

TNAU chosen to foster biotech innovation

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY INNOVATION CLUSTER

- ▶ Creation of an innovation cluster which provides knowledge networking and mentoring support
- ▶ Development of the enabling ecosystem to support exploitation of research and entrepreneurship
- ▶ Creation of innovation incentives for students, faculty, researchers, entrepreneurs and businesses
- ▶ Innovative ways of human resource and skill development
- ▶ Creation of shared facilities, finishing schools, specialised centres/facilities, among others
- ▶ Creation of knowledge and resource sharing mechanisms

COIMBATORE, January 25, 2014 -

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) here is one of the two universities in the State, and among five in the country that have been selected for the Central Government's initiative to promote biotech innovation at the university level. The initiative has been launched by National Innovation Council (NIC), Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), and Department of Biotechnology (DBT), to

help translate promising biotechnology research findings of students into innovations, with total infrastructure support, financial assistance, and protection through patenting.

TNAU Vice-Chancellor K. Ramasamy said that 17 universities had applied for the initiative and five had been selected and the names were announced recently by Chairman of NIC Sam Pitroda.

Under this initiative, the selected university would work as an incubator for budding entrepreneurs who wish to innovate in biotechnology through a 'University Innovation Cluster (UIC)'.

The incubation would not stop with converting potential ideas into products, but also ensure it received industrial acceptance. A full-time professor and two technicians would oversee the activities of the UIC.

"To begin with, the selection committee has identified for TNAU 12 candidates from various institutions, who are interested in becoming entrepreneurs in biotechnology. The initial hand-holding will be for two years. If the research is found good, the support will be extended for another three years. The initiative has been awarded to the University for five years, after which it will be extended for another term," Mr. Ramasamy said.

TNAU had received Rs. 3.8 crore as the first instalment for the initiative. The university is looking for Rs. 8 crore and Rs. 25, respectively, as the next two instalments for the five-year initiative.

Paddy straw sold as cattle feed at subsidised rate to farmers



Cattle-growers buy paddy straw sold at nominal rate by the Animal Husbandry Department at Bhavani in Erode district.— PHOTO: M. GOVARTHAN

ERODE, January 25, 2014 - The Animal Husbandry Department started selling paddy straw as cattle feed at subsidised cost to farmers on Friday at the Veterinary

Hospital in Bhavani.

During the course of this month, the department initiated the sale of paddy straw through its hospitals in Perundurai, Elumathur, Polavakalipalayam, and in Nambiyur.

Drought

The department procures paddy straw from the Agriculture Department and private entities for around Rs. 10 a kg and sell them at a subsidised cost of Rs. 2 a kg to farmers during drought period.

“We sell paddy straw to farmers on the basis of three kg per cow a day for seven days. The initiative was conceptualised to prevent farmers from carrying out distress sale of their cattle at times of drought,” said P. Jayaraman, Joint Director of Animal Husbandry Department. Sale of paddy straw would be sustained for the next three months, Mr. Jayaraman added.

Mulberry farmers fear failure of crop due to dust pollution

‘Pollution due to a nearby blue metal crushing unit’

KRISHNAGIRI, January 25, 2014 - Farmers undertaking cultivation of mulberry crop have expressed concern that their crop might fail during this season due to the heavy dust pollution caused in and around Mudhukurikki village near Berigai. They alleged that the cause for the pollution was due to the frequent transportation of blue metal in heavy lorries from a nearby stone crushing unit.

S. Gopal and eight others of Mudukurikki village brought his damaged crop to the monthly grievances redress day meeting and explained it to the collector and agricultural officials. In a combined petition submitted by farmers to the Collector, they said that over twenty families depending on mulberry cultivation were on brink of losing their crop due to heavy pollution from a private stone crusher.

They also alleged that close to 40 loads of blue metal is being transported to Karnataka in tipper lorries and has affected the condition of BT road.

As a result of this, when lorries pass through, dust pollution caused due to the movements was spreading to at least 50 meter on either sides of the road, affecting the mulberry crop. Due to these, the farmers fear that they may suffer a loss in crop which in turn would affect their repayment schedule of loans.

Patta transfer

A section of farmers complained that the revenue officials are demanding bribe for patta transfer. They also mentioned a name of a surveyor who had demanded Rs. 5000 for giving patta transfer. Hearing the complaint, the District Revenue Officer P. Balasubramanian promised suitable action against the official concerned and said that 800 pattas were ready for distribution in Uthangarai.

A group of farmers demanded the district administration to take measures to supply water to the water bodies in and around Berigai, Athimugam and adjoining areas by digging a new canal from Kelavarapalli dam.

According to them, as these areas experienced acute water shortage due to failure of rains. Presiding over the grievances redress programme, Collector T.P. Rajesh instructed the officials to survey and to prepare a feasibility report for recommendation to the Government for the project.

Farmers said that the Government should take effective steps to control monkey menace in the district, as it affected crop production.

“Gypsum is being stocked at various places in the district for distribution to the farmers. Zinc Sulphate would be supplied after getting the necessary sanction from the Government”, said S. Radhakrishnan, Joint Director, Agriculture.

In response to the query raised by Nazeer Ahmed of Kengaleri regarding raising the height of the compound wall for crematorium, P. Mandhirachalam, Project Director, DRDA directed the officials to prepare an estimate and implement the project under the General Fund.

Karur farmers demand 2,000 cusecs during Mettur closure



KULITHALAI, January 25, 2014 -

Farmers pleading for sustained release of water from Mettur Dam to meet drinking water and irrigation requirements in Karur and other districts at the grievances day meet in Kulithalai on Friday.

The crest gates will be closed for delta irrigation by January 28

Farmers in Karur district have called upon Chief Minister Jayalalitha to ensure a minimum flow of 2,000 cusecs from River Cauvery in irrigation

channels to save the standing crops in the region.

With the possible closure of Mettur Dam and an extended dry spell staring at them, the farmers in areas irrigated by the 17 irrigation channels branching off on either side of River Cauvery are facing a bleak prospect.

The demand echoed at the grievances day meet held here on Friday with Karur Collector S. Jayandhi in the chair. Marudur Thirunavukkarasu, a farmer, noted that already PWD officials had stopped release of water in the South Bank Canal and Kattalai High Level Channel for sometime now and Mettur Dam would be closed for delta irrigation by January 28.

DAM CLOSURE OPENS TROUBLE

🔴 **Mettur Dam is normally closed for irrigation from January 31 to June 12 every year**

🔴 **Release of water in the South Bank Canal and Kattalai High Level Channel has been stopped**

🔴 **'CM must ensure that every region gets a minimum of 300 cusecs for 10 days in a month'**

🔴 **'Consider storing up to 1 tmc ft of water in the newly-constructed Mayanur Barrage'**

Besides, rampant sand mining has forced a steep depletion of groundwater resources on either bank of the river forcing farmers to find deeper locations for irrigating the fields, Mr. Thirunavukkarasu observed.

