

Lok Sabha passes Food Security Bill

Sonia terms Bill a fulfilment of her party's promise to wipe out hunger and malnutrition



UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi speaks in the Lok Sabha on Monday.— Photo: PTI/ TV GRAB

The Lok Sabha on Monday literally burnt the midnight oil to pass the ambitious National Food Security Bill, 2013, that seeks to provide highly subsidised food grains to nearly 70 per cent of the population of the country.

Dubbed as a “game-changer,” the flagship measure of the UPA government will give a legal entitlement to 67 per cent population (75 per cent rural and 50 per cent urban) for getting subsidised grains under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). A beneficiary will be entitled to 5 kg of rice, wheat or coarse cereals at Rs. 3, Rs. 2 and Re. 1 per kg a month and will be identified by the States based on parameters prescribed by the Union government. The government had promulgated an Ordinance to this effect in July which had to be replaced by the Bill in the current Monsoon session of Parliament to make it a law. The Lok Sabha was sitting to deliberate on a number of amendments that were moved by several members after a six-hour long debate. There were some anxious moments for the treasury benches when an amendment to Clause 8 of the Bill, moved by the Leader of the Opposition Sushma Swaraj, created confusion and was believed to have gone through as the Speaker Meira Kumar announced the result of the division.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kamal Nath suggested a revote on it to which Ms. Swaraj agreed, saving the government from embarrassment. Her amendment was negated as the result of the division showed 252 Ayes and 141 Nays with the total number being at 393. The lengthy process of going through a volley of amendments to the Bill and subsequent division, demanded by many members, took more than three hours.

In a rare speech in the Lok Sabha, Congress president Sonia Gandhi described the measure as a “big message” about India’s capability to take responsibility for the food security of all its citizens. She said the Bill would fulfil her party’s promise to “wipe out hunger and malnutrition.” However, the Opposition saw it as a “political gimmick” as general elections are due next year. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Murlu Manohar Joshi termed it as a “vote security” Bill while Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav wanted the Bill to be put in abeyance and the proposed legislation discussed with the State Chief Ministers.

Union Food Minister K. V. Thomas assured the Lok Sabha that loopholes in the National Food Security Bill would be plugged. Asserting that the Centre would protect the federal system, he said that the Centre and the States would “go hand in hand” in implementing the measure. Brushing aside claims that the government had not had enough consultations on the legislation, he said: “There was no dearth of consultation ever since the original bill was drafted last year and it was sent to the Standing Committee.” He said the Government had accepted all the recommendations of the Standing Committee barring one on universalisation of the scheme.

The Minister said that the offtake of States for ongoing schemes like Targeted PDS and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) would be protected and the additional burden on account of the implementation of Food Security Bill would be to the tune of Rs. 5000 crores.

On modernisation and computerisation of PDS by the States, he said the Centre would bear 50 per cent of the cost incurred by the States but in the case of the North-Eastern States and Jammu and Kashmir the Centre would bear 90 per cent of the cost.

He also assured the House that the MSP would be protected and foodgrains coming to mandis would be taken over by the Food Corporation of India. Seeking to bring all parties on board, he said that food grain supplies to the States would not be reduced with the implementation of the Food Security Bill. His reference was to Tamil Nadu as the AIADMK had raised concerns that the Bill would result in reduced supplies.

Two-day agriculture workshop from August 30

With a view to appraise the Cauvery delta farmers with the technologies available in agriculture and marketing facilities, Periyar Maniammai University is organising a two day National workshop cum showcasing of Agrotechnologies-2013 on August 30 and 31. Briefing presspersons about the workshop, N. Ramachandran, Vice-Chancellor, Periyar Maniammai University said here on Monday that sustainable agriculture using available resources will be the focal theme of the workshop. He said that the University is introducing a farmers-producer concept for the farmers to sustain agriculture and make it more profitable. The workshop would be able to interact with experts and live demonstrations of new technology.

S. Ranganthan, Chairman of Centre for Cauvery Development Studies said that Cauvery delta farmers had been following mono-cropping for many years. He called for a change of attitude as well as change of action. Farmers could yield three to five tonnes of paddy in one acre of land. But in an acre of land they could yield 1.5 tonnes of pulses from an acre which will fetch them more money than paddy. G. Chidambaram, Former State Planning Commission Member, said that fast changes are taking place in all fields. Role of universities is not just giving degrees but to address and interact with myriad problems confronting the society.

After RAWE, some TNAU students want to take up farming

104 final year B.Sc Agriculture students back from a two-month rural stint



Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University K. Ramasamy interacting with students who had displayed their findings in the form of models in Coimbatore on Monday after their return from the Rural Work Experience Programme.— PHOTO: S. SIVA SARAVANAN

At least 10 per cent of the total 104 final-year B.Sc. Agriculture students of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University who are back from a two-month rural stint want to take up serious farming.

Even if the four-year course has not motivated them to take such a decision, the 60-day Rural Agricultural Work Experience (RAWE) programme has done so.

Transformation of agriculture is possible with the attitude of such students, a visibly happy Vice-Chancellor K. Ramasamy said here on Monday as he took stock of the students' two-month activity on their return.

The RAWE consisted of three components — a 15-day programme with the office of the Assistant Director of Agriculture (ADA), a 30-day village stay programme, and a 15-day programme with a NGO.

Final-year students were split into 16 groups and assigned 16 villages in three districts, viz., Coimbatore, Tirupur, and Erode, from June 4 to August 15.

The students are overwhelmed by the wealth of information they got from the experience. According to them, everyday was an experience that taught them new lessons.

At the ADA's office they learnt about what the Government did for the farmers — schemes, subsidies, and other activities. They were involved in attending and assisting in conduct of meetings of the various Block heads. Armed with this knowledge they went on to spend a month in villages. Each student was attached to a farmer who served as a host.

They got to interact with large / small / marginal / woman farmers. It was a two-way learning experience with the farmer teaching the student and vice versa. While students got to learn the basics of farming from scratch, farmers got to know the various technologies and implements to improve farming. At the end of the stay, the student came up with four farm development plans that the farmer could adopt to augment productivity of his crop.

According to S. Mahimairaja, Dean (Agriculture), the students, on Monday, displayed through models and posters, what they had learnt during their 60-day stint. They explained to the Vice-Chancellor the observations they had made and how different they were from the field and the laboratory.

“Students are sent on the RAWE programme in the seventh semester, which is predominantly practical-oriented. Today’s exhibition is assessed by three scientists for 20 marks. Students will also have to make presentations for which they are assessed for 20 marks,” he said. Students were happy that they got a chance to see the real farmer in action and also got a chance to live in a village and observe their everyday life. Most of them were keen on ensuring that technologies reached farmers and also helping them improve their marketing skills.

Plea to include affected farmers in drought survey for compensation

Combined efforts of the agriculture and revenue departments are a must during the drought survey so that not a single affected farmer is left out, said Agriculture Additional Secretary and District Monitoring Officer R. Vasuki.

Addressing a special meeting held here on Saturday, she said that village administrative officers and agriculture officials play a crucial role as they are closely associated with farmers and they can gauge the gravity of the drought.

All farmers affected by drought should be enrolled in the survey and the officials should assist the farmers in getting suitable compensation, she advised.

Establishing farm ponds should be completed before the north east monsoon sets in.

‘Farmers should change strategy to face challenges’

Farmers’ movement in Karnataka should change its strategies to face the challenges posed by economic liberalisation, literary critic Srikantha Kudige said.

He was speaking after releasing a book on ryot leader late N.D. Sundaresh titled ‘Bharata raitha mukutamani N.D. Sundaresh’ at Karnataka Sangha here on Monday. In the 1970s and 80s, Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS) under M.D. Nanjundaswamy and N.D.

Sundaresh successfully rallied farmers against the unjust policies of the government. The KRRS had organised non-violent struggles against confiscating the property of farmers who had become tax defaulters, imposing tax on rice grown by farmers and forceful recovery of loan they had borrowed from banks.

In protest programmes against the efforts to confiscate the property of ryots for non-payment of tax, Prof. Nanjundaswamy used to say farmers were not defaulters, but the government itself was indebted to farmers who provide food security to the nation. While Prof.

Nanjundaswamy provided intellectual leadership to the KRRS, late Mr. Sundaresh used to organise the farmers at the grass-root level, he said.

Farmers were being subjected to new forms of exploitation now owing to the economic liberalisation policies of the government. Large tract of agricultural land was being acquired in the name of special economic zones. Public services were being privatised in an aggressive manner. The KRRS should organise the farmers against the economic liberalisation policies

of the government, he said. Dr. Kudige regretted that, the ryot movement in Karnataka at present was suffering from a dearth of intellectual leadership. The KRRS should develop the courage to question the unjust policies of the government, he said.

He stressed the need to sensitise the present generation youths on the principles of late Mr. Nanjundaswamy and Mr. Sundaresh. The programmes to commemorate these leaders should be held at education institutions, he said.

The KRRS also had extended support for Gokak movement, struggle launched by Dalitha Sangharsha Samiti against caste system, and environmental movements. He stressed the need for a study on the socio-cultural changes triggered by the ryot movement in Karnataka.

Folklore expert H.S. Ramachandre Gowda said the various factions of KRRS should come under the common platform to face new challenges posed by economic liberalisation.

The programme was organised by N.D. Sundaresh Pratishtana. The book is edited by Shobha Sundaresh. Secretary of National Education Society S.V. Thimmaiah, president of District Women Writers Association S.V. Chandrakala were among those present.

Pitfall for jumbos at IISR farm



: The experimental farm of the Indian Institute of Spices Research (IISR) at Peruvannamuzhi is located bordering the Kakkayam forest division in the district. Elephants straying into its 95-hectare farm area, which is rich in water, vegetation and fruit-bearing trees, is almost a daily occurrence.

Marauding herds of the pachyderm have already destroyed large stretches of cash crop, fruit-bearing trees, and a variety of newly budded saplings on its campus. After unsuccessfully trying different methods, including electric fencing, erection of compound walls, and fixing of chilli ropes, the IISR authorities have now embarked on a rather eco-friendly way to keep the mammoth mammal at bay — dig a trench around the farm.

