

It turned out to be a 'dark' Pongal for sugarcane growers



Various farmers' associations have demanded a procurement price of Rs.3, 000 per tonne of sugarcane as against Rs.2,350 announced by the State government.

In a statement, C.Vyapuri (United Farmers' Association), T.Gurusamy (Bharathiya Kisan Sangh), and C.Nallasamy (Tamil Nadu Toddy Movement), alleged that the failure of the State government to get the just price for sugarcane would ruin agriculture in Tamil Nadu .

They said that the sugar mills had destroyed the jaggery units. The effluents generated from mills in the form of molasses is the raw material for distillery units. But sugarcane suppliers do not get any share from the sale of molasses.

Just because the production of the distilleries keeps rising day by day, even the "unripe" sugarcane is crushed by the sugarmills to provide the distillery units adequate raw material. "This is atrocious," they lamented.

They said this Pongal had turned out to be a “dark” one for them because there of the slump in production and discrimination in price.

They asserted that their demand for Rs.3, 000 per tonne of sugarcane is fully justified. “The State should realise this,” they added.

They also said “sweetness” is a quality provided not only by sugarcane but also by ‘palmgur’. Palmyra trees do not need irrigation, they just need minimal maintenance, they protect the environment, and prevent globe warming.

Toddy, which has been produced in the country since time immemorial, is respected in all the tropical countries. Except in Tamil Nadu, toddy is not banned anywhere in the world.

The ban order was issued in 1987 when former Chief Minister M.G.Ramachandran was unwell. Just because the palm industry has been so curtailed, palmgur, which is a siddha food item, is sold for just Rs.160-180 a kilogram.

The ban on toddy is against nature, they alleged, and declared that palm workers and farmers would join hands to treat the birthdays of M.G.Ramachandran, former Chief Minister M.Karunanidhi and current Chief Minister Jayalalithaa as days of “mourning”.

Water jetting: an eco-friendly pest management technique in mulberry

The cost of this technology is lesser than that of a standard power sprayer



Old recommendation: A farmer practising the method. -Photo: Special Arrangement

Like other crops, mulberry is also prone to a number of pest attacks. Farmers generally spray pesticides two times before each harvest of leaves i.e. in bimonthly interval to produce quality leaves to feed the silkworms. The spray consists of some chemical pesticide mixed with water and sprayed over the leaf canopy.

The main drawback in this is that while the chemical spray initially seems to control the pest, over time the insect develops an immunity to these sprays. Besides this, the practice of spraying chemicals over time creates some serious health problems to the farmers spraying it.

No precaution

“Unlike foreign countries many here do not take precautionary measures like closing their nose and mouth with a piece of cloth, wearing gloves etc. We have also observed that mulberry farmers experience monetary loss because the silkworms often die without forming cocoons due to the residual toxic effect of insecticides sprayed,” says Dr. N. Sakthivel, Scientist, Research Extension Centre, Central Silk Board, Srivilliputtur.

In order to overcome these problems the research extension of the silk board developed a water jetting package which attempted to apply the physical force of water against the sucking pest menace in mulberry cultivation and succeeded.

Water jetting — using a high volume sprayer — is an old recommendation but became unpopular among the farmers because it required huge quantity of water at the spraying spot. It is an expensive method and required a lot of time and labour.

But in the present method irrigation water is diverted from the main pipeline to a one- inch garden hose with the help of suitable adaptor and gate-valve for jetting.

Therefore, the farmer gets an uninterrupted supply of water as well as sufficient flow quantity to generate adequate water pressure to hit the pests lethally and wash them out from the plants.

The water pressure and jetting distance can be adjusted by blocking the open end of the garden hose by using the thumb.

Less cost

Farmers who do not have pipeline across the garden can establish the system for one acre at a cost lesser than that of the cost of a high volume power sprayer.

The technology is highly economical as the cost of establishment of the system is lesser (Rs. 5,000 – 7,000) than the purchase of standard high volume power sprayer that costs Rs.10,000-15,000) and also can conveniently be used for many years.

Water jetting can be done at the time of routine irrigation without using additional man power and any revolving expenditures. It is estimated that approximately 2-3 hours are required to cover a one acre plantation depending upon the plants' age.

Silkworm rearing can be taken up only 15-20 days after spray of chemical insecticide in mulberry garden due to its residual toxic effect.

Not possible

Further, chemical measure to control pests in mulberry garden is not possible after initiation of silkworm rearing. But water jetting can be done at any moment if pest incidence is noticed i.e. even after initiation of silkworm rearing.

“This practice not only eliminates the pest population but also removes the black sooty moulds developed on the honeydew secreted by the pests and dusts from the leaves which increase the efficiency of photosynthetic activities followed by increase in leaf quality and yield.

The silkworms prefer this dust-free quality leaves, with resultant increase in silk productivity and income to the farmers,” explains Dr. Sakthivel.

This is an eco-friendly approach as it helps to avoid use of harmful insecticides and does not cause any health hazard to the users, silkworms and other beneficial organisms and also does not pollute the environment.

Sucking pests are soft bodied insects unlike caterpillars and beetles. The strong jet of water dislodges the pest and washes them down from the plants. Post water jetting observations revealed many ants feeding the dead pests on the ground, according to him.

Proven

It is proved that a sericulture farmer can maintain his mulberry garden free from pests without application of any insecticide if he jets the water routinely at the time of each irrigation.

This water jetting can also be employed for other agricultural and horticultural crops with a little care at the time of flowering stage.

The person who irrigates the garden could simultaneously jet the water. Therefore no additional manpower and no revolving cost of chemicals are required. The jetted water irrigates the garden as well.

This practice is highly effective, eco-friendly, user-friendly, economic and could bring solution to the pesticide issues which pose great threat and challenge to mulberry cultivators.

Another greater issue of chemical insecticides is that they destroy the natural enemy complex in agro ecosystem rather than pests, because many pests often develop resistance to the chemicals applied.

For more information readers can contact Dr. N. Sakthivel through Email: sakthivelcsb@hotmail.com and recsvpr@gmail.com phone: 04563 203100, mobile: 9842761789.

Device to remove insect pests from stored grains

Stored grains are attacked by several pests. They assume importance as they start their damage in the field itself. Generally insects fly from nearby farms, farm store houses or farmer storehouses and start laying eggs on the grains that are stored. Eggs are the root cause in of damage to the grains during storage.

As the use of pesticides and fumigants on or near stored grain is more dangerous to human beings and due to the development of resistance to the insects, mechanical methods like rotation, tumbling and impact of infested grains prove to be effective in the removal of stored-product insects.

Limited information

Mechanical removal of insects from stored grains is an important pest control strategy. Till now only very limited information is available in using the mechanical mode for controlling the egg stages of insects.

Hence, a device to remove adult stored product insects and crush the eggs present in stored grain has been developed by Department of Agricultural Entomology, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore.

The device has a grain feeding hopper, insect cleaning unit with an outlet to collect them separately and an outlet for the treated grain. It can be easily operated and within five minutes majority of the insects present in the food grains can be removed and collected in the collection outlet.

Further inner arrangement in the insect cleaning unit facilitates crushing of the eggs, if any, in the grains. The capacity of the hand operated machine is 200 – 250 kg/hr. It can be easily motorized depending on the need.

Best results

For wheat and pulses (whole and broken) the perforation size of the insect cleaning unit can be adjusted between 2.8-3 millimetres and for cereals like rice, maize, sorghum, it should be 2 millimetres, so that perforation permits insects alone and not the grains. For best results, the length of the insect cleaning unit can be six feet or more, depending on the grain handling.

The approximate cost of this device is Rs. 2,00,000. The unit can also be fabricated into smaller sizes. It has been licensed by TNAU through Agribusiness Entrepreneurship programme.

(Dr. S. Mohan, Professor, Entomology, Department of Cotton Centre for Plant Breeding and Genetics, TNAU, Coimbatore- 641 003, email: sarmamohan@hotmail.com, Mobile: 09488458006.)

'Rescind decision on land for DRDO, set up solar power plant'

It will help solve power problems faced by farmers, says KRRS



Members the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha staging a dharna outside the Deputy Commissioner's office in Chitradurga on Wednesday.— Photo: V. Chandrappa

Members of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha took out a procession and staged a dharna outside the Deputy Commissioner's office here on Wednesday, demanding that the land granted to the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) at Kudapura in Challakere taluk be withdrawn.

They wanted a solar power plant to be set up on there instead, to help farmers in the district.

The agitators took out a procession from Ambedkar Circle to the Deputy Commissioner's office.

They said the State and the Union governments had provided DRDO 4,000 acres at Kudapura. As DRDO's presence would not help solve the water and power problems faced by farmers, the government should withdraw its decision and set up a solar power plant there to meet the demand for electricity in the State, they said.

The agitators submitted a memorandum to Deputy Commissioner V.P. Ikkeri and warned of an intensified agitation if the authorities failed to take action.

Agriculture Department to promote millet cultivation

As against a target of 43,500 hectares under millet cultivation for 2012-13, the Agriculture Department has thus far achieved 27,500 hectares.

Majority of the area is under Chulam, followed by maize.

