THE HINDU

Online edition of India's National Newspaper

Tuesday, November 30, 2010

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113058180300.htm

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Milk producers demand regularisation of employees

Staff Reporter

Members stage demonstration in front of the collectorate

Photo: N. Bashkaran

In unison:Members of the Tamil Nadu Milk Producer's Co-operative Society Employees Federation staging a demonstration in front of the collectorate in Krishnagiri on Monday. —

KRISHNAGIRI: Members of the Tamil Nadu Milk Producer's Cooperative Society Employees Federation has demanded immediate regularisation of employees working in 260 societies. In this connection over 400 members staged a demonstration in front of the collectorate on Monday.

The association also demanded that the salary of the employees should be fixed on a par with those of the federation employees and union employees as per the Cooperative Act. Ten per cent of the procurement price of the milk should be allocated for administrative expenses.

Later in a memorandum to the Collector, V. Arun Roy, the federation alleged that the milk procured from the societies were being stolen by lorry crew on the way to Aavin in Krishnagiri and sold to wayside eateries and hotels. The loss incurred due to pilferage was deducted from the salaries of the society members. To avoid this, the delivery receipt should be issued at the procurement point itself to the societies concerned, the employees demanded.

To ensure the quality of milk supplied by the societies, the administration could take effective steps to establish a common quality testing centres at all the blocks.

They also urged the district administration to disburse the pending payments to the members of the milk cooperative societies in Krishnagiri Panchayat Union without any delay by the District Federation.

Members of the milk societies should be given milking machine, vaccination, insurance and artificial insemination on free of cost.

A subsidy of Rs. 5 should be paid to every litre of procured milk like Karnataka, Kerala and Puducherry. This amount should be directly paid to the members etc.

The demonstration was led by the federation president S. Baskaran.

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113062290400.htm

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Crops on 1.42 lakh hectares submerged

Special Correspondent

CHENNAI: Crops cultivated on 1.42 lakh hectares remain submerged in Madurai, Villupuram, Dharmapuri, Thanjavur, Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, Tiruvarur, Ariyalur, Permabalur and Dindigul, according to a State government release.

While reviewing the relief works in various districts, the Chief Minister said the crop damage would be assessed after water receded.

He also announced Rs.2 lakh each to the families of 103 persons killed in the rain that lashed the State. He announced Rs.2,000 each for the huts damaged in the rain.

Officials told the Chief Minister that 301 families in Tiruvallur, Ramanathapuram, Erode, Madurai and Cuddalore districts had been evacuated and the government was distributing 10 lakh food packets to them everyday.

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113051010300.htm

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Permanent solution to floods to be found: Minister

Special Correspondent

Construction of a high-level bridge across the Velliangal Odai at Thirunaraiyur proposed

— Photo: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

TOUR OF FLOOD-HIT AREAS: Health Minister M.R.K. Panneerselvam at Thirunaraiyur to assess flood damage on Monday. A boat is ready to ferry him to the affected areas.

CUDDALORE: For the second consecutive day on Monday, Health Minister M. R. K. Panneerselvam visited the flood-affected areas in the Kattummannarkoil, Chidambaram and Vriddhachalam blocks to assess the damage and to console the distressed people.

He told them that the government had initiated measures for putting in place a permanent solution to the recurring problem of floods and for this it had sanctioned a sum of Rs. 301 crore.

Mr. Panneerselvam observed that Cuddalore district was situated in a vulnerable location. For, the rain water run off from Perambalur and Ariyalur also used to ran through the district before joining the sea.

The five rivers namely the Pennaiyar, the Gedilam, the Vellar, the Kollidam and the Paravanar used to be in spate during the monsoon seasons, causing heavy damage to standing crops, cattle heads and habitations in the district. It was learnt that in the recent spell of rain, standing crops on 17,500 hectares were submerged, 1,167 huts were fully damaged, 8,166 huts were partly damaged, and, 12 bullocks and 12 goats were killed.

The Minister gave an assurance to the people that due compensation would be given soon to those who suffered losses.

He noted that whenever the excesses from the Veeranam tank were let out through the Velliangal Odai the Manavaikkal downstream too used to overflow, inundating the farm lands and habitations. The Thirunaraiyur village used to bear the major brunt of the floods. Therefore, to save the villagers from the seasonal problem it had been proposed to construct a high-level bridge across the Velliangal Odai at Thirunaraiyur. The proposal would be soon sent to the government for approval, he said.

Forecast

Mr. Panneerselvam further noted that the Meteorological Department had forecast another spell of rain from December 1 to 4. Therefore, the officials had been instructed to take all possible precautionary measures to prevent any loss and if need arises, to evict the people in the flood-prone areas to places of safety.

He said that the district administration had so far distributed 30,000 food packets to the affected people in Thittakudi, Vriddhachalam, Kurinjipadi, Kattumannarkoil and Chidambaram blocks.

To check any possible spread of water-borne diseases necessary preventive measures had been taken. The Primary Health Centres had been stocked with adequate medicines and the stagnating water was being drained as soon as possible and bleaching power was being sprayed.

The Minister accompanied by District Collector P. Seetharaman, PWD Executive Engineer Selvaraj, D.Ravikumar, MLA, and other officials visited at least 20 places, including Elleri, Sarvarajanpettai, Veeranatham, Thirunaraiyur, Kumaratchi, Meyyathur, Thavirthanpattu, Sivayam, Mummudi Cholapuram, Dharmanallur, Nallathur and U.Mangalam.

In the afternoon the sky cleared up and there was respite from the rain.

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113058150300.htm

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Vaniyar Dam full to the brim

Staff Reporter

DHARMAPURI: Vaniyar Dam, one of the big dam in Dharmapuri district, reached its full level after a gap of four years. The water level of the dam on Monday was 64.29 ft as against its full depth of 65 feet. The excess water was being released to the lakes through the water channels from last week.

Due to this the lakes in Venkatasamuthram, Aalapuram and Onthiampatti has reached full level. The Thenkaraikottai and Parayapatti lakes are yet to fill up. The farmers expressed happiness due to the release of excess water from storage of the lakes.The two other dams, including Chinnar, have reached its full level. As many as 120 lakes out of the 1,197 lakes under the control of the Panchayats and 13 lakes under the control of PWD out of the 73 have reached full level. Meanwhile, the water level at the Thoppaiyar Dam reached 43.60 ft as against its full depth of 50.18 ft. The water inflow into the dam was 88 cft.The water level in Varattaru Dam reached 33.25 ft as against full capacity of 34.45 ft.

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113055290200.htm

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Aavin milk procurement hit by rain and flood

R. Sairam

MADURAI: The recent bout of heavy rains and floods has had an adverse impact on milk procurement by Madurai Aavin, which has declined by 25,000 litres in recent days. While milk procurement stood at 1.85 lakh litres a day before the rains, it has come down to 1.60 lakh at present.

However, the union was maintaining the present sales levels of 1.90 lakh litres a day by purchasing milk from Tirunelveli, Coimbatore, Virudhunagar, Thanjavur and Tirunelveli Unions, Official sources told The Hindu here on Monday.

The problems have been compounded by the fact that Theni, which also comes under Madurai Aavin Union, was particularly hit very hard by the rains and floods. With over one lakh litres of milk procurement every day, Theni district accounted for bulk of the milk procurement of Madurai Aavin, officials said.

Senior officials said that the union was taking several initiatives to increase milk procurement. They were expecting milk procurement to increase by 5,000 litres in the next three days. Further, officials said, the entire quantum of decline in procurement would be made up within a fortnight, assured the officials.

A team of 18 veterinary doctors of the union and another seven appointed under National Agricultural Development Programme in Madurai have been visiting the Milk Producing Cooperative Societies (MPCS) to check the health of milch cattle.

Aavin officials said that while other unions in the State were also hit by rains, the Madurai region was hit harder as rains were much heavier in the south and sales levels were also higher compared to other unions.

The officials exuded confidence that the Madurai Aavin Union could see milk procurement increase up to 2.50 lakh litres a day during the coming summer season.

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113054610300.htm

54,000 hectares of samba paddy fields inundated

Tiruch Bureau

The extent of crop loss yet to be assessed, says Collector

— Photos:B.Velankanni Raj

trail of miseries:(Top) A woman farmer standing inside her inundated paddy field at PR Puram in Nagapattinam on Monday. (Above) Resident of the tsunami housing colony filling water from a tap inside knee-deep water at New Nambiyar nagar in Nagapattinam.

NAGAPATTINAM: The continuous spell of showers for the past one week has inundated over 54,000 hectares of samba fields at the tail-end of the Cauvery delta. The flooding has submerged fields up to 1.5 feet and 2 feet, threatening paddy crops that are at the post-tillering stages of ear-head formation and ear-head initiation.

However, farmers differ from the administration's estimates, putting the extent of inundation at 75,000 hectares. The inundation of fragile crops at ear-head formation and initiation stages would trigger pest invasion, primarily of stem borers and worms, they say.

On Monday, the intermittent rain has enabled slow drainage from fields. Speaking to The Hindu, Collector C.Munianathan said the extent of crop loss was yet to be assessed. There were no major incidents except a reported breach at Kalathidalkarai village in Thirukuvalai, he said. According to Mr.Munianathan, the drainage would be monitored and report on extent of loss would be sent to the government shortly.

Over 34 cattle were killed and over 100 huts destroyed. As of Monday evening, an old man had died at Vedaranyam. The body has been sent for autopsy to determine the cause of death. The rainfall figures for 24-hour period up to Monday morning 8 a.m. were as follows: Mayiladuthurai 75.20 mm; Tirupoondi 71 mm; Manalmedu 57.80 mm; Vedaranyam 57.01 mm; Talainayar 47.08 mm; Nagapattinam 44.20; Kollidam 38 mm; Tharangambadi 37.60 mm; Sirkazhi 31.50 mm, with an average of 51.04 mm.

Karur

The district got a respite from the rain on Monday with sunshine swathing the town and various parts of the district.

But overnight rain and downpour over the past few days have battered the roads. Schools and colleges remained closed on Monday.Karur Municipality officials have urged the people to consumer boiled water.

The district experienced 631 mm of rainfall during the 24 hours ending 8. 30 a.m. on Monday. The amounts of rainfall (in mm) recorded in several places across the district during the period were as follows:

Thogamalai 97, Mylampatti 77, Panjapatti 54, Palaviduthi 52, Kadavur 51.2, Anaipalayam and Krishnarayapuram 48 eaach, Mayanur 43, Kulithalai 38, Karur 31, and K. Paramathi 22.

