

Now Tamil Nadu to seek Cauvery Management Board

Having passed through the stage of notification of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal's final award, the State government is going to seek immediate establishment of the Cauvery Management Board (CMB) for effective implementation of the award.

The CMB will form part of a scheme that has to be framed by the Union government. The Tribunal, in the final award given in February 2007, suggested the creation of the CMB and Cauvery Water Regulation Committee.

The need for early formation of the CMB is imminent with only a few months to go for the water year to begin. As the final report has been notified, the Cauvery River Authority and Monitoring Committee, the institutions set up for the interim award, cease to exist. Without an implementation mechanism in place, the final award, to quote the Tribunal's words, "would only remain on a piece of paper."

Modelled on the lines of Bhakra Beas Management Board, the CMB will have representatives of the governments of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Puducherry, apart from nominees of the Union Ministries of Agriculture and Water Resources. There will be three whole-time members. The CWRC will also have representatives of several departments of the Union government and the Basin States. Eight reservoirs including four in Karnataka, three in Tamil Nadu and one in Kerala will have to be operated in an integrated manner by the States under the overall guidance of the CMB.

Sources in the government say that till the formation of the CMB, the Central Water Commission should monitor the situation and take appropriate steps.

The government is particular that Karnataka should not be allowed to use flows during summer and in support of their contention, the sources refer to one of the clauses in the final order which states that there has to be an effective storage of a minimum of three thousand million cubic feet (tmc ft) in all the reservoirs on June 1 [the first day of water year] including the storage of water carried over from the previous water year, the sources say, adding that irrigation season for the Cauvery Basin is from June to January.

As for the stipulation under the Inter State Water Disputes Act that the scheme has to be placed on the floor of Parliament, the sources say that according to one school of thought, there is no need for doing so as the Tribunal, in its final award, referred to the legal position that once notified, the decision of the Tribunal acquired the same force as an order or a decree of the Supreme Court. That being so, how could the part of the decision relating to the framing of the scheme be considered by the Parliament for modification or otherwise, the Tribunal wondered, adding that such a situation might create an "anomalous situation."

It also noted that the order or decree of the Supreme Court could not be examined for modification by both Houses of Parliament.

Tribunal award settles definition of 'water year'

The final award of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT) notified by the Centre has settled the definition of a normal year, water year and irrigation season which has been a bone of contention between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

A "normal year" shall mean a year in which the total yield of the Cauvery basin is 740 tmcft; a "water year" shall mean a year commencing on June 1 and ending on May 31 and the "irrigation season" shall mean the season beginning on June 1 and ending on January 31 of the next year.

In a normal year, Karnataka has to release to Tamil Nadu at Biligundulu 192 tmcft (as against 205 tmcft in the interim award) in monthly deliveries. This comprises 182 tmcft from the allocated share of Tamil Nadu, including 10 tmcft for environmental purposes. In a distress year, the allocated shares shall be proportionately reduced among Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

The Cauvery includes the main river, all its tributaries and all other streams contributing water directly or indirectly to it. The award authorises the Board/Authority to monitor the monthly releases with the help of the States concerned and the Central Water Commission for five years. Thereafter, if any modification/adjustment is needed in the schedule, it may be worked out in consultation with the party-States with the help of the CWC "without changing the annual allocation among the parties".

The Tribunal, comprising chairman Justice N.P. Singh and members N.S. Rao and Sudhir Narain, was set up in 1990 and its final award came in 2007.

Sugar factory office ransacked

Farmers went berserk at Nandyal Sugar factory on Wednesday damaging the furniture to protest against the delay in reopening the factory.

According to reports, about 100 farmers who brought the produce to the factory on the outskirts of Nandyal grew impatient as the management failed to receive the cane even a week after its arrival.

They expressed serious concern over the delay and loss of moisture and weight while the management remained silent over the reopening citing seasonal repairs as the reason.

The farmers barged into the office and destroyed the furniture. The factory authorities registered a serious protest with the farmers for their unruly behaviour.

The farmers accused the management of delaying the cane acceptance after cutting with its approval.

Jayalalithaa launches tree plantation drive

Chief Minister Jayalalithaa planted a banyan sapling on the Marina beach opposite the Presidency College on Wednesday to mark the launch of yet another massive tree plantation drive in the State. The scheme of planting 65 lakh saplings is part of her $65\{+t\}\{+h\}$ birthday celebrations. The birthday of Chief Minister Jayalalithaa is on February 24.

According to a press release, the decision to plant 65 lakh saplings has been taken following the success of last year's drive covering 64 lakh saplings across the State.

In the first phase, 2.08 lakh saplings of a number of species would be planted in all the districts of the State. Each of the districts will get 6500 saplings in the first phase.

Work on planting the saplings on the first phase will begin on February 24 and end by February 28.

Most of the saplings in Chennai would be planted in parks, along interior roads and bus routes of the Chennai Corporation and other government agencies. Trained personnel will be given responsibility of guarding the saplings from damage in most urban areas. Residents and beneficiaries of the scheme will be given responsibility of watering the saplings in areas where personnel cannot be appointed.

The remaining saplings would be planted only in July after the onset of the south west monsoon in some parts of the State in June.

After the onset of the north east monsoon later this year in most of the districts in the State, a chunk of the remaining tree saplings are expected to be planted. All the saplings will be planted by December.

Species chosen

The saplings to be planted include banyan, neem, *mantharai, illuppai, poovarasu, punnai, mahilam*and *pungan*. Tree species that would survive tropical drought conditions have been chosen for the scheme.

Two decades of judicial shepherding in Cauvery row

It is the Supreme Court that has, time and again, pushed the process of resolution of the intractable Cauvery water dispute, be it at the stage of constitution of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal or the notification of final award of the Tribunal.

In May 1990, the Supreme Court directed the Central government to constitute the Tribunal, a demand made by Tamil Nadu since 1970.

When the Tribunal, in January 1991, rejected Tamil Nadu's plea for interim relief, the State went to court, which, in April that year, directed the tribunal to entertain the petition for an interim order. Two months later, the Tribunal gave the interim award.

This triggered yet another legal row, with the Karnataka government promulgating an ordinance nullifying the Tribunal's interim order. A presidential reference was made in July to the Supreme Court on the validity of the award and the ordinance.

Tribunal order upheld

In November 1991, the court held that the ordinance was *ultra vires* the Constitution. It also upheld the validity of the Tribunal order and said the award should be published by the Centre in the official gazette. In December 1991, the interim order was published in the gazette.

Again, when the Court was moved for getting the interim order executed, the Central government, in April 1997, submitted that a scheme would be framed for effective implementation of the order. In August 1998, the Cauvery River Authority (CRA) was constituted.

