

Dairy farmers' pension to go up

Minister for Dairy Development K. C. Joseph told the Assembly on Thursday that the pension of dairy farmers from the Dairy Farmers' Welfare Fund would be enhanced. The Minister was piloting the Kerala Dairy Farmers' Welfare Fund (Amendment) Bill which seeks to increase the contribution payable by Milma and milk cooperatives to the fund, which in turn will enable the fund to increase the pension amount. — Special Correspondent

Red gram as alternative finds favour with farmers

Red gram cultivation is proving to be a viable alternative crop for farmers reeling under crop loss due to drought in the district.

Farmers from Vadipatti block have availed of opportunities under the centrally funded Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) project.

"Vayal vizha"

Deputy Director (Agriculture) S. Kanagaraj told *The Hindu* here on Thursday that through "vayal vizha" (field festival), the farmers were given an exposure to red gram cultivation techniques.

In a changing scenario, alternative crops are the only option to keep the soil fertile and farmers busy. Red gram required minimal water and drip irrigation produced a high yield, Mr. Kanagaraj pointed out. A farmer, Ayyankalai of Sanampatti in Vadipatti taluk, said that he had raised red gram on 1.5 acres in November and harvested a net 948 kilograms per acre, which is considered a high yield for a maiden venture, the official said and added that a tonne of red gram was selling at Rs.30,000.

Assuming that a farmer invests Rs.15,000 per acre, he gets a return of Rs.15,000 over a period of 150 days.

Good market

There is a good market for red gram in Virudhunagar and Oddanchatram (Dindigul district).

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Cotton farmers stage road roko

More than 100 farmers of various districts, who brought cotton from their fields to auction their produce in the Namakkal Agricultural Marketing Society resorted to road roko in front of the society on the Tiruchengode Road in Namakkal Town on Thursday evening seeking better price for their cotton. Over 7,000 bags of cotton were brought to the society for auctioning on Thursday. During the auction the price of a quintal was fixed at Rs. 4,200.

“This is Rs. 2,000 lesser per quintal than the Rs. 6,200 the same quantity of cotton was auctioned in the society, last Thursday,” farmers added.

Nanjundaswamy was the backbone for farmers, says Devanoor Mahadeva

Writer and Padma Shri winner Devanoor Mahadeva has hailed the role of farmers' leader, the late M.D. Nanjundaswamy, in standing up for the interests of farmers.

He was speaking after inaugurating the Raithotsav to mark the 77th birth anniversary of Nanjundaswamy at Hondarabalu on Wednesday.

Nanjundaswamy was the backbone for farmers. He gave them strength to protect their interests and deal with the government. He had the courage to raise his voice against injustice, stood up for natural agricultural and medicinal practices, and called for a struggle against globalisation, Mr. Mahadeva said.

His influence also extended to other social reforms, such as organising inter-caste marriages and stressed the importance of satyagraha as a method of protest, the writer added.

Plight of farmers

Founder of Narmada Bachao Andolan Medha Patkar saw an “international conspiracy” in how genetically modified seeds were replacing local variants.

She rued that the voices of farmers, Dalits and adivasis were rarely heard by those in power. Globalisation had been accepted without getting their opinion. Farmers were not committing suicide, the government was “killing” them by not offering a suitable price for their produce.

Ms. Patkar hailed the contribution of Nanjundaswamy and called upon farmers to follow his ideal.

Convener of the raitha sangha K.S. Puttanaiah, Nanjundaswamy’s daughter Chukki Nanjundaswamy and Adivasi leader from Kerala S.K. Janu were present.

Farmers protest against move to stop water release

A large number of farmers, along with Janata Dal (Secular) workers, staged a demonstration in front of the office of the Irrigation Department here on Thursday in protest against the government’s decision to stop releasing water into canals from February 15.

They criticised the government and officials for what they described as issuing a whimsical order without analysing the ground realities in the Bhadra command area. Tension prevailed near the Irrigation Department office when farmers tried to enter the office.

The police prevented them from doing so. B.M. Sathish, working president of the district unit of the Janata Dal (S), who led the agitation, told *The Hindu* that the Bhadra Irrigation Consultative Committee and the Command Area Development Authority (CADA) had taken a decision recently to provide farmers with water for at least 100 days continuously. Both the committee and the authority had studied the water storage in the Bhadra reservoir and the requirement of water for other purposes, including drinking, before coming out with a timetable to release water into the canals for 100 days.

Questioning the propriety of the decision of the higher authorities in Bangalore to stop releasing water into canals for irrigation purposes from February 15, he expressed concern over the fate of farmers, who had cultivated various crops in the command area investing crores of rupees.

Several standing crops in the command area would start withering if water was not supplied for the next 30 days, he said.

The CADA had kept aside about 6 tmcft water for drinking purposes and the situation did not warrant the decision to stop releasing water for irrigation purposes, he said.

He warned that farmers would intensify their agitation if the decision to stop releasing water was not withdrawn.

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'Recommend writing off all loans of farmers'

The Agriculturists' wing of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee has appealed to Rahul Gandhi, vice president of the All India Congress Committee, to recommend writing off all the loans of farmers obtained from nationalised banks to prevent any further suicides in Tamil Nadu.

In a communication, Puliur A.Nagarajan, State vice president of the wing, has said that crops in almost 20 lakh acres in Tamil Nadu have withered due to the failure of monsoons and Karnataka's refusal to release water .

As serious drought prevails all over the State, agriculture in the State has been hit hard and ryots are in serious distress. Already as many as 19 farmers have committed suicide unable to bear the debt burden.

Mr.Nagarajan pointed out that the Central government prevented several suicides in 2008 by writing off all the loans of those owning less than five acres and 25 per cent of those owning more than five acres.

Thus it had written off as much as Rs.80,000 crore . “It was all because of your (Rahul Gandhi’s) guidance for which the farmers are ever indebted to you “.

Submitting that situation in Tamil Nadu is akin to the one in 2008, Mr.Nagarajan urged Mr.Gandhi to use his good offices to write off the loans of farmers obtained from nationalised banks. That alone can save the farmers from suicides, he asserted.

