

Indigenous crop varieties on display



A local variety brinjal (left) from Linemedu and (right) a mesta (sikappu pulichai) that were displayed at an exhibition of indigenous crop varieties organised by the KVK in Salem. - PHOTO: P. GOUTHAM.



23 samples brought by farmers in Salem identified as new varieties

SALEM, February 14, 2014: Farmers of this district brought more than 50 indigenous crop varieties for display at the one day exhibition of such varieties, which was organised by the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), attached to the Tamil Nadu Agriculture University (TNAU) at Sandhiyur, on Wednesday. This was organised as part of a workshop on Protection of Plant Varieties (PPV) and Farmer's Rights Act (FRA), 2001. N. Sriram, of the KVK who organised the event, told *The Hindu* that these varieties were scrutinised by a panel of experts from TNAU.

"It was done in the presence of farmers who brought them. During scrutiny 23 varieties brought by six farmers and farmers clubs were identified as new varieties that were yet to be documented", the organiser said.

Documentation

He added that the farmers were informed at once if the varieties brought by them were yet to be documented, or if they were already documented as an indigenous variety.

"Some varieties had their origin in other parts of the state. Some of the paddy varieties were already documented by farmers in Tanjore and Tiruchi", he added.

The new varieties documented in the names of the farmers here were: Salem Sanna, a paddy variety, and Naatu Thenai from Nilavarapatty village; Sikappu pulichai (Mesta) and Bottle gourd from Puthur Agraharam; Ribbed gourd, Lady's finger, Bitter gourd, Black night shade (manathakali), Pumpkin (oblong), Pumpkin (Round), Bottle gourd and Brinjal from Linemedu.

Mochai and Horse gram from Pukkampatti village near Mecheri; Chilli, Varagu, red and brown Thenai, Cumbu, Horse gram and Naripayaru from Kolnaickenpatty near Mettur; Yam and Elephant foot yam from Thalaivasal.

Free of cost

Dr. Sriram said that these varieties would be sent for a crop specific Distinctness, Uniformity and Stability (DUS) test.

"There are DUS centres registered under the PPV and FRA Act across the country to conduct the test for specific crop varieties, free of cost. The centre at TNAU, in Coimbatore, has been recognised to test paddy and groundnut", he said.

"The 23 documented samples will be tested in those centres for one crop cycle. The harvested produce will then be tested for its uniqueness such as the ability to withstand drought and maintaining uniform productivity. On completion of these procedures, the farmers who documented it will be given credit for preserving the variety", he added.

Farmers nurse hopes to raise second crop



ERODE, February 14, 2014 - Farmers of Erode district have called upon the State Government for release of water from the dams in The Nilgiris district into the Bhavani Sagar Dam so as to raise second crop.

On Thursday, a delegation of farmers led by the president of Keel Bhavani Paasana Kootamaippu P. Kasiannan on Thursday

submitted a petition to the Public Works Minister O. Paneerselvam requesting release of water from the Upper Bhavani, Pykara and other dams where, the farmers said, the combined storage exceeds 12 tmc feet water.

The Public Works Department stopped letting water into the LBP (Lower Bhavani Project) canal during the second week of January towards the end of the harvest of paddy crop.

Thanks to abundant monsoon rain in The Nilgiris district, water was released into the LBP canal last August for cultivation of 1,03,500 acres in Erode, Tiruppur, and Karur districts.

The dam level that stood at 85.30 feet with storage of 18,663 mcft (million cubic feet) at the time of water release has now come down to 42.77 feet, and the storage has dropped to 2,925 MCFT. Meeting drinking water needs for the summer months is a priority, according to PWD officials.

Farmers, on their part, reason out that by releasing water from the dams in The Nilgiris into the Bhavani Sagar Dam, the State Government will be fulfilling the directive of the Cauvery Tribunal for releasing water for the second crop. A representative of the delegation said a request for release of at least 8 TMC feet water from other reservoirs into the Bhavani Sagar Dam has been made to the Government.

Farmers from the district have also approached the High Court paralelly to espouse their cause.

Boon for farmers



Big day:Water being released from the Singoor project to a canal after it was formally inaugurated by Deputy Chief Minister C. Damodar Rajanarasimha, in Medak district on Thursday.- PHOTO: MOHD ARIF

Eco-friendly tips for farmers



Secretary of Andhra Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ch.R.K. Prasad speaking at a seminar on Organic Farming organised on chamber hall premises in Vijayawada on Thursday for farmers. —Photo: Ch.Vijaya Bhaskar

An innovation that offers double bonanza for paddy farmers

HYDERABAD, February 14, 2014 - Good news for paddy farmers! They can now doubly benefit by growing an additional crop without incurring extra cost, apart from contributing to the nation's fuel needs.

A student of Ph.D at the Indian Institute of Sciences (IISc), Bangalore, has devised a technique to grow paddy along with an oil-producing algae, which helps farmers earn additional income.

Termed 'Algiculture', it is a sustainable method of algae cultivation in paddy fields. The interesting part is that it requires no additional land, water or nutrients. "Algiculture has the potential to benefit farming, especially in semi-arid regions, by offering an opportunity to farmers to attempt multiple-cropping and simultaneous generation of algal bio-fuel," says Abitha, the student.

While paddy grows to be harvested, the new method allows farmers to raise an additional 100 kg algae in a hectare. In two months, it produces nearly six tonnes of algae that can be used as bio-fuel, as algae is looked upon as a source of renewable bio-fuel.

Abitha's path-breaking project was the second runner-up at the innovation competition, 'Power of Shunya : Challenge for Zero', organised by DuPont. She teamed up with Vikas Gujral from Indian School of Business (ISB), Hyderabad, to win the Rs. 2.5 lakh prize money. In the new technique, algae rise as floating 'flocs' that are harvested every afternoon and sent for drying, oil extraction and cattle feed supplement. The dung is finally deposited in the paddy field for higher sustainability.

Abitha has successfully completed a pilot project at Tumkur in Karnataka. "Following its success, all farmers in the area are now keen to follow it, as it is not only financially beneficial but also enriches their land with nutrients."

According to her, paddy is cultivated in 44 million hectares in the country, and even if 17 per cent of it is used for 'algiculture', India's fuel needs can be met with no additional energy input.

Abitha, a student of Ph.D at the Indian Institute of Sciences, Bangalore, has devised a new technique, termed 'Algiculture', to grow paddy along with an oil-producing algae, which helps farmers earn additional income

Agriculture, horticulture now fully tax-free in J&K

JAMMU, February 14, 2014 - Proposing no fresh taxes in a populist budget for 2014-15, Jammu and Kashmir Finance Minister Abdul Rahim Rather on Thursday declared the State's agriculture and horticulture sectors fully tax-free for the next financial year.

