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Farmers stage protest

Staff Correspondent

DAVANGERE: Farmers staged a protest in Harihar by blocking traffic for some time near Ekkegundi on the Harihar-Shimoga Road on Friday, demanding action against some merchants who were allegedly buying paddy at a price lower than the support price announced by the Government.

The protesters said that they had availed themselves of loans from private financiers and traders for cultivating paddy. The financiers and merchants were now demanding repayment. This had forced some farmers to sell their crops at very low prices to clear loans. Sensing the plight of farmers, some traders were asking the farmers to sell their crop at very low prices, the said.

The protesters demanded the district administration set up a vigilance committee to save farmers from exploitation. They urged the Government to introduce a system of making payment for the produce against delivery at the procurement centres. At present, farmers are given a slip for the quantity of the produce received and the payment is released later.

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Rs. 350 crore for new scheme on climate resilient agriculture

Gargi Parsai

NEW DELHI: The Centre has allocated Rs.350 crore for implementation of a new planned scheme — National Initiative on Climate Resilient Agriculture — to address the impact of climate change on agriculture and allied sectors.

About one lakh farmers from 100 districts in various States will benefit from the on-farm demonstration of climate resilient technologies that will be undertaken under the scheme during the remaining 11th plan period till 2012. Of the Rs.350 crore that has been set aside, Rs.200 crore will be spent during 2010-11 and Rs.150 crore in 2011-12 in research infrastructure, capacity building and on farm demonstration of technologies.

Simultaneously, the Indian Council of Agriculture research will come up with a long-term strategic research plan on crop improvement to heat and drought stress, management of natural resources for adaptation and mitigation and innovative livestock management practices to minimise heat stress on animals.

The scheme is meant to address the issues relating to impact of climate change in agriculture and to evolve “cost effective” adaptation and mitigation strategies.

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Training in TNAU

Staff Reporter

COIMBATORE: A training in making value-added products from banana will be held at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University on December 21 and 22.

According to a university release, processing of banana into various value-added products will be covered in the training programme.

It will include making of preparations like banana flour, banana noodles, banana milk shake powder, jam, ready-to-serve beverages, banana pseudo stem candy, banana fig, and banana flower pickle.

Those interested can register before December 20.

A fee of Rs. 1,000 in the form of a Demand Draft drawn in favour of Dean, Agricultural Engineering, should be sent to Head, Post Harvest Technology Centre, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore – 641003. For details, contact 0422-6611268.

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Crop loss leads to mental stress among farmers

Sib Kumar Das

BERHAMPUR: Colossal mental tension caused by immense crop loss due to untimely rains has started to take toll on the mental health of peasants in Orissa.

Suicidal tendency and cardiac strokes due to mental tension has started to emerge among the peasants of the State. Eight such cases have been reported from Ganjam, the home district of the Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. As per official reports all types of kharif crops including paddy, pulses, oilseeds and vegetables were damaged in the district due to the untimely rains. Crop loss was reported from all the 3,126 villages of Ganjam district.

Four farmers who were extremely worried and depressed by the crop loss have committed suicide. Four other peasants allegedly suffered cardiac strokes due to immense stress caused by the economic burden due to the crop loss. Two of them died and the other two became comatose after the strokes.

As per the data recorded by the farmers' organisation Orissa Krushak Sabha (OKS) Sadanand Gantayat (65) of Putipadar village under Hinjli block that come sunder the Assembly constituency of the Chief Minister committed suicide by consuming pesticide on December 9. On the same day another peasant of the same village Bipra Behera suffered a cardiac arrest alleged to be caused by mental pressure due to the crop loss caused by untimely rains. He is now in coma.

On December 12, another 45-year-old peasant from Ramapalli village of Chatrapur block committed suicide in his field by consuming pesticide. On the same day another farmer Ekamra Swain (46) is also alleged to have committed suicide by consuming pesticide at Kachara village of Ganjam block. Kandhuni Pradhan of Gangapur village in Chatarpur block suffered a heart stroke in his rain devastated agricultural field on December 15. Shock of crop loss is alleged to have caused cardiac arrest and death of Upendra Karana (36) at Bada Agula village under Kavisuryanagar block. He had the stroke after a visit to his paddy field. At Galeri village in Bhanjanagar block Bhimasena Gouda jumped into a well to commit suicide on Thursday. On the same day a 70-year-old farmer Mohana Sahu of Bhramarpur village under Digaphandi block also went into coma after a stroke caused by mental stress due to immense crop loss.

