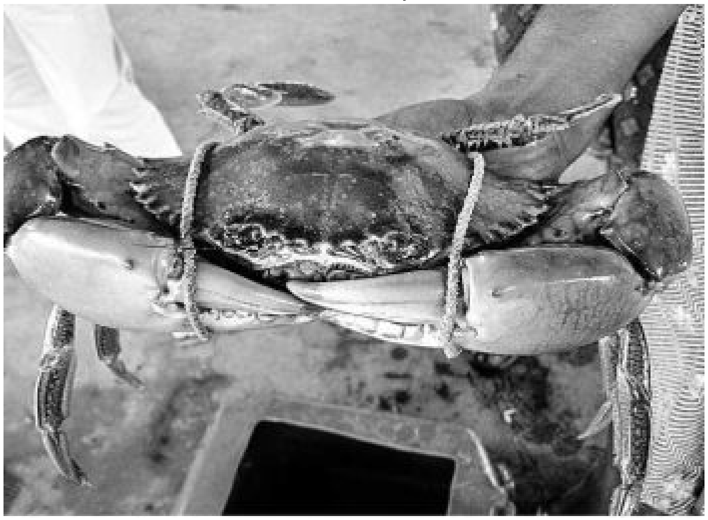
THE HINDU

# Promoting crab fishery through captive farming practices

Staff Reporter

For providing alternative employment opportunities to the fisherfolk

— Photo: N. Rajesh



**Advanced:A view of a large size crab species in Tuticorin.**

Tuticorin: Fattening of mud crab could provide employment opportunities for the fisherfolk as a means of costal livelihood besides promoting crab fishery in Tamil Nadu. The edible crab fishery was flourishing through captive farming practices.

Due to advanced techniques, survival rate of crabs at nascent stage could be improved.

The culture and fattening techniques were being offered. Crab fattening could promise community based fisheries management. The fisherfolk could adopt it on a part-time basis to generate more income.

Hence they should be exposed to such fattening techniques, said J. Daniel Jameson, Former Director of Research and Extension, Fisheries College and Research Institute, here on Wednesday.

By constructing bunds or mud enclosures along the brackish water region in the mouth of an estuary, culture of mud crab could be taken up for enhancing livelihood of the fisherfolk and also the members of women self help group.

“While marine crab fishery of west and east coast contributes about 10 per cent of the total marine crustacean landings, commercial production through fattening would restore mud crab fishery from stock depletion. The mud crab ‘Scylla serrata' and ‘Scylla tranquebarica' are from the estuaries. Shell fish like lobster and mud crab are most preferred in the international market. Export of live mud crab from India, especially from Tuticorin, which is emerging as the biggest seafood exporter, is popular because of its protein value. Necessary techniques for crab seed production is also available,” Dr. Jameson said.

Business Standard

# Food Grain may cost more in GST regime

Vrishti Bniwal / new Delhi September 9, 2010, 1:23 IST

Adult mud crabs were being caught through traps with various baits of fish organs. Brackish water regions of Tuticorin coast could well be utilised for the collection of juvenile crabs especially along the mangrove vegetation and muddy regions, which serve as a suitable natural shelter for juvenile crabs.

“Monsoon seasons from October to December every year help in the mixing of rain water along the brackish water region resulting in low salinity of seawater along the mouth of estuaries. Hence, abundant algae could be developed in the estuarine waters,” he added.

Alternative employment “Normally, mud crab sheds its outer skin (outer coat) as it grows. Such crabs are weak with less meat content accumulated with water. Further, water crabs are low priced and consumer preference is poor. Such crabs are also collected from the brackish water region and fattened by feeding them with fish offal, clam meat and oyster meat. For this, the earthen ponds of about 100 -300 square metres are dug along the coast or close to the backwaters for further fattening them to marketable size. This fattening technique has become more popular after the Tsunami in Tamil Nadu as an alternative employment,” Dr. Jameson pointed out.

Prices of food grains, especially wheat and rice, may go up in the proposed Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime. At present, about half the states do not levy Value Added Tax (VAT) on wheat and rice, though they are allowed to tax these food grains at 4 per cent. In GST, these items may be taxed at 12 per cent at the concessional rate or 20 per cent at the standard rate, unless the Union and state governments decide to exempt these. Currently, there is no proposal to exempt these grains from GST.

The Centre is pruning its exemption list to align it with states’ exemption list for VAT, which includes 99 goods. Food grains do not feature in these items. Even if the government decides to tax wheat and rice at the lower rate of 12 per cent, consumers will end up paying more than the current rate. Food grains will become cheaper only if these are exempted from GST.

Apart from VAT, various “statutory charges” are levied on food grains by local governments in the existing regime. While the 4 per cent purchase tax, levied in Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, will be subsumed in GST, other charges like rural development fee, market fee (mandi tax), infrastructure development tax and commission to societies and sub-agents may continue in the new regime.

A finance ministry official said there was no proposal to subsume local taxes on foodgrain, except purchase tax, in GST. Since these are not part of the chain, these will be levied along with GST. The official added the Centre and states might have to exempt the grains from GST because taxing them at such higher rates would be detrimental in a country like India.

In the existing set-up, total tax on rice and wheat is highest in Punjab at 13.5 per cent, followed by Andhra Pradesh (12.5 per cent on rice) and Haryana (10.5 per cent). In the GST regime, tax on food grains is Punjab could go up to 21.5 per cent if the 4 per cent VAT/purchase tax is replaced by 12 per cent GST. Other levies add up to 9.5 per cent in the state.

