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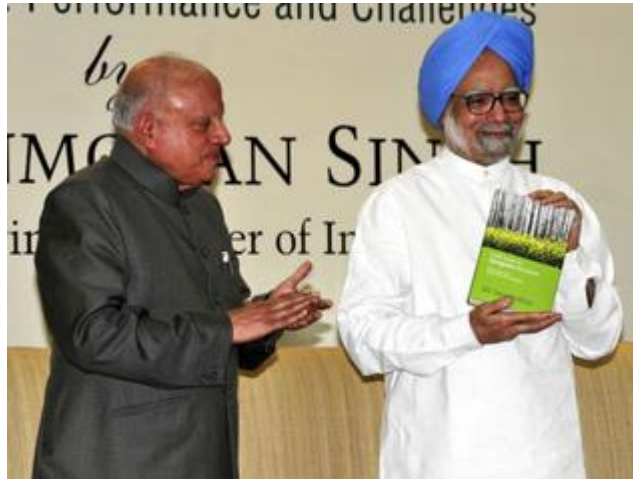
Wednesday, September 29, 2010

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Farmers' enthusiasm needs to be revived, says M.S. Swaminathan

Gargi Parsai

— Photo: S. Subramaniam



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh releases a new book, “From Green to Evergreen Revolution: Indian Agriculture: Performance and Challenges”, by Dr. M. S. Swaminathan (left) in New Delhi on Tuesday.

NEW DELHI: While Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said on Tuesday the country was close to achieving 3.5 per cent growth rate in the farm sector “but could, and should, do more,” eminent agriculture scientist and Rajya Sabha member M.S. Swaminathan pointed out that farmers' enthusiasm today “was not in good shape and needed to be revived.”

Dr. Singh was speaking to a distinguished gathering after releasing a book of essays on agriculture — From Green to Evergreen Revolution - Indian Agriculture: Performance and Challenges — by Dr. Swaminathan.

The Prime Minister said the country was close to achieving an agriculture growth rate of nearly

3.5 per cent this year despite the challenge of food inflation, as against a “long term average of no more than 2 per cent.”

A Core Group of Central Ministers and Chief Ministers had been set up to deal with the rise in prices of essential commodities and address the issue “without hurting agriculture growth.”

He lauded the role of Dr. Swaminathan in ushering in the Green Revolution and contributing to the processes of nation building. “Our agriculture owes a deep sense of gratitude to him.”

Dr. Swaminathan highlighted the four pillars of agriculture growth as — technology, services, public policy and farmers' enthusiasm. “When the hybrid wheat variety was introduced, Punjab farmers took to it like fish to water and demanded a 'triple hybrid' variety. Such was their enthusiasm. But farmers' enthusiasm today is not in very good shape and needs to be revived.”

“Scientists can develop a technology, but whether it reaches farmers will depend on public policy,” he pointed out, while recalling his association with the former Ministers, C. Subramanian and Jagjivan Ram, who rose to the occasion several times to help farmers at critical times of political and social evolution.

Dr. Swaminathan profusely thanked N. Ram, Editor-in-Chief of The Hindu, and “ The Hindu family” for giving him permission to publish articles in his book from the annual agriculture review that the newspaper brings out.

The book has been published by Academic Foundation.

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Omar calls for peace, assures all help to fruit growers

Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR: Terming peace as a pre-requisite for all economic activities, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday assured the fruit growers that the government would facilitate the movement of fruit from the Valley to the terminal markets.

Appreciating the concern of fruit growers for the smooth flow of trucks, the Chief Minister assured them full support including exemption of taxes to empty trucks coming to the Valley to transport the fruit. He hoped that the protesters who had brought normal life to a standstill for the last several months would not hurt the fruit industry for which the peak season had commenced.

Chairing a joint meeting of top officials and representatives of fruit-growers and transport associations here, the Chief Minister said that the next three months were crucial for transport of fruit.

“Huge damage has already been done to the economy of the State leaving trade and commerce in a shambles and hurting the livelihoods of the common people,” he said. The Chief Minister directed the Horticulture Minister to convene another meeting after 15 days to review how the transport of fruit was going on. He asked the horticulture, transport, traffic and police departments to attend to the difficulties of the fruit-growers and take appropriate action for ensuring the smooth plying of trucks. Representatives of fruit growers from the Valley gave their suggestions

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Farmers waiting for water release

Staff Reporter

Following steady rise in level at many dams

THENI: In the wake of a steady rise in storage level in Vaigai and Periyar dams, farmers are hoping that the Public Works Department (PWD) would release water for irrigation of 2.19 lakh acres under Vaigai ayacut in five districts in the first week of October.

Water level in Vaigai dam has touched 62.04 feet with a moderate inflow of 997 cusecs on Tuesday. Similarly, the level has reached 117.5 feet in Periyar dam and the inflow into the dam was 1,298 cusecs. Storage level in the Vaigai dam was 4,009 mcft and at the Periyar dam it was 2,141 mcft.

With the combined credit having crossed 6,000 mcft, farmers hope that the PWD engineers would recommend to the government for issuing order to release water for irrigation of first crop in Dindigul, Theni, Madurai, Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga districts.

Five feet up

Farmers in some parts of the district are jubilant as water level in major dams in the district is steadily going up. Water level has risen by five feet in Sothuparai dam in the last 24 hours, thanks to a good rain in the catchment areas. The level rose to 94 feet in the dam which was just 88.5 feet on Monday.

Similarly, storage was impressive in Manjalar dam, situated on the foothills of Kodaikanal. Water level in the dam was 40.60 feet, up by one foot, compared to the previous day level of 39 feet.

Manjalar dam received 100 mm of rainfall on Sunday night.

Thekkadi received 30 mm, Sothuparai dam 18 mm and other areas received rain below one cm.

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Contract farming: States told to give up 'hypocrisy'

Special Correspondent

Union Minister calls for attitudinal change on the issue

— Photo: S.S. Kumar



Union Minister of Food Processing Industries Subodh Kant Sahay (third from left) releasing a report at a function in Chennai on Tuesday. M. Rafeeqe Ahmed, chairman, FICCI Tamil Nadu

State Council, received it. (From right), P. Murari, advisor to FICCI president; A. Padmasingh Isaac, chairman Taskforce – Farm to Fork; and Mohammed Zainuddin A. Jalil, Trade Commissioner of Malaysian Trade Commission, are in the picture.

