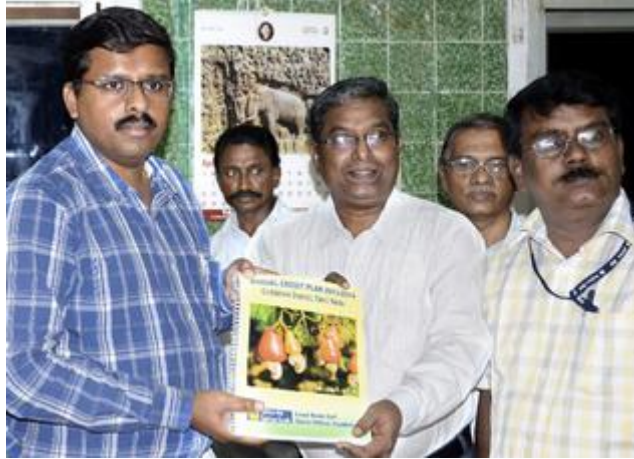


Major share of Cuddalore annual credit plan for farm sector



Collector R. Kirlosh Kumar releasing the Annual Credit Plan for 2013-14 in Cuddalore on Wednesday.—Photo:C. Venkatachalapathy

Bankers in Cuddalore district have decided to raise the credit limit to various sectors to Rs. 3,722.33 crore for the financial year 2013-14.

This would be 21.45 per cent higher than what was sanctioned in 2012-13. The Annual Credit Plan (ACP) that facilitates sector-wise and bank-wise allocation for the purpose was released on Wednesday by Collector R. Kirlosh Kumar at a special bankers' meeting held at his camp office here.

The Collector lauded the efforts of the Lead Bank (Indian Bank) in preparing a detailed document that would be useful for the bankers, government officials and other stakeholders.

Mr. Kumar noted that since economy of the district was basically agrarian, a lion's share of the ACP amounting to Rs. 2,859.38 crore had been earmarked for the agricultural sector, forming 76.81 per of the total financial outlay.

The allocation for industrial and service sectors was Rs. 144.18 crore and Rs. 718.77 crore respectively, accounting 3.88 per cent and 19.31 per cent of the Plan size. As such, the service sector would get a major thrust.

The ACP had also made provision for a sum of Rs. 331.05 crore to be allocated to various government programmes meant for the uplift of the poor and the downtrodden.

The financial outlay would be shared by bankers as follows: commercial banks – Rs. 2,957.15 crore, co-operative banks – Rs. 514.43 crore, regional rural bank – Rs. 245.80 crore and the Tamil Nadu Industrial Investment Corporation – Rs. 4.95 crore.

Lead District Manager R. Sethuraman said that updating the data on village resources and dissemination of such information to field-level functionaries to prepare the branch credit plan were the two important requirements of the ACP exercise.

Mr. Sethuraman further said that based on the branch credit plan, block-level and district-level credit plans were finalised. The ACP had been prepared in synchronisation with the potential linked credit plan prepared by the NABARD.

R. Manimaran, Zonal Manager, Indian Bank, Cuddalore, S.Rajagopalan, and Assistant General Manager, NABARD, were present.

The Collector handed over “sanction tickets” from Indian Bank to 29 students for educational loans to the tune of Rs. 50.52 lakh.

‘Farmers’ participation vital to protect coconut trees from pests’

Black head caterpillars are spreading fast in Namakkal, Rasipuram taluks

“Involvement of farmers is more important to save coconut trees from the fast-spreading damage caused by black head caterpillars, than solely depending on the agriculture department to come out with a solution,” Joint Director of Agriculture A. Prabakaran told *The Hindu* after inspecting some of the worst hit groves in Namakkal and Rasipuram Taluks.

“Coconut cultivated across a few thousand acres has been affected by the caterpillar and it is spreading fast in the summer — which favours its multiplication. Farmers seek distribution of predators of the caterpillar to get rid of them. There are a host of problems in producing such large volume of predators to meet the enormous requirement,” he added. According to him the main constraint is unfavourable climatic conditions for multiplication of the predators during summer, as the temperature should be lower.

He said that on the other hand the laboratory that is dedicated to multiplication of the predator on the Mohanur Road in Velur can only meet the requirements of 500 hectares of coconut cultivation.

“A proposal has been submitted to officials concerned, seeking additional funds to gear up multiplication of the predator and to maintain favourable conditions artificially by using air coolers,” he said and made an appeal to farmers to try other modes of controlling spread of black head caterpillar.

Subject Matter Specialist (Agronomy) at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) S. Alagudurai said that farmers should identify affected trees at a very early stage, cut down the affected leaves and burn them.

“The caterpillar has a lifetime of just seven weeks during which it develops into a pupa and an adult that lays an average 135 eggs. Burning the affected leaves will save other trees in that vicinity,” he said.

He said that controlling the caterpillar needs an integrated approach as about 600 caterpillars can completely destroy a coconut tree in less than two weeks.

“There are many neem-based and chemical pesticides that can be sprayed below the affected leaves, while root feeding of pesticides at 10 ml per affected tree should also be followed,” he added.

Mr. Alagudurai said that root feeding is more effective than using predators. The pesticide has to be mixed with an equal quantity of water and poured into a packet.

A red root of the affected tree should be soaked in the solution to help the pesticide reach the ends of the tree and kill the caterpillar when it eats the leaf.

Farmers claimed that root feeding cannot be followed due to human resource shortage and the presence of residues of the pesticides in coconuts for close to 45 days after root feeding was done.

Mr. Prabakaran explained that farmers will have 90 days to cut coconuts from a tree from which they take coconuts once.

“This will give them ample time to root feed twice without affecting the farmers and consumers,” he clarified.

KAU to award doctorate honoris causa to farmers

Academic Council nod for revision of syllabi once in four years

The Academic Council of Kerala Agricultural University on Wednesday decided to award doctorate honoris causa to farmers who have made significant contributions to the agriculture sector.

A subcommittee, headed by the Director of Extension, recommended a modus operandi for selecting the winners. The council approved the committee’s recommendations.

The council also gave the nod to proposals to revise the syllabi of courses once in four years; to prescribe a minimum OGPA (Overall Grade Percentage Average) of 6/10 for a pass in undergraduate courses; to change internal-external components of evaluation to 50:50; and to include external examiner in postgraduate viva voce.

“Syllabus revision will bring in the much-needed contemporary changes in farm studies,” P. Rajendran, Vice-Chancellor, said. “A proposal in this regard was mooted by a

workshop on academic reforms conducted earlier this month. In order to encourage research in thrust areas, postgraduate students will be provided with a bank of projects to choose their subject of research. The project bank will be prepared by experts.”

Registrar E.K. Mathew said the council had nominated Thomas George as its representative to the Kerala Higher Education Council.

The KAU Management Aptitude Test for admission to MBA in agri-business management would be discontinued and admission to the course would henceforth be based on CMAT/CAT score in consonance with norms of the All India Council for Technical Education.

Students who discontinue the MBA course will lose all fee paid and those who leave the course after closure of admission should pay an amount of Rs.50,000 as liquidation damages. MBA in agri-business management has been approved as a qualification for admission to Ph.D. in rural marketing.

E.V. Nybe, Director (Academic), said the council approved the proposals to restructure college-level committees and Faculty Research Committee to ensure effective planning and monitoring of postgraduate and doctoral research programmes, and to change the existing undergraduate study tour pattern to an all-India tour after the sixth semester and an all-Kerala tour during the final semester.