According to S. Lakshmiraj, Joint Director of Agriculture, Coimbatore, the department plans to boost the area under millet in the January cultivation season to reach the target.

The Department will initiate the programme under the 'Initiative for Nutritional Security Through Intensive Millet Promotion' scheme.

The State Government has allocated Rs. 70.76 lakh for the purpose.

Training

He says that the Department has trained and been training farmers at various levels on the cultivation aspects, millets' nutritional levels and value addition from millet products.

The Department was implementing it in all the blocks in the district.

The Department has been promoting farmers' clusters by bringing together 15 – 20 farmers in a cluster. In each village it planned to have two or three such clusters.

It will then train the farmers' groups at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University and then supply critical agricultural inputs – seeds, fertilizers, bio fertilizers, and chemicals.

Objective

The objective was to increase the area under millet cultivation in a phased manner.

The over all objective was to increase millet cultivation among people to meet their nutritional needs.

'Write off agriculture loans'

Tamizhaga Vivasayeegal Sangam has urged the Union and State Governments to write off agriculture loans. At its monthly meeting held in January, it has urged the State Government to supply fodder at subsidised cost as there was shortage of fodder because of drought.

It has asked the Government to publish online the monthly cultivation data, as ascertained by the Agriculture and Revenue Departments so that it would bring out the actual figure. Likewise, the Association wants the Government to revisit the subsidy fixed for the drip irrigation.

The farmers' association has also sought fixing guideline value for agriculture lands at a different rate until cultivation was on and not treat them as housing plots. Government should instruct sub registrars in this regard.

New DPCs to come up in Thanjavur, Tiruvarur districts

Taking into consideration the beginning of harvest of samba paddy in pumpset-irrigated areas in Thanjavur and Tiruvarur districts, Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation (TNCSC) is planning to open new Direct Purchase Centres (DPCs) depending on the requirement.

Harvest has just commenced in pumpset-irrigated areas and it is likely to pick up in the first week of February. Since the paddy procurement will not be much due to failure of the samba crop in canal-irrigated areas, the TNCSC has decided to limit the number of DPCs on the basis of requirement.

The regional office of the TNCSC here has sent a proposal for opening 56 new DPCs apart from the existing 42 DPCs in the district. "The new DPCs will be spread over in all taluks while the maximum number will be opened in Orathanadu taluk where the harvest in pumpset-irrigated areas is more," officials said.

The plan is to procure 5 lakh tonnes this year in the district against 6.5 lakh tonnes procured last year. With respect to Tiruvarur district, harvest is yet to pick up.

Regional office of TNCSC at Tiruvarur has sent proposal for opening 45 new centres in the first week of February. At present 26 centres are functioning in the district.

Samba has been raised under pumpset-irrigated areas on 1 lakh hectares in both districts.

Total coverage of samba in both pumpset-irrigated and canal-irrigated areas in the two districts is 2.75 lakh hectares.

Crop loss is heavy in canal-irrigated areas in both districts and the district administration has prepared estimates of 50 per cent loss, more than 50 per cent loss and total loss of crops under canal-irrigated areas in the district.

Farmers of both districts expect the State government to announce relief for the loss of crop.

TNCSC is paying Rs. 1,350 per quintal for A grade variety of paddy and Rs. 1,300 per quintal for common variety of paddy.

A flowery treat in store at Sikkim festival

To promote commercial floriculture in the State, a five-day international flower show will be organised by the Sikkim Government from February 23 at Sasaram Garden in Sikkim.

“To provide a window showcasing Sikkim’s potential as a floriculture destination, we are organising a flower festival in which 30 representatives of 12 countries will participate,” said Sikkim Minister of Tourism & Civil Aviation Bhim Dhungei here on Wednesday.

“We are expecting more tourists this year than the previous year. In 2012 we received around seven lakh domestic and 20,000 international tourists. Since most of the tourists we receive are from West Bengal we are here to promote the flower festival that we are organising,” he said.

The festival will provide an opportunity for interaction with leading buyers and suppliers of horticulture from different parts of the world.

“The five-day festival will offer a glimpse of rare varieties of flowering plants. It will also provide a platform for depicting the floricultural development of different parts of the world,” Mr. Dhungei said.

“The aim of the festival is to sensitize farmers of the State and to enhance investment in floriculture and related sectors,” he pointed out.

Apart from the flower festival, Sikkim will also host a Buddha festival in June.

Speaking about development in Sikkim Mr. Dhungei said, “The Government has initiated proactive steps to conceptualize and implement climate change adaptation initiatives related to reviving dying springs, streams and lakes.”

“We have also launched a mega social housing mission for providing quality housing to around 30,000 people who reside in *kutchha* houses in our State,” he added.

‘Give Chamarajanagar farmers compensation for crop loss’

President of the Karnataka State Sugarcane Growers' Association Kurubur Shanthakumar on Wednesday urged the State government to pay compensation to farmers who have lost their crops in over 50,000 acres in the Kabini command areas in Kollegal, Yelandur and Chamarajanagar taluks in Chamarajanagar district.

Speaking to presspersons here, Mr. Shanthakumar claimed that crops withered as water from the Kabini was released to Tamil Nadu. The State government must take steps to send officials to these areas to estimate the crop loss and fix adequate compensation. Farmers in Tamil Nadu were receiving compensation of Rs. 13,800 per acre for crop loss. The Karnataka government should follow suit. The farmers had petitioned Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar, who recently visited Chamarajanagar, he said.

'Put pressure on Centre'

Mr. Shanthakumar suggested that the State government put pressure on the Centre against notifying the final award of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal, by taking a delegation of farmers from the Cauvery command area to Delhi. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh should be apprised of the ground realities: the scarcity of water in the reservoirs and the sufferings of farmers. Owing to lack of power supply farmers were unable to pump even the available water to the fields, Mr. Shanthakumar said. The problem should be addressed by the State government, he added.

He announced that a meet on comprehensive agricultural practices would be held at the Maharaja Centenary Hall here on Saturday at 11 a.m. Karnataka High Court judge Subhash B. Adi would inaugurate the programme. The event was being organised by the Raitha Sanghatanegala Okkoota and the sugarcane growers' association, he said.

Arun Balamatti from the JSS Krishi Vijnana Kendra, Suttur; A.P. Vishwanath from the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore; and Nagaraju from the agri-forestry wing of the UAS would address the farmers.

S.B. Dandin from the University of Horticultural Sciences, Bagalkot, would unveil the special edition of the 'Raitha Dhvani' magazine.

Award

Three farmers who have taken up comprehensive agricultural practices would be felicitated with the 'Krishi Kayakayogi' Award. They are Siddappa Gadigeppa Hulajogi from Naragund in Gadag district, G. Mahesh from Kalpura in Chamarajanagar district, and Sudarshana Rao Sindhe from Hullalu in Mysore district.

'Coordinated efforts will prevent disease'

Coordinated efforts are needed between farmers, agricultural scientists, dieticians, doctors, food scientists, corporate businessmen, policy makers and politicians for the prevention of disease through healthy and balanced diets, Ravinder Singh, Scientist C, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), New Delhi said here recently.

Speaking at a national conference on Food Processing Technology for Health Progression NCFPTH 2013, organised by the Department of Food Science and Nutrition, Periyar University, Salem, Mr. Singh said prevention of disease is vital in the modern world and that can be achieved only through proper diet.

He said that the country has a large raw material base suitable for food processing industry and wanted professionals to use the opportunity.

P.S. Panneer Selvam, Medical Director, Shanmuga Hospital, Salem said that healthy weight management in adults can prevent many non communicable disease and improve the quality of life.

S. Devaraja, Department of Studies and Research in Biochemistry, Tumkur University, Karnataka discussed antithrombotic agents from medical plants, fruits or seeds as least side effects help in better management of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular complications.

Vice-Chancellor of the university K. Muthuchelian gave the presidential address.

Workshop

With organic farming gaining momentum, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Sandhiyur is planning to organise one day training cum workshop that would deal with organic farming cultivation practices, and marketing products at national and global level. Hence, farmers who are

interested in the organic farming can contact: S. Manickam, Programme Coordinator and Professor, KVK, Sandhiyur, Salem 636-206. Phone 0427-2422550.

Solve problems faced by sugar mill: cane growers

Ganjam District Sugarcane Growers' Association (GDSGA) urged the Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to initiate measures to solve problems faced by Aska Cooperative Sugar Industries Limited (ACSIL).

They have threatened to take up agitation on Jan 28, if no steps were taken regarding demands of sugarcane growers by Jan 26. It may be noted that around 8000 sugarcane growers of Ganjam district depend on ACSIL.

According to vice president of GDSGA, Narayan Jena, efficiency of the ACSIL has decreased due to mismanagement and technical snags. These were affecting the income of sugarcane growers, he added. The GDSGA alleged that the ACSIL was not being run in its full capacity.

As per the sugarcane growers, the ACSIL was to start sugarcane crushing from November first week. But this year the sugarcane crushing started on Dec 21. The crushing capacity of the ACSIL was 2500MT per day but at present it was crushing 1400MT of sugarcane per day on an average, they alleged.

This year the ACSIL has targeted to crush 2,55,000MT of sugarcane by the end of March. "But the pace with which the sugarcane crushing is going on it may take another three to four months to crush this amount of sugarcane", Mr Jena said.

