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Wastage of foodgrains

It is true that the Supreme Court should not go into the realm of policy formulation ("Order on free grain to poor can't be executed, says Manmohan Singh", Sept. 7). But the government should have ensured that foodgrains did not rot. It is the duty of the government to create and maintain adequate storage facilities so that not a grain is wasted at a time when high inflation and rising prices have made the lives of people, especially those below the poverty line, miserable.

It may not be easy to implement the Court order in this case. But if wastage is inevitable due to poor storage facilities, distributing the foodgrains free of cost to the poor is a better option.

K.V. Seetharamaiah,

Hassan

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The Supreme Court's order to give away foodgrains supposedly rotting in warehouses to the poor is not only bad economics but also fraught with danger. Free food is not the same as free power, which is meant for productivity enhancement. But there is definitely a case for supplying foodgrains at cheaper prices. Also, reports of huge amounts of foodgrains rotting away are often exaggerated to cover the pilferage of good foodgrains.

K.M. Lakshmana Rao,

Visakhapatnam

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Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's statement that the Supreme Court should not go into the realm of policy formulation is the voice of democracy. Judicial activism has become common and should be curtailed. In a democracy, people are supreme and Parliament represents the people.

B. Prabha,

Varkala

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Heading a country that is in the bottom pile of the Human Development Index, Dr. Singh is expected to speak with sensitivity on the subject. His call for more people to be taken out of agriculture betrays his government's dangerous orientation towards globalisation, which is least suited to our country.

S.V. Venugopalan,

Chennai

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Feeding the poor is not a matter of policy but of morality. The Supreme Court did not say the poor must be given free food forever. Letting millions of tonnes of foodgrains rot is surely not a way of encouraging farmers to grow more food.

Bernard Thangasamy,

Nellore

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The Prime Minister is right in saying the judiciary should not go into the realm of policy making, but the spirit of the Supreme Court order should be taken into consideration. The government has done nothing to strengthen the public distribution system. Instead of allowing the foodgrains to rot, they can be sent to ration shops and made available to the poor.

Karavadi Raghava Rao,

Vijayawada

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Can the Prime Minister's argument against providing free food for the poor, linking this to farmers being deprived of fair prices, not be termed as an attempt to deflect attention from actual facts? Is not the difference between fair prices for farmers and subsidised prices for the poor to be met by allocations in the budget? Why cannot this quantum be adjusted by tweaking the tax structure, which gives incentives running into thousands of crores to the rich? The Supreme Court should keep away from formulating policies. But is it not on the right side of justice when it talks about distributing for free foodgrains that the government is unable to prevent from rotting?

Kasim Sait,

Chennai

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Instead of getting into a confrontation with the judiciary, the government should act on the proposed law on food security. Foodgrains should be distributed at subsidised rates and the Food Corporation of India must adopt modern technology in grain storage.

Rahiba Rashid,

Bangalore

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The Court only pointed a finger at the government's failure to act — and rightly so — on a matter of utmost priority, namely, the wasting of the direly needed food commodity.

A.V. Reddi Sastri,

Srikakulam

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If people should be taken out of agriculture, as Dr. Singh says, what should people of rural India do? Migrate to cities only to be ousted from there with disrespect? What we need is another Green Revolution. Industrialisation is good but not at the cost of agriculture.

Raunak Yadav,

Raipur

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It is unfortunate that the Centre that can afford a 300 per cent hike in the salary of MPs cannot implement the Supreme Court's order to distribute foodgrains that would otherwise rot to the poor.

A. Antony Eachail,

Kollam

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Farmers asked to apply for free motors

THENI: Applications had been distributed to 35,047 farmers who have free power connection in the district so far to enable them to get energy efficient motor for pump sets under a free motor distribution scheme, said Collector P. Muthuveeran. He was presiding over a meeting on distribution of free pump sets to farmers at Collectorate here on Monday.

Main objective of this scheme was to provide energy efficient motors to small and medium farmers in the district for their pump sets free of cost to replace the existing inefficient high energy consuming motors. The farmers with over five acres of land would get motors at 50 per cent subsidy.

They should submit the applications to the Assistant Engineer (TNEB-Distribution). In turn, TNEB officials would conduct a direct field study to identify real beneficiaries. On completion of study, all details would be sent to the headquarters for further action. The field study would be over by September 15, he added.

The farmers were divided into three categories – those farmers having 1.25 acres of wet land or 2.5 acres of dry land, farmers having 2.5 acres of wet land and 5 acres of dry land and farmers who have lands more than this limit – to avail this scheme. This move would save sizable quantity of electricity. Several pump sets used by the farmers across the district were consuming more electricity that had resulted in the power shortage, he pointed out.

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http://www.thehindu.com/2010/09/08/stories/2010090856380300.htm

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'No intention to confront Court on grain issue'

J. Venkatesan

Supreme Court lauds the government's response on various suggestions made by it

NEW DELHI: With the Centre making it clear that there was no intention to have any confrontation, the Supreme Court has lauded the government's response on various suggestions made by the Court relating to the public distribution system (PDS) and the storing of foodgrains in godowns to prevent wastage.

During the resumed hearing of the petition filed by the People's Union for Civil Liberties, a Bench comprising Justice Dalveer Bhandari and Justice Deepak Verma took on record a comprehensive affidavit filed by the government.

At the outset, Additional Solicitor-General Mohan Parasaran made it clear that the "government has no intention of having any confrontation with the Court on the issue of distribution of foodgrains."

He said the Empowered Group of Ministers discussed to consider the Supreme Court's order and had come out with various measures. He read out the details of the affidavit filed by the Centre. Additional Solicitor-General Harin Raval appeared for the Food Corporation of India (FCI).

The Bench in its order said: “We are happy to note that the Union of India, in pursuance to the suggestions of this Court, has decided to allocate to the State governments/Union Territories on ad hoc basis an additional quantity of 25 lakh tonnes of wheat/rice at BPL [Below the Poverty Line] prices for the next six months. This will be over and above 469.7 lakh tonnes already allocated under the targeted public distribution system.

“This decision of the Union of India would go a long way in providing much needed relief to the BPL population.”

It added: “In pursuance of the directions of this Court, the Union of India has also taken a number of important steps to preserve the foodgrains which has been procured by them.