The all-Kerala tour will be designed in such a way that students get familiarised with different agro climatic conditions, research stations and their functioning.

The council meeting was attended by deans of faculties, Directors of Extension, elected representatives of teachers and students, and expert members nominated by the Chancellor.

From classroom to farm

EVENT Madura College students visit Vadivelkarai Village to study the environmental issues affecting the farmers



SENSITISING STUDENTS Studying pests that destroy the crop. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Is inorganic farming the only solution to meet the demand? How are we going to tackle health issues arising out of overuse of chemical fertilizers? Can we switch over to organic farming? At a time of acute water shortage what do farmers do to protect their crop? Such queries drove a group of students from Madura College to Vadivelkarai Village to study the environmental issues bothering the farming community.

“To get first hand information, we decided to take the classroom interaction to the field ,” says S. Balakrishnan, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy who is also project co-ordinator. ,

“Students should visit fields for a better understanding as environment studies is part of the UGC syllabus now,” he adds.

Active learning

Since active learning is all about shaping perspectives, Balakrishnan feels students' perspective towards subjects like bio diversity, climate change, global warming, water scarcity and food security should change.

Once a fertile area in the Nagamalai Pudukottai and Koothiarkundu ayacut, Vadivelkarai is now reeling under severe water shortage. Due to monsoon failure farmers are now solely dependent on ground water, which is also depleting fast.

Nagarajan, a local farmer, introduced various farming activities to the students and explained how he manages with the available water resource. “We have two crop seasons here and one has to adopt alternate cultivation method to enrich the soil,” he says.

Farmers here alternate between paddy and plantain or brinjal to give sufficient time for the earth to recharge itself. “Earlier, we used only organic methods for farming,” says Nagarajan. “We have used cow dung and goat's poop as manure for crop and they are again in great demand now due to lack of sufficient water and cattle feed.”

G. Karthick, III year Physics, wanted to know why peasants go for inorganic farming when sustainable development is only possible with organic practices. Farmer A. Soundarapandian explained that chemical fertilizers gave more yield in less time . “For example, the Karnataka ponni rice variety takes 145 days to reach full growth but when we use organic manure it takes double the time and the yield is much less .”

“Though organic farming is beneficial to people, immediate implementation is impractical as the gap between demand and supply widens, “ points out feels Balakrishnan.

S. Sornarajan, Assistant Agricultural Officer, Department of Horticulture, Madurai West, briefed farmers about the best farming practices to achieve desirable results. “Our department regularly conducts orientation programmes for the farmers. We encourage them to install drip irrigation system in their fields so that water is evenly supplied to all

parts of the field in short period of time. We also offer substantial subsidies,” says Sornarajan, also a native of the village.

The 21-member team, including 15 girls visited the brinjal field to learn about pests that destroy the crop.

“Such extension activities are organised regularly to sensitise students,” says R. Murali, Principal, Madura College. “It creates environmental awareness among students. Though many of us claim that we are from villages none of us know what agriculture-based lifestyle is all about. Understanding tradition is not about visiting only heritage sites but also to places like these where one learns more about social life of people.”

Making silage popular among livestock owners in Rajasthan



Low cost: In about two weeks, fermentation is complete and the silage is ready to be fed to the cattle.— Photo: Special Arrangement

Non-availability of green fodder becomes a problem during summer season or when the monsoon fails.

Prolonged preservation of fodder in the form of silage becomes the key to overcome the increasing constraints in green fodder availability.

“Silage making is a simple solution to this issue. It helps in ensuring availability of green food during lean period or drought conditions. It also helps in improving digestibility in animals and in maintaining milk production during lean periods.

“Timely and unchanged feeding is possible with silage,” says Dr. R.K. Nagda, Dean, College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Vallabhnagar Dist., Udaipur, Rajasthan.

Stored fodder

Silage is fermented, high-moisture stored fodder which can be fed to cud chewing animals such as cattle, sheep and goats.

It is fermented and stored in a process called ensilage, ensiling or silaging and is usually made from grass, maize, sorghum or other cereals using the entire green plant (not the grain alone).

Chaffed and packed in air tight conditions at appropriate moisture levels within 24 hours of chaffing, silage can get ready in 60 days. The crops suitable for making silage are ordinary green grasses, sorghum, maize and various weeds.

“After harvesting, crops are shredded into small pieces and spread in uniform layers over the floor or inside big bags. If the material is placed in bags or containers then the container mouth has to be tightly closed to prevent air from entering.

In about two weeks fermentation gets completed and the silage is ready to be fed to cattle,” explains Dr. Nagda.

Silage must be firmly packed to minimize the oxygen content or it will get spoilt.

Traditional methods

Traditional methods of making silage involve digging a pit in the soil and placing the harvested matter inside and covering it with soil. But this proved difficult since landless farmers cannot go for such pit methods.

This method makes it difficult to transport the silage from the pit to the cattle shed, making portability difficult. It is also labour intensive and costly. High wastage of silage near top of the pits also occurs due to mud contamination.

Once opened, silage must be used within a short time. “Also we find there is a general aversion among farmers to make silage themselves and this is a major impediment in wider use of it,” he says.

Plastic bags

Last year the University of Veterinary Animal Sciences in Bikaner was approached by some experts to try and make silage in plastic bags.

Called silage bags, they are easily available in different capacities, are light in weight, cost low, can be folded, stored easily and carried even on a bicycle.

Trials were conducted at various locations in Rajasthan and results have emboldened scientists to encourage farmers to use this technique on their animals.

“One of the main reasons for our finding the bags useful is that they are available in various sizes from 1.5 to 5 kg depending on requirement in the local market. “Labour requirement is low: 1-3 persons are needed to fill a bag. Moisture retention is excellent with practically no wastage or contamination.

The nutritional value of the packed silage remains intact. One 100 kg bag is sufficient for feeding 5-10 animals a day," he says.

The first trial in Rajasthan was done at a farmer's field on the outskirts of Udaipur at a village called Boradia. The bag was opened 75 days later and the cows immediately consumed it.

Quite profitable

Making silage can enhance fodder growing as a profitable activity by providing a marketing link between growers and dairy sector. The University is presently trying to make this technique popular among its farmers.

For more information contact Dr. R.K. Nagda, Dean College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Vallabhnagar Dist, Udaipur, Rajasthan, email: nagdark2006@yahoo.co.in, mobile: 09414734827 and 07742002277.

Role of insect light trap in organic agriculture

Insect light trap is one of the very effective tools of insect pest management in organic agriculture as it mass-traps both the sexes of insect pests and also substantially reduces the carryover pest population.

Important pests

The key insect pests of cereal crops (rice, maize, sorghum), pulse crops (chickpea, pigeonpea, lentil, greengram), vegetable crops (okra, cauliflower, cabbage, tomato, brinjal), horticultural crops (mango, litchi, pomegranate, apple guava, coconut, banana) can be mass trapped by using the light trap.

Farmers must know that by attracting and killing one adult moth or insect they control around 300-400 insect progenies through them.

By monitoring the light traps they will know better what types of insect are there in the field and whether they are in controllable level or not.

Once the insect population in the light traps crosses a certain limit the farmer can decide on the type of pest management they have to take up. By keeping a light trap, one for every half an acre right from the beginning of planting the farmer can control almost all the insect pests that are trying to attack the crop. The light trap has undergone lots of changes from its simple beginning as a kerosene lamp kept in front of a cloth sheet or water container to electrically operated ones to battery operated now.