In states like West Bengal, Bihar and Gujarat, the tax is only 3 per cent and it mainly comprises other levies which will not be subsumed in GST. Kerala has exempted rice from tax but charges a market fee of 7 per cent. Impact of taxing food grains in GST will have maximum impact on such zero-VAT states.

Overseas demand may push jeera prices up by 10%

Dilip Kumar Jha / Mumbai Sep 09, 2010, 00:58

Emerging demand from neighbouring countries including Bangladesh and Pakistan is likely to push cuminseed (jeera) prices up by at least 10 per cent this month.

Traders believe that orders have started increasing from Bangladesh in addition to the regular demand from developed countries including the US and the EU. Pakistan demand is set to open by the end of this month. Bangladesh and Pakistan constitute five per cent and three per cent of India's total nearly 55,000 tonnes of annual jeera exports respectively.

But, exports to India's neighbouring countries are set to rise this year once supply from competing countries including Syria, Turkey and Iran exhaust, which is expected soon.

In the spot Unjha (Gujarat) market, India's largest selling market yard, jeera prices softened on Tuesday by Rs 100 to close the day at Rs 2,600 per bag of 60 kg.

"Traders who built their inventories, are selling jeera to raise fund for new trade. The traditional seasonal demand has also not yet started. But, the festival demand is expected to start by the end of this week which will raise prices up a bit," said Praveen Patel, an Unjha based trader.

On the NCDEX, the jeera contract for delivery in September, however, rose 4.41 per cent to trade at Rs 13,822 a quintal after initial decline early this month. The contract hit an all-time high of Rs 15,048 a quintal on July 22 amid crop failure reports in Syria.

Despite storage shortages, FCI sticks to rice buy target

Dilip Kumar Jha / Mumbai Sep 09, 2010, 00:55

This means less will be left for the open market, which may trigger a rise in prices.

Despite criticism for procuring foodgrain without creating adequate storage, Food Corporation of India (FCI) plans normal procurement this kharif season.

FCI Chairman Siraj Hussain told Business Standard the government-owned agency had no plan to go slow on buying paddy at the minimum support price (MSP) announced for this season.

According to trade sources, FCI procured nearly 30.8 million tonnes rice out of the country's total output of 75.9 mt last season. It bought 22.5 mt wheat out of the total output of 79 mt.

As on September 1, FCI held 20.5 mt rice and 29.9 mt wheat. One-third of all this is in the open. The storage is sufficient to meet the annual intake through the ration shop chain, the public distribution system.

Analysts estimate nearly 10 mt grain got spoilt last season due to shortage of warehousing space. The result was an order from the Supreme Court to distribute grain among the poor for free or at a nominal charge. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has publicly said this is not practical.

Recently, FCI refused to buy the PAU-201 variety of hybrid rice, with an estimated output of around 1.6 mt in Punjab, due to black spots on the grain. This left a question in farmers' minds about how FCI will procure this season.

The rice output is estimated to remain range-bound this year despite higher acreage. Madan Sabnavis, chief economist of Care Ratings, forecast rice output at 76 mt as against 75.9 mt in the previous season.

If FCI procures anywhere close to 30.8 mt, like last year, there will be a shortage of grain for the open market, which may trigger a rise in prices.

Data compiled by the agriculture ministry show rice sowing increased by 660,000 hectares (ha) to 39.51 million ha this kharif season. Favourable monsoon in the north raised prospects but drought in the east and northeast during the early sowing season has lowered the overall output forecast.

Indian coffee planters lose out to Vietnam, Philippines

Debasis Mohapatra / Bangalore Sep 09, 2010, 00:01

The Indian coffee industry may face a tough time ahead due to emergence of low-cost producers like Vietnam, the Philippines and other south-east Asian nations.

"The cost of cultivation for Indian coffee increases 12-15 per cent every year due to high wages and fuel prices. But, this is not the case in Vietnam and other south-east Asian nations," Ramesh Rajah, president of the Coffee Exporters Association said.

The quality of Vietnamese coffee was good, giving tough competition to the Indian produce, he added. While Vietnam produces 12-15 million bags (one bag is equivalent to 60 kg) of coffee every year, India's output is around three million bags per annum. The Robusta variety, which accounts for 97 per cent of Vietnamese output, accounts for 65 per cent of India's production.

"The reduction in cost competitiveness has been reflected in the price realisation per bag in recent times. Indian robusta, which used to get a $400 premium per bag five years back, is receiving around $100-$150 premium as due to competition from the Vietnamese coffee," Rajah said.

He also said that greater mechanisation along with cheap labour cost were the contributing factors for Vietnamese low cost of production. Rajah also pointed towards the stagnant growth rate of Indian coffee production along with exports. "While Vietnam has come to the level of producing around 12-15 million bags in the last 30 years, India's coffee production and exports have been same for last ten years," he said.

Coffee Board officials have a similar view regarding this matter. “Efficient resource allocation in Vietnam and other south-east Asian nations are the prime factors for cost advantage over Indian coffee,” Jabir Asghar, vice-chairman of Coffee Board of India said.

He, however, said that the scenario is not bad and would have impact on exports in the medium term only. A Kochi-based coffee broker also said that unless India finds ways to deal with cost factors, coffee had to face the same fate as other plantation crops like pepper, rubber among others.

Commodities from India, like pepper, are facing tough competition from Vietnam as it no longer enjoys the cost arbitrage. Referring to this matter, Chowda Reddy, an analyst of JRG Wealth Management said that as compared to India, Vietnam had emerged both as a major producer and exporter in the world within a very short span of time.