CHENNAI: State governments should give up their “hypocrisy on contract farming,” Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Subodh Kant Sahay said here on Tuesday.

Citing West Bengal, which opposed contract farming of potato for multi-national giant Pepsi, he called for an attitudinal change on the issue.

Mr. Sahay wanted big States such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan to set up departments for food processing as done by Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. There was no point in merely having a policy without a department, he said and added that efforts to set up facilities to process food would not succeed if this was not done.

Food grain worth over Rs.50,000 crore went waste across the country last year owing to lack of storage facilities and food processing initiatives. On an average, the loss was put at 40 per cent of the total production.

Mr. Sahay said that packaging remained the single biggest hurdle to further development of the food processing industry. The Ministry of Food Processing was working with various stakeholders and research institutions to find appropriate solutions.

Inaugurating a conference and exhibition on ‘Agribusiness and food processing, Farm to Fork - 3,’ organised by FICCI Tamil Nadu State Council, Mr. Sahay said that the packaging solutions needed to be of a world-class quality and had to be affordable at the same time.

P. Murari, advisor to president, FICCI, said that if the industry did not continuously upgrade technology, then non-tariff barriers would stand in the way of its progress.

M. Rafeeque Ahmed, chairman, FICCI, Tamil Nadu, said that food processing industry in the country would grow by about 40 per cent by 2015. One per cent growth in the industry would translate to direct employment to 5 lakh people.

A. Padmasingh Isaac, chairman, Taskforce – Farm to Fork, said that food processing industry

had to be treated like infrastructure industry to enable its rapid growth.

V. Prakash, Director, Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore, said that no other country would work on traditional Indian food stuff. More research was required into India's traditional wealth such as Jharkhand Amla's curative properties, he added.

Mohammed Zainuddin A. Jalil, Trade Commissioner, Malaysian Trade Commission, and Paisan Maraprygsavan, Deputy Consul General (Commerce), Thai Trade Centre, explained the facilities and incentives offered in their countries for the sector.

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No improvement in Siruvani water position

Special Correspondent

Tight situation ahead in terms of drinking water supply

— File Photo: K. Ananthan



Tough times: Water level in Siruvani Dam is little more than 34 ft as against the full reservoir level of nearly 50 ft.

COIMBATORE: The Siruvani Dam was only 70 per cent full on Tuesday, indicating a tight situation ahead in terms of drinking water supply in the city and suburbs.

Sources in the Coimbatore Corporation said the water level in the dam was a little more than 34 ft as against the full reservoir level of nearly 50 ft.

After a spell of heavy rain (90 mm) on September 1, the dam had recorded very negligible rain ranging from 6 mm to 40 mm since then. A normal South West Monsoon should have led to water overflowing from the dam, considering the fact that there was more water than last year at the start of the monsoon season.

The sources pointed out that between the middle of this month and now, the water level had risen only by two ft and the withdrawal of the monsoon had already been sounded.

But, the sources were confident that the North-East Monsoon that was scheduled to set in next month would fill up the dam.

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Farmers to sow rain-fed crops

Staff Reporter

Tuticorin: The much-awaited rainfall has brought respite to the people of Tuticorin from the sweltering heat. Drizzle continued for over thirty minutes here on Tuesday morning. There was a downpour in Tuticorin for about half-an-hour on Monday also.

Though there was widespread rainfall across the district, Tuticorin town received no rainfall leaving the residents under sultry conditions. The low lying areas were waterlogged following the rainfall and as a result traffic flow had been badly affected. Since the roads were being dug for implementing the underground drainage system on a large scale within the corporation limits, the streets and roads were packed with traffic moving at a snail's pace.

Despite chilly weather, the school-goers, office-goers and the public, who were seen under covers, performed their daily chores. The farmers especially seemed to be a happy lot since the downpour had provided a welcome relief. The farmers were keeping their fingers crossed for good rainfall ahead of the Rabbi season, which would commence from October. Sources from the Department of Agriculture said the farmers would start sowing the rain-fed crops including millets, pulse crop, chillies and coriander.

The crop sowing would be executed on an average of 1.2 lakh hectares in blocks, which were

conducive for the cultivation of rain-fed crops. Millet would be sowed on about 40, 000 hectare; pulses would cover 68, 000 hectare; chillies on 10, 000 hectare and coriander in about 5, 000 hectares.

The blocks including Kovilpatti, Kayathar, Vialthikulam, Pudur and Ottapidaram would cultivate rain-fed crops.

Fishing operations continued as usual but the number of boats that ventured into the sea was lesser than usual. "As many as 155 boats undertook fishing operation on Tuesday of the total 227 boats from the fishing harbour in Tuticorin. Usually, the catch becomes less during rainy season. Only 185 boats had ventured into the sea on Monday," Fisheries Department sources told 'The Hindu' here on Tuesday.

Rainfall recorded in mm in several parts of the district are Tiruchendur – 8 mm; Kulasekarapattinam – 11; Vialthikulam – 7; Kadalkudi – 22; Soorangudi – 18; Vaipar – 5; Kovilpatti – 13; Kayathar – 3; Ottapidaram – 24.3; Tuticorin – 15.3, Keelarasaradi – 24 and Ettayapuram – 16.

Tirunelveli

Tirunelveli and other parts of the district also witnessed widespread rainfall. Rainfall recorded in mm are Nanguneri – 4 mm, Palayamkottai – 4mm, Radhapuram – 9mm, Sankarankoil – 14 mm, Shencottah – 17mm and Tenkasi 1.3 m.m.

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Rajasthan farmers to get more fertilizer

Special Correspondent

JAIPUR: The Rajasthan Government is making arrangements for supply of an additional 45,000 tonnes of di-ammonium phosphate used as fertilizer for crops in view of a good monsoon this year. The buffer stock of 2 lakh tonnes of DAP will also be used for the rabi crops to be sown during the next two months.

State Cooperative Minister Parsadilal Meena said here on Tuesday that the additional demand from farmers for fertilizers would be met through cooperative societies which would get DAP from Indian Potash Limited and Indian Farmers' Fertiliser Cooperative Limited.

