

THE HINDU

HYDERABAD

DS wants TRS to fulfil promises made to farmers

Leader of Opposition in the Telangana Legislative Council D. Srinivas has assured constructive cooperation to the ruling party Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) in running the House but reminded that it was Government's responsibility to fulfil its promises to people.

Constructive role

Responding to TRS member K. Swamy Goud's request that the opposition should play a constructive role, Mr. Srinivas sought to remind the House that within four days after the ruling party formed the government, farmers died due to confusion over crop loan waiver.

The Government should have made a statement on loan waiver after considering all aspects rather than stating some thing first and then making amends to it. This confusion claimed the lives of few farmers.

"You should keep your commitment to farmers and fulfil the promise," he told the treasury benches.

ALAPPUZHA,

Rani, Chithira paddy fields may get new lease of life

Plan to launch cultivation in fields after 22 years



District Collector N. Padmakumar at a meeting of landowners of Rani and Chithira kayal paddy fields in Alappuzha on Monday.— PHOTO: BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Rani and Chithira kayal paddy fields, once known for their cultivability, may be able to reclaim their importance in the Kuttanad region. Efforts are on to launch paddy cultivation in the 'padasekharams' after 22 years.

Of the nearly 1,500 acres that form the fields, around 200 acres remain under government ownership. While the remaining land has been allotted to 1,300 persons, many are yet to receive the title deeds that are required to stake claim to the fields. Moreover, the construction of the outer bund in the fields that is being undertaken under the Kuttanad Package is yet to be completed. The government has decided in principle to accord sanction for an amount of Rs. 7 crore towards the revival of farming in the region, according to sources.

As part of the preliminary measures conducted by the district administration and the agriculture department, a meeting of landowners in the region was held here on Monday to elicit their support for the cause. Convening the meeting, District Collector N. Padmakumar said the government has given all support towards reviving farming in the region.

According to him, around 80 per cent of the Rs. 24-crore bund construction work has been completed. An estimate of Rs. 90 lakh required for electricity connection in the area has been submitted to the government. The amount is likely to be sanctioned without much delay. Mr. Padmakumar said the plan was to begin sowing of paddy seeds by September.

About 500 landowners took part in the meeting. They were told that land taxes must be paid for the ownership rights and permission to participate in the cultivation. A large number of owners had not paid land tax after 2006, according to a participant at the meeting.

'Padasekharam' committees for both Rani and Chithira kayal fields were elected during the meeting.

KOLKATA,

Tea prices firm up on crop shortage



Tea prices have increased by five to 10 per cent due to lower crop arrival in the first two months of this fiscal. The crop was lower mainly due to drought conditions in the tea growing areas in Assam and North Bengal.

The improved prices have raised the hopes of tea companies of being able to protect their profitability. “Drop in earnings was a growing fear among tea companies,” an official at the Indian Tea Association, the apex industry association for north Indian growers, said.

Scanty rainfall and high temperature since the beginning of 2014 resulting in severe drought in Assam have resulted in a 35 per cent lower crop between April and May, 2014. During April & May, many parts of Assam Valley, Darjeeling and Dooars did not receive any rainfall which had played havoc on the health of tea bush and on made tea.

Crop loss is being estimated by ITA at an unprecedented 30 million kg in the first two months as compared to the same period in 2013.

A senior official at McLeod Russel India Ltd., the world’s single largest bulk tea producer, said that higher prices were likely to offset the loss in volume for most companies. MRIL, whose own production stood at 64 million kg in 2013-14 (it buys another 23 million kg), had lost about two million kg in the first two months, the official said.

He said that while the rains had come in most of tea-growing regions, prices, now averaging at about Rs. 160 per kg. were expected to remain firm. ITA said that a shortage was likely as domestic tea consumption was growing at an annual rate of 3 per cent.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,

Paddy procurement price through banks

Price will be paid through coop. banks

The government is planning to pay the price of paddy procured from farmers through banks from the next season, Chief Minister Oommen Chandy said in the Assembly on Tuesday.

Replying to a calling attention motion of Therambil Ramakrishnan (Congress) on the difficulties faced by farmers due to the non-receipt of paddy price from the government, Mr. Chandy said that the plan was to disburse the price through cooperative banks.

The government will issue a receipt to farmers and on producing it in banks, they will get the money, the Chief Minister added..

Food and Civil Supplies Minister Anoop Jacob said that the State government had asked the Centre to provide its procurement allocation of Rs.150 crore in advance.

‘Delay unjustified’

The Minister said the arrears would be cleared soon. The delay in paying the procurement price was unjustified, he said.