Delay in crushing process is leading to loss for sugarcane growers as their produce is getting dried up. Drying up of sugarcane amounts to weight loss and less income for producers. The sugarcane growers were a worried lot as with time water supply to their fields gets reduced which becomes a catalyst for drying of sugarcane produce.

The sugarcane growers also demanded posting of a permanent Managing Director (MD) for the ACSIL. According to them without a regular MD management of this sugar factory was in doldrums.

Rain or thunderstorm likely today

The Capital on Wednesday experienced a slightly warmer than usual day with the maximum temperature settling at 24.1 degrees, four degrees below normal for this time of the year and up from Tuesday's 22.6 degrees Celsius. The minimum was 8.3 degrees Celsius, one degree above normal and also up from Tuesday's 6.6 degrees Celsius.

However, an unusual forecast has also been set for Thursday. "There might be rain or a thunderstorm, there might even be a hail storm in some areas," said the India Metrological Department duty officer. Wednesday, however, did not even have a hint of rain even as humidity levels oscillated between a maximum of 100 per cent and a minimum of 51 per cent.

Temperatures might remain almost the same with the maximum being put at 21 degrees Celsius and the minimum at 11 degrees Celsius.

India's rice bowl battles to feed its population!

The harvest festival 'Sankranti' is observed as 'Pedda Panduga' not just for its religious festivities, but the bountiful crop it generates that decides the food security level.

For the farmers, the festival is a thanksgiving act to mother Earth that yields the crop. The State has an enviable performance in agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and fisheries, apart from being in the forefront on micro-irrigation. In spite of this, the State has a lot of ground to cover in eliminating hunger.

While the agriculture and allied sectors contributed to a growth rate of 8.36 per cent in 2007-08 from a paltry 3.93 per cent in 2006-07, horticulture (10 p.c.), livestock (6.52 p.c.) and fisheries (5.19 p.c.) too propelled the growth rate. By providing micro-irrigation facility to 1.20 lakh acres, the State jumped from sixth slot in 2003-04 to third in 2006-07 in terms of food production.

According to National Horticulture Board, AP ranks first in mango, sweet lime, papaya, chilli and turmeric yield. Similarly, it is first in poultry/sheep and second in buffaloes, apart from generating a whopping one million tonnes of fish and prawn valued at Rs. 73 billion. "In spite of all this, what causes concern is the State's preparedness to meet the needs of its BPL residents after an unexpected drought or flood," says Rajagopal Velamoor, former director of Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI), Kasargod.

In a chat with The Hindu on the Sankranti-eve, Dr. Rajagopal pointed out that the State was tagged under 'serious hunger' category with regard to Global Hunger Index (GHI). "It is a paradox that the State dubbed as a 'rice bowl' and 'horticultural hub' is also a home of large number of hungry people," he observed, attributing it to the inaccessibility of essential commodities through Public Distribution System (PDS) to the poorest.

Around 19.6 per cent of the 8.465 crore residents of the State were undernourished, with as high as 32.7 per cent children below five years suffering from underweight, he said, quoting the International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington. The founder of Society for Hunger Elimination (SHE), a Tirupati-based NGO, Dr. Rajagopal appeals to the public to take a pledge on 'Sankranti' to help creation of a database on poverty and hunger levels in districts. He can be contacted at 0877-2287083 or 9441200217 for details.

'Complete irrigation projects before bifurcation'

The bifurcation of the State should be considered only after completing irrigation projects in Rayalaseema region, allocation of assured water and diversion of Krishna water to the region after completing the Polavaram project, Rayalaseema Karmika Karshaka Parishad president Ch. Chandrasekhara Reddy said, on Wednesday.

'Purposeless' meeting

Terming the Seemandhra meeting on January 17 with MPs and MLAs 'purposeless', he told a press conference here that any decision on the bifurcation of the State without involving or consulting Rayalaseema was unacceptable.

Irrigation interests supreme

Irrigation interests of the region are supreme and location of the capital is secondary, Mr. Reddy said. The region has been long neglected and betrayed and was not even taken into account in the bifurcation move, he lamented.

Rayalaseema gave up the capital in Kurnool in 1956 and the Shribagh Pact of 1937 was not implemented, Mr. Chandrasekhara Reddy said, questioning how the loss to the region would be compensated.

The irrigation projects in Rayalaseema will remain incomplete if the State is bifurcated. He urged the Central government to not play with people for political gains.

The demand for a unified State is not driven by sentiment but is for existence, he said.

Concern over pest attack on paddy crop in Kuttanad

Farmers in Kuttanad already reeling under the high price of fertilisers and insecticide have a new problem on their hands- a pest attack on the paddy crop.

Experts say that the change in climate is one of the reasons for the pest attack. "The attack of leaf folder pests has been on the increase in some parts due to the presence of cloudy atmosphere with a lot of vegetative growth. Now it is being brought under control," L. Beena Kumari, project director, Kerala Centre for Pest Management, Mankombu said.

The attack of leaf folder has affected nearly 4,000 acres in the paddy fields under Champakulam and Ramankary block panchayats in the district.

Agriculture authorities had instructed the farmers to spray the proper dose of insecticides in the paddy fields. They have also warned that insecticide be sprayed only in those paddy fields affected by the pest.

If the paddy fields not affected by the pests were sprayed with the insecticide there will be a possibility of attack of brown plant hopper. The methods of pumping in water and then drying it out will help in managing the pests, they added.

Farmers have been blamed for not noticing the attack of pests in the early stages and taking preventive measures. Spodoptera Mauriti has affected paddy fields reclaimed from 'kayal' (backwaters) here, especially in Rajapuram kayal area.

The pest attack here could have been controlled if the paddy field was allowed to hold water pumped in for at least six hours. The District Collector on Monday visited the paddy fields affected by pest attack and gave instructions to agricultural officers to take steps to control the pest attack.

Experts also warn of saline water intrusion into the paddy fields.

The threat of saline water intrusion is looming large over paddy fields in Marthandam kayal, paddy polders in Kainakary, Kakkakayal, Thayilpadam, Edavazhikkom Kayal and Bhagavathy padam which come under the Alappuzha Krishibhavan's limit.

Another problem that is likely to happen in the near future is the shortage of water.

Already the rains during the Malayalam month of Thulam (North east monsoon during mid-October to mid-November) was very low this year when compared to last year. Last year, it was 150 mm while it was only 70 mm this year.

'The attack of leaf folder pests has been on the increase in some parts due to the presence of cloudy atmosphere with a lot of vegetative growth.'

'Give Chamarajanagar farmers compensation for crop loss'

President of the Karnataka State Sugarcane Growers' Association Kurubur Shanthakumar on Wednesday urged the State government to pay compensation to farmers who have lost their crops in over 50,000 acres in the Kabini command areas in Kollegal, Yelandur and Chamarajanagar taluks in Chamarajanagar district.

Speaking to presspersons here, Mr. Shanthakumar claimed that crops withered as water from the Kabini was released to Tamil Nadu. The State government must take steps to send officials to these areas to estimate the crop loss and fix adequate compensation. Farmers in Tamil Nadu were receiving compensation of Rs. 13,800 per acre for crop loss. The Karnataka government should follow suit. The farmers had petitioned Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar, who recently visited Chamarajanagar, he said.

'Put pressure on Centre'

Mr. Shanthakumar suggested that the State government put pressure on the Centre against notifying the final award of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal, by taking a delegation of farmers from the Cauvery command area to Delhi. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh should be apprised of the ground realities: the scarcity of water in the reservoirs and the sufferings of farmers. Owing to lack of power supply farmers were unable to pump even the available water

to the fields, Mr. Shanthakumar said. The problem should be addressed by the State government, he added.

He announced that a meet on comprehensive agricultural practices would be held at the Maharaja Centenary Hall here on Saturday at 11 a.m. Karnataka High Court judge Subhash B. Adi would inaugurate the programme. The event was being organised by the Raitha Sanghatanegala Okkoota and the sugarcane growers' association, he said.

Arun Balamatti from the JSS Krishi Vijnana Kendra, Suttur; A.P. Vishwanath from the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore; and Nagaraju from the agri-forestry wing of the UAS would address the farmers.

S.B. Dandin from the University of Horticultural Sciences, Bagalkot, would unveil the special edition of the 'Raitha Dhvani' magazine.

Award

Three farmers who have taken up comprehensive agricultural practices would be felicitated with the 'Krishi Kayakayogi' Award. They are Siddappa Gadigeppa Hulajogi from Naragund in Gadag district, G. Mahesh from Kalpura in Chamarajanagar district, and Sudarshana Rao Sindhe from Hullalu in Mysore district.

Red gram growers stage 'chakdi jam'

They want MSP to be fixed at Rs. 5,000 a quintal



Making a point: Traffic was disrupted as farmers blocked roads with their bullock carts and staged a protest in Gulbarga on Wednesday.— Photo: Arun Kulkarni

Red gram growers stepped up their agitation for minimum support price (MSP) of Rs. 5,000 a quintal, by blocking traffic here on Wednesday.

A large number of farmers drove through the main roads of the city in bullock carts, and staged a 'chakdi jam' by blocking the road near the Deputy Commissioner's office.

