

# THE HINDU

## More research needed to add value to cocoa



More research is needed to add value to cocoa, said Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University K. Ramasamy here on Monday.

To integrate the research and development efforts, an organisation is required for cocoa at the South-India level, he said while inaugurating a two-day seminar on “Cocoa Development in India – Issues and Strategies.”

### **Intercrop**

Cocoa was cultivated as an intercrop in South India along with coconut and arecanut trees and rubber. TNAU had taken up a joint research with Cadbury India Limited in 2008 to address some of the problems faced by cocoa growers and to develop new high yielding varieties and technologies that would help farmers to get higher yield.

“TNAU scientists have already identified 10 clones that have a yield potential of more than three kg dry bean a tree a year. These cocoa

clones will be evaluated under five different agro-ecological regions of Tamil Nadu for further studies,” Mr. Ramasamy said.

He added that in view of the research and development support being extended by TNAU, the government should sanction a Centre of Excellence for Cocoa to the university. It could be operated at two coconut research stations in Aliyar Nagar and Veppankulam.

Satyabrata Sahoo, Director of National Horticulture Mission and Commissioner of Horticulture, Tamil Nadu, said that the four lakh acre under coconut cultivation could be used to grow cocoa as an intercrop.

### **Publication**

The Vice-Chancellor released *Sahara*, a publication in Hindi, prepared by the Directorate of Cashew Nut and Cocoa Development, and *Processing and Value Addition of Cocoa* prepared by the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore.

He distributed awards to best performing cocoa farmers of Southern India.

## **Two new genera of tree frogs found in Western Ghats**

Two new genera of frogs were discovered by a team of independent researchers, led by Anil Zachariah and Robin Kurian Abraham, during their recent exploration in the Western Ghats.

The discovery, published in the latest issue of International Taxonomic Journal *Zootaxa*, is a joint effort by the team which comprised B .R. Ansil; Arun Zachariah of the Wild Life Disease Research Lab in Wayanad; and Robert Alexander Pyron, Assistant professor, Department of Biological Sciences of the George Washington University, U.S.



Latest Find: *Beddomixalus bijui* (left) and the *Mercurana myristicapalustris*.





## **Biodiversity hot spot**

The discovery once again proves that the Western Ghats, a biodiversity hot spot and Unesco world Heritage site, is a treasure trove of many amphibians.

It was found that the newly found genera belonged to tree frog family 'Rhacophoridae.' The frogs were discovered in highly threatened fresh water swamp eco systems, which are unique to the mountain range.

The frogs discovered are named after two remarkable personalities who had an association with this landscape. One genus is named 'Beddomixalus' after colonel Richard Henry Beddome. He was a gifted polymath of the colonial era, who made extraordinary contributions to the understanding to the natural history of the sub-continent while serving as the Chief Conservator of Forests in the Madras Presidency. His works were the first detailed forays towards a systematic and through understanding of the amphibian diversity of the Western Ghats.

The other genus has been christened 'Mercurana' to commemorate Freddie Mercury, late iconic lead singer of the British rock band Queen. Mercury (his pen name) was of Indian Parsi origin and had spent major part of his childhood in India in Panchagni, located in the northern part of the mountain range, where the frog now bearing his name has been discovered.

While the 'Beddomixalus bijui' was found in the swamp forests of the Anamalai and high ranges of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, 'Mercurana myristicapalustris,' is restricted to highly fragmented and threatened low land 'Myristica' swamp forests in the foothills of the Agastyamalai hills in Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram districts.

This distinctive forest type is dominated by wild relatives of nutmeg that thrive in waterlogged soil, and hence the name 'Myristica' swamp. But much of these types of forests have been lost, having

been converted to raise cash crops such as rubber and oil palms, Dr. Anil Zachariah says.

Moreover, episodes of erratic rainfall over recent years are likely to affect the breeding patterns of these frogs and detailed studies are needed to explore such impacts, Mr. Abraham says.

The researchers highlight that the swamp forest and their unique biota are to be preserved. They stressed that the finding of two novel genera after more than a century of herpetological exploration in the region take the total number of tree frog genera in the Western Ghats to seven.

---

- *They are named after two remarkable personalities associated with this landscape*

- *Erratic rainfall during recent years likely to affect breeding patterns of these frogs*

*They were found in highly threatened fresh water swamp eco systems*

---

## **‘Despite adversities, doubling of farm output possible’**

Though the number of families involved in farming in Cuddalore district is on the decline, the State government’s objectives of doubling foodgrain production and tripling farmers’ income are still achievable, said Ka. Ilango, Deputy Director of Agriculture (State schemes).

He was speaking at a “Farmers’ Day” celebrations organised by the Faculty of Agriculture of Annamalai University on its campus at Chidambaram on Wednesday.

Mr Ilango said that five years ago, the number of farming families in the district was 3.48 lakh. However, it has now come down to 3.08 lakh families. Area under cultivation too had shrunk significantly. Yet, Cuddalore farmers were known for their resilience and endurance. The district was blessed with irrigation sources: rivers such as the Kollidam, the Gedilam, the Vellar and the Manimuktha, tanks such as the Veeranam tank and the Wellington lake, and abundant sub-surface water.

While 50 per cent of the cultivable area in the district is part of the delta region, the remaining falls under the non-delta region. Therefore, Mr. Ilango pointed out that despite the drought situation prevailing in the district, as of now two farmers from the Kurinjipadi area had created State-level records in paddy and pulses yield.

## **Farmers block roads with paddy bags**

Farmers from different parts of Vellore district who brought paddy for sale at the Regulated Market here on Wednesday, blocked Thorappadi Road in front of the market by placing their paddy bags on it. They were protesting against refusal of permission to allow them to take their vehicles inside the market.

### **Three-hour wait**

Over 200 farmers from different parts of the district came to the market at 5 a.m. carrying paddy in vans, tractors and autorickshaws. In view of the absence of adequate space for the vehicles inside the market, the authorities did not allow all the vehicles inside.

As they were not allowed entry for vehicles even at 8 a.m., the farmers removed the paddy bags from their vehicles, placed them on the road and blocked traffic.

Police held talks with the agitating farmers and officials of the Regulated Market. The farmers gave up their agitation after the authorities allowed them to stock their paddy bags in one of the rooms in the market.

## **Plea to check migration of farm workers**

All India President of Farm Workers Union Paturi Ramaiah urged authorities to apply MGNREGS to check migration of farm workers from drought-hit areas. He was addressing conference of Farm Workers Union on Wednesday at Mantralayam.

## **Farm ponds play big role in tiding over droughts**



*New beginning: Curently, Adilabad district alone has about 195 farm ponds.—  
Photo: Special arrangement*

The Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA), Hyderabad, is actively involved in popularising farm pond concepts for farmers in Andhra Pradesh. The farm ponds are constructed at the lower side of the fields and the runoff from the higher side of the fields are channelised into the pond.

For farmers of Seethagondi gram panchayat in Adilabad district, Andhra Pradesh, small dugouts created as farm ponds in their district dug under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural employment Guarantee (MGNREG) scheme did not seem to create any enthusiasm as the volume of water stored in the pits was retained only for a short period and got silted up just after one or two rainy seasons.

To address this grievance the Institute intervened to dig some additional large ponds in the district.

### **Crucial resource**

“Water, the most crucial resource for sustainable agricultural production in the dry land/rain fed areas, is not being used fully. Much of the rainfall runs off the ground. The runoff does not only causes loss of water but it also washes away precious top soil,” says Dr. Mohammed Osman, Principal Scientist (Agronomy) and Head of the Institute.

Apart from digging some new ponds those already dug under the scheme were re-modelled and about 30 ponds of higher dimension and capacity were dug. Sixteen ponds out of the total 30 retained water for some months and few of them throughout the year.

The success led to huge demand from all farmers in the region for more such big ponds and today the district alone has about 195 farm ponds.

The National Agriculture Innovation Project (NAIP) under Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi bore the expense for the work.

Farmers were also cooperative towards this concept and a couple of them also invested their money for installing pumpsets to draw the water from the ponds to irrigate their fields.



## **Personal investment**

For instance, a small farmer, Umanath, whose field happens to be close to the pond met the cost for installing a diesel pump and pipelines for lifting the water from the pond to irrigate his half-acre plot.

