

Promoting farm food



Farmers from the Sundarbans pose as a farmhand and as the Mahatma in this depiction of a farm scene at the agri horti food fest organised by the State Agriculture department and the Confederation of Indian Industry in Kolkata on Tuesday. (Right) Artists perform at the festival.— Photos: Sushanta Patronobish

Price crash leaves tomato, onion farmers in the lurch

Huge arrivals in the market blamed for the slide in prices

KARUR, February 19, 2014 - Prices of tomato and onion tumbled in Karur markets bringing tears in the eyes of farmers. Huge arrivals of vegetables at the Karur market from various destinations pulled down the prices, say traders.

Continued drought, scarcity of water and rainfall, increasing cost of labour and its dwindling availability all took a toll on the vegetable arrival, particularly tomato and onion, at the Karur markets during the past few months. While tomato is brought in from Krishnagiri, Dindigul, Tiruchi, Theni, and Madurai districts, onion is sourced from within the State and outside.

Local villages were sending onion and tomato to the market but that met only a fragment of the requirement. Those villages depend heavily on the rivers for irrigation and scarce flow down the Cauvery and practically nil flow in River Amaravathy for the better part of the year drastically reduced the area under tomato and onion cultivation. This pushed up the price of tomato and onion to unheard of levels to the utter difficulty of the consuming public.

Hoteliers found it expensive to dish out onion and tomato dishes and instead substituted cabbage for onion to a great extent. The price of vegetables had a cascading effect on the eateries. When onion prices touched a high of Rs. 80 a kg or even more in some markets a few months ago, there was a hue and cry but lured by the bubbly rise in prices, more farmers opted for onion cultivation.

However, huge arrivals from outside markets, heavy production in rain-fed and irrigated areas outside the State resulted in gradual reduction in the price of tomato and onion that were mostly preferred by the consumers. Now, while Bellary variety onion was sold for Rs. 14 a kg, the small variety was priced Rs. 18 a kg. Onion sold for Rs. 40 a kg a couple of months ago.

“Onion price came down steadily over a period. With the slump in prices, people and hoteliers are buying a lot more onion these days. I will not vouch that the price line would hold for a long period but could assure you that prices will stabilise around Rs. 20 a kg reflective of the drought reality and summer in the days to come,” says K. Sethupathi of Kamaraj Market here.

Similarly, the price of tomato that went for Rs. 50 a kg sometime ago has tumbled to Rs. 8 a kg after touching a record low of Rs. 5 a kg last month. Increased arrival from other districts following a bountiful harvest was the major reason for the reduction in tomato prices.

“Last month, we purchased tomato for Rs. 3 a kg at the Vendasandur and Thuvarankurichi wholesale markets from farmers and still found it difficult to sell that to small time Karur traders as tomato did not fetch a reasonable price. Now, it goes for Rs. 7 a kg and is yet susceptible to sale price variations,” says T. Singaram of Vendasandur who regularly bring tomato to Karur and Erode markets.

Farmers can soon hire agricultural machinery

186 custom hire service centres to be set up this year

BANGALORE, February 19, 2014 - Minister of State for Agriculture Krishna Byre Gowda on Tuesday told the Legislative Council that efforts were on to set up 186 custom hire service centres for agricultural machinery and farm implements this year to help small and marginal farmers.

Replying to Congress member Pratapchandra Shetty during the Question Hour, the Minister said farm machinery would be available for a nominal rent at these centres.

He said the government had called for expression of interest from non-governmental organisations and charitable institutions to set up the custom hire service centres.

Mr. Gowda said the government was implementing a programme related to farm mechanisation mainly to fight the shortage of labour. Under this programme, farmers belonging to the general category were getting a subsidy of 50 per cent on the purchase of agricultural machinery while those belonging to SC/ST communities were being given 90 per cent subsidy.

Concern

Replying to a query, he expressed concern that the area under paddy cultivation in the districts of Udipi and Dakshina Kannada had seen a decrease of about 11,103 hectares in the last five years.

Replying to a query by BJP member Doddarange Gowda, the Minister said members would be appointed to the Agricultural Prices Commission shortly.

Replying to Congress member Allam Prabhu Patil during the Zero Hour, the Minister said he would direct the authorities to resume toor dal procurement by offering a minimum support price in Gulbarga district. Earlier, Mr. Patil alleged that farmers were in dire straits as procurement centres had been abruptly closed for want of funds.

📌 **186 custom hire service centres will be set up this year: Krishna Byre Gowda**

📌 **'Programme on farm mechanisation being implemented mainly to fight labour shortage'**

Outlining opportunities in agribusiness

A logistic hub, central business centre to come up



Dr. Bakiyathu Saliha, Assistant Professor, Agriculture College and Research Institute, Madurai, speaking at a seminar in Madurai on Tuesday. — Photo: S. James

MADURAI, February 19, 2014 - The Madurai-Tuticorin Industrial Corridor will have manufacturing hubs at Madurai, Tuticorin, Tirunelveli and Ramanathapuram, besides having an agricultural business investment region for the benefit of agriculturalists from Virudhunagar, Madurai and Theni districts, said A. Kathir Kamanathan, former chairman of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) here on Tuesday.

He was speaking on the topic “opportunities in agribusiness – special reference to Madurai-Tuticorin industrial corridor” at a seminar as part of National Mission on Food Processing organised by the Department of Agricultural Marketing and Agribusiness.

“The plan of the project includes a logistic hub and central business centre in the Madurai region at an estimated cost of Rs.3,800 crore for infrastructure by the State and an investment of Rs.12,000 crore by the private sectors,” he added. Tuticorin region would get port-based industries, while Tirunelveli region would focus on renewable energy generation and Ramanathapuram region on petrochemical industries, he further said.

The seminar, inaugurated by A.J.A. Jeyasingh Gnanadurai, Joint Director of Agriculture, Madurai district, had sessions on topics such as consultant view on food processing, bankers role in nurturing food processing industries and motivating small-scale entrepreneurs in the food processing sector.

Bakiyathu Saliha, Assistant Professor at Tamil Nadu Agriculture College and Research Institute, spoke on “Food processing opportunities in the southern region. “Agriculturalists lose 40 per cent of their produces in the post-harvest loss. The loss can be reduced by 50 per cent by following proper food processing techniques,” she said.

