

THE HINDU

AIR-NABARD tie-up

The All India Radio, Chennai, has tied up with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) to broadcast an awareness programme on financial literacy.

The half-hour slot between 7.30 p.m. and 8 p.m. every Wednesday, named *Pannaiyum Pasumaiyum*, is part of an initiative to celebrate the International Year of Family Farming, according to R. Rajagopal, the programme executive. — Special Correspondent

Honour for ICRISAT Director General

In recognition of his relentless efforts to improve the livelihoods of poor smallholder farmers in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, Dr. William Dar, Director General of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), was conferred the prestigious Agriculture Leadership Award 2014 at the Seventh Agriculture Leadership Summit, held in New Delhi recently.

Under the chairmanship of Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, the national organising committee of the Agriculture Leadership Awards 2014 conferred the honour on Dr Dar, according to a release here by ICRISAT.

“The survival of one billion people will depend upon us finding answers to hunger, poverty and malnutrition. I humbly dedicate this Life Time Achievement Award to the smallholder farmers of Asia and sub-Saharan Africa,” Dr. Dar said after receiving the award.

Dr. Dar now joins an illustrious list of past recipients of the award who include - Dr. Verghese Kurien, the Father of India's White Revolution, Dr. R.S. Paroda, former Director General of the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR), Dr. R.B. Singh, Chancellor of the Central Agriculture University, Dr. Prem Lal Gautam, Chairperson, Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority, and Dr. Amrita Patel, Chair, National Dairy Development Board.

Corporation to clear loans of farmers

It will repay banks the existing loans of farmers and ensure that the credit line remains open for them.

In a bid to facilitate fresh loans and provide debt relief up to Rs.1.5 lakh to each farmer, the State government has decided to set up Farmers' Empowerment Corporation by providing an initial capital of Rs.7,000 crore.

After a meeting of top level executives of various banks with Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Telugu Desam MP, Y. Satyanarayana Chowdhary, Principal Secretary (Finance) P.V. Ramesh and vice-chairman, State Planning Board, Kutumba Rao told reporters that the State Cabinet at its meeting on October 1 would approve the establishment of the corporation, which would be a "one-stop shop" for all welfare and empowerment activities of farmers.

They said the proposed corporation would repay banks the existing loans of farmers and ensure that the credit line remains open for them. However, the extent to which cash would be paid and certificates (such as bonds) with maturity value to be issued for covering the rest of the amount would be decided at the State-Level Bankers Committee meeting on Tuesday. The certificates with an annual 10 per cent interest would be bought by the corporation after January 15, 2016 if the farmers wanted to sell them.

Observing that it was not a waiver and the whole commitment of the government was aimed at providing debt relief to farmers, they said the initiative would cover 96 per cent of the farmers in the State. Other agriculture-related corporations such as seed development corporation, agro industries and oilseeds federation would also be merged with the new entity after their division was complete as per the A.P. Reorganisation Act.

AP calls it agriculture debt redemption

The Andhra Pradesh Government hereafter will call the loan waiver scheme Agriculture Debt Redemption as the former gives a wrong connotation as if banks are writing off the crop loans.

The Resource Mobilisation committee which held a meeting with CEOs of Banks here on Monday put forward a mutually benefiting proposition.

While government would assume the responsibility for clearing the crop loans of farmers of up to Rs.1.5 lakh per family, it told the banks that it was only asking for restructure, rescheduling to clear the outstanding crop loans in an incremental way over a period of four to five years. Otherwise the Non-performing assets of banks too would rise steeply.

The second proposition was for building partnership with banks in executing the development challenges of Andhra Pradesh. The huge requirement of funds for infrastructure projects with private sector participation would have to come from banks, the committee members said.

But, first government would address its pressing priorities of clearing agriculture credit of farmers. “This is a responsible act of government to help farmers affected by natural calamities. The debt relief will help them invest on cultivation on crops,” sources said.

The amount to be released by the government to the tune of Rs.5,000 crore to Rs.6,000 crore by September 30 would be deposited in the corporation being floated as the Special Purpose Vehicle. The SPV could be registered immediately on Tuesday with three directors -- Agriculture Commissioners, Principal Secretary, Agriculture and Secretary, Finance Department, sources said. The amount would be deposited in the list of crop loan borrowers forwarded by the banks to enable the farmers to seek fresh loans.

1, 500 ha of jowar to be produced for Anna Bhagya scheme

Stating that the government has set a target of producing jowar in 1,500 hectares in Bijapur district to distribute under the Anna Bhagya scheme, Joint Director of Agriculture Department Manjunath has said that in order to meet the target, the department was supplying adequate seeds, micro-nutrients and fertilizers to the farmers.

He provided this information at the Karnataka Development Programme (KDP) meeting held here recently.

ZP Chief Executive Officer, K.B. Shivakumar directed agriculture department officials to keep an adequate stock of Urea ready for distributing among the farmers for the rabi season.

Saying that he received reports of some agencies selling Urea to neighbouring States in the black market, he directed the officials keep a vigil on the stock and supply of the Urea in the district. Adding to the matter, ZP president, Umesh Kolkur said that some of the

agencies were trying to create an artificial scarcity of the Urea to increase the cost in the market. “Be alert and ensure that no such illegal activity has taken place in the district,” he said.

Assuring the meeting of taking all steps to prevent illegality, Mr. Manjunath informed that Bijapur district had been declared as first in the State in managing Urea.

More visitors at Krishi Mela



Farmers inspecting a variety of sugarcane at the Krishi Mela in Dharwad on Monday.—Photo: By special arrangement

While the felicitation of farmers for their best farming practices at the taluk and district levels continued on the third day of the Krishi Mela organised by the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, here on Monday, the inflow of visitors to the event continued to increase too.

The day also saw release of books on farm-related issues brought out by UAS, Dharwad, including Kaleyo Beleyo Aayke Nimmadu, Soya Avare Tukku Nirodaka Tali -DSb 21, Jolada Sudharitha Besaya Kramagalu and Krishi Arannya –Bharavaseya Bhoobalake Paddathi.

Addressing the farmers, Sri Basavaraj Devaru of Revanasiddheshwar Math, Mansur, called on them to focus on the soil health and also seek information on best farming practices from other farmers and farm scientists.

M.B. Chetty, Director of Extension, UAS, and chairman, Krishi Mela, said that as more than 90 per cent of the graduates showed interest in joining government or private sectors, the university had started a two-year diploma course in agriculture to attract youths towards agriculture.

A special training programme for youths on climbing the coconut tree and harvesting and cleaning the hood using the equipment has become a special attraction at the mela. It has been organised by the Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Saidapur Farm, Dharwad and Coconut Development Board. The session 'Farmers to Farmers' on integrated farming systems and agriculture allied activities conducted in the afternoon saw a good response and several farmers shared their best farming methods.

According to an UAS release, around 3.65 lakh people visited the mela on the third day. The mela will conclude on Tuesday evening.

Meet to discuss Aralam farm proposals

Projects valued at Rs.17.42 crore will be discussed

A high-level meeting to discuss proposals, worth Rs.17.42 crore, for the development of the Aralam farm here will be held at the farm on October 6.

An official press release issued here on Monday said State-level heads of departments would attend the meeting.

This was decided at a meeting in Thiruvananthapuram in the presence of Agriculture Minister K.P. Mohanan and Minister for Welfare of Scheduled Tribes P.K. Jayalakshmi.

Projects involved

The project proposals include establishment of a Neera plant (Rs.1 crore), a dairy farm (Rs.5 crore), farm nursery development (Rs.1.05 crore), model goat farm (Rs.2.13 crore), model poultry farm (Rs.6.09 crore), cashew processing unit (Rs.35 lakh), development of a polyhouse for cultivating vegetables and saplings (Rs. 18.75 lakh), coconut processing unit (Rs.75 lakh), and medicinal herbs cultivation (Rs.85 lakh).

The Cabinet meeting has already approved the project proposals submitted by District Collector P. Bala Kiran.

