

THE HINDU

TODAY FARM NEWS

12.02.2013 A.M

Sriramulu promises free foodgrains for BPL families

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Inaugurating the party's district office here on Monday, he said houses for slum dwellers, laptops for students passing SSLC, engineering and medicine, and education for students from poor families would be provided free of cost. Besides, mass wedding ceremonies would be organised at the taluk and hobli levels.

He said the party would give priority to irrigation and support price for produce. It would also take steps to provide Rs. 700 a month to mothers of first to ninth standard students, and Rs. 1,000 for SSLC to degree students. Recommendations of the Dr. D. M. Nanjundappa Commission Report and Dr. Paramashivayya Report would be implemented. Interest-free loan for farmers, self-help groups and small vendors, and Rs. 5,000 for pregnant women would also be provided, he said.

He said the BSR Congress would field candidates in all 224 Assembly constituencies.

Earlier, speaking to presspersons, Mr Sriramulu criticised the Budget presented by Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar and said it had failed to fulfil the expectations of the people.

"Our party will face elections in all Assembly constituencies independently," he added.

The party workers would take a decision on the issue of fielding G. Janardhana Reddy in coming elections, he said.

During the inauguration of the party office, some workers raised slogans outside the building, alleging that party leader Devu Bellary was neglected while organising the function.

Technology Week celebrations begin

The Technology Week celebrations organised by the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Pattambi, were inaugurated by P. Rajendran, Vice-Chancellor, Kerala Agricultural University (KAU), on Monday.

Dr. Rajendran highlighted the relevance of the theme of the week 'Climate change mitigation and conservation agriculture,' and praised the participation of farmers in the technical session.

P.V. Balachandran, Director of Extension, KAU, presided. Francis Kombara, member of the KAU general council; Jose Mathew, Associate Director of Extension; and Shaji James, Head, KVK, spoke.

Dr. Rajendran dedicated a model of conservation agriculture developed by the KVK to the farming community.

An exhibition highlighting technology and equipment required for conservation agriculture is being held as part of the celebrations. It will come to a close on February 15. Technical sessions on various topics related to agriculture and livestock management will also be held.

Call for metered free power to farmers

Rural consumers facing discrimination: discom engineer



A.V.V.Surya Pratap

Metering of agriculture pumpsets and separation of its feeders from non-agriculture feeder lines for supplying quality power and cutting down consumption wastage are being advocated by APEPDCL divisional engineer A.V.V.Surya Pratap.

He released the results of his study of the issues facing the distribution companies and the consumers in a book 'Power Sector Reforms in AP – Known Problems and Solutions'. He not only covered the ills plaguing the sector but also gave practical solutions from a consumer point of view.

The rural consumers who are paying power tariff on par with their urban counterparts are facing discrimination with regard to quality of service relating to load shedding, safety, 3-phase supply, loads, investments, electrical accidents and metering of services, he noted in his study.

The rural folk should either be charged a lower tariff for the deficiency in services or quality of services improved on par with their urban counterparts.

Dr Surya Pratap told *The Hindu* that another important aspect of his study was on the need to supply metered free power to the farmers to plug loopholes, power wastage and encourage scientific method of power consumption. In the absence of which, wastage of power is high, overexploitation of groundwater, inefficient methods of using electricity, misuse of power to non-agriculture purpose. There are instances of using free power for unlicensed industries and even sub-leasing the same to them. The un-metered free electricity supply has led to the planting of water intensive crops, switching on the agriculture pumpsets and going on errands in an irresponsible manner. The subsidy amount worth the metered consumption can be transferred directly to the accounts of the farmers instead of giving scope for its misuse, he said.

He advocates providing of separate agriculture feeders in rural areas. The objective is to provide three-phase supply for only the specified timings in the agriculture feeders while non-agriculture feeders get three-phase supply round-the-clock.

At present there is neither an incentive for efficient use of energy nor a disincentive for higher consumption.

The consumers should be motivated with awards and rewards, he suggested.

Farmers demand that officials pay compensation

A farmer from Kothlapur village in Sangareddy met officials on Monday and urged them to see that compensation should be paid for the land acquired by the government, which was extended to a private firm for establishing an industry.

“We have lost our livelihood by handing over our farm land to the government. We have filed a case in the High Court, which has disposed in our favour directing them to pay compensation,” the petitioners informed Joint Collector A. Sharath, in a memorandum submitted to him in the grievances cell.

TRS district president R. Stayanarayana led the farmers’ delegation to the Joint Collector.

He said that the farmers have been going from pillar to post to get justice but no official had responded to their request.

He said that the land acquired from farmers was handed over to the Asian Pacific Breweries Peral Pvt. Ltd.

He said that the court had directed the Collector to see that ex-gratia be paid within three months to those petitioners/assignees who had not been provided employment.

Large number of farmers who had handed over their land to the government came along with him to the Collectorate to present the memorandum.

Focus on animal husbandry sector: Mohanan

The government will take all steps to promote the animal husbandry sector in the State, Minister for Agriculture and Animal Husbandry K.P. Mohanan has said.

He was speaking after inaugurating the second graduation day ceremony of the Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (KVASU) here on Saturday in his capacity as the Pro-Chancellor of the university.

The Govardhini project, aimed at achieving milk self-sufficiency, and the proposal to constitute a Goat Development Board in the State were part of such initiatives. The significance of Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Sciences had increased, he said adding that the projects would help increase job opportunities for fresh graduates.

Mr. Mohanan lauded the university authorities for issuing degree certificates in three days of announcement of results.

Delivering the presidential address B. Ashok, Vice Chancellor, KVASU, said the university would invest nearly Rs.30 crore to develop infrastructure and Rs.2 crore to set up a library-cum-information complex.

Over 30 per cent of the books would be general-interest ones which the public could use, Dr. Ashok said.

The Minister awarded degree certificates to 118 students — including 102 who completed the Bachelor of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry (BVSc and AH) course and 16 who did the Dairy Science and Technology course.

Mr. Mohanan gave away gold medals to Sweety Varghese of the College of Dairy Science and Technology, Mannuthi; and Aparna V. of the College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Pookode, who bagged first rank in B.Tech. (Dairy Science and Technology).

K.P. Sreekumar, Registrar, KVASU, welcomed the gathering and A. Jalaludeen, Director, Academic and Research, proposed a vote of thanks.

M.V. Shreyamskumar, MLA; K.G. Suma, Director, Animal Husbandry Department; K. Sarojini, Director, Dairy Development Department; and Udaya Varman, Director, Museums and Zoo; spoke.

Flower growers are not feeling the joy this V-Day

This year has been unprofitable due to unfavourable weather'



Another place to go:For growers whose entire yield is not export worthy, there is the option of auctioning the produce at the International Flower Auction Bangalore.— file photo: AFP

For flower exporters, love is in full bloom, literally. And Europe appears to be saying it with flowers, with love from India, this Valentine's Day. Exporters are rejoicing as sales have been soaring in the week leading up to February 14.

Growers, on the other hand, are a disappointed lot as they have not been able to reap profits.