“In the affidavit, it is mentioned that 12,418 tonnes of foodgrains stored in FCI godowns have got damaged as on August 1, 2010, and out of this 12,418 tonnes of good grains, the quantity of wheat is 2,689 tonnes, quantity of rice is 9647 tonnes, and quantity of paddy is 82 tonnes.”

Further, the Bench said: “It is indicated in the affidavit that the FCI is to introduce modern technology in the storage of foodgrains. We hope and trust that the suggestions given by the Court and steps taken by the Union of India would go a long way in preserving the foodgrains already procured.”

On the Court's suggestion that government must procure only that many foodgrains which could be properly preserved, the affidavit said that the Government of India “has twin objective in procuring foodgrains — (i) ensuring minimum support price to farmers and (ii) meeting the requirements of foodgrains for the public distribution system.” The affidavit said that when markets were not very favourable, many farmers might not be able to sell their produce in the open market and that they would be left at the mercy of traders.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES
Wed, Sep 08, 2010 | Updated 07.18AM IST

7 Sep, 2010, 02.48PM IST,REUTERS

India wheat futures almost steady

MUMBAI: India's wheat futures were trading in a narrow range on Tuesday afternoon as hope the government could allow exports of the food grain outweighed downward pressure on prices, analysts said. Traders expect India to allow export of large amount of the grain later in the year after assessing the paddy output and keeping prices under control. Prices have been declining over the last few sessions due to bumper crop and the government's plan to release additional stocks in the domestic market, analysts said.

"We understand that export is going to happen...there is enough stock for domestic needs and export," said a Mumbai-based executive with a transnational grains trader. India, which curbed grain exports in recent years to head off domestic price rises, made some concessions to export to neighbouring Bangladesh recently after some global suppliers cancelled deals to ship Black Sea wheat since Russia curbed grain exports. The government had estimated in mid-July the country's wheat harvest would hit a record 80.71 million tonnes this year.

The Indian government will free 2.5 million tonnes of grains from its stocks for sale to states, Farm Minister Sharad Pawar said last week. September wheat on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) was at 1,222 rupees, down 0.13 percent at 2:04 p.m. Karvy Comtrade Ltd expects September contract to move sideways with resistance at 1,227 rupees and support at 1,221 rupees.

7 Sep, 2010, 02.26PM IST,REUTERS

Oilseeds, soyoil steady; output hopes weigh

MUMBAI: Indian soyoil and oilseed futures were treading water on Tuesday afternoon as a rise in August oilmeal exports offset pressure from hopes of higher output of summer-sown oilseeds, analysts said. The country's oilmeal exports in August rose 14 percent from a year earlier, its second straight monthly rise, on higher demand from traditional buyers in Japan and China, data from trade body showed on Tuesday.

"Traders are speculating about higher production of kharif oilseeds. Weather is supportive for soybean and groundnut crops," Mehul Agrawal, analyst at Sharekhan Commodities, said. As on Sept. 2, area under oilseeds in the world's biggest edible oil importer stood at 16.94 million hectares, compared with 16.36 million hectares a year ago, farm ministry data showed.

At 1:56 p.m., the September soyoil on India's National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) was down 0.34 percent at 484 rupees per 10 kg. Demand for edible oils usually goes up in India during Aug-Nov due to festivals such as Diwali and Eid. Malaysian crude palm oil futures were flat on Tuesday as traders were divided between lower crude oil markets and expectations for a recovery in exports this month.
September soybean on NCDEX was unchanged at 2,052 rupees per 100 kg, while rapeseed for September fell 0.43 percent to 533.9 rupees per 20 kg. India's soybean output in 2010/11 is likely to top last year's and meal exports from the new crop are likely to rise significantly as lower bean prices are seen giving edge to Indian exporters, a senior industry official said.

hindustantimes
Wed,08 Sep 2010

Wind: Normal	Barometer: 1004.0

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Sep 10	Sep 11	Sep 12	Sep 13	Sep 14
33º | 27º	32º | 27º	31º | 27º	30º | 26º	30º | 26º
Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy

Business Standard

Wednesday, Sep 08, 2010

Oilmeal exports up 14% in August on better prices

BS Reporter / Mumbai September 08, 2010, 0:41 IST

Better overseas realisation, a higher forex rate and improved domestic availability pushed oilmeal exports up 14 per cent in August.

Data compiled by the Mumbai-based Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) show overall oilmeal exports at 244,075 tonnes in August as compared to 214,807 tonnes in the corresponding month last year.

Total exports in April-August, however, recorded a marginal two per cent rise at 1,021,957 tonnes, as compared to 1,002,664 tonnes in the same period last year. In the first quarter of the current financial year, oilmeal shipment continuously declined due to drastic fall in prices. The availability, especially of soybean meal, was also reduced due to farmers' reluctance to supply to mills for crushing, in anticipation of higher prices.

Now, stockists and farmers have realised that holding soybean is unlikely to fetch higher value, on estimates of a bumper crop this kharif harvesting season. Nearly 35 per cent of about 9.5 million tonnes of soybean was held with farmers and stockists before this kharif season, beginning June. Now, the quantity is being released gradually.

As a consequence, oilmeal exports started picking up gradually in July, which recorded total shipment of 241,182 tonnes, a rise of 39 per cent from 173,329 tonnes in the same month last year. Experts believe this will continue in the coming months as well. Since June, realisation in the overseas market has improved. The average soybean meal price shot up sharply to $374 a tonne in August, a sharp rise from $349 a tonne in June.

Similarly, ricebran extraction price also shot up to $185 per tonne from $171 a tonne in the month under consideration. The prices of rapeseed meal and castorseed meal, in contrast, declined marginally to $224 a tonne and $74 a tonne in August, from $227 a tonne and $75 a tonne in June, respectively.

India’s export to South Korea was reported at 155,893 tonnes in April-August, consisting of 96,212 tonnes of rapeseed meal, 54,631 tonnes of castor seed meal and 5,050 tonnes of soybean meal. During the same period of last year, however r, South Korea imported 160,316 tonnes of oilmeal from India. China reported import of 176,261 tonnes, comprising 150,303 tonnes of rapeseed meal, 13,371 tonnes of groundnut meal, 11,982 tonnes of soybean meal and 605 tonnes of castorseed meal. The country reported an import of 156,892 tonnes in April-August last year.

