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Chief Minister inspects samba cultivation in Tiruvarur

Special Correspondent

He was briefed on the technology named as 'Rajarajan 1000'

— Photo: M. Srinath



Taking stock:Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi having a discussion with

TIRUVARUR: Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi inspected the samba paddy cultivated under System of Rice Intensification (SRI) method, which has now been renamed as “Rajarajan 1000” method, at Kovil Thirumalam village in Nannilam taluk in Tiruvarur district on Sunday.

Farmers demonstrated removing of weeds using cono weeder on the field.

M. Chandrasekaran, Collector, Tiruvarur, briefed the Chief Minister on the adoption of the technology in the district.

Under "Rajarajan 1000" method, samba paddy seedlings had been transplanted on 23,500 hectares.

Transplantation completed

Transplantation was done on 38,750 hectares under conventional method. In total, samba transplantation was completed on 62,250 hectares in the district so far. Direct sowing was done on 12,242 hectares in Muthupettai and Thiruthuraiipoondi areas.

Less water, seeds

The "Rajarajan 1000" method helps in using less water and small quantity of seeds. Samba and thaladi paddy would be raised on 1,44,810 hectares in Tiruvarur district this year, the Collector told the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister spoke to Varadarajan, a farmer, and enquired with him about samba cultivation.

Mr. Karunanidhi also enquired with the Collector about the shortfall in area of coverage under kuruvai and whether it was compensated in samba.

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Agri expo under way

Staff Reporter

— Photo: G. Moorthy.



GOOD OPPORTUNITY:Visitors at the exhibition in the city on Sunday.

MADURAI: With the objective of providing farmers with information on the latest developments and advances in technology, an agriculture expo is being organised from Saturday to Tuesday at the Gandhi Museum Grounds here.

A joint venture of the Lions Club of Madurai Tamil and the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) here, the expo features 120 stalls with participants from across India, according to M. Vijayaprakash, chairman of Lions Club of Madurai Tamil and the expo.

He said that participants have come from various states such as Punjab and Rajasthan. Major agriculture companies have kept on display the latest agriculture implements such as harvester machines, planting machines and other equipment needed for floriculture, horticulture and sericulture. Seminars were also being held on each of the four days. The seminars would touch various aspects of agriculture and help farmers a lot, he said.

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180-lakh tonne food grains lying in open: BJP

Staff Reporter

CHANDIGARH: Bharatiya Janata Party national secretary Kirit Somaiya said on Sunday that in spite of reprimand by the Supreme Court, the Centre seems little concerned about Rs.58,000 crore worth food grains rotting in various godowns.

He was speaking to media persons after inaugurating an exhibition on “Criminal wastage of food grains worth Rs. 58,000 crore” at the party headquarters here.

“Awful economic policies of the Congress Government are responsible for such a pathetic and chaotic situation in the country”, Dr. Somaiya said and added that while food grains in government godowns are rotting , prices of essential commodities are going up.

He said that during his interaction with FCI senior officials in Haryana, Punjab and Delhi last week, he learnt that still 180 lakh tonnes of food grains are lying in open at various godowns in Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan and UP.

The Food Corporation of India has admitted that out of 64,21,000 tonnes food grains of central pool in Haryana 50,11,675 tonnes is lying in open which is around 78 per cent and out of 20,45,573 tonnes food grains in Rajasthan 15,05,318 tonnes is more than 15 months old, he said.

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Kharif acreage up by 6.9% this year

Thanks to good monsoon, the area under rice cultivation this kharif season has gone up by 6.4 per cent. Last year, paddy cultivation had suffered owing to drought in 399 districts during the same period.

As per the official data released by the Ministry of Agriculture, paddy had been sown in 35.8 million hectares till October 7, compared to 33.14 million hectares in the corresponding period last year, showing an increase of 2.7 million hectares over the same period.

Kharif crops have been sown in 102.19 million hectare area as against in 95.75 million hectares last year, registering an increase of 6.9 per cent.

There has been a major enhancement in the cultivation of pulses that have been sown in 11.59 million hectares this year. This is 1.8 million hectares more than that in the corresponding period last year.