Farmers will be given receipts to be produced at banks

Arrears will be cleared soon: Minister

TIRUCHI,

Pest attack hits jasmine cultivation in Tiruchi

SCENT OF TROUBLE

- Plants are bought from Rameswaram at the rate of Rs. 3 a piece
- Average daily yield is put at 50 kg per 1,000 plants
- Daily average revenue is estimated at Rs. 1,000
- Wholesale market has recorded fall in arrivals in the last few days
- Jasmine cultivated on about 300 hectares of land



Buds have discoloured at many places causing yields to fall

Jasmine cultivation in the district has been affected by pest attack causing extensive damage to the crop in a number of villages resulting in poor yield. Although the harvest picked up to some extent in the aftermath of the summer showers last month, the yield has dwindled in the past few days following pest attack.

Andhanallur block in the district is a major centre for jasmine cultivation. A cluster of villages, including Singapore Othakadai, Puliur, Podhavur, Theerthapatti, Seplapatti, and Posampatti are known for jasmine cultivation in the district.

R. Thangavel from Inampuliyur village near Andhanallur says he had grown 1,300 plants of jasmine on an acre and the average yield was about 20 kg. "Several farmers adopt their own technique for containing pest attack," he says.

Farmers in Mannachanallur block point out that they have started applying pesticides but the pest attack could not be controlled.

M. Kaliyaperumal of Tiruvarangapatti in the block said the crop yielded flowers from the Tamil month of 'Thai' (January – February). Though farmers witnessed a sharp increase in yield following summer showers last month, there has now been a dip in the yield as the buds discoloured because of pest attack.

He could not get adequate returns on the investment. He had bought the plants from Rameswaram at the rate of Rs. 3 a piece. The average daily yield from his 1,000 plants on one acre was 50 kg which fetched a daily revenue of Rs. 1,000 before summer showers. But now, the daily returns had come down to Rs. 600 because of fall in yield. He had invested Rs. 2,000 for applying to pesticides on Saturday.

K. Rajasekar, a dealer in the flower, said that absence of irrigational facility and rise in mercury level had resulted in poor arrivals at the wholesale market in Srirangam. The arrivals was just 60 per cent of the usual harvest this year, probably because of heat wave. Ettarai and Koppu were the major centres which supplied jasmine flowers to the Srirangam market.

Ayilai Siva Suriyan, district secretary of the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, said that pest attack had been a recurring phenomenon yet to be resolved.

An official from the Horticulture Department said farmers applied fertilisers instead of pesticides to control the pest attack.

He would study the nature of pest attack and recommend suitable action. The district accounted for about 300 hectares of jasmine with an average daily yield of 20 kg an acre.

B. Krishnan, a former official of Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Society (IFFCO), suggested that farmers consulted the Horticulture Department officials and carefully

select proper pest-specific remedy. He said that bio-pesticides could control the pest attack to some extent. Spraying of neem-based pesticides would go a long way in controlling the pest attack.

MANGALORE,

Two Jackfruit festivals this month

Jackfruit festivals are back. Jackfruit lovers, farmers and food processors can attend two festivals this month: one in Dakshina Kannada and another in Uttara Kannada.

University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Bangalore and Punacha Vyavasaya Seva Sahakari Sangha would organise a festival at Punacha, Bantwal taluk, Dakshina Kannada on June 22.

The UAS will organise a two-day festival at Sirsi, Uttara Kannada from June 14 in association with Kadamba Marketing Souharda Sahakari Ltd., Sirsi.

The 'halasina habba' (jackfruit festival) at Punacha would be conducted in the premises of Mahishamardini temple from 10 a.m. Shyamamma, Associate Professor, Gandhi Krishi Vignana Kendra, UAS, Bangalore would deliver the key note address at the inaugural session.

Water level

Mettur

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 44.30 feet on Monday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 1,158 cusecs and the discharge 800 cusecs.

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Tuesday, Jun 10

Max Min

36° | 28°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:41

Humidity: 51

Sunset: 06:33

Wind: normal

Barometer: 999

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Wednesday, Jun 11

Max Min

35° | 28°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday

Jun 12



40° | 30°

Partly Cloudy

Friday

Jun 13



41° | 29°

Cloudy

Saturday

Jun 14



41° | 29°

Partly Cloudy

Sunday

Jun 15



40° | 29°

Partly Cloudy

Monday

Jun 16



41° | 29°

Partly Cloudy

Airport Weather

Chennai

Chennai

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:41

Humidity: 79

Sunset: 06:34

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1002



Modern Fish Market to Come up at Mulanthuruthy



MULANTHURUTHY: The Mulanthuruthy grama panchayat is setting up a modern fish market here as part of an initiative to increase employment opportunities in the area. According to civic body officials, the project is expected to provide work to at least 200 people here.

Panchayat vice-president T K Mohanan said the market would be set up in a 35-cent land near Mulanthuruthy vegetable and fruit market. The project is being implemented using the financial aid of central and state governments.

“The total cost of the project is estimated to be `1.23 crore. Ninety percent of the amount will be funded by the National Fisheries Development Board. The remaining amount will be contributed by the state government,” the president said. He said that sanitation facilities would also be arranged at the market.

“We will seek the help of experts to set up a waste treatment plant and develop sanitation facilities at the market. Modern freezers will be arranged to store and preserve fish,” he said.

