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THE HINDU

Commodity prices

Bittergourd is turning very pricey this year. The price of this vegetable has surged over 28 per cent in the last year and is also up over 12 per cent in the last one month. A sharp decline in arrivals is a major factor that triggered the price rise. In Chennai, bittergourd is selling for ₹36 per kg, up from ₹28 per kg a year ago.

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	34
Gram Dal	1 kg	75	50
Tur Dal	1 kg	200	83
Urad Dal	1 kg	190	90
Moong Dal	1 kg	130	96
Masoor Dal	1 kg	100	75
Sugar	1 kg	32	34
Milk	1 ltr	37	27
Ground Nut Oil	1 ltr	125	104

Commodity	Quantity	Now	Year ago
Sun flower Oil	1 ltr	92	85
Gur (Jaggery)	1 kg	50	50
Tea	1 kg	220	220
Salt	1 kg	18	17
Lime	1 kg	70	80
Apple	1 kg	140	140
Papaya	1 kg	30	25
Pineapple	1 kg	50	40
Pomegranate	1 kg	160	120
Sapota	1 kg	50	40
Banana	1 kg	30	30
Bitter Gourd	1 kg	36	28
Brinjal	1 kg	36	32
Cabbage	1 kg	20	16
Cauli Flower	1 kg	50	40
Garlic	1 kg	140	120
Ginger	1 kg	100	120

Commodity	Quantity	Now	Year ago
Chilly	1 kg	32	38
Onion	1 kg	50	30
Potato	1 kg	24	40
Tomato	1 kg	32	20

*Source: Nathan Enterprises & Kovai Pazhamudir Nilayam, Chennai.

States sell subsidised pulses to hold price

Following the Centre's appeal to States to supply tur dal at reasonable rates, several States have begun selling pulses at prices much lower than the market rates, either through government agencies or the Public Distribution System.

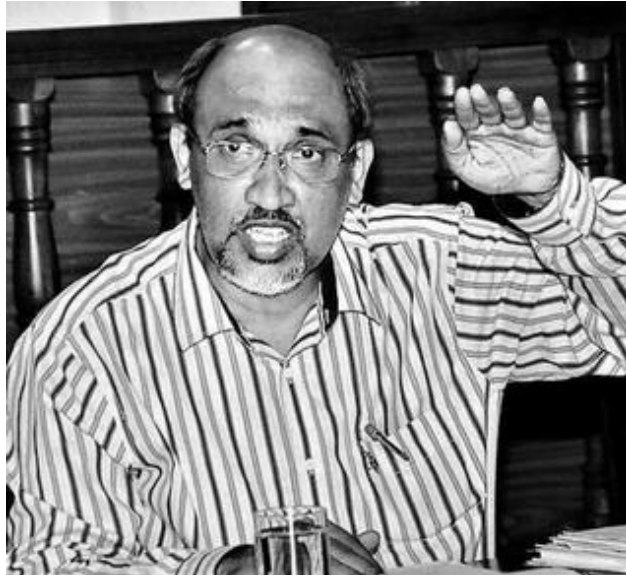
The Tamil Nadu government is selling 1 kg of urad dal and imported lentils each to a consumer at Rs. 30 per kg; Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are supplying 1 kg of tur at Rs. 40 per kg to those Below Poverty Line and Antyodaya Anna Yojna beneficiaries under the PDS.

The Haryana government has directed the Haryana Agriculture Marketing Federation to procure pulses from the open market and sell them at Rs. 50 per kg through its 80 centres. Under the dal-roti scheme, the State is providing 2.5 kg of chana to people Below Poverty Line and Antyodaya Anna Yojna beneficiaries. In Himachal, chana and masoor dals are being sold at Rs. 50 a kg through PDS shops.

After talking to millers, importers and chambers of commerce, the governments of Gujarat, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand have decided to make tur available through the PDS at prices from Rs. 120 to Rs. 140 per kg. The open market price is Rs.178 per kg.

According to government sources, Gujarat millers will supply tur dal at Rs. 135 per kg, which will be sold at Rs. 145 per kg in the retail market.

State for arecanut board to support growers



Chairman of the Karnataka Agriculture Price Commission, T.N. Prakash Kammardi, addressing the media in Mangaluru on Monday.

The government has formed a technical committee to examine the proposal to establish an arecanut board following recommendations by the Karnataka Agriculture Price Commission, said commission chairman T.N. Prakash Kammardi.

Considering the turbulent situation arecanut growers are facing, there is a need to have an institutional set up to address the issues, Mr. Kammardi told reporters on Monday. Though various cooperative societies have ensured relief to growers, that is not enough especially with regard to research, arecanut import, and pricing.

The technical committee constituted by the State government comprises the Vice-Chancellor of University of Horticulture Sciences, Bagalkot, as the chairman, with officials from the Horticulture Department, CPCRI and arecanut cooperatives as members.

Earlier, Mr. Kammardi held a meeting with farmers, cooperatives and officials of agriculture and horticulture departments in the city. He said the commission held elaborate consultations with stakeholders in arecanut farming, including farmers, cooperatives, scientists, traders, and government officials, before concluding that there was a need for the Board.

The Board should be set up through an Act of Parliament with all-India jurisdiction on the lines of the boards for coffee, rubber, tobacco, and spices. It should be under the control of Union Ministry of Commerce with the Government of India and the Government of Karnataka being equal stakeholders, he said.

Expressing concern over the dwindling farm holdings under paddy cultivation in Dakshina Kannada District, Mr. Kammardi said a team of officials and farmers from the district would be sent to Kerala to study the special package offered for rain-fed paddy cultivation.

