

NAMAKKAL, February 3, 2014

## **Namakkal eggs cheapest in country's wholesale market**



At the end of the first month after announcing the new price fixation for wholesale price of egg – from January 1, 2014 – the National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC) Namakkal Zone has managed to maintain the price of egg as the lowest in the country. Statistics from the NECC shows that the wholesale

A rack of eggs at a poultry farm in Namakkal.— Photo: P.Goutham

price of an egg ranged between Rs. 3.60 and Rs. 3.30 in the month.

“Average price of the commodity in that month was Rs. 3.44. This is the lowest among the 30 NECC zones across India”, Chairman of NECC Namakkal Zonal P. Selvaraj told *The Hindu* .

“This was possible as the NECC took a strong stand to fix price of egg at the board rate without including the commission for traders – for packing, transportation and their profit. It is against the practice of fixing the price of egg with commission for traders that was in practice for close to two decades. The production cost of egg is about Rs. 3.25 an egg, helping farmers make a marginal profit”, he said.

Dr. Selvaraj said that Namakkal and Hospet are the only NECC zones in India that fix the wholesale price without commission for traders.

“About 95 percent of the farmers are following the new pricing pattern. Some small scale farmers in the nearby districts are yet to follow the pattern and make better profits”, Dr. Selvaraj added.

Wholesale price of egg in January was 37 paise less than the price in December (Rs. 3.81).

But farmers claimed that they made reasonable profit in January compared to the previous month.

“In December traders deducted 60 to 70 paise per egg from the price fixed by the NECC”, farmer S. Rajendran said.

Another main objective of the price fixation pattern with effect from New Year is to bring down the retail price of egg below Rs. 4 and boost consumption. But this is yet to become a reality in some parts of the State as the retail price there still stands at Rs. 4.50.

“The NECC that strongly campaigned that wholesale price of aged egg laying hens will be fixed without commission for traders from February 1, postponed it to March 1. This move was taken at the last moment due to resistance from some traders”, NECC sources

representatives said.

VELLORE, February 3, 2014

## **24 ha of sugarcane fields come under drip irrigation**

Twenty-four hectares of sugarcane fields in Vellore district have been brought under drip irrigation through the subsidy scheme of the Department of Agriculture.

The area under drip irrigation includes 21 hectares in Katpadi taluk, 12 hectares in Sholinghur block and 5.5 hectares in Ambur taluk.

Vellore Collector R. Nanthagopal visited the 2.5-ha sugarcane field of Kannagi Naidu in Eranthangal village panchayat in Katpadi taluk and the one-ha field of Lalitha of Abdullapuram in Thenpalli village panchayat in Sholinghur block in the registered area of the Vellore Cooperate Sugar Mills, and the two-ha land of Karunakaran in Periyanguppam village panchayat in Madhanur panchayat union, attached to the Ambur Cooperative Sugar Mills on Thursday and enquired with them the benefits they got through drip irrigation.

R. Jayasundar, Joint Director of Agriculture, Vellore said that a 100 per cent subsidy is given to small and marginal farmers for installing drip irrigation system in land of less than five ha, while the subsidy is 75 per cent in the case of farmers having more than five ha.

### **Target**

A target of 120ha has been fixed for Katpadi taluk and 40ha for Ambur.

The Collector inspected the mango saplings in the 10-ha field of Saroja Ammal in Karigiri panchayat in Katpadi taluk and the tissue banana cultivated in the 1.2-ha field of Dayalu Reddiar in Gugaianallur panchayat in Katpadi taluk under the National Micro Irrigation Scheme and the vegetable crops in the field of Pandurangan in Madhanur block under the Precision Farming Scheme under the National Agricultural Development Programme, all of whom have availed of the drip irrigation subsidy. Mr. Nanthagopal appealed to all farmers to make use of the subsidy available for drip irrigation and cultivate sugarcane and horticultural crops and thus overcome the water scarcity prevailing in the district.

## **New fish market in Vellore comes to life with all vendors shifting shops**



The new Fish, Poultry and Mutton market constructed by the Corporation at Makkan on Bangalore Road has sprung to life with all vendors from the old fish market occupying it.

Collector R. Nanthagopal and Mayor P. Karthiyayini at the new fish market in Vellore.— Photo: C. Venkatachalapathy

Initially, vendors of old fish market were reluctant to participate in the auction and demanded direct allotment of shops in the new market.

But, the Corporation stood its ground on auction and has not accepted this demand and asked them to vacate the old market by December 30. But in the last minute, a reconciliation plan was arrived at and they were given a weeks' time to participate in the auction.

They took shops on lease. Following this, vendors in the old fish market shifted to the shops allotted to them in the new market .

Collector R. Nanthagopal and Mayor P. Karthiyayini along with the officials visited the fully-occupied new market.

Mayor P. Karthiyayini told *The Hindu* , “The market has 50 sheltered shops and 60 floor shops. The vendors in the old market got allotted shops in the new market.

“After participating in the auction the vendors asked the Corporation to provide shelters in front of the shops to protect meat from spoiling due to rain or shine. We have provided Rs. 12 lakh for the same. The market has 24 hour water supply. It is modern and hygienic. All the shops in the market are fully occupied. There is neither surplus nor scarcity of shops,” she said.

## **Let the K-brand chicken fly high, Collector tells poultry farmers**



Sharing ideas: District Collector S. Jayandhi speaking at a training session for native-chicken poultry farmers in Karur.

Native chicken rearing farmers in Karur district must carve a niche for themselves by creating a brand image for their birds in the national poultry market. All necessary training and financial support will be extended to farmers to achieve it, District Collector S. Jayandhi promised poultry farmers here on Friday.