The area under coarse cereals is also higher by 2.91 per cent at 21.2 million hectares against 20.6 million hectares sown last year.

The area under sugarcane is higher by 20.41 per cent, while the area under cotton increased by 8.9 per cent and jute acreage went up by 9.68 per cent over last year.

The cultivation of oilseeds has shown a marginal increase of 0.32 per cent. The oilseeds acreage is 17.5 million hectares this year compared to 17.4 million hectares sown last year.

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Chennai, October 10, 2010

Monsanto against mandatory labelling of GMO products



Gyanendra Shukla, Director (Corporate Affairs), Monsanto India. Photo: N. Sridharan

Monsanto, the biotechnology major, holds the view that mandatory labelling of products made from genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in India would make no sense. It favours options such as companies voluntarily labelling products as not containing GMOs, and individuals making a personal decision not to consume food containing GM ingredients.

During an interview with *The Hindu* group of publications, Gyanendra Shukla, Director (Corporate Affairs) of Monsanto India Ltd, said the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had determined that GM crops did not differ from non-GM crops, and that products containing GMOs need not be labelled.

“FDA does require a product to be labelled thus if an ingredient is a potential allergen or somehow changes the nutritional properties of the food,” he said. However, no approved biotech crop is either an allergen, or has any significant nutritional differences from non-GM counterparts.

If at all labelling is made mandatory in India there ought to be proper infrastructure in place for companies to comply with the law, he pointed out.

Genetic engineering techniques

Genetic engineering techniques use DNA molecules from different sources that are combined into one molecule to create a new set of genes. This DNA is then transferred into an organism, giving it modified or novel genes. Demand for labelling GMO products has cropped up in view of fears raised over their safety as food and feed.

New version

Having introduced Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) cotton, known as Bollgard I, in 2002, Monsanto is now testing a version of GM cotton that incorporates the properties of Bollgard II and Roundup Ready Flex cotton. “The new variety will provide protection

against bollworm and caterpillar besides controlling weeds and other pests,” Dr. Shukla said.

Currently, 250 companies in India sell Bt cotton seeds, most of them deriving their technology from Monsanto. “Though we offer Bollgard I and II, farmers buy more of Bollgard II since it is just Rs. 100 more for a packet of 450 gm of seeds,” he said.

This year, cotton is grown on a record 107.55 lakh hectares in India and over 90 per cent of it is Bt cotton. Corn (maize) and cotton account for 15 per cent of India's total cropped area.

Technology fee

Dr. Shukla said the issue of technology fee was pending in courts. The controversy cropped up after Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat fixed the technology fee for Bt cotton seeds. Currently, Monsanto gets Rs. 96 as technology fee for a packet of Bollgard I and Rs. 150 for Bollgard II. Monsanto opposes controls on seed pricing, for it would discourage investment in technology.

Monsanto is testing Bt corn that gives protection against insects and weeds. “It is dual-technology, and is being tested in India.”

As of now, Monsanto is not looking beyond Bt corn. “We're not looking to bringing in GM soyabean or pulses to India unless there is public partnership. ...There's no system to recover the costs,” he said. “In partnership, we'll get compensation for what we bring in. These are open pollination varieties where farmers do not buy hybrids.”

On the moratorium on Bt brinjal imposed by the Centre, Dr. Shukla hoped that facts that are scientifically-based will prevail.

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Hybrid amla variety proves to be fruitful

Staff Reporter

Horticulture official shows the right way of cultivation

— Photo:N. Rajesh



A BOUNTY:Organically-grown amla at a homestead garden in Palayamkotti.

TIRUNELVELI: A hybrid variety of Amla, NA-4 (Kanchan), planted in a homestead garden nine years ago, is continuously giving higher yield, thanks to organic farming techniques.

About 25 kg of fruits have been harvested in the second phase at an interval of just seven days. The rich soil of the country, particularly in south Tamil Nadu, is found to be ideal for growing vegetables, many used as medicinal herbs.

The southern districts are renowned for producing nutritious and quality amla fruits. Turning away from the traditional way of cultivation, where chemical fertilisers and plant protection chemicals play a major role, S. Raja Mohamed, Assistant Director of Horticulture, Vilathikulam, Tuticorin district, nourished the tree in his house in Tirunelveli with organic manure such as sheep droppings, farm yard manure and well-decomposed leaf moulds. Periodical and need-based application of bio-fertilisers, watering as and when necessary with a dry spell leads to a bumper yield.

