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THE HINDU

Their hard work bears fruit in an arid land



Amid a massive spread of ‘kattu karuvai’ (*Prosopis juliflora*) in Kamudhi block, one of the driest parts of the district, lies an oasis, ‘Akal Farm’, developed by Himachal Pradesh-based Kalgidhar Trust.

After a bumpy drive on the three-km-long metal road from Abiramam, about 80 km from here, opens an iron gate to the lush green horticulture farm at Vallandhai in Kamudhi block.

From Moga district in Punjab to Vallandhai, four Sikh families, comprising about 20 members, have come a long way to develop the about 300 acres of fallow land into an orchard.

“We bought the lands in 2007 and it took three years to remove the shrubs and develop the area for plantation,” supervisors Sarbajit Singh (56) and Darshan Singh (46) told *The Hindu* at the farm on Tuesday.

They came all the way from Punjab on the direction of Baba Iqbal Singh heading the trust. The former Director of Agriculture, Himachal Pradesh, said that there were plenty of fallow lands in south Tamil Nadu and directed

them, his disciples, to explore cultivation, as the Sikhs visited this part of the area.

Acting under the guidance of the Baba, the families pooled in money and bought the lands at the rate of Rs. 20,000 per acre as the local farmers turned sceptical about the fertility of the land and sold them at throwaway prices.

The local farmers now envy the Sikhs. The irony was that some of the farmers worked as workers in Akal Farm, said Mr. Syed Segana, retired Village Administration Officer of Abiramam, now working in the farm.

The local people were hostile to the Sikhs in the beginning but became friendly now, he said.

“Our hard work literally bore fruits,” the Singhs said, displaying the apple-sized ‘Lucknow 49’ species of guava, developed in about 40 acres and Alphonso, the most superior mango variety and the prized Imam Pasand in about 60 acres.

They also cultivated cucumber, pumpkin and watermelon as inter-crop last year and harvested about 20 tonnes of watermelon and 12 tonnes of pumpkin. They were harvesting two tonnes of cucumber daily now. Their mangoes sold like hot cakes in Madurai and Bengaluru.

They dug 15 bore wells and installed drip irrigation for judicious use of water.

They also established Amla farm in 40 acres and grew timber-valued trees in about five acres. They proposed to expand mango and guava farms.

From Moga in Punjab to Vallandhai, four Sikh families have come a long way to develop about 300 acres of fallow land into an orchard

Farmers moving from Kalaburagi's staple grams to commercial crops



Changing preferences of farmers and their slow yet steady shift from traditional crops to the more lucrative crops, is reflected in the targets fixed by the Agriculture Department for the kharif season in Kalaburagi district for the year 2015-16.

Unlike the previous years when the department used to increase the area under red gram cultivation on a regular basis, there has been a marked reduction in the targets for red gram this year.

At the same time, a significant increase is seen in the area under commercial crops such as cotton and soyabean, and plantation crops such as banana and papaya.

According to the Agriculture Department's targets for the current year, the area under red gram — which used to be the mainstay of farmers in the drought-prone Kalaburagi district at around 4 lakh hectares — has come down to 3.59 lakh hectares compared with 3.62 lakh hectares fixed last year.

Similarly the area under black gram has come down from 38,000 hectares in 2014-15 to 25,500 hectares this year and the area under the green gram has come down from 20,200 hectares to 18,000 hectares.

In the current year, the cumulative area target fixed for kharif crops is 5.70 lakh hectares, with a production target of 26.96 lakh tonnes. The area under foodgrain has been fixed at 4.36 lakh hectares as against 4.55 lakh hectares last year and the production target has been fixed at 4.65 lakh tonnes.

The area under cotton has gone from 34,500 hectares during 2014-15 to 50,475 hectares this year, and the area under soyabean has been increased from 14,000 hectares last year to 20,325 hectares. The target fixed for coverage under oilseeds was 53,240 hectares, with a production target of 68,923 tonnes this year.

An increase in the irrigation network in the district has also helped in the shift from the traditional crops to other crops.

Checks to stall sale of underweight urea bags

Officials attached to the Department of Agriculture are conducting surprise checks in various parts of the district since Tuesday to stall the sale of underweight urea bags.

After *The Hindu* brought to light the sale of underweight urea bags to the farmers, the officials organised surprise checks in the primary agriculture cooperative societies and private retailers selling the chemical nutrient imported from the Sultanate of Oman. To compensate the 'handling loss' at Tuticorin Port, where it is being imported, underweight bags are being sold to the farmers after manually packing the bulk urea in bags, the buyers allege.