Speaking after inaugurating the training programme for native chicken rearing farmers at the TANUVAS Veterinary University Training and Research Centre at Panduthakaranpudur near here, Ms.Jayandhi pointed out that the demand for native or country chicks was going up by the day.

Just as in agriculture where organic farming had come to occupy centre stage, in poultry, native chicken varieties were being increasingly preferred by the consumers for their taste, quality, nutritional value, and strength, Ms.Jayandhi said.

Poultry farmers must make all efforts to ensure that Karur brand of native chicken achieve popularity similar to that of Namakkal broiler varieties across the country. Stating that there was money in rearing native chicken, the Collector called upon the farmers to hone their skills to harness the potential for native chicken rearing in the district for which she said she would co-opt the services of the Department of Animal Husbandry, TANUVAS, banks, NABARD, TAHDCO and other governmental agencies. The three-day training was being conducted under the aegis of the Scheme for Poultry Development by the Department of Animal Husbandry, and NABARD extended a back-ended subsidy to the beneficiaries.

This was the second training programme under the scheme in Karur district during the current fiscal and 27 beneficiaries were participating in the programme. The Collector also gave away Rs.6.18 lakh to three beneficiaries of the previous training programme as credit-cum-subsidy.

Regional Joint Director of Animal Husbandry R.Gopinath, TANUVAS VUTRC head Prof Akila, Lead District Manager S.M.Murugesan, NABARD Assistant General Manager A.Parthiban, and Assistant Director of Animal Husbandry Kulandaisamy spoke.

## **Textile mills seek measures to control prices of cotton**

Textile mills here have sought measures to control prices of cotton as it is the main raw material for the mills.

This was discussed at a meeting held in New Delhi recently. K. Thirunavukarasu, president of South India Spinners' Association who participated in the meeting, informed that the meeting was attended by officials from the Union textile and finance Ministries and banks and representatives of the textile spinning sector.

Funds at lower cost

The textile mills have sought additional funds from banks at lower cost so that they would be able to purchase cotton that would be needed for six months. This would enable the mills to purchase substantial quantity of cotton when the arrivals are good and thus, protect the units from the fluctuations in cotton price.

The association had also sought removal of cotton from commodity trading and pointed out that since funds were available at a lower cost to the multi-national cotton companies, they were able to purchase large quantities of cotton at the beginning of the season and sell them later at a higher price.

The officials asked the banks to prepare proposals and said it could be discussed with the industry. "Though the proposal is not likely to take off this year, the process has started and it can be taken forward in the coming months," he said.

The cotton season began in October 2013 and the prices have already crossed Rs. 40,000 a candy.

The Southern India Mills' Association sought the Centre's permission to transport cotton from Gujarat to Tamil Nadu by foreign vessels.

The mills here purchase 70 to 80 lakh bales of cotton every year from Gujarat. The cost to transport cotton (a 50-candy load) by truck from Gujarat to

Coimbatore is nearly Rs. 80,000. It works out to Rs. 75,000 if transported by train. If the mills transport the cotton by Indian vessels, it costs about Rs. 65,000.

In the case of a foreign vessel, the cost of transporting cotton from Gujarat to China is just 150 dollars. Hence, it is strongly felt that the Government should permit the mills to use foreign vessels.

DHARWAD, February 3, 2014

## **Farm machinery exhibition begins at agricultural varsity**



Farmers at an exhibition at the University of Agricultural Sciences in Dharwad on Sunday.

A two-day farm machinery exhibition began at the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Dharwad, here on Sunday.

The event, organised to inform farmers about the latest farm equipment, attracted a large number of farmers from different parts of the region. Various farm equipment were on display. Farm tools and farming technologies developed by UAS are being exhibited as part of the event. A seminar will be held during the exhibition, which is being organised by UAS, Dharwad, under the Union government's Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY).

Earlier, inaugurating the exhibition, former professor of Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) J.S. Pawnar said farmers should be encouraged to go for mechanisation of farms to enhance food production.

G.S. Dasog, Dean (Agriculture), Agricultural College, Dharwad, said mechanisation was needed to overcome the shortage of labour. He suggested that farm machinery manufacturers consider the needs of the farmers while designing machines, which would help them in making these machines popular as well to suit local conditions. M.B. Chetti, Director of Extension, UAS, Dharwad, who presided over the inaugural session, said that it was difficult for farmers to get information at the annual Krishi Mela which was attended by over 11 lakh persons. Therefore, UAS, Dharwad, had decided to organise a separate event to exhibit farm machineries and inform farmers about their uses, he said.

MEENANGADI, February 3, 2014

## **Centre to send foodgrain by ship to Kerala**

Union Minister of State for Food and Consumer Affairs K.V. Thomas said here on Sunday that the Union government had taken measures to transport foodgrain for public distribution in Kerala by ship as a part of setting up a viable public distribution network in the country. The first shipment would reach Kochi port on February 22 from Kakinada port in Andhra Pradesh.

Speaking after inaugurating a godown of the Food Corporation of India, with storage capacity of 5,000 tonnes, Mr. Thomas said the government would expand the means of transportation to other ports in the country, if the first shipment was found to be cost-effective.



## Need for organic farming near Ansupa stressed to preserve ecology

### *World Wetlands Day celebrated*



**CATCHING THEM YOUNG:** School children taking part in a quiz programme organised to mark the World Wetlands Day by Athagarh Forest Division and Museum of Natural History at Ansupa, the sweet water lake, in Cuttack district on Sunday. —Photo: Lingaraj Panda

The need for proper management of wetlands such as Ansupa in Athagarh area of Cuttack district was stressed by conservationists during the World Wetlands Day celebrations near the lake on Sunday.