On November 10

A final decision on the project implementation would be taken at a meeting at the farm on November 10.

Mr. Mohanan and Ms. Jayalakshmi as well as Minister for Welfare of Scheduled Castes A.P. Anil Kumar would attend the meeting, the release said

Sowing complete in 98 per cent of targeted 1.8 lakh ha in Shimoga

Paddy and maize are the major crops of the district

FACT FILE
District records 1,955 mm rainfall till Sept. third week against the average of 1,818 mm for the period
Monsoon became active only after the third week of July
Sowing of sugarcane on 4,000 ha in the Tunga, Bhadra command areas to commence in 10 days
At present, farmers are using urea for the crops
Paddy in a few pockets of Shimoga, Bhadravati, Shikaripur and Sorab taluks infected by leaf roller and blast diseases

The sowing has been completed in 98 per cent of the total cultivable land in Shimoga district owing to impressive rainfall during the monsoon.

By the third week of September this year, the district had received 1,955 mm rainfall against the average rainfall of 1,818 mm.

In the initial phase of the monsoon, the district had received scanty rainfall. However, the monsoon became active from the third week of July.

Deputy Director of the Department of Agriculture K. Madhusudan told *The Hindu* that the target for sowing in the district had been set at 1.8 lakh hectares of land this year. Of this, sowing had been completed in 1.76 lakh hectares of land. Sugarcane has been

cultivated in the remaining 4,000 hectares of land in the command areas of Thunga and Bhadra reservoirs. Sowing of sugarcane is likely to commence in about 10 days' time, he said.

At the present stage, farmers use urea fertiliser for paddy and maize crops. Adequate stock of the fertilizer had been maintained in the district. The district had a stock of 16,680 metric tonnes of fertilizer.

Fertilizer stock

The department had taken the initiative to distribute fertilizer among farmers through the primary agricultural cooperative societies and Raitha Samparka Kendras. In addition, farmers could also purchase fertilizer from private dealers, the officer said. Agricultural crops in 18,405 hectares of land, including paddy cultivated in 15,188 ha and maize in 3,507 ha, had been damaged owing to rain.

Survey to assess the loss had been completed and the compensation would be paid to farmers shortly, Mr. Madhusudan said.

The paddy crop had been infected by leaf roller and blast diseases in a few pockets of Shimoga, Bhadravati, Shikaripur and Sorab taluks. Officials from the department had visited the affected areas and suggested to the farmers to use quinalphos, monocrotophos and chlorpyrifos pesticides for leaf roller disease and carbondizim pesticide for blast disease, he said.

Hemavati waters to be released soon to tail-end areas



N. Cheluvarya Swamy, MLA, along with Managing Director of the Cauvery Neeravari Nigam Ltd. K. Jaiprakash, inspecting a lake in Nagamangala taluk of Mandya district on Monday.

K. Jaiprakash, Managing Director of the Cauvery Neeravari Nigam Ltd. (CNNL), has said that the Hemavati water will soon be supplied to tail-end areas in Nagamangala taluk of the district.

Mr. Jaiprakash, along with Nagamangala MLA N. Cheluvarya Swamy and officials of the Irrigation Department, visited Devalapura, Chikkayagati, Bindenahalli, Bheemanahalli, Hiduvakere and Palagrahara in Nagamangala taluk and inspected the lakes/agricultural fields on Monday.

“We have instructed the CNNL personnel to supply 220 cusecs of water to fill the lakes and also cater to the needs of agricultural fields in the tail-end areas of the taluk,” he told presspersons at Nagamangala. Mr. Swamy said that farmers in tail-end areas of Nagamangala were losing crops owing to lack of water.

Additional Superintendent of Police M. Puttamadaiah, Assistant Commissioner H.L. Nagaraj and others were present.



Reader's Mail – Dindigul

REHABILITATE MARKET

IN SIVAKASI

The slaughter houses and fish market constructed by Sivakasi Municipality are kept idle for the past several years. With heavy growth of vegetation around, the campus looks like a dense forest. I request the municipal authorities to use the fish market as a daily vegetable market for the benefit of residents of south Sivakasi.

S.N.M.T. Nagarajan,

Sivakasi

ERADICATE WILD GROWTH OF JULIFLORA

Prosopis juliflora, commonly known as 'seemai karuvelam,' is widely seen in Ramanathapuram district. It was introduced in the 1960s to meet fuel wood requirements and to restore degraded lands.

Nearly 52,000 hectares of land in this district is occupied by *Juliflora* trees. I

It is a fast growing and well-adapted exotic species versatile for afforestation. Now it has become an aggressive weed in several parts of the district and poses a serious threat to native biodiversity.

It adversely affects growth and production of crops.

The water table is found to decrease in those areas where these trees grow.

The thorny stems and branches often cause injury to humans and animals and hinder agricultural operations. The smoke produced while burning parts of this tree pollutes the environment. Production of charcoal from juliflora tree is an important livelihood for people in rural areas.

However, people involved in this work face serious health hazards. The district administration should take steps to eradicate *Prosopis juliflora* and make way for improving agricultural opportunities.

C. Sudev,

Kilakarai

APPOINT MONITORING COMMITTEE

Media reports say essential commodities such as milk, edible oil, beverage and water are not as good in quality as generally expected by the public. It needs monitoring by government to improve quality of these items and prevent adulteration. We can prevent spread of water-borne diseases only by maintaining quality of drinking water. The State government must act early to appoint a monitoring committee from taluk-level to eliminate adulteration in liquid commodities. The Collector must prosecute those involved in adulteration on the recommendation of the surveillance committee. An amendment to the relevant rules must be made to levy penalty and convict those who violate quality norms.

K. Somasundaram,

Devakottai

Karimnagar dairy to tap solar power

Following the prevailing acute power shortage in the rural areas, the Karimnagar Milk Producer Company Limited, albeit Karimnagar dairy, has decided to tap solar power in a phased manner by installing the necessary solar panels at all the milk societies, bulk milk cooling units and also at the dairy.

Disclosing this to newsmen here on Monday, Karimnagar dairy chairman Ch. Rajeshwara Rao said that they are taking measures to ensure that solar power is provided to the milk societies in the rural areas to ensure that there is power for lights and operation of a computer. Initially, we will install solar power systems in some villages and later extend them to all societies and provide subsidy, he added.

Medical insurance

Giving details about the general body meeting which was held on Saturday, he said that the meeting had decided to provide Mediclaim medical insurance to milk producers and their family members to provide medical treatment up to Rs 1 lakh by providing at least 50 per cent of the premium. He also said that the dairy had earned profit of Rs. 51.87 lakh when compared to last year profit of Rs 33 lakh.

Explaining about the expansion of their area of operation, he said that they are planning to open bulk cooling units (BCU) in Adilabad, Nizamabad, Medak and Warangal district to increase milk procurement and simultaneously increase sale of milk and milk products. He also said that they had decided to increase the share capital of the Karimnagar dairy from the existing Rs. 5 crore to Rs. 15 crore.

He said that they have also decided to sell vermin compost in packets to farmers and others at Karimnagar dairy. Karimnagar Dairy Managing Director V. Hanumantha Reddy was also present.

Artificial scarcity of urea created in TS

In the absence of proper supervision by officials, traders are hoarding stocks to make a fast buck'. A week ago, similar scenes were witnessed at Kalwakurthy, Talakondapalli and Midzil of Mahabubnagar district where the farmers took to streets protesting against hoarding of stocks.

Traders' greed and lack of proper supervision by the officials concerned is making the farmers scamp for urea at some places in Telangana, even as the kharif season is coming to an end and the rabi cultivation is yet to gain momentum.

Though the fertilizer stocks in most of the districts are sufficient to meet the demand, there is some shortage in districts such as Nalgonda. According to reports, the traders' greed to make fast buck was creating artificial scarcity of urea even in districts where it is available in required quantities.