“We know that no wild animals recognise man-made boundaries. So, rather than confronting them, we wanted to coexist with them causing minimum trouble to their normal life,” says M. Anandaraj, IISR director, about their trench project.

It is very difficult to contain the movement of the herd when accompanied by calves. They turn violent at the sight of even a remote threat to their younger ones. The frequent elephant raids on the farm was a serious threat to the life of staff members living on the campus and to the valuable germplasm conserved there, says Dr. Anandaraj

Fences, according to him are not appropriate for all situations. Heavy investment, power supply problem, huge maintenance cost, growth of vegetation along the fence, theft and

vandalism have resulted in failure of this method in most areas. “Elephants are clever animals and will enter the farm through any small section that is unprotected,” says Aboobacker Koya, Superintendent of the farm. The Institute also has tried electric fencing in some areas. “But there are habitual fence breakers among the elephants who are clever enough to cut the power supply by short circuiting the lines using wooden logs,” said Mr. Koya.

Using chilli rope fences, according to him, is suitable only for small farms. The chilli paste has to be applied on the rope, which is tied along the boundary of the farm, every 3 days and during the monsoon, it should be applied daily. “It is practically impossible to apply the paste on the rope stretching three km distance around the farm,” he said.

P A Mathew, former head of the farm, still remembers an “unbelievable” incident at the farm. It was few years ago. The elephants had already destroyed almost all the jackfruit trees at the farm. In order to save an exotic jackfruit plant variety in his collection, he had kept it inside a nursery shed.

“But a clever jumbo managed to grab it by crawling into the nursery on its knees as I helplessly watched it from a distance,” remembers Mr. Mathew. Though catapults, firecrackers or different sound devices can be tried, nothing is effective in a huge farm, said Mr. Mathew.

“At the end, digging a trench was the only solution before us,” said Dr. Anandaraj. The standard measurement of trenches recommended by the Forest Department and Assam Hathi Project, according to him, was 2.5 metres width on top, 1 metre at the bottom and 2 metres depth. “But we increased the measurements by half a metre in width to ensure that its purpose is served,” said the director.

The 3,185-metre trench, which covers almost two-thirds of the total farm area, required around 3,250 hours of excavation. Three excavators worked for three months and the Institute had to spend around Rs. 25 lakh on the project, he said.

Having understood the fact that elephants move out of the forest during the peak summer months, the institute has also constructed three ponds outside the trench to cater to the needs of the thirsty animals.

Tenant farmers’ meet

The CPI (M) District Committee is organising a tenant farmers’ convention at the UTF Hall (2/6, Brodipet) in Guntur on August 27. All India Kisan Sabha Vice-President S. Malla Reddy is participating as the chief guest. Tenant Farmers’ Association State secretary N. Ranga Rao, A.P Vyavasaya Karmika Sangham district vice-president A. Koti Reddy, Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sangham district president P. Narasimha Rao are also taking part. - Staff Reporter

Egg rate

The National Egg Coordination Committee has fixed the rate of egg as Rs. 3.33

Chilli farmers incur major loss due to fire in cold storage



The charred Guntur Cold Storage after the fire mishap on Monday.- T. Vijaya Kumar

Hundreds of chilli farmers incurred a loss estimated to be over Rs. 10 crore due to fire that broke out in Guntur Cold Storage here. Farmers first noticed smoke billowing out of the storage on Saturday evening and more than 20,000 bags were reduced to ash by Sunday night.

Fire was extinguished on Monday but not before it caused a huge loss. This is the fourth such major incident in less than two-and-a-half years. Nearly 2,200 farmers suffered a staggering loss of Rs. 60 crore due to fire accidents that took place in three cold storages in just about two months in early 2011.

Lack of proper fire safety system has been blamed for the mishap while the possibility of sabotage was not ruled out. The exact cause of the fire was yet to be established by Fire Services Department which has begun the probe on the usual presumption that it could be due to electrical short-circuit.

There were about 50,000 bags of chilli in the storage when the fire started raging and almost half of that was brought out by the farmers who dared to enter the burning chambers while jets of water were being sprayed.

Leaders of the Joint Action Committee of chilli farmers, who managed to get a major portion of the compensation paid for the crop that was gutted in the fire accidents that took place in 2011, met the Collector S. Suresh Kumar on Monday and demanded justice.

Compensation could be paid only when the United India Insurance Company Ltd (UIICL) with which the chilli stocks were insured, settles the claim and sorts out other issues.

It takes a long time considering the past experiences as a host of departments have to submit their reports while an independent inquiry would be conducted by the UIICL essentially with the help of a third party surveyor.

‘Robert Vadra is a small farmer’



*Like most senior Congress leaders, Haryana Chief Minister **Bhupinder Singh Hooda** too has avoided commenting on the sharp questions raised by IAS officer Ashok Khemka about the Robert Vadra-DLF land deal and the issuance of land development licences in his State. Speaking for the first time on the controversy that broke out after The Hindu reported excerpts from Mr. Khemka's 100-page submission to the government, a combative Mr. Hooda, with several bureaucrats by his side, answers some of the charges.*

Following the uproar over Ashok Khemka's 100-page submission to your government on the Robert Vadra-DLF deal and other concerns relating to the issuance of colony licences, questions have been raised about the manner in which such licences are issued in Haryana. They are seen as favours to political cronies.

It is the policy of our government to give licences to farmers to develop their land and not just restrict it to a handful of big builders. This was done because it was felt that the small farmer is being denied the benefit of rapid urban development taking place in the State. So, if a farmer collaborates with a developer (as Robert Vadra did with DLF), he can sell his licence along with the land and reap the benefit.

Are you saying that Mr. Vadra is a poor small farmer in Haryana?

He is a landowner. If he owns land designated as an agricultural zone, then he is a farmer.

This uproar (over 3.53 acres) is only because he is the son-in-law of the Congress president.

Thirty-five to 40 per cent of our licences are given to such small farmers who enter into collaboration agreements with developers. It is not illegal.

Not only opposition parties, but a senior Congress MP, Rao Inderjeet Singh from Haryana, has also demanded an investigation into licensing of 21,000 acres of land for various uses by

your government in the past eight years, including the 3.53 acres that was part of the Vadra-DLF deal.

Rao Inderjit Singh has himself collaborated with Unitech and got a colony licence for 83 acres of his land in Gurgaon. Part of it is his ancestral land and part has been bought later. If someone with 83 acres can get the benefit of a licence then why should a small farmer with two or three acres not get it? He has as much right to get a licence. My question is, why should a poor man be denied a licence? When Inderjit gets a licence for his own land, then the policy is correct. When Robert Vadra gets it, then he says it is wrong. Why?

There is a demand for an independent investigation into the whole gamut of issues raised by Mr. Khemka. Why is your government shying away from an investigation?

An investigation for what? We have no complaint from anyone that Mr. Vadra has done anything wrong in Haryana. We have enquired into the two aspects of the deal that concern our government. These are, whether Mr. Vadra has paid the full stamp duty on the sale and whether the licence fee has been paid by his company. On both these counts he is clear. The rest is a matter between two private parties and the government has nothing to do with it.

Mr. Khemka's specific charge is that Mr. Vadra falsified documents and entered into sham transactions to earn money from his land licence.

Who has charged? Which are the false documents? There are no false documents filed by Mr. Vadra. Corporation Bank has never said that it is not their cheque. It could be called 'false' if it was forged or counterfeit. That cheque [mentioned in the sale deed between M/s Onkareshwar properties and M/s Skylight Hospitality] was never presented or dishonoured. As for what money DLF paid to Mr. Vadra for the licensed land, DLF should have come and defended itself. I am not sure why they are not doing it.

Mr. Khemka has also alleged that the government committee did not enquire into many other issues referred to it, such as misappropriation of panchayat land by misusing the Consolidation Act.

That is not true. Everything has been enquired into by the Committee. I have not read its report, but I think it is alright. No colony or commercial licence or change of land use by my government has been cancelled by any court. That itself is indication that there is no wrongdoing.

There is nothing new in Mr Khemka's allegation. Everything has been clarified by our Committee. He is making an issue out of a non-issue.

If Mr. Khemka, as you say, has made false allegations against your government, will you take action against him for doing so?

The Chief Secretary is looking into that and has probably asked him for comments. It is for him to take action. I am never in a hurry to take action against anyone. Everything has a time. I am not a biased person, but will not spare whoever is at fault.

The media has raised questions on allegations made by Mr. Khemka about the Vadra-DLF deal, and yet you say that nothing is wrong or worth ordering an independent investigation? The media is sensationalising the issue for TRPs. Mr. Vadra is a decent man. He could have filed defamation cases against anyone. He is only being maligned for being the son-in-law of Sonia Gandhi.

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The Haryana Chief Minister says there is nothing illegal about the land transactions involving the Congress president's son-in-law

Collection centres to aid farmers for better price

In an effort aimed at helping farmers get better price for their produce, the Horticulture Department here will establish collection centres in Thondamuthur and Pollachi, from where traders, vegetable vendors or bulk purchasers can purchase fruits and vegetables.

‘Peri-metro Project’

The centres will start functioning from September 1, says Satyabrata Sahoo, Commissioner of Horticulture and Plantation Crops, Government of Tamil Nadu.

Along with the two, the Department will establish 19 such centres in nine districts in the State. Attached to those collection centres will be farmers’ clusters. Farmers after producing vegetables and fruits will take those to the collection centres, gather inputs about prices prevailing at other centres and then command a good price under this ‘Peri-metro Project’.

The sheer volume and quality of produce will help the farmers.

Mr. Sahoo says that the Department has planned the Project in such a way that the farmers run the entire programme. The farmers will also run the collection centres and at a later stage the retail outlets as well. The retail outlets will come at a later date and no deadline has been fixed. The priority now is to set up the collection centres. The Department on its part will supply quality seeds and farm implements at a subsidised price, finance the purchase of vehicles to transport vegetables and fruits from farms to the collection centres and also provide the infrastructure necessary at the centres.

“The Government’s job is to handhold the farmers until they manage the affairs.” In Coimbatore, the Thondamuthur collection centre will function at the regulated market complex there.

