

## Fishing ban sends seafood prices soaring

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*The only catch the city will get will be brought in by small boats and catamarans*



*Break time: The ban offers fishermen a chance to get some well-earned rest —  
Photo: M. Srinath*

CHENNAI, April 16, 2014 - Seafood prices in the city have begun shooting up with the imposition of the 45-day ban on mechanised fishing boats. Die-hard fans of fish may have no option but to curb their craving. Over the past few days, a kilogram of deboned *vanjaram* (seer fish) is being sold at Rs. 900. A week ago, it cost Rs. 600 a kilo. "Prices of fish have been on the rise for the past few days. With the ban coming into force, prices are expected to increase even further," said a source in the Tamil Nadu Fisheries Development Corporation, which runs a number of stalls in the city.

"*Sankara* (red snapper) is being sold at Rs. 200 a kilo, *nethili* (anchovies) at Rs. 200 and *kanava* (squid) at Rs. 150 a kilo. I cannot afford fish at such rates, which is why I plan to cut down on consumption this summer. We will shift to eggs and vegetables," said Kumuda Kumaran, a resident of Perambur.

The city consumes around 130 tonnes of fish a day that lands at the Kasimedu fishing harbour. But with the fishing ban commencing, around 1,100 mechanised boats will not venture into the sea during the annual fishing holiday to allow breeding of fish.

"The only catch that the city will get will be brought in by small fibre-reinforced boats and catamarans that fish near the coast. That will only be around 3 to 4 tonnes. Fish caught by residents of various fishing hamlets will be sold there," explained Sukumar, who runs an ice factory inside the fishing harbour.

"People who want fresh fish are coming to our villages. But now, even small fry is being sold at high prices so we don't want to buy it as it may not get sold. My husband, a fisherman, drives an autorickshaw to supplement incomes," said Suguna Kumaresan, a fish vendor at Thiruvanmiyur Kuppam.

During the ban, traders usually bring in fish from Kerala and Karnataka. But not many vehicles are coming in this time, said fisherfolk. "With the election around the corner, checking has become very strict.

Many traders are afraid of losing money since transactions often do not involve bills or documents. Even last week, a trader lost Rs.1.50 lakh. With the Lent season ending this weekend, there will be a sudden spurt in demand but there won't be enough fish, leading to a further increase in prices," said Nanjil Ravi, of the Akila Indhiya Meenavar Sangam.

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## Rainfall

DHARMAPURI, April 16, 2014 - The district received 55.30 mm of rainfall till 8.30 a.m. on Tuesday. A statement from the Disaster Management and Mitigation Department of the Revenue Administration issued here on Tuesday said that Hogenakkal received 22.30 mm and Marandalli 33 mm of rainfall .

# Scanty rainfall in the south

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MADURAI, April 16, 2014 - Sudden showers across the southern districts over the last few days have brought relief from the rising mercury levels.

Despite storage areas in Madurai District such as Manjalaru recording over 30 mm of rainfall on Monday, there has been no inflow into the Vaigai dam due to erratic spells. Rain eluded Madurai city which recorded a maximum of 40 degree Celsius even though overcast skies could be seen on Sunday and Monday.

Heavy rain lashed different parts of Kanyakumari district on Monday. While Adayamadai recoded 65 mm of rainfall, Koziporvilai received over 85 mm of rainfall and places such as Eraniel, Peruchani and Chittar recorded over 8 mm of rain. It contributed to a moderate flow of water at Thirparappu Falls.

While the Tirunelveli district received scant showers over the last five days, the rainfall was largely restricted to the western parts of the district which included Alangulam, Tenkasi, Kadayanallur and Sankarankoil. During the last one week, Tenkasi recorded 70 mm of rainfall and Sankarankoil received more than 60 mm rainfall.

The eastern parts of the district which included Tirunelveli city, however, remained dry with no sight of rain to bring respite from heat and water scarcity. On April 12, Dindigul district recorded a total rainfall of 64.8 mm with areas such as Palani, Nilakottai and Vedasandur recording more than 10 mm of rainfall.

The showers however receded in the district in the following days and Kodaikanal was the only area which recorded more than 1 mm of rainfall on April 13. Meteorological reports predicted partly cloudy skies for Madurai for the next one week and suggested that Kodaikanal would have overcast sky with the possibility of a thunderstorm in the next two days.

Forecasts show that parts of Kanyakumari, Theni, Thoothukudi, Virudhunagar and Sivaganga would receive an average of 5 mm of rainfall a day during the course of the next week.

## Water level

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The water level in Periyar dam stood at 110 feet (permissible level is 136 feet) on Tuesday with an inflow of 100 cusecs and discharge of 100 cusecs.

