

## Tuesday market offers farm hands a new livelihood model

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*At least 200 hawkers sell their wares at the market every Tuesday —Photo: B. Jothi Ramalingam*

CHENNAI, February 24, 2014 - A sleepy village in Tiruvallur district comes to life every Tuesday, thanks to a market that helps farm hands earn some cash by selling vegetables grown in nearby fields or brought from outside.

On Tuesdays, agricultural work in Chinnambedu village, popularly known as Siruvapuri, located 35 km from Chennai in Tiruvallur district, is put on hold. The weekly market springs to life along the long winding road leading to the Murugan temple with at least 200 hawkers selling local produce including raw bananas, banana stems, greens, brinjals, saplings and fruits.

According to K. Kapilan, a farmer and local resident, over 10,000 devotees visit the Siruvapuri Murugan temple on Tuesdays and special days like Krithigai.

“Many of our farm hands buy produce from local farmers and sell it at the market. The villagers produce banana, chilly, paddy and pulses,” he said.

Antonyammal, who works as a labourer in the neighbouring fields, said that every Tuesday, she buys vegetables from Arani market.

“I leave the village at 3 a.m. so that I reach here by 6 a.m. and start selling vegetables including brinjal, ladies finger, radish and bitter gourd. I buy vegetables worth Rs. 1,000 and earn a profit of around Rs. 300. On other days, all that I can earn is Rs. 150,” she said.

The market allows people like M. Nagooran, another labourer, to earn that extra rupee. “I don’t mind sitting on the road in the dust because I make extra cash on these days. I don’t earn much working as a farm hand,” he said.

There are those like Nagomi from Palavakkam, who sell puttu arisi — which is cooked red rice, shredded coconuts and sugar. Small packets are priced at Rs. 10.

She walks around the market with her plate rather than sitting at one spot. “If I move around, I can cover more people,” she explains with a grin.

Apart from the hawkers, the market also sees temporary hotels being set up. Nandini Store is ranked as the best by locals and visitors.

Ramesh Babu, who has been running the store, said it takes three days of work for his family to run the hotel on Tuesdays.

“We make idlis and pongal for breakfast, variety rice for lunch and fried items for dinner. Food is available till 10 p.m. On Sundays too, there is a crowd,” he said.

## Farm wells in Tiruvallur to boost water supply

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CHENNAI, February 24, 2014 - In a bid to manage the city’s water demand during summer, Chennai Metrowater is hiring agricultural wells in Tiruvallur district to draw groundwater and offset the shortfall.

However, officials of Metrowater say these wells will be kept in reserve and be used only as a last resort during summer. At present, Chennai gets 580-600 million litres of water on alternate days due to insufficient resources.

The water agency had recently floated tenders to hire nearly 250 agricultural borewells near Poondi, Tamaraiykkam and Minjur. Some of the villages from where the groundwater will be sourced for city water supply are Magaral, Pullarambakkam, Kilanoor and Siruvanoor Kandigai.

The water agency expects to draw 40 million litres a day (mld) from these wells. Sources say water drawn from the borewells will travel about 40 km through pipelines to Red Hills from where it will be supplied to the city.

Metrowater had earlier purchased water from agricultural wells in 2004 when the city faced severe water scarcity.

There were also plans to buy groundwater at a rate of nearly Rs. 24 per hour in 2010 following a drop in storage at reservoirs catering to Chennai's water demand. However, the wells were not used then as Krishna water came in handy in augmenting the water supply.

"This year too, we will decide about purchasing water from the agricultural wells depending on how much Krishna water we receive after March," said an official.

Additional lorries will be engaged to facilitate more tanker trips if required. The water agency currently operates nearly 3,000 tanker trips to provide street supply.

"We also plan to sink 13 more borewells in the Neyveli aquifer and Poondi to draw 13 mld of groundwater," said an official.

Besides sourcing water from Tamaraiykkam and other well fields, alternate arrangements are also being made to bring 55 mld of water from Neyveli and Paravanar river in Cuddalore district if supply from Veeranam tank is suspended for want of resources.