Repeated orders

On several occasions in the last 10 years, the court gave orders for the release of certain quantum of water by Karnataka to Tamil Nadu.

Last year, Tamil Nadu had to approach the court once more for a meeting of the CRA to be held. It was after the court pulled up the Prime Minister's Office that the Authority met in September, after a gap of over nine years.

The court, now and then, raised queries on the status of the notification of the Tribunal's final report, given in February 2007. For the latest development to occur, the court, in its order of February 4, set a deadline directing the Union government to notify the final report by February 20.

BARC comes to the aid of farmers

: Farmers and women self-help group members turned up in good numbers for a workshop on Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC)-developed rural technologies for uplift of villagers in Madurai district, at the Collectorate here on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, S.P. Kale, Head, Technology Transfer and Collaboration Division, BARC, said that BARC and Department of Atomic Energy initiated AKRUTI (Advance Knowledge and Rural Technology Implementation) under their societal initiative to create structured and scalable network of technology nodes in rural areas providing easy access to modern technologies to all villagers in their own village.

Bhabha Atomic Research Centre is for the provision of modern technology at a nominal cost to support the village economy.

This is done with an interest to stem the movement of rural populace to the urban, said, Mr. Kale.

Modern technology here includes the agro-based technical support, for example, to increase the agricultural yield to have disease-resistance solutions. To utilise the residues for decentralised manure production and bio-gas plants.

"We insist the farmers to form cooperatives to utilise and share the benefits. BARC's bio-gas technology has been offered to people who needed it on a non-exclusive basis to prevent monopoly," added Mr. Kale.

Daniel Chellappa, senior scientist, BARC, said that technologies such as, solar dryer technology for fruit plantation is also encouraged; it increases the shelf life of fruits. Membrane-based water filter technology for bacteria-free water was provided to rural people at a nominal cost. BARC had developed easy-to-use soil testing kits and given the same to farmers in various states.

Finality has come to Cauvery issue, says Ranganathan

: The Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association has every reason to be happy about the gazetting of final award of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal by the Centre on Wednesday.

One of the persons who contributed significantly was S. Ranganathan, secretary of the association, who filed the case demanding the setting up of the Tribunal on behalf of the association in November 1983, which formed the basis for the legal battle on the issue.

"By publishing the final report in the gazette, finality has come to the Cauvery issue," Mr. Ranganathan said and traced the history of the issue.

"We, farmers from Salem in the west down to Karaikal in the east, registered an association which was called then as 'Tamil Nadu Cauvery Neerpasana Vilaiporulgal Vivasayigal Nala Sangam' in June 1983. Later it was renamed as Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association.

"This has been necessitated as bilateral talks held between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka for eleven years between 1972 and 1983 did not yield any result. In 1986, M.G.Ramachandran, the then Chief Minister, also gave a letter that Tribunal was the only answer to solve Cauvery issue. The case filed by us was retained. In 1990, the then Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi passed a resolution in the Assembly, demanding the formation of Tribunal.

Water level

Water level in the Periyar dam on Wednesday stood at 112.80 feet (136 feet) with an inflow and a discharge of 105 cusecs each.

The level in the Vaigai dam was 48.24 feet (71 feet) with an inflow of 86 cusecs and a discharge of 60 cusecs.

The combined Periyar credit stood at 2,383 mcft. Pulipatti recorded 49 mm of rainfall followed by Melur 27.2, Mettupatti and Thaniyamangalam 13 mm each, Idayapatti 12, Madurai 10.4, Sattaiyar dam 10, Kallandiri 7.4, Andipatti 5, Veerapandi 4 and Kodaikanal 2 mm.

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Wednesday stood at 46.95 feet (maximum level is 143 feet).

The dam had an inflow of 348.10 cusecs and 271.75 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam.

The water level in Manimuthar dam stood at 80.65 feet (118 feet).

Manimuthar dam had an inflow of 54 cusecs and no water was discharged from the dam.

Kanyakumari

The water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 4.40 feet, 32.85 feet in Perunchani, 5.15 feet in Chittar I, 5.25 feet in Chittar II and 6.90 feet in Poigai dam.

Farmer groups in Kerala run their own markets, eliminate middlemen



Group marketing: There is no waiting period or credit at the samitis.- Photo: M.J. Prabu

More than growing, it is while marketing the produce that a farmer faces a lot of problems and hitches. The irony is that the profit of the produce does not benefit the grower nor the consumer but the middlemen. For decades now, breaking this hold has always been a subject of discussion and controversy in many states.

"The Kerala Government, realising the seriousness of the issue, formed the Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council (VFPCK) to help farmers market the produce themselves. The council developed a new group marketing system that is production centred and farmer-participatory. Farmers in different villages all through the State were formed into self help groups called Swasraya Karshaka Samithi (SKS),"says Chief Executive Officer of VFPCK, Mr.V.V. Pushpangadan.

Different locations

Each samiti has 20- 25 farmers as members, who are responsible for sourcing and marketing the produce. Every two years the samithi elects new office bearers. VFPCK has established different marketing locations across the region and the members bring their produce to these places to be sold.

Unlike several other trading places in the country, there are no unions for loading or unloading the produces from the vehicles. The farmers have to do it themselves or can use their own labour for the work.

Presently 600 farmers are members of the SKS and about 150 non member farmers also utilise its benefit. Traders are informed on daily basis to come to the spot and inspect the produce.

Better pricing

At present there is no storage facility for the products, mainly bananas and vegetables. A farmer member of the Kattakada, Thiruvananthapuram samiti, Mr. N. Janardhanan Pillai says, "this council has empowered us to get a better price for our produce. Bargaining power for us has increased. We all have a voice now and are luckily free of political interference so far."

To add additional support for bargaining the Market Information Centre (MIC) gives details on the daily market prices of banana and all other vegetables collected from different markets in Kerala and even outside the state.

The council provides account books and proper authorised platform weighing scales, furniture, telephone connection, land and building for all the samitis across the state.

Some of these samitis have achieved an annual turnover of more than Rs. 1 crore a year in the past.

Giving an insight on the price schedule, Mr. G.R. Anil Kumar, district manager of the council says, "for example, Nendran banana variety is priced at Rs. 30 a kg and red banana variety at Rs. 42 a kg. The price varies daily and we keep a check on it. When farmers bring in their banana bunches we pay them 90 per cent of the cost immediately."

No waiting

There is no waiting period or credit. For every Rs.100 a farmer is paid Rs. 95. Out of the remaining balance Rs. three is paid as bonus during festival times like Onam and Rs.2 is used for administrative expense.

