

Krishi Vigyan Kendra sets up new centre to help farmers

GULBARGA, March 27, 2014 - The Krishi Vigyan Kendra of the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Raichur has come up with a first ever unique concept "Agriculture Information Centre" to keep the farmers updated with new methods of farming and extend research works in agriculture.

Assistant Station Director of the Gulbarga Doordarshan Kendra M.B. Patil inaugurated the centre on Wednesday. He said that the centre had facilities to watch agricultural programmes of Doordarshan and farmers who missed the shows could come and watch it at the centre at their leisure.

Prasar Bharati has provided all the telecasted and aired programme records to Krishi Vigyan Kendra to update the farmers with new technologies in cultivation and research students to improve the agriculture methods.

He said that the farmer was the right judge to choose the crop keeping in view the climate uncertainties and they should also keep track of the emerging trends in the market and the demands.

Dr.P.S Dharmaraj, Project Director of the Agriculture Research Station said that of the total 638 Krishi Vigyan Kendra in India, Gulbarga is the first ever to introduce the concept of "Agriculture Information Centre". Around 9 lakh hectares of the land is used for Agriculture in the District, Mr Dharmaraj said

Raju Teggalli, Coordinator of the Krishi Vigyan Kendra and Somshekar Ruli, Programme Executive at All India Radio were present.

☑ ***Agriculture Information Centre will show agricultural programmes of Doordarshan***

☑ ***Farmer should also keep track of the emerging trends in the market and the demands.***

Controlling blast infestation in rice

Blast infestation in rice has been reported from many places of Andhra Pradesh State. In Telangana, Andhra and Rayalaseema zones, the disease has been reported to an extent of 10-20 per cent during this season.

There are broadly three types of blast. The first is called as leaf blast. Infested crop leaves exhibit spindle shaped spots with brown margin and grey dots.

This type has been prevalent in Warangal, Karimnagar, Khammam, Krishna, East Godavari, West Godavari, Nellore, Srikakulam and other districts of Andhra Pradesh for the last few weeks.

Node blast

The second type is node blast. Caused by a fungus, the symptoms are crop turning black in colour and panicles breaking easily.

The third type is called neck blast. This starts during panicle emergence initiation of the crop period. The neck region is blackened and shrivelled. Grain set in ears is completely or partially inhibited.

Out of the three, neck blast is more severe and results in yield losses to a great extent. Favourable environmental factors such as prolonged dry periods, cool nights, low night temperature, high relative humidity, cloudy, drizzling weather and high nitrogen supply increase all the three disease incidences.

Management:

- Healthy disease free seeds alone should be used for sowing.
- Use disease resistant or tolerant rice cultivars
- Seed treatment with tricyclozole 75 WP at 2.0 g or carbendazim at 1.0g per kg seed as wet seed treatment or carbendazim at 3.0 g per kg as dry seed treatment.
- Seeds should not be collected from infested fields.
- Remove weeds and collateral hosts from field and bunds. Balanced fertilizer application is a must.
- At the time of harvesting, infested plants should be removed and destroyed.
- Field bunds and irrigation channels should be kept clean. Avoid excess application of nitrogenous fertilizers.

Spraying of fungicides like tricyclozole 75 WP at 0.6 g or isoprothiolane 40EC at 1.5 ml or kasugamycin 3 L at 2.5 ml will be more effective.

(Dr. A. Vijaya Bhaskar Rao is Scientist (Plant Pathology), email:av_bhaskar12@yahoo.co.in, mobile: 098498 17896, Regional Agricultural Research Station ,Warangal, Acharya N.G.Ranga Agricultural University, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.)

Farmer's notebook



Alternative: The bio fuel powered water pump emits less smoke than a conventional one.-
photo: special arrangement

The farmer has been using this technology for the last four years

Environmental awareness week

The Vivekananda Social Service Organisation in association with the Union Ministry of Forests and Environment organised various programmes to create environmental awareness for a week recently. Seminars on protecting environment, sapling planting campaign, and competitions marked the week. The Nehru Yuva Kendra brought out stickers with slogans urging people to protect the environment.