On an average, more than 100 kg of fruits are being harvested from the sixth year onwards in a year before the onset of monsoon. He also advised to grow minimum two to three varieties of amla such as NA-7, kanchan, BSR-1 to effect cross-pollination.

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Don't turn roads into drying yards, farmers told

Special Correspondent

Action warned against those who block roads for drying produce

CUDDALORE: Collector P. Seetharaman has appealed to farmers to give up the practice of using the highways as drying yards.

Addressing a farmers' meeting here, he said it had come to his notice that several farmers were drying their produce on the main thoroughfares and arterial roads.

They were also putting up wooden logs, boulders and thorny bushes as hedges to protect the foodgrains spread out on the roads.

Mr. Seetharaman observed that such a measure had reduced two-way roads into one-way roads, causing traffic bottlenecks and accidents.

Moreover, the dust from winnowing of foodgrains caused irritation to the eyes of two-wheeler riders. Mr Seetharaman said that the district administration had set up several drying yards on a priority basis for the benefit of farmers.

The agriculture marketing committee had also created such a facility.

If there was any shortage of drying yards, the big farmers could use an elevated portion of their farm lands for the purpose, Mr. Seetharaman said.

The small and marginal farmers could hire tarpaulins from the agricultural marketing committee and private companies.

He also mooted the idea that farmers' association could pool resources to procure tarpaulins to be rented out to the needy members.

Mr. Seetharaman also said that if the farmers made collective representation seeking drying yards in their respective areas, the district arrangements would make arrangements for creating such a facility.

However, he warned of stern action against those who might continue with the practice of blocking roads for drying their produce.

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THE ECONOMIC TIMES

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8 Oct, 2010, 02.33PM IST, IANS

Food prices may soar due to global warming

LONDON: Large-scale crop failures are likely to become more common in the wake of climate change and lead to spiralling prices.

Rising temperatures could trigger events such as the wheat crisis in Russia this summer which pushed up food prices, researchers from the Universities of Leeds, Exeter and the Met Office said.

Scientists warned that rising temperatures would make crops mature more quickly, reducing their yield, while extreme temperatures could also significantly reduce yields, according to the journal *Environmental Research Letters*.

More droughts would affect crops, while more intense monsoon rains could lead to flooding and crop damage, the Daily Mail quoted the researchers as saying.

Lead study author Andy Challinor from the University of Leeds, Britain, said: "Due to the importance of international trade, crop failure is an issue that affects everyone on the planet, not just those in crop-growing regions."

"More extreme weather events are expected to occur in the coming years due to climate change and we have shown that these events are likely to lead to more crop failures," he said.

"What we need to do now is think about the solutions. It is highly unlikely that we will find a single intervention that is a 'silver bullet' for protecting crops from failure," he

added.

An approach which combined building up crop tolerance to heat and water stress alongside investment in agriculture was needed, the researchers suggested.

Co-author Evan Fraser from the University of Leeds said: "It appears that more developed countries with a higher GDP (gross domestic product) tend to evolve more advanced coping mechanisms for extreme events."

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By P Jonathan Ambrose

10 Oct 2010 12:42:05 AM IST

100-ton weighbridge for Puducherry farmers

PUDUCHERRY: Farmers and tradesmen in Puducherry have a reason to celebrate as the government will soon install for the first time in Puducherry an electronic 100-ton weighbridge at the Kalapet area. The weighbridge, costing approximately Rs 30 lakh, will be a great boon to the farmers facing several problems with regard to their produce. "The available weighbridges at the market are of 100 kg, 300 kg, going up to a maximum of 500 kg. But since our produce goes into thousands of kgs, we end up weighing it piecemeal which leads to inaccuracies, with the result that we suffer several losses. Also, when we use the weighbridge elsewhere, we have to pay them rent," explained Kandavel, a trader at the Big Market in the UT.

He added that they have been requesting the government for a weighbridge for several years now.

