as the Union government has allowed FDI (foreign direct investment) in the retail sector. Wastage in agro-products is over 70 per cent in India, he said.

The conference discussed increased consumer awareness, globalisation, FDI in retail, health concerns of people as key drivers of food safety in India. It also touched upon improving safety standards in food processing, following best food safety norms and staving off epidemics.

G. Srinivasan, Deputy Director, Food Safety Standards Authority India, was present.

Defective paddy seeds to be replaced within a day

District Collector P. Venugopal said farmers, who have the option of buying seed from agencies of their choice, would be given up to Rs.4,000 per hectare of paddy crop for the next pancha cultivation, irrespective of their source of seed.

Mr. Venugopal was presiding over a meeting to review the preparation for the pancha cultivation here on Tuesday. Earlier, assistance was provided only to those farmers who bought seeds from the Seeds Authority promoted by various States, including Kerala State Seeds Development Authority, Karnataka State Seeds Development Corporation and National Seeds Corporation. The assistance will be transferred to the bank accounts of farmers within a month of sowing the seeds.

The Collector instructed officials of the Kerala State Seeds Development Authority (KSSDA) to replace seeds that were not sprouting within 24 hours. KSSDA officials told the meeting that the seeds would reach the krishi bhavans 10 days before sowing.

They also said there was enough stock of seeds for distribution in the district. The seeds that were not sprouting would be replaced as soon as the Agriculture Officer informed KSSDA.

There will not be any delay like waiting for lab test results, as in the past, the officials said.

Karnataka State Seeds Development Corporation will distribute 1,120 tonnes of seeds, KSSDA 1,244.84 tonnes of seeds and National Seeds Corporation Limited 146.6 tonnes of seeds. A total of 189 tonnes of seeds will be distributed through the practice of exchange of best seeds among the farmers. Farmers should be careful in choosing the seeds that will give the yield in less time in case they are late in sowing.

KSEB officials were told to take steps to avoid disruption in power supply in November and December to ensure smooth operation of water pumps for the paddy polders in Kuttanad, with special focus on cultivation undertaken in reclaimed kayal (lake) paddy fields.

Forum demands special status for Kuttanad farming area

The Kuttanad Vikasana Samithy has demanded that the Agricultural Department declare the area as a Special Agricultural Zone (SAZ) as per the recommendations of noted agricultural scientist M.S. Swaminathan, and effect legislations in this regard.

In a statement here on Monday, Thomas Peeliyanikkal, executive director of the samithy, said the Kuttanad package had recommended Rs.15 crore of activities related to the formation of SAZ. If the SAZ is not formed, the funds will lapse. The SAZ envisages the protection of the

boundary of the land under cultivation, environment-friendly cultivation, and government compensation for any loss due to use of environment-friendly methods of cultivation. The SAZ would help realise a scenario where the Central and State governments and farmers unite to invest in the agricultural sector and bring in technical assistance.

Mr. Peeliyanakkal alleged that the State government did not show any interest in creating conditions and legislations for this purpose. He also criticised the moves of the Agriculture Department to allow partial compensation of Rs.8,000 per acre for farmers who had suffered losses in the break in outer bunds of their paddy polders.

The Agriculture Department should have sought the Rs.50 crore recommended by Dr. Swaminathan and kept this amount as a separate fund for compensating the farmers, he said.

If this fund was maintained, the department need not have asked the State government for money. He said that due to the lack of this fund, farmers who incurred losses in consecutive years due to the bunds breaking are yet to be compensated.

He also said the government had sanctioned Rs.20,000 per hectare last July as compensation for farmers who suffered losses in the C, D Blocks, Mangalam Manikya Mangalam and Poonthuram paddy polders.

'NGOs to be roped in to spread awareness of forest conservation'

Pledging the full support of the district administration to the efforts of the Forest Department to protect forests, Collector Siddharth Jain said meetings involving NGOs would be conducted in the villages situated in the vicinity of the forest areas to spread awareness on conservation of forests.

He was speaking at a meeting of the district-level forest protection committee held in Kothagudem on Tuesday evening.

Addressing the officials of the forest, revenue, police and other allied government departments and agencies, Mr. Jain said the district is endowed with vast stretches of forest and a rich variety of flora and fauna.

The Revenue and Police Department would extend all possible help to the Forest Department in its efforts to check encroachments on forest lands and felling of trees, he said adding that it was the collective responsibility of all to conserve the forests. He suggested that the forest officials should invoke the provisions of the PD Act against the persons perpetrating offences like felling of trees and smuggling of teak wood in the forest areas. He asked the officials to strictly adhere to the provisions of the Recognition of Forest Rights (RoFR) Act.

He wanted them to take initiative to get forest clearance for the ongoing road infrastructure development works under the Central government sponsored Integrated Action Plan for Left Wing extremism affected areas in the district. Superintendent of Police P. Hari Kumar, ITDA Project Officer Veerapandian, Bhadrachalam sub-Collector Narayana Bharat Gupta and others were present.

Solar power unit to energise pumpsets inaugurated



Solar power-based borewell energiser inaugurated by Municipal Administration Minister M.Mahidhar Reddy for Indira Jala Prabha beneficiaries in Potluru village in Prakasam district on Tuesday. —Photo: Kommuri Srinivas

Farmers who are finding it difficult to irrigate their lands in view of acute power shortage can heave a sigh of relief, as a solar power unit is available now to meet their power demand to energise their pumpsets.