Pudukottai

Residents of Pudukottai and its surrounding villages heaved a sigh of relief following a letup in medium to sharp showers. Fishermen did not venture into the sea. For the 24 hours ending 8 a.m. on Monday, the amount of rainfall recorded were as follows:

Alankudi 104 mm; Gandarvakottai 95 mm; Mazhaiyur and Udaiyalipatti 80 mm each; Ayinkudi 77 mm; Perunkulam 73 mm; Viralimalai 70 mm; Karaiyur 69 mm; Pudukottai 67 mm; Tirumayam 65.6 mm; Keeranur 64 mm;Aranthangi 62 mm; Keezhanilai 57 mm; Karambakudi 55 mm; Arimalam 54 mm; Nakudi 53 mm; Iluppur 50 mm; Kattumavadi 48 mm; Kudumiyanmalai 40 mm; Ponnamaravathy 35 mm; Annavasal 36.2 mm; Avudaiyarkovil 35 mm; Manalmelkudi 23 mm; Adhanakottai 19 mm and Meemisal 16 mm.

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113057540300.htm

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Farm labourers stage demonstration

Special Correspondent

SALEM: Members of All India Agricultural Labourers Association (AIALA) staged a demonstration here on Monday demanding the District administration to take steps to remove encroachment in the village common path at Dadanur in Ayothiapattinam Poovanur Panchayat near here. The members, all of them labourers and small time farmers, claimed that they had been using a pathway which they said belonged to panchayat. District functionary P. Kadirvel presided over the agitation.

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113055770200.htm

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Black gram takes green colour

Black and green : The new variety of black gram - Shekhar 1 (KU 301)

THANJAVUR: Black gram, as the name denotes is usually black in colour. But the C.S.Azad University of Agriculture and Technology of Kanpur, has recently invented a black gram, which is green in colour. Thousand grains of the new variety Shekhar 1 (KU 301) weighs 44 grams.

According to the Assistant Director of Seed Certification, Agriculture department, Thanjavur, the new variety of black gram can be tried by the farmers of Cauvery delta districts in the place of T9 variety, which has become susceptible to yellow mosaic disease. The suitable season for sowing Shekhar 1 is after March 20th. The crop is moderately resistant to powdery mildew disease and highly resistant to yellow mosaic disease.

Last year, the variety was raised on a trial basis in both Margazhi (December-January) and Chithirai (April -May) pattams under seed form condition and it performed well, the assistant director of seed certification said in a press release issued here on Monday.

Foundation seed produced by the department of agriculture is to be distributed to farmers this year.

Interested farmers can contact Joint Director of Agriculture or Assistant Director of Seed Certification, Thanjavur, at 04362-231066.

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113061600300.htm

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Constant downpour sows concern among samba farming community

M. Balaganessin and Syed Muthahar Saqaf

1,100 ha submerged in Tiruverambur block; Agriculture Department begins assessment of damage

. — Photos:M. Moorthy

hope against hope:A farmer showing the paddy inundated at Vengur village near Tiruchi on Monday. (Right) Agricultural workers clearing the vegetation at Kuvalai canal in Vengur village

TIRUCHI: Samba crop raised in over 1,100 hectares in Tiruverambur block in the district have been inundated due to the continuous downpour experienced in the last few days.

Farmers of the block whose crop have been totally submerged in waist deep waters are in the crossroads, pinning their hope on some relief or other from the government. Sensing the gravity of the problem, the agriculture department officials have already started assessing the crop damage in the block.

The loss has come as a severe blow to the farmers as they have transplanted the nurseries just a fortnight ago. Unexpected rainfall this month has caused havoc. There is widespread apprehension among the farming community that if water did not drain within the next two days, the chances of saving the standing crop will be remote.

The standing crop stood inundated in 22 revenue villages in the block and the farmers of Vengur; Kuvalakudi; Natarajpuram; Arasangudi; Kiliyur; Pathalapettai; Tirunedungulam; Koothaipaar and Kalkandarkottai are the worst hit. A cross section of the farmers said that inundation could have been well avoided, had certain long-term strategies been taken up in the union. Most important is the need for desilting and deepening of Ananda Cauvery drainage channel, a major channel discharging the storm waters from these villages. The thick growth of water hyacinth in almost all the major water bodies, choking the free flow of water, was yet another major factor confronting the farmers.

“The need for desilting the Ananda Cauvery has been oft -repeated demand of the farmers for a long time, but of no avail”, regrets T. Sangilimuthu, president, Tiruverambur block unit of the CPI(M) affiliated Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam. “It is high time that the government accords priority for restoring the excellent discharge system designed during the British rule with farsightedness”, he says. Although crops at upper reaches are safe, the problem of inundation commences at Arasangudi panchayat and extends up to Inthaliyur on the Tiruchi – Thanjavur border. A sheet of water is seen in various fields. Adappanpallam area in Arasangudi has been one of the worst hit areas, with transplanted crop submerged in waist deep water.

N. Sathiyarajan and A. Mariappan, farmers, who have raised Co-43 variety in Adappanpallam, have almost lost all hopes of salvaging the crop, with opportunities for drainage remaining grim.

M. Murugesan of CPI(M), president, Pathalapettai panchayat, says that 250 acres in various parts in his panchayat, had been damaged.

Apart from the let up in the showers since Monday, another solace for the officials and farmers is the non-discharge of water in to Cauvery from Mettur for the last few weeks.

Already a team of agriculture department officials led by R. Ravi, assistant director of agriculture, Tiruverambur, conducted survey of the damage on Monday. The Joint Director of Agriculture, J. Sekar visited these areas on Saturday.

MLA's efforts

K. N. Sekaran, MLA, Tiruverambur constituency, who inspected the rain damage in different villages on Monday said that he would apprise the Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi of the damage caused to the standing crop and plead for adequate relief to the affected farmers.

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113054501300.htm

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Foreign firms invited to revive closed urea units

NEW DELHI: Union Fertiliser Minister M. K. Alagiri on Monday invited global firms to invest in the revival of closed urea units.

"With increased availability of gas, the government is also considering revival of closed urea plants. We welcome participation of the fertilizer industry across the world in this respect," Mr. Alagiri said at a fertilizer conference here.

Five units of Fertilizer Corporation of India (FCIL) and three units of Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation (HFCL) are closed, as of now.

The government had constituted an Empowered Committee of Secretaries (ECOS) to evaluate all investment options for revival of the closed units of FCIL/HFCL and to make suitable recommendations for consideration of the government.

A consortium of PSUs comprising GAIL India, Coal India and Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilisers (RCF) have expressed their intent to put up a fertilizer plant on coal-based technology at Talcher (unit of FCIL).

Similar proposal has also been received from Steel Authority of India Ltd. for revival of the Sindri unit and by Krishak Bharti Cooperative Ltd. (KRIBHCO) for revival of the Ramagundam unit.

Mr. Alagiri also said the domestic firms were being encouraged to enter into long-term joint venture cooperation with their foreign counterparts to make various fertilizers available to the farmers.

“For fertiliser security, we encourage and support the Indian fertilizer industry to acquire fertilizer assets abroad. We welcome initiatives in this regard,” Mr. Alagiri said

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113054471300.htm

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Decision on freeing urea sector before this fiscal

Fertilizer subsidy will increase by Rs. 15,000 crore

NEW DELHI: The Union Fertiliser Ministry on Monday said decision on decontrolling the urea sector would be taken within the current financial year.

“The Cabinet is yet to consider decontrolling the urea sector. I expect, whatever the decision will be, it will be taken before the current financial year,” Fertiliser Secretary Sutanu Behuria told reporters on the sidelines of a conference here.

The fertilizer industry has been pressing the government to decontrol the urea sector in line with the potassic and phosphetic fertilizers.

With the introduction of the nutrient based subsidy scheme, with effect from April this year, the government has already freed potassic and phosphetic fertilizers. However, in relation to urea, including its price and movement, it is still controlled by the government. Urea constitutes almost 50 per cent of India's fertilizer consumption.

Declining to comment on the likely changes in the decontrolled era from the current controlled regime, he said, “what exactly will happen will be discussed at the meeting of the Group of Ministers and then in the Cabinet. We don't know what will emerge."

“However, we want to make sure that the price does not go to an extent where the farmers cannot buy the fertilizer,” Mr. Behuria added.

On whether the government would like to appoint a regulator in that case, Mr. Behuria said, “It is too early. If there is a need for any regulator, it will come."

Asked when the meeting of the Group of Ministers would take place, Mr. Behuria said, “the Finance Ministry has to take a decision on when it will happen. The date has not been finalised yet."

Meanwhile, Mr. Behuria said the fertilizer subsidy for the current fiscal would be around Rs.67,000 crore, up by Rs.15,000 crore from the budget estimates of Rs.52,000 crore.

“Subsidy is determined via various factors. Because of good monsoon, consumption will increase and this will lead to escalation in subsidy,” he said.

India has contracted to import six million tonnes of urea and eight million tonnes of DAP for the current fiscal.

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113054521500.htm

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Spices exports up

K. Venkiteswaran

Rise in export of value-added products too 68% of target for financial year met

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KOCHI: During April-October 2010, a total of 3,17,800 tonnes of spices and spice products valued at Rs.3,685.25 crore (U.S. $805.10 million) were exported from the country as against 2,99,250 tonnes valued at Rs.3,260.08 crore ($ 675.15 million) in April-October 2009, registering an increase of 6 per cent in volume and 13 per cent in rupee terms of value. In dollar terms, the increase was 19 per cent.

During April-October 2010, the export of chilli, ginger, fennel and garlic showed an increase, both in volume and value, as compared to April-October 2009. The export of value-added products like curry powder and spice oils and oleoresin have also shown an increasing trend as compared to April-October 2009.

However, in the case of cardamom (small), cardamom (large), turmeric, fenugreek and mint products, the increase is in terms of value only. The export of coriander has increased in terms of quantity only. All other spices like pepper, cumin, celery, other seeds like mustard, aniseed, ajwanseed, etc., nutmeg & mace and other spices like asafoetida, tamarind, etc., have decreased both in terms of volume and value as compared to last year.

During April-October 2010, a total quantity of 10,500 tonnes of pepper valued Rs.187.50 crore were exported as against 12,250 tonnes valued Rs.191.16 crore last year. The unit value of pepper increased from Rs.156.05 a kg in 2009-10 to Rs.178.57 during 2010-11. The export of cardamom (small) during the current period was 450 tonnes valued Rs.51.70 crore as against 600 tonnes valued Rs.43.37 crore during last year. During the period, a total quantity of 1,41,000 tonnes of chilli valued at Rs. 865.00 crore was exported as against 1,11,750 tonnes valued at Rs. 701.76 crore last year, registering an increase of 26 per cent in quantity and 23 per cent in value.

