

MADURAI, January 18, 2014

Farmers urged to use nano technology

A meet convened by the district administration to redress farmers' grievances at the Collectorate here on Friday had an unexpected visitor as T. Anitha Sironmani, Chairperson of the School of Biotechnology of Madurai Kamaraj University walked in and offered to assist the farmers with innovations achieved through nanotechnology.

Ms. Sironmani told the farmers that just one litre of nano solution, available with the Genetic Engineering Department of the university, could purify about 30,000 to 40,000 litres of dirty water. The purified water could be used for irrigation, fish culture and a host of other activities.

"Each litre of the nano solution costs Rs. 200," she added.

She also said that herbal preparations of her department were capable of curing foot and mouth disease as well as rabies.

"Just one dose of the preparation to be consumed orally in the form of a soup could cure the diseases in no time without any side effects. We have tried it out on animals as well as humans and they recovered completely," she said.

Collector L. Subramanian introduced her to the gathering as an expert in nano technology and urged them to make use of the innovations. Later, Ms. Sironmani said that people interested in trying out the innovations could contact her by dialling 9942146141.

New technology to the rescue of farmers

Integrated water management reaps rich dividends

The success of a technology is measured by the number of people adopting it. In villages, especially, the introduction or adoption of a new system is often not easy. It takes a long time to convince and earn the confidence of farmers.

“Dealing with a farmer is an art,” says Dr. K. Ramasamy, Vice Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, which has taken strenuous efforts to improve the living standards of a group of Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe farmers of the Periyakalakkadi village on the outskirts of Chennai through the World Bank funded TN-IAMWARM (Irrigated Agricultural Management and Water Resources Management) project. The project aims at helping farmers manage water resources like lakes, ponds and dams in an integrated manner to increase productivity.

A major portion of lands in the village was donated to poor farmers through the *bhoomidhan* movement by an NGO called ASSEFA. The NGO also deepened a small pond nearby to provide water for irrigation and domestic use. But the move did not help much as the lands were bone dry in summers and, often, farmers cultivated only short-term crops. Many left their lands and migrated to towns for jobs. But the scene changed in the last one year. Today, the village attracts many government officials and the media, thanks to some 70 farmers. Each farmer has a story to tell — a story of hope, success and happiness.

“Achieving this was not easy. We had to meet the farmers many times, explain to them how the new technology would help them earn money. We stationed a specialist in the village to meet the farmers and instil confidence in them. The woman started talking to the village women every day. After some days, she was able to make some of them convince their husbands to accept the new

technology. The rest was quite easy for us,” says B.J. Pandian, Nodal Officer and Director, Water Technology Centre.

Initially, drip irrigation was laid out in 60 acres and sprinklers in 27 acres. Vegetables like brinjal, bhendi, cluster bean, lab lab, moringa, curry leaf and tuberose are now being grown on them. Today, farmers earn a daily income of more than Rs.1,000.

KRISHNAGIRI, January 18, 2014

Farmers want GAIL to rework pipeline project

Tamil Nadu association welcomes Supreme Court's stay on the project



Welcoming the interim stay on the GAIL pipeline project by the Supreme Court, P. Shanmugham, general secretary of the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, the farmers' wing of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), told *The Hindu* that it would still amount to only an “interim relief” to the affected farmers in seven districts of the western region in Tamil Nadu.

He pointed out that after a series of agitations by various farmers' associations on the grounds that their livelihood was being affected, the State government heard the grievances of farmers and ordered a halt to the laying of pipelines.

Mr. Shanmugam said the Centre should instruct GAIL to lay the lines along national highways, instead of cutting through farm lands.

S.A. Chinnasamy, president of Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam, welcomed the interim stay and urged the State government to pursue the case further to get a permanent solution for the farmers. Kongunadu Munnetra Kazhagam general secretary G.K. Nagaraj said the pipelines could be laid along highways, as was done in Karnataka and Kerala. He wanted clearance for the present route of the pipeline cancelled.

Kongunadu Makkal Desiya Katchi general secretary E.R. Easwaran said GAIL should rework its project.

MADURAI, January

No end to woes of Melur farmers

Accuse Public Works Department of poor water management

Farmers from Melur taluk near here complained that water released from Vaigai dam recently for irrigation, on the basis of a Court order, did not reach many areas due to poor water management by the Public Works Department (PWD).

Melur farmer P. Ravi said: "I had taken great efforts to get the water released from the dam to our taluk. But unfortunately, not a single drop has reached my fields so far."

He pointed out that a channel that carries water to his fields had been destroyed due to encroachments. The government officials failed to restore it despite making repeated representations to the Revenue as well as PWD officials since August, he claimed.

He also exhibited two communications, one sent to him by the PWD officials stating that they had written a letter in this regard to the Tahsildar concerned and another by the Tahsildar stating that he had not received any such letter from the PWD.

Collector L. Subramanian warned the PWD officials against providing wrong information. He directed them to conduct a joint inspection of the spot along with revenue officials and sort out the issue within 15 days. Another farmer T. Ramamurthy brought a bunch of withered paddy crop and told the Collector that this was the state of a majority of crops in Melur taluk.

Later, N. Palanichamy, Tamil Nadu Cane Growers Association, also blamed poor water management as the reason for farmers suffering without water. He alleged that people who had taken fishing rights in village level water bodies were not allowing release of water for irrigation.