National pulses policy needed

Karnataka Agriculture Price Commission Chairman T.N. Prakash Kammardi on Monday said there was a need to formulate a national pulses policy for proper balance of cultivation of different pulses.

Farmers appear to be keen on growing short-duration pulses such as Bengal gram and black gram, instead of toor dal, as a result of which areas under toor dal cultivation have considerably reduced, he said.

Farmer leaders meet Jayalalithaa at Kodanad

Representatives of farmers' associations on Monday met Chief Minister Jayalalithaa at Kodanad seeking support for their proposed fast on November 4 to assert the rights of the State in the Cauvery river water dispute, besides pressing for a charter of 27 other demands.

Representatives of the All Farmers Association Co-ordination Committee, including president P.R. Pandian, general secretary Arjunan and other office-bearers, arrived at Kodanad on Monday. Speaking to reporters later,

Mr. Pandian said that the Chief Minister assured them of her support and had also said that she would soon announce the list of AIADMK office-bearers who would take part in the fast. The other demands included a separate Ministry for Irrigation, and withdrawal of sales tax on agricultural produce and related products.

‘Karnataka will go ahead with dam’

Former Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy has said that his State would go ahead with the construction of a dam across Cauvery at Mekedatu to address the drinking water needs of seven districts around the area.

Talking to reporters on Monday, Mr. Kumaraswamy who was here to inaugurate a mutt, said: “We are constructing the dam not for agriculture purpose but to meet the drinking water needs of people of six to seven districts in the area.” People living in the district near Mekedatu were facing drinking water problem every year and the government could not supply them water even by digging bore wells, he said.

The dam would be built without causing any harm to Tamil Nadu, he said adding that Karnataka released Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu whenever there was good rainfall. “There is no necessity for us to keep the water when there is excess water.”

The government had released water to Tamil Nadu in the last four or five years without any problem as there was excess water. However, this year, there was deficit rainfall and the government was finding it difficult even to cater to the drinking water needs of Bengaluru city, he said. The Cauvery waters dispute tribunal had given the award, but the government was not in a position to release the September-October quota of 45 tmc ft of water to Tamil Nadu, he said. He said the Ganga-Cauvery River link project was 100 per cent necessary. His party would fully support the project, he added.

H.D. Kumaraswamy says the Mekedatu dam will be built without causing any harm to Tamil Nadu

Fisheries to be part of Krishi Mela in Raichur this year

P.M. Salimath, Vice-Chancellor, University of Agricultural Sciences Raichur, has said that fisheries sector will be included in the Krishi Mela for the first time this year.

He told presspersons on Monday that the mela would be a four-day affair from this year, which would be held on the university campus in Raichur for four days from December 27.

Filling posts

Prof. Salimath said that the government had given a green signal to fill 855 teaching and non-teaching posts in the university and a notification would be issued soon as per the reservation norms of Article 371(J) of the Constitution.

He said that the administrative building of the university constructed at a cost of Rs. 24 crore was nearing completion and it would be inaugurated during the Krishi Mela. Prof. Salimath said that the university had decided to invite Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to inaugurate the building.

National Seed Congress from today

The three-day National Seed Congress will begin at the Hyderabad International Convention Centre on Tuesday to deliberate latest challenges of global seed scenario and cutting edge technologies in the Indian seed industry.

Addressing a press conference on Monday, Agriculture Minister Pocharam Srinivas Reddy said the Congress will be attended by about 600 participants from agricultural universities, government agencies and seed sector.

There will be seven technical sessions and a panel discussion to promote Telangana as the seed bowl of the country. An exclusive session for seed farmers of Telangana will be organised.

Tur dal sales dip as price goes through the roof

Tur dal sales have registered 60 per cent dip in Vijayawada.

The government will supply tur dal to white ration card holders at Rs. 50 a kg.- Gandham Chandrudu, Joint Collector

He spiralling price of *tur dal* has raised the hackles of shopkeepers over the last few weeks, with sales registering 60 per cent dip in city markets, forcing consumers to shun the commodity.

The price of the commodity was around Rs. 80 a kg a month ago, but it has now touched Rs. 200, forcing consumers to say no to it.

While majority of consumers think twice before buying *tur dal*, hoteliers are using red lentils owing to its competitive price. “We have never seen such an uncertain situation in the last three decades. If the government fails to take concrete measures, the price will go up further. The festival will also contribute to escalation of price,” says Prakash Rao, a grocery store owner at Kaleswararao market.

Shopkeepers cite low production owing to crop failure as one of the reasons for the steep increase in prices. Another factor is hoarding.

On its part, the government has placed an indent for 1,700 metric tonnes of *tur dal* out of 5,000 metric tons that were imported by the Centre in view of the shortage of the commodity in the market. This was confirmed by Union Minister of Urban Development M. Venkaiah Naidu. At a review meeting on Sunday, the district administration decided to constitute special teams to crack the whip on hoarders. Teams, comprising officials from Revenue, Market and Civil Supplies departments, will conduct random checking to contain hoarding.

“As of now, we have not received complaints about hoarding, but customers request us not to allow shopkeepers to collect exorbitant charges,” says Joint Collector Gandham Chandrudu. He adds that the government will supply tur

dal to white ration card holders at Rs. 50 a kg. According to him, the administration has stocked 700 metric tonnes of the commodity to meet the growing demand.

The government will supply tur dal to white ration card holders at Rs. 50 a kg. - Gandham Chandrudu, Joint Collector

Rabi crop sowing operations begin

As per details given by the Ministry of Agriculture sowing of rabi crops has started in some parts of the country.