During April-October 2010 we exported 6,050 tonnes of ginger valued at Rs. 38.29 crore as against 2,225 tonnes valued at Rs.21.17 crore last year. Out of 6,050 tonnes, the export of fresh ginger was 4,200 tonnes at a rate of Rs.25/kg. During April-October 2010, a total quantity of 8,500 tonnes of currypowder/paste valued at Rs.112.18 crore was exported as against 8,400 tonnes valued at Rs.109.59 crore last year. During the period, the export of spice oils and oleoresins also increased to 4,125 tonnes valued at Rs.495.90 crore from 4,115 tonnes valued at Rs.429.98 crore last year.

Compared to the spices export target of 4,65,000 tonnes valued at Rs.5100.00 crore (U.S. $ 1,125 million) fixed for the financial year 2010-11, the achievement of 3,17,800 tonnes valued at Rs.3,685.25 crore ($ 805.10 million) during April-October 2010 is 68 per cent in terms of quantity and 72 per cent in rupee and dollar terms of value.

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113057640300.htm

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Set up crisis management panel to help farmers: Chandy

Staff Reporter

'Ensure that the crop calendar is not thrown off the track'

First-hand information: Leader of the Opposition Oommen Chandy interacts with a farmer at the Ayyanad Padasekharam, Pulinkunnu, in Alappuzha on Monday when he, along with KPCC president Ramesh Chennithala, visited

ALAPPUZHA: Leader of Opposition Oommen Chandy has called for the immediate constitution of a crisis management committee to provide succour to the rain-affected paddy farmers in Kuttanad.

Speaking to reporters after visiting the rain-ravaged fields of Kuttanad along with Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee president Ramesh Chennithala on Monday, Mr. Chandy said the damage was widespread and devastating. Unless remedial measures were initiated on a war-footing, the danger of the crop calendar being thrown off the track in the next season as well is looming large. Any delay in the 'puncha' season would have a cascading effect on the subsequent second round of cultivation as well.

Based on the feedback he had received from farmers during his two-hour trip through Kuttanad by boat, Mr. Chandy said about 4,800 acres of paddy fields had suffered damage due to bund breaches while ripe crop in over 2,300 acres had been damaged by the continuous rain. Immediate compensation to the farmers, combining the ex gratia of Rs.4,000 a hectare as per State norms and Rs.6,000 a hectare from the Kuttanad Package's Crisis Management funds, should be made available, he said.

Even such compensation would alleviate only by a fraction the financial loss to the farmers, but only such steps could prevent them from quitting the field entirely, Mr. Chandy said. Another issue, he said, was the shortage of seeds to re-start the ‘puncha' round. Farmers prefer the ‘Jyothi' and ‘Uma' varieties of seeds at this juncture since these varieties meant a lesser duration for ripening.

Any longer duration of the crop would mean that the harvest would be carried into April-May, which was when the summer rain loomed large, meaning more trouble for the farmers. Moreover, as per the State government norms, they would get only 32kg of seeds per acre, when the actual requirement is 60 kg. This anomaly had to be solved, he said.

Mr. Chandy also came down heavily on the State government, alleging that the Kuttanad Package was progressing at a snail's pace, and that speedy implementation of the package could have avoided the large-scale damage witnessed this time. The crop insurance scheme of the State was also in vain, since no farmer benefitted from the scheme despite paying the premium, he said.

Mr. Chennithala, demanding that Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan should visit the affected areas immediately, said the government's lethargy had resulted in the farmers losing their confidence, resulting in a dangerous situation where the State's dependency on other States for rice would increase.

A meeting of MLAs and MPs and other public representatives should be convened immediately to chalk out an action plan to sort out the issue, he said.

A.A. Shukoor, MLA, UDF district chairman C.R. Jayaprakash, KPCC secretary Johnson Abraham, Kerala Karshaka Congress president Lal Varghese Kalpakavadi, DCC secretary D. Sugathan and others were present.

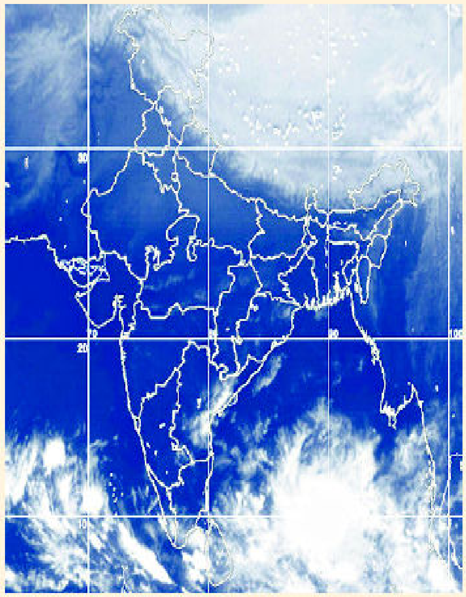
WEATHER

ANDHRA PRADESH

Anantapur	31	19	0	217
Arogyavaram	25	18	0	301
Bapatla	32	23	0	332
Calingapatnam	31	21	0	612
Gannavaram	32	21	9	329
Hyderabad AP	30	19	0	102
Kakinada	32	23	0	704
Khammam	31	18	0	209
Kavali	31	24	0	752
Kurnool	31	21	0	92
Mahabubnagar	31	21	0	60
Machilipatnam	31	23	0	670
Nandyal	31	21	0	151
Narasapur	32	22	0	489
Nellore	32	25	1	761
Nizamabad	33	20	0	117
Ongole	33	24	2	394
Ramagundam	34	21	0	147
Tirupathi AP	31	22	0	436
Tuni	33	21	0	511
Vizag AP	32	21	0	634
Vizag	32	23	0	750

KARNATAKA

Agumbe	27	15	0	740
Bangalore AP	26	17	0	248
Bangalore	26	17	0	287
Belgaum AP	28	19	0	179
Bellary	31	20	0	217
Bijapur	28	16	0	165
Chitradurga	29	18	0	425
Chickmagalur	27	19	0	386
Chintamani	26	13	0	233
Gadag	28	19	0	250
Gulbarga	29	19	0	139
Hassan	28	17	0	—
Honavar	34	25	0	531
Karwar	35	24	0	704
Madikeri	22	15	2	449
Mangalore AP	31	23	tr	748
Mysore	24	18	1	325
Mandya	25	15	0	268
Panambur	31	23	0	634
Raichur	31	17	0	42
Shirali	33	23	tr	399



INSAT PICTURES AT 11-30 hrs.
Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on Nov. 29.

KERALA

Alappuzha	31	24	tr	765
Kannur	31	22	4	781
Kochi AP	29	24	1	1074
Kottayam	30	23	3	962
Kozhikode	31	23	5	718
Punalur	29	22	12	1129
Thiruvananthapuram AP	30	23	28	709
Thiruvananthapuram City	29	23	26	691
Vellanikkara	29	23	6	951

TAMIL NADU

Adiramapattinam	26	23	44	541
Coimbatore AP	24	20	12	389
Coonoor	15	14	42	716
Cuddalore	29	23	8	798
Chennai AP	32	23	0	414
Chennai	31	24	0	470
Dharmapuri	26	21	0	489
Kanyakumari	28	22	36	434
Karaikal	29	24	36	649
Kodaikanal	14	11	57	779
Madurai AP	26	22	10	628
Nagapattinam	28	23	44	672
Palayamkottai	27	23	34	272
Pamban	30	25	1	733
Parangipettai	27	24	12	602
Puducherry	29	23	14	863
Salem	26	21	tr	443
Thanjavur	24	23	146	600
Tiruchi AP	23	22	106	443
Tiruchi	23	22	101	—
Tiruttani	32	21	0	465
Tondi	27	23	2	654
Tuticorin	29	22	79	325
Ooty	13	10	4	—
Valparai	23	18	6	701
Vedaranyam	26	22	27	—
Vellore	29	21	0	343

LAKSHADWEEP

Amini Divi	27	24	17	397
Minicoy	29	23	16	373
Kavarathi	31	23	117	363

OTHER STATIONS

Kolkata (Alipore)	32	22	0	89
Mumbai	34	24	0	177
New Delhi	26	10	0	33

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (trace) and total rainfall in mm since October 01, 2010.

Monsoon active in Tamil Nadu

CHENNAI: Northeast monsoon has been vigorous over Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Rainfall occurred at most places over Lakshadweep and at many places over Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Isolated rainfall occurred over coastal Andhra Pradesh, coastal and south interior Karnataka. Mainly dry weather prevailed over Rayalaseema. Dry weather prevailed over Telangana and north interior Karnataka.

The following stations recorded very heavy-to-heavy rainfall in centimetres: Tiruvaiyaru (Thanjavur dt.) 18, Tiruthuraipoondi (Tiruvarur dt.) and Pullambadi (Tiruchirapalli dt.) 17 each, Thanjavur 15, Needamangalam (Tiruvarur dt.) 14, Peravurani (Thanjavur dt.) and Muthupet (Tiruvarur dt.) 13 each.

FORECAST (Valid till Wednesday morning): Rain would occur at a few places over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and Lakshadweep. Isolated rain or thunder showers may occur over coastal Andhra Pradesh, Rayalaseema, coastal and south interior Karnataka. Mainly dry weather may prevail over north interior Karnataka and Telangana.

Heavy Rainfall Warning: Isolated heavy rain would occur over south coastal Tamil Nadu in next 48 hours.

HEAVY RAINFALL WARNING: Isolated heavy rain would occur over south coastal Tamil Nadu during next 48 hours.

hindustantimes
Tue,30 Nov 2010

Farm output surges, growth may touch 7% this year

New Delhi, November 29, 2010
First Published: 00:19 IST(29/11/2010)
Last Updated: 02:15 IST(29/11/2010)

India's sluggish agriculture sector — its biggest impediment to a high growth rate — is finally poised to take off. Farm growth won't just meet its target of 4% this year, it could even climb to never-seen levels, possibly 7%, government officials, planners and independent economists told *HT*. "We may see 6-7% growth, depending on how the rabi (winter) crops go," Planning Commission member Abhijit Sen said.

The main reason for this optimism is the outstanding kharif (summer) output, which alone delivered nearly 3% farm growth over last year, Sen added.

Agriculture secretary P.K. Basu too said a turnaround was in the offing.

This will mean more money in the hands of two-thirds of all Indians, who depend on farm income. Rural spending will rise, which will push up manufacturing and thereby, the economy.

