

More food industries should come under organised sector

There exists a strong need for smaller units in the food processing industry to come under organised sector to achieve food security. Nearly 40 per cent of the industry is functioning outside the organised sector, according to K. Rathnam, Managing Director of Amul Dairy, the popular brand managed by the Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation.

Lecture

He was addressing National Nutrition Week celebrations and a special meeting of the Nutrition Association and Nutrition Society of India, Coimbatore Chapter, organised at the Avinashilingam University here on Thursday. In his lecture on 'synergy between nutrition and food industries towards global nutrition security', Mr. Rathnam said that the dependency on processed foods would increase in the next decade when aged persons are expected to comprise nearly 20 per cent of India and China's total population. The Indian food industry is worth around US\$135 billion now and is expected to touch \$ 200 billion by 2018. The value addition businesses alone were expected to grow by as much as 25 per cent by 2025, he added.

Returns

He also traced the development of Amul Dairy from being just a milk collection and distribution unit in 1946 to one of the largest food industry now, specialising in manufacture of value added products. It provided nearly 80 percent returns to farmers and also worked to uplift women farmers. In her presidential address, Sheela Ramachandran, Vice-Chancellor of the varsity, exhorted the industries to work with educational institutions, non-governmental organisations and

government agencies besides small and medium enterprises in nation-building.S. Kowsalya, Convener, Nutrition Society of India, N. Vasugi Raja, Dean, Faculty of Home Science, spoke.

Help at doorstep for kitchen garden scheme

Under the Urban Horticulture Development Scheme, where the State Government provides inputs, technical assistance and Rs. 1,325 in 50 per cent subsidy, the assistance will be available at doorstep, says a release.The Department of Horticulture will provide 10 varieties of vegetable seeds, light growing medium - compressed coco peat sealed in grow bags along with water-proof spread sheets, water soluble fertilizers, bio- fertilizers, bio-pesticides, fungicides, etc. at the doorstep. To deliver the same, the department has got four vehicles.The release says that interested residents in Singanallur, Ondipudur, Peelamedu, Podanur and Sular may dial 99655-62700 or 97864-86143 for help.Those in S.S. Kulam, Kalapatty, Saravanampatty, Gandhipuram and Ganapthy may dial 95784-52676 or 97875-55692. Residents of R.S. Puram, P.N. Palayam, Ramanathapuram, Vadavalli and Thondamuthur may dial 97919-98833 or 96598-52087 for assistance.Likewise, residents in Saibaba Colony, Periyanaickenpalayam, G.N. Mills and Thudiyalur may dial 95245-89749 or 94888-36480 for help.

Water released from Thirumoorthy Reservoir

Water was released from the Thirumoorthy Reservoir into the main canal for irrigation.According to sources, following instructions from the State Government, the officials at the Reservoir opened the shutters around 9 a.m. to let water into the canal.Nearly a lakh acre that come under the second turn of irrigation are expected to gain from the water release, sources said.District Collector, Tirupur, Govindaraj was present at the time of opening of the shutters.

To keep a tab on farmlands



With modern technology facilitating delivery of information at just a simple click, it is no surprise that people are increasingly adopting it to enjoy its benefits. The latest to join this bandwagon is the Department of Agriculture. Assistant Agriculture Officers (AAOs) in the district have been provided with ‘tablet’ computers to help them on their visits to farmlands. Speaking about the initiative, Joint Director of Agriculture Jaisingh Gnanadurai said that the ‘tablets’ would help in easy identification of diseases and pests in crops. “If the AAOs are unable to identify a crop disease or have to know about solutions for various pest attacks, they simply have to photograph the affected crop and upload the picture onto the website of the Department of Agriculture. This will be monitored by a team of experts who will identify the problem and prescribe measures to be taken to save the crop,” he explained. Apart from identifying issues with crops and livestock, the tablets will also enable the officials to check for availability of seeds in the 32 agricultural depots in the district. “A database of the agriculture website will have stock details of the types of seeds available in the depots. Farmers can approach the officials and ask them to check for the availability and the depot they should approach,” an official from the Agriculture Department said. The tablets have

already been distributed to 65 AAOs who will begin using them during their site visits after they get Internet connections towards end of this month. Five AAOs have been assigned for each of the 13 blocks in Madurai district to undertake field visits on a regular basis. “Apart from equipping them with technology, we have made it mandatory for all AAOs to go on field visits, once in 15 days, in villages under their jurisdiction to ensure that farmers are benefitted,” MrJaisinghGnanadurai stated.

