

Mettur blocks all attention leaving 17-channel areas in 'rain shadow'



In the hue and cry over the failure of monsoon and its impact on Mettur dam and kuruvai and samba crops in the delta region, the farmers here are worried that the State government has lost sight of the standing crops in about 1.50 lakh acres in the 17-channel area between Mettur dam and Grand Anicut.

While the total ayacut of these channels is over two lakh acres, Uyyakkondan Vaikal alone has an ayacut of over 23,000 acres.

These ayacuts are spread over a number of taluks including Paramathi-Velur, Gobichettipalayam, Sathyamangalam, Bhavani, Erode, Karur, Krishnarayapuram, Kulithalai, Srirangam, Manachanallur, Tiruchi, Lalgudi, Ariyalur, and Musiri.

With the release of water from Mettur dam being stopped following serious fall in storage, and Karnataka refusing to part with any water during the past more than a fortnight despite the direction of the Cauvery Monitoring Committee, the samba crop in delta region was the first victim.

"It is the crops in the 17-channel area that would be the next victim," laments Puliur A.Nagarajan, vice president, agriculturists' wing, Tamil Nadu Congress Committee.

“The State government has not come out with any policy initiatives to help us out (if the crops were to wither) as it did in the case of delta ryots,” he adds.

“We were assured of water supply for irrigation through these riverine channels throughout the year as early as 1838 by J.R.Brown, Collector of Trichinopoly,” points out Mahadanapuram Rajaram, working president, Cauvery Delta Farmers’ Welfare Association.

“All these ayacuts are triple-crop (muppogam) areas and that’s why they were assured of round-the-year irrigation. Even the dates of staggered closure for repairs and maintenance have been notified by the British Collector,” points out N.Natarajan, former superintending engineer, PWD, and a member of the Cauvery Family. “The system depending on these 17 channels has been functioning well for long and not a drop of water was wasted,” he asserts. These farmers have been traditionally raising annual crops such as banana, sugarcane, turmeric, betel vines, coconut, oil palm, and paddy. This year, while sugarcane is said to have been raised in about one lakh acres, banana has been raised in at least about 40,000 acres.

According to farmers, most of these ayacuts have rarely been dependent on Mettur dam release because they have “open source”. Rivers such as Bhavani, Noyyal, and Amaravathi, which are perennial, and a number of other smaller rivers joined the Cauvery between Mettur and Upper Anicut and they were the original feeders to these channels. Now Bhavani, Noyyal, and Amaravathi are unable to contribute much to the Cauvery. Besides, the lift irrigation societies are drawing water from the Cauvery even during “non-mettur season”.

Hence, the demand of the ayacutdars of the 17 channels is that their legal right for water throughout the year should be recognised. “We should not be treated like country cousins of delta farmers”. Besides, they plead that at least 3,000 cusecs should be released from the Mettur Dam instead of the current 500 cusecs so that it would reach at least Upper Anicut and feed these channels.


However, according to official sources, the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal has categorically said that first priority would be accorded only to “food security” of the State – meaning the delta region – where paddy is the only crop and which has more than 12 lakh acres of normal paddy coverage . When there is hardly any storage in Mettur dam for irrigation and all that the government now releasing is only for drinking water purposes, it would be virtually impossible to pay heed to the 17-channel area farmers, they clarified.

Survey of crop failure over

WHEN MONSOON PLAYED TRUANT * HA: HECTARE

CROP	NORMAL AREA	AREA COVERED	UNSOWN AREA	AREA AFFECTED	
				OVER 50 PER CENT	LESS THAN 50 PER CENT
PADDY	61,000 HA	15,000 HA	45,000 HA	6,170 HA	5,200 HA
MILLET	25,800 HA	15,200 HA	10,600 HA	9,900 HA	2,100 HA
PULSES	8,800 HA	6,400 HA	2,400 HA	3,200 HA	1,350 HA
OILSEEDS	4,900 HA	2,400 HA	2,500 HA	680 HA	250 HA
COTTON	6,700 HA	4,100 HA	2,600 HA	3,200 HA	680 HA
SUGARCANE	4,500 HA	4,585	--	--	--

- Madurai district comprises 13 blocks.
- Total cultivable area of various crops stands at 1,11,700 HA.
- Kalligudi, Kallupatti in Tirumangalam block affected.
- Madurai East, Vadipatti, Melur blocks highest unsown areas.
- Last such survey was taken in 2010 when there was a flood.
- Ratio of conversion of agriculture land likely to be high.