Under a pilot project under Indira Jala Prabha, a Rs. 5.50 lakh unit was launched in the remote Potluru village in Prakasam district on Tuesday by Municipal Administration Minister M. Mahidhar Reddy.

The Minister exhorted farmers to go for solar power-based unit, taking advantage of the subsidy of up to 30 per cent provided by the Centre.

Based on the success of the pilot project, the solar-powered borewells would be extended to more areas, said district Collector Anita Rajendra.

The solar panel of the unit, with a photovoltaic system rating of 5 kilowatts, produces enough power to run a 5 HP motor for eight hours, explained Sunbright Energy Solutions Limited Director (finance) Ch. Ravi.

The unit was installed to irrigate 10.87 acres of mango orchard belonging to five ST beneficiaries by the District Water Management Agency.

Agricultural marketing: panel to submit report in February

The two-day Convention of the Committee of Agricultural Marketing Ministers from different States and Union Territories concluded here on Tuesday, after completing a heavy agenda, covering a range of subjects like the integration of domestic and overseas markets for better returns, Agri-Commodity Price Stabilisation, financing of agricultural marketing and post-harvest marketing infrastructure projects, taking markets to the doorstep of farmers and so on.

The Committee comprising Ministers and the concerned Principal Secretaries and Commissioners was constituted by the Prime Minister to study the entire gamut of agricultural marketing as it prevailed in the different States and come out with a roadmap to ensure remunerative prices to farmers, providing them with a direct link to the market eliminating middlemen, putting in place alternative channels of marketing, besides uniform Agricultural Marketing Act through out the country.

We have discussed all the issues concerned and would submit our report to the Prime Minister in February next, recommending suitable structural and legislative reforms so as to ensure maximum benefits to farmers and consumers, said Harshawardhan Patil, Maharashtra Minister for Cooperation and Parliamentary Affairs, who is also the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers.

Addressing the media at the end of the convention, he said that 30 out of the 35 States in the country had a comprehensive Agricultural Marketing Act and that in respect of the five states like Kerala, Bihar etc. which did not have one, the services of National Institute of Agricultural Marketing (NIAM) Jaipur, was being taken to prepare the draft rules for approval by the States concerned.

Plan to double milk production by 2015

Women self-help groups to be involved in establishing Pala Pragati Kendras in State

The State government, through the Department of Animal Husbandry and Pala Pragati Kendras being established by the self-help groups (SHG), has formulated a strategy under the Milk Mission to enhance production from its present level of 298.01 lakh litres per day to 496.31 lakh litres per day, and also the per capita availability of milk from 269 grams per person to 426 grams per person per day.

It is planning to increase the population of high-yielding milch animals to nearly 1.04 crore, apart from enhancing milch animal productivity from 3.39 lakh litres to 4.78 lakh litres per day. The availability of pasteurised milk would also shoot up to 109.73 lakh litres per day.

The government plans to achieve this in phases by 2015 by establishing Pala Pragati Kendras (mini-milk dairies) throughout the State at the rate of four to five in each village involving self-help women groups.

The government's strategy is to involve women for successfully ushering in a white revolution. In all, 5,000 gram panchayats located within 10-km radius of Bulk Milk Cooling Units (BMCU) are being selected.

A mini-dairy consists of eight murrah buffaloes and 8 cross bred cows. The animals will be purchased in two batches.

The second batch of animals will be purchased 4-6 months after purchase of first batch of animals to ensure continuous milk production and income.

Apart from milk production in the private sector, the government's plan is to set up 700 mini-dairies in the State and about 140 dairies in the district by the year 2015.

Each dairy unit is being established in a two-acre land and each member of the Joint Liability Group (JLG) is expected to earn an income of Rs.2,500 to Rs.3,000 per month.

The Pala Pragathi Kendras are run by JLGs, which are carved out of the SHG groups in a village. Women interested in the enterprise can emerge as a JLB for the express purpose of establishing mini-dairies in the villages.

The District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) and the Department of Animal Husbandry are giving special training to members of SHGs to handle the huge upcoming milk revolution in the State.

Joint Director of Animal Husbandry V. Venkateswara Rao told *The Hindu* that the mini-dairies apart, family-based dairies having cows and buffaloes would also contribute to the milk revolution, as every family that owns cows and buffaloes supply milk to the milk collection centres.

Virginia tobacco growers place indent for 31,250 tonnes of fertilizer

Tobacco Board has received about 20,000 tonnes of other fertilizer so far

The Virginia tobacco growers have placed an indent with the Tobacco Board for supply of about 31,250 tonnes of various fertilizers for the current crop season.

Of this, 5,400 tonnes of ammonium phosphate was sought by the growers from Prakasam and Nellore districts.

So far, the Board has received about 20,000 tonnes of other fertilizers such as DAP and SSP and most of them were already distributed on time.

Regarding ammonium sulphate, the Board has entered into a contract with the Gujarat State Fertilizers Corporation(GSFC) for purchase of 5,400 tonnes at the rate of Rs.420 per a 50-kilo bag.

The Board has taken up this matter in August and September with the Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers (MoCF) requesting it to permit GSFC to supply the said 5,400 tonnes of ammonium sulphate to the Board.