Pointing out that the Supreme Court had directed the Central government to gazette the Final Award of the Cauvery water Disputes Tribunal before February 20, he appealed to Mr.Gandhi to recommend the same to the Central government.

Release water to second crop: Naidu

Telugu Desam president Nara Chandrababu Naidu has demanded that the State Government release water for the second crop by Sunday and warned that he would stage a sit-in if the Government fails to do so.

Addressing a meeting after inaugurating the statues of B.R Ambedkar, Babu Jagjeevan Ram and N.T Rama Rao at the village centre, Mr. Naidu said that farmers in Krishna Western Delta had been sowing second crop in the rice fallows for years. Crops like maize and blackgram had brought considerable income to farmers, Mr. Naidu said. The day saw Mr. Naidu interacting with farmers, women and students in villages of Tenali rural mandal. Launching a frontal attack on Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy, Mr. Naidu said that the C.M had been hell bent on protecting the tainted Ministers in the Cabinet rather than solving the problems of poor and trying to bring down the prices of essential commodities. Mr. Naidu also tried to woo people belonging to Scheduled Castes and said that he had always favoured categorization of SCs so that all sub castes get benefited. In a bid to win the support of Minorities, Mr. Naidu promised that he would open a Islamic Bank and provide interest free loans to unemployed Muslims. Mr. Naidu was accompanied by former minister Alapati Rajendra Prasad, MLAs Nakka Anand Babu, Prathipati Pulla Rao and others.

Insure crops: Collector

Collector Anshul Mishra has appealed to farmers to insure their crops.

The failure of monsoon forced a majority of farmers to abruptly stop cultivation at different stages in the district.

By getting an insurance cover and remitting premium for the total extent of land, it would help farmers offset loss to a great extent.

Officials from the agriculture department and primary agriculture cooperative banks could be approached for details. The district administration surveyed the total extent of land covered under paddy and other crops.

Farmers urged the State government to declare Madurai district drought-hit and give them compensation adequately as in the case of delta farmers.

An agricultural official said that by remitting a meagre premium of less than Rs.200 per acre, a farmer would get Rs.8000 per acre as his claim.

The government announced to reimburse a portion of the premium remitted by farmers, he pointed out.

CPI(M), OKS pick holes in paddy procurement process

Ganjam district units of CPI (M) and Odisha Krushak Sabha (OKS) have alleged irregularities in paddy procurement in the district.

At a meeting of the organisations held in the city on Thursday to discuss this problem of peasants, it was decided that they would go for agitation if the irregularities were not rectified.

As the first step, peasants, members of CPI (M) and OKS will stage a dharna in front of the office of the Ganjam District Collector at Chatrapur on February 20 to highlight the issue.

Apart from members of the district committee of the CPI (M), the meeting was attended by OKS State president Abhiram Behera, its district president Kailash Sadangi and general secretary P. Harikrishna Reddy.

Peasant representatives from different blocks of the district also participated and provided data regarding operation of paddy procurement mandi opened in their areas. Mr. Sadangi said in

most of the places it was found that the millers were gaining from the paddy procurement process, while the real farmers were not getting proper price for their produce. “This is occurring due to nefarious nexus between the officials involved in the paddy procurement process and the millers,” said Mr. Sadangi.

Most of the peasant representatives made the allegation that millers were procuring paddy at less than Rs. 1,000 per quintal from the farmers.

These millers were handing over the procured paddy at the government mandi at Rs. 1,200 per quintal through fake names of farmers, alleged Mr. Reddy.

“When real farmers reach the mandi to sell their paddy, the authorities managing the mandi are usually claiming that the quota of procurement had got completed,” the peasant representatives said. Even when real peasants get to sell their produce at the government mandi, they were not getting the payment immediately.

Mr. Behera said the irregularities during paddy procurement in Ganjam district, which was the home district of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik hinted at the similar affair of paddy procurement throughout the State.

Action sought

He asked the State government to initiate strict action so that real farmers rather than unscrupulous millers could benefit from the paddy procurement process.

Bid to boost rice farming

The Centre of Excellence for Research on Wetland Farming Systems proposed to be set up at Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) is intended to give a boost to rice farming in the granaries of the State.

It is one of the eight centres of excellence mooted at a brainstorming session recently convened by the Minister for Agriculture.

The KAU Centre of Excellence will have its main unit at the Regional Agricultural Research Station, Kumarakom. Its sub-units will function at the Rice Research Station , Vyttila (coastal farming systems), and the Agricultural Research Station, Mannuthy.

“The brainstorming session was effective. The Agriculture Minister, Agricultural Production Commissioner, and Agriculture Secretary discussed with KAU scientists different aspects of farming. A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of each research station was conducted,” KAU Vice-Chancellor P. Rajendran said.

Apart from that for wetland ecosystems and farm mechanisation, centres of excellence are being planned for the fields of biotechnology and secondary agriculture (at Vellayani, with a sub-centre at Vellanikkara); rice research and development (Pattambi); research on spices, cool season vegetables and subtropical fruits (Ambalavayal); protected cultivation and precision farming (Vellanikkara); production of seeds and planting material (Vellanikkara and Anakkayam); and research on biofertilizers and bio-control agents (Vellayani and Vellanikkara).

“The university is aware of the need for an active interface with other research and development institutions in the field of agriculture and allied branches. We have also decided that research and production activities should be delinked. A review of the progress attained in the programmes mooted in the brainstorming session will be held after three months,” he said.

Efforts to revive 57-year-old Seed Farm



Once a prominent producer of agriculture crop seeds, the 1956-established State Seed Farm situated on an expanse of 39.05 acre at Devanampalayam near Pongalur is now bearing an abysmal picture.

The farm has been remaining idle for the past few years with its decline starting almost a decade ago due to administrative lapses, inadequate financial provisions to offer attractive wages to hold back the daily wage labourers deployed for land preparation, de-weeding and seed harvesting works, migration of farm workers in the area to textile industry, depletion in

water resources and also due to non-filling of 'full-time farm manager's post' for the past many years.

