

Link major waterbodies to attract birds: farmers



Monsoon failure has hit farmers as well as winged visitors

DESERTED: The dry Koonthankulam tank in Tirunelveli district. — Photo: A. SHAIKMOHIDEEN

TIRUNELVELI, December 19, 2013 - Koonthankulam, a famous birds' sanctuary in the district, which would have attracted a few lakhs of winged

visitors during this time every year and submerged in the peculiar 'clak' sound from the long beaks of the birds, has fallen silent as two water bodies that provided everything to the birds are bone dry now.

Whenever Koonthankulam and Kaadankulam were brimming with water, due to the southwest and northeast monsoons or the water released from the Manimuthar Dam, around 40 varieties of birds including painted stork, flamingo, bar-headed goose, pelican, spoonbill, ibis, snake bird, heron, tern, duck, egret, garganey and pintail used to be found at Koonthankulam.

Naturally, the birds nesting atop acacia trees grown inside the tanks and on trees in village used to attract hundreds of visitors every day.

The Department of Forest created nine sand mounds as it would facilitate the birds to catch the fishes and other insects floating on the water.

For the second consecutive year, the monsoon failure has affected farmers as well as birds.

"To avoid this situation and save the sanctuary, the government should consider connecting the Koonthankulam and Kaadankulam, the two major water bodies providing food and shelter to the birds, with the 73-km-long flood carrier channel being dug to take the surplus water of the Tamirabharani, Karunaeniyar and Nambiyar to dry areas of Nanguneri, Thisaiyanvilai, Radhapuram and Saattaankulam on an outlay of Rs.369 crore. If this suggestion is translated into action, one can see birds here throughout the year," says K. Subramanian of Koonthankulam.

Since the two water bodies are located just six km away from the flood carrier channel under excavation, the government may consider the farmer's suggestion.

However, the Public Works Department, which is executing the flood carrier channel project, says that it was ready to connect Koonthankulam and Kaadankulam if the government wanted it to do so.

“We’re idle for the past several months as the Centre, which has to release funds for the flood carrier channel project, has stopped the assistance completely leaving the third and fourth phase of the scheme in limbo,” said a PWD engineer connected to the scheme.

Farm mechanisation poised to grow in Tirupur

TIRUPUR, December 19, 2013 - With agricultural workers continue to migrate to the ‘more lucrative’ textile sector and to other activities, the scope for farm mechanisation is set for an exponential growth in Tirupur district during the next few years.

An assessment done by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) on the scope of farm mechanisation in the district had computed ‘credit potential growth’ in the initiation of agriculture mechanisation activities from Rs. 41.65 crore in 2012-13 to the potential credit flow of Rs. 74.85 crore in 2016-17 fiscal, the last financial year of the current Five Year Plan period, in the district.

“Farm mechanisation is now becoming the need of the hour in districts like Tirupur considering the acute shortage of requisite labourers. The mechanisation, besides increasing the production and productivity, also generates employment in the long run once the farm activities get widened,” K.C.M. Balasubramaniam, a farmer and former agriculture economist from Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, pointed out.

The NABARD’s analysis, though showing a substantial potential for growth in agriculture mechanisation, had put a word of caution, as part of the suggestive action points, to the financial institutions that extend capital support to such activities.

“The activities that are now generally been financed by the banks confined to the purchase of tractors, power tillers, power weeders and combine harvesters, among a few others.

They should start extending the assistance to improved agricultural implements and plant protection gadgets,” V.S. Sriram, District Development Manager of NABARD, said.

The other suggestions put forward by the NABARD and other stakeholders involved in farm development were the need for extension of finances for replacement of tractors, power tillers and agri-implements to help the farmer reap the complete benefit of the mechanisation process.

Joint Director of Agriculture M.K. Sherif said that the improvement in farm mechanisation would be most beneficial in the case of sugarcane, maize, turmeric, coconut and paddy considering the conditions it were cultivated in the district.

It will be beneficial for sugarcane, maize, turmeric, coconut and paddy

Dairy farmers seek hike in procurement price

VELLORE, December 19, 2013 - Dairy farmers belonging to Tamil Nadu Milk Producers' Association and Tamil Nadu Primary Milk Cooperative Workers' Association, Vellore district, staged a demonstration opposite the Collectorate on Arcot Road here on Wednesday. Their demands, among others, included enhancement in minimum procurement price of milk. The farmers wanted the minimum procurement price of cow's milk to be increased from Rs.20 a litre to Rs.25 a litre, and that of buffalo's milk from Rs.28 a litre to Rs.35 a litre in view of exorbitant increase in the prices of animal feed.

Their other demands included payment of an incentive of Rs. two per litre to milk producers as given in Karnataka and other States, payment of Re.one per litre by Vellore and Tiruvannamalai Districts Milk Producers' Union (Aavin) to primary milk producers' cooperative societies towards administrative expenses, uninterrupted supply of quality animal feed, steps on a war-footing to prevent any fresh outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease which has already affected large number of cattle in Vellore district, creation of a separate welfare board for milk producers, payment of solatium of Rs.50,000 from Perarignar Anna Welfare Fund to the family of a milk producer who died a natural death, and hike in the salary of 19,823 employees of 2,931 primary milk cooperative societies.

K. Mohammed Ali, State general secretary, Tamil Nadu Milk Producers' Association, inaugurated the agitation. K. Balakrishnan, Communist Party of India (Marxist) Central Committee member and State president of Tamil Nadu Farmers Association affiliated to Centre for Indian Trade Unions (CITU), spoke.

'Ensure that farmers get remunerative prices for their produce'

GULBARGA, December 19, 2013 - The Raitha Krishi Karmikara Sanghatane has expressed its concern over the number of farmer suicides.

The latest case was of Sanjeevkumar Rathod of Panegoan village on the outskirts of Gulbarga city, who committed suicide on December 15 because he was unable to repay a loan of over Rs. 4.5 lakh.

Mr. Rathod had taken a crop loan of Rs. 1.5 lakh from banks and more than Rs. 3 lakh from private moneylenders. He could not repay the loans in time owing to his crops failing for two successive years. Unable to bear the pressure, the 26-year-old farmer ended his life.

'Relief not given'

District convener of the sanghatane Ghouse Patel, in a statement issued here on Wednesday, said that although government officials visited the victim's family and assured that compensation would be paid immediately, it was yet to reach them. Mr. Patel demanded that adequate compensation be given to the farmer's family immediately.

He, however, added that no amount of compensation would bring back the farmer. The government should take immediate steps to ensure that farmers get remunerative prices for their produce and evolve a system wherein farmers who lost their crops got compensation immediately to repay their debts. The government should also end the menace of moneylenders in villages by extending liberal loans through banks.

Farmers stall rail line doubling work



Farmers staging a protest on the railway tracks near Shimsha Bridge in Maddur on Wednesday.

MANDYA, December 19, 2013 - A large number of farmers, demanding compensation for land given for the Bangalore–Mysore railway track doubling project, staged a protest by putting up stoves and cooking food on the tracks at two places in the district on

Wednesday.

The protests were held near Shimsha Bridge in Maddur and Elechakanahalli near Mandya. The farmers said the district administration had acquired several acres of fertile land. But, compensation was not paid, they said. Around 50 farmers stalled works on the railway track doubling project near Shimsha Bridge. “The authorities should release Rs. 80 lakh an acre as well as the interest on the amount,” they said.

Another group of farmers staged a similar protest on the railway tracks near Elechakanahalli, on the outskirts of Mandya. Railway officials Chandrashekar and Srinivas visited the spot.