Japan reported an import of 265,264 tonnes as compared to 113,763 tonnes in the previous year. Total export to Japan consisted of 249,964 tonnes of soybean meal and 15,300 tonnes of rape seed meal. Vietnam imported 45,208 tonnes compared to 269,328 tonnes last year, consisting of 85,153 tonnes of soybean meal, 18,605 tonnes of rape seed meal and entire 41,450 tonnes of rice bran extraction.

Guarseed futures plummets over 3% on all round selling

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 07, 2010, 17:24 IST

Guarseed prices tumbled by Rs 66, or 3.04 per cent, to Rs 2,103 per quintal in futures trade today on speculators booking profits at existing higher levels influenced by weak spot markets sentiment.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange counter, guarseed prices for October contract plunged by Rs.66, or 3.04 per cent, to Rs 2,103 per quintal, with an open interest of 1,80,530 lots.

Current September-month contract too declined sharply by Rs 61, or 2.85 per cent, to Rs 2,082 per quintal, with an open interest of 89,670 lots.

Tea exports declined by 20% in July

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 07, 2010, 17:58 IST

The country's tea exports fell by nearly 20 per cent to Rs 209.8 crore in July, according to data released by the Tea Board today. Tea exports stood at Rs 260.1 crore in July 2009.

In volume terms, the total shipments of tea declined by nearly 9 per cent to 16.58 million kg in July, as against 18.2 million kg in the corresponding month last year, the board said.

The exports in value terms during January-July period of this year rose by nearly 10 per cent to Rs 1,393 crore in contrast to Rs 1,269.7 crore in the corresponding period in 2009.

However, the exports, in terms of volume, rose by 15 per cent during the first seven months of the current year to 107.29 million kg from 93.23 million kg in the same period last year.

The country exported 197.9 million kg of tea in the 2009 calendar year.

Tea production in India, the world's largest producer, declined to 123.1 million kg in July 2010 from 126.7 million kg in the same month last year. The fall was mainly due to a dip in tea output in Assam by about 4.6 million kg.

Gram, its dal remains weak on sluggish demand

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 07, 2010, 17:38 IST

In an otherwise steady wholesale grains market today, gram and its dal prices declined further by Rs 25 per quintal in the wholesale pulses market today owing to sluggish demand.

On the other side, other pulses continued to trade in a tight range in the absence of worthwhile activity and settled around previous closing.

Marketmen said subdued demand against sufficient stocks position mainly kept pressure in gram and its dal prices.

Gram and its dal local variety remained weak and lost another Rs 25 each to Rs 2,225-2,250 and Rs 2,475-2,500 per quintal.

Following are today's quotations in Rs per quintal:

Urad 5,400-5,950, Urad chilka (local) 5,800-6,200, best 6,600-6,900, Dhoya 6,700-6,800, Moong 4,800-5,200, Dal moong chilka local 5,700-6,100, Moong Dhoya local 6,200-6,400 and best quality 6,600-6,800.

Masoor small 3,250-3,450, bold 3,450-3,700, Dal Masoor local 3,900-4,000, best quality 4,200-4,500, 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 2,225-2,250, gram dal (local) 2,475-2,500, best quality 2,600-2,700, besan (35 kg) Shakti bhog 1,050, Rajdhani 1,050, Rajmah chitra Pune 3,400-4,000, China 3,500- 4,000, red 3,400-3,500, kabli gram small 4,200-5,400, 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.

Palmolein oil rises on fresh buying

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 07, 2010, 17:34 IST

In an otherwise steady oils and oilseeds market today, palmolein oil prices rose by Rs 20 per quintal on fresh buying.

Marketmen said fresh buying by vanaspati millers, driven by rising demand on account of festive and marriage season, led to a rise in palmolein oil prices.

In the national capital, palmolein (rbd) remained in demand and advanced by Rs 20 to Rs 5,000 per quintal.

Meanwhile, other edible oils such as groundnut mill delivery and mustard expeller, remained unchanged at Rs 8,650 and Rs 5,250 per quintal, respectively.

Following are today's quotations in Rs per quintal:

Oilseeds: mustard seed 2,500-2,600 and groundnut seed 2,100-2,850.

Vanaspati ghee (15 litres tin) 750-860.

Edible oils: Groundnut mill delivery (Gujarat) 8,650, groundnut Solvent refined (per tin) 1,500-1,510, Mustard Expeller (Dadri) 5,250, Mustard Pakki ghani (per tin) 705-860, Mustard kachi ghani (per tin) 860-960, Sunflower 6,300, Sesame mill delivery 5,850, soybean Refined mill delivery (Indore) 4,920 Soyabean degum (Delhi) 4,720, Crude Palm Oil (Ex-kandla) 4,170, Cottonseed mill delivery (Haryana) 4,550, Palmolein (RBD) 5,000, Rice bran (phy) 3,750 and Coconut (per tin) 1,100-1,130.

Non-edible oils: Linseed 4,150, Mahuwa 4,000, Castor 7,900-8,000, Neem 3,800-3,900, Rice bran 3,300-3,400 and palm fatty 3,225-3,300.

Oilcakes: groundnut de-husk 800-850, sesame 950-1,150, Mustard (new) 1,025-1,050, Mustard 1,200-1,210 and Cottonseed 1,075-1,175.

Non-basmati rice up on retailers demand

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 07, 2010, 17:31 IST

Prices of non-basmati rice rose by Rs 25 per quintal in the wholesale grains market today on emergence of stockists buying to meet rising demand from retailers demand.

Restricted arrivals from producing regions also influenced the non-basmati rice prices.

Other commodities including wheat, however, held steady in thin trading.

Traders said increased buying by stockists on pick up in retailers demand, helping wholesale non-basmati rice prices to rise.

In the rice section, permal raw, wand, sela and IR-8 were up by Rs 25 each to Rs 2,000-2,050, Rs 2,075-2,225, Rs 2,300- 2,350 and Rs 1,825-1,850 per quintal, respectively.

Following are today's quotations in Rs per quintal:

Wheat MP (deshi) 1,650-1,750, wheat dara (for mills) 1,210-1,215 chakki atta (delivery) 1,215-1,220, atta Rajdhani (10 kg) 175, Shakti bhog (10 kg) 175, Roller flour mill 630-650 (50 kg), Maida 750-780 (50 kilos) and Sooji 875-895 (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 2,000-2050, Permal wand 2,075-2,225, Sela 2,300-2,350 and Rice IR-8- 1,825-1,850, Bajra 940-950, Jowar yellow 1,200-1,300, white 2,300-2,350, Maize 1,070-1,080, Barley (UP) 1,080-1,100 and Rajasthan 1,080-1,090.