Prone to seasonal swings and dependent on the monsoon, farm growth has been volatile in recent years. In 2009-10, the worst drought in three decades shrank farm growth to almost zero.

High farm growth won't quite alter the overall projected growth of 8.5% for this year, as agriculture's share in gross domestic product — the sum total of all income from all sectors — is barely 16%. "However, it will mean more robust contribution to the economy," finance secretary Ashok Chawla said.

What's driving farm growth? "Our agriculture seems to be finally responding to prices," NR Bhanumurthy, economist with state-owned National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPR), said. The NIPR's own forecast is 5.6% farm growth.

Periodic hikes in minimum support prices (MSP) have worked. Between 2004 and 2010, MSP — the assured price at which the government buys paddy and wheat — was raised by 78.6% and 75%, respectively.

Fast-changing consumption patterns have prompted more high-end crops to be grown and high food prices may have a role too, economists say. Cheaper farm loans — at 5% this year from 7% till 2009 — also helped.

Another reason is the "low base" effect: following last year's drought, growth was practically nil, so this year may shine in comparison. But the drought also meant farmers this year worked aggressively to make good their losses, Bhanumurthy said.

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather

Clear	**Tuesday, Nov 30** Max Min 31° | 22.9°
Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs	Sunrise: 6:13
Humidity: 79%	Sunset: 17:39
Wind: Normal	Barometer: 1011.0

Tomorrow's Forecast

Rainy	**Wednesday, Dec 1** Max Min 30° | 24°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Dec 2	**Dec 3**	**Dec 4**	**Dec 5**	**Dec 6**
28° | 25°	27° | 25°	27° | 26°	27° | 25°	28° | 25°
Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy

THE ECONOMIC TIMES
Tue, Nov 30, 2010 | Updated 07.21AM IST
30 Nov, 2010, 01.05AM IST,Bloomberg

Palm oil jumps as China demand rises

SINGAPORE: Palm oil rebounded from two straight weeks of losses on Monday on signs that demand in China is rising even as heavy rain reduces yields in Malaysia and Indonesia, the biggest producers of the commodity.

February-delivery futures rose 3.3% to 3,381 ringgit ($1,070) a tonne on the Malaysia Derivatives Exchange, the highest level since November 11. The price dropped 1.6% last week and 0.8% the week before.

Exports from Indonesia, the top producer, jumped 13% to 1.45 million tonne in October from a year ago, the Indonesian Palm Oil Association said on November 25. Shipments to China surged 25% to 215,900 tonne and sales to India climbed 24% to 596,600 tonne. The two countries are the biggest users.

“There are enough fundamentals to support prices,” Arhnue Tan, a senior plantation analyst at ECM Libra Capital Sdn, said by e-mail. “With the festive season coming up, and Malaysian supplies looking vulnerable, I think that crude palm oil prices will continue to be quite strong.”

Chinese demand picks up before the Lunar New Year, the biggest festival on the country’s calendar, when demand for food soars. The celebration will fall in early February next year. Malaysian palm oil output fell 1% to 14.3 million tonne in the first 10 months of the year, according to data from the Malaysian Palm Oil Board .

Output in Indonesia may decline to 21.8 million tonne, less than 22.5 million tonne forecast earlier, on lower yields, the China National Grain & Oils Information Center said, citing OilWorld, an industry publication.

Exports from Malaysia rose 19% to 1.32 million tonne in the first 25 days of November compared with the same period in October, Intertek said November 25. Shipments rose 25% to 1.36 million tonne, Societe Generale de Surveillance said.

30 Nov, 2010, 01.02AM IST, Jayashree Bhosale,ET Bureau

Mutton demand is rising in India

PUNE: Indians' love for goat meat has led to the commodity's price increasing at 20% per annum. Earlier this month, on Bakri Id, when demand rises sharply, prices of good looking, big size goats in Kolhapur were close to Rs 25,000 per animal and in Mumbai, it crossed Rs 80,000.

The demand for goat meat is increasing faster than the growth in goat population. Experts in the field are of the opinion that if this trend continues, India will have to import goat meat from Australia or other countries to meet the demand.

During the festive period of Bakr Id, mutton prices in Pune were Rs 280 per kg while in Kolhapur it were ruling at Rs 250 per kg. Good quality goats were brought from Karnataka for the festive season. "We sold 400 goats at Rs 165 per kg as against Rs 150 last year. The rate was fixed three months ago," said Nitin Menon, managing director, Mani Agriculture and Research Company, which has 1,500 to 2,000 stall-fed goats.

Dean of Bombay Veterinary College Dr Abdul Samad said, "We have neglected goats for long. There is no government programme to encourage goat rearing although it is an animal which gives good returns without huge investments." Dr Samad added that though the goat population is increasing, according to the government census, declining grazing land poses a big challenge to the industry.

Large-scale, organised goat farming has not yet become a successful venture in the country. Pune-based Nimkar Agriculture Research Institute has used Boer goats from South Africa for cross-breeding and improving meat production in the country. BV Nimkar, founder of the institute, said, “mutton prices are increasing 20% per annum. But in India only Andhra Pradesh has succeeded in improving the goat and sheep population.”

30 Nov, 2010, 01.00AM IST, Madhvi Sally & S Sujatha,ET Bureau

Christmas makes turkey, emu & duck meats hot stuff

CHANDIGARH/COIMBATORE: Farm-raised turkey, emu and duck meats are slowly entering the Indian dining tables as these exotic meats have caught the fancy of discerning consumers. With Christmas and New Year drawing near, retailers as well as the farm-owners are busy with the processing of such meats.

The market is gearing to face the rush during the festival week. “We expect a 50% growth in business this year owing to a stable economy, unlike the previous year,” said Tia Solomon of Pune-based James Smith Food, which rears and sells Turkey and Peking ducks under the brand name ‘Capella’ in the domestic market.

She added that a majority of the sales was still coming during the festive month’s sales. “We expect to sell more than 3,000 turkey birds this year and over 1,000 ducks per day in the domestic market,” she said.

Turkey per kg was being sold for Rs 420-440, with a full-grown bird weighing between 4kg and 9kg. Peking duck is being sold for Rs 180 per kg. Suppliers to major restaurants and five-star hotels state that demand has picked up in the recent past with a number of retail and cash-and-carry store chains also entering the business.

The demand of duck (peking ducks) and emu meat is also likely pick up during the festive season. Chennai-based Kallerians, who has recently entered the Turkey meat processing business with a unit in Vellore, expects the demand to grow up as Christmas nears.

30 Nov, 2010, 12.56AM IST, Jayashree Bhosale & Madhvi Sally,ET Bureau

Despite excess output, milk prices to remain stable

PUNE/CHANDIGARH: Milk prices will not fall in winter, which is a flush season, primarily due to rising cost of feeding milch cattle . The October-March period is the flush season when milk production increases across the country, leading to price fall.

However, this year, none of the cooperatives or companies has reduced milk or dairy product prices post Diwali which has been an annual norm. The country's largest dairy marketer, Rs 8,000-crore Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Limited (GCMMF), has seen milk production increase by 7% with an average milk procurement of 98 lakh litre per day. "Milk and dairy product prices are unlikely to fall this year. Increase in cattle feed prices is putting pressure," said GCMMF managing director in-charge RS Sodhi.

The Maharashtra government, which has a policy of revising milk prices downward from October 1 with the beginning of the flush season, has also not done so this year. "The production cost of milk has not come down. Hence there is no reason to reduce the milk price," said RC Shah, general manager (dairy) of the Kolhapur-based Gokul milk cooperative. Gokul is the second-largest milk supplier after Amul to Mumbai. Karnataka, the second-biggest milk producer of the country, milk procurement has crossed 39 lakh litre per day, which is an increase of 5% compared to the same month previous year.

Godrej Agrovet managing director BS Yadav said, "Normally, the cattle feed prices come down in October by 5% to 7%. But this year it has not happened due to the market conditions. The prices of all the commodities are firm in the international market. Rice bran, de-oiled rice bran and cotton seed extraction are the main ingredients of cattle feed. These are not cheap due to excess rainfall. Though green fodder is available, cattle also need dry fodder like husk, which is not yet available."

However, private dairies and dairy product manufacturers disagree that milk production has increased in the country . "This year, during the past two months, there is a shortage of milk. Why would Amul and other milk cooperatives purchase milk powder from Karnataka cooperative?" said milk powder manufacturer, Sterling Agro MD Kuldeep Saluja.

He added that farmers were demanding Rs 26 a litre for bufallo milk compared to Rs 23 a litre during the same period previous year.

Pune-based cheese exporter Parag Milk Foods, which had earlier this year launched its branded dairy products ‘GO cheese’, is hoping the scenario would improve in the month ahead. Parag Milk Foods MD Preetam Shah said that the milk production was expected to go down by 8% this year. “The unseasonal rains in the past two months have taken a bearing on the milk production. We expect flush season to set in by next month,” he said.

An industry analyst points out that with the dairy products and milk sales picking up annually along with an increase in milk processing capacity, milk consumption in the country is also increasing. Big dairies like Dynamix, Parag Milk Foods, Warna dairy, Siddharth Milk Foods India along with a few other companies, account for about 20 lakh litres of daily milk consumption for product conversion in Maharahstra alone. This has led to a low supply of liquid milk across the country and prices to remain stable.

29 Nov, 2010, 02.12PM IST,PTI

Cardamom futures up 2.83 pc on fresh spot demand

NEW DELHI: Cardamom futures prices rose by Rs 31.40 to Rs 1,139.30 per kg today due to rising demand in the spot market owing to the ongoing marriage season.

Restricted arrivals from producing regions also supported the rise in futures prices.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange counter, cardamom for February delivery rose by Rs 31.40 or 2.83 per cent to Rs 1,139.30 per kg, while December delivery surged by Rs 28.10, or 2.53 per cent to Rs 1,139.90 per kg.

The spice for delivery in January gained Rs 26.70, or 2.41 per cent to Rs 1,135 per kg.

Traders said pick up in demand in the spot market due to the ongoing marriage season, mainly attributed to the rise in cardamom futures prices.

They said, restricted arrivals from southern region also supported the uptrend in prices.

29 Nov, 2010, 12.52AM IST, Nidhi Nath Srinivas,ET Bureau

Only bulls listen to falling rain

Last year's drought was terrible. But this year's excess rainfall is worse. Why? Drought at least gets officially classified as a natural disaster . The government moves fast. Farmers are compensated for crop loss. People expect shortages. Not so with extra rain. That is considered business as usual by everyone except farmers who are now watching their fields turn into muddy pools and crops to mulch.

