

## New technologies at farmers' meet

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COIMBATORE, January 7, 2014 - The State-level Farmers' Day meet to be held at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University on January 11 will witness the unveiling of a host of new crop varieties, technologies, implements, publications, welfare measures and e-extension initiatives.

The highlight of the meet would be the inauguration of a central museum that would showcase all the seed and crop varieties introduced by the university and the related technologies, Vice-Chancellor of TNAU K. Ramasamy told presspersons on Monday. Besides the various launches, the university will begin the services of a battery-operated two-wheeler and four-wheeler to enable visiting farmers to go around the TNAU campus. Three best seed production centres and three best seed production scientists will be given awards. Five farmers who have achieved in their fields of specialisation will be presented the 'Velanmai Chemmal' awards. The awards are sponsored by CRI Pumps Private Ltd. Agriculture Minister S. Damodaran will be the chief guest for the occasion.

## Vending machine for seeds at TNAU

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*It will dispense 36 varieties of seeds*



A person demonstrating the automatic seed vending machine at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. It will be placed at the entrance of the Botanical Garden in Coimbatore on January 11.

COIMBATORE, January 7, 2014 - Tamil Nadu Agricultural University is installing a seed vending machine at the entrance of the Botanical Garden on Marudhamalai Road to dispense small quantities of seeds for roof and kitchen gardening purposes.

To be inaugurated on January 11 by Agriculture Minister S. Damodaran, the machine will dispense 36 varieties of seeds, both vegetable and flower, at the touch of a button. It contains six racks – four to hold vegetable seeds and two to hold flower seeds, all in pouches. Hence, a person wanting a pouch from a particular rack has to insert a Rs. 10 note in the given cavity and punch the assigned button on the console near the door of the machine.

According to Vice-Chancellor of the university K. Ramasamy, the Rs. 2.4 lakh-

seed dispenser from Haryana is the first to be installed in Tamil Nadu and is aimed at easing the financial burden of those who often end up paying huge amounts for large quantities of

seeds they do not require. The machine will be maintained by the Seed Centre of the university and will dispense TNAU seeds. The university plans to subsequently install more vending machines that will dispense seeds of private companies too.

## Farmers turn teary-eyed as onion prices crash

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*Price has touched Rs.8 a kg at the wholesale market*



*a tale of woe: Women sorting out small onions at the wholesale market in Dindigul on Monday.— Photo: G. Karthikeyan*

DINDIGUL, January 7, 2014 - Price of onion hits rock bottom, thanks to huge arrivals from Mysore and massive yield in Dindigul and neighbouring districts like Tiruchi and Tirupur.

Prices of small onions, which were hovering between Rs.80 and Rs.100 last month, have crashed to Rs.8 at the wholesale market on Monday. Top quality of onion was hovering around Rs.12 and 15 a kg.

Prices started coming down from December second week, when it was Rs.50 a kg, said traders at the Dindigul wholesale market, the biggest onion market in the State.

The market received 12 lorry loads of onion on Monday and prices touched an all time low. Farmers fear that the prices will go down further, if arrivals increase in the coming weeks. Small onions, lifeline of thousands of farmers, have been cultivated on a large scale in Batlagundu, Nilakottai and Oddanchathram. With the commencement of harvesting, farmers in the district have started dumping small onions in the market.

Arrival of onions from Eriyode, Nilakotti, Vendasandur and Oddanchatram has increased manifold and supply is more than the demand, says onion commission agent V. Rajendran.

“Arrival will increase in the months to come. Exporters alone can help farmers get a better price and stabilise the market. Otherwise, farmers will incur huge loss”, he pointed out.

“On Monday, we exported 70 tonnes of onion to East Asian countries and this should continue,” he added.

“Sudden fluctuation in onion prices have not helped us, we see only loss every year,” said M. Murugan, a farmer from Vendasandur.

“Less yield means loss for farmers, despite high price of the produce. Bumper yield will help slash prices but it will not help meet even production costs”, he added.

Yield was hit in the district last year owing to failure of monsoon and this resulted in prices of onion skyrocketing three months ago.

Farmers, who got 80 bags of onion in one acre in 2011, could not get even 25 bags in 2012.

“The only solace is that huge arrival of small onions in January has made onion affordable to the public”, said Kandhasamy, another trader.

# Farmers take out a rally in Nagapattinam

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NAGAPATTINAM, January 7, 2014 - Farmers affiliated to the Cauvery Delta Farmers Protection Association staged a protest rally here with a slew of demands on Monday. The farmers, who took out a rally from the new bus stand to the collectorate, criticised the State government for extracting a promissory note from farmers for the crop compensation of Rs.15,000 that was paid for 2012-13 for crop loss. The State government announced a compensation of Rs.15,000 an acre along with the State government component of Rs.8,692 for crop loss exceeding 50 per cent. However, the funds that were remitted to bank accounts of farmers and the remittance was allowed for withdrawal only on obtaining a promissory note for the said amount. The promissory note was to be claimed during the current season, says Kaveri Danapalan, general secretary, the Cauvery Farmers Protection Association. According to the protesters, the government should renounce its claim from farmers.

Further, farmers had asked for an increase in support for paddy from current Rs.1,400 a quintal to Rs.2,500 a quintal. The protesters demanded cultivation incentive of Rs.500 a quintal for paddy as against the current incentive of Rs.50 a quintal. Further, privatisation of National Agricultural Insurance Scheme by the Centre was condemned. Farmers have appealed for the State government to run the scheme.

## Low price of jaggery spoils farmers' party

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*Farmers usually get the best price in the days preceding the Pongal festival*



*Workers busy making 'jaggery cakes' on Ayyampettai - Ganapathi Agraharam Road in Thanjavur as Pongal nears. — Photo : B.Velankanni Raj*

*Sakkarai Pongal* and *Ven Pongal* are the two main delicacies made during Pongal festival. Jaggery is the main ingredient for *Sakkarai Pongal* while *Ven Pongal* is prepared without jaggery.

Jaggery preparation is on in places such as Ayyampettai, Ganapathi Agraharam, Thiruvaiyaru and so on around Thanjavur. Workers from Palani, Dharmapuri, Erode, and Salem have been summoned for the task. They stay here for three or four months and prepare jaggery. They use the cane crusher to crush the cane and extract juice. This is put in trays to make the jaggery cakes called *Achu Vellam* or *Pettai Vellam* in market parlance.

Usually, the days preceding the Pongal festival are happy days for sugarcane farmers as there is good demand for the produce. But this year, the prices have dipped. "A 30 kg bag of jaggery was sold at Rs. 1,600 last year. This year, the price is only Rs. 1,250 for a bag," said Ramanathan, a sugarcane farmer.

According to traders, good arrival of jaggery from other States was the reason for the prices cooling down.

# Delta farmers express happiness

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THANJAVUR, January 7, 2014 - Farmers of Cauvery delta districts expressed happiness that Justice Chauhan, a judge of Supreme Court, will soon be appointed as the Chairman of Cauvery River Water Disputes Tribunal by the Centre.

S. Ranganathan, secretary, Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association, said that after a long gap, Mr. Justice Chauhan had been named Chairman of the Tribunal on the recommendation of Justice P. Sathasivam, Chief Justice of India.

The tribunal has been without a chairman for more than one and a half years ever since N.P. Singh resigned as chairman on health grounds in April 2012. "It is heartening that a new chairman will take over after his retirement on July 1. Though we have to wait for another six months, it is a welcome move," Mr. Ranganathan said.

The new chairman should look into petitions filed by the States and the Centre under Section 5 (3) of the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act seeking an explanation or guidance on the final award of the tribunal which are pending before it, Mr. Ranganathan said.

The tribunal had given its final award on February 5, 2007.

Mr. Ranganathan also said that the tribunal and the Supreme Court should examine whether it was necessary to hear the appeal petitions filed by States and the Centre as farmers were given to understand that Tribunal's award was final and there could not be any appeal.

V. Jeevakumar, vice-president of Tamil Nadu Agriculture Labourers Association, said that the new Chairman should give thrust to formation of the Cauvery Management Board and the Water Regulatory Authority as per the final award.

