

## Special teams to assess crop loss

Staff Reporter

*Revenue Minister to visit Ganjam district today*

Photo: Lingaraj Panda



**GRIM SCENARIO: Farmers trying to retrieve rain damaged paddy on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar on Friday.**

**BERHAMPUR:** Sample crop cutting would be taken up within a week to assess the agricultural loss caused by recent rains in the State.

It may be noted that there has been extensive damage to standing crop especially the kharif paddy crop in south Orissa districts and other districts like Nayagarh, Kendrapara, Khurda, Jagatsinghpur etc. Revenue Minister Surya Narayan Patra will visit areas of Ganjam district on Saturday where large scale crop loss has occurred due to the recent rains. The State Agricultural Director visited the district to assess the damage on Thursday.

Ganjam district administration had convened an emergency meeting on Friday to discuss the crop loss due to untimely rains.

Speaking to The Hindu, Ganjam Collector V.K. Pandian said sample crop cutting would be taken up in two levels to assess the losses so that farmers could be properly compensated. Teams have been formed for this and the process is likely to end within a week.

The crop loss assessment would be made at both village as well as block level. Joint teams of departments of statistics and agriculture would take up crop cutting taking blocks as units.

The teams comprising revenue and agriculture department officials would take similar sample crop cutting taking village as units. As per the Collector all the 22 blocks of the district have suffered crop loss.

Meanwhile, farmers, who had suffered crop loss due to the rains, staged a demonstration at Hinjli with damaged paddy stalks in their hands on Friday. Members of Ganjam district 'Manav Adhikar Surakshya Manch' submitted a memorandum to the Revenue Divisional Commissioner (RDC), southern division, demanding loan waiver for farmers, who have suffered crop loss due to recent rains.

They also demanded the State government to exempt tuition fees for the students of these peasants.

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**'Rs.5,000 crore required for horticulture during XII plan'**

Special Correspondent

TIRUCHI: Considering the challenges faced in terms of the need to increase productivity

and the climate change, there was a need for investing about Rs.5,000 crore for research and development in the horticulture sector during the XII Plan Period, said H.P.Singh, Deputy Director General (Horticulture), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). During the XI Plan period, about Rs.761 crore was earmarked for research in horticulture and about 80 per cent of the money has been spent. During the current fiscal about Rs.125 crore has been released.

However, the XII plan outlay for the sector was yet to be firmed up, he said, speaking on the sidelines of the inaugural of the global conference of banana, jointly organised by the Association for Improvement in Production and Utilisation of Banana (AIPUB) and National Centre for Banana (NRCB), Tiruchi, here on Friday.

Mr.Singh said the ICAR was in the process of strengthening the infrastructure of the 23 horticulture research and development institutions, including the six national research centres, across the country. Incubators, to foster agro entrepreneurs, would be started wherever necessary. An incubator was being planned at the NRCB in Tiruchi also.

Tissue culture and bio-technology laboratories have been set up at the NRCB at a cost of Rs.60 lakh and Rs.75 lakh respectively. This apart, a banana processing centre has also been established at the centre at an investment of Rs.45 lakh to upscale production of value added banana products.

The NRCB, which has been allotted about Rs.20 crore during the XI Plan Period, has also been asked to come out with a hand held device for detecting viruses in the field.

With land available for cultivation shrinking and climate change, there was a need for improving productivity. The ICAR had the technologies to improve productivity.

There were about 26 centres across the country for technology transfer through a coordinated approach. They were mandated with coming up with and propagating locale and situation specific technologies. The functions of the project would be reviewed soon to validate their efficiency and bring in improvements if necessary, he said.

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## 'Market for organically grown bananas growing'

Special Correspondent

*Four-day Global Conference on Banana commences*

—Photo:M.Moorthy



**fruitful:Stephan Weise, centre, Bioversity International, France, conferring the Kadli Ratna Award on H.P.Singh, Deputy Director General, Horticulture, ICAR, at the Global Conference on Banana in Tiruchi.**

TIRUCHI: With growing consumer appreciation of organically grown fruits, there was an increasing demand for organically grown bananas. A systematic approach to promote organic farming in banana was required, observed H.P.Singh, Deputy Director General (Horticulture), Indian Council of Agricultural Research, here on Friday.

The country also has to tap the huge potential for export of banana and quality of the produce would be the key to improving the market share in the international banana market, he said inaugurating a four-day Global Conference on Banana, jointly organised by the Association for Improvement in Production and Utilisation of Banana (AIPUB) and the National Research Centre for Banana (NRCB), Tiruchi.

Though India was the largest producer of banana in the world, almost the entire produce was consumed domestically with less than 0.5 per cent of the total production being exported. Banana was grown in about 130 countries across the world and India produced about 26.98 million tonnes from about 0.75 million hectares, accounting for about 16.5 per

cent of the total global production.

There was a regional disparity in adoption of technologies accounting for the variation in the productivity levels ranging from 7.6 to 62.9 tonnes per hectare in different parts of the country. This has to be addressed immediately.

There was a need to develop infrastructure for better handling, transportation and storage of banana for both the domestic and export markets. Market promotion, research and identification of new markets for exports should be taken up on priority. Given the challenges posed by climate change there was a need for promoting global partnership initiatives to share expertise and technologies to overcome them, he said.

Stephan Weise, Programme Director, Bioversity International, France, said while 196 countries had signed the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1992, negotiations were on complex issues such as access to genetic resources and benefit sharing. He underlined the need for sharing genetic resources among countries as it would not only bring in monetary benefits about also new technologies. It would also help develop international property rights and help conservation efforts. P.Murugesu Bhoopathi, Vice Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, said horticulture would be growth engine of the agriculture sector in future as the per capita consumption of fruits and vegetables was increasing.