President of Ganjam district unit of the OKS, Kailash Sadangi said all these cases were related to extreme mental tension caused by the financial burden due to kharif crop loss. Psychiatrist Chandrasekhar Tripathy of MKCG medical college said recent crop loss can cause immense mental stress for the poor farmers which can give rise to strokes and suicidal tendencies. According to him this rising negative tendency among the poor peasants can only be stopped through immediate declaration of sops and relief measures for these peasants who are now undergoing severe mental tension. He also advised the family members, neighbours and friends of farmers who have incurred heavy loss to keep watch and take advice of physicians in case some one shows up signs of extreme inferiority complex or symbols of mental worry.

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Multiple factors push up coconut oil prices

K.A. Martin

Steep fall in production in Kerala, Tamil Nadu

Price expected to stabilise in January Economic recovery in the U.S. to stimulate demand

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KOCHI: A steep increase in the export of fresh coconuts, spiralling prices of edible oils across the spectrum and a 50 per cent fall in coconut production in the State have cast a shadow over predictions that coconut oil market will cool past the Christmas-New Year celebrations and the Sabarimala pilgrim season.

Market tizzy

The market had been in a tizzy over the last two months. Coconut oil price in Kochi, the traditional hub that yielded its place to Kangayama in Tamil Nadu, touched Rs.81 a kg (Rs.8,100 a quintal) on December 3, a record so far. The price held steady for a day before coming down to Rs.80 and Rs.79.50 over the last two days.

“We did not expect the price to go so high,” said Talat Mehmood, a long-time trader and member of the Cochin Oil Merchants' Association (Coma).

He pointed out that the previous record was towards the end of 2005 when the price of coconut oil touched Rs.74.60 a kg.

Production

A steep fall in production in the State and Tamil Nadu (about 15 per cent) are the major reasons for the rise in price, said Coma director and trader Prakash B. Rao said.

The price will stabilise around Rs.65 sometime in January, he said. That is traditionally the time when coconut oil prices stabilise, Chief Coconut Development Officer of the Coconut Development Board (CDB) M. Thomas Mathew said.

Export

Export of fresh coconuts, during the current financial year, went up more than 40 per cent and registered a 145 per cent increase in value realised, according to figures provided by the CDB, the designated Export Development Council for coconut and coconut products.

The Agricultural Market Intelligence Centre (AMIC) of the Kerala Agricultural University had predicted early this year that the price of semi-husked coconuts would ease with crop arrivals. The agency report was the result of a study of the price of semi-husked coconut over a 10-year period in the Thrissur market. The study was released in April this year.

Economic recovery in the U.S. and Europe may stimulate higher demand for palm oil, palm kernel oil and coconut oil during the current year, said Satheesh Babu of AMIC.

The rise in the price of palm kernel oil, similar to coconut oil in chemical structure, too played a big role in heating up the coconut oil market.

Palm kernel oil used to be bought in large quantities by industrial users of coconut oil. But with palm kernel prices catching up with coconut oil, substitution was no longer viable, Mr. Mathew said.

The world demand for bio-diesel was getting stronger and there would be more pressure on coconut and coconut oil prices, the AMIC study had said.

The study also said that the effects of El Nino would induce a drought in the Philippines and some parts of Indonesia, where production would be affected over a 12 to 15-month period.

Despite the current spiral in price, the average price of coconut oil between January and November this year was Rs.56.84 a kg while copra price was Rs.38.63 a kg.

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Kuttanad farmers shun free fertilizer

Dennis Marcus Mathew

Dumped:Sacks of Dolomite, a mineral powder intended as fertilizer, being used as props for pathways in Kainakary, after farmers refused to use them.

