

**A farmer at heart and soul**



Despite heading two urban bodies thrice, Teegala Krishna Reddy, the newly-elected legislator from Maheshwaram constituency, remains a farmer at heart and thoughts.

Fondly slapping on the rumps of the farm animals at his dairy in the interiors of his TKR Engineering and Pharmacy colleges at Meerpet, he identifies each from the other.

“We bought this for a price of Rs.One lakh,” he points at a large beast, before shifting attention to a huddle of calves, “These were raised at our Choutuppal farm before being brought here.”

He personally visits Haryana to handpick the best of the cattle for his farm. Firmly anchored to his birthplace where his father, a sarpanch, owned 300 acres, he refuses to contest from anywhere else.

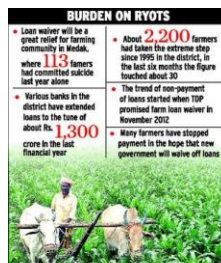
The non-ambitious attitude cost him much in political career. It took him 32 years to become an MLA, on behalf of the party to which he pledged his heart and soul.

“I have been in TDP since it was born. I was a big fan of NTR and his movies,” he recalls. A graduate from Nizam College to which he would bicycle daily from Meerpet, he had been a tiller for 12 years before TDP arrived. In reward for his loyalty, NTR made him HUDA chairman in 1987—a post he had to forego after TDP’s defeat in 1989. In 1994 elections, he had to campaign for Malreddy Ranga Reddy to whom he had forfeited his chance of contesting elections. In 1999, the seat went to BJP as part of electoral alliance. His second tenure as HUDA Chairman was between 1997 and 2002, followed immediately by his direct election as the City Mayor—a post he holds in esteem. “NTR Garden, Necklace Road, Hitec City, flyovers, International Airport, sports stadia, and even the idea of Metro Rail were born during my tenure,” he proudly says. His first claim to assembly was in 2009 elections, which he lost to former Home Minister P.Sabitha Indra Reddy, only to win the recent elections.

“I will work to get Krishna water to each and every village, and for education and health. I would also like to start a charitable trust,” he says on his plans for Mahesh -waram.

At 67, Mr.Reddy has his two sons looking after the TKR Group of educational institutions, while his only daughter and son-in-law recently returned from the USA. His wife remained a home-maker.

### **Loan waiver to benefit 2.9 lakh farmers**



As the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) is all set to form the government in Telangana state on or after the 'appointed date', i.e. June 2, the farmers in the region are eagerly waiting for Chief Minister designate K. Chandrasekhar Rao to sign the file related to the loan waiver.

The loan waiver would be a great relief for farming community in general and Medak in particular, where 113 farmers had committed suicide last year alone. It was estimated that about 2,200 farmers had taken the extreme step since 1995 in the district and in the last six months the figure touched about 30.

Mr. Chandrasekhar Rao, during his campaign, had promised to waive farming loans up to Rs. 1 lakh.

According to officials, the loan waiver would benefit about 2.9 lakh farmers of the about 4 lakh farmers in the district. Various banks in the district have extended loans to the tune of about Rs. 1,300 crore last financial year.

Most of the farmers had stopped repayment of loans with the hope that that the new government would waive their loans.

Officials are putting the total burden due to loan waiver at about Rs. 1,500 crore. Actually the tendency of farmers not repaying bank loans started after Telugu Desam party president N. Chandrababu Naidu made the promise of farm loan waiver during 'Meekosam' visit in November 2012.

"Mr. Naidu asked the farmers not to pay the farm loans stating that he would waive them after coming to power. This made the farmers to hold back repayment with a hope that all the parties will follow him. Actually that was what happened with almost all major parties announcing the same decision," said a bank officer on condition of anonymity stating that the actual figures come out when a policy decision was taken.

## **Forest will be painted green**



The bamboo groves in the three forest divisions in Wayanad district used to be a haven for wildlife, especially the animals from the adjacent sanctuaries during summer. But, after a generous bloom in 2006, the whole crop has completely withered away.

Now the territorial forest divisions in the district are preparing to plant a green canopy over the degraded forest, for which they have raised close to 1.8 lakh planting materials including the seedlings of bamboo, cane, fruit-bearing plants, and Kambakam (*Hopia parvi flora*) plants at various nurseries of the two territorial forest divisions.

### **100 hectares**

“We had planted bamboo and Kambakam plants on nearly 100 hectares of land in Pathiri reserve forest under the Chethalayath range of forest last year and it was a success. This inspired us to plant various species of plants, including bamboo, Kambakam and fruit-bearing plants on 79 hectares of degraded forest land this year,” P. Dhaneshkumar, South Wayanad Forest divisional officer, told *The Hindu* .

They have raised one lakh bamboo seedlings, 7,000 Kambakam plants and 10,000 saplings of 10 species of fruit-bearing trees.

“Usually natural regeneration would occur after a massive flowering of the plant. But the process is rare these days in the forest owing to various reasons, especially the grazing of wild animals,” he said.

“The number of wild animals, especially herbivores, has increased considerably in the forest of the district because of the conservation measures adopted since last two decades,” Mr. Dhaneshkumar said. Forest fire was another threat to natural regeneration.