Reviewing the availability of DAP with Principal Cooperative Secretary R. K. Meena and Registrar of Cooperative Societies P. S. Mehra here, Mr. Meena said new rakes containing 15,000 tonnes of DAP would be arriving in the State in four to five days.

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Himachal apple crop at all time high of 3.8 crore boxes



The Hindu Despite mudslides holding up trucks, the bountiful apple harvest has flooded markets across India such as bazaar in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh.

Apple crop is set to break all past records in Himachal Pradesh with production crossing 3.85 crore boxes during the current marketing season of June to October, officials said on Sunday.

The production was about 90 lakh boxes more than the highest production of 2.67 crore

standard boxes (each box comprising 20 kg) in 2007 and almost three times more than the 1.30 crore boxes produced in 2009.

About three crore boxes had already been sent to various markets across the country while 90 lakh to one crore boxes were yet to be sent to the market.

About 40 lakh boxes were stranded in Jubbal-Kotkhai areas due to a massive landslide on Shimla-Jubbal road near Gumma, 50 km from Shimla. The road was closed on Saturday evening as a 200-metre stretch of the road was washed away and hundreds of apple-laden trucks got stuck en route.

The juicy apple from tribal Kinnaur and Lahaul and Spiti districts was yet to hit the market and this year the production in twin tribal districts was expected to cross 40 lakh boxes as compared to 20 to 25 lakh boxes during the previous years.

The government agencies sent about 70,000 tonnes of apple under Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) for processing but due to lack of storage capacity, a large quantity of apple was rotting, sources said. A record apple crop coupled with heavy rains causing numerous road breaches in the apple belt, especially in Shimla district, hampered transportation of the fruit. However, the disruption in transportation helped in avoiding glut in the markets and the prices, though less than last year, were more or less stable. The row over charging of commission from the growers at Azadpur market also made the growers apprehensive.

While substantial quantity of apple was sent to hitherto unexplored markets in Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka, some big agri-business companies like Adani and Reliance also directly purchased apple from the growers. The timely rains helped in improving the colour and size of apple and it was one of the reasons that the crop completely surpassed the earlier production estimates pegged at around 3 crore boxes. The growers from Kinnaur and Lahaul and Spiti and other high-altitude areas were hoping for a bonanza during the Commonwealth Games as the late varieties of apple are juicy and bigger in size, said a grower from Lahaul.

29 Sep, 2010, 12.28AM IST, PK Krishnakumar,ET Bureau

Chocolates to turn costly on soaring cocoa prices

KOCHI: Chocolate manufacturers appear to be getting ready for another round of price increase as domestic cocoa has become costlier amid a poor second harvest. The runaway rise in cocoa bean prices compelled companies such as Campco to raise product prices a few months ago.

Consumption is all set to rise during Deepavali but companies like Cadbury are not worried as they rely on imports as much as local purchases. Global prices of cocoa beans have fallen and the imported beans are cheaper than the local varieties despite the duty and the quality is better.

Campco, which doesn't depend on imports, went for a 10-15% increase in products prices three months ago. "Though we are not importing beans, we import about 700-800 tonnes of cocoa powder for our use. The price of cocoa powder is still ruling at high levels," Mr AS Bhat, MD of Campco, told ET. With the reports of a low second round of cocoa harvest, chocolate companies think prices may not drop in the next few months. The dry bean prices are hovering around Rs 160 per kg now. Campco's annual requirement is around 4000 tonnes of cocoa beans.

Cadbury India, which mops up around 10,000 tonnes from the domestic market, has not passed price rise on to consumers. According to sources in Cadbury India, the second cropping period beginning August has not yielded good results. The high prices are prompting farmers to go for an early harvest before the pod ripens. Along with unseasonal rains, this has affected the quality. This may force Cadbury to have a rethink on the price for the wet beans.

Business Standard

Wednesday, Sep 29, 2010

All eyes on India amid firm global sugar prices

Ajay Modi / Mumbai September 29, 2010, 0:45 IST



The domestic sugar industry can sniff an opportunity amidst firm global prices but it's also going through a time of uncertainty as floods in parts of Uttar Pradesh have sparked fears of a lower output.

UP is the second-biggest sugar-producing state and sugarcane fields in its western districts such as Muzzafarnagar, Meerut and Bijnore have been flooded. "Though the water level is receding, the yield and recovery of sugarcane are likely to be affected in the top-producing districts. In my view, sugarcane production in western UP could be lower than last year despite more planting this year," said Arun Khandelwal, president, Federation of Gur Traders, Muzzafarnagar, Asia's biggest gur (jaggery) market.

The industry is of the view that the extent of the impact will be known only after 8-10 days. "Some impact will definitely be there but it cannot be quantified," said Arhant Jain, president (finance) at Dhampur Sugar, which owns four mills in UP.

Expectations of a lower crop in Brazil, the world's biggest producer, are driving international sugar prices higher. They have touched a seven-month high, making exports from India viable. "The global market may not end up with a 3 million tonne surplus next year as was projected earlier due to a dry spell in Brazil. The world is watching the Indian output. If India produces 26-27 million tonnes, global prices will soften. If the output falls below 25 million tonnes, they will appreciate," said Sunil Kakria, managing director, Mawana Sugars.

There is a possibility of exports from India. Jonathan Kingsman, chairman of Switzerland-based Kingsman, the world's top sugar consultancy and brokerage, said earlier this month that India could export one million tonne sugar in the year beginning October. Analysts are bullish on the prospects of UP-based companies such as Bajaj Hindusthan and Balrampur Chini as they may pay a lower sugarcane price in the new season beginning October. "UP's mills are expected to pay a much lower sugarcane price than the 2009-10 season.

Against an average price of Rs 240-250, mills may pay the state-advised price, which could be in the range of Rs 180-190 per quintal," said investment advisor S P Tulsian. Last year, the state-advised price was Rs 165 but the price war between mills for more sugarcane drove prices to Rs 240-250. The higher price was paid in anticipation of appreciating sugar prices. Prices, however, took a beating after government intervention. If sugar prices remain at the current level of Rs 2,600-2,700 per quintal, UP's mills will have a margin of Rs 500-600 per quintal, Tulsian adds.