When the Agriculture Department officials checked the weight of urea bags in the primary agriculture cooperative societies (PACBs) and a few retailers on Tuesday, it was found that most of the bags weighed about 48 kg or 49 kg instead of the prescribed 50 kg.

"We've instructed the PACBs and the retailers not to sell the underweight urea bags to the farmers until corrective measures are taken," said Gajendra Pandian, Assistant Director (Quality Control), Department of Agriculture, who coordinated the surprise checks on Tuesday.

Permit tapping of neera, farmers' plea to Govt.

Coconut farmers in the district keenly anticipate a positive response from the government to their plea to tap 'neera', which is considered a health drink on account of its high nutritive and medicinal value by neighbouring States of Kerala and Karnataka.

According to farmers, Kerala granted licences to coconut producers' societies and federations to tap neera in specified quantities last year. The neera is subsequently processed and marketed.

Emulating Kerala, the Karnataka Government decided earlier this year to amend laws to facilitate coconut farmers to tap neera.

Though neera tapping would help farmers to scale up revenue, Tamil Nadu Government's hesitation stems from the apprehension that neera could easily be fermented and turned into toddy with about four per cent alcohol in a matter of hours, official sources said.

Farmers in the district, however, lamented that the fear of losing revenue from IMFL sale is the main reason for Tamil Nadu's lack of enthusiasm.

Representatives of farmers' organisations have been insisting that neera being a health drink, the State Government must permit tapping from coconut and palm trees. The State Government had during 2010 announced that neera would be procured from the members of Palm Workers' Welfare Board for Rs. 10 per litre, and that Rs. one crore would be provided to the Board for installing chilling facilities to store the procured neera. But, there has been no progress.

Egg production to remain normal

With cloudy sky and moderate wind speed expected to keep the poultry comfortable, the egg production in layers will remain normal in the district.

A press release from Agromet Field Unit of Veterinary College and Research Institute and Regional Meteorological Department, Chennai said that the sky will be partly cloudy with chance of drizzling at few places. The maximum and minimum temperature is expected to be around 36 degree centigrade and 25 degree centigrade.

Feed

Feed intake will be normal and egg production will remain normal, the release added.

Also, poultry farmers were asked to test maize, groundnut and sunflower cake for mycotoxin before use.

Farmers seek paddy procurement centres

Tension prevailed for a while outside the Deputy Commissioner's office here on Tuesday when a group of farmers attempted to forcibly enter its premises urging the authorities to announce minimum support price for paddy and open procurement centres for it.

The farmers picked up an argument with the police when they attempted to forcibly enter the premises to speak to Deputy Commissioner S.T. Anjan Kumar.

They blocked all the three gates of the office with lorries and tractors loaded with paddy and demanded that the Deputy Commissioner announce the support price.

Mr. Anjan Kumar invited the farmers for talks after the police informed him about the issue. During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner tried to convince the farmers that it was difficult for him to announce the support price and also set up procurement centres as the State government had to take a decision on the issue.

As the model code of conduct for the gram panchayat polls was in force, the decision might be delayed, he said.

Irked by this, the farmers alleged that 25 per cent of paddy crop had been harvested and the price had collapsed.

However, the attempts by the Deputy Commissioner and Food and Civil Supplies Department officials to convince the farmers failed and they decided to continue the agitation till their demands were met.

Camps by Animal Husbandry department

The Department of Animal Husbandry and Animal Welfare announced a series of 'infertility treatment camps' for cows and heifers to be held over a period of one month throughout Puducherry region, beginning on May 20. The camps are aimed at augmenting milk production and increasing birth of calves, said a release from the department. The first camp will be held at Sandaipudukuppam on Wednesday, and will finish with camps at Reddiarpalayam and Mettupalayam on June 22.



Declining mobility caused brittle bones in humans: Study



Rather than urbanisation or diet, rise of agriculture and fall in mobility has led to lighter, brittle bones among humans today, interesting research has found.

The study of the bones of hundreds of humans who lived during the past 33,000 years in Europe sheds light on a monumental change that has left

modern humans susceptible to osteoporosis, a condition marked by brittle and thinning bones.

At the root of the finding is the knowledge that putting bones under the “stress” of walking, lifting and running leads them to pack on more calcium and grow stronger.