For the farmers to tide over the crisis, the State government must ensure that at least 2,000 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam during the closure period (January 31-June 12) so that every region got a minimum of 300 cusecs for 10 days in a month on rotation basis, he urged.

Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association working president Mahadanapuram V.Rajaram and deputy secretary Kavandampatti R.Subrmanian supported the demand for at least 2,000 cusecs during Mettur closure period to save the standing crops in the district. Mr.Subramanian pointed out that anyhow the districts below Mettur required some flow down the river to meet the drinking water requirements and hence the government could consider the plea of the farmers for sustained release till June-end.

Meanwhile members of the Federation of Farmers Affected by Pollution led by the president Ramasamy and secretary Ramalingam brought with them a bottle of dark liquid which they claimed was water collected from the river Amaravathy and alleged that industrial pollution was devastating Karur district's water resources. They wanted the district administration to end the contamination and pollution of water resources by effluent-discharging industries.

Mr.Rajaram also urged the State government to consider storing up to 1 tmc ft of water in the newly-constructed Mayanur Barrage that was yet to be officially opened so that during summer at least the storage could help recharge groundwater in the region.

DRO M.Aruna, RDOs Nellai Vendhan (Karur) and Sivasoundaravalli (Kulithalai), Joint Director of Agriculture M.Deivendran, Joint Registrar of Cooperative Societies Santhanam, progressive farmers Kulithalai A.V.Gopaladesikan, Rajeswari, and Keezhaveliyur Raju spoke.

Citing poor rainfall, farmers seek loan repayment holiday

SALEM, January 25, 2014 - Farmers have made an appeal to the district administration to declare one-year loan repayment holiday for the loan that they obtained last year. They made this representation to the Collector at the farmers' grievances redress meeting here on Friday. They also urged the Collector to hold talks with representatives of nationalised banks and cooperative banks in this connection and help them get the holiday sanctioned.

"We have obtained loans to the tune of about a lakh or more by pledging jewellery and property. But poor rainfall for the second year in succession and dropping ground water level made agriculture difficult last year. This forced us to incur heavy loss. It has become impossible for us to manage our farm, family and repay the loans. A repayment holiday will help us save our valuables from getting auctioned," said N. Perumal, a farmer.

President of the United Farmers Association's, Tamil Nadu, C. Vaiyapuri, made an appeal to the district administration to disconnect all the private bore wells located near rivers and tanks.

"Keeping in mind the dropping ground water level, digging of new bore wells should also be stopped," he added.

Farmers also alleged that tapping ground water using bore wells and illegally selling them was rampant in rural pockets.

Responding to the allegation, District Collector K. Maharabushanam promised stringent action against persons indulging in such acts and asked the farmers to give complaints against them.

Many farmers urged the administration to make a representation to the State Government on the impact of the poor rainfall in this district in 2012 and 2013.

"The district should be announced as a drought-hit district. Steps should be taken for assessing the loss suffered by farmers," the farmers added.

Claiming that some leading farmers and representatives of associations alone got a chance to represent their grievances, some farmers made an appeal to the Collector and officials concerned to give a chance for smaller farmers also.

Earlier, during the meeting, officials from the Agriculture, Agricultural Engineering, Agricultural Marketing, Animal Husbandry Department and Krishi Vigyan Kendra explained the various schemes available for farmers, and its benefits.

📌 **Announce district as drought-hit**

📌 **Take steps to assess loss suffered by farmers**

Farmers grievances meet on Jan. 31

TIRUCHI, January 25, 2014 - The monthly farmers grievances meeting will be held at the Collector's Office in the city at 10.30 a.m. on January 31, Collector Jayashree Muralidharan said in a press release.

Vidhana Soudha chalo by poultry farmers on Jan. 29

BANGALORE, January 25, 2014 - PROTEST BY POULTRY FARMERS

The Karnataka State Poultry Farmers' Welfare Association will hold 'Vidhana Soudha Chalo' on January 29 demanding that they be given all the benefits extended to farmers. Karnataka Rajya Prantha Sangha General Secretary G.C. Bayyareddy said farmers have made big investments in poultry farming and the increase in electricity charges and wages have put them in hardship. Though the sector comes under the Agriculture Department, they are not receiving benefits, he added. He said the government should consider poultry farming under agriculture and allied sector on the lines of Punjab, Gujarat and Haryana. — Staff Reporter.

DC to convene meeting of farmers

HASSAN, January 25, 2014 - Deputy Commissioner V. Anbukumar has convened a meeting of farmers of Belur taluk, who have been staging a protest demanding supply of drinking water to their villages, in Hassan on Saturday. The farmers have been protesting for three days. The farmers alleged that the pipeline meant to supply drinking water from Yagachi reservoir to villages in Javagal and Banavar hoblis had been damaged and this had affected the supply of drinking water. — Staff Correspondent.

Farmers' delegation seeks solution to water crisis

'Standing crops in tail-end area withering'

RAICHUR, January 25, 2014 - A farmers' delegation, led by Chamarasa Malipatil, State president of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha, met Minister for Water Resources M.B. Patil and Minister of State for Medical Education and in-charge of the district Sharan Prakash Patil at Bangalore on Friday and discussed about the prevailing water crisis in the tail-end area of Tungabhadra Left Bank Canal (TLBC). The delegation told the Ministers that standing crops of cotton, chilli, jowar and others in Raichur and Manvi taluks were drying due to water scarcity.

The delegation accused the Tungabhadra Board officials of violating the decisions of the Tungabhadra Irrigation Consultative Committee (TICC) as they had failed to release water into TLBC despite the reservoir having adequate stock.

“We have presented a clear picture of the prevailing water crisis in TLBC tail-end areas, particularly in Manvi and Raichur taluks. The Ministers were convinced and promised that they will arrange to provide the tail-end farmers with sufficient water after the Republic Day celebrations,” Mr. Malipatil told *The Hindu* .

According to Mr. Malipatil, Dr. Sharan Prakash Patil will shortly convene a meeting of the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police to discuss the issue.

The delegation took exception to release of water to Andhra Pradesh from Tungabhadra reservoir well before the scheduled date. Water Resources Minister M.B. Patil reportedly told the delegation that the officials of the Tungabhadra Board had been directed to stop releasing water to Andhra Pradesh.

Some members of the delegation complained of unauthorised expansion of the area under irrigation in the upper canal areas.

“We have also told the Ministers that huge tracks of land, particularly those belonging to some influential persons, are being illegally irrigated in the upper areas of the canal. They are overdraw the water, leaving little water to the tail-end farmers. The Ministers have assured that appropriate action will be taken to address the problem,” Mr. Malipatil said. When the issue of accumulation of a large quantity of silt in the Tungabhadra reservoir was raised, the delegation was told that it was almost impossible to clear 30 tmcft silt from the dam as it would involve several technical issues. Options of increasing the height of the dam, construction of parallel canal and balancing reservoirs, among others were discussed, Mr. Malipatil said.