Unlike the traditional system of agricultural extension, in VFPCK, the dissemination of information is routed through farmers.

Three farmer leaders called Master Farmers (MFs) are selected in each samithi and are trained to lead each group. They lead farmers in the areas of production, credit and marketing.

The membership enables farmers access to credit, training and to technical advice from the Council staff, but benefits have gone beyond production related aspects.

Unlike the Krishi Vigyan Kendras of agricultural universities the extension approach of VFPCK model is unique with features like office-less extension, frequent farm and home visits, and mass awareness programmes like campaigns and demonstrations.

An MoU was signed with 11 banks in the State for disbursement of credit to farmers. The samiti assesses the credit-worthiness and credit requirements of its members through a participatory credit planning session.

Better position

"The concept of group marketing was developed with a focus on empowering and facilitating the farmers to take more effective decisions for marketing of their produce. This helps farmers to have a good volume thereby being in a better position to negotiate with the wholesalers in order

to 'optimise their returns.' Large volumes induce traders to buy from the samithis," says Mr. Pushpangadan.

Weighing is done by farmers and is transparent and accurate. The loading, unloading of produce is done by farmers themselves ensuring careful handling of the produce.

Prompt payment

Prompt payment within the prescribed period is guaranteed as there is a collective effort in recovery from among debtor traders. This helps them to reduce transportation expenses and save time.

For more details contact Mr. G.R. Anil District manager, VFPCK, Vipanchika – House No. 38, Chempakanagar, Bakery Junction, Thiruvananthapuram-1, Phone: 0471- 2334480, Mob : 09447107254 and 9446455663.

Soya bean products good for health: MP

MP Madhu Goud Yaskhi has said that there was high demand for soyabean products all over the world as they were found to prevent several diseases. He appreciated the Sri Srinivasa Soya Food Products here on Wednesday for introducing the products in the form of soya dal, chunks, granules, provinta, soya papad and flour. -Staff Reporter

Former PWD engineers hail gazetting of Cauvery award

Welcoming the notification of the final award of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal, the Tamil Nadu PWD Senior Engineers Association, an organisation comprising retired engineers of Public Works Department of the State, has said that the move was the first step towards the implementation of the award.

"This is a move forward as it is legally obligatory on Karnataka to implement the award now. It also gives a legal protection and the right to Tamil Nadu to take steps to get the award implemented as per law," A. Veerappan, secretary of the association, told *The Hindu*.

Mr.Veerappan, a former special chief engineer of PWD, pointed out that the notification had come after continuous and persistent efforts by the State government in taking up the matter before the Supreme Court over the past few months.

SC directive

"We also appreciate the Supreme Court's directive. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh needs to be commended (for the decision to notify the award) too, especially as elections are due soon in Karnataka. Even a few days ago, Karnataka Chief Minister called on the Prime Minister asking him not to notify the award," he felt.

"Though Tamil Nadu did not get what it should have in the final award, we have reason to be happy over the notification of the award," observed R.V.S. Vijayakumar, a former chief engineer of the PWD and vice-president of the association. 'It gives a legal protection and the right to Tamil Nadu to take steps to get the award implemented as per law'

Sathanur reservoir opened

Sathanur reservoir was opened for irrigation on Wednesday.

Collector Vijay Pingale opened the sluice gates of the pick-up dam located eight km from the main dam, downstream. Left and right bank canals branch from the pick-up dam and connect 90 irrigation tanks and 45,000 acres of agricultural land that mostly cultivate paddy.

However, paucity of water has forced authorities to restrict the water only to the tanks this year.

Water level at the dam was 84.3 feet (full height 119 feet) when it was opened.

A release form the Collectorate said that left bank canal would receive 150 cusecs of water which would feed only 2,889 acres of land this year through 40 irrigation tanks. Right bank canals would receive 200 cusecs and feed 4,644 acres of land through 48 tanks.

Water would be released for 18 days.

Samiti forms five-point resolution against Cauvery final award notification



Members of the Mandya Zilla Raitha Hitarakshana Samiti discussing the consequences of the notification of the final award of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal in Mandya on Wednesday.

The Mandya Zilla Raitha Hitarakshana Samiti (MZRHS) unanimously passed a five-point resolution here on Wednesday to protect the interests of farmers in the State following the notification of the final award of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT).

The samiti members, under the leadership of its president G. Madegowda, held a meeting at the Gandhi Bhavan here on Wednesday evening and severely condemned the notification of the final award.

First point: The first point of the resolution, presented by Mr. Madegowda, is to severely condemn the notification of the CWDT as it harms the agricultural activities in the Cauvery basin area of the State. Other points include: putting pressure on the Centre to withdraw the

notification of the CWDT; to convene a meeting with the former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, the former Chief Minister S.M. Krishna, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly Siddaramaiah, elected representatives and irrigation experts at the Legislators' Home in Bangalore, to chalk out a further plan of action to safeguard the interests of Karnataka farmers; to discuss the issue/consequences of notifying the CWDT with Minister for Water Resources Basavaraj Bommai and Minister for Parliamentary Affairs S. Suresh Kumar, and to urge the State government to complete the modernisation works of the Cauvery-dependent canals before June this year.

Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS) leader K.S. Puttannaiah, Melkote MLA C.S. Puttaraju, farmers' leaders Sunanda Jayaram, K.T. Srikantegowda and others attended the meeting.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Thu, Feb 21, 2013 | Updated 09.25AM IST

Rubber drops on higher Thailand supply concern

TOKYO: <u>Rubber</u> futures tumbled to the lowest level in more than a month on speculation that shipments from Thailand, the world's largest producer, may increase as the nation is expected to end a pricesupport program as planned.

The contract for July delivery fell 3% to 305.3 yen a kg (\$3,273 a tonne) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange, the lowest settlement price for the most-active contract since January 16. The drop widened losses this month to 3.3% and cut gains to 0.9% this year.

The Thai government will review a programme to support prices by purchasing the commodity from farmers when it expires at the end of March, Deputy Farm Minister <u>Yuttapong Charasathien</u> said on Tuesday. <u>Thailand</u> agreed with Indonesia and Malaysia last year to cut exports by a combined 300,000 tonne in the six months through March to bolster prices.

"Funds may sell their positions to cut losses because their average cost is around 315 to 320 yen," Gu Jiong, an analyst at commodity broker <u>Yutaka Shoji</u>, said by phone from Tokyo.

This intensified losses, amid speculation the Thai government will end the price-support measure, he added. Futures in Tokyo have gained 17% since October 1, when the three largest producers began restricting shipments.

The price recovered on signs of global economic recovery and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's stimulus that weakened the yen to an almost three-year low against the dollar. The contract for September delivery in Shanghai fell 1.1% to close at 25,805 yuan (\$4,135) a tonne.

