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THE HINDU

Commodity prices

Onion is not the only vegetable that makes households shed tears due to its surging prices. Brinjal too could be added to this list. The price of brinjal has surged 40 per cent in the last one year. Fall in production due to poor rains has taken prices higher. In Chennai, brinjal is sold currently at ₹28 per kg, up from ₹20 per kg a year ago and from ₹24 per kg last month.

Here are the prices of various commodities in Chennai.

Price scale is given as Rs./kg

Commodity	Quantity	Now	Year ago
Rice	1 kg	28	32
Wheat	1 kg	32	30
Atta	1 kg	30	32
Gram Dal	1 kg	71	47
Tur Dal	1 kg	150	86
Urad Dal	1 kg	130	91
Moong Dal	1 kg	111	97
Masoor Dal	1 kg	95	75
Sugar	1 kg	30	34
Milk	1 ltr	37	27

Commodity	Quantity	Now	Year ago
Ground Nut Oil	1 ltr	124	105
Sun flower Oil	1 ltr	91	85
Gur (Jaggery)	1 kg	50	49
Tea	1 kg	220	220
Salt	1 kg	18	17
Lime	1 kg	70	100
Apple	1 kg	140	150
Papaya	1 kg	30	30
Pineapple	1 kg	40	40
Pomegranate	1 kg	140	100
Sapota	1 kg	50	40
Banana	1 kg	32	28
Bitter Gourd	1 kg	30	24
Brinjal	1 kg	28	20
Cabbage	1 kg	20	16
Cauli Flower	1 kg	40	40

Commodity	Quantity	Now	Year ago
Garlic	1 kg	140	90
Ginger	1 kg	100	120
Chilly	1 kg	32	36
Onion	1 kg	62	30
Potato	1 kg	20	36
Tomato	1 kg	32	16

*Source: Ministry of Consumer Affairs, National Horticulture Board.

Govt. to step up vigil at ports to check export of cow meat

The Centre has decided to strengthen vigil along ports to ensure that there is no illegal export of cow meat which is banned in India. Buffalo meat export is, however, allowed.

Amidst the raging controversy over killing of a man in a Dadri village over rumours of eating beef, Union Minister of State for Agriculture Sanjeev Balyan on Tuesday reviewed the export of meat with senior officials of the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and the Departments of Animal Husbandry and Dairying and Food Processing.

Among other measures, the government had withdrawn 25 per cent transport subsidy on meat export and strengthened its regulation viz-a-viz the weight of the packed meat that is sent abroad. Meat export was 14.7 per cent lower between April and August this year than in the corresponding period in the previous year. Export of meat is mostly to Vietnam, Africa and the Middle-East.

In the meeting it was decided to set up testing laboratories at ports for random testing of meat that is being exported to ensure that there was no illegal export. Beef, outside of India, comprises meat of cow as well as buffalo. In India, however, beef is termed as cow meat.

“APEDA officials said there is no illegal export of cow meat as production and exports are strictly monitored through a software, ‘Meat Net.’ However, it has been decided to set up labs at ports to check illegal export of cow meat,” Mr. Balyan told journalists.

Buffalo exports are being done by 49 slaughter houses recognised and licensed by the APEDA of which 20 are in Uttar Pradesh. There are 1,696 slaughter houses in the country, all of which are administered by the State governments. The maximum number of them are in Maharashtra, followed by Uttar Pradesh and Telangana.

Asked about a Central Law on cow slaughter, he said there was no such proposal. Cow slaughter was a state subject. As of now cow slaughter was banned in the country except in five States including Kerala, West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. Some of the States that have banned cow slaughter do allow consumption of beef if it is brought from another state where there is no ban.

14.7 per cent decline in meat export this year, say officials

‘Create awareness about Central schemes’

District-level officers should take steps to create awareness among people about the benefits provided under Central schemes, Union Minister of State for Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises G.M. Siddeshwar has said.

Speaking at a meeting of district lead bank officers here on Tuesday, he said that the Union government had launched schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Jivan Jyoti Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Atal Pension Scheme and Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana. “These schemes should reach the actual beneficiaries to ensure their overall growth,” the Minister said.

“Action will be initiated against officers who fails to provide information to people about these schemes and help them get the benefits,” he said.

In Davangere district, 99,248 people registered under the Pradhan Mantri Jivan Bima Yojana, 1,63,993 people under the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana and 1,616 registered under the Atal Pension Scheme. Compensation has already been paid in one case under the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana. A total of 7,118 people had registered under Mudra Yonaja, he added. Commenting on the increasing cases of farm suicide in the district, Mr. Siddeshwar instructed bankers not to issue notices to farmers for repayment of loans till instructions were given and compensation should be given to all families of deceased farmers as early as possible.

Compensation given

Agriculture Department Joint Director Sadashiv informed the meeting that 25 farmers had committed suicide in the district in which compensation has been provided to 10 families of deceased farmers.

Seven cases had been rejected by the committee formed to look into suicide cases as there were no agriculture land or bank loans in this names. The remaining cases are in process.

Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer R. Girish, Reserve Bank of India Jayaprakash Narayan and representatives of different banks were present.

Rains make paddy sprout at purchase centres

Farmers blame TNCSC officials for not taking quick action

Paddy sprouts at direct purchase centre at Madigai in Thanjavur district.

Delay in procurement of kuruvai paddy by Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation (TNCSC) at the direct purchase centres in some places in Thanjavur district has affected farmers who allege that many bags of paddy have sprouted.

They claim that their produce was being turned away at the DPCs on charges of “excess moisture content” than permissible following which protests were held in certain villages.



With scarce water availability forcing only those with borewells to take up kuruvai paddy cultivation in delta districts, farmers had to endure much hardship in seeing through the season in Thanjavur district. Now, harvest of kuruvai paddy crop was going on in full swing in most of the areas and the TNCSC had opened scores of DPCs where farmers could trade in their produce at their locality.

At Madigai village near here, officials manning the DPC turned away produce of farmers who brought in paddy on Sunday ostensibly because of higher moisture content than the sanctioned 17 per cent. Sporadic and moderate rain had been lashing Thanjavur district over the past three days and the paddy waiting to be sold at the Madigai DPC started sprouting much to the anger of farmers who staged a demonstration. Officials made special arrangements to procure the paddy that had not sprouted.

“Despite rains, we had dried the paddy with great difficulty and took it to the DPC where the officials did not procure citing scarcity of gunny bags on Sunday. We had to keep the paddy in our bags at the DPC itself and after the Monday rains, paddy in many bags had started sprouting now. Those that had not sprouted will have a lot more moisture than permitted and in both

ways farmers suffer as again the officials are rejecting our paddy,” says Mani, farmer of Kattukurichi village. Because of the problem, farmers resorted to demonstrations at Kakkarai and Sellampatti villages in Thanjavur district.