The ordinary light trap consists of an electric bulb emitting yellow light as attractant and a funnel to direct lured insects into a container containing water.

A biotech company called Romvijay Biotech has developed a light weight, portable, battery-operated, remote and timer operated light trap.

LED bulb

The light trap has been fitted with yellow light emitting LED bulbs for longer life and much brightness. The inbuilt battery is chargeable and one charge will keep the light glowing for about eight hours.

Farmers are advised to keep one light trap for every half an acre during the dusk hours (6 pm to 9 pm) when the insects are very active.

The cost of the light trap is Rs 600 and those interested can contact Mr. Abdul Khader, Safs organic enterprises on Phone: 0413-2271915 or mobile: 09488591915.

(Dr. C. Vaithilingam , Romvijay Biotech Private Limited, No-5, Cuddalore Main Road, Kanniakoil, Puducherry 607 402, email: vaithi52@gmail.com, mobile:094432 39092, Phone +91 413 2611165.)

Matters of milk and medicine

CHAT Milk might not be all that we have been brought up to believe, claims author and naturopath N. K. Sharma



Malicious milk?Dr. N. K. Sharma at the book launch in New Delhi

Breaking away from a common notion is not an easy task. With *Milk: A Silent Killer* Dr. N. K. Sharma wants the world to know that a glass of milk could turn into a nightmare for you and your loved ones.

Conventional wisdom, passed down over generations, holds that milk is good for health, and the slightly more suspicious claim that it will ensure good scores on the report card. It is a source of calcium but could also be the reason for cancer. Sharma, a well known naturopath, has come up with a revised version of his book *Milk*, which was published in 1987. "Since my childhood I have been a lover of milk and been a sufferer too. I used to do medicines and yoga and never doubted why my ailing condition was not being cured," he says.

A large intake of milk over several years can lead to cancer, as the magnesium it contains can get slowly deposited in the body. The doctor also believes that prevention is better

than cure and boasts proudly about he has shielded his family from any form of disease. “God has graced us with a healthy mind and body, nobody is born ill. It is we who deplete the condition of our body through our ignorance,” he says. “Disease is not natural, health is natural state of body; medicines should not become a lifestyle and it should be treated as a medicine only.”

But to shatter the common myth that has been here for ages is not an easy task. “We have to become the message. We know what is the right thing to do, we will certainly benefit from it later. We have been brought up to believe milk is good, it is high time for it to change,” he signs off.

Freak rains toll rises to seven; crops damaged



Double blow: Notwithstanding the power woes which are affecting crops across the State, a farmer inspects his crop damaged by heavy rain in Sangareddy of Medak district on Wednesday. -Photo: Mohd Arif

The toll in the freak rains and hailstorm that lashed some parts of Telangana rose to seven with two more deaths coming to light on Wednesday, one each from Nizamabad and Medak districts.

Twenty-three persons were injured in different freak accidents caused by the strong gales that accompanied the rains.

The fresh death reported from Nizamabad was that of a woman caused by lightning. The district now accounts for five casualties, whereas there was one death each in Hyderabad

and Medak. The rains and strong winds destroyed over 350 houses, most of them in Nizamabad, and 26 buffaloes, sheep, bullocks perished.

COLOSSAL DAMAGE

- ▶ Crops in over an extent of nearly 50,000 acres damaged**
- ▶ Over 350 houses, most of them in Nizamabad, destroyed**
- ▶ About 26 buffaloes, sheep, bullocks perish**
- ▶ Twenty-three persons injured in freak accidents caused by the strong gales**

Huge damage to crops

A rough estimate by the government based on preliminary reports sent by the Collectors indicated that crops over an extent of nearly 50,000 acres had been damaged. The crops affected included paddy, maize, sesamum and sunflower. Horticultural crops, particularly mango, were damaged in over an extent of 2,500 acres. T. Radha, Disaster Management Commissioner, said the full extent of the damage would be known only after enumeration by revenue officials.

The rains and hailstorm lashed parts of Telangana for the second consecutive day on Wednesday. There were clouds of dust in several localities of Hyderabad as a result of the strong gales that preceded the rains. The localities experienced a downpour for more than an hour around midnight, leaving many low-lying roads inundated by morning.

Some relief

Besides reducing the demand for power and providing some relief to AP Transco which was struggling to meet the heavy load, the rains have also mitigated the hardships faced by residents of a number of apartments in respect of groundwater availability.

Hyderabad Airport area, Golconda, Hakimpet recorded 4 cm of rainfall each, Medak, Kamareddy 3 cm each and Vikarabad and Medchal one cm each. There were isolated spells of rain in Rayalaseema with Tadipatri and Arogyavaram reporting a rainfall of 3 cm each. However, this region reeled under dry weather with Anantapur recording temperature of 42 degrees Celsius, the State's highest for the day.

Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy, who was in Nellore participating in Indiramma Baata, was kept posted with details about the loss of life and crops.

Heavy rain takes away crops, livestock

Narsimha Reddy became an unlucky farmer in just 24 hours. The tomato crop he had cultivated in his five acres at Kalivemula village in Sangareddy mandal has completely fallen due to hailstorm and heavy gales that uprooted the crop and carpeted it on the ground.

“I had planned to harvest the crop on Wednesday and made all arrangements. But, luck did not favour me. The rain added with hailstorm and heavy gales started at about 1 p.m. on Tuesday and continued till late in the night with little intervals. The entire tomato crop has been carpeted while I witnessed it helplessly,” Mr. Lakshma Reddy told *The Hindu*, controlling his tears.

He was one among the scores of farmers who bore heavy losses by the hailstorms and heavy gales that swept some parts of Medak district on Monday and Tuesday.

Not quantified yet

According to sources, crop and livestock loss was reported from Medak, Hatnoora, Gajwel, Jagadevpur, Wargal, Mulugu, Siddipet, Toopran and Narsapur mandals.

It was reported that paddy, maize, mango, vegetable crops were lost in about 4,000 acres from about 15 villages. However, officials were not yet ready to quantify the loss money-wise stating that they were busy collecting the data.

According to Collector A. Dinakarbabu, preliminary reports suggested that paddy (1,064 hectares), maize (1,703 ha), sunflower (99.60 ha) and mango (60.40 ha) crops were lost. About 15,000 poultry birds perished due to the rains in about 12 poultry sheds, 10 buffalos and cows, six calves too died. Around 177 houses were partially damaged and four houses were fully damaged and about 800 electric polls were uprooted affecting the power supply to about 30 villages.

Power disrupted

While power supply was restored to Sangareddy late on Tuesday night, it was restored in Medak only on Wednesday.

APCPDCL Chairman and Managing Director V. Anil Kumar and senior officials from the district along with the Collector visited the affected areas on Wednesday and consoled the victims. They also assured to extend assistance in the shortest possible time.

Cattle-lifters can't resist it in Old City

The problem is persisting for many years as professional gangs are involved in the job



ON THE PROWL

- ▷ Gangs steal sheep/goats from the streets during broad daylight
- ▷ Many poor families rear them to supplement their family income
- ▷ Gangs scout localities in autorickshaws to carry out their activities
- ▷ A sheep or goat can fetch anywhere between Rs. 3,000 and Rs. 8,000
- ▷ Auto drivers indulge in hit and run tactics if someone tries to stop them
- ▷ Stolen goats/sheep sold to slaughterhouses or butchers at 60 p.c. of market price

“I incurred a loss of Rs. 15,000 after three goats were stolen in a year. The police also do not take such thefts seriously

JAHANGIR
Local resident

Instances of theft of sheep and goats are not restricted to city outskirts alone. The old city is also facing a similar problem for the last many years. Gangs steal sheep and goats daringly from the streets during broad daylight.