The officials assured the farmers that they would take measures to release compensation by December 27.

Arecanut farmers protest in Sagar

SHIMOGA, December 19, 2013 - *They want the govt. to protect their interests*

Arecanut farmers staged a massive protest under the aegis of Prantya Adike Belegarara Sangha in Sagar city on Wednesday demanding the government to take initiatives to protect their interests.

The shops, hotels and commercial establishments in Sagar city remained closed expressing solidarity with the protesters. The arecanut growers from neighbouring Sorab, Hosanagar, Tirthahalli and Sirsi taluks also took part in the protest.

President of the association B.R. Jayanth said, in a report submitted to Supreme Court with regard to a case on banning gutkha, the Union Ministry for Health has said that consumption of arecanut was injurious to health.

'Not injurious'

However, the scientists of The Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI) have certified that consumption of arecanut was not injurious to health. Without verifying the CFTRI report, the officials of Ministry of Health have come to a wrong and hasty conclusion that arecanut was injurious to health, he said.

Mr. Jayanth also expressed concern over the direction from Union Ministry of Health to Food Safety and Standards Authority of India to examine the scientific evidences on the harmful effects of arecanut on human health. The officials of Ministry of Health were acting against the interests of arecanut growers, he said.

As the price of arecanut is sensitive to the policy decisions of the government, the stand taken by Union Ministry of Health has created apprehension among the farmers. Both the Central and State governments should take initiatives to clear these apprehensions and instil confidence among the arecanut growers, he said.

Panel recommendations

He also expressed displeasure against the delay in implementation of the recommendations of Gorakh Singh panel on extending financial assistance for rejuvenation of arecanut plantations infected with pest and fungal diseases.

The organisations of arecanut growers will stage a massive protest in Bangalore shortly demanding for the implementation of the recommendations, he said.

Addressing the gathering, working president of Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha K.T.

Gangadhar alleged that commercial forces were pressurising the government to discourage the cultivation of arecanut.

🔍 ***'CFTRI says that arecanut is not injurious to health'***

🔍 ***'Govt. should instil confidence among arecanut farmers'***

Calicut varsity to hold farm fair

MALAPPURAM, December 19, 2013 - Calicut University will hold the second edition of a mega agricultural fair at Kohinoor grounds from January 2, 2014. The 10-day fair will incorporate food, horticultural and book fests. University officials said that thousands of people were expected for the show at the grounds which is on National Highway-17. The number of stalls at the fair will be doubled this year, said K.V. Mohanan, convener of the fair committee.

The fair will be open from 9 a.m. till 9 p.m.

There will be popular art shows in the evening. Seminars introducing modern methods of agriculture will be held as part of the show.

For details, the organisers can be contacted at 9037925441.

Farm sector has lost prominence due to lopsided policies, says AIKS

GUNTUR, December 19, 2013 - *National seminar on alternative agricultural policy held at Guntur*

The farm sector has been booted out of the Indian economy due to the lopsided policies of successive governments, national general secretary of All India Kisan Sabha Atul Kumar Anjan said here on Wednesday.

The agricultural sector, which has been contributing 51 per cent to the Gross Domestic Product of the country and providing livelihood to two-thirds of its population, is now staring at its worst crisis with farmers' suicides, lack of minimum support prices and rising cost of cultivation, Mr. Anjan said at the inaugural of the national seminar on "Farmer Centered Alternative Agricultural Policy," being organised by the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) here.

Policy changes sought

"The present share of agriculture to GDP is just 13.2 per cent. Market forces have taken hold of the farm sector and though much water has passed under the bridge since 2007 after the M.S Swaminathan Commission report was tabled, the government has not taken any action. More than five lakh farmers had committed suicide during the last 13-14 years," Mr. Anjan said.

District Collector S. Suresh Kumar too shared his passion for agriculture and called for an effective pressure group to bring in policy changes. Mr. Suresh Kumar said that declining agricultural production during the last 20 years had forced many farmers to shift from agriculture to other activities.

Vice Chancellor of Acharya Nagarjuna University K. Viyanna Rao said that declining rate of agricultural growth had been a matter of concern. Farmers have been at the receiving end due to lack of effective agricultural policies and new challenges like corporatization of agriculture, which has thrown the farm sector into a crisis.

No stable prices

Former chairman of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) T. Haq said that farmers continue to be in the 'debt trap' due to lack of proper and stable agricultural policies.

Former Minister Kodela Siva Prasada Rao, general secretary of A.P Rythu Sangham Ravula Venkaiah also spoke.

🔗 ***Farm sector staring at its worst crisis with suicides, rising cost of cultivation: Anjan***

🔗 ***Declining rate of agricultural growth matter of concern, says ANU Vice Chancellor***

Farmers seek introduction of paddy trading

KURNOOL, December 19, 2013 - Andhra Pradesh Raithu Sangham, affiliated to CPI, urged the marketing department to introduce paddy trading at four important market yards in the district.

K. Jagannatham, the district secretary of Raithu Sangham, met Kurnool Market Yard chairman D. Venkateswarlu and urged him to introduce paddy trading at Kurnool as well as Nandyal, Yemmiganur and Adoni.

He said on account of growing irrigation facilities, more farmers were switching over to paddy cultivation which was being cultivated in nearly 8 lakh acres. However, not a single centre conducts trading in paddy, he said. In the absence of trading, farmers sell the commodity to commission merchants in villages which reduce profits, he added.

He said paddy had become the mainstay under KC canal, Telugu Ganga and upper reaches of LLC. Mr. Venkateswara Reddy is understood to have promised to take up paddy trading immediately.

State farmers move apex court against Krishna tribunal verdict

NEW DELHI, December 19, 2013 - Eight farmers of Andhra Pradesh moved the Supreme Court seeking an interim stay of the award of the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal II permitting Karnataka to raise the height of the Almatti dam from 519.6 mts to 524.25 mts. Filed by advocate Guntur Prabhakar, petitioners Devineni Umamaheswara Rao and seven others in their special leave petition against the award said "the KWDT has erred in permitting Karnataka to raise the height of Almatti Dam from 519.6 Mts. to 524.25Mts detrimental to the rights and interests of people of Andhra Pradesh which will adversely affect the timely flow of water to Andhra Pradesh and agriculture operations in the Krishna Basin and entire ayacut of more than 35 lakh."

As per the final award passed on November 29, Andhra Pradesh is entitled to get 1,005 thousand million cubic feet (tmcft) of water, Karnataka will get 907 tmcft and Maharashtra's share is 666 tmcft.

The farmers said the Tribunal failed to consider that with respect to the height of Almatti Dam the Union Government has appointed a high power committee comprising the Chief Ministers of West Bengal, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Assam and the said the committee recommended an height of 519.6 Mts only in order to protect the interest of Lower riparian State and the same was approved by this court in the Suit filed by Andhra Pradesh.

While so, allowing Karnataka to raise the height of the dam would be against the interests of the farmers of Andhra Pradesh.

Economic compensation likely for farmers in Western Ghats

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, December 19, 2013 - *Expert panel moots payment for ecosystem services*

: The expert panel set up by the government to formulate the State's response to the report of the Kasturirangan committee on the conservation of the Western Ghats is considering an economic compensation programme to protect the interests of farmers in the villages named Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs).

Official sources said the panel had discussed a series of economic incentives initially mooted by the Kerala State Biodiversity Board to promote stakeholder interest among the farmers and ensure their participation in environmental management. Conservation grants are likely to be recommended for farmers involved in ecosystem services such as multiple crop farming, maintenance of traditional breeds, organic farming, watershed protection and use of renewable energy sources.

