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THE HINDU

Veggies will be procured without grading: Minister

Sunil Kumar visits Kanthallur, interacts with farmers

Agriculture Minister V.S. Sunil Kumar has said that steps will be taken to procure all vegetables produced by farmers of Kanthallur and Vattavada, without grading.

In an interaction with farmers at Kanthallur, he said he was aware of the problems faced by the farmers and that the HortiCorp would procure the vegetables without grading them. Grading by the agency was a problem faced by the farmers as the agency procured only the first quality produce while that graded second and third quality went to traders at throwaway prices.

Factors such as climate and selection of seeds play a role in the poor output in terms of size and colour. This often results in poor demand for them in the market. Traditionally produced items, though with better quality, is graded second or third making it difficult for the farmers to sell them.

Procurement agency

HortiCorp is the main government agency procuring vegetables from farmers. However, when there is a bumper production, farmers find it difficult to market them as there is no regular procurement by the agency. Almost all the farmers are registered under the cool season vegetable marketing societies at Kanthallur and Vattavada. These societies collect vegetables from the farmers and in turn give to HortiCorp.

The farmers demanded that there should be an arrangement for the timely disbursement of payment for the procured vegetables.

Sugarcane farmers

Sugarcane farmers also aired their complaints. Mr. Sunil Kumar said that he would seek opportunities for marketing Marayur jaggery and its procurement by a government agency. The Minister was accompanied by Agriculture Secretary Raju Narayana Swami and officials of the Agriculture Department.

Mr. Sunil Kumar would stay at Munnar and would visit the vegetable farms at Vattavada on Tuesday.

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- *Horticorn procures only first-quality produce from farmers of Kanthallur*
 - *Farmers demand timely disbursal of payment for procured vegetables*

Buyers feel the pinch as rain hits veggie supplies

Delhi gets most of its supply from Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand

Prices of vegetables, especially the green ones which perish faster, continue to remain high as supplies have been hit by monsoon.

According to members of Azadpur Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC), prices of vegetables such as cauliflower, cabbage, spinach, beans, capsicum, ladies finger, brinjal and broccoli have seen a steep hike.

Heavy rain

“Delhi gets a major share of perishable and green leafy vegetables from States like Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. These places are witnessing heavy rainfall and if it does not stop, the prices are going to head further north,” said Rajender Sharma, member of the APMC at Azadpur Mandi.

The traders added that at present most vegetables arriving in the Capital are produced in green houses maintained in nearby States.

While the crops at green houses receive a protected environment, reaping the produce in farms is becoming difficult as the rains have flooded the fields. They suspected the prices to normalise only by the end of this month.

However, experts and wholesale traders informed that retailers are taking advantage of the monsoon to overcharge the buyers.

Disparity

The Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) in its latest survey found that retailers were charging very high prices as compared to wholesale prices of vegetables. The disparity between wholesale price and retail prices for essential vegetables like ladies finger, cabbage, bitter gourd went up beyond 35-40 per cent between June 30 to July 30, 2016, the survey revealed.

The wholesale rate of a kilo of cauliflower was recorded at Rs.30 on Monday, but in the retail market in Delhi-NCR it was being sold anywhere between Rs.120 and Rs.182. Similarly, cabbage cost Rs.21.43 at the Azadpur Mandi, but it was being sold at Rs.80 to Rs.97 per kilo in the retail market. The same vegetable was available at Rs.35 a kilo in the first week of July.

Selective purchase

The rising prices have forced the buyers to become selective in purchasing vegetables for daily consumption. “The price of cauliflower is shocking. Other vegetables like beans, spinach, cabbage and carrots are also too expensive. I found arbi to be still cheap, so bought a lot of them,” said Jwala Dutta, a resident of Chittaranjan Park.

Paddy transplantation yet to pick up

The major dams irrigating paddy in Adilabad district are Swarna and Kadem besides, the Saraswati canal of SRSP



GETTING READY: Farmers making preparations for paddy transplantation near Kadem irrigation project in Adilabad district.- Photo: S. Harpal Singh

Paddy transplantation in the Godavari belt is slow at this juncture, but the farmers in Adilabad district are upbeat thanks to the excellent monsoon and the inflows into irrigation projects.

The good augury however, may not cause an impact in terms of increasing the normal area under the prime food crop in the mandals along the course of river Godavari.

The expected area under paddy, both rainfed and irrigated crops, is over 52,000 hectare this kharif of which about 12,500 hectare has already been transplanted. The coming three weeks will see hectic activity so far as transplantation is concerned, according to officials in the Agriculture Department here.

Along river Godavari

There are 15 mandals in the Godavari river belt in Adilabad where paddy is one of the major crops.

The crop is also cultivated in smaller extents in Bejjur, Koutala, Sirpur (T) and Dahegaon mandals in the eastern side of the district.

Some of these mandals have already recorded the average normal rainfall which has ensured filling up of all local tanks and projects. The mandals which have received over 100 c.m. of rainfall so far in the season are Bhainsa, Kuntala and Dilawarpur in Nirmal Revenue Division and Bejjur and Vemanpalli in Asifabad and Mancherial Divisions respectively.