The level in Vaigai dam was 26.55 feet (full level 71 feet) with no inflow and a discharge of 40 cusecs. The combined storage in Periyar credit was 523 mcft. Manjalaru and Marudhanadhi recorded 36 mm and 32 mm rainfall respectively and Sothuparai recorded 2 mm during the last 24 hours ending at 8.30 a.m. on Tuesday.

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 43.31 feet on Tuesday against its full reservoir level of 120 feet. The inflow was 136 cusecs and the discharge 1,500 cusecs.

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Tuesday stood at 39.40 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 32.64 cusecs and 204.75 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam.

The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 68.30 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 11 cusecs and 100 cusecs of water was discharged.

# Fishing ban triggers migration

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*Over 6,000 fishermen search for alternative livelihood*

MACHILIPATNAM, April 16, 2014 - *Mechanised boats anchored at Gilakalandi near Machilipatnam on Tuesday.*— photo: T. APPALA NAIDU

Thousands of families in Krishna district engaged in fishing activity have begun migrating in search of alternative means of livelihood as the 45-day fishing ban on the east coast came into force from the midnight of April 14. According to the Department of Fisheries, over 750 country-made boats as well as 95 mechanised boats have been anchored at the Machilipatnam Fishing Harbour, literally putting an end to regular fishing activity in the Bay of Bengal. The ban will be lifted on May 31. Over 6,000 fishermen including crew members who operate the boats are 'jobless' owing to the marine fish-conservation initiative taken by the fisheries authorities. "The best we can do is promise the release of 30 kg rice a month to each family engaged in fishing and affected by the ban," Fisheries Department Deputy Director T. Kalyanam told *The Hindu*. The officials are advising fishermen not to violate the ban in order to expect a good catch after the ban is lifted, apart from conservation of fish during the ongoing breeding season.

However, in Krishna district, which is a hub of sweet water fish and brackish water aquaculture, the announcement of ban came in handy for aquaculture farmers who make use of the opportunity in the seller's market for making a quick buck.

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📌 ***The 45-day fishing ban is from April 14 to May 31***

📌 ***Over 750 country and 95 mechanised boats anchored***

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## Inflation pressures continue to remain elevated

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*NEW DELHI, April 16, 2014 - Wholesale price inflation hits 5.7 % in March while food inflation inches up to 8.31 % in February*

Right at the peak of the elections season, bad news on the inflation front is here to haunt the incumbent UPA Government. Growing at the fastest pace since December, wholesale price inflation hit 5.7 per cent in March. All major categories - food, fuel, and manufactured goods - showed accelerated price growth, according to the official data released here, indicating that inflation pressures in the economy continue to remain elevated.

Mirroring the trend in wholesale price inflation, retail prices inflation for March, also released by the government on Tuesday, came marginally higher at 8.31 per cent against 8.1 per cent in February.

The rise in March comes after three months of declining retail inflation trend. The corresponding figure was, however, much higher at 10.4 per cent in March 2013. Inflation was a major issue during the assembly polls in Delhi in December, and the Opposition parties have consistently raked it up in their campaign.

Wholesale diesel prices grew at the rate of 14.6 per cent, while LPG prices were up 9.3 per cent. Wholesale food prices rose 9.9 per cent with rice up 12.6 per cent and vegetable prices inflation growth of 8.6 per cent. Consumer prices inflation in food, beverages and

tobacco came at 9.1 per cent mainly on the back of vegetables retail prices inflation growing at 16.8 per cent and fruits prices rising at the rate of 19.2 per cent in March.

The rate of growth of wholesale inflation in primary articles (accounts for 20 per cent of the Wholesale Price Index or WPI) came in at 7.7 per cent in March against 6.3 per cent in the previous month.

Fuel and power prices, which account for 15 per cent of the index, rose 11.2 per cent against 8.8 per cent in February. However, retail fuel prices moderated in March. Consumer price inflation in March was 6.3 per cent for the category fuel and light.

The wholesale price of manufactured goods (accounts for the remaining 65 per cent of the index) grew at the rate of 3.2 per cent in March, its fastest pace since May, 2013. Wholesale manufactured goods inflation had come in at 2.8 per cent in February.

“This set of WPI numbers has implications for the near term monetary policy outlook,” said global rating agency Moody’s Analytics in a statement on the inflation numbers.

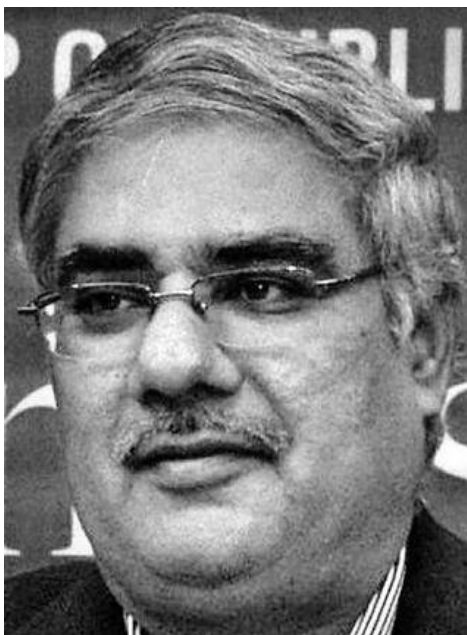
“The Reserve Bank has lately paid closer attention to the consumer prices, but the WPI is still important and can in some instances be a leading indicator of consumer prices.”