It will be hard for a new visitor to the premises now to even imagine that this seed farm in the past has been producing tonnes of foundation seeds of paddy, pulses, tomato and bhendi, cotton seeds, and certified seeds of maize for farmers across the State.

Today, one can see only a damaged name board lying on a corner of its entrance, broken barbed wire fence, dead coconut tree trunks and heavily dilapidated administrative blocks.

"During the late 90's, the farm has even been producing breeder seeds of cotton for farmers across the country with the help of Central Institute of Cotton Research under the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR)," a senior agriculture department official who had once served as the manager of the farm in 1990s, told *The Hindu* .

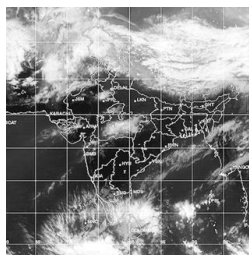
Without a full-time farm manager, even the basic maintenance of the premises was not been taken care of resulting in almost 180 coconut trees on the campus dying and the green pastures started sporting 'dry look'.

To revive the farm's activities, the Department of Agriculture along with district administration and a few other departments have chalked out an action plan.

"Under the district administration's direction, it has been decided to utilise the workers from the MNREGS labour-pool for reviving farm activities," Joint Director of Agriculture M.K.Sherif said.

For a starter, saplings needed for tree plantation programmes of District Rural Development Agency will be raised before plunging into full-fledged operations, Mr. Sherif said.

weather



New Delhi (Plm)	26	11	0	69
New Delhi (Sfd)	25	10	0	103
Chandigarh	25	10	0	95
Hissar	25	9	0	48
Bhuntar	22	3	0	234
Shimla	14	6	0	241
Jammu	23	9	0	86
Srinagar	16	1	0	83
Amritsar	23	7	0	37
Patiala	25	9	0	64
Jaipur	27	12	0	10
Udaipur	27	14	0	2
Allahabad	29	11	0	9
Lucknow	26	9	0	112
Varanasi	28	12	0	20
Dehradun	25	10	0	247
Agartala	29	14	0	0
Ahmedabad	34	20	0	0
Bangalore	31	20	0	1
Bhubaneshwar	31	17	0	1
Bhopal	29	15	0	20
Chennai	31	24	0	tr
Guwahati	31	13	0	0
Hyderabad	31	19	0	3
Kolkata	28	18	0	12
Mumbai	35	23	0	0
Nagpur	33	17	0	10

Patna	27	12	0	13
Pune	33	17	0	0
Thiruvananthapuram	35	22	8	31
Imphal	27	6	0	tr
Shillong	22	11	0	9

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

Rainfall

RAINFALL: Weather was dry over the region.

MINIMUM TEMPERATURES : The minimum temperatures changed little over the region. They were above normal in Rajasthan and normal in rest of the region. The lowest minimum temperature in the plains was 06.3°C recorded at Adampur (Punjab).

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 16th FEBRUARY 2013: Rain/snow may occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand during next 24 hours and at many places thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, west Uttar Pradesh and north Rajasthan during next 24 hours and increase thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at many places over east Uttar Pradesh and at a few places over south Rajasthan from 15th onwards.

WARNING : Heavy snowfall may occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand on 15th and 16th. Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, north Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh on 15th and 16th. Thunder squall accompanied with hails could also occur at one or two places over Jammu division of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, north Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh on 15th and 16th.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 16th FEBRUARY 2013: Mainly clear sky likely to become partly cloudy sky with possibility of light rain/thunderly development towards late night. Mist/shallow fog in the morning.

weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Rainy

Friday, Feb 15

Max Min

30° | 24°

Rain: 84

Humidity: normal

Wind: 06:31

Sunrise: 06:14

Sunset: 10:11.0

Barometer: 0

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Saturday, Feb 16

Max Min

31° | 25°

Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday Feb 17	Monday Feb 18	Tuesday Feb 19	Wednesday Feb 20	Thursday Feb 21
31° 24° Cloudy	31° 25° Overcast	30° 24° Overcast	30° 24° Overcast	29° 23° Overcast

Airport Weather

Delhi

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 07:00

Humidity: 68

Sunset: 06:11

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1011.5



14th jan 2013

Indifferent weather lifts jeera futures



Jeera futures gained more than 1 per cent on adverse weather in Gujarat. Moreover, arrival was low as the Unjha market was closed for *Vasant Panchami* festival.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, the March contract increased by Rs 137.5 or 1.04 per cent to Rs 13,307.50 a quintal with an open interest of 10,293 lots, while April was up Rs 120 to Rs 13,372.50 with an open interest of 7,437 lots.

Jeera traded higher by Rs 30-35 to Rs 2,275-2,710 for 20 kg at Rajkot, where 2,000-2,200 bags arrived.

According to a Rajkot-based trader, cloudy weather and high temperature may damage the standing crop.

According to market analysts, with rates having fallen quite significantly over the last few weeks, stockists were not willing to sell, which capped the fall in prices. However, if the new crop arrival remains high, prices may not rise.

Arrival of carryover stocks from last year is weak. Export demand may rise from Syria and Turkey. According to market sources, about three-fourths of the export target has already been achieved due to a global supply crunch.

Pepper falls on selling pressure

The pepper market fell on reports of more availability of the material on the exchange platform coupled with some selling pressure on the spot following decline in the futures market on Thursday . Consequently, all the deliveries across the board closed below the previous day closing.

There was liquidation in Feb and buying of spot. The turn over increased significantly by 81 per cent in March alone while buying was there in March and April, market sources told *Business Line*.

Exporters who have made commitments earlier for February/March shipments were seen ready to buy at Rs 410 and 411 a kg so as to fulfil their export commitments, they said.

Spot trade

Some of other financiers who are holding stocks were also seen showing interest to sell their product at Rs 425 a kg, but buyers were reportedly offering Rs 15 less a kg.