Traffic was disrupted for more than three hours and the police had a tough time regulating vehicles.

Not one vehicle was allowed to either enter or exit the Deputy Commissioner's office premises. Even Additional Deputy Commissioner Latha Kumari's vehicle was sent back.

Addressing farmers, president of the Karnataka Pranta Raitha Sangha Maruti Manpade and secretary of the Karnataka Red Gram Growers' Association Karisiddappa Patil said their agitation would not be withdrawn till the government fixed the MSP at Rs. 5,000 a quintal of red gram (up from the present Rs. 4,000 a quintal), and sanctions Rs. 100 crore from the revolving fund to the red gram development board.

The funds would enable it to effectively intervene in the market and purchase produce directly from farmers, they said.

They submitted a memorandum, addressed to Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar, to the district authorities.

More to come

Wednesday's protest was part of a larger agitation planned by growers and trade organisations, such as the Karnataka Pranta Raitha Sangha, the All-India Kisan Sabha, the Karnataka Red Gram Growers' Association, Krishik Samaj, the Hyderabad Karnataka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the grain and seeds merchants' association and the dal millers' association.

On January 24, they propose to hold a 'rasta roko' in all taluk headquarters and important towns of the district.

On January 29, a Gulbarga district bandh will be observed.

It's a bitter Pongal for cane growers

Various farmers' associations have demanded a procurement price of Rs.3, 000 per tonne of sugarcane as against Rs.2,350 announced by the State government.

In a statement, C.Vyapuri (United Farmers' Association), T.Gurusamy (Bharathiya Kisan Sangh), and C.Nallasamy (Tamil Nadu Toddy Movement), alleged that the failure of the State government to get the just price for sugarcane would ruin agriculture in Tamil Nadu .They said that the sugar mills had destroyed the jaggery units.

The effluents generated from mills in the form of molasses is the raw material for distillery units. But sugarcane suppliers do not get any share from the sale of molasses.Just because the production of the distilleries keeps rising day by day, even the “unripe” sugarcane is crushed by the sugarmills to provide the distillery units adequate raw material. “This is atrocious,” they lamented.

They said this Pongal had turned out to be a “dark” one for them because there of the slump in production and discrimination in price.

“They asserted that their demand for Rs.3, 000 per tonne of sugarcane is fully justified. The State should realise this,” they added. They also said “sweetness” is a quality provided not only by sugarcane but also by ‘palmgur’.

Palmyra trees do not need irrigation, they just need minimal maintenance, they protect the environment, and prevent globe warming. Toddy, which has been produced in the country since time immemorial, is respected in all the tropical countries.

Except in Tamil Nadu, toddy is not banned anywhere in the world. The ban order was issued in 1987 when former Chief Minister M.G.Ramachandran was unwell.Just because the palm industry has been so curtailed, palmgur, which is a siddha food item, is sold for just Rs.160-180 a kilogram.

The ban on toddy is against nature, they alleged, and declared that palm workers and farmers would join hands to treat the birthdays of M.G.Ramachandran, former Chief Minister M.Karunanidhi and current Chief Minister Jayalalithaa as days of “mourning”.

Farmers criticise move to release water

The State government's move to release 0.5 tmc of water to the old ayacuts of Bhavani river received widespread criticism from a section of farmers in the district.

Officials sources said the government had decided to release 1.5 tmc of water from the hydel reservoirs in Nilgiris to Bhavanisagar dam. Of which, it was planned to provide 0.5 tmc each to Kalingarayan, Thadapalli- Arakkan- kottai and Lower Bhvani Project (LBP) ayacuts.

Stating that the allotment was unfair, LBP farmers said the release of 0.5 tmc of water would not meet their requirements as the ayacut has a vast area. "The Kalingarayan ayacut has about 15,000 acres and the Thadapalli-Arakkankottai ayacut has about 25,000 acres. But the LBP ayacut has more than 2,00,000 acres. How will the farmers in LBP ayacut irrigate more than 2 lakh acres of land with just 0.5 tmc of water?" questions Lower Bhavani Farmers Welfare Association President S. Nallasamy.

The public works department had already begun releasing about 750 cusecs of water to the Kalingarayan ayacut based on the government's order.

Meanwhile, officials in the public works department said the LBP ayacut would be given more water from the existing storage in Bhavanisagar dam in addition to the allotment made by the government.

'Write off agriculture loans'

Tamizhaga Vivasayeegal Sangam has urged the Union and State Governments to write off agriculture loans. At its monthly meeting held in January, it has urged the State Government to supply fodder at subsidised cost as there was shortage of fodder because of drought.

It has asked the Government to publish online the monthly cultivation data, as ascertained by the Agriculture and Revenue Departments so that it would bring out the actual figure. Likewise, the Association wants the Government to revisit the subsidy fixed for the drip irrigation.

The farmers' association has also sought fixing guideline value for agriculture lands at a different rate until cultivation was on and not treat them as housing plots. Government should instruct sub registrars in this regard.

Agriculture Department to promote millet cultivation

As against a target of 43,500 hectares under millet cultivation for 2012-13, the Agriculture Department has thus far achieved 27,500 hectares.

Majority of the area is under Cholan, followed by maize.

According to S. Lakshmiraj, Joint Director of Agriculture, Coimbatore, the department plans to boost the area under millet in the January cultivation season to reach the target.

The Department will initiate the programme under the 'Initiative for Nutritional Security Through Intensive Millet Promotion' scheme.

The State Government has allocated Rs. 70.76 lakh for the purpose.

Training

He says that the Department has trained and been training farmers at various levels on the cultivation aspects, millets' nutritional levels and value addition from millet products.

The Department was implementing it in all the blocks in the district.

The Department has been promoting farmers' clusters by bringing together 15 – 20 farmers in a cluster. In each village it planned to have two or three such clusters.

It will then train the farmers' groups at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University and then supply critical agricultural inputs – seeds, fertilizers, bio fertilizers, and chemicals.

Objective

The objective was to increase the area under millet cultivation in a phased manner.

The over all objective was to increase millet cultivation among people to meet their nutritional needs.

Agricultural implements distributed

Assistance, relief and subsidy-based agricultural implements worth Rs.24.62 lakh were distributed to 272 beneficiaries at the 'mass contact day' programme held at Vellalaviduthi village near Gandarvakottai recently.

C. Manoharan, Collector, gave away assistance and received petitions from villagers.

He also gave away orders effecting name transfer in 'patta' records and prizes to villagers for best cattle care.

P. Kumar, MP, V.C. Ramaiah, president of District Panchayat and Sakthivel, Project Director of District Rural Development Agency were present.

'Centre should pay relief for samba crop loss'



Karnataka is delaying the gazetting of the final award of the Cauvery River Water Disputes Tribunal by placing objection before the Central government, said P.Nedumaran, president of Thamizhar Desiya Iyakkam, here on Wednesday.

He told presspersons that it was unfortunate that former Prime Minister Deve Gowda had gone to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to object.

"I strongly condemn this attitude of Karnataka and appeal to the Centre to gazette the final award," he said.

Take responsibility

He also said the Centre should take responsibility for the loss of samba crop in Cauvery delta districts.

“If the Centre had intervened after Supreme Court's order for release of water and forced Karnataka to release water, things would have been different. So the Centre should take the responsibility and pay relief for samba loss,” he said.

Fertile farmlands vanish in Cauvery delta as realty deals entice farmers



Pushed by unsettling agricultural conditions and pulled by lucrative real estate deals, farmers across the famed and fertile Cauvery delta in Tamil Nadu are selling their lands to real estate developers. In Amma Chatram, Marudhanallur, Tirunageswaram, Mathur, and in a host of other villages in Thanjavur and adjacent districts, farmlands are being converted to residential plots at a galloping rate.

The agricultural uncertainties have multiplied this year due to poor supply of water and the power situation, and real estate appears to be the exit option for farmers. Though worried about the situation, farmers are not complaining, and the reasons are not hard to find.

“Do not let the green colour deceive you. The fields have crops but they are wilting. There is not enough water now to see the crops through,” S. Thangappan, a farmer in Maruthuvakudi near Aduthurai, cautioned. “Three crops a year is a thing of the past. If we are lucky, we can have one good crop. An acre of agricultural land can normally yield about 30 to 35 bags of rice and our average profit would be Rs.6,000 to Rs.7,000 per acre. Mind you, this income comes after we harvest the crop and not every month. This year has been the worst and we would not be able to recover whatever we have spent,” he explained.

Thangappan would survive and may even continue farming. He is a retired truck driver and gets pension. No such options exist for the 55-year-old Rajakannuof Manalmedu near Pasupathi Koil. He owns less than an acre of land close to the Kudamuruti river. He cannot spend money on drilling a bore to tide over the water crisis, nor does he have income from other sources. “Agriculture is no more economically sustainable,” he complained.

The story of Radhakrishnan, a farmer in Musakulam, a village tucked away from the main road and located about 5 km from Tiruvarur, is equally distressing. Though he owns two acres, Radhakrishnan lives a difficult life. Without water, the crops are wilting and his family of four lives off the free rice the State government gives through its ration shops.