A comprehensive survey of the crop failure in the district had been completed and a report sent to the government, Agriculture Department officials said here on Thursday.

The survey was conducted in response to appeals for compensation by farmers reeling under losses due to a failed monsoon.

Collector Anshul Mishra, Joint Director (Agriculture) S. Rajendran and other officials spearheaded the survey.

According to officials, the survey addressed four broad questions — (a) normal area of cultivation, (b) area covered, (c) unsown area and (d) area affected — (I) over 50 per cent and (II) less than 50 per cent.

The district has a total area under cultivation of around one lakh hectares, which includes paddy, millet, pulses, oil seeds, cotton and sugarcane. Paddy cultivation alone covers 61,000 hectares.

The survey indicated that of the 13 blocks, Madurai East, Vadipatti and Melur blocks had extensive unsown area. Farmers in this pocket relied on water from the Periyar reservoir and preferred to keep away off cultivation for fear of getting into debt, officials said.

Kalligudi and Kallupatti blocks near Tirumangalam are severely affected due to lack of water for irrigation. Farmers resumed agricultural activity after the PWD released water from the reservoir.

After a fortnight, when there was no rainfall, the officials realised that the available water would be sufficient just for 10 days. Farmers are demanding water supply to cover 75 days.

Mr. Mishra said that farmers who had their own water sources were able to grow crops.

Agriculture Department officials are recommending that farmers switch from paddy to crops that are less heavily reliant on water availability.

Close to 45,000 hectares had been left fallow in the district this season, raising farmers' hopes for a fair compensation from the government.

CPI(M) seeks compensation for Pudukottai farmers

State secretary of Communist Party of India (Marxist), G. Ramakrishnan, urged the State government to announce compensation to samba paddy farmers.

Addressing presspersons after visiting the affected paddy fields at Egaperumanur and surrounding villages near Aranthangi on Thursday, Mr. Ramakrishnan said paddy growers had been hard hit due to the failure of the monsoon and the government should come to their rescue.

He said a compensation of Rs.25,000 an acre for every farmer and Rs.10,000 for every agricultural labourer should be announced.

Referring to the irrigation system in the district, Mr. Ramakrishnan said Pudukottai too formed part of the Cauvery delta as a large area was being irrigated through the river.

He urged the State government to include Pudukottai district as part of the delta districts, as agricultural packages had been extended to Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts.

Growers demand 50 p.c. import duty on red gram

The Hyderabad Karnataka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HKCCI) and the Karnataka Red Gram Growers' Association have demanded that import duty of 50 per cent be imposed on red gram from Myanmar and Tanzania, among others, to balance the supply and demand in the country.

HKCCI president Umakant Nigudgi and secretary Basavaraj Hadgil, speaking at a meeting with Yogesh Suri, Advisor to the Planning Commission, said here on Thursday that substandard red gram imported from these countries at cheaper rates was a major reason for the crash in prices of the pulse.

Imposing import duty or anti-dumping duty would help stabilise the prices of the produce in the Indian market, they said. The government, which had hinted at imposing duty on imported gold, should follow the same principle for red gram, they said.

Dr. Suri said the Centre had decided to allow the import of pulses to overcome the shortage of more than 3.5 million tonnes in production of pulses in the country.

Mr. Nigudgi demanded a special package of Rs. 1,000 crore towards red gram cultivation in the region. Focus should be on research and development for increasing the yield and introducing pest-resistant varieties, he suggested. Farmers' leader and association vice-president Karisiddappa Patil said the minimum support price fixed by the Centre was "unscientific". Input costs had increased three times and labour charges had doubled, yet the price of red gram was the same. The MSP should be increased to Rs. 5,000 a quintal from Rs. 3,850, he demanded.