The other paddy-rich mandals of Mancherial, Jannaram and Luxettipet have received rainfall in excess of 22 per cent while Sarangapur has recorded 49 per cent excess. “There will neither be shortage of groundwater nor in the reservoirs this season,” observed an official from the Agriculture Department.

Irrigation sources

The major dams irrigating paddy in the district are Swarna and Kadem besides, the Saraswati canal of the SRSP Project and the Sadarmat channel.

All these irrigation facilities are brimming and farmers hope to get the maximum benefit out of the situation this season.

The ayacut stabilised under Kadem Project is 70,000 acres while that under the 47-km Saraswati Canal is about 40,000 acres. Swarna and Sadarmat irrigate about 7,000 acres each during kharif.

Tomato price plummets for second time in five months

Tomato price is witnessing a downward spiral for the second time this year. The price currently rules at Rs. 7 to 8 per kilogram for first-grade tomatoes in Erode markets. Retail points are flooded with crates of tomatoes.

During March this year, the price fell to Rs. 5 a kilogram, and two months later, the price galloped to nearly Rs. 90 to Rs. 100 per kilogram. Yet again, the supply has far surpassed demand level, according to a trader in Rangampalayam.

There are reports of farmers desisting from harvesting the produce and instead letting their cattle graze on them since even the cost incurred towards labour and transportation cannot be recovered, a supplier said. Farmers, especially

those in the Thalavady belt, who had spent as much as Rs. 25,000 towards cost of cultivation, are the worst sufferers.



Tomato cultivators in Thalavadi of Erode have been facing economic setbacks periodically due to crash in price of produce.- PHOTO: M. GOVARTHAN

The Horticulture Department's effort to prevail upon farmers to utilise the state-of-art cold storage facility at Alukuzhi near Gobi to protect themselves from vagaries of nature reflects rather slow progress. Farmers are keen on getting money for the produce at the earliest for sowing the next crop, according to officials. The frequency in price fluctuations must make farmers realise that storing the produce is the best option. Tomatoes could be preserved in cold storages for a maximum of one month, a senior official said.

Colours of Independence campaign to mark I-Day

In a step towards promoting national integration and jute awareness, the Jute Corporation of India (JCI) is launching a week-long 'Colours of Independence' campaign on Tuesday. Terming this as an opportunity for general public to participate, Chairman and Managing Director of JCI K.V.R. Murthy said similar campaign would be launched in 70 cities to celebrate 70 years of Independence.

"HRD Minister Ganta Srinivasa Rao is expected to launch the campaign at CMR Central Shopping Mall at 10 a.m. on Tuesday. Participants can try their hands at jute fabric painting which will be conducted at the mall until August

15,” he said. The painting will be sent to the Union Ministry of Textiles which is spearheading it.

“The labour-intensive jute industry is facing manpower crunch. However, the jute crop is plentiful this year and there is less dependence on imports of jute products from Bangladesh,” he said.

The JCI aims at safeguarding the interest of farmers, ensuring minimum support price. “The Mini Mission – III, launched as part of the Jute Technology Mission, is entrusted with the task of providing market linkages to jute growers.

JCI intends to provide a one-stop solution for Jute Diversified Products (JDP) under the brand name ‘Sonali’. In future, a dedicated JDP outlet will be set up in Visakhapatnam,” Dr. Murthy said.

He said the Bhimli mesta grown in Vizianagaram and Srikakulam were of inferior quality due to prevailing dry weather conditions. “Therefore the minimum jute price per quintal has been fixed at Rs. 2,900 in these districts,” Dr. Murthy added.

Amended GST Bill gets Parliament green signal

Barring AIADMK, all 443 members present in Lok Sabha vote in favour.

The Constitution amendment Bill to pave the way for the Goods & Services Tax (GST), which is described as the biggest taxation reform in recent history, and which Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said will free the nation from tax terrorism, is just a tiny step away from becoming an Act.

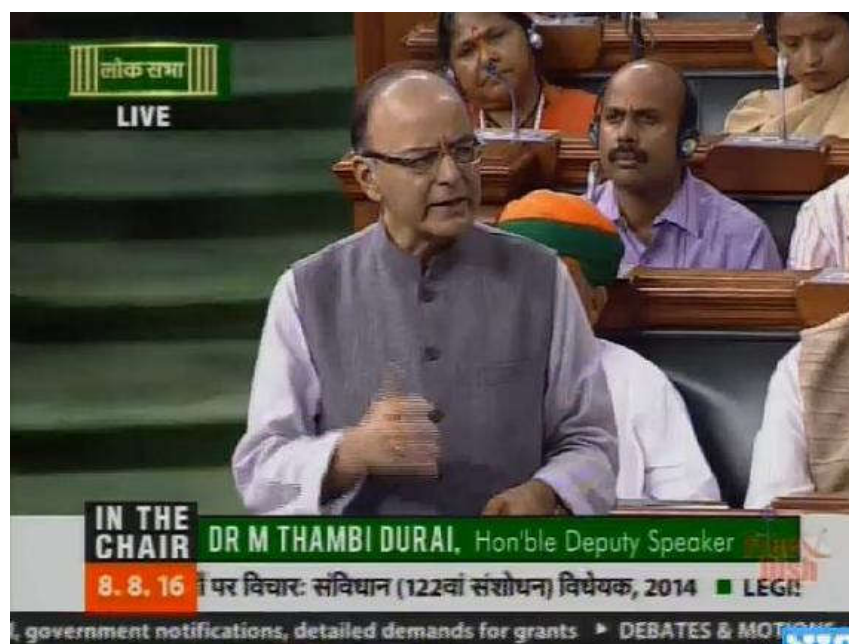
Eleven years after the GST was first proposed by former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, in 2005, Parliament on Monday passed the Bill.