“I am told that some individuals had been given fishing rights even in Vaigai dam and that is why the officials were hesitant to release water,” he said.

Reacting to it, the Collector asked Mr. Palanichamy not to level allegations on the basis of hearsay information. “Can fishing be a reason for not letting water for irrigation? Fishing is not our priority. Our priorities are farming and drinking water. Fishing comes last,” he said.

He, however, agreed to obtain information about fishing activities in the dam from the fisheries department officials in Theni district.

CHENNAI, January 18, 2014

NGO, TNAU join hands to help farmers

Thandalam, a small non-descript village about three km from Arakkonam, may soon become an important place for sourcing good quality organic inputs and cooking condiments such as ready-to-use masala powder.

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore, has come forward to lend a helping hand to several SHGs in the village, who are making the inputs and have been meticulously trained by an NGO called Thandalam Yogakshema Trust.

A function was held recently in the village by the Trust, which invited TNAU Vice-Chancellor Dr. K. Ramasamy to strengthen, guide and help several women and farmers in the village to improve their production.

The trust placed a request for regular guidance on all organic practices that farmers in Thandalam have presently undertaken.

“Though we have a capacity for producing more than 10 tonnes of vermicompost and 15 tonnes of several masala powder varieties, which have been certified as best by many leading buyers in Chennai, we have not been able to maintain consistency in production because of several factors such as lack of storage facilities and absence of proper information. We decided to seek the help of the university to help and guide us and the Vice-Chancellor has promised to take steps to address our requirement,” says Radha Parthasarathy, Managing Trustee.

Addressing over 200 farmers, who assembled in a government school, Dr. Ramasamy requested them to make use of the university extension staff facilities in their region.

“The university is ready to work with any farmer to improve his lifestyle. There are several subsidy schemes introduced by the government”, he said, asking them to make use of them. “You have the right to seek and make use of our university’s expertise,” he said.

The Vice-Chancellor promised that the university’s team of specialists would follow up on their requests and once in a fortnight, the field staff would visit the village.

ICRISAT reaches out to small farmers

International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) Director General Dr. William D. Dar said that prosperity of small holding farmers is their aim and all efforts are being taken towards this end.

Addressing a gathering of about 300 agribusiness innovators and entrepreneurs at the one-day 'Agribusiness Fair' held at ICRISAT on Friday, Mr. Dar said: "Our mission is to make smallholder farmers in the dry lands prosperous, not just self-sufficient. And that is why we are engaged in promoting an inclusive and technology-based entrepreneurship and agribusiness program." This is part of Agri-Business Incubation (ABI) programme in technology upscaling and commercialisation.

Dr. Kiran Sharma, CEO, Agribusiness and Innovation Platform (AIP) –said that entrepreneurship at the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) level was one of the most efficient ways of taking products of research for development to the farmers. Dr. A.S. Rao, former advisor, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, emphasised on the growing prospects in the agribusiness sector.

THRISSUR, January 18, 2014

Agricultural expo

Agriculture Minister K. P. Mohanan will inaugurate on Sunday the organising committee office of the South Indian Agri Expo 2014 to be hosted by the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU). The exhibition will be held at KAU headquarters from February 28 to March 6. The committee office will be located at Agricultural Information and Technology Centre (ATIC), Mannuthy. P. C. Chacko, MP, will be the guest of honour. Organising committee chairman M.P. Vincent, MLA, will preside.

NIZAMABAD, January 18, 2014

Agitated turmeric farmers block national highway

Turmeric farmers under the aegis of the AP Turmeric Farmers' Association, on Friday, staged a rasta roko on the NH 44 at Indalwai in Dichpally mandal and on the NH 63 from Armour to Kammarpally, demanding remunerative price for their produce.

Traffic comes to halt

The agitation continued for two hours from noon to 2 p.m., badly affecting the movement of vehicular traffic on both the highways. Traffic was stranded from Dasnagar to Kammarpally and Armour to Indalwai due to the road blockade.

Farmers from Velpur, Morthad, Kammarpally, Jakranpally mandal headquarters participated in the rasta roko.

Rs. 15,000 MSP sought

Speaking on the occasion, Association president Kotapati Narsimha Naidu demanded that the State government respond to the letter written by the Union

Agriculture Ministry regarding the fixation of MSP for turmeric and send a report to the Centre at the earliest.

Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar, after a spate of agitations and representations in New Delhi, had agreed to fix the MSP at Rs.15,000 per quintal for turmeric, he said.

Turmeric Board

“The input cost for the crop, at present, stands at nearly Rs.10,000 per quintal. Further, the crop yield this year has dwindled by 30 per cent due to heavy rains. There is an urgent need of establishing a Turmeric Board on the lines of the one for spices to address all such issues,” he said.

MANGALORE, January 18, 2014

Ujire society launches low interest loans for farmers

Farmers who are members of a cooperative society based at Ujire in Dakshina Kannada can now avail loan by pledging farm produces at a lower interest rate of seven per cent per annum.

If cooperative societies usually charged a high rate of 12 per cent to 14 per cent rate interest per annum on farm produce pledge loans, farmers affiliated to the Belthangady Taluk Rubber Growers' Marketing and Processing Cooperative Ltd. get it at lower rate of interest.

The cooperative society launched this scheme last month in association with the Corporation Bank, which provided the loans. President of the cooperative Sridhar G. Bhide said the farmer members of the society could pledge rubber, areca nut, pepper and cashew up to six months and take home a maximum of Rs. 3 lakh in loan. The loan could be renewed, he said.