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Director-General Chandrajit Banerjee said in a statement here that this rise in WPI inflation had to be attributed to supply side constraints in the agricultural side since demand in the economy was weak — as is evident from all indicators of growth. The statement released listed the steps that the government must take to control food inflation: The revival of inflation, especially of food prices, calls for supply side initiatives to raise agriculture productivity, including augmenting investment in agri-infrastructure and improving supply side management, delisting perishables from Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee, encouraging foreign direct investment in retail which would boost agriculture production, and the like.

“While the CII has been raising these points for some time, we are yet to see significant actions on this front. Knowing how deep the impact of inflation goes in slowing down the economy, the CII would urge that policy actions are swift and decisive on this front,” Mr. Banerjee added.

## ‘GM crop adoption needs more trials and a stronger approval regime’

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*It has a lot of promise, says ITC Agri Business head Sivakumar*

S. Sivakumar

CHENNAI, April 16, 2014: Even as the raging controversy over genetically-modified (GM) crops is refusing to subside, S Sivakumar, Group Head – Agri & IT Businesses, ITC Ltd., has pressed the caution button. In a free-wheeling interaction with select journalists from *The Hindu Group* of publications here on Tuesday, Mr. Sivakumar asserted that subject (GM crops) required more research work and improved approval regime.

Mr. Sivakumar’s observation comes even as the Indian government is trying hard to arrive at a scientific consensus for modified crops.

Instead of blindly opposing it, more research work should be allowed in terms of number of trials, he said. This especially was needed in the wake of claims that the GM crops were

more resistant to the vagaries of climate change and higher productivity benefits, he pointed out.

“GM crops have a lot promise ... though it is necessarily, it need not be the only solution.

“Rather than saying that we will not consider GM and not even allow trials, work on two fronts has to happen concurrently – work on science must happen as well as efforts should go to strengthen approval protocols,” he pointed out.

One of the lacunas that really created all controversy in BT Brinjal’s case was the fact that approval happened despite insufficient independent trials and data, he said. Drawing comparisons with other markets, he noted that in countries like the U.S., all aspects including the role of government and intermediaries were dealt with clearly when GM crops were deployed. However, it was not the case in India, he said. He admitted that there was a serious challenge in creating the knowledge and know-how among the farmers about the importance of such modified crops and foods.

He pointed out that the past 10 years saw a much better growth of close to four per cent in agriculture amid more volatile weather conditions when compared to the preceding decade. He listed out four key areas where quick action was needed to boost agriculture namely use of technology, better policy framework in trade and marketing, enabling infrastructure and social subsidy-related policies.

Mr. Sivakumar also indicated that there was good progress in farm mechanisation, which also helped precision farming that led to better utilisation of natural resources, in the country. But the inflection point of mechanisation will probably occur in 2-3 years’ time, driven by a combination factors such as drudgery reducing and precision-related activities, and farmers’ shift towards non-farm works, among others.



## Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

**Wednesday, Apr 16**

Max Min

33° | 26°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 66

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:56

Sunset: 06:21

Barometer: 1012

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

**Thursday, Apr 17**

Max Min

35° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday  
**Apr 18**



35° | 26°

Partly Cloudy

Saturday  
**Apr 19**



31° | 27°

Cloudy

Sunday  
**Apr 20**



31° | 27°

Cloudy

Monday  
**Apr 21**



31° | 27°

Cloudy

Tuesday  
**Apr 22**



30° | 27°

Overcast



## Basmati lends fragrance to rice exports

Surge in shipments								
	2010-11		2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	Qty	Value	Qty	Value	Qty	Value	Qty	Value
Basmati	2.027	9781.08	3.145	15335.8	3.461	18985.38	4.022	28189.73
Non-Basmati	0.091	220.71	3.953	22085.84	6.691	13930.19	6.479	14479.89
Total	2.118	10001.79	7.098	37421.64	10.152	32915.57	10.5	42669.62

(Qty in million tonnes, value in ₹ crore)



**New Delhi, April 15:** Basmati rice exports have doubled in volume and tripled in value in the last four years on strong demand from traditional markets in Iran and West Asia. For the fiscal ended March 2014, shipments of basmati scaled a new high, touching 4.02 million tonnes and exceeded \$4.5 billion in terms of value compared with the previous fiscal.