Many poor families in the slum areas rear sheep and goats to supplement their family income. The animals are allowed to roam freely in the neighbourhood every morning and at the end of the day they return to the shed.

“A sheep or goat can fetch anywhere between Rs. 3,000 and Rs. 8,000 and cashing upon it many professional gangs are engaged in stealing in this part of the city,” says Shaik Jilani, a resident of Shastripuram who has lost more than six goats in the last three years. Thieves use autorickshaws to

carry out their activities. They scout the localities in the afternoon and on spotting them at isolated places, the gangsters lift them and dump them in the autorickshaw and speed away.

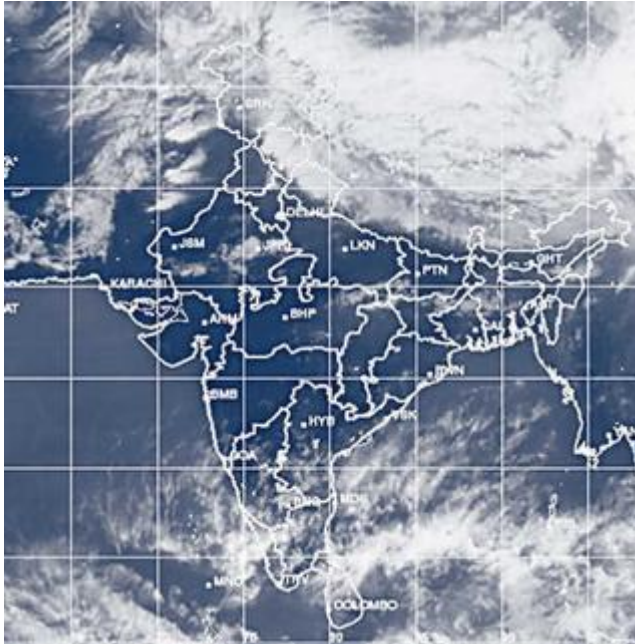
Even the bravest dare not confront them by standing in front of their autorickshaw as they are known for their hit and run tactics. In a recent incident a youth of Gazi-e-Millat Colony in Chandrayangutta tried to stop one gang after chasing the autorickshaw but the auto driver tried to run over him.

It was only after the intervention of over a dozen odd youth of the locality that the two-member gang was caught. The thieves were given a sound thrashing before being handed over to the police. Jahangir, a local resident of the area, said that he has lost more than three goats in the one year.

“I have incurred a loss of about Rs. 15,000 due to the thefts. The police also do not take such thefts seriously,” he laments.

The stolen sheep and goats are sold to slaughterhouses or selected butchers, who are hand in glove with cattle thieves.

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on April 3rd.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	37	18	14	22
New Delhi (Sfd)	36	18	9	20
Chandigarh	33	19	0	25
Hissar	32	17	0	39
Bhuntar	26	11	0	102
Shimla	21	10	0	99
Jammu	27	18	1	33
Srinagar	12	7	4	85
Amritsar	29	14	0	4
Patiala	33	18	0	23
Jaipur	36	19	5	7
Udaipur	36	19	0	0
Allahabad	39	20	0	9
Lucknow	37	19	0	1
Varanasi	39	20	0	6
Dehradun	31	17	0	17
Agartala	35	21	6	31
Ahmedabad	36	22	0	0
Bangalore	35	22	1	14
Bhubaneshwar	38	24	0	0
Bhopal	34	22	0	21
Chennai	34	25	0	32
Guwahati	33	20	0	20
Hyderabad	36	20	41	41

Kolkata	37	26	0	1
Mumbai	31	25	0	0
Nagpur	39	23	0	15
Patna	37	21	0	1
Pune	36	19	0	3
Thiruvananthapuram	34	27	0	80
Imphal	32	15	0	29
Shillong	24	14	0	22

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (tr-trace) and total rainfall in mm since 1st March.

RAIN AT MANY PLACES

RAINFALL: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at few places over Jammu and Kashmir and at isolated places over Haryana, Himachal Pradesh Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Weather was mainly dry over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cms are: HARYANA: Farukhnagar 1, JAMMU AND KASHMIR: Gund 1 and WEST RAJASTHAN: Bikaner Tehsil 1.

MAXIMUM TEMPERATURES : The maximum temperatures fall markedly in Jammu and Kashmir, rose in east Uttar Pradesh and changed little elsewhere. They were above normal in, appreciably below normal in Jammu and Kashmir and normal in rest of the region. The highest maximum temperature in the region was 39.4°C recorded at Sawai Madhopur (Rajasthan) and Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh).

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 05th April

2013: Rain/thundershowers would occur at a few places over Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh during next 24 hours and at one or two places thereafter.

Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Uttarakhand.

Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Punjab, Haryana and Delhi during next 24 hours and mainly dry weather thereafter. Weather would be mainly dry over rest of the region.

WARNING : Thunder squall accompanied with hails could occur at one or two places over Jammu division of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Haryana and Thunder squall over Delhi during next 24 hours.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 05th April 2013: Partly cloudy sky. Light rain/thunderstorm accompanied with thunder squall could occur till night

Water level

: Water level in the Papanasam dam on Wednesday stood at 76.70 feet (permissible level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 117.01 cusecs and 504.75 cusecs is discharged from the dam. The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 88.02 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 39 cusecs and 400 cusecs is discharged.

Nagercoil

Water level in the Pechipparai dam stood at 10 feet, 28.40 feet in Perunchani, 4.30 feet in Chittar I, 4.39 feet in Chittar II and 3 feet in the Poigai dam.

The water level in Periyar dam on Wednesday was 112.90 feet (permissible level is 136 feet) with nil inflow and discharge of 100 cusecs on Wednesday. The water level in Vaigai dam was 45.96 feet (71) with an inflow of 132 cusecs and discharge of 60 cusecs. The combined Periyar credit stood at 2,145 mcft. There was no rain in the region, PWD officials said.



Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Thursday, Apr 4

Max 32° | **Min** 25°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 94

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:03

Sunset: 06:20

Barometer: 1009

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Friday, Apr 5

Max 34° | **Min** 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday Apr 6	Sunday Apr 7	Monday Apr 8	Tuesday Apr 9	Wednesday Apr 10
35° 27° Partly Cloudy	35° 27° Overcast	35° 27° Overcast	35° 27° Overcast	34° 26° Overcast

Court relief for collectors facing contempt charges

CHENNAI: The Madras high court has closed the contempt of court proceedings against seven district collectors and as many superintendents of police, initiated by a farmers' association aggrieved by the Gail's multi-crore, inter-state gas pipeline project from Kochi to Bangalore.

The first bench comprising acting Chief Justice R K Agrawal and Justice N Paul Vasanthakumar, acceding to the submissions of TN advocate-general A L Somayaji and closing the contempt petition of Farmers' Sangam general secretary Kandasamy on Tuesday, asked the government to communicate its decision on the project to Gail within three days.

The 600-km pipeline is to be laid between Kochi in Kerala and Bangalore in Karnataka, passing through seven districts — Coimbatore, Tirupur, Erode, Namakkal, Salem, Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri — in Tamil Nadu. Farmers in these districts raised objections saying it would affect more than 3,000 acres of farm land. By earlier orders, the high court asked the state to hold talks with farmers, besides Gail, to arrive at a settlement.