Similar is the case in some other areas of Thanjavur and the district administration had counselled the TNCSC officials to adopt a lenient approach in procuring paddy with moisture content from farmers. TNCSC Senior Regional Manager P. Manimaran conceded that there was problem with gunny bags availability at Madigai and the problem had been looked into. He said that efforts were being made to procure paddy from farmers without putting them to trouble.

Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam district secretary Samy Natarajan called upon the officials to procure paddy with up to 21 per cent moisture content after getting the consent of the Food Corporation of India. Automated paddy driers must be installed in all major DPCs in the region to prevent such problems in procurement, he said.

Tamil Maanila Congress Farmers’ Wing State president Puliyur Nagarajan demanded that the State government immediately address the moisture content issue during the current kuruvai season as rain would add to the normal moisture content. Instead of cheque, farmers would prefer cash disbursal for their produce, he said.

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- ***Paddy was not purchased because of shortage of gunny bags***
 - ***Farmers say paddy had become wet because of sudden rain***
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Training programme

A free one-day training programme on cultivation of annual ‘moringa’ and bhindi cultivation techniques will be conducted at Krishi Vigyan Kendra on Veterinary College and Research Institute premises here on October 12.

A press release from B. Mohan, Programme Coordinator, said that annual 'moringa' (drumstick) grows well in a wide range of soil while 'bhindi' (ladies finger) also gives high yield during the season.

The release added that if proper cultivation techniques are followed in both the crops, yield would be more. The training would cover the cropping pattern, weed and water management besides marketing techniques.

Farmers, members of self help group, youth and interested can participate. Interested can come in person on working days or register through phone numbers 04286 266345, 266244 and 266650.

For registration mentioning of Aadhaar number is mandatory, the release added.

Climate change major challenge faced by agri sector: Yeddyurappa

He asks varities to develop drought-resistant food crops



B.S. Yeddyurappa, Shivamogga MP, handing over the prize to the winner of the best stall at the Krishi Mela in Shivamogga on Tuesday

B.S. Yeddyurappa, Shivamogga MP and national vice-president of BJP, urged the government to purchase power from neighbouring States and from private power companies.

In the past, when the State faced power crises due to deficient rainfall, the government would enter into agreements in advance to purchase power.

The State government should earmark ample funds to purchase power and ensure that transmission corridors and lines are reserved in this regard, he said, at the valedictory of Krishi Mela, organised by University of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences (UAHS), Shivamogga, on Tuesday.

Agricultural activities had received a serious setback in the State owing to power crises. Farmers were suffering from losses owing to fluctuations in the price of their produce and inconsistent climate.

Mixed cropping would insure the farmers against loss. Farmers can enhance their income by growing multiple crops on a plot of land and agricultural scientists should provide guidance to them, Mr. Yeddyurappa said.

Climate change had posed a major challenge for the agriculture sector.

In the event of deficient rainfall, farmers should cultivate pulses and oil seeds that require less water. Agricultural universities should develop drought-resistant varieties of food crops and popularise them to counter the challenges posed by climate change, the MP said.

Addressing the gathering, C.M. Ibrahim, deputy chairman of Karnataka State Planning Board, called upon farmers in Malnad region to take up apiculture. Honey produced in the vicinity of Western Ghats is known for its distinct taste and has great demand in the Middle East.

Mr. Ibrahim urged the UAHS administration to organise similar krishi melas at the taluk level to reach out to more farmers and to keep them updated on the latest innovations.

B.Y. Raghavendra, Shikaripur MLA, said the State government had allotted 800 acres of land near Iruvakki in Sagar taluk for the new campus, UAHS, Shivamogga.

An estimated amount of Rs. 300 crore was necessary to set up the new campus, he said, while requesting the government to release the funds at the earliest.

C. Vasudevappa, Vice-Chancellor of UAHS, Shivamogga, was present.

ACRI to focus on bettering nutrition

As the golden jubilee celebrations of Agricultural College and Research Institute (ACRI) here come to a close this year, the institute is poised to undertake cutting edge research through its Centre of Excellence for Innovations (CEI).

Being the first of its kind in south Tamil Nadu, the CEI will undertake advanced research in focus areas of southern agro climatic ecosystems and explore the process of value addition in small millets for better nutrition and healthcare.

According to the Dean, K. Velayudham, funding for the centre will be both from the State government and National Agriculture Development Programme.

An estimate for Rs.6.34 crore for 2015-16 has already been submitted to the government and a sum of Rs.6.5 crore is sanctioned for procurement of laboratory equipment and instruments and Rs.50 lakh for construction of a building. This will be one among the six CEIs in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU).

The CEI will conduct research to speed up the process of evolving superior genotypes of small millets and major horticultural crops and work towards formulating novel bio-control agents and bio-inoculants.

The centre would have inter-institutional collaborations to survey socio-economic factors associated with sustainable and successful crop production in the southern districts, said N. Senthil, Director, CEI.

Post-doctoral fellows would utilise the centre to undertake inter-disciplinary research. One of its objectives is to establish a viable innovation system, which can remain as the base for sustainability of education, research, innovation and entrepreneurship.

During the golden jubilee year of the ACRI, which was inaugurated on August 19, 1965, the State government has sanctioned Rs 2.5 crore for an integrated modern kitchen-cum- dining and students' amenities centre. Efforts are also on to release a postal stamp during the valedictory function to be held soon.

Farm fresh at your doorstep

Today, organic vegetables, fruits and greens are just a phone call away. AKILA KANNADASAN on how subscription-based services are becoming popular in Chennai



Shopping made easy Organic vegetables being delivered to a home in the city Photo: M. Vedhan

It's not easy going completely organic. The grocery store down the road is more accessible than the organic store some distance away. It's easier to pick up vegetables from the department store on the way back home from

work than wait for vegetables to arrive at the weekly organic market in the neighbourhood. But, it is all changing — you can now get exotic greens such as *asmudakathan* or *kizhanelli* delivered to your doorstep.

Door 2 Door Organics, a dial-in delivery initiative, provides a range of organic vegetables and fruits. Jitendra Prasad, the founder, has introduced the concept of a ‘weekly farm box’. Customers can choose from the small, medium, and large farm boxes, with vegetables such as onions, tomatoes, potatoes, cucumbers, carrots, turnips, mushrooms and more.

“The only way to gain a good customer base for organic food is by promising people a regular supply at a reasonable price,” says Prasad. “The cost of production of organic food is high and there are instances where farmers are forced to mix organic vegetables with the regular varieties and sell it at rock-bottom prices,” he adds.

Prasad has a team of 11, which harvests, sorts, packs and delivers vegetables from his organic farms at Red Hills and Tiruvallur. He has a different list of vegetables for each week. “We also provide a recipe that can be tried out using one of the vegetables in our farmbox,” he explains.