Shivaraj Patil, Hampana Gowda Badarli, Pratap Gowda Patil, MLAs, the former legislator Gangadhar Nayak, farmers’ leaders Trimurthy, Nageshwara Rao, Anand Rao, Balish Reddy, Doddabasavana Gowda Ballatagi, Basavaraj Mali Patil, Balaji and Babu Rao were in the delegation.

Farm sector gets lion’s share

Stress on improving productivity and ensuring welfare of farmers

| | | |
|---|--|--------------|
|  | • Promotion of hi-tech agriculture | Rs.200 crore |
| | • Income guarantee for small, marginal farmers | Rs.50 crore |
| | • Health insurance for farmers | Rs.50 crore |
| | • Interest-free loans for farmer cooperatives | Rs.10 crore |

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, January 25, 2014 - The budget presented by Finance Minister K.M. Mani in the Assembly on Friday lays stress on improving agricultural productivity and ensuring the

welfare of farmers.

An income guarantee scheme and health insurance for small and marginal farmers, and a programme to promote hi-tech farming were among the major proposals for the agriculture sector in the Budget.

Mr. Mani allocated a total of Rs.964.82 crore for production, procurement, and distribution of crops as well as agricultural research.

The Budget sought to transform Kerala into a hi-tech agriculture State by training farmers to adopt technology for increased productivity. A core team of agriculture and botany graduates would be created in association with the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation to train the farmers. Interest-free loan up to Rs.5 lakh would be extended to farmers adopting hi-tech methods.

Mr. Mani said that at least five poly houses would be set up under each Krishi Bhavan. He promised loan up to 90 per cent of the cost of a poly house, free electricity for poly house farmers, concession in building tax and financial assistance through the Agri Card Scheme. An Agri Mission would be created to identify the beneficiaries.

The Budget promises subsidy to promote vertical farming in small plots of 10 cents.

Income guarantee

The government would foot 90 per cent of the premium for the income guarantee scheme covering 25 major crops. An amount of Rs.50 crore had been allocated for the scheme targeting farmers holding up to 2 hectares of land. Mr. Mani said the insurance scheme would ensure fair returns for farmers. The government would also bear 50 per cent of the premium on the health insurance scheme to be implemented through the State Insurance Department.

The Budget proposes interest-free loan up to Rs.5 lakh for farmers cooperatives to improve agricultural infrastructure, procure crops, and market them. Mr. Mani said a family assistance scheme under which the government would foot 50 per cent of the outstanding amount on the loan of a deceased farmer.

Another major proposal is to set up small scale food processing units to manufacture value-added products from crops such as jackfruit, mango, and tuber crops. The Minister said this would generate new jobs, contribute to food security, and avoid wastage of farm produce. Training and financial assistance would be provided under the Entrepreneurship Development Mission.

The Budget proposes an outlay of Rs.25 crore to provide matching grant for panchayats taking up agricultural development activities such as production and supply of saplings and training of farmers. Another Rs.15 crore had been allocated for a project to establish block-level nurseries to produce seeds or saplings of high-yielding varieties.

Market intervention

The Budget promised rubber farmers that the government would intervene in the market to ensure fair price in the event of a downturn leading to a crash in price. It had allocated Rs.1 crore for a project to make value-added products such as packaging materials and bio medical equipment from agricultural waste. An amount of Rs.25 lakh had been earmarked for the Global Agri Meet to be held in Kochi to attract investments in agriculture and food processing.

Mr. Mani announced an initiative to introduce the 'Made in Kerala — Safe to Eat' brand as a premium label marketed in association with the Confederation of Indian Industry. He said the State government would tie up with the Railways and shipping companies for an ambitious scheme to market coconut, banana, and pineapple crops throughout India and the Middle East countries.

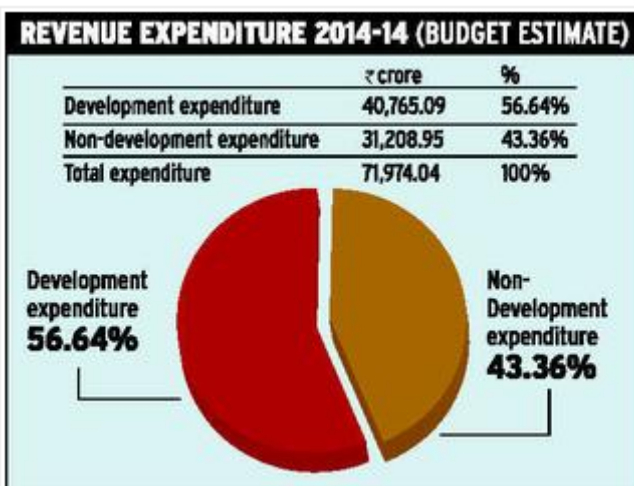
The budget also included a special package for arecanut farmers (Rs.10 crore) in Kasaragod and a proposal to set up agri malls (Rs.5 crore) with Central assistance.

Allied sectors

In the allied sectors, the Budget proposes a Rs.9.19-crore project to strengthen diagnostic facilities for animal diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease (FMD). A new poultry breeder farm would be set up in Kasaragode (Rs.4 crore).

The fisheries sector would get an allocation of Rs.177.4 crore. The proposals included promotion of aquaculture and a production bonus for fish workers.

Sops for farmers, gold merchants



THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, January 25, 2014 - Farmers and gold merchants are among the sections that have bagged the maximum concessions in the budget presented by Finance Minister K. M. Mani in the Assembly on Friday.

Mr. Mani has exempted coconut, areca nut and pepper farmers and all farmers except companies coming within the purview of the Plantation Labour Act from paying plantation tax. Last year's budget had exempted all farmers from agricultural tax.

The proposed changes to the compounding tax on gold ornaments will benefit jewellery merchants. The compounding tax has been fixed at one per cent of the turnover for traders with a total turnover of Rs.10 lakh or less.

Mr.Mani said the changes were based on the recommendations of the Subject committee of the Assembly. For dealers opting compounding for the first time, the existing provision will continue. Reduced rates will be prescribed for those who had compounded continuously for three years and five years respectively based on a slab system. The slabs for determining compounded tax will be based on total turnover. Compounding tax will not be applicable for new branches and those without purchase and sales.

The Minister said the changes to the compounding tax would result in a revenue loss of Rs.25 crore. He said the government would study the possibility of an online invoice system for gold dealers not coming under the compounding scheme and those having a prescribed turnover.

The tourism sector is another beneficiary of this year's budget. Mr. Mani has proposed a 50 per cent reduction in the luxury tax rate of auditoria and convention centres with rent above Rs. 20,000. The concessional rate is aimed at promoting Kerala as a destination for seminars and conventions.