A large number of farmers descended on old market areas in Miryalguda of Nalgonda district to purchase urea, but most of them had to return disappointed as the stock was limited. At one point of time, the police found it difficult to control the large number of farmers who arrived at the market. Officials stated that the district has received about 75,000 tonnes of urea so far against the requirement of 95,000 tonnes.

A week ago, similar scenes were witnessed at Kalwakurthy, Talakondapalli and Midzil of Mahabubnagar district where the farmers took to streets protesting against hoarding of stocks.

Artificial scarcity of urea has been forcing farmers to protest in streets in Warangal, though supplies were more than the required quantity. District Collector G. Kishan said 1,47,904 tonnes of urea was received in the district in addition to previous stock of 20,790 tonnes.

In practical terms, the district has 21 lakh bags of urea against the requirement of y 13.5 lakh bags.

However, by creating artificial scarcity in the absence of proper supervision the traders are selling a bag of urea at Rs. 360 against the actual price of Rs. 285. There has been no shortage of urea in Karimnagar and Nizamabad districts. Against the normal requirement of 1.25 lakh tonnes in Nizamabad for kharif, only 90,000 tonnes were received this year but about 11,000 tonnes are still lying unsold due to erratic monsoon. Sales are very poor in Karimnagar too where 6,292 tonnes of urea are available.

Engagements

THANJAVUR

Tamil University and Tamil Nadu Agricultural University: Environment and Herbal Plant Science Department, planting of saplings, Collector N. Subbaiyan inaugurates, Vice-Chancellor M. Thirumalai presides, Women's Hostel complex, 11 a.m.

Department of Agriculture: Traditional food festival, Darez Ahamed, Collector, inaugurates, Cauvery Mahal Thirumana Mandapam, 10 a.m.

COIMBATORE

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University: Meeting, Centre of Advanced Faculty Training in Agronomy, 12 noon

“Market intelligence crucial for farmers”



T.N. Balamohan, Dean, Horticulture College and Research Institute, Periyakulam, speaking at a seminar in Madurai.— Photo: R. Ashok

Market intelligence is crucial for farmers to sustain in agriculture, said T.N. Balamurugan, Dean of Horticulture College and Research Institute, Periyakulam.

He was speaking at a district-level seminar on “Production and Value Addition of Horticulture Crops” attended by farmers at Tamil Nadu Agriculture College and Research Institute here recently. “Agriculture alone will not take farmers to the next level. Business-oriented agriculture should be promoted, without which making profit is not possible,” Dr. Balamurugan said.

According to him, farmers and traders should work together to cultivate products required in the market. Most of the farmers were unaware of the market demands and the needs of the consumers, he noted. “Farmers should form associations and fix prices for their produces. Educating consumers and traders on quality addition is as important as educating farmers,” Dr. Balamurugan added.

C. Chinnusamy, Dean of Agriculture College and Research Institute, said despite lack of adequate rain in the past three years, India was able to retain a good position globally in export of vegetables, fruits

and flowers because of advancement in technology and horticulture. He urged the farmers to make good use of technology in farming and determine fixed prices for their products in the market.

The programme was organised by National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation, Coimbatore, and Department of Horticulture, Madurai, under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture.

C. Moorthy, Deputy Director of Agriculture and Business Marketing, said, "Farmers cultivating Madurai Malli and pigeon peas are being formed into several groups containing 20 members, for whom loan and other assistance will be provided."

Suresh Dagade, Deputy Director of National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation, Coimbatore, said the institution had identified the horticultural needs of farmers and tried to bring out solutions.

Tribal hamlet to market organic ragi

Group cultivation brings cheer to tribespeople of Thayannankudy



A traditional link to livelihood: The ragi field on 17 hectares of land at Thayannankudy will be ready for harvest by October.

: Ragi, locally known as 'keppa,' has a traditional link with the food habits of tribespeople, especially the Muthuvans.

When its cultivation was taken up under the livelihood programme of the tribespeople of Thayannankudy in the remote forest settlement of the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary, it turned out to be a huge group activity.

The ragi field on 17 hectares of land will be ready for harvest by October. It's for the first time that ragi cultivation has been undertaken by all the 38 families of the settlement, on the banks of the Chinnar river.

Experiment

The experimental cultivation of paddy on the same field last season prompted the forest authorities to support the group cultivation of 'keppa.' A sum of Rs.50,000 was given to the Eco-Development Committee (EDC) for starting the cultivation, said a senior official of the Anaimudi Forest Development Agency (AFDA).

Bio-fencing with citrus cultivation and solar fencing have been provided to protect the crop from wild animals.

Thayannankudy will soon market an organic ragi brand through the eco-shops of Chinnar, Marayur, Alampatty, and Rajamala, said a Forest Department official.

The supply of ragi will be the surplus after internal consumption. Chinnar wildlife warden G. Prasad said there were 11 forest settlements in the sanctuary and each of them had separate EDC implementing livelihood programmes, especially through group farming activities.

However, as for the largest area of keppa cultivation, Thayannankudy makes a difference, he said.

A member of the Thayannankudy EDC said though farmers had cultivated ragi on the mountain slopes individually, it was now an entire paddy field turned to ragi cultivation.

The tribespeople have their own cuisine of ragi such as 'uppumavu,' which was once their staple food. A senior tribal member said they had deviated from the cultivation of keppa due to many reasons. The change in the food habit had made them more disease-prone and ill healthy. It is a return to their own food habit, he said.

Neera company, CFTRI sign pact

Palakkad Coconut Producer Company Limited (PCPCL), one of the 12 farmer producer companies formed under the aegis of Coconut Development Board, has entered into an MoU with Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI), Mysore, for research and development in neera derivatives, processing, and packaging.

The agreement was signed by CFTRI secretary Mallika Kumar and PCPCL chairman P. Vinod Kumar.

Technological tie-up

The agreement for technological collaboration will enable the PCPCL to expand its commercial use of neera, sourcing the produce from 12 federations to take the daily sales volume to Rs.1 crore a day. In a statement, the Coconut Development Board said that the PCPCL had 26,000 coconut farmers under it.

Economic security

CFTRI Director Ramraj Shekhar was cited in the press release as saying that neera was a major technological and economic innovation providing economic security to coconut farmers and neera technicians.

The agreement between the CFTRI and the PCPCL is expected to be “of futuristic nature” and the terms and conditions are that the PCPCL will be paying a fee of 1 per cent of its sales turnover to the Mysore-based research institute.

Long-term partnership

In turn, the CFTRI will extend a long-term partnership in developing, standardising and commercialising technology for processing and packaging neera and its derivatives, the press release added.

On the occasion of the signing of the MoU, CFTRI had put on display five major neera products like neera concentrate, neera honey as well as bottled neera.

Residents to create rooftop gardens across city



Jaswant Singh has grown 55 varieties of herbs, apart from other plants and trees, on his rooftop garden in Mogappair. He received an award from the Chennai Corporation for the best garden at home —Photo: K. Pichumani

Jaswant Singh (50) has managed to cultivate 1,000 species of fruits, flowers and medicinal herbs at home.

Months after he received an award from the Chennai Corporation, for the best garden at home, he is all set to lend his green fingers to the civic body.

Mr. Singh will lead a team of residents tasked with raising a rooftop garden on Ripon Buildings and other structures of the civic body.

The rooftop gardens will have fruit-bearing trees such as those of papaya, jackfruit, orange, apple, blackberry, lemon, dates, mango and sapota.

The gardens will be commissioned after clearance from the heritage conservation committee (HCC). The key, officials say, is these gardens will be designed without affecting the structural stability of the heritage building.

The initiative is aimed at demonstrating that any building can have rooftop gardens by adoption of suitable technology.

Mr. Singh's garden on Spartan Avenue in Mogappair has 55 varieties of herbs, including aloe vera, oregano, betel leaf, basil, *karisalankani*, black pepper, *thoothuvalai*, *perandai*, *tippili*, *vallarai*, *aswagantha*, *thuthi*, and *sirukurinjan*.