At end October, the north got 359% extra rain, central India 100%, Tamil Nadu 20% and the country as a whole 40%. Maharashtra this week officially pegged damage at 1 million hectares. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Gujarat, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh are totting up losses. And the rains go on.

Government's optimistic estimates of food and raw material availability are now irrelevant. Supply of several commercial crops has been hit through destruction and delays. Food and commodity inflation may worsen as this reality sinks in. Especially, as most of these crops are grown once a year.

In largest sugarcane grower Uttar Pradesh, excess rain has brought with it pests, disease and lower yields. Fields in Maharashtra and Karnataka are too sodden for workers to enter. Left standing, a tall grassy plant like cane simply keels over into the mud. With little raw material, sugar factories are twiddling their thumbs. Cogen power plants have no bagasse to burn. India may ultimately produce 24 million tonne sugar this year that just matches consumption, and not the expected 27 mt.

Paddy acreage was anyway 10% below normal. Drought in major growers West Bengal, Jharkhand and parts of Bihar further chipped away supply. In Konkan region, more than 1 lakh hectares are officially damaged. If rains continue in south India and UP, losses could rise.

Prices are creeping up even though the government holds mountain of stocks. Escalating rubber prices reduced tyre companies to tears. But there is no respite. It has been raining continuously for seven months in major producer, Kerala. Rubber that sold for Rs 110 a kg in last October is now going for Rs 200 — an 80% jump. Cotton exporters are biting nails. Banking on estimates of a record harvest, they committed to export 5.5 million bales by December 15 at fancy prices. But it rained on their parade.

By Express News Service
30 Nov 2010 03:07:53 AM IST

Thousands of acres of crops under water

TIRUVARUR/NAGAPATTINAM: Crops in several thousands of acres are under water in Tiruvarur district. Rain water has entered many villages and roads have been badly damaged at several places.

The five-day-long incessant rains, which filled up many water bodies, stopped on Monday morning. However, the region is now faced with a host of practical hurdles.

The low pressure area in the Bay of Bengal had led to heavy downpour in the district since Wednesday, which was especially heavy on Thursday and Friday.

The average rainfall for November is 350.54 mm. But, the present spell has exceeded this limit by 100 mm.

Roads, where UGD works had been completed, turned from bad to worse during the rains as the dug-up stretches have not been re-laid after the completion of the work. Water stagnation was also perceived in a number of areas, posing undue hardship to commuters.

This is the same situation throughout the district as many of the roads, including the Tiruvarur-Mannargudi section and Tiruvarur-Thiruthuraipoondi stretch of the Tiruvarur-Thanjavur national highway, have been badly damaged due to the rains.

Draining of rain water has been delayed at several locations. The fields are still inundated and water has not started receding even as rivers, canals and drainage channels are flowing to the brim.
Farmers complain that water flow has been affected at several places, due to the abundant growth of water lettuce and other wild plants.
Moreover, the Vennar, which witnessed floods during the heavy rains in Tiruchy, Thanjavur and Pudukkottai districts, was heading to the Moonar headwork on Monday afternoon at the rate of 5,800 cft per minute. The Vettar and Odampokki rivers and wild streams are also in full flow. The banks are overflowing in more than 100 spots. Breaches have been reported at more than 25 places, that are being blocked by PWD officials and the villagers, by placing sand bags.
Meanwhile Nagapattinam and Karaikal districts witnessed much-needed respite from heavy rains on Monday. Residents were relieved at seeing the brightly shining sun. However, the paddy fields are still submerged. Sea continues to remain rough in the entire coastal stretch in the two districts. Fishermen did not venture into the sea for the fifth consecutive day.

30 Nov 2010 03:13:20 AM IST

Milk society employees plan strike on Dec 20

ERODE: The Tamil Nadu Primary Milk Producers' Cooperative Society Workers' Federation has threatened to go on a fast on December 13 and strike work across the State on December 20 if the government fails to treat them as Aavin staff.
The federation took out a massive rally at Erode and submitted a petition to the Collector on Monday. Union district president K Subramanian and secretary T Ramasamy said over 25,000 workers in 7,500 societies have been receiving a salary of just `750- 2,500. "It is less than the minimum salary fixed by the Collectorate. Though societies are supplying 90 per cent of the procured milk to Aavin, it is giving just 40 paise per litre as commission, which is used to pay the salary of members of the societies," they argued.
However, societies have been paying Aavin 10 paise per litre for its administrative expenses, and five per cent of the total turnover as education and co-operative fund to the co- operative union, they pointed out. They added that milk societies have had to spend out of their own pockets to buy kits to test and measure milk. They said there were workers in milk societies who have been working for more than three decades without a holiday. But, they get a pay of `2,500 and an ex-gratia of `1,200 during Deepavali.

29 Nov 2010 03:17:53 AM IST

Madurai: Paddy in 1,281 HA submerged in floods

MADURAI: Paddy cultivated in 1,281 hectares were submerged in the floods in the district. Compensation will be provided to the affected farmers after the damage has been assessed, A Tamilarasi Ravikumar, Minister for Adi Dravidar Welfare, said on Sunday.

After inspecting the Vandiyur tank along with Collector C Kamaraj, the minister told reporters that 10 persons have lost their lives in floods for whom `5 lakh compensation has been released so far. As many as 302 houses were damaged. Among them, 48 were completely destroyed. For damaged houses, `3.5 lakh compensation has been provided so far, she said. “We will take up the issue with the Chief Minister along with Union Minister M K Alagiri to speed up relief works,” she mentioned.

Later, the minister and the collector proceeded to Thenpalanji village and Vadapalanji Sundararajapuram to inspect the damage to crops. She assured the affected farmers that compensation would be provided after assessing damaged to the crops.

Business Standard

Tuesday, Nov 30, 2010

Cotton prices up despite rain

D Gopi / Guntur November 30, 2010, 0:38 IST

Cotton prices in the open market this season have so far remained satisfactory, giving a sigh of relief to the growers. The incessant rain and flood that had marooned the fields initially dashed hopes of farmers as they feared that the crop would get discoloured and the price would fall drastically. However, the first round of sales that began in the third week of November saw farmers fetching remunerative prices as traders and millers picked up the product from various auction centres.

The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) is still waiting at the auction centres for its turn to buy the stock at the minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 3,000 a quintal. Interestingly, the product is now being sold at the highest price of Rs 4,600 a quintal, which was recorded at the Adoni market yard in Prakasam district of the state. The price in the current season is ranging between Rs 3,500 and Rs 4,600 a quintal based on the colour. The cotton, which has lost its colour is getting slightly lower than the MSP. The discolour problem is only seen in the black cotton soil, which was affected by the incessant rains and water logging.

With the weather changing in the last two weeks, the first harvest from the black cotton soil has started arriving at the auction platforms. The harvest from the light black cotton soils and southern cotton soils that arrived at the auction platforms is doing well and the prices are more than the MSP. If the weather remains dry for the next couple of weeks, the prices are expected to cross Rs 4,800 to Rs 5,000 a quintal.

“We have positioned our personnel at all the auction platforms and if the price comes down near to the MSP, we would buy the product to support the farmers. But, as of now, farmers are on the safe side and there is no worry for them unless the crop gets discoloured or the moisture content increases beyond the permitted level of 8 to 10 per cent,” said CCI deputy general manager, S K Panigrahi.

This year, the CCI cleared 30 purchase centres in the state as against 39 in the 2009-10 season. The CCI had brought down its purchase centres mainly because the local spinning mills had increased their capacity and were buying more quantity.

The board has estimated cotton production at 32.5 million bales for the season 2010-11, as against 29.5 million bales in 2009-10. The increase in production comes on the back of increased acreage and the use of Bt seeds, the board said. Andhra Pradesh farmers are placed in a better position this season as the production in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra is expected to come down due to rains in the last two weeks.

So far, 4.6 million bales of cotton had arrived from various states by November 21, as against 4.8 million bales during the same period in 2009. Gujarat continued to top with arrivals in the current season at 1.4 million bales by November 21, followed by Maharashtra with 990,000 bales, Punjab with 542,000 bales and Andhra Pradesh with 530,000 bales. Last season, during the same period, arrivals from Gujarat stood at 1.8 million bales, followed by 550,000 bales from

AP. The fall in arrivals from Gujarat this year, despite increased acreage, has been attributed to the heavy rains.

Ethanol has a special appeal for India

Kunal Bose / November 30, 2010, 0:05 IST

The other day the director general of Indian Sugar Mills Association Abinash Verma made an impassioned plea for the central government to announce the final price of ethanol to be procured by oil marketing companies (OMCs) for blending with petrol. Till such time the final price is announced, OMCs are to procure ethanol from indigenous sources at a uniform ex-factory ad-hoc price of Rs 27 a litre for its doping with petrol. According to Verma, sugar mills have finalised “contracts with oil marketing companies for supply of about 600 million litres and delivery has begun.”

In this particular case, the government is not to be blamed for the unconscionably long time being taken to post ethanol’s final price. Over three months ago, the government flagged off the ethanol blended petrol programme (EBPP) across the country as it left it with an expert committee led by planning commission member Saumitra Chaudhury to recommend the final price. The government wanted the final price recommendation “expeditiously.” It will be interesting to watch how much weight the committee will give to “parity with gasoline retail price, import parity price of ethanol and underlying cane prices,” as suggested by the sugar industry.

India being the world’s second largest producer of sugar from cane after Brazil, is expected to use a growing portion of cane by-product molasses for making ethanol. For the world, Brazil stands as the shining example of very largely eliminating greenhouse gas emission by using ethanol either in a blend with petrol or on stand alone basis in its automobile fleet.

New Delhi’s commitment to EBPP – it has an open mind on raising ethanol blend percentage to up to 10 per cent depending on the availability of molasses and resolution of competing claims of chemicals and India made foreign liquor (IMFL) makers – is as much because of the prospect of controlling carbon footprint from ethanol use as for “enhancing benefits to cane farmers.” In a joint presentation to the expert committee, Isma and National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories said ethanol use would also “boost income pool of cane farmers.” A committee under

C Rangarajan will be recommending a formula for sharing of revenue from sugar and primary byproducts by mills and farmers.

So divergent are the views of the sugar industry and other users of alcohol derived from molasses about the supply and respective requirements of the by-product that it is proving to be a Herculean task for the committee to find a common ground.

What must also be coming in the way of fixing the final price is chemicals and IMFL manufacturers' opposition to mandatory five per cent ethanol blending at any fixed price. According to them, in case EBPP is to be relaunched, the basis of working out ethanol price will be its calorific value and cane price. Interestingly, in this campaign they are finding support from the department of chemicals and petrochemicals.