The market will focus on wholesale dealings. “Fish will be distributed to Amballoor, Maneed, Edakkattuvayal, Chottanikkara and Thiruvaniyoor panchayats. Once the market starts running successfully, other projects regarding value addition and marketing, as part of fishery promotion, will be planned,” authorities said. The construction of the fish market will be inaugurated by Excise Minister K Babu on June 14.

Agriculture Dept Geared Up to Meet Farmers’ Demands

Express News Service

Bangalore: The Agriculture Department has made elaborate arrangements to meet the requirements of the farmers on fertilizer and the certified seeds for the current Khariff season, targeted to cover a sowing area of over 74 lakh hectares in the State.

According to official sources, the sowing operations have already started in many parts and it is completed in six per cent of sowing area till June first week.

For the current khariff season, an estimated demand for a total quantity of 20.5 lakh tonnes of fertilisers is expected of all varieties including that of Urea (8 lakh), Phosphate, Complex (6.5 lakh), MoP (2 lakh) and DAP (4 lakh) and the supply would be made on monthly basis in accordance with the demand.

Maintaining that the allocation of fertilisers from the Centre to the State is more than adequate, the officials said, “We have a

MRPs OF VARIOUS FERTILISERS

Urea:	₹285
MoP:	₹828 to ₹899
DAP:	₹1,180 to ₹1,268
20:20:13:	₹884-₹949
10:26:26:	₹1103-116

(per bag of 50 kg)

stock pile of fertilisers about 6.32 lakh metric tonnes against June month’s demand of over 3.70 lakh tonnes.”

The distribution of fertilisers would be made through a well-knit distribution network involving Raitha Samparka Kendras, Marketing Federation, Co-operative societies, Taluk Agriculture produce Marketing Committees and Private traders, informed officials.

“While 35 per cent of the fertiliser distribution is being done through co-operative institutions, the rest of the quantity is being handled through private traders” the

sources said.

The department has designated its officials at the taluk and district levels as the Inspectors to protect the farmers from any supply of spurious and sub-standard materials, and set up as many as seven testing laboratories.

It has also warned the dealers and distributors against any attempt to levy additional price for the fertilisers over and above the MRP, which would be printed on the bags.

To ensure better transparency in the distribution and monitoring the supply of adequate quantity of fertiliser at the prescribed price for the farmers, the department has evolved a Mobile Fertilizer Monitoring System (MFMS), an IT platform, in which all the dealers and distributors had been connected.

There are more than 12,600 registered dealers and distributors across the State dealing with the fertiliser business, the sources added.

Business Standard

Potato up 1.5% on pick-up in demand



Potato futures prices moved up by 1.50% to Rs 1,387.80 per quintal today, on increased demand in spot markets against restricted arrivals from producing regions.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, potato for delivery in July rose by Rs 20.60, or 1.50%, to Rs 1,387.80 per quintal, with trading volume of 92 lots.

The potato for delivery in June also moved up by Rs 10.30, or 0.77%, to Rs 1,337 per quintal, with a trade volume of 59 lots.

Analysts said increased demand in the spot markets against tight supplies from producing regions mainly pushed up potato prices at futures trade.

Palm oil down 0.6% on profit-booking



Crude palm oil futures prices fell by 0.64% to Rs 510 per 10 kg today after speculators booked profits at prevailing levels amid a weak trend overseas.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude palm oil for delivery in June declined by Rs

3.30, or 0.64%, to Rs 510 per 10 kg in business turnover of 185 lots.

Similarly, the oil for delivery in July traded lower by Rs 2.80, or 0.54%, to Rs 506.60 per 10 kg in 122 lots.

Analysts said apart from profit-booking by speculators at existing higher levels, a weak trend in the global market influenced crude palm oil futures prices.

In Malaysia, palm oil fell 1% to \$745 a metric tonne on the Malaysia Derivatives Exchange.

Cardamom up 1.4% on spot demand



Cardamom prices rose by Rs 12.70 to Rs 935 per kg in futures trade today as speculators created fresh positions, supported by rising demand in spot markets.

Further, restricted arrivals from producing regions also supported the uptrend in cardamom futures.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, cardamom for the June delivery rose by Rs 12.70, or 1.37%, to Rs 935 per kg in a business volume of 7 lots.

Spice prices for the July contract rose by Rs 11.90, or 1.32%, to Rs 907 per kg in a business volume of 273 lots.

Traders said rising export as well as spot demand and restricted supplies from producing regions mainly led to an upsurge in cardamom futures prices.

Tata Global wants to repeat tea success story in coffee segment

Around 70% of \$1.5-b turnover comes from tea, while 20% from coffee



Ajoy K Misra, Managing Director and CEO, Tata Global Beverages

Tata Global Beverages will continue to focus on its core sectors of branded tea, coffee and enhanced water over the next five years.

There is a huge opportunity in the core sector business, which is growing substantially, both in the domestic and overseas markets, and the company would like to leverage it, said Ajoy K Misra, Managing Director and CEO.