RISING VALUATIONS

	BSE Price in Rs			Market Cap in Rs Cr	
	Aug 31, '10	Sep 28, '10	%chg	Aug 31, '10	Sep 28, '10
Dwarikesh Sugar	72.80	105.10	44.37	118.74	171.42
Shree Renuka Sugars	63.75	86.65	35.92	4273.80	5809.02
Rajshree Sugar	59.45	78.20	31.54	134.89	177.44
Dhampur Sugar	59.25	77.15	30.21	319.36	415.84
Sakthi Sugars	49.00	63.35	29.29	180.32	233.13
Triveni Engineering	96.00	118.10	23.02	2475.84	3045.80
Bajaj Hind Sug	21.70	26.00	19.82	256.06	306.80
Uttam Sugar	45.30	53.80	18.76	116.74	138.64
Bajaj Hind	113.95	134.65	18.17	2181.00	2577.20
DCM Shriram Ind	74.75	86.40	15.59	130.07	150.34
Ugar Sugar	14.84	17.13	15.43	166.95	192.71

Thiru Arooran Sugars	148.00	170.20	15.00	167.54	192.67
Balrampur Chini	83.85	93.05	10.97	2176.75	2415.58
EID Parry	392.60	430.40	9.63	3394.03	3720.81
KCP Sugar & Inds	18.80	20.55	9.31	213.19	233.04
Bannari Amman Sugars	846.50	900.00	6.32	968.40	1029.60

Gujarat groundnut crop to touch 1.5 mn tonnes

Vimukt Dave / Mumbai/ Rajkot September 29, 2010, 0:29 IST

Gujarat, one of the leading groundnut-growing states in the country, is likely to see groundnut production of more than 1.5 million tonnes this kharif season in 2010-11. This shows an increase of 200,000 tonnes as compared to 1.3 million tonnes of groundnut output during the same season in 2009-10.

According to Govindbhai Patel, a former president of the Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) and a leading trader of edible oil, Gujarat kharif groundnut production in 2009-10 is estimated to rise by 2 lakh tonnes to 15 lakh tonnes, which hovered around 13 lakh tonnes last year.

Samir Shah of Rajmoti Oil Industry agrees, "The production is estimated to be higher this season. New crop has started arriving in the local market."

The increase in groundnut output is mainly due to sufficient rainfall and favourable weather conditions in the state, particularly in the Saurashtra region, which is known for groundnut production. The area under groundnut crop in the state also grew this season.

"Though heavy rains may affect groundnut yield in Jamnagar, Porbandar and Junagadh, prospects for groundnut crop in Rajkot, Amreli and Surendranagar look bright as the climate was favourable during sowing period," said NC Patel, vice-chancellor, Junagadh Agriculture University.

Enthused by the favourable weather conditions and enough rainfall, some of the industry players even estimate output of two million tonnes.

As of July-end, the groundnut acreage in Gujarat stood at 1.63 million hectares, up from 1.58 million hectares during the same period last year.

Himachal heads for record kharif crop

Baldev S Chauhan / New Delhi/ Shimla September 29, 2010, 0:11 IST

Himachal Pradesh is set to produce a record kharif crop this year due to the good monsoon.

Farmers are reaping a good harvest after crop failure for three years in a row.

Sources in the state's agriculture department said the state is expecting a record kharif crop of 937,000 tonnes (9.37 lakh). This includes 780,000 tonnes (7.80 lakh) of maize and 150,000 tonnes of paddy.

Due to poor monsoon last year the kharif production was only 655,000 tonnes. A dry winter also hit the rabi crop which was only 450,000 tonnes (4.5 lakh) far below the rabi target of 725,000 tonnes.

Over 80 per cent of the hill state's farmland is dependant on rain fed water for irrigation.

Wheat dara remains up on festive demand

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 28, 2010, 18:26 IST

Wheat dara prices extended gains by adding another Rs 10 per quintal in the wholesale grains market today on increased buying by flour mills to meet the rising festival demand.

Non-basmati rice also looked up on retailers demand.

However, bajra and jowar dropped on increased arrivals from producing regions against reduced industrial offtake.

Traders said increased buying by flour mills to meet the rising festive season demand mainly pushed up wholesale wheat dara prices.

Wheat dara (for mills) rose further by Rs 10 to Rs 1,235-1,240 per quintal.

Atta chakki delivery followed suit and added another Rs 5 to Rs 1,240-1,245, while atta flour mills and sooji shot up Rs 20 each to Rs 660-680 and Rs 870-890 per 50 kg.

In the rice section, permal raw, wand, sela and IR-8 were up by Rs 10 each to Rs 2,005-2,055, Rs 2,080-2,230, Rs 2,305-2,355 and Rs 1,835-1,860 per quintal respectively.

On the other hand, bajra dropped by Rs 50 to Rs 960-970 and jowar yellow and white by Rs 20 and Rs 50 to Rs 1,150-1,250 and Rs 2,200-2,250 per quintal on increased arrivals.

Following are today's quotations in Rs per quintal:

Wheat MP (desi) 1,650-1,750, wheat dara (for mills) 1,235-1,240 chakki atta (delivery) 1,240-1,245, atta Rajdhani (10 kg) 175, Shakti bhog (10 kg) 175, Roller flour mill 660-680 (50 kg)

Maida 760-790 (50 kilos) and Sooji 870-890 (50 kg) Basmati rice (Lal Quila) 9,300, Shri Lal Mahal 9,300, Super basmati rice 9,000, Basmati common 5,500-5,600, rice Pusa-(1121) 4,500-5,000

Permal raw 2,005-2,055, Permal wand 2,080-2,230, Sela 2,305-2,355 and Rice IR-8- 1,835-1,860, Bajra 960-970, Jowar yellow 1,150-1,250, white 2,200-2,250, Maize 1,100-1,110, Barley (UP) 1,070-1,090 and Rajasthan 1,080-1,090

Kabli, gram rise on stockists buying

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 28, 2010, 18:24 IST

Kabli gram and gram prices firmed up to Rs 100 per quintal in the wholesale pulses market today on increased buying by stockists and expectations of pick up in demand during coming festival and marriage season.

Marketmen said increased buying by stockists to meet the rising demand during the festival and marriage season mainly pushed up the wholesale kabli gram prices.