Test poultry feed before use, farmers told

Poultry owners in the district were asked to test feed ingredients coming from other States for mycotoxin content before feeding them to poultries. A combined weather advisory bulletin from Agromet Field Unit of Veterinary College and Research Institute, Namakkal and Regional Meteorological Centre, India Meteorological Department, Chennai said that humidity will be in the range of 54 to 73 per cent in the next two days. It said that the post mortem observation in birds brought for the diagnostic purpose revealed death of birds due to Necrotic enteritis and upper respiratory tract infections. Hence farmers are asked to test feed ingredients for clostridium load and take appropriate measures. The release also said that rising temperature favoursspiralling whitefly infestation in tapioca crops and hence Triazophos at the rate of 1 ml per liter of water should be sprayed over the crop. With foot and mouth disease affecting livestock, farmers are asked to vaccinate the cattle in September.

Check dams turn out to be a boon for Perambalur farmers



Timely initiative: A check dam built across the Nandhiyar at Alathur block in Perambalur district brimming with rainwater. A total of 50 check dams constructed at different places in the district have come in handy for harvesting rainwater, and the recent summer showers have come as a boon to farmers. The water level in a number of wells in the vicinity of the check dams have also gone up following the construction of these dams by the Agricultural Engineering Department at an estimate of Rs.1.96 crore in the district. The largest beneficiary of the recent summer showers are the farmers in Alathur block where four check dams had been constructed across the Nandhiyar. An official study conducted by the department during the post-rain period revealed that storm water stored in channel running to a length of 1,300 metre has contributed to the recharging of water table in 50 wells. "Water level in eight wells located close to Nandhiyar had registered an increase of about eight feet each," an official source said. The check dams have saved the farmers from incurring additional expenditure for deepening existing wells or digging up additional borewells. One of the farmers, M.Selvam of Padalur, whose field was located about 200 feet away from the check dam across Nandhiyar, pointed out that though he had drilled additional borewells in the past, the sources had failed. But, because of the check dam, his irrigation well has shown considerable increase in water level. Farmers of the belt largely rely on well irrigation as there are no rivers in the area. R.Durairaj, another farmer of

Ootathur, who cultivates onion and groundnut, said that the thanks to the check dams, farming, for him, was not a gamble any more.

Level in Periyar dam inching towards 136-foot mark

Water level has been slowly inching towards 136-foot mark in MullaiPeriyar dam owing to good inflow into the dam. The level in the dam stood at 132.2 feet on Sunday even as the inflow slumped to 1,315 cusecs. But PWD officials restricted the discharge to 500 cusecs in order to raise the water level to 136 feet. With the level having crossed 130-foot mark, a five-member sub-committee, constituted by the Supreme Court-appointed High Power Supervisory Panel, has been visiting the dam frequently to assess the situation and submit a report to the panel. Despite the absence of two members representing Kerala owing to Onam festival, the three other members of the sub-committee, led by Central Water Commission Executive Engineer Umberji Harish Girish, inspected the dam on Saturday too. (The panel advised the sub-committee to inspect the dam frequently after the dam level crossed 130 feet.