Realising the importance of the sector, the State government has already announced that a horticulture university would be set up in the State, which would be a model .

B.P.Ray,Vice chancellor, Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology, research in tissue culture has revolutionised banana cultivation in the country and there was a lot of research going on in bio-technology.

M.M.Mustaffa, Director, NRCB, and P.Sundararaju, Principal Scientist, spoke.

Earlier, Mr.Weise conferred the Kadli Ratan, the highest award of the AIPUB, on Mr.H.P.Singh in recognition of his outstanding contribution in field of banana research and production. Mr.Weise was also awarded the AIPUB fellowship. The following were conferred with AIPUB awards on the occasion: Ratan Life Time Achiever Award – S.S.Mehta; Achievers Award – P.Rathinam; Kadli Puraskar –N.Kumar; Nallavazhai Award

for Outstanding Farmer – S.A.Sukumar, Thottiyam; and Best Dissertation Awards – S.Elayabalan and G.Karunakaran.

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## **Fish seed rearing pond inspected**

Staff Reporter

*“Go for inland fish culture”*

Tuticorin: A team of officials under the chairmanship of Joint Director of Fisheries, Inland, Chennai, R. Thillai Govindhan, inspected a fish seed rearing pond at Muruganpuram near Vallanad in Tuticorin district on Friday.

With adequate water resources in the wake of rainfall in the recent days, the inland fish culture could be a promising venture for stakeholders.

The team inspected the developments of infrastructure executed by Latha, a beneficiary under National Agriculture Development Programme. With the objective of familiarising fish seed rearing, the Government is extending financial support to those interested. A subsidy of Rs. 1.5 lakh is being provided.

To get it, stakeholders had to fulfil certain conditions of infrastructure for nurseries and rearing fish ponds, sources from the Fisheries Department said.

P. Jebakumar Ranjan, Assistant Executive, Fisheries Department, Tuticorin, and R. Shalini, Assistant Director of Fisheries (Inland), Tirunelveli, were present.

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## Shitake mushroom goes native

Sharath S. Srivatsa

*City lab domesticates the prized gourmet fare for your table*

— PHOTO: K. GOPINATHAN



**FUNGUS AMONG US:** Imported shitake mushrooms cost about Rs.600 a kg. It will be far cheaper once cultivation starts at home.

**BANGALORE:** The queen bee of fungi, the shitake mushroom which takes gourmet cuisine to the next level of fine dining, will soon come at a fraction of its current price.

Presently imported from Japan and China at an exorbitant cost, the shitake mushroom has been domesticated and standardised for cultivation for Indian condition by the Mushroom Research Lab at the Indian Institute of Horticulture Research (IIHR) here. The cooler climates of Ooty, Kodaikanal and Kodagu are particularly conducive to its cultivation.

“Imported shitake mushrooms cost about Rs. 600 a kg. With standardisation of cultivation procedures, it can be grown in India, which could reduce the cost considerably,” Meera

Pandey, Principal Scientist, Mushroom Research Lab, told The Hindu.

#### Protein source

Shitake has been cultivated for over a thousand years now and is one of the popular sources of protein in China, Japan and East Asia. It is valued for its medicinal value, including anti-cancer agents and cholesterol-reducing properties, Dr. Pandey said, and added that it took two to three years for the institute's efforts to fructify. Besides successfully developing shitake mushroom for Indian conditions, the IIHR has standardised two local varieties that have sourced from local forests.

Standard procedures have been developed for the pink oyster mushroom, sourced from Western Ghats region in Shimoga, and cherry oyster mushroom, collected from forests near Bangalore.

“Research on forest mushrooms involves understanding viability in the yield, shelf life, nutritional value and also the texture,” Dr. Pandey said.

Unfortunately, there has been no documentation of the edible mushrooms available in forests of India though hundreds of varieties grow in the wild.

Of these, some 25 varieties are edible. At least eight varieties of mushrooms, mostly sourced from forest areas, are being consumed locally, and these include the koole anube of Shimoga and alumbe of Goa. Only button mushroom, oyster mushroom and milky mushroom were popularly cultivated in India, Dr. Pandey said, attributing to the fact that Indians were yet to develop a taste for mushrooms.

Meanwhile, the IIHR is also attempting to domesticate about four varieties of mushrooms native to the forests of Andaman, Rajasthan, Western Ghats and Gir in Gujarat.



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## **“Conserve marine fishes during monsoon showers”**

Staff Reporter

*Shell fishes breed during this season only: former official*

TUTICORIN: With the flow of rainwater into sea, the productivity of marine resources could be enhanced. Following the discharge of freshwater in the wake of good rainfall, the fish species living in sea will experience a new environment with rich breeding and spawning grounds. Most of the marine and brackish water fishes living in brine waters are induced by salinity and thermal changes for spawning during rainfall against a backdrop of monsoon, according to J.D. Jameson, former Director of Research and Extension, Fisheries College and Research Institute, Tuticorin.

“The fast growing and multiplying fish species such as sardine, herrings, anchovies, barracuda, lethrinus and many shallow water and column living fishes spawn during the rainy season due to activation of the endocrine glands, especially the pituitary, which is the major monitoring factor in the breeding and spawning of fishes.”

Shell fishes like shrimps and crabs also breed during this season only. The reason behind the spawning is also coincided with mass productivity of tiny algae and zooplankton organisms, which serve as food to the filter feeding fish species.

“Such feeds are highly nutritious and rich in protein. The tiny hatchlings and baby fish feed on such microscopic food organisms and grow better”, he added. Under these conditions, the fishermen, who are operating trawl nets, shore nets, trammel nets and other banned nettings, are advised to keep away from fishing for a short duration.