Since the 1980s, the United Nations Environment Programme, Food and Agricultural Organisation and World Bank have recognised Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) as an instrument for biodiversity conservation and repair of damaged ecosystems.

A senior official said the incentives were expected to assuage the fears of the settler farmers and residents who have been on the warpath against the demarcation of ESAs by the High Level Working Group headed by Mr. Kasturirangan.

"While the notification issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests last month clearly spells out the don'ts like mining, quarrying, thermal power plants, big construction projects and Red category industries, it does not mention the dos for ESAs. Our effort is to highlight some of the activities that can be taken up as a participatory exercise," he said.

The interim report of the State-level expert panel headed by .Oommen V. Oommen has proposed a resurvey of the 123 villages identified as ESAs. The intention, according to government sources, was to exclude agricultural land, settlements and plantations from the ESA. According to the proposal, teams comprising officials of the Revenue, Forest and Agriculture departments and representatives of the panchayat-level Biodiversity Management Committees would examine the available land records to identify the human habitats to be exempted from the ESAs.

The HLWG had depended on satellite data to demarcate 123 villages as ESAs. During its interaction with people's representatives, the three-member expert panel received inputs that the total reliance on remote sensing data had led to anomalies in classification.

"Several townships and plantations were demarcated as ESAs while the vast grasslands in Wagamon, a critical ecosystem, have been excluded. This is one of the factors that fuelled the mass protests against the implementation of the HLWG report," said the official. The government order on resurvey is likely to be issued soon.

Chief Whip P.C. George said here that the final report of the expert panel was expected to alleviate the concerns of the settler farmers.

📌 ***Participatory conservation model***

📌 ***Resurvey of 123 villages proposed***

Controlling fruit fly menace in bitter gourd

Cucurbit fruit fly is the most destructive pest of bitter gourd throughout the country. The pest attacks other cucurbitaceous vegetables such as bottle gourd, cucumber, tinda, pumpkin, gherkin, etc.

Adult fly punctures the early tender fruit tissues and lays its eggs. The infestation often reaches cent per cent leading to complete loss of the crop. The maggots feed on the contents of fruits and cause premature dropping of fruits.

Entry point

Infested fruits can be identified by the presence of brown resinous juice which oozes out of the punctures made by the flies. The punctures serve as entry for various bacteria and fungi and as the result of the infection, fruits start rotting, get distorted, malformed and fall prematurely.

The fly breeds throughout the year. Females thrust around 50 eggs as groups into tender fruits. The eggs hatch in 1-9 days and the maggots bore into the pulp forming galleries. Seven days old pale white mature larvae come out of the rotten fruits and bury themselves about 5cm deep into the soil and pupate. Barrel shaped brown puparium emerge as adult flies in two weeks.

Adult flies are reddish brown in colour. They feed on honey dew and juices of ripe injured fruits.

There are several generations in a year. The population of the pest is low in hot dry conditions and high during rainy season.

Control measures:

- Grow fruit fly tolerant bitter gourd varieties.
- Collect and destroy infested fruits such as fallen, deformed and stunted fruits.
- Frequently rake up or plough the soil to expose pupae to their natural enemies and detrimental weather.
- Grow maize as border crop as the flies have the habit of resting on such tall plants. Maize alone can be sprayed with insecticides.
- Use ribbed gourd as trap crop and apply carbaryl 0.15 per cent or malathion 0.1 per cent on congregating adult flies on the under surface of leaves.
- Apply bait containing 50ml of malathion + 0.5kg of gur/sugar in 50 litre of water and it may be repeated at weekly interval if the attack is serious.
- Use traps citronella oil, eucalyptus oil, vinegar(acetic acid) and lactic acid to trap flies.

(Dr. J. Jayaraj, Professor of Entomology, Agricultural College and Research Institute, Madurai 625 104, email: vu2jrj@rediffmail.com, Phone No. 0452-2422946.)

250 agriculture service centres for Chittoor

CHITTOOR, December 19, 2013 - The State government has sanctioned 250 agricultural implements service stations, and 22 implements hiring stations for Chittoor district for the year 2013-14 allotted Rs 4.41 crore as subsidy for the same.

The district agriculture wing officials are taking steps to identify beneficiaries to set up these centres at the mandal headquarters. Under this scheme, all implements used in the mechanical tilling of land would be given to farmers at a subsidised rate ranging up to Rs. 1 lakh. The implements on hire will be applicable to paddy farmers while those undertaking the cultivation of groundnuts can also avail of the subsidy on implements. The subsidy will be extended in the case of both individual and group farming.

The officials have asked farmers to consult their respective agricultural officials at the mandal level.

FMD continues to plague Upper Kuttanad

PATHANAMTHITTA, December 19, 2013 - *As many as 1,000 cattle afflicted with the deadly virus*

Dairy farmers in the Upper Kuttanad region are a depressed lot with the attack of the foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) virus continues unabated in the region.

Majority of the livestock in the villages of Peringara, Kadapra, Niranom, Nedumprom, and Kuttoor are afflicted with the viral disease. The virus has claimed the lives of 35 cattle, including calves, in Upper Kuttanad alone in the past two weeks.

The debt-ridden farmers are facing acute financial crisis with the loss of their livelihood. Though the records available with the Department of Animal Husbandry here have put the FMD casualty in the district at 32, a realistic assessment has put the casualty at not less than 100.

Public Relations Officer of the department George Varghese said that Peringara panchayat was the worst-affected. A rough estimate showed that not less than 1,000 cattle in the Upper Kuttanad region were afflicted with the disease, said Sunny Thomas who runs a dairy farm at Karackal in Peringara panchayat.

Talking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Thomas said he was forced to reduce his livestock to 28 from 44 when the disease started spreading.

According to him, seven of his livestock had been afflicted with the disease, while two cows and three calves died of the disease in the past 10 days.

Mr. Thomas said he had vaccinated all the remaining cattle at his farm and the affected cattle were recovering fast due to expert treatment and costly medicines brought from Ernakulam.

However, the plight of many small-scale farmers who had lost their cattle is pathetic. They have purchased two cows at Rs.60,000 under the Kuttanad Package, availing themselves of a subsidy worth Rs.30,000. They are seeking a solution to repay their bank loan after the death of both their cows.

Wildlife at risk of contracting FMD

KOCHI, December 19, 2013 - *Cattle grazing, movement of humans help spread disease*



Ungulates are at most risk of contracting foot-and-mouth disease among wild animal populations in the State.

Wild animal populations of Kerala are at risk of contracting foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), which may prove fatal. The outbreak is most likely to affect ungulates, wildlife experts say.

Two instances of gaur deaths owing to acute FMD infection were reported from the Kottayam region last week, and animal disease experts fear the disease has spread to wild populations.

V. Gopinath, Chief Wildlife Warden, Kerala, said there existed a real threat to the wild animal population of the State. Cattle grazing and movement of human beings were contributing to the spread of the air-borne disease, and the wild animal population of the State was under severe threat, he said. Management of the disease would not be possible in the wild. The epidemic had hit the cattle population in the State in an unprecedented manner. It could also impact the wild animal population on an unparalleled scale, Mr. Gopinathan said.

It is estimated that over 10,000 head of cattle graze through the forest areas of Wayanad alone. While there are around 6,000 head of cattle in the periphery regions of Wayanad, the cattle population in settlements inside the forest area is estimated to be around 4,000.