“Had my field been near the main road, it would have been worth many lakhs of rupees. Real estate people would have lined up to buy it to convert it to housing plots. What to do we are stuck in this small village,” Radhakrishnan said.

He has reasons to lament so. At Semmozhi Nagar, a housing colony on the main road to Tiruvarur and 2 km away from Radhakrishnan’s farm, the developers have sold all the plots. Those who own are reselling them at a price of about Rs.350 sq.ft. This makes the area, once a farmland, worth about Rs.1.5 crore an acre. The land prices escalate further as one approaches the town. In contrast, Radhakrishnan’s two-acre farm is worth only about Rs.2 lakh.

Even projects in small villages such as Amma Chatram, far away from Kumbakonam, the price of residential plots are as high as Rs.575 sq.ft. as against Rs.27 per sq.ft. for a farmland located a little further away. Such conversions have resulted not because of the organic growth of the place, but driven more by speculative investment. This is evidenced by the fact that only a few houses are built in the many colonies and vacant plots are regularly resold.

Mannachanallur, a village closer to the Kollidam river near Tiruchi, is an illustrative example to understand the consequence of farmland conversion. This place was once a well-known rice bowl and the local variety was very popular. Over the years, farmlands have turned into housing plots and agricultural production has significantly dropped. Prabha Raman, a wholesale rice dealer in Tiruchi, points out that “it is difficult to find the local rice in the market.” He explained that “more than 70 per cent of what is sold here and in other places in Tamil Nadu is from Karnataka. They are cheap and preferred.”

In 2011, the government amended the regulations to make conversion of wetlands difficult. Anyone wishing to change the land use had to get the permission of the district collector. The State government claimed that this would deter indiscriminate conversion, but, like other building rules, this too is followed in the breach.

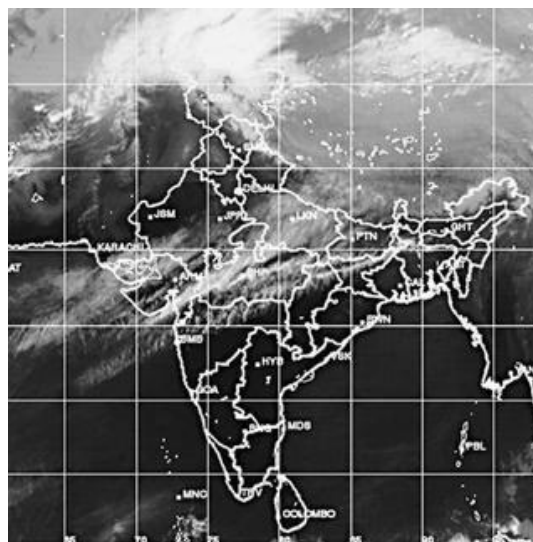
Unauthorised conversions

A revenue official in Kumbakonam said that people hardly sought approval. Unauthorised conversions are rampant and a major source of local corruption. A seller near Kumbakonam was ingenious. He applied for approval to convert 9.5 acres of farmland to 140 residential plots. After receiving the approval, he quietly annexed the adjacent land and divided it into another 100 plots.

Between 1971 and 2006, land under paddy cultivation has reduced by 6 lakh hectares. The much awaited results of the 2011 agricultural census are expected to show further decline.

It may be unfair to stop the farmers while allowing urban dwellers to benefit from the land value appreciation, particularly when agriculture is becoming difficult to pursue. At the same time, as the State agricultural plan, drafted by the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in 2009, projects an additional 7 lakh hectares has to be brought under cultivation by 2020 to meet the demand for rice. Addressing both the issues is going to be a tough challenge.

weather



New Delhi (Plm)	23	8	0	0
New Delhi (Sfd)	23	8	0	0
Chandigarh	21	9	0	0
Hissar	21	7	0	0
Bhuntar	20	3	0	8
Shimla	14	2	0	2
Jammu	20	8	0	1
Srinagar	12	0	0	6
Amritsar	19	3	0	5
Patiala	21	7	0	0
Jaipur	23	14	0	0
Udaipur	28	12	0	0
Allahabad	27	13	0	0
Lucknow	24	11	0	0
Varanasi	26	11	0	0
Dehradun	21	7	0	0
Agartala	26	9	0	0
Ahmedabad	28	14	0	0
Bangalore	30	15	0	0
Bhubaneshwar	33	18	0	1
Bhopal	30	14	0	0
Chennai	30	20	0	0
Guwahati	25	11	0	0
Hyderabad	32	17	0	0
Kolkata	27	15	0	12
Mumbai	29	19	0	0
Nagpur	33	13	0	6

Patna	25	11	0	0
Pune	33	12	0	0
Thiruvananthapuram	33	22	0	4
Imphal	24	3	0	0
Shillong	15	6	0	0

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

Rain and snow

Rainfall : Rain/snow has occurred at isolated places over Jammu and Kashmir. Weather was dry over rest of the region.

MINIIMUM TEMPERATURES: The minimum temperatures rose appreciably in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, rose in Haryana and changed little elsewhere. They were appreciably above normal in east Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, above normal in Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir and west Rajasthan and normal in rest of the region. The lowest minimum temperature in the plains was 03.0°C recorded at Amritsar (Punjab).

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 18th JANUARY 2013: Rain/snow would occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand during next 24 hours and increase thereafter. Rain/thundershowers would occur at one or two places over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and north Rajasthan during 24 hours and increase thereafter. Rain/thundershowers would occur at one or two places over south Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh on 17th onwards.

WARNING: Heavy to very heavy rain/snow would occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand on 17th and 18th. Thunder squall accompanied with hailstorm may occur at one or two places over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, west Uttar Pradesh and north Rajasthan on 17th and 18th January.

**FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 18th
JANUARY 2013:** Mainly clear sky becoming partly cloudy sky with possibility of light
rain/thunder development towards night. Fog in the morning.

weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Thursday, Jan 17

Max Min

28° | 22°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 94

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:35

Sunset: 06:02

Barometer: 1014

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Friday, Jan 18

Max Min

29° | 20°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday Jan 19	Sunday Jan 20	Monday Jan 21	Tuesday Jan 22	Wednesday Jan 23
30° 20° Partly Cloudy	25° 23° Overcast	25° 23° Overcast	25° 24° Cloudy	26° 23° Overcast

Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Humidity: 100

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 07:14

Sunset: 05:47

Barometer: 1014



December retail inflation rises to 10.56%

Rising for the third consecutive month, retail inflation breached the double-digit mark at 10.56% in December, driven by higher prices of vegetables, edible oil, pulses and cereal.

The retail inflation was 9.90% in November and 9.75% in October. The vegetables basket in December

recorded the highest inflation of 25.71% among all the constituents that make the Consumer Price Index (CPI), according to data released today.

Vegetables were followed by the oil and fats segment at 16.73%. Sugar turned more expensive by 13.55%. Pulses and cereals became dearer by 13.46% and 13.70% on an annual basis. Meat, fish and egg rose become 11.64% more expensive.

Clothing and footwear witnessed 10.74% increase in prices.

In urban areas, retail inflation rose to 10.42% in December from 9.69% in the previous month. The CPI for rural population increased to 10.74% during the month from 9.97% in November.

All India provisional General (all groups) CPI numbers of December 2012, for rural, urban and combined are 126.8, 124 and 125.6, respectively.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is expected to take into account the double-digit retail inflation when it comes out with its third-quarter policy review later this month.

Wholesale price based inflation for November was at 7.24%, much higher than the RBI comfort level of 5-6%.

Concerned over the persistent inflation, the RBI has kept key interest rates unchanged since April, 2012.

Industrial output growth rate had contracted by 0.1% in November, from a robust 8.3% in October.

THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

17.01.2013 A.M

16th jan 2013

Bearish trend likely in castorseed on higher inflow



Castorseed prices declined on Wednesday as demand was dull in the spot market. Moreover, market participants booked profit as prices had run up higher in the previous sessions.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), castorseed February contracts moved down by Rs 22 to Rs 3,677 a quintal with an open interest of 1,27,380 lots.

NCDEX March castorseed contracts declined by a similar margin to Rs 3,767 with an open interest of 34,850 lots. On the Rajkot Commodity Exchange, castorseed for March delivery decreased by Rs 6 to Rs 3,822.

About 28,000-30,000 bags of castorseed arrived in Gujarat and prices dropped by Rs 3 to Rs 710-723 for a *maund* of 20 kg.

Around 2,400-2,500 bags castorseed arrived in Saurashtra and prices were quoted at Rs 692-711.

A Rajkot-based castor trader said: “At present, export demand is dull in castorseed. With this, arrival during past one week has increased. In this condition castor price may decline further in the coming days.”

According to future market traders, market participants booked profit as spot demand was weak.

Natural rubber use up 3% in Apr—Dec; output rises by 2%

Natural rubber consumption in the country rose by 3 per cent to 7.42 lakh tonnes in the first three quarter of this fiscal.

Its production also increased by about 2 per cent to 6.93 lakh tonnes during the same period, Rubber Board data said.

India consumed 7.19 lakh tonnes tonnes of natural rubber and produced 6.82 lakh tonnes in April—December of 2011—12 financial year.