Important factor

The export worth of the flowers is an important factor for growers. Mohan Rao, who has been involved in flower cultivation in Nelamangala for the last 10 years, said this year had been an unprofitable one due to unfavourable weather conditions.

"I had to spend Rs. 3 lakh for three borewells owing to erratic rainfall. The weather led to early budding, so only 10,000 of the 1 lakh stems was export worthy this season. When compared to sales of Rs. 15 lakh last year, it is only about Rs. 7 lakh this year," he said. The direct export rates of rose stems too have reduced from Rs. 12 a stem to rates ranging from Rs. 6 to Rs. 8, he added.

'High production cost'

General secretary of the South India Floriculture Association Jayaprakash Rao said that the cost of production for growers was high. The government had previously announced during the 2010-11 budget that power tariff would be reduced from Rs. 6 per unit to Rs. 2. However, it has not yet been implemented despite growers' pleas, he said.

For growers whose entire yield is not export worthy, there is the option of auctioning the produce at the International Flower Auction Bangalore (IFAB). Managing Director of IFAB Ltd., G. Vasantha Kumar, said there was an average increase of 50 per cent in arrivals at the IFAB, in addition to the 10 per cent new buyers this time. He added that about 60 per cent of the annual exports are clustered around February 14.

Sales expected

"Around February 9 last year, we sold around 1.3 lakh stems. This year, it is approximately 2.3 lakh, which is an increase of at least 1 lakh. Around February 14 last year, about 10 lakh stems were sold in five days. This year, we expect sales of around 12 lakh in the same period. Many of

the flowers from the IFAB are transported mainly to Hyderabad and New Delhi, followed by Kolkata,” Mr. Kumar said.

The IFAB sees an average trade of Rs. 50 to Rs. 60 crore on a yearly basis, with sales reaching Rs. 100 crore, including ornamental plants.

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Over 2,600 farmers get Rs.67 lakh diesel subsidy



support:S.Natarajan, Collector, handing over subsidy to farmers in Tiruvarur on Monday.

Diesel subsidy amounting to Rs.67 lakh was handed over to 2,698 farmers who were using diesel pump sets for raising samba crop in the district, here on Monday.

The State agriculture department has sanctioned the subsidy through the agricultural engineering department.

The Collector handed over Rs.37.59 lakh for 1,648 farmers to the Kumbakonam Central Cooperative Bank and Rs.29.41 lakh to 1,050 beneficiaries to Thanjavur Central Cooperative Bank.

The Collector directed the secretaries of the primary agricultural cooperative and credit societies to credit the subsidy in the accounts of the farmers.

John Peter, joint registrar, Thanjavur Central Cooperative Bank, and K. V. S. Kumar, joint registrar, Kumbakonam Central Cooperative Bank, received the cheques from Mr. Natarajan. The Collector also presented Rs.65,000 each to five farmers as subsidy for raising mulberry and Rs.75,000 as subsidy to another farmer as silk worm rearing.

In his brief address to the farmers, the Collector said that the farmers could earn a monthly income of Rs.20, 000 by raising mulberry crop in two acres of land.

He said that through the State Department of Silk Development, mulberry has been raised as an alternative crop in Nannilam, Kudavasal, Needamangalam and Valangaiman taluks in the district.

N.Jeevakani, District Revenue Officer, and other officials were present on the occasion.

On business opportunities in farming

A seminar on business opportunities in agriculture was held at Sri Balaji Chockalingam Engineering College, Arni, on Monday.

Entrepreneur development centre of the college organised the event. S.T. Sudarsan, Assistant General Manager, NABARD, Tiruvannamalai, in his guest lecture, stressed on the need to develop communication skills to effectively approach people.

Stop giving milch animals, fodder scarcity is looming large: farmers

'In most parts of the State groundwater depletion is an issue'



Left with no choice:Goats eating posters near the Collectorate in Tiruchi. —Photo. A. Muralitharan

The Federation of Tamil Nadu Agriculturists' Associations has appealed to the State government to stop giving goat and milch animals free of cost till drought conditions in Tamil Nadu cease because fodder scarcity is looming large.

State secretary of the federation C.Nallasamy told *The Hindu* that the farming community is thankful to Chief Minister Jayalithaa for the free goat and also milk animal scheme. ""But once

the livestock are given to the poor , where will they go for the fodder? They might be forced to think of only abattoirs,” he warned.

Mr.Nallasamy says that only Thiruvallur, Thiruvannamalai, Villupuram, Cuddalore, and Tuticorin have had some rains and hence groundwater is not a serious problem. But in most other parts, not only the crops have withered but also groundwater itself is becoming a serious issue due to drought conditions. “Indiscriminate exploitation of water, especially for irrigation, has led to the depletion of groundwater. In some areas, borewells have been sunk up to a depth of even 1,000-1,500 ft.”

While more than half the delta area is drought-hit, several regions including Lower Bhavani Project area, Right and Left Bank Canals of Mettur, Amaravathi, PAP, Vaigai and Tamiraparani did not get adequate water for irrigation. Poor rains have hurt the lakes and tanks too. “Then where is the scope for green fodder?” he asked.

Mr.Nallasamy, who hails from Kongu region, says the entire region is in the grip of serious drought.

According to him, even the State government can do nothing about the green fodder whose prices are shooting up. Maize fodder of one acre which used to sell at Rs.500-1,000 is now quoting around Rs.15,000. Hay, which used to cost around Rs.3,000-4,000 an acre, is also quoting around Rs.15,000. Rice bran, which used to be sold at Rs.350-400 per bag of 50 kg, is now quoting around Rs.600. Cattle feed sells for Rs.1,300 for a bag of 50 kg. “But milk procurement price stays put at Rs.18 a litre.”

The result is that the price of even good breed like Jersey Freisian, normally sold between Rs.35,000 and Rs.40,000, is now quoting around Rs.20,000. “They are no more valued but only weighed,” he laments.

Pointing out that drought has hurt all the contiguous States and also western India, he says even if the State government wants to help the farming community by procuring green fodder from other States, it may not be available elsewhere too.

“The State government is facing a very tricky situation,” he admits.

All that we can pray for is normal summer rains – from April to July – when 20 per cent of the total annual rainfall is recorded by the State, he adds.

Meanwhile the government could try to provide dry feed such as “parutthikottai (cotton seed) and pinnakku (oil cake),” at subsidised cost.

Official sources point out that the State government has been encouraging green fodder cultivation in most of the districts even by extending an incentive of Rs.3, 000 for 0.25 acre. Almost in every district a minimum of 100-200 acres has been identified every year and each beneficiary of the free livestock scheme is given 0.25 acres for raising green fodder. A number of farmers are accustomed to growing Co3, Co4 varieties for fodder apart from cholam. At the same time, the sources admit that drought conditions prevailing in several regions of the State would naturally affect the availability of green fodder.

Crop loss owing to poor rain being assessed

Even as the Chief Minister has announced relief for farmers in delta administration, the official machinery in Coimbatore district has almost concluded that the loss to farmers on account of very poor rainfall during the South West and North East monsoons should be anywhere between Rs. 12 crore to Rs. 15 crore. The average loss of food grains is expected to be around 1,200 tonnes.