Earlier humans had stronger bones and that weight-bearing exercise in modern humans prevents bone loss.

“By analysing many arm and leg bone samples from throughout that time span, we found that European humans’ bones grew weaker gradually as they developed and adopted agriculture and settled down to a more sedentary lifestyle,” said Christopher Ruff from the Johns Hopkins University’s school of medicine.

Modern lifestyles have famously made humans heavier, but, in one particular way, noticeably lighter weight than our hunter-gatherer ancestors: in the bones.

“The decline continued for thousands of years, suggesting that people had a very long transition from the start of agriculture to a completely settled lifestyle,” Ruff said.

Better bones are still achievable, at least for younger humans, if they recreate to some extent the lifestyle of their ancestors, notably doing a lot more walking than their peers, the authors said.

The paper appeared in the early edition of the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Express Recipes: How to make the perfect Mango cake

One of the few good things about the sultry summer season is the availability of mangoes. Aam Panna, Mango shake, Mango Lassi, Mango pickle, Mango ice-cream, Aam Paapad...the list is endless. Eggless Mango Cake can also be one option, only if you know the recipe. Here goes.



Ingredients

Maida – 1 cup (110 grams)

Mango – 1 (300 grams)

Condensed milk – ½ cup (200 grams)

Powdered sugar – ½ cup (100 grams)

Milk – 3-4 tbsp

Butter – 1/3 cup (80 grams)

Cashew nuts – 2 tbsp

Raisins- 2 tbsp

Baking powder – 1 tsp

Baking soda – ¼ tsp

Method

* Add baking soda and baking powder in maida and mix well. Strain the mixture twice. Add butter, mango pulp and condensed milk in a separate bowl and whisk them nicely. Also add powdered sugar and mix well.

Cut cashews into small pieces. Remove the stalk of raisins and wipe clean with a cloth.

- * Preheat oven at 180 degree centigrade.

- * Grease the cake container with ghee or butter. Place a butter paper or plain paper that fits into the container and place it at the bottom. Grease the paper as well with some butter.

- * Add dry ingredients like maida and baking powder in condensed milk and mango pulp. Whisk the batter until all lumps get dissolved. Also add milk, cashews and raisins in the batter.

- * Pour the batter in the container and tap it on surface so that it gets even. Oven is hot, place the container in oven and set oven for 25 minutes on 180 degree centigrade. Check after 25 minutes. Cake has not turned brown from top yet. Place it back in oven and bake for 10-15 more minutes and check again. Cake has turned brown from top. Insert a knife in cake to check it. The batter should not stick to the knife. If the knife comes out clean that means cake is baked completely.

- * Take out the cake from oven and allow it to get frigid. Now separate the cake from mold. For this run knife all around the cake and place the container upside down over a plate. Cake will come out from the mold. Remove the butter paper from top and cut into pieces as per your preference.

Things to remember

- * Make sure the cake batter is not too thick or too thin in consistency. If the batter is thin then cake puffs up quickly but gets flat later.

- * If the batter is too thick then cake doesn't puffs up as per desire.

- * Bake the cake first for 25 minutes and then bake it as per the requirement.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Kalam pitches for sustainable growth

Ranchi: Former president A P J Abdul Kalam on Tuesday stressed on co-operative structure, integrated rural development and transgenic technology for a sustainable agriculture growth.

Kalam, who was addressing the gathering at the 5th convocation of Birsa Agriculture University on Tuesday, said small landholding was a major challenge to the agricultural progress in the country.

Kalam's observation is significant at a time when India, considered an emerging economy, has made headlines for farmers' suicide in different states, with more than 250 deaths just in Maharashtra.

A recent report, quoting figures from the agriculture ministry's data, said number of farmers who committed suicide has crossed 3,000 in the last three years.

Talking about the Platform for Translational Research on Transgenic Crops (PTTC), Kalam said, "This will be the birthplace of a new generation transgenic crops that will even surmount the genetically modified crops developed so far, in terms of their ability to lower farm-level production costs and also feature increased nutritional traits."

He added that iron-rich rice and edible vaccines could soon be in demand.

Kalam asked the degree-holders if they would like to be remembered for evolving a strategy for bio-fuel, from plants and algae or for implementing a road map for organic cultivation, free from harmful pesticides and chemical fertilizers.

"Processing of agriculture produce can result in a value addition of four to five times and increased shelf life," he said, further telling students what farmers have often demanded.