It would deplete juvenile and brood fishes. Otherwise, it would not allow shallow, pelagic and deep water fishes to attain the optimal size for commercial purpose. Therefore fishermen should extend cooperation to conserve marine fishes during monsoon showers, he said.

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## 'Centre indifferent to farmers' woes'

Staff Reporter

Kozhikode: Amarjeet Kaur, national secretary of the Communist Party of India (CPI), has alleged that the Union government's indifference to the rise in prices of essential commodities is intensifying the struggle of poor farmers in the country.

She was inaugurating a delegates' meet as part of the 37th State convention of the Joint Council of State Service Organisations at Tagore Centenary Hall, here, on Friday.

Ms. Kaur said the increasing figure of farmer suicides in the country was a reflection of the instability in the field. "Nearly 1,80,000 farmers committed suicide within the past 10 years according to government figures. But the Union government is least bothered about the count and is now busy with increasing the price of petroleum products," she said.

Ms. Kaur, who is also the national vice-president of the All India Trade Union Congress, alleged that both the National Democratic Alliance and the United Progressive Alliance governments were responsible for ruining the Public Distribution System. It was the Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL) classification that had worsened the situation, she said.

Parliament march

She said the party workers would take out a march to Parliament on February 23 registering protest against the increasing violations of labour laws in the country. It would urge the government to put an end to the contract system in the government sector, she said.

Forest Minister Benoy Viswom, State Women's Commission member Meenakshi Thampan

and All India State Government Employees Confederation general secretary K. Balasubrahmanyam also spoke.

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## Farmers want import of pulses put off

Special correspondent

*Import during harvest will affect the interests of farmers*

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*Centre allowed import of pulses to meet shortage*

*'Crash in prices of red gram before arrival of fresh stock is alarming'*

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GULBARGA: The Karnataka Red Gram Growers' Association has demanded that the Union Government put off allowing import of 5.5 lakh tonnes of pulses to meet the shortage, as it would result in a crash in prices of pulses at a time when fresh stocks would be arriving in the markets.

Basavaraj Ingin, president of the association, told presspersons here on Friday that the association was not opposed to importing pulses to meet the shortage, but the timing of the decision would affect the interests of the farmers.

“The Centre should not allow import at the time of harvest of pulses as it will affect prices in the wholesale market and hit farmers badly,” Mr. Ingin said. However, the Government could allow import of pulses at a later stage after arrival of the harvested pulses in the market, he suggested.

Mr. Ingin said that prices of red gram in the wholesale market in the region had crashed to

a new low. It ranged between Rs. 2,400 and Rs. 3,000 per quintal in the market now and red gram growers were in distress. The crash in prices of red gram even before arrival of fresh stock was alarming, he said.

He said that the State Government should immediately direct the Red Gram Development Board to establish procurement centres and purchase the commodity from farmers directly. The State Government should also announce a bonus of 25 per cent on the minimum support price of Rs. 3,000 per quintal for red gram.

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## **Paddy in 20,157 ha damaged**

Correspondent

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*Assessment is in progress in Vizianagaram and Parvathipuram Minister assures affected farmers of compensation*

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VIZIANAGARAM: The preliminary report on damage to the harvested paddy on account of incessant rain for five days from December 5 has been put at 20,157 hectares (standing crop: 2497 ha, crop on sheaves: 7452ha and crop made into heaps: 10,208 ha) and damage to other crops such as cotton (2580ha), black gram and green gram (881ha) and maize (209 ha), banana (30ha) and vegetables (4.80ha), according to Joint Director (agriculture) Y. Narasimhulu. The rainfall received during the period was 118.4mm against the normal of 4.80 mm for December.

Talking to The Hindu on Friday, Mr. Narasimhulu said that assessment of damaged crop in both Vizianagaram and Parvathipuram revenue divisions was going on.

Mr. Narasimhulu said that the damage to paddy during cyclone in the first week of November and on 12th and 13th of the same month was 17,095 ha i.e. cumulatively paddy damaged due to rain so far was in an extent of 37,252 ha out of the crop area of 1.24 lakh ha. Minister for Transport Botcha Satyanarayana, who inspected the harvested paddy in Nellimarla, Gurla, Bondapalli and Gajapathinagaram mandals on Thursday assured farmers that compensation would be paid to affected farmers as per guidelines. A village would be taken as a unit for assessing the crop damage, he said and added that panchayat sarpanch, mandal agriculture officer, village revenue officer and a prospective farmer would do the assessment.

Those who were not covered under crop insurance would be extended input subsidy at the rate of Rs. 4,500 per hectare. He said the government was considering extending seed on subsidy for rabi and a decision would be taken in the next two days.

Review meet

Later, at a review meeting in the evening, the Minister asked officials to take up works extensively under the NREGP in the mandals where the crop loss was high.

According to tentative figures on damages released at the meeting, the number of houses damaged in 27 mandals was 45 fully and 357 partially (compensation amount estimated was Rs.16.53 lakhs), breaches to 10 minor irrigation tanks in three mandals (loss put at Rs.4 lakhs), rural water supply 87 works (Rs.104.30 lakhs), Roads and Buildings (Rs.1135 lakhs), damages to culverts, drains etc. in four municipalities (Rs.17 lakhs) and Panchayat Raj roads and buildings (Rs.1312.70lakhs).

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**Centre apathetic towards farmers: Jagan**

Chinaparimi (Guntur dt.): Former Member of Parliament Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy, on Friday, demanded the State government to pay Rs.5,000 as compensation to each of the farmers affected by the recent spate of rains.

Addressing a sizable crowd which was waiting for hours at this small village, Mr. Reddy faulted the State government for failing to come up with a strategic plan to mitigate the losses incurred by farmers during natural disasters.