Meanwhile, good afloat business has taken place today for an estimated 47 tonnes of fresh pepper at Rs 386, 396 and 406 a kg, they said.

March contract on the NCDEX opened on an easier note at Rs 36,455 a quintal and traded with volatility. At the beginning of the forenoon session it went up and touched the highest price of Rs 36,565 a quintal up by Rs 110 from the opening price and traded with high volatility.

In the afternoon, it touched the lowest price of Rs 35,860 a quintal, down by Rs 705 and then traded with volatility and recovered marginally in the closing session to the last traded price of Rs 36,200 a quintal.

February contract on the NCDEX decreased by Rs 150 a quintal to close at Rs 39,490 a quintal. March and April dropped by Rs 390 and Rs 285 respectively to close at Rs 36,120 and Rs 34,880 a quintal.

Turnover

Total turnover increased by 742 tonnes to close at 1,613 tonnes. Total open interest moved up by 37 tonnes to 3,714 tonnes. February open interest decreased by 40 tonnes to 565 tonnes while that of March and April were up by 29 tonnes and 25 tonnes respectively to close at 2,102 tonnes and 576 tonnes.

Spot prices remained unchanged at previous levels of Rs39,600 (ungarbled) and Rs41,100 (MG 1) a quintal on matching demand and supply.

Indian parity in the international markets was at \$7,900 a tonne (c&f) for prompt shipment while Feb was at \$7,600 a tonne (c&f) and Mar at \$7,000 a tonne (c&f). All other origins are closed on holidays.

Mustard oil weakens as arrival rises



Mustard oil in *mandis* across Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat on Thursday showed a mixed trend even as arrival of mustard seeds is rising. In Indore, mustard oil gained Rs 2 to Rs 712 for 10 kg, while it was down Re 1 each in Neemuch and Morena at Rs 705 and Rs 715 respectively. In Rajasthan, while mustard oil declined by Rs 15 in Kota to Rs 720, it was Rs 5 up in Ganga Nagar at Rs 725 and Rs 15 up in Jaipur at Rs 735. In Gujarat also, mustard oil ruled Rs 5 up at Rs 715.

However, compared with last week, mustard oil is ruling Rs 18 lower in Indore, Rs 20 down in Morena and Neemuch. Similarly in Rajasthan also, mustard oil is ruling Rs 15 lower in Kota, Ganga Nagar and Jaipur, compared with last week.

Prices of mustard seeds were down too as arrival of new mustard seeds increases in *mandis*. While in Indore mustard seeds ruled at Rs 4,300-4,500 a quintal, in Neemuch, new mustered seeds with 20-22 per cent moisture ruled at Rs 2,700-2,900 and with 8-9 per cent moisture ruled at Rs 3,450-3,460. According to Neemuch-based trader Kamlesh Nahti, mustard seeds prices will decline further as arrival gains pace in 10-15 days.

With high moisture content in new mustered and decline in demand, plant deliveries of mustard seeds for Jaipur line in the past one week have declined by Rs 100 to Rs 3,825-3,850 a quintal. Mustard seeds futures traded lower with rise in arrival and slack buying. On Thursday, April and May contracts on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange closed at Rs 3,406 a quintal (down Rs 8) and at Rs 3,431 a quintal (down Rs 14).

Arrival of new mustard seeds in the country on Thursday was recorded at 95,000 bags, of which 35,000 bags were offloaded in Uttar Pradesh, 18,000 in Madhya Pradesh, 22,000 in Rajasthan, 2,000 in Gujarat, 3,000 in Punjab and Haryana. Fifty thousand bags of old mustard seeds arrived in the country on Thursday.

Orthodox tea gains at North India auctions

Orthodox tea gained while CTC declined this week at sale number 7 at the Kolkata tea auction. The average price of Orthodox at Rs 149.36 was higher than last week's (sale number 6) at Rs 144.25 a kg and that of CTC was lower at Rs 128.83 (Rs 130.65), according to auctioneers J. Thomas & Company Pvt. Ltd.

Volume sold was slightly higher for CTC at 82.98 per cent (82.52 per cent) and lower for Orthodox at 81.11 per cent (85.62 per cent).

This week at sale number 7, total offerings (packages) at the three North Indian auction centres in Kolkata, Guwahati and Siliguri were 2,19,296 compared with 2,64,527 in the corresponding sale last year. The offerings at Kolkata comprised CTC/Dust 1,32,684 (1,41,390), Orthodox 4,912 (17,421) and Darjeeling 4,053(1,219). The corresponding figures for the other auctions

centres handling mainly CTC/Dust were, Guwahati 53,280 (63,578) and Siliguri 24,367 (40,919).

Selected Assams maintaining quality sold well, while the good and medium sorts eased in value following decline in quality. Plainer categories were irregular around last levels. Selected good Dooars maintaining quality sold at irregularly lower rates, while the remainder was down. Tata Global was selective while Hindustan Unilever operated actively. West India dealers operated on the few liquoring sorts on offer. There was fair enquiry from North India and local sections. Exporters were selective.

Nominal quantity of well-made Orthodox offerings were readily absorbed at dearer rates. Remainder sold irregularly around last levels and tended lower. Stalky and poorly made varieties at times witnessed withdrawals. Selected Continental enquiry was seen for the few tippy and liquoring varieties on offer. Exporters to CIS and West Asia operated.

Hindustan Unilever operated on the fannings. Limited weight of Darjeeling whole-leaf grades on offer tended lower. Brokens and fannings sold in line with quality, with selected better sorts appreciating. Hindustan Unilever selective, Tata Global quiet. Local buyers were the mainstay.

Cheaper turmeric at Nizamabad trumps Erode crop



Spot turmeric sales here have dropped despite prices falling to Rs 5,800-6,200 a quintal, as traders are buying from Nizamabad, where prices are even lower.