***Metrowater expects to draw 40 million litres of water per day, from these wells.***

## Farmers share knowledge with Punjab counterparts

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TIRUPUR, February 24, 2014 - S.V. Chinnasamy, R. Janakiraman, R. Eswaran and M. Subramanian, four progressive farmers from Tirupur district who were selected by the Agriculture department for an exchange programme with their counterparts in Punjab, have returned richer with knowledge on farm income enhancement methods.

The visit to Punjab gave the four farmers to take part in a progressive agriculture summit at Mohali and visit farms as well as research facilities there. Mr. Eswaran, one of the members of the team, told *The Hindu* that one of the biggest gains from the visit were the chances we got to learn how the farmers there had been giving value-addition to their farm produces on a large scale immediately after the harvests, instead of depending on selling the raw produces alone.

"Manufacturing of value added products by farmers themselves, like what they do in Punjab in the case of crops like maize and potatoes, can avoid any losses occur due to the glut in the market for raw produces," he said.

This apart, the exposure also helped the Tirupur farmers to learn how their counterparts from the Punjab succeeded in introducing many modified gadgets suited for small scale farmers as farm mechanisation initiatives and thereby, reduce the manpower requirements.

"In a district like Tirupur, which face labour shortage, the systems can be replicated which not only reduce the dependency on manpower but also increases the farm incomes," observed Mr. Chinnasamy. The Tirupur farmers also visited National Research Centre for Mushroom at Solan in the nearby Himachal Pradesh State.

"We will be disseminating the entire things learned from the visit to Punjab to other farmers across Tirupur district," Mr. Eswaran said.

# Singoor project rejuvenates Andol farmers

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*Officials inspecting the Singoor Canal in Medak District.- PHOTO: MOHD ARIF*

ANDOL (MEDAK DISTRICT), February 24, 2014 - M. Mallaiah is the president of the Water Users' Association and in his late 40s. Till recently he worked as a labourer under Mahatma Gandhi National

Employment Generation Scheme (MNREGS) on daily wages.

But, the Singoor project has transformed not only his life but hundreds of farmers in Andol mandal who had to work as labourers as there was no water for irrigation. The construction of canals and trial release of water from Singoor has brought cheers to these farmers who have now taken to agriculture again.

"I worked as a daily wage earner despite having nine acres of land as there was no water for irrigation. The construction of canals and release of water from Singoor project is going to change our lives, forever. We can cultivate the lands, live a dignified life and provide work for many labourers," says Mr. Mallaiah. Partial completion of Singoor canals and trial run of water has increased the confidence levels among the farmers. It's a four-decades-old dream that came true for the people of Andol constituency represented by Deputy Chief Minister C. Damodar Rajanarasimha, who was instrumental in completing the project. Land prices increased 10-fold. "We used to sell Rs. 40,000 per acre whereas the present rate is Rs. 4 lakh per acre," says K. Srinivas Yadav, former sarpanch of Andol village. Even then many farmers are not ready to sell their lands.

B. Srinivas is more optimistic. "We are seven brothers having about four kuntas of land. We can get two crops of paddy every year once we get assured irrigation.

The rice yield is sufficient to feed my small family of four for the entire year without any worry," says Srinivas pointing towards the completely filled Andol tank. K. Lingamaiah and B. Raju, having about 10 acres each, are busy clearing the bushes in the small sub-canal that leads to their fields. "More than 60 farmers are participating in the clearing job depending on the time available so that we can get water without hindrance," they said.

***Many farmers who were forced to work as labourers for want of irrigation water, take to farming following the trial release of water from Singoor canals***

## Now, wild boars haunt Kuppam farmers

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CHITTOOR, February 24, 2014 - *After the wild elephants which destroyed their crops, wild boars are now giving sleepless nights to the farmers*

After a three-month long unprecedented destruction of crops by herds of wild elephants, now it's the turn of wild boars in hundreds to ravage the fields in over two dozen villages of Ramakuppam, Gudupalle and Kuppam mandals in the district.