Dr. Suri had pointed out that the government took into consideration inflation and final cost of the produce while fixing the support price.

K.V. Thomas to inaugurate farm fete

Union Minister of State for Agriculture K.V. Thomas will inaugurate 'Polima' agriculture festival, jointly organised by the State Agriculture Department, Agriculture Technology Management Agency and People's Service Society, at the Town Hall here on Friday at 9 a.m.

The Minister will also inaugurate procurement and distribution of farm products while M.B. Rajesh, MP, will inaugurate an exhibition of agriculture products. District panchayat president T.N. Khandamuthan will honour the farmers who had won awards.

Shafi Parambil, MLA, will inaugurate a seminar on agriculture. Mar Jacob Manathodath, Bishop of Palakkad diocese, will preside.

Farmers protest, seek 7-hour power supply

Farmers laid siege to the electric sub-station at Jalalpur village in Balkonda mandal on Thursday complaining that they were not getting seven hour continuous power supply to the agriculture fields as promised by the government. Deploring that they had no other go than holding protests before the government offices to exert pressure on the authorities for power supply they said that due to frequent interruptions in the supply the standing paddy crop was getting dried up. – Staff Reporter

Coconut to be procured through Krishi Bhavans

The government will procure raw coconut from farmers through 39 Krishi Bhavans in 13 blocks of the district. Principal Agriculture Officer G. Sudarshan said that in each block coconut will be procured through three to four Krishi Bhavans.

An amount of Rs.78 lakh was allotted to the district for the preliminary works of the procurement.

Each Krishi Bhavan would be given Rs.2 lakh, he said.

Mr. Sudarshan said that procurement would begin in the district on getting government sanction.

A meeting of top officials to review the procurement arrangements would be held at the district panchayat conference hall at 11 a.m. on Friday. Kerafed would pay the farmers for the coconuts procured. Only the crop of those farmers registered with Krishi Bhavans would only be procured, Mr. Sudarshan said.

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The Nilgiris needs a separate development authority

In ensuring the economic well-being of this holiday destination, tourism plays a crucial role and as of now there is no cause for concern vis a vis its health.

Winter, Spring, Summer or Fall, the place continues to be south India's premier hill station, notwithstanding its haphazard development. However, taking a hard look at the sector's past, present and future would be of considerable help.

Expressing this view, veterans in the hospitality and travel sectors and some green activists opined that tourism in the Blue Mountains needs better planning.

Speaking to *The Hindu* here on Thursday, they pointed out that tourism in the hill station which was seasonal for many decades had become round-the-year, a couple of decades ago.

It had changed over the years and though the hill station attracts visitors in all seasons, the flow is good only on weekends.

Cautioning that the local people and the authorities can no longer afford to be complacent, they said that for too long it has survived on its past reputation.

If the situation in places like Jammu and Kashmir improves and alternatives are provided to the tourists, “they will gladly change their travel plans”.

This place, which has for long been considered a tourist ‘goldmine’, should not be allowed to be neglected any longer in terms of organised tourism. Already discerning tourists, both domestic and foreign, are reluctant to make a repeat visit.

“We have had enough” is their refrain while referring to the lack of civic amenities.

Though there was a time when unlike other hill stations, Ooty boasted of excellent roads, over the years this sector, including the national highway passing through the town, has done considerable harm to the image of the town.

Despite the large-scale environmental degradation and haphazard development which has taken place, Ooty still manages to cling on to its ‘Queen of Hill Stations’ sobriquet.

Since it is one of the few places in the country which beckons both VIPs and the common people, the government should take the initiative to put in place a development model exclusively for the district. It should ensure that development and conservation go hand-in-hand. While discouraging unplanned promotion of tourism, all efforts should be made to improve infrastructural facilities so that visitors can carry back pleasant memories. The standard of sanitation and hygiene should be high.