“We decided to plant and protect the seedlings under various forest enrichment programmes, with the active support of the public and members of the Vana Samrakshna Samitis, till the plants reach maturity,” he added.

### **Sites for planting**

A major share of these seedlings would be planted on a degraded forestland in Pathiri forest section under the Chethalayath range of forest on the Kerala-Karnataka border, where desertification had been posing threat after the massive destruction of bamboo groves, and Banasura hill ranges under the Kalpetta range of forest, where soil erosion was threatening the Banasura reservoir, this season, he said.

“Escalating man-animal conflict is a major concern for the wildlife managers in the State. Many a time wild animals come to farmers’ plots to feed on fruits especially jackfruit and mango. Hence, we are planning to plant the saplings of 10 species of fruit-bearing plants including jackfruit, mango, guava, seethapazhom (anona squomosa) and njaval (syzygium cumini) to tackle the crisis, Mr. Dhaneshkumar said.

The North Wayanad forest division has raised close to 20,000 bamboo saplings, 15,000 mahogany and 40,000 cane saplings to plant on 60 hectares of degraded land under the three forest ranges of the division.

The division is also planning to sow seeds of bamboo on 105 hectares of land under the Begur forest range of forest, where a major forest fire was reported this year, with public participation, A. Shanavas, North Wayanad forest divisional officer said.

### **A king among mangoes**



*As the mango season gets underway this summer, Srirangam-based Thathachariar Gardens showcases its prized Imam Pasand variety*

Peacocks call out in the distance as visitors squelch through the rain-moistened undergrowth at the Thathachariar Gardens in what is to many, an annual pilgrimage to seek out the sweet and soft-as-butter Imam Pasand mango that is the signature produce of this family-owned farm.

So special is the fruit, that enquiries start coming in as early as February and March, says Mr. S. Rangarajan, 81, the former bank official who has been at the helm of affairs at the farm for several decades.

The Imam Pasand is not native to the Tiruchi district, but the silt and water of the Cauvery river seem to have done it a world of good.

“My uncle S.R.V. Thatham started the farm in 1945, and one of his friends brought the first graft of the Imam Pasand from Andhra Pradesh. We developed the graft further, and so basically all the Imam Pasands growing in this region are supposed to be from our graft,” says Mr. Rangarajan.

The number of varieties has been brought down to six from the original 20, in order to lessen the chances of crop losses.

The origin of the prized variety’s Hindi/Urdu name (which translates as ‘The Imam’s Favourite’) is lost in the mists of time. Some say it was originally grown in Kerala and beloved of Mughal emperor Humayun (and was called Humayun Pasand), but mango lovers would rather just relish the fruit rather than quibble over etymology.

In the 70-acre farm that we visit, Thathachariar Gardens has 700 mango trees, of which around 300 are the Imam Pasand, followed by other varieties such as Banganapalli, Roumani, and Kallamani (Bangloura).

Thathachariar Gardens has also developed the ‘Pacharusi’ mango that is tart and tangy in taste, and is meant to be eaten raw.

What makes the Imam Pasand even more exclusive is that it has a very short season between May and June every year. The fruit is plucked shortly before ripening, when its green coat sports an ash-grey look that will eventually bloom into straw-yellow on maturation.

Farming methods are a judicious mix of modern and native norms that are defined by years of experience.

“After the mango is picked (an Imam Pasand tree can yield anywhere between 40-100 fruits per season), we lay the fruit on the ground for a day to let the sap run. Then we arrange the raw mangoes on a bed of hay to allow them to ripen naturally,” says Ganesan,

who looks after the upkeep of the trees and also functions as a lease agent for the farm during harvest time.

This year's yield has been 25% less than the usual figure due to insufficient rainfall, says Mr. Rangarajan. "We had excessive heat, but that atmosphere is conducive only during the flowering stage for mango," he says.

"Only 1% of flowering trees bear fruit, but this year most of the blossoms wilted in the harsh sunlight," he rues.

There are several other challenges for farms like Thathachariar Gardens, which uses inter-cropping (alternating coconut trees with mangoes at six-acre intervals as a natural pest control measure).

"We need to spray insecticide to stop the hopper insect from infiltrating the gestational-stage mangoes, but it's hard to get the skilled labour for this," says Mr. Rangarajan.

The lowering of the water table is also of grave concern, he adds. "Earlier we used to get water at 40-50 feet with a three or four-horsepower motor, but this year, the water diviner says that we'd have to dig bore-wells up to 120 feet."

The recent rains haven't helped either. "They are good for the trees but bad for the fruit," says Ganesan.

Even these problems don't seem to deter fans of the Imam Pasand, as customers continue to drive up to the farm to claim their orders.

"We have a very good local market," says Mr. Rangarajan, "though we have never had to advertise. We did export once to the Middle East, but we stopped because it affected our local demand."



The stipulation of uniform-sized fruit by exporters doesn't work in favour of the Imam Pasand, as each mango could grow up to 800 grams in weight.

“I wasn't able to get a good price for the export-rejects locally,” adds Mr. Rangarajan. “So we prefer to avoid the middleman and let customers come directly to us.”

The mangoes are sold by the dozen, with an average price of Rs.300-600, which can skyrocket depending on the season's duration.

Mr. Rangarajan, now 81, remembers coming to the farm at seven every morning and supervising its operations everyday, even during the rainy season.