"Most of the agriculture and horticulture related items were already tax-free. Yet we used to charge a toll tax of Rs. 65 per quintal on entry on all fertilisers followed by Valued Added Tax at the rate of 5 per cent of the price. We import hundreds of thousands of quintals of fertilisers every year. All these items have been fully exempted from all taxes," Mr. Rather said at a news conference after presenting a 'zero-deficit' budget in the Legislative Assembly. He elaborated that over 5 lakh families associated with the horticulture sector would benefit as all fertilisers, insecticides, pesticides and other chemicals and machinery had been removed from the list of the taxable items.

'Not in view of elections'

He asserted that there would be no change in the existing levy structure as no fresh taxes had been proposed in the budget. "But, this is not in view of the elections ahead. We just don't want to burden the people with any more taxes," he added.

In another significant development, Mr. Rather declared to have written off the red balance worth more than 2,000 cumulative loans lifted from the government and the interest accrued thereon — of all the deficit-riddled Public Sector Undertaking (PSUs). He suggested that these PSUs, which have been recommended for total closure by two government committees in the last 15 years, should devise a self-sustaining mechanism without relying on the government's budgetary support every year any more.

The Anmol Beti scheme, currently operational in 97 community development blocks, has been extended to all the Below Poverty Line (BPL) families throughout the State. The government deposits Rs. 5,000 in the bank account of the first girl child of a BPL family on her admission in the 11th standard. Mr. Rather announced 100 per cent increase in the largesse.

He said growth rate of 5.88 per cent had been achieved in 2013-14 as against the national rate of 4.88 per cent in the GDP. He put the State's total estimated income at Rs. 43,543 crore. The same would be the total expenditure, he said.

Mr Rather said the State's tax revenue had increased from Rs. 2,683 crore in 2008-09 to Rs. 6,600 crore in 2013-14. Non-tax revenue had jumped up from Rs. 837 crore to Rs. 2,160 crore.

☐ ***The red balance worth more than 2,000 cumulative loans lifted from the State government***

☐ ***Hundred per cent increase in the government's share in Anmol Beti scheme***

Sanjaynagar goes organic

Horticulture department's 'Jaivik Mall' will offer 374 items



The retail outlet of Jaivik Krishik Society, the second one in Bangalore, which was inaugurated on Thursday.— Photo: K. Gopinathan

BANGALORE, February 14, 2014 - A variety of cereals, pulses, minor millets, spices, flours, vegetables, fresh and dried herbs are among 374 organic products to be sold at Jaivik Mall in AECS Layout,

Sanjaynagar.

The mall was inaugurated on Thursday by Minister for Agriculture Krishna Byre Gowda. It is the second retail outlet of Jaivik Krishik Society, which is part of the Department of Horticulture. The first one is at Lalbagh.

The department plans to take the number of such outlets to six by 2014-end. It will open one in Banashankari and another in Nandini Layout by February-end, in defunct HOPCOMS outlets.

Apart from this, Organic Corners will be opened in select HOPCOMS outlets to sell organic products.

Funds for farming

After inaugurating the outlet, Mr. Gowda said the government was committed to promoting organic farming, for which it had set aside Rs. 36 crore.

"There is greater awareness among people about the benefits of organic produce. The government will focus on promoting minor millets that have several health benefits.

Increased demand will encourage farmers to cultivate minor millets," he said.

K. Ramakrishnappa, additional director in the department and president of the society, said, demand for organic food was increasing. "Though organic products are a little expensive compared to non-organic ones, the health benefits are greater, not to mention the environmental benefits as well."

The department was promoting organic terrace and kitchen gardening. As part of this, it hoped to train 40,000 people, he said.

Processing centre

Besides, a grading, packing and processing centre for organic products is being established at a cost of Rs. 1 crore at Tippegondanahalli, Mr. Ramakrishnappa added.

Maize centres to operate till Feb. 28

CHITRADURGA, February 14, 2014 - As per State government orders, the district administration has decided to keep all the three maize procurement centres open till the end of February so that the farmers can sell their maize without any hurdles. Deputy Commissioner V.P. Ikkeri has stated that the farmers can sell any quantity of maize grown in their fields by proving necessary documents to the officers at the procurement centres. Initially, the government had decided ordered to purchase only 75 quintals of maize per farmer, but the order was withdrawn based on the agitations launched by the farmers in these centres.

'Consumption of millets controls diabetes'

SANGAREDDY, February 14, 2014 - In view of rising temperatures, millet crops would get importance in cultivation. As millets help in keeping the health of people in good condition, the government is according great importance to it. As part of encouraging millet crops, the Karnataka government has already introduced them in the PDS.

Addressing farmers during the concluding programme of Mobile Bio Diversity festival held at Machannoor in Jarasangam mandal of Medak district on Thursday, Deccan Development Society (DDS) director V. Rukmini Rao said that according to a report recently published, consumption of millets controls diabetes.

C.S. Ramalakshmi, Commissioner, Sericulture, said there was a need to include millets in Anganwadi food supplement as it would improve the health of children and pregnant mothers. "You are extending great service to the nation by cultivating 16 varieties of crops and keeping seed of about 60 varieties," she said. Chiranjeevi Chowdary, Commissioner, Women and Child Welfare, promised to introduce millets in some Anganwadi centres on pilot basis. A pilot programme will commence in Srikakulam district shortly, he added.

On this occasion, six women farmers – Begari Sangita, Begari Eeramma, Nagamma, Begari Manemma, Vezote – U Douno (Nagaland) and Marie Gaveloux (France) - were felicitated.

Mobile Bio Diversity festival concludes at Machannoor in Jarasangam mandal of Medak district

Rs.50-crore cotton mission

CHENNAI, February 14, 2014 - The government will launch a Rs.50-crore Tamil Nadu Cotton Cultivation Mission to boost the cotton production in the State, said Finance Minister O. Panneerselvam in his budget speech on Thursday.

The Minister said cotton was cultivated on 3.34 lakh acres with a production of four lakh bales. But all the 1,948 spinning mills in the State required 110 lakh bales per year. Under the mission, at least 3.70 lakh acres will be brought under cotton cultivation in 2014-15 and ultimately the cultivation will be expanded to 6 lakh acres in the next five years. He said as part of the government's efforts to improve on-farm productivity and farmer's income, various sub-projects would be taken up under the National Agriculture Development Programme (NADP) at a cost of Rs. 323 crore. Moreover, the crop loan target for the co-operatives would be enhanced to an unprecedented level of Rs. 5,000 crore. The allocation for crop insurance was Rs 242.54 crore. Earlier, the DMK and its allies staged a walkout from the House alleging that the time of tabling the budget was changed without consulting them.