Mr. Reddy sought to woo the farming community by reminding that his father, the late Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, had always wanted to improve the condition of farmers. "My father always sided with farmers. In fact, the first file he signed after becoming the Chief Minister was to provide free electricity to farmers," Jagan said.

He also took a dig at the Centre stating that the Central government had not come to the rescue of farmers in the State reeling under the impact of successive floods and cyclones. He said that the successive cyclones, Laila during Rabi season and the recent Jal, dashed the farmer's hopes of a good harvest.

"The Centre's apathy can be gauged from the fact that when the State government sought a financial assistance of Rs.1,000 crore, it washed its hands off by releasing a pittance," he said.

Big turnout

Mr. Jagan earlier arrived by Janmabhoomi Express at Tenali and was accorded a rousing reception by his supporters, who came from Ongole, Narsaraopet etc. There was much jostling in the railway station. The milling crowds kept pushing and former Minister Pilli Subhash Chandra Bose tripped twice and Jagan lost his footwear.

There was considerable delay as the convoy moved at a snail's pace. Jagan obliged farmers at many places and stopped to have a look at the water-soaked fields. Jagan could cover only one village as against the scheduled tour covering 10 villages.

Former Minister Balineni Srinivasa Reddy, Ambati Rambabu, Konda Surekha and ex-AMC Chairman Lella Appireddy were among those who accompanied Jagan on his tour. Jagan is expected to cover at least 10 villages on Saturday.

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## Rain damages roads, crops

Coimbatore Bureau

*Erode, Salem are the worst affected in terms of road damage*

PHOTO: M. GOVARTHAN



**monsoon fury:Old Bus Stand Road in Perundurai in Erode district is among the rain-battered stretches.**

COIMBATORE: Apart from more than 10 deaths, districts across the western region of the State have reported damage to roads, bridges and crops during the North East Monsoon. Erode and Salem have borne the brunt of the monsoon fury in terms of road damage.

In its report to the State Government, the district administration in Salem has said that the damage to roads has been “very extensive.”

Nearly 549.41 km of State and National Highways roads, 78 km of rural roads and 15.66 km of municipal roads and 1.7 km town panchayat roads have suffered damage. The administration, including the Salem Corporation, has sought Rs.48 crore for the restoration of the roads.

A total of 38 causeways and culverts and bridges of State Highways and nine in panchayat areas have also been damaged.

The rain led to breaching of the bunds of 14 river systems and tanks. Of the total loss on the agriculture front, 50 per cent related to cotton, especially in areas such as Attur and Gengavalli that received heavy rain.

The administration has recorded total damage to 63 huts and partial damage to 335 others. Two persons and 16 cattle were killed.

Even as the administration is seeking funds from the Government, it has already started paying compensation to the affected persons, an official said.

In Erode district, six persons died and crops on more than 500 acres in Gobichettipalayam and Sathyamangalam blocks were damaged in heavy rain.

Out of the six persons, three were killed when a car was swept away in flash floods in the surplus weir of Perumpallam reservoir around midnight of October 6. Three others were washed away in flash floods at various places in the district.

Many jungle streams in Sathyamangalam forest range sprang to life, bringing copious inflow to the water bodies in the block. A number of water carrying channels overflowed bringing paddy, turmeric and sugarcane crops cultivated on more than 500 acres in Gobichettipalayam and Sathyamangalam block under a sheet of water.

The continuous stagnation of water had caused severe damage to the turmeric crop, farmers said and feared that the productivity of the crop was expected to go down this year.

A causeway constructed across a jungle stream on Periya Kodiveri - Jogiyur road was damaged in the floods in the first week of October. A few house collapses were reported in Gobichettipalayam block.

A total of 347 houses were damaged in Krishangiri and Dharmapuri districts. Of these 148 were in Krishnagiri.

Damage to roads, bridges and culverts over a length of 220.33 km in the district has been put at Rs.10.40 crore.



In Dharmapuri, 199 houses were damaged in the rain from October 1 to December 6. One person and two cattle were killed.

Damage to State Highways roads was put at Rs.1.58 crore and other roads around Rs.10 crore.

A total of 55 huts and 66 tiled roof houses were reported damaged across Coimbatore District in the rain. Dwellers in the huts were given a total compensation of over Rs.1 lakh and the owners of tiled roof houses Rs.1.6 lakh, the district administration said.

Damage to roads belonging to the Highways and local bodies was estimated at around Rs 10 crores. This estimate and proposals for repairs had been sent to the Government, Coimbatore District Collector P. Umanath told The Hindu on Thursday.

A girl died when the wall of her house collapsed during heavy rain. Two persons were washed away in flash floods in the district.

A sum of Rs.3 lakh was given as compensation to the families of the deceased. They would also be given Rs.1 lakh from the Chief Ministers Relief Fund.

The administration in Tirupur said 26 huts collapsed and 49 other dwellings suffered partial damage.

An 80-year-old man died when the wall of his hut collapsed in Malayapalayam village. Officials said that crops on 222 hectares, including paddy on 150 hectares, were damaged.

(With inputs from Tirupur, Salem, Erode, Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri)

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## High inflation cause of concern, govt to remain vigilant: FM

Although satisfied with the possibility of India achieving 8.75% growth in the current fiscal, finance minister Pranab Mukherjee said on Saturday that inflation continues to remain a cause of concern.

"Inflation has been high and a cause of concern... government will continue to remain vigilant on the price front", he said, addressing the Indian Business Leaders Award function organised by private channel *CNBC TV18*.

Attributing high inflation to domestic drought last year and rising global prices in the commodity market, Mukherjee said the silver lining is that food prices have started coming down.