ALAPPUZHA: Thousands of sacks of Dolomite mineral powder, a fully subsidised fertilizer supplied to paddy farmers of Kuttanad, is being wasted, misused and neglected, with farmers preferring the traditional lime mortar powder for soil upgrade and to treat soil acidity.

A sack of Dolomite, weighing 50 kg, costs Rs.250, and is supplied free of cost by the government via Krishi Bhavans to farmers. However, according to ‘padasekharam' committees and farmers, 90 per cent of farmers opt for lime mortar powder to treat soil acidity. Farmers allege that they were asked to accept the freebie if they wanted to avail of subsidies for other fertilizers as well.

Unintended uses

The consequences are obvious if one goes on a boat-ride alongside the paddy fields of Kuttanad, particularly Kainakary and Nedumudi. At some places, the sacks are heaped on the embankments. Somewhere else, they are used to strengthen bunds alongside paddy fields. Near farmers' residences, the sacks are placed across rivulets or muddy tracks as props for pathways. And in some paddy fields of Kainakary, the sacks are just dumped in unused corners of the field.

Krishnankutty, 56, a farmer in Kainakary says he has been using lime mortar for years and wants to continue with the same. Dolomite, he argues, slackens the soil, making usage of the heavy combine harvester machines impossible during harvest.

The other view

However, some farmers, who admit they are a minority, say slackening of soil is a natural phenomenon in the fields of Kuttanad, which were shaped by draining water from lakebed. They have been using Dolomite for years now, and have so far not experienced negative side-effects.

Principal Agriculture Officer K. Kusumam told The Hindu that no pressure was exerted on farmers to use Dolomite. “They might not be using Dolomite because of some misconception. Dolomite is a scientifically recognised material for soil upgrade since it contains magnesium, which helps increase yield. Many farmers are using the fertilizer. We cannot help it if some decide to waste it,” she said.

The exact amount of Dolomite that was supplied this year and the total loss suffered by the government on account of farmers rejecting the material was yet to be ascertained, she added.

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Water for 43.8 lakh acres for rabi

Special Correspondent

HYDERABAD: With a view to making up the crop loss during kharif due to heavy rains and cyclones, the government has decided to provide irrigation to large extent of 43.81 lakh acres in different regions during rabi from major, medium and minor projects.

The schedules indicating the dates for water release from these projects to their ayacuts will, however, be decided by the local Irrigation Advisory Boards in the next few days in consultation with the chief engineers of the projects concerned and elected representatives like MLAs.

An action plan to cover this large extent of ayacut during rabi was finalised by Major & Medium Irrigation Minister P. Sudarshan, after discussions with officials of the State Committee on Integrated Water Planning and Management here on Friday.

The Minister told the media later that the canals of the projects would be closed by March-end or by April first week after the rabi needs were fully met, to facilitate annual maintenance works.

The plan provided for supply of water from 14 major projects to serve 36.2 lakh acres out of 43.81 lakh acres planned. These projects are Nagarjunasagar (6.21 lakh acres), Jurala (68,000 acres), Rajolibanda Diversion Scheme (10,500 acres), Nizamsagar (1.9 lakh acres), Sriramsagar Stage I (8.8 lakh acres), Sriramsagar Stage II (75,000 acres), Kaddam (34,500 acres), K. C. Canal (1.1 lakh acres), Srisailam Right Branch Canal (30,000 acres), Godavari delta (8.9 lakh acres), Krishna delta (5.24 lakh acres), Yeleru (53,000 acres), Ghanpur Anicut (10,000 acres) and Telugu Ganga (1.15 lakh acres).

The water to be released from medium irrigation projects will cover 1.04 lakh acres and minor sources 6.5 lakh acres.

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Team of scientists takes up research on onion

Correspondent

SIRSI: A team of scientists from the College of Forestry, Sirsi, and from the College of Agriculture, Dharwad, have formulated a project to take up research to check diseases that haunt sweet onion (also called as Kumta onion) cultivation, which is cultivated in Kumta in Uttara Kannada district after harvesting paddy every year.