What must also be queering the pitch for the committee, are the pitching of alcohol requirements at extraordinary high levels by chemicals and IMFL makers. The latter group has also suggested that ethanol should not cost more than Rs 21.50 a litre so that its "operational viability" is not compromised in any way. Isma itself admits of very large differences in production and consumption figures for alcohol made available by sugar mills and other interests. The only way to break the logjam will be to get the relevant data from state excise authorities. What is, however, beyond contest is the country's capacity to take care of ethanol blending of up to 10 per cent.

Hairsplitting is unavoidable when sectional considerations take precedence over national interests. Bioenergy recommends itself for its renewability and environment friendliness. International Energy Agency says "bioenergy is the largest renewable energy contributor to global primary energy today and it has the highest technical potential of all renewable energy sources." One major source of ethanol, a member of bioenergy family, is cane or sugar byproduct molasses. Both Brazil and India will claim to have passed the muster of soil productivity, water use efficiency, biodiversity maintenance and reward for farmers as they grow cane.

Ethanol has a special appeal for India, for its feedstock here unlike in Brazil is only the byproduct molasses. As a result, we are not using farm land or a food crop for making bioenergy. China has a dislike for using corn for making ethanol. It is, therefore, pushing non-staple crops like sorghum, balata and cassava. Both India and China are keenly promoting jatropha, a hardy oil rich seed which can be grown on marginal land. All these crops are good sources of biofuel. Oil accounts for a little over 30 per cent of India's import bill and to the extent there is ethanol doping, money spent on oil imports will be saved.

Brazil and the US between them are responsible for over 85 per cent of the world ethanol production. In Brazil, 25 per cent ethanol doping in gasoline is mandatory, while over 11 million Flex cars on Brazilian roads run entirely on ethanol. India needs catching up.

Tyre firms to again press rubber manipulation charge on NMCE

Dilip Kumar Jha & George Joseph / Mumbai November 30, 2010, 0:02 IST

The Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (Atma) intends to persist with its charge of manipulation of natural rubber prices on the Ahmedabad-based National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE).

The Forward Markets Commission (FMC), the commodity markets regulator, has declined an Atma request to intervene. However, Atma plans to write again to FMC and NMCE in coming days, reiterating its point on the need for a reduction in the daily price band of the NMCE.

"We have evidence for the price manipulation of natural rubber on the NMCE, which we are submitting to the FMC on (next) Monday or Tuesday," said Atma director-general, Rajiv Budhraja.

Since the launch of rubber futures on the NMCE in 2003, the Delhi-headquartered Atma holds the exchange responsible for the price rise in natural rubber, the only raw material for tyre making. The claim was rejected each time it was raised, with the argument that the price movement was based on basic demand and supply.

Atma had, in the second fortnight of October, urged FMC to reduce the daily price band from the existing four per cent to one per cent. Terming the commodity derivatives exchange a place for speculative and manipulative trading, Atma had also urged the regulator to suspend trading in natural rubber.

The FMC had, on October 21, asked NMCE to clarify its stand and justify the price movement in natural rubber. The exchange did so on October 23. FMS told Atma last week, "The internal investigation found no clue leading to price rigging on NMCE. Hence, no action is required against the exchange in any form." A renewed complaint was again rejected, with FMC saying, "A four per cent price band is in line with other agri commodities, plantation products and, most importantly, global markets."

"You cannot give a too-wide or too-narrow price band to market participants," an industry official said. Meanwhile, with a 10 per cent decline in production due to unseasonal rainfall, the price of natural rubber has risen to Rs 200 per kg (of the benchmark RSS-4), more than double the level in November last year. Usually, the price declines in November, as this is the time of peak production in Kerala, the major supplier.

Output this November is estimated at 82,000 tonnes as compared to 92,500 tonnes in the corresponding month last year. Apart from this, labour shortage is a serious issue in most plantations, even at high wages.

Sweet year ahead for sugar firms

Ajay Modi / New Delhi November 30, 2010, 0:00 IST

This season may bring more profits on lower levy, better ethanol prices.

Sugar companies are expected to improve profitability in the current year beginning October (the sugar year is from October to September) on lower levy obligation, higher ethanol prices and improved cogeneration.

"With rise in cane production and recovery, we estimate lower costs and higher sugar production. With estimates of all-India and international production showing a deficit, the domestic fundamentals are expected to be much better, which along with better cogeneration performance will help to turn around the performance of the sugar business," said Dhruv Sawhney, chairman and managing director of the third-biggest producer, Triveni Engineering and Industries.

The company's net profit for the quarter ended September 30 declined 75 per cent to Rs 13.85 crore.

Triveni, however, performed better than companies like Balrampur Chini and Dhampur Sugars on account of its engineering business. Both Balrampur and Dhampur incurred huge losses (see chart).

The average realisation on sugar (excluding levy sugar) was around Rs 3,000 a quintal for most companies in the previous season while the cost of production was higher as these companies paid Rs 240-245 a quintal for sugarcane.

The increase in levy sugar obligation (the portion of output that mills have to give to the government at a price it decides, presently Rs 1,800 a quintal, for the ration shop system) from 10 per cent to 20 per cent also impacted realisation. The levy obligation for the current season is seen around 10 per cent.

“High inventory cost was the main cause of loss in the year ended September 30. The loss was augmented by a rise in the levy obligation. This year looks better. Even with a sugarcane price of Rs 205 a quintal, some margin is possible if sugar is sold for Rs 2,800 a quintal. Moreover, our profitability from distillery and cogeneration business will improve given higher ethanol price and more power generation,” said Arhant Jain, president (finance) at Dhampur Sugars, which owns four sugar mills in Uttar Pradesh.

The current realisation is in the range of Rs 2,800-2,900 a quintal.

A miller from the second-biggest sugar producing state said the industry would breakeven at a sugar price of Rs 2,800 a quintal provided cane recovery for the season improves to 9.5 per cent from current level of 8.2-8.3 per cent.

He added the only way sugar price would sustain at a level of over Rs 2,800 was through export of 1-1.5 million tonnes over and above the export of around 1 million tonnes under the advance licence obligation.

The country is expected to produce over 25 million tonnes sugar this year, up over 31 per cent from last year.

Business Line
Business Daily from THE HINDU group of publications
Tuesday, November 30, 2010

Date:30/11/2010 URL:
http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113053121800.htm

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Back **EU rejects three okra consignments from India**

Higher level of pesticide residue found in shipments.

M.R. Subramani

Chennai, Nov. 29

The European Union (EU) has rejected three consignments of bhindi (okra or lady's finger) from India this year as they contained pesticide residues higher than the prescribed limits.

In addition, the EU has issued notices on the presence of residues in four other consignments of bhindi and one consignment of drumstick (moringa).

Higher levels of monocrotophos, acephate and triazaphos residues were found in these consignments. The EU has a tolerance limit of 0.05 mg/kg for monotcrotophos residue in bhindi, while for acephate and triazophos, the maximum residue limit is 0.02 mg/kg and 0.01 mg/kg respectively.

In the consignment that was rejected on November 10, the monocrotophos residue level was 0.13 mg/kg and that of acephate 0.13 mg/kg.

In a consignment that was rejected on February 17, the presence of triazophos was found to be 0.11 mg/kg.

Monocrotophos has been found toxic to birds and humans. All the three pesticides can cause excessive sweating, headache, weakness, giddiness, diarrhoea, abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting, difficulties in breathing and cardiac problems.

Bhindi makes up a significant part of fresh vegetable exports from the country, though officials are unable to give an exact figure. During 2009-10, 4.19 lakh tonnes of vegetables valued at Rs 731 crore were exported against 5.05 lakh tonnes valued at Rs 680 crore in 2008-09.

“Bhindi is exported for Indians abroad. It is quite a popular vegetable with them,” said Mr S. Dave, Director of the Agricultural and Processed Food Exports Development Authority (Apeda).

The problem with bhindi exports, according to officials, is that it is not easy to monitor the supply chain since it is too fragmented and the material comes from different parts of the country.

“It is difficult to keep track and trace back the problem,” said an exporter.

When asked about this, Mr Dave said that Apeda had held a meeting with exporters with regard to the issue and a plan is being worked out to monitor vegetable exports.

“Basically, these vegetables are sourced from mandis for exports. But traders won't know for what the vegetables are being bought and the problems in them,” said Mr Dave.

“The Commerce Ministry is looking at some sort of grading in the supply chain so that exporters will ship out only good agricultural products,” he said.

A trader said that the Centre had asked the EU to relax its tolerance level for pesticide level standards. “A request has gone to raise the level from 0.01 mg/kg but nothing has happened. We are looking at a level of 0.05 mg/kg,” the source said.

Besides vegetables, other commodities that have come under scrutiny are fruits and raisins. In the case of raisins, a consignment was rejected on September 20 as the presence of dead insects, sticks and stones were found in it.

Date:30/11/2010 URL:
http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113052671900.htm

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Back **Farmers asked to explore freshwater fishing potential**

Our Bureau

Mangalore, Nov. 29

Freshwater fishing can provide an additional source of income for farmers, according to Dr K.M. Shankar, Dean of College of Fisheries, Mangalore.

Presiding over the inauguration of a training programme on fishing in lakes and ponds, organised by the Bidar-based Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University (KVAFSU) here on Monday, Dr Shankar said that farmers can get an additional source of income if they properly maintain lakes and ponds in their fields and plantations.

These lakes and ponds can be used for rearing freshwater fishes.

Stating that agriculture sector has been witnessing the shortage of workforce in farms and plantations, he said fishing in lakes and ponds does not require a huge workforce.

However, farmers should give importance for the maintenance of ponds and lakes and should be involved in every step of freshwater fish rearing, he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Parshvanath, Assistant Director, Department of Fisheries, Mangalore, said that there is good potential for freshwater fishes in the market.

Giving the example of Mangalore, he said three-four tonnes of freshwater fishes are being sold a day in Mangalore during the rainy season.

Most of these fishes are being brought from Raichur and Andhra Pradesh, he said.

Fishermen do not venture into sea during the rainy season, as the Government declares fishing holiday during that period.

Mr Monappa Karkera, member of the board of management of KVAFSU, who has taken up freshwater fishing in Dakshina Kannada district, said that the activity can provide additional source of income for farmers.

Just introducing fingerlings into freshwater and waiting for a better return out of it may not yield results. Farmers should take adequate care while rearing fishes in ponds and lakes, he added.