An announcement from the Chief Minister on the quantum of relief for farmers in non-delta districts is expected any moment.

The State Government has a norm to provide relief for farmers in the wake of the crop loss exceeding 50 per cent and rainfall deficit ranging over 40 per cent.

Coimbatore district has witnessed a deficit rainfall of 38 per cent which is just two per cent away from the Government fixed norm of 40 per cent.

Sources said that there had been extensive loss for the farmers who had coconut crop, maize and small crops and horticulture crops, paddy in Thondamuthur and Anaimalai blocks, cereals, dhal and groundnuts.

The paddy farmers in Anaimalai heaved a sigh of relief because of some water having been provided from the Aliyar river.

Maize and small crops coverage which used to be over 95,000 acres, this time came down to 67,500 acres, of which crops in 14,750 acres withered for want of water.

Horticulture crops

Even the horticulture crops over 85,000 acres witnessed substantial loss owing to inadequate water.

In terms of paddy crops, crops in 125 acres out of the 375 acres had withered.

With regard to cereals and dhal, of the 22,500 acres, crops in 6,500 acres had withered.

With regard to groundnuts and other oil seeds that used to be cultivated in about 20,000 acres, this year saw cultivation in only 12,500 acres. Crops in more than 1,500 acres had withered.

The area under specific crops came down and even a portion of that withered because of inadequate rainfall. Both the South West and North West monsoon proved to be inadequate this time (*see graphics*).

Having completed the assessment of crop loss in delta districts and having announced compensation, the compilation of crop loss from other non-delta districts is likely to be taken up for consideration for provision of relief now, officials said.

With the Chief Minister having declared all the districts excepting Chennai as drought-hit, farmers could anticipate some compensation and pin hopes on the South West monsoon expected to set in by May end, officials said.

KMF milk procurement is likely to decline further, say officials

'It may come down to less than 40 lakh kilograms daily'



Farmers in several districts in south Karnataka are selling their cattle due to scarcity of fodder, water.— PHOTO: M.A. SRIRAM

The milk procurement by the Karnataka Milk Federation, which has declined by almost 10 lakh kilograms a day in the last few weeks, is expected to decline further. This also comes in the light of farmers in several districts in south Karnataka selling their cattle due to scarcity of fodder, water and high cost of feed.

While the daily procurement had reached a record high of 55 lakh kilograms a couple of months ago, it has now fallen to 45 lakh kilograms daily. "We are anticipating a further decline to less than 40 lakh kilograms daily," a senior KMF official told *The Hindu*.

A decline in the lean season is normal, he said and added that the situation this year is being compounded by the scarcity of fodder and water in several districts.

Sources, however, said that even if it falls to around 40 lakh kilograms, the federation would be able to meet the demand.

At present, the federation sells about 31 lakh litres of milk, and uses about 9 lakh litres for curd, buttermilk, panneer, cova and sweets, among others.

Distress sale

The deficit rainfall has added to the woes of the farmers who are resorting to distress sale of cattle due to fodder and water shortage.

K.B. Bommegowda, a resident of Kajjikoplu in Pandavapura taluk, Mandya district, who owned six cows, has sold four of them. "I sold the cows to an agent for a price ranging from Rs. 4,500 to Rs. 12,000," he said.

"The cost for a tractor load of hay, which was between Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 8,000, now costs between Rs. 14,000 and Rs. 20,000. There is also scarcity of water," he added.

Similarly, many others in his village have sold their cattle unable to feed them.

Confirming that distress cattle sale is taking place in big numbers to agents from Tamil Nadu, B. Nagbhushan, Secretary of Doddhindvadi Milk Producers Cooperative Society, in Kollegal taluk of Chamarajnagar district, said that cattle was being sold at throwaway prices.

"We were collecting about 1,000 litres of milk daily till recently and it has now come down to about 700 litres a day. This is mainly due to cattle sale and also due to the lean season," he said and added that milk procurement by the milk union in Kollegal taluk has come down to about 70,000 litres a day from about one lakh litres a day. The KMF officials, who acknowledged that they were aware of such distress sale due to fodder and water shortage, however, attributed the decline in procurement to the lean season.

Problems galore keep rabi cultivation low

The rabi season of cultivation has failed to enthuse farmers who are already let down by the nature and power shortage during the kharif season. As a result, sowings/transplantation of different crops in rabi has fallen below the normal extent of cultivation.

Transplantation of paddy, the major crop cultivated in rabi, has been about 4-lakh hectares below normal till January-end. Officials of the Agriculture Department stated that paddy was cultivated in 7.68-lakh ha till the last month-end against the normal extent of 11.6-lakh ha during the period. The total extent of paddy grown in rabi is 14.84-lakh ha.

Insufficient water in irrigation projects, depletion of groundwater table and severe power shortage have affected the paddy cultivation during the season, a senior officer of the

department said. Going by the slow pace of transplantations and poor water levels in reservoirs it would be difficult to reach the normal area of cultivation in the remaining one month period, he explained. Paddy cultivation in rabi season was 13-lakh ha by the end of January in 2011 and 9.84-lakh ha in 2012. Its coverage was also below normal by over 3-lakh ha in the recently-concluded kharif season too. With the paddy production going down by about 8-lakh tonnes in kharif, lesser cultivation of the crop in rabi would have serious impact on the price of rice in the market, the official said.

However, the below normal cultivation of paddy in rabi has pushed up the cultivation of coarse grains such as maize, pearl millet, finger millet, sorghum, wheat and others. As against the normal extent of 4.99-lakh ha for the rabi season the crops were sown in over 6-lakh ha so far this season. Cultivation of pulses has also picked up in rabi with different crops sown in 12.53-lakh ha against the normal of 11.68-lakh ha for the entire season.

Oilseeds' extent was also poor in kharif at 14.92-lakh ha against the normal of 17.62-lakh ha.

Milk price to be reduced by Re. 1 from tomorrow

Nandini milk consumers will get some relief from Wednesday with the Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) on Monday announcing a Re. 1 reduction in the price for a litre of milk. Current prices, which came into effect on February 9, ranges between Rs. 28 and Rs. 30 a litre in different parts of the State.

From Wednesday, a litre of milk in Bangalore, Mysore, Mandya, Tumkur, Kolar, Hassan and Shimoga districts will cost Rs. 27, Rs. 28 in coastal Karnataka, Raichur, Bellary, Dharwad and Belgaum districts, and Rs. 29 in Gulbarga and Bijapur districts. The price of curd will come down from Rs. 34 to Rs. 33 a litre.

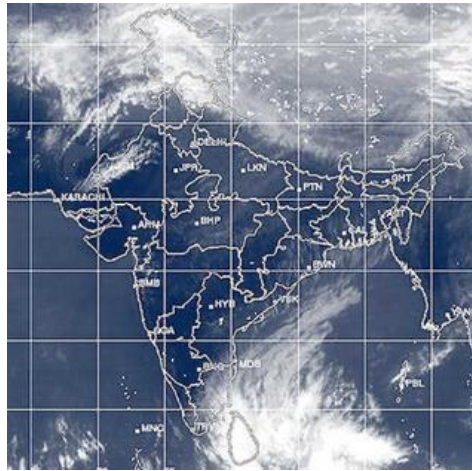
The decision was announced by KMF Chairman G. Somashekar Reddy on Monday after a meeting with Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar, who is learnt to have sought a reduction in price by Rs. 2 a litre.