Around 70 per cent of the company's \$1.5-billion turnover comes from tea, while 20 per cent comes from coffee and the rest from its enhanced water, plantation and extraction businesses.

The company has a comfortable share in the global branded tea market and hopes to replicate this in the branded coffee segment, which is growing faster overseas than in the domestic market, Misra said.

He was interacting with reporters after the inauguration of the DARE (Development Activities in Rehabilitative Education) School, an initiative of Srishti, supported by Tata Global Beverages, at Munnar, Kerala.

There are many challenges and opportunities in the market, such as changing consumer trends and competition from other brands, he said.

“The growing consumption of branded tea, coffee and enhanced water (with nutrients) in matured markets gives us the confidence to look forward while, at the same time, the current economic slowdown in the US and European markets poses a major concern, affecting consumer sentiment,” he added.

Misra said the growth of green tea the world over would be in double digits, while black tea will grow by 6-8 per cent in India.

Tata Coffee has now set up a roasting unit and an instant coffee unit, Misra said.

Its joint venture with Starbucks has plans to expand the network of outlets from the present 46. The acquisition of the coffee brand MAP in Australia will help the company expand its offerings in that country, he added.

Instant tea

Instant tea is another focus area. Besides instant tea factories for black tea in Munnar and Florida, it has entered into a venture with a Chinese firm for green tea to cater to the US, Europe and parts of Asia.

Apart from making powder from tea extracts for the US and European firms to make iced tea, the venture will place more emphasis on green tea as a category and other specialties, said Misra

He said Tata Global sources over 100 million kg of tea every year from major plantations in the North and South, and also from South Africa, for the Tetley brand. Tetley also has joint venture operations in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

In the bottled water segment, which is growing at 20 per cent, Tata Global has taken its premium sourced mineral water — the Himalayan brand — to Singapore and will extend it to neighbouring geographies shortly.

Likewise, Tata Water Plus, which is currently available in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, will be taken to Gujarat and other States.

‘Organic’ isn’t clean and it isn’t toxin-free

Buying organic food is an exercise in personal virtue: You pay more to consume food that’s healthier for you and less damaging to the environment because it’s grown without artificial or toxic chemicals.

This powerful perception, based more on belief than facts, goes a long way toward explaining why demand for organic products has grown so much. Organic sales have more than tripled in the past decade, to more than \$30 billion a year, while sales of conventional food products have dawdled along at an annual growth rate of about 2 per cent.

There’s just one huge problem: Neither of the main assumptions driving the growth of organic farming are grounded in science. In fact, there is evidence that organic farms produce as much, or more, pollution than conventional farms and that organic products might actually contain more toxins than other foods.

Like all farms, those that grow organic products rely on fertiliser. Often, organic farmers use animal manure rather than chemicals derived from petroleum or minerals.

Less is more

In one study of greenhouses in Israel, the use of manure led to much more nitrogen leaching into groundwater compared with use of conventional fertilisation. Nitrogen contamination, the study noted, is one of the main reasons for closing drinking-water wells.

And by the way, nitrogen from all sorts of farming is one of the main pollutants behind algae blooms, fish kills and dead zones in bodies of water from local farm ponds to the northern Gulf of Mexico.

A broader study of 12 different farm products in California found that in seven cases, those using conventional methods had lower greenhouse-gas emissions.

A big reason for the difference? Conventional farming tends to be more efficient than organic farming, meaning fewer inputs are needed to generate the same amount of food.

That hits on a critical issue for organic farming, as noted in a 2012 analysis of more than 100 studies of farming methods across Europe: Getting the same unit production from organic farming tended to lead to “higher ammonia emissions, nitrogen leaching and nitrous oxide emissions”. And while organic farming tends to use less energy, it also leads to “higher land use, eutrophication potential” — that’s the dead zones mentioned above — “and acidification potential per product unit”.

Not so straightforward

The main author of the study, Hanna Tuomisto, a professor at Oxford University, said many people think organic farming has intrinsically lower environmental impacts than conventional farming but the literature tells us this is not the case. Whilst some organic farming practices do have less environmental impact than conventional ones, the published evidence suggests that others are actually worse for some aspects of the environment. People need to realise that an “organic” label is not a straightforward guarantee of the most environmentally-friendly product.

Organic animal production also can cause problems. Unlike conventional farms, organic farms usually let animals wander around. No surprise that animals then do their business wherever nature calls. Rain, in turn, washes waste into local streams and rivers. Think of that next time you see free-range something on the menu. By comparison, conventional farms can (although they don’t always) confine waste to covered areas. This prevents exposure to rain that causes polluted run-off.

As for health benefits, the evidence suggests there’s no distinguishable difference in nutritional value between organics and other food. Some types of organic production, notably the use of manure concentrations, actually lead to higher levels of toxins in food. One study in Belgium found that organically cultivated winter wheat had higher levels of lead and cadmium than conventionally grown wheat. The levels were below tolerable limits, and processing could have removed some of the contaminants.