Officials of the civic body will study the techniques adopted by residents to grow banyan, *buddha* tree, *arsan* tree, *white madar*, *kadamba*, *vanni*, *rudrasha*, *vilvam*, sandalwood and coconut on rooftops.

The gardens on the premises of Ripon Buildings will also exhibit the best practices in gardening at various homes if HCC clears the proposal.

“Our children learn the art of balancing rapid urbanisation with conservation of nature through rooftop gardens at home. Urbanisation should not be a curse on the environment,” said Mr. Singh.

Ripon Buildings and other civic body structures will have fruit-bearing trees and herbs on their rooftops

Mettur level

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 91.74 feet on Monday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 27,873 cusecs and the discharge, 18,602 cusecs. Mettur and surrounding areas received 9.2 mm rainfall in the last 24 hours that ended at 8 a.m. on Monday.

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Tuesday, Sep 30

Max Min

Partly Cloudy 32° | 26°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:58

Humidity: 84 Sunset: 05:59

Wind: normal Barometer: 1012

Tomorrow's Forecast



Wednesday, Oct 1

Max Min

Cloudy 34° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday
Oct 2



34° | 26°
Cloudy

Friday
Oct 3



35° | 27°
Partly Cloudy

Saturday
Oct 4



36° | 27°
Sunny

Sunday
Oct 5



37° | 27°
Sunny

Monday
Oct 6



37° | 27°
Sunny

DECCAN Chronicle

Teak flowers replace Gunugu flowers due to drought conditions



Teak flowers are not used in preparation of Bathukamma idols but with women preferring it, the demand for teak flowers has risen this season.

Utnoor(Adilabad): The existing drought conditions created shortage of 'gunugu' (*Celosia argentea*) flowers which are widely used in preparing Bathukamma idols. So women chose to replace those flowers with that of teak (*Tectonia grandis*).

The 'gunugu' flowers are mostly found at the edges of agriculture fields but this time, there are not many of the plants due to the dry conditions.

So women switched to using teak flowers which add to the beauty of the flower arrangement. Generally, teak flowers are not used in preparation of Bathukamma idols but with women preferring it, the demand for teak flowers has risen this season.

Mekala Sujatha of Utnoor said she, along with her sisters, collected teak flowers due to shortage of 'gunugu' and that teak flowers had enhanced the beauty of her Bathukamma idol. "Gungu flowers are really an essential part of Bathukamma idol but due to the shortage of the flowers, we were forced to go for teak flowers," she said, adding that even their relatives in Karimnagar had taken the flowers in a mini-van from Adilabad.

The 'gunugu' flowers which usually do not cost much are being sold at Rs 1 a flower this year

Banks to give only 50 per cent amount as fresh crop loans



According to agriculture officials, district officials have identified 3,15,015 farmers eligible for the crop loan waiver and the amount comes to the tune of the Rs 1,510.91 crores in the district.

Adilabad: The banks would give only 50 per cent amount as fresh crop loan to the farmers after rescheduling their loans, following the payment of the 25 per cent crop loan waiver to the tune of Rs 4,250 crores to the banks in the first phase by the state government.

According to agriculture officials, district officials have identified 3,15,015 farmers eligible for the crop loan waiver and the amount comes to the tune of the Rs 1,510.91 crores in the district.

However, the state government has released Rs 377.73 crore, that comes to 20 percent in the total crop loan waiver to the 32 banks in the district and the remaining 75 percent amount of crop loan waiver will be paid to the farmers with interest in three phases.

The state government has asked the farmers to take fresh loans from the banks.

The state government has formed redressal committees at mandal level with tahasildar as its chairman, respective bank managers and MPDO as members to look into the complaint if any, in the selection of farmers for crop loan waiver.

Joint Director of Agriculture (JDA) S. Rose Leela said the fresh loan amount would be based on scale of finance and the remaining amount after deducting 25 per cent from the crop loan arrears up to Rs 1 lakh.

It is not clear whether the banks will give only 50 percent of amount of fresh crop loans even for rabi season as the state government has not paid the crop loan waiver up to Rs 1 lakh by the state government.

It is noticed that the crop loan waiver announced by the state government has become more useful for small and marginal farmers as most of these farmers had taken loan below Rs 1 lakh.

But big farmers had taken crop loans from various banks beyond Rs 1 lakh. The delay in waiver of crop loan had hit farmers for the last few months after the TRS was voted to power.

Business Standard

Coconut prices shoot up



Coconuts stacked and ready for sale in a shop at Cross Cut Road wholesale market, Coimbatore. (Photo: DC/File)

Coimbatore: In the coconut land of Coimbatore, coconut chutneys have become a priced delicacy. Coconuts, which normally cost about Rs 10, are now priced at not less than Rs 25 in many retail shops. Prices are expected to further zoom up by next week as the Sabarimala Ayyappa season is set to begin.

A drastic dip in coconut production in the sprawling farms of Coimbatore and Tirupur district is the prime reason behind skyrocketing coconut prices. Of the 1 crore coconut trees cultivated in the sprawling groves of Pollachi and Udumulpet, about 50 per cent have dried up due to drought and infestation of pests, say farmers' associations. Besides, exports of Coimbatore coconuts to Gulf countries have picked up, leading to the drastic spike in their prices.

“Coimbatore and Tirupur districts, the hub for coconut trees, witnessed low productivity of nuts as a significant majority of the trees have dried up due to drought. Until the recent rains, farmers were buying water in tankers, paying up to `1,000 per load to save the drying coconut trees,” said T.A. Krishnasamy, president of South India Coconut Growers Association.

Moreover, the growers have also found a new market for coconut in the Gulf countries. “As almost 75 per cent of coconut groves in neighbouring Kerala were affected by an infectious disease causing a dip in production, coconut growers in Tamil Nadu have started to tap the potential of the export market by sending coconuts to the Gulf countries. This has led to a constant increase in the price of coconuts. Further, coconut bearing in trees will also be low from September to January,” said Krishnasamy.

Coconut growers are now selling the nuts to wholesale merchants at Rs 16, Rs 17 and Rs 18, depending on the size of the nut. “A month ago, these coconuts were sold for Rs 13, Rs 14 and RS 15,” Krishnasamy said.

T. Chandran, a merchant in the Cross Cut road wholesale market, said he sells 1 kg of coconut for Rs 30. “If the nuts are small, they are sold at different prices at around Rs 20. As the Ayyappa pilgrims season is set to begin, it will cause further increase in prices,” he said.

In many middle-class households, coconut chutneys are off the dinner table. T. Gayathri, a homemaker and a resident of Ram Nagar, said she had brought down the use of coconut in her food items due to high costs. “Nowadays, I don’t make coconut chutneys often,” she said. Eateries are struggling to keep the delicious coconut chutneys, a perfect sidedish for idli, dosa and upma, on their menu list.

Honorary president of the Tamil Nadu Hotels Association, M. Ravi, said the hotel industry has been struggling to cope with the increasing prices of coconut and other vegetables. “We cannot increase food prices as it will affect our business,” he said.

Vegetable prices see sharp drop in Maharashtra as demand falls



Prices of most vegetables have fallen sharply in Maharashtra this month, mainly due to better crop output prospects in the current harvest season, thanks to a more even distribution of [monsoon](#) rainfall immediately before its withdrawal.

This month, the price of tomatoes has dropped 41 per cent in the [Vashi](#) (Navi Mumbai) wholesale [APMC](#) market to trade at Rs 26 a kg on Monday. Brinjal and ladies finger have fallen 27 per cent and 21 per cent to Rs 16 a kg and Rs 11 a kg, respectively.