He hopes the farm will continue its tryst with the Imam Pasand mango for generations to come.

### **Mango, jackfruit mela begins**

A wide variety of carbide-free mangoes and succulent jackfruit are on display and sale at the mango and jackfruit mela, which commenced at Lalbagh Botanical Gardens on Friday.

Naturally-ripened mango varieties ranging from Rs. 30 to Rs. 80 a kg are being sold at 75 stalls. However, Alphonso mangoes were priced between Rs. 50 and Rs. 80 a kg, though the given rate was Rs. 65. Jackfruit varieties being are sold for Rs. 30 for 12 pieces.

“About 1,800 hectares of mangoes were destroyed in Karnataka this year leading to a loss of Rs. 513 crore. The Central government has provided Rs. 82 crore as relief while the State government has provided compensation of Rs. 25,000 per hectare,” said Horticulture Minister Shamanur Shivashankarappa after inaugurating the mela.

Horticulture Department Additional Director (Fruits) R. Jayaprakash said the department is expecting sales of about 700 to 800 metric tonnes this time. The mango production during the current season was an estimated 3.5 lakh tonnes.

While the exhibition will be on till May 30, the mela will continue till June 15.

### **Procurement of paddy restarts**

*The market was closed for a week following a clash between 'hamalis' and 'munims' and non-payment of dues to farmers*

Trading activity restarted at the Agriculture Market Yard after a gap of 7-8 days giving relief to the farming community here on Friday. With this, traders, commission agents and farmers were quite busy in the market.

Farmers, who waited all these days keeping their agriculture produces around expressed satisfaction over the purchases. The market remained closed following the clash between 'hamalis' and 'munims' and also the non-payment of dues to farmers.

### **Banana growers seek compensation for crop loss**

The banana growers under the banner of the Andhra Pradesh Rytu Sangham staged a demonstration at Chintalapudi in West Godavari district on Friday, seeking compensation for the crop losses reported during the heavy gales a week ago.

The farmers urged the authorities of the Horticulture Department to enumerate the crop losses at the earliest and initiate the process for payment of compensation to the victims.

According to B. Balaram, secretary of the Andhra Pradesh Rytu Sangham, 80 to 90 per cent of the banana plantations got damaged by the gales and the farmers had suffered huge crop losses just a month ahead of the harvesting season. Farmers cultivated banana in 25,000 acres in the upland, agency and delta regions in the district and the crop loss

was reported mainly in the upland areas. Mr. Balaram said that this was the third successive year the growers had suffered crop losses due to gales.

He alleged that the victims were denied compensation though enumeration of the losses was undertaken by the administration in the previous years.

“The farmers have invested Rs. 60,000 to Rs. 70,000 per acre for growing banana and the tenant farmers spent an additional of Rs. 20,000 towards lease. The farmers can’t recover from the shock if the government fails to come to their rescue,” Mr. Balaram said.

*‘Around 90 per cent of plantations in West Godavari district got damaged by gales’*

### **Tobacco exports reach another milestone, touch Rs. 6,059 crore**

*2.64 lakh tonnes of tobacco and tobacco products were exported in 2013-14*

: Tobacco Board Chairman K. Gopal has said the sector has achieved yet another milestone, surpassing last year’s record in terms of exports, both quantity and value. During 2013-14, 2.64 lakh tonnes of tobacco and tobacco products worth Rs. 6,059 crore were exported, out of which the contribution of un-manufactured tobacco to volumes was 2.34 lakh tonnes at Rs. 4,842.01 crore.

The country exported 29,534 tonnes of tobacco products valued at Rs. 1,217 crore.

In a press release, Dr. Gopal said exports to western Europe dominated with 34 per cent, followed by Eastern Europe (14per cent), the Gulf (11per cent), South and South East Asia (20 per cent), Africa (13 per cent), and North and South America (8 per cent).

### **FCV shipments**

Similarly, the Flue Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco exports also surpassed the previous record of 1.74 lakh tonnes (in 2009-10) to reach 1.80 lakh tonnes, Dr. Gopal added.

He said FCV tobacco exports earned Rs. 4,086 crore. In dollar terms, this is valued at \$ 675 million.

Exports of FCV tobacco during 2013-14 had increased by two per cent, 28 per cent and 15 per cent in quantity, rupee and dollar terms respectively as compared with exports made during the previous year.

Major destinations for Indian un-manufactured tobacco during the period were Belgium, Egypt, Russia, Korea, the Philippines, the US, the UAE, Netherlands, Germany, Yemen, Nepal and Poland.

### **Special initiative**

As a special initiative, the Board had given the opportunity to interested tobacco traders for adoption of whole village demonstration on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) under direct supervision of the Board.

### **Kerala farm workers can earn up to Rs. 30,000 a month**

Being a farm worker is no mean job in Kerala, where a labourer can earn upto Rs 30,000 a month.

Believe it or not, many agriculture labourers earn five figure salaries in the State, thanks to the State government's new "labour force" scheme.

The Agriculture Department, with the support of village panchayats, has drawn up the scheme to ensure decent wages to farm workers and raise their status in society, sources said.

Under the scheme, a ‘Karshika Karma Sena’ (farm workers’ army) with farm workers enrolled as members are formed in each village panchayat.