While overall inflation in October was 8.58%, food inflation for the week ended November 27 was 8.69%. The inflation, according to the RBI was above the comfort level of 4-5%.

On economic expansion, Mukherjee said Mid-Year Analysis presented in Parliament recently had projected the GDP growth rate at 8.75%, on the back of 8.9% recorded in the first half of the current fiscal. Following the global economic crisis, the growth rate slipped from 9% to 6.7% in 2008-09. It, however, picked up to 7.4% in 2009-10 and is all set to go up in the current fiscal.

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**Back Rains, festival leave cotton exporters high and dry**

*Gujarat production may take 10% hit.*



Atop cotton heaps:APMC yard workers load cotton onto a lorry at Gondal APMC yard, 35 km from Rajkot, for transport to a ginning mill. —

M. R. Subramani

Rajkot, Dec. 10

A combination of rain and Diwali holidays, resulting in low arrivals, has led to exporters not being able to get the required 55 lakh bales (170 kg each) for shipments before the December 15 deadline.

In October, the Centre had announced permitting 55 lakh bales of cotton exports from November 1 and fixed a deadline of December 15 for the shipments to sent abroad.

“Exports by December 15 may be 25-30 lakh bales only. What has happened is that we could not buy for 12-15 days from the market due to reasons such as rains and Diwali,” said Mr M. P. Patel, Managing Director, Jaideep Cotton Fibres, an exporter.

The markets were closed for at least five days for Diwali. On top of it, farmers waited for an auspicious day after the festival to sell, he said.

“Another 6-7 days were lost due to heavy rain in the region,” he said. There is demand from China, Turkey, Pakistan and Indonesia, said Mr Anand A Poppat, Managing Director, Jalaram Cotton and Proteins Ltd. Exporters and ginnerers fear that there could be a loss of 10 per cent in the crop against the initial estimates.

“Some 107 lakh bales were expected to be produced in Gujarat. It could be now 10 per cent lower,” said Mr M.P. Patel.

#### Lower production

Mr Poppat is of the view that production in Gujarat would be 10 per cent lower than the initial estimates of 130-135 lakh bales.

“There could be damage of 10-15 lakh bales in Gujarat,” said Mr Govindlal G. Patel of Deepak Enterprises. “We think the minimum production in Gujarat will be 90 lakh bales.”

All-India production could be 310-315 lakh bales against initial estimates of 335 lakh bales. However, a section of the traders here thinks that 335 lakh bales is still possible given that an output of 350 lakh bales was projected.

“Rain accompanied by heavy wind has brought down production in my farm to 10 maund (20 kg each) on a bigha (2.5 acres). But for that, the output on my farm could have been 40 maund a bigha,” said Mr Shyamjibhai Raiyani, a pesticide distributor-cum-farmer.

Some farmers at the Dhoraji Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee yard said that their production had halved due to the un-seasonal rain. “The rain has led to boll in the plant falling. And water has seeped into the flowers, affecting the quality of cotton,” said Mr Kalpesh Posiya, a trader at Dhoraji APMC yard.

Black and yellow

There is, therefore, a problem in the cotton that is arriving at various markets in Rajkot district. While some are a little black, the others are a bit yellowish.

“We can set right the black ones while ginning, but the yellow ones are a problem,” said Mr Poppat.

If cotton arrives without any problem or is good in quality, then farmers get a minimum of Rs 900 a maund (20 kg). But any drop in quality sees the prices going down to Rs 850 for cotton with patches of black and around Rs 750 for those with yellow patches.

“If the cotton had been picked up before Diwali, there would have been no problem, or minimum contamination. If the picking was after the festival, then there would have been problems, as we are seeing now,” said Mr Jaisukhbhai Patel, a trader in Gondal APMC yard.

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Back **Onion eases on higher arrivals**

Firm trend*		
Date	Arrivals	Modal price
Dec 3	1,102	1,251
Dec 6	1,034.5	1,300
Dec 7	1,288.5	1,351
Dec 8	1,500	1,200

\*Arrivals in tonnes; Rs/quintal  
at Lasalgaon market  
Source: NHRDF

M.R. Subramani

Chennai, Dec. 10

Onion prices continued to rule firm in terminal markets across the country, though they tended to ease a little on Friday following higher arrivals and demand slowdown.

However, quality onion continued to garner premium, especially the ones that had been harvested during the rabi marketing season during April-June.

At Lasalgaon, the modal price or the rates at which most trade took place dropped to Rs 1,200 a quintal with a higher arrival of 1,500 tonnes playing in the minds of the traders.

“New arrivals are lower and their quality too is not good. There is great demand for old stocks since they seem to have a longer shelf life,” said Mr Madan Prakash, Executive Director of Rajathi Exim Group.

“In Gondal market in Gujarat, prices were down a tad as demand was lower. Still, quality onions fetched better prices,” said Mr Jaman Bhai, a trader. At the Gondal Agricultural Market Produce yard, onion was traded between Rs 390 and Rs 420 for a maund of 20 kg. “Gujarat onion is in demand in States such as Punjab and Rajasthan,” said Mr Prakash. “Arrivals were on the higher side today in Gujarat too and demand was lacking compared with that,” said Mr Jaman Bhai.

Rains play spoilsport

Unseasonal rain last month has affected onion crop in parts of Maharashtra and Gujarat. The crop has been hit in other growing areas of the country too. “Quality onions cost anything around R 25-27 a kg in Maharashtra markets,” said Mr Prakash. In retail outlets, onion in the South is quoting over Rs 50 a kg mainly due to short supply and lack of quality onion.