The fields rich with potato, papaya, sweet-corn and various vegetables in these mandals bordering with Karnataka are surrounded by thick forests, inviting sounders of wild boars immediately after dusk. The farmers are anguished that at a time when they are enjoying a breather after the elephants' menace, the scourge of boars has started stalking their economy.

The fields of Nayanur, Peddavanka, Nadumuru, Nayanur, Kodiganipalle, Peddaparthikunta, Chinnaparthikunta, Gollapalle, Veernamala, Thanda and Arimanupenta are some of the villages in these mandals which bore the brunt of these wild boars.

Destruction of crops by wild boars is not new to farmers here, but what now terrifies them is that their numbers have swelled to hundreds, raiding the crops from all directions, making all efforts to save their crops futile. This year, the sounders have incredibly adapted themselves to the blast of crackers, the hoots and shouts of farmers and beating of drums mean nothing to them. The farmers on night vigil have no option, but to lock themselves inside sheds or to abandon their vigils.

Incidents of killing boars with live wires, crude bombs and shooting at them are also common, but most of the cases go unreported. The farmers say solar fencing will be a better deterrent against raids by wild animals. The forest department partially erected solar fencing at fields in Ramakuppam mandal, but the works are yet to commence in the other two mandals. The seriousness found in tackling the wild elephants is missing in the case of boars.

## Red Star alleges 'unholy' nexus in conversion of forest, farm land

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BERHAMPUR, February 24, 2014 - CPI-ML (Red Star) alleged that land meant for agriculture, grazing ground as well as forest land was being converted for other uses because of some unholy nexus.

Addressing newsmen in the city, leaders of Ganjam district committee of the party said it was a factor behind reduction of agricultural land in the district in recent times. District committee members of the party, Sankar Sahu and Sibaram Sahu alleged that around 5,000 acres of agricultural land, forest land and grazing ground in the district had been already converted for other use in recent times.

According to them most of this land was either used for commercial cultivation projects of private companies or for non-agricultural use.

"The forest land which has been converted has not been handed over to the real landless needy but is being handed over to private companies for commercial agriculture," they said.

### **Corporate farming**

The party also came up with data that 1,000 acres of such land was being used for corporate farming in Buguda block, its amount was 800 acres of forest land in Polasara block.

The CPI-ML (Red Star) has also objected changed use of 2000 acres in Bhanjanagar block and around 800 acres in Kukudakhandi block. Mr Sankar and Mr Sibaram alleged that the tehsil office at Kukudakhandi had been built up on land meant for grazing ground. The party also demanded the government to take immediate steps so that the land acquired by Tata Steel for the purpose of its now shelved mega steel project in the district should be returned back to the displaced families. "If the company wants to use the land for other use like its proposed SEZ, then it should again acquire the land at current value," leaders of the party said.

The party has decided to take up a major demonstration at Bhanjanagar on March 12, to protest against use of land meant for domestic animal grazing, agricultural land, and forest land for any other use. They had taken up similar demonstrations in recent past over the issue. On February 3, a farmers' demonstration had been organised by the party regarding it at Aska. The CPI-ML (Red Star) has also decided to protest against the establishment of proposed titanium plant near Chatrapur alleging that it would drastically affect the environment of the area.

# Bapatla Agri College alumni meet

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HYDERABAD, February 24, 2014 - Alumni of the 1970 batch of Bapatla Agricultural College held a meeting here on Sunday, at the Jaya International Hotel. The meeting was attended by several distinguished former students of the institution including Mannava Sivakumar, former Director of Climate Prediction and Adaptation Branch of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) in Geneva, Switzerland, C. R. Swaminathan, Former Chief Executive, PSG Group of Institutions, Coimbatore, and P. Koteswara Rao, former I-G of A.P. Among the issues discussed by the meeting was the status of the Endowment Fund established by the Alumni Foundation, and the members decided to enhance the amount to grant more scholarships to deserving poor students attending the Bapatla Agricultural College currently. The next meeting will be held in Tirupati from February 3 to 5, 2015.