They are then trained in all sorts of agriculture related works, ranging from tilling land, sowing seeds and harvesting crops, coconut plucking and even hi-tech farming, a department official said.

Anybody in the village panchayat can hire the service of the ‘Karma Sena’ members giving them a fixed standard wage.

A top official said that against the conventional practice of paying labourers immediately after the work is over, their wages are calculated based on the hours they work and is paid on a monthly basis, putting them on par with the salaried class.

“Their daily wages are collected by either the panchayat or local Krishi Bhavan officials from each employer and credited to bank accounts,” state Director of Agriculture R Ajith Kumar told PTI.

Some hard working labourers even earn more than Rs 30,000 salary in many months, he said.

## **WATER LEVEL**

### **Madurai**

The water level in Periyar dam stood at 114 feet on Friday with an inflow of 100 cusecs and a discharge of 100 cusecs. The level in Vaigai dam was 32.94 feet with an inflow of 25 cusecs and a discharge of 40 cusecs. The combined storage in Periyar credit was 1,417 mcft. There was no rainfall recorded during the last 24 hours ending 8.30 a.m. on Friday in the region.

## **Mettur**

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 35.92 feet on Friday against its full level of 120 feet.

The inflow was 2,782 cusecs and the discharge 500 cusecs.

## **TIRUNELVELI**

The water level in the Papanasam dam on Friday stood at 52.10 feet (maximum level is 143 feet).

The dam had an inflow of 12 cusecs and 204.75 cusecs of water is discharged from the dam.

The level in the Manimuthar dam stood at 67.73 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 4 cusecs and no water is discharged.

## **Kanyakumari**

The water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 20.65 feet, 45.60 feet in Perunchani, 7.94 feet in Chittar 1, 8.03 feet in Chittar 11, 6 feet in Poigai and 54.12 feet in Mamabazathuraiyaru dam.

Chennai

## Chennai - INDIA

### Today's Weather



Sunny

**Saturday, May 24**

Max | Min

30° | 20°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:42

Humidity: 59

Sunset: 06:28

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1005

### Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

**Sunday, May 25**

Max | Min

38° | 29°

### Extended Forecast for a week

Monday May 26	Tuesday May 27	Wednesday May 28	Thursday May 29	Friday May 30
38°   28°	36°   28°	36°   28°	37°   29°	37°   29°
Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Sunny

### Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:27

Humidity: 38

Sunset: 07:08

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1007



# Business Standard

## **Farmers, experts in Gujarat root for new rice transplant method**

[Farmers](#) in [Gujarat](#) have asked the state government to adopt a new technique that helps in increasing the yield of rice as part of its farm policy.

'System of Rice Intensification' (SRI), a method of boosting yield of the key [kharif crop](#), has been adopted by some of the States in the country.

Nearly 100 farmers from Dang, Valsad and Navsari districts want Gujarat to implement this procedure and incorporate it in Gujarat's agriculture policy.

These farmers and agriculture experts were taking part in a workshop on SRI titled 'More from less' organised here today by Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP).

"Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Tripura and Bihar have made SRI a part of their farm policy and we want Gujarat Government to follow suit," Apoorva Oza, Chief Executive officer of AKRSP in India, said at the workshop.

"We have conveyed it to State Agricultural Secretary and got a positive response. We have been told it will be introduced in the next 'Krishi Mahotsav' (agricultural festival organised by state government)."

Under SRI, rice seedlings, less than 15 days old with just two leaves, are planted singly and spaced optimally to permit more growth of roots and canopy. Seedlings are removed and relocated when young to avoid trauma to roots and minimise transplant shock.

Oza said the technique requires less water and seeds, and increases yield on any type of



land.

"Through SRI, our farmers can get five times more paddy production," said Atul Mehta, an agricultural scientist, adding farmers in the tribal belt of South Gujarat have successfully adopted this technique.

"Farmers in Navsari, Narmada and Dang districts saw 40 to 150 per cent increase in production in different paddy varieties under SRI as compared to conventional methods," Mehta added.

### **NCDEX launches internationally aligned sugar contracts**

National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange ([NCDEX](#)) today launched [sugar](#) contract, which will be available for October onwards contracts and is aligned with the global market so that industry can protect itself from volatility in prices.

The new contract has been designed in partnership with apex industry body Indian Sugar Mills Association ([ISMA](#)), NCDEX said in a release issued here.

Currently, NCDEX offers sugar contracts expiring in June 2014, July 2014, August 2014 and September 2014 for trading.

The modified contract will be applicable for all contracts expiring in and after October 2014.

This will allow mills to benefit from price discovery and risk management for a longer term.

"India is the world's largest sugar consumer and second largest producer. Therefore, its prices hold significant importance in the global market. We expect the redesigned

contract to add tremendous value to all stakeholders," NCDEX Managing Director and CEO Samir Shah said.

The contract has now taken a higher quality of sugar as its basis so that the end consumer industry, like food and beverage companies are encouraged to take delivery, it said.

The Exchange has also withdrawn staggered delivery in the contract as per the industry demand.

Further the sugar mills can deliver sugar directly to the buyers' premises under the 'direct delivery' option, which has also been made available.