The Nalla Keerai team has been delivering organic greens to Chennai households for the past few years. They plan to take their initiative a notch higher by providing yearly, six-month and three-month subscription-based services. This is a model that the team has been striving for, ever since they started out in 2011. It’s simple — ask customers to commit to buying, and pass on the commitment to farmers.

For a yearly subscription of Rs. 4,460, customers will get a basket of five greens home-delivered every week. This will include two bundles of traditional greens such as *palak*, *murungai*, *manathakkali* and *Ceylon pasalai*; one bundle of dressing greens such as lemon grass, basil and ramba; and one bundle each of ‘ancient’ and ‘exotic’ greens.

Says R. Jaganathan, who started Nalla Keerai, “Once we create a distribution system, we can gradually begin to send traditional varieties of rice, oil, jaggery and fruits in small quantities to those who are part of it.” He says that Nalla Keerai follows Gandhian economist J.C. Kumarappa’s theory, which breaks down what and how much a farmer should grow, depending on requirement.

“I’m trying to put this system in place. This is why we’ve started our subscription model,” he adds.

Nalla Keerai promises an interesting array of greens. “*Karisilankanni* is said to prevent cancer. *Andmanjal karisilankanni*, is good for the liver,” says Jaganathan. His team is working on a software to perfect their system and plans are on to launch a Nalla Keerai app.

Several smaller organic food stores in the city have also introduced door delivery. M. Nagaraj, who’s part of Organic Farmer’s Market (OFM), has an outlet in Arumbakkam.

He delivers fruits, vegetables and groceries to households in the neighbourhood. “This makes it easier for people to switch over to organic,” he says. C. Dhamodharan, yet another OFM member, delivers products to houses around Medavakkam.

Prasad and Jaganathan say that more people are signing up for their services. “They feel their refrigerator smells different — a raw, earthy fragrance,” adds Prasad.

The only way to gain a good customer base for organic food is by promising people a regular supply at a reasonable price

Seafood processing units to come up in State

‘The companies will be able to provide employment to over 1,200 people’

Aquatic animal feed mills, shrimp farming, Tilapia hatchery and seafood processing units are to come up in the State at a total cost of Rs. 500 crore.

Sources in the Tamil Nadu Fisheries University, which facilitated the companies to invest in the State through the Global Investors Meet (GIM) held last month, said land had been identified at Kadapakkam in Kancheepuram, Thirupalaivanam and Thervoykandigai in Tiruvallur district and Agaram in Cuddalore district for these companies.

A. Kumaresan, director, Shenglong Biotech India Pvt Ltd., whose company is investing Rs. 100 crore in manufacturing 50,000 tonnes of feed and hatchery to produce two billion young shrimps, said his company was very happy to invest in Tamil Nadu.

“We have already sold 15,000 tonnes of feed to farmers. The market in India is very good. We had planned to set up our fish feed plant in Andhra Pradesh and were looking out for land. But when the Fisheries Department Secretary, Vijaykumar, said the government would facilitate fast clearance, we have decided to move it here. We are really seeing that things are moving fast,” he said.

Sources in the university said they had been mediating between the companies and the various departments, including the DTCP and the Coastal Aquaculture Authority.

“Since the Chief Minister said clearances would be provided through single window system, the processes are being speeded up,” said a source.

The companies would be able to provide employment to over 1,200 people. “Fish feed companies are not many in our country. Since the annual growth rate for aquaculture is over 8 per cent, there is a good demand for feed,” explained the source.

“Since the annual growth rate for aquaculture is over 8 per cent, there is a good demand for fish feed”

Progressive farmers make handsome profit

Cucumber plants being raised by vertical farming method in poly greenhouse near Nallamanarkottai in Dindigul district.

Despite shortage of water and labour force, progressive farmers at Nallamanarkottai village in Vadmadurai union have been making handsome profit as they treat agriculture as industry.

They not only adopt the latest technologies but also use imported seeds to get better yield on small area. They also appoint technical hands to man their farms, where they raise cucumber, tomato and other vegetables.

Vertical farming method under weather-controlled atmosphere has helped them to harvest large quantity of cucumber. They harvest 35 tonnes of cucumber and earn an income of Rs.10 lakh in 140 days. “At least, two acres are needed to raise 2,500 plants on open field whereas in poly house, we grow the same number of plants on half acre by adopting vertical farming method. With the implementation of the latest technologies, we have registered four-fold increase in yield while reducing cultivable land size to half,” says S. Ramesh, a progressive farmer at Nallamanarkottai.

“The poly greenhouse has fogging, drip irrigation, automatic fertigation facilities. We can control temperature in poly house irrespective of outside temperature. Besides, the farm has small technical work force, including a consultant,” he added.

Mr. Ramesh imports seeds from The Netherlands and each seed costs Rs.6. Total investment in the poly house is around Rs.40 lakh and the subsidy part is Rs.8.3 lakh.

Cucumber creepers grow up to four metres till the roof of the poly greenhouse in his farm. With long shelf life and rich in water content, this import variety of cucumber is very attractive in Kerala. Procurement price of cucumber hovers between Rs.15 and Rs.30, he says. Poly greenhouse is

ideal for raising tomato and jasmine as they are very sensitive to climate, says Subbu Raja, a horticulturist in Batlagundu.

The farmers appeal to horticulture officials to produce seeds of imported varieties locally and distribute to them to scale down production costs. The Centre for Excellence, an Indo-Israel joint venture, at Reddiyarchatram, can take up this task, they suggest.

Another progressive farmer from Batlagundu opines that pomegranates when they grow in poly houses will give better yield. The farmers need subsidy for setting up fogging devices in poly houses, he says and adds dissemination of advanced technologies is need of the hour to protect small and tiny farmers and to tap huge potential in the district.

They treat agriculture as industry and adopt latest technologies

“Procure paddy without delay”

The farmers’ wing of the Tamil Manila Congress has urged the State government to ensure the procurement of paddy without any delay at the Direct Purchase Centres in the delta districts.

In a statement issued here, A.Nagarajan, president of the farmers wing, said kuruvai paddy brought in by farmers in some places were not being procured immediately.

India unveils climate target to cut carbon intensity

India has promised to make its economy more energy efficient and cut the carbon produced per unit of GDP growth by 33-35 per cent by 2030 from 2005 levels in a climate-change policy statement released ahead of a U.N. summit in Paris in December.

India, the world's third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases, also said it would target 40 per cent cumulative installed power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030, though said this would require U.N. financial support.

The pledges, submitted to the United Nations late on Thursday, were broadly in line with expectations, given emerging economies such as India have resisted setting specific targets to cut emissions.

* India pledges 33-35 pct cut in carbon intensity by 2030

* No "peak emissions" target or carbon market pledges

* Coal set to continue dominating power sector in future

India is not yet prepared to go as far as China, the world's biggest emitter, which pledged at the end of June to reduce its carbon intensity by 60-65 per cent by 2030, partly through the use of carbon trading. Beijing also said it would bring its absolute emissions to a peak by "around 2030".