Apart from increased demand, higher prices aided by a decline in rupee boosted basmati shipments to Rs. 28,189 crore, a 48 per cent growth over last year. Though exports of non-basmati rice grew 4 per cent in value to Rs. 14,479 crore in 2013-14, in volume they were down some 4 per cent.

Total rice shipments grew 3.5 per cent to 10.5 million tonnes.

### Eyeing China

"India continued to be the largest rice exporter for the third year in a row," said R Sundaresan, Executive Director, All India Rice Exporters Association (AIREA).

The rice exporter's body is targeting a 10 per cent growth in shipments in the current year. "We are trying hard to gain access to the Chinese market," Sundaresan said. Iran was the largest buyer of Indian basmati, followed by Saudi Arabia and Iraq during the year. This growth in demand was despite higher prices. Basmati prices were higher by 50-70 per cent in 2013-14 over last year on higher paddy prices.

Iran imported over 1.4 million tonnes, followed by Saudi Arabia which bought 7.1 lakh tonnes and Iraq over two lakh tonnes.

### Non-traditional markets

"Rising consumption in West Asia, estimated at around 10 per cent annually, is driving the demand for Indian basmati," said Anil Mittal, Chairman and Managing Director, KRBL Ltd, the country's largest exporter.

Apart from Iran, countries such as the US, Iraq, Afghanistan and African nations, such as Ghana, Nigeria, and Ivory Coast, have been buying more of Indian basmati to cater to their growing demand, Mittal said.

Further, with the increase in adoption of newer variety 1590, which is considered farmer-friendly because of its high yields and disease-resistance characteristics, basmati production is poised for a big jump in production in coming years, Mittal said.

### **African demand**

Non-basmati rice continued to witness strong demand from African countries.

Republic of Benin in West Africa was the largest buyer of Indian non-basmati rice, followed by Senegal, Bangladesh and South Africa.

Benin imported about 1.14 million tonnes, followed by Senegal at 6.2 lakh tonnes.

## Slack demand robs flavour off cardamom

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**Kochi, April 15:** Cardamom prices dropped marginally last week on slack demand amid moderate arrivals. The individual auction average price declined to below Rs. 800 a kg. Export buying shrunk as no fresh orders were forthcoming following an upsurge in the prices, exporters said. They attributed this phenomenon to release of cardamom by Guatemala which was holding back its stocks for prices to move up. They continued to offer to the main market for the commodity in the world, West Asia, at competitive rates about \$2/kg below Indian prices, market

sources told *Business Line*. They said Guatemala was offering at \$12-12.5 a kg against the Indian price of \$14-14.5 a kg. The individual auction average last week vacillated between Rs. 780 and Rs. 795 a kg.

At the Sunday auction held by the KCPMC, arrivals decreased to 65 tonnes from 85 tonnes the previous Sunday and the entire quantity was almost sold out. The maximum price was at Rs. 1,154 .

The auction average declined to Rs. 786.46 from Rs. 802 the previous Sunday, PC Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC, said. Prices of exportable variety have gone up to around Rs. 800 a kg and that has led to a slowdown in export buying.

During the current season ending in July, arrivals are 18,333 tonnes against 10,640 tonnes during the same period a year ago. Sales were 17,817 tonnes against 10,135 tonnes.

The weighted average price as on April 13 was Rs. 617.80 against Rs. 748.20 a kg the same date last year.

Prices of graded varieties ( Rs. /kg): AGEB 980-990; AGB 820-830; AGS 790-800 and AGS -1: 770-780. Bulk prices ranged between Rs. 450 and Rs. 1,500 a kg.

## Mills' poor buying pounds chana

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**Indore, April 15:** Chana continued to trade lower on weak physical demand and poor buying from millers on Tuesday. With mandis closed for '*Hanuman Jayanti*', private trading took place. Chana (kanta) was quoted at Rs. 2,800-50, while chana (desi) ruled at Rs. 2,500-2,600 a quintal on Tuesday. Notwithstanding expected decline in chana output this year due to extensive damage to the crop, chana in local mandis has been witnessing a downtrend due to arrival of poor quality produce.

Decline in spot chana also dragged its dal with chana dal (average) being quoted at Rs. 3,350-3,450, chana dal (medium) at Rs. 3,550-3,650, while chana dal (bold) ruled at Rs. 3,750- 3,959.

Dollar chana witnessed sluggish trend on slack domestic and export demand. In private trading, dollar chana was at Rs. 4,000-4,500 ( Rs. 5,000-5,200 last week) amid negligible arrival.

In container, however, dollar chana witnessed marginal decline compared to its prices last week with dollar chana (42/44 count) at Rs. 6,125-50 ( Rs. 6,150-75), 44/46 count ruled at Rs. 5,925-50 ( Rs. 5,950-75 ), 58/60 count at Rs. 4,900-25 ( Rs. 4,950-75 ), while dollar chana (60/62 count) ruled at Rs. 4,775-4,800 ( Rs. 4,825-50 a quintal ).