"We expect better participation in the futures contracts, by all stakeholders, which will improve volumes and throw up a better price discovery mechanism. We expect the new contracts to equip sugar producers better to take advantage of the global commodities market, as and when opportunities come up," ISMA Director General [Abinash Verma](#) said.

### **Turmeric futures sheds 1.73% on subdued demand**



[Turmeric](#) prices drifted by 1.73 per cent to 6,346 per quintal in futures market today as speculators indulged in reducing exposures due to subdued demand against adequate supplies from producing belts.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, turmeric for delivery in June fell by Rs 112, or 1.73 per cent to Rs 6,346 per quintal with an open interest of 12,830 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in July lost Rs 114, or 1.72 per cent to Rs 6,504 per quintal in 2,570 lots.

Analysts said offloading of positions by speculators, driven by weak demand in the spot market, mainly kept pressure on turmeric prices at futures trade.

### **Chana down 0.51% on sluggish demand**



[Chana](#) prices fell by 0.51 per cent to Rs 2,928 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators reduced positions, driven by sluggish demand in the spot market.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange, chana for delivery in June declined by Rs 15, or 0.51 per cent, to Rs 2,928 per quintal with an open interest of

1,38,710 lots.

The July contract traded lower by Rs 13, or 0.43 per cent, to Rs 2,995 per quintal in 66,510 lots.

Analysts attributed the fall in chana prices to trimming of positions by speculators, triggered by subdued demand in the spot market against increased supplies from producing regions.

## THE HINDU BusinessLine

### **Ample stocks, slack buying pound wheat**



Lack of buying interest coupled with easy availability of stocks pulled dara wheat and flour prices marginally down on Friday.

Sluggish domestic demand and easy availability of stocks pulled wheat and flour down, said Radhey Sham, a market expert. Wheat may continue to rule around current levels and any major alteration in prices is unlikely, he said. Besides the local stocks, arrivals from the Uttar Pradesh are also putting pressure on the market, said experts.

After witnessing a steady trend earlier this week, dara wheat dropped by ₹5 to ₹1,465-70 a quintal. Around 2,500 bags of wheat arrived and stocks were directly offloaded at the mills. Mill delivery was at ₹1,465 while delivery at the chakki was at ₹1,470.

An uptrend was witnessed on the NCDEX. June contracts moved up by ₹1 and traded at ₹1,543 with an open interest of 11,930 lots. July contracts moved up by ₹5 and traded at ₹1,575 a quintal with an open interest of 6,250 lots.

Flour too dropped by ₹5 and sold at ₹1,720. On the other hand, Chokar was unchanged at ₹1,350 a quintal.

### **Poor quality, slack demand grind turmeric**



Spot turmeric prices declined on Friday at Erode on the back of medium quality arrivals and sluggish North Indian demand. “Due to arrival of poor quality turmeric the traders

quoted decreased price for the turmeric. They purchased very low quantity of the spice for want of upcountry demand. Stockists purchased some quantity,” said RKV Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said that of the arrival of 5,400 bags only 2,300 were sold. Of this the stockists bought about 1,000 bags. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety turmeric was sold at ₹4,599-6,911; the root variety ₹4,399-6,691 a quintal.

Salem Hybrid: The finger turmeric was sold at ₹5,964-7,125 and the root variety ₹5,600-6,714. Of the 1,381 bags that arrived, 240 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety quoted ₹6,159-7,061 and the root variety ₹5,899-6,704. Of the 1,167 bags on sale, 887 were traded.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety turmeric fetched ₹5,999-6,998; the root variety ₹5,696-6,700. All the 1,547 bags found takers.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger turmeric was sold at ₹5,801-7,072 and the root variety ₹5,370-6,000. All the 188 bags were traded.

### **Pulses go off the boil on rising inflow**



Weak demand and higher arrivals have dragged prices of pulse seeds in Indore mandis. Higher arrivals and poor buying from millers pounded moong prices in Indore mandis on Friday by ₹700 a quintal. On Friday, moong (bold) tumbled to ₹5,800-6,100 (₹6,600-6,800), while moong (medium) declined to ₹4,500-4,700 a quintal (₹5,000-5,500). Moong dal (medium) was at ₹7,000-7,100, moong dal (bold) at ₹8,000-8,100, while moong mongar declined to ₹10,000.

Masur has been witnessing a downtrend for the past few days on slack buying support from millers with masur (bold) at ₹5,150-75, while masur (medium) declined to ₹4,700-5,000. Notwithstanding current fall in masur, its future appears bullish on lower crop output and higher imports, said a trader.

Masur dal (average) was ₹5,600-50, masur dal (medium) at ₹5,700-50, while masur dal (bold) ruled at ₹5,800-6,000.

Urad also traded low on slack demand with urad (bold) at ₹5,000-5,200, while urad (medium) ruled at ₹4,600-4,900. Urad dal (medium) was being quoted at ₹6,000-6,250, urad dal (bold) at ₹6,400-6,600, while urad mongar ruled at ₹6,800-7,200 a quintal.

### **Mixed trend in sugar**



Sugar prices declined by over ₹20 and ruled steady on the lower end on less than expected local offtake. Producers continued selling in local markets in absence of buying from neighbouring States as prices are ruling on par with Maharashtra diverting demand to nearby areas. *Naka* and mill tender rates were unchanged. According to traders, as Vashi market's traders are carrying enough stocks and supply from mills are ample, stockists kept away from building up more stocks. On export front also recovery in rupee in recent times has made exports uncompetitive.