Farmers, who are currently getting between Rs. 17.50 and Rs. 21 (plus Rs. 2 from the government) for a litre of milk will get up to Rs. 2 more following Monday's decision, he said.

While the KMF has agreed to bring down the price, in exchange it has asked the government to provide subsidy on cattle feed, which will help farmers as well as the milk unions.

“The government has agreed to release around Rs. 60 crore till the end of March. After that, we have requested the government to give Rs. 4 a kg of cattle feed; the government is yet to respond,” he added.

Weather



ANDHRA PRADESH

Anantapur	33	20	0	tr
Arogyavaram	31	16	0	6
Bapatla	31	20	0	0
Calingapatnam	29	19	0	0
Gannavaram	32	21	0	0
Hanamkonda	33	19	0	0
Hyderabad AP	31	20	0	3
Kakinada	31	22	0	2
Kavali	31	22	0	0
Kurnool	34	21	0	0
Mahabubnagar	33	19	0	15

Machilipatnam	32	22	0	0
Nandyal	33	20	0	0
Narasapur	31	22	0	0
Nellore	32	23	0	0
Nizamabad	35	21	0	23
Ongole	33	22	0	0
Ramagundam	34	20	0	0
Tirupathi AP	32	21	0	0
Tuni	32	21	0	15
Vizag AP	32	20	0	8
Vizag	30	21	0	3
KARNATAKA				
Agumbe	33	13	0	0
Bangalore AP	31	15	0	1
Bangalore	31	17	0	1
Belgaum AP	33	18	0	0
Bellary	34	19	0	0
Bijapur	33	20	0	4
Chitradurga	32	18	0	0
Chickmagalur	30	16	0	15
Chintamani	30	16	0	0
Gadag	33	18	0	0
Gulbarga	34	20	0	33
Hassan	31	16	0	20
Honavar	33	22	0	0
Karwar	35	22	0	0
Madikeri	28	14	0	24

Mangalore AP	34	23	0	0
Mysore	32	17	0	0
Mandya	33	18	0	0
Panambur	34	23	0	0
Raichur	33	20	0	0
Shirali	34	23	0	0
KERALA				
Alappuzha	32	25	0	76
Kannur	34	25	0	0
Kochi AP	33	24	0	27
Kottayam	35	22	0	32
Kozhikode	34	25	0	0
Punalur	37	22	0	22
Thiruvanantha				
-puram AP	32	23	0	17
Thiruvanantha				
-puram City	33	23	0	22
Vellanikkara	35	24	0	0
TAMIL NADU				
Adiramapattinam	33	23	0	52
Coimbatore AP	33	21	0	1
Coonoor	22	11	0	10
Cuddalore	31	23	0	0
Chennai AP	31	23	0	tr
Chennai	30	24	0	0
Dharmapuri	33	18	0	0
Kanyakumari	33	25	0	9

Karaikal	30	25	0	10
Kodaikanal	20	10	0	43
Madurai AP	34	24	0	4
Nagapattinam	31	25	tr	13
Palayamkottai	35	24	0	8
Pamban	32	26	0	61
Parangipettai	32	23	0	0
Puducherry	32	22	0	0
Salem	34	20	0	0
Thanjavur	33	25	0	5
Tiruchi AP	34	23	0	tr
Tirupattur	35	18	0	0
Tondi	31	24	0	30
Tuticorin	32	24	0	24
Ooty	22	8	0	6
Valparai	29	9	0	7
Vedaranyam	32	23	0	199
Vellore	33	21	0	0
LAKSHADWEEP				
Amini Divi	33	26	0	tr
Minicoy	32	26	0	105
Kavarathi	30	26	0	tr
OTHER STATIONS				
Kolkata (Alipore)	27	13	0	12
Mumbai	31	23	0	0
New Delhi	24	9	0	103

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

Dry weather in Andhra Pradesh

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

The minimum temperature rose appreciably at one or two places over coastal Tamil Nadu, rose at a few places over rest Tamil Nadu, fell appreciably at one or two places over interior Karnataka, fell at one or two places over Rayalaseema and changed a little elsewhere over the region.

They were appreciably above normal at one or two places over Telangana, north interior Karnataka, coastal Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, above normal at a few places over rest Tamil Nadu, at one or two places over rest Telangana, Rayalaseema, rest coastal Karnataka, appreciably below normal at one or two places over coastal Andhra Pradesh and were generally normal over the rest of the region.

Chamrajnagar recorded the lowest minimum temperature of 15 degree Celsius in the plains of the region.

FORECAST (valid till Wednesday morning): Isolated rain may occur over south Tamil Nadu, Delta districts of north coastal Tamil Nadu and Lakshadweep. Mainly dry weather would prevail over rest of Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

12.02.2013 A.M

weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Tuesday, Feb 12

Max Min

30° | 23°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 89

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:32

Sunset: 06:13

Barometer: 1013

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Wednesday, Feb 13

Max Min

31° | 24°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday Feb 14	Friday Feb 15	Saturday Feb 16	Sunday Feb 17	Monday Feb 18
30° 23° Partly Cloudy	31° 24° Overcast	30° 24° Overcast	30° 22° Overcast	31° 22° Overcast

Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Humidity: 100

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 07:02

Sunset: 06:08

Barometer: 1018



Foodgrain output to fall 3.5% due to drought

THE HINDU
Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

12.02.2013 A.M

11th jan 2013

Export demand keeps cardamom steady



Good export buying has aided the cardamom market to remain steady last week without dropping despite slack domestic demand at auctions held in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

The individual auction average remained below Rs800 a kg, vacillating between Rs725 and Rs785 a kg last week.

However, good export buying helped the market from falling following weak demand from the domestic market. "Nobody in the market was aggressive in buying", market sources told Business Line. They said exporters were actively covering as the prices prevailing at present were attractive to the overseas buyers. Consequently, more are and more inquiries were pouring in, they claimed.

Slack demand from the upcountry market is attributed to the unfavourable weather conditions prevailing in the north Indian states which is said to have resulted in a fall in retail sales.

Added to this, there is a bearish feeling in the trade, albeit speculative, that as the prices have been on a declining trend, the growers are holding back their produce anticipating rise in prices. Therefore, the trade believe that this material would ultimately come to the market later.

Exporters said to have bought an estimated 40 tonnes of the cardamom and in fact, more buying is likely if the prices remained stable at the current levels, export sources claimed.

At the same time, the supply remained limited as the harvesting of the current crop is almost over, growers said.

Weather conditions continued to remain totally unfavourable so far. According to veterans in the field of cardamom growing region, the plants would withstand the current dry spell till mid Feb.