In her address, Rohini Sridhar, chairperson of the CII, said unless value addition was done locally, it might not be possible for the producers to earn profit. “We reap productivity, but we should learn to make value addition to be able to compete in the global market,” she said.

In his inaugural speech, Mr. Gnanadurai emphasised the need for food processing.

“Processing agricultural produces will be beneficial to the farmers as well as the consumers,” he said.

Three-day workshop on agriculture

PALAKKAD, February 19, 2014 - A three-day workshop for farmers, writers and mediapersons will be inaugurated by Leader of the Opposition V.S. Achuthanandan at Malampuzha, near here, at 10 a.m. on February 21.

It is being organised by the Farm Information Bureau. The inaugural function will be presided over by Minister for Agriculture K.P. Mohanan. There will be a seminar on social media and the agriculture sector during the workshop. Discussions on agriculture policy, development of dairy farms, animal husbandry, horticulture, floriculture, etc. would also be organised. — Staff Reporter

Conversion of farm land opposed

KORAPUT, February 19, 2014 - Koraput district branch of Odisha Krushaka Samaja (OKS) , demanded a ban on conversion of irrigated agricultural land to homestead land.

Biren Patnaik, president of the unit, alleged that land mafias were breaking laws of the land for converting huge patches of agricultural land in and around Jeypore under the very nose of local revenue administration.

Addressing mediapersons at Jeypore on Tuesday he highlighted the challenge in losing precious cultivable land that the region was facing due to massive conversion of agricultural land .

'Pay arrears to farmers'

District Collector M.Raghunandana Rao said that paper mills should pay arrears to subabul farmers through market committees. In a meeting with representatives of various paper mills, the Collector said that while the farmers were to be paid Rs 4,400, from the companies only Rs 3,700 was being paid. He asked the paper mills to pay arrears within 15 days.

Farmers grievance meet at Ariyalur

ARIYALUR, February 19, 2014 - The district administration will conduct the farmers grievances day meeting at the collectorate hall at 11 a.m. on February 21. E. Saravanelraj, Collector, will preside over the meeting. An official release called upon farmers to take part in the meeting and get their grievances solved.

15,000 tonnes of paddy procured



The storage capacity is about 40,000 tonnes

IN FULL SWING:Paddy procurement by the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation has gained momentum in Erode. - PHOTO: M. GOVARTHAN

ERODE, February 19, 2014 - The Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation has reached the halfway mark in paddy procurement in Erode district.

So far, 15,000 out of 30,000 tonnes anticipated have been procured through the 28 Direct Procurement Centres established throughout the district.

The rest of the procurement would be made by mid-March, said C. Muruganatham, Regional Manager of the corporation. The procurement process began last November. Last year, the procurement was nil despite the corporation opening a handful of district centres because of the drought conditions. With the water position in the Bhavani Sagar Dam comfortable, the Public Works Department was able to release water for paddy cultivation

last August. The harvest was much higher — over 40,000 tonnes — during 2011-12. Farmers are given Rs. 14.15 a kg for Grade A varieties and Rs. 13.80 for common varieties. The corporation's storage capacity is about 40,000 tonnes at its two godowns — 25,000 at Perundurai, and 15,000 at Sivagiri. This year, the entire paddy crop procured in the district had moisture content within the permitted upper limit of 16 per cent. This year, the supply of 30 winnowing machines made the task of cleaning the paddy before procurement easier, said Mr. Muruganatham, adding that the sunny weather condition in the harvest period has helped farmers to keep the moisture content within the specified limit.

Sale of Rs.2 per kg dry fodder begins

TIRUCHI, February 19, 2014 - Sales of dry fodder for farmers at subsidised rate of Rs.2 a kg has commenced at four centres in the district.

The fodder will be sold through the centres functioning at the veterinary dispensaries at Manikandam, Valanadu, Manachanallur and Thandalaipudur.

The State government has ordered the sale of dry fodder at subsidised rates to farmers in view of the shortage of fodder as part of drought relief measures. The government has allotted Rs.40 lakhs for setting up four fodder storage godowns in Tiruchi district.

Farmers can purchase three kg of fodder for each cattle a day for seven days. A farmer can buy a maximum of 105 kg a week for five head of cattle.

Sale of the fodder was inaugurated at Manachanallur last week by Minister for Khadi and Village Industries T.P.Poonachi.

Importance of green manure crop stressed

TUTICORIN, February 19, 2014 - Progressive farmers in the district were exposed to the importance of green manure crops in agriculture and seed production practices. The programme was organised by the Department of Plant Breeding and Genetics, Agricultural College and Research Institute, Killikulam, here on Tuesday.

Inaugurating the programme, V.Subramanian, Dean, said farmers could improve the soil health and productivity by incorporating green manure crops. As awareness on usage of green manure had increased, availability of quality seed required for cultivation of such crops was inadequate.

To bridge the gap in demand and supply, the college took this initiative to produce quality seeds of Daincha at the college farm.

To encourage the farmers to take up quality seed production in green manure crop, this training programme was organised. The farmers could earn extra income by marketing quality seeds to needy farmers.

Hence, Dr. Subramanian urged the farmers to take up seed production in green manure crops in a larger way to increase the usage of green manure and improve the soil health and productivity.

A fund of Rs. 2.53 lakh has been set aside through the National Agricultural Development Programme for production of quality seeds of green manure crops and to conduct three farmers' training programmes.

KAU to focus on bio-alternatives

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, February 19, 2014 - Bio-control methods and integrated pest management practices will assume top priority in the research activities of the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU).

Addressing the Zonal Research Extension Advisory Council (ZREAC) meeting of KAU here on Tuesday, Director of Research T.R. Gopalakrishnan said research would be focussed on evolving organic methods to replace banned pesticides.

Jeena John, Principal Agricultural Officer, Kollam, inaugurated the meeting. As many as 165 farmers from Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, and Pathanamthitta participated in a farmer-scientist interface organised as part of ZREAC.

State Horticulture Mission Director K. Prathapan delivered the keynote address.

The interface programme provided a platform for farmers to highlight their problems and seek technical solutions from agricultural experts.

A press note issued by KAU said the university would chart out its research priorities based on the inputs from the programme.