The total area sown under rabi crops as on October 23, 2015, has risen to 28.20 lakh hectares as compared to 17.36 lakh hectare last year at this time.

Wheat has been sown/transplanted in 0.20 lakh hectares, pulses in 9.83 lakh hectares, coarse cereals in 16.57 lakh hectares and oilseeds in 1.60 lakh hectares.

— **S. Varadharajan**

Training in feed preparation

A free one-day training programme on preparation of feed for rearing of desi bird for meat and egg purpose will be conducted at Krishi Vigyan Kendra on the Veterinary College and Research Institute premises here on November 2. A release from B. Mohan, programme coordinator, said that the programme would help in preparation of own feed.

Farmers, members of self-help groups, youth and interested can come in person on working days or register through phone numbers 04286 266345, 266244 and 266650. For registration, mentioning of Aadhaar number was mandatory, the release added.

Poultry farmers asked to test feed, water

Poultry farmers in the district are asked to test the feed and drinking water

before feeding to the birds.

A release from the Agromet Field Unit of Veterinary College and Research Institute here and Regional Meteorological Centre, Chennai, said that post-mortem observations in the birds brought for diagnostic purpose at the Poultry Disease Diagnosis and Surveillance Laboratory in the institute revealed that the death of birds were due to E. coli infection.

Hence, the farmers were advised to test the feed and drinking water for E. coli at the laboratory and use appropriate sanitizers to control the infections.

The release also said that conditions were becoming favourable for commencement of northeast monsoon from October 27 and normal level of rainfall was expected.

Hence, farmers were asked to adopt rainwater harvesting methods to preserve water.

Water hyacinth to be cleared shortly



Thick growth of hyacinth has been hampering flow of irrigation water through the Noolar channel near Tirunallar in Karaikal district.— Photo: B.Velankanni Raj

Thick growth of water hyacinth has been hampering the flow of water for irrigation in the Noolar channel hindering agricultural operation in a few commune panchayats in the district The thick growth has been spreading its roots stagnating the water all through the channel.

Water through the channel irrigates fields in a cluster of villages including Tirunallar, Muppethankudi, Meyvaicherry, Thenpidagai and Thethankudi. Local residents said that the closure of shutters resulted in stagnation of water in the area and subsequently foul smell.

The Noolar channel separates the PWD road leading to Tirunallar from Karaikal on the one side and a number of residential colonies on the other. Residents complain that the channel was noted for copious water throughout the year in the past. The growth of water hyacinth testified to its pollution.

At an official meeting convened by the Collector E. Vallavan, it was decided to clear the hyacinth so as to facilitate free flow of water for irrigation.

Four new crab species found in Kerala



Researchers at the Department of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries, University of Kerala, have reported the discovery of four new species of crab from the Kerala coast, highlighting the crustacean diversity in the State.

The discovery of three hermit crabs has been recorded as part of a collaborative research project by A. Biju Kumar, head of the department; R. Reshmi, research scholar, and Tomoyuki Komai of the Natural History Museum and Institute, Chiba, Japan. The findings have been published in *Zootaxa*, the international journal of taxonomy.

The first of the new hermit crab species named *Paguristes luculentus* was collected off the coast of Kollam. It represents the ninth of the genus known from Indian waters. The species name *luculentus* (meaning colourful) refers to the livid living colour of the crustacean.

The second species *Diogenes canaliculatus* is light brown or tan and named after the longitudinal furrows on the outer surface of the arm of the left chelate leg.

The narrow bodied animal lives inside a shell shaped like an elephant tusk. Both the hermit crabs belong to the family Diogenidae, which are left handed hermits because the left claw is larger.

Collected from Neendakara, Kollam, the third species *Pagurus spinosior* belongs to another hermit crab family Paguridae known as right handed crabs and is tan in colour. The name *spinosior* refers to the strong armature on the clawed legs of the species.

A new species of pinnotherid crab, *Afropinnotheres ratnakara* was found inside the brown mussel (*Perna perna*) at Kovalam. The species was named *ratnakara* which means Indian Ocean in Sanskrit, as the genus was reported for the first time from the Indian Ocean.

Ubiquitous animals

Hermit crabs are ubiquitous animals often not considered to be ‘true’ crabs as they lack an external shell on their soft abdomen which leaves them vulnerable to predators. To protect themselves, they live in abandoned gastropod (snail) shells and often select larger shells as they grow up. Their last two pairs of legs are small and modified and, along with their uropods (appendages at the end of the abdomen), are used to clamp onto the internal whorls of the shell.

More than 40 species of hermit crabs were documented from the Kerala coast during the research project.

The University of Kerala is finalising a memorandum of agreement with Prof. Peter Ng Kee Lin, Head of the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum, Singapore, for a detailed study of the biogeography of crustaceans of Indian coastal waters.

Long-term strategy to help farm sector: Venkaiah Naidu

Union Minister M. Venkaiah Naidu and Telangana Finance Minister Eatala Rajender felicitating Vadde Sobhanadreeswara Rao with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 11th anniversary celebrations of 'Rythu Nestham' in Hyderabad. —Photo: Nagara Gopal

A team comprising Ministers, officials is on the job, he says.

Union Minister for Urban Development M. Venkaiah Naidu and Telangana Finance Minister Eatala Rajender on Friday said only an unstinted focus and multi-pronged long-term strategy would usher in improvements in the farm sector and help bring down suicides by farmers.

Mr. Naidu said that in the first year, the priority of the Centre and Prime Minister Narendra Modi was to revive the economy, followed by improving infrastructure, followed by a focus on the agriculture sector. A high-level team comprising Ministers, officials, bankers and scientists was already on the job, especially working out a crop income insurance scheme and issuing soil health cards.