Sundara Vimalanathan of the Thanjavur Cauvery Farmers Protection Committee said that the Cauvery Management Board should be constituted immediately without delay.

## Farmers determined to intensify agitation

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*They demand resumption of flood carrier channel work*

*protest: Farmers staging a demonstration at Thisaiyanvilai on Monday.— Photo: A. SHAIKMOHIDEEN*

THISAIYANVILAI, January 7, 2014 - Over 2,000 farmers staged a demonstration at Thisaiyanvilai on Monday demanding immediate resumption of the work to link the Tamirabharani, the

Karumaeniyar and the Nambiyar rivers for taking the floodwater to the rain shadow regions of Tirunelveli and Tuticorin districts.

Led by M. Appavu, former Radhapuram MLA and organiser of the demonstration, the farmers, including over 1,000 women, raised slogans in support of early completion of the excavation of 73 km-long flood carrier channel that would take the surplus floodwater of the perennial river to the dry regions of Nanguneri, Thisaiyanvilai and M.L. Theri near Sattankulam in Tuticorin district to provide succour to the crop.

Mr. Appavu, who started the agitation after garlanding the statue of former Chief Minister K. Kamaraj near Thisaiyanvilai bus-stand, said the farmers of these dry regions were desperately in need of early completion of the project since the seawater was rapidly intruding into the land. If just 1,000 million cubic feet out of over 50,000 mcft floodwater

being wasted into the Gulf of Mannar, was diverted in the flood carrier channel, farmers of Nanguneri, Thisaiyanvilai, Radhapuram and Sattankulam regions would get benefited immensely. He charged that the Jayalalithaa-led AIADMK government had put the ambitious project in cold storage after the channel had been excavated for about 40 km as it was conceived and started by the previous DMK regime.

“Our agitation with renewed vigour will continue until this project is completed as it will benefit several generations. We will intensify the protest, if our genuine demand is ignored,” Mr. Appavu said.

As protestors from the nearby places came to Thisaiyanvilai in vans, the vehicles were stopped at entry points of this town panchayat and the agitators were asked to go to the venue by foot.

Led by Deputy Superintendent of Valliyoor N.K. Stanley Jones, the police made elaborate security arrangements as it had denied permission for hunger strike but allowed the demonstration.

## Waive farm loans: floriculturists

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UDHAGAMANDALAM, January 7, 2014 - Members of The Nilgiris District Floriculture Small Farmers Association staged a demonstration at the Independence Square here on Monday. N. Vishwanathan and N. Krishnamurthy, president and secretary, respectively, of the association, who led the demonstrators, said that it was to draw the attention of the government to their demands.

Stating that the government should waive the farm loans availed of by them from various banks, they added that the proceedings initiated against the floriculturists in distress should be stopped soon. The government should expedite work on establishing a carnation plants production unit. The horticulture complex here should be made to serve its purpose. Financial assistance should be extended to repair green houses which were damaged during natural calamities.

Action should be taken against traders who had supplied sub-standard planting materials and promoters who had been responsible for putting up poor quality green houses.

Adverting to the reasons for floriculture being hit in The Nilgiris, they said that farmers had been taken for a ride by some private firms which had supplied poor quality inputs. They submitted a memorandum to the Collector.

## Sugarcane farmers to launch indefinite agitation on Jan. 13

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MYSORE, January 7, 2014 - Sugarcane farmers have threatened to launch an indefinite stir in front of the residence of the district in-charge Minister V. Srinivas Prasad, to highlight their unresolved grievances.

This was decided at a meeting of the State Sugarcane Cultivators' Association held in the city on Monday. Association president Kurubur Shanthakumar said the State government had “betrayed the interests” of sugarcane cultivators of Mysore, by fixing the support price at Rs. 2,500 a tonne. This has resulted in a loss of Rs. 500 a tonne for farmers.

### **‘Exclude charges’**

The association said the government should ensure that the harvesting and transportation charges were excluded from the MSP, and the net price should be Rs. 2,500.

Although the government had fixed Rs. 2,500 as the support price, some factories have ignored this and are paying farmers Rs. 2,400 a tonne.

### **Indifference**

In view of the “indifference of authorities to the predicament of sugarcane farmers”, the association in Mysore has decided to launch an indefinite stir outside Mr. Prasad’s residence from January 13, said the association president.

## Farmers’ convention in Udupi on Jan. 11

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UDUPI, January 7, 2014 - The Udupi Zilla Krishik Sangha would be organising a one-day farmers’ convention at the Sharada Mantapa here on January 11.

Bantakal Ramakrishna Sharma, president of the sangha, said that nearly 4,000 farmers from different parts of the district were expected to participate in the convention. There will be three seminars related to agriculture, horticulture and dairy farming.

The topics for the seminars include: ‘Agriculture and modern education’, ‘Agriculture and culture’, ‘Processing of fruits and vegetables and value addition’, ‘Better varieties for paddy cultivation’, ‘First Aid in dairy farming’, ‘Model agriculture for self-reliance’, ‘Role of women in agriculture’, ‘Modern Apiculture or beekeeping’, and ‘Need for mechanisation in agriculture’. Experts in agriculture and horticulture would participate as resource persons in these seminars. An interaction programme between farmers and heads of various government departments is also in the offing. An exhibition-cum-sale of agricultural equipments, seeds and saplings, and books would be held at the venue.

## Farmers’ dream for water from Kinnerasani unfulfilled

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*Undue delay in completion of left bank canal disappoints farmers*

*A view of the Kinnerasani project in Khammam district. PHOTO: G. N. RAO*

KHAMMAM, January 7, 2014 - The long-awaited dream of farmers belonging to 11 villages in Palvancha and Burgumpadu mandals for water from the Kinnerasani project continues to remain unfulfilled

due to the inordinate delay in the completion of the works of the left bank canal of the project.

The Kinnerasani reservoir was constructed at Yanambailu in 1969 exclusively to cater to the water requirements of the Kothagudem Thermal Power Station (KTPS) in Palvancha. Subsequently, it emerged as the major drinking water source for the industrial towns of Palvancha and Kothagudem besides several other villages in Kothagudem division.

### **Sanction in 2005**

The government accorded administrative sanction for the right and left canals of the project at an estimated cost of Rs 36.82 crore in 2005.

The 6.5 km long right main canal of the project was completed after much delay more than one and half year ago. Chief Minister N Kiran Kumar Reddy inaugurated the right canal by releasing water into it in 2012.

The left bank canal of the project, conceived nearly seven years ago as part of the much touted Jalayagnam with an irrigation potential of 7000 acres, missed several deadlines in the last couple of years.

### Abrupt halt

The works came to an abrupt halt since the last rainy season. Sources said that a little over 19 km length of the total 24.25 km long left bank canal works had been completed so far. A combination of factors, including initial hiccups in acquisition of land, sharp escalation in project cost and tardy pace of execution of the works led to the inordinate delay, sources added.

The prolonged delay in completion of the Kinnerasani left bank canal works has exposed the government's apathy towards the small and marginal farmers belonging to the weaker sections, particularly of the tribal community in the division, said K Dharma, secretary, Kothagudem division, A P Rythu Sangham.

The non-completion of the left bank canal more than seven years after its inception exposed the hollow claims of the people at the helm of affairs about Jalayagnam, he charged, demanding that the works should be completed expeditiously at least by the end of the ensuing summer season.

"Efforts are under way to ensure speedy completion of the remaining works on 5.25 km stretch of the left bank canal before the next rainy season," said Bajaranna, executive engineer, Irrigation Department, Palvancha.

## Farmers seek water to KC canal for rabi

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KURNOOL, January 7, 2014 - Farmers staged a protest at the Collectorate here on Monday demanding water to KC canal for the rabi crop. The farmers blocked the traffic on the road and staged a demonstration holding placards and portraits of local leaders.

The police objected to protesters depicting the elected representatives in poor light and removed the placards. The farmers said the KC canal water was diverted to Anantapur district due to the indifference of the local leaders.