NRCB to release new diseases-tolerant banana variety

The National Research Centre for Banana (NRCB) will release a new 'monthan' variety of banana. The cooking banana 'saba', which had its origin in the Philippines, is well suited for marginal lands. It is a high-yielding variety tolerant to diseases, particularly leaf spot disease and wilt, said M.M. Mustaffa, Director, NRCB. Addressing the newly-recruited Agriculture Research Science (ARS) scientists, banana growers, and other officials at a seminar-cum-interaction at the NRCB premises at Podhavur near here recently, Dr. Mustaffa said that the new variety, with duration of 12 to 13 months, required minimum rain and could survive prolonged dry spell with intermittent irrigation. Each plant could yield a bunch weighing between 26 and 38 kg with 13 to 16 hands. Each hand would have

12 to 20 fingers. He appealed to banana growers to apply bio-fertilizers for improving their productivity and for ensuring plant protection. He said that bio-fertilizers would strengthen soil fertility and enhance banana production. This was the 100th batch of ARS scientists who, as part of 21-day-long training, explored the opportunities and challenges faced by the farmers of central region. The training concluded with a rural seminar where they discussed their experience with scientists and agriculture officers. R. Selvarajan, principal scientist, called upon farmers to adopt nutrient management strategies to avoid pests and diseases in banana. M. Asokan, programme coordinator, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Sirugamani, stressed the importance of applying pesticide judiciously and encouraged farmers to go in for ADT-49, a disease-resistant paddy variety compared to the much sought-after varieties such as BPT-5204. Ravi, Subject Matter Specialist, KVK, explained the techniques to minimise pest attack using bio inputs. Paulraj, Assistant Director of Agriculture, Andhanallur, elaborated on State government's schemes. Venkat Kumar, principal scientist, National Academy of Agriculture Research Management, motivated farmers to set up farmer producer companies. Marimuthu, a progressive farmer from Thuraiyur, explained the importance of farmer producer companies for achieving success.

Prisoners undergo training in compost preparation



HARD WORK: Convicts lodged in the Central Jail getting trained in compost preparation in Tiruchi. **PHOTO:** R.M. RAJARATHINAM.

In the latest rehabilitation initiative for prisoners, a group of convicts lodged in the Central Jail here were trained in the manufacture of compost preparation using organic wastes and certain minerals. The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) provided the necessary expertise to the selected prisoners and sponsored some materials for the compost preparation. Around 40 convicts were chosen for the day-long training organised inside the sprawling Central Prison premises on Saturday. Vast extent of land in the prison campus is being used for raising different types of vegetables by the prison authorities engaging convicts. The method of preparation of compost using organic wastes in the prison was driven home to the prisoners by the IFFCO Chief Area Manager, Tiruchi D. Subramanian during the hands-on training programme. The IFFCO, a leading player in the country's fertiliser industry, sponsored some quantities of bio-fertiliser, gypsum and urea in the manufacture of the compost. The organic wastes collected from the prison campus were also used for its preparation to apply them during cultivation of various types of vegetables raised in the prison campus. The compost using organic waste would serve as enriched manure helping in higher yield, Mr. Subramanian said. The prisoners were also trained in digging compost pits. The compost preparation training would enable prisoners to engage in income generation activity once they were released from the prison, Mr. Subramanian said. Convicts in Tiruchi Jail are already engaged in a host of production activities including manufacture of file pads, raincoats, garments and mosquito nets besides bakery items.

Water release from Somasila reservoir soon

The district administration is planning to release water for crops under the Somasila reservoir ayacut in the next two weeks, with the reservoir getting sufficient inflows. A decision in this regard would be taken in the Irrigation Advisory Board meeting, to be held soon. According to irrigation officials, the water level at the Somasila reservoir has crossed the 16 tmcft level, with heavy

inflows continuing owing to considerable rain in the upper catchment areas and water being released from the Srisailem dam. The second crop season under the reservoir is coming to an end by the middle of September. The officials are preparing to release water for the second crop without further delay. Meanwhile, farmers are busy with agricultural activities, keeping the prospects of good water availability for the coming cropping season as well.