After ascertaining the views of farmers, the government announced it was not in favour of the project and that Gail should close all existing trenches made to lay pipelines.

The advocate-general further pointed out that the government had asked the Gail to compensate farmers for their losses. The judges said: "In view of the decision already taken after convening the meeting as directed by the division bench, no further adjudication is necessary in this contempt petition." They added that the decision could be for Gail to challenge the decision by separate proceedings.

City businessman's passion for farming bears fruit



R Raveendran with his family in the 'purple passion fruit garden' | Kaviyoor Santhosh

Touch, taste and learn to grow the much-sweet purple passion fruit, ripe and mellow, at Raveendran's house.

People from across the state visit his house to enjoy the rare sight and to get tips from him on the art of its cultivation. The demand for the saplings and seeds of the purple fruit is seeing a steady rise.

A businessman, 56-year-old R Raveendran has turned the 800-square feet terrace of his house at Pongumoodu into a fruit garden.

After 22 years of service abroad, he had returned home and started a garage and a stationery shop in the city. However, his interest in farming led to growing vegetables on the backyard of his house. Soon, he took to vegetable cultivation on his rooftop and like many others he had enough fresh vegetables for his kitchen.

It was then, two-and-a-half years ago, that Raveendran took to the cultivation of passion fruit plants and got his terrace ready for them. He bought the Brazilian variety of purple passion fruit from one Ramesh, who worked with the Farm Information Bureau in the city, and studied about the plant and its growth at various agricultural seminars and took to cultivating the fruit in earnest.

"The purple passion fruit is the most special of all the items that I have ever produced," says Raveendran.

According to him, the fruit has much medicinal value. The juice of the fruit checks the growth of cancer cells and is believed to protect the heart. It is also supposed to possess 'somniferous' properties, and when taken before going to bed, helps the person to relax and have a restful sleep. The fruit is rich in Vitamin C, Vitamin A and Potassium. The seeds of the fruit are vital sources of fibre. It also controls diabetes.

The maintenance of the garden is not an easy job as it takes hours to keep it clean. "Well, I spend my evenings along with my family here as the place is one of the comfortable zones in our house. Each and every produce in the garden is the combined effort of everyone in the family," he says.

"There are vegetables like cabbage, capsicum, amaranthus and others along with the passion fruit in my garden. And, of course, I strictly follow a 'no chemicals' policy, and use only organic manure in my garden," says Raveendran.

Raveendran now wants to share his experiences with others who wish to keep their house green by penning a book on farming tips. His house, Reji Bhavan, for sure would leave one confident to try a hand at cultivation.

Business Standard^{beta}

Coconut Board promoting nut cultivation in newer areas

There is not much area left in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu for coconut cultivation

With the area under coconut cultivation in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu now almost saturated, the Coconut Development Board is now promoting it in newer areas.

Andhra Pradesh offers tremendous potential for coconut cultivation on over half a million hectares from the existing 110,000 hectare, according to a top official of the Coconut Development Board (CDB).

There is enormous potential for growing coconut in the entire coastal Andhra Pradesh and many other districts. The present area under coconut cultivation is around 110,000 hectare and there is scope to grow coconut on more than half a million hectares, CDB chairman T K Jose said.

"We look forward to Andhra Pradesh as a focused state as the area under coconut cultivation in Kerala and Tamil Nadu has almost saturated, and there is not much area left in Karnataka. Whereas, Andhra Pradesh offers more area and has better potential for processing and developing coconut enterprises," Jose said.

It will take minimum five years for the state to bring over half a million hectares under coconut cultivation, he said, adding, "the CDB needs support from the horticulture department to increase coconut area under cultivation."

"Besides, farmers should come forward as they will be given high-quality seedlings from our nurseries, associate nurseries of agricultural department and private nurseries," he said. CDB is a statutory body established by the central government for integrated development of coconut cultivation and industry in the country.

To promote integrated development of coconut throughout the country, the Board has undertaken several initiatives, including providing 25 per cent subsidy under Technology Mission on Coconut for minimum five years to motivate entrepreneurs for venturing into coconut processing sector.

In India, coconut is grown on a total area of around 1.9 million hectare and the annual production is 16,943 million nuts. Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh are the main growers in the country, together accounting for 90 per cent of area (under coconut cultivation) and 93 per cent of production, the CDB said. Kerala leads with an annual production of over 600 crore coconuts on 7 lakh hectare area.

At present, Andhra Pradesh occupies the fourth position after Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka but its productivity (per hectare production of nuts) is much better. East Godavari, West Godavari, Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam districts are in forefront.

The state accounts for around 5.5 per cent in area and 6.15 per cent of production of coconut (over 1 billion nuts), according to CDB officials. West Bengal, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh have conducive agro climatic conditions wherein coconut-based integrated farming system can be introduced, they said.

Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Goa, Gujarat, Odisha and West Bengal are traditional producers of coconut while Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand are the new non-traditional areas in the north. All seven states of North-East also grow coconut.

Better export opportunities to keep jeera prices firm: JAU study

It further estimated that jeera production was expected to be lower by 10% this season

Jeera price during April and May will continue to be firm as this year export opportunities were better, said a study by Junagadh Agriculture University's (JAU).

It further estimated that jeera production was expected to be lower by 10% this season.

According to study by department of agricultural economics of JAU, in Gujarat during 2011-12, jeera was grown in 3.74 lakh hectares leading to a production of 2.83 lakh tonnes with a productivity of 760 kg per hectare. Whereas, at country level the production was about 3.42 lakh tonnes, from an area of 5.13 lakh hectares.



But in current year 2012-13 the area under cultivation for jeera in Gujarat is estimated at about 3.34 lakh hectare, which is 10% less due to lack of irrigation. In Rajasthan also jeera production may be less this year.

“Last year at harvest time from March to June, 2012 jeera price remained around Rs 2,400 per 20 kg but from July onwards it started increasing owing to uncertainty of monsoon and now it is prevailing around Rs 2,500 per 20 kg in various markets, which is expected to remain firm, except in coming few weeks when arrivals are at peak. Production may decline by 10% in current year and export opportunities are better”, said Dr Maganlal Dhandhalya, associate research scientist of department of agriculture economics, JAU.

The total arrivals of jeera increased to 45,000 bags from 35,000 bags, while demand was seen around 35,000 bags against 34,000 bags.

Dhandhalya said, “After studying the markets and export scenario, price of jeera would hover in the range of Rs 2,450 to Rs 2,700 per 20 kg during April to May, 2013”

Kedia Commodity said that jeera exports are expected to pick up in coming months amidst lower production reports in Turkey and Syria.

As per JAU study, the export of jeera from India was 45,500 tonnes last year (2011-12), which is expected to increase to level of about 60, 000 tonnes in current year 2012-13. Major competitors for jeera export are Syria and Turkey, but their production comes late in June-July. Indian jeera is exported to countries like US, UK, UAE, Japan, Brazil to name a few.

Potato down more than 2% on weak demand

Prices fell as speculators offloaded their positions



Potato futures for May fell by Rs 21,40, or 2.05%, to Rs 1,020 per quintal in 95 lots.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the April contract traded lower by Rs 9.30, or 0.90%, to Rs 1,017.40 per quintal in 12 lots.

Prices fell as speculators offloaded their positions driven by weak trend in the spot market.

Besides, increased supplies in the spot market from producing regions further pulled down the prices.