Mr. Gopinathan said the presence of cattle in forest areas and its fringes was a matter of grave concern. Imposing restriction on grazing would not be possible, he said. P.O. Nameer, Head of the Wildlife Division of the Kerala Agricultural University, said two-hoofed herbivorous mammals, namely wild boar, mouse deer, spotted deer, Sambar, barking deer, gaur, and Nilgiri Tahr were susceptible to the epidemic.

Wild elephant populations were also vulnerable to the disease.

Two cases of captive elephants contracting the disease from cattle were reported from Thrissur and Kottayam. Till now, no instances of carnivores falling prey to the disease had been reported, Dr. Nameer said.

M.R. Saseendranath, Director of Academics and Research, Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, said there existed the possibility of the infection spreading from cattle to wild animals. Bio-safety measures such as vaccination of cattle population in human habitations bordering the forest areas and restriction of movement of cattle and human

beings were the only options available for containing the spread of the disease. Death occurred in animals owing to secondary infection. The mortality rate in wild animals would be less compared to that in cattle, Dr. Saseendranath said.

Wildlife experts said the disposal of carcass would be another major challenge awaiting wildlife managers following the disease outbreak. The absence of scavenger species such as vultures and hyenas in the forests of the State could aggravate the situation. Animals feeding on the carcasses could also develop the disease. Scientific disposal of the remains would have to be undertaken for containing the disease, they said.

KRRS demands more water for rabi crop

BELLARY, December 19, 2013 - Desai Jadiyappa, vice-president of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha, urged Minister for Water Resources M.B. Patil to direct Irrigation Department officials to release adequate water into the low-level canal of the Tungabhadra reservoir to enable farmers to take up rabi cultivation in Bellary, Hospet and Sirguppa taluks. Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday, Mr. Jadiyappa along with other farmer leaders said the discharge from the reservoir was not in full quota as had been decided at the Irrigation Consultative Committee meeting. A memorandum had been submitted to the Minister seeking release of water earmarked for Bellary district. Mr. Jadiyappa said the KRRS planned to lay siege to the Irrigation Department office in Bellary if the demand was not conceded.

Organic vegetable stall shuts shop

KHAMMAM, December 19, 2013 - The organic vegetable stall, which functioned under the aegis of Kinnera women self-help group from the premises of the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) here for little over a year, has become defunct.

The initiative by the women SHG to sell organic vegetables at the DRDA's office, the agency which is promoting the non-pesticide management (NPM), evoked good response from health-conscious buyers, including employees.

The SHG operated the stall against all odds for more than a year. The well intended initiative of the SHG women aimed at providing an opportunity to the organic farmers to sell their vegetable produce and earned them wide appreciation.

However, the organic farmers faced a severe ordeal in bringing their vegetable produce from their villages to the stall at the DRDA's office in the absence of proper transportation arrangements. Some of the organic farmers belonging to Kaikondaigudem, Pallegudem and Chintapalli villages of Khammam urban and rural mandals, switched over to the Rythu Bazar in the town citing unbearable transportation expenses. This finally led to the closure of the stall recently, sources added. Government agencies engaged in promotion of organic farming in NPM mode should take up the responsibility of providing transportation, marketing and other logistic support to organic farmers to help the latter get remunerative

prices, said the Rythu Sangham district secretary Nunna Nageswara Rao. An inter-departmental approach is needed to enable the farmers continue sustainable agriculture practices in adherence to NPM, he suggested. Efforts are under way to motivate the organic farmers to sell their vegetable produce on the premises of the DRDA's office, said P Anjaneyulu, the District Project Manager (NPM), DRDA.

'Promote millets as staple food'

HYDERABAD, December 19, 2013 - Millets such as sorghum, ragi and pearl millets should be promoted in the interest of health and nutritional security, said Agriculture Minister Kanna Lakshminarayana here on Wednesday, inaugurating a three-day, international consultation on 'Millets for health and nutrition' at the Directorate of Sorghum Research (DSR). The DSR, a unit of the ICAR, is celebrating its Golden Jubilee year of sorghum research this year. DSR Director J.V. Patil said the past four decades had gone through phases of green revolution, self-sufficiency and favourable government policies to promote fine cereals such as rice and wheat. This, he said, had resulted in reduction of millet consumption.

Water levels



The water level in Periyar dam was 117.10 feet with an inflow of 54 cusecs and a discharge of 467 cusecs. The level in Vaigai dam was 45.01 feet with an inflow of 224 cusecs and a discharge of 60 cusecs. The combined storage in Periyar credit was 2,751 mcft. There was no rainfall recorded during the 24 hours ending at 8.30 a.m. on Wednesday.

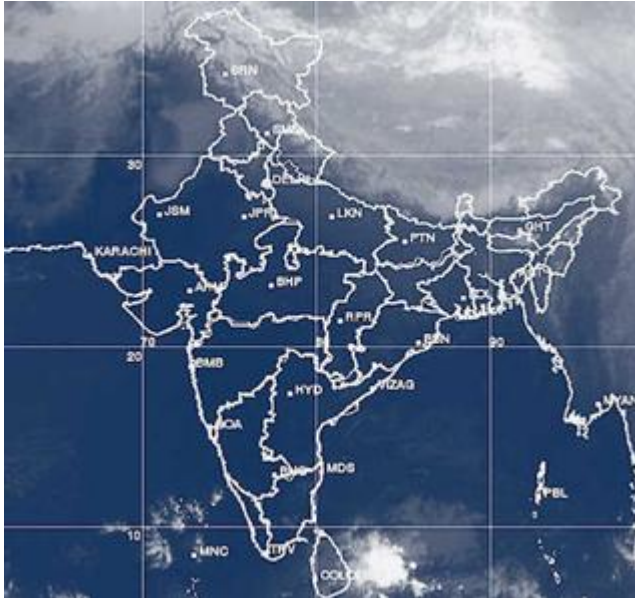
The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 77.73 feet on Wednesday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 939 cusecs and the discharge 9,000 cusecs.

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Wednesday stood at 96.25 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 424.97 cusecs and 1,003.5 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam.

The water level in Manimuthar dam stood at 75.73 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 52 cusecs and 35 cusecs of water was discharged.

Nagercoil - The level in the Pechipparai dam stood at 26.60 feet, while it was 59.95 feet in Perunchani, 13.05 feet in Chittar 1, 13.15 feet in Chittar 11, 4.70 feet in Poigai and 54.05 feet in Mamabazathuraiyaru.

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs. Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on December 18.