Even during peak summer the farmer could easily water his crop and was able to get a net return of Rs. 72,000 from his tomatoes in 3-4 months due to continuous water availability.

Another small farmer M. Manthu whose field was also close to the pond introduced sorghum crop during rabi season in his two-acre plot and was able to earn Rs. 30,000 from both grain and fodder.

## **Scarce things**

“Fodder and drinking water were scarce commodities for many of us during summer some years back but today after the establishment of these farm ponds both these problems no longer seem to bother us,” says the farmer.

The success of Mr. Manthu encouraged many more farmers to cultivate rabi sorgum, and today the area under sorgum has increased from two to 10 acres.

Some farmers have also started cultivating wheat and chickpea using the pond water successfully.

Similarly several tribal farmers in the region have now realised the importance of rainwater harvesting and are able to save Rs. 2000- to 2,500 on fetching of water (hiring of bullock cart and drum) for spraying pesticides for their crops.

The institute is encouraging the farmers to fence the ponds and harness the multiple benefits of water by rearing fish and growing vegetables for meeting nutritional security.

The availability of water in most of the ponds is the silver lining for improving cropping intensity and diversity in the most disadvantaged district of Andhra Pradesh.

### **Black soil district**

Adilabad is mainly a black soil district and receives good rainfall that offers scope for rainwater harvesting and recycling on a large scale.

Since continuous water availability is a must for agriculture work, preserving and maintaining a perennial source is of utmost importance.

Today the district serves as a model for many other villages in the country to follow in preserving rainwater and using it during drought periods, according to Dr. Mohammed.

For further details readers can contact Dr. Mohammed Osman, Head and Principal Scientist (Agronomy), Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA), Santoshnagar, Hyderabad – 500 059, email: [mdosman1960@yahoo.com](mailto:mdosman1960@yahoo.com), Mobile: 09440763100, phone: 040- 24530177.

## **Agricultural polytechnics to come up in all districts within five years**

District Agricultural Polytechnics will be established in 32 districts of the State in the Public-Private Partnership mode under the XII Five-Year Plan of Tamil Nadu. Though admissions will begin from 2014, the polytechnics will come up in a phased manner over the next five years.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University K. Ramasamy, who is also Member, State Planning Commission, pointed out that the polytechnics, with a State contribution of Rs. 78 crore, would focus on equipping students with knowledge on maintenance and repair of farm equipment and machinery.

There are already Institutes of Agriculture under the eight research centres of the university offering diploma programmes in agriculture and horticulture. These have been churning out agricultural assistants who work at Panchayat Union and Block levels in each district.

But the new polytechnics had been devised to address the pressing need for skilled work force to maintain and repair farm machinery and equipment that farmers were turning to in the light of labour shortage. They would also be trained to attend to the two-wheelers of farmers.

“Farm mechanisation is the solution to overcome labour shortage. But farmers are finding it difficult to maintain these equipment because in case of a breakdown or any other problem, it has to be moved to the city for repairs. The polytechnic pass outs will be placed in villages so that it is possible for them to attend to repairs immediately and also ensure proper maintenance,” Mr. Ramasamy said.

The modalities of establishment of the polytechnics would be worked out with interested industry partners who deal in farm equipment and machinery. The private partner could choose to use his premises or find a new one for establishing the polytechnic. The curriculum would be designed to suit the district-wise cultivation requirement and the equipment used accordingly.

Each polytechnic would admit 40 students, both boys and girls, for the three-year programme.

***Will focus on equipping students with knowledge on maintenance of farm equipment***

## **Eco friendly measure to control papaya mealybug**

Chemical measures to control the outbreak of papaya mealybug in Tamil Nadu did not yield success because of wider host range including many weed species and trees, presence of thick protective waxy coating over the body and mainly development of resistance to the chemical insecticides.

### **Past lesson**

Based on the lesson learnt from other countries like Guam, Palau, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, U.S. (Florida) etc where the pest was suppressed successfully by classical biological control programme, National Bureau of Agriculturally Important Insects (NBAII) Bangalore functioning under Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) imported three effective exotic parasitoids namely *Acerophagus papayae*, *Anagyrus loecki* and *Pseudleptomastix mexicana*, mass multiplied and released them in hot spot zones jointly with Agricultural Universities of different states as well as Central Silk Board. The pest was completely brought under control.

Recent survey in Tamil Nadu indicated reappearance of papaya mealybug in a few areas of Salem, Namakkal, Erode, Coimbatore, Virudunagar and Thirunelveli districts.

The incidence is also recorded on other plant species including hibiscus, sorrel leaves, tomato, brinjal etc.



Though the population of the pest recorded below economic injury level, incidence of this pest is found to be increased in the locations facing severe drought and hot climate.

Past experience revealed that spray of insecticides induced the outbreak of the bug rather than control because of its resistance and destruction of natural enemies as they are highly sensitive to the chemicals.

### **Contact**

Release of above said exotic parasitoids at 200 individuals per location alone is sufficient to manage the pest. If incidence of papaya mealybug is noticed, farmers may approach nearby agriculture universities or field units of Central Silk Board for help.

(N.Sakthivel, Scientist, Research Extension Center, Central Silk Board, Srivilliputtur, Tamil Nadu, email:

sakthivelcsb@hotmail.com, Mobile: 098427 61789 & R.

Balakrishna, Scientist, & Head, Regional Sericultural Research Station, Salem, Tamil Nadu, email: balakrishna131@gmail.com, Mobile: 09443692283.)

## **Priority to mixed cropping under NREGA**

*Cultivation of cashew, mango, guava and sapota to be encouraged*

Srikakulam District Water Management Agency will develop 20,000 acres of vacant land with the funds allocated under National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. The DWAMA officials will encourage farmers to opt for mixed crop varieties so that they would get income periodically since yielding will come in different seasons. Cashew, mango, guava, sapota and other varieties will be encouraged under the land development scheme.



*Stock-taking: Officials of Srikakulam District Water Management Agency interacting with farmers and workers near Ranasthalam in Srikakulam district.*

Srikakulam Collector Saurabh Gaur and the DWAMA Project Director A. Kalyanachakravarti have directed the field officers to collect feedback from the farmers about the schemes so that it would be implemented effectively. The district administration estimated that around Rs.50,000 will be spent on each acre in a phased manner. Saplings, fertilizers, pesticides will be supplied to the selected farmers under the scheme. “We will give financial assistance to the farmers for growing the saplings. The scheme will certainly help small and marginal farmers,”

Mr.Kalyanachakaravathy told *The Hindu* . Greenery will be developed with the making of barren land into fertile land with the initiatives of the government, the officials felt. Training programme will be conducted for the farmers very soon to explain about the importance of mixed crops and maximum utilisation of the land with less expenditure.

The department is also keen on creation of permanent assets too as it has been facing criticism that the funds allocated under the scheme were being paid as wages. Out of Rs.350 crore, around Rs. 275 crore were allocated as wages in 2013-14. Hereafter, the DWAMA officials will encourage construction of panchayat buildings and Anganwadi centers also.

# 141 paddy procurement centres to be set up

*Officials estimate a yield of 13 lakh metric tonnes in rabi*

With the officials of the agriculture department estimating a yield of 13 lakh metric tonnes of paddy during the current rabi season, arrangements are being made to set up 141 paddy procurement centres throughout the district to ensure remunerative price to the produce. Paddy has been transplanted in 1.6 lakh hectares during the current season and the farmers have kept their fingers crossed over the outcome. Paddy farmers from the district had been facing difficulties in the form of the non-availability of water and natural calamities like cyclones for the past two years.

As the is good, the officials are keen on assuring a better price to the farmers and they are hopeful that the paddy procurement centres will give a tough competition to the private players and keep the prices of paddy stable. The government fixed minimum support price of Rs. 1,280 per quintal for the A-1 grade variety and Rs. 1,250 per quintal for the normal variety.

Addressing a review meeting with the millers and the officials of the Civil Supplies department, Joint Collector A. Babu on Wednesday said that the Food Corporation of India was not participating in the procurement, so that the government decided to procure the paddy through the millers.

- 
- ***MSP of Rs. 1,280 per quintal for the A-1 grade variety fixed***
  - ***State decides to procure paddy through millers: official***
-

## Vegetable price skyrockets

Gold is not alone in making news on the price front. It has company in beans, carrot, chilli, small onion and many other vegetables. But there is a difference. Gold and the vegetables are travelling in opposite directions, with the prices of the latter going up.