As well as not setting such a timeline, India did not give a commitment in its submission to establishing carbon trading.

New Delhi also stressed that coal would continue to dominate power generation for its more than 1 billion people in the future, though stressed its commitment to clean energy technologies.

India said it planned to develop 25 Solar Parks, supply 100,000 solar pumps to farmers and convert all 55,000 petrol pumps across the country to solar.

It also pledged to "aggressively" develop hydro and nuclear energy.

India said its plans were "fair and ambitious considering the fact that India is attempting to work towards low carbon emission pathway while endeavouring to meet all the developmental challenges the country faces today."

Preliminary estimates indicate India would need to spend around \$206 billion between 2015 and 2030 for implementing adaptation actions in agriculture, forestry, fisheries infrastructure, water resources and ecosystems, the submission said.

"India's climate actions have so far been largely financed from domestic resources. A substantial scaling up of the climate action plans would require greater resources...", said the statement, which was lodged with the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change.

A preliminary estimate suggests that at least \$2.5 trillion will be required for meeting India's climate change actions between now and 2030, it said.

Prime Minister [Narendra Modi met U.S. President Barack Obama](#) and France and Britain's leaders last month, and called for a climate change agenda that helps developing countries with access to finance and technology.

[Anti-rabies vaccine administered to pet dogs](#)

A pet dog being immunised against rabies in Erode on Tuesday.

Anti-rabies vaccine was administered to about 240 pet and community dogs in the district on Tuesday.

The vaccination was carried out by the City Corporation, Society for Prevention of Cruelty against Animals, Animal Husbandry Department and Coimbatore-based People for Animals. Over the next three days, 1,000 dogs will be immunised, official sources said.

The plan for immunising pets and community dogs against rabies was taken at a recent meeting of the SPCA chaired by the Collector.



The Animal Husbandry Department is into the process of strengthening the district unit of Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) with induction of more members and augmenting its finances.

At the meeting, the Joint Director of Animal Husbandry Department S. Palanichamy initiated a discussion on making cattle-sellers comply with the norms of transporting the animals and providing proper care. The SPCA was revived during August last year to ensure humane treatment of cattle, livestock and community dogs. The organisation was provided a building on the Erode Taluk Office premises to monitor the condition of cattle transported to and from cattle shandies, to rule out overloading and suffocation. The SPCA is also responsible to keep a tab on maintenance of cows donated by devotees to temples, and certify goshalas. The certification is essential to receive funding from Animal Welfare Board of India. SPCA members have to make sure that the sheep and cow are slaughtered with least pain and check the animals for diseases beforehand.

The SPCA is often criticised by animal lovers due to the continuing overloading of cattle brought to shandies at various locations in the district, including Karungalpalayam, Kanagapuram, Gobi Modachur, Perundurai, Seenapuram, Sivagiri, Melampadi, Sanisandai, Kavindapadi, Sathyamangalam, Siruvalur, Puliampatti, and Puduchandai Rules permit transport of only six grown cattle or 12 calves in a lorry with valid fitness certificate from veterinarian. The cattle must be provided with water and

food. But, the norms are not followed usually. Cattle purchased from the shandies are taken for culling to Kerala and Karnataka, without proper feeding and padding on floor with straw or coir.

NGOs promote vegetarian food among students

During a time when the nation is struggling with polar opinions on the consumption of beef, NGOs in the city have started promoting vegetarian food by organising events for school students.

At one such event organised by World Veg Council as part of World Vegetarian Day celebrations on Tuesday, hundreds of students from various schools participated in competitions, listened to lectures and received prizes for creativity in promoting vegetarian food items.

R. Yaksheeta, a student of class II in Vivekananda Vidyalaya, said she wanted to stop consuming non-vegetarian food. “I want to change to vegetarianism, now that I have understood the benefits of vegetarian food,” said Yaksheeta, on the stage as part of the event. “Many students were inspired by the speeches,” said M. Raju Kothari, a member of Rajasthan Association, Tamil Nadu.

Speakers claimed that research by various world-class universities showed that vegetarian food improved intelligence among children.

“We propagate awareness on the advantages of conserving land, water and biodiversity by promoting the cause of vegetarianism,” said Vijay Kumar Bafna, international vice-president of World Veg Council.

World Veg Council International president N. Tarachand Dugar said a university in the United Kingdom established the link between intelligence and food habits.

“Vegetarian food does not lack in nutrition. Pulses, cereals, vegetables and fruits rank high in the nutrition table. It may be surprising to note that eggs are not as nutritive as projected, ranking low in the nutrition table,” said Mr. Dugar.

“This is our message and mission. We deem it essential to spread awareness among the younger generation,” he said. Social Welfare Minister B. Valarmathi stressed the need to find eco-friendly modes of promoting food security.

Cultivation of medicinal plants to get a boost during Mysuru Dasara

Over 50,000 saplings are ready to be distributed



Saplings of medical plants are being grown for several weeks at the nursery of the Government Ayurveda College in Mysuru

In a bid to promote commercial cultivation of medicinal plants, over 50,000 saplings of several varieties of therapeutic plants, which had been carefully raised since over several weeks at the nursery maintained by the Mysuru-based Government Ayurveda Medical College, have been kept ready for distribution during Dasara.

The saplings, including at least 20,000 tree species, had been cultivated at Chandra Vana near Kukkarahalli Lake here.

This is perhaps for the first time in recent years that plants had been raised in such huge numbers for the promotion of commercial cultivation of medicinal plants.

Thanks to the Department of AYUSH, farmers from Mysuru and neighbouring districts can obtain unlimited number of saplings for free, if they produce copies of land records to the authorities.

“We spend about Rs. 25 for raising each sapling, but we are distributing each plant at Rs. 10 so that they are not wasted. But, farmers will get them for free,” said Satyanarayana Bhat, Principal, Government Ayurveda Medical College, Mysuru.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Dr. Bhat, who is also the member of Karnataka Medicinal Plants’ Authority, said saplings would be distributed from October 14 onwards, when the city is hosting the festivities.

The saplings can either be used for commercial cultivation or can be planted in gardens for home remedies by the locals, Dr. Bhat said.

“These plants have a lot of therapeutic value. If they are grown in our garden or neighbourhood, it will be useful for finding remedies to some ailments,” he explained.

Some institutions too have come forward to procure the saplings and plant them on their campuses, the college principal said.

Moolika Dasara

Meanwhile, the Government Ayurveda Medical College, the Department of Horticulture and the Karnataka State Medicinal Plants’ Authority have organised a farmers’ meet as part of Moolika Dasara which begins here on October 10.

Deputy Commissioner C. Shikha will inaugurate the event at Chandra Vana. Importantly, farmers and the manufacturers of Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani drugs will be brought on a common platform to ensure market linkage for promoting commercial cultivation.