## Edible oils heat up with cues from futures

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**Mumbai, April 15:** Edible oils ruled firm on Tuesday tracking extended gains in the futures market. On the Bombay Commodity Exchange (BCE), palmolein and groundnut oil increased by Rs. 7 and Rs. 10 for 10 kg each. Rapeseed oil rose by Rs. 1. The volume remained comparatively low as stockists have covered enough palmolein previous day . During the day, about 200-250 tonnes of palmolein

were resold at Rs. 602 ex-JNPT and Rs. 606 Mumbai. Besides, Ruchi sold about 80-100 tonnes of sunflower oil at Rs. 662.

Vikram Global Commodities (P) Ltd quoted Rs. 630/10 kg for Malaysia super palmolein.

Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs. 610, super palmolein Rs. 630 and soyabean refined oil Rs. 655 for May.

Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs. 610 for April-May, soyabean refined oil Rs. 655 for May and sunflower refined oil Rs. 665 for May 10.

Allana was quoting palmolein at Rs. 608 for April-May, soyabean refined oil Rs. 657 for May 15- 31 and sunflower refined oil Rs. 665 for April.

At Rajkot, groundnut oil *telia* tin ruled steady at Rs. 1,110 and loose (10 kg) at Rs. 695.

BCE rates ( Rs. /10 kg): groundnut oil 740 (730), soya refined oil 652 (652), sunflower exp. ref. 605 (605), sunflower ref. 665 (665), rapeseed ref. oil 673 (672), rapeseed expeller ref. 643 (642) cottonseed ref. oil 655 (655) and palmolein 605 (598).

## Turmeric scales Rs. 7,000/quintal on upcountry buying

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**Erode, April 15:** TURMERIC SCALES RS. 7,000/QUINTAL

Spot turmeric prices at Erode increased to Rs. 7,000 a quintal on Tuesday on receipt of upcountry orders. "Traders in Erode received fresh upcountry demand and so they procured 70 per cent of the 4,800 bags that arrived. Prices are likely to rule firm for a few days," 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. 4,909-6,999 and the root variety Rs. 4,599-6,689 a quintal.

The finger variety of Salem Hybrid was Rs. 6,269-7,889; the root variety Rs. 5,706-6,891. Of the 1,248 bags that arrived, 892 were sold. Our Correspondent



# March vegoil imports drop 6% on weak demand

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**Mumbai, April 15:** Vegetable oil imports fell six per cent in March to 8,35,424 tonnes against 8,89,415 tonnes in the same period a year ago as the rupee appreciated and demand slipped.

Imports included 8,32,925 tonnes of edible oil and 2,499 tonnes on non-edible oil, according to the data released by the Solvent Extractors' Association.

The rupee appreciated to 60.95 against dollar from 62.16 in February.

Overall, imports of vegetable oils between November and March were down six per cent at 43,32,231 tonnes (46,24,678 tonnes).

Import of refined oil rose 32 per cent to 8,17,615 tonnes against 6,20,698 tonnes in the first five months of the season that began in November.

## **Duty structure**

In contrast, import in crude form was down 11 per cent to 34,36,042 tonnes (38,76,738 tonnes).

This was largely due to inverted duty structure followed by exporting countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia which are trying to promote their own refining industry.

Palm oil imports in proportionate to soft oils such as soyabean, sunflower and rape oil were down due to the duty structure.

Palm oil imports in last five months decreased 17 per cent to 31,42,418 tonnes.

While soft oil imports increased to 11,11,239 tonnes (6,85,339 tonnes).

Indian refiners prefer to import crude soft oils over crude palm oil, which has reflected in pattern of import in last few months, said SEA.

## **Stocks**

Inventory of edible oil at various ports as on April 1 was estimated at 4,90,000 tonnes. Crude palm oil stock was at 2,70,000 tonnes, refined palmolein was at 90,000 tonnes, degummed soyabean oil at 50,000 tonnes and crude sunflower oil at 80,000 tonnes.

Consignments of about 710,000 tonnes were in the pipeline, said SEA.

Import of non-edible oil such as palm fatty acid distillate and crude palm kernel oil in March plunged to 2,499 tonnes (38,509 tonnes) due to weak demand.

The overall import of non-edible oils between November and March were down 38 per cent at 78,574 tonnes (1,27,242 tonnes).

## **Business Standard**

# Rabi arrivals, elections cast shadow on agri commodities

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Since the schedule for the [Lok Sabha elections](#) was announced in the first week of March, agricultural [commodities](#) have been on a downward spiral. The reasons include caution on the movement of cash, fear of action on [essential commodities](#) to control food inflation if a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government comes to power and an increase in arrival of [rabi crop](#) commodities.

All these have seen the prices of various agricultural commodities fall 5-14 per cent in about a month.