“If summer rains failed to arrive after Feb 15, then the plants would start withering and subsequently would dry up”, they said. “However, there are indications at present that the summer rains may arrive after Feb 15”, they said.

According to market observers 70 per cent of the growers had 50 per cent output while the remaining thirty per cent had 30 to 35 per cent crop this season as the weather has so far been totally unfavourable.

As a result, the current total output is estimated at somewhere between 13,000 tonnes and 15,000 tonnes as against the production last season of 26,000 – 30,000 tonnes, they said.

Total arrivals last week dropped to 320 tonnes from 371 tonnes during the week before last, and of this 302 tonnes were sold, they said.

At the Sunday auction conducted by the KCPMC total arrivals dropped to 59 tonnes from 65 tonnes arrived in the previous Sunday and the entire quantity was sold out. The maximum price was at Rs1,139 a kg and minimum was at Rs486 a kg. Auction average price dropped to Rs764.22 a kg from Rs774.52 a kg the previous Sunday, Mr P C Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC told Business Line.

Total arrivals and sales during the current season from Aug 1, 2012 to Feb 10, 2013 were at 8,042 tonnes and 7,639 tonnes respectively. Total arrivals and sales during the corresponding period last year were about 12,159 tonnes and about 11,844 tonnes respectively.

The weighted average price as on Feb 10, 2013 stood at Rs772.67 a kg as against 558.09 a kg as on the same date last year.

Prices of graded varieties were steady at previous levels and they in Rupees per Kg were: AGEB 900 - 1,000 ; AGB 780 -790 ; AGS 745 – 755 ; and AGS -1 : 720 – 730.

Trickling inflow steams up rice

Inadequate supplies and rising domestic demand pushed up rice prices by Rs 50-400 a quintal up, which were at their highest levels of the season on Monday.

Amit Chandna, Proprietor, Hanuman Rice Trading Company, said that the uptrend was anticipated as domestic demand had started picking up.

Low availability of stocks is also a big reason behind the uptrend, he added. The market may hold its position for the next few days, and if supplies don't improve, prices may go further up, said Chandna.

In the physical market, Pusa-1121 (steam) went up by Rs 100 and sold at Rs 7,600 a quintal while Pusa-1121 (sela) quoted at Rs 6,600, Rs 125 up.

Pure basmati (raw) quoted at Rs 8,500-8,550. Duplicate basmati (steam) increased by Rs 200 and traded at Rs 6,400-6,500.

Similarly, non-basmati prices went up on buying. Prices of Sharbati (steam) improved by Rs 100 and quoted at Rs 4,900-5,000, while Sharbati (sela) was at Rs 4,650, Rs 50 up.

PR-11 (sela) increased by Rs 300 to Rs 3,100 while PR-11 (raw) quoted at Rs 2,800-2,900, Rs 100 up. Permal (raw) and Permal (sela) varieties went up by Rs 100 each and sold at Rs 2,350 and Rs 2,300, respectively.

Brokens of Pusa-1121 rose: Dubar increased by Rs 400 and quoted at Rs 3,200, Tibar by Rs 300 and sold at Rs 4,300, while Mongra was at Rs 2,500 a quintal, Rs 100 up.

Paddy Arrivals

About 2,000 thousand bags of PR variety arrived and sold at Rs 1,325 a quintal. Around 3,000 bags of Sharbati arrived and quoted at Rs 2,250. The 1,000 bags of duplicate basmati that arrived sold at Rs 3,600. About 5,000 bags of Pusa-1121 arrived and quoted at Rs 3,750.

Retail demand lifts spot sugar

Spot sugar on the Vashi wholesale terminal improved on Monday on demand from retailers. Spot prices were up Rs 5-10 a quintal tracking firm *naka* and mill tender rates. Producers sold at Rs 15-20 higher on Saturday evening. *Naka* prices were up Rs 20 for M-grade. The market sentiment was positive, as futures extended gains by Rs 33-34 till noon.

“Prices at the mill level may not fall below Rs 3,000-3,050, considering higher production parity cost. Demand from retailers and wholesalers may lift prices now, after they fell by over Rs 150 a quintal over the last month and a half on higher supplies,” said a wholesaler.

He further said upcountry buying has been missing in Maharashtra since long, as prices in other producing centres are on a par. So the improvement will be slow. Currently, Vashi carries more than 120 truckloads of inventory.

In Vashi, 64-65 truckloads (each of 100 bags) arrived and 62-63 truckloads were locally despatched. On Saturday, 11-12 mills offered tenders and sold 54,000-55,000 bags (each of a quintal) at Rs 3,050-3,090 (Rs 3,040-3,090) for S-grade and Rs 3,145-3,240 (Rs 3,130-3,230) for M-grade. On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, the March contract was up to Rs 3,081 (Rs 3,048), April to Rs 3,118 (Rs 3,085) and May to Rs 3,159 (Rs 3,126) till noon.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association’s spot rates: S-grade Rs 3,192-3,272 (Rs 3,192-3,272) and M-grade Rs 3,302-3,431 (Rs 3,292-3,431).

Naka delivery rates: S-grade Rs 3,140-3,180 (Rs 3,140-3,180) and M-grade Rs 3,220-3,350 (Rs 3,200-3,330).

Spot turmeric rises on quality arrival

Spot turmeric improved slightly on arrival of quality produce. “Virtually no traders have received fresh orders and so they are not interested in buying. But some stockists purchased at higher prices. Upcountry demand

is expected to pick up only in February-end or March first week,” said Erode Turmeric Merchants Association R.K.V. Ravishankar.

He said harvest has started in some places and by the middle of March, the crop may arrive for sale.

Meanwhile, local spices firms placed orders.

The traders said only 2,996 bags arrived for sale, of

which 60 per cent was sold. The hybrid variety was sold for an increased price of Rs 6,589 a quintal, Rs 600 more than the last week.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales yard, the finger variety fetched Rs 4,009-6,189, the root variety Rs 3,804-5,409.

Salem hybrid crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,419-6,589, the root variety at Rs 5,109-5,669. Of the 491 bags, 192 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,447-6,300, the root variety at Rs 5,274-5,719.

Of the 438 bags that arrived, 417 were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,924-5,985, the root variety at Rs 5,009-5,719. Of the 166 bags, 131 were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,017-6,512 the root variety at Rs 4,500-5,960. All the 94 bags kept for sale were sold.

Cotton blooms as exporters stock up



Demand from spinners and exporters to fulfil yarn export orders pushed up cotton on Monday. According to traders, the fibre crop may gain during the week as arrival is marginally down.

The A grade Sankar-6 variety traded higher by Rs 200-300 to Rs 34,500-34,900 a candy of 356 kg, while B grade was Rs 34,100-34,300 in Gujarat. The V-797 variety was offered at Rs

25,800-26,000 a candy. About 45,000-48,000 bales of 170 kg each arrived in the State, while 1.85 lakh bales arrived in the rest of the country.

Exporters have increased purchases expecting higher demand after Chinese New Year holidays, a broker here said. Strong export demand for yarn also pushed buying by local mills.