So are you worried now? You shouldn't be. Buy what you like to eat whether it's organic or not — unless you're watching your food budget, in which case the choice is clear. Bloomberg

Tea prices lose steam at Kochi sale; 25% offerings withdrawn

Kochi,

Tea prices continue to decline at the Kochi tea auction with prices of almost all varieties declining.

In sale no 23, the quantity on offer in CTC dust grades was 14,73,000 kg.

The market was lower by Rs. 5-7 and as the sale progressed, the decline in prices was up to the tune of Rs. 10 and sometimes up to Rs. 15. It also witnessed heavy withdrawals to the tune of 25 per cent.

According to auctioneers Forbes, Ewart & Figgis, the decline in prices was less for teas which came under the selection of major blenders.

Exporters confined to low priced teas and the upcountry demand was fair.

The arrival in orthodox grades was lower at 7,500 kg compared to last week. The primary grades remained steady while others were irregular and lower.

A small quantity of orthodox dust sold was absorbed by exporters.

In the best CTC dusts, PD varieties quoted Rs. 95/116, RD grades fetched Rs. 95/115, SRD ruled Rs. 109/136 and SFD stood at Rs. 109/146.

The leaf sale also witnessed a declining trend and the quantity on offer in orthodox grades was 1,82,500 kg.

The market for select Best Highgrown Broken and Fannings barely remained steady. Others were irregular and lower. Whole leaf from the same origin showed a decline in value.

The quantity on offer in CTC grades was 73,500 kg. With a fair demand, the market for good liquoring varieties barely remained steady. Others were irregular and easier and witnessed some withdrawals.

In the dust category, Injipara (prm) RD quoted the best prices of Rs. 151 followed by Monica SFD at Rs. 148.

In the leaf grades, Chamraj Green FOP (S) fetched the best prices of Rs. 301 followed by Pascoe's Woodlands Hyson Green Tea at Rs. 291.

White stem borer menace threatens Arabica coffee crop in Karnataka

Bangalore

Severe incidences of white stem borer (WSB) in Karnataka's coffee growing region are threatening the cultivation of the Arabica coffee crop.

The high incidence of WSB this year is due to continuous dry weather from October to April and high temperature during April-May (as high as 38 degrees). The delay in blossom showers has also aggravated the situation and the region got rains only in the first week of April.

“This dry weather and high temperature was conducive to the borer to be active to breed and spread into large areas. This effect is all across the arabica growing estates in the Chikmagalur, Hassan and Kodagu districts in the State,” D Govindappa Jayaram, Chairman, Karnataka Planters' Association (KPA), told *Business Line*.

Severe impact

The incidence of WSB is severe in Chikmagalur's Mudigere and Tarikere taluks and a few areas in Hassan district. In Kodagu, Somwarpet – one of the largest arabica growing taluk – is the worst affected. High incidents are also reported from Virajpet and Madikeri taluks as well.

Jayaram said: “The borer-ridden arabica plants in more than 40 per cent area are being uprooted. Loads of WSB affected stems are being transported to be used as firewood. This severity is unseen in the last 40 years.”

Commenting on the WSB incident, Bose Mandana, former Vice-Chairman, Coffee Board and a coffee grower at Suntikoppa in Kodagu, said: “The borer attack is very severe this year. We were losing 50-100 plants an acre whenever WSB attack took place. But this time around, we are losing at a faster pace of 200-300 plants an acre. It looks like in one shot, we may lose the entire Arabica crop this year.”

Doubts over Arabica

The plantation fraternity is feeling helpless as nobody is able to help them out this year not even horticulture experts or agriculture scientists of Central Coffee Research Institute.

“The future of Arabica is also in question for this year young plants – one-year-old promising Chandragiri variety has been affected,” said Mandanna.

“This time during the crisis when we approached scientists and extension officers, they had no response or solution. All we got as reply was grow more trees and protect shade,” he said.

“If we follow it, then there will be no coffee. The plants need some amount of sun for photosynthesis,” he said.

Acknowledging the WSB menace in the State, Jawaid Akhtar, Chairman, Coffee Board, said: “WSB this year is very high. This is due to delayed blossom showers and high temperatures in coffee growing regions. To initiate remedial measures, we have taken up survey to assess the quantum of damage.”

Coffee Board aid

“Meanwhile, the Board has prescribed methods such as tracing, pruning and uprooting the infested plants in the affected areas,” he added.

Mandanna said, “Normally three round of weeding takes place for WSB - to trace, remove and repeated the same after rains. Now only one round has taken place. The current loss is estimated at 30 per cent. The full extent of damage will be known after the monsoon rains that is in August-September when more rounds of tracing are done.”

“This time around the pheromone traps prescribed are not effective and have not helped in trapping the borer beetles,” said Jayaram.

The KPA has written to the Coffee Board to take up fresh survey of the affected areas and take stock of the situation.