Import of natural rubber rose 23 per cent to 1.69 lakh tonnes in April—December of 2012—13 fiscal from 1.37 lakh tonnes in the year—ago period, while the exports declined by 53 per cent to 10,608 tonnes from 22,763 tonnes during the same period.

In December last year, the production of natural rubber increased marginally to 1.10 lakh tonnes from 1.07 lakh tonnes in the same month in 2011, while, its consumption declined to 78,000 tonnes from 84,795 tonnes during the corresponding period.

Rubber imports fell sharply to 13,611 tonnes in December last year from 21,146 tonnes, whereas, exports of the commodity rose to 1,429 tonnes from 1,077 tonnes in the same period.

Higher production cost offset poultry farmers profit



Poultry farmers in Namakkal, the hub of egg production in India, today said they are not making profits due to increased cost of raw material and acute power shortage, a leading association of egg producers said.

“Egg production cost now equalises the selling rate and there is no profit for farmers. Almost all farmers now have to rely on generators for electricity due to acute power shortage,” R Nallathambi, Namakkal eggs producers association said.

He said their profits had been affected after foreign countries like Muscat and Oman banned eggs following the bird flu in Bangalore outbreak in October 2012.

Nallathambi said despite the setbacks, one crore eggs are being despatched daily to markets in North India, 60 lakh to mid-day meals schemes and also to Kerala.

With agricultural production also declining, feed being supplied from this sector to poultry farmers had dwindled, he said.

Spot rubber skids on global cues



Spot rubber markets declined sharply on Wednesday. Moderate losses in the domestic and the international futures and the absence of quantity buyers kept the local market under pressure during the day. According to observers, there has been no selling pressure as growers seemed to be optimistic on a recovery in the market though it is passing through a bearish phase now.

Meanwhile the Key TOCOM rubber futures fell as a frustrating global economic outlook and a pause in the Yen's recent sell off triggered profit-taking at higher levels.

Sheet rubber weakened to Rs 160.50 (162.50) a kg, according to traders. The grade moved down to Rs 161.50 (163) a kg at Kottayam and Kochi, according to Rubber Board.

The February series declined to Rs 161.50 (164.00), March to Rs 163.70 (166.41), April to Rs 167.55 (170.52) and May to Rs 170.80 (173.93) a kg on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) dropped to Rs 180.21 (183.06) a kg at Bangkok. The January futures nosedived to ¥289.4 (Rs 179.95) from ¥297.5 during the day session, but then recovered partially to ¥298 (Rs 183.07) in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 160.50 (162.50); RSS-5: 156 (157); ungraded: 150 (152); ISNR 20: 157.50 (158) and latex 60 per cent: 106 (107.50).

India hard-sells buffalo meat, oilmeal to China

India is lobbying hard to sell buffalo meat, tobacco and oilmeal to China encouraged by its success in convincing its neighbour to buy Basmati rice from the country.

New Delhi has raised the red flag over the huge trade imbalance in Beijing's favour and has said that buying more farm products from the country by removing 'unnecessary' quality restrictions is one of the ways to bridge it.

"We are seriously pushing China to start buying buffalo meat and tobacco from us and also resume import of oilmeal. Expediting the formalities for Basmati imports is also something we are stressing on so that exports can start," Commerce Ministry Joint Secretary Asit Tripathy told *Business Line*.

China's trade surplus with India was nearly \$40 billion in 2011-12 and touched \$29 in the first eight months of the current fiscal.

"There is little we can do in terms of limiting Chinese imports as Indian industry needs Chinese equipment and machinery. We can try to lessen the deficit by selling more of our products, especially agriculture produce and pharmaceuticals," another official said.

The negotiations on farm products are being carried out by the Ministry together with the Agriculture & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (Apeda) , the Government's body for promoting farm exports.

Huge potential

"China holds a lot of potential for buffalo meat as it is a big consumer and our exports can touch \$1 billion in the first two years itself," Tripathy, who is also the Chairman of Apeda, said.

India is amongst the three largest exporters of bovine meat that includes Australia and Brazil and is slated to take the top spot in 2013 with a 30 per cent growth from 1.66 million tonnes to 2.15 million tonnes, according to industry estimates.

The US Department of Agriculture had predicted that India will be the top bovine meat exporter in 2012 itself, but the comparable figures are yet to come.

Chemical issues

China does not import buffalo meat from India as it is on the list of countries afflicted by the foot and mouth disease. Indian officials argue that production and processing of meat takes place following exact norms prescribed by the international quality prescriber OIE and there is no consumer risk what-so-ever.

India also wants China to resume imports of oilmeal that was suspended last year as traces of a chemical found in the green dye in sacks was detected by authorities. Indian exporters have now agreed to send their shipments in plastic bags.

China has also been discussing norms to import tobacco from India for the past couple of years but has not finalised things yet. “We hope to move on to other farm products, once we start exporting the ones with greatest potential,” the official said.

NMCE’s Dec rubber delivery soars over 800%

The National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE) has registered 800 per cent increase in rubber delivery on the exchange in December contract.

In December, the exchange registered the largest delivery ever on the exchange.

It was 1,544 tonnes against 183 tonnes in December 2011, a rise of 843.72 per cent.

Producers and suppliers benefitted by giving huge delivery on the exchange because the exchange price was more attractive, said a statement from the NMCE.

The tapping season of rubber has just started, the statement issued here said.

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

The stock position in the exchange certified warehouse is displayed on the Web site of the exchange in which one could get the information of daily arrivals and despatch. The stock position as on January 11 was 6,581 tonnes.

The commodity exchanges are not only meant for physical delivery but also for price discovery and price risk management.

Threat of delivery is to keep the futures market aligned with spot market so that nobody is able to manipulate the price on the futures market and convergence takes place on the settlement date, the statement added.

Coonoor tea auction volume drops



With dry winter conditions reducing the crop growth, the arrival of tea for Sale No: 3 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions to be held on Thursday and Friday has fallen.

In all, 16.59 lakh kg has been catalogued, reveals an analysis of brokers' listing. This is as much as 2.41 lakh kg less than last week's offer but as much as 5.20 lakh kg more than the offer this time last year.

Of the 16.59 lakh kg on offer, 11.77 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 4.82 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades. As much as 15.64 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 0.95 lakh kg, orthodox variety. In the leaf counter, only 0.56 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 11.21 lakh kg, CTC. Among the dusts, only 0.39 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 4.43 lakh kg, CTC.

Fresh tea accounts for 16.23 lakh kg while about 36,000 kg comprises teas which had remained unsold in previous auctions.

Exporters to Pakistan, however, are hesitant to invest huge sums in the context of India's continued allegation of ceasefire violation by Pakistan at the border. Export enquiry was weak. There was good demand from upcountry buyers for brighter liquoring teas.

Olive oil prices set to zoom as drought looms over Spain



Olive oil aficionados are in for a price shock. Hit by drought, Spain, the largest olive producer, has slashed the crop by about half.

As a result, prices of olive oil have firmed up by over 50 per cent in the past six months forcing the importers here to pass on the cost hike to consumers.

Besides, a weaker rupee against the Euro has further exerted pressure on the importers here.

Some brands, such as Leonardo and Borges, have partially hiked prices in past few months, attributing it to the weaker currency. However, a bigger price hike is in the offing.

“There is tremendous pressure on companies to pass on the costs. Prices could go up by about 60 per cent by March as we don’t have any choice,” said V.N. Dalmia, President, Indian Olive Association.

Spain, which produces 1.4-1.5 million tonnes of olive oil annually, is expected to produce between 600,000 and 700,000 tonnes, down by over 50 per cent. Spain is the largest exporter of olive oil to India, accounting more than half of the latter’s imports. As the total production of olive oil in the world is only about 3 million tonnes, a loss of 700,000–800,000 tonnes is significant, Dalmia said.

Apart from the rise in raw material price, the costs of processing and transportation have also gone up, compelling the importers hike prices.

Input costs

The price of raw material traded on commodity exchanges in Italy and Spain have gone up by an average of 50 per cent over past six months.

Dalmia said the price hike could stunt incremental growth in olive oil consumption in India, where rising affordability, health benefits and increased exposure to Western life styles were aiding the trend. Despite the recent hike in prices, India's olive oil imports were up 64 per cent for the April-September 2012 period at 4,527 tonnes against 2,627 tonnes in the corresponding period last year.

McCain Foods to invest \$69 m for potato processing in Gujarat

McCain Foods India Pvt Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Canadian major McCain Foods, will invest another \$69 million (Rs 372 crore) at its potato processing plant in Mehsana, Gujarat, a company official said.

The investments will roll in from October , said Vikas Mittal, Managing Director at the Vibrant Gujarat Summit held in Gandhinagar recently, according to a company statement here.

This investment will be done to expand capacities to meet increasing market demand for frozen snacks. It will increase farm acreage and employment opportunities to meet the expanded capacity needs.

The company expects more investment in Gujarat in short to medium term to meet growth needs, he said.

McCain Foods India is working with about 1,200 contract farmers over 4,000 acres in Gujarat to cultivate 'processed quality' potatoes in the State.

To meet the enhanced plant capacity, McCain Foods will be working with contracted farmers to double the acreage under potato cultivation.