The sheer volume and quality of produce will help the farmers

Saying it with onions



TDP leaders drawing attention of people with an innovative map of Samaikyandhra made with onions, in Visakhapatnam on Monday.- Photo: K.R. Deepak

Onion counter opened



Collector A. Dinakarbabu on Monday inaugurated an onion counter at Rythu bazaar in the district headquarters. Similar counter was also opened at Siddipet. The onion would be sold for Rs. 34 and each customer would be offered 2 kg. — Staff Reporter

Rs. 73.52-crore work for fishing harbour

Foundation stone laid at Chinna Muttom

Expansion work would be undertaken on an estimate of Rs. 73.52 crore at the Chinna Muttom fishing harbour, said Labour Minister K.T. Pachimal.

Laying foundation stone for the expansion work at Chinna Muttom on Sunday, he said that when the fishing harbour work began in 1984, there were only 60 mechanised boats and 100 country boats. But once the work was completed in 1994, there were 143 mechanised boats, 166 country boats and 15 fibre-reinforced boats.

Presently there were 308 mechanised boats, 115 fibre-reinforced boats and 15 country boats in this harbour. Another 500 mechanised boats from the nearby areas use the harbour.

After the harbour was badly damaged in the 2004-tsunami, after conducting various studies, the State government decided to carry out the expansion works.

The existing eastern breakwaters area would be lengthened and a new breakwater area formed on the western side.

Once expanded, the harbour could house 150 more mechanised boats, benefiting around 1,500 fishermen, Mr. Pachimal said.

Collector S. Nagarajan, Executive Engineer of Tsunami Project Divisional Implementation Unit R. Kamaraj and other officials participated.

This Vizhag boy takes to surfing as a fish takes to water



Making waves: Sathish, from a village near Visakapatnam is the winner of most promising Indian surfer at the international surfing festival in Puducherry on Sunday.— Photo: G. Krishnaswamy

Thirteen-year-old Sathish hugs his shiny new surfboard close, as he poses for photographs with his friend at the beach, the venue of Puducherry's second international surfing challenge.

For the son of a fisherman from Rushikonda near Vishakapatnam, the trip to Puducherry is a long way from home, being the first time he has stepped out of his fishing village.

Sathish won a custom-made surfing board along with the title of 'Most promising Indian surfer' after his stint at the surfing challenge which concluded on Sunday.

In a festival where Indian and international surfers braved the ocean for glory, the boy managed to make his mark. The boy who speaks only Telugu came in for a pat in the back from surfers across ages.

"Sathish dropped out of school to help his father bring home more catch from the sea," says his instructor Andy. "The family needed the money and he has been helping his father out on the boat."

But how did a poor school dropout make it to an international event, when one surfing lesson today costs easily around Rs. 1,000. He has his tutor Andy to be thankful for.

"As Rushikonda is originally a fishing village, boys from the fishing community were curious about surfing when I started to surf a few years back. Some of them wanted to learn and today we have around 12 to 15 of them in the school," explains Andy who says he does not charge the children of the fishing hamlet.

Though many of his friends go to school, Sathish refuses to, mainly due to problems at home. However, his instructor has persuaded him to take school exams as a private candidate, by planning to coach him in his free time.

Sathish who got hooked to surfing just a year back, is one of the most promising students in the school. The title was awarded to him for the judges liked his moves, said Juan Reboul, one of the proprietors of the Kallialay Surf School, which hosted the event. “We were looking for someone who have the potential and put in a lot of hard work into his surfing.”

Little wonder that he is the first student from his group to go out for a competition.

“When I told my friends I was coming here, they all made fun of me, saying what I was going to do in such a big competition.”

Now, Sathish has been asking his instructor to call his friends back home with the news.

“He has not gone even to Visakapatnam city which is 10 km away,” says Anudeep. To Sathish and his friends, the surfboard could be a game-changer.

“The board back at home is not ideal for small kids, as we generally train surfers who are much older than him,” says Andy. For children from the fishing community, who are natural swimmers, there are now plenty of waves to be made.

Milk producers seek increase in incentives

Cost of feed gone up; feed not available with Aavin

The cost of cattle feed has increased by 52 per cent to 100 per cent in the last two years.

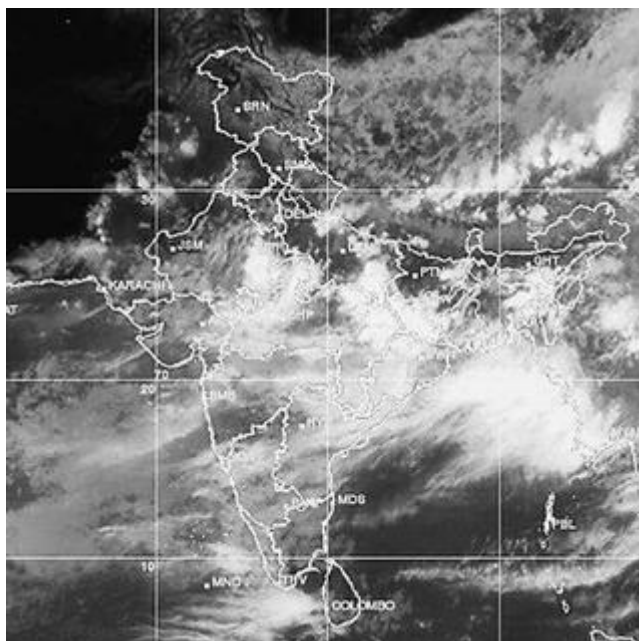
Hence the government should provide an incentive of Rs. 5 for buffalo milk and Rs. 10 for cow's milk, the Tamil Nadu Milk Producers Welfare Association has demanded.

Its president K.A. Sengutuvel told reporters on Monday that the cost of feed had gone up by an average of 52 per cent this month when compared to the cost in November 2011.

Also the feed was not available with Aavin and they were forced to depend on private producers ending up by paying high cost.

Hence, to meet out the situation, the State government should offer an incentive of Rs. 5 for buffalo milk along with the procurement price of Rs. 20 and Rs. 10 for cow's milk along with the procurement price of Rs. 26, he demanded. He also said that since shortage of fodder had burdened the milk producers due to failure of monsoon and supply and demand mismatch of feed, the government should supply feed at Rs. 10 a kg.

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on August 26th.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	35	27	8	517
New Delhi (Sfd)	35	26	13	763
Chandigarh	35	27	0	736
Hissar	36	26	0	507
Bhuntar	33	21	0	391
Shimla	24	17	0	747
Jammu	33	27	0	1081
Srinagar	32	18	0	209
Amritsar	37	28	0	741
Patiala	35	28	0	680
Jaipur	35	26	29	661
Udaipur	31	24	22	656
Allahabad	34	26	0	882
Lucknow	36	25	0	646
Varanasi	35	27	0	603
Dehradun	32	24	14	2478
Agartala	35	27	0	678
Ahmedabad	30	26	0	749
Bangalore	27	19	tr	400
Bhubaneshwar	35	26	0	613
Bhopal	30	24	1	1112
Chennai	36	26	0	439
Guwahati	37	27	2	630
Hyderabad	30	22	7	519
Kolkata	36	28	tr	1309
Mumbai	28	25	19	2051
Nagpur	27	23	0	1323

Patna	36	28	0	297
Pune	27	21	2	534
Thiruvananthapuram	32	24	0	870
Imphal	35	24	0	765
Shillong	25	18	5	764

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

RAINFALL

RAINFALL: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at a few places over Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand and at isolated places over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (3 cm and above) HARYANA: Faridabd and New Delhi (Lodi Road) 4 each and Ballabgarh 3, HIMACHAL PRADESH: Dharamsala 4, PUNJAB: Shahpur Kandi 5, Madhopur 4 and Nangal 3, EAST RAJASTHAN: Sanganer Tehsil 6, Choti Sadri and PipalKhunt 5 each, Ghatol, Mangrol, Kapasan, Sabla, Jaipur and Gangdhar 3 each, EAST UTTAR PRADESH: Kakrahi 6, Bansi 4 and Basti 3, WEST UTTAR PRADESH: Nagina and Moradabad 3 each and UTTARAKHAND: Chamoli 3. **FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 28th August 2013 :** Rain/thundershowers may occur at many places over east Uttar Pradesh. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and west Uttar Pradesh during next 48 hours and increase thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over rest of the region.

Heavy Rainfall Warning : Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places over east Uttar Pradesh during next 48 hours.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE

MORNING OF 28th August 2013: Partly cloudy sky. Light rain/thundershowers may occur in some areas.

hindustantimes

Sonia Gandhi's ambitious food bill gets Lok Sabha nod; UPA gets its 'game-changer'

The food security bill, ardently pushed by Congress president Sonia Gandhi as the centrepiece of her party's campaign to win a third term in elections due by May 2014, finally won approval of the Lok Sabha on Monday -- after days of unruly scenes in Parliament.

Described as India's most ambitious and historic initiative, the bill, which is to ensure food and nutritional security to its people at affordable prices, was adopted by the House after an intensive debate and protracted voting process.

About 300-odd amendments that were moved by opposition leaders to extend the scope of the bill's coverage were negated by division of votes and last-minute glitches.



*UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi speaks in Lok Sabha during the ongoing monsoon session.
(PTI Photo)*

One such glitch even involved leader of opposition Sushma Swaraj's amendment to the bill, which was shown by the electronic voting display system as having a majority support, which was later revised by a re-vote.

In a rare speech to Parliament, Sonia Gandhi urged everyone to unanimously clear her party's flagship welfare scheme and rebuffed critics who questioned finding money to run it at a time when India's economic growth was running aground.

"There are people who ask whether we have the means to implement this scheme. I would like to say that we have to figure out the means. The question is not whether we can do it or not. We have to do it," she said, directly addressing the criticism of the impact of the expensive scheme on government's meagre finances .

Gandhi described the welfare scheme as part of an "empowerment revolution" and reached out to the opposition for support.

"This legislation is only the beginning," she said, "we will be open to constructive suggestions, we will learn from experience, but we must put aside our differences." The latest law proposes subsidized foodgrain for up to 75% of the rural and up to 50% of the urban population.

Eligible households would get five kg of foodgrain per person every month -- Rs. 3 a kilo for rice, Rs. 2 a kilo for wheat and Rs. 1 a kilo for coarse grains. It also has a special focus on nutritional support to the poorest of the poor, women and children.