“While India takes cue from international coffee prices, Vietnam has a say in determining prices of robusta variety in the international market,” Reddy said. He also said that coffee planters had to reduce their operational expenditure to remain competitive in the near future.

# Maize production may rise by 19% in 2010-11

Press Trust of India / New Delhi Sep 08, 2010, 18:35

The production of maize is likely to go up by 19 per cent to touch 20 million tonnes in 2010-11 crop year on higher acreage and improved yield, Karvy Comtrade said in a report.

"Production in 2010-11 is expected to touch 20 million tonnes on higher acreage and improved yield," the brokerage firm said.

India's maize production had declined to 16.8 million tonnes in the 2009-10 crop year (July-June), from 19.73 million tonnes in the previous year on account of drought last year that hit almost half of the country.

However, Karvy noted that the price of maize is unlikely to come down as a result of strong demand and limited supply in the spot market.

"Strong demand from starch industry and poultry feed manufacturers has been supporting the spot prices. Limited supply in the spot market and strong demand is pushing the spot prices," it said.

Excess rain likely to drive up cotton prices

Komal Amit Gera / Chandigarh Sep 09, 2010, 00:57

The escalating cotton prices in the Indian market might surge further as a result of delayed crop maturity due to the extended monsoon.

The early sowing varieties (J 34) in Punjab and Haryana that are harvested in early September would take two to three weeks to mature. The situation is similar in other parts of the country. Heavy showers and extended monsoon in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh would also impact timely supply of the late sowing varieties (MECH in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, Shankar 6 in Gujarat, and MCU in Andhra Pradesh) of cotton.

According to agriculture scientists, the cotton flower requires bright sunshine to mature. Rainfall delays pollination. Cloudy and partial cloudy skies hinders maturing. Water logging has also affected early picking in the lower stems in Punjab and Haryana.

The trend may also impact the estimated yield of cotton of about 325 lac bales this year. The country recorded a cotton output of 295 lac bales last year.

Cotton prices shot up in the recent past (from Rs 2,600 per mond – 1 mond = 37.324 kg – to Rs 3,700 per mond in September) as a result of cotton being put under OGL from October 1.

Textile mills are facing short supplies and it can be delayed further.

Chairman cum managing director of Cotton Corporation of India S C Grover told Business Standard that their operations may also be deferred if the picking is delayed. He said they have exhausted their stock and cannot supply to the millers. Their procurement would be 8 per cent to 10 per cent of the total arrival of cotton. The CCI procured 90 lakh bales last year.

Jagtar Singh Mehma, a progressive farmer from Bhatinda said (the cotton belt of Punjab) witnessed delayed picking due to extended monsoon.

One of the largest yarn manufacturers of India said large players can manage till mid or end-November but it would affect small and medium players.

The millers are hard pressed to resort to polyester cotton blends and 100 per cent polyester spinning to utilise their capacities in such situations. Due to the lack of liquidity in cotton futures the consumers cannot rely on commodity markets.

It is premature to comment on the yield but the demand and supply gap of cotton would affect the the textile industry, said an expert.

Rubber prices jump by Rs 250 per quintal

Press Trust of India / Kochi Sep 08, 2010, 18:46

Rubber prices today jumped by Rs 250 to Rs 16,700 per quintal here on the back increased buying from tyre manufacturers

The prices of rubber jumped by Rs 250 from Rs 16,450 per quintal to Rs 16,700 today as on September 6, 2010.

"After the government's proposal to cap import duty at Rs 20 per kg, tyre makers postponed buying anticipating low prices. However, after seeing resistance from rubber growers, they have resumed buying, which has led to a jump in the prices of rubber," All-India Rubber Dealer Federation President George Valy told PTI.

Rubber prices in the domestic market have declined from Rs 18,600 per quintal on August 6, to Rs

16,350 per quintal on September 2, and market experts had further predicted that it may further go down to Rs 15,000-level following which tyre makers had postponed their purchases.

However, with rubber growers showing firm resistance in selling their products at this level, tyre makers are resuming their buying here.

Before import duty was fixed, the prices of rubber in the international market stood at around Rs 15,000 per quintal, but following the proposal to cap import duty, they went up to Rs 16,000 per quintal and it may go up to Rs 18,000 per quintal, he said.

Castorseed prices firmed up by Rs 88, or 2.34 per cent, to Rs 3,870 per quintal in futures trading today following renewed buying by traders, driven by firm spot market sentiment.

Marketmen said strong demand from paint industries ahead of festive season amid restricted supply, mainly supported the uptrend in castorseed prices.

They said the demand for paint, which normally rise during the festival season of Diwali and Dussehra, further fuelled on reports of a boom in realty sector.

The castorseed is maximum used by paint manufacturers and some other heavy industrial units.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange platform, castorseed prices for November contract shot up by Rs 88.50, or 2.34 per cent, to Rs 3,870 per quintal, with an open interest of 1,110 lots.

Current September stock delivery also jumped by Rs 46, or 1.16 per cent to Rs 4,002 per quintal, with an open interest of 1,480 lots.

Castorseed futures climbs further on brisk buying

Press Trust of India / New Delhi Sep 08, 2010, 13:40

Guargum prices fell by Rs 67, or 1.30 per cent, to Rs 5,079 per quintal in the futures trade today, as speculators indulged in booking profits at existing higher levels.

Marketmen said, traders preferred to offload their holdings at prevailing higher levels in tandem with a continuous fall in guarseed prices in the spot markets.