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**Back Globion seeks licences for 8 new poultry vaccines**

Hyderabad Dec. 10

Poultry vaccine maker Globion India, a joint venture between Lohmann Animal Health of Germany and Coimbatore-based Suguna Poultry, is planning to expand its products portfolio from its manufacturing unit in Andhra Pradesh.

The joint venture company, which recently commissioned its Rs 75-crore poultry vaccine manufacturing unit in Medak district, has applied for eight fresh licences for vaccine production.

“We are at present producing six poultry vaccines and have applied for eight more, which we expect to receive in the next six to nine months,” according to Dr D.K. Dey, CEO of Globion.

The company will be producing about 25 per cent of the plant capacity of 5,000 doses annually in this fiscal.

“We will be scaling up the production to full capacity in the next three to four years, by which time we expect to breakeven,” he told press persons here.

Globion, in which Suguna has 74 per cent stake, is producing the vaccines using technology from Lohmann, a global player in the animal vaccines market. It is competing in the domestic market with MNC players such as Intervet, Merial and Abic, apart from local players such as Venky's Vaccines, Inbovac and Hester.

The total domestic animal vaccine market size is estimated at Rs 2,000 crore, with the poultry segment accounting for Rs 150 crore.

“Among the eight new licences we have applied for is one vaccine that we are developing with technology from Tamil Nadu Veterinary University – this product can be stored in room temperature and hence does not require special infrastructure,” Dr Dey said.

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**Back Pulses firm despite subdued demand**

Our Correspondent

Indore, Dec. 10

Barring chana dal, almost all the pulses ruled firm despite subdued demand. On lack of support in the physical market and decline in chana stock prices, which were quoted at Rs 2,325-2,330 a quintal, chana dal in the spot traded Rs 25 lower. The spot market saw chana dal (bold) being

quoted at Rs 3,000 a quintal, chana dal (medium) at Rs 2,925 and chana dal (average) quoted at Rs 2,725 a quintal. Chana futures at the NCDEX also edged lower influenced by speculation. Chana December and January contracts at the NCDEX closed at Rs 2,460 and Rs 2,521 a quintal, respectively.

#### Slack demand

Prices of remaining pulses in the local mandis remained steady despite slack demand. Masoor dal (medium) quoted at Rs 3,525, while masoor dal (bold) quoted at Rs 3,750 a quintal. Urad dal (chilkewali) quoted at Rs 4,400 a quintal, urad dal (1st quality) quoted Rs 5,500, while urad dal (mongar) quoted at Rs Rs 5,700-Rs 6,800 a quintal.

Tur dal (Maharashtra Line) quoted at Rs 5,600, tur dal (Indore Line) quoted Rs 5,500, tur dal (markewali) quoted at Rs 6,200, while tur dal (sawa No.) quoted at 4,700-Rs 4,900.

According to traders, future of tur and masoor dal does not appear to be going upward keeping in view the large stock of imported goods. Arrival of new tur dal in mandis is quiet meagre.

Moong dal also remained steady with prices of moong dal (chilka quality) quoted at Rs 4,600-Rs 5,200, while moong mongar quoted at Rs 5600-Rs 6200 a quintal.

Among the pulse seeds, besides chana, masoor and tur also declined following slack demand. Masoor quoted Rs 50 lower at Rs 2,950 a quintal, while tur declined by Rs 100 at Rs 3,400 a quintal.

Among other pulse seeds, urad quoted at Rs 3,800-Rs 3,900 a quintal and moong quoted at Rs 4,000. Local mandis on Friday witnessed arrival of merely 500 bags of moong, while arrival of urad was recorded at about 1,000 bags.



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**Back Season for chickpea**

P.V. Sivakumar



Readying for sale:A vendor arranges chickpea (*Cicer arietinum*) in bags for sale on the Puranapul Road in Hyderabad on Friday. With winter setting in, heaps of chickpea land from Medak and Nalgonda districts at the markets in Hyderabad. Each bag of green chickpea weighing one kg costs Rs 80-100.

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**Back Rain stretches spot rubber gains**

Our Correspondent

Kottayam, Dec 11

Spot rubber market improved on Saturday.

The prices firmed up mainly on covering purchases though the domestic futures were almost steady on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

According to reports, off-season rains disrupted the tapping in most of the plantations.

Sheet rubber firmed up to Rs 198 (197.50) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi.

## FUTURES MIXED

The trend continued to be mixed in the futures market.

The December series closed at Rs. 198.10 (198.22), January at Rs. 201.67 (201.39), February at Rs. 205.37 (205.32) and March at Rs. 208.61 (208.70) a kg on the NMCE.

Spot rates (Rs/kg) were: RSS-4 : 198 (197.50); RSS-5 : 188 (187.50); ungraded: 184 (183); ISNR 20: 191 (191) and latex 60% : 127 (127).

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### Back Rice down on poor buying

Our Correspondent

Karnal, Dec. 10

Rice market witnessed a down trend on Friday. With low buying, aromatic rice varieties dropped Rs. 100-150 a quintal.

Prices of Sharbati dropped Rs 30-50 a quintal while the other non-basmati varieties witnessed a steady trend.

Mr Amit Chandna, Proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company, told Business Line that sluggish domestic demand led the market down.

After ruling firm in this week, rice prices dropped on Friday. Low trade inquires are also a reason behind the fall, he added.

Prices of Pusa-1121 steam (new) ruled around Rs 5,200 a quintal, while the old variety sold around Rs 5,300. Pusa-1121 sela (new) was at Rs 4,150-4,200, whereas the old variety was at Rs 4,300.

Pusa-1121 raw (new) ruled between Rs 5,050 and Rs 5,150, while the old variety quoted around Rs 5,250. Pusa (sela) ruled at Rs 3,200-3,250 and Pusa (raw) at Rs 4,150.