The budget has proposed tax exemption for rice bran oil, maida, wheat powder, paper cups and soaps manufactured from coconut oil. It recommends a five per cent tax rate on LED equipments and rubber spray oil used for control of fungus in rubber plantations.

LPG VAT

Mr. Mani said suitable amendments would be made to exempt VAT on the subsidy amount of LPG with retrospective effect from January 1, 2014. This, he said, would bring down the price of an LPG cylinder by Rs. 41.32. The government will have to forego a tax revenue of Rs.287 crore on this account.

The budget has proposed a reduction in the tax rate of furnace oil used for coastal transport from 14.5 per cent to five per cent. Mr.Mani said this would encourage more vessels to touch Kochi for refuelling.

The budget has reduced the tax rate of Ayurvedic cosmetics from 12.5 per cent to four per cent. The tax rate of various types of cakes, halwa, mixture, laddu and jelabi will be unified at five per cent without classification as branded or unbranded items.

For the Kochi Metro project, Mr.Mani has proposed exemption of the tax on works contract.

'Drum seeder' to help farmers



DATT centre popularising the device in view of severe shortage of labour

Technology at work:Agricultural scientist R Uma Reddy demonstrating the working of the drum seeder to farmers at a meeting in Warangal on Friday.— Photo: M. MURALI

WARANGAL, January 25, 2014 - A simple axle with two wheels and drums attached to you around in between to store and drop seeds known as called

'drum seeder' is becoming popular among the farmers in the district.

In view of sever shortage of labour, it is being popularised by the District Agricultural Technology and Transfer (DATT) centre.

Director of the centre, R Uma Reddy told *The Hindu* that it would help lot with regard to the labour component to paddy farmers. It also helps save the seed. "A farmer requires 30kg paddy per acre with manual labour. By using drum seeder, farmer just needs 12 kg," he explained.

In conventional method of sowing paddy, a farmer needs to engage 10 to 12 labour per acre of sowing whereas, three people can sow 2.5 acres a day using the drum seeder.

Cost effective

Mr R Uma Reddy said it would cost Rs 5,000 but it was being given to farmers at Rs 2,500 under 50 per cent subsidy scheme. Since the seeds are dropped at regular interval and at correct space, it also helps avoid weed problem in the field. "The beauty of the drum seeder is that it is easy to maintain and no power or other costs involved in it," he said. The all other parameters, like varieties, fertilisers and water management remain same both in manual transplanting and Drum seeder planting.

Picking up

"Because of efforts by DAATT Centre, in the district this technology is slowly picking up and now in every mandal at least 300-400 acres paddy is under drum seeder planting. This suits very well the small and marginal farmers and addresses labour issue in paddy crop, he added.

Farm forestry fair

KORAPUT, January 25, 2014 - A farm forestry fair was inaugurated by district Collector Sachin Jadhav in the presence of A.O.F.Bakhla , RCCF, L.K.Tiwari , additional PD of OFSDP at Koraput on Friday. More than 70 farmers and 60 officials from Koraput, Rayagada , Phulbani and Gajapati districts took part in the fair .

Farmer-friendly Budget presented in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, January 25, 2014 - The Kerala budget for 2014-15 presented in the Assembly by Finance Minister K.M. Mani on Friday proposes several initiatives that will enthruse farmers, besides fresh imposts to mobilise an additional revenue of Rs. 1,556.35 crore during the year.

The additional revenue will come mainly from levies on liquor (Rs.400 crore), motor vehicles (Rs. 145.34 crore), rock-crusher and manufactured sand industry (Rs. 140 crore), high-end textile retail shops (Rs. 100 crore), paper lotteries (Rs. 100 crore), and edible oil other than coconut oil (Rs. 80 crore).

Stamp duty on registration is proposed to be increased/rationalised across the board to raise Rs. 100 crore additionally.

The Budget estimates a revenue deficit of Rs. 7,131.69 crore, with the revenue expenses expected to reach the level of Rs. 71,974.04 crore against expected revenue receipts of Rs. 64,842.35 crore.

The Budget proposes each government department setting apart one per cent of its annual allocation on programmes to spark the spirit of entrepreneurship among the youth.

Cumulatively the amount that will be available for this purpose will be more than Rs.500 crore. The departments are to spend this amount for implementing innovative entrepreneurial ideas of the youth.

The Budget proposes foregoing revenue to the tune of Rs.287 crore by exempting the subsidy part of cooking gas price from value added tax now applicable under the direct transfer of subsidy benefit to the consumers.

Mr. Mani said this would bring down the price of a cylinder of cooking gas by Rs.41.32. The Budget also seeks to "correct certain unscientific aspects" of the existing tax compounding system for gold jewellery showrooms at an expected revenue loss of Rs.25 crore.

Sowing the seeds of 'agriprenurship'

CHIDAMBARAM, January 25, 2014 - For the first time in Tamil Nadu the Entrepreneurship Development Institute (EDI) has conceived the idea of promoting 'agriprenurship' to give a thrust to the farm sector, said K. Dhanavel, Secretary, Department of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).

In his inaugural address delivered at the 'Agriprenurship residential training programme' organized at the Annamalai University premises, Mr. Dhanavel said that the event was intended to make the agricultural technicians happy and proud of their avocation. It was a matter of concern that the share of agriculture in the Gross State Domestic Products (GSDP) has come down from 54-55 per cent in the early 50s to just about 8.34 per cent today. This was due to stagnation that had set in the farm sector for the past few decades and the significant growth recorded by the service sector (61 per cent) and the manufacturing sector (27-28 per cent).

Mr Dhanavel said that the consumerism-oriented western economy collapsed because the cost of the container was more than that of the contents. It was not a healthy trend that the massive spends on advertisements and unproductive expenses incurred on product promotion were loaded on to the sale price.

He pointed out that 40 per cent of the population was dependent on 10 per cent of meagre resources meant for agriculture whereas remaining 60 per cent of population was sharing 90 per cent of resources. In the long run such a trend would severely impact economy.

"Therefore, to sustain economy the safe threshold level for agricultural sector's share in the Gross Domestic Products ought to be 10 per cent," he said.

The MSME secretary also noted that when water-stressed countries such as Israel and Arab countries that received scanty rainfall in the range of 120 mm to 200 mm a year had a thriving agricultural sector, the State with an annual rainfall of about 1,000 mm could do much better. .

The concept of 'agriprenurship' was, therefore, being promoted to encourage setting up of enterprises related to the farm sector. Mr Dhanavel further noted that as part of the endeavour to accomplish the goals set by the Vision 2023 documents, Chief Minister Jayalalithaa had enhanced the fund allocation to the MSME department from Rs 1.25 crore to Rs 5 crore a year for imparting entrepreneurship training.