The society would store them at its new 3,000-tonne NABARD Consultancy Services-certified warehouse at Laila, near Belthangady.

Prasad Rao, Assistant General Manager, NABARD, Mangalore said NABARD has brought the bank and the society together to show that such a model could be worked out in rural areas. Its main objective was to prevent distress sale by farmers and increase their hoarding capacity, he said.

Chief executive officer of the society Raju Shetty said the scheme was launched on December 19. Since then 26 farmers have availed the loans.

Mr. Bhide said that once loans were repaid the farmers could sell areca nut, pepper and cashew outside, and rubber to the society.

As the society is primarily of rubber growers they would have an additional advantage in pledging the rubber.

While selling the pledged rubber sheets, even if the weight of sheets gets reduced after storing in the warehouse, the society would pay for the original weight of the sheets pledged, Mr. Bhide said.

MANDYA, January 18, 2014

Nidaghatta farmers stage protest, demand water

Farmers staging a demonstration outside the Irrigation Department office in Mandya on Friday.

A large number of farmers from the Nidaghatta tail-end region staged a protest outside the Irrigation Department office off the Bangalore-Mysore Highway here on Friday, to protest against the department's "failure" to ensure regular water supply for their crops.

Farmers from several villages in Maddur taluk participated in the protest.

Farmers in the tail-end region cultivate paddy, sugarcane, tomato and other crops on hundreds of acres; those standing crops have been affected by the shortage of water, they said, and blamed the department for this.

The department has been discharging water through canals in Nidaghatta for irrigation; however, farmers in the upper reaches have been drawing excess water.

As a result, farmers in the tail-end region are not getting enough water, protesters said. "We have submitted several memoranda to the officials concerned, but they have neglected our demands," Thammanna, a farmer, alleged.

They raised slogans against Mandya district in-charge Minister M.H. Ambareesh and department officials for not addressing their grievances.

They wanted Mr. Ambareesh to inspect the canals and agricultural fields in the tail-end region and understand the problems they were facing. They said that the crops would wither if immediate action was not taken.

The farmers withdrew their protest when department officials promised to resolve the issue.

DAVANGERE/BIJAPUR, January 18, 2014

Farmers stage dharna over sugarcane MSP

Demand fair prices and payment of minimum support prices ; accuse sugarcane factories of not implementing MSP

Members of Bhartiya Kisan Sangha taking out procession in support of their various demands in Bijapur on Friday.

Farmers in Davangere and Bijapur staged dharna and took out rallies demanding fair prices and payment of minimum support prices (MSP) for sugarcane, tur and jowar.

Large number of sugarcane farmers staged a dharna in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office in Davangere on Friday protesting against the inaction of the government and to insist the sugar factories to pay the MSP fixed by the government for sugarcane.

The agitators raised slogans against the government and also against the sugar factories for not implementing the MSP for sugarcane fixed by the government a few months ago.

Tejasvi Patel, general secretary of the State Sugarcane Growers Association, who led the agitators, said the State government had fixed an MSP of Rs. 2,650

per tonne of sugarcane and the State government had agreed to give an amount of Rs. 150 per tonne along with a rebate of Rs. 100 per tonne in tax. Hence the sugar factories have to pay an amount of Rs. 2,500 per tonne to sugarcane growers, Mr. Patel said. He alleged that no sugar factory, including the two sugar factories run by the family members of Horticulture Minister Shyamanur Shivashankarappa in Davangere district, had implemented the MSP so far.

Support farmers

Mr. Patel said that if the government had fixed the MSP after considering the interests of both the growers and as well as sugar factories, how could the sugar factories incur losses by paying Rs. 2,650 to farmers. Sugar factories must pay the MSP to ensure that sugarcane farmers, who incurred huge expenditure to raise the crop due to higher prices of fertilizer and labour, would not sustain losses, he said.

He noted that the sugar factories had earned hundreds of crores in profit when the prices of sugar reached a peak, adding that the factories also prepared many by-products such as molasses from sugarcane. He cautioned that if the factories failed to implement the minimum support price and the government failed to ensure the factories complied, the farmers might consider switching over to other “profitable crops” in the coming years and discontinue sugarcane production.

Meanwhile, in Bijapur, the district unit of Bharatiya Kisan Sangha took out a rally and submitted to the memorandum to the government through the district

administration on Friday, demanding the hike in MSP and protesting against the lack of infrastructure at the procurement centres.

Accusing the sugar factory owners of defying the government order of giving Rs. 2,650 per tonne for sugarcane, the agitators said that most of the factory owners were giving only Rs. 1,800 per tonne by giving the excuse that the sugar content in the cane was less.

The Sangha demanded the government not only to ensure the granting of prescribed amount but also take legal action against the factory owners that were defying the order. The Sangha also urged the government to ensure the release of Rs. 200 per tonne balance amount to be paid to the farmers since 2012.

Tur and jowar

In the memorandum, the members said that the government should hike the MSP of tur and jowar as the amount announced by the government was inadequate. The Sangha said that Rs. 5,000 per quintal for tur and Rs. 1,800 per quintal for jowar was not enough considering the increasing cost of cultivation and transport.

Welcoming the decision of the government to distribute jowar under public distribution system, the Sangha however said that the MSP for Jowar should be increased to Rs. 2,500 quintal. The Sangha said many maize procurement centres do not have adequate weighing machines due to which the farmers were facing difficulty in selling the grains.