All 443 members present in the Lok Sabha — which had earlier passed it in May 2015 —voted in favour of the Constitution (122nd Amendment) Bill, 2014, as amended by the Rajya Sabha last week. AIADMK members walked out before the vote, as they did in the Rajya Sabha.

Ratification required

All other parties supported it, but speakers from most sought assurances from the government that the GST would not push up prices of goods and services. The amendment will have to be ratified by at least 16 States.

Both Prime Minister Modi and Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley expressed gratitude to all political parties for approving the amendment in one voice and hailed the coming on board of most political parties and States as the strength of democracy.



PM's pat for parties

“GST can't be seen as a victory of a party or government...It is the victory for the democratic ethos of India and a victory for everyone,” Mr. Modi said, noting that all parties had risen above the differences in ideologies in support of the amendment. He said the Bill would have been in trouble in the Rajya Sabha due to lack of numbers and the reluctance of some States, but in the end all parties backed it.

He said the new indirect taxation regime, which will subsume 7-13 taxes, will free the nation from tax terrorism and help end corruption as traders will be

compelled to give proper bills. “The consumer will be king,” Mr. Modi said. GST was a Great Step by Team India, he said.

The new tax regime will increase tax base for Centre & States, reduce tax evasion and improve ease of doing business – **ARUN JAITLEY**, Finance Minister

Tamil Nadu is a manufacturing State that will suffer while consuming States will benefit from GST – **P VENUGOPAL**, AIADMK

Centre should keep tax rate low under the GST regime and bring legislations as Finance bills instead of Money Bills – **VEERAPPA MOILY**, Congress

GST is a big step towards ending tax terrorism... it can't be seen as a victory of a party or govt, it is victory for democratic ethos of India & a victory for everyone – **NARENDRA MODI**, Prime Minister

Initiating the debate in the House, Mr. Jaitley said the government’s effort was to build across-the-board support as it didn’t want a “divided Parliament” to approve it. “The process of building consensus slowed the progress on the Bill,” he said.

Lead speaker for the Congress, Veerappa Moily urged the government to acknowledge that the idea of introducing GST was an offshoot of the liberalisation policies initiated by Dr. Manmohan Singh under Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao in 1991. “If there was political consensus in 2011, this Bill would have been passed then,” he said.

Several speakers, including Mr. Moily, Dharmendra Yadav of SP and Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge, sought to know why Prime Minister Modi had opposed the GST as the Chief Minister of Gujarat. In his intervention in the debate, while owning up to having doubts over the GST as the Chief Minister of Gujarat when the Bill was first introduced in the House in 2011, Mr. Modi said that it had led him to speak several times to the then Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee and as Prime Minister that experience had come in handy for him.

Mr. Kharge said that the government had with its majority “bulldozed” the Lok Sabha’s suggestions in 2014. “If you paid heed, this Bill would have been passed earlier...You are responsible for stalling...your Finance Minister said

the Congress had obstructed and blocked the growth of this economy — take it all back now,” Mr. Kharge said, even as former chairman of the empowered committee Sushil Modi watched the better part of the proceedings from the gallery.

After passage of the Bill by Parliament, Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi said: “GST is a good step for the country.”



Raghuram Rajan’s final RBI policy review today, may hold line against inflation

Raghuram Rajan has also persuaded the government to form a monetary policy committee, made up of central bankers and members chosen by the government, to decide interest rate changes in future.



Reserve Bank of India Governor Raghuram Rajan. (Source: PTI)

Inflation at a two-year high will probably prevent Raghuram Rajan from cutting interest rates at his final policy review as head of the Reserve Bank of India on Tuesday. The government has still to pick a successor to the highly respected former International Monetary Fund chief economist.

But when he walks away on Sept. 4 to return to academia and family living in the United States, Rajan will be relieved that he leaves behind a government that last week formerly adopted the consumer price inflation targets he had set. Chances are that the next RBI governor will be able to make what could well be the final reduction in an easing cycle that has brought the policy repo rate down to a more than five-year low of 6.5 percent.

Rajan has lowered rates by 150 basis points since January last year, but economists doubt whether the current cycle has much further to run. “Even if a dovish governor takes over he or she would have a very narrow window to cut rates,” said Radhika Rao, an economist at DBS Bank.

“Food prices have been very volatile and despite monsoon rains they could remain high in July-August. We have another 25 bps cut pencilled in for the fourth quarter of this calendar year and then it will stay flat after that.”

Most economists polled by Reuters hold a similar view.

Inflation is a long way below the double digit levels prevailing when Rajan was appointed in 2013, but at 5.77 percent in June, it was near the top of the RBI’s 2-6 percent range, and above the near-term target of 5 percent by March next year.

Rains have been better than average, suggesting food prices that shot up before the monsoon arrived will moderate. But they are stubbornly high in rural areas suffering from the previous two years of drought.