## TNAU predicts price increase for turmeric

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COIMBATORE, February 24, 2014 - The Domestic and Export Market Intelligence Cell of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has predicted the price of turmeric to rule on the higher side because of high demand.

It is predicted that it would cross Rs. 7,500 a quintal during March-May this year.

### **Fresh arrival**

The peak demand will pick up from February end after completion of the winter season. Fresh arrival of BSR 8 variety has started in Tamil Nadu markets and other varieties are expected to start arriving from March from Andhra Pradesh, according to a release from the university.

Trade sources say that Indian turmeric production this year was estimated at 35 to 40 lakh bags of which Andhra Pradesh accounted for 20 lakh bags, Tamil Nadu for seven lakh bags and Maharashtra for 10 lakh bags.

### **Analysis**

The present prediction was based on the analysis made of the last 25 years' turmeric price that prevailed at Erode Regulated Market and traders' survey.

For details, contact 0422-2431405.

## Training on millet production

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COIMBATORE, February 24, 2014 - A training on millet production and value addition will be organised by the Department of Millets of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University here on February 27 and 28.

According to a release, participants will receive training on preparation of value-added products from millets. Millet growing farmers and women from self-help groups can participate in this free training.

For details, contact Head, Department of Millets, TNAU, Coimbatore, 641003; call 0422-2450507; or e-mail [tomillets@tnau.ac.in](mailto:tomillets@tnau.ac.in).

# “Foot-and-mouth disease under control”

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*Initiative continues to eradicate it:  
Collector*

PERAMBALUR, February 24, 2014 - Even though the foot and mouth disease (FMD), which claimed the lives of a large number of cattle population across the State a few months ago, is firmly under control, the State Animal Husbandry Department is continuing its initiative to eradicate this disease in toto. The department will launch the sixth round of vaccination throughout

Perambalur district by March 1, according to Darez Ahamed, Collector.

Addressing a farmers' grievances day meeting here recently, Mr. Ahamed said the district recorded cent per cent achievement by covering the entire cattle population in the last five vaccination camps held after the outbreak of the disease. "Farmers should extend a helping hand to veterinary doctors to make the sixth round also a success," the Collector said.

Vaccination of the animals in 13 phases at regular intervals would protect them from the disease on a permanent basis, he said and added that it had been planned to organise orientation programmes to create awareness among farmers soon.

Thangaraj, Deputy Director of Animal Husbandry, had explained that an animal took a few days to develop immunity to the disease after the administration of the vaccine. He also dismissed as untrue the reports of death of animals after the vaccination.

When farmers drew the attention of the authorities to the fall in the milk yield of the vaccinated cows, Dr. Thangaraj said this had no basis. Due to stress underwent during vaccination process there might be a fall in milk yield for a couple of days, but it would not have any adverse impact on the animal's health.

## Water level

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The water level in Papanasam dam on Sunday stood at 55.10 feet (the maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 115.50 cusecs and 11 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam. The water level in Manimuthar dam stood at 73.91 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 11 cusecs and 330 cusecs of water was discharged.

### **Kanyakumari**

The water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 12.30 feet, while it was 45 feet in Perunchani, 4.26 feet in Chittar I, 4.36 feet in Chittar II, 3.80 feet in Poigai and 50.20 feet in Mamabazathuraiyar.

# Doppler weather radars to boost forecasting

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*A student demonstrates the working of an unmanned aerial vehicle to Shailesh Nayak, Secretary, Union Ministry of Earth Sciences—Photo: K. Pichumani*

As part of efforts to improve weather forecast services, the Meteorological department is in the process of adding more Doppler weather radars to its network.

The department is also identifying gap areas such as strengthening of meteorological observations in mountainous regions and more automatic rain gauges, L.S. Rathore, director general of Indian Meteorology Department said on the sidelines of a four-day symposium on 'Monsoons-Observations, Prediction and Simulation.'