SIMA hails it

Special Correspondent from Coimbatore writes:

The Southern India Mills' Association (SIMA), welcoming the announcement, it would enable the State to be self-sufficient in cotton.

The SIMA chairman, T. Rajkumar, said that textile mills in the State needed over 100 lakh bales a year. However, just five lakh bales of cotton were produced and the mills procured the rest from other States. The mills were paying high freight costs to transport cotton from other States.

Grow your veggies at home

UAS-B pilot project will show how to use kitchen waste



For green thumbs: Seedlings of vegetables and plants that can be easily grown in limited spaces will be made available to the public. — File Photo: Sampath Kumar G.P.

BANGALORE, February 14, 2014 - The University of Agricultural Sciences-Bangalore (UAS-B) is set to start a pilot

project to help citizens of the Garden City grow their own vegetables in whatever little space they have at home or in terrace gardens.

This green project envisages the use of used water and kitchen waste as compost. Announcing this at a press conference here on Wednesday, UAS-B Vice-Chancellor K. Narayana Gowda said the project would be taken up on an experimental basis by April at a ward in each of the 17 Assembly constituencies under the Bangalore Urban region. The wards to be included under the project would be finalised by the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), he said.

The project, which would be implemented in association with the BBMP, the Horticulture Department and chosen nationalised banks, is a follow-up of the two-day Urban Krishi Mela held by the UAS-B in October 2013 to motivate people to grow their own vegetables.

Jobs for youth

Under the pilot project, the university would identify four to five unemployed youth in each ward and train them on the methods of raising quality vegetable seedlings. The BBMP would give them space of about 100 ft X 100 ft in each ward to set up a nursery under the supervision of the university and with the help of bank loan.

These seedlings would then be made available to the public at affordable cost. The idea was to ensure that vegetable seedlings are available to residents near their residences, he said, while observing that several people had shunned the idea of growing vegetables mainly because of the fact that seedlings were not readily available.

The vegetables, which are used in everyday food and can be grown easily with limited water, such as tomato, chillies, radish and greens would be promoted under this project, Prof. Gowda said.

The highlight of the project is that it would make use of the wet waste generated by each house as compost for the vegetables. The main idea was to reduce the burden of garbage on the city, he said while pointing out that presently the BBMP was spending about Rs. 400 crore a year on garbage disposal.

According to him, people can get nutritious and fresh as well as organic vegetables through this method if they spend a few minutes a day on managing the plants.

The university hopes to extend the project to the entire city in about a year from now, he said.

The pilot project also wants to target the huge space available on the premises of educational institutions, corporate houses and vacant sites.

500 schools in Palakkad to get poultry clubs

PALAKKAD, February 14, 2014 - District panchayat president T.N. Khandamuthan inaugurated a poultry club scheme for schools at Government Moyan Girls High School here on Thursday.

Mr. Khandamuthan said that such clubs would be formed in 500 schools in the district to encourage students take up food production at a young age.

Five chickens

Five chickens each would be distributed free of cost to 100 select students under the scheme.

The scheme was presented at the meeting by S. Venugopal, Deputy Director of Animal Husbandry Department.

The meeting was presided over by K.E. Haneefa, Development standing committee chairman of the district panchayat.

Cattle feed plant in Idukki

KATTAPPANA, February 14, 2014 - Agriculture Minister K.P. Mohanan will lay the foundation stone for the Kerala Feeds Ltd's (KFL) hi-tech cattle feed plant at Arieezha near Thodupuzh on Friday. The plant will be constructed at a cost of Rs.66.6 crore. KFL has similar feed production units in Kollam, Irinjalakuda and Kozhikkode. The plant is being set up at the 10-acre land in Manakkad, Ani S Das, Managing Director, KFL, told media persons at Thodupuzha.— A Correspondent

Water level

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Thursday stood at 63.85 feet. The dam had an inflow of 74.77 cusecs and 604.75 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam. The water level in Manimuthar dam stood at 79.98 feet. The dam had an inflow of 13 cusecs and 530 cusecs of water was discharged.

Kanyakumari

The water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 15.40 feet, 45.30 feet in Perunchani and 6.23 feet in Chittar 1.

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 51.13 feet on Thursday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 135 cusecs and the discharge 600 cusecs.

The water level in Periyar dam stood at 110.80 feet (the permissible level is 136 feet) on Thursday with no inflow and a discharge of 105 cusecs. The level in Vaigai dam was 34.45 feet (total level is 71 feet) with an inflow of 32 cusecs and a discharge of 40 cusecs. The combined storage in Periyar credit was 914 mcft. There was no rainfall recorded during the 24 hours ending at 8.30 a.m. on Thursday, PWD officials here said.

TNAU awards faculty who have authored books

'Need effective business models to market books'



R. Rabindran, Registrar of TNAU (second left), handing over a merit certificate to one of the 12 awardees honoured by the university for maximum number of publications in their respective disciplines, in Coimbatore on Thursday. - Photo:M.Periasamy.

COIMBATORE, February 14, 2014 - Tamil Nadu Agricultural University gave away merit certificates to 12 faculty members

who have published the maximum number of standard books in their respective disciplines here on Thursday.

The event, held as part of the valediction of the three-day book fair of the university, was organised to appreciate the scientists for their contribution to the printed content in agriculture and allied fields.