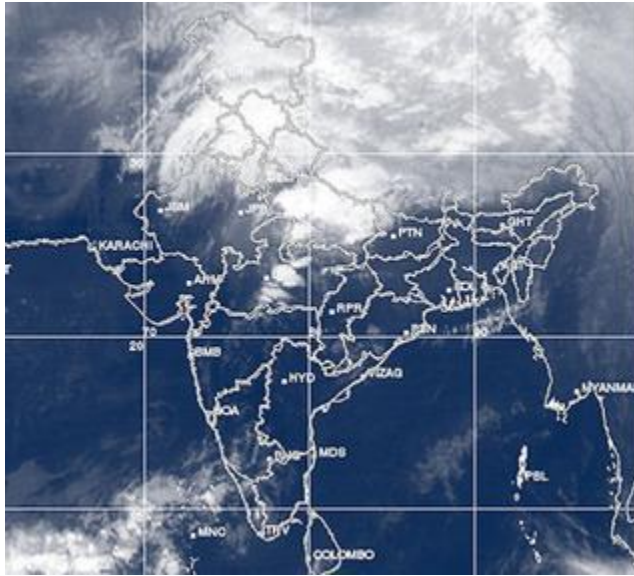
January 18, 2014

MADURAI: The water level in Periyar dam stood at 113 feet on Friday with no inflow and a discharge of 345 cusecs.

The water level in Vaigai dam was 35.50 feet with an inflow of 211 cusecs and a discharge of 60 cusecs. The combined storage in Periyar credit was 1,301 mcft.

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

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs. Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on January 17.

ANDHRA PRADESH

Anantapur	33	20	0	0
Arogyavaram	30	18	0	0
Bapatla	29	19	0	0
Calingapatnam	29	18	0	0
Gannavaram	31	19	0	0
Hanamkonda	31	18	0	0
Hyderabad AP	31	19	0	0
Kakinada	30	21	0	1
Khammam	31	18	0	0
Kavali	30	19	0	2
Kurnool	32	20	0	0
Mahabubnagar	31	19	0	0
Machilipatnam	29	20	0	0
Narasapur	31	21	0	0
Nellore	31	22	0	1
Nizamabad	33	20	0	0
Ongole	31	20	0	0
Ramagundam	31	19	0	0
Tirupathi AP	31	18	0	0
Tuni	30	21	0	0
Vizag AP	29	19	0	3
Vizag	28	20	0	19

KARNATAKA

Agumbe	30	14	0	0
Bangalore AP	28	16	0	0
Bangalore	29	18	0	0

Bagalkote	33	17	0	0
Belgaum AP	31	14	0	0
Bellary	33	19	0	0
Bijapur	31	18	0	0
Chitradurga	31	17	0	0
Chickmagalur	29	16	0	0
Chintamani	29	16	0	0
Gadag	31	19	0	0
Gulbarga	33	19	0	0
Hassan	28	12	0	0
Honavar	32	21	0	0
Karwar	33	21	0	0
Madikeri	23	16	0	0
Mangalore AP	33	23	0	0
Mysore	30	19	0	0
Mandya	30	19	0	0
Panambur	33	23	0	0
Raichur	31	17	0	0
Shirali	32	21	0	0
KERALA				
Alappuzha	32	24	1	1
Kannur	33	25	0	0
Kochi AP	33	24	0	0
Kottayam	35	24	0	0
Kozhikode	34	25	0	0
Punalur	35	21	0	tr
Thiruvanantha				
-puram AP	31	24	0	79
Thiruvanantha				
-puram City	33	24	0	14
Vellanikkara	34	23	0	0
TAMIL NADU				
Adiramapattinam	31	21	0	12
Chennai	30	22	0	tr
Chennai AP	30	20	0	1
Coimbatore AP	31	21	0	0
Coonoor	18	13	1	4
Cuddalore	31	21	0	tr
Dharmapuri	31	18	0	0
Kanyakumari	30	24	0	85
Karaikal	29	25	0	7
Kodaikanal	18	10	0	17
Madurai AP	33	22	0	10
Nagapattinam	30	25	0	7
Palayamkottai	33	23	0	31
Pamban	30	25	0	59
Parangipettai	31	22	0	0
Puducherry	30	20	0	1
Salem	32	20	0	0
Thanjavur	30	22	0	1

Tiruchi AP	31	21	0	tr
Tiruttani	31	19	0	0
Tondi	29	22	0	43
Tuticorin	31	23	0	21
Ooty	19	10	0	0
Valparai	27	11	9	10
Vellore	30	20	0	0
LAKSHADWEEP				
Amini Divi	33	26	0	0
Minicoy	32	24	0	2
OTHER STATIONS				
Kolkata (Alipore)	20	13	0	0
Mumbai	26	19	0	0
New Delhi	18	8	0	0

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

DRY WEATHER

IN A.P.

CHENNAI: RAINFALL OCCURRED AT A FEW PLACES OVER LAKSHADWEEP AND ISOLATED RAINFALL OCCURRED OVER TAMIL NADU AND KERALA. MAINLY DRY WEATHER PREVAILED OVER SOUTH INTERIOR KARNATAKA AND DRY WEATHER PREVAILED OVER ANDHRA PRADESH, COASTAL AND NORTH INTERIOR KARNATAKA.