Thai rubber free-on-board declined for a second day, falling 1.8% to 94.70 baht (\$3.17) a kg on Wednesday, according to the Rubber Research Institute of Thailand.

Raw Sugar Futures dip, coffee rises

LONDON: ICE <u>raw sugar futures</u> dipped on Wednesday to levels around 2-1/2-year lows, while arabica <u>coffee</u>rose from a more than twoyear low and ICE cocoa steadied above a 7-1/2-month low.

March raw sugar futures on ICE traded down 0.06 cent or 0.33% at 18.16 cents per lb at 1235 GMT, after hitting 17.87 cents a lb on Thursday, its lowest level since August 2010.

Dealers said sugar prices were consolidating after a short-covering rally on Tuesday. "The market remains rangebound, but the lows are slowly getting lower, and any rallies are short-covering in nature," said James Kirkup, head of sugar brokerage at ABN AMRO Markets.

Speculators raised their net short positions in raw sugar and coffee contracts on ICE Futures US to record highs in the week to February 12, increasing their bearish stance in markets abundant in supplies, US Commodity Futures Trading Commission data showed on Friday.

Heavy sugar supply prospects kept prices under pressure, with an improving crop outlook for top producer Brazil. India is unlikely to export the sweetener for up to three years, however, as high production costs price shipments out of the global market and a drought in major growing regions squeezes output.

Thai raw sugar for the Japanese market struggled to attract buyers as premiums stayed near their strongest in five months, while there were some sales of whites from Pakistan, dealers said on Tuesday.

Brazilian dock workers in Santos on Tuesday ended a two-day occupation of a Chinese ship in protest at port modernisation plans as unions threatened a national port strike over the government plan. May white sugar on Liffe eased 50 cents or 0.1% to \$495.10 a tonne in light volume of 1,130 lots.

New York March sugar seems to be approaching the bottom of a medium-term downtrend, as indicated by its wave pattern, according to Reuters market analyst Wang Tao.

May arabica coffee futures on ICE rose 1.6 cent or 1.16% to \$1.4000 per lb, bouncing off a more than 2-1/2 year low of \$1.3760 per lb struck on Tuesday, with ample excess supply limiting gains. "Any sort of positive reaction in the arabicas market elicits producer selling," said Keith Flury, a senior soft commodities analyst with Rabobank.

The <u>spread</u> of the tree-kiling fungus roya is expected to cost Central America's coffee industry roughly half a billion dollars in the current 2012/13 harvesting season, a statement released by the region's agriculture ministers says. "There is a lot of talk about roya, but it will be a while before it impacts on trade flows," Flury said.

May robusta coffee futures on Liffe firmed \$6 to \$2,050 a tonne in thin turnover of 1,413 lots. May cocoa on Liffe rose 5 pounds or 0.36% to 1,413 pounds (\$2,200) a tonne in light volume of 1,568 lots, above Tuesday's 10-month low of 1,403 pounds.

May cocoa futures on ICE fell \$5 or 0.24% to \$2,114 per tonne, standing just above a 7-1/2-month low of \$2,113 per tonne. Cocoa dealers said production from the West African mid-crop could reach an all-time high due to favourable weather conditions. Cameroon's cocoa exports rose almost 15% in the five months to the end of January, compared with the same period last season, National Cocoa and Coffee Board statistics showed on Tuesday.

Cocoa butter dips in Europe after grinders boost processing

The price of <u>cocoa butter</u> relative to that of beans, which gained 65 percent last year, fell in <u>Europe</u> in the past month as processors boosted output, according to three traders who have direct knowledge of the sales.

The cost of cocoa butter relative to the price of beans, or the so-called butter ratio, was 1.80 to 1.85 times cocoa futures on the <u>NYSE</u> Liffe exchange, said the traders, who asked not to be identified because they aren't authorized to speak to the media.

The ratio was 2.05 to 2.1 a month ago.

Delfi Cocoa (Europe) GmbH, owned by Singapore-based Petra Foods Ltd., is increasing processing at its Hamburg plant after a six-month slowdown, Karel Menu, the company's managing director, said on Jan 7.<u>Cargill</u> Inc., the U S's largest closely held company, started to increase grindings after cutbacks last year, Jos de Loor, president of the cocoa and chocolate unit, said Nov. 21.



Sense of finality on Cauvery row



Taking pride in the achievement, Jayalalithaa said, "We have permanently secured the rights of Tamil Nadu over the Cauvery water." |PTI

Tamil Nadu on Wednesday won the dispute on sharing of Cauvery waters once and for all, when the Centre notified the award of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT) in the official gazette, six years after the order was given on February 5, 2007. Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa described it as a great victory for her and her government.

Taking pride in the achievement, Jayalalithaa said, "We have permanently secured the rights of Tamil Nadu over the Cauvery water."

The move came after the Supreme Court rapped the Centre for delaying the decision and had on February 4 set February 20 as the deadline to issue the notification. The notification was issued in Tuesday's date.

"I would describe this as a great victory for me and for my government and the farmers of the Cauvery delta areas. Personally, for me this is a tremendous victory. After spending more than 30 years in politics, this is the first time that I have experienced a sense of fulfilment and a sense of achievement today because we have permanently secured Tamil Nadu's rights over the Cauvery water," said a beaming Jayalalithaa, at a press conference at the Secretariat.

"It is a red-letter day in my life... This is the best birthday present I could ever have had in my life," Jayalalithaa said, showing a copy of The Gazette of India in which the final award of the CWDT has been notified. She said the notification marked the culmination of a long struggle that she has undergone over 22 years. She said all her struggles had not gone in vain, as the award is binding on Karnataka. "Hereafter, Karnataka cannot refuse to obey the order of the Tribunal."

CM promises help to rain-hit farmers



A crop lies flattened in the recent unseasonal rains in Karimanagar district. Chief minister Kiran Kumar Reddy toured rain-affected parts of Karimnagar and Adilabad districts Tuesday. | Express Photo Chief Minister N Kiran Kumar Reddy visited Adilabad and Karimnagar districts which were lashed by unseasonal rains and hailstorm recently and assured the farmers of all possible help.

Though he did not make any political statement with the model code of conduct in force due to MLC elections, he reiterated the state government's decision of giving an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh each to the victims, free education to the children of the victims, two acres of land and a pucca house.

The chief minister, who flew to Adilabad in a helicopter, had an aerial inspection of the areas devastated by the hailstrom.

Revenue minister N Raghuveera Redy, Asifabad MLA Attram Sakku, Sirpur Khagaznagar MLA K Sammiah, Mancherial MLA G Aravind Reddy, MLC Prem Sagar Rao and others were present.