Tobacco Board Chairman G. Kamalavardhan Rao pursued these matters with the MoCF and impressed upon it to permit GSFC to supply ammonium sulphate immediately as transplanting of tobacco has already started.

Considering the requests of the Tobacco Board, the MoCF has cleared its proposal and gave permission for three days ago to GSFC to supply 5,400 tonnes of ammonium sulphate to the Board.

The GSFC has already moved 1,620 tonnes, which will reach Ongole in the next three days and the rest in the first week of November.

The Tobacco Board will supply ammonium sulphate at the rate of Rs. 445 per a 50-kilo bag.

Rain aids samba paddy transplantation



braving the storm: Heavy showers lashed Thanjavur district on Tuesday. Photo: B. Velankanni Raj

Heavy rains triggered by the depression in Bay of Bengal lashed Thanjavur and Tiruvarur districts on Tuesday. However, it helped in the transplantation of samba seedlings in both districts.

Samba paddy has been transplanted in 44,000 hectares so far in Thanjavur district and 40,000 hectares in Tiruvarur district. Direct sowing has been taken up in 4,000 hectares in Thanjavur district and in 60,000 hectares in Tiruvarur district, said agriculture department officials.

Three hundred hectares of harvest ready kuruvai crop in Thanjavur district and 1,500 hectares of samba crop in Tiruvarur district have been inundated.

While schools remained closed in Tiruvarur district, they functioned in Thanjavur district. With rains forecasted to continue on Wednesday, the district administrations have taken all precautionary measures. "We are in a state of preparedness to face any eventuality due to rain and cyclone," said the Collectors.

Meanwhile Anil Meshram, Director, Department of Agricultural Marketing and Agri-Business, and monitoring officer for Thanjavur district conducted a review meeting with officials on monsoon preparedness.

Rainfall recorded till 8 a.m. on Tuesday: Valangaiman 42.2 mm, Kumbakonam 30 mm, Kodavasal 32.6 mm, Nannilam 60.6 mm, Needamangalam 28.5 mm, Neyvasal Thenpathi 22.4 mm, Mannargudi 32 mm, Thiruthuraiipoondi 80.4 mm, Tiruvarur 73.2 mm, Papanasam 10.2 mm, Thanjavur 5.6 mm, and Muthupettai 35.4 mm.

Direct sowing taken up in 4,000 hectares in Thanjavur district and 60,000 hectares in Tiruvarur district

Weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Rainy

Wednesday, Oct 31

Max Min

30.7° | 22.0°

Rain: 79.8

Humidity: 84

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:02

Sunset: 05:42

Barometer: 1003

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Thursday, Nov 1

Max Min

28° | 22°

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday Nov 2	Saturday Nov 3	Sunday Nov 4	Monday Nov 5	Tuesday Nov 6
28° 23° Cloudy	33° 25° Overcast	34° 25° Overcast	33° 25° Overcast	33° 25° Overcast

Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Humidity: 78

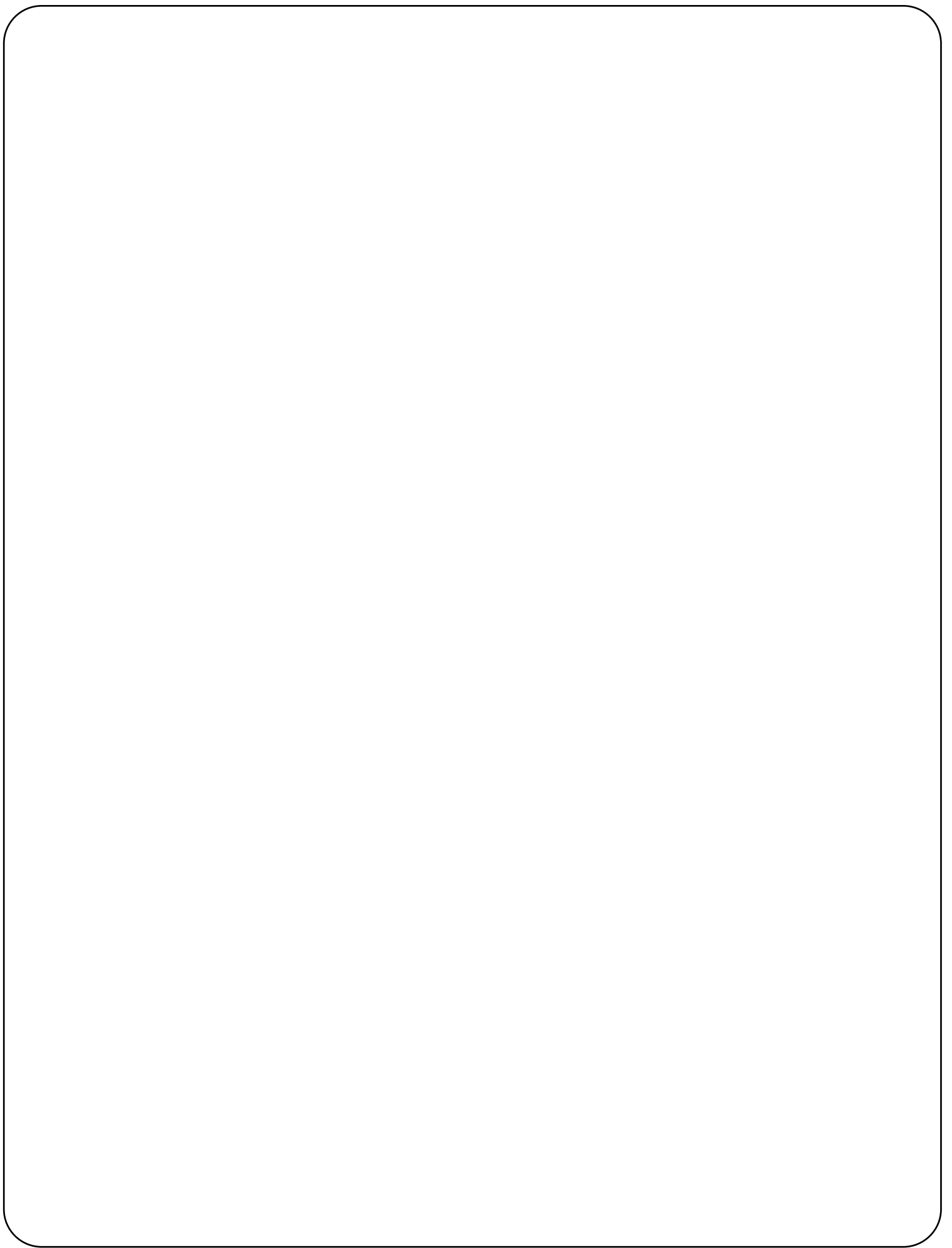
Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:32

