

Today Farm News

21.09.2012 A.M

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Training

A training on preparation of value-added products from amla will be held at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University on September 25 and 26.

Processing of amla into various value-added products and packaging technologies will be covered. It will include preparations such as amla plain and blended beverages, syrups, shreds and candy, and packaging of amla fruit products. Details on FPO licence for establishing fruit processing industry and finance, and marketing of the products will also be part of the training. Those interested should pay a fee of Rs. 1,000 in the form of a Demand Draft drawn in favour of Dean, Agricultural Engineering, should be sent to the Head, Post Harvest Technology Centre, TNAU, Coimbatore – 641003, before September 25. For details, contact 0422-6611340 / 6611268.

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Chidambaram plans to release grain at cost to cut food prices

Centre gears to tackle runaway inflation, fiscal deficit and economic slowdown In a move to soften the blow of the recent increase in diesel prices and tempering the persistent rise in food prices, the Union government has decided to release 10 million tonnes of foodgrains through the Food Corporation of India in the open market.

According to government data, food prices hit a high of 12.03 per cent in August.

A senior official of the Finance Ministry told *The Hindu* that this was part of Finance Minister P. Chidambaram's multi-pronged plan to simultaneously tackle the runaway inflation, an unmanageable fiscal deficit and an economic slowdown, leading to diminished public and private investment despite the growth in demand.

Every month, 2.5 million tonnes of grain will be allocated through auction for the next four months. "We expect food prices to start dropping significantly as a result of this, since we are releasing the foodgrains on a no profit, no loss basis," the official said.

"In a worst case scenario, the cost of collection and storage of the grain will only be marginally higher than the auction price, but this will be more than offset by the reduction in ... inflation. The... spinoff of reduced inflation will be lower interest rates, leading to increased investment," he noted.

The government data says the annual Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) was 10.03 per cent in August, driven mainly by a rise in food prices. The country's retail inflation is reportedly the highest among the BRICS nations and above the RBI's "comfort level." The Wholesale Price Index also rose to 7.55 per cent in August on the back of rising food prices.

The Ministry's multi-pronged approach to interlinked issues, which will be implemented in the next few months, underscores its fears that the economy could be hurtling to a point of implosion.

Sources in the Ministry point to the slowdown in public and private investments because of interest rate volatility in an environment of growing demand, which is widening the demand-supply gap.

Between 2010-11 and 2011-12, consumption grew by 14 per cent in rural areas and 12 per cent in urban areas, while manufacturing grew by 0-0.1 per cent.

The inability to cap the fiscal deficit by cutting planned public investment either in infrastructure or in welfare schemes like those under the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act has left the government with very little elbow room, they say.

According to the Ministry, cutting subsidies, as in the case of the recent increase in diesel prices, is the only way out of the present vicious economic cycle to a virtuous one.

“As much as 40 per cent of diesel is consumed by industry, including for running mobile towers and power generators in five star hotels and shopping malls, 22 per cent is consumed for transport, while 17 per cent is used by farmers. The government still bears a subsidy of Rs. 9 a litre of diesel even after hiking the retail price by Rs. 5. It is... unsustainable for the government to continue subsidising industry in this manner,” the official said.

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For him, the fruits of labour are sweet and sour

M. Ragunath succeeds growing grapes on the terrace of his house



tasty feat:M. Ragunath with the grapes he had grown on the terrace of his house at Gandhipuram in Coimbatore.— Photo: M. Periasamy

Not always are the fruits of labour sweet. For M. Ragunath it is sweet and sour as he has succeeded growing grapes on the terrace of his house on Gandhipuram Second Street. “I took it up as a challenge,” he refers to the decision to grow grapes.

When he decided to do something green and shared the decision with friends, a good number of them said that he could not grow grapes. “It was impossible,” was what they said, he recalled.

Sometime last October-November after making up his mind, Mr. Ragunath, a photographer and videographer, went to Thondamuthur to buy shoots from grape farmers.

He made grape cuttings and planted them in the tank he constructed. "I did everything needed to grow the creepers – from constructing tanks to erecting the support structures to watering to now harvesting," he says.

As the plants grew, he also went about collecting anything and everything that could aid the growth – cow dung, used cement bags, poles, etc. "I collected cattle waste wherever I found them. And in doing so I did not feel shameful."

Mr. Ragunath did what he felt right and did not seek help. But he said to himself that he would not use fertilisers or pesticides – and to this day he had been true to himself. "I wanted it to be completely organic because I love environment-friendly agriculture."

His commitment won him appreciation and also gained him friends. "Neighbours and all those who came to know of my growing grapes, came forward to help me. Some of them gave wooden poles, a few others dung and others moral support."

Environment awareness

In keeping with the public contribution, Mr. Ragunath has started sharing the fruits of labour with all those who helped him, and also students. "I chose students because through the grapes and the growing of it, I wanted to create environment awareness among them." He has shared the fruits with the students of the Punitha Mariannai High School.

Father D. Peter Mariadass, the School's correspondent and head master, says that more than 100 students and a handful of teachers had visited Mr. Ragunath's terrace-garden and were inspired to take up similar work on their terrace. The school management was also contemplating to do so.

Mr. Ragunath says that his green thinking has its roots in the Siruthuli movement.