And inflation could be stoked by the impact of a pay increase for government workers and pressures arising ahead of the imposition of a nationwide goods and services tax approved by the upper house of parliament last week.

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He has also persuaded the government to form a monetary policy committee, made up of central bankers and members chosen by the government, to decide interest rate changes in future.

The panel has still to be formed, and whoever takes over from Rajan will have to follow through on a campaign to clean up the country's banks.

Although measures were announced in April to make banks more quickly reflect interest rate changes in their lending rates, the sector has struggled to lower borrowing costs at a time when their profitability has been hit by high levels of bad debt.

Maharashtra: Dam water levels up from 3% to 59%

The good monsoons this year has helped in increasing the water levels from mere three per cent to 59 per cent in dams across Maharashtra.



Satara: Water being discharged from Koyna Dam in Satara, Maharashtra. (Source: PTI)

The good monsoons this year has helped in increasing the water levels from mere three per cent to 59 per cent in dams across Maharashtra. Majority of the big dams, including Jayakwadi which had reached dead level in June, are back to life with incessant rains in July and first week of August.

Almost, 270 of 355 talukas have reported heavier rains compared to last year. The IMD projection report has predicted more rainfall in August, extending upto mid-September.

The ministry of agriculture believes some of the rain-shadow belts which always record extremely poor rainfall may cope up if there are heavy rains during next one month.

Another good news is the rising water levels in the dams across the state from an average three per cent in June to 59 per cent in first week of August. Last year, the total rainfall in dams was 41 per cent. The latest statistics shows a record of 108 per cent rainfall, much higher than last season's 62 per cent.

THE HINDU **BusinessLine**

GST a big win for 'Team India', will end tax terrorism: Modi

Both Houses give nod to Constitutional Amendment Bill; action shifts to States

The historic constitutional amendment that would pave the way for a common goods and services tax (GST) system got Parliament's nod on Monday after the Lok Sabha agreed to the amendments moved to the Bill in the Rajya Sabha last week. AIADMK, the only party to oppose the Bill, staged a walk-out.

With this, the action now shifts to the States, as the Constitutional Amendment Bill requires the nod of at least 50 per cent of State assemblies for it to become law.

The constitutional amendment is crucial as it would confer the Centre with the power to tax at the retail stage and also allow the States to tax services.

In his intervention during the discussions, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said GST would be a “catalytic agent” in strengthening the federal structure of India and would benefit both “small traders” and States.



“This (introducing GST) is a gigantic step that will give us freedom from tax terrorism. It will eradicate both corruption in tax collections and also poverty. It will prevent creation of black money.

“There will be uniformity in the tax system and the consumer will be king. By implementing GST, States will also have more income that could be used for their development agenda,” Modi said.

The Prime Minister lauded all political parties for putting “national interest” ahead of their “political interests” and coming out to support this “transformative” piece of legislation.

Describing GST as “Great Step by Team India”, Modi also said that it would be ‘Great Step towards Transformation’ and ‘Great Step towards Transparency’.

Meanwhile, the Lok Sabha which considered the 10-odd amendments moved in the Rajya Sabha last week, passed the amendments, as AIADMK staged a walkout from the Lower House, as it had done in Rajya Sabha last week. The AIADMK’s contention is that Tamil Nadu’s concerns on GST had not been addressed by the Centre. In reply to the discussions on the amendments in Lok Sabha on Monday, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley expressed confidence that GST — like the value added tax system — would be a “win-win” for both the Centre and States.

“GST will expand the tax base, plug leakages in revenues and also increase the quantum of tax collections,” Jaitley said.

Responding to Lok Sabha Deputy Speaker and AIADMK leader M Thambidurai’s query on what the situation will be after the five-year period, till which manufacturing States will be compensated for any revenue losses, Jaitley said this query was more “a fear of the unknown.”

“These fears (losses will continue beyond five years) are exaggerated. GST is only going to bring additionality of taxes into your kitty,” he said.

Jaitley also said the aspect of “anti-profiteering” clauses would have to be considered by the GST council and there won’t be need for Parliament or State legislatures to consider it right now.

Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Veerappa Moily demanded that the standard rate be capped at 18 per cent. Moily even said that Centre and States should desist “profiteering” tendencies, noting that any rate above 18 per cent would be burdensome for the middle class and the poor.

Congress also wanted Jaitley to give an assurance that subsequent Bills — Central GST law and the iGST law — would only get introduced as financial Bills and not as money bills. However, the party did not get its way on both these demands.

Tea production up 15% in June



Ample rains in the North push up output, while dry spell hits production in the South

The country's tea production grew by 15 per cent in June this year to 144.11 million kg (mkg) over corresponding last year, boosted by increase in output in the top two producing states of Assam and West Bengal. The Tea Board said Monday that production in Assam, the top producing State, grew 16 per cent to 73.14 mkg in June this year, aided by ample rains. In June last year, Assam had produced 63.07 mkg.

Top 2 producers

Similarly, in West Bengal, the second largest tea producing State, the output was higher by 22 per cent in June at 42.53 mkg — up from 34.87 mkg in the corresponding last year. All key tea producing regions —Dooars, Terai and Darjeeling — registered an increase in output during June. The higher output in Assam and West Bengal boosted the North Indian tea production in June to 118.81 mkg, an 18 per cent increase over corresponding last year's 100.74 mkg.