Many valuable medicinal plants are used in the preparation of Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani drugs.

‘We need to cultivate medicinal plants locally’

Karnataka Medicinal Plants’ Authority member Satyanarayana Bhat said medicinal plants are at present are primarily sourced from the Western Ghats and eastern plains for drug preparation. Assam and Madhya Pradesh were the major sources of medicinal plants for herbal medicine manufacturers in the State, including those in Mysuru region, he told *The Hindu* on Tuesday.

Raw material

As commercial cultivation has not taken off on a big scale in the State, raw material was becoming expensive and quality resources had therefore becoming scarce, he said.

“If medicine manufacturers encourage commercial cultivation in their neighbourhood, engaging local farmers, they will ensure fresh raw materials, creating a win-win situation for both,” he said.

Seven species of seabirds spotted

Seven species of seabirds were recorded during the recent pelagic bird survey in the waters off the Azhikkal coast here conducted under the Malabar Natural History Society (MNHS) in association with the Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department.

The MNHS in a press release here on Tuesday said that the pelagic bird survey conducted on October 4 as part of the Forest and Wildlife Department's Green Partner Programme recorded the seven species of

seabirds which included the sighting of two Roseate terns. Noting that the sighting of the Roseate terns is significant, it said it is the third time that this species of tern has been recorded in the State.

The bird can be often confused with similar looking Common tern, the release added.

The survey team also saw a juvenile Masked Booby, a large seabird that fishes by plunging into the water. It could only sight a single Flesh-footed Shearwater, the release said adding that flocks of this species were a regular feature of the seas in the region in the previous years. The other seabirds sighted during the survey are Bridled terns, Arctic Skuas, Wilson's Storm-petrels and Swinhoe's Storm-petrels.

Prominent ornithologists Chris Bowden from the Royal Society for Protection of Birds, United Kingdom, Mike Prince from Bubo Listing of birds, Praveen J. and Dipu Karuthedathu were among those who participated in the bird survey. Seventeen bird enthusiasts from various parts of the country attended the survey.

The survey was co-ordinated by Jafer Palot and Sathyan Meppayur of the MNHS and K.E. Bijumon, Section Forest Officer, Social Forestry, here. Monitoring of seabirds in the State and other parts of south India has been carried out since 2010, the release said adding that so far 20 species of seabirds have been recorded from various parts.

Field inspection to decide fate of trees

A team of officials led by Chief Secretary Jiji Thomson will conduct a field inspection on Wednesday to decide on the number of trees that can be retained during the four-laning of the Kazhakuttam-Mukkola stretch of the NH-66 bypass.

The inspection has been planned as a meeting convened on Tuesday to discuss the issue failed to arrive at a consensus. The meeting was attended by Public Works Department secretary A.P.M. Mohammed Hanish, National

Highways Authority of India (NHAI) chief general manager V. Chinna Reddy, representatives of environmental organisations, and officials of various departments.

Mr. Thomson told the meeting that a good number of the 4,700 trees on the stretch would have to be removed for road development. It was estimated that at least 10 per cent could be retained and conserved. The inspection has been aimed at identifying such trees.

Officials of the NHAI informed the meeting that trees which were present along the central median could not be retained as per the guidelines of the Indian Roads Congress. This was primarily due to the risks associated with maintaining trees within the 45-m right of way.

The NHAI proposed to plant three times the number of trees that would have to be felled, sources said.

Mobile veterinary clinic service launched



Deputy Speaker M. Padma Devender Reddy at the launch of the mobile veterinary clinic service at Sangareddy in Medak district.-PHOTO: Mohd Arif

On the lines of 108 services – Pashu Rakshak- a service for cattle was launched in Medak recently. These vehicles were formally launched by Deputy Speaker M. Padma Devender Reddy, on October 2.

‘Pashu Rakshak,’ the mobile veterinary clinics were made available over a toll free call -1800-425-1383- from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The vehicle equipped with a veterinary surgeon, para- veterinarian and attendant along with required surgical equipment and would be stationed at Sangareddy (95151 08650), Narsapur (95151 08651), Zaheerabad (95151 08652) and Siddipet (95151 08653). If any farmer needs these services beyond the specified timings they can directly call the phone number of their respective divisions and get the services. These services can be used at remote areas and at places where veterinary clinics are not available. “For the first time we have introduced such service to benefit farmers who cannot bring their cattle to the veterinary clinics due to various reasons including lack of transport facility. In the case of any emergency the farmers can call the staff at the Pashu Rakhak vehicles to the numbers provided for each division and get services,” Dr. K. Laxma Reddy, Joint Director, Animal Husbandry, told *The Hindu*.



Express Recipes: How to make whole wheat chocolate chip cookies

Whole wheat chocolate chip cookies (Source: Ashima Goyal Siraj)

When it comes to gifting, I believe there is nothing better than homemade stuff, especially homemade sweets. These whole wheat chocolate chip cookies pack in the goodness of whole wheat flour, honey and chocolate. Something that can be eaten (and gifted) guilt free. I go half and half on sweetness with honey and brown sugar. Too much of honey makes the batter thinner than how I would like it to be.

To make every cookie the same size, I bake them in my muffin pan. They come out exactly the same size and perfect to be packed in a jar and ready to gift.



Another tip that I received when I had started to learn baking was to always use eggs and butter at room temperature. So I normally take them out of refrigerator 30 mins before starting any preparation.

Honey wholewheat chocolate chip cookies

Preparation Time: 20 mins|

Baking Time: 20 mins |

Makes ~20 small cookies

Ingredients

1/4 cup honey

1/2 cup brown sugar

100 gms unsalted butter,

softened 1 medium egg

1 tsp vanilla essence

1½ cup Wholewheat flour a pinch of salt

1/2 tsp baking soda

1/2 tsp baking powder

100 gms of dark chocolate bar chopped into chips

Method

* Beat together butter, sugar and honey with a cake beater until they are smooth and well combined.

* Add in the egg and vanilla essence. Beat again to combine.

* Sift together flour, salt, baking soda and baking powder. Add this dry mixture, 1/4th cup at a time, mixing well before adding the next one. It will be a slightly sticky dough but that's okay.

* Finally add in the chocolate chips and mix them evenly in the batter by just hand mixing.

* Preheat oven to 180°C (~350°F). Divide the dough into ~20 rounds and shape into cookies. Grease a muffin pan and place the cookies in each mould. Bake for 15 mins.

* Remove from oven on a cooling rack for 5 mins before taking the cookies out of the mould. Store in airtight jar when cooled down completely and enjoy.



Swear by your Paleo diet? Here's all that's wrong with it

Paleo vegan hybrid diet, research now suggests, is not the answer to all our dietary issues. (Shutterstock)

As if you were not already confused about what you should eat, here's one study that will make things more difficult for you. A recent theory has underpinned the Paleo diet, a high-protein, low-carbohydrate diet that has grown in popularity.