He has also planted saplings on Gandhipuram streets and those saplings had grown to trees to provide shade.

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One-hour water release from Grand Anicut from today



at last:Water released from Mettur dam flowing across the Cauvery river near Kambarasampettai in Tiruchi on Thursday.Photo:M.Moorthy

Water will be released for samba cultivation from Grand Anicut between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. on Friday. Water released from Mettur dam on September 17 reached Grand Anicut on Thursday. About 15,000 cusecs is drawn from Mettur dam now.

The PWD sources here said that the plan is to release 5,000 cusecs each in Cauvery and Vennar systems, 2,000 cusecs in Grand Anicut canal system, and 1,000 cusecs in South Arcot channels from Friday .

Though belated, farmers have made up their mind to compensate the losses suffered in Kuruvai this year. Community nurseries have been raised at many places using borewell water and seedlings will be supplied to needy farmers who can transplant them once canal water reaches their areas.

Initially, the PWD had decided to continuously supply water so that it may reach tail end areas. Hopes are pinned on northeast monsoon for supplementing water from Mettur dam. Farmers have also gone for direct sowing at many places in Thanjavur and Tiruvarur districts. In direct sowing, seeds are sown and allowed to grow in rain water. System of Rice Intensification (SRI) method of cultivation is also followed in many villages. In SRI method, seedlings are raised on mat and transplanted quickly. This reduces water requirement.

Fisheries Minister K.A.Jayapal and Minister for School Education N.R.Sivapathi will participate in the water release at Grand Anicut on Friday. Collectors of Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, and Nagapattinam will also take part in the function.

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Delta farmers' hopes dashed to ground

The failure of the Cauvery River Authority, headed by the Prime Minister and comprising Chief Ministers of the basin States, to find a solution to the severe water shortage faced by farmers in the delta region, has caused anger and disappointment among various farmers' associations.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had ruled that Karnataka should release water at the rate of 9,000 cusecs daily from September 20 to October 15, but Karnataka had rejected the order. Tamil Nadu has also expressed disappointment with the outcome and decided to approach the Supreme Court for justice.

Arupathi P. Kalyanam, general secretary, Federation of Farmers Associations of Delta Districts, demanded a "stronger mechanism" to implement the inter-State river water award. "If a State government bluntly refuses to let any water for a lower riparian State, despite Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's most logical, genuine and minimum demand for two tmcft a day, and when the Prime Minister is unable to do anything about it, what sort of federalism do we have?" he wondered.

Quoting Section 6A (v) of the Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956, he pointed out that it empowered the Centre to "amend or vary any scheme framed under sub-section (i) (meant for giving effect to the orders of the tribunal). This provision could be used to create a stronger mechanism to enforce river disputes award.

Besides, Karnataka should be held responsible for the loss of Kuruvai and Samba crop resulting in a loss of more than 32 lakh tonnes of paddy.

"National parties like the BJP and Congress, which are the major parties in Karnataka, should not play State politics and they should have national outlook", he pleaded.

P. Viswanathan, State president, Yeri Matrum Aatru Paasana Vivasayigal Sangam, urged the Central Government to declare Tamil Nadu as a drought-affected State and grant a relief of at

least Rs. 20,000 crore as it has done to the case of some northern States. The farmers who have lost their livelihood because of the loss of Kuruvai and Samba, should be given a compensation of at least Rs. 20,000 per acre.

Mahadanapuram V. Rajaram, working president of the Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association, said, "All that our association has now decided is to support our Chief Minister and cooperate with her in what ever she does for the welfare of the delta farmers", he told *The Hindu*

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Board to promote use of bamboo in construction activity mooted

'Bamboo can replace cement and steel in construction'



Bamboo products on display at the National Institute of Design in Bangalore.

Bamboo can replace cement and steel in construction of buildings, and the government needs to play a more proactive active role to promote its use, said Kamesh Salam, founder and Executive Director of the South Asia Bamboo Foundation.

Speaking at the World Bamboo Day celebrations at the National Institute of Design here on Tuesday, Mr. Kamesh Salam said that India is the second largest producer of bamboo. More value can be added to the produce if more revenue can be generated by using it, he said.

"The government needs to spread more awareness about bamboo. When there is a Tea Board (to regulate and promote the crop), Rubber Board and a Coffee Board, why can't there be a

Bamboo Board? There is lack of policy support and the government needs to build a conducive atmosphere so that farmers are encouraged to grow bamboo,” Mr. Salam said.

S.C. Joshi, Director, Institute of Wood Science and Technology, said that resources available in the country are not managed the way they should be, and there is a lot of government control with regard to selling of bamboo, which is the fastest growing crop.

Sulochana V.K., an engineer, said that bamboo is extensively used as a building material and its use can save a large amount of construction cost.

Bamboo products displayed

A wide collection of products made out of bamboo was displayed at the National Institute of Design to mark World Bamboo Day on Tuesday.

Besides a wide range of chairs, sofa and other furniture, a bicycle made out of bamboo attracted attention of the visitors. Vijay Sharma, who created it, said that his work for art had evolved after experimenting with bamboo.