Rain Centre helps organisations dig deep for water

CHENNAI, March 27, 2014 - It is that time of the year when Chennaiites get concerned about dipping groundwater levels. It is also the best time to prepare for harnessing rainwater. Two institutions will soon be able to reap the benefits of rains with the support of Rain Centre, a city-based voluntary organisation.

R.K. Mutt in Mylapore and Cancer Institute are set to become self-sufficient to meet their water needs as the Mandavelipakkam-based centre has helped secure funds from a company.

Like many other large institutions that depend on private water supply, these organisations too spend a large sum on water. Cancer Institute, which receives hundreds of patients daily, does not have sufficient water sources. Both its campuses lack proper rainwater harvesting structures, Rain Centre's director Sekar Raghavan said.

He added that work is on to provide a total of 12 recharge wells running for a depth of 15 feet on both the premises. "Summer is the right time for constructing rainwater harvesting systems as groundwater level will be below 10 feet. It is important to tap the right type of soil for good percolation," he said.

A.V. Lakshmanan, advisor, Cancer Institute, said: "The initiative will help recharge the borewells. We expect to cut down on our water expenditure. We spend Rs. 60 lakh every year."

At the R.K. Mutt campus, spread over 5.5 acres, the centre has recently completed its project.

Mr. Raghavan said most of the rainwater that stagnated on the premises was draining into the stormwater drains.

"We realised that as the top layer of soil was clayey, water did not percolate. We have provided 16 recharge wells at several points at a cost of Rs. 9 lakh," he said.

With these structures, the Mutt will be able to save 2.9 crore litres of water every year.

"We want to reach out to such organisations and make them self-sufficient in their water needs," Mr. Raghavan added. For details, the Rain Centre can be contacted at 044-24616134/24918415.

King of fruits arrives with a price to match



High prices attributed to low yield

BANGALORE, March 27, 2014 - Vendors say approximately 20 tonnes of mangoes are arriving in K.R. Market in Bangalore each day. —Photo: K. Murali Kumar

The king of fruits has arrived in the city albeit in small quantities, and the prices are expected to be higher than what it

was last year.

Much of the consignment, vendors at K.R. Market pointed out, was coming from Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh as mangoes grown in Ramanagaram and Kolar, two major mango growing districts, have been damaged due to inclement weather.

Syed Zameer of Bharath fruits said in the past fortnight K.R. Market has been receiving 15 to 20 tonnes of mangoes each day. He said depending on the variety, the price ranges between Rs. 60 and Rs. 180 per kg in the city. Traders expect the price to drop by 50 per cent over the next few weeks as larger quantities of the fruit are expected to arrive. While, Raspuri, Sendura, Totapuri and Mallika varieties of mangoes are already in the market, Alphonso, Malgova and Neelam are expected to arrive after April.

Commenting on the sales, a vendor at K.R. Market said he was disappointed as the initial excitement of the commencement of the mango season is yet to be seen in customers.

Although he procured over two quintals of mangoes hoping to encash on the customer's initial excitement, he was able to sell just about 20 kg a day. "Most customers are buying mangoes in small quantities, and they may buy in large quantities in April," he said.

Ramesh S., a customer at the market, said he would wait for another month for the prices of the mangoes to fall. Meanwhile, horticulture experts said the season has turned out to be an "off year" one in the State although they had expected it to be an "on-year" one. At the time of flowering, experts had estimated the State's production to be around one million tonnes. However, the prevailing dry weather, low soil moisture and mango hopper epidemic had damaged the crop. Experts expect production of just 3 to 4 lakh tonnes of mangoes in the State this season.

The former Additional Director of Horticulture (Fruits) S.V. Hittalmani, said that 60 per cent of the total crop in Ramanagaram had been damaged and poor quality mangoes may come into the market.

Mr. Hittalmani said customers can expect a 30 per cent hike in price compared to last year's, and he attributed it to low yield. Horticulture Department officials estimate the price of mangoes to fall after April 15. They expect that Raspuri will cost anywhere between Rs. 30 and Rs. 40 a kg and Badami between Rs. 70 and Rs. 100.

☒ ***'Dry weather, low moisture and mango hopper epidemic damaged the crop'***

☒ ***Four lakh tonnes of mangoes expected to be produced this season in State***

Cucumber time



With summer peaking, sale of cucumber has picked up. A scene at Kondalampatti bus stop in Salem.— PHOTO: P. GOUTHAM

Water level

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 48.98 feet on Wednesday against its full reservoir level of 120 feet. The inflow was 1,519 cusecs and the discharge 1,000 cusecs.