According to the agriculture department, which is procuring the machine, it is still under processing with a tender being issued for the same, after which the weighbridge will be installed within the next couple of months.

Also, farmers were earlier at the mercy of buyers, who did sometimes tamper with the readings and paid a lesser amount but with the government-owned one soon to be installed, farmers will be able to steer clear of such problems.

“The largest weighbridge so far measures 80-ton and is owned by a co-operative unit. The 100-ton weighbridge will be an advantage as, compared to the other weighing units in the UT, being a government initiative, the fee for using the weighbridge will be very minimal so as to benefit farmers and traders alike,” said an official from the agriculture department.

The official added this is part of the agriculture infrastructural development programme which includes several initiatives, which need to be developed including a state-of-the-art godown for the farmers to store their crops, a ripening room system, designed for the fresh produce to improve product appearance without dehydration.

The others include a modern super market for the farmers to sell their product, etc.

By Express News Service

11 Oct 2010 12:50:47 AM IST

Water pump operation through cell phone

ERODE: Farmers in Chennimalai have found a new use for cell phones. They are using it as a remote to operate the pumpsets installed in their field from afar. A prototype kit was introduced by three engineers Rajakumaran, Kumar and Nallasivam some months ago and is called real mobile start controller.

“It can be attached to the pumpset’s starter and then the farmer can operate the pumpset from his home itself by giving a missed call. As the kit is programmed to function only from one phone number, no other person will be able to operate it. The kit will inform the farmer through SMS about water position in the well, power cut, and other defects, if any,” Rajakumaran said.

“One does not need to visit the farm at night. Even if a farmer goes out of station, he

can operate the pumpset for specific hours and stop it through the cell phone. The cost of the kit is affordable,” he added.

According to Chennimalai town panchayat president A Gopalakrishnan, the kit could also help streamline the water supply system. The town panchayat that gets water under the Cauvery and Ottanguttai water supply schemes operates several motors to fill its overhead tanks.

While the OHTs under the Cauvery scheme are in the town itself, the motors in Ottanguttai are located four kilometres away from the panchayat office. The workers find it difficult to visit the area during night to operate the motors. Frequent power cuts also disrupt water supply system. The real mobile start controller offers a solution to these problems.

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Back Coffee trade prepares for sustained high prices

“There is a shortage of good quality arabicas.

The countries growing it cannot bring more area under Arabica”



A Srinivas

Bangalore, Oct 10

Coffee traders and growers are of the view that high world arabica prices, fuelled by the shortage of arabica milds, are here to stay at least through the next calendar year.

Roasters in the US in particular have raised consumer prices, an indication that they are prepared for high arabica prices. "Psychologically, the support is at 160-165 cents/lb," a representative of a leading export house said. While brands can hold prices for a while, there is a limit even to that, another trader said.

arabicas

Prices of Brazilian arabicas (New York terminal) are now ruling at about 150 cents/lb, compared to 169 cents/lb on September 14. This is still in line with the average price in August (152 cents/lb) and way above the May level of 122 cents/lb, when the rally started.

The markets could be relatively subdued till November. The average price in September was 162 cents/lb, much higher than the average 2009 price of 111.39 cents/lb and the 2008 level of 123 cents/lb.

Columbia milds

Mr Amit Pant, Business Manager, Olam Agro India Ltd, said: “The prevailing high prices of arabica milds are basically a supply and demand issue. Prices are likely to stay firm at least till next June, due to the persistent shortage of mild arabicas. The Columbian crop is expected to be better than the last two years, but it could take time for the inventories to fill up. Besides, 2011 is expected to be an off-year for Brazil. With Columbia's coffees in short supply, the demand for coffees from Peru, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua has been on the rise.”

Columbian milds are ruling at 216 cents/lb (New York), after touching a high of 254 cents/lb on September 8. Unlike in the Brazilian arabicas, the prices have been firm since around April 2009, as a result of two lean seasons.

The drop in prices of Columbian milds and Brazilian arabicas since the record levels reached in the first and second weeks of September points to the possibility of profit-booking. Brazilian is a primarily an arabica cherry producer.