During elections, the movement of cash for election-related expenses increases, owing to which enforcement agencies strengthen vigilance. "Several angadias (who move goods and cash, primarily in smaller towns) have become very cautious because of the vigil on the movement of cash. As we have to pay farmers in cash, trade is disturbed and farmers start selling at lower prices," said a Saurashtra-based trader.

Prices of jeera, turmeric, barley, kapas, palm oil, castor seed and wheat, have fallen significantly in the past month, as many of these are rabi crops and this is arrival season.

"It's a coincidence of arrival season (rabi crops) and the tight movement of funds during the election period. Together, this is putting downward pressure on commodity prices," said Jagdeep Grewal, head of research at Kunvarji Commodities, which focuses on spot and futures markets across commodities.

The commodities that have seen a rise in prices include soybean (due to reports of a shortage), sugar and gur. Export incentives for raw sugar and lower production estimates

have put upward pressure on prices, with gur tracing the sentiment.

The market fears if a BJP government comes to power at the Centre, it will use the Essential Commodities Act to tame food inflation. In 2011, a panel headed by Narendra Modi, the BJP's prime ministerial candidate, had recommended measures such as a ban on futures trading in essential commodities, including rice, [pulses](#) and edible oils, as there was no strong linkage between spot and futures.

Other recommendations included making offences

POLL JITTERS				
	Unit	Mar 4	Apr 11	% change
Jeera	₹/quintal	11,335	9,790	13.63
Turmeric	₹/quintal	7,182	6,252	12.95
Barley	₹/quintal	1,372	1,217	11.30
Kapas-Surend	₹/20kg	863	770	10.72
Crude Palmoil	₹/10kg	604	556	7.92
Castor Seed	₹/quintal	4,269	3,952	7.43
RBD palmolein	₹/10kg	645	598	7.21
Wheat	₹/quintal	1,637	1,521	7.09
CottonSeed Oil	₹/quintal	1,547	1,452	6.14
Chana	₹/quintal	3,169	3,015	4.86
Mustard. Seed	₹/quintal	3,536	3,397	3.93
Guar Gum	₹/quintal	12,760	12,440	2.51
Ref Soyaoil	₹/10kg	724	709	2.04
Maize	₹/quintal	1,171	1,149	1.88
Shankar Kapas-Rajkot	₹/20kg	1,047	1,028	1.86

Source: NCDEX  
Compiled by BS Research Bureau

under the essential commodities Act non-bailable.

Grewal said, "Past remarks and the stance of the leading PM candidate towards essential commodity futures are a topic of discussion among market participants."

Naveen Mathur, head (commodities and currencies), Angel Commodities said, "El Niño possibilities, if these come true, could be bad news for agricultural commodities. As this fear is growing, it could eventually arrest the price fall."

## Vegetable oil import down 6% in Nov-Mar

[Vegetable oil imports](#) between November 2013 and March 2014, the first five months of the oil year, saw a drop of six per cent to 4.3 million tonnes (mt) compared to 4.6 mt in the same period last year, according to data issued by the [Solvent Extractors'](#) Association.

The imports saw a sharp increase in November and December but these got arrested after that. Now, the reports indicate a possible fall. March vegetable oil imports also saw a drop of six per cent, compared to the same period last year, to 835,424 tonnes.

The average stock in the ports and the pipeline was 1.4-1.5 mt in the +past six months but has been averaging 1.2 mt in the past two months.

Imports of RBD palmolein saw a jump, however, of 32 per cent between November and March, to 817,615 tonnes as prices were on the lower side. Crude palm oil imports were down 11 per cent from November to March, at 3.4 mt.

Total edible oil imports from November to March were 4.2 mt compared to 4.4 mt in the same period last year, while non-edible oil imports were 78,574 tonnes this year; last year, it was 127,242 tonnes. Availability of [oilseeds](#) was higher this year, leading to higher availability of vegetable oil.

Around 60 per cent of India's vegetable oil demand is met by imports. The picture this year

<b>SLIPPERY GROUND</b>								(Imports in tonnes)
Month	2012-13			2013-14			% change	
	Edible	Non-edible	Total	Edible	Non-edible	Total		
Nov '13	676,234	24,137	700,371	927,111	17,198	944,309	35	
Dec '13	883,489	25,098	908,587	1,052,550	15,159	1,067,709	18	
Jan '14	1,132,631	24,499	1,157,130	871,527	34,287	905,814	-22	
Feb '14	954,176	14,999	969,175	569,544	9,431	578,975	-40	
Mar '14	850,906	38,509	889,415	832,925	2,499	835,424	-6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,497,436</b>	<b>127,242</b>	<b>4,624,678</b>	<b>4,253,657</b>	<b>78,574</b>	<b>4,332,231</b>	<b>-6</b>	

Source: Solvent Extractors Association

is expected to be the same as last year. Domestic consumption is on the rise.