The traffic was restored after the protesters were dispersed.

Meanwhile, tomato farmers also staged a demonstration protesting against falling prices.

They urged the marketing department to take up shoring up measures to save farmers from huge losses and impending financial crisis.

***Block traffic on the road and stage a demonstration holding placards and portraits of local leaders***

## Farmers clear mango orchards in Krishna district

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*Labourers chopping a mango tree into pieces at Eedara village in Nuzvid division of Krishna district.*

VIJAYAWADA, January 7, 2014 - The mango trees that have survived vagaries of nature for nearly five decades are being axed in the district. The farmers in the region who are on the lookout for a lucrative alternative food crop and, if successful, mango orchards growing indigenous and exotic varieties of mangoes will dwindle in future if this trend continues.

Many growers are uprooting the mango trees that are 45 to 50 years old.

They are either looking for short period commercial crops or crop such as guava.

According to a rough estimate, the farmers have uprooted the trees in over 1,600 hectares in the district. Farmers in Nuzvid region, which is one of the popular areas for supply of high quality and tasty mangoes to national and international markets, are also sailing with the wind.

Horticulture Department Assistant Director B. S. Subbarayudu says that farmers cultivate mango in 96,000 hectares in 29 mandals of the district.

The farmers were uprooting the old trees as the yield has come down. The average yield is six tons per acre compared to State average of eight tons per acre.

The yield on these old trees is far less. The farmers were suggested to go for pruning or de-heading old trees for better yields.

But, they are more inclined to plant new saplings; they are planning to go for intercropping by cultivating vegetables, chillies etc.

It would take four years for a new sapling to bear the fruit, he says. Labourers like Rambabu say that they are paid Rs. 3,000 per ton to cut the trees and load them onto Lorries. N.

Srinivasulu of Sobhanapalem says that the mango trees have become too old for a good yield. More so, the returns are not attractive compared to maize. Hence, the farmers are clearing the mango orchards, he adds.

***Horticulture Department Assistant Director Subbarayudu says the farmers are uprooting the old trees as the yield has come down***

## Agriculture calendar to be launched

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KOLKATA, January 7, 2014 - After launching a unique administrative calendar, the State government has now decided to set up a 'Krishi' (agricultural) calendar.

While the administrative calendar sets targets for the 61 departments of the State government and aims at bringing transparency and accountability in government work, the Krishi calendar aims at boosting agricultural production in the State and aiding the process of agricultural marketing.

The calendar will have information on all types of agricultural products, although the focus will be on paddy and potato production. West Bengal leads in paddy production.

The calendar will contain information on the time of production of a certain crop, the districts in which it is primarily grown and suggestions on the use of fertilisers and insecticides to optimise production.

It will also aid farmers in earning the maximum possible returns for their crops and assist them in selling them. The calendar will act as a bridge between farmers and officials of the agriculture department at the block level.

***It will contain on the time of production of crops and districts in which they are grown***

## KAU to host south Indian agriculture fair in February

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THRISSUR, January 7, 2014 - The Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) will host the south Indian agricultural fair 'Agrifesta 2014' in February. The fair will showcase important researches and extension advancements achieved by the State Agricultural Universities, ICAR Research institutions and line departments in South India, according to KAU Vice-Chancellor P. Rajendran.

Farmer organisations, non-governmental organisations and agriculture entrepreneurs will partake in the mega event.

KAU Executive Committee member M.P.Vincent, MLA, who is the Organising Committee Chairman of the fair, informed that an organising committee had been formed with the



Ministers for Agriculture and Cooperation; the Thrissur Mayor; P.C. Chacko, M P; the Vice-Chancellor and the District Panchayat president as patrons.

The fair will create a platform for all stakeholders to share knowledge and experience and update themselves of the latest advancements in the farm sector. It also aims at motivating youth to take up agriculture as a profession.

Seminars on relevant topics, discussions, open forums and field visits to centres of KAU will be the highlights of the fair.

A food exhibition involving value-added agricultural products, ethnic food and speciality dishes of Kerala will add flavour to the event, Mr. Vincent said.

***Seminars on relevant topics, open forums and field visits to KAU centres will be the highlights of the fair.***

## CM assails national crop insurance programme

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CHENNAI, January 7, 2014 - *Says the "abrupt and sudden" decision by Centre comes as rude shock to farmers*

Criticising the Union government for launching the National Crop Insurance Programme (NCIP), Chief Minister Jayalalitha has stated that the "abrupt and sudden" decision of the Centre without "proper consultation" with stakeholders, especially States, came as a "rude shock" to farmers.

She was reacting to the Union government's withdrawal of the National Agriculture Insurance Scheme (NAIS) and replacing it with the Modified National Agriculture Insurance Scheme (MNAIS) / Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (WBCIS) under the newly introduced National Crop Insurance Programme (NCIP) from the 'Rabi' season of 2013-2014. In her letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Sunday, the Chief Minister said that as a result of the efforts of the State government, the number of farmers covered under the existing agriculture insurance scheme went up from 1.01 lakh farmers in 2000-2001 to 9.76 lakh farmers in 2012-2013.

To substantiate her point that the decision was made without taking into confidence of the stakeholders, she said the administrative instructions on the NCIP introduction with effect from the current 'Rabi' season were issued by the Centre only on November 1, 2013, one month after the commencement of the season.

She argued that the introduction of the NCIP would increase the burden of premium on the farmers of Tamil Nadu 'manifold.' Under the old scheme, the stipulated premium level was 2 per cent to 3.5 per cent of the sum insured, depending on the season and crop. Due to the State government's assistance, the farmers would have to pay only one per cent to 1.75 per cent of the sum insured. Now, this would go up to 3.75 per cent to 4.8 per cent.

When Tamil Nadu's farmers were facing acute hardship due to the severe drought that prevailed during 2012-13 which had further been compounded by the 33 per cent-deficit rainfall during the 2013 north-east monsoon, the "steep hike" in the premium burden on the farming community would adversely affect agricultural prospects and was "totally unacceptable" to her government. Ms. Jayalalitha suggested that the additional premium over and above 2 per cent of the sum insured under the NCIP be borne equally by the State government and the Union government without passing on the burden to the farmers. Seeking Dr. Singh's personal intervention in the matter, she called for a "speedy decision" on her suggestion.

# Rabi crops: sowing completed on 43,277 ha

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CHITRADURGA, January 7, 2014 - The district has completed sowing on a total of 43,277 hectares of the total 89,940 hectares target set for the rabi season by the end of December 31.

According to Agriculture Department Joint Director R. Krishnamurthy, the target for Challakere taluk was 19,390 hectares, of which sowing had been completed on 4,857 hectares; the target for Chitradurga taluk was 15,350 hectares, of which sowing had been completed on 13,872 hectares; and in Hiriyr taluk the target was 42,250 hectares, of which sowing had been completed in 18,449 hectares.

In Holalkere taluk, the target was 6,859 hectares, of which sowing had been completed in 2,430 hectares; in Hosadurga the target was 3,300 hectares, of which sowing had been completed in 2,000 hectares; and the target for Molkalmuru taluk was 2,800 hectares, of which sowing was done on 1,669 hectares of land, he said.

The farmers had completed sowing jowar on 7,874 hectares, maize on 4583 hectares, Bengal gram on 23,728 hectares, horse gram on 1,936 hectares, sunflower on 2,584 and cotton on 700 hectares of land.

## Rainfall

The district had received a total of 538.3 mm rainfall as against the normal rainfall of 486.6 mm in 2013. Challakere taluk had received 441.8 mm rainfall as against the normal 402.4 mm rainfall, Chitradurga had received 633.3 mm as against the normal 590.2 mm, Hiriyr had received 632 mm as against the normal 443.7 mm, Holalkere had received 728.6 mm rainfall as against the normal 602.8 mm, Hosadurga has received 381.1 mm as against the normal 463.3 mm and Molkalmuru taluk has received 326 mm rainfall as against the normal 417.4 mm rainfall.