Topping the price chart is beans. A kg of beans was until recently sold at over Rs. 100 a kg. The current price in the wholesale MGR Market is around Rs. 90 a kg.

A. Abdul Azeez, Secretary, Kovai Mavatta Motha Anaithu Kaikari Vyabarigal Sangam (wholesale vegetable traders' association), said that the current price was at least Rs. 50 a kg more than what it used to be a year ago.

Likewise the prices of tomato and small onion had also increased. A kilogram of tomato was sold at Rs. 25 a kg, which was at least Rs. 10 more than the normal price. A kilogram of small onion was priced around Rs. 45 a kg, which was at least Rs. 30 more.

Mr. Azeez added that the increase in price also held good for potato, big onion, carrot, cabbage, drum stick, chilli and other so called English vegetables.

The increase had to do with poor inflow of vegetables from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, where because of the impact of poor South West Monsoon the yield was below normal. "The Coimbatore market is getting only 25 per cent of what it usually gets from the aforementioned States."

The story of country vegetables or *nattu kaikari* is no different.

Even here, Mr. Azeez said, the share of vegetables from fields in Coimbatore and neighbouring areas had come down. It stood at 10



per cent. A good percentage of the vegetables were from Karnataka, where, again the yield was poor.

In all probability the inflow of vegetables would come down in the coming days as the vegetables would be diverted to the local markets there and if that were to happen, Coimbatore could expect a further increase in price, predicted A. Subramani, a wholesale vegetable vendor.

In the retail market to the scene is no different.

Retail vendors said that the upper middle class that usually did not mind the cost up to a point had started buying vegetables after inquiring about the price and that too not based on requirement.

On the days the prices of beans crossed Rs. 130 a kg, ginger Rs. 134 a kg, and coriander leaves Rs. 100 a kg, their sales were reduced.

The increase in prices meant that the people from the low income group also reduced their consumption. From a family of eight adults, 38-year old Valli, who worked as a domestic help, said that in a week, the family consumed approximately 25 kg vegetables.

“A quarter kg of green vegetables is almost Rs. 20. We cannot cater for our family without a minimum of half-a-kg of vegetables for a meal. A bundle of greens is Rs. 10. At least a minimum of Rs. 100 is needed for a day's vegetables,” she rued.

### **Quality vegetables**

For grocers like S.P. Muthukumar, proprietor of Mahalakshmi Store in a gated community, the search for quality vegetables at affordable price meant travel to Ukkadam and Saibaba Colony markets.

Substandard quality vegetables only attracted more wastage and hence he chose to spend a little more for quality ones that his customers preferred.

Restaurant owners and roadside food vendors are not spared, either. Mani Shankar Kumar of Lakshmi Sankar Mess said that it

was hard for him to buy country vegetables at the farmers' market in R.S. Puram. "I am unable to spot in sufficient quantities gourds, ladyfinger, cluster beans and other vegetables. And if they arrive in the market, the quantity is negligible."

The poor inflow had pushed up the price of vegetables and so he had to increase the price of food. "It was only recently that I revised the price and now I'm planning for a marginal increase."

## **Sufficient supply of milk products**

On the occasion of Ramanavami and to help consumers, the Karnataka Milk Federation has made elaborate arrangements to supply sufficient curd/buttermilk on Friday. KMF Director (Marketing), in a release, said the general public/organisations can place orders of their requirements with nearby Nandini milk agents parlours on Thursday. Public and organisations may contact marketing managers of unions/units, if there are any problems regarding sourcing curd/buttermilk during the festival. Consumers may contact Mandya Milk Union; Vijayanagar, Basaveshwaranagar, Kengeri and Rajarajeshwarinagar (9686663663); Tumkur Milk Union: Peenya, Mahalakshmi Layout, West of Chord Road, Nandini Layout (7760965213); Kolar Milk Union (Domlur, Indiranagar, K.R. Puram, Jeevanbhimanagar (7760964555); Mother Dairy (Yelahanka, Nagawara, Yeshwanthpur, Mathikere (951994332); Bangalore Milk Union (Jayanagar, J.P.Nagar, Basavangudi, Chamarajpet, Rajajinagar, Malleswaram, Cantonment, Lakkasandra, Wilson Garden (7760966811). — Staff Reporter

# Free milch cows scheme starts paying dividends

*Aavin procures 80,000 litres daily from beneficiaries*

At least one impact of the scheme for free distribution of milch cows, one of the present government's flagship schemes, is discernible.

'Aavin,' officially called the Tamil Nadu Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation, is procuring approximately 80,000 litres daily from the beneficiaries. [On an average, the daily total procurement is 24.36 lakh litres of milk].

Pointing out that this demonstrated the success of the scheme and debunked the argument of critics, Animal Husbandry Minister T.K. M. Chinnayya told the Assembly on Wednesday that the scheme coupled with another scheme for free distribution of goats/sheep was leading to the improvement of economic conditions of people in rural parts of the State.

So far, 2,185 calves had born out of 24,000 milch cows distributed to the poor, while 10 lakh goats, given by the authorities, had given birth to 2.4 lakh kids.

Mr Chinnayya, whose reply to the debate on demands for grants for his department was marked by spontaneity, said that against the government's norm of 30 per cent quota for Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes under the two schemes, around 40 per cent coverage had been achieved.

## **Indigenous cattle**

The government would encourage the preservation of indigenous cattle breeds, for which seminars and exhibitions would be held, apart from rewarding farmers who were raising well-maintained

such animals. For setting up five model farms to rear goats in a scientific manner, a sum of Rs. 2.21 crore had been earmarked.

As part of strengthening its measures on fodder development, the government set apart Rs. 4.21 crore for forming cattle breeding and fodder development units. This was apart from an allocation of Rs. 25 crore for State Fodder Development Scheme and Rs. 15 crore for provision of dry fodder to livestock at 50 per cent subsidy, as part of drought mitigation efforts in eight districts of the Cauvery delta.

Three training and extension service centres of the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS) would be set up in Ramanathapuram, Perambalur and Nagapattinam at a cost of Rs. 2.7 crore. Two new Veterinary College and Research Institutes in Orathanadu of Thanjavur district and Ramayyanpatti of Tirunelveli would function from new buildings.

To feed the milch cows given under the government's scheme, a mineral mixture would be produced by the TANUVAS at a cost of Rs. 1.5 crore.

Chief Minister Jayalalithaa ordered the hike of monthly assistance given to students of B.V.Sc from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 4,000 during internship, the Minister added. [The move would benefit approximately 260 students, says a source in the department].

***“The government will encourage the preservation of indigenous cattle breeds”***

## **Arcottuthurai, Tranquebar may get fishing harbours**

: Arcottuthurai and Tranquebar in Nagapattinam district are likely to get fishing harbours. The fish landing centre at Jegadapattinam in Pudukottai district will be further improved, Fisheries Minister K.A. Jayapal said here on Wednesday.



Moving the demands for grants for his department in the Assembly, he said a detailed feasibility study would soon be commissioned for these proposals. Already at Jegadapattinam, which is a major landing centre for Pudukottai district, improvement works are on at a cost of Rs. 78.93 lakh.

Mr. Jayapal also said the department would create a corpus fund for conducting detailed studies for setting up of fishing harbours and marine structures so that the works could be expedited.

These efforts, he said, were in continuation of the emphasis of the department for the construction of fishing harbours and landing centres across the State's coast.

The minister also said several fishing harbours including those in Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, Colachel and Thengapattinam and Chennai Harbour are already being upgraded. The Chief Minister Jayalalithaa had recently announced that the Chennai harbour would be further expanded at a cost of Rs. 75 crore.

As far as inland fisheries was concerned, the Minister announced that an integrated inland fisheries network in would be set up in Thanjavur and Thiruvavarur districts at a cost of Rs. 5 crore, a total of Rs. 1.57 crore had been allocated to provide subsidy to inland fishermen for purchase of nets and boats and Rs. 1.82 crore had been set apart for providing subsidy to farmers undertaking inland fishing.

The State's first private fishing harbour built on Build Own Operate Transfer basis at Muttom in Kanyakumari district was nearing completion. Steps are being taken to set up a fishing harbour on PPP basis at Manakudi, which is also in Kanyakumari district.