For a variety of reasons, including agro-climatic conditions, a strong base of skilled farmers and infrastructure, Gujarat will continue to be McCain's preferred destination, he added.

McCain Foods India had set up a potato processing plant in Mehsana district with an investment of nearly \$35 million.

For farmers, a one-stop portal for all agrarian needs



There are 80 Web sites and portals run by Governments providing information to farmers on soil, plant protection, diseases, weather forecast, fertiliser use and farm and crop management. The number could be much more in the private sector. All this is likely to confuse the farmer.

To tackle this, the Union Government has come up with the idea of a unified portal, to provide information on all farming needs. The portal www.farmer.gov.in, is not fully live yet. The basic beta version in English is aimed at integrating all relevant information from the various Web sites.

The portal integrates the convergence technologies to offer latest information to farmers, instead of uploading dated information. For example, the information fertiliser dealers upload through SMS would be updated automatically.

“ We are not going to offer him content in a language he is not familiar with. We are working with the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing to translate the content into various local languages,” Sanjeev Gupta, Joint Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Government of India, told *Business Line*.

The Government is hoping to make it available to the farmers in the next few months.

In order to make it a farmer-friendly portal, the Department has divided the country into 125 blocks. “Compare this with the number of agri-climatic zones in the country. They are just 23.

When they open the portal, the farmers see the Indian map. Depending on their location, they can select a State and the block they belong to,” he said.

An IITian, Sanjeev Gupta said the portal would provide information on the sources of all agricultural inputs. To check hoarding, the Government will mandate the dealers to upload the stock position through SMS, if they are not familiar with the Internet .

“The system will prompt them with a few questions. The answers will be converted into updates on the portal, giving the farmers latest information,” he said.

Mixed trend in pepper

The pepper market witnessed mixed trend on Wednesday with the running contract February moving up while others dropping on liquidation/switching over.

The market was highly volatile with huge volumes being traded. February contract opened at Rs 37,030 a quintal and traded with high volatility and before beginning of the forenoon session touched the lowest price of the day at Rs 36,745 a quintal, down by Rs 285.

Thereafter, it traded with marginal volatility. However, in the afternoon session prices moved up sharply and touched the highest price of the day in the closing hour at Rs 37,560 a quintal up by Rs 815 and witnessed high volatility and in the closing minutes it fell sharply to the last traded price of Rs 37,100. However, the last half-hour closing average was given as Rs 37,230 a quintal.

Heavy liquidation in February brought down February open interest to below 2,000 tonnes. Many liquidated for fear of getting delivery.

Spot trade

On the spot, 22 tonnes of pepper arrived and they were traded at Rs 375 to 395 depending upon the quality, bulk density and area of production, they said.

February contract on the NCDEX increased by Rs 275 a quintal to close at Rs 37,230 a quintal. March and April contracts dropped by Rs 210 and Rs 115 respectively a quintal to close at Rs 35,275 and Rs 34,600 a quintal.

Total turnover increased by 568 tonnes to close at 3,044 tonnes. Total open interest dropped by 146 tonnes to close at 3,344 tonnes.

February open interest decreased by 299 tonnes to 1,957 tonnes while Mar and Apr dropped by 141 tonnes and 4 (four) tonnes respectively to close at 980 tonnes and 342 tonnes.

Spot prices increased by Rs100 in tandem with the futures market trend and the good demand to close at Rs 38,400 (ungarbled) and Rs 39,900 (MG 1) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market was at \$7,850 a tonne (c&f) at spot prices for Jan while at Feb was at \$7,100 a tonne and it remained competitive but no body dared to make any offer for fear of delivery of the material, they said.

Tur seen steady on fall in output



Tur has been ruling stable in Indore for the past few days amid subdued demand.

Though arrival of new tur has started in local mandis, it is yet to pick momentum.

Besides, availability of cheap imported lemon tur on Mumbai port, which is costing Rs 3,675-3,700 a quintal, has also added to the bearish sentiment in domestic tur.

Currently, tur (Maharashtra) in Indore is ruling at Rs 4,000-4,050, while tur (Madhya Pradesh) is ruling at Rs 3,000-3,400.

With last year's stock of domestic tur getting exhausted and report of decline in domestic crop output, any major fall in tur prices from its current level appears unlikely, said a pulse trader, Sanjay Agrawal.

Moong and urad ruled stable amid subdued demand. After trading high last week on account of Makar Sankranti, moong prices have come back to normal with moong (best) currently ruling at Rs 5,200-5,300, while moong (medium) ruled at Rs 4,500-4,800.

Last week, moong prices were on the rise on buying support had gone up to Rs 5,300. Moong dal also ruled stable with moong dal (medium) ruling at Rs 6,000-6,200, moong dal (bold) at Rs 6,600-6,700, while moong mongar ruled at Rs 7,000-7,200.

Similarly urad and its dal ruled stable with urad (bold) in local mandis on Friday being quoted at Rs 3,400-3,500, while urad (medium) at Rs 2,900-3,000.

Urad dal also ruled steady on slack demand with urad dal (medium) on Wednesday being quoted at Rs 4,000-4,100, urad dal (bold) at Rs 4,500-4,600, while urad mongar ruled at Rs 5,700-6,000.

Sugar rules static as mills continue supply

Sugar prices at upper mill and naka level ruled steady on Wednesday.

The Vashi wholesale spot sugar market remained closed on account of the death of a broker. There was no loading unloading in the market.

Routine local demand kept volume normal at mill level previous day evening.

Sources said that traders have not booked new orders. There is a continuous supply from mills and ease in local demand in middle month kept business routine till now. The domestic sugar futures market was slightly up.

In the Vashi market, arrivals were 58-60 truckloads (each of 100 bags) but were not unloaded. There were no local dispatches. On Tuesday evening, about 15-16 mills sold about 58,000-60,000 bags (each of 100 kg) at Rs 3,100-3,150 (Rs 3,100-3,150) for S-grade and Rs 3,220-3,270 (Rs 3,200-3,270) for M-grade.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, sugar prices for February futures were higher by Rs 10 to Rs 3,262 (Rs 3,252); March up by Rs 10 to Rs 3,295 (Rs 3,285) and April was Rs 3,348 (Rs 3,340).

Spot sugar prices in the Vashi market were: S-grade Rs 3,242-3,322 (Rs 3,242-3,322) and M-grade Rs 3,362-3,471 (Rs 3,362-3,471). **Naka level prices were** S-grade Rs 3,200 -3,250 (Rs 3,200 -3,250) and M-grade Rs 3,250-3,400 (Rs 3,250-3,400).

Poultry feed eases as key ingredients turn cheap



Following continuous fall in prices of key ingredients, prices of poultry feed products turned cheaper on Wednesday.

A continuous fall in soyameal mainly led feed prices down, said Aditya Mishra, a commodity expert.

After touching levels of Rs 3,010 a quintal in the third week of December, soyameal prices have been falling, he said.

Soyameal eased further by Rs 70 and settled at Rs 2,760. Bajra went down by Rs 25 to Rs 1,370, while maize quoted Rs 30 up at Rs 1,580.

Di-calcium phosphate at Rs 36.50 a kg and meat and bone meal at Rs 32 a kg remained unchanged.

Rice bran oil was quoted at Rs 56 a kg, while after witnessing a fall last week, mustard de-oiled cake ruled flat at Rs 1,530 a quintal.

Feed Prices

After ruling flat since the last week of November, feed prices went down by Rs 20-60 for a 30 kg and 50 kg bag on Wednesday.

Price of broiler concentrate feed eased by Rs 60 and quoted at Rs 1,800 for a 50-kg bag while broiler starter mash was Rs 20 down at Rs 1,440.

Broiler pre-starter concentrate 30 per cent went down by Rs 60 at Rs 1,540 for a 30-kg bag while layer concentrate quoted Rs 60 down at Rs 1,365 for a 50-kg bag.

Pre-lay mash and broiler finisher went down by Rs 20 each and quoted at Rs 1,010 for a 50-kg bag and Rs 1,420 for a 50-kg bag, respectively.

Poultry Products

Meanwhile, an increase in demand pushed broiler and chick prices marginally up while egg traded in a negative territory, on Wednesday.

Egg was marginally down at Rs 3.48. Broiler went up by Rs 2 and quoted at Rs 78-80 a kg, while chick improved by Rs 4 and sold at Rs 20-22.

Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

17.01.2013 A.M

Wheat falls 2.5% on bumper crop hopes



Wheat futures for January fell by Rs 39, or 2.47% to Rs 1,538 per quintal in 1,510 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, the February contract held steady at Rs 1,483 per quintal in 9,600 lots.

Speculators reducing their positions, amid hopes of a bumper crop affected the trade.

Potato slips 4% on increased supply



Potato futures for May plunged by Rs 33.70, or 4%, at Rs 808.10 per quintal in 242 lots.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, the March contract lost Rs 21.80, or 2.64%, to Rs 803.50 per quintal in 446 lots.

Traders offloading their positions, sluggish demand against increased supply triggered the downtrend.

Jeera rises 0.24% on export demand

Jeera futures for April gained Rs 32.50, or 0.24%, to Rs 13,850 per quintal in 5,556 lots.



At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, the March contract gained Rs 22.50 or 0.16%, to Rs 13,850 per quintal in 12,843 lots.