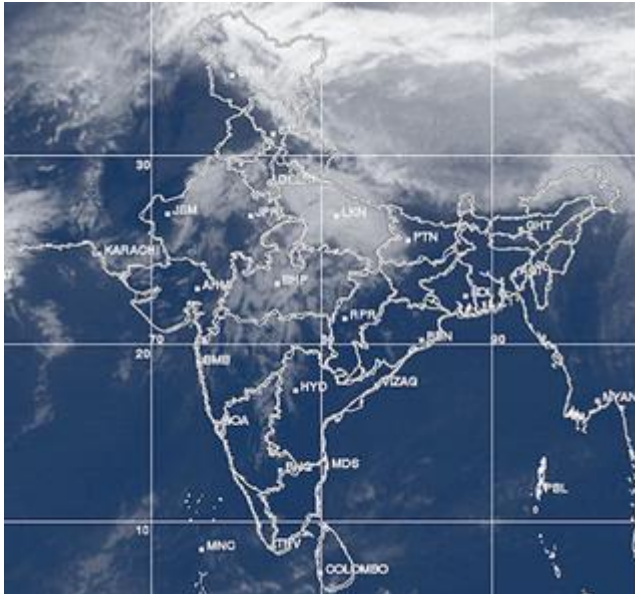
R. Rabindran, Registrar of TNAU, gave away the certificates to N. Dhandapani, Professor, Agricultural Entomology, P. Muthukrishnan, Professor, Agronomy, C. Karthikeyan, Professor, Agricultural Extension, S. Kamaraj, Professor, Bio-Energy, P. Jayakumar, Professor, Crop Physiology, V. Ponnuswami, Professor, Horticulture, M. Gunasekaran, Professor, Plant Breeding and Genetics, S. Manimegalai, Professor, Sericulture, G. Vanitha, Assistant Professor, Computer Science, K. Iyanar, Assistant Professor, Forage Crops, M. Suganthy, Assistant Professor, Medicinal and Aromatic Crops, and M. Karthikeyan, Assistant Professor, Plant Pathology.

Publishers, who attended the event, called for more linkages and co-ordination with the university to enable publishing curriculum based textbooks in various disciplines of agriculture.

Depending upon the marketability of books, publishers could maintain the printing order. They also said that they were interested in taking up publication of quality materials based on expert reviews.

The faculty authors called for effective business models to market books among students. They urged the publishers to fix nominal price for books to enable students purchase the same. It was agreed upon that the author and publisher should follow ethical practices to publish quality content.

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs. Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on February 13.

ANDHRA PRADESH

Anantapur	37	21	0	0
Arogyavaram	33	17	0	0
Bapatla	30	21	0	0
Calingapatnam	32	21	0	0
Gannavaram	33	20	0	0
Hanamkonda	33	17	0	0
Hyderabad AP	32	20	0	0
Kakinada	33	20	0	1
Khammam	32	20	0	0
Kavali	31	19	0	2
Kurnool	35	19	0	0
Mahabubnagar	31	19	0	0
Machilipatnam	31	21	0	0
Narasapur	32	21	0	0
Nellore	32	22	0	tr
Nizamabad	33	22	0	0
Ongole	32	20	0	2
Ramagundam	32	20	0	0
Tirupathi AP	35	18	0	1
Tuni	34	21	0	0
Vizag AP	34	19	0	3
Vizag	31	21	0	19

KARNATAKA

Agumbe	29	14	0	0
Bangalore AP	30	17	0	0
Bangalore	32	19	0	0
Bagalkote	33	15	0	0
Belgaum AP	33	12	0	0
Bellary	33	19	0	0
Bijapur	32	16	0	0
Chitradurga	32	19	0	0
Chickmagalur	30	13	0	0
Chintamani	31	15	0	0
Gadag	32	18	0	0

Gulbarga	34	20	0	0
Hassan	31	13	0	0
Honavar	31	20	0	0
Karwar	32	20	0	0
Madikeri	24	13	0	5
Mangalore AP	32	21	0	0
Mysore	32	19	0	0
Mandya	32	20	0	0
Panambur	33	23	0	0
Raichur	34	21	0	0
Shirali	31	19	0	0
KERALA				
Alappuzha	33	23	0	1
Kannur	34	24	1	5
Kochi AP	32	23	0	0
Kottayam	33	24	0	0
Kozhikode	31	23	0	tr
Punalur	35	19	0	1
Thiruvanantha				
-puram AP	31	23	0	140
Thiruvanantha				
-puram City	33	23	0	45
Vellanikkara	29	23	tr	0
TAMIL NADU				
Adiramapattinam	31	20	0	12
Chennai	31	22	0	tr
Chennai AP	31	20	0	1
Coimbatore AP	32	21	0	0
Coonoor	21	14	0	12
Cuddalore	32	20	0	tr
Dharmapuri	33	18	0	0
Kanyakumari	30	22	0	85
Karaikal	30	22	0	7
Kodaikanal	20	10	0	17
Madurai AP	33	21	0	10
Nagapattinam	31	23	0	7
Palayamkottai	34	21	0	31
Pamban	30	22	0	63
Parangipettai	31	21	0	6
Puducherry	31	20	0	1
Salem	33	20	0	0
Thanjavur	33	23	0	1
Tiruchi AP	34	20	0	tr
Tirupattur	34	17	0	0
Tiruttani	33	18	0	2
Tondi	29	22	0	43
Tuticorin	30	21	0	21
Ooty	19	7	0	0
Valparai	27	11	0	12
Vellore	32	20	0	1
LAKSHADWEEP				
Amini Divi	33	25	0	68
Minicoy	32	23	0	12
OTHER STATIONS				
Kolkata (Alipore)	28	16	0	0
Mumbai	27	20	0	1
New Delhi	21	6	0	11

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (trace) and total rainfall in mm since January 01, 2014.

DRY WEATHER

IN A.P.

CHENNAI: ISOLATED RAINFALL OCCURRED OVER KERALA. MAINLY DRY WEATHER PREVAILED OVER SOUTH INTERIOR KARNATAKA AND DRY WEATHER PREVAILED OVER TAMIL NADU, ANDHRAPRADESH, LAKSHADWEEP, COASTAL AND NORTH INTERIOR KARNATAKA.

TALIPARAMPA (KANNUR DT) AND KUNNAMKULAM (THRISSUR DT) RECORDED 1 CENTIMETRE RAINFALL EACH. THE MINIMUM TEMPERATURE ROSE APPRECIABLY AT A FEW PLACES OVER TELANGANA, AT ONE OR TWO PLACES OVER RAYALASEEMA, NORTH INTERIOR KARNATAKA, ROSE AT A FEW PLACES OVER NORTH INTERIOR KARNATAKA, AT ONE OR TWO PLACES OVER NORTH TAMIL NADU, SOUTH INTERIOR KARNATAKA AND CHANGED LITTLE ELSEWHERE OVER THE REGION. THEY WERE APPRECIABLY BELOW NORMAL AT A FEW PLACES OVER NORTH INTERIOR KARNATAKA, BELOW NORMAL AT A FEW PLACES OVER TAMIL NADU, NORTH INTERIOR KARNATAKA, AT ONE OR TWO PLACES OVER COASTAL ANDHRA PRADESH, RAYALASEEMA, MARKEDLY ABOVE NORMAL AT ONE OR TWO PLACES OVER TELANGANA, ABOVE NORMAL AT ONE OR TWO PLACES OVER NORTH TAMIL NADU, SOUTH INTERIOR KARNATAKA, TELANGANA AND WERE REMAINED NORMAL OVER THE REST OF THE REGION.