ANDHRA PRADESH

Anantapur	30	15	0	51
Arogyavaram	27	14	0	182
Bapatla	30	16	0	583
Calingapatnam	28	16	0	990
Gannavaram	30	17	0	524
Hanamkonda	30	12	0	296
Hyderabad AP	29	13	0	253
Kakinada	29	19	0	712
Khammam	30	17	0	100
Kavali	30	19	0	558
Kurnool	29	16	0	100
Mahabubnagar	31	14	0	165
Machilipatnam	29	19	0	499
Narasapur	31	18	0	674
Nellore	31	21	0	441
Nizamabad	31	12	0	120
Ongole	32	18	0	535
Ramagundam	29	10	0	201
Tirupathi AP	30	18	0	372
Tuni	30	18	0	524
Vizag AP	29	16	0	716
Vizag	29	19	0	695

KARNATAKA

Agumbe	29	8	0	626
Bangalore AP	26	14	0	198
Bangalore	26	14	0	244
Bagalkote	31	10	0	—
Belgaum AP	29	9	0	63
Bellary	31	14	0	63
Bijapur	29	7	0	113
Chitradurga	28	15	0	55
Chickmagalur	26	13	0	70
Chintamani	26	10	0	85
Gadag	28	14	0	88
Gulbarga	32	15	0	38
Hassan	28	10	0	116
Honavar	34	21	0	266
Karwar	35	19	0	167
Madikeri	24	10	0	205
Mangalore AP	33	18	0	344
Mysore	27	16	0	183
Mandya	28	13	0	185
Panambur	34	19	0	247
Raichur	29	13	0	103
Shirali	34	17	0	428

KERALA

Alappuzha	31	21	0	419
Kannur	34	21	0	336
Kochi AP	33	20	0	610
Kottayam	33	19	0	520
Kozhikode	33	21	0	311
Punalur	31	19	0	719
Thiruvanantha				
-puram AP	32	22	0	494
Thiruvanantha				
-puram City	34	21	0	521
Vellanikkara	31	21	0	457

TAMIL NADU

Adirampattinam	31	20	0	228
Chennai	29	20	0	436
Chennai AP	29	20	0	486
Coimbatore AP	29	18	0	157
Coonoor	19	8	0	603
Cuddalore	29	21	0	386
Dharmapuri	27	17	0	263
Kanyakumari	30	23	0	316
Karaikal	28	21	0	605
Kodaikanal	19	9	0	330
Madurai AP	30	21	0	296

Nagapattinam	28	21	0	582
Palayamkottai	30	22	0	335
Pamban	28	25	tr	534
Parangipettai	30	21	0	601
Puducherry	30	20	0	454
Salem	30	17	0	225
Thanjavur	29	21	0	253
Tiruchi AP	29	19	0	355
Tirupattur	28	18	0	180
Tiruttani	30	18	0	321
Tondi	29	21	0	348
Tuticorin	30	22	0	307
Ooty	19	7	0	281
Valparai	27	7	0	372
Vedaranyam	—	—	—	—
Vellore	28	19	0	105
LAKSHADWEEP				
Amini Divi	32	22	0	203
Minicoy	31	25	0	181
Kavarathi	—	—	—	—
OTHER STATIONS				
Kolkata (Alipore)	28	17	0	523
Mumbai	32	20	0	73
New Delhi	23	9	0	73

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (trace) and total rainfall in mm since October 01, 2013.

DRY WEATHER IN ANDHRA PRADESH

CHENNAI: Mainly dry weather prevailed over Tamil Nadu and dry weather prevailed over Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Lakshadweep.

The minimum temperature rose appreciably at one or two places over north Tamil Nadu and, rose at one or two places over north coastal Andhra Pradesh and north interior Karnataka and changed little elsewhere over the region.

They were markedly below normal at one or two places north interior Karnataka, appreciable below normal at one or two places over Telangana, south interior Karnataka, coastal Tamil Nadu, below normal at one or two places over coastal Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, north interior Karnataka and Rayalaseema and many places over Tamil Nadu and remained nearly normal over the rest of the region.

Bijapur recorded the lowest minimum temperature of 7 degree Celsius in the plains of the region.

FORECAST (valid until Friday morning): Mainly dry weather will prevail over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Lakshadweep.

Cold Wave Warning: Cold wave conditions would prevail over parts of interior Karnataka during next two nights.

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Thursday, Dec 19

Max Min

28° | 22°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 65

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:25

Sunset: 05:46

Barometer: 1014

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Friday, Dec 20

Max Min

29° | 21°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday

Dec 21

29° | 21°

Partly Cloudy

Sunday

Dec 22

24° | 22°

Overcast

Monday

Dec 23

24° | 22°

Overcast

Tuesday

Dec 24

24° | 23°

Overcast

Wednesday

Dec 25

25° | 23°

Cloudy

THE HINDU Business Line

Coonoor tea turnover up 20% in 11 months

Coonoor, Dec. 18: The cumulative turnover of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions in the 11 months of the current calendar has risen by 19.89 per cent over the corresponding period of 2012.

This is mainly due to some 38 lakh kg more tea being sold with Rs 10 a kg increase in average price, reveals an analysis of the market. In the 48 auctions held till November-end, 5.51 crore kg were sold against 5.13 crore kg in 2012.

Consequently, between January and November, the cumulative turnover increased to Rs 499.43 crore from Rs 416.56 crore — up Rs 82.87 crore or 19.89 per cent.

Poor yield, leaf fall disease stretch rubber growers' woes



Imports may rise to record this fiscal as prices hover around Rs 150/kg

Domestic rubber prices suffer heavy losses

Chennai, Dec. 18: Rubber growers are going through a tough period with poor yield and leaf fall disease adding to their current problem of lower prices, which are hovering around Rs 150 a kg.

"Rubber growers have been squeezed

this year with monsoon being 150 per cent higher than normal. Trees have been affected by the leaf fall disease which has reduced production by 20-40 per cent," said M.P. Cherian, Chairman of the United Planters Association of Southern India's rubber committee.

"Excess monsoon rainfall this year has also reduced the number of days a grower taps the rubber tree," said George Valy, President of Indian Rubber Dealers Federation.

"The residual money in the pocket of planters has come down now and they could begin facing more problems if the situation continues for another six months," says Cherian.

According to Rubber Board Chairperson Sheela Thomas, there has been a slight decrease in production as well as consumption this year.

Domestic production during the first half of the current fiscal was 4.26 lakh tonnes (lt) against 4.85 lt in the same period a year ago.

The fall in prices has been nearly 23 per cent from a high of Rs 196.50 a kg that growers got for RSS-4 grade on August 10. During the same time last year, prices were ruling at Rs 163.

The RSS-4 grade is being used by the consuming industry, particularly tyre makers, who consume 65 per cent of the country's total production of over nine lt.

"Small farmers with holdings less than three hectares are the ones who are facing problem due to current prices. They are in real trouble," said N. Radhakrishnan, Adviser, Cochin Rubber Merchants Association.

"With small farmers being unable to get tappers, they will be badly hit," said Valy.

According to the Rubber Board, over 90 per cent of 10-11 lakh rubber growers are small farmers.

"Though prices of RSS-4 are ruling at Rs 153 a kg, a grower can actually expect that for only 65 per cent of the rubber he produces. The remaining gets scrap rubber rate," said Cherian. Currently, scrap rubber fetches around Rs 106 a kg.

"Growers seem to compare current prices with the record Rs 240 a kg they fetched two years ago. But domestic prices were higher than global prices until November," said Rajiv Budhraj, Director-General of Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association.

Rising costs

"Growers are facing problems of rising costs in managing plantations. Costs have gone up four times since 2008-09," said Cherian.

For example, the rubber firms' per employee cost that was Rs 135 a day four years ago has increased to Rs 450-500 now, including statutory payments such as provident fund, bonus and medical care.

According to Valy, growers have to pay a minimum of Rs 3 a day for a tree for tapping 100 trees. "This turns out to Rs 600 a day for a grower who has 200 trees," he said. "Small and marginal growers have their own difficulties and limitations to afford the increased cost of inputs and labour wages," said Sheela Thomas.

"In the last couple of years, prices of inputs such as fertiliser have also gone up," said Radhakrishnan.

"Farmers realise 95 per cent of farm-gate prices here compared with 60-70 per cent in other parts of the world," said Budhraja.

Higher Imports

Growers and traders point to imports as one of the reasons for fall in prices.

"Till November, 2.38 lakh tonnes have been imported. We could end up importing a record three lakh tonnes this fiscal," said Valy. In 2012-13 fiscal, 2.17 lt were imported.