Setback for S.India

However, in South India, the production was rather sluggish with the region registering a mere two per cent growth in output at 25.30 mkg during June as prolonged dry weather has impacted the harvest.

Production in Tamil Nadu grew 2.66 per cent to 17.78 mkg, while it was almost flat in Kerala at 6.79 mkg. In Karnataka, the tea production fell marginally by 2.67 per cent to 0.73 mkg.

India, the world's second biggest tea producer, had registered a three per cent increase in output during 2015-16 at 1,233.14 mkg. India exports tea grades such as the CTC (crush-tear-curl) mainly to Egypt, Pakistan and the UK, and the orthodox variety to Iraq, Iran and Russia.

PS Sundar from Coonoor adds: Meanwhile, the average price at Sale No: 31 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auction ruled at 88.29 a kg – the second lowest in any sale in 2016 so far after 87.47 of previous week. The low price helped increased absorption with as much as 94 per cent of the 16.72 lakh on offer being sold.

No CTC grade entered the high-price bracket of 200/kg.

The Pekoe Dust of Homedale Estate, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped the Dust auction as also the entire CTC market when Oswal Tea Traders bought it for 196 a kg.

In the Leaf Tea auction, Homedale Estate's Broken Pekoe, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped at 180. In the orthodox market, Chamraj topped at 231 a kg followed by Kodanad at 206.

Cardamom gains aroma on short supplies

Small cardamom prices showed a firmer trend on thin arrivals at auctions held in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Good domestic demand continued to persist at a time

when the arrivals were showing a declining trend, Ranganathan, a dealer in Bodinayakannur, told *BusinessLine*.

Good quality bulk from the new crop, which is of course at short supply, was being traded at 760-820 a kg, he said.

At present, harvesting is taking place in a few pockets such as Kallar and Mankulam in Munnar valley which had received summer showers and thus were not affected by drought.

Whereas, harvesting in half of the main growing areas is expected to commence from August-end while picking in the rest of the areas would begin from mid-September.

As a result, picking is likely to be limited to 3 to 4 rounds given the present weather conditions as against the normal six rounds, PC Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC, told *BusinessLine*.

At today's auction held by the Cardamom Planters' Association at Santhanpara, the average price remained nearly steady at 766.23 a kg because of inferior quality.

Arrivals stood at 10.5 tonnes and the almost the entire quantity was sold out.

Meanwhile, at the second auction today conducted by Idukki District Traditional Cardamom Producer Company the average price shot up to 842.55 a kg from 831.47 the previous Monday. The maximum price was at 1,137 and the 22.8 tonnes of good quality capsules arrived were all traded. Total arrivals last week were at 425 tonnes.

Total arrivals during the season up to August 6 were at around 34,438 tonnes and sales were at 33,266 tonnes.

The individual auction average stood at around 644 /kg.

Prices in /kg: 8mm bold good colour 1,200-1,220; 7-8 mm 900- 920; 6-7 mm 670 and below 6 mm: 630-640.

Mahindra launches 4 varieties of dal under NuPro

Mahindra Agri Solutions, part of Mahindra & Mahindra Group, has launched four new varieties of branded pulses under its NuPro brand in Mumbai with a target to become a pan-India player in three years.

The company, which is selling only branded tur, has completed the entire portfolio of branded dal with the launch of chana, moong, masoor and urad. It also plans to launch *besan* under NuPro brand soon.

The agriculture division of Mahindra group is targeting a turnover of 20 crore this fiscal from the branded pulses market in Mumbai which is estimated at 350 crore. Overall pulses market in Mumbai is about 5,000 crore.

Mahindra plans to source 90 per cent of its pulses requirement directly from farmers in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka and depend on imports from Canada, Myanmar and Tanzania for the rest.

Ashok Sharma, Managing Director, Mahindra Agri Solutions, said the good response for the tur dal, which was launched nine months ago, has given confidence to go whole hog on pulses.

“We have sold 500 tonnes of NuPro tur dal in nine months and touched a peak of 100 tonnes recently. In fact, about 30 per cent of our sales came through repeat customers,” he said.

Estimated at 1.5 lakh crore, the Indian market for branded pulses is growing at 20 per cent per year for last five years as pulses sold in loose are also priced at a premium mostly.

Mahindra is also strengthening its focus on research and development and is developing a new variety of hybrid seed for pulses to improve the yield which is

currently among the lowest at 650 kg/hectare against the world average of 1,000 kg. It is 1,900 kg/ha in China.

No ban on tobacco imports for now, says Sitharaman

The Union government on Monday ruled out a ban on tobacco imports for now.

Reiterating the government's stance in reply to members' concern in the Lok Sabha during Question Hour over illegal import of tobacco and urging the government to disincentivise legal imports,

Commerce and Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said:

“Any ban on imports has to be imposed on domestic production also. So, we have to be conscious if we can stop the total import of any commodity. But, do we stop the production of tobacco in this country? We also have to give effective alternatives to the farmers.”

Sitharaman said tobacco imports had remained in the range of \$40.9 million, but what was of great concern was the rise in smuggling.

The Minister said smuggled cigarettes which have been detected are valued at 162 crore in 2015-16.