Organised jointly by Indian Meteorological Society (IMS) and SRM University, the symposium was inaugurated on Friday. Mr. Rathore said the department was also considering venue-specific forecasting in urban areas following the success model of predicting weather for the Commonwealth Games a few years ago.

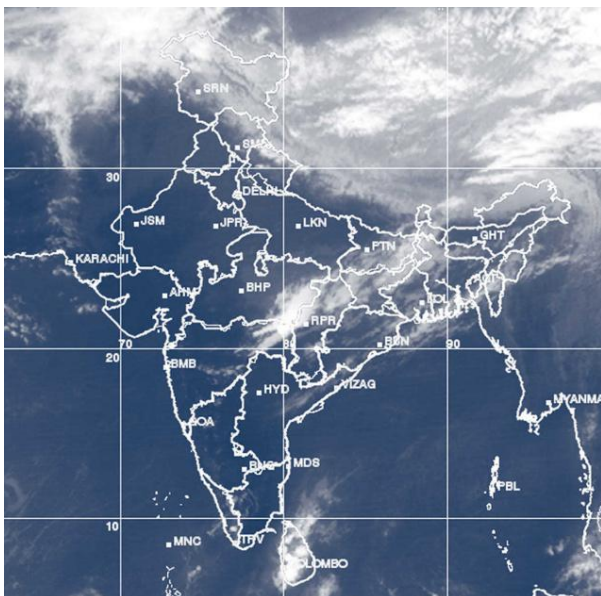
At present, information on various weather parameters for five days is being collated and disseminated to farmers at the district-level. "We plan to narrow it down to the block-level soon," he added.

Earlier, Shailesh Nayak Secretary, Union Ministry of Earth Sciences, and IMS president, elaborated on the issues that need to be addressed. Reiterating the need to improve the accuracy in the prediction of monsoon rainfall, he said the ministry has taken steps to augment atmospheric and ocean observation. Satellite and ship-based observation has also been initiated.

SRM University's vice chancellor M. Ponnaivaiko also spoke during the symposium attended by about 300 delegates.

## Weather

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INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs. Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on February 23.

# Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

**Monday, Feb 24**

Max 29° | Min 22°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 83

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:28

Sunset: 06:16

Barometer: 1015

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

**Tuesday, Feb 25**

Max 28° | Min 23°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday  
**Feb 26**



30° | 21°  
Partly Cloudy

Thursday  
**Feb 27**



31° | 22°  
Partly Cloudy

Friday  
**Feb 28**



25° | 23°  
Cloudy

Saturday  
**Mar 1**



26° | 23°  
Overcast

Sunday  
**Mar 2**



26° | 22°  
Overcast

## *The Indian* **EXPRESS**

### Food security Act also covers foreign nationals, refugees, says Law Ministry



*The association of Nepali residents in India had filed the petition in the court to get subsidised ration under PDS. (Reuters)*



## SUMMARY

*MEA has been asked to provide details of the allowance to refugees to ascertain if they could be brought under food security.*

The Union Law Ministry's opinion is that the food security legislation covers not just Indians but also foreign nationals and refugees.

The ministry's legal affairs department gave this opinion in the backdrop of a 2012 petition by the Mool Pravah Akhil Bharat Nepal Ekta Samaj, saying that "the provisions of National Food Security Act are not only applicable to Indian citizens but also to foreign nationals legally residing in India".

The view runs contrary to the Himachal Pradesh High Court order last July that ration cards cannot be issued to those who are not citizens of India. The association of Nepali residents in India had filed the petition in the court to get subsidised ration under PDS.

The legal affairs department's opinion has drawn flak from the Ministry of External Affairs as well as Centre's food & public distribution department, which have said that the grant of ration cards implies transfer of resources in the form of subsidies from the government of India to its citizens, and not to those of another country.

At a meeting on February 10, the two asked the legal affairs department to review its opinion considering that entitlement under the Act was "subject to inclusion of the household in the list of eligible households".

While agreeing to re-examine the entitlement on the matter of foreign nationals, the legal affairs department felt refugees stood on a different footing as they were provided a subsistence allowance by the MEA.