The Association has requested the Board to write to the State Government to declare and publish the areas affected by WSB in Chikmagalur, Hassan and Kodagu districts as White Stem Borer affected areas.

22% tea unsold at Coonoor

Coonoor,

As much as 22 per cent of the 14.13 lakh kg offered at Sale No: 23 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auction worth Rs. 2.57 crore remained unsold, despite shedding Rs. 2 a kg.

Vigneshwar Estate tea, auctioned by Paramount Tea Marketing, topped the CTC market when Shreeji Traders bought it for Rs. 187 a kg with Homedale Estate tea, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, following at Rs. 185. Crosshill Estate got Rs. 183. In all, 92 marks got Rs. 125 and more. Among orthodox teas, Kairbetta topped at Rs. 223 a kg followed by Kodanad and Corsley Rs. 218, Chamraj Rs. 216, Havukal Rs. 211 and Highfield Rs. 209. In all, 41 marks got Rs. 125 and more .

Export purchase was less and limited to plainer less-priced teas. Some teas were bought for Pakistan in wide range Rs. 53-72 a kg.

Rains boost spot rubber

Kottayam,

Spot rubber made all round gains on Monday.

Widespread rains and the absence of genuine sellers catalysed the sentiments and the market improved amidst scattered transactions.

According to sources, there were no fresh enquiries from the tyre sector.

Sheet rubber improved to Rs. 145.50 (144) a kg as reported by the traders.

The grade firmed up to Rs. 144.50 (144) and Rs. 141.50 (141) respectively, according to Rubber Board and dealers.

The June futures increased to Rs. 143.61 (143.10), July to Rs. 144.51 (142.99), August to Rs. 141.95 (139.93), September to Rs. 141.10 (139.45) and October to Rs. 140.90 (138.50) a kg while the Rubber Mini June futures weakened to Rs. 142.26 (143.10) a kg on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) closed at Rs. 120.09 (119.47) a kg at Bangkok.

The June futures dropped to ¥183.2 (Rs. 105.81) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates (Rs. /kg): RSS-4: 145.50 (144); RSS-5: 141 (139); Ungraded: 137 (135); ISNR 20: 132.50 (132) and Latex 60%: 122 (120).

Sugar export sop to be restored to Rs. 3,300/t

New Delhi,

The Centre is all set to restore the incentive on raw sugar exports to Rs. 3,300 a tonne.

The incentive, technically supposed to defray expenditures on marketing and promotion incurred by mills, was slashed to Rs. 2,277 a tonne for shipments during April and May by the previous government.

There was also a move initiated under the then Food Minister KV Thomas to dispense with the incentive scheme totally after September 30, when the current 2013-14 sugar year ends. The Ministry had even prepared a draft note towards this for consideration by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, which had earlier approved the scheme on February 12.

The new Government has decided to retain the incentive in its original form, covering a total quantity of up to 40 lakh tonnes (lt) to be shipped between February 2014 and September 2015, i.e. until the end of the 2014-05 sugar year. Also the incentive is to be restored to Rs. 3,300 for June and July, informed sources told *Business Line*.

Minister parleys

This follows a meeting that Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan had with his Cabinet colleagues from Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Maharashtra last Wednesday to look into the problem of cane payments to farmers by sugar mills.

The meeting was attended among others by the Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari (who is also holding charge of Rural Development following Gopinath Munde's demise), MSME Minister Kalraj Mishra, and Women & Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi. The Ministers of State for Agriculture and Food, Sanjeev Kumar Balyan and Raosaheb Dadarao Danve, were also present.

There was a clear consensus to create conditions to ensure full discharge of cane arrears at the earliest. This would include promoting exports given the surplus sugar stocks in the country, the sources said.

The 2013-14 sugar season opened with stocks of 92.98 lt. With likely production of 214 lt and imports of one lt, the total availability for the season would work out to 334.98 lt, as against estimated consumption of 240 lt and exports of 20 lt.

The next season will have opening stocks of 75 lt, almost equivalent to four months' domestic consumption. Without exports, sugar prices will remain depressed, making it difficult for mills to pay off farmers, the sources noted.

Cane politics

In UP, factories had, as on June 5, paid only Rs. 10,939.84 crore out of the Rs. 19,390.57 crore worth of cane procured from farmers at the State Advised Price of Rs. 280 a quintal for the 2013-14 season. That translates into outstanding arrears of over Rs. 8,450 crore.

Sugarcane farmers constitute a sizeable votebank in Maharashtra, where assembly elections are due later this year, and UP, where the Bharatiya Janata Party is seeking to build on the momentum from its best-ever performance in the recent Lok Sabha polls. There are obvious political stakes in being seen to be doing things for cane farmers. The Ministers even favoured raising the import duty on sugar (both white and raws) from the existing 15 per cent to 40 per cent. But that is a call that the Finance Minister (Arun Jaitley) will have to take, the sources said.