Australian students visit TNAU



The student-group from Australia visiting a farmer's field at Pollachi during a study trip to the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in Coimbatore.

COIMBATORE, February 19, 2014 - A student group from La Trobe University, Australia, was on a visit to Tamil Nadu Agricultural University recently to learn

about Indian agriculture.

A 15-member team, led by Professor Peter Sale, visited farms of progressive farmers in Pollachi.

The field visit was organised by the Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology.

Students of agriculture and animal husbandry also learnt about village life, farming practices, crops grown, animal husbandry, organic farming, wild life, etc.

The team spent a day at the farm of O.V.R. Somasundaram. It got to see different crops grown on his farm, such as coconut, processing of nutmeg and cocoa, shade set nursery, etc.

The students learnt the combination of using inorganic fertilizers and organic inputs.

They were also taken around the village.

KMF not to procure milk of unvaccinated cattle

BANGALORE, February 19, 2014 - *'Measures necessitated after recent outbreak of FMD'*

The Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) has decided not to procure milk from farmers who do not get their cows and buffaloes vaccinated against foot-and-mouth disease (FMD). A month-long vaccination drive is presently under way across the State.

Speaking to presspersons here on Tuesday, G. Somashekar Reddy, KMF Chairman, said the drive, taken up by the federation and the Department of Animal Husbandry, was modelled on the lines of the Pulse Polio campaign and was intended to reach out to every farming household in every village.

Certifying farmers

The drive would conclude on March 14. Farmers would be given cards stating their cattle was vaccinated and they had to show the card before the milk could be accepted at the collection centre, he said.

A.S. Premnath, KMF Managing Director, said these measures were necessitated after the recent FMD outbreak that affected over 50,000 head of cattle and killed 14,441, resulting in milk production going down by nearly 2.5 lakh litres. Around 25 per cent of farmers had not vaccinated their cattle then.

The KMF would hold a Statewide convention of dairy farmers on February 22 in which around 3 lakh farmers were expected to participate. Mr. Premnath said that export of Nandini products was on the rise and were now available in Russia, Israel, U.A.E., Burma, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Within the country, Nandini products were procured for the army in Assam and Kashmir, he said.

He said that Amul too was buying milk, butter and milk powder from the KMF. To a question on the proposal to make milk available to children for five days a week under 'Ksheera Bhagya', he said the federation had given a proposal on providing milk in flexipacks but the plan was yet to be approved, given the costs involved.

Mr. Reddy said that actors such as the late Rajkumar had been ambassadors for the KMF for free. His son Puneet Rajkumar was following in his footsteps.

In full bloom



Hands full: Workers plucking chamomile flowers at a farm near Vellode in Dindigul.—
PHOTO: G. KARTHIKEYAN.

Water level

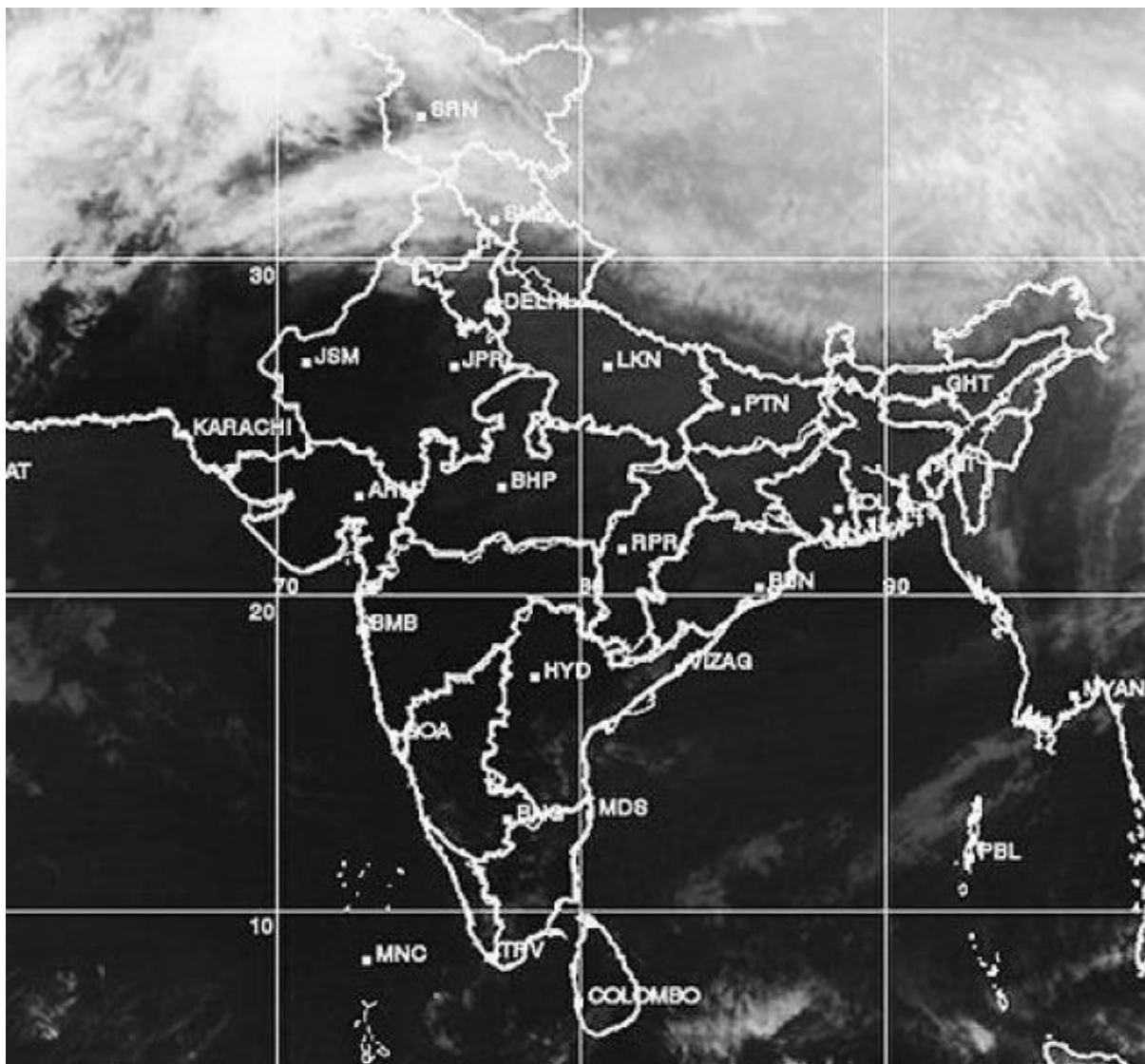
Mettur - The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 50.72 feet on Tuesday against its full reservoir level of 120 feet. The inflow was 168 cusecs and the discharge 1,800 cusecs.