"Despite cheaper imports, tyre companies have been affected by weak automobile sales.

Pan-Asia, there are 3.5 lakh tonnes waiting to be offloaded into the market," said Cherian.

Car sales during April-November period of the current fiscal dropped by nearly five per cent.

Sales of commercial vehicles declined by 17.5 per cent during the same period.

According to Sheela Thomas, rubber consumption in the first half of the fiscal was 5.72 lt against 5.8 lt in the year-ago period.

"The price scenario should be delinked from imports. Production dropped during July-September and even now, future availability of rubber continues to be a concern," said Budhraja.

"We had indicated to Government officials that we will be importing this year," he said.

The Rubber Board Chairperson said: "It is a fact that, owing to an extended period of rains, supply of rubber in the domestic market was tight in the last 4-5 months. The contracted imports landed at the start of peak production period and this exerted a downward pressure on price. The price crash is attributed to various reasons and import is one factor contributing to it."

While Upasi and tyre manufacturers are seeking support for the entire pipeline from the grower to the end-user, Radhakrishnan suggests suspension of imports for a few months.

Sheela Thomas said that imports cannot be barred in view of the country's commitment to the World Trade Organisation.

Glut

The situation could turn to worse in the next couple of months for growers as production is set to peak, said Radhakrishnan. "Production could be around 2.30 lt during December-January, while consumption will be 1.80 lt only. It will leave an additional 50,000 tonnes as surplus," he said.

Selling pressure pounds pepper

Kochi, Dec. 18: Selling pressure continued to pull both spot and future pepper on Wednesday. Increased enquiries from sellers also aided the price fall.

At the same time buying by inter-State dealers on cash carry basis was reportedly taking place, market sources said .

On the spot, 17 tonnes of pepper arrived and of this 15 tonnes were traded.

In the international markets also supply, at present, is limited. Vietnam was offering clean 500 GL material at \$8,500 a tonne, while there were no sellers for the Asta grade, they said. Jan and Feb contracts on the NMCE fell by Rs 300 and Rs 393 respectively to Rs 52,750 and Rs 52,950 a quintal.

On the IPSTA, Jan contract closed at Rs 53,500 while the Feb contract dropped by Rs 69 to Rs 52,500. Spot prices dipped further by Rs 300 to Rs 49,000 (ungarbled) and Rs 51,900 (garbled).

Export prices remained at \$8,700 (c&f) for the Europe and \$8,950 a tonne (c&f) for the US.

‘Tumhara’ ragi, coconut oil from Tumkur farmers

Bangalore, Dec. 18: Farmers in Tumkur, Karnataka have begun to market their own produce to fetch better value for their crops. They have launched their own brand “Tumhara” under the “Dream:In Tumkur” project and begun selling ragi and coconut oil products.

The brand has been launched with the support of ‘Dream: In’ and Manipal Foundation. The products will be available at retail outlets of Big Bazaar and a few local retail chains.

Farmers have also identified tamarind and arecanut as other crops to take up for processing and packaging. Products from these are seen as appealing to consumers.

Initial products launched include ragi malt, ragi baby food and virgin coconut oil.

Later, coconut chips and ragi dosa mixes will be marketed.

Initiative

Dream: In is an initiative to empower people at the village or local level, while Manipal Foundation facilitates communities by partnering and giving them scale.

“Dream: In Tumkur” is an innovative project to create new socio-economic value, in an inside-out development approach,” P Balachandran Warriar, CEO, Manipal Foundation, told *Business Line*.

The project has identified farmers, formed groups and created a team of agri-preneurs.

“For this, a network of over 380 farmers, processing and packing units and food research institutions, mentors, government agencies, financial institutions and NGOs have been created,” said Kush Medhora, cofounder and CEO, Dream: In.

“Based on the sales and acceptance, we will be roping in more partners to sell in Bangalore.

“We plan to aggressively market it as a local product,” said Medhora.

Currently, the products are priced lower than the competition and leading brands.

Pricing is done in such a way that farmers get four to five times the price of the commodity after value addition.

Warrior said under the project, two brands have been created and they are in the process of being trademarked.

These brands are licenced free-of-cost to the farmer.

Sweet news! Sorghum can reduce sugar levels

Hyderabad, Dec. 18: Here is yet another reason why you must consider millets in your diet. Scientists have found that if you replace part of your rice-wheat meal with sorghum, you may well manage your sugar levels.

Scientists at National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) and Directorate of Sorghum Research (DSR) have just concluded a World Bank-funded research project that revealed sorghum's quality to lower glycosylated haemoglobin levels.

Glycosylated haemoglobin or HbA1c is a parameter used to diagnose diabetes. A World Health Organisation (WHO) report recommends HbA1c of 6.5 per cent as the cut-off point for diagnosing diabetes.

"We have done a study with NIN to find out how sorghum can benefit people in managing the HbA1c levels. The clinical trials in a limited population in a period of three months showed reduction of HbA1C levels to 7.3 per cent from 7.9 per cent, indicating sorghum's benefits," DSR Principal Scientist B. Dayakar Rao said.

Scientists have replaced 50 per cent of the diet of the sample population who ate rice with sorghum foods. "We, however, need to do the study on a much larger scale to ascertain the benefits," he told *Business Line* on the sidelines of the global meet on millets for health and nutritional security. The three-day conference is being organised by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, DSR and Society for Millets Research.

ICAR Deputy Director-General Swapan Kumar Datta said that millets were the future crops of the country.

"It can tolerate extreme weather conditions. The climate resilient crop can also help paddy and wheat. While drought tolerance could help paddy, heat tolerance would benefit wheat," he said.

Name change

With a view to enhancing the scope of the DSR, ICAR would soon rechristen it to Indian Institute of Millets Research. "It will be a centre of excellence for all millets research, including work on minor millets," the ICAR official said.

For crisis-ridden sugar industry, relief package may come in stages

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs to take up proposal today

New Delhi, Dec 18: The Government may announce some incentives to ease the cane payment burden of the beleaguered sugar mills this week.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs is likely to consider a proposal on providing interest free loans of about Rs 7,200 crore to sugar mills on Thursday. "The incentives will be announced in stages. Some incentives will be considered this week, while some more will be considered next week," Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar told reporters. Pawar, who

heads an informal group of ministers that is working on relief package sugar mills, said the panel had received a number of suggestions from the sugar industry and major sugarcane producing States such as Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka.

"We have come up with our own recommendations," Pawar said hinting that the Government could also announce concessions to encourage the production of raw sugar for which there is export demand. The industry has traditionally produced refined sugar and the Government is likely to support the production of raw sugar as a new product. As part of the interest-free loans being considered for the sugar industry, banks will lend equivalent to the excise duty paid by mills in the last three years, while the entire interest of 12 per cent would be borne by the Centre and the Sugar Development Fund.

Reeling under the impact of high cane costs, the sugar industry is facing payment crisis as glut in production of the sweetener has resulted in a bearish trend in prices.

The industry is currently saddled with arrears estimated at Rs 3,400 crore.

The reluctance on the industry to start crushing for the 2013-14 season time due to high cane costs had forced the Government to intervene and a panel headed by Pawar was asked to look into the issue.

The panel had suggested extending interest free loans of Rs 7,200 crore to the crisis-ridden sugar mills to start the crushing season.

It has also recommended recast of loans availed of by mills according to the Reserve Bank of India norms, incentivise production of four million tonnes of raw sugar and create buffer stock, besides doubling ethanol blending in petrol to 10 per cent.