Price worry: Planters' body wants rubber imports banned

Kochi,

Concerned over fall in rubber prices, the Association of Planters of Kerala (APK) has urged the Centre to ban imports of rubber to protect growers from further crisis.

Prices of natural rubber, according to APK, have dropped to a five-year low and this situation has pushed growers into deep financial crisis. The Association attributed unabated imports by consuming industries as the main reason for the decline in prices.

The current trend in imports suggests that it may exceed the record 3,24,586 tonnes registered in the last fiscal. In May alone, the import was some 33 per cent more than the same period previous year. The Association was of the view that a higher import duty will curb imports.

APK also expressed concern over questioning the credibility of Rubber Board in releasing the data.



Delayed monsoon could impact cotton/soya sowing

The next eight days could prove to be crucial for farmers across the country. The delay in the arrival of the southwest monsoon and projections of below-normal rainfall seem to have become a concern for the agriculture sector and could impact cotton sowing operations for the kharif season of 2014, senior officials at the Central Institute for Cotton Research (CICR) in Nagpur say.

“There has been a week's delay in the monsoon and from past experience it has been seen that when there is water shortage, farmers shift to soyabean. BT cotton seeds are expensive and if these do not germinate in time, farmers cannot afford resowing them again,” Dr KR Kranthi, director, CICR, explained.

Moreover, prices for both soya and cotton have been good this year, as a result of which farmers could take up cultivation of either soya or cotton depending on the rainfall, he said. Last year, around 115 lakh hectares across the country had come under cotton cultivation while 41 lakh hectares came under cotton cultivation in Maharashtra.

A delay of eight days could prove to be a deciding factor and if the monsoon delays up to June 20-25, there is a strong possibility of farmers shifting to soya, he added. Hazarding a guess at this point could prove to be difficult, he said. Last year, the monsoon had covered the entire country by June 15.

According to senior officials at Cotton Corporation of India, there has been a 20% rise in cotton acreage this season in states such as Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana and the monsoon is yet to set in across several states.

Moreover, after the damage caused to soyabean seeds last year by incessant rainfall at the time of harvesting, farmers could possibly shift to cotton, officials said.

Area under cotton cultivation could go up by 2-3 lakh hectares in Maharashtra and an additional one lakh hectares in the Vidarbha region, say officials. In Vidarbha, around 11 lakh hectares is under soyabean and another 13 lakh hectares under cotton. Sowing operations, which begin from June 15, could last up to July 15.

According to data available with the Cotton Development Board, Mumbai, sowing operations for cotton have already been completed in around 13.8 lakh hectares across the country.

Govt plans urea price hike to curb fertiliser subsidies

The government plans to raise the price of urea, the fertiliser most used by farmers, by at least 10% in order to contain subsidy costs that are straining the budget, government and industry officials said.

The first major price hike in four years would mark an important step by PM Narendra Modi's new government to cut wasteful use of urea and ease fiscal pressures resulting from a weak economy.

"A 2-3% rise in urea prices won't make any meaningful difference in subsidy allocation. We are pitching for at least a 10% hike," said one government official who requested anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to the media.

The proposal has the support of fertilisers minister Ananth Kumar, sources said. He has asked officials to prepare measures to implement it to either go before the cabinet or be included in finance minister Arun Jaitley's first Budget in early July.

Sector stocks jumped on the news, with Chambal Fertilisers and Chemicals gaining 6.6% and Tata Chemicals climbing as much as 2.6% in early trading in Mumbai.

Fertiliser subsidy costs have quadrupled over the past decade as the previous government kept urea prices below the cost of production, fearing a backlash from the influential farm lobby.

A proposed doubling of natural gas prices is now expected to force the government's hand. Gas accounts for four-fifths of the cost of making urea, a nitrogenous fertiliser that consumes more than half of India's \$11-billion annual fertiliser subsidy bill.

"The gas price rise is making the urea price hike a compulsion. The government has no choice. We are expecting a decision before the budget or in the budget," said a senior official with a state-run fertiliser company.

India last year approved a hefty rise in gas prices to more than \$8 per million British thermal units in a bid to boost returns for local energy producers, spur investment and ease acute power shortages. Modi will have the final say on a proposal to implement the

natural gas price hike from July 1. The gas price increase was put on hold during India's recent election, which the BJP won by a landslide.

A spokesman for the ministry of chemicals and fertilisers declined to comment, but a top official from the ministry said on Monday that “there is no proposal to increase urea prices just yet”.

The official, who asked not to be identified because Parliament is in session, said his ministry had not moved any

The Telegraph

calcutta, india

Monsoon cheer for tea growers, cultivators

SMITA BHATTACHARYYA



A farmer waits for rainfall to begin ploughing his paddy field at Teok on Monday. Picture by UB Photos

Jorhat, The onset of monsoon in the Northeast, albeit delayed by four days, has brought cheer to tea growers and cultivators alike.

Reeling under heavy crop loss in the first flush, the rain has brought hope of a better tea crop output in the second flush period.