In reply to a question by BN Goud of the Telangana Rashtriya Samithi on what alternative crops were being suggested to tobacco farmers, Sitharaman said for

the Northern black soil area, maize, paddy, cotton, soyabean and redgram were suggested as alternatives for the kharif season, and Bengal gram, paddy, mustard and fodder crops for the rabi season.

Cotton blooms on short supply

Cotton prices moved up on the back of tight supply and good demand from domestic mills.

Though, *kapas* or raw cotton traded flat on moderate demand and cottonseed marginally declined on limited buying.

Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton gained 500 to 48,000-48,500 per candy of 356 kg.

About 700-800 bales of cotton arrived in Gujarat and 2,000 bales arrived in India. *Kapas* was unchanged at 1,280-1,310 per 20 kg and gin

delivery *kapas* was at 1,320-1,340 per 20 kg. Cottonseed lost 10 to 615-625 per 20 kg.

Good demand for quality turmeric

Spot turmeric prices at Erode increased on Monday on the back of quality arrivals.

“Though there was no arrival of Salem Hybrid, the local hybrid fetched good price of 9,400-10,600 a quintal and all the 600 bags of local hybrid varieties were sold.

The buyers, despite of non-receipt of upcountry orders, are buying the spice to cater to the local masala and grinding units,” said RKV Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association. Of the arrival of 5,500 bags, 70 per cent stocks were sold. The price of the finger variety was up 150 a quintal and the root variety by 100.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association, the finger turmeric was sold at 7,556-9,466 a quintal; the root variety 7,355-8,456. Of the arrival of 1,897 bags, 1,464 were sold.

Business Standard

Raghuram Rajan's final RBI policy review to hold line against inflation

Inflation at a two-year high will probably prevent the RBI Governor from cutting interest rates at his final policy review today



Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Raghuram Rajan gestures as he answers a question from the audience after delivering his keynote address at the "Advancing Asia: Investing for the Future" conference in New Delhi

Inflation at a two-year high will probably prevent Raghuram Rajan from cutting interest rates at his final policy review as head of the Reserve Bank of India on Tuesday.

The government has still to pick a successor to the highly respected former International Monetary Fund chief economist.

But when he walks away on September 4 to return to academia and family living in the United States, Rajan will be relieved that he leaves behind a government that last week formerly adopted the consumer price inflation targets he had set.

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Smart farming: The future of agriculture in the connected world

IoT, combined with big data, provides farmers with a wealth of information that they can use to maximise productivity and maintain the quality of food in the supply chain, says Robert Le Busque



Internet of Things (IoT) is already a mainstream phenomenon, being driven by the promise of revenue growth across multiple sectors such as manufacturing, transportation, resource extraction, agriculture, and the military. The agriculture industry, in particular, primarily depends on engineering, technology as well as the biological and physical sciences. In this digital era, the agriculture industry has been an enthusiastic adopter of IoT and the applications of IoT in this sector is proliferating at a lightning speed with big farmhouses having to rethink their methods to find the efficiencies and cost savings necessary to compete.

With the real-time data provided, it can be possible for farmers to work in the acres of land and still watch their assets across entities such as their field, machinery and finance, monitored without being physically present. IoT, combined with big data, further provides farmers with a wealth of information that they can use to optimise efficiency, maximise productivity, and maintain the quality of food in the supply chain - from field to fork.

Initiatives to modernise agriculture have already been undertaken by developing IoT systems that enhance livestock welfare, these systems use data collected from a variety of sensors to ensure all operations are being executed within a set parameter and alerting farmers of any issues. For instance, when using IoT to monitor the health of livestock remotely, the farmers can track the animals' movement to establish grazing patterns and help increase yield.

The IoT solutions also address two crucial issues prevalent which is irrigation and productivity in the agriculture space. Every year we read stories from across the globe on various countries facing drought and discussions on how this can be tackled. With the advent of technology in agriculture, this problem can now be resolved with assets such as irrigation systems or [farming](#) vehicles. These vehicles and systems provide data gathered by IoT sensors giving the farmers a holistic view of performance and helps schedule servicing and prevent yield-sapping breakdowns.

In certain areas such as precision agriculture, real-time data about soil, weather, air quality and hydration levels can help farmers make better informed decisions about the planting and harvesting of crops thus increasing the overall yield of crops as well. The IoT solutions and sensors will aid in increasing crop productivity by way of managing and controlling the activities such as crop water management and observation service (SOS).

Robert Le Busque, MD (sales operations and strategy) for APAC, EMEA and LATAM at Verizon

The advancement in the technology ensures that the sensors are getting smaller, sophisticated and more economic. Networks are emerging to become intelligent and secure, protecting your data and ensuring that essential information gets through. Although awareness about these connected devices has only been

created recently, there are progressive signs of this application already being taken seriously. Focusing on encouraging innovation in agriculture, smart farming is the answer to the problems that the industry is currently facing. 'Connected farm' is the future of farming; companies need to be committed to helping develop IoT across all sectors, including agriculture.

The concept is quickly catching on and is disrupting the agriculture sector to make the farm of the future possible. Smart farming offers high-precision crop control, useful data collection, and automated farming techniques.

It is a technology where you can predict and prevent disease; monitor data on soil and crop condition in near real-time and machines can make sure that the crops are fed and watered without any intervention.