Vegetables available at higher rates also influenced the trading sentiment to some extent, they said.

Kabli gram small remained firm and added another Rs 100 to Rs 4,350-5,550 per quintal.

Gram also seen in demand and advanced by Rs 50 to Rs 2,300-2,325, while its dal local and best quality traded higher by the same margin to Rs 2,550-2,575 and Rs 2,675-2,775 per quintal.

Following are today's quotations in Rs per quintal:

Urad 5,230-5,780, Urad chilka (local) 5,830-6,230, best 6,450-6,750, Dhoya 6,600-6,700, Moong 4,470-4,870, Dal moong chilka local 5,270-5,670, Moong Dhoya local 5,800-6,000 and best quality 6,400-6,600

Masoor small 3,350-3,550, bold 3,550-3,800, Dal Masoor local 4,050-4,150, best quality 4,350-4,650, Malka local 3,900-3,950, best 4,050-4,150, Moth 5,000-5,300, Arhar 3,800-3,900, dal arhar dara 4,800-5,200

Gram 2,300-2,325, gram dal (local) 2,550-2,575, best quality 2,675-2,775, besan (35 kg) Shakti bhog 1,050, Rajdhani 1,050, Rajmah chitra Pune 3,500-4,100, China 3,600- 4,100, red 3,500-3,600

kabli gram small 4,350-5,550, dabra 2,700-2,800, imported 4,500-4,900, lobia 3,700-3,800, peas white 1,900- 2,000 and green 2,100-2,300

THE HINDU Business Line

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Back Complex fertiliser sales zoom in nutrient-based subsidy regime

Selling increases 43 per cent in April-August this fiscal.

Fertiliser product consumption

	(lakh tonnes)			
	Urea	DAP	MOP	NPKS
2000-01	191.86	58.85	18.29	47.80
2004-05	206.65	62.56	24.06	55.08
2005-06	222.98	67.64	27.31	66.94
2006-07	243.38	73.81	25.86	67.99
2007-08	259.63	74.97	28.81	67.21
2008-09	266.49	92.31	40.77	70.29
2009-10	264.81	110.04	41.66	75.76
Apr-Aug 2009	96.93	50.77	13.01	28.16
Apr-Aug 2010	101.71	47.71	15.53	40.25

Harish Damodaran

New Delhi, Sept 28

Sales of complex fertilisers have registered a whopping 43 per cent year-on-year growth, courtesy the institution of a Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) regime with effect from April 1.

During the first five months of the current fiscal, fertiliser companies have sold 40.25 lakh tonnes (lt) of complexes, containing different proportions of nitrogen (N), phosphorous (P), potash (K) and sulphur (S). Compared with this, sales amounted to only 28.16 lt during April-August 2009-10.

Conventional ones

The increase in despatches of NPKS complexes has far outstripped those of conventional fertilisers such as urea, di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) and muriate of potash (MOP).

In fact, DAP sales have actually fallen, while in the case of urea, the five per cent growth has come on top of a decline in consumption during 2009-10.

FIXED SOP

Industry sources attributed the jump in offtake of complexes mainly to the NBS, which links

subsidy payments to the nutrient content of individual fertilisers. Under the NBS, the Centre provides a fixed per kg subsidy of Rs 23.227 on N, Rs 26.276 on P, Rs 24.487 on K and Rs 1.784 on S.

Accordingly, the subsidy payable to companies for every tonne of '10:26:26:0' fertiliser sold works out to Rs 15,521, while being Rs 15,114 and Rs 10,133 on '12:32:16:0' and '20:20:0:13', respectively.

This is as against the earlier regime, where subsidy was available only on specific products (urea, DAP, MOP, etc) without linkage to their nutrient composition.

"The NBS has certainly made complexes more attractive, both to companies as well as farmers. For example, DAP, with 18 per cent N and 46 per cent K, is now retailing at Rs 9,950 a tonne. On the other hand, 12:32:16:0, unlike DAP, contains K and is available for just Rs 8,350. That makes it a value proposition for farmers, which is largely due to the NBS," the sources pointed out.

COVERING 19

The NBS currently covers 19 non-urea fertilisers, including MOP, DAP, mono-ammonium phosphate, triple super phosphate, single super phosphate, ammonium sulphate and 13 complexes. The latter includes 16:20:0:13, 20:20:0:13, 23:23:0:0, 10:26:26:0, 12:32:16:0, 14:28:14:0, 14:35:14:0, 15:15:15:0, 20:20:0:0, 28:28:0:0, 17:17:17:0, 19:19:19:0 and 16:16:16:0.

The Centre has, moreover, from the current fiscal allowed free import of complexes, while also bringing these under the purview of the NBS. This has led to import of some 5.70 lt during April-August, with another 15 lt scheduled to arrive during the remaining months of the fiscal. The imports – contracted by Indian Potash Ltd, Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative, Zuari Industries, Nagarjuna Fertilisers and Mangalore Chemicals & Fertilisers – have helped boost supplies of complexes over and above the domestically manufactured quantities.

Domestic production of complexes, too, has risen from 27.82 lt in April-August 2009 to 36.52 lt during April-August 2010. This has, in turn, been facilitated by increased MOP

supplies in the global market. “Last year, we were unable to source sufficient potash because of high world prices. As a result, we had to sell more of DAP in place of complexes. This time, it is just the reverse,” noted a domestic manufacturer.

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Back Heavy arrivals, lack of demand pound wheat; flour gains



Our Correspondent

Karnal, Sept. 28

Heavy arrivals pulled the prices of Dara wheat variety down marginally and the variety ruled between Rs 1,190 and Rs 1,195 a quintal against the levels of Rs 1,200 last weekend.

The fine quality was around Rs 1,205 a quintal.

Mr Sewa Ram, a wheat trader, told Business Line that heavy arrivals and slack demand pulled the wheat prices down.

Weather is favourable for the trade and traders are expecting good arrival in the upcoming

days too, he said.

About 300 quintals of dara wheat arrived at the Karnal grain market terminal on Tuesday.

Prices of desi wheat varieties ruled firm.

Tohfa variety ruled at Rs 2,190-2,200 a quintal; Lok-1 at Rs 1,810; Kitchen queen new marka at Rs 2,020-2,025; Parley-G variety around Rs 2,120 and the Nano at Rs 2,050-2,060 a quintal.