THE MINIMUM TEMPERATURE ROSE APPRECIABLY AT ONE OR TWO PLACES OVER TELANGANA, FELL AT ONE OR TWO PLACES OVER INTERIOR KARNATAKA AND CHANGED LITTLE ELSEWHERE OVER THE REGION.

THEY WERE APPRECIABLY TO MARKEDLY ABOVE NORMAL AT A FEW PLACES OVER TELANGANA, APPRECIABLY ABOVE NORMAL AT ONE OR TWO PLACES OVER NORTH INTERIOR TAMIL NADU, KERALA, NORTH INTERIOR KARNATAKA, ABOVE NORMAL AT A FEW PLACES OVER REST OF TAMIL NADU, RAYALASEEMA, AT ONE OR TWO PLACES OVER REST OF KARNATAKA, SOUTH COASTAL ANDHRA PRADESH, BELOW NORMAL AT ONE OR TWO PLACES OVER NORTH COASTAL TAMIL NADU AND WERE GENERALLY NORMAL OVER THE REST OF THE REGION.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL SUNDAY MORNING: RAIN OR THUNDERSHOWER WOULD OCCUR AT A FEW PLACES OVER LAKSHADWEEP. ISOLATED RAIN OR THUNDERSHOWER MAY ALSO OCCUR OVER SOUTH TAMIL NADU, KERALA, KARNATAKA, COIMBATORE AND NILGIRIS DISTRICTS OF NORTH INTERIOR TAMIL NADU. MAINLY DRY WEATHER WILL PREVAIL OVER REST TAMIL NADU, PUDUCHERRY AND ANDHRA PRADESH.

THE HINDU **Business Line**

Coconut oil prices up despite poor sales

Erode, Jan :

Coconut oil prices increased on Friday in Erode markets despite poor sales.

“Coconut oil price increased to Rs 1,570-1,590 for 15 kilogram loose pack. But buyers were reluctant to buy expecting prices to decrease within a fortnight,” said R.M. Palanisamy, a dealer.

Currently, retail dealers are buyers. No big dealer is willing to stock the oil.

Coconut oil crushers have adequate stocks of coconut oil and copra with them, he said. After Pongal holidays, oil crushers procured limited stock of copra in the open market and are holding it with them.

Palm kernel and palm oil prices ruled flat at Rs 5,850 for a quintal.

Biscuit firms are buying them as usual for their products.

If coconut oil prices decreases next month, then prices of palm kernel and palm oil will decline. Therefore, palm oil buyers have procured limited stocks only.

The price of Copra prices decreased to Rs 7,600-7,700 a quintal. Despite the drop, sales of copra were low.

At the Avalpoondurai Regulated Market Committee on Friday, auction could not be conducted because of non-arrival of the copra.

Officials said not even a single bag of copra arrived for sale on Friday as growers seemed to be still in festive mood.

Spot rubber prices turn weak

Kottayam, Jan :

Spot rubber prices ended weak on Friday. Lack of buyers and a drop in the prices in domestic and international markets kept local market under pressure during closing hours.

The market sustained at the prevailing levels on supply concerns, though there was marginal selling by dealers and growers.

Most growers were holding their produce, hoping to sell at better levels once the commodity recovers from the ongoing bear phase, a trader said.

Sheet rubber declined to Rs 150(Rs 151) a kg at Kottayam and Kochi, according to traders and the Rubber Board.

The grade closed weak at Rs 147(Rs 148) a kg, according to dealers.

February futures weakened to Rs 150.16 (Rs 151.99), March to Rs 152.50 (Rs 154.09), April to Rs 156.75 (Rs 157.53) and May to Rs 158.70 (Rs 159.72) a kg, while the June futures remained inactive on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) dropped to Rs 144.93 (Rs 146.33) a kg at Bangkok.

January futures slid to ₹ 264.2 (Rs 155.68) from ₹ 266.3 a kg during the day session but remained inactive in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates Rs/kg were: RSS-4: 150(151); RSS-5: 143(144); Ungraded: 138(140); ISNR 20: 147(148); and Latex 60%: 130.50 (131)

Tea Board fixes Rs 13/kg as floor price for green leaf

Coonoor, Jan :

The Tea Board has advised factories in Nilgiris to pay green leaf suppliers for the month of January, the highest of the minimum price of Rs 13 a kg or the price arrived at as per the Board's price sharing formula (PSF).

"As per the directives of Madras High Court and GO NO: 68 of Tamil Nadu Government, the Tea Board is implementing reasonable price formula to be paid by factories for the green leaf purchased from growers.

As a sequel to this, the board has fixed Rs 13 a kg for this month.

"This is based on the recommendation of District Price Monitoring Committee chaired by Nilgiris Collector. The actual price to be paid is the highest of the PSF or the minimum price," Tea Board Executive Director R. Ambalavanan said.

Regulator waives margin money for farm commodities

Mumbai, Jan :

In a bid to revive trading interest in commodity markets, the Forward Markets Commission has exempted sellers who have deposited goods in an exchange-accredited warehouse from paying an initial margin.

However, they have to pay mark-to-market margin at end of the day depending on the price movement of the particular commodity stored in the warehouse.

The directives may be made effective from February 1, a notification from the regulator said.

Ajay Kumar Kedia, Kedia Commodity Comtrade, said the move would encourage spot market traders of agriculture products to take position in the futures platform as they normally have goods in their warehouse.