He was speaking after giving away the I.V. Subba Rao Lifetime Achievement Award to former Agriculture Minister Vadde Sobhanadreeswara Rao and Special Recognition Award to former Chief General Manager of NABARD-Andhra Pradesh P. Mohanaiah and 43 awards to progressive farmers, farm scientists, extension officers, journalists and media houses. Those present included Deputy Speaker of the AP Assembly Mandali Buddha Prasad, Yarlaggadda Lakshmi Prasad, Chairman, Kisan Khet Maazdoor Congress, M. Kodanda Reddy, Special Chief Secretary-AP, T. Vijayakumar.



Maneka kin V M Singh to launch Kisan Party today

In the past, the leader has held several agitations, taken up sugarcane farmers' issues, and filed petitions in the courts on behalf of the farmers.

With eyes set on the 2017 Assembly polls, farmer leader V M Singh will Tuesday formally announce the formation of his political outfit — Kisan Party — in Lucknow and then follow it up with a massive farmers’ rally on December 23 in Delhi. The rally will also mark former prime minister Choudhary Charan Singh’s 113th birth anniversary.

V M Singh, a former MLA who has unsuccessfully contested [Lok Sabha](#) elections on several occasions, is hopeful that he would be able to grab the “space left vacant” by Bhartiya Kisan Union and the declining popularity of Jat leader Choudhary Ajit Singh.

“We have come in touch with at least 50 lakh household in the past two decades. If every household has four votes on an average, this means that we have the backing of two crore voters,” Singh explains his political calculations.

He, however, added that he “would not ask for the votes.” “We have helped them (the farmers) in their struggle. Now we would appeal to them to give us political power to change the scenario,” Singh told [The Indian Express](#).

In the past, the leader has held several agitations, taken up sugarcane farmers’ issues, and filed petitions in the courts on behalf of the farmers.

Spelling out the reasons to form a political outfit, Singh said that agriculture, and therefore farmers’ issues, never forms the agenda of any political parties who, he alleged, “divide people on religious lines”.

“All issues concerning the farmers are hidden behind this Hindu-Muslim issue. We are appealing to farmers to shed this religious and caste agenda and come forward for their rights.”

The leader claimed that nearly five crore youths have left the farming background to seek menial jobs. “We want to bring them back, their respect and pave way so that they can return to farming. Rural sector needs strengthening and people will revert to agriculture.”

In the present scenario, Singh claims that no other party has touched farmers’ lives as has his organisation, Rashtriya Kisan Mazdoor Sangathan. “There is no comparison between us and BKU. They are nowhere. Rakesh Tikait lost miserably and Ajit Singh too has lost appeal. We want to tap all the space left vacant,” he said.

Related to Union minister [Maneka Gandhi](#), Singh holds a considerable following in the western region and Rohilkhand areas in the state.

Nutrition for kids

Why early life investment matters, and what we should do about it.



Malnutrition rates for India are extremely high, with about 38.4 per cent of children being stunted and 46 per cent underweight (National Family Health Survey, 2005-06).

With the success in reducing child mortality, the challenge before India is to safeguard early-life conditions in order to prevent long-run loss in welfare for individuals and the economy. Malnutrition rates for India are extremely high, with about 38.4 per cent of children being stunted and 46 per cent underweight (National Family Health Survey, 2005-06). There is an emerging consensus that early childhood represents a critical period for the formation of cognitive and non-cognitive skills that affect long-term wellbeing. Several recent studies examine the long-term effects of general nutritional deprivation at critical periods, starting in-utero till the first two years of life. The findings indicate that long-run well-being is highly sensitive to the environmental conditions experienced early in life.

The new economics of the lifecycle recognises that childhood is a multistage process where early investments feed into later investments. The effects of poor growth until the age of two are irreversible for an important set of adult outcomes, including not only physical growth and disease resilience, but also education and economic productivity. Any shock during early childhood can prove costly, not just in the short run but also in terms of lifetime skill formation.

Increased climatic variability poses special challenges for child nutrition, especially for subsistence farmers depending on rain-fed agriculture. Given how dependent rural lives are on weather conditions, a rainfall shock is likely to affect household income due to a reduction in agricultural production, as well as food availability, which, in turn, affects the nutritional outcomes of children. Households often have to revert to suboptimal coping mechanisms, like taking children out of school or deferring healthcare expenditure.

Additionally, in the context of developing countries, child health shocks are likely to interact. For example, a child who is malnourished may be less able to fight off or recover from a disease. Similarly, a malnourished mother is more likely to bear a child who has lower ability to cope with health shocks. Moreover, the same shock can have differential impact depending on the initial level of health and access to social insurance. Importantly, the long-run consequences of such shocks depend on the availability and effectiveness of mitigation strategies before the household. For example, households with better assets and access to credit are better able to compensate. There is evidence that children from households that are the most socio-economically vulnerable are worst affected in their nutritional outcomes.

One way forward is to have an effective social protection mechanism that would enable households to maintain food security and protect the nutritional outcomes of children. As such, research findings provide additional justification for interventions such as weather insurance, social insurance schemes or policies ensuring food security, which shield infants from the health consequences of temporary environmental, civil and economic shocks. We need to recognise that programmes safeguarding early childhood vulnerability can play a critical role in any sustainable development agenda.