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113053051700.htm

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Back Onion crashes on deluge of arrivals, poor quality

Oscillating*

	Arrivals	Price
Nov 1	2,432	1,181
Nov 9	611.5	1,725
Nov 10	966	1,750
Nov 11	1,074	1,725
Nov 12	1,157.5	1,600
Nov 15	1,671	1,535
Nov 16	1,192	1,653
Nov 18	1,486.5	1,667
Nov 19	1,720.5	1,350
Nov 22	942	1,600
Nov 23	860.5	1,400
Nov 24	807.5	1,350
Nov 25	665	1,400
Nov 26	810	1,500
Nov 29	1,350	950

*at Lasalgaon
Arrivals in tonnes;
modal price in Rs/quintal
Source: NHRDF

M.R. Subramani

Chennai, Nov. 29

Onion prices crashed by over Rs 500 a quintal on Monday as arrivals flooded the market and buyers kept away in view of the poor quality of the offerings.

“Markets had been closed last week due to rains. When it opened today, arrivals flooded the market,” said Mr Rupesh Jaju, an exporter from Nashik in Maharashtra.

In Lasalgaon (Maharashtra), the modal price or the rates at which most trades take place dropped by Rs 550 a quintal from the weekend's price to Rs 900 a quintal.

Arrivals there were 1,350 tonnes against 810 tonnes on Friday. “The problem with the arrivals was that over 60 per cent was damaged.

Only 15-20 per cent was of good quality and they ruled between Rs 1,800 and Rs 2,000 a quintal,” Mr Jaju said.

Prices to fall

“Improved weather and increasing arrivals led to crash in prices,” said Mr Madan Prakash, Executive Director of the Chennai-based Rajathi Exim Group. “The fall was expected since prices had run too high and there was a scare in the market,” he said.

Since the beginning of this month, the modal price of onion has been hovering between Rs 1,500 and Rs 1,800 a quintal in Lasalgaon on a slew of reasons, including festivals, untimely rains, delayed arrivals and farmers holding back their produce hoping for better prices.

Circular to exporters

“Better quality arrivals are expected in the next few days. Onion prices could soften after December 15 and are expected to rule below Rs 900 a quintal,” said Mr Jaju.

Meanwhile, canalising agencies such as the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing

Federation (Nafed) have asked exporters to refrain from buying huge quantities of onion.

Though canalising agencies sent a circular to exporters to refrain from buying huge quantities, shippers are not buying much from the market in view of high prices and poor overseas demand.

The circular has been issued since damages have been reported in export consignments. “Onions come to market this season do not have a large shelf life. Therefore, they could get damaged during shipments. That's why the circular,” Mr Jaju said.

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113053211800.htm

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Back **India asks global fertiliser suppliers to link prices to costs**

‘Refrain from opportunistic pricing'.

Our Bureau

New Delhi, Nov. 29

With fertilisers imports of over 20 million tonnes (mt) expected this fiscal – besides another 10 mt of intermediates and raw materials – the Centre is concerned over spiralling international prices.

Since June, landed prices of imported urea has gone up from around $250 to almost $400 a tonne, while rising from $500 to $630 a tonne in the case of di-ammonium phosphate (DAP).

In his inaugural address at the Fertiliser Association of India's (FAI) “Annual Seminar 2010” here on Monday, the Union Minister for Chemicals & Fertilisers, Mr M.K. Azhagiri, noted that there has been a “sudden rise” in the prices of fertiliser products and inputs in international market.

On the other hand, as the maximum retail prices charged to farmers have been not been raised much, the Government has been absorbing the increased global prices. “A very high and unreasonable level of pricing would put stress of Government finances. The global fertiliser industry needs to discuss and ensure that international food security is not affected," Mr Azhagiri said.

The Union Minister of State, Mr Srikant Jena, was more direct in urging global suppliers to "look at their pricing parameters," which, he said, should be based on "cost of production," instead of the "demand-supply scenario." While the Centre is partially shielding farmers from the soaring international prices at a huge cost to the exchequer, "the increasing prices do raise fears of demand destruction," he warned.

Mr Jena said the Centre was planning to move away from the earlier open-ended fertiliser subsidy regime (which enabled a pass-through of high international prices to the exchequer) to a "more deterministic and predictable subsidy scenario."

During 2009-10, India imported 5.21 mt of urea, 5.89 mt of DAP and 5.29 mt of muriate of potash (MOP), with these estimated at seven mt, eight mt and six mt respectively (in addition to 1.5 mt of complexes) in the current fiscal.

"We are large and open market. So, international suppliers must deal with us on a long-term, sustainable basis and not in an opportunistic way leading to demand destruction. They should look at cost plus a reasonable margin," said Mr A. Vellayan, Chairman of FAI.

Speaking separately to presspersons, the Fertiliser Secretary, Mr Sutanu Behuria, said that the Centre's fertiliser subsidy bill for 2010-11 may cross Rs 65,000 crore (against the budgeted Rs 49,980.73 crore and the revised estimate of Rs 52,980.25 crore for 2009-10).

The Centre has already provided Rs 5,000 crore additional subsidy in the second supplementary demand for grants. "We will ask for another Rs 8,000-10,000 crore in the third supplementary. The Finance Ministry will decide on the allocation, but there could be a small carryover to the next financial year," he said, adding that this additional sums are likely to be in cash and not bonds as in the past.

Date:30/11/2010 URL:
http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113053041700.htm

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Back **Turmeric hits record Rs 16,000/quintal**

Our Correspondent

Erode, Nov. 29

Turmeric price touched a record Rs 16,000 a quintal. “Everybody has been taken by over the sudden hike of Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,200 a quintal within a day for turmeric,” said Mr R.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association, on Monday.

He said: “The prices were around Rs 15,000 last weekend, but when the market opened on Monday, prices increased by Rs 1,000 a quintal. This is due to the increase of turmeric price in the futures, as on Monday morning it was quoted as Rs 16,172 a quintal, which has favoured the turmeric farmers and the selling price reached Rs 16,500 a quintal.”

Today is purely a farmer's day, he said.

Mr Ravishankar said: “If there is good support for the turmeric and the demand and sales continues to be high, the prices will remain for another one week. Further, this is the first time in December such huge arrivals of turmeric to the market is seen for sale.”

In the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 9,501 to Rs 15,700 a quintal and the root variety at Rs 9,199 to Rs 15,800 a quintal. Out of arrivals of 896 bags, 508 were sold. Prices increased by Rs 500 a quintal.

In the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 15,766–16,246 a quintal, the root variety at Rs 15,739–6,300 a quintal. Out of arrivals of 152 bags, 56 were sold. There was an increase of Rs 800 a quintal on Monday compared with last week.

In the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 16,366–16,576 a quintal, the root variety Rs 16,366–16,536 a quintal. All the 601 bags kept for sale, were sold. Prices increased by Rs 1,200 a quintal on Monday.

In the Regulated Marketing Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 16,286–16,638 a quintal, the root variety Rs 16,291–16,727. All the 1,174 bags kept ready for sale were sold, purchased by bulk buyers.

The regulated market authorities said the prices increased by Rs 1,000 a quintal and demand for the product is high.

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113053081800.htm

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Back **Delayed kharif harvest puts off rabi sowing**

K.V. Kurmanath

Hyderabad, Nov. 29

After getting hit by floods and untimely rain towards the end of the kharif season, farmers in Andhra Pradesh are unhappy going by reports of sluggish sowing from different parts of the State.

Paddy has been sown on 0.89 lakh hectares (lh) as on November 24, against the average crop area of 1.16 lh. As a whole, coarse grains have been sown on 1.84 lh or 72 per cent of the average crop area of 2.56 lh.

In all, foodgrain crops have been covered on 9.39 lh against the as-on-date average of 9.91 lh. The season average for foodgrains has been put at 30.58 lh. Including oilseeds and commercial crops such as tobacco, the average crop area for the season stood at 39.26 lh. One-third area (13 lh) has been sown as on November 24.

“It is very early to say that sowings are sluggish. Paddy is sown only in 1.16 lakh ha against the season average of 14.32 lakh ha. Similarly, coarse grains are to be sown in about five lakh hectares. Only half of it was covered so far,” a senior Agriculture Department official told Business Line.

“The reason for early sluggishness in sowings is due to delayed harvest in several parts of the State due to rains and floods. Besides losing kharif crop in vast areas, farmers also lost early gains in rabi. However, we are expecting a bumper rabi this time," he said.

On the reason for the optimistic estimates for rabi, he said unprecedented and widespread rains replenished water resources, including underground water levels.

While coastal Andhra registered sowings of 2.85 lh against the as-on-date average of 3.81 lh, Rayalaseema covered 5.26 lh (6 lh) and Telangana 4.91 lh (5.13 lh).

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113053031700.htm

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Back **Soya oil gains despite subdued demand**

Our Correspondent

Indore, Nov 29

Soya oil in the local mandis gained marginally despite subdued demand. Notwithstanding the positive trend in the overseas market, soya oil on Monday gained marginally with soya refined in the spot quoted Rs 2-3 higher at Rs 532-Rs 535 for 10 kg. However, delivery rate of soya refined was Rs 502 that was purchased Ruchi and later sold it to Dhanlaxmi. On the other hand, Dewas soya plant purchased soya refined at the rate of Rs 503 for 10 kg.

Similarly, soya solvent gained marginally at Rs 495-Rs 498. On the back of positive global cues, soya oil futures gained marginally on the National Board of Trade where soya oil after opening at Rs 565.50, saw a high of Rs 569.20 and low of Rs 564.90 before closing at Rs 566.50.

On the NCDEX also, soya oil December contract supported by bullish global market closed Rs 4.25 higher at Rs 568.20, while its January contract closed up at Rs 580.03 for 10 kg respectively. On the other hand, soybean ruled steady with sluggish demand at plant level. On the spot, soyabean quoted at Rs 2,050–2,100 a quintal, while plant delivery rates were Rs 2075 Rs 2200 per 100 kg.

State mandis on Monday witnessed arrival of merely about 2.25-2.50 lakh bags of soybean, while arrival of soybean in Indore was recorded at 2,000-2,500 bags.

According to a soybean trader, Mr Mukesh Purohit, in the absence of proper demand from counters, market was subdued but at the same time, he said that demand will peak once marriage season is over and weather becomes clear.

On the NCDEX, soyabean futures increased with the December contracts closing Rs 20 higher at Rs 2,246 a quintal, while January contracts closed Rs 18.50 higher at Rs 2,292, respectively.