Good rainfalls in guarseed growing areas boosted the prospects of a better crop and further influenced the market sentiment, they added.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange counter, guargum prices for most-active October contract declined by Rs 67, or 1.30 per cent, to Rs 5,079 per quintal, with an open interest of 46,640 lots.

Current September-month contract too shed Rs 65, or 1.25 per cent, to Rs 5,148 per quintal, with an open interest of 8,235 lots.

THE HINDU Business Line

# Quality issues, excess supply drag washed robustas

Prices drop by Rs 1,800/50-kg bag since November.

A. Srinivas

Bangalore, Sept 8

The fall in prices of farmgate robusta parchment from over Rs 5,000 for a 50-kg bag in October-November 2009 to Rs 3,200 now has given rise to a controversy over whether the drop has been caused by oversupply alone.

While the exporters believe that oversupply is the crux of the problem, traditional producers of washed robustas – many of them being large growers or corporates with washing fermentation facilities – are of the opinion that a drop in quality has contributed to the fall in prices.

Mr Amit Pant, Business Manager, Olam Agro India Limited, said: “An unexpected rise in supplies has contributed to depressed prices. It is a niche market coffee with a solid but strong demand. And if all of a sudden supply exceeds demand, it is bound to have an effect. The robusta parchment produced this year is in the region of 26,000 tonnes.”

Mr M.P. Devaiah, General Manager, Allanasons Private Limited, said: “The price has fallen both due to new entrants and a higher robusta crop. Arabica pulpers have been buying robusta fruit, while robusta cherry producers have been converting to parchment, using other pulpers.”

Double whammy

Mr Nishant Gurjer, Managing Partner, Kaapi Royale, said: “There has been a problem at two levels — higher production of robusta parchment and a lack of knowledge among new entrants of the technique involved in making quality robusta parchment. There has been fine-tuning of the fermentation process over the years, something that new players could not have replicated overnight. Besides, given the recession in Europe, buyers would only be too willing to discount the coffee if there are indications of a decline in quality, after the coffee is cupped.”

Washed robustas, used as a blend in espressos and speciality coffee, is seen as an arabica substitute.

Growers alleged that some major curers procured robusta fruit from small growers and deployed processes that produced an “inferior” form of washed robusta. The machines used were a “dry pulper”, which uses less water than what is normally required to make washed robustas. The other is a “wet processing” method, reportedly used to convert robusta cherry into parchment.

Ms Sunalini Menon, CEO, Coffeelab Private Limited, said: “It is too early to react right now. The same situation arose about 20 years ago, when old, bleached coffee was being passed off as Monsoon Malabar, a speciality coffee variety. But it died down after a season.”

Mr Bose Mandanna, former Vice-Chairman, Coffee Board, said: “The new entrants were perhaps trying to cut down on the water requirement. This is one of the reasons why the quality has come down. Pulping should be done within hours of the harvest. But with more cherry and arabica growers doing this without having their own pulpers, there were delays, affecting quality.”

Impact on Image

Mr Ashok Kuriyan, Managing Director, Balanoor Plantations and Industries, said: “These machines do not go through the rigours of the washing and fermentation process. This could impact India's image as a producer of quality robusta parchment, and impact the markets of traditional producers.”

Growers pointed out that the absence of information on robusta parchment output has given buyers a chance to depress prices further. The output of washed robustas in 2008-09 was in the region of 18,000 tonnes. This year's output is expected to be anywhere between 26,000 tonnes and 35,000 tonnes.

About 30 per cent of the increase in washed robusta output over last year is expected to be on account of the bumper robusta crop in Kodagu. According to some growers, an estimated 5,000 tonnes is expected to have come from curers and traders using community pulpers.

Mr Vishwanath of SLN Coffee Curing Works said: “As against robusta parchment production of 18,000 tonnes last year, this year's production is about 35,000 tonnes. Cherry can be held, whereas parchment has to be utilised, hence the glut. As for the wet processing method, it can only be used for improving the quality of the cherry.”

Mr Kuriyan said: “The near-doubling of robusta parchment exports between January and August this year, compared with the last calendar year, appears to have been triggered by traders entering into mass production, using the new processes.”

Robusta parchment exports this calendar year have crossed 20,000 tonnes, against about 11,000 tonnes in the corresponding period last year.

“A lot of people who would not have made robusta parchment have gone in for this due to the high prices last year and the difference between parchment and cherry prices in late 2009,” Mr Gurjer, a producer of speciality coffees, said.

The difference between washed robusta and cherry prices was nearly 200 per cent in October-November 2009.

“The demand for washed robustas is picking up, but slowly. Ten years ago, specialty coffee makers would not look at washed robustas,” Mr Gurjer said.

## Slack offtake floors rice

Our Correspondent

Karnal, Sept. 8

Heavy rainfall since Monday night has disturbed rice trade badly. With trading being lukewarm, the market witnessed a steady trend and prices dropped marginally from their upper levels.

On Wednesday, Pusa-1121 (steam) ruled around Rs 5,500 a quintal, Pusa-1121 (sela) at Rs 4,500, Pusa-1121 (raw) at Rs 5,000-5,500. Pusa (sela) quoted at Rs 3,400-3,450 a quintal and Pusa (raw) at Rs 4,200-4,250.

Basmati sela ruled at Rs 6,500 a quintal, while basmati raw was quoted at Rs 7,300-7,500.

The Sugandha-999 sela was quoted at Rs 2,700-2,750, PR14 was at Rs 2,200, PR (new) was quoted at Rs 1,950 while the PR (old) ruled around Rs 2,050 a quintal.