In Tamil Nadu 8.51 lakh MSMEs, with a total investment of Rs 50,000 crore, were churning out products worth Rs 20,000 crore a year and were providing employment to 61 lakh people. The statistics signified the vital role played by the MSMEs in economy, Mr Dhanavel added.

Director of the Entrepreneur Development Institute S. Murugaia said that the entrepreneurs should have confidence and enthusiasm to succeed.

University Administrator Shiv Das Meena said that acquiring adequate knowledge on both practical and the theoretical aspects was essential for a successful entrepreneur. J.

Vasanthakumar, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture and K. Jayachindiran, Joint Director of Entrepreneurship Development Institute, also spoke.

Milk procurement price to go up by Rs. 3

BELLARY, January 25, 2014 - The Raichur, Bellary and Koppal Milk Producers' Union has announced a Rs. 3 per litre increase in the procurement price of milk as a bonus to milk producers. However, the enhancement of procurement price is limited to only two months (February and March 2014) and limited to milk producers of three districts — Bellary,

Raichur, and Koppal — coming under the union's jurisdiction. G. Somashekar Reddy, chairman of the Karnataka Milk Federation, who announced the enhancement of procurement price, said that the decision was taken at the monthly meeting of the union here on Friday. According to him, the procurement price of cow's milk, which was Rs. 23.75 per litre, would now be Rs. 26.75 and buffalo's milk will cost Rs. 31 as against Rs. 28. Farmers would continue to get the incentive of Rs. 4 passed on by the government.

Water level

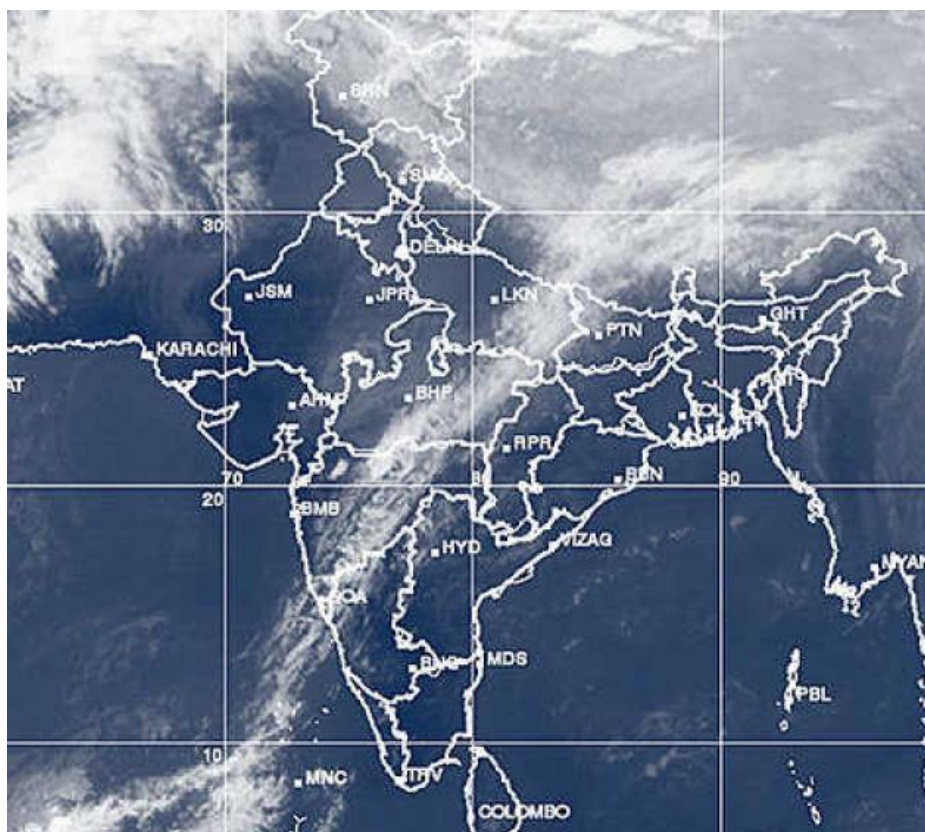
The water level in Periyar dam stood at 112 feet on Friday with an inflow of 160 cusecs and a discharge of 200 cusecs. The level in Vaigai dam was 35.70 feet with an inflow of 164 cusecs and a discharge of 40 cusecs. The combined storage in Periyar credit was 1,159 mcft. There was no rainfall recorded during the last 24 hours ending at 8.30 a.m. on Friday, PWD officials said.

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 51.54 feet on Friday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 210 cusecs and the discharge 2,000 cusecs.

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Friday stood at 92 feet. The dam had an inflow of 259.26 cusecs and 1,008.60 cusecs of water was discharged. The water level in Manimuthar dam stood at 84.30 feet. The dam had an inflow of 52 cusecs and 30 cusecs was discharged.

Kanyakumari - The water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 19.75 feet, 53.50 feet in Perunchani, 10.63 feet in Chittar 1, 10.73 feet in Chittar 11, 4.40 feet in Poigai and 54.12 feet in Mamabazathuraiyaru.

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs. Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on January 24.

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Saturday, Jan 25

Max 29° | Min 22°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 78

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:35

Sunset: 06:06

Barometer: 1015

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Sunday, Jan 26

Max 30° | Min 22°

Extended Forecast for a week

Monday

Jan 27



30° | 23°

Partly Cloudy

Tuesday

Jan 28



25° | 23°

Overcast

Wednesday

Jan 29



24° | 23°

Overcast

Thursday

Jan 30



24° | 22°

Overcast

Friday

Jan 31



24° | 22°

Cloudy

THE HINDU Business Line

Allanasons is the best exporter of green coffee



Bangalore, January 24: Allanasons Ltd has won the best green coffee exporter award instituted by the Coffee Board. The company bagged the award for exporting the highest volume of coffee in 2012-13.

NKG Jayanti Coffee was second, followed by Amalgamated Bean Coffee Trading Company Ltd. At the IICF, Coffee Board honoured individuals and institutions for setting high standards and benchmarks in the world of coffee.

The following are the other category winners: In the speciality coffee segment – Aspinwall & Company topped the list, followed by Allanasons Ltd and NKG Jayanti Coffee.

Instant coffee category: CCL Products, followed by Tata Coffee and Nestle India. Roasted coffee beans and ground coffee: Jay Keshav Exports, Rams Exim and Fresh and Honest Cafe. NKG Jayanti Coffee won the award for the best exporter to Europe. The company bagged the award for exporting the maximum amount of coffee to Europe in 2012-13. Amalgamated Bean Coffee Trading Company Ltd and Allanasons Ltd came second and third. Following are the best exporters of coffee to the different regions: US & Canada: CCL Products, Allanasons Ltd and Mudremane Coffee Curers. Russia & CIS: CCL Products, Tata Coffee and Nestle India. West Asia and North Africa (Mena): Allanasons Ltd, Nestle India and Bola Surendra Kamath & Sons. Far-East: Sri Narasu's Coffee Company, Vayhan Coffee and Tata Coffee.