Cardamom down 0.6% on profit-booking

Prices fell as speculators booked profits



Cardamom futures for April declined by Rs 5.10, or 0.57%, to Rs 879.50 per kg in 386 lots.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the May contract shed Rs 5, or 0.55%, to Rs 895.60 per kg in 140 lots.

Prices fell as speculators booked profits at prevailing higher levels amid a subdued spot demand.

Adequate stocks in the physical market also put pressure on the cardamom prices.

Mentha oil down 1.5% on weak demand

Prices fell due to increased arrivals in the spot market



Mentha oil futures for April fell by Rs 16.10, or 1.52%, to Rs 1,37.30 per kg in 696 lots.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the May contract lost Rs 15.10, or 1.47%, to Rs 1,006 per kg in 110 lots.

Prices fell due to increased arrivals in the spot market.

Sentiment weakened further as investors indulged in profit-booking in the midst of fall in spot market demand.

Market pulse for agro commodities: Mangal Keshav

Average price of small cardamom increased to '682.5 per kg while maximum price offered was up at '1,125 per kg, as per spice board.

Arrivals of chilli crop declined below 1lakh bags; however demand was reported firm among local buyers at auctions held at Guntur market. Spot rates were steady & quoted at '55-'60 per kg based on crop quality while futures surged more than 1.5% on bargain buying at lower levels.

Arrivals of jeera crop increased to about 40,000 bags from which 35,000 bags were traded at auctions held at Unjha market. Spot rates were down & quoted around '128-'130 per kg, as per local traders.

Spot rates of pepper garbled were steady at '362 per kg and that of un-garbled was unchanged at '347 per kg while arrivals increased to 17 tons & trades too were up at 16 tons at auction held at Kochi market, as per IPSTA.

Arrivals of turmeric crop stood ~10,000 bags from farmers & unsold 10,000 bags at previous day's auction while trades were up at ~15,000 bags at auctions held at Nizamabad market.

Spot rates were down quoted at '55-'60 per kg, as per local traders. Erode market for turmeric will remain close till April 8.

Average price of small cardamom increased to '682.5 per kg while maximum price offered was up at '1,125 per kg, as per spice board. Total inflow of small cardamom crop increased to 54.9 tons from which ~54.5 tons were sold at SIGC auction held at Kochi.

Arrivals of Soya bean crop increased to about 50,000 bags across MP market & steady ~1,000 bags at mandis of Indore while supply at mandis of Rajasthan increased to about 15,000 bags, as per local traders.

Spot rates of soya bean crop offered by planters were steady at '37-'37.5 per kg while rates across mandis of Indore eased slightly to '35.5-'36.5 per kg, as per local traders.

Inflow of mustard seed crop declined to 165,623 quintals, while average of closing spot rates were down at '3,040.2 per quintal, as per agriculture marketing board of Rajasthan. Total arrivals of mustard seed crop increased to more than 5.5lakh bags across major trading center while spot rates were steady & quoted between '33.5-'35.5 per kg based on location.

Chana futures continued their positive trend, closing higher by more than 1% on buying support at lower levels. Spot rates too were up at '34-'34.5 per kg, supported by higher off-take among local buyers & stockist.

Spot rates of mentha oil declined & closed below '1,200 per kg, pressured by poor industrial & export demand and steady supply of about 200-250 drums, across major trading centers. However, front-month futures recovered more than a percent on short-covering.

THE HINDU Business Line

Buyer resistance saps rubber

Kottayam, April 3: Spot rubber declined on Wednesday. The market lost ground tracking the heavy losses in domestic futures on the National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE). According to observers, the prices fell mainly on buyer resistance though there was no selling pressure either from dealers or growers. The trend was partially mixed as latex finished flat amidst scattered transactions.

Sheet rubber surrendered to Rs 165.50 (167) a kg, according to traders. The grade weakened to Rs 166.50 (167.50) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to Rubber Board.

In futures, the April series dropped to Rs 162 (164.90), May to Rs 163.80 (167.73), June to Rs 164.90 (168.82), July to Rs 164.50 (169.01) and August to Rs 165.65 (169.42) a kg for RSS 4 on the NMCE.

RSS 3 (spot) slid to Rs 155.54 (155.89) a kg at Bangkok. Its April futures increased to ₹ 246.1 (Rs 143.24) from ₹ 246 a kg during the day session and then to ₹246.9 (Rs 143.71) in the night session on Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM).

Spot rubber rates (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 165.50 (167); RSS-5: 164 (164.50); Ungraded: 159 (161); ISNR 20: 161 (162) and Latex 60 per cent: 111 (111).

Coonoor tea auction volume at 5-week high

Coonoor, April 3: A volume of 10.27 lakh kg would be offered for Sale No: 14 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auction to be held on Thursday and Friday, reveals an analysis of the brokers' listings.

This is the highest volume in five weeks. It is as much as 2.10 lakh kg more than last week's offer and about 64,000 kg more than the offer this time last year.

Of the 10.27 lakh kg on offer, 7.58 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 2.69 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades. As much as 9.65 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 0.62 lakh kg, orthodox variety. In the leaf counter, only 0.40 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 7.18 lakh kg, CTC. Among the dusts, only 0.22 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 2.47 lakh kg, CTC.

Of the 10.27 lakh kg coming up for sale, about 59,000 kg comprises teas which had remained unsold in previous auctions. Fresh tea accounts for 9.68 lakh kg. In the Leaf auction last week, Hindustan Unilever Ltd bought brighter liquoring and medium varieties while Duncans Tea Ltd showed interest on medium broken. Tata Global Beverages Ltd was selective .

In the Dust auction, HUL and Tata Global were selective while Duncans and Godfrey did not operate. Indcoserve bought medium smaller dusts. AV Thomas and Co Ltd was forceful on brighter liquoring smaller grades. Exporters were selective on plainer grades but upcountry buyers demanded brighter liquoring teas.

Tomatoes leave Bengal growers with smashed hopes

Low prices leads to farmers dumping their produce



Frustrated: Farmers throw away tomatoes on road on not getting proper prices in Kamakhyaguri near Alipurduar district, West Bengal (file photo).

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Kolkata, April 3:

Rabi Mal, a farmer of Jolkul village in Hooghly district, approximately 90 km from Kolkata, is earning a little less than a rupee a kg on tomatoes this year.

Having spent nearly Rs 8 for producing one kg of tomato, Rabi is neck deep in losses. "Prices have dropped to less than Re 1 a kg; and even at this price we are not getting buyers," he said.

Ironic it is, even while farmers are incurring heavy losses, retail consumer in Kolkata is shelling out Rs 12-15 a kg for tomatoes.

Tomato prices, which were ruling around Rs 5-6 a kg till about a fortnight ago, have sharply dipped in the last two weeks on an estimated overproduction and poor demand.

The drop is more significant compared with Rs 14-16 a kg, which the farmers were earning during November-December 2012.

"I have little option left but to cut down the plants as tomatoes have already become ripe and leaving them any further on trees will only spoil the crop. I will sell it for whatever price I get," Rabi said.

Production

Tomato seeds in West Bengal are usually sown in the month of June-July and planting is done after 3-4 weeks of sowing. Maturity of tomato plants is achieved after 8-12 weeks of planting.

West Bengal produced nearly 11.04 lakh tonnes (lt) of tomatoes in 2011-12. The total area under cultivation was 55,225 hectares. The latest production figure for 2012-13 is not available.