During the discussion on the demands, M.H. Jawahirullah (Manithaneya Makkal Katchi) suggested that the Rs. 2,000 distributed to fishermen's families during the 45-day fishing ban could be increased as the cost of living has gone up.

He also said that the traditional fishing rights of the fishermen in the Gulf of Mannar biosphere must be protected. Replying, Mr. Jayapal said if he received any specific complaint the matter would be taken to the Chief Minister.

## **New fishing harbours**

Arcottuthurai and Tranquebar in Nagapattinam district are likely to get fishing harbours, Fisheries Minister K.A. Jayapal said.

## **More mobile fish stalls for city; fish fest next month**



*Fishing for sales Eight more such vehicles will be procured for the State, and most of these will run in Chennai —Photo: S.S. Kumar*

In a boost to a popular facility, the city will soon get more mobile fish stalls. Two such stalls already exist, and sell whole as well as dressed fish across different localities.

Minister for fisheries, K.A. Jayapal, on Wednesday announced that eight more vehicles would be procured at a total cost of Rs. 80 lakh for the State. A majority of these vans would be pressed into service in Chennai, where there are still untapped markets, he said.

Moving the demand for the fisheries department, he said that in order to improve the marketing of hygienic fish and fish products, existing fish markets in Chennai, Coimbatore and Tirupur — being run by the department — would be modernised at a cost of Rs. 36

lakh. There are three such markets in Chennai at Nandanam, Anna Nagar and Adyar.

The city will also get one more State-run restaurant in Neelankarai. At present, there are fish restaurants in Santhome and Nandanam that are run by the Tamil Nadu Fisheries Development Corporation (TNFDC).

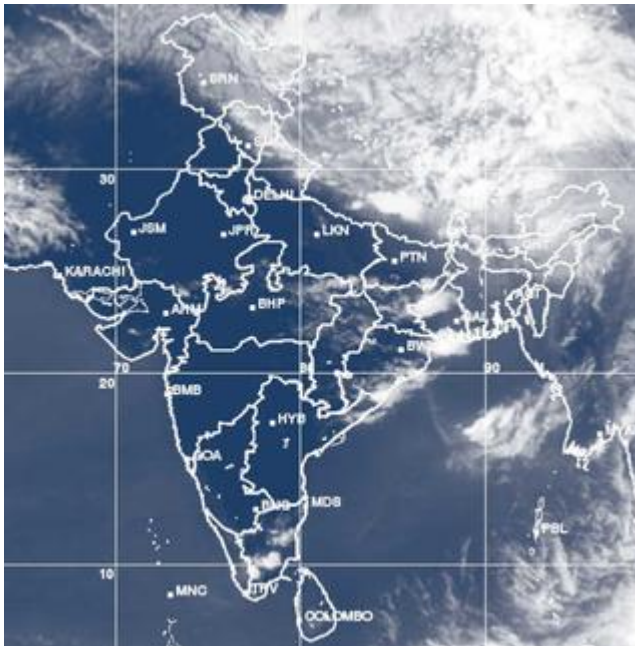
In 2012-13, sales of fish touched 370 tonnes, and peaked on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. On Sundays alone, two tonnes of fish are sold through various outlets in the city. With the government providing funds for more outlets, sales are likely to increase, he said. This year, the target has been set at 450 tonnes.

The Minister also said that as announced by the Chief Minister recently, a fish festival will be held in Chennai from May 9-12 at the Island grounds. At the festival, a variety of ornamental fish, fresh water fish and marine fish will be displayed. Competitions, including those for aquarium hobbyists as well as for fish food recipes, will be conducted.

For those in the fish processing industry, attractions will include aquaculture inputs, machinery for aquaculture and fish processing and fishing equipment.

A total of Rs. 1 crore will be spent on the festival that is to be conducted in association with the TNFDC and the Tamil Nadu State Apex Cooperative Federation Ltd.

# Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on April 17th.

|                 | Max | Min | R  | TR  |
|-----------------|-----|-----|----|-----|
| New Delhi (Plm) | 41  | 21  | 0  | 26  |
| New Delhi (Sfd) | 40  | 22  | 0  | 22  |
| Chandigarh      | 36  | 18  | 0  | 26  |
| Hissar          | 40  | 17  | 0  | 40  |
| Bhuntar         | 24  | 8   | 4  | 133 |
| Shimla          | 24  | 12  | 0  | 108 |
| Jammu           | 29  | 18  | 0  | 34  |
| Srinagar        | 10  | 6   | 31 | 140 |
| Amritsar        | 36  | 14  | 0  | 5   |
| Patiala         | 39  | 18  | 0  | 23  |
| Jaipur          | 40  | 23  | 0  | 7   |
| Udaipur         | 38  | 23  | 0  | 0   |
| Allahabad       | 41  | 24  | 0  | 11  |
| Lucknow         | 39  | 23  | 0  | 1   |
| Varanasi        | 41  | 24  | 0  | 7   |
| Dehradun        | 34  | 17  | 0  | 18  |
| Agartala        | 30  | 18  | 3  | 68  |
| Ahmedabad       | 40  | 24  | 0  | 1   |
| Bangalore       | 35  | 23  | 0  | 22  |
| Bhubaneshwar    | 40  | 26  | 1  | 2   |
| Bhopal          | 40  | 24  | 0  | 21  |
| Chennai         | 40  | 28  | 0  | 32  |
| Guwahati        | 25  | 19  | 9  | 45  |
| Hyderabad       | 40  | 25  | 0  | 42  |
| Kolkata         | 38  | 25  | 0  | 2   |
| Mumbai          | 32  | 24  | 0  | 0   |
| Nagpur          | 43  | 25  | 0  | 16  |

|                    |    |    |   |     |
|--------------------|----|----|---|-----|
| Patna              | 36 | 23 | 0 | 1   |
| Pune               | 36 | 19 | 0 | 3   |
| Thiruvananthapuram | 35 | 27 | 0 | 105 |
| Imphal             | 22 | 14 | 3 | 84  |
| Shillong           | 16 | 11 | 2 | 29  |

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

## RAIN AT MANY PLACES

**RAINFALL:** Rain/thundershowers have occurred at many places over Jammu and Kashmir, at a few places over Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand and at isolated places over Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. Weather was mainly dry over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: HIMACHAL PRADESH: Udaipur 2 and Kangra, Nagrota Surian, Kalpa, Manali, Keylong, Mandi and Rajgarh 1 each and JAMMU AND KASHMIR: Pahalgam 7, Anantnag and Awantinagar 5 each, Kukernag and Quazigund 4 each, Gulmarg, Gund, Shalimar and Srinagar 3 each, banihal 2 and Bhaderwah and Kupwara 1 each.

**MAXIMUM TEMPERATURES:** The maximum temperatures rose appreciably in Haryana, rose in Punjab, west Rajasthan and Uttarakhand, fell largely in Jammu and Kashmir and changed little elsewhere. They were appreciably above Haryana and Punjab, above normal in east Rajasthan and west Uttar Pradesh, largely below normal in Jammu and Kashmir and normal in rest of the region. The highest maximum temperature in the region was 42.0°C recorded at Jhalawar and Kota (Rajasthan).

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 19th April 2013:** Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand during next 24 hours and mainly dry weather thereafter. Weather would be mainly dry over rest of the region.

**FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 19th April 2013: Mainly clear sky.**

## **Water level**

Water level in the Periyar dam was 112.50 feet (Permissible level is 136 feet) with an inflow of 100 cusecs and discharge of 100 cusecs on Wednesday. The water level in Vaigai dam was 45.42 feet (71) with an inflow of 28 cusecs and discharge of 60 cusecs. The combined Periyar credit stood at 2,034 mcft. The Vaigai dam recorded a rainfall of 8 mm.

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Wednesday stood at 69.10 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 119.61 cusecs and 396 cusecs was discharged from the dam.

The water level in Manimuthar dam stood at 85.11 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 29 cusecs and 5 cusecs was discharged.

### **Kanyakumari**

The water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 11.10 feet, 26.30 feet in Perunchani, 3.54 feet in Chittar I, 3.64 feet in Chittar II and 1.40 feet in Poigai dam.