Pepper market turns hot



Kochi, January 24: Pepper prices turned hot on increased demand and tight supply on Friday. Consequently, spot prices shot up by ₹300 a quintal, while the March and April contracts on the National Multi Commodity Exchange ended higher.

There were buyers for ungarbled pepper from upcountry markets at ₹510 a kg, but sellers stayed away, hoping prices will rise further in the coming days.

North Indian buyers were active giving the indication of a rising demand. "The market was extremely firm," sources told *Business Line*. Thus, strong domestic demand coupled with tight availability, aided the price rise, they claimed. About 25 tonnes of validity expired stocks were traded at ₹512 a kg.

Overseas buyers looking for prompt and immediate shipments bought from Brazil at \$7,300 a tonne for Brazil B 1 pepper.

Meanwhile, Vietnam, which is closed for Chinese holidays from Friday till February 15, has offered \$6,800 a tonne for 500 GL FAQ; \$7,400 a tonne for 550 GL; and \$7,800 a tonne for Asta grade for shipments after mid-February and March, they said. February and March contracts on the NMCE increased by ₹160 and ₹109 a quintal respectively to the last traded price of ₹51,520 and ₹51,935 a quintal.

Total turnover dropped to 7 tonnes, while total open interest remained unchanged at 16 tonnes. On the IPSTA, all active contracts stayed steady at the previous levels for want of enough participants. Spot prices rose by ₹300 a quintal to close at ₹49,300 (ungarbled) and ₹51,300 (garbled) a quintal.

Indian export prices were at \$8,500 a tonne (c&f) for the Europe and \$8,750 a tonne c&f for the US.

Iran lends a hand to Indian tea

Green cover India exported a little over 140 million kg of tea compared to the previous year.

Kolkata, January 24: Tea exports increased 4.8 per cent at to 147 million kg between January and September 2013.

Shipments were a little over 140 million kg during the same period the previous year.



Export realisation

According to the Indian Tea Association, export realisation during the period grew by 16.5 per cent to ₹2,933.01 crore, riding on over 11 per cent increase in average export prices to ₹199.58 a kg. Last year, the realisation was ₹179.58 a kg.

While North India contributed 56 per cent of export volume, it made up 69 per cent in terms of total value. South India clocked higher growth in volume and value.

North Indian tea

While North Indian teas fetched about 10 per cent higher price compared with the previous year, South India fetched some 16 per cent higher realisation for every kg of tea sold in the overseas market. In terms of regions, Iran was the main buyer, importing 16 million kg of tea between January and September. Shipments were double that of the previous year's 8 million kg.

Similarly, countries that bought more Indian tea include the US, Poland, UAE, Turkey, Afghanistan and Japan, the ITA said in a report.

On the other hand, buying by the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries — Russia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. Exports to CIS were marginally lower by 5 per cent at 40 million kg (42 million kg).

Buyers

Other countries where purchase of Indian tea declined include the UK, Netherlands, Germany, Australia, Ireland, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kenya and Pakistan.

Exports to the CIS countries are a far cry from over 100 million kgs shipped during the 1990s. Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, tea exports have taken a hit with Sri Lanka enjoying an advantage, thanks to tea-for-arms deals.

In terms of exports by other competing countries, Kenya reported a 17.7 per cent increase in tea exports to 174.1 million kg till October.

However, Sri Lanka (till July 2013) reported a 2.6 per cent drop in shipments to 169.6 million kg, the report said.

Rabi rice planting picking up



Coverage update*

| Crop | (In lakh hectares) | |
|----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| | This year | Last year |
| Rice | 15.26 | 10.73 |
| Wheat | 314.78 | 296.09 |
| Pulses | 156.57 | 149.02 |
| Coarse Cereals | 60.12 | 61.90 |
| Oilseeds | 88.40 | 85.65 |
| Total | 635.13 | 603.39 |

*Acreage as on January 24

Source: Ministry of Agriculture

Wheat sowing hits record even as coarse cereals trail

New Delhi, January 24: The ongoing rabi season continues to see a mixed sowing pattern. Wheat, chana and mustard area have increased to a record, but coverage of jowar, a key rabi coarse cereal crop, barley, urad and moong, continue to trail.

Wheat, rice

According to the Agriculture Ministry, the area under wheat is up at 314.78 lakh hectares (lh), against 296.09 lh during the same period a year ago.

The coverage of rice, which had been trailing until the start of this month, has begun to gather pace. Rice has been sown on 15.26 lh, against 10.73 lh last year at this point of time. In all, 635.13 lh have been brought under various crops as on January 24, against 603.39 lh during the same period a year ago. Though coarse cereals, pulses and oilseeds coverage is high, individually the acreage in some crops is lower.

Among coarse cereals, sowing in maize and barley is higher, but in the case of jowar, it is lower at around 37 lh (38.75 lh). Some of the farmers cultivating jowar have shifted to other crops such as rapeseed/mustard.

Though chana (gram) sowing has topped 100 lh for the first time (102.21 lh versus 92.98 lh), the area under urad (blackmatpe or black gram) and moong (green gram) are down.

The acreage is lower as prices had been ruling low until last month-end. Prospects of higher prices this year in pulses are bleak.

Urad acreage is over 1.5 lh lower than last year, while sowing in moong is lower by over one lh.

Oilseeds

Among oilseeds, rapeseed has seen a record coverage, thanks to the conducive weather, better soil moisture and higher storage level in reservoirs. But rabi groundnut sowing is lower, mainly due to the unseasonal rains in Gujarat late last year.

Farmers are reported to have taken to other crops such as cumin (jeera). Sowing in sunflower is also lower this year.

Rainfall

Though rainfall from January 1 is 14 per cent excess, the spread has been quite uneven with only Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar receiving excess or normal rainfall.

In 19 of the 36 metro sub-divisions, rainfall has been either deficient or scanty and in three, there has been no rain.

Rainfall prospects aren't encouraging for the January-March period, with the India Meteorological Department saying that rains could be deficient. The storage in the reservoirs is good with the water level in 45 of the major 86 reservoirs above 70 per cent of the capacity.

The storage is also at a 10-year high of nearly 98 billion cubic metres (BCM) against a capacity of 154.877 BCM.

Hatsun Agro net doubles

Chennai, January 24: Growth in volume of branded milk and dairy products and the continuing shift away from commodity business, contributed to Hatsun Agro doubling its net profit for the third quarter of the current year.

The company has reported a net profit of ₹30.88 crore on a total income of ₹633.28 crore for the quarter ended December 31, 2013. During the corresponding period the previous year, the company reported a net profit of ₹15.02 crore on an income of ₹543 crore.

R. G. Chandramogan, Chairman and Managing Director, Hatsun Agro, said the commodity business — primarily skimmed milk powder — contributes about 10 per cent of the total revenue against 25 per cent last year. Most of the milk fat, previously a commodity, is now sold as branded Hatsun ghee.