Delay in implementation of loan waiver keeps farmers on tenterhooks

The farming community in the district is gradually becoming restive following the delay in the implementation of the farm loan waiver scheme up to Rs. 1 lakh as announced by the government and the extension of new loans, in the district. To begin with, a number of farmers in Beerkurmandal treaded the path of agitation, protesting the delay in implementing the farm loan waiver. Venting ire at the government decision, they boycotted Gram Sabhas at Nasrullabad, Nemli, Ankol, Beerkur, Sangem and Damarancha villages and at Nasrullabad they detained sarpanch Arige Sailu, village revenue officer Usharani, Gram Panchayat secretary Sarika and *karobar* (GP employee) Ratankumar at the panchayat office when they came to conduct the sabha. Later, staging a protest, they criticised Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao, saying that he was trying to renege on his promise. They sought to remind the Chief Minister that before elections, he had promised to scrap loans up to one lakh for each farmer. At Nemli village too, farmers disrupted the Gram Sabha and detained the VRO at Panchayat Bhavan. Similarly, farmers stalled Gram Sabhas at several villages in Beerkur and Kotagirimandals falling in Banswada Assembly constituency, represented by Minister for Agriculture Pocharam Srinivas Reddy, and demanded scrapping of all loans up to Rs. 1 lakh. At some villages in Lingampetmandal, farmers expressed displeasure at the reported decision of applying the gold loan waiver only to certain banks. They warned that they would launch an agitation if the waiver was not made applicable to all

banks. At Kalkurki in Bodhanmandal, farmers boycotted the Gram Sabha and demanded unconditional implementation of the scheme.

Collector appeals

toryots

Collector Ronald Ross appealed to ryots not to get panicky as 4.36 lakh farmers had been identified for the loan waiver and it would be applied to all those who had taken loans and even repaid them. He also said that new loans would be given to farmers.

Water level at Mettur

The water level in the Mettur Dam stood at 103.64 feet on Sunday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 24,484 cusecs and the discharge, 70,007 cusecs.



Vegetable Devpt Scheme in Wayanad

Vegetable cultivation in Wayanad will get a big boost as the Agriculture Department is all set to launch 'Vegetable Development Scheme' in the district under Wayanad package. The scheme will be implemented at a cost of `329.25 lakh. The Principal Agriculture Officer, Wayanad, had reported that claims worth `11,20,180 of Kalpetta and Mananthavady blocks could not be encashed during the last three years since the bills were not honoured by the Treasuries concerned owing to treasury restrictions. Hence the Director of Agriculture had

submitted a proposal for settling seven claims connected with the construction of poly houses, open precision farming, capacity building programme and farmer's training under vegetable development component of Wayanad package pertaining to Kalpetta and Mananthavady blocks for Rs 11,20,180. The government had given administrative sanction to the scheme in the last week of August.

'Speed up Renovation of Pundy Botanical Garden'

Lieutenant Governor Ajay Kumar Singh on Monday directed the Territorial administration to complete the renovation and beautification work on the 188-year-old Botanical Garden before this financial year-end. Singh who visited the garden, which had attracted much attention through Ang Lee's movie 'Life of Pi', inspected the work taken up at a cost of `8.15 crore under a Centrally-sponsored scheme in December 2013. The garden was established during the French regime in May 1826 with "Jardin du Roi" (The King's Garden) and the other "Jardin Colonial et Acclimatation" (The Colonial Garden And Acclimatisation). Initially it was experimental in nature. After a decade in 1938, a botanist S G Perottet took over charge of the garden and enriched it with species of rare and interesting plants. But the garden was damaged during the cyclone Thane following which the Department of Tourism and Agriculture drew separate plans for restoration. Under the tourism project, garden facilities comprising kids play-area, a Japanese garden, viewing deck, rock garden, Ashlar bridge and grass-steeped seating were taken up. Besides pathway and jogging track facilities near the toy train, landscaping and parking facilities as well as an interpretation centre for visiting tourists and students on various floral species in the garden were undertaken. The Agriculture Department has started replanting the trees damaged in the cyclone, while adding new species as well. The Lieutenant governor emphasised on the need for strengthening the fossil park by adding fossils from all over the country. At present there are fossils only from Thiruvarkkara. He also expressed dismay over the poorly maintained founder's

memorial inside the park and directed the authorities to pay attention towards it. Along with officials of tourism and agriculture he went around and made special inquiries about amusement activities as well.