The celebrations were organised by the Chilika Development Authority, Regional Museum of Natural History and Athagarh Forest Division. A large number of local people and students of nearby schools took part in the celebrations. The main theme of the discussion at the function was 'Wetlands and Agriculture: Partners in growth' since the horseshoe shaped fresh water lake was shrinking in the recent years.

The speakers who addressed the gathering stressed the need for organic farming in the nearby areas surrounding Ansupa to preserve its ecology.

Since Ansupa was considered as wetland of national importance and its depth and size was on the decline due to various reasons, the local farmers were urged

to take to organic farming thereby contributing towards the preservation of the wetland.

A booklet on Ansupa and its eco-system was also released on the occasion. The members of two local women self help groups who had been involved in the preservation of the lake since long were also present on the occasion.

PUDUKOTTAI, February 3, 2014

## **Pudukottai district farmers in dire straits selling cattle for pittance**

An acute fodder shortage due to the severe drought conditions prevailing across Pudukottai district, coupled with worse water scarcity, has forced the farmers to sell their cattle for pittance.

At a time when even drinking water has become scarce in the district, maintenance of cattle has overburdened the farmers. “We have no other option but to sell the cattle not only to make the ends meet, but also to avoid loss of animals due to starvation,” says a cross-section of farmers.

The total failure of northeast monsoon has disappointed farmers and authorities alike. Over 5,800 minor and major tanks in eight taluks in the district have gone bone dry for the past few months.

Usually hay from the Cauvery delta region in the district, after the local usage, is sent to Kerala. But, due to total failure of paddy this season, acute shortage of fodder has been a problem in the whole district. A small bundle of hay costs Rs. 50 and there has been a scramble among farmers for purchasing fodder at this exorbitant rate.

“The district has been witnessing an unprecedented drought and the worst-hit are the cattle. Farmers have to spend a lot for procuring hay from the delta districts. The price of groundnut cake too has doubled,” complains S. Ponnusamy, district secretary of the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam.

Last year farmers had to spend Rs. 5,000 or Rs. 3,000 for a load of a tractor or a mini-van respectively. This year, prices have sky rocketed further. According to Mr. Ponnusamy unscrupulous elements, taking advantage of the situation, have been exploiting the hapless farmers. He urged the government to take drought relief measures on a war footing. When contacted, V. Mahalingam, Regional Joint Director of Animal Husbandry, said that the government had sanctioned

fodder depots for the supply of hay at subsidised rates in seven centres — Viralimalai, Aranthangi, Tirumayam, Keeranur, Gandarvakottai, Alangudi, Ponnamaravathi. A kg of hay would be sold for Rs. 2 and the centres would be opened in a week's time, the official said.

## **Lending a helping hand to farmers through online delivery system**

G. Latha Krishna Rao, Additional Chief Secretary (Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs), Karnataka.

Farmers in rural Karnataka no longer have to lug around voluminous land documents to secure a bank loan, thanks to 'Bhoomi', an online delivery and management of land records system operated by the State Revenue Department with technical assistance from the National Informatics Centre.

Bhoomi, which had received e-governance award in the past, won another award in the category, incremental innovation in existing project, at the 17th national conference on e-governance that concluded here on Friday. The project won the award for electronically integrating the database with stakeholders. Bhoomi has computerised more than 20 million land records of 6.7 million farmers in Karnataka.

"Given the vastness of database of land records, we wanted to look at how other agencies could utilise it. So, first we linked the database with banks. Several nationalised banks are using it now," said G. Latha Krishna Rao, Additional Chief Secretary to Karnataka Government (Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs). It was during her tenure as Revenue Principal Secretary that the project was implemented.

When farmers approach banks for loans, they are first asked to submit land records. With the electronic integration of the database, the banks could access data on the extent of the farmer's landholding or whether the person had taken other loans, Ms. Rao said.

The database is also being used to simplify the process of land acquisition. Agencies that needed to acquire huge tracts of land for various development projects had to scout tehsildar offices to get the land records. Now, they could access the database.

The various stages of land acquisition are also updated on the website and once the acquisition is complete, the title of the land is changed in the name of the developing agency concerned. This rules out the possibility of ignorant or wilful

usage of land already acquired. The database has also been linked with the registration department, whereby even the sketches of the plot are made available. This makes it possible to assess the exact extent of land owned by both private landowners and the government.

“There have been a lot of cases where people have tried to sell government land. Now registration officials can immediately put an end to such attempts. The rights of both the government and private landowners are being protected,” Ms. Rao said.

Buoyed by the success of the digitisation of rural land records, the Karnataka government has now initiated the digitisation of urban property records.

SALEM, February 3, 2014

## Farmers seek more dry fodder depots



Minister for Agriculture S. Damodaran inaugurating a dry fodder depot in Coimbatore on Sunday.

Farmers who owned milch animals in Salem have welcomed the Government's effort to face the anticipated severe dry fodder shortage in the district by opening five depots to supply dry fodder at subsidised rate. But, they feel that more depots have to be opened in the district that has a heavy cattle population.

Regional Joint Director of the Animal Husbandry Department (AHD), Salem, K.M. Sivaprakasam told *The Hindu*, on Saturday, that over 12,000 farmers have registered in the depots since registration began for availing dry fodder at a subsidy of 75 to 80 per cent about 10 days ago. “Ration cards to avail the benefit have been distributed to more than 3,500 farmers in the depot at Thalaivasal. The rest were distributed to farmers who have registered in the depots at Nangavalli, Narasothipatti, Konganapuram and Mecheri. Registrations are yet to be closed,” he added. In this connection AHD officials said that these farmers have an average three milch animals taking the total number of animals that would be availing the benefit close to 36,000.