Water level in the **Papanasam dam** on Tuesday stood at 59.30 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 210.88 cusecs and 604.75 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam.

The water level in **Manimuthar dam** stood at 76.22 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 10 cusecs and 530 cusecs of water was discharged.

Kanyakumari - The water level in **Pechipparai dam** stood at 13.80 feet, while it was 43.50 feet in Perunchani, 5.50 feet in Chittar I, 5.15 feet in Chittar II, 3.80 feet in Poigai and 54.12 feet in Mambazathuraiyaru dam.

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs. Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on February 18.

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Wednesday, Feb 19

Max 29° | Min 24°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 79

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:30

Sunset: 06:15

Barometer: 1014.0

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Thursday, Feb 20

Max 31° | Min 24°

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday
Feb 21

31° | 23°

Partly Cloudy

Saturday
Feb 22

24° | 22°

Overcast

Sunday
Feb 23

24° | 22°

Overcast

Monday
Feb 24

25° | 22°

Overcast

Tuesday
Feb 25

25° | 23°

Overcast

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Schemes to promote community farming announced in budget

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The district panchayat will chalk out a massive project to conserve the Vellayani lake. District panchayat vice-president Rufus Daniel made this announcement while presenting the panchayat budget for the fiscal 2014-15 here on Tuesday.

The panchayat has envisaged a project worth Rs 26 crore for conservation of Vellayani lake, which will be implemented with assistance from ministry of environment and climate change. This project will be initiated in addition to the ongoing project, which is being carried out at a cost of Rs 49.5 lakh.

The panchayat has been undertaking a slew of measures like construction of organic bunds, promotion of farming in areas adjacent to [Vellayani Lake](#) and levelling of craters developed in various parts of the lake owing to sand mining. "Water conservation is one of the priority areas of the panchayat. We have been successfully carrying out projects to save Vellayani lake, which acts as reservoir for five major drinking water projects," Daniel said.

The budget for the next fiscal expects revenue of Rs 150.89 crore and an expenditure of Rs 142.74 crore with a surplus of Rs 7.34 crore. The panchayat budget lays thrust on agriculture

and animal husbandry sector with a total allocation of Rs 6.59 crore. A special scheme has been introduced to promote community farming. Under the scheme 200 traditional farmers who own land not less than 30 cents will be provided Rs 20 lakh for farming activities. In areas where water scarcity has hampered the agriculture lift irrigation will be introduced to channelise water from nearby sources to barren lands using pumps.

The budget also introduces a new scheme for promoting organ donation. The panchayat will form special teams in 73 village panchayats and awareness camps will be conducted. The list of donors will be finalized and a network of organ donors will be established which will then be linked with various hospitals in the district.

The health sector will see many projects being carried over from the previous year like palliative care scheme, trauma care and mobile dialysis unit. Basic facilities will be upgraded at Nedumangad hospital. A total of Rs 2.9 crore has been allocated for the health sector.

Education sector did not receive any novel scheme with panchayat allocating more funds for conducting English grammar clinic and civil service foundation course in all the schools coming under 73 village panchayats. The budget presentation was marked by the absence of five congress (I) members and vociferous interventions from the opposition. The budget will be passed in a committee meeting which will be held in next two days.

Offer incentives to encourage farming

CHANDIGARH: Alfred Wahl, president of Polar Genetics Canada said protein deficient country of India should encourage pig farming with government offering incentives. It would also provide higher income for farm families, farm family besides ensuring fiscal additions to overall economy.

He was talking on the sidelines of a lecture on the role of genetics in improving pig production. Robin Young, India project manager, Manitoba Food Development Centre, said commercialization of conventional and functional food products were only answer to the economic crises being faced by the farm sector of Punjab. He emphasized the need for collaborative efforts of agro-scientists, farmers, food processors, and food scientists.

Describing canola as a next big thing, Frank Groeneweg Chairman SaskCanola said that in the health conscious society with focus on healthy dietary fats canola was becoming popular all over the world. He said canola was fast emerging as excellent livestock feed that was increasing dairy production.

Speaking on Dairy Genetics and Semex, Amar Dhumal [General Manager](#) Samex-Provet Genetics (I) Pvt Ltd. said that the semen export was emerging as new growth area in the farming economy.

Govt relents as protesting farmers mount pressure

BATHINDA: The Punjab government has agreed to pay Rs 64 crore to compensate the families of farmers and farm labourers, who committed suicide due to rising debt, in just three days as against the previous announcement of disbursing the money in two instalments over four months. This follows the protesting peasant groups, who have laid siege to Bathinda district administrative complex for the past one week, threatening to

disrupt the rally of BJP's prime ministerial candidate [Narendra Modi](#), scheduled to be held on February 23. The protesting farmers lifted the blockade on Tuesday evening following an assurance from the government.

Rejecting the [state government](#) stand on payment of compensation to families of suicide victims, the protesting farmers had surrounded the Bathinda mini secretariat and completely blocked entry to offices of deputy commissioner (DC), senior superintendent of police (SSP) and deputy inspector general (DIG) of police.

Following this, the government consented to hand over the compensation amount in three days and also pay Rs 6 crore to residents of Gobindpura village in Mansa, who were uprooted for setting up a thermal power plant. Bathinda DC K K Yadav and SSP Gurpreet Singh Bhullar gave a written assurance to agitating farmers that their demands have been accepted and urged them to end their protest.

However, the farmers have decided to wait till February 21 for fulfilment of their demands, before dispersing from Bathinda. "We will wait till February 21 and remain at the children's park. If government failed to implement the agreed proposal, we will revive our agitation," said Bharatiya Kisan Union (Ugrahan) general secretary Sukhdev Singh Kokri and Punjab Khet Mazdoor Union secretary [Lachman Singh Sewewala](#).