FORECAST (VALID UNTIL SATURDAY MORNING): ISOLATED RAIN OR THUNDERSHOWERS MAY OCCUR OVER KERALA AND SOUTH INTERIOR KARNATAKA. DRY WEATHER WILL PREVAIL OVER TAMIL NADU, PUDUCHERRY, LAKSHADWEEP, ANDHRA PRADESH, COASTAL AND NORTH INTERIOR KARNATAKA.

hindustantimes

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Friday, Feb 14

Max 30° | Min 21°

Rain: NO

Humidity: 0

Wind: 0

Sunrise: 0

Sunset: 0

Barometer: 0

Tomorrow's Forecast



Sunny

Saturday, Feb 15

Max 30° | Min 21°

Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday
Feb 16



25° | 22°

Overcast

Monday
Feb 17



24° | 22°

Overcast

Tuesday
Feb 18



23° | 22°

Overcast

Wednesday
Feb 19



25° | 22°

Overcast

Thursday
Feb 20



29° | 23°

Sunny

Farmers see red as maize centre closes

HUBLI: Farmers of Navalgund taluk staged a rasta roko on Hubli-Solapur road on Thursday, protesting against authorities for closing the maize procurement centre at Arekurahatti village.

As it is the only route between Hubli and Bijapur, traffic on this road was thrown out of gear for more than two hours due to the protest. Maize is one of the major crops of Navalgund and farmers grew it battling a drought in the region.

"Buckling under pressure from farmers, the government opened five procurement centres to purchase maize at Rs 1,310 minimum support price for a quintal in Navalgund taluk. Around 20 days ago, a procurement centre was opened in Arekurahatti village to lift maize, said farmer [Somareddy Lakkannavar](#).

"Despite problems, we managed to grow maize and it cost us around Rs 6,000 to 8,000 to grow maize on an acre. If the yield is good, we get about 30 quintals, but this time we just got only 10-12 quintal of maize because of the drought in the taluk," explained Lakkannavar. "We are upset that the process of purchasing maize through the procurement centre was stopped abruptly on Thursday. On Wednesday the process was slow. We did not get a satisfactory reply for the closure of the centre," he added.

Farmers said that if there is a rain their produce will be damaged and so the produce should be purchased immediately. Though the minimum support price fixed by the government is very less, we are not selling it through the centre, and the government should take action against the officers who have failed to expedite the process of purchasing maize from the procurement centre, farmers added.

Farmers from Karlwad, Yamanur, Padesur, Tirlapur, Kalawad and other surrounding farmers depend on this centre.

When contacted, Navalgund tahsildar K N Bhajantri said as there was no place to store the maize already procured from the farmers they closed the centre on Thursday. "We will open the centre tomorrow as we have identified two more warehouses for further storage of maize."

"We have been purchasing maize since three weeks. We procure maize about 3,000 to 4,000 quintals daily at the Arekurahatti centre and 7,000 quintals from the Navalgund centre," he added.

Agri, Infra Sectors Get Big Boost in TN's Fourth Tax-free Budget

ADVANTAGE
TN

DEPARTMENTS SUCH AS POLICE, SCHOOL EDUCATION AND ADI DRAVIDA WELFARE WILL SEE A HIKED ALLOCATION IN 2014-15, ACCORDING TO THE REVENUE-SURPLUS BUDGET PRESENTED BY FINANCE MINISTER O PANNEERSELVAM

Here's a look at some of the announcements made by the government for the coming year

₹5,186.20 Cr

Allocation for Police Department

₹681 Cr

Relief package to tackle shortage of drinking water and fodder due to deficit rainfall

₹119.98 Cr

For intra-state river linkage projects

₹5,300 Cr

Hiked allocation for food subsidy

₹3,833.62 Cr

For Cooum river project



Finance Minister O Panneerselvam presents the budget on Thursday as Chief Minister J Jayalalitha looks on | P JAWAHAR

₹1,593 Cr

For setting up Green Energy Corridors to tap wind power

₹5,400 Cr

TNEB tariff subsidy for farmers

₹2,000 Cr

For 17 road infra projects in Chennai metropolitan area

WHAT'S NEW?

Cotton Cultivation Mission which will cover 6 lakh acres in the next five years | Opening of over 100 'Amma Marundhagams' (pharmacy) on lines of 'Amma Unavagams'

Finance Minister O Panneerselvam on Thursday presented a tax-free, revenue-surplus budget for the year 2014-15. This is his fourth tax-free budget since the AIADMK government assumed office in May 2011.

While higher allocations have been made for key departments like police, school education and Adi Dravida welfare, special thrust has been given to agriculture, irrigation, industrial growth, power augmentation, child health, road safety, drinking water shortage etc.

The important schemes announced in the budget include Tamil Nadu Cotton Cultivation Mission which will cover 6 lakh acres in the next five years, setting up of Green Energy Corridors worth Rs 1,593 crore, Cooum Restoration Project worth Rs 3,833 crore, setting in motion the Chennai City Transportation System, purchase of 1,000 more buses at a cost of Rs 200 crore, opening of over 100 Amma medical dispensaries, a new initiative for child health screening and early intervention service, major combined water supply schemes in 11 districts at Rs 745.67 crore and implementation of the Tamil Nadu Sustainable Urban Development Project worth Rs 3,600 crore.

Apart from these, the State government would host a Global Investors' Meet in Chennai in October 2014 to promote the growth of industry and infrastructure in Tamil Nadu for which `100 crore has been allocated.

The finance minister said the projected revenue surplus would be Rs 289.36 crore while the fiscal deficit would be Rs 25,714.31 crore for 2014-15, 2.73 per cent of the gross state domestic product (GSDP). Panneerselvam added that the Centre had not released the Rs

THE HINDU Business Line

Coconut replanting scheme to be extended

Kochi, February 13: The Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar said on Wednesday that the Government is exploring the possibility of extending the scheme of replanting and rejuvenating coconut gardens to the entire country.

The programme was implemented on pilot basis in Kerala and Andaman and Nicobar Islands in 2009. Later, it was extended throughout Kerala.

Speaking after distributing the national awards of Coconut Development Board in New Delhi, Pawar called for intensified research to produce high yielding and early bearing varieties for optimising farmers' income.

He said that the share of India in world coconut production and productivity is 26.34 per cent and 10,736 nuts/hectare respectively, the highest. World coconut production is 63.33 billion nuts from an area of 12.26 million hectares.