Sweet onion is one of the commercial crops of Uttara Kannada district and is grown on about 1,000 acres of land. However, the output of the crop was reduced by 30 per cent last year, thanks to diseases like “twisting malady”.

Financial aid

This project will be implemented during this season with the co-operation of the Department of Horticulture and Agriculture and the Onion Growers' Association of Kumta under the financial assistance of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development.

B.S. Janagouder, Dean and Gurudatta M. Hegde, Plant Pathologist, College of Forestry, Sirsi, will co-ordinate the project activities, according to a release on Thursday.

Business Standard

Monday, Dec 18, 2010

Chavan for more transparency in sugar co-ops

Sanjay Jog / Mumbai December 18, 2010, 0:14 IST

CM calls for professionalism and a scientific approach in mills' operations.

Two days after the Bombay High Court's decision to look at fund utilisation by cooperative sugar factories, Maharashtra Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan on Friday called for transparency and professionalism in the latter's operations. He said the mills would have to improve their performance to take on challenges in the fast-changing market.

At the same time, Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar said the mills should crush the standing cane in the current season but be prepared for crushing bumper cane in the 2011-12 season. He hinted at various innovative solutions to the issues faced by the sugar industry.

Chavan and Pawar were speaking near Pune at the annual general meeting of the Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories in Maharashtra, a representative body of a little over 170 mills in the state.

Chavan said the industry should not expect more financial help from the state government as it had already announced a Rs 1,000-crore package to help farmers, including cane growers, affected by unseasonal rain.

His statement comes after the court's observation that more than half the co-operative sugar factories in the state were financially sick. The court said there was a need to revive or close the sick mills. It sought the Comptroller & Auditor General of India's audit reports for these mills from April 2007 within six weeks.

This comes at a time when various political parties and farmer organisations, such as the Shiv Sena and the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, have been leading agitations to press for payment of Rs 2,200 per tonne as the first advance to cane growers. A senior state government official told Business Standard: "Immediately after addressing the federation's AGM, Chavan held a two-and-a-half hour meeting with Cooperation Minister Harshvardhan Patil to closely look into the mismatch between revenues and expenses of sugar mills and the challenges faced by them."He said Chavan had asked the cooperation department and the federation to provide details of the revenue earned by the mills and their capacity to pay the cane price.

Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar criticised the agitators for excessive demands and said they were led by those who could not win any election.**PTI adds:** The Centre will issue its directive on export of 500,000 tonnes of excess sugar production this week, Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar said on Friday."The government took the decision permitting export of 500,000 tonnes of sugar yesterday and a notification to that effect will be issued this week," he said.

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Back **Tur purchases hit by quality issues**

Our Correspondent

Indore, Dec. 17

Barring masur dal, all the pulses ruled steady on subdued demand. On the other hand, both masur and masur dal continued to witness an uptrend on spurt in demand.

On Friday, masoor dal further gained Rs 25 with decline in arrival of domestic crop and increased demand at lower price, which it had been witnessing for the past few days. In the spot, masur dal (medium) quoted Rs 3,600 and masur dal (bold) quoted Rs 3,700 a quintal. Similarly masur also gained Rs 25 at Rs 3,025-3050 a quintal on improved demand.

With the arrival of imported masur, which was being sold in mandis at as low as Rs 2,900 a quintal, and decline in arrival of domestic crop, masur and masur dal witnessed an uptrend.

According to traders, masur and masur dal in the past few days had gone down alarmingly, so a positive correction in its prices was bound to happen.

Other pulses witnessed restricted trading with limited demand as traders have already stocked up . Tur dal and tur also ruled steady on sluggish demand.

Inferior quality

Though arrival of new tur in the mandi has already started, traders are unwilling to buy stocks of inferior quality. According to a trader,Mr Babulal Khandelwal, the demand for new tur in the mandi is almost nil because of high level of moisture and inferior material. In the mandi, new tur dal was quoted at Rs 5500 a quintal, while the whole December price of new tur dal quoted at Rs 5100. Tur dal (sawa No.), which a few days back traded at Rs 4,700 a quintal, was quoted Rs 4,500 on Friday. Tur dal (marka) has also declined by Rs 100 in the past two days due to sluggish demand.