Traders expect exports to Southeast Asia to more than double in 2013, which could compensate to some extent for a fall in demand from China, the world's largest consumer and traditionally the biggest buyer of the Indian cotton.

This financial year, yarn exports are expected to touch a record high owing to demand from China. According to a Textile Commissioner Office source, in 2012-13, about 1,000 million kg of yarn was expected to be exported. Earlier, yarn exports were estimated at 920 million kg. Last year, exports stood at 827.68 million kg.

Weak foreign cues, poor buying cool soya oil

Soya oil continued to slide on weak foreign markets and slack demand in the physical market. Soya refined on Monday declined to Rs 690-695 for 10 kg (Rs 695-700), while soya solvent declined to Rs 658-660 (Rs 658-662).

Compared with last week, soya refined in the physical market is down Rs 25. Besides, profit booking at the higher rate has also led to the decline in soya oil in the past one week. Soya oil futures traded low on weak CBOT projections and buying with February and March contracts on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) closing at Rs 723 (down Rs 1.15) and Rs 694.90 (down Rs 5.70). Compared with last week, the two contracts are down Rs 18 and Rs 30 respectively.

Sluggish trend continued in soyabean on weak foreign markets and slack demand for soya de-oiled cake or soyameal. On Monday, soya seeds ruled at Rs 3,150-3,250 a quintal (down Rs 30-50 from last week). Plant deliveries of soyabean declined to Rs 3,270-3,320 against Rs 3,300-3,350 last week. Weak global cues and buying pulled down soyabean futures with February and March contracts on the NCDEX closing at Rs 3,260 (down Rs 41.50) and Rs 3,172 (down Rs 61.50).

Soyameal declined on sluggish domestic and export demand. While in the domestic market on Monday it was quoted at Rs 27,000, it was Rs 28,500 a quintal in the port. One lakh bags arrived in Madhya Pradesh on Monday, including 5,000 bags each in Indore and Ujjain mandis and 4,000 bags in Dewas.

Spot rubber declines further

Domestic rubber markets made further declines on Monday. The local prices continued to post moderate losses tracking the overall weakness in NR futures on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. 'There has been no indication of a recovery in the commodity as expected even after the peak production season probably due to so many other factors. But the fact is that the growing community is in real trouble at current price levels' a trader said.

Sheet rubber weakened to Rs 156 (157) a kg according to traders. The grade dropped to Rs 156.50 (157) a kg at Kottayam and Kochi as quoted by the Rubber Board.

The February series declined to Rs 155.15 (156), March to Rs 157.20 (158.33), April to Rs 160.24 (161.33) and May to Rs 163.80 (164.59), while the June series improved to Rs 169.89 (167.59) a kg on NMCE.

RSS 3 (spot) slipped to Rs 175.47 (175.58) a kg at Bangkok. The Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM) remained closed on account of National Foundation Day.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 156 (157); RSS-5: 152 (152.50); ungraded: 146 (147); ISNR 20: 152 (153) and latex 60 per cent: 101 (101).

85% tea sold in Coonoor auctions

About 85 per cent of the 14.02 lakh kg offered for Sale No: 6 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association (CTTA) auctions were sold.

The oldest bought-leaf tea factory in Kotagiri region, Cross Hill Tea Factory, topped the CTC market.

"Our broken pekoe leaf grade fetched Rs185 a kg – the highest among all leaf and dust grades of all CTC teas. Our three more leaf grades – broken orange pekoe fannings (Rs 179), broken

orange pekoe small (Rs 170) and broken orange pekoe (Rs 162) – and two dust grades – pekoe dust (Rs 165) and red dust (Rs 161) – have also fetched high prices. In all, our six grades have got Rs 161 and more/kg”, Cross Hill Operations Head Dinesh Raju told *Business Line*.

Homedale Tea Factory tea, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, fetched the highest price of Rs 178/kg in the CTC leaf auction.

“Our nine grades fetched Rs 123 and more for a kg. Of them, four are leaf grades and the rest, dust grades”, Homedale Managing Partner Prasant Menon said.

Vigneshwar Estate got Rs 164. In all, 201 marks got Rs 100 and more a kg.

Among orthodox teas from corporate sector, Chamraj got Rs 276 a kg, Highfield Estate Rs 261, Havukal Rs 198, Kairbetta Rs 171, Glendale Rs 170, Kodanad and Prammas Rs 169 each and Sutton Rs 165. In all, 35 marks got Rs 100 and more.

Pakistan was strong for select grades in the range Rs 90-106 a kg. The CIS bought for Rs 91-130. There was some purchase for European ports at Rs 92-95.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 86-89 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 110-150 for brighter liquoring sorts.

They ranged Rs 86-89 for plain dusts and Rs 110-150 for brighter liquoring dusts.

National Multi Commodity Exchange posts 80% rise in Jan rubber delivery

The National Multi Commodity Exchange has registered 80.45 per cent increase in the delivery of rubber in January.

It was 1,606 tonnes against 890 tonnes in January 2012, the largest ever on the exchange. The producers and suppliers have benefitted by giving huge delivery on the exchange because the exchange price was more attractive, a press statement issued here said.

NMCE has certified the warehouse of CWC for delivery of rubber in Kerala near all the producing areas at Aluva, Ernakulum, Kakkanad, Kakkancherry, Kozhikode, Palakkad, Piravom

Road and Thrissur. The stock position in the exchange-certified warehouse is displayed on the Web site of the exchange in which one could get the information of daily arrivals and despatch.

The stock position as on January 30 has reached to 7,148 tonnes out of which 428 tonnes is in plastic packing.

NMCE has formed an independent team of quality experts for periodical check of the quality of rubber in the exchange-certified warehouses consisting of Rubber Board quality expert, regional office of CWC and NMCE representative. The commodity exchanges are not meant for physical delivery but for price discovery and price risk management.

Physical delivery is the enabling provision to give delivery when it is most profitable in terms of price otherwise suppliers give delivery to their clients nearer to their location so that criss-cross movement of the commodity is avoided which otherwise makes the commodity more expensive.

Cotton Association sees output at 354 lakh bales

The Cotton Association of India has estimated cotton crop output to be lower by five per cent this year at 354 lakh bales against 373 lakh bales last year.

In December, the association estimated cotton output at 353.25 lakh bales.

Arrivals as of January-end were at 177 lakh bales, against 102.50 lakh bales in December.

The average daily arrivals continue at an impressive pace of over 2,50,000 bales, said the CAI.

Despite the reduction in cotton acreage, the prospects of cotton crop look promising this year.

The demand for cotton from the mill sector continues to remain good, it said.

The total cotton supply will touch 419 lakh bales with imports of 12 lakh bales and opening stock of 53 lakh bales.

On the demand side, the domestic consumption is estimated lower at 271 lakh bales (excluding exports).

The mill demand is estimated at 235 lakh bales, while that of small-scale mills and non-mill is 20 lakh bales and 16 lakh bales, respectively.

The industry will be left with a surplus of 177 lakh bales, said the CAI.

Total demand last year was 382 lakh bales, including exports of 127 lakh bales.