On the other hand, despite heavy arrivals of wheat, flour prices rose by Rs 10 (a 90-kg bag). Flour was quoted at Rs 1,200 (a 90-kg bag) and chokar prices rose by Rs 5 (a 49-kg bag) to the season's highest around Rs 545 (a 49-kg bag).

Heavy loss of the fodder due to rain and floods has resulted in chokar prices surging.

Paddy arrivals

Over 40,000 bags of different paddy varieties arrived in the Karnal mandi on Tuesday against the 35,000 bags arrived on Monday. Despite the heavy arrivals, prices of PR paddy variety ruled steady.

PR-13 variety was quoted at Rs 880-950 a quintal; PR-47 was at Rs 950-1,035, PR-14 was quoted at Rs 950-1,050 a quintal, while the PR-11 ruled around Rs 970-1,110.

Prices of Sharbati variety rose by Rs 90 a quintal and the prices ruled between Rs 1,300 and Rs 1,470 a quintal against the Rs 1,300-1,380 quoted the previous day.

Sugandha-999 prices witnessed a drop of Rs 100 a quintal and the variety ruled between Rs 1,000 and Rs 1,450. Rice millers lifted the new arrivals.

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[Back](#) Water levels in Karnataka reservoirs up

Anil Urs

Hubli, Sept. 28

Water levels at hydroelectric power generation reservoirs in Karnataka have increased substantially in the last eight days.

According to the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre, "As on September 23, water levels in all the three reservoirs (Linganamakki, Supa and Varahi) are less when compared to the corresponding period of 10 years average level and also previous year levels."

Linganamakki reservoir saw water level increase by 0.8 foot. The present level is less by 8.05 feet when compared to the corresponding period of previous year levels.

At Supa reservoir, level increased by 1.21 feet. The present level is less by 4.76 feet when compared to the corresponding period of previous year levels.

Water levels at Varahi reservoir increased by 0.92 foot. The present level is less by 4.3 feet when compared to the corresponding period of previous year levels.

In the Krishna basin, reservoirs levels at Bhadra, Ghataprabha, Malaprabha, Almatti and Narayanapura reservoirs have increased. Bhadra reservoir saw increase by 0.29 foot. Tungabhadra reservoir level decreased slightly by 0.08 foot.

Tungabhadra reservoir level decreased slightly by 0.08 foot. No change in the level at Ghataprabha reservoir. In Malaprabha reservoir, the level increased by 0.13 foot.

Marginal rise in Cauvery

In Almatti reservoir, the level remained same. In Narayanapura reservoir, the level increased slightly by 0.59 foot.

Water level in the Cauvery Basin also saw marginal increase in flow, levels at Hemavathi and KRS reservoirs have increased, while Harangi and Kabini reservoirs have decreased

slightly since last eight days.

The levels at KRS and Kabini reservoirs are less when compared to the corresponding period of 10 years average level and also previous year levels.

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Back Domestic demand drives cashew prices up, slows exports

G. K. Nair

Kochi, Sept 28

A strong domestic demand has slowed down exports of cashew kernels apart from pushing up its prices, which ruled much above the international market, according to trade sources.

consumption

India is fast emerging as a major consuming country for cashew kernels following change in life style and food habits consequent to growth in economy, industry sources said. "Even at a rate of 200 gm a year, per capita consumption is taken into account for 40 per cent of the Indian population, still the annual demand for kernel will come to over one lakh tonnes," Dr Abdul Salam, a KAU Professor and cashew expert, told Business Line.

He estimated that the domestic market absorbs around 1.25 lakh tonnes of kernels and the unorganised sector contributes significantly to this segment.

"There was hardly any export activity from India in the cashew market as the domestic demand is strong and prices for most grades are much higher than international market," Mumbai-based trade sources said.

Stray business was done for W240 at around \$3.60 and W320 at around \$3.35 (f.o.b.). Some processors in Vietnam sold at lower levels – W240 at around \$3.50 and W320 at

around \$3.25 (f.o.b.). But volume was limited.

Big processors were not offering or asking same prices as India, Mr Pankaj N. Sampat, a Mumbai-based major trader, told Business Line.

Brazil is very quiet. Trade is selling some quantities at few cents below quotes from large processors.

“Despite limited activity with major markets during the last six weeks, there is no pressure on processors to reduce prices because (a) some volume is being traded to one market or the other; (b) Indian domestic demand has been strong for the last 2-3 weeks; and (c) there is little replacement RCN available till next North crops which will start in Mar 2011,” Mr Pankaj said.

Meanwhile, recent reports about raw cashew nut (RCN) availability is not encouraging, he said.

Weather impact

Indonesia and Brazil are reporting that weather problems will affect crop size and quality. Clear picture will not be available for some time but the concern will add to uncertainty, he said. No adverse news from East Africa but uncertainty about movement continues.

Spot RCN prices

Spot RCN prices in India and Vietnam continued to be high and, hence, limited volumes were being traded, he said. Processors will be reluctant to buy big volumes unless kernel activity picks up but small purchases by large number of players might lend support to the market.

“There is little chance of reduction in RCN prices in 2010 unless there is a big decline in kernel activity in last quarter. Unless RCN prices come down, processors will not be able to reduce their kernel offers.

So, we can reasonably expect market to be firm till the end of the year – beyond that, trend of kernel buying activity will determine price movement in first quarter and that will impact

RCN prices when 2011 crops start in second quarter”, traders said.

Outlook for 2011 is very unpredictable, Mr Pankaj said. There is concern about impact of high prices on retail off take. So, retailers and roasters may reduce volume and period of cover. This will mean regular small buying by some market or the other leading higher volatility within a range. Breakout from the range will happen only when there is a substantial shift in fundamentals i.e. either a big increase in supply or a big decline in usage.

In the last few years, there has been a power shift on both sides of the cashew market – supply and demand. “India is no longer the largest supplier to the world market and that position has been taken over by Vietnam for kernels and West Africa for RCN. On the demand side, the US and the EU continue to be large buyers but they have been overtaken by Asia which is now the largest consuming region (India is the largest consuming country)”, he said.

This has altered the market dynamics – relative power of each region to determine market trend has changed. It is now much more a spot and nearby market – activity in many more origins and markets influence the price than in the past.