Arrivals at Vashi market were 57-58 truck loads (of 100 bags each) and the local dispatches were 54-55 truck loads. On Thursday, 14-15 mills managed to sell hardly 38,000-40,000 bags at ₹2,930-3,000 (₹2,930-3,000) for S-grade and ₹3,030-3,150 (₹3,050-3,150) for M-grade.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade ₹3,092-3,196 (₹3,100-3,222) and M-grade was ₹3,202-3,382 (₹3,200-3,412). *Naka* delivery rates: S-grade ₹3,060-3,130 (₹3,060-3,130) and M-grade ₹3,170-3,270 (₹3,170-3,270).

### **Limited demand holds cotton steady**



Cotton prices remained unchanged as demand was limited. Raw cotton or *kapas* was also steady as ginning activity in Gujarat has come down. According to traders, cotton season is about to end and only domestic mills are buying. Export demand is almost nil. Cotton



price may remain at this level and there is no chance for big changes. Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton for best quality was traded at ₹42,000-500 for a candy of 356 kg, while B grade cotton stood at ₹40,000-41,000. Lower grade cotton was quoted at ₹34,000-35,000. About 30,000 bales (of 170 kg each) of the fibre arrived in Gujarat and 80,000 bales arrived in India. Similarly, *kapas* for best quality was ₹900-950 for a *maund* of 20 kg. Average *kapas* was traded at ₹950-1,030 and gin delivery stood at ₹3,035-1,060. Cotton seed marginally declined by ₹5-7 to ₹375-390.

### **Coconut oil edges down on high arrivals**



Coconut oil prices decreased a tad at Erode on the back of huge arrivals of coconut from Kerala. “The price of the coconut oil, which was sold at a high of ₹2,300 for 15 kg, decreased by ₹30. For such a heavy price some quantity of coconut oil was sold. The buyers are expecting a slide purchased very little quantity,” said RM Palanisamy, a oil trader on Friday.

He said that the price of copra has increased to ₹11,000 a quintal and the edible copra at ₹13,000. Because of the low stock of copra the price of the coconut oil has increased, he added.

On Friday, the copra farmers said that Kerala oil crushers have purchased about 1,500 tonnes of (roughly 15 lorry loads), as the South-West monsoon will start within a week. Now the Kerala coconuts are arriving in huge quantity to Erode. Farmers are engaged in converting the coconuts into copra and within a week 800 tonnes of copra was sold from Erode to Kerala oil crushers and some other coconut oil crushers of Tamil Nadu.



### **Pepper set to rally on tight supply, below-normal monsoon**

Limited availability and reports of a less-than-normal monsoon could soon take the domestic pepper market to new highs. Prices have already crossed the R700/kg level and, with supply being extremely short, it is expected to rally in days to come. India is the world's largest consumer of pepper and the second-largest producer after Vietnam.

The Spice Board data show that 1 kilogram of black pepper (MG 1) was valued at R732.50 per kg at the end of third week of May against R725 at the end of the second week. Prices at the end of third week of May, 2013 stood at R353.83 per kg.

“Supply of pepper is extremely short and any demand is leading to a spike in the spot price. It would not be surprising if the market crossed R900 per kg in a few months, or even R1000 per kg. The global market will be range-bound but the Indian market has decoupled,” Jojan Malayil of Kochi-based Bafna Enterprises said.

Pepper is a rain-sensitive crop and any small variation in monsoon rains impacts the yield. With reports that monsoon rains will be less than normal this season, farmers and traders are holding on to stocks in anticipation of gains.

After the onset of monsoon, spike initiation in the black pepper crop can be seen, along with the emergence of new leaves on lateral branches in a week. Once the spike initiation happens, there should not be any dry spell until maturity. Continuous and steady moisture supply is essential for the growth of berries.

The agro-meteorology department of Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) says in a report that physio-chemical changes occur in plants due to changes in the monsoon

pattern. The recently concluded International Pepper Community (IPC) annual conclave reports that global production in 2014 will be around 6,000 tonne lower compared to this year. According to IPC figures, production in 2013 was pegged at around 3,16,832 tonne. A paper presented at the World Spice Congress held at Kochi reports that India's pepper production for the 2013-14 season will be 34,000 tonne against 45,000 tonne reported by the International Pepper Community (IPC).

“Vietnam has exported close to 1 lakh tonne and pipelines are full. The crop from Indonesia is expected to come to the market by June. This supply may keep the global market range-bound, but Indian demand is huge and very robust,” Jojan said.

### **Sugar output likely to drop 3.7% this year**

Sugar output in India is expected to drop 3.7% this marketing year through September, although production would still be marginally higher than consumption, according to the Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA).

Output will likely hit 24.2 million tonnes in 2013-14 compared with 25.14 million tonnes a year before, ISMA said. Consumption is expected to go up by 5.3% to 24 million tonnes, it added.

However, the closing stocks of sugar in the current marketing year (or the opening stocks for the next year) could drop 19.4% to around 7.5 million tonnes, thanks to expected exports of up to 2 million tonnes of sugar in 2013-14 compared with a paltry 0.34 million tonnes a year before, ISMA said.