Sunset: 05:36

Barometer: 1016





THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

30.10.2012 P.M

31.10.2012 A.M

30th oct 2012 P.M

Pepper zooms on circular trading

Pepper market shot up on circular trading despite good arrivals and limited domestic buying on Tuesday. All active contracts ended much above the previous day's closing.

Domestic buyers were covering just 50 per cent of what they required because of the high prices. As prices shot up, more and more sellers were seen appearing in the primary markets and releasing old stocks of pepper. Some 80 tonnes of farm grade pepper arrived today and were traded., market sources told *Business Line*.

There was no fundamental support for the current spike in prices. Circular trading pushed up the prices, they said.

Turnover increased significantly. Open interest also went up. November contract on the NCDEX increased by Rs 370 a quintal to the last traded price (LTP) of Rs 44,250 a quintal. December and February prices went up by Rs 365 and Rs 205 respectively to the LTP of Rs 43,700 and Rs 39,100 a quintal.

Turnover

Total turnover increased by 1,222 tonnes to close at 2,145 tonnes. Total open interest moved up by 288 tonnes to close at 9,187 tonnes.

November open interest increased by 231 tonnes to 5,891 tonnes while that of December and February went up by 16 tonnes and 32 tonnes respectively to close at 2,605 tonnes and 601 tonnes.

Spot prices in tandem with the futures market trend shot up by Rs 300 a quintal to touch Rs 40,900 (ungarbled) and Rs 42,400 (garbled) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market was at around \$8,500 a tonne (c&f) Europe and about \$4,800 a tonne (c&f) for the US and remained totally out of the race.

Wheat flat on tepid demand; flour gains



Moderate buying kept dara and desi wheat prices unaltered while an increase in demand pushed flour prices up on Tuesday.

Radhey Sham, a market expert, told *Business Line* that it is unlikely to see any major alteration in market even this week as demand and supply is likely to remain stable.

Good buying interest by the flour mills to meet the current domestic demand is keeping wheat prices firm, said market sources.

In the physical market, around 50 tonnes of the dara variety arrived from Uttar Pradesh and the stocks were directly offloaded at the mills.

Mill delivery was at Rs 1,490-1,495 a quintal while delivery at the chakki was Rs 1,500.

Similarly, Desi wheat varieties ruled flat on steady demand and quoted between Rs 2,050 and Rs 2,200 .

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat for November delivery lost by Rs 21 and traded at Rs 1,566 a quintal.

December contracts went down by Rs 11 to Rs 1,586. On the other hand, wheat spot prices on the exchange increased by Rs 10 and traded at Rs 1,510.

Flour Prices

Despite a steady trend in wheat, flour prices increased by Rs 30 and sold at Rs 1,680. Chokar went for Rs 1,275 for a quintal.

Thinning arrivals of copra heat up coconut oil



Coconut oil market was firm in Tamil Nadu and Kerala this week due to rains in producing areas of both the States.

This has resulted in decrease in copra and coconut arrivals and led to increase in coconut oil prices, Prakash B. Rao, Vice-President, Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA), said.

Prices in Kerala are ruling at Rs 62/kg while it has been quoted at Rs 60 in Tamil Nadu.

The market was not active last week in both these markets due to Puja holidays.

However, Rao said that availability of coconut in Tamil Nadu may be hit due to the threat of a cyclonic storm. This, in turn, has affected market sentiments.

Participation of upcountry buyers was also limited at this price levels, he added.

Copra prices are ruling at Rs 4,300 a quintal in Kerala and Rs 4,200 in Tamil Nadu.

Palm oil prices are quoted at Rs 61 a kg, while palm kernel oil stood at Rs 54.

Thalath Mahamood, former President, COMA, said that though the market is ruling in a steady position, the cheaper availability of imported palm oil and palm kernel oil may affect a further rise in coconut oil prices. Traders are now pinning hopes for a further price recovery in the ensuing Diwali season like in the past.