"My farmer friends often tell me that one of the key research development area which they need is in the field of agro economics and development of proper markets for farms produce. Research on forward pricing, breaking the monopoly and cartelization of purchasers, fixing of spot prices before delivery and a market where farmers have the choice to sell is essential," he said.

Milk prices are likely to go up again. The state government plans to bring an ordinance to fix the minimum support price (MSP) for milk from base-point suppliers at Rs 20 per litre. It will also make buying milk at a price lower than this a non-bailable offence.

Barely a few days ago, Gokul and Mahanand dairies had increased MRP by up to Rs 2 per litre to benefit retailers demanding better margins. And now this decision may prompt another round of increase in retail milk prices as there are no guidelines to fix MRP in milk and companies are at liberty to increase prices as they wish.

Most big dairies now pay between Rs 14 and Rs 16 to village-level dairies and, though the government has assured retail prices will not increase, it is improbable that the big dairies will absorb this rise in procurement price and not pass it on to consumers.

An industry expert says, "With the exception of Amul, Gokul and Mother Dairy, all brands will be affected by this new decision. All of them will have to pay higher procurement prices to farmers."

Consumers are currently paying Rs 20 for half litre packs whose printed price is Rs 18.50 and Rs 51-52 for one litre packs whose actual rate is Rs 48. Shopkeepers charge extra on all brands including those which pay them high margins of Rs 4-6 per litre. There is a strong likelihood that dairies will pass on the new burden to consumers as well. So, if consumers are forced to pay Rs 5-6 more per litre every day, the burden works out to Rs 150-180 per month.

On Tuesday, dairy development minister Eknath Khadse had a meeting with cooperative societies and private companies about finalizing the procurement cost of the dairy farmers for milk per litre. "Currently, the cooperative dairy industry and private companies give Rs 15 to 16 per litre

and make money double out of it. However, the government has decided that they should give Rs 20 as minimum price for a farmer but should not increase the retail price," said Khadse.

"The government will file criminal case against those companies or cooperative societies who will give less than Rs 20 per litre to farmers. The government will come up with an ordinance and the action will be on the lines of Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) which will be a non-bailable offence," said Khadse.

The meeting was held after opposition leader in the legislative council Dhananjay Munde raised the issue of milk farmers suffering due to lesser price for milk.

While announcing the minimum price for the farmers, the government also decided to buy additional milk from private players so that they do not have to bear losses. "They should buy milk from farmers at the fixed minimum price and the excess milk will be bought by the government. The government is trying to give subsidy for the milk power and the proposal has been sent to the central government to encourage milk power project. The government will consider both farmers and consumers benefit in this process," said Khadse.

Govt to check urea diversion to industry



The government has finally found a solution to curb illegal diversion of highly subsidized urea for industrial use by deciding that 100% urea both

imported and produced in the country will have to be neem coated. Sources said 100% neem coating would help save at least Rs 4,500 crore annually on two accounts - reduced demand of the nitrogen-based fertilizer by checking illegal diversion and decline in use of neem-coated urea in comparison to normal one.

Fertilizer ministry officials said the minutes issued after last Cabinet meeting mentions ensuring neem coating of entire quantity of urea meant to be used for agriculture. "We will soon issue notification making it mandatory for all domestic manufacturers. Some mechanism will also be worked out for huge quantity of urea that is being imported since there is chance of this imported fertilizer getting diverted for industrial use, if we don't do neem coating," said an official. Some guidelines may be issued to carry out the neem coating at the ports itself.

Government has already made it mandatory for 75% neem coating of urea.

India annually uses about 31 million tonnes of urea and about 8-9 million tonnes is imported. On an average the subsidy for each tonne of urea is around Rs 15,000 crore. Rough estimates suggest at least one million tonne of urea is illegally diverted for industrial use and hence stopping this illegal act would mean saving of about Rs 1,500 crore. Moreover, shifting from usage of normal urea to neem-coated urea is also likely to reduce the demand by 10%. This would help save another Rs 3,000 crore annually.

"Neem coated urea is unfit for industrial use while this is good for the soil, crop and beneficial to farmers. The wastage is less and it works as a bio-pesticide. Even the extent of ground water pollution is less. We are also launching a campaign to make farmers aware that they will face action if they are caught selling subsidized urea to industrial units," said joint secretary (fertilizer) Sham Lal Goyal.