Stakeholders will have to change their strategies to succeed in this changed environment, he added.

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Back Diverse trends in coconut oil



C.J. Punnathara

Kochi, Sept. 28

As prevalent high prices have dissuaded buyers from the market, prices of coconut oil in Tamil Nadu have begun unwinding. Upcountry demand for industrial consumption and Kerala consumer demand were slack in the Tamil Nadu market last week.

Prices in Tamil Nadu have wound down nominally from Rs 7,000 last week to Rs 6,950 a quintal.

The upcoming bank holidays are also expected to result in unwinding of positions by stockists, Mr Prakash B. Rao, Director of Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA), said. But the shortage of the product in Kerala markets has pushed up prices to Rs 7,100 a quintal in the State. The trends in coconut oil will be dictated by which direction the Tamil Nadu prices move this week. The traders expected some profit booking at the current prices.

Palm kernel oil

The immediate triggers, which resulted in the current price rise, Onam festival in Kerala and Ganesh Chaturthi festival in Maharashtra and Gujarat, are behind the market now.

The low arrivals and poor stocks of palm kernel oil remain the only trigger which could ensure that the price of coconut oil remains firm in the coming days.

Prices of palm kernel oil, which is a major competitor and a substitute to coconut oil, have grown to Rs 6,950 a quintal. Palm oil prices reigned around Rs 4,600 a quintal.

Meanwhile, reports indicate that harvests of oil palm are under way in Malaysia and the product should start arriving at Indian ports in the coming weeks.

Firm trend

Reflecting the firm trends in the coconut oil market, copra prices quoted Rs 5,000 a quintal in Tamil Nadu markets.

The shortage of the product resulted in copra prices moving up to Rs 5,100 a quintal in Kerala.

NAFED sold the product at Rs 5,100 a quintal in their last reported trade in Kerala. The trade expected the prices to remain firm in the short run before easing in the weeks ahead on account of increased arrivals of palm oil and palm kernel oil from Malaysia.

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[Back](#) Rising supply drags groundnut oil



Our Correspondent

Rajkot, Sept. 28

Groundnut oil has come under severe pressure on increased arrivals. In the last one week, the prices have dropped by Rs 135 for a 15-kg tin.

Groundnut oil price at Rajkot on Tuesday was quoted at Rs 1,435-1440 for a 15-kg tin. Earlier last month, groundnut oil price touched a record Rs 1,570-1575.

Groundnut oil in 15-litre tin was traded at Rs 1,335-1,340 and the price of "loose" oil was Rs 825-830 for 10 kg. In Gujarat, about 25,000-30,000 bags (each of 50 kg) of groundnut has begun to arrive every day. The new groundnut crop is ruling at Rs 620-700 for 20 kg.

"Owing to the arrival of new crop in the Saurashtra region, the raw material is abundantly available. Further arrivals will put pressure on groundnut oil more. The price could go below Rs 1,200 for tin after Diwali," said Mr Samir Shah of the Rajmoti Oil mill in Rajkot.

Poor demand

Rajkot-based traders said that currently, the demand of groundnut oil is poor. Navaratri and Diwali are coming, and at that time demand could increase. According to industry sources, groundnut production in Gujarat is estimated at over 15 lakh tonnes this year, against 12-13 lakh tonnes last year.

Our Chennai Bureau reports: In Tamil Nadu, groundnut oil prices have dropped to Rs 76 a kg from a record Rs 84 last month. Groundnut kernels price, on the other hand, have dropped to Rs 3,100 a quintal from Rs 3,800.

Trade sources said there were no buyers at these prices. The lack of buying are indications that the price could drop further.

Estimates of higher groundnut production have dragged the prices lower. According to the Agriculture Ministry, kharif groundnut production is estimated to be 56.4 lakh tonnes against 36.6 lakh tonnes last year.

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Back Edible oils weighed down by resales



Our Correspondent

Mumbai, Sept. 28

Imported edible oils ruled steady and desi oils declined on Tuesday in Mumbai market. The demand was thin.

Resale selling pressure continued to weigh on sentiment. Traders/stockists were more

active in forward purchases. The volume increased on buying support for the forthcoming festival. Cotton oil slid Rs 5 for 10 kg. In Malaysia, crude palm oil futures recovered after initial decline and closed above the psychological level of 2,700 ringgits (MYR) a tonne.

Though the global market is witnessing an uptrend, the domestic market has been hit by lack of demand. Indore NBOT soya futures declined on profit booking on new arrivals, said traders.

Market sources said that selling pressure for outstanding purchases of the speculators, for the current month is forcing them to resell. The volume in palmolein was about 1,000 tonnes.

Out of that Ruchi sold about 300 tonnes and Liberty sold about 450 tonnes. About 250 tonnes were traded as resale.

All trade took place in the price range of Rs 458–463 for 10 kg. In soya refined oil, buyers stayed away due to the declining trend on the National Board of Trade futures in Indore.

Palm oil futures

On Malaysia's BMD CPO futures October closed lower by 4 MYR at 2759 MYR, November was up 5 MYR at 2737 MYR. Indore NBOT soya oil October futures closed lower at Rs 490.50 (Rs 494.80) and November at Rs 498.50 (Rs 504.30).

Mumbai commodity exchange spot rate were (in Rs/10kg): Groundnut oil 855 (865), soyabean refined oil 480 (480), sunflower expeller refined 550 (550), sunflower refined 600 (600), rapeseed refined oil 572 (572), rapeseed expeller refined 542 (542), cotton refined 500 (505) and palmolein was at 465 (465) a 10 kg.

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[Back](#) Thin inflow keeps sugar unchanged



Our Correspondent

Mumbai, Sept. 28

Sugar prices at the Vashi terminal market ruled steady on Tuesday on lower arrivals and thin demand.

A wholesale trader said that due to the month-end poor local demand and lifting pressure for outstanding purchases encouraged speculators to resell. Mills also sold good quantity on Monday evening on buying support from upcountry and neighbouring States. Maharashtra's mills have sold about 65,000-70,000 bags of sugar to State level stockists in the range of Rs 2,530-2,550 for the S grade and Rs 2,560-2,600 for the M grade.