Inland saline aquaculture scope in Malwa

CHANDIGARH: The waterlogged areas of Malwa region of Punjab will be explored for inland saline aquaculture, especially with W S Lakra, director and vice-chancellor of [Central Institute of Fisheries Education](#) advocating it at the Progressive Punjab Agriculture Summit.

Lakra said Punjab's 0.9 million hectare of salt affected area has tremendous scope for inland aquaculture. "This land is unfit for sustainable agriculture crop besides surface-drainage system was uneconomic," he said.

"Culture of milk fish is being promoted as it has tolerance to variable salinities. He said the target of 3750 kg per hectare production per year has been achieved with culture of grey mullet touching 1320kg/per hectare/4 month production," he added. .

Speaking of value added eggs, meat and fish products, Dr Jayathilakan, [senior scientist](#), [Freeze Drying](#) and Animal Products Technology Division, Defence Food Research Laboratory, Mysore, said that meat, fish and egg are an indispensable source of valuable macro and micro nutrients.

"Countries like Brazil, Russia, India, China and [South Africa](#) account for more than 50% of world's total population and represent most of the animal protein demand. He said the total meat production that was 3.6 million tonnes in the country in 1992-93 has jumped to 6.7 million tonnes in 2011-12 in which poultry has 37% share," he said.

"Value addition of meat products is growing and India would focus on appropriate quality raw material, correct formulation, optimum processing, right packaging, storage stability, flavor and colour changes, nutritional value, labeling requirements and product specifications and regulations," he said.

Experts pointed out that giant freshwater prawn tiger shrimp, white shrimp, pacific white shrimp that were witnessing increase market share. Punjab with 99000 ton fish production

and with highest fish productivity of 6560 kg/per hectare, double than national average has ability to lead the nation.

THE HINDU Business Line

Cane arrears mount to Rs. 12,000 crore



Bearish trend continues in sugar; output down 13% at 14.37 million tonnes

Sour, not sweet Sugar prices continue to be bearish on excess supply and millers find it difficult to make payments to farmers.

New Delhi, February 18: Sugar production till mid-February in the current season to September is down by 13 per cent at 14.37 million tonnes (mt) against 16.58 mt during the same period a year ago. The lower production is due to delayed start to the crushing season. At the same time, cane arrears or the payments to be made to farmers by the sugar factories till date have exceeded Rs. 12,000 crore, according to the Indian Sugar Mills Association. As sugar prices continue to be caught in the bearish price trend on surplus availability, millers are finding it difficult to make payments to farmers.

Uttar Pradesh topped cane arrears list with payment dues estimated at Rs. 8,000 crore, followed by Karnataka at Rs. 3,000 crore. Maharashtra is estimated to have arrears of Rs.300 crore, followed by Gujarat at Rs. 200 crore with other states accounting for the rest, ISMA said.

Factories in Maharashtra have produced close to five million tonnes of sugar, followed by Uttar Pradesh at 3.57 million tonnes and Karnataka at 2.7 million tonnes.

Crushing season

The cane crushing season this year was delayed by about a month over the issue of pricing, but the industry expects to make up for the delayed start during the course of the season. It has pegged the output at 25 million tonnes.

ISMA said sugar recovery in Maharashtra is marginally higher at 10.96 per cent this year. However, by mid-February, about 10 factories in Maharashtra closed their operations this year compared with eight in the corresponding period a year ago.

Also in UP, sugar recovery this season is marginally higher at 8.91 per cent. Sugar output in Gujarat is estimated at 7.5 lakh tonnes, while in Andhra Pradesh it is projected at 6.6 lakh tonnes. Tamil Nadu production has been pegged at 4.5 lakh tonnes.

ISMA said that total raw sugar production in the country touched 8 lakh tonnes till January. Factories, mainly in Maharashtra and Karnataka are expected to produce another 10 lakh tonnes in the current season. The Government last week announced an export incentive of Rs. 3,333 a tonne for export of raw sugar to be made over the next two months.

Sugar exports in the current season till January this year were estimated at 8.5 lakh tonnes of which raw sugar accounted for more than half the quantity shipped at 4.5 lakh tonnes. Refined sugar accounted for the rest.

23% tea remains unsold at Coonoor sale

Coonoor, February 18: Nearly 23 per cent of the 14.36 lakh kg offered for Sale No: 7 of the Coonoor Tea Trade Association auction remained unsold with demand slumping, when the average price rose Rs. 1.50 a kg over the previous week.

Besides, excess global supply, prolonged snowfall in Russia and rest of the CIS, Europe, Japan, the US and floods in the UK, limited exporters' operations.

Exporters confined to plainer less-priced teas. Most shippers to Pakistan were silent contending adequate availability with their importers. Some bought for Rs. 61-88.

North Indian teas

With North Indian teas reeling under end-season wafer-thin offerings, domestic traders were active at the Coonoor auction and upcountry buyers bought brighter liquoring teas.

Crosshill Estate topped the CTC market at Rs. 200 a kg. It was the only CTC tea to enter Rs. 200/kg bracket. Vigneshwar Estate got Rs. 196 and Homedale Estate Rs. 192. In all, 55 marks got Rs. 125 and more. Among orthodox teas, Chamraj topped at Rs. 252/kg, followed by Kairbetta Rs. 235, Highfield Estate Rs.230, Havukal Rs. 228, Corsley Rs. 227 and Prammas Rs. 226. In all, 45 marks got Rs. 125 and more.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging from Rs. 57-60 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs. 110-160 for brighter liquoring sorts. They ranged Rs. 68-72 for plain dusts and Rs. 130-190 for brighter liquoring dusts.

No issues with FDA norms, say seafood exporters

Kochi, February 18: 'NO ISSUES WITH FDA NORMS'

The Commissioner of US Food and Drug Administration, Margaret A. Hamburg, who is on a visit to India, has held talks with seafood industry leaders in Kochi. The Seafood Exporters Association of India (SEAI) President, Abraham J Tharakan, told Hamburg that seafood exporters had no issues with the FDA and that the industry considers the FDA to be "very fair" in its inspection procedures. Abraham also said India had emerged as the largest exporter of shrimp to the US last year, exporting nearly one lakh tonnes valued at over \$1 billion. India was the eighth-largest exporter of food products, including spices and seafood. Our Bureau

Shortage in export grade cardamom continues

Kochi, February 18: Cardamom prices ruled steady last week as there was demand and supply balance at the auctions. Shortage of exportable grade capsules continued, even though arrivals increased.