---



# Weather Chennai - INDIA

## Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

**Thursday, Apr 18**

**Max Min**

33° | 28°

**Rain:** 0

**Sunrise:** 05:54

**Humidity:** 79

**Sunset:** 06:21

**Wind:** normal

**Barometer:** 1006

## Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

**Friday, Apr 19**

**Max Min**

37° | 28°

## Extended Forecast for a week

| <b>Saturday<br/>Apr 20</b> | <b>Sunday<br/>Apr 21</b> | <b>Monday<br/>Apr 22</b> | <b>Tuesday<br/>Apr 23</b> | <b>Wednesday<br/>Apr 24</b> |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                            |                          |                          |                           |                             |
| 36°   28°                  | 35°   26°                | 35°   26°                | 33°   27°                 | 34°   27°                   |
| Partly Cloudy              | Overcast                 | Overcast                 | Overcast                  | Overcast                    |

# Farmers' body slams govt policy

SAMBALPUR:

The Sambalpur Zilla Krushaka Surakhya Sangathan (SZKSS) has come down heavily on the state government's paddy procurement policy and said it would lead to more farmer suicides in the state. The sangathan reacted sharply to the statement of food supplies minister P K Deb, who reportedly said the government was not being able to procure paddy from the farmers and suggested that they sell their produce in other states.

[Senior farmer leader Ashok Pradhan](#) said the faulty policy of the [state government](#) has helped

# Trichy farmers welcome free ponds' scheme

TRICHY: Farmers in Trichy have welcomed the move to dig ponds in their farms as it would help them harvest rain water during the dry spell in the region. District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), which has been in the forefront digging farm ponds on private lands free of cost, has reached the final stages of the work. Currently, the works are on to dig up more than 700 farm ponds in Trichy district.

Tamil Nadu government has ordered the development of ponds

on farmers' land to harvest the rain water. They can also rear fish in the ponds to augment their income. The decision has multiple benefits as ponds help to improve the ground water level on farm lands when water is receding at many places.

The scheme was launched in February this year, and the works have almost reached the final stage. Though the scheme is available in all the districts in Tamil Nadu, it receives good response from Trichy farmers who are deprived of water for cultivation for the past few years. "As per the norms, the beneficiaries of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) who comes under the categories of small farmers (own below 2.5 acres), marginal farmers (own below 5 acres) and SC/ST farmers (no limit) are only selected for this scheme. The eligible farmers are interested to receive the scheme eyeing on improving the ground water level," G Radha, project director of [DRDA](#) (Trichy), said.

Besides the benefit of rain water harvest, the farmers can make use of subsidies from the fisheries department for rearing fish, said M Ramamurthy, inspector of fisheries, Trichy.

As on April 17, DRDA has identified spots for 746 farm ponds in 14 village unions of Trichy district. Of which, the works for 232 farm ponds at the cost of Rs 105.08 lakh were over. "We have a target for 1,500 farm ponds till the end of this year in Trichy district. The place for rest of the farm ponds will be identified."

As per the scheme, ponds of two types could be dug --- one with 30x30x1.5m dimension and another of 15x15x1.5m. However, 90% of farm ponds created in Trichy are of the latter size. "It is

a welcome move. If they provide provisions to drain the excess water in farm lands into the pond during cultivation, the water mixed with fertilizers would settle under the pond. The sand can be used as manure later," said N Veerasekaran, a farmer.

The workers under NREGS schemes are engaged in the work. DRDA has estimated Rs 1.5 lakh for bigger pond whereas Rs 45,000 for smaller ponds. It spends the money as wages for the MGNREGS workers. However, some of the farmers say that NREGS workers are not good to dig ponds, as such work requires the help of heavy machinery. V Ayyakannu, the state president of [Bharathiya Kisan Sangam](#), told TOI "The workers in MGNREGS are struggling to dig up 1.5 metre because they were accustomed to easy work previously. So, they should use earthmovers to dig up the pond."

Commenting on that assistant project officer DRDA [Dhandapani](#) said, "As per rule, only MGNREGS workers should do the work. We never engage machinery in digging up the farm ponds."

---

THE  NEW  
**INDIAN EXPRESS**

## Tajikistan invites Indian investment in agriculture, mining

Indian Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari held constructive talks with Tajikistan as the central Asian country invited investment and cooperation in the sectors of agriculture, mining and energy from India.

For Details: <http://newindianexpress.com/videos/nation/Tajikistan-invites-Indian-investment-in-agriculture-mining/2013/04/16/article1547505.ece>

## Push for fisheries, animal husbandry

The Tamil Nadu government has said it would take a number of steps to ensure proper utilisation of local potential for growth in the fisheries and animal husbandry sectors, such as promotion of inland fisheries and shrimp culture in the fisheries and preservation of indigenous livestock varieties and plans to strive towards self-sufficiency in the breeding of high-yield breeds of cattle for the livestock sector.

These announcements were made in the Assembly as part of the demands for grant of the Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries Department, by Animal Husbandry Minister TKM Chinnayya and Fisheries Minister KA Jayapal.

The policy note for fisheries stated that of the potential 4.5 lakh metric tonnes of production from inland fisheries, the State had so far achieved only 1.85 lakh metric tonnes. The announcements of 25 percent grant to inland fishers for the purchase of nets and fibreglass catamarans and 50 percent grant for equipment needed for inland fish culture were aimed at addressing this gap.

Jayapal also announced that a modern fish processing centre with ice factory and cold chain storage facilities would be set up at Kurichi in Coimbatore district. Other major announcements by Jayapal were studies for the setting up of fishing harbours at Jagadapattinam, Tharangambadi and Arkaduthurai, a corpus fund for studies on the establishment of fish landing centres and an expansion of the mobile fish marketing programme.

The animal husbandry sector is also poised for an inward push for growth, with Chinnayya announcing that the government would hold a workshop and an exhibition on the preservation of indigenous cattle breeds like Kangeyam, Umbalacheri, Burghur, Pulikulam, Alampadi and the Toda buffalo.

The government would also take steps to encourage the breeding of buffaloes, impart scientific training methods for raising goats, establishment of veterinary hospitals in Ramanathapuram, Perambalur and Nagapattinam districts and the establishment of a country chicken hatching centre at the Tirunelveli Veterinary College among others.

## Drought: High-level meeting held

In a drought review meeting convened by Chief Minister Oommen Chandy here on Monday, an amount of Rs 14.48 crore has been allotted for the district to carry out relief measures.

Till May 31, the amount that can be allotted by the District Collector for drought-relief projects has been raised from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 20 lakh. In the meeting, it has been decided to take immediate measures to solve the water scarcity issues and tackle drought in the district involving various departments.

Chandy directed the Kerala Water Authority to prepare a chart of all drinking water projects that could be completed in a year's time and implement them. A group comprising Ministers and MLAs has to monitor the progress of the work.

So as to offer a permanent solution to drought, more check dams will be built and ponds and quarries will be preserved as water sources. For all new buildings, stringent directive will be given to make rainwater-harvesting tanks mandatory and rain pits will be dug linking with the employment guarantee scheme. It has also been directed to prepare a project to preserve the Vellayani lake.

A taluk-level meeting will be convened to take measures to tackle drought with the participation of MLAs and panchayat presidents. The Electricity Board has to help the Water Authority to streamline the power cut in pump houses and treatment plants.

Measures will be taken to increase the number of tanks and lorries supplying drinking water. Priority will be given to lorries



arranged by the government for collecting and supplying water from the water sources.

The meeting also discussed ways to make the current drinking water projects efficient and foolproof. A suggestion was made in the meeting to solve the water shortage in 55 panchayats by extending pipelines.

Officials made it clear that 151 ponds in the district will be cleaned and more check dams will be constructed.

Ministers Adoor Prakash, K P Mohanan, V S Sivakumar and P J Joseph, Deputy Speaker N Sakthan, district panchayat president Remani P Nair, District Collector K N Satheesh, MLAs and officials participated in the meeting.

On Tuesday, a meeting of Ministers and officials will be convened to release special orders on the basis of the drought review meetings held in various districts.