The MEA has been asked to provide details of the allowance to refugees to ascertain if they could be brought under food security, with the subsidy component deducted from the allowance.

The legal affairs department has to submit "fresh advice" this week as the Supreme Court will take up an appeal by the Nepali association against the high court order. In its interim order of December 13, the apex court had stayed the cancellation of permanent consumer or ration cards issued to Nepali applicants or migrant labourers, and gave the Centre 10 weeks to file an affidavit.



## Farmers Need Facilitating, Not Spoon-feeding

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There is good news from the agriculture front. Over the last 10 years, the food grain output rose from 213.19 metric tonnes (MT) to 263.2MT. During the period, production of pulses and oilseeds also increased from 15 and 25MT to 20 and 33MT respectively. The value of agricultural exports has also soared from \$7.5 billion to \$45 billion. Tractor sales have trebled to 5.5 lakh units and rural poverty has declined faster than urban poverty. All this shows that the agriculture sector has been steadily growing despite the slackness noticed during a 10-year period earlier. But the government has little to take credit for the achievement which has more to do with market forces than its intervention.

The farmers should realise that the era of automatic price rise through government intervention is almost over with subsidies being phased out globally. India has been given five years' time to phase out all such subsidies so that it complies with the provisions of the WTO under the general agreement on trade and tariff (GATT). They have to face the realities of global trade and reap benefits. Also, they must be prepared to face the consequences of fluctuations in global demand and supply.

Instead of giving subsidy on fertilisers, seeds and electricity, the government should concentrate on building infrastructure in the rural areas. For instance, the state of rural roads is pathetic and it makes transport of agricultural produce and inputs like seeds, fertiliser etc. difficult and expensive. Similarly, it is the government's job to provide irrigation facilities to the farmers. Without adequate electric supply, farmers will not be able to store their produce like potatoes, apples and tomatoes and provide irrigation. Investments in these sectors will ultimately benefit the farmers. One mistake the UPA government did was to ignore the potential of biotechnology in agriculture. One can only hope that the next government will not repeat the folly.

## THE HINDU Business Line

### Industry sees lower rabi chana output on unusually cold weather

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**Panjim, February 23:** Contrary to Government estimate, chana output this rabi season is expected to be lower at 6.5 million tonnes (mt), according to trade estimate at the Pulses Conclave 2014 held in Goa. This was largely due to unusually cold weather and overestimate of pulses acreage.

Earlier, the government has estimated a bumper chana output at 9.8 mt this year against 8.88 mt harvested in the same period last year.

Speaking to media on the sidelines of the pulses conclave, Bimal Kothari, Vice-Chairman, Indian Pulses and Grains Association, said if the industry estimate comes true the overall pulses output this year would be much less than Government's estimate of 19.8 mt as chana crop alone accounts for 40 per cent of the rabi crop.

"Given the huge variation in government and industry output estimation, the Association plans to appoint a private agency to do crop survey in a scientific manner. We are already talking with SGS, the world's leading agriculture inspection, verification, testing and certification company," he said.

If all goes as per plan, the first crop survey by a private agency should start from next kharif season, he said.

#### **Low MSP**

Highlighting the fact that tur and chana prices have fallen below the minimum support price, Kothari said the quantity of Government's pulses purchase at MSP is low and is not sufficient to protect farmers' interest. Chana prices in the wholesale market has fallen to Rs. 25-27 a kg against the MSP of Rs. 31 a kg. Chana was sold at Rs. 45-50 a kg two years back when the Government introduced special incentive programme to enhance output.

The Government should consider appointing a dedicated agency to procure pulses at MSP. The Association expects pulses imports to fall this year to three million tonne from four million tonnes recorded last year due to higher crop output.

The association has urged the Government to allow free exports and felt that such a move will not spike in domestic pulses prices as the international demand for pulses is very low. India last year exported just 3-4 lakh tonnes while it imported 3.30-3.40 mt. In the first nine months of this fiscal, pulses imports were at 2 mt.

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