***Chitradurga got 538.3 mm of rain as against the normal rainfall of 486.6 mm in 2013***

# Scarce raw material spells doom for Adilabad cotton industry

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*Farmers prefer to sell produce to Maharashtra traders for better price and perks*

*In doldrums: Labourers at the Jainoor Agriculture Market yard in Adilabad district relaxing as the steadily decreasing cotton arrivals leave hardly any scope for work. – Photo: S.HARPAL SINGH*

ADILABAD, January 7, 2014 - The cotton processing industry in the district owing to severe shortage of raw kapas this year.

On one hand, the adverse weather in last monsoon resulted in reduced yield and on the other; much of the produce is being diverted to the processing centres in neighbouring Vidarbha region of Maharashtra where farmers stand to gain monetarily due to good price and incentive schemes offered by the traders there.

While the industries located in Adilabad town needs raw cotton to the tune of over 50,000 quintals per day, the cumulative arrival at the 16 centres in the district is pegged at a measly 2,000 quintals from local areas and about 15,000 quintals from Karimnagar, Warangal and

Khammam districts. So far, only 17 lakh quintal of cotton has been traded which is roughly half the regular average for an industry which logs over Rs.5, 000 crore business every year. Having felt the squeeze of the adverse season, cotton traders and industrialists in centres like Patan Bori, Pandharkawda, Ghatanji and Mukutban in Yavatmal and Hinganghat in Wardha district in Maharashtra have introduced incentive schemes to attract farmers even from places in Adilabad.

The incentives are in the shape of prizes offered through periodic draw of lottery in the name of farmers who have sold their produce at the given market yards.

“At smaller centres like Mukutban (40 km away from Adilabad) giving prizes like bullocks to farmers is a costly affair for the traders here. At larger markets like Hinganghat, the traders are offering even tractors, laptops etc ,” reveals Ramesh Reddy Yeltiwar, Secretary of Mukutban Market Committee.

“About 15 per cent of the total arrivals to our market, which amounts to around 400 quintals, come from Adilabad and Peddapally in Karimnagar. We hope the completion of Digras bridge across the Penganga in Jainad mandal will increase the inflow in future,” he says.

Farmers are also evincing interest to sell their produce to the Maharashtra traders who offer better price. “The traders in Vidarbha offer Rs. 5,200 per quintal, while the average price at Adilabad markets stands at Rs. 4,400 per quintal. This is why farmers are selling their produce to the Maharashtra traders, who are purchasing cotton at farmers’ door steps,” says Suram Lasmanna of Jainad mandal.

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📌 **Arrivals at Adilabad markets reduced to 2,000 quintal per day this year**

📌 **Maharashtra traders are luring farmers with incentives like tractors, laptops**

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## FMD toll at 4,705; 50,000 animals affected

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THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, January 7, 2014 - The recent outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in Kerala has claimed the lives of 4,705 heads of cattle across the State and affected 51,581 animals since August last year, the Assembly has been informed.

Replying to a submission by M.P. Vincent in the Assembly on Monday, Minister for Animal Husbandry K.P. Mohanan said preventive measures had been stepped up to arrest the spread of the disease.

Claiming that the FMD outbreak was now under control, he said, “Ring vaccination is being carried out in the areas around the affected locations and diseased animals are being treated free of cost. Adequate funds have been sanctioned for procurement of medicines and disinfectants at the district level. Experts from the Southern Regional Disease Diagnostic Laboratory at Bangalore and the All India Coordinated Research Project on FMD have confirmed that the O strain of the virus is responsible for the outbreak in Kerala”.

The Minister said the import of cattle from neighbouring states had been temporarily banned to prevent the spread of the disease. “The Animal Husbandry Department has deployed crisis management teams and rapid action force for emergency operations. An amount of Rs.1.09 cr has been disbursed as compensation for dead animals”.

Earlier, moving the submission, Mr. Vincent said the FMD outbreak was threatening to cripple the dairy sector in Kerala. “The 40 per cent loss in milk production has created a crisis for dairy farmers. The disease has affected animals in the Thrissur zoo and threatens wildlife”.

Acknowledging the steps taken by the government to contain the disease, Mr. Vincent called for the introduction of more powerful vaccines and disease-resistant hybrid cows. He stressed the need for more vigilance at border check posts.

Pointing out that the vaccines used for immunisation of cattle were not effective, former Minister C. Divakaran called for a system to monitor the potency of vaccines.

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📌 ***Disease under control, says Minister***

📌 ***Preventive measures stepped up***

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## Egg rate

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NECC fixes egg rate at Rs. 3.60

## Water level

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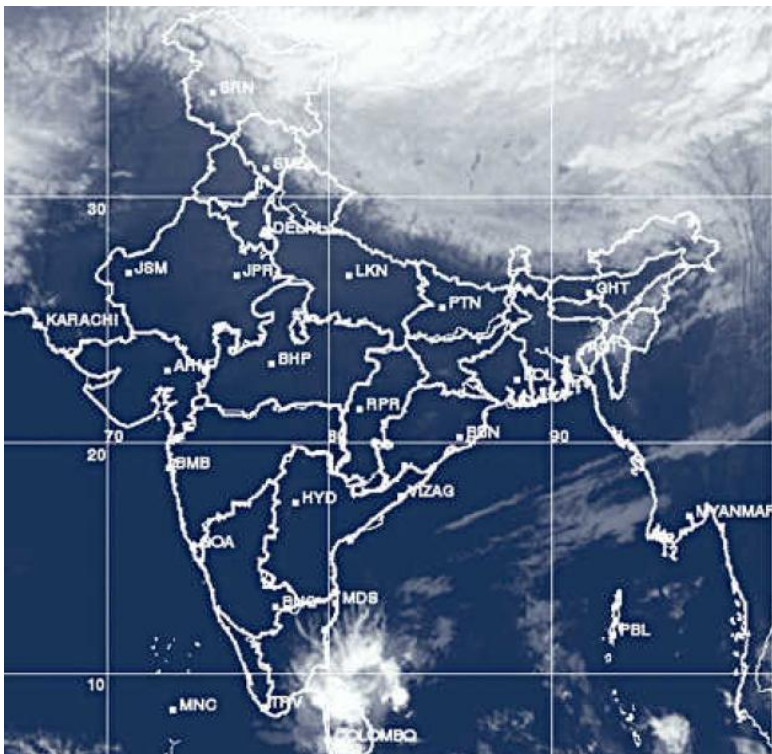
**Mettur** - The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 61.94 feet on Monday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 1,030 cusecs and the discharge 9,000 cusecs.

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Monday stood at 83.40 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 185.60 cusecs and 394.75 cusecs is discharged. The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 71.31 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 8 cusecs and 430 cusecs is discharged.

**Nagercoil** - The level in Pechipparai dam stood at 22 feet, while it was 56.20 feet in Perunchani, 13.02 feet in Chittar 1, 13.12 feet in Chittar 11, 4.40 feet in Poigai and 54.12 feet in Mamabazathuraiyaru.

## Weather

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INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs. Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on January 06.

# Weather

Chennai - INDIA

## Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Rain: 0

Humidity: 62

Wind: normal

## Tuesday, Jan 7

Max Min

29° | 23°

Sunrise: 06:32

Sunset: 05:56

Barometer: 1012

## Tomorrow's Forecast



Sunny

## Wednesday, Jan 8

Max Min

29° | 23°

## Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday Jan 9	Friday Jan 10	Saturday Jan 11	Sunday Jan 12	Monday Jan 13
28°   23° Cloudy	28°   22° Cloudy	25°   23° Cloudy	25°   23° Overcast	24°   22° Overcast

THE TIMES OF INDIA

## Tamil Nadu Agricultural University to install seed vending machine soon

COIMBATORE: As a first of its kind in the state, seed vending machines will be introduced by the [Tamil Nadu Agricultural University](#) (TNAU) where people can buy vegetable and flower seeds from the machine by paying money similar to vending machines selling soft drinks. This is being introduced as a pilot project by TNAU aiming to help those who want to purchase seeds in small quantities for nurturing their kitchen and terrace gardens.