Normally, North Indian traders prefer to start fresh trading on the auspicious day.

Bharat N. Khona, former Board Member, COMA, said that upcountry demand was low at this price level.

The local demand in Kerala also dropped drastically due to cheaper availability of other edible oils.

In spite of this price rise, he said corporates and upcountry buyers are adopting a wait-and-watch policy in the market.

Maize prices swirl up on fears of hurricane damage to crop



Maize (corn) prices traded on a positive note today with the far month February contract topping Rs 1,428 a quintal, a 2 per cent rise.

Maize prices are rising in line with the rise in corn prices in the global market where futures are soaring over fears of Hurricane Sandy damaging standing crops, besides an increased demand for feed grade corn from the South-East nations such as China and Korea.

Corn gained, snapping the longest losing streak since March 2011, on signs that a slump in prices may have boosted demand for supplies from the US, the world's largest grower.

On the NCDEX, maize for November delivery rose 0.15 per cent to Rs 1,307, while the December and January series gained 0.9 per cent each to Rs 1,346 and Rs 1,389 respectively. In the Davangere spot market in Karnataka, maize was quoted unchanged at Rs 1,366.65 a quintal.

On the CBOT, the grain for December delivery advanced 0.4 per cent to \$7.40 a bushel after declining for six straight days. Futures were at \$7.38 by 2:15 p.m. Singapore time, trimming the monthly loss to 2.4 per cent.

Grains output to touch 250 mt on better rabi

Foodgrain output will touch 250 million tonnes in 2012-13 on improved rabi prospects, said Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar on Tuesday.

The expectation of a better rabi crop, on revival of late monsoon in August and September, would help offset the decline in kharif.

Poor monsoons had hurt the kharif foodgrain output, which is set to decline by a tenth over the previous year.

The kharif foodgrain production is pegged at 117.18 mt against an all-time high of 129.94 mt in 2011-12.

procurement mechanism

Addressing the Conference of Food Ministers and Secretaries of States and Union Territories, Pawar called for strengthening of foodgrain procurement mechanism in eastern States such as Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal.

He said the move to bring green revolution in eastern India would see a rise in paddy production in these States.

foodgrain output

Last year, the total foodgrain output touched an all-time high of 257.44 mt and the target for the current year is pegged at 249.52 mt.

The late revival of monsoons in August and September has helped improve the moisture level in the soil and farmers have been advised to go in for early sowing, Pawar said.

The coverage of pulses, oilseeds and cereals in rabi is expected to be higher than last year.

Pawar attributed the rise in wheat and rice output to the effective procurement arrangements for these cereals. He also emphasised the need for procurement of coarse cereals, oilseeds and pulses.

The Minister also called upon states such as Punjab and Haryana to diversify into other crops besides rice and wheat.

Productivity in Punjab and Haryana has been affected as these States only grow rice and wheat. "Diversification of agriculture will not be possible unless there is assured procurement," Pawar said asking procurement agencies such as FCI and Nabard and State governments to work out plans in this regard.

Stockists begin to build up turmeric inventories



Erode, Oct. 30:

Stockists have begun purchasing huge stocks of turmeric in the Erode markets and building up inventories with an intention of selling them at a higher price.

“We are not buying the turmeric for the past fortnight as we have not received any order from North India. But we are visiting the markets daily watching the situation and quality of the turmeric . On Tuesday, more than 2,500 bags of turmeric arrived after one month and sixty per cent of them were procured by the stockists,” said the traders.

They said already the stockists are having huge stock and are continuing their buying with an intention to stock them and sell the produce when the price touched more than Rs 9,000 a quintal.

Now the yellow spice is selling at Rs 5,500-5,800.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,919-5,169 a quintal, the root variety Rs 3,279-4,279.

Salem Hybrid Crop: The finger variety fetched Rs 4,896-5,829 while the root variety Rs 4,560-5,104.

Of the 1,217 bags arrived, 259 were sold.

At the Regulated Marketing Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,450-5,540; the root variety Rs 4,389-4,902.

Of the 704 bags, 633 bags found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,809-5,912; the root variety Rs 4,289-4,899.

Of the 874 bags arrived, 872 were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 4,780-5,710; the root variety Rs 4,239-5,109.

All the 236 bags were sold.

Support prices, PDS are here to stay, says Montek



Minister of Agriculture and Food Processing Industries Sharad Pawar flanked by Minister of State for Agriculture K.V. Thomas and Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia at the Conference of Food Ministers/ Secretaries of States and UTs in the Capital on Tuesday. – S. Subramaniam



[The Hindu](#) There is no question of dismantling the foodgrains procurement and distribution through MSP and PDS system, says Montek Singh Ahluwalia.

The Government will continue with buying foodgrains through minimum support price (MSP) programme as well as the public distribution system (PDS), even as it considers direct cash transfer for food subsidy to plug leakages.

Allaying fears of some States that had voiced concern over the proposed direct cash transfer, Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia said on Tuesday that the MSP and PDS systems will continue.

Shrugging off criticism that the Government was dismantling the PDS by introducing direct cash transfer of subsidy, Ahluwalia said, "This is completely wrong, because there is no question of dismantling the MSP." He was addressing a conference of State Ministers and secretaries on strengthening PDS.