How exactly our brains, which take up about 2% of our body mass, but consume 25% of our energy, got so big is not known but one theory holds that with the invention of stone tools, we began scavenging for animals and started digesting their protein-rich meat easily and all of those calories gave our brain the surplus energy needed to grow larger, according to a report in *PRI*.



Refuting the idea that we should eat as our Paleolithic ancestors did, the new paper says meat doesn't hold the key to our large brains. It was the glucose in starches, like potatoes and tubers, cooked over a fire that allowed our brains to grow.

Glucose is the best most readily processed form of energy in our diet, says co-author Mark Thomas of University College London. "So that's what our Paleolithic ancestors would've wanted because without it, they're going to die."

Thomas argues that we started cooking with fire about 800,000 years ago, earlier than many scientists believed in the past. Cooking is very important as it has a profound effect on the ability to access the energy density in

starch-rich foods, Thomas says, adding that it also helped in evolving enzymes in our saliva that broke down cooked starches.

Disagreeing with the paper, the creators of the Paleo diet argue that carbohydrates (like starches) weren't necessary for the evolution of our brains. But Thomas draws a distinction between the Paleo diet, which he calls a "trademarked dietary regime," and academic research into how our ancestors ate, by saying that the Paleolithic period, which really means the period in which we made stone tools before farming, is a very long period and encompasses many periods and environments and ecologies, thus there was never one single Paleolithic diet.

He agrees with one of the central tenets of the Paleo diet though -- that we eat more carbohydrates than we need, but says the dietary issues of our Paleolithic ancestors were quite different, adding that people are still not clear exactly what they ate.

The study is published in *The Quarterly Review of Biology*.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

[Crocodile captured from agriculture field in Tamil Nadu](#)

Fire and rescue services personnel caught a five-foot long crocodile at Pullampadi in Trichy district of Tamil Nadu on Tuesday.

A farmer noticed the reptile in an agriculture field and alerted the fire and rescue services department.

The crocodile was found close to the Pullampadi water channel. According to the villagers, crocodiles enter the agriculture fields due to increased flow in the Kollidam river and the channels connecting it.

[Krishi Mitra for depressed farmers](#)

The district general hospital here has set up a Krishi Mitra cell to offer free counselling and medical treatment to farmers low on confidence and down with psychological ailments.

Civil surgeon Dr AA Raut, while inaugurating the psychological health week and remedy and guidance programme for stopping farmers' suicides, said the cell had been set up to treat the farmers who were in a psychologically broken state.

Psychologist Bhavana Purohit offered counselling to the farmers present and guided on how they could be weaned away from the thought of taking the extreme step.

"Our endeavour is to provide proper counselling to the farmers in grip of psychological disorders and restore their confidence with proper treatment. We have a team of psychologists posted at the cell to look after the patients," said Dr Raut.

[PAU has designs on you, Mr Farmer](#)

For protecting farmers from various skin diseases, especially breathing problems, they are prone to catch while crop harvesting, Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) has made protective clothing for wheat harvesters and pesticide applicators, which includes starched kurta, doubled layered gloves and various types of masks.

Experts from apparel and textile department of College of Home Science, PAU, said that farmers face a lot of skin-related and asthmatic problems, especially while they move for wheat harvesting.

Head, apparel and textile department, Dr Sandeep Bains said that the department has made a kit of protective gear. These include a starched kurta-pyjama and 3 types of masks. They are promoting the kit through kisan clubs and these were also put on display at the kisan mela held on PAU campus recently.

According to information, the starched kurta is designed for pesticide applicators. Starch acts as an eco-friendly barrier for pesticide contamination. Also, Chinese collars and elasticized cuffs prevent pesticide vapours to come in contact with the skin.

The three types of masks-scarf mask, cap with mask and beak mask-present in the kit protects wheat harvesters from inhaling micro wheat dust particles while harvesting and reduces breathing problems.

Officials from the department say that the kit is very useful for farmers and is available at the university at a cost of around Rs 750.

Gloves for Okra pluckers

Dr Sandeep Bains said that the department has also made protective gloves for Okra pluckers. She said Okra pluckers have to face a lot of problems as rashes appear on their hands. Further, she said that the double-layered gloves developed by the department protects them from rashes, protects against thorns and also facilitates them in plucking Okra

THE HINDU BusinessLine

Centre re-thinking order on auction route for bought-leaf units



The Centre is taking a re-look at its recent order that asked bought-leaf factories to mandatorily route 70 per cent of the annual produce through auctions, according to a Tea Board official.

The Ministry of Commerce had, in May, issued a notification to this effect under the Tea (Marketing) Control Amendment Order (TMCO), 2015.

Talking to newsmen on the sidelines of the annual general meeting of the Tea Association of India on Monday, S Soundararajan, Director – Tea Development, Tea Board, said that the review of the order is under consideration.

“Meeting between the people concerned in the Ministry and stakeholders of the tea industry has been done and the (TMCO) order is under review,” he said.

According to him, in an effort to simplify the procedures, the Board has already abolished the compulsory notarised declaration over cultivation practices, standards and management of personnel from tea gardens. This is replaced by self-attested declarations.

Relooking the TMC0 order

Earlier at the AGM, Vijay Dhandhanian, President, Tea Association of India, rooted for 're-look' into the order.

“The Provision of Tea Marketing Control Order in the matter of pricing of green leaf may perhaps require a re-look. The probable anomalies that would rise in the stipulation of offering 70 per cent of the produce by the bought leaf factories in auction centres under the order have been raised before the Tea Board,” he said.

The present auction system, according to Dhandhanian, is incapable of handling such huge inflow of tea.

Jute bags for packaging

Jute Commissioner Subrata Gupta, who was present on the occasion, said the option of using jute bags to package tea could be explored in the coming days.

Talking to newsmen, Gupta said, “food grade packing material” for coffee and cocoa has already been developed and options can be explored to extend the same to tea.

Under the prevalent Jute Packaging Act, 1987, the use of jute bags is mandatory for packing foodgrains and other materials weighing beyond 25 kg (a package).

Tea Board working on modalities for specialty sales

The Tea Board is working on the modalities to revive its support to the Nilgiri winter specialty tea auctions of Nilgiri Planters' Association (NPA).

Fiscal support

“These speciality tea auctions had fetched high prices for quality tea and created favourable image for Nilgiri teas. The Board had extended fiscal support for the conduct of these auctions in the past. Last two years, these auctions were not held for want of fiscal support. The Board is interested in

promoting such high quality teas. We are working on reviving our fiscal support,” Tea Board Executive Director C Paulrasu told *BusinessLine*.



“We have appealed for the revival of the speciality auctions and are waiting for Tea Board’s concurrence. These auctions had helped Nilgiri specialty tea producers fetch over ₹10,000 a kg”, NPA’s immediate past Chairman KC Ponnappa said.