“Usually, when prices are low, arrival goes down but buying continues at these low prices. But now, arrival has decreased and sales have also gone down. Prices have been stable at Rs 5,800-6,200 a quintal for the past 45 days. Erode auction centres have never faced such a situation before,” said Erode Turmeric Merchants Association President R.K.V. Ravishankar.

He said for the past 10 days, farmers have brought only 2,500-3,000 bags though they have huge stock, as they are reluctant to sell at Rs 6,000 a quintal and expect prices to rise to Rs 10,000 in the last quarter of the year.

Traders said they were buying turmeric at Rs 4,500-5,500 a quintal from Nizamabad for local requirement. They are expecting upcountry orders in the first week of March, when they will increase purchases.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association, the finger variety (new crop) was sold at Rs 4,819-6,279 a quintal, the root variety at Rs 4,416-5,569. The old crop finger variety was sold at Rs 4,605-6,409, the root variety at Rs 4,299-5,789.

Salem hybrid crop: The finger variety fetched Rs 6,009-6,909, the root variety Rs 5,650-5,925. Of the 2,710 bags that arrived, only 547 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,579-6,409, the root variety at Rs 5,465-5,789. Of the 249 bags that arrived, 216 were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,329-6,391, the root variety at Rs 4,800-5,859. Of the 494 bags that arrived, 462 were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,247-6,219, the root variety at Rs 4,950-6,062. All the 84 bags kept for sale were sold.

oor demand, global cues pull down palmolein

Groundnut oil and cottonseed refined oil were up Rs 5 and Re 1 for 10 kg each despite weak reports from producing centres. Imported palmolein and soyabean refined oil dropped by Rs 2 and Rs 3 for 10 kg each on lack of demand and weak overseas markets. Sunflower oil and rapeseed oil ruled unchanged. Malaysian palm oil futures edged down on Thursday, as data showed stockpiles in the world's No.2 producer remained high and on improving weather in key soya-growing regions in South America.

Seasonally slowing production in Malaysia could see stockpiles in February easing but inventory levels are unlikely to dip below 20 lakh tonnes in the first quarter of 2013, according to analysts.

This should keep crude palm oil prices below 3,000 ringgit a tonne in the first quarter of 2013.

As stockists have covered enough for February, they preferred to stay away from fresh ready buying but took fresh positions for March delivery, a broker said. Local refiners have started quoting palmolein for March Rs 2-5 higher and about 700-800 tonnes was traded directly with two local refiners, the broker added. There were no direct volumes for February delivery with them, as resellers were offering at Rs 5 less. Resellers traded only 50-60 tonnes of palmolein. Indigenous edible oils were under pressure of new arrivals of crops in producing areas.

Towards the end of the day, Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 511-513 for February and at Rs 515-517 for March, super palmolein at Rs 560 and sunflower refined oil at Rs 800 for February. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 507-510, soyabean refined oil at Rs 695 and sunflower refined oil at Rs 775 for February and Rs 515-518 for palmolein for March. Allana offered palmolein at Rs 510 and super palmolein at Rs 560 for February. In Saurashtra and Rajkot, groundnut oil declined to Rs 1,910 (Rs 1,920) for a 15-kg *telia* tin and to Rs 1,240 (Rs 1,250) for loose (10 kg).

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, soyabean refined oil's March contract was up at Rs 703.55 (Rs 695.20), April at Rs 692.65 (Rs 685.90) and May at Rs 690.45 (Rs 685.35).

Malaysia's crude palm oil's March contracts settled lower at MYR2475 (MYR2,484), April at MYR2,495 (MYR2,505) and May at MYR2,512 (MYR2,522) a tonne.

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg): groundnut oil 1,240 (1,235), soya refined oil 692 (695), sunflower exp. ref. 710 (710), sunflower ref. 780 (780), rapeseed ref. oil 775 (775), rapeseed expeller ref. 745 (745) cottonseed ref. oil 610 (609) and palmolein 505 (507).

Offtake, enquiries keep rice firm

Rising domestic demand and fresh trade enquires kept aromatic and non-basmati rice firm on Thursday.

After increasing earlier on Monday, rice prices have been ruling firm due to trade enquiries, said Amit Chandna, Proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company.

Rising retail demand has lifted prices and they are likely to rule around current levels for the next few days, he added. Traders expect prices to fall a tad later this month, said Chandna.

In the physical market, Pusa-1121 (steam) sold at Rs 7,600 a quintal, while Pusa-1121 (sela) quoted at Rs 6,600 a quintal.

Pure basmati (raw) quoted at Rs 8,500-8,550 a quintal. Duplicate basmati (steam) traded at Rs 6,400-6,500 a quintal.

Sharbati (steam) quoted at Rs 4,900-5,000, while Sharbati (sela) was at Rs 4,650 a quintal.

PR-11 (sela) was at Rs 3,100, while PR-11 (raw) quoted at Rs 2,800-2,900 a quintal. Permal (raw) sold at Rs 2,350 a quintal, while Permal (sela) went for Rs 2,300 a quintal.

Dubar quoted at Rs 3,200, Tibar sold at Rs 4,300, while Mongra was at Rs 2,500 a quintal.

Paddy Arrivals

About 2,000 thousand bags of PR variety arrived and went for Rs 1,310 a quintal, around 2,000 bags of Sharbati arrived and quoted at Rs 2,230 a quintal. A thousand bags of duplicate basmati arrived and went for Rs 3,600. About 3,000 bags of Pusa-1121 arrived and quoted at Rs 3,725 a quintal.

According to reports, Iraq has issued a tender to buy a minimum of 15,000 tonnes of basmati rice of Indian and Pakistani origin.

Tea Board to participate in Gulf food exhibition

The Tea Board will participate in Gulfood 2013 to be held at World Trade Centre in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, from February 25 to 28.

“We have registered the participation of those exporters who have keen interest to improve their presence in the UAE, as we regard Gulfood as the right window to reach buyers in the Gulf region.” V. George Jenner, Director of Tea Promotion for West Asia and North Africa, Tea Board, said.