In case of non-supply of foodgrains, the deprived will get a food security allowance. The law also provides for grievance redressal mechanism and penalty for non-compliance by a public servant or authority.

Under the plan, the government will sell subsidised wheat and rice to 67% of its 1.2 billion population.

Replying to the debate, food minister KV Thomas promised to make improvements in the legislation, plugging loopholes while pledging not to trample on the powers of the states to implement.

He also assured states like Tamil Nadu and Kerala and 18 others that their quota of foodgrains currently drawn, which was higher than what they would be entitled under the new law, would be protected. He also said minimum support price for farmers' produce would not be compromised as apprehended by many opposition leaders to cut corners.

In her speech, Gandhi admitted that the existing public distribution system that delivers subsidised food, kerosene and gas was "leaky" needed to be toned up.

"The PDS needs reform. The leakage problem has to be addressed...We are bringing an empowerment revolution in the country," she said, while mentioning in this regard the Right to Information Act, the Right to Education Act and Forest Rights Act et al.

She said, "It is my fervent appeal that we shall pass this unanimously. We are open to constructive criticism, we must rise above differences to pass this. The food bill is meant for the less fortunate sections of our society...It is a historic step to eradicate hunger. It is time to send out a big message that India can take the responsibility of ensuring food security for all its citizens."

"The question is not whether we have enough resources or not and whether it would benefit the farmers or not. We have to arrange resources for it (food law). We have to do it."

Sonia Gandhi,
Cong chief



The debate saw BJP's Murli Manohar Joshi describe it as the Congress party's "vote security bill." Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav too spoke of some reservations.

"Who will foot the financial burden for the states in implementing the bill? The centre should have convened a meeting of chief ministers on the bill before bringing it in Parliament," he said. "The bill does not say that all of farmers' produce will be bought. Bring in the amendments for this," he said.

With the general elections eight months away, the Congress considered it would be a game changer as it had won the last two elections on the back of populist programmes such as a rural jobs plan called MNREGA and a loan waiver plan, which were passed before the 2009 general election.

ALL YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE FOOD BILL

A look at what the scheme means

MONEY MATTERS

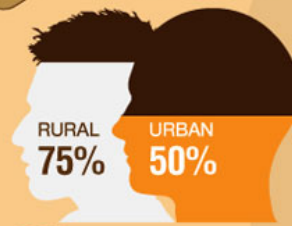
budget

₹ **1,25,000** cr

1% of GDP

Not all of this will be new as scheme will be an add on to other ongoing plans

WHO BENEFITS



810 million people

ON OFFER



5kg

of Rice, Wheat & Coarse Cereals per person/ month at ₹ **3,2,1** per kg respectively

₹ **85,000** cr

was spent on food subsidy bill in 2012-13. This will rise by ₹ **40,000** cr after the enactment of the National Food Security Bill 2013

THE POSITIVES

- Will ensure food and nutritional security for 810 million people
- Will improve malnutrition record. India ranks 65th out of 79 countries on the Global Hunger Index and almost half the children under five are chronically malnourished.
- Will empower women. The eldest woman of the family (above 18) will be regarded the head of the household for issue of ration card

THE CONCERNS



- The programme is projected to push up India's fiscal deficit to 5.1% of GDP in the current fiscal year. The government has promised to keep that deficit under 4.8%
- Extending the PDS may provide another channel for leakages
- Political controversy after claims that the bill makes state governments equally responsible for implementing scheme

ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD

South Africa, Ecuador, Nepal, Brazil have included right to food in their constitutions

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather		Tomorrow's Forecast	
	Tuesday, Aug 27		Wednesday, Aug 28
Clear	Max 33° Min 27°	Sunny	Max 32° Min 26°
Rain: 0	Sunrise: 05:57		
Humidity: 75	Sunset: 06:24		
Wind: normal	Barometer: 1006		

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday Aug 29	Friday Aug 30	Saturday Aug 31	Sunday Sep 1	Monday Sep 2
				
34° 26° Cloudy	34° 26° Cloudy	34° 26° Overcast	34° 26° Overcast	33° 26° Overcast



Govt may allay GM crop concerns in House today

NEW DELHI: In a new-found boldness fraught with significant implications, the agriculture ministry has begun pushing for allowing trials of GM crops.

As the [Supreme Court](#) is set to resume hearing on controversial GM crop issues from next month, the ministry may in Parliament on Tuesday try to allay the concerns of civil society and NGOs about possible adverse impact of genetically-modified organisms on both health and environment. It may put forth its arguments forcefully by citing the success story of [Bt Cotton](#) in India and pitch for field trials of genetically engineered food crops.

Though the ministry is known for its pro-GM crop stand, it has so far left it for the apex court to take a call on it. Interestingly, R S Paroda — the sixth member of the technical expert panel that was set up by the SC to give its opinion on GM crops — in its separate report to

the apex court has supported field trials.

The other members have recommended an indefinite ban on field trials, arguing that "the release of GM crops for which India is a centre of origin of diversity should not be allowed". However, Paroda suggests that experts appointed by the ministry should review all the crops for commercial release upon clearance from [Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee \(GEAC\)](#).



Agriculture ministry figures show that the country had 11.97 million hectares of land under cotton cultivation in 2012-13 (fourth advance estimates released on July 22) as compared to 7.60 million hectares in 2003-04.

The change of approach coincides with the impending launch of the food security legislation, with agriculture minister [Sharad Pawar](#) making a forceful pitch for a fresh look at GM crops. He has cited the obligation to feed millions by arguing the goal could be attained by boosting agricultural productivity — skillfully blending the advocacy for GM crops into a popular concern.

Emphasizing the need to increase agricultural productivity with the help of biotechnology, the ministry will on Tuesday try to drive home its point by sharing data of commercial use of Bt Cotton in India during the past one decade and successful use of GM crops across the world.

The point will be made in the [Lok Sabha](#) in response to a Parliament Question. Pawar may himself respond to the members' concern over the use of Bt Cotton and its impact on overall export and agricultural produce.

It is expected that the ministry in its response will not restrain itself in stating that the objections of the NGOs and civil society have, in fact, been very speculative and also been without "any reasonable assessment of the technological strengths of Bt Cotton".

The data, which may be shared by the minister, shows that the yield of cotton in the country has increased from 307 kg/hectare in 2003-04 to 488 kg/hectare in 2012-13 (second advance estimates). The data on production rate (yield) of Bt Cotton, however, is not maintained separately. However, more than 90% of total cotton area (approximately 12 million hectares) in the country is now under Bt Cotton.

Agriculture ministry figures show that the country had 11.97 million hectares of land under cotton cultivation in 2012-13 (fourth advance estimates released on July 22) as compared to 7.60 million hectares in 2003-04. As far as total production of cotton is concerned, the period from 2003-04 to 2012-13 had seen increase from 13.73 million bales (170 kg each bale) to 34 million bales, making India the second largest exporter of cotton.

It is learnt that the ministry in its reply to the Parliament Question is also likely to emphasize that there is no scientific evidence to show that Bt Cotton has adversely impacted the biodiversity or human\cattle health.

The ministry may also pitch for field trials of many GM crops. At present, 79 applications, covering 11 crops including rice, castor, maize, wheat, sugarcane, brinjal, potato, chickpea, mustard and sorghum are pending for approval. Out of the 79 applications, 24 are awaiting no-objection certificate (NoC) from state governments while the rest (55) are yet to be considered by the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) pending SC decision on the entire issue.

Field trials are necessary to generate relevant bio-safety information relating to a GM crop and its elaborate analysis to ensure food, feed and green safety.

BT Cotton on upswing

- * Spurt in yield of cotton — from 307 kg/ha (2003-04) to 488 kg/ha (2012-13)
- * Data on Bt Cotton yield is not maintained separately. However, more than 90% of total cotton area (approximately 12 m ha) in India is now under Bt Cotton
- * 11.97 m ha under cotton cultivation in 2012-13 as compared to 7.60 m ha in 2003-04
- * Between 2003-04 and 2012-13, there has been an increase of 13.73 m bales (170 kg each bale) to 34 m bales
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Lok Sabha passes Food Security Bill; Congress, opposition battle for credit

NEW DELHI: [Lok Sabha](#) on Monday passed the Food Security Bill, barely eight months ahead of the 2014 Lok Sabha election amid a fierce competition between Congress and the opposition to daub themselves in populist colours.

Termed a "game-changer" by UPA-2, the [Food Security Bill](#) went through a protracted passage in Lok Sabha as opposition parties ranging from BJP, AIADMK, CPI and BJD to Akali Dal insisted on a vote on amendments such as further reducing the rack rates for cheap foodgrain and making the law's coverage universal.

All concern about a burgeoning current account deficit and falling growth was in abeyance as the government and opposition wrestled to walk away with maximum brownie points after the vote on the bill was concluded.

The government too said it stopped short of considering universal coverage as it was hemmed in by constraints of production and procurement but justified a long delay in the legislation by arguing that the law has been vastly improved.



The bill will now be considered by Rajya Sabha where the govt needs to be more careful of its numbers although BJP has indicated that it is not keen to stall the law.

Congress chief [Sonia Gandhi](#) defied the discomfort of a nagging viral fever to set the tone for the ruling party, saying the question whether resources could be mustered for the bill was best answered by stressing, "Ye karna hi hai." She admitted that the bill would provide succour to those who have not benefitted from growth and are battling the curse of hunger and malnutrition.

Her speech is the first time she has intervened in a debate in the current Lok Sabha apart from a speech during the special session of Parliament held to commemorate its 60 years. She spoke once earlier when proposing Meira Kumar for Speaker.

Sonia made it plain that the food bill - seen to have her strong backing - is Congress's latest rights-based entitlement and a cornerstone of the ruling party's political agenda for the next Lok Sabha election.

There was considerable skirmishing over the amendments moved by the opposition with the ruling party benches on one occasion voting against a clause in the bill, mistaking it to be a change proposed by leader of opposition Sushma Swaraj.

The matter was settled with Swaraj agreeing to a re-vote, a rare occurrence in the House. The bill will now be considered by Rajya Sabha where the government needs to be more careful of its numbers although BJP has indicated that it is not keen to stall the law.