Interestingly, by analysing the cost-benefit ratios, we find the returns to investing early in the lifecycle are high — both for the individual as well as the society in which she lives — whereas the follow-up remediation of inadequate early investment is often difficult and costly. There is no equity-efficiency tradeoff for early childhood investment, and this has an important bearing on policy design. Therefore, monitoring the nutritional indicators of children becomes especially important. To design better action plans, we need objective data on nutrition and its drivers at the most disaggregated

level. Nutritional biomarker data, which is critical to this debate, should be made open and at least available on request to researchers and policymakers. In spite of the increased importance of early childhood investment, we seem to be going in the opposite direction, with reductions in the outlays for the midday meal scheme, etc. The government must keep in mind that investing in disadvantaged young children simultaneously promotes equity and productivity.

Neither Here, Nor There: Mantis shrimp are shy, family-minded creatures

Neither mantis nor shrimp, this shallow water inhabitant of tropical and semi-tropical marine waters has been around for 450 million years or more and are related to crabs and lobsters.



Mantis shrimp (Source: Thinkstock Images)

It's a world many of us, including myself, have largely missed out on: the kaleidoscopic, shimmering rainbow world beneath the sea, whether in the sun-spangled shallows of coral reefs or the mysterious ultra-indigo depths 20,000 leagues beneath. They are populated by a multitude of nature's most bizarre and dazzling cast of characters, many of which are still completely alien to us.

One such weirdo is the mantis shrimp. Neither mantis nor shrimp, this shallow water inhabitant of tropical and semi-tropical marine waters has been around for 450 million years or more and are related to crabs and lobsters. There are more than 450 species, ranging in size from around 10 cm to 46 cm and many are clad in the carnival colours of clowns. But these are clowns of a different hue — they're true badass clowns.

There are two main branches of the clan: the spearers and the smashers, depending on the armament they carry. The former have spiny appendages at the ends of their raptorial claws which grow out of the sides of their mouths — well barbed — rather like the arms of a praying mantis, with which they impale and hook their prey, usually soft-bodied creatures like fish. The latter has a hard club-ended appendage with which it punches its victim at the speed of a 0.22 calibre bullet leaving the barrel of a gun. If that were not enough, the force of the blow causes air bubbles (called cavitation bubbles) to boil around the club and when these quickly collapse, they let loose a powerful shock wave (accompanied by a tiny flash of light and sound) that further bludgeons the victim. (The collapse of cavitation bubbles in other situations has caused holes to be punched in the propellers of boats). Try moving a fist as fast as you can under water, and you'll appreciate the effort needed to deliver a punch of any magnitude. These guys ambush or chase down hard-shelled fellows like crabs and rock oysters, smashing them open with the force of their blows.

To develop these magnum forces, their specialised limbs consist of a system of springs and latches powered by muscles; one muscle compresses the spring, another latches it in place and the third (like a trigger) releases the latch — and wham, the arm zings out!

For all their ferocity, they are shy, family-minded creatures: in some monogamous species, partners may stay together for as many as 20 years and both may bring up their families. So much so, that in one species, the female lays two clutches of eggs: his and hers! They're shy and spend most of their lives in their burrows or tunnels at the bottom, only emerging to hunt or maybe socialise a bit. They have dust-ups among themselves, but punch each other more with the intent of sending the opponent head over heels than smashing it to smithereens (They also have padded posteriors which they hold up to their opponents to cushion blows).

Apart from their sucker punches, mantis shrimps have the most astonishing eyes of any creature under or above water. Our eyes have three colour receptors, sensitive to green, blue and red light. Our brains process inputs coming from these and signal what colour we're actually seeing. Using just these three receptors, we can distinguish colours and shades.

Mantis shrimp have 12 colour receptors, so you would imagine they would be able to distinguish thousands of colour shades more than us. But here's

the thing — to their surprise, scientists discovered that they cannot do this and that we were, in fact, better at distinguishing close colours and shades. Further, of these 12 colour receptors, five or six were attuned to ultraviolet wavelengths (which, we cannot see), of which several were actually filtered out because they could be harmful. So how come the mantis shrimp is worse than us in telling, say scarlet from orange? With us, much of our colour analysis is done by our brains, which process raw information sent by our red, blue and green receptors and inform us exactly what shade we're seeing. With the mantis shrimp (which lacks our brainpower), it seems that the colour receptors simply short-circuit the system and recognise the colour wavelength they're attuned to straight away: the "red" receptors recognise the colour red and don't fuss about whether it's scarlet or orange. This information is enough to instantly tell the mantis shrimp whether the creature it is looking at is a predator, prey or potential partner and how it needs to react; in its environment, milliseconds can mean the difference between life and death.

Scientists have also discovered that these astonishing creatures are able to "roar" or rumble, much like the long distant low frequency rumblings of elephants. What messages they send and receive and what they mean as yet remains a mystery of the deep. But, yes I fear, we have been warned!

hindustantimes

Role of traders comes under Sebi lens as prices of pulses zoom
HT Correspondent, Hindustan Times, Mumbai



Droughts in Maharashtra and Karnataka and hoarding by speculators has led to an acute shortage, especially arhar and tur, leading to the artificial surge in prices. (Reuters File Photo)

Supporting the government's view that the recent sharp rise in prices of pulses is partly due to speculation and bad monsoon, Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) chairman UK Sinha on Monday warned commodity players of strict action if they were found involved in irregularities.

“In channa contracts, if you look closely, you'll find that next month's future market is showing backwardation... which means that the future price is lower than the spot price,” Sinha said. “This indicates that those who are hedging in the market are taking the call that prices will fall. We are watching the situation very closely. You are aware that various states have organised raids and seized stocks. If we find that any of those who have violated the Essential Commodities Act, or the Control Orders, are also players in the commodity market...it makes a case for Sebi to take strong action.”