Susanth C.S., head of the Centre for Bamboo Initiatives at the National Institute of Design, said most items on display were designed by the faculty and students of the NID, and were handcrafted by artists. Apart from usual furniture, several artefacts, including various lampshades, clothes hanger, were also on display.

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Tomato growers shattered

Tomato growers in Aspari, Pathikonda and Aluru areas are distress on account of falling prices. Tomato prices fell to 50 paise per kg in the local markets on Thursday.

The increased market arrivals and the fall in the prices at Tamil Nadu markets caused the slump. Kurnool district exports around 150 truck loads of tomato to Tamil Nadu markets which prefer the short variety fruit.

Farmers complained that they were unable to recover the picking charges and the produce was dumped along side the roads.

Tomato is grown in 15,000 hectares in Kurnool district, mainly in the rainfed conditions.

A reasonable price would fetch disposal cash for farmers who need money for inputs for other crops at the time of the season.

If the tomato crop fails them, the farmers of upland area get starved for cash during peak agriculture season.

Farmers said they had invested up to Rs. 15,000 per acre hoping for better returns but the vegetable crop has failed them this season.

The officials have no wherewithal to go to the rescue of the farmers as inter-State trade activity was involved in it.

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Fruit, flower show

University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, is conducting a fruit and flower show as part of Krishi Mela 2012 in Dharwad from September 22 to 25. Those interested can register their names on or before September 21. For details, contact 9448495310 or 9448902525. — Staff Correspondent

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Go for innovation, farmers urged

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has called for adoption of innovative methods for irrigation to save water and augment the crop yield by using bio-farming techniques. He said the use of sprinklers and application of drip irrigation must be promoted to save water, which was crucial for the desert State.

Addressing the third State-level farmers' felicitation ceremony here, Mr. Gehlot said innovations by farmers would lead to achievements in the agriculture sector and support the State government's initiatives on development. He gave away certificates of merit to selected farmers.

Mr. Gehlot said the State government had for the first time paid bonus of Rs.100 per quintal to farmers along with the support price for procurement of wheat, giving them an additional benefit of Rs.200 crore. As many as 25 lakh farmers would get crop loans worth Rs.9,000 crore during the kharif season, he added.

A total of 496 farmers selected at the State, district and panchayat samiti levels were felicitated in the ceremony.

State Agriculture Minister Harjiram Burdak said agricultural and horticulture production in the State had registered a significant increase this year. Principal Agriculture Secretary D. B. Gupta said a rabi campaign to be conducted across the State from October 1 to 20 would help out farmers by supplying agricultural inputs.

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FAI favours rational pricing policy

The Fertilizer Association of India (FAI), on Thursday, claimed that nearly 5-6 million tonnes of urea was being illegally diverted for non-farm use and smuggled to Nepal and Bangladesh due to lack of rational pricing policy between various fertilizers.

“Urea in the country is so cheap that around 15-20 per cent of the crop nutrient is being diverted for non-farm uses, and is also smuggled to neighbouring countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Burma,” FAI Chairman A. Vellayan told journalists at a press conference here.

The country consumed about 30 million tonnes of the key nitrogenous fertilizer in the 2011-12 fiscal. “This is happening because there is no rational price parity between the prices of urea and that of phosphatic and potassic (P&K) fertilizers like di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) and muriate of potash (MoP),” Mr. Vellayan said. He said prices of urea in India were cheaper compared to other major agrarian countries. In the U.S., urea is priced at around \$526 per tonne, in the Philippines \$577 a tonne, in China costs \$295 and in Pakistan \$266 a tonne. In India, however, it is priced at \$96 a tonne.

Zuari Industries Executive Vice-President H. S. Bawa said due to high global prices of DAP and MoP and rupee depreciation, P&K fertilizer prices had gone up but that of urea were stable at Rs.5,310 per tonne since April 2010, forcing farmers to opt for urea. As per government data,

the retail price of MoP rose by 92 per cent to Rs.23,100 in the current kharif (summer) season from Rs.12,040 per tonne in the 2011-12 rabi (winter) season, while DAP prices rose by 33 per cent to Rs.26,500 from Rs.20,000 per tonne in the same period. "The best way to bring rational price parity is to move to a policy regime where subsidy is a fixed amount per kg of nutrient for all nutrients and in all fertiliser products, and MRP floats in line with market prices," he added.

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Milk price hiked by Rs. 2 a litre

The Odisha State Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation Limited (OMFED) on Thursday announced to increase price of milk by Rs. 2 per litre.

The revised milk price would come into effect from September 23, said OMFED in a press statement here.

"In order to give reasonable purchase value of milk to some 2.62 lakh registered milk farmers of OMFED in rural areas of the State, the OMFED authorities have decided to give a hiked price of Rs. 1.75 paise per litre more for their produced milk, from September 23 onwards," it said.

The federation said this would enable the overall economic and social growth of the farmers.

"In the context of hike in purchase value of milk, the Maximum Retail Price per litre of OMFED double toned milk would be Rs. 24 instead of Rs. 22 and toned milk shall be Rs. 26 instead of Rs. 24 from September 23 onwards," it said.

The OMFED said this hiked price of milk would not be applicable to the consumers of Rourkela Dairy area, Joda, Barbil and Kodia area.

New rate

Consumers would purchase milk as per new rate instead of the printed rate till the old polythene are exhausted, which are lying with OMFED at present, the federation said.