Though India tops in coconut production and productivity, he said the country is lagging behind in processing, value-addition and exports. The country's position in value addition is 22 and in the case of exports, it is 25{+t}{+h}.

KV Thomas, Union Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, said that Friends of Coconut Tree training programme initiated by the Board is a role model for creating skilled "green collar jobs" in the agriculture sector, which has high potential in many crops too.

More than 22,000 unemployed youth has been trained under this programme, the Minister said adding that that the shortage of edible oil has also opened up opportunity to coconut farmers.

Govt's export subsidy sweetens sugar

Mumbai, February 13: EXPORT SUBSIDY SWEETENS SUGAR

Sugar prices improved across the country on Thursday as stockists started building fresh positions after the Government approved a Rs. 3,333/tonne subsidy to boost raw sugar exports. Prices on the Vashi spot market increased by Rs. 10-15 a quintal. Arrivals at Vashi market was around 58-60 truckloads (of 100 bags each), while local dispatches were higher at 63-64 loads. On Wednesday evening, 19-20 mills offered tenders and sold 65,000-70,000 bags at Rs. 2,510-2,630 (Rs. 2,500-2,620) for S-grade and Rs.2,660-2,830 (Rs. 2,650-2,820) for M-grade.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S-grade Rs. 2,700-2,802 (Rs. 2,702-2,792) and M-grade was Rs. 2,800-2,962 (Rs. 2,800-2,952). Naka delivery rates were: S-grade Rs. 2,680-2,750 (Rs.2,660-2,735) and M-grade Rs. 2,810-2,920 (Rs. 2,790-2,925). OUR CORRESPONDENT

Outlook turns bearish for mustard on higher supplies

Indore, February 13: OUTLOOK TURNS BEARISH FOR MUSTARD

Mustard oil ruled flat in mandis across Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat on subdued demand even as arrival is on the rise. On Thursday, mustard oil ruled at Rs. 632/10 kg, while it was quoted at Rs.625 in Neemuch and Rs. 635 in Moorena mandis. Given the rise in arrival of mustard, a sluggish trend in mustard oil will continue in the coming days, notwithstanding improved demand. Plant deliveries also ruled stable at Rs. 3,400-40 a quintal. Prices of old mustard in Indore mandis ruled at Rs. 4,000-a quintal. OUR CORRESPONDENT

Edible oils tow futures, rise; stockists stay off

Mumbai, February 13: EDIBLE OILS TOW FUTURES

The sentiment in the edible oils market firmed up on Thursday, tracking extended gain in futures despite lower physical demand. On the Bombay Commodity Exchange, groundnut oil, cotton refined oil and palmolein rose by Rs. 10, Rs. 2 and Rs. 1 for 10 kg each. Soyabean refined oil declined by Rs. 3. Towards the day's close, Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs. 595, super palmolein Rs. 615, super deluxe palmolein Rs. 635.

Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs. 593-596, soyabean refined oil Rs. 655 and sunflower refined oil Rs. 670. OUR CORRESPONDENT

Rice seen ruling at current levels next few days

Karnal, February 13: RICE TO RULE AT CURRENT LEVELS

Prices of aromatic and non-basmati rice ruled with nominal variation on Thursday. According to the trade experts, the market may continue to rule around current levels over the next few days and then it may witness an uptrend in the coming weeks. As the mercury rises, demand will increase, said Amit Kumar, a trader. In the physical market, Pusa-1121 (steam) sold at Rs. 9,200-50, while Pusa-1121 (sela) quoted at Rs. 8,150 a quintal. Pure Basmati (Raw) quoted at Rs. 12,500. Duplicate basmati (steam) sold at Rs. 7,050. Pusa-1121 (second wand) was at Rs. 7,100, Tibar at Rs. 6,150 and Dubar at Rs. 5,000 a quintal. About 4,000 bags of Pusa-1121 arrived and went for Rs. 4,200 a quintal. OUR CORRESPONDENT

Jeera falls on slack demand

Rajkot, February 13: Jeera price declined on the back of weak export and domestic demand. On spot weakness, jeera futures dropped.

National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange jeera March contracts declined Rs. 10 to Rs. 11,800 a quintal, with an open interest of 6,750 lots. April contract dropped by Rs. 52.50 to Rs. 11,715, with an open interest of 4,641 lots.

At Unjha mandi of Gujarat, arrival of jeera was 5,000-5,200 bags, while demand remained at 5,000 bags. Prices decreased by Rs. 15-20 to Rs. 2,150-2,400 per 20 kg. In Rajkot prices ruled at Rs. 2,010-2,300 per 20 kg.

Reports of demand picking up later are lending cushion to falling prices.

Spot rubber rules steady



Stretching gains Latex 60% also benefitted on lack of sellers
Kottayam, February 13: Spot rubber finished firm on Thursday. According to observers, prices improved mainly on supply concerns as there were no genuine sellers in the market even at higher levels. Transactions were at a low key.

Sheet rubber improved

to Rs. 148(Rs. 147) a kg, according to traders. The grade was quoted steady at Rs. 147 and Rs. 144 respectively by the Rubber Board and dealers.

February futures closed at Rs. 147.75 (Rs. 147.94), March at Rs. 150.70 (Rs. 150.97), April at Rs. 155.62 (Rs. 155.68), May at Rs. 158.50 (Rs. 158.06) and June at Rs. 159.55

(Rs. 159.63) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) dropped to Rs.133.73 (Rs. 133.83) at Bangkok. February futures closed at ₹219.0 (Rs. 133.97) on TOCOM.

Spot rubber rates (Rs. /kg) were : RSS-4: 148(147); RSS-5: 145.50 (145); Ungraded: 144(143); ISNR 20: 145 (144) and Latex 60%: 119.50 (118.50).

TN Budget gives cotton farming a boost

Chennai, February 13: Cotton cultivation in Tamil Nadu will get a boost with the launch of a cotton cultivation mission from 2014-15. The State Government has allocated Rs. 50 crore to bring 3.70 lakh acres under cotton next year. Over the next five years, over 6 lakh acres will be brought under the fibre, Finance Minister O. Paneerselvam said presenting the budget for 2014-15. Funds from the Cotton Technology Mission of the Government of India will be dovetailed with the State programme.

Cotton is cultivated on 3.34 lakh acres now with the output at about 4 lakh bales (of 170 kg each).

The State Government also spelt out plans to push for farm mechanisation with an allocation of Rs. 100 crore.

Potato to turn hot on Bengal blight attack



Output will be affected as disease hits crop in Purba Midnapore and Bankura districts

Reason enough Potato prices in retail markets will rule high
Kolkata, February 13: A late blight attack may impact West Bengal's potato production this year.