President of the United Farmers Association C. Vaiyapuri felt that the solution for taking the benefits of the scheme to more farmers would be to start at least one such depot in all the 20 panchayat unions in the district.

Staff Reporter adds from Coimbatore: Agriculture Minister S. Damodaran on Sunday inaugurated the hay distribution centre in Kinathukadavu. A release said that the Minister told the participants that the Government had allocated Rs. 12.50 crore for the purpose at Rs. 10 lakh a centre. At the centre, farmers with necessary identity cards would get hay Rs. 2-a-kg an animal.

MANDYA, February 3, 2014

## Assistance to revive farms

The Horticulture Department has asked farmers seeking assistance for taking up horticulture activities by reviving their farms to come forward, Information Department has said in a release. A sum of Rs. 12,000 would be given per hectare of land to take up horticulture activities.

Interested farmers can contact the Information Department, situated next to the office of the Mandya Superintendent of Police here, for more information regarding the scheme.

## Water level - Madurai



### WATER LEVEL

The water level in Periyar dam stood at 111.20 feet (permissible level is 136 feet) on Sunday with an inflow of 116 cusecs and a discharge of 105 cusecs. The level in Vaigai dam was 35.33 feet (full level 71 feet) with no inflow and a discharge of 60 cusecs. The combined storage in Periyar credit was 1,017 mcft.

There was no rainfall recorded during the 24 hours ending at 8.30 a.m. on Sunday, PWD officials here said.

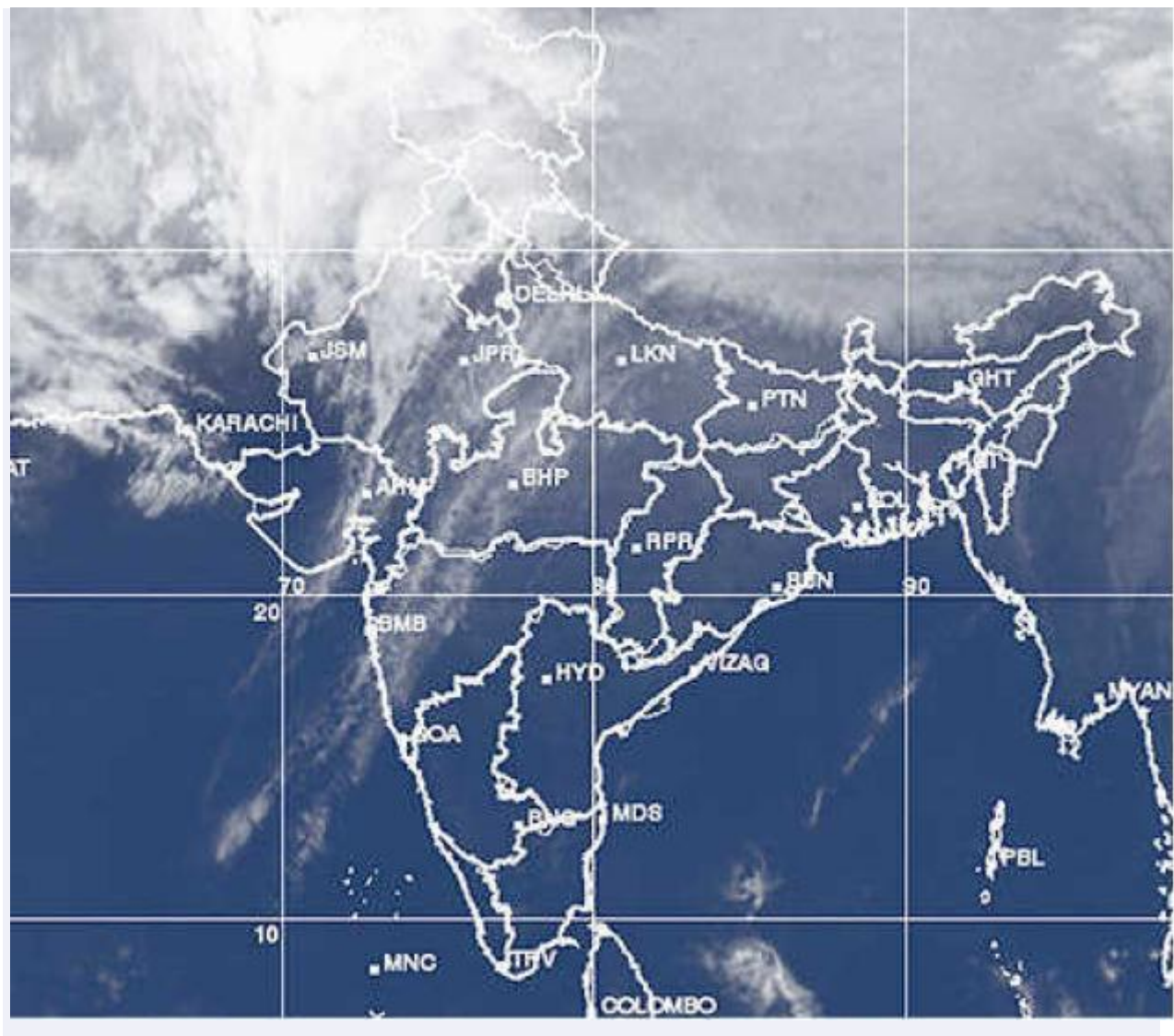
TIRUNELVELI :Water level in the Papanasam dam on Sunday stood at 80.95 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 222.92 cusecs and 1,154.75 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam. The water level in Manimuthar

dam stood at 82.83 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 23 cusecs and 195 cusecs of water was discharged.