Spot rubber drops a tad

Kottayam, Dec.18: Spot rubber prices were almost steady on Wednesday. The market lost its direction despite a firm closing in domestic futures as there was no follow-up buying by major consuming industries. RSS-4 suffered marginally during late trading hours, while overall volumes were extremely dull in most counters.

Sheet rubber weakened to Rs 153 (Rs 153.50) a kg, as quoted by the traders. January futures improved to Rs 158.02 (Rs 157.67), February to Rs 160.52 (Rs 159.98), March to Rs 163 (Rs 161.51) and May to Rs 167.77 (Rs 165.30) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) declined to Rs 160.65 (Rs 162.12) at Bangkok. December futures closed at ¥280.0 (Rs 168.89) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates Rs/kg were: RSS-4: 153 (153.50); RSS-5: 145.50 (145.50); Ungraded: 142 (142); ISNR 20: 146.50 (146.50); and Latex 60%: 109 (109).

Low output fears drive castorseed futures up



Rajkot, Dec. 18: Castorseed futures continued to trade higher on speculation that output will be lower this year. Moreover, higher demand for castor oil in the last couple of days supported the price rise. On Wednesday, however, spot castorseed declined on increased arrival and slow demand at the upper level. On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, castorseed January contracts increased by Rs 11 to Rs 4,873 a quintal with an open interest of 78,570

lots. NCDEX February contracts gained Rs 23 at Rs 4,962 with an open interest of 166,970 lots.

On the Rajkot Commodity Exchange, castorseed March contract improved by Rs 13 to Rs 4,956. The contract touched a high of Rs 5,023 during the day.

On the other hand, spot castorseed was seen falling as arrivals rose after increase in prices in the last few days. RCX spot castor was down by Rs 25 at Rs 4,412.50. Castor oil was down Rs 5 to Rs 930 for 10 kg.

About 45,000-50,000 bags of castor arrived in Gujarat and prices were Rs 885-895 for 20 kg. About 7,800-8,000 bags arrived in Saurashtra and went for Rs 840-850.

According to traders, the output this year is estimated at one million tonnes against 1.4-1.5 million tonnes in the last couple of years.

With a carryover stock of 3,00,000 tonnes, total availability is expected to remain at 1.4 million tonnes. The annual demand for castor seed is 1.8-1.9 million tonnes to extract oil for medicinal use. India meets 90 per cent of castor oil demand worldwide.

Sugar declines on slack demand



Mumbai, Dec. 18: Sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale market declined by Rs 5-10 a quintal for old stocks, while stocks from the new cane crop ruled steady on Wednesday.

Naka and mill tender rates ruled steady on routine month-end demand that is lower.

Activities were need-based in the spot as stockists at the Vashi market are carrying ample stocks.

Sugar futures also dropped as production has peaked at main cane producing centres.

An observer said that the price for the new season M-grade variety is expected to narrow gap with S-grade which is already ruling below production costs. Sentiment was calm as local demand is not expected to pick up till month-end.

Difference between bold and small variety is about Rs 200-250 a quintal at present.

Producers are continuously selling last year's sugar at lower price to make space available for new arrivals.

On export front, chances of shipment are bleak due to lower price which is currently ruling near \$440 a tonne.

Arrivals at Vashi market were 61-62 truckloads (of 100 bags each) while local dispatches were 60-61 loads.

On Tuesday, 18-20 mills sold 58,000-60,000 bags through tenders in the range of Rs 2,650-2,750 (Rs 2,650-2,750) for S-grade and Rs 2,750-3,000 (Rs 2,750-3,000) for M-grade.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S-grade Rs 2,862-3,012 (Rs 2,852-3,012) and M-grade Rs 2,986-3,212 (Rs 2,986-3,212).

Naka delivery rates were: S-grade Rs 2,810-70 (Rs 2,810-70) and M-grade Rs 2,930-3,130 (Rs 2,930-3,130).

Uttar Pradesh rates were: Muzzafarnagar Rs 3,220.

Edible oils slip on sluggish buying



Mumbai, Dec. 18: Edible oils market ruled steady on Tuesday on lack of demand, while domestic soya oil futures rebounded.

In Mumbai, cotton and palmolein dropped by Rs 5 and Rs 2 for 10 kg each. Groundnut, soyabean and sunflower oil ruled unchanged. Rapeseed oil rose by Re 1.

Towards the day's close, Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 585, super palmolein at Rs 605, super deluxe

palmolein Rs 625, soyabean refined oil Rs 665 and sunflower refined oil Rs 710. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 585, soyabean refined oil Rs 660 and sunflower refined oil Rs 687. Allana was quoting palmolein at Rs 584, super deluxe Rs 624, soyabean refined oil Rs 665 and sunflower refined oil Rs 700.

In Rajkot, groundnut oil was quoted at Rs 1,240 (Rs 1,240) for *telia* tin and loose (10 kg) was Rs 790 (Rs 790). Soyabean arrivals were 1.75 lakh bags and prices were in Madhya Pradesh it was Rs 3,650-3,875 ex mandi and Rs 3,850-3,925 plant delivery. Mustard seed arrivals were 70,000 bags and its prices were Rs 3,200-3,600.

Malaysia BMD crude palm oil January contracts settled lower at MYR 2,502 (MYR 2,532), February at MYR 2,533 (MYR 2,561) and March MYR 2,552 (MYR 2,576).

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were: groundnut oil 800 (800), soya refined oil 660 (660), sunflower exp. ref. 640 (640), sunflower ref. 690 (690), rapeseed

ref. oil 738 (737), rapeseed expeller ref. 708 (707) cottonseed ref. oil 620 (625) and palmolein 580 (582).

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

Broiler may soon touch Rs 110 a kg on higher demand



Karnal, Dec. 18: Demand for poultry products has improved gradually over the last 10 days and it may improve further in the coming days. Feed prices, on the other hand, may continue to rule firm, according to trade expert.

The poultry products market continued

to witness uptrend following higher demand but feed products remained unchanged on Wednesday.

Aditya Mishra, a trade expert, told *Business Line* that besides domestic demand, poultry farmers and traders are receiving good orders from Uttar Pradesh, Jaipur, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Himachal and Delhi.

Market sentiments are good and traders expect broiler prices to touch levels of Rs 110 a kg over the next couple of weeks, he said.

Egg is expected to trade between Rs 4.10 and Rs 4.15 for a piece but it may touch Rs 4.25, while chick may rule around Rs 28, said Aditya Mishra.

Prices of poultry feed products were unchanged following marginal fluctuation in the cost of production.

In the physical market, soyameal dropped by Rs 200 to Rs 34,300 a tonne, while bajra moved up by Rs 400 to Rs 13,400 a quintal.

Di-calcium phosphate was unchanged at Rs 34.60 a kg, MBM eased by 10 paise to Rs 31.70 a kg while maize improved by Rs 5 to Rs 1,485 a quintal. DRB went up by Rs 100 to Rs 7,400, while Mustard de-oiled cake eased by Rs 100 at Rs 14,800 a tonne.

Feed products

Broiler concentrate quoted at Rs 2,010 while Broiler Starter Mash sold at Rs 1,550 for a 50 kg bag. Pre-lay mash sold at Rs 1,040. Layer concentrate 25 per cent was at Rs 1,480 while Layer concentrate 35 per cent was sold at Rs 1,165.

Poultry Products

Broiler moved up by Rs 10 to Rs 88-90 a kg, egg ruled firm at Rs 4.02, while chick went for Rs 25, Re 1 up.