Unfavourable weather

Exporters bought only around 30-40 tonnes of cardamom last week, they said. Meanwhile, as the weather has been unfavourable from the beginning of January without any signs of summer showers, the sentiment has turned bullish in the market.

Any rise in arrivals at the auction is leading to consequent fall in prices. Prices ruled at Rs. 625-680 a kg.

At the Bodinayakannur auction held by the Cardamom Planters Association on Monday, 56 tonnes arrived and 45 tonnes were sold. The maximum price was Rs. 815 a kg due to the inferior quality of the material.

The average price fell to Rs. 627.20 against Rs. 653.12 a kg last week. Almost 95 per cent of harvesting is over and the material that has been arriving is from the current crop, trade sources in Kumily said.

Exporters are expected to buy the available exportable quality material till September-October until the arrival of Guatemalan crop. However, the continuous uptrend in prices might turn the produce unattractive to exporters, traders said.

Upcountry buyers were active. During the current season to July, arrivals are 17,089 tonnes as on February 16 against 8,328 tonnes during the same time a year ago. Sales were 15,620 tonnes against 7,897 tonnes. The weighted average price as on February 16 was Rs. 596.88 a kg against Rs. 770.69 a kg.

At the Sunday auction, the maximum price was Rs. 933 and the minimum at Rs. 422 a kg. The auction average decreased to Rs. 653.44 a kg from Rs. 660.52 the previous week, P C Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC, said.

Prices of all graded varieties remained unchanged last week: AGEB 800-810; AGB 640 -650; AGS 600-640; and AGS -1: 585-590. Dry weather conditions prevailed in the growing areas and they have not received any rains for over a month, they added.

Spot turmeric improves with futures

Erode, February 18: SPOT TURMERIC UP WITH FUTURES

Spot turmeric prices rose marginally on Tuesday in Erode market, taking cues from the futures market. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales yard (new crop), the finger variety was sold at Rs. 5,900-6,835 a quintal and root variety Rs. 5,411-6,539 a quintal. The finger variety (old crop) was sold at Rs. 4,608-6,889/quintal and root variety Rs. 4,500-6,510/quintal. Salem Hybrid crop: The finger variety fetched Rs. 5,800-7,200/quintal and root variety Rs. 5,717-6,909/quintal. At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs. 5,799-6,858/quintal and root variety Rs. 5,725-6,543/quintal. Of the 304 bags of turmeric that arrived for sale, 263 were sold. Our Correspondent

Buyer resistance saps rubber

Kottayam, February 18: Spot rubber turned weak on Tuesday. This was followed by sharp declines in domestic futures probably on profit-booking at higher levels.

According to observers, the local market lost ground on buyer resistance, though there was no visible selling pressure from dealers or growers. The trend was mixed. Sheet rubber dropped to Rs. 155 (Rs. 156) a kg, according to traders.

The grade increased to Rs. 155 (Rs. 154) and Rs. 152 (Rs. 151) respectively, according to Rubber Board and dealers.

March futures declined to Rs. 152.95 (Rs. 157.86), April to Rs. 156.79 (Rs. 162.38), May to Rs. 159.11 (Rs.164.71), June to Rs. 160.51 (Rs. 165.47) and July to Rs. 162.00 (Rs. 163.56) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) improved to Rs. 138.58 (Rs. 135.35) at Bangkok.

February futures closed at firmed ¥230.4 (Rs. 140.03) on Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates (Rs. /kg) were: RSS-4: 155 (156); RSS-5: 152 (153); ungraded: 149 (150); ISNR 20: 151(151) and latex 60%: 122 (122). Rally may not stretch –p18

Dara wheat gains on fresh demand

Karnal, February 18: Dara wheat improved marginally on Tuesday on emergence of fresh buying, while flour continued to rule flat on moderate buying. Dara wheat is likely to be range-bound over the next few days but within a positive territory, said Radhey Shyam, a trade expert. In the physical market, dara wheat moved up by Rs. 5 to Rs. 1,615-1,625 a quintal. Around 1,000 bags of wheat arrived and stocks were directly offloaded at the mills. Mill delivery was at Rs. 1,615 a quintal, while delivery at the chakki was at Rs. 1,625 a quintal. A mixed trend was witnessed on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange. February contracts improved by Rs. 1 to Rs. 1,678 a quintal, with an open interest of 290 lots. Flour remained unchanged and was sold at Rs. 1,860 a quintal. Similarly, Choker ruled flat and was sold at Rs. 1,470 a quintal. Our Correspondent

Rally in rubber may not stretch

Global growth in production, higher inventory set to put pressure on prices



Outlook dull Rubber prices will continue to be under pressure.

Chennai, February 18: Rubber prices have increased over 10 per cent since the beginning of this month after hitting a four-year low on January 30, but the rally could be short-lived. Signs of this were evident on Tuesday when profit-taking emerged in the futures market.

On January 30, prices of RSS (ribbed smoked sheet) grade four dropped to Rs. 140 a kg at Kottayam, forcing the growers to raise a hue and cry.

Rubber procurement

Following this, the Kerala Government on February 5 decided to procure rubber from growers at Rs. 1 a kg higher than market rates until prices touch Rs. 171. Since then, prices have been on an upswing with some growers reportedly saying that they will not part with their produce until rates touch Rs. 171.

On Monday, there were no sellers in the rubber market, as growers chose to wait for further rise in prices.

On Tuesday, prices for the RSS (ribbed smoked sheet) grade 4 were quoted at Rs. 155 a kg at Kottayam.

In the global market, benchmark Tokyo Commodity Exchange July contracts ended at ¥234.9 or Rs.142.25 a kg.

Globally, too, prices have recovered to a three-week high after dropping to a four-year low following excess supplies and tardy economic growth, particularly in China.

Resistance

According to CP Krishnan, Wholetime Director, Geojit Comtrade, the current rally could face resistance at Rs. 160 kg. "On the lower side, prices can fall to Rs. 138," he said.