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Krishi Mela to begin today

Krishi Mela 2012, a four-day event, will be held at the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Dharwad, here from Friday.

It has been organised in association with the departments of Agriculture and Horticulture. Vice-Chancellor R.R. Hanhichinal said around 10 lakh people were expected to take part in the event.

This year, the mela would focus on agricultural technologies for drought management and integrated farming system for sustainable livelihood. It would begin with the seed mela on Friday, which would be inaugurated by Bernard, Vice-Chancellor of Canada University. More than 1.5 lakh quintal of seeds for rabi sowing will be displayed at the mela.

Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar would formally inaugurate the festival on Sunday .

Eminent scientists, researchers and progressive farmers would hold talks with farmers on new technologies in the market for taking up hassle-free cultivation, he added.

The UAS campus would have nearly 450 stalls, showcasing farm equipment.

Debates

The mela would also throw light on integrated farming practices, dry land technologies for enhancement of agricultural productivity, watershed development, rainwater harvesting for groundwater recharge, organic farming systems, nutrient management, bio-fertilizer and soil health care, sale of improved varieties seeds, plants and publications, seed production, storage and marketing and improved agricultural technologies and farm machineries, he said.

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UAS to honour farmers

The University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, has selected 13 farmers, including six women, for this year's best farmer and best farm woman awards.

Vice-Chancellor R.R.Hanchinal told presspersons on Thursday that the awards had been instituted to encourage innovative farmers and farm women.

Awardees

The best farmer award would be given to Ganapathi Talgund from Sirsi, Mutanna Beerappa Pujar from Kamanahalli in Haveri district, Gudadappa Mailarappa Lingashettar from Mundargi taluk, Doddappa Bandiwaad from Marewad village in Dharwad taluk, Chandrashekharayya Prabhayya Jadimath from Ramdurg in Belgaum district, Siddhappa Balagonda from Kolar in Bijapur district and Ramesh Savadi from Golbhavi in Bagalkot district.

Women selected for the award are Bhagirathi Ramkrishna Bhat from Karva in Honnavar taluk, Bebakka Hemanna Barangi from Hireanaji in Byadagi taluk, Kasturi Shivayya Hiremath from Belavadi in Gadag taluk, Basamma Ningappa Jakkannavar from Harobelavadi in Dharwad district, Shashikala Mallikarjun Nadagoudar from Muddebihal in Bijapur district and Renuka Bheemappa Maraditota from Cholachagudda in Bagalkot district, Mr. Hanchinal said.

The award distribution ceremony would be held on September 24, Mr. Hanchinal added.

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Facilitation centres for farmers planned

Farmer facilitation centres will be opened in 10 panchayats under the Harithasree project of Kudumbasree Mission. The beneficiary panchayats would be at Kavilumpara, Changaroth, Chemancherry, Payyoli, Balussery, Unnikulam, Mavoor, Chathamangalam, Panangad, and Tiruvambadi.

This was decided at a district-level workshop held to prepare the action plan for Harithasree Project. Presidents of grama panchayats and chairpersons of standing committees for development were among those who attended the workshop. It was also decided to identify cultivable land in panchayats suitable for organic farming. A scheme was also prepared at the workshop to produce 500 tonne fruits, 1,000 tonne vegetables, and 2,500 tonne tubers in these organic farm lands.

This scheme would be taken up by local bodies at their next meeting. Estimates would be prepared for preparing farm lands for organic farming and for deployment of expert farmers to guide farmers involved in the project. Kudumbasree District Mission co-ordinator KK Mohammed Faizal presided over the workshop where details of the Harithasree project were worked out.

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A farmer with a passion for fruits



R. Raveendran has visitors from all over the State, who travel all the way to Ulloor here, just to climb atop the terrace of his house. What welcomes them are succulent passion fruit, some

green and mostly purple, hanging from their tender tendrils. Walk another 800 sq ft, and one finds as many as 400 bags with all sorts of vegetables growing in them.

The passion fruit crop, spread over 400 sq ft, is no ordinary one, says this passionate farmer who took to the activity after retiring as an electrician. He plucks one to show the light purple colour of its rind. The rich aroma and the comparatively lesser acidic flavour clearly distinguish it from the common golden variety. "Purple passion fruit is much sweeter than the golden one. I understand that this variety is effective in controlling cough and asthma, apart from reducing blood pressure. Officials from the Agriculture Department have confirmed the species," he says. There is more to come, says Mr. Raveendran, and leads the way to the backyard of his adjacent bakery. Standing at 11 ft 3 inches, one would surely do a double take at the spinach there, a plant that usually grows hardly three-four ft. "That is the highest growth rate this year, but hopefully it can grow to a record height," says Mr. Raveendran, for whom setting records is nothing new. A 275-kg African yam cultivated in his backyard had gained a spot in the Limca Book of Records as the heaviest of its kind in 2010. For this year's Onasadya at home, every vegetable on the banana leaf came from his garden. His crops are high-yielding varieties, thanks to the home-made bio-fertilisers and natural pesticides. It has not only helped make cultivation profitable but also solved the waste management problem at home.