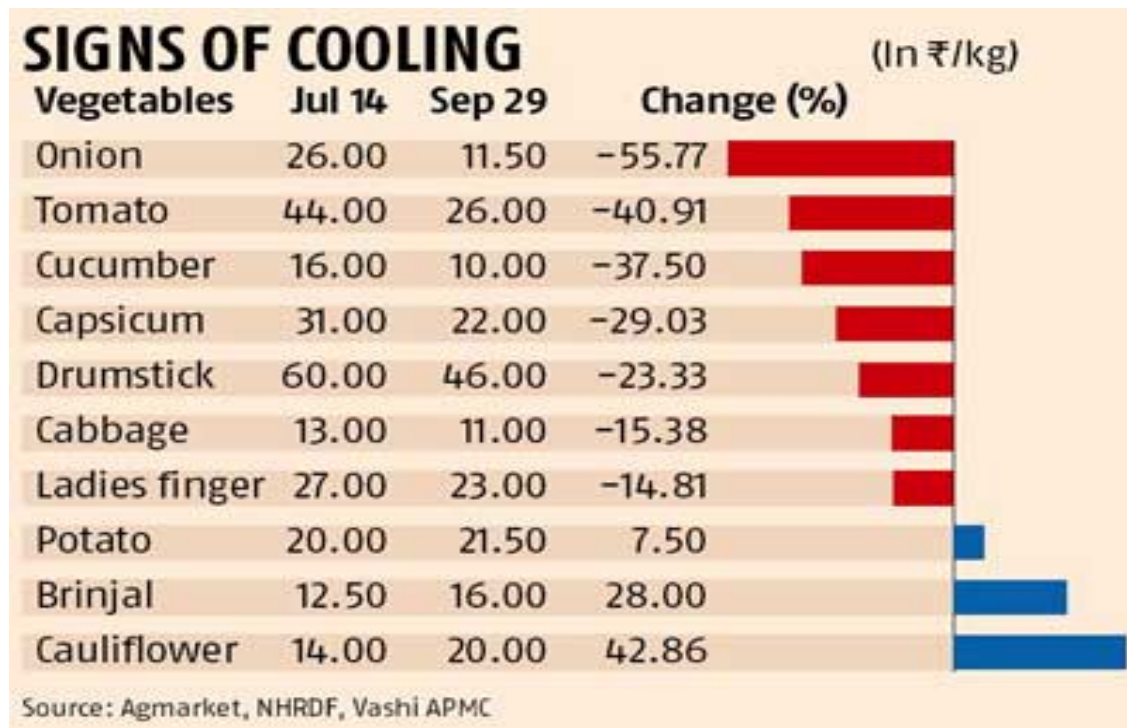
These mean a fall of up to 50 per cent from the peak level in the third week of July, when a month of delay in monsoon had delayed sowing and threatened the standing crop.

“Around 80 per cent of vegetables traded in the Vashi APMC are trading lower. Normally, prices remain elevated during the festive season. The last spells of rainfall proved a boon for vegetables crops, especially in the major growing regions of Maharashtra. And, the

government's repeated assurances to consumers about not letting the prices of agricultural commodities go up has had an impact," said a senior official at the APMC.

However, the price of cauliflower and drumstick rose 67 per cent and 28 per cent in the month, to quote at the Vashi mandi at Rs 20 a kg and Rs 46 a kg, respectively.

"These are some of the vegetables that are still in short supply. There was over a month of delay in sowing and a proportionate delay in maturing. Full harvesting is expected to commence in the second week of October. Then, arrivals will begin in a big way," said Sanjay



Bhujbal, a cauliflower trader in Vashi.

A steady increase in arrivals and weak consumer demand has also contributed to the price fall. Against daily average consumption in Mumbai and its suburbs of 1,800-2,000 tonnes, total supply is estimated at 2,500 tonnes, about 200-250 tonnes more than in July.

A study by Nomura Global Economics estimates the consumer price index rise at seven per cent in September, against 7.8 per cent in August, largely due to a fall in [vegetable](#) prices.

“Vegetables will be cheaper in the coming weeks, with the momentum of increase in arrivals,” said Suryakant Dhawale, a cabbage vendor.

Making ethanol from cane juice to trim sugar surplus



This season, the Brazilian sugarcane crop is nine per cent lower than the government estimate, provoking an observer to say "you are looking at reduced crop at reduced prices. That's a recipe for disaster".

The crop was hit, as Brazil's principal cane region, the centre-south, faced a severe drought during the key growing period. Low returns from the crop will have long-term implications for the sugar mill sector and [ethanol](#) production.

With their income reduced, Brazilian growers are reportedly taking less care of their cane fields. Unlike in India, where sugar factories get entire supplies of cane from independent farmers in captive zones, cane processors in Brazil, the world's largest producer of

sugar (accounting for 40 per cent of global exports), are also major cane growers. Nevertheless, many Brazilian factories are partly dependent on cane supplies from independent growers.

BITTER-SWEET

That low global sugar prices aren't allowing production-cost recovery is forcing the beleaguered Brazilian sugar sector to be trimmed

Four consecutive years of good production will leave India with opening stocks of 7.5 mt for the 2014-15 season

The first advance estimate by the [Indian Sugar Mills Association](#) pegs the coming season's production at 25.5 mt

The viability of this sector in Brazil is critically dependent on the volume of exports and the prices sugar fetches in the global market. No wonder Brazilian producers are always looking for opportunities to push their sugar, wherever possible. For instance, in recent times, nearly the entire imports by India were from Brazil. Now, Thailand, the world's second-largest sugar exporter, fears once the Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Economic Community, or AEC, integration happens late next year, allowing duty-free movement of goods and services among the 10 member nations, its sugar sector will be hit. "You may ask why Thailand should feel threatened, as all other Asean members are sugar-importing countries. Thai sugar producers have started voicing concern post [AEC](#) integration, Brazilian sugar will find its way into Thailand from its neighbouring countries such as Cambodia, Laos and Malaysia," says former Indian Sugar Mills Association president Om Prakash Dhanuka.

That low global sugar prices aren't allowing production-cost recovery is forcing the beleaguered Brazilian sugar sector to be trimmed. According to Brazilian sugarcane sector organisation UNICA, 44

factories have shut operations since 2009. Commenting on the fallout of the ill-fated expansion of the past, Wall Street Journal says global sugar surplus has forced Brazilian "processors to shut dozens of mills and some growers to invest less in their fields. The moves highlight the desperate economics of the Brazilian sugar sector". The crisis has important connotations for Indian sugar groups, primarily because they remain hugely burdened with stocks of, amid a depressed market.

"We have our back to the wall. At current prices of sugar, factories in Uttar Pradesh aren't recovering cane-procurement cost. No wonder in August-end, of the nationwide cane price arrears of Rs 5,500 crore, the share of Uttar Pradesh alone was Rs 4,500 crore. Four consecutive years of good production will leave the sector with opening stocks of 7.5 million tonnes (mt) for the 2014-15 season starting October. The first advance estimate by ISMA (Indian Sugar Mills Association) pegs the coming season's production at 25.5 mt. I shall not be surprised if it climbs to 26 mt on the back of an improvement in sugar recovery from cane," says Dhanuka. The revised customs duty of 25 per cent is, no doubt, a deterrent to imports. But some officials in the sector will be more comfortable with a duty of 40 per cent. Also, they will be happy if raw sugar imported for refining and re-export doesn't stay here for too long.

Besides making imports unviable, ISMA is justified in asking the government to create a buffer stock of three mt, freeing factories of the burden of financing this inventory. ISMA president Ajit Shriram wonders about the opportune time of dismantling the proposed buffer, as he doesn't foresee "a down cycle in sugarcane and sugar production in the near term". Casting all reservations aside, a buffer at this stage will provide some relief to cane processors. A sure way of reducing production in 2014-15 without causing any hurt to growers will be to use surplus cane juice (the 'B' variety heavy molasses) into ethanol. For this, the government will have to prevail

upon oil marketing companies to pay more for this variety of ethanol. Shriram says to make ethanol from heavy molasses, factories have to be paid at least "1.6 times the price of sugar. This is because one tonne of sugar sacrificed will provide about 600 litres of ethanol".

Basmati prices decline 25% in Punjab

Tepid response from rice millers; several farmers had gotten into Basmati



The prices of [Basmati rice](#) have fallen in [Punjab](#) this year by 20 to 25 per cent as compared to those of [kharif](#) 2013 due to a tepid response from rice millers at the beginning of the season.