Replanting subsidy

Meanwhile, Paulrasu used the 124th AGM of NPA to ask planters to increasingly utilise the funds available under various schemes of 12th Plan to improve their field and factories.

“Nearly 37 per cent of the Indian tea bushes are now older than 50 years while in most countries, the fields are filled with young, productive plants. To gain global competitiveness, I urge planters to replace old bushes with new plants for which the Board gives replantation subsidy of ₹80,000 per hectare. We have also been assured by Nilgiris district administration that planters will be allowed to use earthmovers for this purpose on a case-by-case basis,” he said.

“After we introduced the Plant Protection Code, overseas buyers are showing greater interest to import Indian tea. We need to maintain high quality standards. The Board is implementing stricter quality norms to ensure that,” Paulrasu noted.

Exports, GI tag

On export front, Ponnappa said that Tea Board has confirmed that Nilgiri Orthodox Logo is registered both as Certification Trade Mark and Geographical Indication (GI). “I have urged our members to get required licence from Tea Board and get registered as authorised users to help Nilgiri origin teas receive enhanced marketability. We have appealed to Tea Board to aggressively promote Orthodox GI,” he said.

Till August, tea production of NPA members has risen to 10.75 million kg (mkg) from 10.09 mkg last year.

Arabian Sea may spin up a storm during the week

India Met Department has put out a watch for a low-pressure area in the Arabian Sea around the Lakshadweep Island off the Karnataka-Kerala coast.

Forming of 'low' during this time of the year when the southwest monsoon has exited the mainland or is in the process of doing so, needs special watch.

Delayed withdrawal

This year, the monsoon withdrawal has been delayed with most of northern part of India having been brought under the grip of drier northwesterly winds.

In the South, the monsoon has been offering some resistance to the invading northwesterlies, and the 'low' will form in the sea where the two winds converge.

According to most weather models, the 'low' will intensify in strength and graduate to become a monsoon depression/cyclone off the Karnataka-Konkan coast.

This transformation is expected to take place over the next two-three days and into the weekend, as per projections by these models.

October cyclones

Given the transition period of southwest monsoon to northeast monsoon, October is a month that has witnessed tropical cyclones in the Arabian Sea/Bay of Bengal.

The Indian region gets affected by cyclones in two different seasons - pre-monsoon (April and May) and post-monsoon (October and November).

This is a unique feature of the geographic region and increases its vulnerability. It is the increased wind shear that prevents cyclone formation during a monsoon.

During the monsoon, the winds change in direction and speed with height producing 'shear' and this unsettles building storm structures.

This is reversed during the transition period when wind shear gets reduced, allowing the storms to build their structures in a proper fashion and grow in strength.

Domestic raw cashew output dips on unseasonal rains



The raw cashew nut (RCN) production in India slipped last fiscal and continued to stay much below the requirement of the industry, while the global demand is growing at over 10 per cent per annum.

“Cashew markets are growing at 10 per cent and more not only in India but also in the US, Europe and other countries,” Shahal Hassan Musaliar, Chairman, Cashew Export Promotion Council (CEPCI) said at the Council’s Diamond Jubilee function held here recently. To cope up with the global demand, significant efforts are needed to be taken to increase raw cashew nut production to keep the industry self-sufficient, he said.

Meanwhile, sources at the Cashew and Cocoa Development Directorate under the Union Ministry of Agriculture told *BusinessLine* that cashew production in the country in 2014-15 slipped to 7,25,420 tonnes from 7,36,560 tonnes in 2013-14.

They attributed the fall in output to “unseasonal rains during the fruit setting period.” Total area under the crop increased to 10,27,200 hectares last fiscal from 10,07,695 hectares in 2013-14.

Sasi Varma, Executive Director and Secretary, CEPCI said, “we need to choose the right blend of technology and ensure Indian cashew processing has the best food safety standards.”

Coffee exports flat at 3 lakh tonnes



India's coffee exports in the marketing year ending September 2015 were almost flat both in volumes and value terms.

Shipments stood at 3.016 lakh tonnes (lt) for the coffee year 2014-15 (October- September), marginally lower than 3.032 lt in corresponding period the previous coffee year.

According to the data released by Coffee Board, the shipments were up marginally in value terms at \$817 million (₹5,160 crore) in coffee year 2014-15 against \$807 million (₹4,920 crore) in the corresponding period the previous year. Also, the per unit realisation was up 5.4 per cent at ₹1.71 lakh/tonne (₹1.622 lakh/tonne).

Higher domestic prices, a declining trend in production of Arabicas – the mild and premium variety, coupled with devaluation of currencies of major producers such as Brazil and Vietnam, which made their exports competitive, have influenced the shipments from India, sources said. India's coffee output touched a record 3.27 lt for the season ending September on favourable weather conditions despite the impact of white stem borer infestation on arabicas.

Further, the forthcoming crop size for the year 2015-16 starting October is seen rising to about 3.55 lt, according to the early forecasts made by the Board.

However, coffee exports in the first nine months of the current calendar year were marginally up at 2.46 lt for the January-September period against 2.44 lt in the corresponding period last year. Though the green coffee shipments are trailing at 1.96 lt in the first nine months against 2.04 lt in the same period last year, the increase in shipments of re-exports at 49,891 tonnes against 39,667 tonnes, have boosted the total exports for the period.

Cardamom rules steady as demand matches supply

The small cardamom markets stayed steady last week despite heavy arrivals on matching demand and supply at auctions held in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Total arrivals were at 840 tonnes even though there were only 10 auctions in place of 12 last week. During previous week arrivals stood at 683 tonnes.

Both domestic and export buyers were buying actively and that has kept the market steady, PC Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC, told *BusinessLine* .

He said north Indian buyers were covering probably for the ensuing festivals such as Dasara, Diwali, etc.

Exporters were also active and bought an estimated 150 tonnes, trade sources in Bodi said.

The individual auction average remained steady and vacillated between Rs. 625 and Rs. 670 a kg.

At the Cardamom Growers Association (CPA) Santhanpara auction today in Bodinayakannur, arrivals increased to 70.1 tonnes from 56.8 tonnes the previous Monday. The maximum price was at Rs. 840. The auction average today slipped to Rs. 613.80 from Rs. 632.24 a kg the previous Monday. Total arrivals during the season up to October 3 stood at 6,794 tonnes against 3,257 tonnes during the same day last year. Sales were at 6,631 tonnes and 3,188 tonnes respectively.

The auction average was at Rs. 650.15 (Rs. 802) a kg.

Prices of graded varieties (Rs. /kg): 8mm bold good colour 940-970; 7-8 mm 720-740; 6-7 mm 630-640; below 6 mm: 590-600.

Domestic demand sweetens sugar

Sugar prices at mill and *naka* level continued their uptrend with further rise of Rs. 70-90 a quintal while at spot market level it ruled steady.