Basmati sela quoted around Rs 6,100, while basmati raw was around Rs 7,050-7,100.

Brokens such as Tibar was at Rs 3,150, Dubar at Rs 2,300 and Mongra around Rs 2,000.

Prices of Permal sela ruled at Rs 2,000-2,200, while Permal steam ruled between Rs 2,150 and Rs 2,200 a quintal. Sharbati sela sold around Rs 2,750 and Sharbati steam at Rs 3,000 a quintal.

#### Paddy trading

Around 3,000 bags of PR-13 arrived, sold between Rs 910 and Rs 950. Grade-A variety — 15,000 bags were quoted between Rs 990 and Rs 1,055.

About 3,000 bags of Sharbati ruled between Rs 1,420 and Rs 1,550.

Sugandha-999 — about 3,000 bags were quoted at Rs 1,450-1,600.

Around 3,000 bags of Pusa (duplicate basmati) quoted at Rs 2,000-2,290. Around 10,000 bags of Pusa-1121 ruled at Rs 2,000-2,400.

About 6,000 bags of pure basmati rice quoted at Rs 2,000-2,680. The stock was lifted by the millers.

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**Back Weak trend in rubber market**

Our Correspondent

Kottayam, Dec 10

Spot rubber turned weak on Friday. The market remained subdued on early trades following the initial weakness in domestic futures but it failed to recover fully in tune with the late gains on NMCE.

Most of the traders were hesitant to expand their commitments towards the weekend session. The trend was mixed.

Sheet rubber closed weak at Rs 197.50 (198.00) after hitting an intraday low of Rs 197.00 a kg, both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to dealers and Rubber Board.

In futures, the December series improved to Rs 198.03 (197.32), January to Rs 201.60 (200.17), February to Rs 205.50 (204.04) and March to Rs 208.95 (207.17) per kg on National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE).

The volumes totalled 4,866 lots and open interest 6,804 lots. The turnover was Rs 98.41 crore.

RSS 3 firmed up marginally at its December futures to ¥ 372.9 (Rs.201.09) from ¥ 372.0 per kg during the day session but then remained inactive in the night session on Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM).

The physical rubber prices/kg are as follows: RSS-4: 197.50 (198.00); RSS-5: 187.50 (188.00); Ungraded: 183.00 (183.00); ISNR 20: 191.00 (191.00); Latex 60%: 127.00 (128.00).

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### **Back Growers' body supports field trial for GM rubber**

C.J. Punnathara

Kochi, Dec. 10

Championing the cause of the genetically-modified rubber developed by Rubber Research of India, the Indian Rubber Growers Association has said there is no justification for the negative campaign against its field trial.

“Technological upgradation with changing times is absolutely essential for the sustainable growth of the rubber sector in India,” Mr Siby Monippally, General Secretary of the association said. Climate change has adversely affected global rubber productivity.

Although new diseases are posing a serious threat, India still leads in productivity.

There are structural problems and social difficulties in extending rubber cultivation to North Eastern States despite the vast potential, said Mr Monippally, who is also a member of the Rubber Board. As the requirement of natural rubber is poised to explode in coming years, all means should be explored to increase productivity.

The association pointed out that GM rubber is being developed by the Rubber Board, a statutory body of the Government of India, for the development of Indian rubber industry. If farmers and industry can benefit from the introduction of GM rubber, it should be welcomed.

It may be noted that China is also developing GM rubber and may sell it cheaper in Indian markets at the cost of Indian farmers. In India there would be no patents for the clones developed by the Rubber Research Institute, vastly reducing the cost to the farmer.

#### Growing industry

With almost all global tyre companies extending operations to India, the country is becoming an important hub for rubber and tyre manufacture. Production and consumption of rubber was evenly balanced till last year. But with decrease in productivity, India could become a net importer of natural rubber. To step up productivity, the introduction of new clones that are disease- and drought-resistant was deemed essential.

The Rubber Board started research on GM rubber as early as 1995. Various aspects were deliberated on before deciding to go ahead with the project. The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee has cleared the field trial.

#### Decision after consensus

The Rubber Board will conduct only the field trial and a final decision on introducing GM clones will be taken only after consulting all the stakeholders, including environmentalists, the growers' association said.

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## Back Turmeric improves on surge in demand

Our Correspondent

Erode, Dec 10

“All the speculators are now away from the market. If the demand increases for the spot turmeric, the prices will go up and also the sales will improve. The prices of both varieties of turmeric have improved on Friday by Rs 350-400 a quintal. Currently, very limited stocks are arriving to the market, as there was no heavy demand,” said R.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Association. The sales also slightly increased in all the four auction places.

He said that at present farmers bring limited stocks, as they are having limited stocks and also they expect the prices will remain till the end of the season. The futures quoted Rs 15,000-odd, which was not reflected in spot turmeric market, as the North Indian merchants expecting that the price may come down.

In Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, finger variety was sold at Rs 9,501 to Rs 16,419 a quintal. Root variety Rs 9,501 to Rs 16,219 a quintal. Out of 1,317 bags kept for sale 573 bags were sold.

In Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Committee, finger variety was sold at Rs 15,627 to Rs 16,459 a quintal, root variety Rs 15,589 to Rs 16,219 a quintal, out of 127 bags kept for sale 61 bags were sold.

In the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, finger variety was sold at Rs 16,196 to Rs 16,527 a quintal, root variety Rs 15,859 to Rs 16,219. All the 142 bags bring for sale, were sold.

In the Regulated market Committee, finger variety fetched Rs 16,219 to Rs 16,589 a quintal, root variety Rs 16,269 to Rs 15,400 a quintal. Out of 1206 bags kept for sale, 1127 bags were sold.