“These traders were shying away from the futures platform as the initial margin levied by the exchanges were an additional burden. However, there is no major benefit for buyers,” he said.

The Commission has been taking various steps to boost the sagging volumes on the commodity futures markets. Last month, FMC halved margin on gold and silver to five per cent as price volatility in bullion came down substantially.

Kochi to get first aquatic animal hospital

Kochi, Jan :

An Aquatic Animal Health and Environment Management Laboratory, the first of its kind in the Government sector will be set up in the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS) here.

The National Fisheries Development Board has sanctioned Rs 56 lakh in this regard for aquatic organisms, including shrimps, fresh water prawn and farming fishes.

B. Madhusoodana Kurup, Vice-Chancellor, KUFOS, said that the centre would be able to regularly monitor the occurrence of diseases and evolve effective strategies for health management for aqua culturists. By doing so, the lab will also play an important role in quarantine and disease-free certification of

ornamental fish. Around 250-300 farmers, at least, are likely to be benefited by the setting up of such a facility in the State, he said.

The laboratory will function as a monitoring and surveillance centre for disease affecting fishes. The centre will be able to test the pollution levels of waters, he said. KUFOS will maintain registers pertaining to the details of farmers, samples given for testing, tests undertaken and results. This will help university students develop researches in related areas.

The prospective of shrimps and fresh water prawn can be fully exploited by culturing disease free species and boosting the export market, he added.

The laboratory will also have facilities for seed quality testing, soil and water quality and feed testing.

Urad, moong, groundnut coverage slips in rabi sowing

Area under wheat, rapeseed/mustard, chana at record



	Mixed coverage (in lakh hectares)	
	This year*	Last year*
Rice	10.51	7.67
Wheat	313.69	295.00
Total pulses	156.17	149.29
Coarse cereals	58.55	60.08
Oilseeds	86.73	84.16

Source: Ministry of Agriculture

* As on January 17

New Delhi, Jan :

Despite the total rabi acreage rising five per cent, coverage of key crops such as urad, moong and jowar besides oilseeds such as groundnut and sunflower is lower for the week-ended January 17.

According to data from the Agriculture Ministry, sowing of wheat, rapeseed/mustard and gram (chana) has increased to a record high. Totally, 625.65 lakh hectares (lh) have been brought under various crops this rabi season against 596.20 lh during the same period a year ago.

Against a normal coverage of 286.36 lh, wheat has been sown on 313.69 lh. Last year, 295 lh had been brought under the cereal during the same period. The area could increase further as sowing is yet to be over in Uttar Pradesh.

The area under rice, which trailed initially, has increased to 10.51 lh (7.67 lh). Rabi rice plantings continue until late February and normally 45 lh come under the crop.

Among coarse cereals, while jowar acreage has dropped with farmers shifting to other beneficial crops, the area under maize and barley has increased. Overall, the acreage is down at 58.55 lh (60.08 lh)

Rabi pulses crops, one of the key contributors to food inflation, are witnessing a mixed trend. While sowing in chana has topped 100 lh, a record against a normal coverage of 82.18 lh, the area under lentils, peas and other pulses is also higher.

The rise in chana acreage is despite farmers in Madhya Pradesh switching over to wheat since the State Government has announced a bonus payment over the minimum support price of Rs 1,400 a quintal. However, coverage of moong, lathyrus and urad is down between 50,000 hectares and one lh.

Rapeseed/mustard sowing has increased to a record of over 70 lh against the normal coverage of 61 lh. Rabi groundnut coverage is down by 55,000 hectares at around six lh. Similarly, sunflower acreage is lower by 70,000 hectares.

The area under sesame, safflower and linseed is up marginally.

higher storage levels

A major reason for the increase in rabi acreage is higher storage levels in the 85 major reservoirs and better soil moisture. However, deficient rainfall under the North-East Monsoon has affected coverage of pulses and a few other crops such

as jowar. The North-East monsoon showered excess rainfall in central parts of the country but was generally deficient over the rest of the country.

The storage level in the reservoir is currently at a decade high of over 100 billion cubic metres (BCM) against the 105.153 BCM capacity.

Cogencis reports: The Centre has called a meeting of food secretaries of various States in the second week of February to review arrangements for procurement of wheat in the new marketing season that begins on April 1, a Food Ministry release said.

In the meeting, estimated marketable surplus ratio of wheat for each State and estimated procurement of wheat for rabi marketing season will also be discussed.

Eastern parts may experience fog; hailstorm likely in UP, MP

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan :

A fog-maker western disturbance waiting for the past couple of days to cross in from central Pakistan has sustained dense to very dense fog conditions over northwest India. Fog to dense fog conditions affected many places over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, east Uttar Pradesh and Bihar overnight on Friday.

DENSE FOG

East Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, parts of Himachal Pradesh, west Uttar Pradesh, west Rajasthan, West Bengal and Odisha too were impacted in this manner.

But visibility was brought down to below 50 m (when aircraft operations become impossible with the best of technology) at Ludhiana, Patiala, Chandigarh, Ambala, Hissar, Bhiwani, Narnaul and Delhi (Ayanagar). Towards the East,

Barabanki, Sultanpur, Gorakhpur, Varanasi, Balia, Ganganagar, Pilani, Chittorgarh, Patna, Gaya, Bhagalpur, Purnea, Malda, Dhubri, Agartala, Kailashahar, Ujjain, Bhopal, Sidhi and Satna too witnessed very dense fog. The western disturbance is akin to a locomotive waiting at a station even as the tailwinds blow the steam onto the track it purveys in front.