₹1.3 LAKH CR GAMECHANGER?

► What's the food security scheme?

It provides for 5kg per person, per month, of rice, wheat or coarse grain. Proposes to cover 67% of India's population or 82 crore people, 75% rural & 50% urban. The rates at which it will be given is ₹3 for rice, ₹2 for wheat & ₹1 for bajra, jowar. The cost of scheme approx ₹1.3 lakh crore, up from current food subsidy bill of ₹75,000 crore in 2012-13. States to get one year for rollout



► What about existing schemes?

Some schemes subsumed: Antodaya Anna Yojana (for poorest of poor), midday meals, meals for children aged 6 months-2 years with their mothers, ICDS (for kids below 6). As of now, apart from state schemes, Centre provided cheap food to around 32 crore people under BPL. This jumps to 82 crore. Govt will need to procure 62 million tonnes of grain

be plugged. Ration cards reduced from 22 crore to 16 crore, but more needs to be done. Storage capacity needs to be augmented

► What's the impact on the economy?

There will be a push on govt spending which will increase current account deficit – not desirable in present situation. There are also concerns that India's procurement for the scheme could push up world food prices in case of drought and under-procurement

► When will the scheme roll out?

There are some grey areas and missing links. States have to identify beneficiaries. This can be a problem as exclusion criteria not clear. Centre is to share transport and commission costs, which need to be worked out. Also govt admits to 20-35% leakage in PDS, which needs to

► Does it make for great politics?

So far states have cornered political benefits for cheap food grain. Now central govt will seek to gain the upper hand in this populist game. On election eve, this could help Congress

The concern for the government in Rajya Sabha is that an opposition amendment may end up being part of the bill rather than a clause being struck down.

The amendments moved by the opposition in Lok Sabha touched minute aspects of the law like inclusion or exclusion of taxpayers as beneficiaries. The government had to go through a testing time before the bill cleared the Lok Sabha after 10pm.

BJP leader Murli Manohar Joshi led the opposition arguments, saying the bill is not a significant improvement over existing benefits and has been brought to Parliament with the objective of "luring voters" ahead of the next election. "This is not a Food Security Bill, this is vote securing bill," he said.

Looking to dent Congress's claim of having brought an umbrella law to provide food security, Joshi said the Chhattisgarh government was doing better, providing cheap foodgrains to 90% of the population.

But no party outright rejected the populist bill that will take the food subsidy to Rs 1.24 lakh crore from the current Rs 75,000 crore although the financial implications kick in only next year.

The Left parties sought universal coverage in their amendments and while these did not pass muster, government managers were quick to point out that the bill's populist aspects were "protected" despite some being pruned by a parliamentary standing committee.

The bill's provisions like retention of the Antyodaya Anna Yojana component - despite the scheme's coverage of a family unit instead of an individual going against the standard for other beneficiaries - is an example where Sonia's hand can be seen.

In fact, the inclusion of nearly all state and central schemes in the food security act, despite its heavy fiscal implications at a time when growth has dropped to below 5% underlines Sonia's determination to pass a welfare measure that adds to her image as a caring provider.

 *The Indian* **EXPRESS**

Congress gives itself some election security, LS passes Food Security Bill



The ambitious bill was adopted by the House through a voice vote after a combined discussion on the measure and a statutory resolution seeking to disapprove the ordinance promulgated on July 5.

After much delay and uncertainty, the landmark Food Security Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha today which seeks to provide cheap foodgrains to 82 crore people in the country, ushering in the biggest programme in the world to fight hunger.

The ambitious bill was adopted by the House through a voice vote after a combined discussion on the measure and a statutory resolution seeking to disapprove the ordinance promulgated on July 5. Over 300 amendments moved by the opposition were rejected.

The legislation was passed after a day-long debate during which Congress President Sonia Gandhi, during her maiden speech in the 15th Lok Sabha, said, "Our goal for the foreseeable future must be to wipe out hunger and mal-nutrition from our country."

Significantly, Gandhi, who is the main force behind the bill, could not participate in voting as she fell ill during voting on amendments and had to leave the House at around 8.15 pm. She was later admitted in the AIIMS.

Earlier, Gandhi sought to allay concerns over the measure. "This legislation is only a beginning. As we move forward, we will be open to constructive suggestions; we will learn from experience," Gandhi said.

She said the approach of the UPA has brought in "an empowerment revolution in our country & something we are proud to have facilitated."

Just before voting on the bill, Leader of Opposition Sushma Swaraj said BJP is supporting the legislation despite it being "half-baked and weak". She added, "we are waiting for the day when we come to power and we will be able to improve the law."Replying to the day long debate, Minister of State for Food K V Thomas dismissed the charge that states were not consulted while drafting the bill. He insisted that the states were consulted four times.

He also dismissed concerns that new measure would impinge upon the rights of the states and said the legislation will become success one when Centre and states work together.

"We will protect the federal system of the country. We don't want to weaken it," he said.

Key outside supporter Samajwadi Party demanded the bill be put in abeyance till states are consulted. Main opposition BJP dubbed the measure as "vote security bill" and picked holes as he questioned as to how it would be implemented and who would be the beneficiaries?"

The passage of the Food Security Bill in Parliament will pave the way to give nation's two-third population the right to 5 kg of foodgrain every month at highly subsidised rates of Rs 1-3 a kg.

After the bill gets Rajya Sabha's nod, India will join the select league of countries that guarantee majority of its population foodgrains. At Rs 1,30,000 crore government support, the food security programme will be the largest in the world. It would require 62 million tonnes of foodgrains.

The bill will guarantee 5 kg of rice, wheat and coarse cereals per month per person at a fixed price of Rs 3, 2, 1, respectively.

However, about 2.43 crore poorest of the poor families covered under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) scheme under PDS (Public Distribution System) would get legal entitlement to 35 kg of foodgrains per family per month.

Thomas rejected suggestion for making food security net universal.

On contentions that such measures were better in some states like Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu, the minister ruled replication of those at the Centre level.

"Tamil Nadu, Kerala are role models. Every state is a role model. But we cannot accept that. In Chhattisgarh a particular system may have worked. But it may not be acceptable to Tamil Nadu and other states," the minister said.

Earlier participating in the debate, UPA's outside supporter Samajwadi Party demanded that the bill be kept in abeyance till Chief Ministers are consulted as it would put additional burden on states.

SP chief Mulayam Singh Yadav raised a number of questions over the bill in Lok Sabha and said it would badly hurt farmers as there was no guarantee in the provisions that all the produce would be bought by the government.

"It is clearly being brought for elections...Why didn't you bring this bill earlier when poor people were dying because of hunger?...Every election, you bring up a measure. There is nothing for the poor," he said participating in the debate on the bill.

Main opposition BJP earlier dubbed the measure as "vote security bill" and picked holes as he questioned as to how it would be implemented and who would be the beneficiaries.

Food Security Bill: Govt assures minimum support price to farmers



Government has assured farmers they will continue to get minimum support price.

Government on Monday assured farmers they will continue to get minimum support price (MSP) even after implementation of the Food Security law.

Allaying fears expressed during the debate on the Bill in Lok Sabha, Food and Consumer Affairs Minister K V Thomas said, "we are not going to freeze the MSPs...whatever foodgrains comes to mandis" will be procured.

Government provides MSP on wheat, paddy and dozen other commodities. MSP is fixed by the Commission for Agriculture Costs and Prices (CACP).

"Whatever be the recommendation of the CACP that will be accepted by the government...We will continue to procure and distribute foodgrains," he said.

Referring to queries on the storage capacity in the country, Thomas said it has increased to 75 million tonnes from 55 MT and will go up to 85 MT by 2014-15.

"This is not enough. We should have intermediate godowns. States should build this," he said, adding, the Centre is providing assistance to states for building godowns.

He admitted that the public distribution system (PDS) in the country was weak, but said steps have been taken during the past years to improve it.

He said duplication and leakages have been checked as the number of ration cardholders have come down to 16 crore from 22 crore in the past four years.

The minister said damages and losses during procurement has come down to 0.07 per cent from 2.5 per cent five years back.

Long due, Food Security Bill meets mixed reaction



The debate on the landmark Food Security Bill ended on a stalemate on the day of its introduction in Parliament (IE)

The Samajwadi Party (SP), which supports the UPA from outside, Monday demanded the landmark Food Security Bill be put in abeyance until the states are consulted while the BJP dubbed it as a "vote security bill".

The main opposition party picked holes in the proposed law and questioned how it would be implemented and who would be the beneficiaries.

Initiating the debate after Food Minister K V Thomas moved the bill for consideration, Murli Manohar Joshi (BJP) said he was in favour of the legislation that will provide highly subsidised food to two-thirds of the country's population. At the same time, he said there were flaws in the bill which should be rectified.

Suggesting that the bill had been brought with an eye on the elections, Joshi said, "In 2009, the then President of India in his address had talked about Food Security Bill. But you have brought this bill when you are going out"

SP chief Mulayam Singh Yadav too contended that the bill was being brought with an eye on elections and said it should be kept in abeyance till chief ministers are consulted as it would put an additional burden on states.

Raising a number of questions over the bill, Yadav said it would badly hurt farmers as there was no guarantee in the provisions that all the produce would be bought by the government. "It is clearly being brought for elections. Why didn't you bring this bill earlier when poor people were dying because of hunger? Every election, you bring up a measure. There is nothing for the poor," he said.

He questioned the government whether it had any assessment of the number of poor in the country. "There is no mention in the Bill. You don't have any figure. You are only going by assumptions," Yadav said, adding the Bill could be brought only after the BPL census was completed.

He said he would support the bill, which provides for highly subsidised foodgrains to two-thirds of the country's population, if certain amendments are moved. "This bill is neither for the poor, nor for the farmers."

Emphasising that the measure would put additional financial burden on the states, Yadav said the Centre should consult chief ministers and until then, keep it in abeyance.

On the other hand, Dara Singh Chauhan of the BSP, another key outside supporter, backed the bill saying it would provide food security to the poor.

JD-U President Sharad Yadav, whose party recently parted ways with BJP-led NDA over Narendra Modi issue, praised Sonia Gandhi for "speaking in the language of the country" while participating in the debate on the bill.