#### Relief Measures

- \* Rs 14.48 crore for the district to carry out drought relief measures.
  - \* District Collector can allot up to Rs 20 lakh for drought relief projects till May 31.
  - \* Water Authority directed to prepare a chart of all potable water projects that could be completed in a year's time and implement it.
  - \* Rainwater harvesting tanks made mandatory for new buildings.
  - \* More check-dams to be built. Ponds and quarries to be preserved as water sources.
  - \* Number of tanks and lorries supplying potable water will be raised.
-

## Market pulse for agro commodities : Mangal Keshav

**Spot rates of soya bean crop offered by planters were down at '40.5-'41 per kg while rates across major mandis declined to '39-'40 per kg, as per local traders.**

Arrivals of chilli crop stood at 0.75-0.8lakh bags; however trades have declined as buyers/ exporters await prices to decline further. Spot rates were down & quoted at '54-'58 per kg, based on crop quality.

Arrivals of jeera crop were steady ~30,000- 32,000 bags while trades declined to below 25,000 bags at auctions held at Unjha market. Spot rates were down & quoted at '128-'130 per kg at Unjha market, as per local traders.

Spot rates of pepper garbled declined '359 per kg and that of un-garbled was down at '344 per kg while arrivals declined to 17 tons & trades were down at 17 tons at auctions held at Kochi market, as per IPSTA.

Arrivals of turmeric crop declined to about 25,000 bags at Nizamabad, while supply at mandis of Erode stood at 6,000-6,500 bags. Spot rates were steady & quoted at '65-'68 per kg, as per local traders.

Average price of small cardamom increased to '667.7 per kg while maximum price offered was up at '1,061 per kg, as per spice board. Total inflow of small cardamom crop increased to 91 tons from which ~89.8 tons were sold at SIGC auction held at Kochi.

Arrivals of Soya bean crop eased slightly to ~0.7lakh bags at MP market & down to about 2,000 bags at mandis of Indore while arrivals of about 15,000 bags were reported at Rajasthan & ~25,000 bags across mandis of

Maharashtra, as per local traders.

Spot rates of soya bean crop offered by planters were down at '40.5-'41 per kg while rates across major mandis declined to '39-'40 per kg, as per local traders.

Inflow of mustard seed crop increased to 374,002 quintals, while average of closing spot rates were down at '3,159.9 per quintal, as per agriculture marketing board of Rajasthan.

Total arrivals of mustard seed crop declined to about 6lakh bags across major trading center while spot rates were down & quoted at '34.5- '36.5 per kg based on quality & location, as per market reports.

Chana futures traded in a narrow range for most part of the session, while spot rates were steady on the back of increase in arrivals at major mandis & good demand for the same among local buyers.

Mentha oil futures recovered from early losses to close higher on short-covering/ buying support at lower levels. However, spot rates were down by another '10-'12 per kg, on poor demand steady across major mandis.

## Coriander down 4% on adequate stocks

**Prices fell as speculators indulged in reducing positions**



Coriander futures for April fell by Rs 287, or 4%, to Rs 6,889 per quintal in 1,370 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange (NCDEX), the May contract declined by Rs 223, or 3.10%, to Rs 6,962 per quintal in 32,810 lots.

Prices hit daily lower circuit by falling 4% as speculators indulged in reducing positions following adequate stocks in the spot markets.

## Almond up almost 3% on strong demand

**Prices rose as speculators enlarged their positions**



Almond futures at the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), for April, rose by Rs 13, or 2.95% to Rs 454 per kg in two lots.

Prices rose as speculators enlarged their positions supported by firm spot demand.

Increasing spot market demand for the ongoing 'Navratra' festival, lower arrivals from overseas markets pushed up almond futures market.

---

## **Cotton body raises output estimate to 340 lakh bales**

Projections revised on better crop prospects in the South

**Mumbai, April 17:** The Cotton Advisory Board (CAB) meeting held on Wednesday increased the cotton production outlook to 340 lakh bales (lb) for this cotton year (October to September) against 330 lb estimated at its meeting in January. The rise in production outlook was largely due to better crop prospects in the southern States including Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

### **Imports may rise**

However, the Board's production estimate for this year is lower than 355 lb achieved last year due to farmers' preference to other crops in major cotton growing States.

A.B. Joshi, Textile Commissioner, said that cotton imports may increase to 25 lb against 20 lb estimated in January as a few mills in the South find it cheaper to bring in consignments from Africa and Australia.

"Besides freight advantage, they also find quality of imported cotton better and there is also certain financing advantage for imports," he said. Imports were at 12 lb last year.

### **Supply outlook**

Production in the northern zone (Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan) is estimated at 60 lb (62 lb) while in Central zone (Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh) it will be lower at 179 lb (212 lb). However, in the southern region the output will be higher at 95 lb (76 lb).

Total supply this year is estimated at 405 lb (413 lb). Mill consumption is pegged at 245 lb (223 lb), small scale units and non-mill demand at 22 lb (21 lb) and 20 lb (10 lb) respectively.

### **Shipments dip**

Exports will be lower at 81 lb (130 lb). The demand is estimated at 368 lb against 384 lb logged in last year. Exporters have registered to ship 89 lb, but have shipped only 81 lb so far, he said.

“The mill consumption has gone up substantially as China, one of the largest importers of cotton from India, is now importing more of yarn. This may be due to increase in cotton price and labour cost in China,” said Joshi.

Suresh.iyengar@thehindu.co.in

***IN FULL BLOOM Output in the southern region will be higher at 95 lakh bales (76 lb). Total supply is estimated at 405 lb (413 lb) and demand at 368 lb against 384 lb.***

## **World pulses market well-balanced**

**Singapore, April 17:** Aggregate world production of major pulses covering field pea, dry bean, lentil and chick pea is expected to slightly improve in 2013-14 compared with the current year, according to experts participating at the International Pulse Trade and Industries Confederation annual convention here.

During a discussion on world pulse demand and supply outlook, field pea production for 2013-14 was estimated at 10.8 million tonnes (9.9 mt) with major origins Canada, Russia, France, United States and Australia producing more. World dry bean production was estimated at 21.3 mt (21.2 mt) with improved output in China and Brazil, but lower in the US.

However, world lentil production is projected to be slightly lower at 3.67 mt (3.73 mt).



In case of chick pea (desi), production is seen up at 9.7 mt from 9.4 mt. in 2012-13 following a huge spurt in Pakistan crop.

### **Firm prices forecast**

While lentil prices are expected to remain firm given the supply shortfall and firm demand, many speakers forecast firm and rising prices for all pulses during the year.

However, data suggest that the market is going to be fairly balanced and therefore prices are likely to stay more range-bound, according to others.

India, mover and shaker of the world pulses market, has set a production target of 19 mt for 2013-14 compared with estimated production of 17.6 mt in 2012-13.

Several measures to boost output have been initiated.

Timely onset and steady progress of South-West monsoon – June to September – will be a key driver of market sentiment.

## **Volume hits 7-week high at Coonoor tea auction**

**Coonoor, April 17:** A volume of 12.45 lakh kg would be offered for Sale No: 16 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auction to take place on Thursday and Friday, reveals an analysis of the brokers' listings.

This is the highest volume in seven weeks.

Of the 12.45 lakh kg on offer, 8.86 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 3.59 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades.

As much as 11.63 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 0.82 lakh kg, orthodox variety.

Of the 12.45 lakh kg coming up for sale, fresh tea accounts for 10.80 lakh kg.

About 1.65 lakh kg comprises teas which had remained unsold in previous auctions.

In the Leaf auction last week, Hindustan Unilever Ltd bought brighter liquoring and medium varieties while Duncans Tea Ltd showed interest on medium broken.

In the Dust auction Duncans showed interest on good medium sorts.

Indcoserve bought medium smaller dusts. AV Thomas and Co Ltd bought brighter liquoring smaller grades.

## Cashew edges up on domestic buying

**Kochi, April 17:** The global cashew market was quiet and soft last week after being steady for several weeks.

The domestic market, which was subdued for several weeks, saw some activity with a slight increase in prices.

During the last one month, there has not been much change in the price range viz., W240 from \$3.90-4.10 / W320 \$3.35-3.50 / W450 and SW320 \$3.05-3.20, splits \$2.20-2.30 and pieces \$1.50-1.60 an lb (fob).

During this period, a reasonable volume has been traded for second quarter shipments, not much has been traded for the second half, Pankaj N. Sampat, a Mumbai-based dealer told *Business Line*.

“In the next 8-10 weeks, we will continue to get confusing reports on the supply side,” he claimed. Picture will be clearer by end-June.