STEAM ENGINE

The western disturbance too has its 'engine' in the front as it chugs into north-west India over the next two days, spewing fog for quite some distance ahead.

The warmth associated with fog formation is what helps break the cold wave in the North thanks to associated clouds that do not allow extreme cold to filter into lower levels.

This helps lift night temperatures. But it also blocks sun reaching the surface during the day setting up 'cold day' conditions. Passage of the 'engine' of the western disturbance will bring back cold northwesterly winds and in turn sets up the cold wave. This is what is currently being played out in northwest India, adjoining central India, east and northeast India which get affected by the western disturbance moving East.

A weather warning for Saturday said that dense fog will bring visibility to below 200 m over sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. Hail storm may break out over east Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

On Sunday, the 'engine' of the western dense will enter northwest India to bring very dense fog (visibility below 50 m) into play. Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh are likely to be affected.

Meanwhile, an India Met Department forecast said that a fresh western disturbance will report in over northwest and central India from Tuesday. Rain and snow will lash western Himalayan region, to start with.

Cotton likely to wilt as buyers stay away



Rajkot, Jan :

Demand for cotton dropped on Friday as arrivals improved, resulting in prices of lint and raw cotton falling. Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton decreased by Rs 200 to Rs 42,800-43,000 for a candy of

Though sellers demanded Rs 43,500 a candy, buyers were not ready to purchase at this price. *Kapas*, or raw cotton, declined Rs 10 to Rs 1,080-1,125 for a *maund* of 20 kg in Rajkot. About 55,000 bales of cotton arrived in Gujarat against 35,000 bales at the beginning of this week. A Rajkot-based cotton broker said buyers are out of the market at this price level and are looking to a further fall in prices. Cotton price may decrease in the coming days.

Cotton production in the country is estimated to increase 5 per cent to 376 lakh bales of 170 kg each during the current season ending September, according to the Cotton Association of India. Cotton arrivals in the country till December 2013 increased by 16.8 per cent to 119.7 lakh bales compared with 102.5 lakh bales during the same period a year ago.

Winter halts masur imports from Canada; urad rallies



Indore, Jan :

Masur prices have rallied by Rs 150 a quintal since last week as imports from Canada have dropped as snowfall has affecting shipments. According to Prakash Vora, as there has been no arrival

imports of masoor from Canada, it has resulted in some scarcity, leading to a steep rise in prices.

Otherwise, pulses and pulse seeds ruled firm on Thursday on weak arrivals and strong demand. Masur (bold) ruled at Rs 4,550-4,600 a quintal, while masur (Madhya Pradesh) was quoted at Rs 4,000-4,200 a quintal. . The rally may not last as once imported masur arrives, prices will tend to drop. The domestic masur crop appears to be lower due to the decline in sowing area this year, another trader told *Business Line*. Rise in spot masur also lifted its dal prices by Rs 150 in the past week, with masoor (medium) in the local mandis on Friday quoted at Rs 5,300-5,400, while masoor (bold) ruled at Rs 5,500-5,650 a quintal.

Moong ruled firm on strong buying from millers. On Friday, moong (bold) ruled at Rs 7,000-7,100 (up Rs 600 from last week), and moong (medium) at Rs 6,00-6,500 (Rs 5,500-Rs 6,000 last week). Due to lower crop and higher demand, moong prices in the local mandis have been ruling high for the last few days.

According to traders, prospects for moong are bullish till April when new moong crop will start arriving at the local mandis. A rise in demand also lifted moong dal in local mandis, with moong dal (medium) on Friday quoted at Rs 8,300-8,600 (up Rs 1,100 from last week); moong dal (bold) at Rs 8,700-8,900 (Rs 7,600-Rs

7,800 last week); while moong mongar was quoted at Rs 8,800-9,100 (Rs 7,600-Rs 7,800 last week), respectively.

Urad and its dal also ruled firm on weak arrival, with urad (bold) today quoted at Rs 4,500-4,600, while urad (medium) ruled at Rs 3,800-4,200).

Urad prices are also up Rs 100-150 since last week. Urad dal (medium) in the local mandis is also quoted higher at Rs 5,250-5,350, (up Rs 300 from last week), while urad dal (bold) ruled at Rs 5,450-5,550, and urad dal mongar at Rs 5,900-6,100.

Market looks forward to export sops for raw sugar



Mumbai, Jan :

Sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale market and naka level ruled steady on Friday as trading was routine.

Prices declined by Rs 10 at the mill level, as producers continued to sell old stocks on low demand.

In the domestic futures market, prices were unchanged with thin volatility after a five-day gain.

“All are waiting to know how much incentive the Government will give producers and in what form. On Thursday, a Group of Ministers finalised the much-awaited incentives for export of 40 lakh tonnes of raw sugar over a period of two years,” an analyst said.

A senior Government official, who attended the meeting, said the Ministers' panel will meet again next week to work out the modalities for the calculation of subsidy.

The domestic market seems to be under pressure as demand continues to be lower than supply.

Upcountry buying is lacking in Maharashtra as prices in other States are at a par with Maharashtra, forcing local millers to depend on State-level markets.

Arrivals at the Vashi market were 61-62 truckloads (each 100 bags), while local dispatches were 58-60 loads.