M Bhaskaran, special officer seeds at TNAU said that they had introduced this concept based on the Kerala Agricultural University's concept. "They have installed such machines in several places in Kerala including bus stands. We visited the spots and saw they were receiving tremendous response," he said.

They will try this for a month and depending on the response, may install similar machines elsewhere, he said.

This machine will be kept at the entrance of the Botanical Garden at the TNAU campus. This will be inaugurated at the State level farmers' Day programmes to be held at TNAU this Saturday. The seeds which will be between 10 grams to 100 grams can be bought by

inserting a Rs10 currency note in the machine. The packets of vegetable and flower seeds can be seen stacked inside the machine through the transparent glass door. The machine will be kept refrigerated to avoid spoiling of seeds. After inserting the money, the customer should press the respective button of the seed he wants and the packet will be released by the machine, falling into the collection box.

This machine which has been purchased at a cost of Rs2.4lakh from a Delhi based firm will be kept in a separate room with a separate employee to manage the machine, refilling when necessary.

"This is specifically aimed at people desiring to grow popular vegetables including tomatoes and brinjal in their limited space at home. Usually, seeds are available only in large quantities which may not be suitable for such people," said Bhaskaran.

Private firms interested in the project can also install similar machines, he said.



## Agri-mall at Nedumangad Soon

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An agri-mall for marketing farm and animal husbandry products will be established at Nedumangad, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Minister K P Mohanan said on Thursday. The government also plans to hold an expo of agricultural products here this year, he said. Mohanan was speaking after inaugurating the 'Vision 2020' farmers' meet and agricultural seminar at Nedumangad. The government will support farmers and people's representatives who formulate plans for production, processing and marketing of agricultural produce, three sectors which have equal importance, the Minister said.

By 2016, the state government hopes to transform Kerala into a fully 'organic farming state', he said. Palode Ravi MLA presided over the function. Projects worth Rs 12.90 crore have been cleared for the expansion of marketing, he said. Rs 10 crore has been sanctioned for establishing the agri-mall and Rs 50 lakh for a cold storage and ripening chamber.

For repairing the Valikode-Market road, the government has sanctioned Rs 80 lakh. The Agriculture Minister also distributed identity cards for farmers and inaugurated an exhibition.

A Sampath MP delivered the keynote address. District Collector K N Satheesh, General Administration Principal Secretary K R Jyothilal, Nedumangad municipality chairperson Lekha Suresh, Agriculture Director R Ajith Kumar and State Horticulture Mission Director K Prathapan were also present.

## Engg Students Turn 'Paddy Farmers'

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Amidst heavy pressure to convert paddy fields and lands for construction activities, even a small initiative to save such lands from further devastation acquires much significance.

A small portion of 7.5 hectares of unused land at Koliakode near Pappanamcode that was once a paddy field sprang to life recently when a group of 'engineering hands and minds' made it ready for cultivation. Around 50 students of Sri Chitra Thirunal College of Engineering who were part of the National Service Scheme (NSS) had a memorable initiation into paddy cultivation. The project was chalked out to make the government realise the need to conserve the fast-vanishing paddy fields.

“The project was taken up by the NSS. In the past few years, the NSS has been successfully participated in activities of public good, including cleaning of canals. This year, in order to create an interest in farming and to protect the paddy fields and also to help the farmers in the area, we worked on the present idea,” said Arun M, NSS programme officer. As many as 50 students entered the field along with experienced farmers at hand to guide them. They tilled and prepared the field, which is a spread over thirty cents and is called the Koliyakode paddy field. Arun said that it was a thrilling experience for the students. “Seeds were sown in the tilled land. The presence of the experienced farmers helped a lot. They were happy to share their knowledge with the young lot,” he said. For the students, it was like using their leisure time after studies in a proper way, one which enriched them in many ways. This was their small step in bringing back paddy cultivation. In fact, paddy fields in the area had come under threat as a canal that was a major source of water was blocked which forced the farmers to stop cultivation. Moreover, as the area is close to the National Highway, there are also chances of the area going in the hands of real-estate lobbies. “It is an area where cultivation could be made a great success. If no protective steps are taken, the land will no more remain a paddy field,” Arun said. For the next few days, the students will engage in regular monitoring of the field. The harvest is planned for January 19 and the entire work will be carried out by the students themselves, for which they will be given training. A yield of at least 400 kilograms of paddy is expected. “We are planning to gift the harvest to GW LP School at Koliyakode where children from below the poverty line families study. And this will help these students in their noon meals,” said the principal of the engineering college Shaji Senadhipan. The NSS unit is planning to turn the harvesting into a big celebration, an event that is being eagerly awaited by the students.

# THE HINDU Business Line

## Tea exporters begin using bitcoins to expand business



MPs draw Commerce Ministry, Tea Board attention

Bitcoin instrument helps the exporter and the importer of tea to clinch a deal directly without any middleman thus cutting out the middleman fees.

**Kolkata, Jan. 6:** A section of small and specialised tea growers and exporters

have begun to expand their business using the digital currency bitcoin and bypassing normal banking channels.

This move which deprives the exchequer of revenue has been brought to the notice of the Commerce Ministry and Tea Board by members of Parliament. Industry sources say the price such type of deals fetches is fantastic. About 15 gm of tea earns around \$11.

Any consignment up to four kg, if sent out of the country by an international courier, will not attract mandatory surveillance or monitoring. The businessmen are taking advantage of this norm to ship out tea.

During the winter session of Parliament, several MPs raised the issue of Bitcoins being used by a section of small and specialised tea growers to sell their produce abroad.

They sought to know from the Government if it was aware of such practices, and if so, any action was being contemplated.

Trading with bitcoins helps exporters and importers of tea to clinch a deal directly without any middleman.

The transaction can be completed within a few minutes. Weekly holidays, bank holidays or strikes do not stand in the way of concluding the deal.

Also payments can be received from anywhere in the world without any bank transfer or the use of debit or credit cards. The modus operandi is this: Bitcoin agents partner with a payment processor such as Bitplay ([www.bitplay.com](http://www.bitplay.com)) who charges only one per cent of transaction value.

Bitplay has already integrated itself with over 12,000 merchants in 30 different countries. It is a free service which many tea exporters are adopting and using. Similarly, according to tea industry sources, if one accesses

[www.madovercoins.com](http://www.madovercoins.com), one can find that all products are sold for bitcoins to enable people to buy products sitting anywhere in the world.

## Cotton gains on limited arrivals

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**Rajkot, Jan. 6:** As cotton arrivals decreased, the natural fibre's prices increased by Rs 200 for a candy of 356 kg. *Kapas* or raw cotton prices also gained.

According to brokers, demand emerged from domestic mills and exporters also began to buy to meet their immediate needs.

Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton traded higher by Rs 200 at Rs 40,800-41,000 for a candy of 356 kg in Saurashtra region of Gujarat. *Kapas* gained Rs 7-10 to Rs 970-995 for a *maund* of 20 kg. Gin delivery *kapas* traded at Rs 1,000-1,020 .

About 50,000 bales (of 170 kg) arrived in Gujarat and 1.75 lakh bales arrived across the country.

Traders said that during the past few days arrivals have decreased from 65,000 bales to 50,000 bales.

According to a Rajkot-based ginner, farmers are holding back *kapas* and they are not willing to sell at lower price.

Cotton brokers feel that in the current conditions, the fibre may gain as mills are likely to continue buying for some more time.

## Spot rubber rules steady

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**Kottayam, Jan.6:** Physical rubber prices ruled almost steady on Monday. Market activities were at an extremely slow pace in most counters following an almost similar closing on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

Meanwhile, latex (60%) improved sharply on fresh buying prior to off season.

Sheet rubber finished unchanged at Rs 160 a kg at Kottayam and Kochi, according to traders and the Rubber Board.

The grade was quoted flat at Rs 157 by dealers. The trend was mixed.

January futures improved to Rs 160 (Rs 158.84), February to Rs 162.70 (Rs 161.34), March to Rs 165.40 (Rs 164.17) and April to Rs 167.50 (Rs 167.68) while the May and June futures remained inactive on the NMCE.