Later, he went to Karimnagar district to assess the damage caused by the hailstorm in Tatipalli, Katlakunta and and Joginpalli villages.

He promised the farmers that the crop compensation would be on par with that given to the victims of Neelam cyclone.

Ministers D Sridhar Babu, N Raghuveera Reddy along with Husnabad MLA A Praveen Reddy, former minister T Jeevan Reddy and others accompanied Kiran Reddy.

CM Gets stuck in Lift

Chief minister Kiran Kumar Reddy, who went to Amalapuram for attending the wedding reception of animal husbandry minister P Viswaroop's son P Krishna, got stuck for about four minutes in the lift.

Kiran along with Viswaroop were going to the first floor of KIMS Hospital, the venue of the reception, when the lift suddenly stopped midway. It was immediately repaired.



Record wheat buy set to raise storage woes



Brace for some serious incremental increase in India's foodgrains stocks in the next few months as the government's latest decision to procure almost 44 million tonnes of wheat in 2013-14 (April-March), almost 15.36% more than this year could put existing storage capacities under stress.

According to official sources, India's foodgrains stocks by June 1, 2013 could be around 90-95 million tonnes, unless inventories are liquidated at a brisk pace. The procurement will increase because of expected bumper wheat harvest, which has been further aided by recent bout of winter rains in most parts of northern and central India. This could further stretch India's existing storage capacities. Till date, Food Corporation of India and state agencies have around 71.5 million tonnes of storage space available with them, of which around 18.60 million tonnes is in covered area plinth (CAP).

As per government's second advanced estimate, wheat production in 2012-13 crop year is expected to be around 92.30 million tonnes, marginally less than last year's record output, with Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh producing more than 75% of the same.

The estimates show that, the biggest increase in procurement will come from Madhya Pradesh, which is gearing up to purchase a whopping 13 million tonnes of wheat in the next crop season, up almost 53% more than the current year.

The Madhya Pradesh manages to meet its procurement target for 2013-14 then it will surpass Haryana as India's second biggest wheat producing and procurement state, after Punjab. Punjab is expected to procure around 14 million tonnes of wheat in 2013-14 and Haryana around 7.8 million tonnes.

The procurement will come at high cost for the Central government as the state has announced a bonus of Rs 150 per quintal over and above the Centre fixed MSP of Rs 1,350 per quintal. The total cost of purchasing the mammoth quantities of wheat from Madhya Pradesh will be somewhere around Rs 1,570 per quintal considering that the state levies around 4.7% as local taxes.

"In the first place I do not understand what is need for determining a procurement target at a time when paddy or rice is selling at 15-20% below the minimum support price (MSP) in almost entire eastern India. In areas where government procurement should be strong it is not, while in states which levy heavy taxes, government is keen on purchasing more, putting an additional burden on the central government," Ashok Gulati, eminent agriculture economist and chairman of Commission for Agriculture Costs and Prices (CACP) told Business Standard.

He said plans to significantly increase India's foodgrains storage capacities by almost 18 million tonnes is also moving at a slow pace and till now around 3 million tonnes have been added as additional capacities.

"The government should immediately waive off the existing stock holding limits in foodgrains and keep them in abeyance for at least 10 years to ensure that private investments are attracted in India's storage sector. Moreover, there should be a meeting with the states to direct them to reduce their state taxes on foodgrains and any state which levies more than 5% local tax on grains, procurement should be stopped from that state," Gulati said.

He said unless government takes some strong pro-active steps in the next few weeks, there could be a big problem in hands as rice stocks are also expected to more in 2013-14 as compared to this year because of slowdown in exports.

In 2012, India managed to export almost 10 million tonnes of rice because of favourable global market, but this year exports could be somewhere around 6-7 million tonnes as Vietnam, which is big player in the global rice market has started undercutting its price to upstage Indian players.

As on February 1, 2013, foodgrains stock in the central pool with Food Corporation of India (FCI) and state agencies is estimated to be around 66.31 million tonnes, a mind-boggling over 200% more than the required quantity.

In this rice stocks are estimated to be around 35.3 million tonnes, as against a requirement of 14.2 million tonnes, while wheat stocks are estimated to be 30.8 million tonnes, as against the requirement of 7 million tonnes.

"The sub-optimal management of food economy should be stopped or else there will be a big problem," Gulati said.

Coriander falls 1.2% on adequate stocks



Coriander futures for May fell by Rs 84, or 1.19%, to Rs 6,950 per quintal in 13,140 lots.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the April contract declined by Rs 80, or 1.15% to Rs 6,836 per quintal in 31,850 lots.

Prices fell as speculators reduced their positions on the back of sluggish spot market demand.

Jeera falls 1% on profit-booking



Jeera futures for March fell by Rs 140, or 1.04% to Rs 13,290 per quintal in 9,912 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the April contract lost Rs 135, or 1% to Rs

13,337.50 per quintal in 8,175 lots.

Prices dropped as speculators booked profits at existing levels.

Increased supply from the producing regions and decline in the export demand pulled down the prices.

Expectations of higher output and supplies of the new crop influenced the jeera futures prices.

Cardamom surges 0.8% on spot demand



Cardamom fututres for April rose Rs 8, or 0.81%, to Rs 991.80 per kgin 153 lots.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the March jumped by Rs 6.60, or 0.69%, to Rs 959 per kg in 822 lots.

Prices surged as speculators created fresh positions tracking a firm spot market demand.

Less arrivals from producing regions also supported the uptrend in cardamom futures.

WB expects good potato crop due to extended winter



An extended winter is likely to help West Bengal produce about 100 lakh tonne of potato this year, which is about 17% more than the last years production of 85 lakh tonne.

"This year the weather is favourable for potato production, and we expect the state to produce about 100 lakh tonne of crop this year," said said Patit Paban De of the West Bengal Cold Storage Association.

At present, the price of Pukhraj variety of potato is hovering between Rs 470-500 per quintal. Harvesting for the Jyoti variety is slightly delayed due to the cold weather, which has kept the shoots green longer than usual.

This year, prices of potato seeds in West Bengal have gone up by almost 50% over the last year. The state imports more than 70% of its total seed requirement from Punjab. In addition, sharp rise in fertilizer prices has added to the cost of production. The cost of per 50 kg bag of urea has gone up from Rs 700-800 last year to almost Rs 1300-1400 this year, according to potato traders.

As a result, the cost of farming of potato this year has been about Rs 400 per quintal, against Rs 260-270 per quintal last year.

Notably, last year, West Bengal saw a dip in potato production due to unfavorable climatic conditions. The state produced 85 lakh tonnes of the commodity last year.