Prevailing higher prices in Uttar Pradesh and Kolkata increase their buying from Maharashtra in last 2-3 days. Shortage of trucks for sugar lifting is also supporting the market sentiment. On Tuesday, total arrivals in the Vashi market were 43-45 truckloads (each 10 tonnes) and demand was 40-42 truckloads. Mill tender rates were Rs 2,530-2,560 for S-grade and Rs 2,570-2,610 for M-grade for a quintal, traders said.

Spot rate

According to the Sugar Merchants Association, spot rate for S-grade was Rs 2,630-2,661 and Rs 2,670-2,751 (Rs 2,675-2,741) for M-grade. Naka delivery rates were unchanged at Rs 2,600-2,630 (Rs 2,600-2,630) for S-grade and Rs 2,640-2,690 (Rs 2,640-2,690) for M-grade.

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Back Quality issues mar urad; pulses mixed



Our Correspondent

Indore, Sept. 28

Trading in Indore mandi on Tuesday remained subdued as traders turned apprehensive ahead of the Ayodhya dispute. On account of lack of trading activities, pulse prices by and large witnessed a mixed trend.

Chana dal gained marginally with its prices in the spot quoted Rs 25-Rs 50 higher. Chana dal quoted Rs 2,600-Rs 2,525, chana dal (medium) quoted Rs 2,700-Rs 2,725 and chana dal (bold) quoted Rs 2,825-Rs 2,850.

Masoor dal ruled steady with spot prices quoting at Rs 3,825-Rs 3,850. Masoor dal (medium) quoted at Rs 3,925-Rs 3,950, while masoor dal (bold) ruled at Rs 4,000-Rs 4,043. Tur dal (markewali) gained Rs 50 at Rs 6,100-Rs 6,200 a quintal, while tur dal (sawa number) remained steady at Rs 5,000-Rs 5,100 a quintal. Moong dal remained steady at Rs 4,300-Rs 4,600, while moong dal (bold) quoted Rs 4,600-Rs 4,650. On the

other hand, urad price declined steeply on increased arrivals and lower demand due to poor quality. Currently, Indore mandi is witnessing arrival of new urad with high moisture level. In the spot market, urad dal quoted Rs 300 lower at Rs 5,000-Rs 5,100. Urad dal (bold) quoted Rs 5,600-Rs 5,700, while urad (monger) by and large remained steady at Rs 7,400-Rs 8,000.

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Back Team to study sugar industry in Tamil Nadu

Our Bureau

Hyderabad, Sept. 28

The Andhra Pradesh Government will send a team to study sugar industry in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra and policies being implemented there.

Mr K. Rosaiah, Chief Minister, has agreed to a suggestion at a review meeting held here on Monday that took stock of the sugar industry.

“Noting that the neighbouring States of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have set up efficient research and development wings for cane development and sugar processing, the Chief Minister agreed to depute teams to these States,” a Government release said.

The team would also study Tamil Nadu Government's move to set up co-generating plants in some of its cooperative sugar factories. The teams were expected to submit reports in three months.

Sugar area

The State's sugar acreage touched 1.80-lakh hectares mark this year as against 1.20 lakh ha last year. Encouraged by good prices and favourable weather conditions, the farmers went for more acreage this year.

The Chief Minister also agreed to continue the Rs 60 (a tonne) purchase tax incentive this

year , the release said.

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Back Tea sector asked to spend more on R&D

Our Bureau

Kolkata, Sept 28

Mr Basudeb Bannerjee, Chairman of Tea Board, on Tuesday urged the tea industry to spend more on research and development in its own long-term interest. "Compared with the turnover of the industry, the expenditure on R&D is insignificant," Mr Banerjee said addressing the 46 {+t} {+h} annual general meeting of Tea Research Association (TRA) here.

While the government had to pick up the large part of the basic research bill, the industry should take upon itself the responsibility of extension work and advisory services and the cost of applied research should be borne jointly by the industry and the government, he said.

The Tea Board Chairman strongly supported the Assam Government's move to upgrade the present status of TRA, which was not much known outside the tea circles. "It is for the industry to decide what status it wants for upgradation," he said suggesting that some sort of debate within the industry might be helpful.

He felt that the upgradation of TRA's status into an institute of national importance for which a Bill had to be brought to Parliament would take care of the funding problem. Right now the fund was allocated virtually on a year-to-year basis. The management of upgraded TRA, he emphasised, should be firmly in the hands of industry. "Anything other than this will be disastrous for the institute," he said. The government had no desire to take over the management of TRA but the industry must act quickly as the matter had been taken up at the highest level. Referring to basic research, the Tea Board Chairman said that TRA must keep attracting better talent but conceded that attracting talent was also

related to remuneration and facilities. North Bengal, he said, needed a permanent tea research station with an upgraded status so that people working in the region could spend considerable time in it. He referred to good work being done at Tea Research Foundation in South India which produced almost the same quantity of tea as North Bengal. Earlier, Mr C S Bedi, Chairman of TRA, stressed the need for continuation of orthodox subsidy. The state-of-the-art quality testing laboratory in Kolkata would be ready for operation shortly. The country's production in the current year, he estimated, would be around 960 million kg compared with 980 mtkgs last year. Dr M Hazarika, Director of TRA, said nanotechnology would provide answer to various problems affecting tea production in the country. Mr D P Maheswari, who took over as Chairman of TRA , proposed vote of thanks.

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Back Bear speculators pull down pepper futures

G.K. Nair

Kochi, Sept. 28

Pepper futures on Tuesday dropped sharply on selling pressure on bearish reports. Bear speculators were selling and the investors succumbing to their pressure tried to liquidate but there were no buyers. They were offering at Rs 2 to Rs 3.50 a kg below the October delivery price. But, buyers were hesitating to buy. Indian parity in the international market, however, remained at \$4,425-4,450 a tonne (c&f). October contract on NCDEX fell by Rs 594 to close at Rs 18,750 a quintal. November and December were down by Rs 618 and Rs 570, respectively, to close at Rs 18,914 and Rs 19,185 a quintal. Total turnover increased by 9,468 tonnes to close at 18,167 tonnes. Spot prices in tandem with the futures market trend dropped by Rs 400 to close at Rs 18,700 (un-garbled) and Rs 19,200 (MG 1) a quintal.

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