Fertilizer Crisis Casts Shadow on Kharif Prospects



Acute fertilizer shortage is threatening the timely sowing of paddy and other kharif crops in the district. Thousands of farmers in the region are facing problems in procuring requisite quantity of Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) and urea. “Around 85,000 farmers suffered a setback as the flood water damaged their paddy saplings recently. They managed to clean the sand-cast land and planted paddy saplings. But they are now worried about the crop as fertilizers are not available in sufficient quantity,” said Ramesh Jena, a farmer of Karilopatana village. Due to short supply, many farmers are forced to buy DAP and urea at exorbitant rates from the black market. “The State Government should supply sufficient stock of fertilizer. Otherwise, the paddy plants will wither away and we will suffer huge loss,” said Bhikari Mohanty, a farmer of Badabaranga village. He alleged that the dealers in connivance with agents are creating artificial shortage of fertilizer. Another farmer of Pattamundai Ratan Sahoo, who has five acres of farm land, said, “I had gone to purchase fertilizer from the market on Sunday but in vain. While our livelihood is at stake, the authorities remain indifferent to our demand for fertilizer.” While the Government fixed price of DAP is Rs 2300 per bag, it is sold at Rs 3000 in the black market, putting the poor and marginal farmers in trouble. Similarly, against the normal price of urea at Rs 580, the fertilizer is available at Rs 700 to 800. When contacted, Deputy Director of

Agriculture department Prafulla Chandra Mishra said, “Farmers of the district had planned to raise paddy on 1,52,000 hectares for which they need 24000 tonnes of fertilizer this kharif season. Till date, we have received about 9000 tonnes of fertilizer. We will provide the rest quantity soon.”Secretary of district KrusakSabhaGayadhar Dhal said if steps are not taken to solve the fertilizer crisis, the Government’s plans to push agriculture as a significant contributor to development will fall flat.

Demand-Supply Shortfall

- Due to short supply, farmers are forced to buy fertilizer at exorbitant rates
- There is a need of 24000 tonnes of fertilizer for this kharif season and till date, the district has received about 9000 tonnes
- While the Government fixed price of DAP is Rs 2300 per bag, it is sold at Rs 3000 in the black market
- Similarly, against the normal price of urea at Rs 580, the fertilizer is available at Rs 700 to 800



Create buffer zones to boost fishing: panel

The expert committee to review deep sea fishing policy has mooted creation of off-shore buffer zones to augment resources in the near shore waters as well as in off-shore areas. According to the panel, there is no scope of expansion of fishing efforts in this buffer zone as waters up to 200 metres depth are optimally exploited and some species are over exploited. This buffer zone could be utilised to diversify existing fishing fleet for targeting resources such as squids and reduce pressure on

near shore waters in the future, the expert committee constituted by the Centre for Comprehensive Review of Deep Sea Fishing Policy and Guidelines said. Keeping in view the development in exploitation of the resources in waters beyond 12 nautical miles, the committee headed by B Meenakumari, Deputy Director General (Fisheries) ICAR suggested the urgent need for enacting a comprehensive legislation for the regulation of Indian fishing fleets in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). However, the committee was of the view that waters beyond 500 m depth are not optimally exploited and there is considerable scope of expansion in this zone especially for tuna and tuna-like species. It is estimated that the tuna and tuna-like resources in the Indian EEZ are valued at ₹3,000 crore. Since there is no Indian fleet to harvest this resource, migratory stock of these species are being caught by fleets of the neighbouring nations such as Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Indonesia. This situation, according to the committee, necessitates strong regional cooperation and sustainable exploitation of the resources including conservation of species/stocks. Given the shortage of expertise to exploit waters beyond 500 m in the country, it is recommended for technology transfer through acquisition of foreign fishing vessels or joint ventures/leasing etc till the domestic capacity is fully developed.