The Cotton Advisory Board, in its second estimate in January, projected cotton output of 330 lakh bales, due to reports of bollworm infesting some of the BT cotton crop across the country, but largely in few regions of Maharashtra and Rajasthan.

As Bt cotton acreage stagnates, seed firms eye food crops in big way



Stagnating acreage is prompting Bt cotton seed makers to diversify into food crops such as hybrid rice, corn and vegetables, where they see a big market potential.

Companies such as Nuziveedu Seeds Ltd and Rasi Seeds (Pvt) Ltd, which currently earn a major share of their revenues from Bt cotton seeds, are aggressively charting plans to scale up exposure to food crops.

“We are diversifying into hybrid rice, corn and vegetables in a big way,” said Arvind Kapur, Chief Executive Officer, Vegetables Seed Division, Rasi Seeds.

The Rs 500-crore firm, which currently has a small exposure to hybrid rice and corn, plans to scale up its breeding programme to introduce more hybrids. Rasi Seeds has partnered with Israeli firm, Evogene Ltd, to develop yield-enhancing and drought-tolerant rice varieties.

Vegetable hybrids

Besides, Rasi has started breeding programmes in some 21 different vegetables to launch hybrids.

“We have enrolled 22 breeders to give a major push to our vegetables seeds business,” Kapur said. Similarly, the over Rs 1,000-crore Nuziveedu Seeds Ltd (NSL) is planning to scale up its presence in food crops such as corn, rice and vegetables.

Cotton currently accounts for around 80 per cent of NSL’s revenues. “In five years from now, we expect cotton seeds to contribute 60-65 per cent of our business,” said Ramesh Viswanathan, Chief Operating Officer, NSL.

Revenues from Bt cotton seeds have shrunk for NSL by about five per cent and the company attributed it to the decline in commodity prices.

Vegetable seed

“Vegetables seed is the future growth engine,” said M. Prabhakar Rao, Chairman, NSL.

Corn seed

The company has doubled its corn seed business from 5 to 10 per cent of its revenues in the past two years.

The hybrid rice currently accounts for six per cent of its revenues and vegetables about three per cent.

Hybrid rice

Hybrid rice is also attracting the interest of both large multinationals such as Syngenta and smaller players such as the Bangalore-based Indo American Hybrid Seeds (India) Pvt Ltd. Currently, hybrid rice is planted in only about five per cent of the total rice acreage of 44 million ha, presenting a huge potential for the seed makers.

Indo American, which has a couple of hybrid rice varieties, is looking to introduce some three to four more, said Arthur Santosh Attavar, Managing Director. The company also expects to launch a Bt cotton variety in the kharif 2013 season.

Syngenta India is also evaluating about three to four more rice hybrids, said the company's Vice-President Rajesh Jain.

The company currently has about four hybrid varieties in the Indian market, introduced some five years earlier.

The recent acquisition of Devgen could further boost Syngenta's portfolio in the Indian market.

Rubber output declines 5% in January; consumption down 9%

India's natural rubber production declined by 5 per cent to 97,000 tonnes in January, while consumption of the commodity fell by 9 per cent to 75,000 tonnes in the same month, data from Rubber Board shows.

The country had produced 1,02,500 tonnes natural rubber while it had consumed 82,535 tonnes in January 2012.

Import of natural rubber fell by 18 per cent to 28,905 tonnes in January 2013 from 23,672 tonnes in January 2012, while, the export of the commodity jumped by more than five-fold to 4,850 tonnes from 967 tonnes during the same period.

For the first ten months this fiscal, natural rubber output rose marginally to 7,90,200 tonnes from 7,84,400 tonnes in April-January of 2011-12 fiscal.

Consumption of rubber rose by 2 per cent to 8,17,815 tonnes from 8,01,750 tonnes during the review period.

Natural rubber imports were high at 1,97,113 tonnes in April-January of 2012-13 fiscal compared to 1,65,936 tonnes in the year-ago period, whereas, exports were down at 15,632 tonnes from 23,730 during the same period.

The stock of natural rubber in the country stood at 2,96,000 tonnes at the end of January 2013.

Sukhbir criticises Centre for proposed fertiliser subsidy cut

SAD President and Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Singh Badal today criticised the Centre for the proposed 15 per cent cut in fertiliser subsidy from the next financial year.

Describing the step as “anti-farmer”, he said instead of slashing the subsidy, the Centre should link the Minimum Support Price of crops with the price index, as had been recommended by the Dr Swaminathan Commission.

Addressing an election gathering in favour of party candidate Joginderpal Jain at various villages, he also criticised the Centre for decontrolling diesel prices.

“These steps will sound the death knell for the already dwindling agriculture sector,” he said.

He demanded Rs 2,200 per quintal as wheat MSP in view of the rising cost of agriculture inputs.

“If immediate steps are not taken, farmers will be pushed deeper into the debt trap, which can create socio-economic problems,” Sukhbir warned.

He claimed that the Centre was favouring multinational companies which had been raising prices at their will.

The UPA government’s ill-conceived policies had reduced the country’s economic growth to 5 per cent whereas inflation had already crossed the double digit figure, he said.

The Moga by-poll is slated for February 23.

Business Standard

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Wheat up 1% on likely dip in foodgrain production

Wheat futures for February edged up by Rs 15, or 0.97%, to Rs 1,560 per quintal in 840 lots.



At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the March contract gained Re 1, or 0.07%, to Rs 1,457 per quintal in 8,680 lots.

Participants creating speculative positions also supported the trade.

Reports saying country's foodgrain production is estimated to decline by 3.5% to 250.14 million tonnes in 2012-13 crop year as poor rains have hit rice and coarse cereal crops, influenced wheat futures trade.

Potato declines 0.9% on adequate supply



Potato futures for March declined by Rs 7.40, or 0.89%, to Rs 828.60 per quintal in 37 lots.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the April contract traded lower by Rs 5.40, or 0.65%, to Rs 822 per quintal in 19 lots.

Prices dropped as speculators offloaded positions, driven by subdued spot market demands against adequate supplies.

Besides, adequate stocks in the physical market following increased arrivals from producing regions, also weighed on the potato futures trade.

Pepper down 0.6% on weak spot demand



Pepper futures for February fell by Rs 230, or 0.59%, to Rs 38,500 per quintal in 672 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the March contract moved down by Rs 110, or 0.31%, to Rs 35,580 per quintal in 2,159 lots.

Subdued spot market demands, increased supplies from a new crop in the physical markets and a likely higher output this season affected the pepper prices.

Speculators reducing positions also triggered the downtrend.

At Kochi spot market, pepper fell by Rs 118 to Rs 40,220 per 100 kg in the previous session.

Sugar up 0.8% on pick-up in spot demand



Sugar futures for March traded Rs 24, or 0.79% higher, at Rs 3,072 per quintal in 28,140 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the February contract edged up by Rs 4, or 0.13%, to Rs 3,025 per quintal in 16,500 lots.

Prices rose as speculators covered-up short positions amid pick-up in spot demand.

Ample stocks following higher supplies in the physical market restricted the rise.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

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Homestay venture leave farmers high and dry

KOZHIKODE: Many of the farmers who ventured into [homestay business](#) expecting good profits are feeling the pinch after failing to get the desired returns.