"There is enough produce from my garden for the family of four. The entire garden is set up in such a way that the whole weight is concentrated on the beams and pillars rather than on the terrace floor. Almost all the food waste, except plastic, turns to manure here," adds the farmer, who is also actively involved in cultivating vegetable saplings for public distribution. "Agriculture has only rewarded me and I will continue to inspire as many people as possible to take up home farming," Mr. Raveendran says.

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Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Rainy

Rain: 0.0
Humidity: 94
Wind: normal

Friday, Sep 21

Max 34.0° | Min 25.6°

Sunrise: 05:57
Sunset: 06:05
Barometer: 1008

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Saturday, Sep 22

Max 34° | Min 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday
Sep 23



33° | 26°

Rainy

Monday
Sep 24



32° | 26°

Rainy

Tuesday
Sep 25



33° | 26°

Rainy

Wednesday
Sep 26



30° | 27°

Rainy

Thursday
Sep 27



30° | 26°

Rainy



Airport Weather

Delhi

Rain: 0
Humidity: 94
Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:09
Sunset: 06:18
Barometer: 1007



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Basmati rice samples carry arsenic: USFDA

The US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) has found arsenic content in about 30 samples of Indian basmati rice in its preliminary analysis. The regulator will issue an

advisory to consumers after completing its study.

However, exporters from India said basmati rice was free from arsenic content as shipments are made only

after complying with the required tests.

The USFDA has collected 200 samples of rice and rice products available in the American market from different countries including India. Of the 200 samples, 31 Indian samples had inorganic arsenic content in the range of 1.8 to 6.5 microgram per serving.

“The FDA is in the process of collecting and analysing samples to examine the issue thoroughly... FDA will analyse these results and determine whether or not to issue additional recommendations,” the USFDA said.

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Karnataka reduces discharge into Cauvery after CRA meet

Karnataka has reduced discharged from its reservoirs into the Cauvery after the Cauvery River Authority meeting on Wednesday.

Both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu expressed dissatisfaction over the PM's ruling at the Cauvery meet. Tamil Nadu announced that it would move the Supreme Court to get its due share in the Cauvery water.

As per the Supreme Court's direction Karnataka agreed to release 10,000 cusecs from September 11 to 19. It kept its commitment till some days back by maintaining a release of 9000 to 12,000 cusecs.

After the Cauvery River Authority meeting ended without any solution acceptable to both the states, Karnataka reduced the discharge by a significant quantum.

Sources in the Public Works Department expressed the concern that the supply would further drop to the levels prior to September 11 in the days to come.

Karnataka on Thursday released only 4,816 cusecs from Kabini Dam and 2,210 from Krishnaraja Sagar Dam. On Wednesday 9,083 cusecs and 2598 cusecs were released from Kabini and Krishnaraja Sagar respectively.

The Mettur dam's inflows and the storage is expected to go down in the days to come because of a drastic inflow-discharge mismatch.

As against 10,820 cusecs inflow on Thursday 15,009 cusecs was discharged from Mettur dam for Samba cultivation. The level stood at 84.160 feet and the storage was 46.228 tmcft which would last hardly for another 30 days with the current discharge level.

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Chilli production to drop by 15%

Chilli production is expected to be 15 per cent lower this year compared to last year on the back of lower acreage. Production of the spice this year is estimated to be 110,000 tonnes compared to 125,000 tonnes last year. This year, the area under chilli, in major producing area of Andhra Pradesh is 87,428 hectare compared to 106,858 hectare last year. The average sowing area that comes under chilli in Andhra Pradesh is 104,528 hectare. Sowing is impacted as export inquiries for the spice have been lower this year, also the price of chilli is lower this year compared to last year. In the last one year chilli prices have been down by 40.7 per cent to Rs 4,880 per quintal.

Italy's agri machinery manufacturer in India

Italy-based multinational company Maschio Gaspardo Group, which specialises in the production of agricultural machinery, has set up a manufacturing unit in Ranjangaon, Pune with an investment of Rs 200 crore. The plant is proposed to manufacture rotary tillers, mulchers and seeders for the domestic market initially. To start with, it will manufacture products for Mahindra & Mahindra and New Holland India. Plans are also underway to serve the needs of Maschio Gaspardo Group's other global customers.

Futures speculation distorting rubber prices'

Import of natural rubber (NR) is set to increase, as speculation in the futures market has severely impacted the availability in physical markets, stated the Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (Atma) and the All India Rubber Industries Association (AIRIA) today.

“A binge of heavy speculation has thrown the entire domestic rubber trade out of gear. Expiry pressures of the just expired September contract have sent prices spiralling up. On September 14, the September contract zoomed up to the four per cent intra-day circuit limit, to close at Rs 193/kg. The trend was not in sync with the fundamentals, as the physical price as per the Rubber Board was Rs 185. On September 15, when a strike was observed in Kerala and physical trade was closed, the September contract rose further by four per cent and the trade touched Rs 201. Ironically, the traded volume on September 15 was just 48 tonnes,” the two industry associations have stated in a communication to the futures market regulator, the Forward Markets Commission. They have noted the international price when all this took place was just Rs 170 per kg.

According to the user-industry, such unnatural and illogical trends in the futures trade heavily hampers the physical trade, resulting in wrong signals to all stakeholders, including growers, with those befitting being only speculators and the exchange operators.