“We are working on improving India’s tea shipment to the UAE, as there has been a slump in the recent years due to political uncertainties in many countries in the Gulf. In effect, India’s tea shipment to the UAE dropped to 19.76 million kg (mkg) worth Rs 314.31 crore in 2010-11 from 21.97 mkg worth Rs 323.16 crore in 2009-10,” he said.

India is the third largest tea supplier to Dubai after Kenya and Sri Lanka. In the last three years, Dubai has been importing 15-16 mkg, which accounts for 22 per cent of the UAE’s total imports (just 6 per cent less than imports from Sri Lanka or Kenya).

Drop in forest cover hits honey bees

The Western Ghats Task Force of Karnataka has expressed concern over decline in honey bee colonies in forests.

Addressing presspersons here on Thursday, Anant Hegde Ashisar, chairman of the task force, said that the number of honey bee colonies is coming down in the forests. He attributed it to factors such as decline in forest cover, loss of different varieties of trees that house honey bee colonies, and use of pesticides for crops.

Most of the farmers are now looking at rubber as a cash crop. This has led to the rapid expansion of rubber plantations in villages. In the process, many farmers remove the flower-bearing plants and deny nectars to bees.

Ashisar said that many contractors, who get rights to collect honey from the Forest Department by paying a small sum in the tendering process, extract honey in a crude way by setting fire to the colonies. This is also one of the reasons for decline in the number of honey bee colonies in forest areas, he said.

SUGGESTIONS

Stating that experts from agriculture universities have stressed on sustainable honey harvesting methods, Ashisar said village forest committees should be entrusted with the task of collecting honey from bee colonies in forests. The Forest Department should do away with awarding contract for honey extractions in forests.

Ashisar suggested that the Forest Department should encourage growing different varieties of trees that house honey bee colonies in the villages adjoining the forests. The nurseries of Forest Department should supply such varieties to farmers.

The departments concerned such as forests, horticulture, and agriculture and horticulture varities should work together for development of honey bee colonies in forests and other areas, he said.

Experts from agriculture universities have studied the pattern of honey bee culture in the forest areas of Yellapur in Uttara Kannada district. Their study report will be released on February 28, he added.

Additional Rs 20,000 crore needed to implement Food Security Bill: Thomas

The Government would require an additional Rs 20,000 crore to implement the proposed Food Security Bill, said Food Minister K.V.Thomas on Thursday. The proposed Bill would increase the food grain requirement by around 7 million tonnes (mt) to 62 mt.

“We hope to introduce the Bill in the last week of the first half of the Budget session and pass it in the second half,” Thomas said. The Budget Session is expected to commence from February 21.

An ambitious programme of the United Progressive Alliance II Government, the proposed Food Security Bill aims to provide subsidised food grains to about two-thirds of the country’s population.

Currently, the Government incurs a subsidy burden of about Rs 1 lakh crore in providing subsidised food grains of about 55 mt to the poor through the public distribution system.

Several States had expressed reservations on the provisions of the proposed Bill, especially on subsidised grain allocation. Tamil Nadu had even sought an exemption, saying it wanted to stay out of it.

Seeking to allay the concerns raised by the States, Thomas said, “We will protect the current subsidised grain allocation of the States. We hope Tamil Nadu will also come around to our

view.” The Food Minister further emphasised that the distribution system should be strengthened for effective implementation.

The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha in December in 2011 and sent to a Parliamentary Standing Committee. The revised Bill is being worked out on the basis of the Parliamentary panel recommendations.

The proposed Bill provides for coverage of up to 75 per cent of the rural population, with at least 46 per cent of the population belonging to priority households. It will also provide for up to 50 per cent of the urban population, with at least 28 per cent of the population belonging to priority households for receiving subsidised foodgrains under the targeted public distribution system.

Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

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Cotton export target too ambitious, say exporters



Meeting the Cotton Advisory Board's (CAB) export target of eight million bales this cotton year (October to September) might be a tall order.

Cotton importers in China (which accounts for about 60 per cent of India's cotton exports) have been told if they import, they would have to buy three times that amount from the Chinese government agency. This would hit India's cotton exports. In the second half of 2012, China had reduced cotton imports and it is expected the trend would continue through this cotton year. Through the past few years, China, has created a buffer stock.

Bangladesh, the second-largest importer of Indian cotton, has reduced imports by six to eight per cent.

Earlier, cotton exporters had said exports would fall short of CAB's previous target of seven million bales.

"In the last 10-15 days, cotton exports have been severely affected and concerns remain whether there would be enough cotton export orders through the year," said Bhadresh Mehta, managing director of Bhadresh Trading Corporation, India's largest cotton exporter.

“The cotton market has remained static in the last one month. Export orders have been coming in at a very slow pace. But domestic demand has been pouring in. Due to this, prices have remained supported,” said Rahul Kotecha, a Coimbatore-based indenting agent. Since February, prices of the benchmark Shankar 6 have risen two per cent to Rs 851/20 kg, as domestic mills are buying cotton. However, traders don’t see a major rise from these levels.

“This year, I don’t see cotton exports touching eight million bales, due to China's policies,” said D K Nair, secretary general, Confederation of Indian Textile Industry.

However, cotton yarn exports have risen and are expected to hit an all-time high this year, primarily due to China importing major quantities of yarn. This financial year, cotton yarn exports are estimated at about 1,000 million kg, compared with 827.68 million kg in the last financial year.

Global pepper prices might rise 6-7% in coming week



Global pepper prices are likely to rise six-seven per cent in the coming week, when markets in Vietnam open for trade on Monday, after the Chinese New Year holidays. Vietnam is the only country at present with stock.

Some exporters here expect a 10-per cent increase in prices next week. According to them, production in Vietnam is lower than the earlier projections.

Reports suggested Vietnam’s total output was likely to be 125,000 tonnes. But, latest estimates indicate it would be 105,000 tonnes only. Some expect it to be even lower. The lower output, coupled with poor supply from other producing countries like India, will push prices up by six-

seven per cent. Before the holidays, Vietnam quoted \$6,050 a tonne for 500 gm/litre grade, \$6,300 for 550 gm/litre and \$6,700 for the Asta grade of pepper.