Jeera futures down on profit-booking

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 07, 2010, 16:42 IST

Jeera traded lower by Rs 28, or 0.20 per cent, to Rs 13,828 per quintal in futures trading today after speculators booked profits after yesterday's rise.

However, poor stocks following tight supplies and export demand at the spot markets, restricted losses.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange platform, jeera for delivery in September fell by Rs 28, or 0.20 per cent, to Rs 13,828 per quintal, with an open interest of 10,548 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in October lost Rs 9, or 0.06 per cent, to Rs 13,985 per quintal, with an open interest of 14,406 lots.

Analysts said emergence of profit-taking by speculators led to a fall in jeera futures but domestic and export demand, restricted losses.

Refined soya oil declines on profit-taking

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 07, 2010, 16:31 IST

Refined soya oil turned weak and lost Rs 1.85, or 0.38 per cent, to Rs 483.80 per 10 kg in futures trade today, as traders indulged in profit-booking at higher levels, influenced by falling demand in spot market.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange platform, refined soya oil for September-month contract fell by Rs 1.85, or 0.38 per cent, to Rs 483.80 per 10 kg, with a trading volume of 93 lots.

Similarly, the refined soya oil for delivery in October contract declined by Rs 1.45, or 0.30 per cent, to Rs 489.20 per 10 kg, with an open interest of 47 lots, while November delivery eased by Rs 1.40, or 0.28 per cent, to Rs 490.60 per 10 kg, with a business volume of one lot.

Business Line

Business Daily from THE HINDU group of publications

Wednesday, September 08, 2010

Date:08/09/2010 URL: http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/09/08/stories/2010090850570800.htm

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Back **Foodgrains dilemma**

The Prime Minister's assertion that the Government cannot implement court's order to distribute free grains to the poor amounts to misinterpretation of an order of the highest court of the land. Obviously, the Supreme Court has said that when the food-grains cannot be stored properly by the Government and become un-consumable in course of time, it should distribute them to the poor before they rot away.

It appears that the Prime Minister would rather have a strong “balance-sheet”, where millions of tonnes of food-grains would be shown as current assets (though unusable), instead of using them for the benefit of the poor and hungry. This is unfortunate.

N.S.Venkataraman

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Back **Decontrol, the sweetener**

Almost two decades after liberalisation began, the sugar sector is still mired in outdated controls. The sooner this changes, the better.

If true, the report that sugar decontrol may not take place any time soon is disconcerting. Just when the Food and Agriculture Minister, Mr Sharad Pawar, a person with long-term interests in the sugar sector, especially in Maharashtra, who is widely believed to have disfavoured decontrol since 2003, has himself initiated the move towards removal of controls, it is unclear what the hitch is this time. It is said the Centre wants to consult the States before taking a final decision — a puzzling move.

Sugar decontrol essentially involves two main elements — abolition of the levy system and dismantling of free-sale quotas, neither of which involves the States. When the levy is abolished, it devolves on the Centre to procure the sweetener from the open market through a tender or any transparent method and supply to the State governments for the public distribution system (PDS). It would be politically inexpedient to discontinue sugar sales through the PDS. If there is an inevitable rise in sugar subsidy, so be it. Dismantling of free-sale quota is an overdue step. It would allow sugar mills the freedom to plan production, inventory and sales; and this is as it ought to be. Clearly, if decontrol constitutes these essential elements, State governments need not come into the picture. Ideally, to draw additional benefits from decontrol, a couple of attendant steps, including withdrawal of administrative restrictions such as stock limits and removal of external trade restrictions (import and export) are warranted. Industry, scientists and policy-makers together must explore how best to break the cyclical nature of cane production and ensure sustained expansion of cane yields and output, to meet growing demand in the coming years.

The State Advised Price of cane is something the Supreme Court itself has held legally valid. Removal of cane area reservation would simply mean that growers and mills are free to sell/buy more freely than hitherto. Such freedom is not incongruent with the imposition of the SAP. In fact, abolition of cane area reservation would allow growers more marketing freedom and mills greater sourcing freedom. It has the potential to transform growers into savvy traders. Any apprehension of objections by State governments is illusory. The Prime Minister must now take charge of sugar decontrol and ensure that its essential elements are implemented at the soonest, while allowing time for meaningful discussions in areas on which State governments may wish to express their views. It is a shame that, almost two decades after the liberalisation process commenced, the sugar sector continues to be in mired in outdated controls. The sooner this changes, the better.

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Back **Far-East demand may help corn exports rebound**

Drought in Russia, floods in China likely to aid trend.

"It is likely that we may enjoy the demand and price like 2007-08 when we our corn shipments touched a record."

M.R. Subramani

Chennai, Sept. 7

Corn (maize) exports are set to rebound this year with shippers getting increasing enquiries from buyers, particularly in Far-East countries.

"There is good demand from Far-East countries, mainly after their currencies have gained. It will make their imports cheaper," said Mr A. Rajkumar of the Chennai-based Alagendran group of companies. "Export enquiries have come from Indonesia and the Philippines," said Mr Poonamchand Gupta, a trader in Andhra Pradesh's Nizamabad.

However, the price at which corn will be offered will count. Currently, maize in Chennai is quoted at Rs 12,000 a tonne ($256). In contrast, US corn for delivery in December is quoted at $167.80 a tonne, while South Africa also quotes around the same level. But freight charges hold the key to Indian maize enjoying an advantage. On Tuesday, the Baltic index, a benchmark for freight rates, increased to a three-month high especially on demand for shipping grains.

"It is likely that we may enjoy the demand and price like 2007-08 when we our corn shipments touched a record," said Mr Rajkumar. During 2007-08, 55 lakh tonnes were exported, despite a ban being imposed mid-way as corn prices surged in the domestic market. The ban was lifted after a short while. In 2008-09, exports dropped to a little lower than 35 lakh tonnes and last fiscal, shipments slipped to lower than 20 lakh tonnes.

Better production

What could help exports this year is the hope of better production. The trade is divided on whether there would be record production, though there is unanimity about yield.