Mr Ashok Kuriyan, Managing Director, Balanoor Plantations and Industries Ltd, said: “There is a shortage of good quality arabicas. The countries growing it cannot bring more area under arabica. More acreage can only come from Africa. Hence, the fortunes of arabica growers will not reverse over the next three or four years.”

Mr Anil Bhandari, Member, Coffee Board, said: “There is a genuine shortage of washed arabicas. Columbia is expected to have a good crop this year, up by 30 per cent over last year. But there have been reports of a fungal infection impacting the crop, although its seriousness is not known. Meanwhile, consumption is rising in East European countries, Russia, Asia, Brazil and Vietnam. Global consumption is up, also in the ‘roasted and ground’ segment. The accusation by some analysts is that the constant entry and exit of funds has the potential to distort prices in relation to fundamentals.”

Mr Nanaiah, Chairman, Karnataka Planters' Association, said: “World prices are

expected to hold firm, unless something drastic happens in terms of funds flow.”

An export house representative said: “No one felt prices would go up to these levels. There has been a big Brazil crop. The funds have pushed prices up. People who paid a lot of margin money have lost. There was perhaps a possibility of taking up coffees, relative to gold and oil.”

Prof M Panduranga Vithal at the Institute of Plantation Management, promoted by the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry, said: “Most growers do not trade at the terminals. Someone up the value chain is doing this. Coffee, a major traded commodity, has always provided a good hedge. Without that, there will not be high prices. However, volatility in prices does not seriously impact anyone in the value chain. The coffee sector has the capacity to absorb shocks. Those who wish to buy bulk coffee would be willing to wait.”

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Back AP Transco to give 1.5 l new power connections to agri pump sets



Power boost: A file photo of farmers transplanting paddy seedlings during the rabi season in Jonathali village of Martur mandal, in AP's Prakasam district.

Our Bureau

Hyderabad, Oct. 10

AP Transco, the power distribution utility of Andhra Pradesh, will give 1.5 lakh new power connections to agricultural pump sets in 2010-11. These connections would supply power free to farmers.

With the State receiving good rains this monsoon, Mr K. Rosaiah, Chief Minister, has asked the officials of AP Transco to strengthen connectivity in rural areas keeping in mind the upcoming rabi season, when farmers would need power to draw water. The State has targeted to cover one crore acres in the rabi season.

He asked the officials to provide the new connections by March 2011, from when the demand for power increases significantly.

The officials informed him that the utility had prepared an action plan to ensure reliable power supply, because generation has improved significantly as reservoirs received good inflows in the last few weeks, a Government release said here on Sunday.

The Chief Minister held a review meeting on Sunday with Mr S. V. Prasad, Chief Secretary, Mr Suthirtha Bhattacharya (Principal Secretary, Energy), and Mr Ajay Jain, Chairman and Managing Director of AP Transco, on the power situation in the State.

The Transco officials said that the State could reduce transmission losses to 18.51 per cent in 2009-10, one of the lowest in the country. "We have reduced the transmission losses by almost 50 per cent from 35 per cent in 2000-01. We could achieve this after implementation of technologies, monitoring systems, and continuous regulation of operations of distribution companies," they said.

The Transco had also taken up an initiative to set up 21 220-kV and ten 132-kV substations at a total cost of Rs 1,155 crore for various lift irrigation schemes being

executed by the Irrigation Department.

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Back Bears pull down pepper futures

G K Nair

Kochi, Oct 10

The pepper market continued to experience a declining trend on bearish activities aimed at depressing the market.

There were intermittent bullish turns, but the bear operators had the upper hand in the 'tug of war'. At times, it gave an impression of a 'gambling den' also with highly speculative activities, which the trading sources said were not a healthy sign.

A latest development in the world pepper market is the emergence of an international commodity exchange with futures trading in pepper. It is expected to become operational in Singapore soon.

According to a report, the Singapore Mercantile Exchange (SMX) "will launch world's first international Black Pepper Futures Contract (Contract Symbol: SMPEPPER) platform with physical delivery-based settlement, as its first agricultural commodity derivatives product".

In the changed scenario now, where all the origins have started trading among themselves, the proposed kind of exchange might turn out to be a guiding factor. Singapore being a common platform for trading, international players dealing in Malabar, Lampung, Vietnam and Brazil (MLVB) could operate from there.