At the same time, he said the measure is a national scheme and no burden should be put on the state governments.

Kalyan Banerjee (TMC) said the bill should not be used as a political gimmick. He expressed apprehension that this would be treated as political gimmick in the coming elections.

Banerjee said the Centre will bring such schemes at the time of elections but states would be compelled to bear the burden.

Banerjee said TMC will support the measure if the government deleted Section 38, which makes state governments equally responsible for implementing the scheme.

T R Baalu (DMK) praised provisions in the pro-poor measure enacted under the leadership of Congress president Sonia Gandhi. He, however, said prevalence of problems like malnutrition are very high in India.

Praful Patel (NCP) said the government should endeavour to give universal coverage to the food Bill and give food grains to all sections of poor people and not limit it to just 75 per cent or 50 per cent of the rural and urban population.

He said the Nationalist Congress Party is in favour of the Bill. "We need to work for welfare and prosperity of this country," he said, adding that food security should be provided to people.

Patel said he does not agree to the poverty line of Rs 28.65 per capita daily consumption as given by Planning Commission.

Bhartruhari Mahtab (BJD) observed that the Bill should give food security to people on the basis of per-household, instead of per-capita as proposed. Mahtab said the per-capita approach would create confusion among people and lead to harassment when new members are introduced in the family. He demanded that states should be given flexibility to decide whether they want the per-capita or per-household approach. The exclusion criteria should also be state specific, he said and suggested that the public distribution system should be strengthened to provide food grains.

Jaya allocates Rs 2.81 Crore for forest wells to reduce man-animal conflicts



The State government has been implementing multi-pronged strategies to avoid human-animal conflict along forest areas implementing various plans. (PTI/File photo)

Chief Minister J Jayalithaa on Monday allocated Rs 2.81 crore for sinking of deep bore wells and building overhead tanks to supply water within forest areas, with a view to prevent wild animals from straying into human habitations during the summer.

The move would check the loss of lives and damage to public property due to man-animal conflicts. The bore wells would be around 400 feet deep with solar-powered submersible pumps, a government statement said.

Some of these bore wells would also have overhead tanks nearby to store water. Water from the tanks would be supplied in open spaces so that animals can quench their thirst whenever they want. Water from overhead tanks would also be used to water plants and put out forest fires.

Bore wells would be sunk at the tiger reserves in Anamalai, Mudumalai, Kalakkadu, Mundanthurai and Sathyamangalam at a cost of Rs 44 lakh.

As part of the same project, 26 deep bore wells without overhead tanks would be set up at tiger reserves and the forest areas in Dharmapuri, Krishnagiri, Coimbatore and Vellore districts, at a total cost of Rs 2.37 crore.

The State government has been implementing multi-pronged strategies to avoid human-animal conflict along forest areas by growing crops desired by wild animals within forest limits, setting up fences, creating awareness among villagers and providing immediate financial assistance to people attacked by wild animals, the statement added.

Sonia stars in day-long debate, Food Bill clears Lok Sabha test



Sonia Gandhi made her first speech in the Lok Sabha in eight years, taking ownership of the UPA's latest instrument of welfarism. (File/PTI)

After a few frustrating, interruption-ridden days, Monday saw some momentous action when Parliament debated and passed the Food Security Bill. As if to mark the occasion, Sonia Gandhi made her first speech in the Lok Sabha in eight years, taking ownership of the UPA's latest instrument of welfarism.

A few hours after she spoke, calling her pet bill a chance to send a "big message" to the world on India's fight against hunger, and before the voting on the Bill, an ailing Sonia left Parliament and was admitted in the ICU at Delhi's AIIMS for a checkup. She was reportedly feverish and had chest pain.

The much-awaited Bill, which gives a large section of India's impoverished population the legal right to cheap foodgrain, was passed in her absence. But before that, there was drama and confusion of the more usual sort too. The Congress-led UPA had to defeat a series of amendments pressed by the opposition parties, the BJP, BJD, Left, Akali Dal, AIADMK, TMC and others, to clinch its game-changer legislation in the Lower House.

It was neither easy, nor straightforward. At one point, an amendment pressed by the BJP seemed to have the votes. In the end, it was won by voice vote. Not even AIADMK and BJD, which opposed the Bill, demanded a division.

The Congress chief tried her best to paper over the differences. Tactically avoiding getting into the fine-print, she chose to be rhetorical in her first speech in the 15th Lok Sabha, asking her fellow parliamentarians to quash differences and telling critics the Bill was about an "empowerment revolution".

In what sounded a bit like her version of an Obamaesque 'Yes-we-can' speech (recently Indianised by Narendra Modi), Sonia said in Hindi: "There're people who ask if we have the resources to implement the scheme. I would like to tell them, we've to find the resources. The question is not whether we can do it — we have to do it."

In an attempt to carry as many parties as she could on the Bill, Sonia was accommodative in tone. She termed the legislation — which seeks to give 67 per cent of the population

categorised as below poverty line a legal right to subsidised food grains at an estimated cost Rs 1.25 lakh crore — as a “beginning”.

She added: “We will be open to constructive suggestions, we will learn from experience, but we must put aside our differences.”

When Leader of the Opposition Sushma Swaraj rose up to support the Bill at the end of the marathon sitting, she said, “Had the government accepted our amendments, it would have improved the Bill, but they did not. Still we will support this half-hearted attempt at food security — and bring our own improved Bill when we come power.”

Bill a half-hearted attempt at food security, alleges BJP

After much delay and uncertainty, the Food Security Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha on Monday. When Leader of the Opposition Sushma Swaraj rose up to support the Bill, she said: “Had the government accepted our amendments, it would have improved the Bill, but they did not. Still we will support this half-hearted attempt at food security - and bring our own improved Bill when we come to power.”

The indication being, the next elections will go in the BJP’s favour. But Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh, speaking right after Sonia, questioned the timing of the legislation, , “Why didn’t you bring this bill earlier when poor people were dying of hunger in Maharashtra - a State where your party rules? Is this for elections or for the hungry?”

He, however, pledged support for the legislation even while lambasting provisions that will put additional burden on the states and would tie the farmers down to a low minimum support price.

Singh was scathing. “How can you make a Food Security bill on assumptions? `26,000 crore or `30,000 crore is not the problem. How much financial liability will the states have to bear because of it?

From where will the states generate funds - there is no mention of that in the Bill,” he said. If Sonia Gandhi and the UPA government wanted a debate on the bill, they had it. The House discussed and debated its provisions till late in the evening - the voting started only around 8.15 pm and ended at 10.46 pm. But speaker after speaker from the Opposition picked holes in the Bill, calling it inadequate in nutritional terms and accusing the Congress-led government of indulging in poll gimmicks in the name of poverty eradication.

AIADMK’s M Thambidurai - citing a famous Supreme Court judgment, where it was said that the rats are eating away food grains - wondered why the bleeding-heart government wants to put a price for the actual beneficiary. “Why is the Centre not giving free food to the poor?”

Accusing the government of using the bill as a poll-vault, he said, “There is no benefit for our State (Tamil Nadu).

How can we support the bill? Our Chief Minister (J Jayalalithaa) is running a better scheme. Even Food Minister K V Thomas admits that our State is affected - but the protection that the Centre is giving is not enough.”

The Congress managers were trying their utmost to get the AIADMK on board with party spokesperson Meem Afzal even claiming that “we want the support of both AIADMK and the DMK - we’re trying.” Well, it did not happen -the voting took place on expected lines.

Business Standard

Cardamom down 0.1% on sluggish demand

Sluggish demand, adequate stocks availability on increased arrivals from producing regions mainly weighed on cardamom prices



[Cardamom](#) prices drifted by 0.16% to Rs 764.50 per kg in futures trade today owing to slackened demand at the spot markets at prevailing levels against adequate positions.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), cardamom for delivery in September weakened by Rs 1.20, or 0.16% to Rs 764.50 per kg in business turnover of 382 lots.

However, cardamom for delivery in October held steady at Rs 794 per kg in 70 lots on scattered transactions.

Market analysts said sluggish demand at prevailing higher levels in the spot market and adequate stocks availability on increased arrivals from producing regions mainly weighed on cardamom prices at futures trade.

Potato up 0.7% on spot demand, tight supply

Potato for delivery in far-month March also edged up by 0.5%

[Potato](#) prices rose by Rs 5.70 to Rs 813 per quintal in futures trade today, mostly supported by rising demand in spot markets amid tight supplies from producing region.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), potato for delivery in September rose by Rs 5.70, or 0.71% to Rs 813 per quintal in business turnover of 73 lots.



The potato for delivery in far-month March also edged up by Rs 4.70, or 0.56% to Rs 840 per quintal in two lots.

Market analysts said the rise in potato prices at futures trade was mostly attributed to rising demand in the spot market, triggering speculative activity by participants.

Jeera up 0.9% on rising export demand

Analysts said speculators enlarged their positions, driven by rising export demand in spot market against less arrivals, mainly pushed up jeera prices



[Jeera](#) prices rose by Rs 127.50 to Rs 13,737.50 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators enlarged their positions following upsurge in export demand in the spot market.

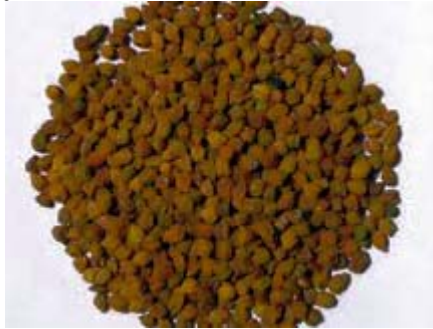
At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), jeera for delivery in October rose by Rs 127.50, or 0.94% to Rs 13,737.50 per quintal with an open interest of 4,671 lots.

Similarly, jeera for delivery in September moved up by Rs 122.50, or 0.91% to Rs 13,615 per quintal in 10,224 lots.

Analysts said speculators enlarged their positions, driven by rising export demand in spot market against less arrivals, mainly pushed up jeera prices at futures trade.

Chana up 0.1% on spot demand

Restricted arrivals in the physical market also influenced the market sentiment



[Chana](#) prices inched up by 0.12% to Rs 3,212 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators created fresh positions supported by a better demand in the spot market.