“Production will be higher this year as rains have led to extra round of sowing, particularly in corn which is a short-term crop. Sowing in corn is also higher,” said Mr Rajkumar. “We hear the area under corn is lower by 15 per cent but thanks to good monsoon, we may see higher yield,” Mr Gupta said.

Corn production touched a record 19.67 million tonnes (mt) during 2008-09 before dropping to 16.64 mt last season.

“Not just yield, but the quality of the crop will be good this year. This will help get better market access,” said Mr Gupta.

In January this year, over 50,000 tonnes of corn sent from the country were rejected on grounds of quality. “Shipments had problems of afloxotin. Such a problem is not expected this year,” said Mr Gupta.

The export demand is seen also on the heels of drought affecting wheat and barley production in Russia. Also, floods have affected the corn crop in China, leading to hopes for higher feed demand from other parts.

“The US corn crop may be lower than earlier estimates. That will also aid the trend,” said Mr Rajkumar.

In the domestic market, Mr Gupta said prices could drop to Rs 900-950 a quintal levels when arrivals begin next month. “Exports could be unfeasible if prices rule around Rs 1,000,” he said.

But Mr Rajkumar said that the export demand would not allow the price to fall below Rs 1,000. “We will see higher supply, higher prices and good demand,” he said.

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http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/09/08/stories/2010090850691700.htm

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Back **Bengal move to release stock could hit potato**

Shobha Roy

Kolkata, Sept. 7

Potato prices are likely to dip by Rs 20-40 a quintal as West Bengal is set to shortly release its stock into the market.

The West Bengal Government was working on the modus operandi for the release which is likely this week, said Mr Patit Paban De, Past President, West Bengal Cold Storage Association.

Earlier, the State Government had procured from farmers about 10 lakh tonne of potatoes at Rs 3.50 a kg. The West Bengal State Consumers Cooperative Federation (Confed) did the procurement which became necessary after prices crashed in the wake of a bumper crop of about 100 lakh tonnes.

The State Government will release its stock in two phases.

The first phase, due to begin this week, will continue till the first week of October. In the first phase, close to four lakh tonnes of potatoes would be sold through a tendering process and another one lakh tonne through public distribution system at a price slightly lower than the market price of the tuber, Mr De told Business Line.

In the second phase, likely after the Durga Puja, another five lakh tonnes would be released, he said. The State Government has formed district and State level committees to work on the modalities of the tendering process, he added.

The wholesale price of the tuber (Jyoti variety) hovered around Rs 380-400 a quintal in the last week of August. Prices, however, inched up Rs 40 a quintal this week on account of the damage caused to the crop in the southern districts of Karnataka due to late blight, Mr De pointed out. The wholesale price was ruling at Rs 400-440, he said.

“Close to 30 per cent of the potato crop produced in the southern districts of Karnataka has been damaged due to late blight and excessive rainfall. So there has been a demand for Bengal potatoes in these States,” he said. Close to three lakh quintal of potatoes were harvested in various parts of the State during current year.

The prices were however likely to dip moving forward. “The prices will drop by about Rs 20-40 once the State Government starts releasing its potatoes into the market and the release of potatoes from cold storages in other States such as Uttar Pradesh picks up,” he observed.

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Back **Cashew prices rule firm in thin trading**

G.K. Nair

Kochi, Sept 7

Cashew market last week witnessed limited activity but prices remained firm for certain grades depending upon the quality.

Some business was done for W240 at around $3.55 and W320 at around $3.30 (f.o.b.) while some buyers paid a few cents higher for good quality and guaranteed supplies, Mumbai-based trade sources said. Splits were traded around $2.80 (f.o.b.).

There was steady domestic demand in India for large wholes and brokens – prices were higher than that in the international market, they said.

“From Vietnam also, activity was limited but some processors were selling a few cents below India. Brazil continues to be quiet, apparently they do not have much to offer from old crop and do not seem to be in hurry to sell from the new crop as arrivals are slow. However, a clear picture of the crop will be available by November,” Mr Pankaj N. Sampat, a Mumbai-based dealer told Business Line.

Kernel outlook

Kernel outlook for the next few weeks seems to be firm, he said. “Limited replacement raw cashew nut (RCN) availability plus steady demand from one market or the other will mean prices will continue to be high. Processors will be content to sell small volumes at a time,” he said.

Similarly, buyers will be inclined to buy “as needed” because “at current levels (a) they will make losses if they are covering short positions (b) risk appetite for going long is limited in view of uncertainty about future demand,” he said.

Low inventories

Long term outlook continues to be cloudy. Inventories seem to be low across the chain due to short crops and hand-to-mouth buying. He said, “tightness will ease only if supplies increase substantially, which can happen only in mid 2011 or usage / demand falls dramatically. Nobody, in fact, knows when – and if – this will happen,” he said.

Apart from price of cashews, other factors such as prices of other nuts plus consumer spending on snacks, and snack nuts in particular, plus general economic situation will have a significant impact on usage/demand of cashews. High prices may not necessarily mean big drop in usage if other factors remained positive.

This situation will make long term contracting difficult for buyers because they do want to be caught with long positions at high levels which they cannot move if demand falls and for processors because they do not want to have large forward commitments even at current high levels because the next big RCN procurement possibility will only be in second quarter 2011.

So, although one can have a legitimate doubt about sustainability of the current price levels for the long term, there is very little reason to expect a change in the current range and firm trend in the medium term.

Spot RCN market in India is firm and small processors, catering to seasonal domestic demand, are paying high prices for small lots of ready goods. Indonesian RCN is being offered around $1,500 a tonne but buying interest is limited as there is a big disparity with kernel prices, trade sources said. “There is a feeling that prices may soften end Sep/early Oct when arrivals pick up (unless kernel prices move up in the meantime). In East Africa, everything looks okay on weather front but it is too early to talk about crop prospects, price levels, shipment commencement,” they said.

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Back **Panel fixes production costs for white, red arecanut varieties**

Our Bureau

Mangalore, Sept. 7

The committee appointed by the Arecanut Research Development Foundation (ARDF) has fixed production cost of white arecanut at Rs 114 a kg and red arecanut at Rs 148 a kg.

The committee – headed by Prof G.V. Joshi, Member of the Karnataka Planning Board – has taken into consideration annual maintenance cost of the arecanut plantation, interest expenses, and establishment cost while calculating the production cost.

Giving details about the production cost here on Tuesday, Prof Joshi said the committee members visited various arecanut growing areas in Karnataka before coming out with their findings.