RSS 3 (spot) flared up to Rs 157.72 (Rs 154.03) at Bangkok. January futures closed at ¥270.5 (Rs 161.28) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

**Spot rubber rates Rs/kg were:** RSS-4: 160 (160); RSS-5: 152 (152); Ungraded: 148 (147); ISNR 20: 158 (158) and Latex 60%: 129 (125).



# Fellowships for rubber scientists

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**Kottayam, Jan. 6:** R. Krishnakumar (Joint Director, Crop Physiology) and Molly Thomas (Senior Scientist, Crop Physiology) of the Rubber Research Institute of India have been awarded fellowships by the Indian Society of Agricultural Biochemists.

This is in recognition of continued service and valuable contributions to the Society for its promotion and developmental activities.

The awards were given by G. P. Sreevathava, General Secretary of the Society in the 12th Convention of the Society held at Sree Venkateswara University, Thirupathi.

# Turnover drops at Coonoor tea auctions

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**Coonoor, Jan. 6:** The falling trend witnessed in turnover in the last quarter of 2013 continued in the opening sale for 2014 at the auctions of Coonoor Tea Trade Association. On an average, overall prices rose to Rs 77.45 a kg from Rs 73.92 in 2013. However, higher price reduced the volume sold to 12.86 lakh kg (15.37 lakh kg). Consequently, the turnover has fallen to Rs 9.96 crore (Rs 11.36 crore), marking a decline of 12.32 per cent.

Havukal Estate's orange pekoe orthodox tea, auctioned by J. Thomas and Co, topped the market at Rs 300 a kg. Highfield Estate got Rs 221, Kairbetta Rs 220, Chamraj and Corsley Rs 215, Kodanad Rs 213 and Prammas Rs 202. In all, 41 marks got Rs 125 and more.

Among CTCs, Crosshill Estate's broken pekoe topped at Rs 200. Vigneshwar Estate got Rs 192, Homedale Estate Rs 190, Shanthi Supreme Rs 188, Deepika Supreme and Hittakkal Estate Rs 180 each. In all, 60 marks got Rs 125 and more.

# Stockists keep away from edible oils market

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**Mumbai, Jan. 6:** Edible oils prices declined on Monday, tracking weak futures amid slack physical demand. Imported palmolein and soyabean refined oil dropped by Rs 2 and Rs 3 each for 10 kg, as local refineries offered discount following bearish global markets.

Arrivals of new crops in the domestic market pulled down rapeseed and cotton

oil by Rs 5 and Rs 4 for 10 kg each. Groundnut and sunflower oil ruled unchanged.

The volume was thin as stockists kept away from fresh bets.

During the day hardly 250-300 tonnes of palmolein were traded.

Ruchi sold 200-250 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 570 for weekly delivery and resellers offloaded 50-100 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 568-570.

Towards the day's close, Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 580, super palmolein Rs 600, super deluxe palmolein Rs 620, soyabean refined oil Rs 655 and sunflower refined oil Rs 700. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 575, soyabean refined oil Rs 645 and sunflower refined oil Rs 675. Allana was quoting palmolein Rs 574-575, soyabean refined oil Rs 648 and sunflower refined oil Rs 680.

Resellers were quoting palmolein at Rs 567-568 ex JNPT.

In Rajkot, groundnut oil ruled steady at Rs 1,240 for *telia* tin and loose (10 kg) Rs 790.

Soyabean arrivals were 2.25 lakh bags and its prices in Madhya Pradesh were Rs 3,550-3,750 ex mandi and Rs 3,825-60 plant delivery.

Mustard arrivals declined to 57,000-58,000 bags and its prices were Rs 3,260-3,700.

**Vikram Global Commodities (P) Ltd** quoted Rs 640/10 kg for Malaysia super palmolein January delivery.

**Malaysia BMD crude palm oil** February contracts settled at MYR 2,590 (MYR 2,630), March at MYR 2,604 (MYR 2,640) and April at MYR 2,610 (MYR 2,644).

**The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were:** groundnut oil 800 (800), soya refined oil 645 (648), sunflower exp. ref. 630 (630), sunflower ref. 675 (675), rapeseed ref. oil 730 (735), rapeseed expeller ref. 700 (705) cottonseed ref. oil 605 (609) and palmolein 572 (574).

## Sugar turns sour on selling pressure



**Mumbai, Jan. 6:** Sugar prices ruled weak following slack demand on Monday.

On the Vashi wholesale market, prices dropped by Rs 20-30 a quintal on the higher side and increased by Rs 5 on the lower side for both the Small and Medium grade.

Increased selling by mills at Rs 10 lower and weak futures kept activities need-based and routine in spot markets.

*Naka prices were unchanged.*

*Traders feel that the current price level is low and it will not drop any further as*

*producers are already selling at loss.*

*Prices in the futures market fell to the lowest level in a week as the Government delayed a decision on giving financial assistance.*

*The Government was expected announces sops for raw sugar production this week, but it has postponed it to January 16, dealers said.*

*Arrivals at Vashi market were 60-62 truckloads (of 100 bags each) while local dispatches were 58- 60 truck loads.*

*On Saturday, about 18-20 mills sold 54,000-55,000 bags at Rs 2,630-2,730 (Rs 2,640-2,750) for S-grade and Rs 2,730-2,940 (Rs 2,740-2,960) for M-grade.*

**The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were:** S-grade Rs 2,842-2,951 (Rs 2,832-2,971) and M-grade Rs 2,940-3,132 (Rs 2,941-3,162).

*Naka delivery rates were: S-grade Rs 2,760-2,865 (Rs 2,760-2,865) and M-grade Rs 2,810-3,055 (Rs 2,810-3,055).*

**Uttar Pradesh rates were:** Muzzafarnagar Rs 3,170.

## Weak global cues pound pepper



**Kochi, Jan. 6:** Pepper prices in futures and spot markets turned cold on reports of easier Vietnam markets and slack demand. Slowdown in upcountry demand dragged spot prices.

All the buyers have withdrawn from the markets hoping that the prices would fall once the new crop in India and Vietnam hits the market, sources told *Business Line*.

Adding fuel to the fire, some of the multinationals were offering Malabar about \$600 below the actual parity of \$8,850 a tonne (c&f) for the US which also

spread bearishness in the market, they said. Supply continues to be thin.

Upcountry demand is met directly by supplies through rail from various centres in Kerala in small lots and from inter-State dealers in Tamil Nadu.

On the NMCE, January and February contracts decreased by Rs 225 and Rs 418, respectively, to Rs 52,600 and Rs 52,394 a quintal. Turnover increased to 21 tonnes. Net open position remained unchanged at 25 tonnes.

On the IPSTA, January and February contracts dropped to the maximum permitted level.

They fell by Rs 1,000 a quintal each to Rs 51,500 and Rs 50,518.

Spot prices dropped to Rs 50,000 (ungarbled) and Rs 52,000 (garbled) a quintal.

Fall in prices coupled with weakening of the rupee pushed the Indian export price to \$8,600 cf Europe and \$8,850 a tonne cf for the US.

## Soyabean, oil slip with global markets

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**Indore, Jan. 6:** Soyabean and its oil dropped on weak foreign markets and sluggish demand in the physical market. Amid arrival of 1.25 lakh bags, soyabean in mandis across Madhya Pradesh ruled at Rs 3,500-3,700 a quintal (down Rs 100 from last week).

Besides weak global cues, poor demand in soyameal in the export market led to steep decline in prices, said Mukesh Purohit, a local soya oil manufacturer.

Arrival of soyabean in Indore mandis on

Monday was recorded at 4,500 bags, while it was 3,000-3,500 bags in Dewas and 4,000 bags in Ujjain mandis respectively.

In futures market soyabean January and February contracts on the NCDEX closed lower at Rs 3,739 (down Rs 17.50) and Rs 3,712 a quintal (down Rs 19.50).

Similarly, plant deliveries of soyabean declined to Rs 3,800-3,850 (Rs 3,850-3,925 last week) on sluggish demand from the crushers.