**Kanyakumari:**The water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 17.50 feet, 50.10 feet in Perunchani, 8.69 feet in Chittar 1, 8.79 feet in Chittar 11, 4.20 feet in Poigai and 54.12 feet in Mamabazathuraiyaru.

**Mettur :**The water level in Mettur dam stood at 51.70 feet on Sunday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 647 cusecs and the discharge 500 cusecs.

## Weather



# hindustantimes

Chennai - INDIA

## Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Rain: 0

Humidity: 74

Wind: normal

## Monday, Feb 3

Max Min

29° | 23°

Sunrise: 06:35

Sunset: 06:10

Barometer: 1016

## Tomorrow's Forecast



Sunny

## Tuesday, Feb 4

Max Min

29° | 22°

## Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday  
Feb 5



31° | 23°

Partly Cloudy

Thursday  
Feb 6



32° | 22°

Partly Cloudy

Friday  
Feb 7



25° | 22°

Overcast

Saturday  
Feb 8



24° | 21°

Overcast

Sunday  
Feb 9



25° | 20°

Cloudy

## **Family-run tea estate gets special certification for social commitments**



Coimbatore, January 31:  
A family-run tea estate in the Nilgiris has become the first one to get a special certification, Trusttea. The certification has been given to the Golden Hills Estates Private Ltd's Erinkadu brand for its social and economic commitments to its workforce besides ensuring environmental protection and sustainability.

The estate will also ensure safety of the workplace as well as the product.

Erinkadu is the second one after Wentworth Estate of Harrisons Malayalam to get the certification in South India. The latter has got the certification as a company run estate.

“This accreditation has brought laurels to the family. It was an uphill task, but we managed. We will continue to be guided by Trusttea in our efforts to maintain sustainability in tea,” said N Lakshman Chettiar, the third generation entrepreneur managing the Golden Hills Estates.

The estate comprises 121 hectares of tea with an orthodox factory, producing about 4 lakh kg of orthodox tea annually. Teas are sold in southern auction centres of Coonoor, Coimbatore and Kochi.



Lakshman Chettiar recalled the efforts taken by his father L Narayanan Chettiar in designing a solar roof over two decades ago. “This has helped us save some 37 per cent on fossil fuel consumption annually and contribute towards carbon credit.

“We have also developed a moisture sensor, which helps save power on the withers and gets the exact wither percentage,” he said.

Trusttea certificate has been initiated by IDH, the sustainable trade initiative.

When asked how many estates in India have been given the Trusttea certification, Rohinton Kurus Babaycon, Local Coordinator, Tea- India, said, three have bagged the certification since its launch in July 2013.

Two estates are in the South and one in the North. The official further said that the network is targeting to cover 600 tea factories, five lakh tea plantation workers, 40,000 small growers in two years time.

“Out of the 1.1 billion kg of tea produced in India, nearly 800-900 million kg consumed in the domestic market is not verified. This India-specific tea code developed for and by the industry, and championed by the Tea Board aims at creating a sustainable sector.

## Limited arrivals support cotton

### **Rajkot :**

Cotton price ruled steady on Friday on the back of stable demand. *Kapas* or raw cotton prices ruled steady as demand from ginners was limited.

Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton traded at Rs. 42,900-43,000 for a candy of 356 kg.

*Kapas was quoted Rs. 1,050-1,085 for a maund of 20 kg and gin delivery kapas traded at Rs. 1,085-1,100 a maund in Rajkot.*

*About 60,000-62,000 bales of cotton arrived in Gujarat and 2 lakh bales across the country.*

*On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, kapas April contracts decreased by Rs. 11.50 to Rs. 983 a maund , with an open interest of 18,478 lots.*

*A Rajkot-based broker said that buying by domestic was hand-to-mouth. Export demand is limited at current price level. Prices may not drop in the*

*coming days due to restricted arrivals. Traders and ginnerers said that arrivals are restricted since farmers are holding back their produce.*

## **Rains, cold wave likely to delay arrival of masur crop**

**Indore :**

### **RAINS TO DELAY MASUR ARRIVALS**

A steady rise in arrivals of imported masur has arrested the uptrend in prices. Masur (bold) was quoted at Rs. 4,375-4,400 a quintal ( Rs. 4,400-25), while masur (Madhya Pradesh) ruled at Rs. 4,000-4,200 on Friday. With unseasonal rains and cold wave, the growth of masur crop seems to have been affected. In that eventuality, arrival of new masur in local mandis may be delayed, said a trader. Decline in spot masur dragged its dal with masur dal (average) at Rs. 5,000-25, masur dal (medium) at Rs. 5,100-25, while masur dal (bold) declined to Rs. 5,200-50 a quintal. Our Correspondent

## **Wheat unlikely to see any change next few days**

**Karnal :**

### **NO MAJOR CHANGE IN WHEAT**

After witnessing a marginal fluctuation in the last few days, prices of dara wheat remained unchanged on Friday. In the absence of any major market moving factors, prices have been ruling in a tight range, said Radhey Shayam, a trade expert. In the physical market, dara wheat sold at Rs. 1,620-25 a quintal. Around 1,000 bags of wheat arrived and stocks were directly offloaded at the mills. Mill delivery was at Rs. 1,620, while delivery at the chakki was at Rs. 1,625. In spot market, wheat traded at Rs. 1,610. Following a steady trend in wheat and good domestic demand for flour in the region, prices remained unchanged and sold at Rs. 1,850 . Similarly, Chokar ruled flat at Rs. 1,470 a quintal. Our Correspondent

# Ministerial panel favours hike in fixed costs for urea

Move to increase subsidy outgo by Rs. 900 cr; prices not to be impacted



## New Delhi :

In a move that may provide some relief to the beleaguered domestic urea producers, a ministerial panel has recommended increase in fixed cost for urea by Rs. 350 a tonne. This will not impact the urea prices as the Government proposes to absorb the additional cost through subsidy.