The cloud means that the storage is available to store the data we will be collecting.

Businesses should aggressively focus on improving their operations for ensuring success, given the urgent requirement in the agri industry.

IoT could provide a real advantage to those that embrace it by providing better quality information that aids better decision making.

The technology is here today to make the farm of the future possible: where you can predict and prevent disease;

where you can view data on soil and crop condition in near real-time; and where your machines can make sure your crops are fed and watered without your intervention.

The cloud means that the storage is available to store the data you will be collecting. Sensors are getting smaller and more sophisticated - and cheaper.

And networks are getting more intelligent and more secure, protecting your data and making sure critical information gets through.

Apple crop woes for Adani, Mahindra

Unrest in J&K intensifies shortage; food-processing units not to be badly hit, as they rely more on crop residue



Companies engaged in apple trading and in marketing of branded apples are preparing for a harder time, due to tepid arrivals in this season, after a record crop in 2015-16.

Output this year — harvesting has just commenced and closes in end-October/November — is estimated to fall significantly. The reasons are public disorder in Jammu & Kashmir, the largest producing state, beside crop damage in Himachal Pradesh.

The agricultural division of Mahindra & Mahindra, which sells branded apples, plans to import more. “We have many sourcing locations overseas,” said Ashok Sharma, chief executive officer of the division.

Apple is the major horticultural crop of both Himachal and J&K.

Adani Agrifresh, with an 80 per cent share in Himachal's organised apple market, has been pulling all resources to procure the targeted 25,000 tonnes.

Sources in the company say damage to the crop in the state has been colossal in the lower and middle elevations; they are concentrating on higher elevations. Prices have shot up due to supply constraints.

Appy Fizz, a Parle-promoted drink, made from apple extract, might not find it as hard — they need culled apples and that was available in the aftermath of hailstorms.

The food processing sector thrives on crop residue and might not be so affected, said a government official.

Prakash Thakur, vice-chairman of Himachal Pradesh Horticulture Produce, Marketing and Procurement Corporation, said:

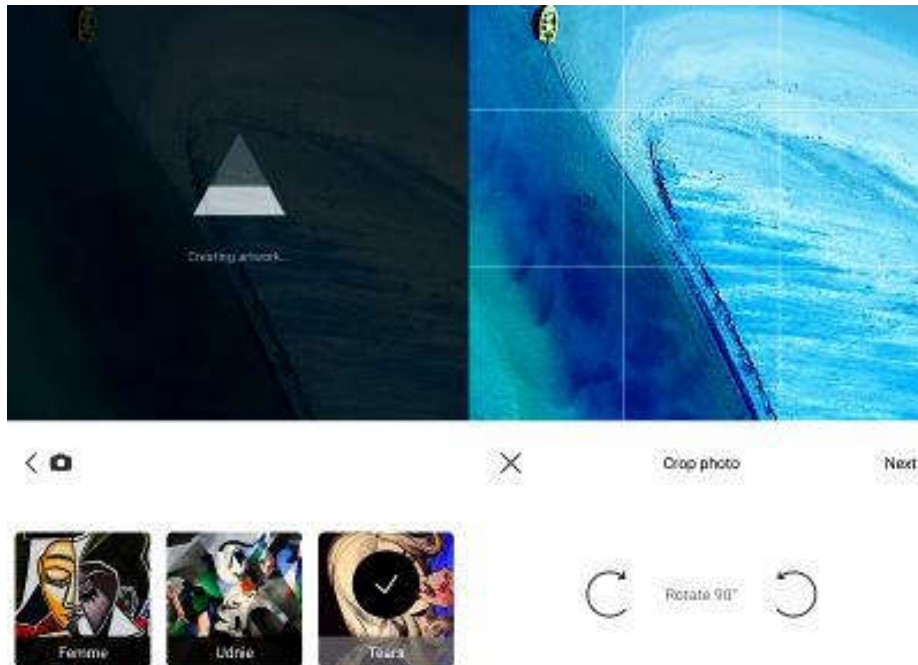
“A higher average mean temperature this season has affected yield and hailstorms in April and May aggravated the crop loss. The annual production can touch up to five crore (50 million) boxes (20 kg each) or 100,000 tonnes in a good year. It would remain in the range of 15 mn boxes this year.”

The crop in J&K is half the expected size, says officials in the horticulture department there. As a result, a 20-kg box trading at Rs 1,200-Rs 1,400 at the farm gate last year at this time is now available at Rs 1,800-2,000. “Prices might ascend in the coming weeks,” said Thakur.

Imports might, hence, rise significantly. It is normally about 20 mn boxes with a good domestic crop. We import mainly from America and China.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Prisma app gets an update, adds cropping feature and more



Prisma photo-editing app has finally got an update that actually brings new features to it. Until now, the Prisma Inc had been rolling out updates but all of them dealt with the app's bug fixes and stability improvements. The latest update applies to both Android and iOS.

The updated app now lets users crop images instead of applying filter on the complete image. Besides that it is also possible to rotate images. It is worth mentioning that images clicked from inside the app cannot be rotated or cropped. Only those images imported from the handset's gallery can be edited with these features.