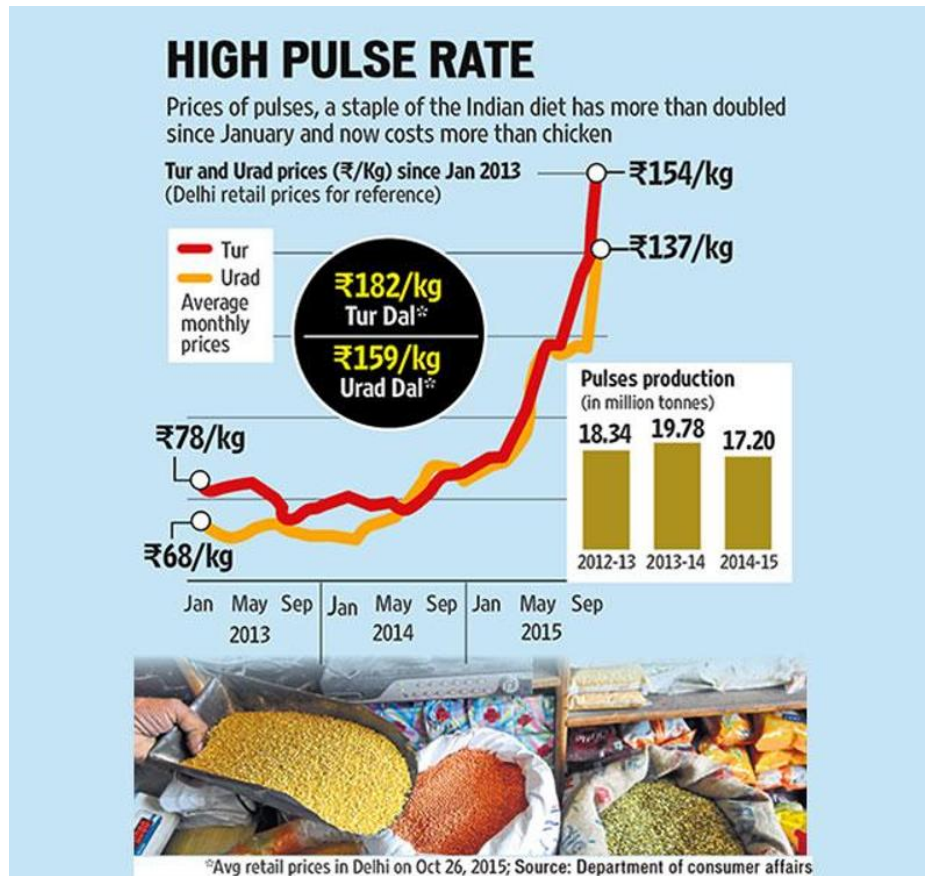
Backwardation happens when a commodity sees a positive demand, or is hit by acutely low supplies, leading the short-term price to rise above long-term levels, as consumers want to store the commodity immediately despite the high cost.

Droughts in Maharashtra and Karnataka and hoarding by speculators has led to an acute shortage, especially arhar and tur, leading to the artificial surge in prices.

To stem the sharp rise in prices, the government conducted raids and in various states and seized about 50,475 tonnes of illegally hoarded lentils. The Centre has also decided to create a buffer stock of 40,000 tonnes, besides selling imported pulses at cheaper rates and imposition of stock limits on traders as well as departmental stores, licensed food processors, importers and exporters.

Last week, finance minister Arun Jaitley met importers and traders, where the latter offered to supply 100,000 kg of tur dal per day at Rs 135 per kg, but requested the government to exempt them from stock-holding limits.

Speaking at the 'India ETF Conference 2015' organised by the National Stock Exchange, Sinha also cautioned market intermediaries to guard against frauds in financial innovations such as exchange-traded funds (ETFs). "If we are able to avoid those risks, make proper disclosures, are able to communicate properly then ETF has a very good chance of growing in India and provide good services to the investors."



Prices of pulses, a staple of the Indian diet has more than doubled since January and now costs more than chicken.

Nestle starts Maggi noodles production, to hit market after clearance



File photo of packets of Nestle's Maggi instant noodles at a shop. (Reuters Photo)

Swiss giant Nestle on Monday said it has resumed manufacturing of its instant noodles Maggi at three of its India facilities and will hit the markets after getting clearances from food testing laboratories.

The company, which was forced to withdraw Maggi from market and stop production in June following tests by certain labs allegedly finding lead and MSG beyond permissible limits, will send first samples of the fresh batches to three accredited labs for tests.

This is in compliance with the order of Bombay high court.

“We have resumed manufacturing of Maggi Noodles at three of our plants, at Nanjangud (Karnataka), Moga (Punjab) and Bicholim (Goa),” said a Nestle India spokesperson.

He further said: “In compliance with the orders of the High Court of Bombay, fresh samples from these newly manufactured batches will be sent for testing to the three accredited laboratories designated by the High Court.”

The company would start selling in the open market only after the fresh samples are cleared.

Nestle plans to resume sales in India of its Maggi noodles in November, said Reuters, quoting a spokesman for the Swiss group on Monday.

“November is envisaged as the date,” he said. Nestle officials had declined earlier this month to speculate when sales might resume.

On October 16, Nestle had said that all samples of Maggi (old batches) have cleared testing by three laboratories as mandated by the High Court.

“We have received test results from all three laboratories mandated by the Bombay High Court to test Maggi Noodles samples. All the 90 samples, covering six variants, tested by these laboratories are clear with lead much below the permissible limits,” Nestle India had said in a statement.