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Wednesday stood at 48.30 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 105.95 cusecs and 96 cusecs of water is discharged from the dam. The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 72.21 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 32 cusecs and 300 cusecs of water is discharged.

Kanyakumari - The level in Pechipparai dam stood at 8.90 feet, 37.15 feet in Perunchani, 3.02 feet in Chittar 1, 3.11 feet in Chittar 11, 2.80 feet in Poigai and 41.95 feet in Mamabazathuraiyar.

Poor rainfall pushes up jackfruit yield



Jackfruit growers anticipate a higher yield in Thanjavur and Pudukottai this season as compared with last year's harvest.— PHOTO: B. VELANKANNI RAJ

PUDUKOTTAI, March 27, 2014 - Although poor rainfall has come as a setback for certain crops such as paddy, sugarcane, and maize, it has come as a boon for jackfruit. Jackfruit growers anticipate a higher yield this season as compared with last year's harvest.

According to jackfruit growers, the poor realisation of rainfall has facilitated an increase in the yield. It would help increase the number of carpel in each fruit.

Arimalam, Gandarvakottai, and part of Tiruvarangulam account for a large area in jack fruit. G.S. Dhanapathy, a progressive farmer, points out that although jackfruit could withstand drought-prone condition, the arrivals were late.

The sale of jackfruits in market was yet to pick up. He hopes that the arrivals would pick up in a few weeks. The seedless jack, which forms an important culinary for various dishes in this part of the region, would fetch attractive returns.

The severe damage caused by a cyclone to the jack trees in Panruti on January 1, 2012, has resulted in a growing demand for the Gandarvakottai and Thanjavur jackfruits, he added. On an average, 100 fruits would be harvested from a fully grown and properly maintained tree. Horticulture scientists said the taste of the fruits would be more delicious, if summer showers were realised in the middle of April or early May.

Fruity flavour of the season



Watermelons cost from Rs.15 to Rs.20 per kg

Hot favourite: Watermelons on sale on the roadside in Karimnagar.-- Photo: Thakur Ajaypal Singh

KARIMNAGAR, March 27, 2014 - With

the temperature soaring, people have started opting for juicy watermelons to get some respite from the sweltering heat wave conditions and avoid health problems due to dehydration and sunstroke.

Watermelon sellers here are a happy lot with the sudden increase of sales over the last one week and a good price for the juicy fruit. The road near the municipal guesthouse in Karimnagar, particularly, is mushrooming with several watermelon shops selling different varieties of the fruit.

Local varieties

To name a few, there are local varieties which are light green, hybrid capsule is dark bottle green and another sweet variety, 'nandari', which is also light green. The local variety is priced at Rs. 15 per kilogram and the hybrid variety of capsule and Nandari costs Rs. 20 per kilogram.

People mostly prefer the capsule variety because of the delicious and sweet pulp inside and similarly the 'nandari' variety also, which is crunchy and juicy. Traders say that they get the watermelons from Anantapur, Kurnool and also from Maharashtra and Rajasthan.

Amjad, a trader says that they are selling a quintal of watermelons everyday and hopes that the sales would pick up to two quintals or so in the near future. Tirupathi, who is fond of watermelon, says that it meets the requirement of water in the body and wards off dehydration during summer.

EU to ban Indian mangoes, vegetables

BRUSSELS, March 27, 2014 - European Union member states, on Wednesday, decided to ban the import of five types of fruits and vegetables from India, after several batches were found to be contaminated by pests such as fruit flies, the bloc's executive said.

The prohibition, which goes into effect in May, covers mangoes, aubergines, the taro plant and two types of gourd. These represent less than 5 per cent of the bloc's fresh fruit and vegetable imports from India, according to the European Commission.

Pests that are not native to Europe were found in 207 fruit and vegetable consignments from the subcontinent last year, the Commission said, adding that they "could pose a threat to EU agriculture and production." The EU's executive also said there were 'significant shortcomings' in the certification systems that prevent contaminated goods from being exported. The ban, agreed by a committee of experts representing member states, is to be reviewed by the end of 2015. — DPA

Exports push up price of gingelly oil

CHENNAI, March 27, 2014 - For customers who live by a budget, the increasing prices of gingelly oil have been a cause for worry.