Bearish outlook for tur on new crop arrivals



Indore, Dec. 18: The sluggish trend continued in tur on slack buying and higher arrivals of the new crop in some parts of the country.

With decline in prices in Maharashtra and Karnatakka on arrival of new tur, prices have fallen sharply in the past one week with tur (Maharashtra) today being quoted at Rs 4,100, while tur (Madhya Pradesh) declined to Rs 3,600-3,700 a quintal.

Local mandis saw scattered arrival of new tur from Jhabua-Dahod line in Madhya Pradesh last week.

However, in the past one week, there has been no arrival in local mandis. Once arrival starts, tur prices are bound to drop further, said Babulal Khandelwal, a trader.

Better crop prospects and pressure of cheaper imports will add further pressure to the downtrend.

Tur dal remained unchanged with tur dal (full) today being quoted at Rs 6,300-6,500, tur dal (sawa no.) at Rs 5,800-5,900, while tur marka ruled at Rs 6,700-7,100 a quintal.

Urad ruled stable on subdued demand with urad (bold) at Rs 4,300-50, while urad (medium) ruled at Rs 3,800-4,000. Urad dal (medium) was being quoted at Rs 4,900-5,000, urad dal (bold) at Rs 5,100-5,200, while urad mongar ruled at Rs 5,500-5,900 a quintal respectively.

Moong ruled flat on subdued demand with moong (Maharashtra) at Rs 6,000-6,200, while moong (medium) ruled at Rs 5,000-5,500. Slack demand moong dal by Rs 100 in the past one week with moong dal (medium) at Rs 6,800-7,000, moong dal (bold) at Rs 7,100-7,200, while moong mongar ruled at Rs 7,300-7,500 a quintal.

Turmeric traders begin stocking up fine quality



Erode, Dec 18: Arrivals of quality turmeric lifted spot turmeric prices in Erode markets, with 55 per cent of the arrivals being sold on Wednesday.

“Quality produce arrived for sale and traders quoting higher price. They bought 55 per cent of the stocks. Though exporters and traders have limited upcountry orders only, they purchased to build inventories. All hybrid finger and root varieties sold at a higher price

because of their quality,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President of Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

Turmeric from the new crop will begin arriving for sale from the year-end. Till then, traders are expected to buy only a meagre quantity. After the new crop arrives, the old crop’s price could gain marginally.

Growers, who are bringing only limited stock of the fine variety that they are holding, expect prices to increase by Rs 1500 a quintal after the middle of January. Stockists also purchased a little quantity on Wednesday.

Prices of the hybrid finger variety increased by Rs 900 a quintal and the root variety by Rs 300 a quintal. Other varieties also increased by Rs 200 a quintal.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety fetched Rs 4,109-6,003 a quintal, the root variety Rs 4,044-5,394.

Salem hybrid crop: The finger variety fetched Rs 5,569-7,009, the root variety Rs 5,309-6,044. Of the 1,329 that arrived, only 292 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,476-6,259, the root variety at Rs 5,029-5,814. Of the 820 on sale, 798 were picked up.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing society, the finger variety went for Rs 5,350-6,259, the root variety for Rs 4,717-5,884. All the 461 bags put up for sale were traded.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was bid at Rs 5,019-6,069, the root variety at Rs 4,401-5,600. All the 147 bags on offer were traded.

Business Standard

Crude palm oil down 0.6% on global cues



Tracking a weak global trend, [crude palm oil](#) prices declined by 0.62% to Rs 548.50 per 10 kg in futures trade today as speculators offloaded their positions.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), crude palm oil for delivery in December declined by Rs 3.40, or 0.62%, to Rs 548.50 per 10 kg in business turnover of 31 lots.

Similarly, oil for delivery in January edged lower by Rs 3.30, or 0.59%, to Rs 551.40 per 10 kg in 37 lots.

Analysts said offloading of positions by speculators in tandem with a weak global trend on concern that exports from Indonesia and Malaysia, the world's largest producers, may drop this month as traders are lured by easing prices of alternate vegetable oils, mainly influenced crude palm oil prices at futures trade.

Meanwhile, palm oil for the contract for delivery in March declined 0.9% to \$784 a metric tonne on the Malaysia Derivatives Exchange.

Sugar down 0.2% on ample supply



[Sugar](#) prices weakened by 0.29% to Rs 2,758 per quintal in futures trade today on ample supplies at spot market against low demand.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), sugar for delivery in January weakened by Rs 8, or 0.29%, to Rs 2,758 per quintal with an open interest of 26,660 lots.

Sugar for delivery in February also traded lower by Rs 2, or 0.07%, to Rs 2,768 per quintal in 17,410 lots.

Analysts attributed the fall in sugar futures to ample supplies at spot market against low demand from bulk consumers such as ice-cream and soft-drink makers due to winter.

Global Cues: Food, non-food prices may remain flat in next one year



Food and non-food commodity prices world over are expected to remain either flat or show a declining trend in the next one year, largely due to rising supplies and stable demand.

According to the latest commodity prices outlook report of the International Monetary Fund, prices of rice, [edible oil](#) and [crude oil](#) could soften in the next few months.

The report said the likelihood of per-barrel prices of West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude oil falling below \$90 and Brent crude falling below \$100 in the next one year is about 40 per cent, compared to 50 per cent a month before. But, the risk of WTI rising above \$150 a barrel has declined to 0.8 per cent from 0.6 per cent, the report said. It said the price of wheat in the international market is expected to be \$240-260 per tonne. Rice is expected to slide from \$551 a tonne to around \$506 a tonne in the next one year.

The price of palm oil in the international markets is also expected to come down from \$761

a tonne to around \$748 a tonne. This should be of particular importance to India, one of the biggest importers of palm oil. It said global cotton prices were expected to come down from 93 cents an ounce to around 78 cents an ounce by the end of 2014, due to excess supplies. This could cause some worry for Indian exporters, as cotton production in 2013-14 (October-September) is expected to be around 35.3 million bales (a bale is 170 kg), as against 33.4 mn last year.

In metals, the price of iron ore is projected to come down in the next one year. Those of copper and aluminium are expected to remain either flat or rise marginally.

Amid high inflation, sugar prices decline continuously



The [food inflation](#) may be giving headache to the government, but sugar has been persistently witnessing a decline in prices for the past four months due to glut in the market. This may probably be the reason why sugar mills are refusing to pay any higher prices to cane growers.

It should be remembered here that in the wholesale-price index sugar forms part of [manufactured items](#) and hence is not included in food inflation, which basically relates to primary (unprocessed) items. However, in consumer-price index, sugar forms part of food basket.

Sugar saw decline in prices since August this year in both [WPI](#) and [CPI](#) inflation rates. According to latest figures, WPI prices declined by 8.41% in November year-on-year, against 8.50% in the previous month. Also, sugar prices fell 5.82% in November against 5.46% a month earlier.

In retail markets, sugar prices came down to Rs 35.42 a kg against Rs 35.7 a month earlier and Rs 36.39 in June. In wholesale markets, sugar rates fell to Rs 32.88 a kg in November from Rs 33.29 in the previous month and Rs 34.01 in June, according to prices monitored by [Consumer Affairs](#) Department in select centres of the country.

The glut in sugar had earlier saw a stalemate between cane growers and mills on the price to be offered to the farmers. Ultimately, the deal was struck at Rs 280 a quintal, the same as last year.

The government gave sugar mills a number of sops including interest free loans of Rs 7,200 crore to help them face the financial crunch.