The State accounts for almost seven per cent of the country's total production, which stands close to 1.7 crore tonnes. Purulia, Nadia, Bankura and Burdwan are some of the key tomato growing districts in the State.

"A number of my friends have thrown away their tomatoes as they have no buyers. I have been selling my produce at a huge loss," said Ajit Mir, another farmer in the Abhirampur village in Hooghly district.

Lack of storage options

In case of overproduction and weak demand, farmers are left with little option as there is hardly any storage facility for tomatoes in the State.

Hassad Food buys majority stake in Bush Foods

Qatar firm bullish on spices, ready-to-eat foods

New Delhi, April 3: The petrodollars from West Asia have begun to flow into the Indian food sector.

Hassad Food Company, part of the Qatar Investment Authority, the Sovereign Wealth Fund of Qatar, announced the acquisition of a majority stake in Delhi-based Bush Foods Overseas Pvt Ltd, a basmati rice and ready-to-eat products maker for an undisclosed sum.

BOARD

The privately-held Bush Foods markets premium basmati rice under brands such as Neesa, Himalayan Crown and the Indian Star.

It clocked a turnover of Rs 1,340 crore for the year-ended March 2013.

As part of the deal, Hassad has bought out the undisclosed stake held by Standard Chartered Private Equity in Bush Foods and also acquired an additional stake from the Awasty Family.

However, Virkaran Awasty will continue to be the Chairman and Managing Director and run the company.

investments

“Bush Foods is our first investment in India and it may open doors for others. We have acquired more than 51 per cent stake and have invested over \$100 million,” said Nasser Mohammad Al Fuhaid Al Hajri, Chairman and Managing Director of Hassad Food.

However, he refused to quantify the exact investment.

Hassad sees a big opportunity in the unexplored Indian food segment, Al Hajri said, adding that his company had earmarked about \$500 million to invest in India over the next three to five years.

other segments

Spices, ready-to-eat and processed food and meat, vegetables and fruits are the categories in which Hassad Food would be exploring opportunities in India, Al Hajri told *Business Line*.

The Bush Foods buy-out will position Hassad Food on the global business map as a major supplier in the basmati rice domain.

“Our mission is to own and develop efficient, profitable, growth-oriented global brands, contributing to the welfare of Qatar and other societies,” he said.

“It is a landmark marquee moment,” said Awasty, CMD, Bush Foods, referring to the investment by Hassad. Awasty expects to use part of the proceeds in augmenting the capacity and brand promotion among others.

capacity, exports

Bush Foods currently has basmati rice processing capacity of 1.8 lakh tonnes and its exports stood at Rs 500 crore last fiscal.

The company recently forayed into the spices segment, where it sees a major growth potential along with the ready-to-eat category of products.

Hassad-Bush Food is the second such deal where a global firm has acquired stake in the Indian basmati rice firm. In 2011, US food major, McCormick, had formed a joint venture Kohinoor Foods to market the latter’s basmati rice in India.

Private firms asked to buy wheat at Govt prices

New Delhi, April 3: Food Minister K.V.Thomas has urged private companies to come forward and procure wheat at Government-fixed support prices. The wheat procurement season is set to commence in the key producing States of Punjab and Haryana, where high taxes imposed by the State Government have driven away the private trade in recent years.

“Let the private trade come and procure this time. We are working out a mechanism,” Thomas told reporters on the sidelines of CII’s annual event. He called for suggestions from the CII to encourage private players in wheat procurement.

In the absence of private trade in Punjab and Haryana, the Government has been forced to procure a record quantity of wheat from the mandis in these States in recent years.

“Our wheat requirement is 28-29 million tonnes (mt) and we were forced to procure 38 mt last year as the private traders did not want to buy at MSP (minimum support price),” Thomas said. Though the burden is huge, we have to procure to ensure MSP to farmers, he added.

In the current year, wheat procurement is set to scale a new high of 44 mt as production is set to peak to about 96 mt. “We don’t want to give a signal that we will procure wheat for private parties,” Thomas said.

Ashok Gulati, Chairman, Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), stressed the need for rethinking on MSP stating that prices could not be based on the cost of production alone and one had to look at the demand scenario. He suggested that the concept of MSP should be limited to only 4-5 commodities, instead of 24.

Agriculture Secretary Ashish Bahuguna called for creating more non-farm employment opportunities in rural areas. Vishwanath.kulkarni@

Profit booking crushes castorseed futures



Rajkot, April 3: After gaining on Tuesday, castor futures declined on Wednesday as market participants booked profits.

On the other hand, spot prices moved up on hopes of export demand.

On the Rajkot Commodity Exchange (RCX), castorseed June contracts decreased by Rs 18 to Rs 3,878 a quintal, while on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, castor April contracts dropped by Rs 25 to Rs 3,546 with an open interest of 54,030 lots.

NCDEX May contracts moved down by Rs 26 to Rs 3,658 with an open interest of 1,25,970 lots.

Spot castor increased by Rs 22.50 to Rs 3,532.50 on the RCX. About 70,000-80,000 bags of castorseed arrived in Gujarat and were quoted at Rs 695-705 for a *maund* 20 kg.

Around 11,000-12,000 bags arrived and the price quoted was Rs 680-705.

According to traders, despite higher arrivals prices improved as the market is expecting higher demand for export in the coming days. Price rise may be capped as spot arrivals have reached almost one lakh bags a day in Gujarat.

Broiler products may get dearer

Karnal, April 3: Despite some correction in the prices of its key ingredients, prices of poultry feed increased this week.

Higher input cost led feed prices upwards, said Aditya Mishra, a commodity expert.

The uptrend was anticipated as the cost of production has been rising continuously over the last few weeks, he said.

Though, prices of a few ingredients have come down, cost of production is still on the higher side, said Aditya Mishra.

Prices of broiler products may increase in next few days.

On Wednesday, soyameal witnessed some correction and prices went down by Rs 400 to Rs 35,000 a tonne.

Bajra improved by Rs 25 and sold at Rs 1,485, DCP was at 35 a kg, MBM at Rs 39 while maize sold at Rs 1,600, remained unchanged. Mustard de-oiled cake went down by Rs 150 and sold at Rs 14,300, rice bran oil decreased by Rs 3 and was at Rs 52 while DRB witnessed some correction, sold Rs 50 down at Rs 9,100.



Feed Prices

Feed prices went up by Rs 30-40 for a 50-kg bag. “Layer concentrate 25 per cent” and 35 per cent went up by Rs 40 each and sold at Rs 1,465 for a 50-kg bag and at Rs 1,150, respectively.

Pre-lay mash and layer grower mash improved by Rs 30 each and quoted at Rs 1,040 for a 50-kg bag and at Rs 980, respectively.

Broiler concentrate quoted at Rs 1,900, while broiler starter mash was at Rs 1,490.

Poultry Products

Meanwhile, poultry products went down on reduced off-take on Wednesday.

Egg eased by 5 paisa and sold at Rs 2.38; broiler went down by Rs 10 and quoted at Rs 66-70 a kg, while chick sold Rs 2 down at Rs 13-14.

Traders expect that poultry products may rule around current levels for the next few days.

Festival demand heats up edible oils



Mumbai, April 3: Palmolein increased by Rs 4 in Mumbai on Wednesday tracking extended gains in Malaysian palm oil futures. Groundnut and cotton oil rose by Rs 10 and Rs 3 each and ruled firm, Saurashtra markets sources said.

Soyabean, sunflower and rapeseed oils ruled unchanged.

Local stockists — wholesalers continued covering edible oils to feed higher demand in the start of the month and festivals ahead.