Typically, under such circumstances, farmers and traders tend to hold stocks and consumers have no option but to contract for imports, as availability thins out and the landed price difference is in the range of Rs 25-30 per kg. Since such speculative trends do not last, the situation could get worse when heavy imports land up in peak production months, they've added.

According to Vinod Simon, president of AIRIA, the current speculation in domestic futures is giving least consideration to the demand-supply fundamentals. “Why,” he asked, “should domestic NR prices hold significantly higher than international prices when we are approaching the peak production months and carrying more than 250,000 tonnes as suggested by the Rubber Board, and also in light of the fact that there is already a spurt in imports this year of 21 per cent?”

From the Rubber Board data, NR imports in April-August was 95,047 tonnes against 78,423 tonnes in the same period last year.

In its communication, the user-industries have asked for curbing the volatility in futures prices by reducing the intra-day price fluctuation limit from the current four per cent to one per cent.

Business Standard

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Gains in soyabean may make up for loss in groundnut



Kharif oilseed production will see a divergent trend this year.

The production of oilseeds with high oil content, such as groundnut and sunflower, would see a drop, while that of low oil content – soyabean – is expected to see a rise.

The decline in groundnut and sunflower could largely be attributed to the drop in acreage, as scanty rain during June-July hit the planting and standing crop, especially in Gujarat.

“The groundnut output would be down by at least a million tonnes this year at around 32-33 lakh tonnes,” said B.V. Mehta, Executive Director of Solvent Extractors Association of India (SEAI).

The oil recovery is 40 per cent in groundnut and 35 per cent in sunflower, but lower at 17 per cent in soyabean.

Last year, the country produced around 42 lakh tonnes of groundnut, according to trade estimates.

However, the Government's fourth advance estimates released in mid-July suggest that the groundnut output stood at 50.97 million tonnes.

state-wise scenario

The potential drop in groundnut output this year could largely be attributed to the decline in acreage mainly in Gujarat, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.

The Government data reveal that the acreage was down in Gujarat at 11.87 lakh hectares (lh), as of September 13, against 14.33 lh in the corresponding period last year.

In Karnataka, the acreage was down to 3.76 lh (5.18 lh), Rajasthan at 3.68 lh (4.24 lh) and Tamil Nadu 1.73 lh (2.02 lh).

However, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have registered a marginal increase in acreage at 10.33 lh (10.18 lh) and 2.25 lh (2.18 lh), respectively.

In Gujarat, groundnut coverage has been only 75 per cent of normal, while castor coverage is 84 per cent of normal. Sesamum sowing is just 27 per cent of the usual coverage.

Mehta said the acreage in Gujarat would be lower by about 3 lh over the Government's estimates, as standing crop in the key growing region of Saurashtra had dried up in June-July due to lack of rains.

The decline in groundnut and sunflower could be compensated by rape/mustard seed in the ensuing rabi season, as the late revival of monsoon has helped improve soil moisture levels.

"The overall oilseed output at the end of 2012-13 season could be the same as that of last year," Mehta said.

Soyabean output

However, production of soyabean could possibly touch a new high as farmers in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, buoyed by returns last year, have planted the oilseed in a record area.

With steep rise in sowing of kharif crops in Madhya Pradesh, production of kharif crops in the State is expected to increase 15-20 per cent compared with its production last year. According to assessment done by Farmers' Welfare and Agriculture Development, the area under kharif crops in Madhya Pradesh has increased by 1.55 lh to 116.25 lh .

Rise in kharif crops acerage has been mainly due to timely availability of seeds, fertiliser, pesticide and other inputs to farmers.

Though monsoon in the State arrived late, plenty of rains in the months of August and September have bolstered prospect of kharif crops.

With soyabean fetching higher prices this year, the soyabean acerage this year in the State has increased with a large number offarmers switching over from cotton farming.

“The crop this year is likely to be same or better than last year,” said Rajesh Agrawal, spokesperson for Soyabean Oil Processors Association (SOPA).

Soyabean output last year stood at 115 lakh tonne.