Restricted arrivals in the physical market also influenced the market sentiment.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), chana for delivery in October traded higher by Rs 4, or 0.12% to Rs 3,212 per quintal in an open interest of 82,520 lots.

Similarly, chana for September contract rose by Re 1, or 0.03% to Rs 3,137 per quintal in 1,32,630 lots.

Traders said speculators created fresh positions, supported by a mild demand in the spot market following festive season, helped chana prices to trade marginally higher at futures trade.

Turmeric up 1.4% on tight supply, better demand

Turmeric for delivery in September rose by 1.18%



[Turmeric](#) prices rose by Rs 76 to Rs 5,240 per quintal in futures market today as speculators created enlarged positions, driven by a rise in demand in the spot market against tight supplies from producing region.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), turmeric for delivery in October rose by Rs 76, or 1.47% to Rs 5,240 per quintal in an open interest of 8,900 lots.

Similarly, turmeric for delivery in September rose by Rs 60, or 1.18% to Rs 5,154 per quintal in 17,060 lots.

Market analysts said speculators enlarged positions on rising demand in the spot market, against restricted arrivals from producing regions, mainly led the upsurge in turmeric prices at futures trade.

Maize firms up marginally to Rs 13,438/ton: USGC

Maize prices up by 0.7% , higher than last year by 9.6%



Even as the sowing area for [maize](#) has increased, its prices have marginally firmed up during the last week to a pan-India average of Rs 13,438 per tonne from the previous week, mainly due to reports of crop damage in some parts of the country, according to US Grains Council.

"Maize prices were up by 0.7% to Rs 13,438 per tonne, higher than last year by 9.6%. Prices have been strong despite an increase in the sowing area and higher production is expected. However, there are reports of some damage from some parts of the country," [USGC](#) India Representative Amit Sachdev said.

It is still too early to speculate if the excess rains and flooding in some parts will affect the productivity at large, he added.

Prices increased in Gujarat by 1.59% to Rs 14,532 per tonne, Karnataka by 6.26% to Rs 13,655 per tonne, Rajasthan by 0.72% and Uttar Pradesh by 5.62%.

However, prices declined in Andhra Pradesh by 4.09% to Rs 12,526 per tonne, Maharashtra by 1% to Rs 14,508 per tonne and Tamil Nadu by 5.65% to Rs 14,864 per tonne.

On the future markets all maize contracts closed higher than last week.

In the spot prices were firm, including Davangere, by 1.84% at Rs 15,175 per tonne,

Karimnagar by 0.42% at Rs 14,850 per tonne and Sangli by 3.90% at Rs 16,555 per tonne.

Prices in other markets were down, Nizamabad down 0.14% at Rs 14,913 per tonne and Gulabghat by 1.62% at Rs 13,650 per tonne.

"There have been reports about some bad quality maize from Bihar, which has led to little increase in demand of pearl millet triggering some increase in price," Sachdev said.

Globally, there is going to be ample amount of corn in the market and this could keep the prices down, Sachdev said, adding that it would depend on several factors, including Chinese buying.

THE HINDU Business Line

Cardamom crop could be lower than initial estimates

Price rules steady as upcountry buyers, traders turn active



Kochi, Aug. 26: Cardamom ruled steady on matching demand and supply despite increase in arrivals last week at auctions held in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Upcountry dealers as well as exporters were active, market sources in Kumily told *Business Line*.

Export buying last week is estimated at 50-60 tonnes. At the current rates there appears to be buyers, both from domestic and overseas, they said. Arrivals so far during the season showed an upsurge.

no bumper crop

However, the output, which was projected earlier as a bumper one, may not be as initially estimated, but it could be better than last season, the trade said. Such a situation is attributed to the incessant South-West monsoon, which has damaged the crop and that, in turn, is claimed to have brought down the output from the projected bumper crop, they said.

The second round of picking is under way and the rise in production is reflected in the increase in arrivals, they said. According to them, 8mm bold capsules fetched Rs 1,000 a kg last weekend. Cardamom of 7mm and above was being sold at Rs 750.

Exportable varieties of capsules are expected to arrive from the second round of picking which has started recently, they said. Individual auction average continued to remain above Rs 600 , and it was vacillating between Rs 610 and Rs 630 .

Total arrivals at the Sunday auction held by KCPMC was the highest ever in the current season at 93 tonnes as against 80 tonnes the previous Sunday and the entire quantity was sold out, said P.C. Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC.

The maximum price was at Rs 1,000 and the minimum at Rs 401 . The auction average price dropped to Rs 617 (Rs 624.31) at previous Sunday's auction.

The current season has begun officially from Aug 1 and hence the total arrival during the season up to Aug 25, stood at 1,441 tonnes against 1,217 tonnes during the same period last season. The sales were at 1,425 tonnes and 1,151 tonnes respectively.

The weighted average price as on Aug. 25 stood at Rs 609.86 against Rs 778.26 as on the same date last year.

Prices of graded varieties (Rs/kg): AGEB 780-790; AGB 590-600; AGS 570-580 and AGS -1: 550-560.

Bulk was being sold at Rs 400-950 a kg.

Mixed trend in Kochi tea sale

Kochi, Aug. 26: Kochi tea auction continues to witness a mixed trend for the last few weeks. In sale no. 34, the quantity on offer in the CTC dust category was 7,57,500 kg.

The market for powdery grades of good liquoring and popular marks of Kerala ruled steady, while other grades were irregular and lower by Rs 3-5 a kg. The decline in prices was less for medium and plainer varieties.

Though the orthodox dust arrivals in the auctions were low at 3,500 kg, this commodity witnessed a steady market. A small quantity was absorbed by exporters.

In the best CTC dusts, PD grades quoted Rs 112/127, RD varieties ruled at Rs 120/152, SRD fetched Rs 128/161 and SFD stood at Rs 130/176.

The leaf sale also witnessed a mixed trend and the quantity on offer in orthodox category was 57,500 kg. The market for select best Nilgiri broken, whole leaf was fully firm to dearer. Others were irregular and lower following quality. Fannings from the same origin witnessed strong feature especially the better ones.

Clean black, well made medium bolder broken, tippy grades appreciated in value, while others were irregular and easier. TGBOP from the same category witnessed strong feature and moved up with longer margins of Rs 10 and more.

Medium whole leaf grades sold around last level and sometimes declined. There was a steady market for corresponding Fannings.

The quantity on offer in CTC leaf was 56,500 kg. The market for good liquoring teas was dearer, while others were lower.

In the dust grades, Monica SFD fetched the best prices of Rs 177 . In the leaf grades P's Woodlands Hyson Green Tea quoted the best prices of Rs 301 .

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80% of Coonoor tea sold at auction

Coonoor, Aug. 26: Eighty per cent of the 12.59-lakh kg offered for Sale No: 34 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auction was sold with the price declining by Rs 1/kg.

Among CTC teas, Pekoe Dust of Homedale Estate, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped the market when Shreeji Traders bought it for Rs 173 a kg.

In all, 48 marks got Rs 125 and more .

Chamraj topped the orthodox market at Rs 256/kg. In all, 32 marks got Rs 125 and more.

Exporters to Pakistan paid a wide range of Rs 67-102/kg and to the CIS, Rs 64-94/kg.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 62-65/kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 115-150 for brighter liquoring sorts.

For plain dusts it was in the range of Rs 69-78/kg and Rs 120-165 for brighter liquoring dusts.

“Primary orthodox leaf got good demand, but secondaries eased up to Rs 5 a kg. CTC leaf came to an easier market losing Rs 2-3. Orthodox dusts received good export enquiry. High-priced CTC dusts gained up to Rs 5, better mediums Rs 3-4 and plainers Rs 2-3,” an auctioneer told *Business Line*.

Mixed trend in spot rubber

Kottayam, Aug 26: Spot rubber was mixed on Monday.

Sentiments were almost neutral and the most active counters finished unchanged amidst low volumes.

Sheet rubber closed flat at Rs 185 a kg at Kottayam and Kochi, according to traders and the Rubber Board.

Volumes continued to be low.

September futures improved to Rs 179.90 (Rs 179.46), October to Rs 176 (Rs 175.28),

November to Rs 173.23 (Rs 172.09) and December to Rs 173.20 (Rs 172.05) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) closed firm at Rs 170.38 (Rs 169.61) at Bangkok.

August futures closed at ¥ 267.4 (Rs 174.19) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates (Rs/kg) were : RSS-4: 185 (185); RSS-5: 182 (182); Ungraded: 174 (174); SNR 20: 167 (169) and Latex 60 per cent: 155 (158).

Cotton lacklustre on holiday mood

Rajkot, Aug. 26: Cotton price remained unchanged as demand fell due to holiday mood in the market.

According to traders, all the market will be closed for week for the festival, especially in the Saurashtra region.

Gujarat Sankar-6 traded at Rs 46,500-47,000 for a candy of 356 kg.

Raw cotton or *kapas* price quoted at Rs 1,150-1,175 for a *maund* of 20 kg.

Hardly 800-1,000 bales arrived in market as most of the mandies were closed from Monday.

Cotton brokers said that neither buyers nor sellers were interested to do business due to holiday mood.

Meanwhile, traders estimated the crop output to be around 115 lakh bales (170 kg each) in Gujarat.

A cotton broker said that cotton price may be increase after the mini vacation but it will be limited as estimates for the new season production are higher.

So far in Gujarat, total sowing of cotton reached 2.70 million hectares, according to the State Agriculture Department data.

Heat in US, rain in India drive up edible oils



Mumbai, Aug 26: A sudden spurt in domestic and overseas futures market lifted prices of imported edible oils here on Monday, despite month-end need-based demand.

Taking cues from Malaysian palm oil, local refineries raised their rates for palmolein and soyabean refined oil higher by Rs 15-20 respectively for 10 kg. Indigenous edible oils were mixed.

On the Bombay Commodity exchange, palmolein rose by Rs 8, soyabean refined oil by Rs 15 and cotton refined oil by Rs 7 for 10 kg due to lower demand. Groundnut oil declined by Rs 5 while sunflower and rapeseed oils ruled steady.

An observer said that weak domestic currency and firm foreign market lifted the sentiment in the physical market.