Speculators building up huge positions amid overseas demand triggered the uptrend.

However, expectations of higher output restricted the gains.

Turmeric down 0.3% on profit-booking

Turmeric futures for May fell by Rs 20, or 0.3%, to Rs 6,670 per quintal in 7,255 lots.



At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, the April contract lost Rs 6, or 0.09%, to Rs 6,560 per quintal in 28,535 lots.

Speculators trimming their positions, weak export demand and higher carry-forward stocks triggered the downtrend.

However, reports of lower area under cultivation due to scant rainfall during the planting season limited the gains.

Cardamom 0.45% weak on profit-booking

Cardamom futures for March declined by Rs 4.90, or 0.45%, to Rs 1,077.20 per kg in 30 lots.



At the Multi Commodity Exchange, the February contract traded lower by Rs 2.70, or 0.26%, to Rs 1,040.70 per kg in 228 lots.

Profit-booking by speculators, a weak spot market trend due to sluggish demand triggered the downtrend.

Increased arrivals from producing regions also influenced cardamom prices.

Pepper moves up 0.3% on thin supply

Pepper futures for March moved up by Rs 105, or 0.3%, to Rs 35,590, per quintal in 834 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, the February contract gained Rs 95, or 0.26%, to Rs 37,050 per quintal in 2,237 lots.



Speculative positions by participants, firm spot market trend due to winter season demand amid thin supplies, triggered the uptrend.

However, expectations of good yield in the top-producing regions, capped the gain



THE TIMES OF INDIA

TODAY FARM NEWS

17.01.2013 A.M

Modi congratulates farmers on winning Krishi Commendation Award for food grain production

AHMEDABAD: Gujarat chief minister [Narendra Modi](#) today, congratulated farmers of the state and agriculture department for winning central government's [Krishi Commendation Award](#) for excellent food grain production. In the year 2010-11 Gujarat had produced record 100.07 lakh tones of food grain.

Giving outlines of the award today in a meeting of state cabinet, headed by the chief minister, state agriculture minister Babubhai Bokhariya informed that the state has bagged the Krishi Commendation Award from the President [Pranab Mukharjee](#) and Union agriculture minister [Sharad Pawar](#).

Krishi Karman and Krishi Commendation Award, 2011-12 have been presented to the states for exemplary [food grain production](#) and the Gujarat bagged Krishi Commendation Award of Rs 25 lakh among seven award categories.

Gujarat chiefly cultivates commercial and cash crops. However since last few years through annual [Krishi Mahotsav](#) drive and water conversation efforts, the state government claimed that the production has increased.

As per the state government's claim in the last 10 years, productivity of the state has increased by 75 % to 1,955kg per hectare from 1,112kg per hectare in 2001.

Total agriculture production of the state jumped to 92.56 lakh.

MT in 47.34 lakh hectare in 2011-12 from 42.92 lakh tone in 38.59 lakh hectare, which shows an increase of 115%.

As per state government's claim the state has continuously managed an agricultural growth rate of over 10%.

Farmers fume as breached Salem bundh floods fields

SALVADOR DO MUNDO: A few breaches in the [Salem khazan bundh](#) have left the farmers' community in Salvador do Mundo in a tizzy with allegations of inaction by the tenants' association and sabotage by some elements flying across thick and fast.

An approximately 6 metre-breach in the Salem bundh on December 17, 2012, has flooded the fields along the 1 km-stretch on the Mapusa riverfront.

The major breach, which occurred after almost a decade to the internal 2 km-bundh and kept increasing despite attempts to plug it, pushes the water level at high tide about 1 km away from the broken bundh at Gangoz.

A few more breaches have occurred to the outer bundh on the riverfront.

Locals say the few houses in the area are safe for now.

"There is no immediate danger of flooding of habitation, but we are worried about the consequences of salinity (on the fields) if the bundh is not repaired soon," said a local.

Sources said the Salem khazan tenants association chairman Agnelo Fernandes has been battling to plug the breach ever since the day it occurred. But on Tuesday, almost a month after the breach occurred, agitated farmers held a meeting in the village and demanded Fernandes' resignation for failing to repair the bundh.

"We have tried to fill up the breach on a few occasions, but it keeps breaking down," Fernandes told TOI.

Denying his negligence in the matter, he said the association had been carrying out minor repairs and pointed out that the bundh had not collapsed for over five years during his tenure.

He said he agreed to quit after the farmers marched to his house after the meeting.

The Salem bundh is the second line of defence to a pond owned by D J Natekar. The rectangular shaped pond is located on the Mapusa riverfront and the outer wall has sprung over six breaches.

Natekar could not be contacted, but sources said he has sworn an affidavit making some suggestions, but has allegedly avoided mentioning the breaches to his bundh.

"It is due to these breaches that the surge of water from the river is washing away the filled-up portions," Fernandes explained.

He did not rule out sabotage, alleging that some elements may be keen to carry out aquaculture in the area.

The association, meanwhile, had written to the Bardez mamlatdar requesting authorities to initiate measures to restore the bundh.

Mamlatdar Pundalik Khorjuekar has referred the matter to the soil conservation division of the agriculture department. The Salem association, which has about 60 farmers as its members, has agreed to share 50% of the estimated cost of 5 lakh.

"We are waiting for the mamlatdar's letter to start the work, but we can also do it (repair work) under emergency conditions," said P B Akki, executive engineer, soil conservation division, agriculture department.

Agri pattern, poaching affect keep migratory bird arrivals

KOCHI: The water bird count conducted at the Kole wetlands of Thrissur has found a significant dip in arrival of birds this year, compared to the last two years.

Kole wetlands had been declared 'Ramsar Site' or wetlands of international importance, as it is one of the globally recognized areas that see noticeable bird movements and is rich in biodiversity.

The survey was conducted as part of the Asian Water-bird Census, with support from the Kerala state forest department, Indian Bird Conservation Network, Kerala Birder and College of Forestry.

"A total of 30,764 birds were counted this year. This is about 16,000 birds less than the 46,002 counted in 2012, and about 7,000 birds less than the count of 37,742 in 2011," PO Nameer, head of the Centre for Wildlife Studies, [College of Forestry](#), Kerala Agricultural University (KAU), who led the survey team told TOI.

Dr Nameer, however, observed such fluctuations in bird population have shown in past annual surveys as well, hence there was no need for undue anxiety over this.

"Kole fields have been witnessing changes in the cropping periods according to the water availability. This could be one of the reasons that has caused fluctuations in bird arrivals. There have been reports of poaching incidents in the area, and we must be vigilant about this," Nameer said.

Indian Pond Heron, Cattle Egret, Little Egret, Great Egret, Lesser Whistling Duck, Northern Pintail, Garganey, Asian Openbill and Whiskered Tern are some of the birds that have shown a decline in their arrival trend this year.

On the brighter side, the survey team located two vulnerable species -- Indian Spotted Eagle (*Aquila hastate*) and Greater Spotted Eagle (*Aquila clanga*). There has been a steady increase in the population of the near-endangered Oriental Darter, from 148 in 2011 to 163 in 2012 to 189 this year, Nameer said. Other threatened birds sighted at Kole this year included Black-tailed Godwit, Painted Stork and Black-headed Ibis.

About 100 birdwatchers participated in the counting conducted at 10 places in Kole.

In MP's golden harvest, rich pickings for CM

By winning an award for excellence in foodgrain production on Tuesday, Madhya Pradesh may have redeemed itself. Till recently, it could not contribute to the central pool even a third of what its poor consumed. Last year, it procured three times more wheat than was distributed under the PDS.

It is a clever combination of earthy politics, hard work and generous help from nature that has helped Madhya Pradesh script this success story. Its production of 190.46 lakh tonne foodgrain in 2011-12 was 18.91 per cent more than its previous highest of 160.16 in 2009-10. It also won the top slot in the category of states producing 100 lakh tonnes.

On the political front, a slew of populist measures like giving a bonus of Rs 100 over and above the MSP and gradual reduction in interest rate on loans disbursed by cooperative banks to zero did the trick. The MSP is given by the Centre but by giving the additional amount, the state government succeeded in appropriating the role of the benefactor. Not surprisingly, a few other states have already started giving the largesse or plan to follow suit.

While private firms that used to buy wheat from MP started sourcing from states where it's cheaper, CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan warded off any fallout with the refrain: "We will buy the last grain, no farmer will be turned away." The 70 per cent of the state's population still dependent on agriculture is a powerful vote bank.

Chouhan also sent a message when a couple of years ago, his government constituted a separate Krishi Cabinet comprising ministries and departments dealing with agriculture. It has not done anything extraordinary but it was enough to give the signal of seriousness. The opposition Congress has found itself inadequate to provide a political response to this. Its allegations about inflated volumes and irregularities haven't cut much ice. While Chouhan hopes to benefit in the state, the agriculture gains may also pay off centrally. By wearing his pro-kisan

image on his sleeve, he has succeeded in doing with agriculture and other social sector schemes what his Gujarat counterpart Narendra Modi has done with infrastructure and industries.

In the BJP's leadership stakes, that may count.

Milind is a senior assistant editor, based in Bhopal, milind.ghatwai @expressindia.com