Therefore, it is worthwhile to give it a try, Mr Kishor Shamji, a long time President of India Pepper and Spice Trade Association (IPSTA), in whose tenure about a

decade ago IPSTA had mooted the idea of setting up an international exchange here, told Business Line. But it failed to take-off due to lack of confidence in some of the producing countries, he said.

However, he said, all the outstanding positions should end up in delivery only, and not in cash settlement, and “then only it will function properly”. According to him, “it could set international parameter for the pepper trade”, he said.

Prices

The decline in Indian parity to \$4,400 a tonne (c & f) resulted in some business coming to India for MG1 from selected pockets in the overseas markets. October, November and December contracts dropped by Rs 397, Rs 380 and Rs 440, respectively, a quintal during the week to close at Rs 18,408, Rs 18,604 and Rs 18,805.

Total turn over moved up by 1,247 tonnes to 61,714 tonnes. Total open interest during the week fell by 1,002 tonnes to 15,244 tonnes. Spot prices dropped by Rs 500 a quintal to close at Rs 18,100 (ungarbled), and Rs 18,600 (MG1) a quintal at the weekend.

Exporters reported to have covered small quantity of farm grade pepper from the investors who were not showing much interest to sell and switched over to November, market sources told Business Line.

Domestic demand is yet to pick up as buyers were not active in the declining market, they said.

An International Pepper Community (IPC) report said black pepper prices remained stable, and market at all origins was firm. The situation is likely to continue till next year. Vietnam, the largest supplier, did not show a selling pressure. The local prices stood at the level of VND 71,500 a kg during the last two weeks. F.o.b. prices for black 500g/l and 550g/l were also stable at the level of

\$3,775 and \$3,959 a tonne, respectively, during the last six weeks. Malabar continued to be the price leader, with limited activity. Trading at the Commodity Exchange decreased during the week. Domestic consumption in India absorbed major portion of its crop.

Lampung black was stable both in local as well as f.o.b. Local price in Brazil increased, while f.o.b decreased marginally. In Sarawak, the local price decreased, while f.o.b was reportedly stable. In Sri Lanka, average pepper price in growing areas increased by 2 per cent.

White pepper prices were stable locally as well as f.o.b.

Ten per cent of Lampung pepper exports during January–August was to India. During July and August 2010, export from Lampung recorded a substantial increase, mostly from carry-over of the previous year's crop, IPC said. During January–August 2010, Lampung has shipped out 24,708 tonnes of black pepper, as against 24,232 tonnes in the same period of last year. Around 50 per cent was exported to the US, and 21 per cent to Vietnam. Other important destinations were Singapore and Russia.

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Back Bengal Govt opts for direct selling of potatoes to traders

Shobha Roy

Kolkata, Oct 10

The West Bengal Government has temporarily put on hold its decision to go for the tendering process for offloading potatoes held by it. The State government has instead decided to opt for direct selling by various agencies to potato traders and cold storages across the State at a pre-determined price, according to Mr Patit

Paban De, Past President, West Bengal Cold Storage Association.

The State Finance Minister, Mr Asim Dasgupta, government officials and the members of West Bengal Cold Storage Association met on Friday to take stock of the rising costs of the tuber due to the demand-supply mismatch on account of delay in offloading of government stock, Mr De told Business Line.

“Based on Friday's meeting, Mr Dasgupta has decided to put on hold the tendering process which was earlier being planned for offloading government stock into the market. The State government has instead decided to ask the agencies such as Confed and Benfed to start selling directly to potato traders and cold storages at a bond price (excluding all expenses) of Rs 400 a quintal,” Mr De said.

Spiralling prices

The potato prices have been skyrocketing over the last few days by almost Rs 200-300 a quintal on account of a demand-supply mismatch. The prices were hovering around Rs 750-800 a quintal during the first week of October. “The potato prices had gone through the roof due to the lower supply of the tuber in the market. The direct selling model which has been announced by the state government has already started on Saturday and will continue for the next few days,” he pointed out.

The State government would take stock of the situation later during this week. “The direct selling will continue for three-to-four days starting Saturday. The situation will then be reviewed by the State government in case there is a drastic fall in prices,” he added.