In June, the FSSAI had banned Maggi noodle product saying it was “unsafe and hazardous” for consumption after finding lead levels beyond permissible limits. The company had withdrawn the instant noodle brand from the market.

Nestle India, which took a hit of Rs 450 crore, including destroying over 30,000 tonnes of the instant noodles since June when it was banned because of alleged excessive lead content, had stated that it would continue with the existing formula of the product and would not change the ingredients.


THE TIMES OF INDIA

[Indian-American to be honoured for exemplary agriculture work](#)



White House Champions of Change for sustainable and climate-smart agriculture will honour an Indian American farmer.

Indian-American farmer is among 12 individuals from across the country who will be recognised as White House Champions of Change for sustainable and climate-smart agriculture at an event in the US.

Anita Adalja, is social worker who merged her career with farming. Currently, she is working as a manager at the Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food and Agriculture.

Anita said, she is committed to food access solutions, community building and sustainable land stewardship.

Before being called to farming, she was a social worker in Brooklyn.

While working with formerly homeless, mentally ill adults in a supportive housing facility, Anita co-founded a rooftop farm on top of the building.

"My commitment to food access, food justice and community building was solidified through this experience.

From there, I threw myself into farming by attending an apprenticeship programme at the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems in Santa Cruz. I haven't looked back since," she said in a USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) blog recently.

The winners were selected by the White House for their achievements and will be honoured for their exemplary leadership and innovation in agricultural production and education.

The Champions have helped implement agricultural practices that promote soil health and energy efficiency, improve water quality, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Anita, has worked to create a more equitable and sustainable food system by increasing food access, sustainable farming, farmer training and farm-to-school education.

Under her management, Arcadia Farm grows thousands of pounds of naturally grown produce that is sold in low-or no-food access areas in Washington, through its mobile farmers' market programme.

A social worker by training, Adalja has previously farmed at One Woman Farm in Gibsonia, Pa, and was the farm manager for Common Good City Farm in Washington.

The award ceremony will be held tonight.

THE HINDU **BusinessLine**

Record prices at Coonoor tea sale

New price records were set up at Sale No: 43 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions.

“Vigneshwar Estate’s Speciality Broken Orange Pekoe Fannings, auctioned by Paramount Tea Marketing, topped the Leaf auctions as also the entire Crush-Tear-Curl (CTC) market when JK Enterprises bought it for ₹251a kg,” Paramount’s General Manager Ravichandran Broos told *BusinessLine*. Vigneshwar Estate’s Speciality Pekoe Dust topped Dust auctions when PS Tea Industries bought it for ₹250.

Homedale Estate’s Red Dust fetched the next highest price of ₹200 in CTC market. Kairbetta topped orthodox market fetching ₹250.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging ₹40-48 a kg for plain leaf grades and ₹100-130 for brighter liquoring sorts. They ranged ₹57-66 for plain dusts and ₹110-175 for brighter liquoring dusts.

Heavy rains forecast for coastal Tamil Nadu

Heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely over coastal Tamil Nadu during this week, a forecast by the US Climate Prediction Centre has warned.

The week that follows (November 1 to 7) will see the heavy rain belt becoming active over west Sri Lanka, south Tamil Nadu and adjoining Kerala, the forecast added.

Monsoon onset

Thus, the North-East monsoon will likely make an eventful onset over the South Indian Peninsula –something the India Met Department expects would materialise in two days' time.

Fishermen going into the sea along and off Lakshadweep and Tamil Nadu have been advised to observe caution in view of the developing hostile weather.

The Met attributes the weather to twin low-pressure areas evolving respectively over South-East Arabian Sea and South-West Bay of Bengal off Sri Lanka.

It expects the system in the Arabian Sea to start intensifying from Tuesday. The Bay counterpart would take longer to assert itself, given space constraints dictated by the Sri Lanka/Tamil Nadu coasts.

Likely cyclone

The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts sees a full-blown cyclone developing in the outer Arabian Sea and heading towards Yemen/Somali coasts.

According to India Met, the likely cyclone may be racing towards southern Oman (just north of Yemen) for making the landfall.

The European Centre says that the Bay of Bengal system would reach the Tamil Nadu coast as a weaker storm but flood the area with punishing rain during the week.

It may pick strength east of Sri Lanka on Wednesday, approach the Kodiakkarai-Velankanni-Nagore-Karaikal stretch for a landfall, weaken a bit, and climb up the coast towards Chennai.

Heavy rain

It will regain some strength over Chennai and off the Andhra Pradesh coast and run up further along the coast of Odisha and Gangetic West Bengal through the weekend.

The track along the East Coast would be primarily decreed by the Arabian Sea cyclone, preventing the rain-bearing Bay system to venture deeper into the interior of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

The rains would, therefore, become weaker towards the western half of the South Peninsula (parts of West Tamil Nadu) to being normal to below normal during the week, says the US forecast.

Meanwhile, West and North-West India (including Gujarat and Mumbai-Konkan) are expected to come under a wet spell during this week and into the next. The IMD has forecast hailstorm for parts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

Karnataka farm price panel favours Areca Board

The Karnataka Agricultural Price Commission has stressed the need for the establishment of an Arecanut Board on the lines of Rubber Board and Coffee Board in the country.

Speaking to presspersons on the sidelines of a meeting with farmers, cooperatives and officials of Agriculture and Horticulture departments in Mangaluru on Monday, Prakash Kammardi, Chairman of Karnataka Agricultural Price Commission, said that there is an immediate need to set up a separate board for arecanut to look into the issues confronted by growers, to strengthen production and marketing process, and to look into

value-addition to the commodity to increase its contribution to the economy significantly.