Although sugar exports have surged this year, a 31% cut in subsidy for raw sugar production for April and May from the R3,300 per tonne offered in February and March has slowed the pace of exports now. The government had in February announced a subsidy on raw sugar production to help mills cut a glut in refined sugar and improve cash flows. Since the country hardly consumes any raw sugar, the subsidy for production is effectively meant for exports. Millers complain the department of food has effected the cut by changing the formula for calculating the subsidy, going against the decision by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs. They say the subsidy quantum for April and

May should have been around R3,800 per tonne, factoring in the appreciation of the rupee, and not R2,277 per tonne, as decided by the food department.

Meanwhile, the country's sugar output between October 1 and May 15 dropped 3.2% from a year before to 23.90 million tonnes, partly due to diversion of cane to other consuming industries in states such as Uttar Pradesh. ISMA had said on Thursday that cane crushing had come to an end in the country, except for 20 sugar mills in Tamil Nadu.

Maharashtra, the largest producer, witnessed output of 7.70 million tonnes until May 15 this year, almost unchanged from a year before.

However, sugar output in Uttar Pradesh, the second-largest producer, hit 6.45 million tonnes, down almost 13.4% from a year before. Earlier this year, mills in Uttar Pradesh expressed their inability to start crushing after banks refused to lend them working capital loans citing a drastic mismatch between cane and sugar prices. This forced farmers to sell cane to competing industries initially, resulting

# The Telegraph

calcutta, india

## Seasonal fruit punch to beat the heat



The scorching sun seems to show no mercy, but a wide range of fruits is bringing respite to residents here in this heat.

Seasonal fruits have arrived in the city markets that not only satiate the taste buds, but also have great nutritional value.

Although the likes of watermelon and mangoes had already made their foray into the bazaar, some of the latest entrants are Indian palm fruits and litchi. With the Sabitri festival round the corner, the demand of litchi is pretty high since women woo the deity by offering the best summer fruits on the occasion. At present, litchi is priced at Rs 120 per kg and in a week the prices are expected to rise up to Rs 150 or more.

The price may burn a hole in the pocket of the customers, but the juicy fruit is a must for several health reasons.

Cuttack-based dermatologist Kishan Agarwal said: “Eating them raw is a wonderful solution for photo protection. The vitamin-rich fruit not only offers great flavour and taste, but also acts like sunscreen by letting the skin breathe freely and resist tan even under the blazing hot sun. Litchi juice could also be a great choice.” Litchi is often imported from Bihar in the state.

Watermelons with 95 per cent water content are yet another great remedy for hydrating the skin. The consumption of watermelon keeps the skin free from toxins and thus acne and pimple free. It is being sold at various kiosks in the twin cities. Another hit among the daily commuters is the bell fruit popularly known as jamroll that is comparatively cheaper at Rs 60 a kg.

The king of fruits, mango in different varieties is being offered in form of soothing beverages at various joints. Aam panna, frozen daiquiri, lassi, smoothie, tarts, et al are being loved by one and all. “Summer is synonymous with mangoes. We look forward to summers only to gorge on different types of mangoes,” said Asha Acharya, a

homemaker. The fruit sellers are also making a killing. “The seasonal fruits are always more in demand than the perennial ones,” said fruit seller Baidyanath Sahoo.

# DECCAN Chronicle

## Food prices soar due to high profit



The high vegetable and food prices in recent years may be due to high margins charged by the retailers. The difference between wholesale price (WSP) and retail prices for essential vegetables have gone up beyond 49 per cent in the year 2013-14 underscoring the widening gaps between the prices at which procurement is done from farmers and the price level for consumers, according to an Assocham paper.

Majority of Indian retailers are selling vegetables at prices which are significantly higher than the WSP, reveals Assocham’s latest study on “Vegetables Whole-sale and Retail Price Discrepancy”.

Normally, the difference between WSP and retail prices on an average stays around 30 per cent, said Assocham. “Due to difference in prices of wholesale and retail, the extra

amount which end consumers are paying for vegetables is utterly disproportionate,” said the industry body.

The study had considered nearly 33 market centers in India including Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, Nagpur, Nasik and Trivendrum. “In the recent past, inflation has been a major concern for the policy makers. Both level of prices ‘consumer price and wholesale price’ inflation has been very high especially in the case of consumer price inflation. It has been around ten percent except fourth quarter in 2013-14,” said Assocham, an industry body. Assocham urged the government to play a crucial role to protect the interest of producers.

## THE ECONOMIC TIMES

### **Vegetable price gaps between retail and wholesale 49%: Study**



NEW DELHI: Difference between wholesale and retail prices of essential vegetables, like onion and potato, went up beyond 49 per cent during 2013-14, a study said.

The difference underscores the widening gaps between the prices at which procurement is done from farmers and the price level for consumers, the Assocham study said.

Majority of Indian retailers, it said are selling vegetables at prices which are significantly higher than the wholesale price index ( WPI).

"Normally, the difference between wholesale price (WSP) and retail prices on an average stays around 30 per cent and it has been much more as seen in the findings of paper," the chamber said.

It further said that WSP benefited multiple times middlemen and traders, particularly for sale of essential commodities and worst hit in the process remained farmer and consumer as farmers margins squeezed badly with consumers paying unreasonably higher prices.