Sharbati sela variety ruled at Rs 2,880-2,900 a quintal; Sharbati steam at Rs 2,950-3,000; Parmal (PR) sela quoted at Rs 2,230, PR (raw) at Rs 2,300-2,320 and PR (steam) at Rs 2,370 a quintal.

Brokens such as Tibar ruled around Rs 3,600 a quintal, Dubar at around Rs 2,850 and Mongra at Rs 2,150.

Mr Tara Chand Sharma, a rice trader, told Business Line that the rice market has been badly affected by the heavy rain. Following fears of drop in prices in the near future, demand at present in the local market is very low, he said. Around 9,000 bags of early variety paddy arrived at several mandis of Karnal district .

About 4,000 bags of Govinda paddy arrived in the market and the early variety was quoted at Rs 900-950 against Rs 1,025-1,030 a quintal on Monday.

According to traders, the high moisture in the stock is the reason behind the drop.

On the other hand, Sugandha-999 gained some and touched levels of 1,375. Around 1,000 bags arrived and they ruled between Rs 1,300 and Rs 1,375 a quintal. Around 200 bags of Sharbati variety arrived and the stock was lifted on the levels of Rs 1,200-1,250 a quintal.

## Fisheries board offers higher subsidy for innovative projects

Our Bureau

Visakhapatnam, Sept 8

The National Fisheries Development Board, Hyderabad, is offering hefty subsidies, as high as 40 per cent, for innovative fisheries units and projects such as sea bass culture and vennami culture, and entrepreneurs should make full use of such schemes to promote sustainable fisheries in the country, according to Dr. P. Krishnaiah, the Chief Executive.

He was speaking at the inaugural session of a one-day interaction meet between the industry and fisheries research institutes – Innovations and Industry – organised here on Wednesday jointly by the NFDB and the Central Institute of Fisheries Technology, Kochi.

Research and industry

He said the NFDB wanted to promote innovative marine cultures such as sea bass culture in association with research institutes. He said the NFDB had taken up cage culture in association with the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) and 50 cages had been set up for the purpose. Incubations centres were also being set up with the help of different research institutes to promote food processing units.

“The NFDB wants to play the role of a facilitator and a link between the research institutes and the industry. That is why we have organised this meet,” he said.

Fishing harbours

Dr Krishnaiah said the state of hygiene in the fishing harbours in the country was quite deplorable and the Visakhapatnam fishing harbour was no exception. “Our marine exports to other countries, especially European countries, would be badly hit if we do not maintain our harbours well. We should keep the fact in mind and make the necessary efforts,” he said.

Dr B. Meenakumari, Deputy Director-General (Fisheries) of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, said a healthy fisheries sector was necessary for the food security of the country and also for large-scale employment generation in the rural sector. Therefore, the importance of fisheries could not be overemphasised. She said the research institutes and the industry should work in tandem to achieve the desired results in the sector.

She later inaugurated an exhibition showcasing the technologies developed by the various fisheries research institutes in the country.

Mr V. Padmanabham, regional president of the Seafood Exporters' Association of India, said such interaction sessions would go a long way in improving the fisheries sector.

In response to the remarks made by Dr. Krishnaiah on the Vizag fishing harbour, he said the harbour was located on the land belonging to the Visakhapatnam port trust (VPT). The VPT was more interested in shifting the fishing harbour to Bheemunipatnam, 25 km from Vizag, and taking back the land for other uses than improving it at the present site. He was critical of the attitude of the VPT authorities. He, however, agreed with Dr. Krishnaiah that hygiene should be improved at all fishing harbours in the country, including Vizag.

Dr T.K. Srinivasa Gopal, Director of the CIFT, Kochi, welcomed the gathering and heads of various fisheries research institutes also spoke on the occasion.

## Sugar turns sweeter on retail offtake

Our Correspondent

Mumbai, Sept 8

Spot sugar prices continued to rise on Wednesday on aggressive retail buying, in spite of supply easing from Pune, Baramati and Ahmednagar areas, where, since Saturday, delivery from mills were disrupted because of the farmers' agitation.

This week, the bank will be closed for three days from Friday to Sunday and spot market will be closed on Saturday and Sunday.

Keeping this in mind, the market is at present witnessing a sharp increase in local demand.

On Wednesday, spot price on the Vashi wholesale market rose Rs 10-15 a quintal, and a similar increase was seen in naka and tender delivery rates.

Mr Hiren Vora of Kavita Trading Co said the delivery problem at sugar mills at Pune, Baramati and Ahmednagar was sorted out and delivery started from these mills.

Mills also came forward with fresh tender offers. On Wednesday, the market witnessed higher arrivals together, but no pressure was seen on price, due to higher retail demand. After Ramadan on Friday, the State's big festival Ganeshotsav will start from September 11. In the last 2-3 working days, Maharashtra's mills have sold around 2.75-3 lakh bags of sugar in the range of Rs 2,520/2,590 (including excise) for S-grade and Rs 2,580/2,635 for M-grade.

Buying from neighbouring Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh also increased due to festival demand, Mr Hiren Vora said.

At the Vashi market, total arrivals were at 80–90 truckloads (10 tonnes each) and lifting was 70–75 truckloads.

Arrivals will continue at high level because of the forthcoming bank and market holidays.

On Wednesday, mills got a good response for their tender offer.

Mill tender rate were expected for S grade at Rs 2,640/2,680 and M grade at Rs 2,680/2,770 a quintal.

According to the Sugar Merchants Association, spot rate for S grade was Rs 2,630/Rs 2,680 (Rs 2,595 /Rs 2,675 on Saturday) and M grade Rs 2,670/Rs 2,770 (Rs 2,630 /Rs 2,760).