Export buying supports cardamom

Cardamom prices ruled nearly steady last week at the auctions. Aggressive export buying kept the market stable even as there buying support was lacking from upcountry traders. Exporters bought an estimated 80 tonnes last week. Whatever exportable grade material arrived was picked up by them whereas, there was not much buying interest from north Indian states. The trade attributed this phenomenon to the presence of inferior variety material imported from Guatemala in to main upcountry consuming centres. Market sources told *Business Line* that Guatemala does not consume even a single kg of cardamom internally and

therefore, they have to dispose of the inferior grade which they sell off at throwaway prices.” They said that the availability of such material in the country has slowed down upcountry demand, of late. “Otherwise, at this time of the season normally good inquiries used to pour in,” they said. The second round of picking has commenced and arrivals also have picked up. However, due to a “hartal” on Tuesday and holiday on Sunday on account of Onam, total arrivals declined. The individual auction average slipped to between ₹740 and ₹800 a kg. Supply of 8mm bold is yet to pick up and its short supply kept the prices at ₹1,100. During the current season that began last month, arrivals are 1,503 tonnes against 2,245 tonnes as on September 6 during the last season. Sales were 1,465 tonnes against 2,241 tonnes. The weighted average price as on September 6 stood at around ₹815 (₹615). Prices of graded varieties (₹/kg): AGEB 915-935; AGB 780-790; AGS 650-670 and AGS -1: 620-640.

Bengal tea estates to reap benefits from alternative uses of land

West Bengal plans to allow alternative use of land – for tourism, horticulture, medicinal plant cultivation, and hydro-electricity generation – by tea estates. The State produces nearly 25 per cent of the country’s tea production. In a draft notification issued last month, the State Government proposed to amend the Schedule F of the West Bengal Estates Acquisition Rules 1954, and the West Bengal Estates Acquisition Act, 1953, to incorporate the provisions for alternate use of land leased out to organised tea sector. The draft notification is in line with the industry’s demand for allowing the sector to help maximise revenue opportunities, without changing the basic character of a tea estate, says Manojit Dasgupta, Secretary General, Indian Tea Association. “ITA may request the government to also incorporate a provision for allowing tea estates in pursuing dairy activities,” he said. Dasgupta says the proposed amendments ensured that the State would have adequate handle on the plantation sector to prevent a complete

diversion of land in non-tea activities. It ensured that the estates (running well over 1,000 acres) cannot use more than five acres of land for tourism. The civil construction has to be limited in 1.5 acres in the plains (where estates are large in size) and only one acre in the Darjeeling hills. There is no particular restriction on land-use for horticulture or medicinal plants. But the provisions make sure that tea has to be mainstay of business and, any such alternative use has to be approved by the district administration. The district government would allow such use only if the land is unsuitable for producing tea and the move is not detrimental to the interest of the labours.

Prices look up at Coonoor tea auctions

Average prices rose to ₹67.32 a kg from previous week's ₹63.71 at Sale No: 36 of the auctions of Coonoor Tea Trade Association last week. Teas worth ₹2.20 crore remained unsold, as there were no takers for 22 per cent of the offer. Crosshill Estate topped the CTC market at ₹191 a kg. Vigneshwar Estate and Homedale Estate got ₹189 each, Deepika Supreme and Shanthi Supreme got ₹187 each and NavilKal Estate ₹182. In all, 74 marks got ₹125 and more per kg. Among orthodox teas, Chamraj got ₹276, Kairbetta got ₹232, Kodanad ₹231 and Havukal ₹216. In all, 38 marks got ₹125 and more per kg. Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging ₹45-47 a kg for plain leaf grades and ₹100-150 for brighter liquoring sorts. They ranged ₹45-49 for plain dusts and ₹120-185 for brighter liquoring dusts. On the export front, Pakistan bought in a wide range ₹50-113 a kg and CIS ₹43-59. Plain CTC leaf grades suffered withdrawals even after shedding ₹2-3 a kg. Better medium CTC dusts eased ₹2-3 and plainers suffered withdrawal despite losing up to ₹3.