The Commission had made elaborate consultations with stakeholders such as farmers, marketing cooperatives, experts, scientists, traders, and government officials in arecanut-growing regions of the State in this regard, he said.

Based on the consultations, the State government had set up a technical committee under the chairmanship of the Vice-Chancellor of Bagalkot-based Horticulture University to discuss the modalities of the Board. Putting forward the guidelines for the establishment of the board, Kammardi said the Arecanut Board should be enacted by parliament through an Act, and should have jurisdiction over the entire country. Since the Board would deal with matters related to economic implications and taxation of the commodity, it should be placed under the Union Commerce Ministry.

Both Central and State governments should have equal stake in policy formulation, decision making and programme execution, he said.

Karnataka, which is the largest arecanut-producing State in the country, has around 2.5 lakh hectares under arecanut cultivation in 140 taluks in the State.

He said the investments made by farmers on arecanut plantations in Karnataka stands at around ₹40,000 crore. Annually farmers spend around ₹3,000 crore on its cultivation.

Apeda plans retail push for basmati in overseas markets

In a bid to promote the basmati exports in retail packs with Indian brands, the Agricultural Products Export Development Authority (Apeda) plans to launch a campaign in key markets such as Saudi Arabia and Iran.

At present, a major chunk of the exports are shipped in bulk form and sold under private labels owned by the importers.

Apeda has invited expression of interest from agencies to launch this promotional strategy that is expected to boost the shipments of the basmati rice.

Basmati holds a major place in Apeda's export basket accounting for close to a fourth of the total shipments in value terms.

Campaign details

"We are working with the All India Rice Exporters Association on this proposed campaign, which may be launched early next year," said AK Gupta, Advisor, Apeda.

"Initially, the campaign is proposed to be undertaken in Saudi Arabia and Iran, which account for over 50 per cent of the total exports," Gupta said.

The initiative is aimed at creating better consumer awareness and education about the Indian basmati rice, while helping the exporters realise better value for their produce, Gupta added.

Further, he said that Apeda, as part of the proposed campaign, would be working with only those brands that already have a presence in these overseas markets.

Exports data

Basmati rice exports have seen a major increase over the past few years from about seven lakh tonnes in 2000 to over 37 lakh tonnes (lt) in 2015. In the current financial year for the April-August period, basmati shipments have seen an increase of 17 per cent in volume terms at 16.78 lt against 14.35 lt in the corresponding period last year, according to Apeda data.

However, in rupee value terms, the basmati shipments have declined 18 per cent to ₹9,940 crore for the April-August period against ₹12,180 crore in corresponding last year, mainly due to lower prices.

The shipments in dollar terms have dropped 23 per cent for the period at \$1.559 billion (\$2.031 billion).

Iran imports

Meanwhile, Iran is yet to resume the imports of Indian basmati, which it had banned mid-November last year to protect the interests of local growers on higher domestic output and stocks.

“We expect that Iran will resume imports in the next couple of months,” Gupta added.

Iran imported about 9.35 lt of basmati in 2014-15, accounting for about a fourth of the Indian shipments.

In fact, the shipments to Iran declined by 35 per cent in 2014-15 over previous year’s 14.40 lt, largely due to the curbs imposed by the largest buyer of the Indian basmati.

Business Standard

Nestle resumes Maggi production in 3 states

The company has resumed manufacturing Maggi at three facilities: Nanjangud, Moga & Bicholim

Nestlé has begun production of Maggi noodles in three states after the brand cleared court-directed safety tests last week.

A Nestlé India spokesperson said the company’s plants at Nanjangud in Karnataka, Moga in Punjab and Bicholim in Goa had resumed manufacturing Maggi noodles.

“Fresh samples from these newly manufactured batches will be sent for testing to the three accredited laboratories designated by the (Bombay) High Court. We shall commence sale only after the samples are cleared by these laboratories,” the spokesperson said.

“We are engaging with authorities at other manufacturing locations to commence manufacture at the earliest,” the spokesperson added.

Nestlé produces Maggi at plants in Karnataka, Goa, Punjab, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. Karnataka and Gujarat lifted the ban on Maggi noodles last week.

Nestlé’s India Managing Director Suresh Narayanan had recently said he was committed to bringing Maggi back to the marketplace. But, the

company has a few hurdles to clear, with the Uttarakhand government saying last week it was in no hurry to lift the ban on production and sale of the noodles. The state government is likely to wait for the hearing on November 3 in the Uttarakhand High Court on the case. Nestlé's largest manufacturing plant for Maggi in the country is in Pantnagar in Uttarakhand.

Maharashtra's Food & Drug Minister Girish Bapat had indicated a week ago the state's FDA unit would move the Supreme Court, challenging the findings of the re-test. The Maharashtra FDA is expected to file the suit in a fortnight.

The urgency with which Nestlé is moving is due to its desire to relaunch **MANUFACTURING NOW** Maggi by the end of this year. The second round of re-tests that will pave the way for Maggi to be relaunched is expected to take time, and the company has to hasten production to ensure it meets the relaunch deadline.

Nanjangud
Karnataka

Moga
Punjab

Bicholim
Goa

NOT CLEAR

Pantnagar
Uttarakhand

Tahliwal
Himachal Pradesh

Sources said Nestlé could have avoided some of the initial uncertainty, had it not terminated an agreement with the Kolkata-based contract manufacturer SAJ Food Products last month. West Bengal had not banned Maggi and SAJ Food Products manufactured about four per cent of Maggi's annual volume.