“This is the first time the prices have shot up over Rs. 300,” said a source in the industry. Many stores have stopped placing orders for top gingelly oil brands as the price has been hovering above the Rs. 300 mark. Some brands are being sold at about Rs. 320 per litre, say retailers.

G. Ravichandran, who runs a grocery in Velachery, said many of his customers have started cutting down on their consumption of gingelly oil.

V.R. Muthu, chairman of V.V.V and Sons, says the increase in price of sesame seeds has pushed up the price of the oil. “A major portion of sesame seeds harvested in the country is exported thus leading to increased prices. As the country expects a bumper crop this year, prices are expected to go down to Rs. 230–Rs. 240 a litre in the retail market, by the first week of June,” he says.

CII meet on food processing

KOCHI, March 27, 2014 - The Confederation of Indian Industry, Kerala, will organise a conference titled ‘Made in Kerala’, at Hotel Le Meridien here on March 29. The conference will focus on value-added agriculture and food processing. Chief Secretary E.K. Bharat Bhushan will inaugurate the programme.

The meet is being held in the backdrop of a visit made by a CII delegation to Sri Lanka recently. Some of the companies based in Sri Lanka have evinced interest in setting up coconut products manufacturing facility in Kerala, according to Shivdas B.Menon, Chairman of the meeting and Managing Director of Sterling group of companies. Mr.Menon said coconut products made in Sri Lanka were generally of good quality and setting up units in Kerala would be beneficial to the foreign companies as the products made in the State would not attract import duty.

March of the melons



Cool off with this juicy fruit

Indulge Salads, smoothies or a facepack, the fruit sure is versatile photo: Nagara Gopala

It is only March and we are already hot around the collar in Bangalore. However, fruit lovers are lucky as there are melons to brighten the day and help to cool and refresh all at once.

Mounds of water melon have already found their way to highways and traffic intersections. In the city, fruit cart vendors and fruit shops have the smaller musk melon.

Bridget White Kumar, who has written a host of Anglo-Indian cook books, shares an unusual salad recipe. “Both water melon

and musk melons make a lovely cool summer salad when mixed with chopped onions, tomatoes, green onions, small wedges of cheese and a pinch of salt and served with a dash of lime juice. It is a nice, sweet and salty salad, which I garnish with chopped coriander leaves or celery.”

Ranjini Kamath says she had bought a melon that was labelled Honey dew and it tasted like its namesake. Sneha Naidu from Fraser Town says, "Melons herald the summer for me. I love juicy musk melons and have used them as centre pieces at parties. The seeds are yummy too and keep me company as I watch *Downton Abbey*."

The seeds of the musk melon could also be put into a strainer and the juice squeezed over the cubed fruit for added flavour. It is preferable to cube all melons and discard the rind, as the water they are grown in could be suspect and lead to salmonella if left unwashed.

Gina Mascarenhas who lives in Cooke Town, says musk melon milk shake tastes wonderful and is a terrific cooler. Her recipe calls for peeling and deseeding the melon. "Blend with a little cold milk and sugar (optional) until it is smooth. Then add a few scoops of vanilla ice cream and viola, your smoothie is ready."

If you have a slice or two of the fruit that has gone squishy, you could mix it in a little milk and apply it as a face pack. So indulge in the melons till it is time for the coming of the king—mango. -MARIANNE DE NAZARETH

hindustantimes

European Union bans Indian mangoes, vegetables due to concerns over pests

The European Union's Standing Committee on Plant Health on Wednesday decided to impose a ban on Indian mangoes and some vegetables from May due to concerns over the presence of pests and insects in consignments arriving from India.

The committee's meeting at Brussels endorsed the emergency measures proposed by the Commission to ban the import of certain fruits and vegetables: [Colocasia sp (taro, eddo) Mangifera sp, (mango) Momordica sp (bitter gourd), Solanum melongena (eggplant) and Trichosanthes sp (snake gourd)] from India.

The measures prohibit the import of some fruits and vegetables from India to tackle what is called "significant shortcomings in the phytosanitary certification system" of such products exported to the EU, the member states said.