A Group of Ministers headed by Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar has approved the Fertiliser Ministry's proposal to raise the fixed production cost of urea by Rs. 350 a tonne.

According to the New Pricing Scheme (NPS) III, the Department of Fertiliser calculates the production cost of urea to pay the subsidy.

Fertiliser Minister Srikant Jena said the move to increase fixed cost of urea would lead to an increase in subsidy outgo by Rs. 900 crore a year. The proposal would be sent to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs for approval.

According to the proposal, the fixed costs – that includes cost of converting natural gas to urea, salary, interest, depreciation and selling expenses among others – for the nutrient produced by plants which are 30 years old or more would be increased by Rs. 300 a tonne. For all other plants, the fixed costs would be raised by Rs. 350 .

## Base year change

The minimum fixed cost would be fixed at Rs.2,300 and the base year for calculating the fixed cost has been changed from 2002-03 to 2008-09.

The scheme would be applicable for one year from the date of notification.

Assuming the proposal gets notified in the next two months, the fertiliser units would be able to take full advantage of the scheme only in the next financial year, sources said. The price of urea – the most widely used fertiliser in the country – is controlled by the Government. The maximum retail price of urea is currently fixed at Rs. 5,360 and the difference between the production cost and the MRP is reimbursed to the producers in the form of subsidy.

## Output profile

The domestic production of urea is estimated at 22 million tonnes while about eight tonnes is imported to meet the domestic shortfall. The Government had pegged the fertiliser subsidy at Rs. 65,971 crore for the current fiscal and the industry estimates outstanding dues at around Rs. 40,000 crore. The delay in subsidy payment has created a liquidity crisis for the fertiliser producers.

## Weather clouds wheat prospects despite record plantings

Yellow rust threat recedes for the crop

<b>Robust coverage</b>		
in lakh hectares as on Jan 31, 2014		
	<b>This year</b>	<b>Last year</b>
<b>Rice</b>	<b>21.13</b>	<b>15.15</b>
<b>Wheat</b>	<b>315.25</b>	<b>296.32</b>
<b>Gram</b>	<b>101.33</b>	<b>93.40</b>
<b>Field Pea</b>	<b>8.51</b>	<b>8.04</b>
<b>Urdbean</b>	<b>7.10</b>	<b>8.35</b>
<b>Moong bean</b>	<b>6.07</b>	<b>6.03</b>
<b>Jowar</b>	<b>36.31</b>	<b>38.81</b>
<b>Malze</b>	<b>15.40</b>	<b>14.27</b>
<b>Barley</b>	<b>8.04</b>	<b>7.94</b>
<b>Rapeseed/ Mustard</b>	<b>71.17</b>	<b>67.17</b>
<b>Groundnut</b>	<b>7.52</b>	<b>8.11</b>
<b>Safflower</b>	<b>1.77</b>	<b>1.48</b>
<b>Sunflower</b>	<b>4.13</b>	<b>4.86</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>642.89</b>	<b>606.65</b>

Source: Ministry of Agriculture

## **New Delhi, January 31:**

The winter or rabi plantings is almost coming to an end and acreages under crops such as wheat and gram have touched new highs this year raising the prospect of a record foodgrain harvest. The plantings were boosted by comfortable water levels in reservoirs and higher soil moisture levels.

The rabi rice planting this year is up by about a fourth at 21.13 lakh hectares (lh) as transplantation goes on in States such as Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Karnataka, Odisha and West Bengal among others.

## **Wheat prospects**

With regard to wheat, sowing has ended even as planting data continues to trickle in. The wheat acreage is higher by more than two million hectares with states such as Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh reporting higher coverage.

The process of grain formation is set to begin in the early planted varieties.

Prolonged foggy and cloudy weather condition at this stage is seen as a concern.

The crop needs sunshine at this stage, said Indu Sharma, Director at the Karnal-based Directorate of Wheat Research.

Though outbreak of yellow rust – a fungal disease was reported in Jammu & Kashmir, Haryana and Punjab, it is kept under check. “The availability of fungicides has helped us to keep yellow rust under check,” Sharma said.

If the weather condition is conducive and there’s no major outbreak of any disease, wheat output could touch 100 million tonnes this year, she added.

## **Pulses coverage**

Apart from wheat, the acreage under gram has also touched a new high, exceeding 101 million hectares. Except for urad, the acreage under pulses such as field pea and moong are higher than last year. The total area under pulses is higher by 12 lh at 156.7 lh.

The acreage under coarse cereals such as maize and barley is also higher this year. However, jowar acreage is lower than last year mainly on account of decline in Maharashtra.

The area under oilseeds has so far touched 89 lh, about three lh more than last year. The acreage under rapeseed mustard stood at 71.16 lh, higher than last year, but lower than the record acreage of 72.22 lh witnessed in 2010-11.

The acreages of groundnut and sunflower are marginally lower than last year, while that of safflower and sesame were higher than last year.

## **Mixed trend at Kochi tea sale**

### **Kochi :**

A mixed trend prevailed at the Kochi Tea auction this week with prices quoting lower for some varieties. In sale number 5, the quantity on offer in CTC dust grades was 11,24,500 kg.