The government had procured 9.75 lakh tonne (lt) of potatoes through the consumer co-operatives under the West Bengal State Consumers Cooperative Federation (Confed) during this year. The potatoes were procured from farmers at Rs 3.50/kg. The State had produced a bumper crop of about 100 lt this year, which

caused the prices to fall; the government therefore bought potatoes in order to prevent prices from crashing.

Close to two-to-three per cent of the total stock held by the government was likely to be released over the next few days through direct selling process.

The State government had identified two processes of offloading the potatoes, one by way of public distribution system and another through trade channel by tendering process. Close to one Mt of potatoes were to be released through the PDS while about 4 Mt would be offloaded through the tendering process, the State government had earlier notified. However, the tendering process could not take off as there was some problem releasing the potatoes through the process, Mr De observed.

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Back Low arrivals pull down Kochi tea prices

Our Bureau

Kochi Oct. 10

Despite weak arrivals, prices continued to gravitate lower at the Kochi tea auction. There was 8.28 lakh kg of dust and 1.62 lakh kg of leaf tea on offer at the auction. Prices at the CTC dust auction generally moved lower, but some select grades quoted at last week's levels. Vimal tea was active in most varieties, while AVT, Tata Global, Hindustan Unilever and Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation lent fair amount of support. Exporters and upcountry buyers were selective and remained subdued. Kerala loose tea traders were also active. Orthodox dust grades remained firm to dearer.

Leaf Auction

Prices of Nilgiri bolder broken, whole leaf grades and smaller broken were irregular and fell sharply by Rs 10-20 and sometimes even more at the orthodox leaf auction. However, a few select grades sold at last week's levels. Nilgiri fannings remained firm to dearer, while medium whole leaf grades and bolder broken grades remained steady to firm. There were several withdrawals as the prices fell. Exporters to Russia and other destinations remained subdued. Tunisian buyers were active but covered only small quantities. Hindustan Unilever was a strong feature of the market and covered whole leaf and Nilgiri fannings. Weak trends were evident at the CTC leaf auction. Manjola SFD and Chinnar SFD fetched the top price at the dust auction at Rs 120 followed by Pasuparai FD at Rs 118 and Pasuparai SFD (Rs 116). At the leaf auction, Pascoe's Woodlands green tea fetched the top price at Rs 322 followed by Pascoe's Woodlands superfine green tea at Rs 225, Chamraj FOP (Rs 207) and Chamraj FBOP (Rs 205).

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Back Fluctuating demand witnessed at Coonoor tea auction

P.S. Sundar

Coonoor, Oct. 10

Market tracked irregular trends at Sale No: 40 of the Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions with fluctuating demand.

Teas worth Rs 1.40 crore remained unsold as 17.5 per cent of the 12.88 lakh kg on offer had to be withdrawn for want of buyers.

In all, 66 marks of CTC teas fetched Rs 100 and more. Darmona Tea Industry topped both leaf and dust markets. In the dust market, Vigneshwar Estate also

topped. Among others, Shanthi Supreme got Rs 130, Homedale Estate and Professor Rs 127.

Among orthodox teas from corporate sector, Chamraj got Rs 205, Curzon Rs 180, Havukal Rs 167, Highfield Estate Rs 165, Prammas Rs 153, Glendale Rs 152, Kairbetta and Tiger Hill clonal Rs 150. In all, 33 marks got Rs 100 and more.

“Orthodox leaf market was irregular gaining and losing Rs 2-4 a kg. High-priced CTC leaf was barely steady to dearer Rs 2-3, better medium irregularly easier to dearer Rs 1-3, but plainers lost Rs 1-2. Primary orthodox dusts eased Rs 2-5, rest irregularly steady to dearer Rs 1-2. High-priced CTC dusts irregularly steady to easier Rs 2-5, but mediums gained Rs 2-3”, an auctioneer said.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 40-42 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 80-115 for brighter liquoring sorts. They ranged Rs 45-52 for plain dusts and Rs 90-130 for brighter liquoring dusts.

On the export front, Pakistan bought selectively for Rs 39-55 a kg and the CIS, Rs 40-45.