In view of the rising prices, the state government had banned export of potatoes to anywhere else in the country. On August 1, the Forward Markets Commision (FMC) has suspended futures trading in potatoes from West Bengal to control volatility in prices. In addition last year in Uttar Pradesh, which produces around 14 million tonne of potato in a normal year, the production was down by around 20%.

As a result, potato prices in West Bengal had surged from around Rs 700 per quintal in March to about Rs 1,000 per quintal by August this year.

Meanwhile, last year, instead of getting good prices due to lower supply, the farmers had been suffering continuous losses. In December last year, with the Punjab government providing transport subsidy to its farmers for excess potato production, at least 20,00,000 tonne of potato entered West Bengal in the month of December, leading to a price crash.

Moreover, in absence of adequate number of cold storages, a large quantity of potato had gone into waste.

The domestic consumption of potatoes in Bengal is three to four million tonne. The rest is exported to exporting the rest to Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Assam and parts of Andhra Pradesh. West Bengal accounts for 30% of the country's potato production.

Chana weakens 0.5% on profit-booking



Chana futures for April fell by Rs 17, or 0.49%, to Rs 3,424 per quintal in 74,280 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange (NCDEX), the May contract declined Rs 15, or 0.43%, to Rs 3,474 per quintal in 24,240 lots.

Prices weakened as speculators booked profits, driven by a weak trend at the spot markets.

Expectations of higher output this season and expanded area of cultivation mainly affected the prices.

Chilli extends losses, slips 2% on selling pressure



Chilli futures for April fell by Rs 148, or 2.14%, to Rs 6,752 per quintal in 8,800 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the March contract declined Rs 138, or 2.04%, to Rs 6,594 per quintal in 7,620 lots.

Prices dropped as speculators booked profits following reports of higher output estimates.

Subdued demand from retailers and stockists also impacted the market.

Business Line

Cauvery row: Buses to Karnataka stop plying

UDHAGAMANDALAM, FEB 20:

Bus services from here towards Karnataka were today stopped apprehending trouble over the gazette notification of final order of Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal, officials said.

The buses ply through Chamrajnagar, Mysore and Mandya in Karnataka, where there are protests over the release of water from Krishnarajsagar dam, to Tamil Nadu.

"The buses plying to Karnataka have been stopped from this afternoon, fearing trouble at that end," officials said.

Police and officials at Kakkanalla checkpost, near the Karnataka border, are advising taxis and car owners, with Tamil Nadu registration, not to venture into Karnataka, as they anticipated trouble following the notification of the final award, sources added.

A report from Krishnagiri said Tamil Nadu buses have stopped plying to Karnataka from there and there were also no buses from Karnataka arriving.

Cauvery Tribunal award on water sharing notified



PTITamil Nadu Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa shows the copy of the extraordinary gazette at a press conference at Secretariat in Chennai on Wednesday.

NEW DELHI, FEB 20:

After six years, the final award of the Cauvery Waters Dispute Tribunal was notified today.

The move came after the Supreme Court rapped the Centre for delaying the decision and had on February 4 set February 20 as the deadline to issue notification.

The notification was issued in yesterday's date.

The Tribunal, comprising Chairman Justice N.P. Singh and members N.S. Rao and Sudhir Narain, in a unanimous award in February 2007 had determined the total availability of water in the Cauvery basin at 740 thousand million cubic (TMC) feet at the Lower Coleroon Anicut site.

The proceedings of the Tribunal, set up in June, 1990, went on for more than 16 years.

In, what was then described as a balancing act, the Tribunal gave Tamil Nadu 419 TMC of water (as against the demand of 562 TMC); Karnataka 270 TMC (as against its demand of 465 TMC); Kerala 30 TMC and Puducherry 7 TMC.

For environmental protection, it had reserved 10 TMC.

The Tribunal's award will come into effect within 90 days of its notification by the Centre. As per law, the award comes into being after being notified by the Centre through its publication in a gazette.

After the issuance of the notification, the Cauvery River Authority chaired by the Prime Minister and the CMC will cease to exist.

New organisations like the Cauvery Management Board and the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee will be constituted which will have representatives from all the co-basin states, experts in hydrology and agriculture.

They will be headed by an officer of the central government and will be under the control of the Centre.

While Tamil Nadu had been demanding an early notification, Karnataka was opposed to it saying till the times cases filed by it in the Supreme Court are settled, the notification should be kept in abeyance.

Turmeric jumps on quality arrival



ERODE, FEB. 20: Spot turmeric rose by Rs 1,400 a quintal on Wednesday as the quality of arrivals improved.

"Though fresh upcountry orders are still missing, traders quoted Rs 7,509 a quintal, which is Rs 1400 a quintal more than Tuesday's price, for the 300 bags of super fine hybrid variety kept for

sale. They quoted increased price for other quality goods, too," said Erode Turmeric Merchants Association President R.K.V. Ravishankar.

Arrival of the new crop has increased over the past few days. Of the 3,300 bags that arrived on Wednesday, 800 were from the new crop. The new crop was sold at Rs 6,400.

Stockists bought over 1,000 bags.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety (new crop) was sold at Rs 4,411-6,489, the root variety at Rs 4,106-5,709. The old-crop finger variety was sold at Rs 5,596-6,699, the root variety at Rs 5,209-5,969.

Salem hybrid crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,885-7,509, the root variety at Rs 5,489-6,286. Of the 880 bags that arrived, 410 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,374-6,689, the root variety at Rs 4,574-5,801. Of the 294 bags that arrived, 263 found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,311-6,404, the root variety at Rs 4,869-6,051.

All the 225 bags kept for sale were sold. At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,579-6,500, the root variety at Rs 4,579-5,919.

All the 90 bags kept for sale were sold.

Mixed trend in pepper

KOCHI, FEB. 20:

The pepper market witnessed a mixed trend on Wednesday with the running contract, which matured today increased substantially, believed to be as part of an effort to converge with the spot prices, while the nearbys showed a decline.

There was good liquidation in Feb and switching over to Mar and Apr because of good badla. Some were liquidating Feb and switching over to nearbys, market sources told *Business Line*.

No activities were on the spot as all activities have come to a stand still following the call by all the trade unions to strike work today and tomorrow.

Feb contract on the NCDEX increased by Rs 335 a quintal to close at Rs 41,735. Mar and Apr dropped by Rs 10 and Rs 150 respectively to Rs 38,040 and Rs 36,355.

Total turn over decreased by 1,455 tonnes to 2,016 tonnes indicating fall in activities. Total open interest declined by 15 tonnes to close at 3,380 tonnes.