It's now turn of Mumbai-Surat to be wary of monsoon fury

The Mumbai-Surat belt could likely get a thrashing by the monsoon winds being pulled in by a well-marked low-pressure area over interior Odisha and Vidarbha. The US National Centres for Environmental Prediction sees a heavy rain wave initially moving towards western Maharashtra during today and tomorrow.

RAIN FURY

Its intensity will scale up further as it moves further into coast on the Konkan-Mumbai belt and then gets guided to the north along the coast. Thus it will move over Mumbai, Surat and into south Gujarat even as the 'low' steers itself into the north over west Madhya Pradesh. The US agency sees most of the rain fury concentrating over the coastal belt rather than west Madhya Pradesh, though the latter would also get its share of heavy rain. According to this forecast, Konkan-Goa and coastal Karnataka also would witness heavy to very heavy rainfall during the next couple of days. India Met Department said the monsoon was vigorous over south interior Karnataka and Chhattisgarh yesterday.

WIDE SWATHE

Rainfall was heavy over a wide swathe of area covering Odisha, east Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, coastal Karnataka, and north interior Karnataka. The erstwhile 'killer low' over northwest India has since weakened into a cyclonic circulation over Haryana and adjoining west Uttar Pradesh. But it is still able to drop rain over many parts of northwest India due to interaction with passing western disturbances in the region. The Met detected one such that was in the process of moving out of the region even as a successor waited its turn over the international border to the west and northwest.

NO CONSENSUS

Meanwhile, there was no consensus among weather models over the possibility of the Bay of Bengal producing another rain-bearing system. This is even as South China Sea/west Pacific bristled with the prospects of getting activated, which are being closely watched for signs of perpetrating to the west and into the Bay. The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts saw a 'low' in the South China Sea heading for a landfall over southwest China coast. This would be matched only by a powerful typhoon taking birth over the west Pacific and racing towards the south of Japan but sparing the island nation. At least two models saw the Bay of Bengal 'responding' to the churn in the South China Sea but not on a scale to match the previous two systems borne out of here.

Business Standard

Wary Coffee Board postpones revised output forecast



A cautious Coffee Board Chairman Jawaid Akhtar shied away from giving a revised estimate of bean production for the coming crop year (October 2014-September 2015), as the previous projection went awry. "I will not repeat the information about our forecast made a couple of months ago. Broadly, crop prospects are looking good," he told planters at the 121st annual conference of United Planters' Association of Southern India. For the post-blossom estimates of crop year 2014-15, the Board has projected production of 344,500

tonnes. "There are two negative factors. On account of a consecutive year of drought, we are witnessing a cumulative effect of (the) White Stem Borer (pest), which affected 3.5 million coffee plants during the first flight period. This was followed by continuous and heavy rains, which adversely affected plantations in patches in different parts of Karnataka," said Akhtar. In its post-blossom estimates for the crop year 2013-14, Akhtar projected 347,000 tonnes. He later revised it downwards by 10 per cent. Actual production for 2013-14, however, was 304,500 tonnes. Planters said they disagreed on output for the current year (2014-15). They estimate between 290,000 tonnes and 300,000 tonnes, since prevailing conditions are the same as last year. "Continuous rains from July to September have led to cherry droppings in several estates. There are possibilities of black rot disease in many places, which might adversely affect production this year as well," D Govindappa Jayaram, president, Karnataka Planters' Association, told Business Standard. Jayaram also said White Stem Borer had severely affected Arabica plantations and growers fear production might decline to 60,000 tonnes of this variety as against 105,500 tonnes projected by the Board. The latter will issue post-monsoon estimates next month, close to commencement of the harvest season. Akhtar said about 50 per cent of the area in Karnataka recorded high incidence (more than 25 plants per acre) of White Stem Borer. About 9.5 million plants are likely to be removed (about 3,200 hectares or three per cent of the Arabica area) in the state.