Naka delivery rates were: S-grade Rs 2,600/Rs 2,630 (against Rs 2,570 /Rs 2,600 on Saturday) and M-grade Rs 2,650 /Rs 2,680 (Rs 2,600/Rs 2,660).

## Bears hammer pepper futures

G.K. Nair

Kochi, Sept. 8

Pepper futures on Wednesday dropped on bearish sentiments created by the selling interest shown by investors.

Some investors holding farm-grade pepper and validity-expired stocks showed interest to liquidate, but there were no buyers. This aided the futures market to drop.

Narrowing down of difference between September and October deliveries prompted switching over to October.

About seven working days are left for September maturity with an outstanding position of over 10,000 tonnes and this might also lead to bearish sentiments in the market, market sources told Business Line. The market has become the platform for a tug-of-war between bull and bear operators. As a result the market continued to witness high volatility.

A market players claimed that “fundamentally there is a shortage” while others found it difficult to accept this theory. The silence on the part of the growers and dealers holding iron stock, even as the prices were ruling above Rs 200 a kg, by and large supports the argument of a section in the market of a squeeze in availability.

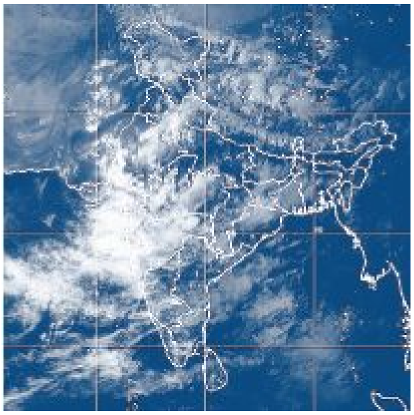
Spot market

In the spot market some quantity of inferior material was traded, traders said.

Market trend gives the impression that there are buyers who wanted to cover frantically to meet their export commitments, they said.

September contract on NCDEX dropped by Rs 20,731 a quintal. October and November were down by Rs 136 and Rs 213 respectively to close at Rs 20,826 and Rs 21,020 a quintal.

## Monsoon turns corner, 101% as of date



Vinson Kurian

Thiruvananthapuram, Sept 8

The South-West monsoon has turned the corner on Wednesday by posting 101 per cent braving a lean patch in East-central, East and North-East India.

Of the four homogenous geographical regions of the country, Northwest India (107 per cent), Central India (104 per cent) and South Peninsula (121) per cent recorded above normal rainfall.

NO GAINS

At 79 per cent, East and Northeast India was in deficit, with no significant gains recorded in the ongoing active phase of monsoon.

Jharkhand (-48 per cent), Gangetic West Bengal (-35 per cent), Assam and Meghalaya (-26 per cent) and Bihar (-25 per cent) bore the brunt of an erratic monsoon in these parts. Northwest India had a deficit Meteorological subdivision in East Uttar Pradesh (-28 per cent) lying adjacent to barren Bihar. Central India too had individual cases of Met subdivisions barely making the grade to the normal as per India Meteorological Department (IMD) definitions (putting it between -19 per cent to +20 per cent).

East Madhya Pradesh (-18 per cent), Orissa and West Madhya Pradesh (-15 per cent each) and Chhattisgarh (-14 per cent) are ‘normal' only by default.

LESS IN KERALA

In the South, the traditional monsoon playgrounds of Kerala and Coastal Karnataka posted -13 per cent and -2 per cent rainfall during the season as of Wednesday.

The massive 121 per cent surplus accrued from the humongous falls over Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu this time round in a trend forecast by international agencies before the start of the season.

An IMD update on Wednesday said that widespread rainfall was reported from over Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, the West Coast, Gujarat, Southeast Rajasthan, and Coastal Orissa during the 24 hours ending in the afternoon.

It was fairly widespread over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarkhand, Haryana, Delhi, West Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Interior Orissa, Gangetic West Bengal, Assam, Saurashtra, Kutch and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

LAND-BASED ‘LOW'

A land-based low-pressure area over Vidarbha and adjoining Chhattisgarh and Southeast Madhya Pradesh persisted overseeing the proceedings over East-central and parts of East India.

An upper air cyclonic circulation was located to over West Haryana and neighbourhood that boosted the easterly flows steered by the land-based ‘low.'

An offshore trough ran down from South Gujarat coast to Kerala coast, but not quite covering it in its entirety.

A rain alert valid for Thursday said that isolated heavy rainfall would occur over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Southeast Rajasthan and Coastal Karnataka.

RAIN WARNING

Isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall would occur over Vidarbha, Madhya Maharashtra and South Madhya Pradesh also during this period.

But isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall has been forecast for Gujarat, Konkan and Goa during the next two days.

Extended forecast until Monday said that fairly widespread rainfall would occur over the Gangetic Plains, Sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, the Northeastern States, Orissa and the West Coast.

The rain belt would be mostly active over the eastern quadrant of the country, including the Southeast Coast, during the week ending September 15 (Wednesday next), according to the US National Centres for Environmental Prediction.

## Global cues boost edible oil prices

Our Correspondent

Mumbai, Sept. 8

The edible oil market edged up on global cues and increased retail demand for Ramzan and Ganeshotsav festival.

Upward movement in price at the producing centres also supported the bullish sentiment.

Malaysia's BMD crude palm oil futures closed higher for the fourth consecutive day on sustained buying interest, ahead of long weekend.