Currently, India is out of the global market, as it offers \$7,200-7,300 a tonne. Also, Brazil, Indonesia and Sri Lanka are not in the picture. So, for now, Vietnam is the only destination for buyers. It is expected that Europe and the US will be active in the market by next week, as most of their stocks were exhausted on Christmas-New Year demand.

The market is poised for a strong bull phase by June-July as Vietnam's stocks exhaust in the next four-five months. India's domestic demand may be met through local produce. So, the global supply will be tight by June-July. Hence, a price rise is inevitable, according to experts. For now, there are no indications from Brazil and Indonesia about any production.

According to reports, production in Kerala and Karnataka, which contribute more than 80 per cent of the total output, would be low. Production in Kerala is likely to fall 50 per cent. According to leading local traders, stock produced in Karnataka would be used for domestic consumption. Benny, a farmer from Idukki, a key producing district of Kerala, said in some parts of the district, production fell 60 per cent. And, the recent price increase would hardly benefit producers, as the output is too low.

Rabi crop yield likely to fall by 70%

NASHIK: The rabi crop yield is likely to fall by up to 70% due to low rainfall, depleting groundwater level and less water in reservoirs available for irrigation, according to the superintendent of Nashik agriculture's office.

"The agricultural and horticultural production is expected to fall by 65% with respect to what has already been sown in the fields, due to the lack of rains," said a senior official from the office of the superintendent of agriculture officer.

"Rabi crop has been sown on 1.08 lakh hectare of land, along with onions and sugarcane, instead of the normal area of 1.19 lakh hectare. The expected loss in agriculture, excluding horticulture is around 60%," the officer said.

In case of horticulture, out of the total one lakh hectare area, 70,539 hectares is likely to be affected with a loss in productivity by 70%.

The officer added Rs 6,000 per hectare for food grains as compensation may be provided while horticulture crops would be compensated at the rate of Rs 8,000 per hectare. "This is calculated as per the standards of compensation given by government under the National Disaster Relief Fund (NDRF)," the official said.

The crops most likely to be affected including wheat, jowar, pulses and oilseeds, the specific data of which is being worked out, the official said.

Delta farmers upset as rain plays spoilsport

TRICHY: The city and its surroundings received light showers on Thursday morning, while dark clouds that hovered over the region posed a threat to the [delta farmers](#) in Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts who are all set to harvest their fully grown samba crops.

Though the [rain](#) would not be of any great help to the delta farmers, it nevertheless brought some cheer to their otherwise drooping spirit of the beleaguered farmers in Trichy district who cultivate some dry crops.

However, the farmers, who have been demanding the release of water from Karnataka were not happy with Thursday's rain. This is because the rain was untimely and insufficient to salvage the withered crops, they said. For the farmers in Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts, the sudden showers did not bring cheer as it ruined the [samba crops](#) that were ready for harvest.

The rain played spoilsport by wetting the paddy harvested in the past two days. Even though a major portion of the samba crops withered due to water scarcity, some of the farmers managed to grow the samba crops by getting water through wells and pumps. Last week, the harvest season began and it gained momentum. At this juncture, Thursday's rainfall vanished their hopes of getting good returns in the season.

P S Masilamani, district secretary of Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam said, "It was raining from 9.30am to 3pm. The harvest of samba crops came to an abrupt halt in several parts of Tiruvarur district. Besides that, the fully grown samba crops fell completely in the field. If it had rained before a month, it would have been very helpful for the cultivation. But this rain would further make loss to the paddy farmers."

In Kumbakonam area in Thanjavur district, the farmers supplied the paddy to the direct procurement centres (DPCs) in Swamimalai, Melasemmankudi, Umaiyalpuram, Pattavarthi and Valanthamangalam. Unfortunately, the paddy stored in the open got wet due to the rain. It was

said that the officials did not cover the paddy with tarpaulin. Due to this, more than 1,000 bags of paddy got wet.

As far as Trichy is concerned, the shower brought cheers as they could save the dry crops if the rain continuous for the next two days. P Viswanathan, state president of [Tamilaga Aatru Paasana Vivasayigal Sangam](#) said, " If there is a heavy rainfall over the next two days, the water would save the dry crops like cotton, groundnut in Pullampaadi, Sangendhi and Vellanoor areas. But today's (Thursday) rainfall is not of any help for samba crops."

Hi-tech goat sheds becoming popular among farmers

KANNUR: The [hi-tech goat sheds](#) developed by the KrishiVigyan Kendra - Kannur (KVK) at Panniyur is fast becoming very popular among the [goat farmers](#).

This goat shed that is easy to assemble and dismantle was designed by T Gigin, assistant professor of the KVK, and it is made using made of galvanized iron frame, fibre-reinforced plastic inter-lockable slat floor, and GI roof.

"Though modern technology has been introduced in many fields of agriculture and animal husbandry, it was very rarely that the technology is used to design such cages," said Gigin, who said this cage ensures proper hygiene and sanitation. "Apart from protecting the goats from the attack of wild animals, it also provides a healthy environment for the goats," he added.

The shed is designed in such a manner that it has special net to collect the dropping, and also the pipe to collect the urine that can be used as manure. This apart, it has a feeding trough and automatic drinker that ensures supply of drinking water.

Though the initial cost is around Rs one lakh, since the maintenance cost is nil and also it will last for at least 15 years, in the long term this is economical, said KVK officials. Since it can be dismantled and reassembled easily, even when the farmers relocate it can be easily taken along.

Though the capacity of the 100 sq ft shed is 10, if a fenced compound is developed around up to 20 goats can be easily reared if the goats are taken out to the compound in the daytime and caged in the evening, according to KVKofficials.

Sancoale farmers unite to revive agriculture

PANAJI: Farmers from Sancoale 'vhoddlemkhazan' on the banks of the Zuari river want to revive agriculture in the submerged paddy belt of the village and have petitioned various authorities for help.