In the spot, it was quoted at Rs 6,100 a quintal. On the other hand, tur (white) ruled steady at Rs 3,300, tur (red) quoted at Rs 2,800-Rs 3,100, while new tur quoted at Rs 3,400-Rs 3,450 a quintal.

Urad, moong

Urad dal and moong dal also remained steady on account of slack demand in physical market. Demand for urad has almost come to a naught as traders have already made large stock of it. In the spot, better quality urad quoted at Rs 3,500-Rs 4,000 a quintal, while prices of urad dal(chilka quality) quoted at Rs 4,400-5,400 and urad dal (mongar) quoted at Rs 5,200-6,500 a quintal.

Moong dal ruled firm with slightly improved demand. Moong dal (Chilka) quoted at Rs 4,600-Rs 5,200, while moong mongar quoted at Rs 5,200-Rs 6,500 a quintal. Moong also ruled firm at Rs 4,300 a quintal on slightly better demand and limited arrival.

Chana

Chana dal also remained steady with routine trading. Chana dal (bold) quoted at Rs 3,050, chana dal (medium) quoted at Rs 2,950 and chana dal (dry) quoted at Rs 2,875-Rs 2,900 a quintal.

Chana too remained steady with its prices in the spot quoted at Rs 2,360-Rs 2,375 a quintal, more so because of steadiness in chana prices in the futures where chana December and January contract closed at Rs 2,538 and Rs 2,562 a quintal.

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Back **Spot rubber improves on buying**

Our Correspondent

Kottayam, Dec 17

Physical rubber prices showed a better trend on Friday. The gap between the domestic and international prices kept the undercurrent firm and the market moved up on fresh buying and short covering. The unexpected changes in weather have also influenced the sentiments. There were rumours that certain tyre manufacturers were buyers on sheet rubber on early trades.

Among other news, Tokyo rubber futures' most active contract May 2011, struck another record high at ¥ 400.9 a kg on supply concerns as heavy rains disrupted tapping in major producing countries.

Sheet rubber improved to Rs 203 (202) a kg, according to traders. The grade was firm at Rs 202.50 (201) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi according to Board's official Web site.

The January series improved to Rs 208.85 (208.38), February to Rs 212.66 (211.80), March to Rs 215.85 (214.83) and April to Rs 220.20 (218.12) per kg for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

The volumes totalled 8820 lots and open interest 7183 lots. The turnover was Rs 169.42 crore.

The December futures bounced back to ¥ 389.0 (Rs 210.44) from ¥ 386.5 per kg for RSS 3 during the day session and then to ¥ 389.7 (Rs 210.82) in the night session on Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM).

RSS 3 (spot) moved up further to Rs 213.75 (213.02) a kg at Bangkok.

The spot rubber rates per kg were: RSS-4: Rs 203.00 (202.00), RSS-5: 197.00 (195.00), Ungraded: 193.00 (192.00), ISNR 20: 197.00 (194.00) and Latex 60%: 131.00 (130.00)

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Back **Bullish trend pushes up pepper futures**

G K Nair

Kochi, Dec 17

Pepper futures, which witnessed the usual tug of war and the resultant volatility, ended gaining marginally on bullish activities.

The bulls could manage to push the market up on the propaganda that out of the outstanding position of 1,622 tonnes, they would take delivery of 1,000 tonnes, market sources told Business Line.

Meanwhile, some trading of high range pepper has reportedly taken place at Rs 215 a kg and the interstate dealers bought it. But, the buyers claimed that they bought it at Rs 213-Rs 214 a kg. The conflicting report confused the market, they said.

Sales of low bulk density pepper from the north Malabar region of Kerala to Karnataka-based dealers are said to be over and as such, the sellers have raised the prices from Rs 206 – Rs 207 a kg to Rs 210 a kg. This report was also used by the operators to keep the market bullish, they said.

Add to this was the buying of good quantities of pepper by Sabarimala pilgrims, which has, of late, acquired significance activating the market at a time when the arrival of new crop has been delayed, according to traders in Kerala's southern districts who estimated the daily sales at 10–15 tonnes of good quality pepper.