"Due to difference in both prices of wholesale and retail prices, the extra amount which end consumers are paying for vegetables is utterly disproportionate," it added.

The study, Assocham said considered 33 market centers in India including Abohar, Bhubaneshwar, Chandigarh, Chennai, Delhi, Guwahati, Jammu and Trivendrum.

Out of 33 centers, nearly 18 centers are charging more than all India average retail prices and wholesale prices, the study said.

The essential vegetables incorporated in the study include bitter melon, brinjal, cabbage, garlic, onion, peas and potato.

### **Invest in irrigation and technology, help farmer earn better**



Nearly two-thirds of India's population still depends on agriculture for its livelihood, yet only 14 per cent of the country's GDP comes from this sector. Obviously, agriculture is



being forced to support far more people than it can.

That is why over 9 million people left farming and the number of landless labourers increased by 36 per cent in the past decade

Yet, agriculture is essential to ensure food security for the country. Although food production has touched new highs in recent years, productivity needs to increase rapidly if anticipated future needs are to be met.

**The top priorities in agriculture are:**

Increase productivity (yields) of food grains, vegetables and other cash crops, which lag behind international benchmarks; for this, end dependence on rain by massively expanding irrigation network, provide better seeds and other inputs, ensure soil health and boost local varieties.

Strengthen agri-extension services to deliver new technologies and modern inputs to farmers. Modi has used some of this in Gujarat with good effect.

Develop agricultural markets with deep linkages with small producers, including transport infrastructure, as well as infrastructure for storage and warehousing, including cold chains. Ensure remunerative prices to farmers and competitive wages for agricultural labourers.

Implement thoroughgoing land reforms to unleash the potential of small landholders and the landless; 67 per cent of land is held by small, marginal and semimedium farmers with holdings of less than 4 hectares, there were 8.6 crore landless labourer households in India in 2011; this is the force that land reforms can tap into.

Wheat declines on increased supply; rice basmati up



NEW DELHI: Wheat prices declined by Rs 5 per quintal on the wholesale grains market today on increased supplies against reduced offtake by flour mills, traders said.

However, rice basmati on the back of fresh buying support, ended higher

Sugar mill gate prices down on ample supply



NEW DELHI: Sugar mills prices eased marginally by Rs 5 per quintal in the wholesale sugar market at national capital today following ample supplies from mills against low reduced offtake by stockist and bulk consumers.

Marketmen said apart from higher supplies from mills, reduced offtake by stockist and bulk consumers, mainly pulled down sweetner prices.

n millgate section, sugar Budhana, Thanabhavan, Khatauli, Bulandshar and Chandpur sheded Rs 5 each to Rs 3,180, Rs 3,170, Rs 3,260, Rs 3,140 and Rs 3,130 per quintal, respectively.

Prices of Kinnoni, Dhanora and Simbholi also faded by Rs 5 each to Rs 3,290, Rs 3,150 and Rs 3,270 per quintal.

However, sugar spot prices ruled flat on spradic buying support.

### **Cashew declines on subdued demand**

NEW DELHI: Cashew prices fell by Rs 5 per kg in the national capital today, largely owing to subdued demand from retailers and stockists.

Sufficient stocks position, following increased arrival from producing belts too weighed on cashew prices.

Cashew kernel (No 180, 210, 240 and 230) prices fell by Rs 5 each to settle at Rs 850-860, Rs 750-760, Rs 630-640 and Rs 520-560 per kg, respectively.

## **Rs 1,420 crore disbursed in last round of aid to farmers**

The state has released remaining financial aid dues for hailstorm-hit farmers worth Rs 1,420 crore. With this, the total disbursement has gone up to Rs 2,810 crore, which has covered 19.37 lakh farmers so far.

A total of 33 lakh farmers would receive the financial assistance in the state. The farmers lost their crops, domestic animals and their houses suffered damage during the hailstorms in February and March. As many as 29 districts in the state of 35 were badly affected.

The state disbursed the aid amount through its relief and rehabilitation department. The report of the department stated agricultural area of 20.57 lakh hectares was affected where more than 50% of the crop was lost completely. It means crops spread over 20.57 lakh hectares were completely damaged and no yield was reported.

The government has announced that financial assistance would be given for loss of crops on up to two hectares only. This means if a farmer lost crops over three hectares, he would get assistance only for crop loss crops over two hectares. A farmer would get Rs 10,000 per hectare for the loss of crops on non-irrigated area. The aid amount for irrigated crops was Rs 15,000 per hectare and Rs 25,000 for loss of orchards.

The state had released Rs 540 crore in March as the first round of aid. An amount of Rs 840 crore was released in the second round in April, but the aid came too late for some farmers. Close to 50 farmers committed suicide chiefly in Marathwada, which was the worst-hit region.

The total damage to crops of fruits such as pomegranates, grapes, mangoes and

vegetables such as tomatoes and brinjals and cereals and pulses such as jowar, wheat and horse gram was pegged at almost 120%. According to experts with the state agriculture department, such damages included 20% expenses farmers have to bear to clear damaged crops and prepare the soil again for the next crop. Of the 16 lakh-hectare affected land, around 2 lakh was under horticulture and the remaining 14 lakh was under vegetables and other crops.