The update has also solved the problem of delay in filter processing time. Now the app relatively takes less time to convert images into the selected image filter. Nothing else is included in the update for now.

Prisma is reportedly working on a tool which will allow the application of its artistic effects on short video clips as well. The company says that the technology is ready and is expected to be rolled out in the coming weeks. The app makers just need to update the computing infrastructure to support the complexities involved in handling videos before going live with the feature.

Unlike most other photo-editing apps which simply overlap the filter effect on the existing image, Prisma creates the complete image from ground-up using its artificial intelligence (AI) technology.

Prisma, the photo-editing app on Android and iOS that shot to fame within days, is giving a tough time to the seasoned apps like Pixlr, Snapseed, Photo Editor Pro and others.

Improve your eye health with these superfoods

Your eyes are one of the most important organs of your body and need to be well taken care of. Just doing eye exercises isn't enough though. You also need to eat foods that help improve eye health. While carrots are excellent for your eyes, there are other foods that are helpful as well...

- Certain fish like mackerel, tuna, salmon and sardines are packed with omega-3 fatty acids that are known to prevent dry eyes and macular degeneration.
- Not only are spinach, iceberg lettuce, broccoli, cabbage, kale, etc that are rich in folic acid, potassium, magnesium, dietary fibre, vitamin C, and excellent when it comes to your heart health, they are great for your eyes as well. Comprising generous amounts of lutein and zeaxanthin help prevent macular degeneration and even cataracts.

- Don't keep eggs out of your kitchen for the fear of cholesterol. Eggs are an excellent source of protein and vitamin A, D, B6 and B12, which are said to protect you from night blindness and improve dry eyes.
- Whole grains such as wheat, millet, oats, corn, barley, rice and rye have a low glycemic index (GI) that will protect your eyes against age-related macular degeneration.
- Munch your way to better eye health with citrus fruits like oranges, lemons and grapefruits. They are packed with vitamin C that is said to lower your risk of developing cataracts as well as macular degeneration.
- Almonds, walnuts and pistachios that are high in omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin E, too are great for eye health.
- Legumes like chickpeas and beans contain bioflavonoids and zinc that help safeguard the retina.
- Sunflower seeds are also said to keep the eyes healthy since they contain lots of vitamin E and zinc.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

M&M launches unpolished pulses to grab share of Rs 350 crore pie in Mumbai

The size of the branded pulses market is a tad less than 1 per cent of the overall size of the pulses market countrywide at Rs 156 lakh crore.

MUMBAI: The estimated Rs 1.5 lakh crore branded pulses market in the country has attracted yet another corporate, thanks to the hefty margins and potential for growth it commands. Mahindra Agri Solutions (MASL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of M&M, which launched tur dal under NuPro brand a year ago in Mumbai, has launched chana, moong, masoor and urad dals across 4000 outlets in the city.

NuPro pulses are targeted at the upper middle class, educated woman of the city. Urad dal has been priced at Rs 130 per half a kilo, moong dal (Rs 185 a kilo), Masoor Dal (Rs 160/kg) and chana dal (Rs 175 a kilo). The premiums that the unpolished dals command range from 50-100 per cent to the normal variety of dals, basis consumer affairs ministry data on July 5.



Justifying the prices, Sharma said, "These are sundried, unpolished variety of pulses which take approximately half the time to cook. Besides we vouchsafe for the purity and high quality assurance, which is why NuPro had a healthy 30 per cent repeat purchase."

The two larger rivals of MASL are Tata Sampann and Satyam, which have 20 per cent and 8-9 per cent market share in Mumbai respectively, said Sharma.

The company which had sales of Rs 2.5 crore in pulses in FY16 targets to generate revenue of Rs 20 crore from pulses in the current fiscal in Mumbai. Its grander aims include expanding to the country's top 10 cities over the years and commanding a 5 per cent market share of the overall Rs 1.5 lakh cr branded market.

MASL also sells edible oils like soya and mustard under the NuPro brand in West Bengal, and fruits and vegetables under the Saboro, Spanish for tasty, brand. The revenues of MASL grew 12 times to Rs 900 crore in the past five years through fiscal year 2015-16.

Around 90-95 per cent of the procurement of pulses is from the domestic market, mainly APMC market yards and appx 10 per cent from Myanmar, Tanzania and Canada. The company has reached out to 2500 farmers in Maharashtra in areas like Latur and Amravati and plans to swathe 10,000 farmers in the near future.

In fact, claims Sharma, the productivity of pulses, which stands at an average 650 kg/hectare in India, rose to 800-850 kilo/ha, thanks to advisory and high quality input sales by MASL to farmers inn Latur. In comparison average yield in China is 1900 kg/ha for pulses, Sharma added.

Ashok Gulati, Infosys chair professor for agri at ICRIER, also said that corporates tend to charge higher premiums because of "quality assurance" and brand equity "which isn't built out of thin air." "If you knew the kind of oils being used by some to polish dals in the unorganized sector, you'd stop eating them," he said. "The bigwigs (corporates) can't afford to erode their brand equity by engaging in malpractice so you as a customer can be sure of quality even if you're paying a higher price.

The size of the branded pulses market is a tad less than 1 per cent of the overall size of the pulses market countrywide at Rs 156 lakh crore, which opens the potential for tremendous growth of the organized sector, Sharma added