Indian parity in the international market was at around \$7,950 a tonne (c&f) for Feb while Mar was at around \$7,200 and Apr at about \$7,000 (c&f).

OVERSEAS TREND

According to an overseas report, pepper market in Vietnam was nearly steady while Brazil was reportedly requesting bids now.

Prices of different origins (\$/tonne) C&F New York: Vietnam Asta: 6,925-6,975; Lampong 550g/l: 6,900 (fob), reportedly traded recently: Brazil Asta 6,600; Brazil B1 6,550; Brazil B2 6,200.

Maharashtra tur gains as rain hits arrival



INDORE, FEB. 20:

Improved demand and rise in tur prices in Maharashtra because of lower arrival due to rain have perked up tur here by Rs 250 a quintal in the past one week. In just a day, tur (Maharashtra) for Indore delivery has gone up by Rs 150 a quintal at Rs 4,400 a quintal. Tur (lemon) was also up at Rs 4,000, while tur (Madhya Pradesh) ruled at Rs 3,600-3,900.

Tur prices are expected to rise further on a lower crop this year at 23-24 lakh tonnes against 32-34 lakh tonnes last year. Tur dal was ruling stable despite slack buying. On Wednesday, tur dal (full) ruled flat at Rs 5,900-6,000, tur dal (*sawa* no.) at Rs 5,200-5,300 and tur marka at Rs 6,300-6,400.

Weak arrival and improved demand have lifted urad prices in Indore *mandis* by Rs 100-125 in the past one week.

Urad (bold) on Wednesday quoted at Rs 3,500-3,525, while urad (medium) ruled stable at Rs 2,800-3,000. Its dal remained unchanged with urad dal (medium) being quoted at Rs 3,900-4,000, urad dal (bold) at Rs 4,600-4,700, while urad mongar ruled at Rs 5,500-5,800.

New Holland plans cotton picker 'designed for India'



NEW DELHI, FEB. 20:

After sugarcane harvesters, New Holland Fiat is planning to launch mechanical cotton pickers in India, hoping to cash in on rising costs and scarcity of farm labour in the countryside.

"We are field-testing a prototype specially designed for the Indian market. It should be ready for introduction in 2-3 years' time," said Gerald E. Salzman, Senior Director at Case IH, part of the \$ 19.4-billion, Illinois-headquartered CNH Global that also owns New Holland.

The proposed cotton picker is "completely different" from the Case IH Module Express machines currently being sold in the US, Australia and Brazil, Salzman told *Business Line.*

While these are self-propelled with the capacity to harvest the seed-cotton (kapas) from six plant rows at a time and simultaneously compact them as 'modules' for delivery to ginners, the picker developed for India is tractor-propelled and tailored specifically for the much smaller farms here.

DESIGNING DIFFERENTLY

"India tops the world in cotton acreage and is behind only China in production. But since your fields are small, mechanisation is a challenge, requiring modifications in the electronics and hydraulic systems of the machines," Salzman noted.

He illustrated the case of sugarcane harvesters, where New Holland started off in India selling its large 353-horsepower Case IH Austoft-7000 series machines to sugar mills.

But subsequently, the company launched a more compact and redesigned 174-horsepower 4000 model, which can move freely in smaller fields and harvest the cane planted in rows with 3.5-4 feet spacing, as against the global norm of five ft and above.

Further, it incorporates a special 'topper' capable of recovering the green cane tops that farmers in India – but not abroad – use as fodder for their animals.

All these modifications have helped New Holland sell over 330 machines so far, costing some Rs 1.3 crore each, inclusive of the complementary infielder tractors and trailers to collect the harvested cane billets.

LOCALISING GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE

"With the cotton picker, too, we are basically leveraging our knowledge globally to design a new machine for India, while looking at the past when farms were smaller even in the US," explained Salzman.

According to him, developing a good picker also requires working closely with seed companies, who can breed varieties/hybrids with the right plant architecture and height, making them amenable for mechanical harvesting.

Growers, too, may have to make some adjustments to their existing agronomic practices. In sugarcane, for example, farmers in India typically maintain just 2-2.5 ft spacing between two plant rows.

To enable mechanical harvesting, they have had to increase this to 4 ft.

Cotton growers currently spend Rs 500-600 as picking cost for every quintal of kapas. At Rs 4,000 a quintal and yields of 12-13 quintals, that works out to roughly Rs 7,000 on gross revenues of Rs 50,000 an acre.

To the extent picking rates have doubled from Rs 250-300 in the last five years, there is certainly a large potential market that the likes of New Holland and John Deere are seeking to exploit.

"Selling harvesting machinery also helps promote our main business of tractors and tillage/planting equipment here, as farmers see the same company doing both," added Salzman.

Plans raising domestic sourcing of spare parts

New Holland Fiat India's (NHFI) tractor plant at Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh makes about 35,000 tractors annually. Out of this, it sells about 28,000 locally (in a domestic market of 5.5 lakh machines) and exports the balance 7,000.

Besides, the company has a unit at Chakan near Pune, that assembles its cane harvesters imported in semi-knocked down form. Right now, the import content is about 95 per cent, with only the diesel engine being sourced locally from Cummins, apart from the electronics.

"We want to progressively raise the domestic content, starting with spare parts such as the basecutter blades and oil filters that are now being imported from Brazil. This will make it more attractive for custom hiring, as the entrepreneurs owning the harvesters will see their maintenance costs reduce with increased local availability of spares," said Gaurav Sood, Head (Crop Solutions) at NHFI.

The Chakan plant will ultimately also manufacture the cotton pickers that the company plans to launch by 2015.

Area under genetically modified crops continues to grow



NEW DELHI, FEB. 20:

Global acreage under biotech or genetically modified (GM) crops continued to expand in 2012, but the pace was a bit slow than previous year.

Interestingly, for the first time since the introduction of these crops in 1996, the developing countries now have more area under GM crops compared to their industrialised counterparts.

In 2012 an additional 10.3 million hectares (mh) came under GM crops against 12 mh in 2011.

BRAZIL LEADS

Brazil accounted for bulk of the expanded GM acreage, followed by Canada, US, India and China, according to a report released by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA). Sudan and Cuba planted GM crops for the first time in 2012 by growing biotech cotton and hybrid biotech maize respectively.

Of the 28 countries that planted biotech crops in 2012, 20 were developing and eight industrial nations.

Developing nations accounted for 52 per cent of the GM crop area in 2012 against 50 per cent in 2011, while the developed countries led by the US accounted for the rest.

STEADY GROWTH

"The adoption of biotech crops in developing countries has built up steadily over the years. This growth is contrary to the prediction of critics, who prior to the commercialisation of the technology in 1996 prematurely declared that biotech crops were only for industrial countries,

and would never be accepted and adopted by developing countries," said Clive James, Founder of ISAAA, in a statement.