The biggest khazan near Cortalim, stretching out about eight hectares, remains flooded almost throughout the year and hardly any agricultural activities can be carried out, some farmers alleged.

"We have been exchanging correspondence with various authorities for about a decade in vain," [Lawrence Fernandes](#), a farmer said. Fernandes and another farmer have cultivated two small patches of their fields, hoping that others will also be motivated to join the effort to revive farming in this belt. "It is just two 'kongeos', but we have taken it up as a challenge," he said.

The farmers were raising two crops, kharif and rabi when the situation was normal. "But the tenants association of one section of the khazan fields are inundating their fields for pisciculture as it is very lucrative," Fernandes alleged.

Agriculturists in the adjoining section of the khazan, who want to cultivate their fields are affected. "Our fields have been destroyed and we are deprived of our rights to cultivate our fields," a villager said.

Around 40 farmers have decided to unite and keep knocking at the door of various authorities for justice. "We have submitted petitions to mamlatdar of Mormugao, director of agriculture, soil conservator division, administrator of comunidades of South Goa, Margao and even chief minister [Manohar Parrikar](#)," Fernandes said. On Thursday, Fernandes and nearly 40 farmers

called on Parrikar and appealed to him to stop the rampant flooding of paddy fields. Parrikar assured them that a new khazan land development board act is being drafted and it will take care of such problems.

"He has agreed to look into our problems," Fernandes said. Recently, local MLA and forest minister, [Alina Saldanha](#) had assured to extend support to the farmers.

A soil conservation division official stated that the sluice gate is in good condition. But the main doors of the sluice gate are removed to let in saline water into the khazan land.

Fernandes alleged that the tenants are misrepresenting facts to the authorities, claiming that the bund has some breaches and the sluice gate has defective wooden panels.

Hailstorm hits crop in Nasrullahganj tehsil

BHOPAL: [Hailstorm](#) in more than two dozen villages in Sehore district on Wednesday night hit crops.

Hailstorm has damaged the crops in and around [Nasrullahganj tehsil](#) of the district. SDM Nasrullahganj, ML Vijaywargiya said, "Around 30 villages have been affected due to hailstorm but prima facie there hasn't been much loss as hailstorm was for a shorter duration."

Initially, we had the information that around 18 villages, including larger villages like Gopalpur, Vasudev, Lathor and others, but later it came to knowledge that 30 villages have been affected, he said.

"The field staff of agriculture and revenue department has been ordered to conduct loss assessment survey in affected villages," Vijaywargiya told TOI.

India needs an extra 200 bn rupees to implement food security bill: K V Thomas



India needs an additional 200 billion rupees (\$3.72 billion) to implement its proposed Food Security Bill, Food Minister K.V. Thomas said on Thursday.

The current cost of the food subsidy is 1 trillion rupees, he added.

India is drafting the bill, which when enacted would ensure subsidised grains to the poor. The bill was introduced in the lower house of parliament in 2011.

State plan fails to curb rising prices



Hyderabad: The efforts of the state government to contain price rise of essential commodities through market intervention have failed to yield results. There has been no significant drop in prices of fine varieties of rice and onions even in rythu bazaars, as claimed by the state government.

The government stepped up efforts to regulate prices of rice and onions, which skyrocketed in the matter of a month. Onions, which were sold at Rs 15 per kg in January has now shot up to Rs 30 per kg in retail outlets. Similarly, the fine variety of rice (Kurnool Masoori), which was sold at Rs 32 per kg in December 2012, rose to Rs 40 this month. Consumers complain of government's failure to curb price rise.

Civil supplies minister D. Sridhar Babu convened a meeting of officials, millers and traders to initiate steps to contain prices. The officials announced that rice would be made available for Rs 30 to Rs 32 per kg, and onions for Rs 15 per kg at rythu bazaars.

However, the reality is that even in rythu bazaars, the rice is priced at Rs 38 per kg, while onions sell at Rs 20 per kg. The traders say they cannot sell these items below these prices as they themselves procure them at high prices.

“Rythu bazaars are located far away. One would have to spend more on transport. Instead, the government should regulate prices in supermarkets and retail outlets,” said B. Mrunalini, a homemaker.

Inflation hits 3-year low, food inflation is still high



New Delhi: Inflation fell steeply to a three-year low of 6.62 per cent in January giving some leeway to RBI to cut interest rates. This is the fourth straight month when inflation has fallen.

However, food inflation is still high to give any comfort to the common man. As compared to last year, onion prices rose by 111.52 per cent, potatoes by 79.07 per cent, vegetables by 28.45 per cent, wheat by 21.39 per cent, cereals by 18.09 per cent, rice by 17.31 per cent and egg, meat and fish by 11 per cent.

Fuel prices inflation was at 7.06 per cent in January, compared to 9.38 per cent in December despite the hike in diesel prices.

Manufacturing goods inflation dropped to 4.81 per cent in January from 5.04 per cent in December. Non-food manufactured inflation eased to 4.1 per cent during the month from 4.2 per cent in December.

Inflation had stood at 7.18 per cent in December and 7.24 per cent in November. It was at 7.23 per cent in January, 2012.

PM's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) chairman C. Rangarajan hoped that inflation would come down to 6.5 per cent by the end of March and suggested that steps should be taken to release more food stocks to ease the price pressure.

In January, he had said inflation has moderated more than expected and the need was to focus on the supply side easing of food articles. "Retail inflation is still high. The WPI inflation in primary and food articles are at higher levels. Efforts should be made to release larger stocks of food articles in the market," he said.

Markets shrugged off positive cues from easing inflation as the Sensex fell by 111 points to snap a two-day rally after Bharti Airtel shares plunged over reports of spectrum dues and SBI slipping after subdued earnings.

"With inflation on the downward trajectory, we can only hope that the RBI would shift its focus towards strengthening the growth momentum by further easing the monetary policy levers in the months ahead. This, if it happens, would give confidence to industry to bring investment plans back onto the drawing board," said Naina Lal Kidwai, the president of industry body FICCI.