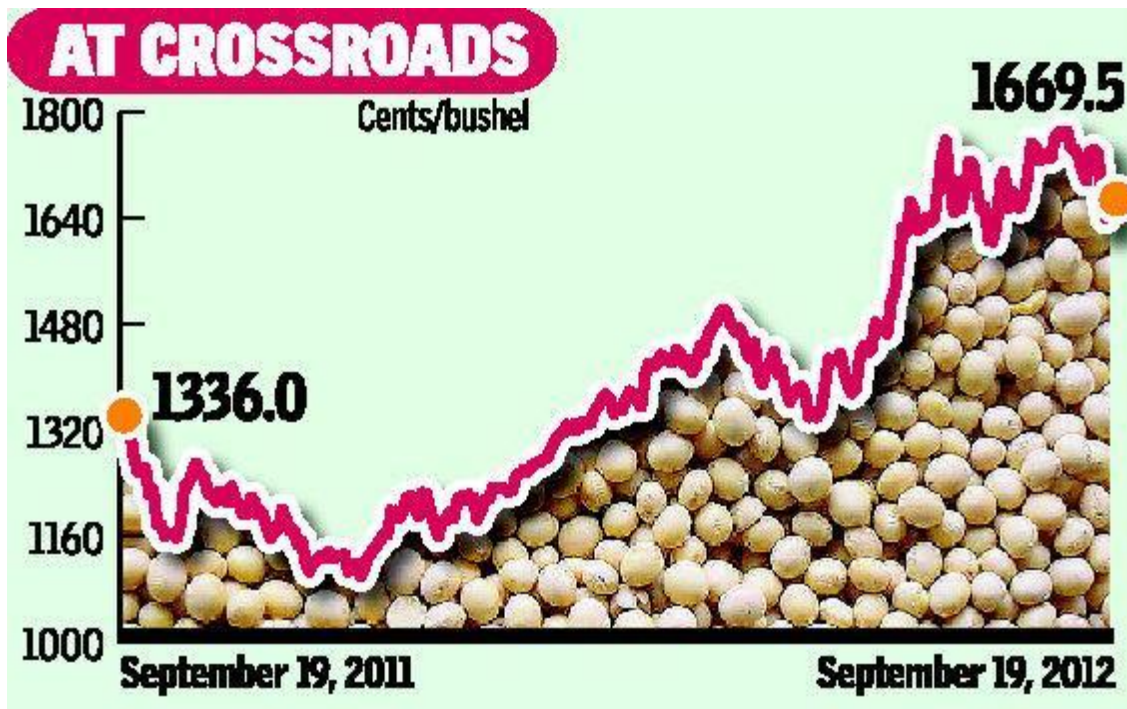
SOPA will announce its crop estimates on September 29, and the harvest next week.

Soyabean prices had more than doubled in the past year on global cues on concerns that drought will trim the US crop.

But the prices have eased a bit on signs of better yields in the US and improving crop prospects in Brazil.

21.09.2012 Sep

CBOT soya in near-term downtrend



BL Research Bureau:

Soyabean futures traded on the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) is taken for this technical analysis.

CBOT soyabean futures advanced 1.8 per cent to close at 1669.5 cents a bushel on Wednesday.

In December 2011, CBOT soya took support around 1,100 cents, its long-term base level and started to trend upwards. Since then, CBOT soya has been on an intermediate-term uptrend.

It breached its long-term resistance around 1,600 cents in early July this year and accelerated.

However, later it encountered resistance around 1,750 cents and began to lose momentum. CBOT soya managed to hold above the 1,600 support and registered record high at 1794.7 cents on September 4 as demand remains firm.

Nevertheless, CBOT soya reversed its direction triggered by negative divergence in weekly relative strength index and daily moving average convergence divergence indicator. It is in a near-term downtrend.

On September 17, soyabean futures tumbled 4 per cent to 1,669 cents a bushel, its biggest fall in a year as yields surprise. This fall has breached its 21- and 50-day moving averages.

In the ensuing week, CBOT soya can decline and test support at 1,600 cents. On the other hand, near-term resistances are positioned at 1,725 to 1,750 cents band and 1,800 cents. Only an emphatic rally above 1,800 cents will take it higher to 1,900 cents.

CBOT soya has been on a medium-term sideways consolidation phase broadly between 1,600 and 1,800 cents. A strong fall below 1,600 cents will pull it down to the next key support band between 1,450 cents and 1,500 cents in the medium-term. Next important support is at 1,300 cents.

21.09.2012 Sep

Rubber futures surging without volume, complains industry



The rubber industry is set to further increase imports of natural rubber, as speculation in futures market has severely affected its availability in the spot market.

The Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (ATMA) and All-India Rubber Industries Association (AIRIA) said that domestic futures trade in natural rubber has once again gone into a binge of heavy speculation that has thrown the entire domestic rubber trade out of gear.

The industry, in a communication to the Forward Market Commission (FMC), said that expiry pressures of just expired September contract, notwithstanding volumes less than 100 tonnes in a day and stocks less than 200 tonnes, sent prices spiralling upwards.

Last week, the September contract zoomed up 4 per cent intra-day circuit limit, to close at Rs 193.

The trend was not in sync with fundamentals as the physical price, according to the Rubber Board, was Rs 185.

On September 15, when a strike was observed in Kerala and physical trade was closed, the September contract rose further by another 4 per cent and touched Rs 201.

Ironically, the traded volume on September 15 was a meagre 48 tonnes, the communication said.

In view of frenzied speculation, physical market pole-vaulted in no time with prices of Rs 200 being quoted that day ignoring the wafer-thin volumes being traded on the futures market.

Strangely, all this happened when international price of RSS3 was just Rs 170 (and Malaysian SMR20 only Rs 153), says the communication.

According to the rubber industry, such unnatural and illogical trends in futures trade hamper the physical trade heavily resulting into wrong signals to all the stakeholders including growers, and beneficiaries are just speculators and the exchange operators.

Typically, under such circumstances, farmers and traders tend to hold stocks and consumers have no option but to contract imports, as availability thins out and also as landed price difference too is in the range of Rs 25-30 a kg.

Vinod Simon, President, AIRIA, said in a statement that current speculation in domestic futures is giving least consideration to demand-supply fundamentals.

In its communication, the industry has also asked for curbing the volatility in futures prices by reducing intra-day price fluctuation limit from the current 4 per cent to 1 per cent.