This decision had to be taken due to a high number of such consignments being intercepted at arrival in the EU with quarantine pests, mainly insects, like non-European fruit flies.

The EU said that though the prohibited commodities represent less than 5 % of the total fresh fruits and vegetables imported into the EU from India, the potential introduction of new pests could pose a threat to EU agriculture and production.

Such pests were found in 207 consignments of fruits and vegetables from India imported into the EU in 2013. A revision of the ban will take place before 31 December 2015, it said.

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Thursday, Mar 27

Max 31° | Min 23°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 74

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:08

Sunset: 06:20

Barometer: 1013

Tomorrow's Forecast








Partly Cloudy

Friday, Mar 28

Max 34° | Min 24°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday Mar 29	Sunday Mar 30	Monday Mar 31	Tuesday Apr 1	Wednesday Apr 2
				
35° 24° Partly Cloudy	30° 23° Overcast	30° 23° Overcast	30° 23° Cloudy	31° 25° Cloudy

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Leeds graduate, BSP's Aligarh candidate, advocates FDI in agriculture, free healthcare

ALIGARH: In a departure from the ordinary, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) is fielding a 25-year-old Leeds graduate, who wants to bring a piece of the US and Europe to Indian villages by providing free healthcare, from the Aligarh parliamentary constituency.

Arvind Kumar Singh's urban outlook does not make him a misfit in the BSP. On the contrary, a party insider says, the choice was deliberate and aimed at "wooing the youth and widening the vote base beyond the Dalit and Muslim voters".

Singh's mother, Rajkumari Chauhan, is the sitting MP from Aligarh. His father, Thakur Jaiveer Singh, is a legislative council member.

Speaking of the urgent need to provide free healthcare, the Leeds graduate said, "In our country, people can't afford health care. I will fight to make Right to Health the eighth fundamental right."

Singh also believes that digitization of government records would play a big role in fighting corruption. "Every ministry is facing the problem of corruption," he said. "There are two ways to fight that: digitization of government data and uploading every detail for public viewing. Every ministry should have a penal account, which should be publicised every year. If an official is unable to proceed with any citizen's case, he should be liable to clarify the reason for his failure to do so. In the US, an official has to pay a penalty for not being able to clear a case in a given time-frame," he said.

A boost to the agriculture sector can help fight the problem of unemployment in the country, he added. "Australia prides itself for rice, Israel for milk, Peru for sugarcane," he said. "Some countries have specialized in agricultural produce but out of the 11 products India is producing, it has no specialization in them."

Advocating FDI in agriculture, he said foreign investment could help curb farmer suicides and also stem the flow of villagers to cities, a phenomenon that he added, leads to unemployment and under-employment.

The 25-year-old claims to have toured 1,300 villages in six months and witnessed the "pain" of villagers. "Big families are stuffed into tiny houses," he said. "We talk of lack of infrastructure, but some villages don't even have basic amenities. Some local areas in Aligarh such as Maulana Azad Nagar are worse than refugee camps."

He said villagers see him every day and feel he is the one for them. "The villagers are impoverished but they know about Modi's polarizing politics," he said. "They know that a united country is a progressive country."

That BJP has no local connect will work to BSP's advantage, he said. Asserting that BSP's poll prospects were bright, he said, "We will support a secular government. No government can be formed at the Centre without BSP."

THE HINDU Business Line

Masur prices may top Rs. 5,000/quintal



Indore, March 26: Weak arrivals and strong buying support from the millers have lifted prices of masur, tur and urad in Indore mandis.

With reports of extensive damage to the crop, arrival of domestic masur in local mandis has declined sharply in the past few days, thereby increasing dependency on imported masur.

Imported masur on Mumbai port was being quoted at Rs. 5,100, masur (bold) at Rs. 4,900-50 (up Rs. 300 in the past one week). Similarly, masur (Madhya Pradesh) also perked up to Rs. 4,400-

4,600 a quintal (up Rs. 200).

Given steep rise in masur prices, both stockists and traders have started building inventories leading to sharp decline in its arrival. Under the circumstances, future of masur appears to be bullish, said Prakash Vora, a local pulse trader adding that masur prices may cross Rs. 5,000/quintal.