The undercurrent of the market was firm, said sources.

Sources said that local stockists continued covering edible oils on support of higher retail demand ahead of RamNavmi and Gudi Padava festivals next week besides retail demands generally improved.

During the day, traders covered another 1,000-1,200 tonnes of palmolein and soyabean refined oil for nearby and forward deliveries.

Liberty sold about 350-400 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 513-515. Ruchi sold 250-300 tonnes at Rs 515-516.

It also sold 150-200 tonnes of soyabean refined oil at Rs 655-660 then raised rates by Rs 5.

Adani sold palmolein at Rs 510. About 150-200 tonnes were resale traded at Rs 510-511 ex-JNPT.

At the close of the day, Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 513-515, super palmolein at Rs 548 and sunflower refined oil Rs 780.

Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 516, soyabean refined oil at Rs 660-665 for April, Rs 670 for May 15 and sunflower refined oil at Rs 771. Allana quoted super palmolein at Rs 545. In Saurashtra – Rajkot restricted selling pushed up groundnut oil by Rs 20 to Rs 1,870 (Rs 1,850) for *telia* tin and by Rs 15 to Rs 1,225 (Rs 1,210) for loose (10 kg).

In producing centres, arrivals of mustard seed continued higher at 5.65 lakh bags and the prices were Rs 3050–3350, while soyabean arrivals declined to 95,000 bags pushing up prices for soyabean to Rs 3650–3700 mandi level and Rs 3750–3800 at plant level.

On the **National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange**, soyabean refined oil's May futures were up by Rs 1.60 to Rs 690 (Rs 688.40); June Rs 680.70 (Rs 680.95) and July at Rs 674 (Rs 675.65).

Malaysia BMD crude palm oil's May futures closed higher at MYR 2,387 (MYR 2,374), June was MYR 2,396 (MYR 2,382) and July closed at MYR 2,403 (MYR 2,386) a tonne.

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg): Groundnut oil 1,220 (1,210); soya refined oil 655 (655); sunflower expeller refined 680 (680); sunflower refined 765 (765); rapeseed refined oil 695 (695); rapeseed expeller refined 665 (665); cottonseed refined oil 625 (622) and palmolein 511 (507).

Vikram Global Commodities, Chennai, has quoted Malaysian super palmolein at Rs 545 ex-Chennai and CIF JNPT at \$907 for April 15 delivery.

Pulses turn bullish on lower arrivals



Indore, April 3: Weak arrivals and robust buying support from millers at the start of the new financial year lifted prices of almost all the pulse seeds and pulses in Indore and other mandis in Madhya Pradesh on Wednesday. The mandis that opened after 4-5 days of holidays had gone through a bearish phase last week. .
Tur, moong and masoor gained.

Tur has increased by about Rs 250 a quintal as demand outstripped arrival.

On Wednesday, tur (Maharashtra) ruled at Rs 4,800, while tur (Madhya Pradesh) rose to Rs 4,300-4,400. Last week, tur (Maharashtra) had been ruling at Rs 4,550-4,575, while tur (Madhya Pradesh) ruled at Rs 4,100-4,200.

According to trade experts, amid lower crop output that is set to decline by 25-30 per cent this year, compared with last year, tur appears to be bullish and may cross Rs 5,000, said Prakash Vora, an Indore-based pulse trader.

Tur output has been estimated at 22-23 lakh tonnes against 32-33 lakh tonnes last year.

Besides decline in domestic crop output, higher import with report of fall in tur output in Myanmar will also add to the bullish sentiment in the coming days, another trader told *Business Line*.

Rise in spot tur has also lifted dal prices in local mandis in the past one week by about Rs 100 with tur dal (full) on Wednesday ruled at Rs 6,600-6,700; tur dal (sawa no.) Rs 5,900-6,000, while tur marka ruled at Rs 7,000-7,300. Moong prices increased by about Rs 300 in the past one week. Moong (bold) in local mandis ruled at Rs 5,700-6,000, while moong (medium) at Rs 5,200-5,400 (up Rs 200 from last week).

Rise in spot moong has also lifted its dal with moong dal (medium) quoted at Rs 6,600-6,700 (up Rs 300 from last week); moong dal (bold) at Rs 6,900-7,000 (up Rs 200), while moong mongar ruled at Rs 7,100-7,300.

Masoor and its dal also witnessed an uptrend on strong buying support and weak arrivals.

Masoor (bold) rose to Rs 4,250, while masoor (medium) ruled at Rs 3,700-3,800. In the past few days, masoor has also seen a gain of Rs 250 a quintal in local mandis.

Rising retail offtake sweetens sugar



Mumbai, April 3: Sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale terminal market rose by Rs 20-30 a quintal on Wednesday on higher retail demand and offtake as the market will remain closed for the next three days up to Saturday to oppose local body tax. Prices at Naka and mill level remained stable, while in the futures market prices dropped by Rs 5 till noon. Vashi-based wholesaler Jagdish Rawal said: "The Government has implemented Local body Tax in the State. A 0.50 per cent local body tax has led to landing cost increasing by Rs 17-18 a bag which is reflected in physical prices. "On improved retailers demand, dispatches remained higher today compared to arrivals." He said traders have decided to go on indefinite strike against LBT under call given by the

Federation of Associations of Maharashtra (FAM). The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's (BSMA) committee members will meet on Saturday and decide the future course of action. As Vashi market carries average 120 truckloads of inventories, there will not be any immediate shortage.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, sugar May contracts declined to Rs 2,999 (Rs 3,004); June contracts were lower at Rs 3,062 (Rs 3,067) and July were up at Rs 3,120 (Rs 3,108) till noon. In the Vashi market, arrivals were 64-65 truckloads (each of 100 bags) and local dispatches were 68-70 loads. On Tuesday evening, about 21-22 mills offered tenders and sold 75,000-80,000 bags at Rs 2,930-2,980 (Rs 2,930-2,980) for S-grade and Rs 2,980-3,140 (Rs 2,980-3,140) for M-grade. In the last two days, producers sold more than 1.25 lakh bags in local markets, said sources.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were (Rs/quintal): S-grade 3,100-3,191 (3,086-3,171) and M-grade 3,200-3,400 (3,172-3,371).

Naka delivery rates were: S-grade 3,020-3,080 (3,020-3,080) and M-grade 3,100-3,250 (3,100-3,250).

Pepper falls on contracts switchover



Kochi, April 3: Pepper prices slipped marginally on Wednesday following concerted efforts aimed at forcing the buyers to switch over to May at a premium as there seemed to be no goods for delivery,

May contract was down by Rs 710 a quintal at Rs 35,440 while April was down by Rs 425 to Rs 35,505 from the highest price of Rs 35,930 in the beginning of the forenoon. On the spot, 27 tonnes of fresh pepper arrived and 25 tonnes were traded. April contract on the NCDEX slipped by Rs 5 to close at Rs 35,670 while May decreased by Rs 70 at Rs 35,685.

Total turnover increased by 634 tonnes to close at 1,397 tonnes. Total open interest moved up by 12 tonnes to 2,236 tonnes.

April open interest dropped by 120 tonnes to close at 1,008 tonnes while that of May increased by 132 tonnes to 1,228 tonnes showing a switching over.

Spot prices in the regional commodity exchange were unchanged on matching demand and supply amid limited activities at Rs 34,700 (ungarbled) and Rs 36,200 (MG 1) and on National Commodity Exchange, stood at Rs 36,445.