Food ministers and secretaries from 18 States are attending the two-day event to discuss various aspects of targeted PDS.

Ahluwalia said the Government would continue public procurement of foodgrain and sell it without subsidy through the PDS. He said the cash for food subsidy would be transferred directly into the bank accounts of the beneficiaries to plug leakages.

PILOT SCHEMES

Food Minister K.V. Thomas said a pilot scheme of direct transfer of cash subsidy would soon be taken up in about six Union territories to assess the efficacy of the proposed model.

Urging States to plug leakages, Thomas asked them to improve the viability of fair price shops, take steps to deliver foodgrain at the door step, improve storage capacity and use technology to track movement and transaction of foodgrain.

PDS PORTAL

A national PDS portal was launched by Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar on Tuesday. The portal www.pdsportal.nic.in contains information relating to fair price shops, ration cards attached to such shops and information such as the monthly allocation orders, State-specific commodity sale prices and position on offtake, among others.

The portal will also contain information on Food Corporation of India and State storage godowns with capacity utilisation and data on Central pool stocks.

Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

31.10.2012 A.M

Groundnut output may fall 40% this year

Deficient rainfall in the key groundnut growing areas of Gujarat during the kharif sowing period seems to have taken a toll on the output of the oilseed. Experts indicate an overall decline of up to 40 per cent in the country, down from 4.17 million tonnes (in shells) estimated in the 2011-12 kharif season to around 2.5 mt in the season of 2012-13.



In a recent report by the Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA), groundnut production in Gujarat has been pegged at only 695,000 tonnes in FY13, as compared to 17,35,000 tonnes in 2011-12, a dip of nearly 60 per cent in the state.

"There is a sharp decline in the major growing regions of Saurashtra in Gujarat and parts of Karnataka. Even as sowing in Andhra Pradesh has been stable, there is a possibility of a decline in production. Overall, the country's groundnut production is likely to dip by about 40 per cent," said Ashok Sethia, vice-president, Central Organisation for Oil Industry & Trade.

By the SEA's Gujarat Kharif Groundnut Crop 2012 estimate, sowing was 1.22 million hectares (it was 1.43 mn ha in 2011-12) but harvested area was down nearly 25 per cent at 916,000 ha, mainly due to deficit rainfall. Hence the decline in output to 695,000 tonnes. For the country, sowing fell from 4.32 mn ha in kharif 2011-12 to 3.9 mn ha this year, a fall of 10 per cent. After Gujarat, Andhra is the second largest sowing state, with over a million hectares covered under groundnut. The average yield per hectare has also reduced to 760 kg against 1,238 kg per ha last year. "Due to most of the districts receiving less rain, the crop as well as the quality is seriously affected," said the SEA report.

SCANTY RAINFALL WEIGHS

State	Kharif acreage (in mn hectares)			Production estimate (in mn tonne)		
	'11-12	'12-13	Y-o-Y % change	'11-12	'12-13	Y-o-Y % change
Guajrat	1.43	1.22	-14	1.73	0.695	-60
Andhra Pradesh	1.05	1.05	-	0.55	NA	-
Karnataka	0.51	0.38	-26	0.35	NA	-
Rajasthan	0.37	0.36	-3	0.55	NA	-
India	4.32	3.9	-10	4.17	2.5	-40

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Govt of India, industry estimate & SEA.

The lower production is likely to affect the price of groundnut oil. These reached Rs 7,600-7,700 a quintal at the beginning of this month. Prices have since eased to Rs 7,200-7,300 a quintal. Sources in the Saurashtra Oil Mills Association said groundnut oil prices are unlikely to fall below Rs 1,800 per 15 kg this year and could cross Rs 2,200 per 15 kg by December.

India's reliance on pulses import to go up

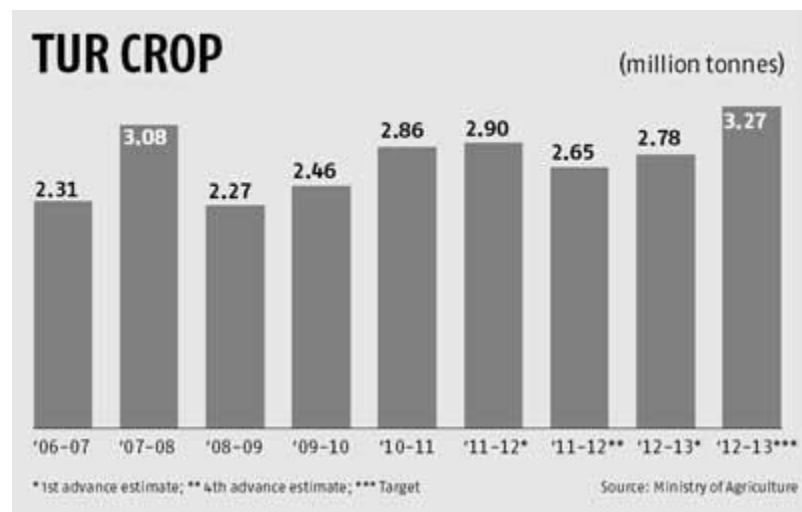
India's reliance on imported pulses could increase this year, due to a decline of around 10 per cent in tur production in the current kharif harvesting season due to pest and worm attacks.