Last year, major basmati varieties such as Pusa 1509 and Pusa 1121 were purchased at Rs 3500 to Rs 4,000 a quintal. The increase in demand and price of basmati was triggered by the high export demand for Indian basmati the world.

Driven by the lucrative price, farmers in Punjab adopted diversification from non-basmati into basmati, which is also supported by the state government under the diversification of agriculture plan.

The projected increase in the area under basmati is 8 to 10 per cent. Because of the dwindling water table in Punjab, farmers are encouraged to diversify from non-basmati to basmati, as it requires lesser irrigation. The Punjab government also offers certain concessions to Punjab-based millers for lifting basmati paddy as this crop is not included under the minimum support price regime.

This year though, millers are skeptical of international demand and are not lifting the crop at a rapid pace.

A revision of import duty on basmati by Iran proved a dampener for basmati exporters and they are stocking the crop in lesser volumes.

The expectation of a glut in the market due to increased acreage had also slowed the buying operations of the millers. The crop would be arriving in full swing in mid-October and that might result in further fall in price.

"A below-average rainfall had already added the cost of irrigation for paddy and a lower remuneration would put us in a precarious situation," said Balbir Singh, a farmer from Sangrur.

He said millers had created a cartel and had deferred buying as they knew the crop size was larger than last year and farmers did not have enough storage space. We cannot negotiate for a higher price, he said.

PRICE SLIDE

Price have been fallen by 20-25 per cent compared to last year
The major basmati varieties of Pusa 1509 and Pusa 1121 were purchased at Rs 3,500 a quintal to Rs 4,000 a quintal last year
High export demand has contributed to the higher basmati price
The Punjab government offers certain concessions to the millers for lifting basmati paddy as this crop is not included under minimum support price regime

THE HINDU BusinessLine

Understanding the world cotton glut

Chart 1

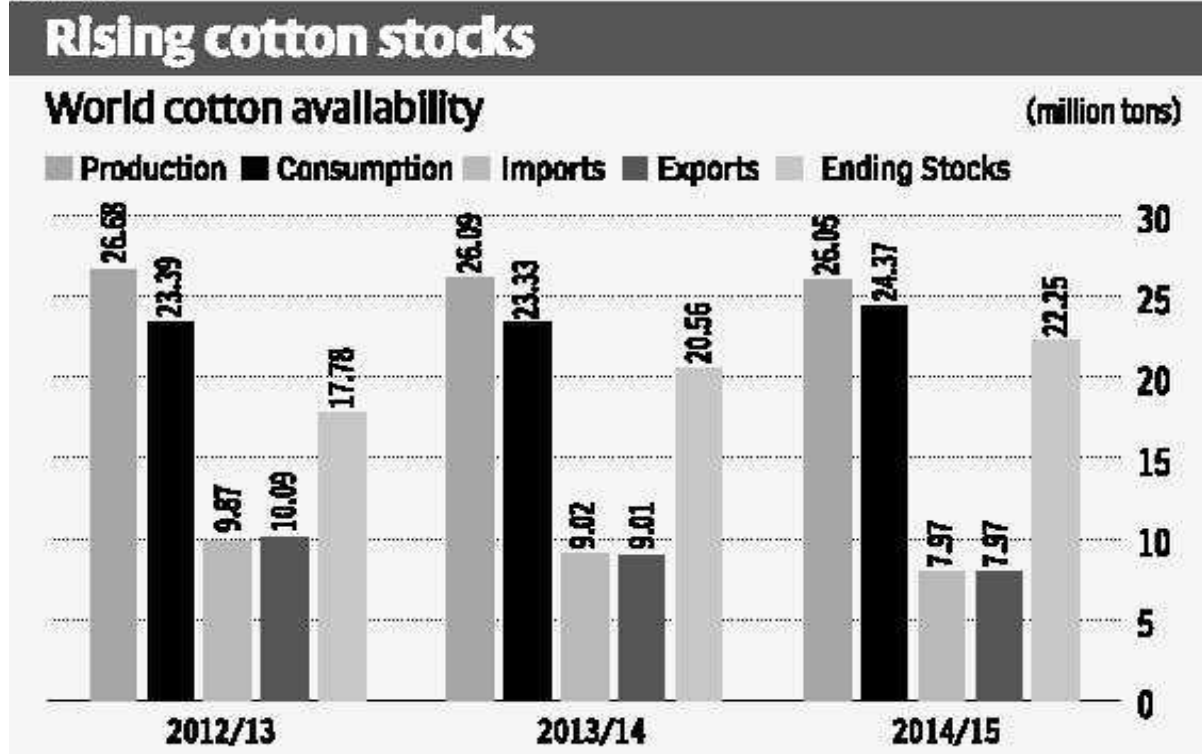


Chart 2

Steadily falling prices

The cotlook 'A' index marketing year (August-July) average (cents per pound)

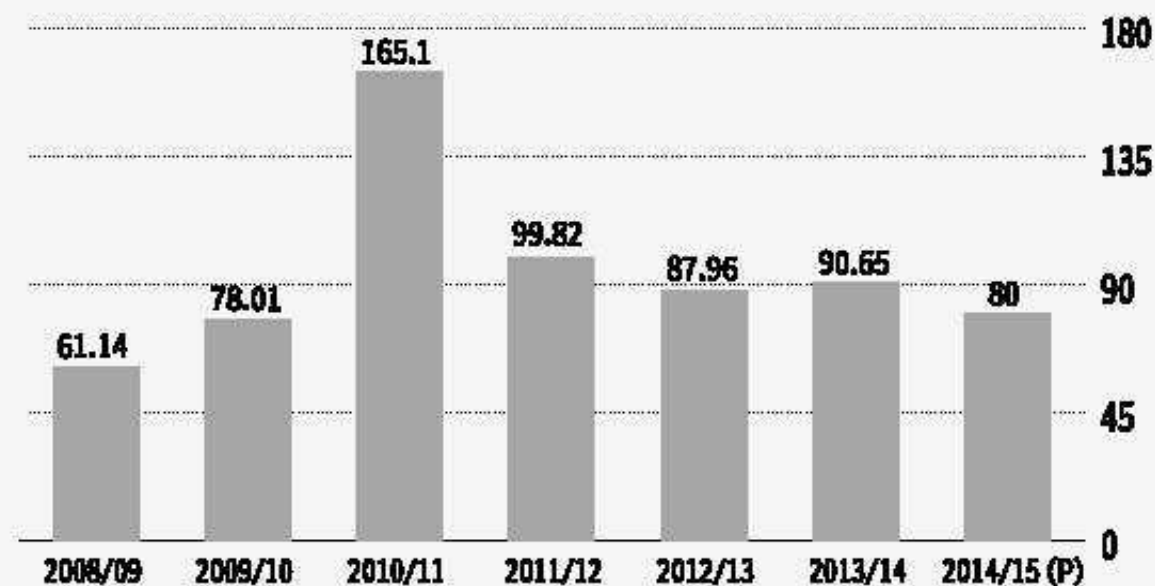
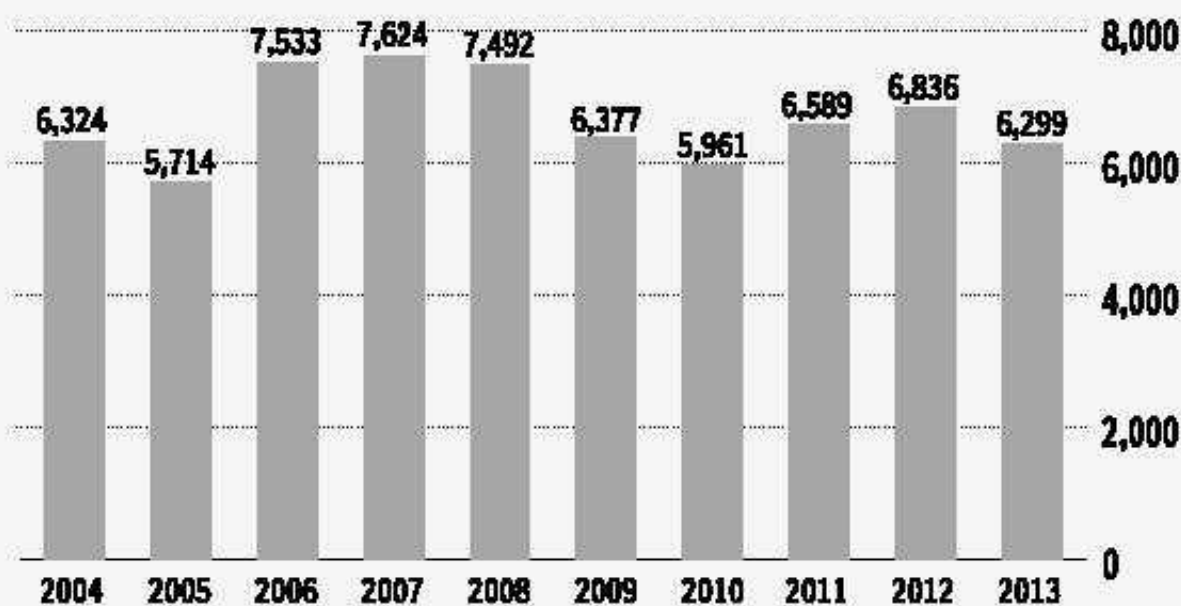