But, overall feeling is that availability in 2013 would be same as 2012; downside on prices is limited and any price decline will be more on account of lower yield rather than increased availability, he said.

Demand prospects continue to be hazy.

## **Demand prospects**

Gut feeling is that demand in most markets should be better considering prices have been steady at relatively low levels for a reasonably long time.

Except for 2011 when prices were very high, usage in Asia has always been good.

Over the last few months, “we have seen that when prices have been moving sideways in the \$3.30-3.50 range. When prices are in lower half of the range, there is good buying interest from all markets but selling is limited to nearbys and at that time some business is done for forwards at the higher end of the range.”

When nearby prices are at higher end of the range, buyers are reluctant to pay additional premium for forward positions and this makes the market quiet again.

Unless something dramatic happens on the supply side leading to higher raw cashew prices, “we expect that market will continue to move in the current range,” the trade said.

## **Pepper recovers on buying interest**

**Kochi, April 17:** Pepper prices recovered on buying support on Wednesday. April opened at Rs 36,100 a quintal and May contract stood at Rs 35,295.

Short position holders, who were keeping the market low, were buying back. In fact, they were artificially creating high turnover, market sources told *Business Line*.

On the spot, 22 tonnes of fresh pepper arrived and that were all traded afloat at an average price of Rs 344 a kg.

Selling pressure continued to persist in Karnataka and low bulk density pepper was being moved out at low prices. Meanwhile, traders from Ernakulam district of Kerala were said to be buying

heavily from Idukki for transporting by rail to upcountry markets, they said.

April contract on the NCDEX increased by Rs 65 to Rs 36,095. May contract went up by Rs 230 to Rs 35,225.

Total turnover decreased by 341 tonnes to 461 tonnes. Total open interest dropped by 64 tonnes to 1,359 tonnes.

Spot prices remained unchanged at Rs 34,400 (ungarbled) and Rs 35,900 (MG 1) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market was at \$6,850 (c&f) for prompt and April shipments, while May was at \$6,725 (c&f). Vietnam was reportedly easier and offered V Asta at \$6,500 (c&f) while Brazil B Asta was at \$6,450-6,475 a tonne.

## **Weak global cues drag spot rubber**

**Kottayam, April 17:** Spot rubber slipped further on Wednesday. Declines in the domestic and international futures and the absence of buyers continued to depress the local sentiments.

There were no fresh factors either technical or fundamental to trigger a positive trend in the commodity and hence an immediate recovery in prices may not be possible.

Sheet rubber dropped to Rs 160 (162) a kg, according to traders. The grade weakened to Rs 161 (162.50) a kg at Kottayam and Kochi as quoted by the Rubber Board.

The May series declined to Rs 156 (159.08), June to Rs 155.78 (157.89), July to Rs 155.25 (157.42) and August to Rs 153.25 (156.90) a kg for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) surrendered to Rs 153.88 (157.23) a kg at Bangkok .

The April futures for the grade slid to ¥239.1 (Rs 132.07) from ¥244 during the day session and then to ¥238 (Rs 131.44) in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

**Spot rubber rates (Rs/kg):** RSS-4: 160 (162); RSS-5: 157 (158); Ungraded: 151 (153); ISNR 20: 149 (151) and Latex 60 per cent: 106 (107).

## Golden Leaf tea sale fetches Rs 68 lakh

**Coonoor, April 17:** The special pan-India auction of The Golden Leaf India Award (TGLIA) contest teas held as the inaugural sale of the newly-launched UPASI Commodities Exchange Ltd (UCEL) portal generated Rs 68 lakh turnover in little over two hours.

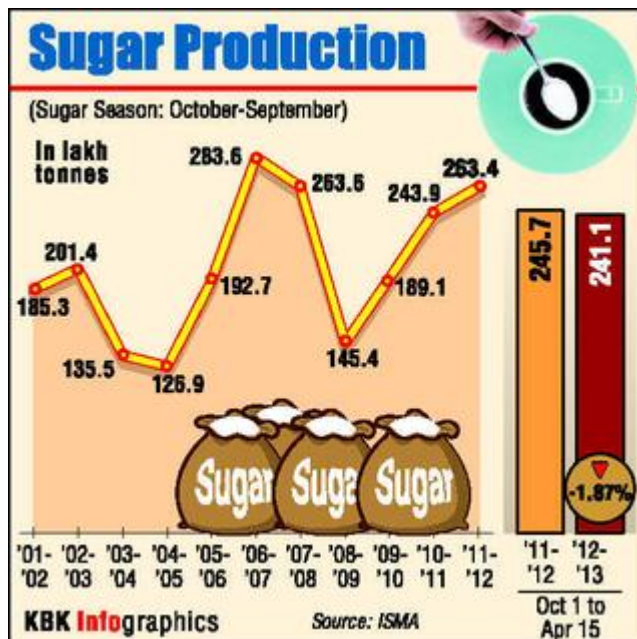
“The average price at the leaf auction was Rs 164.35 a kg and at the dust auction, Rs 152.46. Overall, prices averaged Rs 160.02 a kg,” TGLIA Convener C. Shreedharan told *Business Line*. Of the 71,338 kg on offer, 42,689 kg was sold, marking a sale proportion of 60 per cent.

In the Leaf auction, while Avataa tea of Bluegate Beverages, Billimalai, topped at Rs 1,750 a kg with another lot of Avataa coming second at Rs 701, the third, Kodanad, was at a distant Rs 301. In all, 12 marks entered in Rs 200-299 bracket. The lowest was Rs 100 a kg.

In the Dust auction, while Vigneshwar Estate Speciality topped at Rs 504 a kg., the second was at a distant Rs 176. The lowest was Rs 103.

The date of the next UCEL auction has not yet been announced.

# Cane acreage may decline in drought-hit Maharashtra



**New Delhi, April 17:** Sugarcane acreage in Maharashtra, one of the largest sugar producing States, will be lower this year due to the impact of the prevailing drought, Agriculture Secretary Ashish Bahuguna has said. However, he did not quantify the expected decline in acreage.

The successive drought in Maharashtra has affected the availability of drinking water and fodder. “The next two months are going to be extremely difficult,” Bahuguna told reporters. The India Meteorological Department is expected to issue its monsoon forecast sometime next week, he said.

Cotton planting in Punjab and Haryana will be delayed by about two to three weeks due to delayed wheat harvesting, Bahuguna said. Typically, cotton planting starts in the middle of April and goes on till June in the northern States. The erratic weather has delayed harvest of wheat, which is currently on in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. “The wheat output will be better than last year’s 93.9 million tonnes,” Bahuguna said.

According to sugar industry estimates, cane acreage in Maharashtra could come down by about a third for the 2013-14 season starting



October, as water shortage in major parts of cane-growing areas has affected fresh planting.

Cane planting has been hit in areas such as Marathawada, Vidarbha, Pune, Solapur and Kolhapur among other growing areas. As a result, sugar production in Maharashtra could decline to around 5 million tonnes in 2013-14 from the current year's 7 million tonnes. A clearer picture is expected to emerge over in next few months.

## Lack of buying crushes castor



**Rajkot, April 17:** Castor prices are constantly going down on the back of higher selling and lower demand.

According to market sources, prices may decline further this week as there is no hope for fresh buying in near future.

On the Rajkot Commodity Exchange, castor June contract fell by Rs 38 to Rs 3,639 a quintal.

RCX spot castor declined by Rs 55 to Rs 3,457.50.

On the NCDEX, castor May contract was down Rs 30 to Rs 3,416 with an open interest of 141,070 lots. NCDEX June contract lost Rs 39 to Rs 3,517 with an open interest of 55,460 lots.

## **arrivals**

About 1.05-1.15 lakh bags of castor arrived in Gujarat and price was down by Rs 12 to Rs 670-690 for 20 kg. Around 9,000-9,100 bags arrived in Saurashtra for Rs 670-695.

## **price outlook**

A castor broker said that higher supply from producing regions amid slackness in demand caused the fall in castor prices. Higher arrival may pressurise the prices in near term.

# **Ample supply keeps sugar on leash**



**Mumbai, April 17:** Sugar prices ruled steady following routine demand and supply on Wednesday. On the Vashi wholesale terminal market, spot prices for S-grade declined by Rs 10, while for M-grade the price was up Rs 20 . Naka and mill tender rates ruled steady on usual activities.