James, who authored the report – Global Status of Commercialised Biotech Crops: 2012 – said the report underscores rising awareness in developing countries about the benefits of planting genetically modified crops, which not only have increased yields, but also bring savings in fuel, time and machinery, reduction in pesticide use, higher quality of product and more growing cycles.

The growth rate for biotech crops was at least three times as fast, and five times as large, in developing countries, at 11 per cent or 8.7 mh as against 3 per cent or 1.6 mh in industrial countries.

A record 17.3 million farmers grew biotech crops worldwide in 2012, up 0.6 million from a year earlier. Over 90 per cent of these farmers, or more than 15 million, were small resource-poor farmers in developing countries. "Global food insecurity, exacerbated by high and unaffordable food prices, is a formidable challenge to which biotech crops can contribute," James said.

Coonoor tea offerings hit year's low



COONOOR, FEB. 20:

The dry weather in the Nilgiri tea plantations of the last few weeks has reduced the harvest of green leaf supplied as raw material to factories. This has led to factories working for only four to five days a week and that too, just one shift daily against round-the-clock in peak times.

Consequently, the arrival for Sale No: 8 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions to be held on Thursday and Friday has declined to the lowest volume offered so far this calendar.

Of the 12.51 lakh kg coming up for sale, as much as 1.29 lakh kg comprises teas which had remained unsold in previous auctions. Fresh tea accounts for only 11.22 lakh kg – among the lowest so far this year.

This volume is as much as 2.40 lakh kg less than last week's offer although as much as 1.65 lakh kg more than the offer this time last year.

Of the 12.51 lakh kg on offer, 9.24 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 3.27 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades. As much as 11.74 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 0.77 lakh kg, orthodox variety. In the leaf counter, only 0.43 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 8.81 lakh kg, CTC. Among the dusts, only 0.34 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 2.93 lakh kg, CTC.

"Upcountry buyers are stepping up their purchases here as the volumes in North Indian auctions are low. They are demanding brighter-liquoring high-priced teas", an auctioneer told *Business Line.* Last week, in the leaf auctions, Hindustan Unilever Ltd operated on the good medium varieties. Tata Global Beverages Ltd was selective. Duncans Tea Ltd showed some interest on the good medium smaller brokens. In the Dust auctions, HUL was selective. Tata Global did not operate. Duncans was fairly active on medium sorts.



Rubber skids on lack of buying

KOTTAYAM, FEB. 20:

The domestic rubber futures finished weak on Wednesday. The March series slid to Rs 156.45 (157.49), April to Rs 159.80 (161.09), May to Rs 163.64 (164.47) and June to Rs 165.14 (167) a kg while the July series remained inactive on the National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE).

RSS 3 (spot) declined to Rs 172.52 (176.71) a kg at Bangkok. The February futures for the grade surrendered to \$288 (Rs 166.42) from \$297.10 during the day session and then to \$287.5 (Rs 166.13) in the night session on Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM).

The key TOCOM rubber futures hit a three-week low following Thailand's move to terminate its rubber intervention scheme by the end of March.

The spot rubber prices were not available owing to the forty-eight hour all India general strike declared by the trade unions.

Strong demand may push up olive oil imports by 30%



NEW DELHI, FEB 20:

Dalmia Continental, which sells olive oil under Leonardo brand, today said India's olive oil import could increase by 30 per cent to 9,360 tonnes in the current fiscal, with demand growing due to rising awareness about health benefits of the cooking oil.

"In the 2011-12 financial year, total imports of olive oil stood at 7,200 tonnes. This year, imports are expected to grow by 25-30 per cent," Dalmia Continental, Assistant General Manager, Himani Dalmia said at an event here.

Import of olive oil in volume terms has been growing at a fast pace due to a rise in demand following greater awareness among consumers about health benefits and usage in everyday cooking, she said.

India largely imports from Spain, Italy and Turkey.

She attributed the rise in the awareness level about olive oils in India to the launch of a three-year campaign 'Oliveitup' by an Italian organisation Consortium of Guarantee of Quality Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVC) that completed today.

"Earlier, consumers used to think olive oil was used only for massage purpose. But now, this perception is changing and the oil is being used for cooking purpose," Dalmia said.

The awareness about different kinds of olive oils and its usage clearly reflects in India's imports. For instance, the share of 'olive oil', used for massage purpose, has been declining, while 'olive pomace oil' variety used for high temperature cooking has been growing, she explained.

Even the import of 'extra virgin olive oil', which is used in salad and pasta making, has been on the rise.

In the last three years, Consortium of Guarantee of Quality Extra Virgin Olive Oil has made efforts to reach out to untapped markets to educate Indian consumers about the nutritional benefits of olive oils of European origin.

The top 3 brands in the domestic market, which together control more than 60 per cent of retail sales, are Leonardo, Figaro and Borges (including Cesar).

Some other prominent brands include RS, Bertolli, Del Monte, Fragata, Colavita and Athena.

More wet weather forecast for Northwest India



THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEB 20:

The unexpectedly surprising wet weather regime for Northwest Indian farmlands from early this month is set to continue for another week.

Hardly have two back-to-back weather causing western disturbances passed than a third one signaled its presence into the region.

BACK-TO-BACK

The western disturbances trace back their origin all the way west-northwest into the Mediterranean and pass periodically east.

Along the way, they trigger weather over Southeast Europe, West and Southwest Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

They thrive on the temperature differential across latitudes to set up weather-setting systems including low-pressure areas and even depressions.

Normally, these systems are known to be sedate and controlled in their weather-creating capacity by the time they pass into Northwest India.

But they seem to have broken with the trend thus far during this month, morphing into weather systems as they enter into the country.

AGGRESSIVE FACE

This is discernible in the manner in which low-pressure areas have been thrown up by the two last western disturbances.

In the first case, the 'low' even intensified into a depression, triggering stormy weather, severe snow and heavy rain.

A third 'active' western disturbance is set to enter Northwest India tomorrow and set up a lowpressure area over Southwest Rajasthan.

The 'low' would get dissipated by the next day, but the energy brought on by it will take some time to wither.

The combined system would cause scattered rainfall/snowfall for at least the next four days, an India Meteorological Department (IMD) update said.

RAIN, SNOW

Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand would be worst hit with accompanying isolated heavy snowfall.

Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, NCR Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh may witness thundershowers when isolated hailstorm may also occur over the region.

Farmers in Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, NCR Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have been advised to withhold irrigation in field crops during the period.

vinson.kurian@thehindu.co.in