Industry sources said that companies are keen to achieve the new government target. Director general of Fertilizer Association of India, Satish Chander, said some of the manufacturers are already doing 100% neem coating. Entire production of urea by IFFCO is neem-coated.

THE HINDU BusinessLine

Guar prices show signs of recovery



Weak monsoon, export demand may combine to push prices up

Guar seed prices in the spot market have surged up to Rs. 5,250 a quintal levels during April. The prices were at Rs. 3,600 – near a 10-year low in March – which is about 38 per cent below the levels seen during the beginning of the harvest season in October last year.

The record decline in prices is attributed to mainly to subdued demand for guar gum exports. The exports usually pick up during October but lower crude oil prices made it unviable for shale drilling companies to use guar gum in hydraulic fracturing.

According to the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (Apeda), more than 55 per cent guar gum produced in India is exported to the United States mainly for use in shale drilling.

However, guar prices have been recovering since March, and prices have gained more than 32 per cent to Rs. 5,000 a quintal from 3,770 levels; guar gum surged about 44 per cent to Rs. 11,500 a quintal from 8,000 levels on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX).

The rise is due to speculative buying because of lower production estimates given the expected El Nino effect on monsoon this season. The rising crude oil prices also may lead to improved export demand which might support the price.

Production levels

According to government sources, total guarseed production in India is in the range of about 20-30 lakh tonnes (lt) and fluctuates depending upon the monsoon, particularly in the western districts of Rajasthan.

In 2014-15, guar production is estimated at around 20-22 lt, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, down 18-20 per cent compared to last year production of 25-27 lt due to delayed monsoon and lower area sown in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Haryana.

Weak monsoon

Rajasthan accounts for more 80 per cent of guar production, cultivated mainly in arid districts of western Rajasthan.

The crop is also cultivated in low rainfall areas of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and other areas in both kharif and rabi seasons.

The prediction of below normal monsoon (due to the El Niño phenomenon) for the second successive year by the Met Department may affect guarseed output.

Increased exports

According to Apeda, exports of guar gum have increased by 21 per cent to 6.65 lakh tonnes (lt) from April to March compared to 6 lt exported for the same period last year.

Exports are higher on a year-on-year basis following the increase in demand from the food industry and oil exploration companies as the prices of guar gum dropped to multi-year lows. Lower prices have boosted overseas shipments in the last two years.

Demand has been going up in recent years as it is seen as an environment-friendly biodegradable product for shale gas exploration.

Price outlook

Guar seed and guar gum prices have been trending upwards since March, with lower supply in the domestic market against strong demand by traders and stockists.

The estimation of steady demand from food and textile industry as well as shale gas drilling companies due to improved crude oil prices might help prices surge in coming months.

The writer is Associate Director – Commodities & Currencies, Angel Commodities Broking Pvt. Ltd. Views are personal.

Plans to launch ‘DD Kisan’ on Modi govt’s 1st anniversary

As it plans a series of events to mark its first year in office on May 26, the government is considering to launch ‘DD Kisan’, a 24—hour channel for farmers, on the occasion.

Sources said the move was under “active consideration” of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Prasar Bharati but added that a final decision was yet to be taken.

“The preparations for the launch of the DD Kisan channels are at a very advanced stage. There is a suggestion that it can be launched as the government marks its first year,” a senior official said.

The source, however, said that a final decision will only be taken in consultation with the Prime Minister’s Office.

After it came to power, the NDA government had announced that it will launch a 24—hour TV channel for farmers.

In his Union Budget 2014 speech, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, who now also holds the charge of the I&B ministry, had announced that a 24—hour TV channel will be dedicated to the agriculture sector, for which he had marked an outlay of Rs. 100 crore.

Preparations for the launch of this “niche edu—tainment” channel have been on full—swing. The public broadcaster has been exploring tie—ups with several experts’ bodies such as Indian Meteorological Department, National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, Indian Agriculture Research Institute to produce programmes which provide accurate information for farmers.

Weak demand grinds turmeric



Spot turmeric prices decreased at Erode markets due to poor demand. “Traders have not yet received upcountry demand and so are buying limited stocks for a decreased price. The farmers also brought medium and poor quality turmeric. On Tuesday, of the arrival of 3,500 bags, only 1,350 were sold,” said RKV Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

The price of the turmeric was up ₹100 a quintal in the Regulated Market Committee, but down ₹100 in the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society. The root variety turmeric lost ₹300 in all the markets.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association, the finger turmeric traded at ₹5,511-8,199 a quintal; the root variety ₹5,269-7,437. Of the arrival of 650 bags, 180 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger turmeric went for ₹7,199-8,555; the root variety ₹6,299-7,493. Of the 1,135 bags on sale, 847 were traded.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger turmeric was sold at ₹6,500-8,199; the root variety ₹6,377-7,461. Of the 614 bags offered, 601 were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger turmeric fetched ₹6,569-7,896; the root variety ₹6,169-7,696. All the 147 bags found takers.