Soya oil gained on the CBOT as traders switched over to new contracts ahead of the September 15 expiry of old contracts, a trader said.

Trade sources said that in Mumbai, most of edible oils increased by Rs 3-5 for10 kg on higher quotes by refineries and firm trend in foreign markets. Resale selling pressure was lower.

On Wednesday, about 150-200 tonnes of palmolein were resold at Rs 464-467.

In Gujarat, export demand for groundnut and fears of late arrivals of new crops in the South kept the demand-supply situation for groundnut oil off balance in the spot market. In view of continued selling by refineries, easing supply position and hopes of higher kharif oilseeds production, stockists are now waiting for new arrivals.

At Malaysia's BMD crude palm oil October futures closed 38 Malaysian ringgits (MYR) higher at 2,719 MYR and November closed up 46 MYR at 2,674 MYR a tonne.

Mumbai commodity exchange spot rate were: Groundnut oil Rs 870 (Rs 865), soya refined oil Rs 478 (Rs 475), sunflower expeller refined Rs 515 (Rs 515), sunflower refined Rs 570 (Rs 565), rapeseed refined Rs 573 (Rs 568), rapeseed expeller refined Rs 543 (Rs 538), cotton refined Rs 500 (Rs 495) and palmolein was at Rs 467 (Rs 464) for 10 kg.

## Industrial consumption lifts castor

Our Correspondent

Rajkot, Sept. 8

Castor price rose on fresh export and industrial demand. After a holiday, the market increased by Rs 77/ 100 kg within two days

At Rajkot Commodity Exchange (RCX), castor September future traded at Rs 3,879/quintal. It traded at Rs 3,907 during the day.

Castor December future closed at Rs 3,682. About 3,000-3,500 bags of 55 kg arrived in various mandis of Gujarat.

On NCDEX, castor seed contract declined marginally . NCDEX September contract fell Rs 7 to Rs 3,949/100 kg. Some traders said December contracts improved mainly on speculative buying.

Festive season

Traders said strong demand from the paint industries ahead of festive season, amid restricted supply, mainly supported the uptrend in castorseed prices.

They said the demand for paint, which normally rises during the festival season of Diwali and Dussehra, further fuelled on reports of a boom in realty sector. Castor seed is used by paint manufacturers and some other heavy industrial units.

Rajkot-based traders said that some profit booking may come in the short–term as the price is at a very higher level. The market needs some correction, while exporters and local industries also awaiting a decline to make further purchases.

In the spot market, castor ruled at Rs 723-755 for 20-kg against 690-763 on Tuesday. Arrivals were 3,000-4,000 bags of 75 kg.

## Local buying adds colour to turmeric

Our Correspondent

Erode, Sept. 8

The price of turmeric was unchanged in the futures market but in the spot market it improved by Rs 200 a quintal. Due to local demand, good sales were reported at all places.

The finger variety turmeric at the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association market was sold at Rs 9,199-12,969 a quintal. This is Rs 240 a quintal higher than Tuesday's rates. The root variety was sold at Rs 9,300-13,469 a quintal.

In the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 11,826-13,469 a quintal, Rs 300 higher. The root variety was sold at Rs 12,027-13,219 a quintal. In the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 13,027-13,689, while the root variety sold at Rs 12,699-13,104 a quintal.

In the Regulated Market, the finger variety was sold at Rs 12,989-13,566. This is Rs 150 a quintal higher than Tuesday's price. The root variety was sold at Rs 12,789-13,361 a quintal. Out of arrival of 619 bags, 542 were sold.

“Absolutely, there is no demand from upcountry merchants for turmeric and the demand will start only after the arrival of new crop in December. Now we are getting orders from local merchants and masala firms. So there is possibilities for the improvement in prices from next week,” said Mr R.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

## Encouraging quail

— K. K. Mustafah

Low investment: Quail eggs displayed for sale at a retail outlet near Kochi, Kerala. The egg, priced at Rs 20 a dozen, is available throughout the year. Quail farming is mainly a household activity. The bird and feed are provided free of cost to those who wish to venture into the business and the main attraction is that it requires minimum floor space and low investment. Nutritionally, quail eggs are on a par with chicken eggs. Moreover, they contain less cholesterol. Quails start laying their eggs as soon as as they are seven weeks old. They attain 50 per cent egg production by the eighth week.

## Bumper tur crop likely in Karnataka

Nagesh Prabhu

Bangalore, Sept 8

Karnataka, which roughly accounts for 15 per cent of the country's area under tur (redgram) cultivation, is set for a bumper crop this year, thanks to timely and sufficient rainfall in major growing areas of northern districts of the State.

The area under tur crop has increased to 8.46 lakh hectares in this kharif season against 5.43 lakh hectares last year, thus, farmers are hoping for a bumper crop. The targeted area was 6.76 lakh hectares.

The tur crop covers more than 50 per cent of the area under pulses.

## Short-covering perks up spot rubber prices

Aravindan

Kottayam, Sept 8

Spot rubber improved on Wednesday. According to observers the physical market ruled firm following the gains in domestic futures as the inflow of the raw material was still weak. Sheet rubber increased to Rs 167 from Rs 165 a kg on fresh buying and short covering. The volumes were marginally better.

Futures gain

RSS 4 increased at the September futures to Rs 169.39 (168.31), October to Rs 166.03 (164.29), November to Rs 166.16 (164.61) and December to Rs 167.75 (166.20) a kg on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. The volumes totalled 3404 lots. The turnover was 57 crores and open interest 4255 lots. The September futures for RSS 3 weakened to ¥298.2 (Rs 165.67) from ¥302 during the day session but recovered partially to ¥299 (Rs 166.06) a kg during the night session on Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM).