This has helped insulate the company from the fluctuations of the commodity market and contributed to more stable margins, he said.

No buyers for coconut oil as prices zoom

Erode, January 24: Coconut oil prices increased on Friday but there were no buyers. “Though the price of the coconut oil is increasing every week, there are no buyers. This week, coconut oil price increased to ₹1,640 for a 15 kg loose pack, ₹50 more than last week. Many crushers having adequate stock of coconut oil and are waiting for sales to pick up. Expecting a steep decrease in the price, buyers kept away,” said R. M. Palanisamy, a coconut oil dealer in Erode.

He said the price will fall drastically. There were no buyers in the international market also. Coconut oil exporters also awaiting fresh orders, as they have not received orders for the last two months.

Copra

Meanwhile, the price of copra decreased in all markets. In the local private market on Friday, it was sold at ₹7,800-7,900 a quintal. In the Cooperatives and Regulated Markets, it was sold at ₹7,600 a quintal.

At the Avalpoondurai Regulated Market Committee, the first grade copra was sold at ₹7,410-7,695 a quintal and the second at ₹5,365-7,565 a quintal.

Groundnut oil declines

Mumbai, January 24: The edible oils market was mixed on Friday. A weak domestic currency, expectations of a higher demand and firm domestic soya oil futures market resulted in prices yo-yoing.

Soyabean and cotton refined oil rose by ₹2 and ₹5 each for 10 kg. Sunflower and rapeseed oil ruled unchanged. Groundnut and palmolein declined by ₹10 and ₹1 each. Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (₹/10 kg) were: groundnut oil 780 (790); soya refined oil 647 (645); sunflower exp. ref. 600 (600); sunflower ref. 665 (665); rapeseed ref. oil 730 (730); rapeseed expeller ref. 700 (700); cottonseed ref. oil 630 (625); and palmolein 568 (569).

Sugar prices fall on sluggish demand

Mumbai, January 24: SUGAR DISSOLVES ON SELLING PRESSURE

Sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale spot market declined by ₹5 for S-grade and ₹19 for M-grade on month-end slack demand. Naka prices were unchanged. Mill tender rates were range-bound under selling pressure and volume remained thin. As producers continued to sell, sentiments ruled weak. The domestic futures market continued to be bearish, with prices dropping by ₹19. This has taken the total loss to ₹55 in the last six session, said sources. “Arrivals at the Vashi market declined to 57-58 truckloads (each 100 bags), while local dispatches were 54-55 loads. The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association’s spot rates were: S-grade ₹2,725- 2,865 (₹2,732-2,865) and M-grade ₹2,862- 2,992 (₹2,822 - 3,011). *Naka* delivery rates were: S-grade ₹2,670-2,750 (₹2,670-2,750) and M-grade ₹2,800-2,920 (₹2,820-2,920). Our Correspondent

Supply fears support spot rubber

Kottayam, January 24: Despite a drop in global prices, spot rubber prices ruled flat on Friday.

This was mainly due to supply concerns as the tapping season is set to come to a halt by the end of the month.

According to observers, the market remained under pressure following the sharp declines in international prices. Sheet rubber closed unchanged at ₹151 a kg, according to traders. The grade slid to ₹150.50 (₹151) and ₹147.50 (₹148), as reported by the Rubber Board and dealers.

The transactions continued to be dull.

February futures weakened to ₹150.74 (₹153.32), March to ₹152.85 (₹155.59), April to ₹156.11 (₹158.97), May to ₹158.80 (₹161.66) and June to ₹163.05 (₹164) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) dropped to ₹142.89 (₹144.07) at Bangkok. January futures closed at ₹240 (₹147.45) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates (₹/kg) were: RSS-4: 151 (151); RSS-5: 145 (145); ungraded: 141 (141); ISNR 20: 146 (146) and latex 60 per cent: 124.50 (124.50).

Wheat up marginally; flour rules flat

Karnal, January 24: WHEAT UP A TAD ON BUYING INTEREST

Prices of dara wheat improved marginally on Friday on buying interest, while flour continued to rule flat on moderate buying. In the physical market, dara wheat improved by ₹10 to ₹1,620-1,630 a quintal. Around 900 bags arrived and were directly offloaded at the mills. Mill delivery was at ₹1,620 a quintal, while delivery at the chakki was at ₹1,630 a quintal. A negative trend was witnessed on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange. February contracts dropped by ₹5 to ₹1,653 a quintal, with an open interest of 1,560 lots. Despite an uptrend in wheat, flour continued to rule flat and sold at ₹1,850 a quintal. Similarly, choker was unchanged at ₹1,475 a quintal. our Correspondent.

World rubber prospects

Southern Indonesia rubber areas will experience rainfall as the rainy season is underway. This may delay operations and transportation. Dry weather in Thailand favours area under rubber in southern Thailand. Late season showers in Sri Lanka may delay tapping operations and transportation.

Business Standard

Crude palm oil softens 0.26% on profit-booking

[Crude palm oil](#) prices softened by 0.26 per cent to Rs 533.50 per per 10 kg in futures market today as speculators booked profits at prevailing higher levels, driven by subdued demand in the spot market.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude palm oil for delivery in February declined by Rs 1.40, or 0.26 per cent to Rs 533.50 per 10 kg in business turnover of 102 lots.

The January contract softened by 60 paise, or 0.11 per cent to Rs 529 per 10 kg in 37 lots.

Analysts said besides profit-booking by speculators at prevailing higher levels, subdued demand in the spot market mainly helped crude palm oil prices to trade lower at futures trade.

Cardamom maintains upward march for 5th day

[Cardamom](#) prices maintained an upward march for the fifth-straight session by adding 0.10 per cent to Rs 708.70 per kg in futures market today on pick up in spot market demand against restricted supplies from producing region.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, cardamom for delivery in February moved up by 70 paise, or 0.10 per cent to Rs 708.70 per kg in business turnover of 35 lots.

The March contract traded higher by 20 paise, or 0.03 per cent to Rs 738.20 per kg in 4 lots.

Market analysts said besides pick up in demand in the spot market, restricted supplies from producing region kept cardamom prices remained higher for the fifth-day at futures trade.

Potato extends gains, up 0.4% on strong demand

[Potato](#) prices extended gains for the second day by adding 0.40 per cent to Rs 1037.20 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators enlarged positions on upsurge in demand in the spot market.

Restricted arrivals from producing regions also supported the uptrend in potato.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, potato for delivery in March rose further by Rs 4.10, or 0.40 per cent to Rs 1037.20 per quintal in business turnover of 117 lots.

The April contract added Rs 4, or 0.38 per cent to Rs 1046.20 per quintal in 67 lots.

Analysts said speculators enlarged positions on upsurge in demand in the spot market mainly helped potato prices to gain for the second day at futures trade.