Total imports of pulses of all varieties stand at between 2.5 and 3.5 million tonnes (mt), constituting around 15 per cent of overall annual demand. Assocham estimates India's pulses demand at 21 mt in 2012-13, which might go up to 21.42 mt in 2013-14 and 21.91 mt in 2014-15. Of this, total domestic production is 18 mt, of which tur, a premium variety, constitutes 15 per cent. Tur, a kharif grown pulse, is sown with the onset of monsoons in June, to be harvested in October. This year the onset of monsoon

was delayed by two months, extending the season proportionately. The crop is now set for harvesting towards the end of November.

Ahead of this harvesting season, however, the crop has been damaged due to pest attacks in major growing areas. Although the assessment of the actual loss is yet to be done, not less than 10 per cent must have been damaged. A consequent hit on production cannot be ruled out,” said K C Bharatiya, ex-president of the Pulses Exporters’ Association.



'Pod borer', a common pest which attacks all pulses including tur, urad and gram, caused damage in major producing regions, including Gujarat and Maharashtra, during the flowering stage of tur. Germinated with the vagaries of nature and climatic conditions, 'pod borer' typically affects 30-50 per cent of the crop resulting in a decline in acreage under pulses.

Pradeep Jindal, director of Jindal Overseas Corporation, a Mumbai-based pulses trader, said, "The deficit from local production can safely be bridged through imports as has been done in the past. Hence, the pest attack on tur crop is not a cause of worry as of now."

According to ministry of agriculture data, 9.98 million hectares (ha) was planted under kharif pulses as on September 21 this year compared to 10.83 million ha during the same period last year. Improved rains towards the end of the monsoon season have raised the prospects of sowing. However, planting beyond this period was a little late for obtaining any remunerative output.

At 3.62 million ha, the area under tur acreage reported a marginal decline of 1.6 per cent this year from 3.75 million ha last year, despite delay in rainfall.

According to the first advance estimates for the 2012-13 season, output of kharif pulses is estimated lower by 14.6 per cent at 5.26 mt compared with 6.16 mt last year. The fourth advance estimates for 2011-12 season, however, puts output of pulses at 17.21 mt in 2011-12 compared with 18.24 mt in 2010-11. While the output of chana in 2011-12 is estimated at 7.58 mt, tur is estimated at 2.65 mt, urad at 1.83 mt and moong at 1.71 mt.

“Tur prices have been down by Rs 200 a quintal in the last two weeks due to excessive availability of imported varieties. The trend is likely to continue in the near future as well, being a favourable climatic condition for rabi sowing,” Himat Chandra, partner at Trimurthi International, a Vashi-based pulses dealer, said.

Amidst weak festive demand, tur was quoted on Tuesday at Rs 3,800 a quintal in Vashi’s wholesale market, while urad was hovering at around Rs 3,200 a quintal. Now, trade Rs are eyeing the sowing of rabi crops - chana and masoor.

Coffee output seen lower than last year



Even as the coffee-picking season is barely two weeks away, planters do not share the Coffee Board’s expectation of a record production this year.

Having witnessed a 40 per cent drop in rainfall during the pre-blossom period earlier this year, planters say this year’s coffee production would be a wee bit less than last year’s level of around 314,000 tonnes.

The Coffee Board has estimated a total of 325,300 tonnes for the current year, a growth of about 3.5 per cent over the last year. This includes 104,000 tonnes of arabica and 221,300 tonnes of robusta. However, Karnataka Planters’ Association (KPA) has pegged arabica output at 85,000 tonnes to 90,000 tonnes and robusta at 210,000 tonnes.

“We have witnessed about 40 per cent reduction in pre-blossom showers earlier this year in the major growing regions of Karnataka, which will have a negative impact on the final output. Additionally, there were incidences of white stem borer attack (a pest that attacks arabica coffee plants). More than anything else, this is an off year for arabica,” said Marvin Rodrigues, former chairman, KPA.

Major coffee growing regions in south Coorg in Karnataka, where arabica is grown, have seen patchy rainfall this year. The regions have also witnessed dry spell for longer duration. According to Rodrigues, things improved slightly of late thanks to rains in September, resulting in better bean development. Arabica harvest is expected to begin in parts of Karnataka by the second week of November, while robusta picking would begin by the end of December.

The flat production of coffee may not have any major impact on exports as India exports both domestic crop as well as imported beans after making significant value addition. During January-October 2012, India exported 280,623 tonnes as against 303,966 tonnes in the same period last year, showing a decline of 7.67 per cent. In value terms, exporters earned Rs 4,231 crore, marginally lower than last year’s Rs 4,239 crore. This year’s unit value realisation was Rs 1,50,764 a tonne, higher than last year’s Rs 1,39,456.

Ban pushes up chicken price in Kerala

The price of chicken in Kerala has increased due to the ban imposed by the state on cross border trade of chicken and poultry products.



Live chicken has increased to Rs 85-86 kg from Rs 80 last week. The state has to now completely depend on local farms, which can meet only 30 per cent of the market demand.

MC Scaria, a chicken trader, said the prices would go up further as the ban restricts the supply to a very large extent. Retail chicken outlets in the central districts depend on farms in

Palakkad.