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## Back Sugar gets freight rate boost

Our Correspondent

Mumbai, Dec. 10

Spot sugar prices at Vashi market on Friday shot up by Rs 40-50 till evening on the back of increase in freight rates by Rs 15-20 a bag and with the support of increased retail demand.

Shortage of trucks at producing centres resulted lower arrivals in the market compared to the demand. Naka and Mill tender rates were up Rs 45-50 a quintal.

Wholesale traders said with the support of the fresh local demand volume of trade in naka delivery and buying from mills through tender process also increased.

In naka delivery, good deal took place in the range of Rs 2,860-2,890 for S grade and Rs 2,910-2,935 for M grade. In Mill tender about 80,000-90,000 bags were sold by mills in the price range of Rs 2,830-2,870 for S grade and Rs 2,870-2,920 for M grade on Thursday evening by 14-15 mills.

Most of the volume was with the local/State-level traders. Neighbouring buyers kept fresh buying at bay.

On Friday, mills tender rates were expected higher at Rs 2,850-2,880 for S-grade and Rs 2,870-2,930 for M-grade.

Total arrivals in Vashi markets were at 55-56 truck loads (each of 10 tonnes) and dispatches were higher at about 58-60 trucks.

According to the Bombay Sugar Merchants Association, spot sugar rates were S-grade Rs 2,930-2,981 (Rs 2,891-2,946) and M-grade Rs 2,941-3,041 (Rs 2,931-3,021).

Naka delivery rates were S-grade Rs 2,900-2,930 (Rs 2,880-2,910) and M-grade was Rs 2,950-3,010 (Rs 2,920-2,980).

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### Back Coonoor tea sale turnover down 8.02%

P. S. Sundar

Coonoor, Dec. 10

The turnover at the auctions of Coonoor Tea Trade Association, which for the first time in 2010 had fallen below last year in July, continued to remain low even in end-November, reveals an analysis of market reports.

In January, the turnover had risen by 36 per cent over the previous year.

In February, the increase reduced to 18 per cent but rose to 24 per cent in March, only to fall to 19 per cent in April, 7 per cent in May and 1.39 per cent in June. In July, the turnover was lower by 3.18 per cent. In August, September and October it had fallen by 6.22 per cent, 9.18 per cent and 8.75 per cent, respectively. In November, the turnover was lower by 8.02 per cent over the corresponding month of the previous year.

Despite selling a higher volume the turnover dropped because of the steep fall in the price fetched.

Till November, 47 auctions had been conducted. In all, 4.61 crore kg had been sold against 4.04 crore kg last year. But every kg fetched Rs 15 less, to average Rs 60.75.

Consequently, the turnover totalled Rs 280.06 crore against Rs 304.49 crore last year, posting a decline of Rs 24.43 crore or 8.02 per cent.

In the case of orthodox teas which are mostly exported, both volume and price posted a decline. The volume sold dropped to 2.73 million kg from 2.82 million kg. But even this low volume could be sold only when the price was reduced by Rs 16 a kg to average Rs 73.35.



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## Back Bearish trend pulls down pepper futures

G K Nair

Kochi, Dec 10

Pepper futures continued its fall on Friday on consistent bearish activities aimed at depressing the market.

At the same time, liquidation by long position holders who had bought earlier speculatively and switching over by others had aided the efforts of the bear operators to pull the market down, market sources told Business Line.

The market is being pulled down without adhering to the fundamentals, they alleged. Leading Indian exporters are, in fact, bullish and yet the market fell and it gives the impression that the bears are in the driver's seat, they said.

The domestic demand is yet to pick up while the arrival of new crop is yet to begin. Meanwhile, the last date for filing advance income-tax returns falls on December 15, which has resulted in a liquidity crunch and that in turn slowed down buying by upcountry dealers, sources said.

New technology

In fact, abundant water availability in the growing areas this year could facilitate the growers to convert their bold green pepper into white using the latest technology available with the Spices Board, trade sources said.

Sellers totally withdrew from the declining spot market.

Dealers from the primary markets were also reluctant to buy, they said.

December contract on NCDEX dropped by Rs 460 to close at Rs 21,531 a quintal. January and February dropped by Rs 411 and Rs 341 respectively to close at Rs 21,865 and Rs 22,097 a quintal.

Total turnover increased by 2,820 tonnes to 13,271 tonnes. Total open interest dropped by 692 tonnes indicating good liquidation.

December open interest fell by 1,430 tonnes while January increased by 700 tonnes to 7,474 tonnes showing huge switching over while February moved up by 52 tonnes to 478 tonnes.

Spot prices dropped by Rs 200 in tandem with the futures market trend to close at Rs 20,500 and Rs 21,000 a quintal.

Indian parity

Indian parity with the fall in the futures delivery in the international market today was at \$5,000 - \$5,025 a tonne (c&f) and is expected to remain competitive if the other origins did not reduce their parity, they said.

According to an overseas report from the US today Indonesia reported to have traded FAQ 500 g/l at around \$4,725 a tonne (fob). Asta pepper buyers are said to be quiet at the moment, it said.

Prices quoted for black pepper of different origins per tonne in dollar c&f New York were MG1 asta – 5,100-5,200 ; Lampong asta – 4,925-5,025 fob; Lampong 550g/l – 4,825-4,875 fob; Lampong 500g/l – 4,725-4,775 fob ; Brazil B2 - 500g/l – 4,800 fob; Brazil B asta – 5,000 – 5,050 (last quoted); Vietnam faq 500g/l – 4,675-4,875 fob; Vietnam faq 550g/l – 4,875-5,175 fob; Vietnam asta – 5,200-5,250; new crop March/April; and Spot USA MLSV asta treated – 5,400 ex warehouse New York/New Jersey.

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