Cost calculation

He said the annual maintenance cost of white arecanut comes to around Rs 56,075 an acre, and red arecanut to Rs 64,065 an acre. This includes irrigation, labour charge, processing of the commodity and repair works at the arecanut plantations. Of this, the average labour charge has been calculated at Rs 150 a day.

The interest expenses have been calculated at Rs 36,865 an acre for white arecanut and Rs 43,008 an acre for the red variety. This includes interest on investment and working capital.

The establishment cost has been calculated at Rs 21,032 an acre for white arecanut and Rs 19,145 an acre for red arecanut. The committee has considered 1998-99 as the base year for calculating the establishment cost, as the maximum expansion of arecanut plantation took place during that period.

According to the committee's findings, the average labour cost during that period was Rs 100 a day.

Prof Joshi said the committee has fixed the cost of production of white arecanut at Rs 114 a kg and red arecanut at Rs 148 a kg after taking into consideration these facts.

Survey areas

The survey of arecanut growers was conducted at Sringeri, Koppa, Thirthahalli, Shimoga, Chennagiri, Bhadravathi, Bhairumbe, Yaddalli, Neernalli, Herur, Honnavar, Jalavalli, Bantwal, Puttur, Karkala, Belthangady and Sullia during July-August period of 2010.

Prof Joshi said that arecanut growers don't have the habit of maintaining an account of income and expenditure. If they inculcate that habit, it will help them establishing the cost of the production of the commodity.

Mr K. Padmanabha, President of Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Cooperative (Campco) Ltd, said that the Karnataka Horticulture Department has been informed about the findings of the committee. The report on the cost of production of arecanut will be submitted to the Chief Minister by the end of this month.

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Back **Surge in coconut oil continues**

C.J. Punnathara

Kochi Sept. 7

The surge in coconut oil prices continued into the week even as copra arrivals from all sources declined. As copra prices between Kerala and major Tamil Nadu markets converged there were no fresh arrivals in Kerala markets.

The additional transport and taxes on copra arrivals from Tamil Nadu have made it unviable for Kerala traders to source their requirements from the neighbouring State, Mr Prakash B. Rao, President of the Cochin Oil Merchants Association , said. If the shortage persists in the market, he said that there is all likelihood of the prices remaining firm.

Festival demand

Meanwhile, festivals in North India, especially Ganesh Chathurthi in Maharashtra and Gujarat, have also reportedly fuelled the current price rise. There is a huge demand for edible copra and raw coconut during the festival, which is coming up this weekend. The demand is expected to wane after the week, Mr Bharat Kona, one of the big coconut oil traders of the state said.

The corporate demand and upcountry buyers have been keeping away from the market, Mr Kona who is a major trader for upcountry and corporate buyers said. They have been keeping on the sidelines during the past weeks as prices surged up.

The arrivals in Tamil Nadu markets have waned by 15-20 per cent. However, Mr Kona pointed out that there should be sufficient residual stocks in Tamil Nadu, where traders were waiting to see which way the prices moved before coming back into the market.

The prices from the only source of copra in Kerala, NAFED, have also gone up to Rs 4,150 a quintal. Coconut oil prices are ruling at Rs 6,050 a quintal both in the Tamil Nadu and Kerala markets. The branded coconut oil consumer pack industry is running into trouble since they have to sustain their presence in the market even as the prices grind higher, or else confront losing their market share.

The reduced availability of palm kernel oil is another reason for the spurt in coconut oil prices, sources in the trade said. Although the prices of coconut oil and palm kernel oil often moves in tandem, coconut oil prices are currently ruling higher than the Rs 5,900 a quintal of palm kernel oil. Meanwhile prices of palm oil which is readily available in the market is trailing at Rs 4,600 a quintal.

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Back **Karnataka heading for bumper chilli, onion crop**

Anil Urs

Hubli, Sept. 7

Karnataka is likely to witness a bumper chilli and onion crop this kharif season.

According to the State Horticulture Department, the area under chilli has also gone up sharply by 21 per cent at 1.21 lakh hectares (lh) as on September 1 this year, as against 1 lh in the corresponding period last year. Kharif target for the State is 1.42 lh.

The onion crop has also gone up by 31.73 per cent at 1.37 lh as on September 1 this year, as against 1.04 lh in the corresponding period last year. Kharif target are for the State is 1.37 lh. .

According to a Horticulture Department official, the crop growing districts are witnessing sowing, inter-cultivation, land preparation, nursery bed preparation and transplanting operations.

“However, sowing operations have commenced in a few districts. Already, sown crops are reported to be in an advanced stage of growth,” he added.

Crop coverage

The following are district-wise onion crop coverage as on September 1: Chitradurga area sown is 16,497 hectares (last year coverage was 15,510 hectares). Bagalkot 8,750 hectares (2,600 hectares). Belgaum 5,893 hectares (2,818 hectares). Bijapur 5,701 hectares (1,785 hectares). Dharwad 33,608 hectares (26,800 hectares). Gadag 36,053 hectares (34,161 hectares). Haveri 11,428 hectares (6,053 hectares). Bellary 1,198 hectares (597 hectares). Raichur 1,818 hectares (1,900 hectares). Chamarajnagar 4,900 hectares (2,917 hectares) and Chikkamagalur 8,805 hectares (3,177 hectares)

The following are district wise chilli crop coverage: Chitradurga area sown 3,417 hectares (last year coverage 3,381 hectares). Tumkur 2,213 hectares (489 hectares). Bagalkot 1,850 hectares (1,000 hectares). Belgaum 3,364 hectares (2,980 hectares). Bijapur 690 hectares (536 hectares). Dharwad 45,462 hectares (38,260 hectares). Gadag 15,756 hectares (11,380 hectares). Haveri 25,460 hectares (30,623 hectares). Bellary 11,005 hectares (170 hectares. Raichur 2,494 hectares (1,772 hectares) and Chikkamagalur 2,915 hectares (2,680 hectares).

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Back **Pepper futures rule steady**

G K Nair

Kochi, Sept. 7

Pepper futures, on Tuesday, remained highly volatile as both bullish and bearish speculators actively tried to push up and pull down the market, which was almost steady with a slight decline.

As the difference between September and October deliveries narrowed down drastically, many switched over from September to October. Because of the nation-wide strike on Tuesday, called by the trade unions, which was almost total in the State, the mandis remained closed and hence no activity was reported from the primary markets.