Rise in spot masur also lifted its dal by almost Rs. 400 in the past one week with masur dal (medium) at Rs. 5,600-50, masur dal (medium) at Rs. 5,700-50, while masur dal (bold) rose to Rs. 6,000-50.

Tur (Maharashtra) was Rs. 4,500-50, while tur (Madhya Pradesh) ruled steady at Rs. 3,700-3,800. Two weeks ago, tur prices rallied to Rs. 4,500 with its arrival from Maharashtra getting affected due to rains and snowfall. Tur dal ruled steady on subdued demand with tur dal (full) on Wednesday being quoted at Rs. 6,200-6,300, tur dal (sawa no) at Rs. 5,700-5,800, while tur marka ruled at Rs. 6,500-6,600.

Weak arrival and improved demand also lifted urad with urad (bold) at Rs. 4,750, while urad (medium) ruled at Rs. 4,200-4,500.

New technology turns pineapple into powder



Tropical delight The pineapple powder, a high value produce, has a shelf life of six months .

New Delhi, March 26: In a move that could benefit thousands of pineapple growers in the hilly regions of the North-East, the Imphal-headquartered Central Agricultural University has developed a technology to convert and process the fruit into value-added powder.

Pineapple is a major horticultural crop in the north-eastern region, but growers

have been facing marketing challenges due to logistical issues.

The eight north-eastern States account for more than half of the 1.57 million tonnes of pineapple produced in the country.

Value-addition

“We have developed a processing technology to convert the pineapple into powder that retains the flavour of the fruit. We have filed for a patent and expect to commercialise this technology soon,” said SN Puri, Vice-Chancellor, Central Agricultural University.

Puri said using the technology juice extracted from pineapple is converted into powder – a high value produce that has a shelf life of six months.

One quintal or 100 kg of pineapple can be processed into 10 kg of powder, which can be used in confectionery, ice creams and ready-to-serve drinks, among others. The College of Agricultural Engineering and Post Harvest Technology in Sikkim, one of the six institutions under the CAU, has developed this technology.

Processing units

CAU intends to take this technology to the farmers’ doorsteps through customised mobile units. The primary processing of extracting the juice will be done in the areas of cultivation. CAU will be setting up final processing units at its colleges and several district headquarters where the juice will be converted into powder, Puri said.

Bonus for growers

Growers will be paid on spot for the juice extracted, while they will also be given an option of bonus, based on the realisations of the processed powder.

“Our aim is to help farmers in the hilly regions fetch justifiable returns for their produce,” he added.

Spot rubber edges up

Kottayam, March 26: Spot rubber prices made marginal gains on Wednesday.

The most active counter RSS 4 improved mainly on covering purchases despite a weak closing in domestic futures on NMCE. The trend was mixed and volume low.

Sheet rubber improved to Rs. 149 (148) a kg, according to traders.

The grade firmed up to Rs. 148.50 (Rs. 148) and Rs. 145.50 (Rs. 145) respectively, according to the Rubber Board and dealers.

April futures declined to Rs. 146.69 (Rs. 148.57) May to Rs. 150 (Rs. 151.98), June to Rs. 152 (Rs. 154.43) and July to Rs. 152.40 (Rs. 156.40) while the August and September futures were inactive on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) inched up to Rs. 141.41 (Rs. 141.23) at Bangkok. April futures closed at ¥247.8 (Rs. 145.52) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates (Rs. /kg): RSS-4: 149 (148); RSS-5: 145(145); Ungraded: 141 (140); ISNR 20: 142 (142) and Latex 60%: 111 (111).

Business Standard

Sugar exports hit as local prices touch 7-month high

Rising seasonal demand from ice-cream and beverage makers ahead of the scorching summer months has also contributed to the jump in domestic [sugar](#) prices, which hit Rs 3,077 a quintal on Wednesday, the highest since August 2013

Indian sugar merchants are struggling to sign new export deals, as a surge in domestic prices to a seven-month peak and a firm rupee prompt buyers to wait for cheaper supplies from Thailand, dealers said on Wednesday.

Slower [exports](#) by the No. 2 producer could support global [sugar prices](#), which have slipped in the past two weeks partly on worries a record Thai output - estimated at 11 million tonnes (mt) - will swell an amply supplied world market.