With demand being fair, the market was Rs. 3-5 lower and sometimes more.

However, the decline in price was less for good liquoring teas, which came under the selection of AVT. Low medium and plainer teas were steady to firm and sometimes dearer, especially the blacker varieties.

The arrival was low for orthodox varieties at 9,500 kg. The market witnessed heavy withdrawals. Small quantities sold were absorbed by exporters.

In the best CTC dusts, PD varieties quoted Rs. 93/114, RD grades fetched Rs. 102/127, SRD ruled at Rs.115/140 and SFD stood at Rs. 120/152.

The quantity on offer in orthodox leaf grades was 168,500 kg. The market for Nilgiri smaller broken was steady to firm and sometimes dearer following quality.

### **Heavy withdrawals**

Bolder broken and whole leaf was irregular and lower and witnessed heavy withdrawals. Corresponding fannings appreciated in value. The quantity on offer in CTC grades was 53,000 kg. The market for good liquoring teas was steady to dearer, while others were irregular and lower.

In the dust varieties, Monica SFD quoted the best prices of Rs. 153 followed by both Sholayar SFD and Mayura SFD at Rs. 146 each.

In the leaf grades, Pascoes Hyson Green Tea fetched the best prices of Rs. 286 followed by Chamraj FOP at Rs. 284.

## **Coconut oil manufacturers stop**

### **Erode :**

#### **COPRA CRUSHING HALTED ON POOR SALES**

Coconut oil manufacturers have stopped crushing copra because of poor sales. However, coconut oil prices continue to zoom. “For the last couple of days, prices have increased and on Friday, it was sold at Rs. 1,680 for 15 kg loose pack ( Rs. 112/kg). But very little quantity was sold as buyers are expecting prices to drop in the next 2-3 days. Coconut oil crushers have stopped crushing because of poor sales,” said R. M. Palanisamy, an oil trader in Erode. Copra prices increased to Rs. 7,800-8,000 a quintal in the open market. In the Gobichettipalayam Regulated Marketing Committee, copra was sold at Rs. 7,683-8,193 and the 11.5 tonnes that arrived were sold. At the Avalpoondurai Regulated Market Committee, the first quality was sold at Rs. 7,605-7,925 , the second quality at Rs. 5,765-7,775 a quintal.

## **Turmeric gleams on export enquiries, N. India orders**

### **Erode :**

Turmeric prices increased by over Rs. 500 a quintal for almost all varieties on Friday following export enquiries from countries such as Malaysia and UAE, and orders from North India have

“Due to heavy demand for the root variety in North India and also from other countries, prices increased sharply. The hybrid root increased by Rs. 650 a quintal to Rs. 7,044 a quintal. Turmeric exporters are getting good orders for the root variety from countries such as Malaysia, Sri Lanka and UAE. So, they are buying stocks that have arrived,” said a trader.

RKV Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association, said some traders have received upcountry orders for the root variety and they are buying both varieties for a high price. Turmeric exporters having orders from Sri Lanka and Malaysia are expecting more orders. Due to the arrival of quality produce, prices of both varieties of turmeric increased. Prices in the futures market have

been ruling stable for the last couple of days. If the prices rise in the futures market, they could rise in the spot markets too.

Traders bought all the 200 bags of the new crop by quoting a higher price on Friday. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales yard (new crop), the finger variety was sold at Rs. 5,695-6,714 a quintal and root variety at Rs. 5,499-6,714.

The finger variety (old crop) was sold at Rs. 4,868-6,897 and root variety Rs. 4,699-6,699.

Salem hybrid : The finger variety fetched Rs. 6,689-7,599 and the root variety Rs. 5,866-7,044. Of the 1,217 bags that arrived, 598 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs. 5,969-6,889, the root variety at Rs.5,834-6,789. Of the 1,169 bags on offer, 1,113 were traded.

At the Erode Co-operative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs. 5,731-6,929 and root variety Rs. 5,347-6,899. Out of the 715 bags put up for sale, 686 were picked up.

## Business Standard

### India's agri export to Pak soars ahead of trade pact

As [Pakistan](#) plans to expand [trade ties](#) with India, agriculture exports from India to that country have more than doubled in the past year, on higher demand for commodities such as pulses and vegetables.

Export of agriculture products from India has been a major concern for the farm lobby in Pakistan, which fears abolishing trade barriers with India would hurt domestic farmers.

According to Agricultural and [Processed Food](#) Products Export Development Authority data, India's agriculture export to Pakistan stood at \$146 million



between April and October 2013, nearly 97 per cent higher than the export in the same period last year. In terms of quantity too, exports increased threefold or nearly 198 per cent.

The jump in exports can be attributed to a stellar rise in vegetable exports (520 per cent in dollar and 477 per cent in value terms), and considerable rise in export of pulses (56 per cent in dollar terms and 156 per cent in quantity) and dairy products (170 per cent in value and 147 per cent in quantity terms).

This apart, this year, India also exported onions worth \$17 million (73,140 million tonnes) till October last year, against \$8.90 million (38,823 million tonnes) for the whole of 2012-13. While India granted most favoured nation status to Pakistan in 1996, it recently indicated further opening up of its market on a reciprocal basis.

Recently, the two countries also agreed to establish reciprocal non-discriminatory market access (NDMA) by February-end. At present, Pakistan maintains a negative list of nearly 1,209 items, which will be abolished under the NDMA.