As the number of pilgrims increases, the demand is also expected to rise correspondingly, they said. This phenomenon has squeezed supply from the southern pepper growing districts of Kerala to the terminal/primary markets. It has in turn is creating a pressure on the market making it bullish, they said.

December contract on the NCDEX moved up by Rs 42 to close at Rs 21,886 a quintal. January and February were up by Rs 17 and Rs 20 respectively to close at Rs 22,214 and Rs 22,446 a quintal.

Total turnover dropped by 646 tonnes to close at 7,908 tonnes. Total open interest also fell by 358 tonnes to 13,816 tonnes.

December open interest fell by 698 tonnes to 1,622 tonnes. January and February increased by 214 tonnes and 46 tonnes respectively to 10,908 tonnes and 825 tonnes.

Spot prices on matching demand and supply ruled steady at previous levels of Rs 20,800 (un-garbled) and Rs 21,300 (MG 1) a quintal. Indian parity in the international market moved up to $5,100 - $5,125

a tonne (c&f) and remained nearly competitive with other origins, they said.

According to an overseas report, Indonesia was showing interest to ship its pepper out to non-USA destinations.

Prices quoted for black pepper of different origins per tonne in dollar c&f New York were MG1 asta – 5,125-5,225 ; Malabar faq 500g/l – 4,800 fob; Lampong asta – 4,900-4,950 fob; Lampong 550g/l – 4,850-4,900 fob; Lampong 500g/l – 4,800-4,850 fob; Brazil B2 - 500g/l – 4,700 fob; Brazil B1 - 560g/l – 4,800 fob; Brazil B asta – 4,900 fob; Vietnam faq 500g/l – afo; Vietnam faq 550g/l – afo; Vietnam asta – 5,200-5,250 (new crop Mar/Apr); and Spot USA MLSV asta treated – 5,400 ex-warehouse New Jersey/New York.

White pepper prices quoted in dollar per tonne c&f were Muntok – 7,325-7,350 and Vietnam – 7,425-7,450 - new 2011 crop.

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Back **Uptrend in sugar prices continues**

Our Correspondent

Mumbai, Dec. 17

Sugar prices at spot, naka and tender delivery continued to rise on second day by Rs 25-30 at Vashi market.

Spot rates shot up by Rs 30 on the back of a firm trend at naka and mill delivery levels on Friday.

Sugar export permission under open general licence, higher freight rates and shortage of trucks at the producing level are the main reasons for the sudden spurt in the price. Morale was bullish, said traders.

Arrival in the market was higher at 58-60 truck loads (each of 100 kg) and dispatches to local traders were lower at about 44 -45 truck loads due to limited retail demand.

Volume at mill level continued at higher level on the back of upcountry buying.

Local state-level stockists are also continuously purchasing from mills.

Shortage of trucks at producing centres is curbing supply position at consuming centres, they said.

Mr Jagdish Rawal of B. Bhogilal and Co said demand from consuming centres and announcement of sugar exports by the Government fuelled the bullish sentiment.

Moreover, resumption of futures trading in sugar may boost price rise.

In the last two days sugar prices rose by Rs 80-90 per quintal at mill level but in hajar bazaar it was limited to Rs 50-60 on lower demand.

On Thursday evening 12/13 mills came forward with tender offers and sold about 1/1.25 lakh bags in the range of Rs 2,840-2,890 for S grade and Rs 2,890-2,930 a quintal for M grade.

According to Bombay Sugar Merchants Association, spot sugar rates were: S–grade Rs 2,950–3,001 (Rs 2,940–2,981) and M–grade Rs 2,980–3,061 (Rs 2,971–3,041). Naka delivery rates were: S–grade: Rs 2,920–2,940 (Rs 2,880–2,910) and M–grade: Rs 2,970–3,000 (Rs 2,950–2,980).

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Back **Rice rules steady amid low buying interest**

Our Correspondent

Karnal, Dec. 17

With low buying in the market, prices of aromatic and non-basmati rice have remained unchanged since Monday.