RSS 3 (spot) improved to Rs 163.81 (163.50) a kg at Bangkok.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 167 (165); RSS-5: 162 (160); ungraded: 157.50 (155); ISNR 20: 152 (149.50) and latex 60 per cent: 111 (111).

## Year's lowest volume for Coonoor tea auction

P.S. Sundar

Coonoor, Sept 8

An analysis of the listing by brokers reveals that a volume of 11.89 lakh kg will be offered for Sale No: 36 of the auctions of the Coonoor Tea Trade Association to be held on Thursday and Friday.

This is the lowest volume so far in 2010. It is 87,000 kg lower than last week's offer, which was the year's lowest volume until then. It is as much as 2.91 lakh kg lower than the offer this time last year.

Of the 11.89 lakh kg on offer, 7.95 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 3.94 lakh kg belongs to dust grades. As much as 11.26 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety, and only 0.63 lakh kg, the orthodox variety. The proportion of orthodox teas continues to be low in both the leaf and dust grades. In the leaf counter, only 0.29 lakh kg belongs to orthodox, while 7.66 lakh kg, CTC. Among the dusts, only 0.34 lakh kg belongs to orthodox, while 3.60 lakh kg, CTC. In the 11.89 lakh kg, fresh tea accounts for 10.74 lakh kg. As much as 1.15 lakh kg comprises teas remaining unsold in previous auctions. The lower offer helped prices to rise last week by Rs 2 a kg, over the previous week. Quality leaf teas continue to fetch good prices. “This week, our Broken Pekoe (BP) grade, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped leaf market fetching Rs 134 a kg. In all, six of our grades got Rs 105 and more,” Mr Prasant Menon, Managing Partner, Homedale Tea Factory, told Business Line.

Chennai - INDIA

| Today's Weather | | Tomorrow's Forecast | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Thursday, Sep 9** | | **Friday, Sep 10** |
| | Max Min | | Max Min |
| Cloudy | $29.6^{o}$ \| $23.7^{o}$ | Rainy | $33^{o}$ \| $26^{o}$ |
| Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs | Sunrise: 5:57 | | |
| Humidity: 59% | Sunset: 18:16 | | |
| Wind: Normal | Barometer: 1003.0 | | |

Extended Forecast for a week

| Saturday **Sep 11** | Sunday **Sep 12** | Monday **Sep 13** | Tuesday **Sep 14** | Wednesday **Sep 15** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| $33^{o}$ \| $27^{o}$ | $32^{o}$ \| $27^{o}$ | $31^{o}$ \| $27^{o}$ | $30^{o}$ \| $26^{o}$ | $30^{o}$ \| $26^{o}$ |
| Rainy | Rainy | Rainy | Rainy | Rainy |

| Airport Weather | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Rain: 9.0 mm in 24hrs | Sunrise: 6:01 |
| Delhi | Humidity: 94% | Sunset: 18:36 |
| Delhi | Wind: Normal | Barometer: 1005 |

THE HINDU

# Promoting crab fishery through captive farming practices

Staff Reporter

For providing alternative employment opportunities to the fisherfolk

— Photo: N. Rajesh

**Advanced:A view of a large size crab species in Tuticorin.**

Tuticorin: Fattening of mud crab could provide employment opportunities for the fisherfolk as a means of costal livelihood besides promoting crab fishery in Tamil Nadu. The edible crab fishery was flourishing through captive farming practices.

Due to advanced techniques, survival rate of crabs at nascent stage could be improved.

The culture and fattening techniques were being offered. Crab fattening could promise community based fisheries management. The fisherfolk could adopt it on a part-time basis to generate more income.

Hence they should be exposed to such fattening techniques, said J. Daniel Jameson, Former Director of Research and Extension, Fisheries College and Research Institute, here on Wednesday.

By constructing bunds or mud enclosures along the brackish water region in the mouth of an estuary, culture of mud crab could be taken up for enhancing livelihood of the fisherfolk and also the members of women self help group.

“While marine crab fishery of west and east coast contributes about 10 per cent of the total marine crustacean landings, commercial production through fattening would restore mud crab fishery from stock depletion. The mud crab ‘Scylla serrata' and ‘Scylla tranquebarica' are from the estuaries. Shell fish like lobster and mud crab are most preferred in the international market. Export of live mud crab from India, especially from Tuticorin, which is emerging as the biggest seafood exporter, is popular because of its protein value. Necessary techniques for crab seed production is also available,” Dr. Jameson said.

Adult mud crabs were being caught through traps with various baits of fish organs. Brackish water regions of Tuticorin coast could well be utilised for the collection of juvenile crabs especially along the mangrove vegetation and muddy regions, which serve as a suitable natural shelter for juvenile crabs.

“Monsoon seasons from October to December every year help in the mixing of rain water along the brackish water region resulting in low salinity of seawater along the mouth of estuaries. Hence, abundant algae could be developed in the estuarine waters,” he added.

Alternative employment “Normally, mud crab sheds its outer skin (outer coat) as it grows. Such crabs are weak with less meat content accumulated with water. Further, water crabs are low priced and consumer preference is poor. Such crabs are also collected from the brackish water region and fattened by feeding them with fish offal, clam meat and oyster meat. For this, the earthen ponds of about 100 -300 square metres are dug along the coast or close to the backwaters for further fattening them to marketable size. This fattening technique has become more popular after the Tsunami in Tamil Nadu as an alternative employment,” Dr. Jameson pointed out.