INDIA'S AGRI EXPORT TO PAKISTAN	2012-13	2013-14	Despite efforts to boost trade relations, border skirmishes have often played a spoilsport. For example, recently, Pakistan-occupied Kashmir authorities suspended both trade and travel on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad route after the arrest of a Pakistani driver on the Indian side.
	(April-Oct)	(April-Oct)	
Total export (\$ mn)	74	146.97	
Total export	94,867	2,83,416	
Pulses (\$ mn)	28	44	
Pulses	26,342	67,571	
Other fresh vegetables (\$mn)	6.66	41	
Other fresh vegetables	18,324	105,790	
Onion (\$ million)	-	17.65	
Onion	-	73,140	

Source : APEDA

In 2012-13, India's total trade with Pakistan stood at nearly \$2,606 million — a growth of nearly 34 per cent over the previous year. Of this, the share of India's export to Pakistan was \$2,064 million, while import was \$541 million.

India imports fruits, onions and shrimps, among other things, from Pakistan.

## Tea production rises 6.5 per cent in 2013

Country's [tea production](#) increased by 6.5 per cent to 1,200 million kg in 2013, against 1,126.33 million kg a year ago, a report by the [Indian Tea Association](#) (ITA) has said. Total production of tea in the northern part of the country (Assam and West Bengal) stood at 957.44 million kg in 2013 as against 886.95 million kg in the previous year, it said.

In southern region, the production stood at 242.60 million kg in 2013, as compared with 239.38 million kg a year earlier, the report added. At the Kolkata auction, the average price increased to Rs 157.65 per kg in 2013 as compared to Rs 149.55 per kg in 2012. Prices at the other auction centres like Guwahati and Cochin had also increased during 2013, it said.

Exports during the nine-month period from January to September 2013 had also seen an increase of 5 per cent at 147 million kg as against 140.2 million kg in 2012, the report said.

CIS countries had imported maximum of 39.88 million kg of Indian tea during January to September 2013, followed by Iran at 16.47 million kg, Pakistan 12.35 million kg and the US 10.29 million kg, among other countries, it added.



## *Farmers' Loan Waiver Scheme Hits Fraud Hurdle*

A scheme introduced five years ago to benefit impoverished farmers pushed to the brink of starvation is coming back to haunt the UPA government as details of a massive fraud emerge.

The farmer's loan waiver scheme, once touted a trump card for the UPA government, has become a source of embarrassment, mere months before the

general elections. The government has admitted massive fraud, irregularities and tampering of data by officials in the `65,000-crore welfare project.

The government recently told the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) that action will be taken against those found guilty of pushing tampered and ineligible farmers' lists and so far it has initiated 3,679 cases against erring babus responsible for irregularities to the tune of `230 crore. The PAC report, which examined the Comptroller & Auditor General's (CAG) report on Debt Relief Scheme in January 2014, will be tabled in the coming session of Parliament.

Admitting massive irregularities before PAC, Department of Financial Services said; "Now the fact is somebody who is not eligible got it and somebody who is eligible did not get it or alternatively there was a case of tampering or alternation. This could not happen unless the bank staff concerned made a mistake and a mistake which was apparent on the face of it."

The loan waiver scheme was initiated by the UPA government in 2008 to write off bank loans of 3.69 crore small and marginal farmers in 35 states and Union territories. Approximately 60 lakh other farmers were offered debt relief in form of waiver of 25 per cent of the eligible amount on condition that the farmer would pay the remaining 75 per cent under a one- time settlement scheme.

The Department of Financial Services under Ministry of Finance had appointed Reserve Bank of India and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) as nodal agencies to monitor the implementation of the scheme in respect of the respective banks under their due control, including rural banks and cooperative societies. Of the total beneficiaries, 1.85 crore owed money to government-owned banks and 1.88 crore to lending institutions under NABARD. No money changed hands or was paid to beneficiaries. The implementing agencies simply wrote off the dues and claimed reimbursement from the government.

Responding to PAC concerns about largescale fraud, the government said in at least 301 cases, it has detected tampering of records of beneficiary farmers and five FIRs were lodged. In 449 cases, responsibilities have been fixed by the lending institutions. The probe indicated funds were also misused in writing off personal, vehicle loan, purchase of land and loan for shops in connivance with branch officials, who were supposed to help the farmers suffering from heavy debt burden. According to sources, PAC also flagged the case of over 21,000 accounts which have no acknowledgement from farmers or any other proof indicating shoddy implementation of the scheme.

“Large number of eligible farmers might have been eventually deprived of benefits of the scheme due to perfunctory approach and the scheme could not achieve the intended goals,” PAC observed, terming the scheme a failure.

Sources said an official of Department of Financial Services who recently deposed before the committee did not dispute all these irregularities. “The issues largely raised by the CAG were correct. I do not think that government has any intention of disputing the veracity of the points raised by CAG,” the official told the PAC.

In a written note to PAC, Department of Financial Services gave details of action taken by the authorities to recover funds. It said the recovery of `2.38 crore has been made in 908 cases where benefits were granted to ineligible beneficiaries. In addition, recoveries have been made amounting to `3.61 crore in 1,358 cases where excess benefits were extended to the beneficiaries. Although, the amount recovered so far is too small comparing the massive irregularities, government has assured re-verification of entire 34, 277 branches under RBI and over 9,000 under NABARD.

The panel is understood to have slammed the government’s myopic approach in conceiving and implementing a scheme involving financial concessions to the tune of more than `65,000 crore, adding that the vital lists of intended beneficiaries were prepared in a cavalier manner as these were replete with mistakes, leading to serious financial lapses.

“The PAC has asked the government to submit an action taken report, fixing the responsibilities of those responsible for irregularities by June 2014. Government further assured the PAC that it was committed to re-examine every single case and take corrective action. But, considering the very large number of beneficiaries, this is going to take some time,” a source said.