This was reflected on the futures market. The turnover dropped drastically.

September contract on NCDEX declined by Rs 7, to close at Rs 20,760 a quintal.

October and November dropped by Rs 48 and Rs 50 respectively, to close at Rs 20,875 and Rs 21,022 a quintal.

Turnover

Total turnover dropped by 2,552 tonnes to 19,876 tonnes. Total open interest moved up by 122 tonnes to 17,737 tonnes.

September open interest dropped by 315 tonnes, while that of October and November moved up by 408 tonnes and 24 tonnes respectively, to 5,952 tonnes and 613 tonnes, indicating good switching over from September.

Spot prices for want of activity remained unchanged at the previous levels of Rs 19,900 (ungarbled) and Rs 20,400 (MG 1) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market was also steady at $4,675 - $4,700 a tonne (c&f). Overseas market trend is yet to be known, as the US market remained closed on Monday on account of Labour Day.

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Back **Campco to focus on areca, cocoa, rubber**

A.J. Vinayak

Mangalore, Sept 7

The Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Cooperative (Campco) Ltd is pinning its hopes on arecanut and cocoa markets for growth in the coming years.

Mr K. Padmanabha, who was re-elected President of Campco for the second consecutive term at the 36th annual general meeting of the cooperative here on Sunday, told Business Line that the cooperative wants to increase its market share in the arecanut segment to around 25 per cent from the existing 18 per cent, and wants to grow in cocoa-based industry segment.

Added to this, rubber procurement and marketing will also be of cooperative's focus area.

RAISING PRODUCTION

Mr Padmanabha said that the current turnover of the cooperative stands at around Rs 600 crore.

“We want to increase it to around Rs 1,000 crore in the next two years,” he said.

Asked how the cooperative will achieve this, he said the increase in arecanut market share of Campco and increased production in cocoa segment would help achieve this target.

The increase in market share of arecanut to around 25 per cent would help the cooperative increase its turnover by another Rs 100 crore, he said. Stating that the cooperative wants to give more thrust on finding medicinal value of the commodity, he said steps will be initiated to give focused attention in this matter. Added to this, steps will be taken to bring pressure on the authorities concerned to curb the import of arecanut, he said.

COCOA as intercrop

Mr Padmanabha said that the cooperative is encouraging areca growers to take up cocoa as an intercrop in their plantations. In this regard, it has disbursed around two lakh cocoa saplings to farmers at subsidised rate. This process will continue for the next two to three years.

Stating that the increase in cocoa production would help meet the demands of its chocolate factory at Puttur in Dakshina Kannada district, he said Campco would like to increase the production of finished and semi-finished cocoa products at the chocolate factory.

Agreeing with the fact that there is competition in the chocolate market, he said in spite of that the cooperative is exporting cocoa products to Nepal and African countries. In addition to this, Campco is in talks with the Karnataka Milk Federation to produce chocolates for it.

The factory made a production of 11,065 tonnes of cocoa products during 2009-10, he said. Now the turnover of the chocolate unit stands at around Rs 125 crore. “We want to increase it by another Rs 100 crore in the next two-three years,” he said.

The cooperative, which recently ventured into rubber procurement in Kerala, is planning to expand its network. “We will start rubber procurement at Kadaba in Karnataka by the end of this month,” he said.

Of the 16-member board of Campco, 14 members of Sahakara Bharathi were elected unopposed. Elections for the remaining seats were necessitated as there were three contenders for two posts. Two of the Sahakara Bharathi members won the election, which was conducted on Sunday, helping it to corner all the seats on Campco board.

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Back **Slack demand keeps edible oils steady**

Our Correspondent

Mumbai, Sept. 7

Edible oil markets continued to rule steady in the absence of fresh demand and reports from Malaysia.

BMD CPO futures were little changed after moving both ways in thin trade. Malaysian markets are likely to move within a range this week with thin volume, traders said.

In Mumbai market, groundnut oil and cotton oil showed steady trend on lack of demand, in spite of Gujarat's bullish trend. Arrivals of lower quality oil from South have reduced sharply recently. Soyabean refined and palmolein increased by Rs 2, and sunflower oil was up by Rs 5 for 10 kg.

Resale trade

In palmolein, resale trade of 120-150 tonnes took place in the price range of Rs 458-464. Palmolein was quoted by Ruchi at Rs 460, and by Liberty at Rs 466. Soya refined was quoted by refineries at Rs 470 to Rs 475.

At Malaysia's BMD CPO futures, October closed 11 ringgits higher at 2,681 (2,670) Malaysian ringgits (MYR) a tonne. Indore NBOT soya oil futures continue to decline on reports of new arrivals. Soya oil September futures were down at Rs 478.80 (Rs 482.60) and October's were at Rs 487 (Rs 490).

Mumbai commodity exchange spot rates (for 10 kg) were Rs 865 (Rs 865) for groundnut oil, Rs 475 (Rs 474) for soya refined oil, Rs 515 (Rs 510) for sunflower expeller refined, Rs 565 (Rs 560) for sunflower refined, Rs 568 (Rs 572) for rapeseed refined, Rs 538 (Rs 542) for rapeseed expeller refined, Rs 495 (Rs 495) for cotton refined and Rs 464 (Rs 462) for palmolein.

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Back **Loading problems boost sugar**

Our Correspondent

Mumbai, Sept. 7

Spot sugar prices rose further by Rs 20/Rs 25 a quintal on reports disturbance in loading of sugars at mill level in Pune, Baramati and Ahmednagar areas. On Monday, sugar mills did not come up with any tender in these areas.

Farmers are agitating for higher sugarcane prices and halted the deliveries from mills. On the other side, increased retail demand for Ramadan and Ganesh Chaturthi festival are expected to continue supporting the market, said market sources.

On Monday only Kolhapur, Karad region mills floated tender at higher prices. There were no tenders from Pune, Baramati and Ahmednagar region mills due to disturbance. Naka and tender delivery rates rose by Rs 20–25 a quintal on Monday evening.

The Vashi spot market was closed on Tuesday due to bandh called by Mathadi unions. The undertone of market was bullish. Arrivals were thin in the market but due to bandh trucks were not unloaded.

On Monday, the demand was higher than arrivals. Any further disturbance in supply from mills will fuel the market price. Coming Saturday and Sunday market will remain closed. This may result in heavy buying pressure in the next 2/3 days, said a wholesaler.