"Rubber prices could range in the Rs. 150-160 zone in the short-term," said GJ Ancheril, former president of the United Planters' Association of Southern India (Upasi). One of the uncertainties that could affect the rubber market is the Kerala Government's plan to procure 10,000 tonnes. The State Cabinet is likely to take a final decision, including nominating the nodal agency, on Wednesday.

"The Kerala Government could stop procurement at 5,000 tonnes. It is likely that the Cabinet might want to wait to see how the situation develops since prices have surged in

the last few sessions,” said N Radhakrishnan, Adviser, Cochin Rubber Merchants Association (CRMA).

“We are not sure whether Kerala will procure or not, though it has allocated Rs. 10 crore,” said Ancheril.

The problem for the State is that it plans to spend Rs. 100 crore on rubber procurement but is expecting the Centre to contribute Rs. 90 crore. Also, the coffers of the Kerala Government are almost empty.

“The decision to procure has been made with an eye on the forthcoming parliamentary elections,” said Krishnan.

“We are not sure if the Centre can come up with the allocation. Also, other factors such as imports are at play,” said Radhakrishnan.

Currently, the user industry, mainly tyre manufacturers, is importing crumb or technically specified rubber at Rs. 122 a kg. Even if the industry pays Rs. 22-25 a kg more, it works out cheaper than the ISNR-20 which is the equivalent to imported TSR contracts. ISNR-20 ruled at Rs. 151 on Tuesday.

“The problem is not price but availability. We are not able to get the required quantity and are, therefore, forced to import,” said Rajiv Buddhraja, Director-General of Automotive Tyre Manufacturers’ Association (ATMA).

Imports

Tyre manufacturers are expected to import 20,000-25,000 tonnes TSR every month over the next three months. “There is also the issue of quality with the RSS-5 or lot rubber in the domestic sector. Tyre companies, which are focussing on radial tyres, are now particular about quality of rubber and they are ready to pay a higher price for quality produce. Imported consignments are also of uniform quality,” said Geojit’s Krishnan.

“There is no doubt that imported TSR is cleaner than our sheet rubber,” said CRMA’s Radhakrishnan.

“Rubber availability will be a main concern since we feel estimates of carryover stock don’t tally with the reality on ground. Even for the next fiscal, we feel the Rubber Board has fixed a lower import target of two lakh tonnes, whereas we think shipments into the country could be nothing less than three lakh tonnes,” said ATMA’s Buddhraja.

Global production

Rubber prices will continue to be under pressure on account of higher global production and ample stocks, said Krishnan.

Growth in production is likely to continue, forcing Thailand to think of building stockpiles. Reuters reported that the closely watched rubber inventory in China's bonded warehouses in Qingdao jumped more than 11 per cent in January to around 3,40,000 tonnes.

“Lower global prices will encourage imports and we don’t think procurement will make any huge impact,” said Radhakrishnan.

“Any misalignment from the global market will only be temporary with regard to rubber prices,” said Buddhraja.

But there are a couple of factors that could begin to play out in the domestic market and could result in short-term bullishness.

Tapping has almost come to an end in the growing areas. “There has been no rain for the last one-and-a-half months and there is no incentive to tap now,” said Radhakrishnan.

“Given the lean tapping season, the 10,000 tonnes is a significant quantity that can keep the market interested,” said Krishnan.

Tyre production will peak from March onwards and there could be pressure on supplies. But Ancheril rules out such an eventuality saying that tyre manufacturers are well stocked.

However, trade sources say that sentiments could turn the market bullish.

The concessions announced for the automobile sectors in the vote-on-account by Finance Minister P Chidambaram could also help the rubber sector. “There is a strong possibility of a rebound in the automotive sector in view of the concessions,” said Ancheril.

Also, if the US economy begins to pick-up, it could result in demand for automobiles.

Once that happens, rubber prices could begin to gain with China too joining the growth bandwagon, said Krishnan.

Outlook turns bearish for chana

Indore, February 18: Chana prices ruled stable amid subdued demand and rise in arrivals, with chana (kanta) on Tuesday quoted at Rs. 2,750-2,850 a quintal. Chana (desi) ruled at Rs. 2,500-2,600; chan (mausmi) at Rs. 3,000-3,100; chana (vishal) at Rs. 2,800-2,900 and Kabuli Bitki and chana (kaktu) ruled at Rs. 2,900-2,950 each. Compared with last week, chana is ruling Rs. 100 lower. Given the large stock of imported chana and an expected rise in arrival of new chana in the coming days, prospects for chana look bearish, said Sanjay Agrawal, a local chana trader told *Business Line*. Chana dal also ruled stable on subdued demand, with chana dal (average) on Tuesday quoted at Rs. 3,300-3,350 a quintal; chana dal (medium) at Rs. 3,400-3,450; and chana dal (bold) at Rs. 3,500-3,750 a quintal. Our Correspondent

Groundnut oil falls on weak demand

Rajkot, February 18: Groundnut oil fell on poor demand, while washed cottonseed oil increased on fresh demand from stockists. Groundnut oil new tin was down by Rs. 10 at Rs. 1,315-1,320/15 kg. Groundnut oil loose traded flat at Rs. 725-730/10 kg and *teliya* tin at Rs. 1,135-1,136/15 kg. About 4-5 tankers of groundnut oil were traded by Saurashtra mills. Price of groundnut also dropped due to bumper output. In Rajkot, groundnut bold traded at Rs. 591-670/20 kg, while the price of small groundnut was quoted at Rs. 602-678/20 kg. Washed cottonseed oil gained Rs. 5 at Rs. 598-600/10 kg and cotton oil new tin at Rs. 1,080-1,090/15 kg. Our Correspondent

Business Standard

Crude palm oil rises 1% as demand picks up

[Crude palm oil](#) prices up by 1.02 per cent to Rs 572.90 per 10 kg in futures trading after participants created speculative positions following rising demand in the spot markets.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude palm oil for delivery in April rose by Rs 5.80, or 1.02 per cent, to Rs 572.90 per 10 kg in business turnover of 87 lots.

The March contract was up Rs 5.50, or 0.97 per cent, to Rs 571.40 per 10 kg in 402 lots.

Analysts said speculative positions built-up by participants following pick-up in spot demand mainly led to rise in crude palm oil prices at futures trade.