The West Bengal Agriculture Marketing Department had

projected nearly a 10 per cent growth in production initially to approximately 100 lakh tonnes (lt) this season.

This was against the State producing 91 lt last year.

Key producer

However, Patit Paban De, a member of West Bengal Cold Storage Association, said that production may suffer due to recent incidences of blight attack in Purba Midnapore and Bankura districts.

Purba Midnapore is a key potato producing district in West Bengal.

Though he couldn't ascertain the production loss, De feels it would be a reason enough to keep prices firm this season. State Agriculture Secretary Subrata Biswas was not available for comment.

"Bengal's potato production will be affected due to late blight attack and total production may not be 100 lt as anticipated," De said on Thursday on the sidelines of the 49th Annual General Meeting of the cold storage body here.

De said that prices of the early variety potato (farm-end) ruled between Rs. 700 and Rs. 750 a quintal, up by Rs. 50 over last week.

"Prices may go up further since production will be hit this year," he said. As a result, according to an industry expert, potato prices in retail markets will rule high.

The cold storage association has sought the State Government's intervention in availing 40 per cent capital subsidy for setting up new cold storages provided by the National Horticulture Board. West Bengal has 458 cold storages for potato as of now. About 30-odd cold storages have been added over the past year.

NHB subsidy

Rampada Paul, President of the association, said cold storage operators are not eligible for the NHB subsidy, since the preservation rates at cold storages in Bengal are controlled by the State Government.

"So, we have requested the State Government to help us avail of the subsidy provided by the Centre or offer a similar package," Paul said.

Also, the Association has demanded that a branch of the Central Potato Research Institute should be opened in the second largest potato growing State.

"Once a branch of the research institute is set up in Bengal, farmers here can get seeds grown on the regional agro-climatic condition, thereby reducing production cost," Paul said.

Tea gains steam at Kochi sale

Kochi, February 13: A good demand lifted prices of some varieties of tea in Kochi Tea auction. In sale number 7, the quantity on offer in CTC dust was 9,99,000 kg.

With better demand, the market for good liquoring teas was firm to dearer by Rs. 2-5 a kg and sometimes more especially teas which came under the selection of AVT, exporters and other blenders. The quantity on offer in orthodox grades was 8,500 kg and demand was fair. According to auctioneers Forbes, Ewart & Figgis, the market witnessed some withdrawals and tended to ease. Exporters absorbed a small quantity of orthodox dust.

In the best CTC dusts, PD grades quoted Rs. 98/116, RD varieties fetched Rs. 110/132, SRD ruled at Rs.122/142 and SFD stood at Rs. 127/152.

The quantity on offer in orthodox leaf grades was 133,000 kg. The market for select best Nilgiri broken and whole leaf witnessed some attractive prices following straight line enquiry on improved quality teas. The quantity on offer in CTC grades was 59,000 kg. In the dust varieties, both Monica SFD and Manjolai SFD quoted the best prices of Rs. 152 each followed by Kallayar SFD at Rs. 147. In leaf category, Sutton OP fetched the best prices of Rs. 376.

Business Standard

Crude palm oil futures rise 0.6% on global cues

[Crude palm oil](#) rose 0.62% to Rs 553.50 per 10 kg in futures trade today as speculators engaged in creating positions, tracking a firming trend overseas.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), crude palm oil for delivery in March gained Rs 3.40, or 0.62% to Rs 553.40 per 10 kg in business turnover of 36 lots.

Similarly, the oil for delivery in February traded higher by Rs 3, or 0.56% to Rs 552.20 per 10 kg in 35 lots.

Analysts said speculators created fresh positions on the back of a firm global trend where palm oil climbed to the highest level in six weeks, mainly led to rise in crude palm oil [prices](#) at futures trade.

Meanwhile, palm oil for April delivery rose 0.7% to 798 dollar a metric tonne, the highest level since January 2 on Malaysia Derivatives Exchange.

Cardamom rises 0.9% as demand picks up

Amid pick-up in domestic and export demand and restricted arrivals from producing regions, [cardamom prices](#) moved up by 0.92% to Rs 835 per kg in futures market today as speculators created fresh position.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), cardamom for delivery in far-month April rose by Rs 7.60, or 0.92% to Rs 835 per kg in business turnover of 66 lots.

Likewise, the spice for delivery in March moved up by Rs 7, or 0.88% to Rs 804.80 per kg in 386 lots.

Market analysts attributed the rise in cardamom futures to rising domestic and export demand against restricted arrivals from producing regions.

Potato falls by 0.4% on higher supply, low demand

[Potato](#) remained weak for the second straight day and [prices](#) shed another 0.42% to Rs 1150.50 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators offloaded positions amid higher supplies from producing regions.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), potato for delivery in far-month April fell by Rs 5.10, or

0.42% to Rs 1,150.50 per quintal in business turnover of 73 lots.

The potato for delivery in March also traded lower by Rs 3.10, or 0.26% to Rs 1,111.50 per quintal in 162 lots.

Market analysts said offloading of positions by speculators, triggered by higher supplies in mandies from producing regions mainly kept pressure on potato prices at futures trade.

Sugar surges as govt approves subsidy for raw sugar exports

[Sugar prices](#) climbed Rs 35 to Rs 2,740 per quintal in futures trading today as participants indulged in creating speculative positions after the government approved subsidy for exports of raw sugar.

However, sluggish demand from bulk consumers, limited the gains.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), sugar for delivery in February traded Rs 35, or 1.29%, higher at Rs 2,740 per quintal with an open interest of 8,000 lots.

Likewise, the sweetener for delivery in March traded Rs 24, or 0.87% higher at Rs 2,773 per quintal in 19,590 lots.

Market analysts attributed the rise in sugar prices at futures to speculative positions created by participants after the government yesterday approved a subsidy of Rs 3,333 per tonne for exports of raw sugar to boost overseas sales and help the cash-starved industry to pay arrears to sugarcane farmers.

They said, however, subdued demand from bulk consumers, limited the gains.

Chana extends gains, up 0.72% on spot demand

[Chana](#) prices extended gains for the second straight day by adding 0.72 per cent to Rs 2,936 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators engaged in enlarging positions, driven by strong demand in the spot market.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange, chana for delivery in February added Rs 21, or 0.72 per cent to Rs 2,936 per quintal with an open interest of 19,730 lots.

The April contract gained Rs 15, or 0.50 per cent to Rs 3,026 per quintal in 94,210 lots.