Chart 3

China's steady output

Cotton production in China (thousand tonnes)



China's decision to liquidate its large raw cotton stocks, accumulated as part of a policy of supporting domestic production, is hurting the world's cotton exporters

In a relatively underreported sequence of developments the demand-supply balance in the world's raw cotton trade has shifted towards excess supply, driving down prices and hurting exporters. Underlying this trend is an unusual situation with regard to the global production and exports of raw cotton.

China, the world's leading producer of raw cotton is not among the leading exporters of the fibre. The two leading exporters are India and the United States, which rank second and third on the production league table.

But even among them, India has witnessed a dramatic reduction in exports. Thus, though major producers, China and India absorb domestically much of their production and export little or none, countries such as the United States, Brazil, Uzbekistan and those in West Africa such as Benin, Burkina Faso and Cameroon export much of their production. Exports from the African Zone rose from 2 million tons in 2010-11 to 3.8 million tons in 2013-14.

Excess supply

Overall, the growing concentration of textile production in developing countries has resulted in a situation where developing countries are the principal consumers of raw cotton. In 2012-13, developing countries accounted for 96 per cent of global cotton mill use, 97 per cent of imports, and 81 per cent of production, but only for 52 per cent of global cotton exports.

The fact that China and India, the leading producers, absorbed much of their domestic production meant that the exporters of cotton were spared of two major sources of competition in global trade. And as India's exports began to decline, that competition declined even

further. Moreover, globally cotton stocks have been at high levels and have risen from 18 million tones in 2012-13 to 20 million tones in 2013-14 and an estimated 22 million tones in 2014-15. This willingness to hold stocks has meant that production remained high and ensured that prices were low and stable.

However, there are other challenges that still confront small producers and exporters like Brazil and the African countries. The first is that global production has in recent years been consistently above the volume of raw cotton use or consumption. According to the International Cotton Advisory Council (ICAC), 2014-15 would be the fifth consecutive marketing year when global cotton production exceeds consumption.

Though production is expected to decline by 400,000 tonnes in that year to 26.05 million tons, and consumption to rise by 4 per cent, the latter would touch only 24.4 million tons, resulting in a surplus of 1.7 million tons. Consecutive years of surplus had already taken the cumulative excess of consumption over production between 2010-11 and 2013-14 to 12.3 million tons. That figure is projected to rise to nearly 14 million tons by end 2014-15.

As a result of this excess supply the Cotton “A” Index, a proxy for the world price of cotton computed by the National Cotton Council of America, which rose to a peak of 165.1 cents per pound in 2010-11, fell to 99.82 cents to the pound in 2011-12 and averaged 89.3 cents to the pound during 2012-13 and 2013-14 (Chart 2).

China’s policies

A second challenge is that this situation of excess supply, being partly the result of subsidies provided by the governments of leading cotton-producing countries to their cotton farmers, is not easily reversed. Subsidies that keep production much higher than it would have otherwise been are quite substantial. In 2011-12, a study by the

ICAC Secretariat reported that ten countries were providing subsidies to their cotton industry. China had emerged the largest provider of support to its cotton sector in 2009-10, overtaking the United States.

To support cotton growers, especially in Xinjiang province, with a minimum support price policy and import quotas, domestic cotton prices in China were maintained well above international cotton prices. Total government support to the Chinese cotton sector was estimated at around \$3 billion in 2011-12. In comparison, total support provided to the US cotton sector was around \$820 million through subsidised crop insurance. Moreover, China, which is the main destination for exports of cotton from Africa, imposes import duties of up to 40 per cent on cotton imports in excess of the annual import quota related to WTO obligations.

However, the effect this would have of aggravating excess supply in the global cotton economy by enhancing the level of production, has been partly moderated by the Chinese government's policy of purchasing and accumulating stocks of domestically produced cotton to back its minimum support price policy. Over nine million tons of cotton were purchased from domestic producers in 2011-12 and 2012-13. This did help stabilise cotton production in China (Chart 3).

Besides the objective of stabilising domestic supplies, the fact that higher domestic prices forced domestic mills to turn to imports, especially up to the WTO mandated import quota, necessitated large purchases.

Reversal of trends

By November 2013, cotton reserves held by the Chinese authorities stood at around 10 million tonnes or close to half of total global stocks. The China National Cotton Reserve Corporation had purchased another 5.5 million tonnes since the beginning of the 2013

cotton season. Rising stocks finally prompted the government to discourage imports.

In 2013-14, China's total imports are estimated to have fallen by nearly one-third relative to the previous year. However, in the same year, as a result of drought, production in the US fell 25 per cent, limiting the country's exportable supply. These contrary influences on the demand-supply balance in global trade moderated the effects that China's withdrawal from the market had on world cotton prices.

But as of November 2013 the trend has been otherwise. In that month, China began to draw down its cotton stocks through sales via auction. The China National Cotton Reserve managed to sell 12,312 tonnes of cotton, or roughly half of the 24,354 tonnes on offer, for an average price of Rmb17,737 per tonne (\$2,900). The shortfall relative to the offer was because this was "old" cotton, often held in the warehouses for a year or more, and mills reportedly expressed a preference to buy fresh imported cotton.

That notwithstanding, the auction triggered fears because, if China decided to accelerate stock disposal by offering large discounts on sales outside the auction route, market prices could crash.

In fact in March 2014, China announced plans to slash the prices at which it sold cotton from its reserve, bringing them close to international prices to boost demand. The result has been a downward trend in the prices of cotton futures and raw cotton. In fact, the ICAC projects that the Cotton "A" Outlook Index is likely to fall 11 per cent to 80 cents per pound during 2014-15.

Since the China National Cotton Reserve would have to continue with purchases as part of its minimum support policy, and cannot afford too large a reduction in its sale prices (since that would increase losses it would suffer from disposing of stocks acquired at high prices), the process of unwinding stocks is likely to continue for long.

So prices are likely to remain weak till production and supplies adjust. That would be damaging for the African exporters who have already been hurt by the American subsidy policy.

Coonoor tea gains for 4th consecutive week



Coonoor, September 29:

For the fourth consecutive week, average prices rose at the auctions of Coonoor Tea Trade Association. The average price at Sale No: 39 rose to Rs. 76.99 a kg from last week's Rs. 75.29. Tea worth Rs. 2.45 crore remained unsold.