30/11/2010 URL:
http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113052981700.htm

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Back **Global cues lift imported edible oils**

Our Correspondent

Mumbai, Nov 29

Spot prices of imported oils such as soya and palmolein increased by Rs 3 and Rs 5-10 kg on Monday on the edible oils market, taking cues from the higher closing of the Malaysian market. Indigenous oils were quoted steady on hopes that clear weather conditions will lead to higher arrivals of seeds at producing centres.

To cover the new month's retail demand, wholesalers have become active.

In the spot trade, volume was very nominal. In Saurashtra, with the increase in arrivals groundnut, prices dropped Rs 10 to Rs 1,140 a 15-kg tin and Rs 745 for 10 kg.

In the world market, crude palm oil futures on the Bursa Malaysia Derivatives rose 3.5 per cent due to oil palm crop worries and the $113 billion bailout of Ireland. CPO futures extended their rally as heavy rain and flooding in northern States and palm oil producing areas in Johor, Sabah hurt output.

In line with Malaysian markets, Indore NBOT soya oil futures shot up by over Rs 5/10 kg. Producers and speculators were active buyers for long position, said sources.

Malaysia's crude palm oil futures closed at MYR 3,437 (3,360) for December and MYR 3,411 (3,306) for January. Indore NBOT soya oil futures for December ended at Rs 567.30 (Rs 562.90), and January 11 at Rs 580 (Rs 571.10)

Mumbai commodity exchange spot rates (Rs for 10kgs): Groundnut oil 760 (760), soya refined oil 555 (552), sunflower expeller refined oil 670 (670), sunflower refined oil 715 (715), rapeseed refined oil 607 (607), rapeseed expeller refined oil 577 (577), cotton refined oil 545 (545) and palmolein 526 (521).

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113052961700.htm

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Back **Trade enquiries perk up rice**

Our Correspondent

Karnal, Nov. 29

Trade enquiries lifted rice prices on Monday. Prices of aromatic rice rose by 50-150 a quintal, while the non-basmati varieties increased according to their quality and demand. Prices of Sharbati variety witnessed a good uptrend whereas the Permal variety rose marginally.

Mr Amit Kumar, proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company, told Business Line that trade inquiries were high as also demand leading to the rally. Traders expect good trading in this week and prices could move upwards, he said.

Prices of Pusa-1121 steam (new) ruled between Rs 5,250 and Rs 5,300 a quintal, while the old variety ruled around Rs 5,350. Pusa-1121 sela (new) ruled at Rs 4,200-4,300, whereas the old variety was around Rs 4,250. Pusa-1121 raw (new) ruled around Rs 5,200, while the old variety quoted at Rs 5,300. Pusa (sela) ruled at Rs 3,300-3,350 and Pusa (raw) around Rs 4,200.

Basmati sela ruled at Rs 6,200, while basmati raw was around Rs 7,150-7,200.

Prices of non-basmati varieties rose by 30-100 a quintal. Prices of Permal Sela ruled between Rs 2,150-2,180, while Permal steam ruled between Rs 2,150 and Rs 2,200 a quintal. Sharbati sela ruled between Rs 2,700 and Rs 2,800 and Sharbati steam at Rs 2,900-2,950 a quintal. Around 5,000 bags of Pusa (duplicate basmati) quoted at Rs 1,900-2,250. Around 18,000 bags of Pusa-1121 ruled at Rs 2,200-2,400. About 10,000 bags of pure basmati rice quoted at Rs 2,200-2,850.

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113053131800.htm

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Back **Cardamom rules firm on North India demand**

G.K. Nair

Kochi, Nov. 29

Cardamom prices increased last week on demand, especially from North India, despite arrivals soaring to the highest levels in the current season at the auctions.

Arrivals during the week touched 420 tonnes and almost the whole quantity was sold out. The individual auction average price ranged between Rs 1,000 and Rs 1,050 a kg.

North Indian buyers were actively covering and this kept the prices firm at above Rs 1,000 a kg. Added to this, exporters who were waiting for the prices to decline also covered an estimated 30 tonnes to meet their immediate commitments, trade sources said. Upcountry dealers, who had exhausted their stocks, had to purchase to meet Christmas, New Year and wedding season demand.

Meanwhile, the aromatic spice is available only from the indigenous source to which the buyers have to hang on, they said.

Arrivals were the highest during the current season at 420 tonnes. The KCPMC auction on Monday also registered the highest arrivals during the current season at 91.5 tonnes. The entire quantity was sold out

Significantly, the turnover at the Sunday auction was also the highest at Rs 9 crore in any single auction, Mr P.C. Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC, told Business Line.

The maximum price fetched on Sunday was at Rs 1,191 a kg while the minimum was Rs 850 a kg. Auction average stood at Rs 1,004 a kg, he said.

The enthusiasm in buying, even when the arrivals had reached its peak, indicate that there was a strong basic demand, he said.

Arrivals during the current season from August 1 to November 28 stood at 4,194 tonnes. Of this, 4,105 tonnes of cardamom were sold.

Arrivals and sales in the same period of the previous season were 4,210 tonnes and 4,174 tonnes respectively.

Weighted average price as on November 28 was Rs 1,095 a kg, up from Rs 692.50 a kg the same day last year.

Prices for graded varieties in rupees per kg Monday were: AGEB 1,040 – 1,160; AGB 1,060 - 1,080; AGS -1,015 – 1,025; AGS1-1,000 – 1,020. Prices in the local market at Bodinayakannur in rupees a kg were: AGEB 1,125 – 1,150; AGB 1,050 – 1,065; AGS - 1,000 – 1,015 and AGS 1 - 980 – 1,005.

The weather conditions in growing areas have been very good and ideal for cardamom crop and therefore, the late crop could be comparatively better, growers in Idukki said.

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113053071800.htm

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Back **Grapes too face ‘residual' trouble**

Grapes exports have registered good growth in the last few years, crossing Rs 500 crore last year. But trouble seems to be brewing with regard to the presence of cholormequat residue.

Cholormequat is a chemical that regulates the growth of a plant.

Nearly a dozen consignments of grapes have been found to contain the chemical but nothing has been rejected yet with the EU stopping with just issuing a notification.

Earlier this year, the EU came up with its evaluation of cholormequat and said it should not be used in grapes. It also said evaluations found children suffering from nausea, vomiting, headache and abdominal pain.

The EU has set a maximum limit of 1.06 mg/kg for cholormequat in grapes and so far, Indian consignments have been found to be within the limit. “It is sudden trade issue that has cropped up. We are looking into it and are educating the growers,” said Mr Dave.

Date:30/11/2010 URL:

http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113053201800.htm

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Back **Sour berries**

— P.V. Sivakumar

Waiting for business to lift:Farmers, with bags of Indian green berry (zizyphus jujuba), wait for customers at the Gaddiannaram Fruit Market at Kothapet on the outskirts of Hyderabad on Monday. The price has fallen to Rs 400-450 a quintal. Farmers who bring the produce from Tadipatri in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh and Solapur in Maharashtra, rue their inability to even recover transportation costs.

Date:30/11/2010 URL:

http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113053141800.htm

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Back **Tea prices drop sharply in South in Jan-Sept**

P.S. Sundar

Coonoor, Nov. 29

Prices of south Indian teas declined significantly in the first three quarters of current calendar even as those of north Indian teas increased, reveals an analysis of the market reports of various auction centres.

Between January and September, tea prices declined by Rs 2.41 a kg over the same period last year to average Rs 99.77. This was despite north Indian auctions posting a gain of Rs 4.29 to average Rs 115.32 as south Indian auctions lost as much as Rs 15.03 to average Rs 66.41.

Kolkata auctions posted the country's highest average price of Rs 127.14 a kg (up by Rs 7.42 over last year), followed by Guwahati's Rs 108.67 (Rs 1.23) and Siliguri's Rs 102.78 (Rs 2.52).

In the South, all the auction centres posted a decline over last year. Kochi auctions fetched the highest average price of Rs 74.15 (down by Rs 15.51 over last year), followed by Coimbatore Rs 62.46 (Rs 17.44) and Coonoor Rs 62.19 (Rs 13.45). Teaserve auctions recorded the country's lowest price average of Rs 54.91 (Rs 18.14).All auction centres except Guwahati and Coimbatore sold a higher volume than last year. In all, a volume of 357.87 million kg was sold through the auction centres in the country in the first three quarters against 341.67 million kg in the same period of last calendar.

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113051811900.htm

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Back **Pepper futures look up**

G K Nair Kochi, Nov 29

Pepper futures, after usual high volatility, ended above the previous closing on bullish reports from overseas and domestic expert analysts and consequent buying support.

Report from a leading broking/analyst firm claimed that “the December contract has potential to test Rs 24,667 a quintal during the coming days looking at the global supply and demand scenario while support is seen near Rs 21,315 a quintal”.

Supply situation

An overseas report was also bullish saying tight supply situation in India, Indonesia and Vietnam while stating that Brazil was not in a hurry to sell. All these reports, coupled with non-arrival of the new crop in the market as anticipated in India had resulted in exporters even considering buying low quality pepper, trade sources told Business Line.

There were sellers of inferior quality pepper at Rs 205 a kg in the morning but as the futures started moving up, they withdrew. Buyers were there for quality pepper at Rs 209 a kg but sellers were not ready to part with their produce, they said.

The rupee was weaker against the dollar and that turned out to be advantageous to the trade. As a result, the Indian parity remained at $5,000 a tonne (c&f) for Europe and $5,100 a tonne (c&f) for the US and remained in line with Indonesia which had quoted $5,050 a tonne (f.o.b.) today, they said.

Date:30/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/30/stories/2010113053091800.htm

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Back **Spot rubber weakens on buyer resistance**

Aravindan

Kottayam, Nov. 29

Spot rubber prices turned weak on Monday. Declines in domestic futures and a favourable change in weather for tapping as rains subsided were the key factors that influenced the sentiments in the market. There was no visible selling pressure in the market as arrivals continued to be low.

According to dealers, sheet rubber moved down to Rs 198 (199.50) a kg on buyer resistance. The grade slipped to Rs 198.50 (199.50) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to the Rubber Board.

Futures decline

In futures, the December series declined to Rs 195.94 (199.74), January to Rs 199 (202.80), February to Rs 202.02 (205.47) and March to Rs 204.84 (208.40) a kg for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 improved with the December futures rising to o ¥356.5 (Rs 194.48) from ¥354 during the day session and then to ¥358 (Rs 195.35) a kg in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange. The grade (spot) closed at Rs 200.02 (200.14) a kg at Bangkok.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 198 (199.50); RSS-5: 186.50 (187.50); ungraded: 181 (183.50); ISNR 20: 191 (192.50) and latex 60 per cent: 129 (130).