Analysts said speculators enlarged positions, driven by strong demand from dal mills as well as retailers in the spot market mainly helped chana prices remained up for the second day at futures trade.

Refined soya oil up 0.58% on spot demand

Refined [soya oil](#) gained 0.58 per cent to Rs 687.55 per 10 kg in futures trade today as speculators indulged in creating fresh positions, triggered by good spot market demand supported by ongoing wedding season.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, refined soya oil for delivery in March gained Rs 3.95, or 0.58 per cent to Rs 687.55 per 10 kg with an open interest of 103090 lots.

The February contract traded higher by Rs 3.10, or 0.45 per cent to Rs 691.30 per 10 kg in 9010 lots.

Market analysts said increased positions by speculators, driven by good spot market demand in view of ongoing wedding season mainly led to rise in refined soya oil prices at futures trade.

Turmeric rises 1% on spot demand

[Turmeric](#) rose 1.05 per cent to Rs 7,302 per quintal in futures trading today due to pick up in demand in the spot market against tight supplies.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, turmeric for delivery in far-month April rose by Rs 76, or 1.05 per cent to Rs 7302 per quintal with an open interest of 18,285 lots.

The May contract moved up by Rs 70, or 0.96 per cent to Rs 7,336 per quintal in 4360 lots.

Market analysts attributed the rise in turmeric futures to pick up in demand in spot markets against restricted supplies from producing region.

Sugar stocks up on export incentives

[Sugar](#) stocks rose sharply on Thursday despite a huge fall in the benchmark Sensex due to the government decision to incentivise exporters to get rid of surplus inventory.

While the share price of [Balrampur Chini](#) Mills moved up five per cent to Rs 42 apiece, Parrys Sugar and Oudh Sugar Mills reported a four per cent increase each in their share prices to Rs 16 apiece. The benchmark Sensex fell two per cent, or 255 points, to close on Thursday at 20,193. The mills have been reeling from a continuous price rise in cane and the fall in sugar prices for two years. With negative average margins between Rs 3 and Rs 3.5 a kg, most are seeing losses and dues.

But, in a major relief, the Cabinet Committee on [Economic Affairs](#) (CCEA) approved a sugar export [subsidy](#) of Rs 3,333 a tonne on Wednesday.

“It will help evacuate excess stocks,” said Vivek Saraogi, managing director of Balrampur.

Spot sugar (M 30) prices jumped Rs 35 to Rs 2,740 a quintal on Thursday. Overall, the white (or refined) sugar price declined 14 per cent to Rs 2,880 a quintal in Vashi Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee ([APMC](#)) against Rs 3,360 a quintal a year ago. The trend continued in global markets, also. Raw sugar at 16.2 cents a pound on ICE Futures US in New York fell 1.5 per cent this year and 16 per cent in 2013. Similarly, white sugar, at \$445 a tonne on NYSE Liffe in London, was down 0.6 per cent this year. It saw a 14 per cent plunge in 2013.

MANY TEASPOONS			
BSE price in ₹			
	Feb 12, '14	Feb 13, '14	%chg
Balrampur Chini	39.85	42.00	5.40
Parrys Sugar	15.80	16.50	4.43
Oudh Sugar Mills	15.90	16.60	4.40
Sakthi Sugars	13.41	13.90	3.65
KCP Sugar & Industries	14.74	15.15	2.78
Shree Renuka Sugars	19.64	20.15	2.60
DCM Shriram Industries	37.40	38.20	2.14
Bajaj Hindustan	12.73	12.93	1.57
Uttam Sugar	11.70	11.85	1.28

Compiled by BS Research Bureau

The Indian sector has four million tonnes of surplus stock. A CRISIL report said enabling exports of these would reverse the trend of falling prices in the domestic markets. This momentum would be sustained in the sugar season (October 2014-September 2015) due to a continued decline in production led by an expected increase in dues.

“Though not much time is left for producing raw sugar in the balance crushing period, we expect the subsidy would give some of the much-required liquidity to the mills. This would help clear a part of the dues to the farmers, which has crossed Rs 10,000 crore and may touch Rs 15,000 crore in a couple of months. Market sentiments should improve and the domestic prices will stop falling, helping the mills to reduce some of their losses,” Abinash Verma, director-general of the Indian Sugar Mills Association, said. Sanjay

Tapriya, chief financial officer, Simbhaoli Sugar Mills, however, said the subsidy would benefit only port-based mills, specially those in Maharashtra.

Maize exports may drop 15%

The [maize](#) crop is expected to increase on a year ago due to more area. However, this may not turn into higher realisations in terms of foreign exchange. Despite a drop in prices on a year ago, maize remained uncompetitive in the exports market as prices in the global market were lower, said an official in the Agricultural and [Processed Food](#) Products Export Development Authority (APEDA).

While the country had exported three million tonnes during March-December, one million are projected to be exported in the rest of the financial year. A year ago's exports were five million; a drop of up to 15 per cent is seen by the APEDA.

ALSO READ: [Prestigious science journal retracts findings on ill-effects of GM maize](#)

Traders expected a higher decrease as they go by the crop season, September to October.

More-competitive prices of Argentina and Brazil's exports to southeast Asia (the major consumer) have left Indian maize behind.

According to experts, there was a price differential of five per cent to seven per cent for importers buying from rivals.

But as the winter crop is yet to arrive, the scenario may change.

ALSO READ: [Rising input costs and falling consumption hurt poultry sector](#)

NOT A GOLDEN SCENARIO

Year	Area (mn hectares)	Production (mn tonnes)	Exports (mn tonnes)
2011-12	8.5	21	3.85
2012-13	8.7	21.82	4.78
2013-14	10 (P)	23 (P)	3*

P=Projected; *Mar to Dec

Source: Indian Council of Agriculture Research, APEDA

However, the president of All

India [Starch](#) Manufacturers' Association, Vishal Majithia, says the arrival of the winter crop will not pull down the prices further. "Prices had touched Rs 1,650-1,700 a quintal in two years, putting the sector in a crisis. This year, prices were Rs 1,250-Rs 1,300 a quintal. This is

conducive."

The crop, he said, would meet the requirement for the next seven months and the subsequent one will arrive in October. "So, the probability of a further correction was bleak."

The consistently high prices in two years and the mechanisation of production practices had motivated the farmers to grow maize, said Paviter Pal Singh Pangli, a farmer from Punjab.

The president of Indian Maize Development Association, Sain Dass, said the area had increased across India. The extended monsoon may cause some setback, resulting in high moisture content. This may affect exports but the domestic consumers can buy maize at lower prices this year.