High-import farm products under lens

Faced with a burgeoning trade deficit due to rising import, the ministry of commerce has identified nine agricultural commodities whose annual import is more than \$100 million each for action in this regard. It has written to the respective sector councils and associations, seeking ways to reduce such imports. The nine commodities are vegetable oils, pulses, fresh fruits, cashew, sugar, alcoholic beverages, processed items, cocoa products and sesame seeds. One such

letter, addressed to the chairman of the Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (Apeda) and industry bodies such as the Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) and Indian Oilseeds Produce and Export Promotion Council, reads: "There is a directive from the Prime Minister's Office on institutionalising import appraisal and reducing import dependence. Department of commerce is required to prepare a policy paper containing strategy, goal, road map and outcome for reducing (such) unwarranted dependence. It has been decided that import items of a value more than \$100 mn may be analysed in the first instance."Edible oil leads the agri commodities' import basket with a 60 per cent share. Pulses (15 per cent), fresh fruits (10 per cent), cashew (six per cent) and sugar (three per cent) also contribute.India's annual consumption of edible oil is estimated at 19.5 mntonnes, of which around 60 per cent is met through import, largely from Indonesia and Malaysia. The dependence on imported pulses is 18 per cent of the total 20 mt of annual consumption. The import bill for edible oil was \$7,250 mn in 2013-14 (\$9,851 mn in 2012-13). Pulses worth \$1,828 mn was imported in 2013-14, compared with \$2,450 mn the previous year."To check import of vegetable oils, we should increase domestic production of oilseeds. At 1,000-1,100 kg per hectare (ha), oilseeds production is half of the global average. Since India's strength lies in soybean and cotton seed, their production should be increased at least by 50 per cent in the next five years," said Vijay Data, president of SEA.It also recommends introduction of genetically modified oilseeds for cultivation.India is also a major importer of fresh fruits and juices to the tune of \$1,273 mn (in 2013-14, versus \$1,138 mn the previous year)."The only way to contain import is to increase domestic production. Apart from focus on increasing productivity, we need to concentrate on reducing post-harvest loss and to increase cold storage capacity. Attempts made in the last two Plan periods have resulted in an increase in pulses production by three mt to 17 mt (yearly) now. That efforts need to be continued to make India self reliant in pulses in the next five-six years," said SantoshSarangi, chairman of Apeda.For this, we needs to invest immensely

on research and development. According to Bimal Kothari, vice-president of India Pulses and Grains Association, our average yeild of pulses is one of the lowest in the world.AbinashVerma, director-general of India Sugar Mills Association, wants import duties raised to stop a supply glut.

Sugar down 0.6% on ample supply



Sugar prices fell 0.62% to Rs 3,025 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators trimmed positions amidst higher supplies in the spot market. At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, sugar for delivery in October eased by Rs 19, or 0.62%, to Rs 3,025 per quintal with an open interest of 3,970 lots. Likewise, the sweetener for delivery in September traded lower by Rs 17, or 0.56%, to Rs 2,992 per quintal in 8,160 lots. Market analysts said adequate stocks following higher supplies from millers mainly kept pressure on sugar prices at futures trade but festive season demand capped the fall.

Farmer producer companies help pool market produce, resources

A new corporate India is in the making as close to 1,000 companies owned by young farmers take shape and engage in businesses such as exports and direct marketing with revenue of a few crore rupees.

These farmer producer organisations (FPOs) have set up a state-level federation in Maharashtra last week, with support from the Small Farmers Agri-business Consortium (SFAC). "We now have the critical mass of FPOs to aggregate them at higher levels as state FPOs. The core competence of individual FPOs is production and not marketing of their produce or bargaining to get lower interest rate from banks," SFAC's Pravesh Sharma said.