Soya oil also traded lower with soya refined declining to Rs 655-658 for 10 kg (Rs 660-65 last week). Similarly, soya solvent also declined to Rs 598-602 for 10 kg (610-15 last week).

In the futures market, soya oil declined on weak buying with January and February contracts on the NCDEX closing at Rs 686.70 for 10 kg (down Rs 3.95) and Rs 680-10 (down Rs 3.75).

In the wake of decline in demand in both physical and futures markets, the sluggish trend is likely to continue in soya oil, said Suresh Agrawal, a local trader.

Weak export demand dragged soyameal prices free on rails to Rs 34,500-700 (down Rs 2,000), while it declined to Rs 32,300 a quintal in the domestic market (down Rs 1,000 from last week).

## Wheat prices may ease further

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**Karnal, Jan. 6:** A range-bound to steady movement is likely to be witnessed in the wheat futures and physical market over the next few days, said experts.

After witnessing a steady trend in the last few days, dara wheat dropped marginally, while flour managed to maintain its previous levels on Monday.

A steady demand coupled with ample availability pulled dara wheat prices down, said Radhey Shyam, a wheat trader. Prices may ease further down but any major fall is unlikely, he added.

In the physical market, dara wheat dropped by Rs 10 and sold at Rs 1,600-10 a quintal.



Around 1,000 bags of wheat arrived and stocks were directly offloaded at the mills. Mill delivery was at Rs 1,600 while delivery at the chakki was at Rs 1,610. A mixed trend was witnessed on the NCDEX. Wheat for January delivery moved up by Rs 4 and traded at Rs 1,684 with an open interest of 3,930 lots. The grain had touched a high at Rs 1,685 earlier in the day. January contracts have some support at Rs 1,677 while resistance at Rs 1,687. February contracts dropped by Rs 3 and traded at Rs 1,666. In the spot market, wheat improved by Rs 30 and traded at Rs 1,580.

#### **Flour Prices**

Despite a fall in wheat, flour continued to rule flat and sold at Rs 1,850. On the other hand, Chokar dropped by Rs 25 and was at Rs 1,475 a quintal.

## Upcountry buying revives turmeric

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**Erode, Jan. 6:** Spot turmeric prices increased on Monday on the back of fresh orders from North India. "Though only medium quality turmeric arrived for sale, traders quoted higher price for the yellow spice and purchased more than 1,700 bags of the 2,900 bags that arrived. This is due to fresh upcountry demand. Price will continue to higher for a few more days. Traders expect more orders as turmeric that is available here is at a par with Andhra Pradesh market. Further, stocks in

Andhra have almost been exhausted," said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said that the fresh turmeric crop is yet to arrive in the market, so buyers are buying old stocks. Also, demand for the old crop is high in North India.

The hybrid variety increased by Rs 200-230 a quintal.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety fetched Rs 4,277-6,248 a quintal; the root variety Rs 4,066-5,698.

**Salem Hybrid Variety:** The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,634-6,699; the the root variety Rs 5,477-6,129. Of the 614 bags that arrived, only 129 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety quoted Rs 5,559-6,269 and the root variety Rs 5,309-6,059. Of the 908 bags on offer, 821 were traded.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,468-6211 and the root variety Rs 5,072-6,069. Of the 178 bags put up for sale, 160 were picked up.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 5,359-6,242 and the root variety Rs 4,869-5,569. All the 135 bags found takers.

# Business Standard

## Potato rises 0.47% on pick up in demand

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Amid pick-up in demand in the [spot market](#) and restricted arrivals from producing regions, [potato](#) prices rose by 0.47% to Rs 980.10 per quintal in futures trade today.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, March potato rose by Rs 4.60, or 0.47%, to Rs 980.10 per quintal in business turnover of 164 lots.

The April delivery traded marginally up by 10 paise, or 0.01%, to Rs 963.70 per quintal in 45 lots.

Analysts said besides rising demand in the spot market, restricted arrivals from producing regions led to rise in potato prices at futures trade.

## Cardamom up 0.23 per cent on strong demand

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[Cardamom](#) prices gained 0.23% to Rs 741.40 per kg in futures market today as speculators enlarged their positions, tracking a firm trend at spot market on strong demand.

Besides, tight stocks position following less arrivals from producing regions fuelled the uptrend.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, [March delivery](#) rose by Rs 1.70, or 0.23%, to Rs 741.40 per kg in business turnover of 31 lots.

Likewise, the February spice edged up by Re one, or 0.14%, to Rs 710.10 per kg in 145 lots.

Analysts said speculators enlarged their positions, tracking a firm trend at spot market on strong demand against tight supplies from producing regions that helped cardamom prices to trade higher at futures trade.

## Turmeric down 1.1% on profit-booking

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[Turmeric](#) prices fell by 1.08% to Rs 6,784 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators booked profits at prevailing higher levels, driven by a fall in demand in the spot market against adequate stocks position.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), turmeric for delivery in April fell by Rs 74, or 1.08%, to Rs 6,784 per quintal with an open interest of 13,735 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in May lost Rs 70, or 1.01%, to Rs 6,850 per quintal in 3,110 lots.

Analysts said besides profit-booking by speculators at prevailing higher levels, fall in demand in the spot market, mainly kept pressure on turmeric prices at futures trade.

## Jeera down 0.7% on sluggish demand

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[Jeera](#) prices declined by 0.72% to Rs 12,700 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators trimmed positions, driven by sluggish demand in the spot market against sufficient supplies.

Further, expectations of higher production fuelled the downtrend.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), jeera for delivery in April fell by Rs 92.50, or 0.72%, to Rs 12,700 per quintal with an open interest of 2,052 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in March declined by Rs 67.50, or 0.53%, to Rs 12,647.50 per quintal in 6,948 lots.

Analysts attributed the fall in jeera futures to offloading of positions by speculators following sluggish demand in the spot market.

## Sugar down 0.4% on ample supply

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[Sugar](#) prices fell 0.39 per cent to Rs 2,786 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators trimmed positions on weak demand from bulk consumers against ample supplies.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, sugar for delivery in January lost Rs 11, or 0.39 per cent, to Rs 2,786 per quintal with an open interest of 18,500 lots.

February sugar shed Re one, or 0.04 per cent, to Rs 2,771 per quintal in 17,030 lots.

Analysts attributed the fall in sugar futures to ample supplies from mills against weak demand from bulk consumers such as [ice-cream](#) and soft-drink makers in view of winter season.

## Palm oil sheds 0.8% on global cues

---

Tracking a weak global trend, crude [palm oil](#) prices fell by 0.81 per cent to Rs 549.40 per 10 kg in futures trade today as speculators offloaded their positions.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude palm oil for delivery in February lost Rs 4.50, or 0.81 per cent, to Rs 549.40 per 10 kg in business turnover of 61 lots.

The January contract shed Rs 3.80, or 0.69 per cent, to Rs 544.30 per 10 kg in 169 lots.

Analysts attributed the fall in crude palm oil futures to a weak global trend on concern that exports from Malaysia may decline as global supplies of alternative cooking oils increase.

Meanwhile, palm oil for March delivery lost as much as 1.5 per cent to \$791 a metric tonne on the [Malaysia Derivatives Exchange](#).

# Refined soya oil weakens 0.3% on subdued demand

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Refined [soya oil](#) prices fell by 0.31 per cent to Rs 688.50 per 10 kg in futures trading today as speculators reduced positions, driven by subdued demand in the spot market against adequate stock positions.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, refined soya oil for delivery in January lost Rs 2.15, or 0.31 per cent, to Rs 688.50 per 10 kg with an open interest of 38,760 lots.

The February contract traded lower by Rs 1.15, or 0.17 per cent, to Rs 682.70 per 10 kg in 12,285 lots.

Analysts said reducing of positions by speculators due to subdued demand in the spot market against adequate stocks position led to decline in refined soya oil prices at futures trade.