On Monday, Kolhapur side mills sold sugar at the rate of Rs 2,560 / Rs 2,570 for S grade and Rs 2,620/ Rs 2,640 for M grade.

Vashi spot markets rates were estimated higher at S grade Rs 2,640/ Rs 2,680, M grade was Rs 2,680/ Rs 2,770 a quintal.

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Back **Poor offtake continues to keep pulses on leash**

Our Correspondent

Indore, Sept. 7

Pulses continued to witness downtrend following lower demand in the domestic market.

Spot rates of chana dal in mandi here were Rs 2,575-Rs 2,600 a quintal, while chana dal (medium) quoted Rs 2,700-Rs 2,725 and chana dal (bold) quoted Rs 2,800-Rs 2,825, down Rs

10. Masur dal also witnessed decline with its prices in the spot on Tuesday quoted Rs 25 less at Rs 3,750-Rs 3,775 a quintal.

Similarly, masur dal (medium) quoted Rs 25 down at Rs 3,850-Rs 3,875 a quintal, while masur dal (bold) was quoted at Rs 3,950-Rs 3,975 a quintal, also down Rs 25.

In spot market, urad dal (best quality) quoted Rs 200 higher at Rs 8,200-8,300 a quintal. Both moong dal and tur dal remained steady. Spot rates of moong dal were Rs 4,600-5,000 a quintal, while moong monger quoted at Rs 6,300-6,500 a quintal.

Similarly, tur dal ruled steady with its prices in the spot quoted at Rs 5,400-5,600 a quintal, while tur dal (sawa no.) quoted Rs 50,000 and tur dal (markewali) quoted Rs 5,800-6,000 a quintal. Traders hope further decline in tur dal amidst bumper sowing of tur dal in Gulbarga (Karnataka).

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Back **Uncertain weather dampens wheat**

Our Correspondent

Karnal, Sept. 7

Following the reports regarding Union Government's decision of distributing wheat stocks to below poverty line card holders, wheat prices dropped to the season's lowest levels.

On Tuesday, at the Karnal grain market terminal, the prices of dara varietydropped by Rs 30 a quintal and was quoted at Rs 1,150-1,155, the season's lowest level.

Heavy rain in the region since Monday night and the water logging situation have also disturbed the trade.

The Tohfa variety ruled at Rs 2,180-2,200 a quintal; Lok-1 ruled at Rs 1,800, kitchen queen new marka ruled around Rs 2,000; Parley-G variety was quoted at Rs 2,100 and the Nano was at Rs 2,050 a quintal.

On the other hand, flour ruled firm at the level of Rs 1,180 (a 90-kg bag). Chokar prices rose and touched the levels of Rs 485-490 (a 49-kg bag), the season's highest levels.

Mr Subhash Chand, a wheat trader, told Business Line that because of lukewarm demand and heavy rain there is not much buying in the market. Around 200 quintals arrived on Tuesday, but only part of the stock was lifted.

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Back **Groundnut oil crosses Rs 1,500/15 kg**

Our Correspondent

Rajkot, Sept 7

Despite lower demand, groundnut oil price crossed the Rs 1,500-a-tin mark as the main raw material, groundnut, is not available in the market.

In the Gujarat market, groundnut oil price increased by Rs 35 in two days to Rs 1,500-1,505 for a 15 kg tin. The price of 15 litre tin is Rs 1,400-1,405. Loose groundnut oil reached Rs 900-905 for 10 kg, gaining Rs 20-25 from a week-ago close of Rs 875-880. Markets opened on Monday after five days closure for Janmashtami festival. A Rajkot-based miller said: “It is true that demand is not big but on the other side we are not able to get groundnut for crushing. The oil price will not come down before the new crop comes to the market. During the time, a slight correction may happen but the overall price will not see much reduction.”

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Back **Meet to showcase tech development in fisheries**

Our Bureau

Visakhapatnam, Sept. 7

The Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT), Kochi, and the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad, will jointly organise ‘Innovations and industry meet in fisheries' here on Wednesday, according to a press release.

The meet will be held at Hotel Dasapalla from 9 a.m. The chief executive of the NFDB, Mr P. Krishnaiah, will be the chief guest and Dr B. Meenakumari, Deputy Director-General (Fisheries) of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), will preside over the function.

Entrepreneurs will get a chance to experience first-hand the technologies developed by the various fisheries institutes in the country. Around 60 technologies ready for commercialisation will be showcased in the exhibition.

Technical sessions will be organised to present to entrepreneurs various viable and marketable technologies. “It will be an ideal platform for entrepreneurs to access new technologies. An interface between researchers and the entrepreneurs will be a part of the sessions,” adds the press release.

Registrations will be open between 9 a.m and 9.30 a.m.

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Back **Soyameal exports up 38% in August**

Our Correspondent

Indore, Sept 7

Exports of soyameal in August was 1,76,500 tonnes compared with 1,27,299 tonnes during the same period a year ago, a jump of 38.65 per cent.

On a financial year basis, the export during April to August is 5,50,635 tonnescompared with 4,59,222 tonnes in the same period a year ago, an increase of 19.9 per cent. In the current oil year, (October – September), exports during October to August is 20,55,001 tonnes as against 30,40,423 tonnes last year down by 32.41 per cent.

Export of soyameal this month is expected to be higher than same period last . The data has been collected and compiled by SOPA based on the information received from the Members, Port Authorities and Other Agencies, said Mr Rajesh Agrawal, spokesperson of the Soyabean Processors Association of India (SOPA) in a statement.

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Back **Matsyafed to open hi-tech fish marts in Kerala**

Our Bureau Kochi, Sept. 7

The State Fisheries Minister, Mr S. Sarma has said that Matsyafed will open 30 hi-tech Matsya fish marts in various parts of the State within two months. Speaking after inaugurating the first fish mart, constructed at a cost of Rs 3.65 lakh, at Thevara Santhinagar UP Junction near here, the Minister said that in the first phase, 10 stalls would be opened in Ernakulam, Kozhikode and Kottayam.

The fish marts are being set up using Rs 1.68 crore marked for it as part of the special package to counter recession. The Ernakulam fish market will be renovated and modernised soon by spending Rs 3 crore, he said.

Along with the 10 fish marts proposed, a base station for distribution of fish is also being considered for Ernakulam district, he added.