The state government has banned chicken and poultry products from other states after bird flu claimed lives of 4,265 turkeys last week at Hesaraghatta near Bangalore. Almost 70 per cent of the chicken used in Kerala comes from other states, especially Tamil Nadu.

In 2011, Kerala consumed meat products worth around Rs 6,000 crore. The Animal Husbandry department estimates that the state consumes roughly 5,000 tonne meat daily. According to government data, as much as 45 per cent of the meat consumed in Kerala is chicken. Keralites spent Rs 2,844 crore on chicken in 2009-10, of which Rs 1,752 crore went to poultry farms from outside the state.

Officials of the Commissioner of Food Safety said though bird flu cases were not detected in human beings in Karnataka, the decision was taken as part of precautionary measures.

KG Suma, director, department of Animal Husbandry, told Business Standard that the ban was in effect from Monday. Check post officials have been instructed to use personal protection gears to insulate themselves from contracting the virus while checking trucks.

The department has also beefed up routine checking at chicken farms and outlets throughout the state, besides checking hotels and restaurants.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

TODAY FARM NEWS

31.10.2012 A.M

PMO prods Centre to scan 17 irrigation projects in state

MUMBAI: Pushed by the Prime Minister's Office, the [Union](#) water resources ministry wants the [Maharashtra government](#) to account for 17 irrigation projects worth over Rs 28,000 crore "immediately" . These projects are partly funded by the Centre. Sources said the [PMO](#) had taken an "extremely serious" view, considering that many of these projects are located in distressed and droughtprone regions of Maharashtra.

High-level sources said the Centre has sent a letter to all the five irrigation corporations of the state, seeking details of the projects, names of contractors and the status of the work. The Gosikhurd National Irrigation Project in Vidarbha, whose cost shot up from Rs 372 crore to Rs 7,777 crore, will also be scrutinized. "The Centre's directive is unusual because this is the first time it has sought such in-depth information," they said.

TOI has also learned that a [Central Vigilance Commission](#) team collected data from the [Vidarbha Irrigation Development Corporation HQ](#) in Nagpur a few days ago. Sources said the CVC's inquiry could be a precursor to a much larger [CBI](#) probe in the future.

The move is the latest fallout of the mega irrigation scam, exposed through a series of TOI reports over the past six months. The exposes led to the resignation , last month, of deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar, who headed the state water resources department between 1999 and 2010. TOI's investigations revealed that as much as Rs 35,000 crore could have been siphoned off by a politician-bureaucrat-contractor nexus on dud irrigation projects.

The [Central Water Commission](#) has asked for information on contracts, expenses and irrigation potential created under the accelerated irrigation benefit programme (AIBP).

Hescom to give more power to farmers

Hubli: The [Hubli Electricity Supply Company](#) (Hescom) seems to have woken up to help the farming community who are in distress due to shortage of power to their irrigation pumpsets. [Hescom](#) has decided to supply six hours of power to IP sets in seven districts in north Karnataka region with immediate effect.

Erratic power supply has left the farming community red-faced in many villages. Farmers, who are hit by drought, have been supplied less than three hours of power to their IP sets. Many times, they vented their ire by laying siege to Hescom office. Hundreds of farmers from Gadag, Dharwad, who came to Hubli on Tuesday to discuss the issue with Hescom officials, said power supply has become so irregular that they have to depend on lantern to light up their houses.

Vitthal Ganachari of Mundargi, farmer, told TOI that there is huge discrimination in supply of power to farmers and politicians in the village.

"Politicians get uninterrupted power supply to their pumpsets, but farmers here are not even getting power for three hours," he alleged.

Basavaraj Sabale of Naragund said most of the transformers are under repair in the area and there is acute shortage of power to IP pumpsets.

"If we get sufficient power, we can draw water from the well or other water bodies for agricultural purpose. Most of the IP sets are lying idle without power," he said.

Ningamma Haiger, another farmer from Gudageri, said there is no proper supply of power even in single phase. To help farmers irrigate their land for survival in such critical time, Hescom should provide sufficient power, she added. Farmers also threatened to launch agitation if their demands are not met with immediately.

Officialspeak

HESCOM managing director Rajendra Cholan said power will be supplied for six hours-four hours in morning and two hours in the evening-to villages. Single phase power will be supplied from 6 pm to 10 pm. "Of the total quantity of power we are getting from the state, we are using

18.5% of power to IP sets. We have already requested chief minister Jagadish Shettar and energy minister Shobha Karandlaje to release power up to 25% for IP sets," Rajendra said.

Spices lower lifestyle-related diseases: Expert

Mysore: Spices used in Indian cuisine not only make it tastier and aromatic but also provide an array of health benefits, said K Srinivasan, senior scientist and head of the department biochemistry and nutrition, [CFTRI](#).

Speaking on [World Food Day](#) organized by Indian Medical Association here on Tuesday, Srinivasan said "Indians were the first to know the benefits of spices and started using it. The importance of spices was discovered during the Vedic age."

Spices increase the nutritional quality of food and reduce the need for other less healthy flavours like salt, fat and sugar. Spices reduce the need for sodium, he added. Spices are also known to check obesity and cholesterol. Dr Srinivasan attributed the higher incidence of lifestyle diseases in the West to the meager use of spices in their cuisine.

Spices have more disease-fighting antioxidants. Curry powders prepared out of spices has more beneficial properties, he added.