# Chana down 0.2% on adequate supply

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[Chana](#) prices eased by 0.26% to Rs 3,115 per quintal in futures trade today as participants trimmed positions triggered by higher supplies from producing regions against weak demand.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange, chana for delivery in February declined by Rs 8, or 0.26%, to Rs 3,115 per quintal with an open interest of 62,480 lots.

Similarly, the commodity for delivery in January shed Rs 5, or 0.16%, to Rs 3,057 per quintal in 60,220 lots.

Analysts said the fall in chana prices at futures trade was mostly due to trimming of positions by speculators triggered by higher supplies from producing regions against weak demand in the spot market.

# Soybean prices down on weak demand, bearish overseas cues

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[Soybean](#) prices declined almost Rs 100-150 per 100 kg in spot markets in a fortnight due to weak demand from crushers, said mandi traders.

On Monday, soybean prices in [mandi auction](#) were Rs 3,550-3,750 per 100 kg compared with Rs 3,600-3,900 per 100 kg a fortnight ago, said traders.

Plant delivery prices were Rs 3,825-3,860 per 100 kg against Rs 3,850-3,900 per 100 kg couple of weeks ago.

"Weak soy product demand and lack of support from overseas markets have affected the crusher's intake," said Hitesh Agrawal, a soybean trader in Indore mandi.

Currently, both [soymeal](#) and [soyoi](#) demand is extremely low which is affecting the soybean buying in the domestic markets, claimed traders.

India is one of the leading soymeal suppliers to the Southeast Asian countries and among the major consumers of vegetable oils.

Soymeal export demand is low as the overseas buyers are finding the Indian prices higher compared with other international suppliers, said soymeal traders.

Domestic soyoi intake is low as its prices are higher compared with the other edible oils, said traders.

Also, bearish overseas cues are affecting the domestic market sentiment, said traders.

Increased global supplies due to good crop prospects in South American countries like Brazil and Argentina are putting pressure on soybean prices worldwide, said analyst.

Brazil and Argentina are number two and three soybean producers in the world after the USA.

Low domestic supply is the only support to the prices at present, said mandi traders.

Farmers are not bringing their produce to the markets due to declining prices, said traders.

Currently, average daily arrivals in Madhya Pradesh is around 100,000 bags of 100 kg each which were around 250,000 bags a month ago.

Madhya Pradesh is the number one producer of soybean in India followed by Maharashtra and Rajasthan.

## Vegetable oil import to hit new record this year

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Vegetable (veg) oil [import](#) in India is likely to surpass all previous records to settle at 11.13 million tonnes this year on rising demand from middle class consumers following sustained pressure on prices.

According to [Dorab Mistry](#), Director of [Godrej International](#) and one of the most vocal analysts in the edible oil industry, forecast India's [vegetable oil](#) imports to rise over 4% this year to surpass the benchmark level of 11 million tonnes. Total import of veg oil was reported last year at 10.68 million tonnes.

Rising import, however, is unlikely to hit the growth of domestic production despite crushing of domestic originated seeds remain unviable due to lower realisation than the cost of production driven largely by high value of seeds on sustained increase in the minimum support price (MSP).

Over the last three years, however, domestic production of veg oil has been increasing consistently. In the oil year 2013 – 14 (November – October) domestic production is estimated to rise to 7.75 million tonnes as compared to 7.10 million tonnes in the previous year.



The ongoing rabi sowing season started with a positive note with an increase in acreage due to favourable soil moisture left following extended season rainfalls last monsoon season. Data compiled by the Ministry of Agriculture showed India's total rabi oilseeds sowing area rose 4.2% on year to 7.95 million hectare as on December 19, mainly due to higher acreage under rapeseed and mustard. Total area under rabi oilseeds stood at 7.63 million hectare during the same period last year.

Rapeseed and mustard acreage rose 6% to 6.75 million hectare as on December 19 from 6.37 million hectare last year. Area in Rajasthan, the largest producing region in India, increased 9% to 2.97 million hectare.

Momentum is likely to continue resulting into higher oilseed production in India this year. But, inverted duty structure with higher import tax on crude oil than refined (refined, bleached and diodized or RBD) hit domestic refineries badly.

“In order to protect the interest of domestic refineries and crushing units, the government, as per the Ashok Lahiri Committee should keep differential import duty at least by 7.5% which was narrowed to 5% with the recent import levy of 2.5% on crude palm oil. Anything below 7.5% of differential in duty would make domestic refining business unviable. By not raising differential duty, the government is incentivizing Indonesian refineries and discouraging Indian ones to import more of refined oil and idling their own capacities which they have built over the last several years,” said Dinesh Shahra, founder and chairman, Ruchi Soya Industries Ltd.

Worsening further, the government cut import tariff value of crude and refined oil by over 3% to keep edible oil cheaper in India amid fears of further hike in food inflation which has been a worrying factor for the government.

While import tariff value has been cut by \$29 to \$929 on RBD palmolein, the same on CPO was cut to \$892 a tonne effective January 1 from \$912 a tonne a fortnight ago.

Supply and demand of vegetable oils			
	(million tonnes)		
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14*
Production	6.5	7.1	7.75
Imports	10.2	10.68	11.13
Consumption	16.58	17.33	18.23

· Forecast, Data for oil year (Nov – Oct), Source : Dorab Mistry's latest presentation

## Punjab millers hit by slow pace of rice procurement

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[Punjab](#)'s rice mills, mostly small and medium-sized units, are running at far below their full capacity, with entrepreneurs attributing this state of affairs to the government's policies. Low levels of [rice procurement](#) by the Central and state government agencies are forcing them to operate at low capacity, entrepreneurs complain.

Punjab, which contributes a large share to the Central pool for the public distribution system ([PDS](#)), has a total of about 3,050 [small rice processing mills](#). These mills process non-basmati rice procured by the Central and state government agencies meant for the PDS. The millers are paid processing charges and also get the by-products of paddy, such as paddy husk and bran.

The president of the [Rice Millers Association](#) of Punjab, Tarsem Saini, told Business Standard that Punjab's mills have the capacity to process one lakh tonnes of rice a day, but the government agencies have been lifting only 50,000 tonnes daily across the state, forcing the mills to operate at half capacity.

"The slow movement of grain from the mills makes us slow down the processing. While we can finish the entire stock of 12.5 million tonnes by February 28, we have to stretch it to August," said Saini.

He added: "We met senior government officials to apprise them that due to the rise in the moisture content after February, the grain starts deteriorating and that is a loss to the millers. But we did not get any relief. Some affluent millers have installed sortex machines (machines that can segregate damaged and coloured grain from healthy grain) but very few can afford this."

Sushil Singla of Lakshmi Rice Mills, Samana, lamented that there has been no upgradation in the assessment method for rice, which is done manually. Last year, a substantial chunk of rice was rejected by Food Corporation of India officials, on grounds of "pinpoint damage". Even the Panjab Agriculture University, Ludhiana, has found through studies that pinpoint-sized black spots on rice (or pinpoint damage) are evidence of excess iron and not signs of damage. But there is no clarity from any government agency on this.

Due to the annual hike in the power tariff and the consistent rise in wage rates, costs are steadily going up, but there has been no revision in processing charges for the past eight years. It is still Rs 15 per quintal, Singla added. The millers bear an additional maintenance cost of Rs 7-8 per quintal due to delayed processing.

Millers in the state speculate that as a result of the growing paddy acreage in the Eastern states - Orissa, West Bengal and even Chhattisgarh - rice-consuming states are now less dependent on Punjab. So, from 2010-11 on, the rice off-take from Punjab has slowed down. The shortage of staff in [FCI](#) is also, according to the millers, slowing the movement of rice from Punjab.

The millers remained on strike last month, to make the government aware of issues relating to rice processing. They resumed operations only early this month after an assurance from the state government.

Rice processing used to be a seasonal business, but has become an annual occupation due to lack of correct policies.

Gurdeep Cheema, the president of the Patiala Rice Millers Association, hopes that this is only a phase and that business will revive soon. The implementation of the Food Security Act, recently passed by Parliament, will trigger higher demand for food grain, and paddy processing in Punjab will see its fortunes restored, he hopes.

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