Domestic futures prices were up by Rs 14-17 on speculative buying on speculation of higher demand in the coming days.

An analyst said, “Sugar market is currently passing through normal fundamental factors such as ample supply and need-based demand. Despite lower output projected for the next season, the market is

not responding because closing stocks are expected to be sufficient at the end of current year". In the Vashi market, arrivals were 62-63 truckloads (each of 100 bags) and local dispatches were 61-62 loads. On Tuesday evening, only 13-14 mills offered tenders and sold 54,000-55,000 bags at Rs 2,940-3,020 (Rs 2,940-3,020) for S-grade and Rs 3,040-3,120 (Rs 3,040 - 3,120) for M-grade.

On the NCDEX, sugar May futures was up Rs 17 to Rs 2,955 , June was Rs 3,017 (Rs 3,003) and July at Rs 3,055 (Rs 3,042) till noon.

**The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were (Rs/quintal):** S-grade Rs 3,106-3,221 (Rs 3,116-3,221) and M-grade Rs 3,202-3,401 (Rs 3,182-3,401).

**Naka delivery rates:** S-grade Rs 3,060-3,090 (Rs 3,060-3,090) and M-grade Rs 3,125-3,225 (Rs 3,125-3,225).

## Disparity in edible oil refiners' quotes



**Mumbai, April 17:** Slack demand and weak Malaysian palm oil futures dragged the domestic edible oils markets.

In a market where activities were limited, palmolein dropped by Re 1 and rapeseed oil declined by Rs 4 for 10 kg. Groundnut oil lost Rs 10 on higher selling. Soyabean, sunflower and cotton oil ruled unchanged, said sources.

Sources said that due to absence of retail demand stockists preferred to stay away from fresh buying and preferred to fulfil the old commitments.

Volumes were subdued and isolated as resellers quoted lower rates. In palmolein, a wide price gap between refineries kept the buyers away. During the day, a meagre 80-100 tonnes of palmolein were traded.

A broker said that mustard seed arrivals were 6.10 lakh bags (previous day 6.20 lakh bags) and the prices were Rs 3,350-3,500 a quintal.

Soyabean arrivals were 40,000-45,000 bags in Madhya Pradesh and 10,000-12,000 bags in Rajasthan.

In Indore soyabean price was Rs 3,800-3,900 ex mandi and Rs 3,900-4,000 plant delivery.

Towards the day's close, Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 511-514, super palmolein Rs 545 and sunflower refined oil Rs 780. Ruchi was quoting palmolein at Rs 513 ex Patalganga, soyabean refined oil Rs 675 and sunflower refined oil Rs 765. Allana was quoting super palmolein at Rs 545. Resalers were quoting Rs 508-509 for ready delivery while an upcountry refiner was quoting palmolein at Rs 503 for May delivery. In Saurashtra – Rajkot, groundnut oil was Rs 1,875 (Rs 1,875) for *telia* tin and Rs 1,225 (Rs 1,220) for loose (10 kg).

**Malaysian BMD crude palm oil's** May futures settled lower at MYR 2,253 (MYR 2,284), June at MYR 2,270 (MYR 2,297) and July at MYR 2,276 (MYR 2,301) a tonne.

**The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg):** groundnut oil 1,210 (1,200), soya refined oil 675 (675), sunflower exp. ref. 685 (685), sunflower ref. 770 (775), rapeseed ref. oil 706 (710), rapeseed expeller ref. 676 (680) cottonseed ref. oil 645(645) and palmolein 509 (510).

**Vikram Global Commodities, Chennai** has quoted Malaysian super palmolein at Rs 550 ex-Chennai; \$913 (cif) JNPT April

delivery; \$910 JNPT, May delivery; \$912 Haldia, April delivery and \$910 Haldia, May delivery.

## **Poultry feed rules flat on volatile inputs**



**Karnal, April 17:** Following volatility in prices of key ingredients, prices of poultry feed remained unchanged on Wednesday. Aditya Mishra, an expert, told *Business Line* that despite some correction in the prices of soyameal and a few other ingredients, prices of poultry feed products were unchanged as traders are waiting for the input cost to stabilise.

There has been too much volatility in prices of key ingredients in recent past, he said. Earlier, feed prices were expected to rise but the recent fall has kept the prices unchanged, said market experts.

On Wednesday, soyameal dropped by Rs 2,100 to Rs 37,000 a tonne. Bajra decreased by Rs 15 to Rs 1,470 a quintal, DCP was at 35 a kg, MBM quoted at Rs 42 a kg, while maize sold at Rs 1,630 a quintal, Rs 20 down.



Mustard de-oiled cake dropped by Rs 300 to Rs 15,200 a tonne; DRB sold at Rs 9,300 a tonne, Rs 100 down while rice bran oil was at 52 a kg.

### **Feed products**

“Layer concentrate 25 per cent” was sold at Rs 1,465 for a 50-kg bag, while layer concentrate 35 per cent went for Rs 1,150. Pre-lay mash quoted at Rs 1,040 while layer grower mash sold at Rs 980.

Broiler concentrate quoted at Rs 2,000 while Broiler Starter Mash was at Rs 1,520.

### **Poultry Products**

Meanwhile, broiler and chick prices improved marginally after witnessing a continuous fall in recent past while egg dropped on reduced offtake, on Wednesday.

Egg dropped by 24 paise and sold at Rs 2.33. Broiler went up by Rs 3 and quoted at Rs 55-58 a kg, while chick sold at Rs 16-18, Rs 6 up.

## **Upcountry orders lend colour to turmeric**



**Erode, April 17:** Spot turmeric prices continued to remain bullish on Wednesday as exporters received reasonable orders from North India for quality produce.



“Local exporters have received enough orders from the North for quality turmeric ,besides orders for the root variety turmeric from Delhi.

But traders purchased limited quantity, while stockists bought huge quantity of the yellow spice. Of the arrival of 7,500 bags on Wednesday, 5,100 bags were sold. Of this, stockists purchased 3,900 bags with an intention to keep the stock for sale in future,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,429-8,764 a quintal; the root variety at Rs 4,119-7,689.

**Salem Hybrid Crop:** The finger variety fetched Rs 6,611-9,734 and the root variety Rs 6,369-8,099. Of the 1,766 bags that arrived, only 30 per cent stocks was sold. At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety ruled at Rs 7,411-8,888; the root variety at Rs 6,639-7,689. Of the 552 bags put up for sale, 496 bags found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 6,539-8,919; the root variety Rs 6,669-7,779. Of 480 bags that arrived, 420 bags were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety quoted Rs 6,868-8,843; the root variety Rs 6,876-8,117. All the 102 bags on offer were traded.

## **Weak millers’ offtake pounds pulses**

**Indore, April 17:** Pulse seeds and pulses in Indore mandis either ruled flat or declined marginally on slack demand and increased arrivals.

Tur has declined by Rs 100 a quintal on weak buying support and demand from the millers.

Tur (Maharashtra) in Indore mandis declined to Rs 4,700-50 a quintal (Rs 4,775-4,800) on weak demand, tur (Madhya Pradesh) ruled stable at Rs 4,200-4,300.

Despite marginal decline, a bearish tend in tur is unlikely in the coming days given lower crop output this year and higher import with depreciation of the rupee against dollar.



Traders anticipate tur prices to rise to Rs 5,000 a quintal and more amid decline on domestic crop output and costlier import.

Tur dal (full) was at Rs 6,700-6,800, tur dal (sawa no) at Rs 6,000-6,100, while tur marka is ruling at Rs 7,400.

Moong (bold) ruled at Rs 5,800-6,000 a quintal, while moong (medium) was at Rs 5,400-5,500. Moong prices last week had soared to Rs 6200 a quintal on strong buying support and weak arrivals.

However, given rise in arrivals of summer moong in local mandis in the coming days, bullish trend in moong for the time being appears unlikely.

Moong dal was unchanged with moong dal (medium) at Rs 6,900-7,000, moong dal (bold) at Rs 7,300-7,400 while moong mongar ruled at Rs 7,500-7,800.

Slack demand also arrested uptrend in urad with urad (bold) ruling at Rs 3,500-3,600 while urad (medium) ruled stable at Rs 3,100-3,200.

---