Enthused by the Government's latest reforms drive, fertiliser makers want the Centre to initiate such an exercise in the urea sector as well.

To begin with, they want a hike in the price of urea, which is heavily subsidised at present.

"The hike in urea prices will not only help reduce the rising subsidy bill, but also prevent the adverse impact on soil health," said A. Vellayan, Chairman, Fertiliser Association of India.

The huge price differential in price of urea and non-urea complexes has led to the indiscriminate use of the nutrient for the second year, resulting in imbalanced fertigation.

The effect of imbalanced usage comes with a lag and food production will be impacted in a year or two, Vellayan said.

Urea is currently priced at Rs 5,340 a tonne, while complexes such as DAP and NPK are quoted at Rs 24,000 and Rs 22,000 a tonne each.

Stressing on the need to bring in reasonable price parity between urea and P and K fertilisers, Vellayan said: "By increasing the urea price, the savings in subsidy may be disbursed to P&K

fertilisers for proportionate increase in subsidy of these complexes whenever required – like in case of global price rise or depreciation of rupee”.

Urea prices should be gradually increased over the next two years.

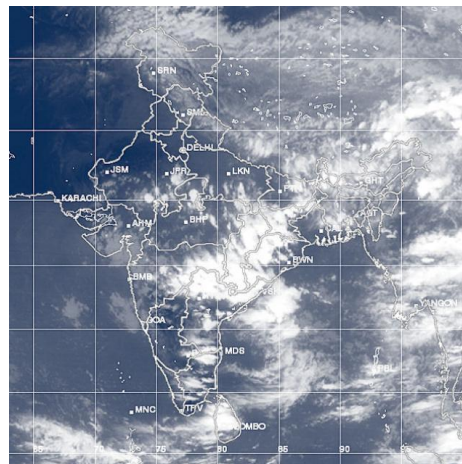
A 70 per cent rise in prices would help the Government save annual subsidy of up to Rs 15,000 crore, he said.

“We feel urea has to be brought under the nutrient-based subsidy (NBS) scheme,” said H.S.Bawa, Executive Vice- Chairman of Zuari Industries Ltd. Satish Chander, Director-General of FAI, said overall fertiliser consumption was down by 12 per cent in April-August period due to poor monsoon.

Urea offtake fell 4 per cent, while DAP sales declined 29 per cent, he said.

21.09.2012 Sep

Monsoon goes into withdrawal mode in North-West



The long return march of year 2012 monsoon may well have begun, prompting a countdown of sorts by the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

DRY WINDS

There has been considerable decrease in moisture content over extreme west Rajasthan, west Haryana and Punjab during the 24 hours ending Thursday morning.

Mostly dry northerly to north-westerly winds are prevailing over northwest and adjoining Central India.

These made conditions increasingly conducive for withdrawal of the monsoon from west Rajasthan and adjoining areas from Monday.

The Climate Prediction Centre of the US National Weather Services sees 'suppressed rain' for most part of the southern peninsula until October 2.

But it has signalled formation of a cyclone/typhoon each during either of the two weeks ending as on date.

These storms are expected to drag the flagging monsoon flows across the peninsula to some strength, bringing some rain during this period.

RAINS FOR SOUTH

In fact, the US National Centres for Environmental Prediction says rains may linger over parts of the south peninsula until October 6.

They are likely to be concentrated over Karnataka, parts of adjoining Rayalaseema and Tamil Nadu.

An extended forecast for the next seven days (until September 27) by the IMD also seemed to suggest some rain for the south.

VIGOROUS IN EAST

But it sees the North-eastern States, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, east India, north Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh getting benefited.

Meanwhile, an IMD update said that the monsoon was vigorously strong over Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh during the 24 hours ending Thursday morning.

It was only slightly less active over Andaman and Nicobar Islands, sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim.

What is driving the monsoon here is a truncated north-south trough of lower pressure from Bihar to coastal Andhra Pradesh across Jharkhand and Odisha.

A weather warning valid for the next two days sad that heavy to very heavy rainfall may break out with extremely heavy falls at one or two places over Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh.

Heavy to very heavy rainfall has also been forecast over sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim.

Maschio Gaspardo sets up plant near Pune

Italian agricultural machinery maker Maschio Gaspardo has set up its first plant in India at Ranjangoan near Pune. The new facility will be inaugurated on September 23 by Union Minister for Agriculture Sharad Pawar.

Set up with an investment of Rs 200 crore, the plant will initially make rotary tillers and supply them to tractor makers Mahindra and Mahindra and New Holland India.

The company also plans to introduce technology in the Indian agricultural market with more products, and develop those specific to local needs.

Alessio Riulini, Managing Director, Maschio Gaspardo India, said "The growing importance of Indian agricultural market gives this country a central position in Maschio Gaspardo Group's global strategy."

The Pune plant will currently employ 120 people and will increase this to 250 people along with planned further investment of Rs 100 crore till 2017.

The Maschio Gaspardo group specialises in the production of agricultural machinery for tillage, sowing, seeding, landscaping, forage-making, sprayers and crop care. It has 11 manufacturing sites worldwide.

The new plant will aid the group to achieve its aim of exceeding \$280-million turnover in 2012.