## MP farmers hold on to chana anticipating better price

Despite damage to [chana](#) crop, Madhya Pradesh farmers are holding on to the crop and shying away from government procurement centres in anticipation of higher prices.

"Only 1,270 tonne of Chana has arrived till last Friday at various procurement centers across Madhya Pradesh," a senior officer in MP Marketing Cooperative Federation Limited said. The state had expected arrival of 2 million tonne.

Though Chana prices for desi variety was hovering around Rs 2,010-2,900 per quintal and Rs 2,300-5,200 per quintal for chana Gulabi in local mandi, farmers are still shying away from procurement centres.

Unseasonal rains during January to March destroyed significant amount of [chana crop](#), yet state government has expected arrival of 2 million tonne at various procurement centres.

Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan had raised the issue of damage to chana crop ahead of polls in March and met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Pranab Mukherjee.

He had also written to the President and demanded funds for [Nafed](#) (National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited) the main procurement agency, so that it can procure Chana at minimum support price of Rs 3,100 per quintal.

"Farmers are holding the commodity in anticipation of higher prices during May-June as there is a shortage of crop due to bad weather this year," a senior official in state farmers welfare and [agriculture](#) development department said.

"Procurement centers rejects the commodity if it has 14% or more moisture why will farmers go at government procurement centres when they can fetch more price in market," said the official.

Also, farmers do not want to run the risk of transporting the commodity to procurement centre and face tough norms of procurement.

Nafed and MP Markfed stood at loggerheads for months over the issue wherein the chief minister kept on alleging Central government for its bias towards Madhya Pradesh farmers. Later when top authorities at centre intervened Nafed and MP Markfed reached an agreement and initiated procurement process since April 1 this year.

The procurement norms of Nafed are stern in terms of fair average quality. And farmers cannot ensure it -- no moisture, no foreign material and the commodity in proper shape and size.

## Jeera up 1.3% on strong demand

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[Jeera](#) prices surged by 1.38% to Rs 9,925 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators enlarged positions on the back of strong demand in the spot market.

However, expectations of higher output restricted the gains.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), jeera for delivery in April jumped up by Rs 135, or 1.38%, to Rs 9,925 per quintal with an open interest of 519 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in May shot up by Rs 120, or 1.21%, to Rs 10,050 per quintal in 9,960 lots.

Analysts said speculators enlarged positions on the back of strong demand in the spot market but expectations of higher output limited the gains at futures trade.

## Turmeric up 4%; hits upper circuit on export demand

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[Turmeric](#) prices hit upper limit in futures trade trade by surging 4% to Rs 6,502 per quintal as speculators enlarged positions triggered by a pick-up in export demand.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), turmeric for delivery in April shot up by Rs 250, or 4%, to Rs 6,502 per quintal with an open interest of 420 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in May moved up by Rs 252, or 3.99%, to Rs 6,572 per quintal in 12,600 lots.

Analysts said strong export demand in the spot markets helped turmeric futures to hit an upper circuits by surging 4% as speculators enlarged positions.



# Chana not a poll plank in MP anymore

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[Chana](#) procurement as a poll plank is missing from all poll constituencies in MP. Earlier, the ruling Bhartiya Janata Party had raised the issue and had tried to corner UPA (United Progressive Alliance) government for its bias towards the state.

“Only 12,700 quintals of chana had arrived till last Friday at various procurement centers across Madhya Pradesh,” a senior officer in MP Marketing Cooperative Federation Limited told Business Standard. The state had expected arrival of 2 million ton.

Though Chana prices for Desi are hovering between Rs 2,010-2,900 per quintal and Rs 2,300-5,200 per quintal for chana Gulabi in local mandi, farmers are still shying away from procurement centres.

Unseasonal rains during January to March destroyed Chana crop to a great extent, yet state government expected arrival of 2 million ton at various procurement centres.

State chief minister [Shivraj Singh Chouhan](#) had raised the issue ahead of polls in March and met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Pranab Mukherjee. He had written to the president and demanded funds for Nafed (National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited), the main procurement agency, so that it can procure Chana at minimum support price of Rs 3,100 per quintal.

“Farmers are holding the commodity in anticipation of higher prices during May-June as there is a shortage of crop due to bad weather this year,” a senior official in state farmers welfare and agriculture development department told Business Standard.

Also farmers do not want to run the risk of transporting the commodity to a procurement centre and face tough norms of procurement.

Nafed and MP Markfed stood at loggerheads for months over the issue wherein the chief minister kept on blaming the Central government for its bias towards Madhya Pradesh farmers. Later when top authorities at centre intervened, Nafed and MP Markfed reached an agreement and initiated procurement process since April 1 this year.

“Procurement centers reject the commodity if it has 14% or more moisture... why will farmers go to government procurement centres when they can fetch more price in market?” an official said.