NDDDB expands footprint into pulses marketing



After milk, edible oil and vegetables, the National Dairy Development

Board (NDDDB) is expanding its footprint into pulses through subsidiary Mother Dairy Fruits and Vegetables Ltd (MDFVL). A range of commonly used unpolished pulses such as tur (arhar) and chana under the Safal brand have been introduced in the Delhi market recently and would be soon rolled out to other states over a period of time.

NDDDB's Safal brand of pulses would be competing with the likes of Tata i-Shakti and a host of regional brands such as Rajdhani and Mangatram among others in a nascent but rapidly emerging market for branded pulses that is largely being driven by the growing modern retail format and the online grocery stores.

Tie-up with farmers

Besides reaching out to the retail consumers, NDDDB also plans to target the bulk and institutional buyers through the Safal brand. "We are testing the waters in Delhi and will expand slowly to other states. Our focus will be on maximising the gains for farmers," said NDDDB Chairman T Nanda Kumar. Initially, Mother Dairy plans to sell around 100 tonnes of pulses a month through the Safal brand.

As part of the backward integration, MDFVL will be tying up with the farmers, farmer producers organisations in major growing States over the next three to four months so as to be prepared for procurement during the upcoming kharif harvest, Nanda Kumar said.

While MDFVL mainly aims to procure pulses from the farmers directly, some private purchases cannot be ruled out to ensure steady supplies to the consumers throughout the year.

MDFVL would also be looking at tying up with millers and could also look at setting up its own milling unit.

Branded pulses

Till recently, the Safal retail units in Delhi were selling Mangatram brand of pulses, clocking a monthly sale of around 50-60 tonnes. "We would also be leveraging our edible oil brand Dhara network to expand the reach of the Safal pulses brand," Kumar added.

The branded pulses segment has caught the fancy of several big companies such as the Tatas and the Adanis in recent years. Tata Chemicals, which sells

the i-Shakti brand of unpolished pulses, had clocked a sales turnover of ₹175 crore by December 2014 and was expected to end fiscal 2015 with a turnover of around ₹250 crore.

Pepper continues to stay firm



Pepper prices remained firm on Tuesday on tight availability amid strong demand. Arrivals shrunk as sellers have started holding back anticipating price rise in the coming days. Tight supply situation in Vietnam is also reported to have pushed up the prices. Vietnam is reportedly offering Asta grade pepper at \$9,200-9,300 a tonne c&f US. As against this, Indian parity is at \$10,600. Arrivals today stood only 12 tonnes from the High Ranges in small lots. Strong domestic demand has aided the price rise, traders said. Spot prices moved up by ₹500 a quintal to ₹60,000 (ungarbled) and ₹63,000 (garbled). June and July contracts on the IPSTA platform also were up ₹507 to ₹63,000 a quintal each. Export prices were at \$10,350 a tonne c&f for Europe and \$10,600 for the US.

Cotton output seen down 5.6%

Cotton output is likely to slide 5.6 per cent to 384.5 lakh bales (of 170 kg each) for the 2014-15 season, down from 407.25 lakh bales produced the

year before, the Cotton Association of India (CAI), in its latest estimates, said on Tuesday.

Balance sheet

With total supply of the fibre for the year estimated at 455.4 lakh bales and domestic consumption pegged at 310 lakh bales, the CAI expects a surplus of 145.40 lakh bales at the beginning of the 2015-16 season.

As on April 30, cotton output fell 14.3 per cent in the key central belt comprising Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, to 206.25 lakh bales.

Output was up a marginal 2.4 per cent in the northern States (Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan) and 3.9 per cent in south India (Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu).

Arrivals dwindle

“Close to 90 per cent of the total crop has already arrived into the market. However, arrivals have fallen drastically during the month of April... arrivals were 27.05 lakh bales compared to 40 lakh bales that had arrived during the same month last year. This constitutes a fall of about 32 per cent,” said a statement issued by the association.