Mr Amit Chandna, Proprietor, Hanuman Rice Trading Co, told Business Line that following the stable demand, prices have ruled steady; new arrivals have also been steady. About the reason for the steady trend, he said there was no export support currently and contracts were yet to be signed.

“The demand gets sluggish as the domestic market does not prefer this grain during winter as much as at any other time of the year,” said Mr Chandna. Prices may witness some changes next week, he added.

The prices of Pusa-1121 steam (new) ruled at around Rs 5,250 a quintal, while the old variety sold around Rs 5,300. Pusa-1121 sela (new) was at Rs 4,150-Rs 4,200, whereas the old variety was at Rs 4,300-Rs 4,350. 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-

Rs 3,250 and Pusa (raw) at around Rs 4,200.

Basmati sela quoted at Rs 6,000-Rs 6,100, while basmati raw was around Rs 7,000-Rs 7,100.

Brokens such as Tibar was at Rs 3,100-Rs 3,200, Dubar at Rs 2,300 and Mongra around Rs 2,000-Rs 2,100.

The prices of Permal sela ruled at Rs 2,000-Rs 2,200, while Permal steam ruled around2,200 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 were sold between Rs 900 and Rs 935. The Grade-A variety arrived in 4,000 bags and quoted between Rs 1,020 and Rs 1,050.

About 1,800 bags of Sharbati ruled between Rs 1,500 and Rs 1,550. Sugandha-999 arrived in about 5,000 bags, and quoted at Rs 1,620-Rs 1,650.

Around 2,000 bags of Pusa (duplicate basmati) quoted at Rs 2,000-Rs 2,230. Around 5,000 bags of Pusa-1121 ruled at Rs 2,000-Rs 2,450.

About 5,000 bags of pure basmati quoted at Rs 2,200-Rs 2,700. The stock was lifted by the millers.

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Back **Andhra Pradesh to purchase damaged paddy**

Rain damaged paddy

Our Bureau

Hyderabad, Dec. 17

Even as the Telugu Desam President, Mr N Chandrababu Naidu, launched an indefinite strike demanding financial assistance to farmers, the Andhra Pradesh Government has decided to procure paddy that was damaged in the recent floods.

“We will ensure that damaged paddy (up to 50 per cent damage) is procured. At least, 10 per cent of this would get minimum support price,” Mr D. Sridhar Babu, Minister for Civil Supplies, said.

Addressing a press conference here on Friday, he said the Government would also see to it that there were enough procurement centres.

Purchase centres

Purchase centres would be opened at all listed rice mils, marketing committees and primary agriculture cooperatives. The procurement would be supervised.

With regard to waiver of interest over crop loans, Mr Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy, Minister for Agriculture, said the Government would come to the rescue of tenant farmers. “We will take measures to extend the interest waiver benefit to them," he said.

False claims

Mr Reddy also warned that severe action would be taken against those who make false claims about damage of paddy and seek payment. This covers not just farmers, middle men but officials too.

On the contentious issue of supply of nine hours of power to the farm sector demanded by Mr.Naidu, the issue was being examined by the Government, he said.

Following the Chief Minister, Mr N.Kiran Kumar Reddy' s discussions with Food Corporation of India on Friday, the FCI has agreed in-principle to help in procurement of some of the partially affected paddy.

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Back **Spot rubber rules steady**

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Kottayam, Dec. 18

Spot rubber finished unchanged on Saturday.

The weekend session was comparatively inactive and lost its direction as the domestic futures on the National Multi Commodity Exchange seemed almost steady with only minor slips in all contracts.

Most of the traders preferred to wait till the international markets resume trading on Monday after weekend holidays.

Sheet rubber finished flat at Rs 203 a kg according to traders. The transactions were low.

Futures slip

In futures, the January series slipped to Rs 208.62 (208.96), February to Rs 212.37 (212.78), March to Rs 215.46 (216.07) and April to Rs 219.47 (219.98) a kg for RSS 4 on the NMCE.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 203 (203); RSS-5: 197 (197); ungraded: 193 (193); ISNR 20: 197 (197) and latex 60 per cent: 131 (131).