The procurement norms of Nafed are stern in terms of fair average quality. And farmers cannot ensure it -- no moisture, no foreign material and the commodity in proper shape and size.

It was a gimmick played by Chouhan to woo voters of farm community and now it has backfired, said a Congress spokesperson.

## Sugar up 0.2% on strong demand, lower output

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Extending its rising streak, [sugar](#) prices rose by 0.28% to Rs 3,200 per quintal in futures market today as speculators engaged in enlarging positions, driven by summer season

demand from bulk consumers amid fall in production.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), sugar for delivery in April gained Rs 9, or 0.28%, to Rs 3,200 per quintal with an open interest of 10,990 lots.

On similar lines, the sweetener for delivery in May moved up by Rs 3, or 0.09%, to Rs 3,241 per quintal in 55,260 lots.

Analysts said apart from rising demand in the spot markets from bulk consumers following summer season demand, fall in sugar production supported the continued rise in sweetener prices at futures trade.

The country's sugar production has dropped by 7% to 21.5 million tonnes in the first six months of the current marketing year due to lower output in key producing states.

## Potato up 1.9% on upsurge in demand

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[Potato](#) prices surged 1.99% to Rs 1,438 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators created fresh positions on the back of rising demand in the spot markets.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), potato for delivery in May was up by Rs 28, or 1.99%, to Rs 1,438 per quintal in a business turnover of 363 lots.

Likewise, the potato for delivery in April traded higher by Rs 1,420, or 1.09%, to Rs 1,318 per quintal in 43 lots.

Analysts said fresh positions created by speculators following an upsurge in demand in the spot market against decline in arrivals from producing regions mainly pushed up potato prices at futures trade.

## Crude palm oil up 0.3% as demand picks up

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[Crude palm oil](#) prices rose by 0.31% to Rs 558.40 per 10 kg in futures trade today as speculators created fresh positions, driven by pick-up in demand in the spot market.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), crude palm oil for delivery in May rose by Rs 1.70, or 0.31%, to Rs 558.40 per 10 kg in business turnover of 104 lots.

Similarly, the oil for delivery in April traded higher by Rs 1.50, or 0.27%, to Rs 562.10 per 10 kg in 166 lots.

Analysts said speculators built-up fresh positions driven by pick-up in demand in the spot market which mainly led to rise in crude palm oil prices at futures trade.

## Cardamom up 1% on rising demand

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Amid rising domestic demand and restricted arrivals from producing regions, [cardamom](#) prices rose 1.08% to Rs 940 per kg in futures trading today as

speculators enlarged their positions.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), cardamom for delivery in April rose by Rs 10, or 1.08%, to Rs 940 per kg in a business turnover of 2 lots.

In a similar fashion, the spice for delivery in May moved up by Rs 3.30, or 0.36%, to Rs 920.70 per kg in 193 lots.

Analysts said apart from spot demand, restricted arrivals from producing regions mainly led to rise in cardamom prices at futures trade.

## India's vegetable oil imports decline 6% in March

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The country's [vegetable oil imports](#) fell by 6% to 8.35 lakh tonnes in March due to a continuous fall in shipments of palm oil, industry body [SEA](#) said today.

Vegetable oil imports stood at 8.89 lakh tonnes in the same month of the previous year, it said in a statement.

India meets about 60% of its annual vegetable oil demand of 17-18 million tonnes via imports. Palm oils make up 80% of the country's total vegetable oil imports.

"Indian refiners prefer to import crude soft oils over [crude palm oil](#) (CPO), which reflected in pattern of import in last few months," Solvent Extractors Association (SEA) said.

Palm oil imports have fallen by 23% to 5.45 lakh tonnes in March this year from 7.08 lakh tonnes in the year-ago period.

Among palm oils, crude palm oil (CPO) shipments declined by 24% to 4.24 lakh tonnes from 5.58 lakh tonnes.

Interestingly, import of refined crude variant (RBD palmolein) which remained higher in last few months owing to lower prices as compared to CPO, fell marginally to 1.12 lakh tonnes in March this year, from 1.37 lakh tonnes in the same month last year.

According to SEA, import of non-edible oils fell sharply to 2,499 tonnes in March this year, as compared to 38,509 tonnes in the year-ago period.

As on April 1, edible oils stock at various ports is estimated at 6.30 lakh tonnes, of which CPO was 4.9 lakh tonnes. About 7.1 lakh tonnes of edible oil is in the pipeline.

Total stock of vegetable oils both at ports and in the pipelines has reduced to 12 lakh tonnes from 12.45 lakh tonnes in the year-ago period.

During the November-March period of 2013-14 marketing year, total palm oil imports have fallen to 22.73 lakh tonnes, as against 31.20 lakh tonnes in the same period of previous year, the SEA data showed.

India imports palm oil mainly from Indonesia and Malaysia.

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