The tourism department, which had assured support for their venture, has failed to extend help to the farmers for popularizing their homestays.

The farmers from Koodaranji, Karassery and Kodencheri panchayats in the district are on the verge of winding up their business while the department of tourism claims 20% growth rate in the number of foreign and domestic tourists.

According to farmers under [Sugandhini Farmers' Cluster](#), they restructured their houses to meet the standards put forth by the tourism department in 2008.

The homestay systems had received a fillip when the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development ([NABARD](#)) had extended financial support to the farmers for starting homestays.

The plan was to explore the scenic beauty of hilly regions to attract tourists. Farmers, who were struggling due to steep price fall of agriculture products, were given the option by the tourism department assuring support.

"Initially only five farmers ventured into the sector. Later, 25 persons started homestays," said K Johnson, office-bearer of Sugandhini.

Many of the homestay owners were able to earn over Rs 35,000 a month in the first phase, who were earning not even 25% of the amount from agriculture.

"We arranged spot visits to destinations including waterfalls (Arippara, Kozhippara, and Pathakayam), spices and medicinal garden (Kakkadampoyil) and trek to Pantheerayiram, etc. However, we failed to succeed owing to the apathy of officials," said a farmer.

The absence of genuine clients also affected the functioning of homestays in the district, said a farmer.

"We could not admit many of the clients who enquired about the homestays as they approached us with questionable intentions," he added.

Meantime, tourism department said they were extending support to all homestays which had met the standards set by them. Address, phone number and other details of 10 homestays in the district were published on the website of the tourism department as part of popularizing homestays.

Millet cultivation comes to farmers' rescue

MADURAI: Amidst depressing reports from water-parched farms as canals and wells dry up, farmers from the arid regions in Madurai have recorded good harvests -- thanks to millets and pulses cultivation that do not require much rainfall and expensive agricultural inputs. The farmers in Peraiyur and Thirumangalam blocks, the relatively drier areas in Madurai district, said though the yields were reduced, their crops were not damaged as had happened in lands depending on river and well water.

M Annalakshmi of Thottiapatti, near Peraiyur, had sown barnyard millets in her 2.5 acre lands and she successfully harvested four quintals of grains which may fetch her Rs 2,700 per quintal this year. "The lack of rains did affect us, but we managed to harvest them because barnyard millet requires lesser water," she said.

Many farmers in the region had adopted millets three years back due to scanty rainfall and the harvests are reasonable, Annalakshmi said. In the same way, about 5,000 farmers in Sengapadai village in Thirumangalam block too gained through dryland agriculture in nearly 10,000 acres. While cotton is the main crop, millets and pulses are sown as intermediate crops. "We cultivated mainly millets, pulses and toor dal (pigeon peas) and the yields were very handsome," said P Ramasamy, a villager. "The area is arid in nature and millets and pulses grow better in this soil. Toor dal from Sengapadai is famous for its taste in the region," he said.

With monsoons playing hide and seek in the region, the need to switch over to alternate crops were stressed for some time. District agriculture department is also planning to promote

barnyard millet in the drier areas in place of paddy. DHAN foundation, a Madurai-based NGO promoting water bodies and livelihoods of farmers, had undertaken a year-long campaign for promoting millets as alternate crop. They even succeeded in persuading 1,000 farmers in Peraiyur block to shift to millet cultivation in 2,000 acres.

"Millets survive better in drought-like conditions and provide comparatively better yields and the market avenues for millets are growing with increasing health consciousness among the public," commented M Palanisamy, programme leader of rain-fed farming development programme of DHAN. "Millets are nutritious. Once they were popular, but vanished over a period. We are trying to promote millet cultivation as well as consumption among the public which will automatically increase the cultivated area," he said.

Crop of Pusa Bold Mustard sways in Sukhlal's field

BHOPAL: The crop of [Pusa Bold mustard](#) is swaying in the field farmer Sukhlal's field at village Sonipura in [Karahal tribal development block](#) in Sheopur district these days. It has become possible due to high-quality seeds. Sukhlal had been growing crops with traditional method in his one-hectare field. Cost of traditional farming had been increasing constantly for the last some years reducing the margin of profit. Under such circumstances, his family was facing financial constraints.

During a visit of the collector, discussion was held on farming by Sukhlal. Collector [Gyaneshwar B. Patil](#) advised Sukhlal to adopt modern methods. He directed officers of the agriculture department to provide seeds to Sukhlal through [Seed Demonstration Scheme](#). Following this, 5 kg seeds of Pusa Bold Mustard were provided to Sukhlal. He sowed the seeds in one hectare. The agriculture department advised him from time to time about fertiliser and sprinkling of medicines. As a result of this, crop of mustard is swaying in his field now.

Success of Pusa Bold Mustard in Sukhlal's field has become topic of discussions in nearby villages. Farmers over there are also thinking about trying this variety of mustard.



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Select millgate sugar price eases on adequate supply

Select millgate sugar prices declined upto Rs 20 per quintal in the national capital today on millers selling against adequate supplies.

Marketmen said millers selling against adequate supplies mainly led to decline in select millgate prices.

In the millgate section, Mawana declined by Rs 20 to Rs 3285, while Kinnoni and Dorala were down by Rs 10 each to Rs 3365 and Rs 3260 per quintal respectively.

The following were today quotations per quintal: Sugar ready: M-30 3,260-3,410, S-30 3,240-3,390. Mill delivery: M-30 3,180-3,320; S-30 3,160-3,300.

Sugar mill gate (including duty): Mawana 3285, Kinnoni 3365, Asmoli 3335, Dorala 3260, Budhana 3290, Thanabhavan 3290, Dhanora 3275, Simbholi 3350, Modi Nagar 3260, Khatuli 3260, Dhampur 3245, Ramala 3190, Bulandshar 3240, Anupshar 3180, Baghpat 3220, Morna 3200, Sakoti 3220, Chandpur 3240, Amroha 3245 and Nazibabad 3180.

DECCAN Chronicle

TODAY FARM NEWS

12.02.2013 A.M

After hike, milk price cut by Rs 1



Bengaluru: Following Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar's intervention, Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) has decided to reduce the increase in milk and milk products by Rs 1.

Speaking to reporters here on Monday, KMF chairman G. Somashekhar Reddy said that considering the consumers' negative feedback on enhancing milk prices by Rs 4 per litre in one go, Shettar had advised the Federation to restrict the increase to Rs 3 per litre.

As per the revised rate, one litre of milk will cost Rs 27 in Bengaluru, Mysore, Mandya, Tumkur, Kolar, Hassan and Shimoga districts. The subsidy on cattle feed will be Rs 4 per kg. "This subsidy will be provided by the state government," he said.

Reddy also disclosed that the women and child development department has identified 20 lakh anganwadi children and 5 lakhs adolescent girls for supplying milk made from skimmed milk powder which will account for 1,000 MT per month upto March 2013. "The CM has assured us

that primary and high school children will also be considered for the skimmed milk powder scheme," he said.