"It is nearly impossible to strike new deals for white sugar. Indian sugar is too expensive," said Kamal Jain, managing director of Pune-based Kamal Jain Trading Services.

"Even in raw sugar, exports have slowed. Only Iran is buying in rupees. Others are not comfortable with current prices." India is offering white sugar at around \$492 a tonne free on board, versus offers from Thailand at \$470 for comparatively better grade white sugar, dealers said. Thailand is the world's no 2 sugar exporter after Brazil.

Indian raws are being quoted at \$438 a tonne, compared to Thai supplies at \$381.

"Two months ago, mills in top producing state Maharashtra were willing to sell sugar below domestic prices. Since the announcement of an exports subsidy for raw sugar, they raised quotes," a Mumbai-based dealer with a global brokerage said.

Indian mills traditionally produce white sugar, but a global glut has made exports difficult. In an attempt to cut down stockpiles, the south Asian country has said it will provide an incentive of Rs 3,300 (\$54.82) a tonne for the production of raw sugar for exports.

Rising seasonal demand from ice-cream and beverage makers ahead of the scorching summer months has also contributed to the jump in domestic sugar prices, which hit Rs 3,077 a quintal on Wednesday, the highest since August 2013.

Chana up 0.1% as demand picks up

[Chana](#) prices edged up by 0.09% to Rs 3,258 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators created fresh positions after pick-up in demand in the spot market amid limited

arrivals from producing regions.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), chana for delivery in April edged up by Rs 3, or 0.09% to Rs 3,258 per quintal with an open interest of 65,980 lots.

Similarly, the commodity for delivery in May traded higher by the same margin to Rs 3,318 per quintal in 51,800 lots.

Analysts said speculators created fresh positions after pick-up in demand in the spot market amid limited arrivals from producing regions helped chana prices to trade higher at futures trade.

Sugar up 1.1% on rising demand

[Sugar](#) prices gained 1.09% to Rs 3,067 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators enlarged their positions, driven by rising demand in the spot markets for the summer season.

Reports of lower output in key manufacturing areas in February also supported the uptrend.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), sugar for delivery in April rose by Rs 33, or 1.09% to Rs 3,067 per quintal with an open interest of 35,120 lots.

Similarly, the sweetener for delivery in March traded higher by Rs 30, or 0.97% to Rs 3128 per quintal in 46,120 lots.

Analysts attributed the rise in sugar prices at futures trade to an increased buying by speculators on the back of rising demand for the summer season amid estimates of lower output.

Potato down 1.1% on weak demand

[Potato](#) prices moved down by 1.17% to Rs 1,192 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators offloaded their positions on the back of weak demand against adequate supplies from producing regions.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), potato for delivery in March fell by Rs 14.10, or 1.17% to Rs 1,192 per quintal in business turnover of 20 lots.

Likewise, the potato for delivery in April shed Rs 2.40, or 0.19% to Rs 1236.40 per quintal in 7 lots.

Analysts attributed fall in potato prices at futures to offloading of positions by speculators on weak demand in the spot market against adequate supplies from producing belts.

Palm oil up 0.4% on spot demand

[Crude palm oil](#) prices gained 0.47% to Rs 581.50 per 10 kg in futures market today as speculators created fresh positions after pick-up in demand in the spot market.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), crude palm oil for delivery in April rose by Rs 2.70, or 0.47% to Rs 581.50 per 10 kg in business turnover of 251 lots.

Likewise, the oil for delivery in March gained Rs 2.30, or 0.40% to Rs 580.50 per 10 kg in 17 lots.

Analysts said speculators created fresh positions after pick up in demand in the spot market mainly led to rise in crude palm oil prices at futures trade.

Cardamom down 0.1% on low demand

[Cardamom](#) futures extended losses for the second straight day by losing 0.14% to Rs 866.30 per kg in futures trade today as speculators reduced positions due to low demand in the spot market against higher supplies.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), cardamom for delivery in May declined by Rs 1.20, or 0.14% to Rs 866.30 per kg in business turnover of 166 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in April shed 90 paise, or 0.11% to Rs 846.70 per kg in 295 lots.

Analysts said speculators reduced positions on the back of low demand in the spot market against higher supplies from producing regions that influenced cardamom prices at futures trade.