On hopes of export possibilities and higher domestic demand, producers started offering the commodity at higher rates. Arrivals at Vashi market increased to 35-36 truck loads and local dispatches remained at 58-60 loads.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs. 2,680-2,812 (2,690-2,820) and M-grade Rs. 2,770-2,942 (2,792-2,922). *Naka* delivery rates: S-grade Rs. 2,650-2,700 (2,550-2,650) and M-grade Rs. 2,750-2,800 (2,670-2,780).

Oilmeal exports up 4% in September

Oilmeal exports increased marginally by four per cent last month to 1.13 lakh tonnes (lt) against 1.09 lt reported in the same period last year. The rise in meal export was largely due to better availability of soyabean and rapeseed as farmers offloaded their crop before the start of next season in November.

However, shipments in the first six months of this fiscal was down 29 per cent at 7.23 lt (10.24 lt), according to the Solvent Extractors' Association of India data released on Tuesday.

Oil mills have reduced soyabean crushing in the last few months due to high prices of the bean in the domestic market and this has affected availability of both oil and meal, said BV Mehta, Director, SEA. Export of soyameal hit a record low of 768 tonnes in August but improved to 6,886 tonnes in September. In the first half of this fiscal, soyameal shipments were down 61 per cent to 42,743 tonnes (1.11 lt).

All the major buyers including South Korea, Vietnam and Oman increased their purchase from India. Between April and September this year, South Korea imported 4.81 lakh tonnes (4.78 lt) of oilmeal including 2.42 lt of rapeseed meal, 2.38 lt of castor meal and 905 tonnes of soyameal.

Vietnam imports were up at 1.32 lt (1.08 lt) consisting of 392 tonnes of rapeseed meal, 480 tonnes of soyameal and 131,272 tonnes of de-oiled rice bran extraction. Thailand and Taiwan imported 17,951 tonnes (94,009 tonnes) and 21,094 tonnes (39,528 tonnes).

Business Standard

Sugar up 24% on deficit forecast

[Sugar](#) prices have jumped 24 per cent in the past two months on global forecasts of shortage during the next crushing season.

Global tracking agencies have forecast sugar supply to be deficient in 2015-16. The International Sugar Organisation has forecast a deficit of 2.5 million

tonnes and the US Department of Agriculture reckons the shortage will be 3.8 million tonnes.

India, too, has cut its production forecast to 27 million tonnes in 2015-16, 2 per cent lower than last year.



The benchmark Sugar M variety is trading at Rs 2,856 a quintal at the [Vashi Agricultural Produce Market Committee](#) near Mumbai against Rs 2,307 a quintal in early August.

Sugar in the US is up 21 per cent to 13.63 cents per pound from 11.27 cents per pound on August 1. Global sugar prices have risen 27.50 per cent since September 1.

"Sugar prices have risen in India on hopes that mills will be able to export this season," said Abinash Verma, director- general of the Indian Sugar Mills' Association.

Trade sources said Brazil, the world's sugar largest producer, had changed its fuel import policy due to a sharp depreciation in its currency. The Brazilian real has slumped over 30 per cent in two months, prompting the government to encourage production of ethanol from sugarcane for blending with petrol.

Brazilian government sources said hydrated ethanol sales jumped by 45 per cent between January and August this year over last year. In August alone, hydrated ethanol sales jumped 56 per cent in Brazil.

"The government recognises the problems faced by sugar mills. So the permission for four million tonnes of exports will work alongside the subsidy as the industry is not in a position to incur losses on sugar exports," said Narendra Murkumbi, managing director, Shree Renuka Sugars.

Sugar mills have decided to finalise export tenders at a notional loss of Rs 6,500 per tonne of raw sugar and Rs 3,500 a tonne of white sugar. The government's sugar export subsidy has been of no use in the last two years as it was announced in the middle of the crushing season by which time mills sign contract for local sales.

Sugar mills plan not to wait for the government to announce the subsidy this

GLOBAL SUGAR BALANCE SHEET (mn tonnes)			
Research firms	Production estimates	Consumption estimates	Surplus/deficit
2014-15			
Czarnikow	187.1	184.1	(+)3.0
F O Licht	182.6	178.7	(+)2.1
ISO	173.8	169.4	(+)3.4
Kingsman	182.6	179.2	(+)3.4
USDA	174.3	170.6	(+)0.3
2015-16			
Czarnikow	186.0	187.7	(-)1.7
ISO	170.9	173.4	(-)2.5
Kingsman	-	-	(-)3.2
USDA	169.6	173.4	(-)3.8

Source : European Commission

year as experience shows the price fell Rs 9,000 a tonne during the three months they waited for the announcement.

The prevailing price, however, is still Rs 4,000 a tonne lower than the average cost of production.

Pepper output likely to fall by half on erratic rains

About 70% of India's pepper consumption is met through local supply

Erratic rain has hit black pepper production. Latest estimates from producing states show in the harvest season beginning December, the output will be 50 per cent lower. Estimates by growers and dealers from Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu indicates overall production will stand at 30,000-35,000 tonnes, against 70,0000 tonnes in the last season.

‘This shortfall will definitely take the market to a much higher level next year,’ said Jojan Malayil of Bafna Enterprises, a leading pepper export house. Currently, prices stand at Rs 625-650/kg; analysts expect this to rise to Rs 700-750.

About 70 per cent of India's pepper consumption is met through local supply.

PEPPER PRODUCTION IN INDIA

Year	Quantity (in tonnes)
2010-11	48,000
2010-12	43,000
2010-13	65,000
2010-14	37,000
2010-15	70,000

Source: Spices Board

Globally, overall output is likely to be steady, as reports from Vietnam indicate higher production. Jazvinder Singh, an analyst based in Vietnam, said production in Vietnam would rise due to better weather conditions and an increase in acreage. According to estimates, the overall output is expected at 160,000 tonnes next year, against 140,000 tonnes this year. As of now, Vietnam is importing from Indonesia. Singh estimates carry-forward stock in Vietnam at about 8,000 tonnes.

In Indonesia, where harvesting has been completed, the output stands at around 70,000 tonnes, compared with the last season's 52,000 tonnes.

Dealers from Kattappana and Sultan Battery in Kerala said growers weren't releasing carry-over stocks, as they expected prices to rise significantly next year.

Growers said low rain during the [monsoon](#) this year had hit pepper output. According to Benny Panikkankudy, a farmer, production might fall as much as 70 per cent in some areas in the Western Ghats. Reports from Coorg in Karnataka also forecast a steep fall in production.

Analysts say the average rainfall this monsoon season was 14 per cent lower this year. In Kerala, the figure stood at 24 per cent. In April-June this year, India's pepper exports stood at 10,750 tonnes, valued at Rs 636 crore, 148 per cent more in volume terms and 201 per cent in value terms compared to the corresponding period of 2014-15.