On Thursday evening, 15-16 mills offered tenders and sold 40,000-45,000 bags at Rs 10 lower at Rs 2,600-2,690 (Rs 2,610-Rs 2,700) for S-grade and Rs 2,720-2,870 (Rs 2,720- 2,880) for M-grade.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, February contracts closes at Rs 2,759 (Rs 2,758); March at Rs 2,765 (Rs. 2,765); and April at Rs 2,784 (Rs 2,778).

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S-grade Rs 2,752-2,905 (Rs 2,752-2,905); and M-grade Rs 2,922-3,032 (Rs 2,922-3,032).

Naka delivery rates were: S-grade Rs 2,700-2,810 (Rs 2,700-2,810); and M-grade Rs 2,820-3,000 (Rs 2,820-3,000).

Wheat may continue to rule steady



Karnal, Jan :

Moderate buying kept wheat and flour prices unchanged on Friday. Steady domestic demand and supplies are keeping wheat and flour prices stable, said market sources.

Radhey Shyam, a trade expert, told *Business Line* that with demand being steady for the dara variety, prices are ruling stable

In the absence of any major market-moving factors, a steady trend has prevailed in the market, he said. It is unlikely to see any major alteration and wheat may continue to rule around the current levels, said trade experts. In the physical market, dara wheat was sold at Rs 1,590-1,600 a quintal. Around 1,000 bags of

wheat arrived and stocks were directly offloaded at the mills. Mill delivery was at Rs 1,590 a quintal, while delivery at the chakki was at Rs 1,600 a quintal.

A positive trend was witnessed on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange. February contracts moved up by Rs 3 and was traded at Rs 1,653, with an open interest of 1,430 lots. The grain made a low at Rs 1,648 earlier in the day. February contracts have some support at Rs 1,642, while resistance is at Rs 1,658. March contracts were fluctuating between negative and positive territory throughout the day and was traded at Rs 1,598. In the spot market, wheat improved by Rs 5 and was traded at Rs 1,565. According to market

experts, the futures market may continue to witness range-bound to steady movement in the coming days.

Flour too ruled flat and was sold at Rs 1,850; choker was unchanged at Rs 1,475.

Edible oil trading turns lacklustre



The edible oils market witnessed dull trading day on Friday on lack of physical demand and low volatility in the futures markets. There was no activity in the absence of global cues as the Malaysian market was closed.

On the Bombay Commodity Exchange, rapeseed and cotton refined oil increased by Rs 5 each for 10 kg. Groundnut, soyabean and sunflower oil ruled unchanged. Palmolein declined by Rs 2. Soyabean oil futures closed lower by more than Rs 2. The gap between January (near expiry) and February widened to Rs 12, which was Rs 5-6 last week.

Malaysia's palm oil inventories rose to a nine-month high in December according to industry data. Slack demand offset a fall in output caused by floods. The market is also keeping a close watch on the ringgit, which is weakening and could boost margins of refiners, said an analyst.

In the absence of fresh demand and weak futures markets, volume remained almost nil in Mumbai. Towards the day's close, Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 572; super palmolein at Rs 592; super deluxe palmolein at Rs 612; and

soyabean refined oil at Rs 650. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 570; soyabean refined oil at Rs 645; and sunflower refined oil at Rs 665.

Allana was quoting palmolein at Rs 570; soyabean refined oil at Rs 647; and sunflower refined oil at Rs 665. Resellers were quoting palmolein at at Rs 567-568.

At Rajkot, groundnut oil declined by Rs 10 at Rs 1,250 (Rs 1,260) for telia tin and Rs 10 at Rs790 (Rs 800) for loose (10 kg). Soyabeans total arrivals were 1.50 lakh bags and its prices in Maharashtra were Rs 3,570-3,640.

On Thursday, Malaysia BMD crude palm oil's February contracts settled at MYR 2,515; March at MYR 2,525; and April at MYR 2,540.

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were: groundnut oil 800 (800); soya refined oil 645 (645); sunflower exp. ref. 610 (610); sunflower ref. 665 (665); rapeseed ref. oil 730 (725); rapeseed expeller ref. 700 (695); cottonseed ref. oil 625 (620); and palmolein 566 (568).

Mixed trend in pepper futures

Kochi, Jan :

Pepper prices were steady with February contracts dropping on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

Spot pepper prices ruled steady as activities were limited. A good quantity of pepper reached North Indian markets directly from the primary markets.

On the terminal market, 17 tonnes of fresh pepper were traded at Rs 488-508/kg.

Moreover, validity expired MG-1 was purchased by end users at Rs 505-515/kg, market sources told *Business Line*. Pepper from the South Kerala was traded at Rs 470-485; high range pepper was traded at Rs 495.

India's monthly requirement is estimated at 4,000-5,000 tonnes. On the NMCE, February contracts declined by Rs 50 a quintal to Rs 50,900 a quintal.

March contracts increased by Rs 624 to Rs 51,999. Turnover moved increased to 5 tonnes. Net open position went up by to nine tonnes.

On the IPSTA, February and March contracts increased by Rs 982 and Rs 996, respectively, to Rs 50,500 and Rs 48,675 a quintal. Spot prices remained unchanged at Rs 48,800 and Rs 50,800 a quintal.

Export prices were \$8,475-8,500 a tonne c&f for Europe and \$8,725-8750 a tonne c&f US.