Potato up 0.6% on spot demand

[Potato](#) prices rose 0.67% to Rs 1,155 per quintal in futures market today as speculators increased their positions amid a firming trend at spot markets on strong demand amid

restricted arrivals.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), potato for delivery in March traded higher by Rs 7.70, or 0.67%, to Rs 1,155 per quintal, with a business turnover of 120 lots.

The potato for April contract also inched up by Rs 6.20, or 0.53%, to Rs 1,174.90 per quintal, with a trading volume of 48 lots.

Analysts said improved demand against less arrivals from producing regions mainly supported the upside in potato prices at futures trade.

Cardamom down 1.3% on sluggish demand

[Cardamom](#) prices drifted Rs 10.60 to Rs 766.10 per kg in futures trade today after speculators offloaded holdings due to subdued spot demand at prevailing increased levels.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), cardamom for delivery in March declined by Rs 10.60, or 1.36%, to Rs 766.10 per kg in a business turnover of 128 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in April traded lower by Rs 8.60, or 1.06%, to Rs 797.10 per kg with trading volume of 435 lots.

Market analysts said off-loading of positions by traders amid a weak spot market trend on subdued demand mainly led to a fall in cardamom futures prices.

Adequate stocks position in the physical market also influenced trading in cardamom prices, they said.

Coriander up 1.5% on spot demand

[Coriander](#) rose by 1.49% to Rs 9,078 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators enlarged their positions supported by rising demand in the spot markets amid restricted arrivals from growing areas.

At the [National Commodity and Derivative Exchange](#), coriander for April delivery gained Rs 133, or 1.49%, to Rs 9,078 per quintal with an open interest of 44,940 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in February traded higher by Rs 82, or 1.01%, to Rs 8,240 per quintal, with an open interest of 3,220 lots.

Market analysts said increased buying by speculators on pick up in spot market demand against restricted arrivals from producing belts mainly influenced coriander prices to rise in futures trade.

Egg prices fall 12% in February



After clocking good gains during the Nov-Jan period, [egg](#) prices in Andhra Pradesh witnessed a 12 per cent drop in February mainly due to the fall in vegetable prices and marginal rise in supply.

According to the National Egg Coordination Committee ([NECC](#)), the average farm gate price in the state for every 100 units stood at Rs 322 in February, as against an average of Rs 370 in January and Rs 386 in December.

In the winter months every year, farmers here reap good returns on the back of increased consumption and strong demand from other states. As winter subsides, prices adjust themselves to the demand-supply position.

However, this year, average monthly prices in February came down quite sharply from the highs of January. "The sudden fall in prices of vegetables in the last few months could have possibly made people to consume more vegetables. This partly contributed to the fall in prices of eggs," said a senior official of NECC, Hyderabad.

According to him, prices exhibit volatility during Mar-Jun due to a demand oscillation of 20 per cent. For farmers to break-even, prices have to stay well above Rs 300 (for every 100 units), he added.

Subramanyam, an NECC coordinator based in Chittoor, said attracted by good returns in the last three months and news of extended winter in North India, many farmers did not opt for culling the birds for chicken in February, which led to some rise in supply.

Confirming this, a farmer in East Godavari district said there was 10 per cent more supply this time.

While Andhra Pradesh produces 70 million eggs every day, around 40 per cent is marketed to other states.

"The [poultry sector](#), which is predominantly unorganised, can be easily subjected to price volatility by a bunch of traders and wholesalers," said Atul Mahajan, managing director of poultry prices monitor papaak.com.

Due to absence of cold storage facilities and short shelf-life of eggs, many farmers were suffering losses every year, he added. During March-April, prices come under pressure on fall in demand and recover slightly in May and from June they start to stabilise.

In 2013, as against an average of Rs 340 in February, prices dropped to Rs 250 in May then. During this period, many farmers suffered losses but kept counting on winter demand to cover the losses. The AP government passed an order halving the unit cost of electricity consumed to Rs 3.30 from November. However, there was no respite in the prices of essential feed--soymeal and maize. In poultry industry, maize and soymeal constitute around 80 per cent cost, followed by electricity and labour expenses.

Andhra Pradesh Poultry Federation president D Sudhakar said farmers would incur losses if prices drop drastically during March-May. In such a situation, "we have to treat it as another bad year for the industry," he said.

According to him, no new players are entering the industry in the state due to falling margins and high feedcosts. The prices of soyabean and maize, after the fixation of minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 2,500 and Rs 1,300 per quintal, are currently available at Rs 3,500 and around Rs 1,600 per quintal respectively.

Sugar output drops by 13%; cane arrears cross Rs 12k cr

The country's [sugar output](#) fell over 13 per cent to 14.4 million tonnes so far this year on delayed crushing while sugarcane arrears have crossed Rs 12,000 crore till date, industry body Indian Sugar Mills Association ([ISMA](#)) said on Tuesday.

Mills had manufactured 16.6 million tonnes of sugar in the corresponding period of the 2012-13 marketing year (October-September), it said in a statement.

According to ISMA, sugar output in [Maharashtra](#) has reached five million tonnes while in [Uttar Pradesh](#) it declined 18 per cent to 3.6 million tonnes and by four per cent to 2.7 million tonnes in [Karnataka](#).

Sugar recovery in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh – the country's top two sugar producing states – was at 11 per cent and 9 per cent, respectively.

Mills have produced 750,000 tonnes of sugar in Gujarat, 660,000 tonnes in Andhra Pradesh and 450,000 tonnes in Tamil Nadu till February 15 of the current marketing year, it stated.

ISMA said the total raw sugar production has reached 800,000 tonnes till January, while mills are aiming to manufacture additional 10,00,000 tonnes in the remaining months of the current marketing year.

On sugarcane arrears, the industry body said total cane payment dues of farmers have crossed Rs 12,000 crore, of which Rs 8,000 crore pertains to Uttar Pradesh and Rs 3,000 crore for Karnataka alone as on date, it said in a statement.

On exports, ISMA said about 850,000 tonnes of sugar has been sold in the overseas market till January of this year. Of this, 450,000 tonnes was raw sugar and the rest refined.

“Another 1.2 to two lakh tonnes, mostly raw sugar, are in transit for getting exported,” it added.