Homedale Estate tea, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped the CTC market when Om Enterprises bought it for Rs. 202 a kg. Crosshill Estate got Rs. 191, Deepika Supreme and Hittakkal Estate Rs. 188 each, Vigneshwar Estate Rs. 183, Shanthi Supreme Rs. 181, Navilkal Estate and Sree Tea Supreme Rs. 186 each. In all, 91 marks got Rs. 125 and more. Among orthodox teas, Kodanad got Rs. 240, Havukal Rs. 224, Kairbetta Rs. 220, Corsley Rs. 201. In all, 45 marks got Rs. 125 and more.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs. 43-48 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs. 100-150 for brighter liquoring sorts. They ranged Rs. 45-54 for plain dusts and Rs. 120-190 for brighter liquoring dusts.

On the export front, Pakistan bought in a wide range Rs. 55-120 a kg.

Tea prices gather steam at Kochi sale

Kochi, September 29:

Better liquoring tea varieties fetched higher prices at Kochi auctions last week. However, prices were irregular and lower for teas which had inferior liquoring properties.

At sale no 39, the quantity on offer in CTC dust varieties was 9,45,500 kg, higher compared with last week. With a better demand, the market was firm to dearer by Rs. 2-3 a kg.

According to the auctioneers Forbes, Ewart & Figgis, a better demand was noticed from upcountry buyers, while exporters confined to medium and plainer varieties. The quantity on offer in dust varieties was also up at 19,000 kg against last week arrival. But the market was lower with many withdrawals. A small quantity of Orthodox dust sold was absorbed by exporters.

In the best Cochin CTC dusts, good varieties fetched Rs. 110-157, medium grades quoted Rs. 75-106 and plain stood at Rs. 60-71.

In the leaf category, the quantity on offer in Orthodox grades was 124,000 kg. With improved demand, the market for Nilgiri Broken and Whole Leaf appreciated with longer margins of Rs. 5-10. Others were irregular and sold around last levels. Exporters to CIS countries were active along with traditional exporters. There was a better demand from upcountry buyers on Whole Leaf.

In CTC leaf, the quantity on offer was 81,500 kg with a good demand for better liquoring. However the demand was less for other varieties. The market for better liquoring varieties was firm to dearer while others were irregular and lower witnessing some withdrawals. There was a subdued demand from exporters.

In the dust category, Monica SFD quoted the best prices of Rs. 157. In the leaf grades, Chamraj Green Tea (FOP) Sup fetched the best prices of Rs. 322/kg

Cardamom rules steady as demand matches supply



Kochi, September 29:

With demand matching supply, cardamom prices ruled steady at the auctions last week.

Arrivals continued to increase as the second round of picking is in full swing in all estates.

Quality cardamom has started arriving, market sources in Bodinayakanur said.

They told *Business Line* that there has been a one-month delay this season because of erratic monsoon rains. According to them, a 10

per cent drop is likely in the total crop this season that began in August.

Demand for Diwali is yet to pick.

However, market sources in Kumily attributed the current stability to export buying coupled with upcountry demand. Exportable variety capsules are arriving in good volume and that is being picked up by exporters. They bought an estimated 150 tonnes of cardamom last week. Similarly, upcountry buyers are also covering actively.

The individual auction average slipped last week to vacillate between Rs. 730 and Rs. 780 a kg. Supply of 8mm bold continued to remain thin and good colour bold capsules were fetching Rs. 1,050.

At the Kerala Cardamom Processing and Marketing Company's auction on Sunday, 90.5 tonnes of cardamom arrived and almost the entire quantity was sold out. The maximum price was Rs. 1,018 and the minimum Rs. 584. Auction average was Rs. 762.73.

Total arrivals during the season are 2,949 tonnes against 3,912.5 tonnes during the same period a year ago. Sales in the current season are 2,885 tonnes against 3,730 tonnes in year-ago period.

The individual auction average as on September 28 this year was Rs. 755 against Rs. 615 in the year-ago period.

Prices of graded varieties (Rs. /kg): 8mm bold 1,050-60; 7mm-8mm 850; 6mm-7mm 740; below 6.5mm 670.

Bayer's new fungicide for wheat seed treatment

Bangalore, September 29:

Bayer CropScience has launched a new fungicide Raxil Easy, a seed treatment product for the control of loose smut disease in wheat. The new product was launched in the markets of Karnal in Haryana and Ludhiana in Punjab ahead of the Rabi planting season.

Loose smut is one of the most common fungal diseases affecting wheat cultivation in the country. It can hamper the growth of the emerging seedling and even harm the plant. Seed-borne diseases like loose smut are best controlled by fungicidal seed treatment products, the company said in a statement. Agri-experts estimate that around one-third of the maximum possible wheat yield is lost to diseases and pests.

Bayer CropScience has been selling Raxil to Indian farmers for many years. Raxil Easy is an advanced FS (flowable concentrate for seed treatment) formulation that sticks uniformly on the seed, leading to increased efficacy in controlling the disease. The active ingredient in the product can control pathogens that are present inside the seed as well as those found on the outer surface.

“Bayer's Raxil Easy will help wheat farmers cultivate disease-free, healthy crops and will help achieve high returns through a significantly higher yield,” said Joerg Rehbein, Head of Bayer CropScience, Indian subcontinent.

Bayer is one of the leading seed treatment suppliers in India with the widest seed treatment portfolio, comprising of insecticides and fungicides. Seed treatment is a common practice in crops cultivated from high-grade seeds which involve intensive production methods. In India, seed treatment with insecticides and fungicides is being

increasingly used in the cultivation of cotton, corn and some vegetable seeds. Awareness about seed treatment in other key crops such as wheat, soyabean, rice and potato is also increasing steadily.

Bayer Cropscience shares ended 2.27 per cent higher at Rs. 2,400.10 on the BSE on Monday.

Polls, festival to delay cane crushing in Maharashtra

Ample supplies, higher carryover stocks likely to keep prices on leash



Bangalore, September 29:

Upcoming assembly elections and the festival season could delay the start of sugarcane crushing in Maharashtra, the largest sugar producing State, by about a fortnight to early November.

However, the delay is unlikely to have any influence on prices following excess supplies in the market and huge opening stocks of around 7.5 million tonnes in the new sugar season starting October 1.

In Maharashtra, many politicians – who have interest in the sugar sector – will be busy fighting assembly elections scheduled for October 15. Also, Diwali celebrations will extent till October 25.

“Though, officially the crushing season is expected to start by October 15, it may actually begin after Diwali in the last week of October or early November,” said MG Joshi, Managing Director of the National Federation of Sugar Co-operatives.

Price outlook

Though the outgoing Congress Government in Maharashtra announced the creation of a separate board for deciding the price of sugarcane, it may actually start functioning after the new government is in place.

The declining trend in sugar prices may pose a challenge for the board to decide cane prices.

The Union Government has fixed a fair and remunerative price of Rs. 220/quintal for a 9.5 per cent sugar recovery.

Trade sources said sugar prices are expected to stay bearish on ample supplies. “The delay in crushing is unlikely to have any impact on the sugar prices as there are sufficient stocks,” said Abhijit Ghorpade, a sugar trader and exporter in Kolhapur.

Karnataka’s situation

Meanwhile, about 10 factories in south Karnataka have started crushing in the last few weeks, while some units in central Karnataka are expected to begin operations in the next few weeks.

However, the fact that factories are yet to clear last year's payments has angered farmers, who are asking the State Government to clear their dues.

“We have asked the State Government to clear the payments – estimated at Rs. 2,300 crore and recover them from millers,” said

Kurubur Shantkumar, Convenor of State Sugar Cane Growers Association.

Blaming the Karnataka Government for not being serious in resolving farmers' issues, Shantkumar said growers plan to resort to agitation from October 5 if the government does not intervene by then.

The Centre had recently asked the sugar companies to give a timeline by when they would clear the Rs.7,000-crore arrears to farmers before it could consider the fresh demand placed by the industry.

A majority of the private mills in Uttar Pradesh have decided not to start crushing this season in the absence of a rational pricing policy.