Saurashtra millers have started offering groundnut oil at lower rates on expectation of early arrivals of crops and higher output weigh on sentiment.

Report of heavy loss of standing crops in Madhya Pradesh due to heavy rain and flood situation in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh have lifted the sentiment in futures markets.

In Mumbai during the day, needy buyers have bought about 200-250 tonnes palmolein at Rs 580-581 in resale while refineries rates were higher.

Liberty quoted palmolein Rs 600, super palmolein Rs 630 and super deluxe Rs 650, soyabean refined oil Rs 690 and sunflower refined oil Rs 825. Ruchi quoted palmolein Rs 610, soyabean refined oil Rs 685 and sunflower refined oil Rs 825. Allana quoted palmolein Rs 600, super palmolein Rs 630, soyabean refined oil Rs 685 and sunflower refined oil Rs 820. In Rajkot, groundnut oil declined to Rs 1,255 (Rs 1,260) for *telia* tin and loose (10 kg) to Rs 800 (Rs 800).

On National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, soyabean refined oil's September futures jumped by Rs 16.10 to Rs 701.50 (Rs 685.40).

October was higher by Rs 21.90 to Rs 681.95 (Rs 660.05).

November increase by Rs 24.30 to Rs 674.80 (Rs 650.50).

Malaysia BMD crude palm oil's September contracts was MYR 2,483 (MYR 2,419), October at MYR 2,449 (MYR 2,385) and November at MYR 2,434 (MYR 2,367).

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were: Groundnut oil 850 (855), soya refined oil 680 (665), sunflower expeller refined 725 (730), sunflower refined 815 (815), rapeseed refined oil 726 (726), rapeseed expeller refined 696 (696) cottonseed refined oil 672 (665) and palmolein 580 (572).

Vikram Global Commodities (P) Ltd quoted Rs 640 for 10 kg for Malaysia super palmolein, September delivery.

Uptrend in aromatic rice varieties surprises market



Karnal, Aug 26: The rice market witnessed a mixed trend on Monday with a surprising uptrend in aromatic varieties, while non-basmati varieties continued to rule flat on moderate buying.

An uptrend at this time of the year is not justified, Amit Chandna, proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company, told *Business Line*.

Alteration of Rs 50-100 a quintal would not make much difference in the market, he said. Currently, the market is moving range-bound but within a positive territory and traders expect that the market may witness some change in the first week of September, said Amit Chandna. In the physical market, Pusa-1121 (steam) improved by Rs 100 and sold at Rs 8,000-8,100, while Pusa-1121 (sela) was quoted at Rs 7,650-7,750, Rs 50 up from the previous level.

Pure basmati (raw) quoted at Rs 8,650. Duplicate basmati (steam) went up by Rs 40 to Rs 6,600.

For the broken of Pusa-1121, Dubar quoted at Rs 3,600, Tibar sold at Rs 4,250 while Mongra was at Rs 2,900.

In the non-basmati section, Sharbati (Steam) sold at Rs 4,500-4,600 while Sharbati (Sela) quoted at Rs 4,300.

Permal (raw) sold at Rs 2,300-2,350 while Permal (sela) went for Rs 2,300. PR-11 (sela) sold at Rs 2,900 while PR-11 (Raw) was quoted at Rs 2,750.

PR14 (steam) sold at Rs 3,100.

Paddy arrivals

Around 4,000 bags of PR paddy variety arrived at the Karnal Grain Market Terminal from the Uttar Pradesh and quoted at Rs 1,225.

Rally in soyabean set to prolong



Indore, Aug 26: Soyabean prices are set to rise on global cues and reports of large-scale damage to the crop in Madhya Pradesh

In the past one week, soyabean have gone up by Rs 100 to Rs 3,550-3,650 a quintal.

In the futures market also, prices have been rising on strong global cues with its October and November contracts on the NCDEX closing at Rs 3,335 (up Rs 136) and Rs 3,541.50 (up Rs 136.50).

Compared with last week, soyabean's October contract on the NCEDX is up Rs 165.

Notwithstanding rise in acreage, hopes of higher crop output this year, appears to have been dashed as the recent rains in Madhya Pradesh have damaged 40-50 per cent crops, particularly in Bhopal, Sagar and Jabalpur divisions, said Vinod Choudhary, a local broker. His views were also shared by Sunil Mukati, a soyabean farmer in Dewas district.

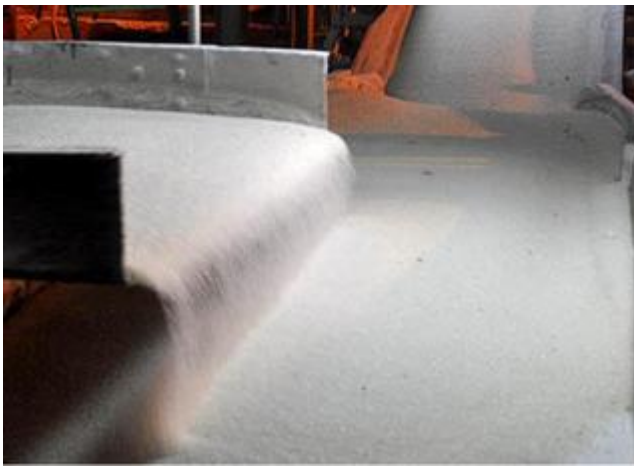
Improved domestic and export demand has also perked up soyameal with its price quoted at Rs 33,500 (up Rs 2,000 from last week), while it was quoted at Rs 34,000 on the port.

Notwithstanding scattered buying support, soya oil also traded higher on strong global cues with soya refined oil was quoted at Rs 665-70 for 10 kg (Rs 662-65).

Similarly, soya solvent also ruled higher at Rs 630-35 on strong global cues and CBOT projections.

In futures also, soya oil ruled higher on strong global cues with its September and October contracts on the NCEDX closing at Rs 701.30 (up Rs 15.90) and Rs 681.70 (up Rs 21.65) respectively. Bullish trend in soya oil will likely to continue in coming days given rise in festival demand ahead, said Mukesh Purohit, a local soyabean oil manufacturer.

Sugar mills continue to sell surplus stocks



Mumbai, Aug 26: Sugar spot prices eased by Rs 3-5 a quintal on Monday as freight dropped.

Prices on domestic futures market declined by Rs 20-28 on profit booking. Naka rates were steady.

Mill tender rates were down by Rs 5-8 as producers continued selling surplus stocks at every stage.

Sources said that in the absence of upcountry buying and need-based local demand, producers in Maharashtra are forced to sell in local market as new crushing season was approaching. Karnataka side millers are selling at a par with Maharashtra diverting eastern side demand there.

Freight rates eased by Rs 4-5 and pulled down prices in physical market.

As sugar mills are carrying surplus stocks due to higher production, they will continue selling old stocks, traders said.

Sources said that activities in the physical market were subdued on ample supply and need-based local demand.

The Vashi wholesale market carries more than 120 truckloads (each 100 bags) stocks.

Arrivals in the market were 64-65 trucks while local dispatches were also expected at 64-65 trucks.

On Saturday 10-12 mills offered tenders and sold 38,000-40,000 bags at Rs 2,900-3,000 (Rs 2,910-3,000) for S-grade and Rs 3,000-3,100 (Rs 3,010-3,105) for M-grade.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, sugar September futures were down by Rs 17 to Rs 3,014 (Rs 3,031), October was lower by Rs 15 to Rs 3,040 (Rs 3,055) and November declined by Rs 22 to Rs 3,060 (Rs 3,082).

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S-grade Rs 3,042-3,142 (Rs 3,042-3,142) and M-grade Rs 3,162-3,376 (Rs 3,162-3,382).

Naka delivery rates were: S-grade Rs 2,990-3,060 (Rs 2,990-3,060) and M-grade Rs 3,100-3,215 (Rs 3,100-3,215).

Uttar Pradesh rates were: Lakhimpur Rs 3,300 and Muffafarnagar Rs 3,320.

Turmeric rules flat as N. Indian buyers turn to AP



Erode, Aug 26: Turmeric prices ruled flat on Monday in Erode markets as north Indian traders placed orders in Warangal and Nizamabad in Andhra Pradesh.

Fresh orders are delayed. Usually during this time fresh orders come in for Erode traders.

Some traders in North India placed orders with Warangal and Nizamabad as prices there are cheaper than Erode. Some traders in North prefer Erode turmeric for its quality, so fresh orders will be received by them soon", said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

The farmers brought 4,200 bags for sale, 65 per cent was sold. Eighty per cent was procured by traders and stockists remaining 20 per cent.

The stockists said that they are having huge stock of turmeric with them, so they are buying very limited turmeric bags.

At Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,299-5,761 a quintal, the root variety Rs 3,719-5,211.

Salem hybrid crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,699-6,874, the root variety Rs 5,096-6,095. Of the 1,250 bags on offer 626 found takers.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,934-5,877, the root variety Rs 4,790-5,576.

Of the 501 bags put up for sale, 477 were traded.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,699-5,822. The root variety was sold at Rs 4,189-5,627. Of the 791 bags that arrived, 748 were sold. At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 4,529-6,099, the root variety Rs 3,656-5,442. Of the 408 bags put up sale, 358 were sold.

Selling pressure sinks pepper



Kochi, Aug 26: Pepper prices fell on Monday on reports of selling pressure. As prices crossed Rs 400-level and touched Rs 405 a kg, those who were holding the material started liquidating. This phenomenon led to the price fall, market sources said. The change in the weather has also paved the way for higher arrivals, they said. In the international market, European buyers are on holidays while the US buyers are said to be waiting for the competition between the India and other producers such as Brazil and Indonesia, who have started offering their produce at cheaper rates. September and October contracts on the NMCE fell last week by Rs 476 and Rs 700 a quintal, respectively to Rs 43,724 and Rs 44,200. Total open interest moved up by 20 tonnes to 60 tonnes. Total turnover dropped by four tonnes to 23 tonnes. Spot prices also dropped by Rs 200 to close at Rs 40,300 (ungarbled) and Rs 42,300 (garbled). Indian parity in the international market moved up marginally following the strengthening of the rupee at the weekend to around \$7,000 a tonne (c&f) Europe at \$7,250 a tonne (c&f) USA.