Sugar trades lower by 0.15% on higher supply

[Sugar](#) prices traded marginally lower by 0.15 per cent to Rs 2,722 per quintal in futures market today as speculators trimmed positions on low demand in the spot market against higher supplies from producing belts.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, sugar for delivery in March declined by Rs 4, or 0.15 per cent to Rs 2,722 per quintal with an open interest of 20,960 lots.

February sugar was down Rs 2, or 0.07 per cent to Rs 2,710 per quintal in 16,100 lots.

Analysts attributed the decline in sugar futures to higher supplies from producing regions against low demand in the spot market.

Chana declines 0.5% on increased supply

[Chana](#) prices declined by 0.53 per cent to Rs 3,021 per quintal in futures trading today as participants trimmed positions, triggered by increased supplies from producing region against weak demand in the spot market.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange, chana for delivery in February fell by Rs 16, or 0.53 per cent to Rs 3,021 per quintal with an open interest of 81,310 lots.

The April contract declined by Rs 12, or 0.37 per cent to Rs 3,190 per quintal in 70,380 lots.

Analysts said participants trimmed positions, triggered by increased supplies from producing regions against weak demand in the spot market mainly pulled down chana prices at futures trade.

PEC floats export tenders for 155,000 tonnes wheat

State-run [PEC](#) today floated two separate global tenders for exporting a total 155,000 tonnes of [wheat](#) between February 15 and March 25.

PEC will offer 120,000 tonnes of wheat at Kandla port on the western coast, while the rest 35,000 tonnes at Vizag port on the eastern coast, according to the tenders.

Bids will close on February 12. Bidders can quote for a minimum quantity of 35,000 tonnes for shipment from Vizag port and 45,000 tonnes from Kandla port, it added.

PEC has issued tenders as part of the government's plan to export 2 million tonnes of wheat, procured by state-run Food Corporation of India ([FCI](#)), in order to create space for the new crop to be harvested from April onwards.

It was in August 2013, the government had permitted export of 2 million tonnes of wheat through public trading agencies PEC, [STC](#) and [MMTC](#). So far, the government has approved tenders for one million tonnes and shipments are underway.

Sugar futures trade lower by 0.15% on higher supply

[Sugar](#) prices traded marginally lower by 0.15% to Rs 2,722 per quintal in [futures](#) market today as speculators trimmed positions on low demand in the spot market against higher supplies from producing belts.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, sugar for delivery in March declined by Rs 4, or 0.15% to Rs 2,722 per quintal with an open interest of 20,960 lots.

The sweetener for delivery in February traded lower by Rs 2, or 0.07% to Rs 2,710 per quintal in 16,100 lots.

Analysts attributed the decline in sugar futures to higher supplies from producing regions against low demand in the spot market.

Coffee sector likely to get Rs 950 cr, a boost for R&D

The Union ministry of commerce is hopeful of approval from the cabinet by the middle of February for the 12th five-year plan (2012-17) allocations for the [coffee](#) sector.

It has approval from the planning commission for a 60 per cent increase in allocation to the sector over the 11th plan, at Rs 950 crore, a top ministry official said.

"The [Expenditure Finance Commission](#) has also given its approval for the detailed packages for several schemes. However, it requires cabinet approval. We have circulated a note and are waiting for comments from the finance ministry," [J S Deepak](#), additional secretary, ministry of commerce, told Business Standard on the sidelines of the India International Coffee Festival here on Friday.

He said the ministry had approved continuation of all major schemes such as the one on rejuvenation and replanting, mechanisation, export promotion and research and development (R&D).

"The major focus of the 12th plan would be on R&D. We have enhanced the allocation to R&D by 60 per cent to Rs 140 crore. There are no constraints on spending money here&D. Our thrust area is to find a solution for the White Stem Borer pest attack on Arabica gardens, which is destroying the crop in major growing regions and affecting productivity. We hope to find a solution during this plan period," he said.

Adding: "We have told the Coffee Board to bring the best minds in the scientific world to launch a combined effort to fight this pest and find a solution in the next few years. We want them to partner with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and the horticulture research institute to find a solution."

He noted Coffee Research Institute scientists had found a solution for leaf rust disease.

Growers in Karnataka, where 72 per cent of India's output comes, had sought a subsidy package of Rs 300 crore from the central government for mechanisation during the 12th plan. During the 11th plan, the government had allocated Rs 50 crore in the fifth year, of which only Rs 22 crore was released to the beneficiaries.

Coffee sector likely to get 60% rise to Rs 950 crore in 12th plan

The ministry of commerce is hopeful of securing approval from the Cabinet by middle of February for the 12th five-year plan allocations for the [coffee](#) sector. The ministry has already got approval from the planning commission for a 60% increase in the allocation to coffee sector at Rs 950 crore for the [12th plan](#) period, a top ministry official said.

“The 12th five year plan allocation for coffee sector has been enhanced by 60% compared to the 11th five year plan period. The expenditure finance commission (EFC) has also given its approval for the detailed packages for several schemes. However, it requires Cabinet approval. We have circulated a cabinet note and waiting for comments from the finance ministry. In all probability, the cabinet approval is likely to come by middle of February,” J S Deepak, additional secretary, ministry of commerce told Business Standard on the sidelines of India International [Coffee Festival](#), here today.

Explaining the main highlights of schemes for the 12th plan, he said the ministry has approved continuation of all major schemes like rejuvenation and replanting scheme, mechanization, export promotion activities, research and development among others.

“The major focus of the 12th plan would be on research and development. We have enhanced the allocation to R&D activities by 60% to Rs 140 crore. There are no constraints on spending money for the R&D. Our thrust area is to find out a solution for the White Stem Borer pest attack on [Arabica](#) gardens, which is destroying the crop in major growing regions and affecting the productivity. We hope to find a solution during this plan period,” he said.

Deepak said the Ministry of Commerce and Coffee Board have accorded top priority to finding a solution for White Stem Borer pest in the next few years.

“The Coffee Research Institute has done some pathbreaking research in this area. However, it is working in isolation. We have told the Coffee Board to bring the best minds in the scientific world to launch a combined effort to fight this pest and find a solution in the next few years. We want them to partner with ICAR, horticulture research institute to find a solution,” he said.

Stating that the Coffee Research Institute scientists have found a solution for leaf rust disease, he said the need of the hour is to tackle White Stem Borer, which is threatening the existence of Arabica gardens.

Deepak said most of the schemes announced in the 11th plan period would be continued in the 12th plan period.

Coffee growers from Karnataka, which accounts for 72% of India's coffee output, had sought a subsidy package of Rs 300 crore from the Central government for mechanisation during the 12th plan period (2012-17).

During the 11th Plan period, the government had allocated Rs 50 crore in the fifth year of the Plan, while only Rs 22 crore of that was released to the beneficiaries.