Rajiv Deka, scientist at the agro-meteorology department of the Assam Agricultural University, here said the dark cloud cover and heavy shower in different parts of the state

signalled the onset of monsoon in the region and the four-day delay was more or less normal. “The monsoon should have hit the region on June 5 or 6 and the gap of four days is not considered to be much of a delay,” he said.

Deka said for the Northeast where rain is usually heavy, the prediction of lower rainfall this year would not affect Assam much.

“A drop of 10 per cent will not affect our crops as the rainfall is heavy in the region. What is important is the distribution of rainfall should be even,” he said.

A tea planter in Jorhat district said he had suffered a shortfall of 30 per cent in the first flush and the continued dry spell in the second flush period (May-July) was cause for dismay.

“The rains have brought hope the loss would be made up during this period. Though a bit late, if the rain falls evenly now, then the tea industry will have a lot to cheer about,” he said.

The Indian Tea Association report has said crops in the Assam valley had declined by 40 per cent in April and 30 per cent in May and that the decline in north Indian tea would be around 16 million kg in April and 14 million kg in May.

At Meleng, Mahan Bora, a farmer, said he had somehow managed to plant seeds after ferrying cans of water from a tubewell he installed in his fields last year. “I have not seen such dry weather compounded by the heat till this year.”

My land had become so dry that fissures had formed. Today, I sprinkled water on the field so I could sow the paddy seeds, as it was already late for planting. However, the rains washed away everything,” he added.

Bora, however, welcomed the onset of the monsoon but warned that this type of climate change did not augur well for the region.

“High-yielding hybrid varieties cannot be depended upon all the time, as they are not able to withstand the extreme weather conditions. The seeds of Ranjit and Masuri varieties of paddy should have been planted by now. We should preserve indigenous varieties of paddy which have properties to withstand flood and drought conditions,” Bora said.

Bora, who has collected 230 indigenous varieties from all over the state, said he was all for

organic farming.

However, everybody did not welcome the downpour, with waterlogging in different parts of Jorhat town resulting in commuters getting stranded.

Rainwater, which reached around knee level, flowed across the roads instead of the drains, rushed into houses and blocked office entrances.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

MP Raju Shetty to raise farmers' demands with Modi

AURANGABAD: Hatkanagale MP Raju Shetty said that he would press for various demands of the farmers to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a letter in the next two days. He was in the city to attend a programme on Sunday.

"Though the party is part of the Mahayuti (BJP-Shiv Sena-RPI alliance), the issues of farmers would be raised," he said.

"I would request the PM to start a cluster of agriculture for collective farming on lines of industrial cluster. An initiative similar to the NABARD's farmers' club can be undertaken with the farmers having legal authority over their lands. If a cluster of about 400 acres of land is started, the farmers would also be able to demand subsidies," Shetty said.

The MP said he would request Modi to provide loans to the farmers for carrying out agriculture-related activities at low interest rates. "I would press for making better roads and providing basic infrastructure facilities through technology to reduce pre and post-harvesting losses," he added.

Shetty said he would raise demand for a mandate to provide 85% loans to those storing crop produce in warehouses.

"The letter would also mention making special arrangement in trains for transporting vegetables and fruits to avoid losses. I will request for a fixed policy on cotton rates, which would help in creating employment opportunities in agricultural and industrial sectors," he said.

The other demands would include releasing a 15-day bulletin at the national level on rainfall and the estimated land available and taken under cultivation. "This will facilitate better crop management and help the farmers in understanding the market in a better way as per the available resources," he said.

The Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatna leader added that he would appeal to Modi to reduce imports on crude oil, pulses and oil seeds which will help strengthen the rupee against the dollar.

Nuffield delegates visit Punjab Agricultural University

LUDHIANA: A delegation of nine Nuffield scholars from Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and Ireland visited Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) and held discussion with Director of Research, S S Gosal and other scientists of the University.

Gosal apprised the scholars about various research programmes of PAU. Ms Jammy, a member of the visiting delegation said that they are visiting India under their global focus programme which is an integrated part of their studies. She further said that they have specially chosen to visit PAU and Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Science University to learn about the success of agriculture in Punjab State.

Former president, PAU Kisan Club, P P S Pangli and M S Malhi also interacted with the delegates. The visitors were very much impressed to see the Museum of Social History of Punjab at the University.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Chana futures fall 2.70 per cent on profit-booking



Chana prices fell by 2.70 per cent to Rs 2,706 per quintal in futures trade today on profit-booking by speculators amid subdued demand in physical markets.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange, chana for June declined by Rs 75, or 2.70 per cent, to Rs 2,706 per quintal with an open interest for 56,570 lots.

Similarly, chana for July delivery fell by Rs 67, or 2.35 per cent, to Rs 2,779 per quintal in 1,37,190 lots.

Traders said besides profit-booking by speculators, subdued demand in the spot markets at existing levels mainly led to the fall in chana prices at futures trade.