The tendency to treat the place merely as a summer resort should change and its immense contribution to the welfare of the State should not be lost sight of.

The revenue generated by tourist spots like the Government Botanical Garden and the Ooty Lake help maintain many other such spots in the State. The need of the hour is a separate authority for the development of the district.

TN in forefront of poverty eradication

Complete uplift:P.Amutha, Chief Executive Officer, TNSRLM, speaking at a seminar in Tiruvarur on Thursday. S.Natarajan, Collector, is in the picture.

Tamil Nadu is in the forefront in India of eradication of poverty, said P.Amutha, Chief Executive Officer, Tamil Nadu State Rural Livelihoods Mission (TNSRLM), here on Thursday. After inaugurating a district-level seminar on 'Vision 2023' and Puthu Vazhvu schemes, Ms. Amutha said that poverty in India remained at 53.88 per cent in 1973-74. Efforts made by the Central and the State government brought it down to 44.48 per cent in 1983-84, 35.97 per cent in 1993-94, and finally to 26 per cent in 2004-05. "All department officials should work towards eradicating poverty in the State and the country," said Ms. Amutha.

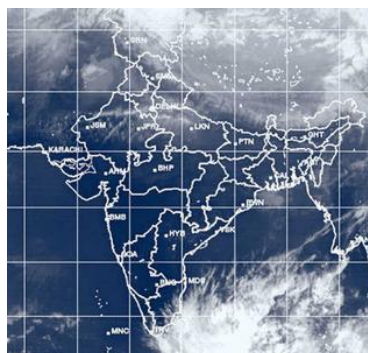
She said that women self-help groups were started in Dharmapuri in 1983. Non-governmental organisations were used to make them perform. Mahalir Thittam was introduced in 1997. Pudu Vazhvu Thittam aiming at alleviating poverty was also introduced in 2005.

It has been implemented for the past eight years. First it was implemented in 15 districts and later extended to another 10 districts. Pudu Vazhvu Thittam is being implemented in Tiruvarur district.

The aim is to identify poor and weaker sections, and strengthen them through strong movements. In human resource development, Tiruvarur district is better than Thanjavur, Vellore, Salem, Namakkal, Dindigul and Ramanathapuram, Ms. Amutha said. Real beneficiaries like rural poor and differently abled should be identified and provided with benefits of schemes.

S.Natarajan, Collector, presided over the meeting.

weather



New Delhi (Plm)	10	5	0	0
New Delhi (Sfd)	10	4	0	0
Chandigarh	10	5	0	0
Hissar	14	5	0	0
Bhuntar	17	-1	0	0
Shimla	13	1	0	0
Jammu	9	7	0	0
Srinagar	9	-4	0	0
Amritsar	10	7	0	0
Patiala	11	5	0	0
Jaipur	21	4	0	0
Udaipur	22	4	0	0
Allahabad	23	7	0	0
Lucknow	20	4	0	0
Varanasi	23	9	0	0
Dehradun	19	3	0	0
Agartala	26	11	0	0
Ahmedabad	26	10	0	0
Bangalore	30	17	0	0
Bhubaneshwar	31	21	0	0
Bhopal	23	9	0	0
Chennai	31	22	0	0
Guwahati	27	10	0	0
Hyderabad	34	22	0	0
Kolkata	27	17	12	12
Mumbai	29	19	0	0
Nagpur	31	15	0	6

Patna	24	11	0	0
Pune	33	14	0	0
Thiruvananthapuram	33	23	0	0
Imphal	25	5	0	0
Shillong	16	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.

Mercury dips

Cold day conditions are prevailing over most parts of Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and west Uttar Pradesh.

Weather was mainly dry over the region.

MINIIMUM TEMPERATURES: The minimum temperatures fell in east Rajasthan and changed little elsewhere. They were appreciably below normal in west Uttar Pradesh, below normal in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and normal in the rest of the region. The lowest minimum temperature in the plains was 0.4°C recorded at Bikaner (Rajasthan).

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 5th JANUARY 2013: Rain/Snow would occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. Weather would be mainly dry over rest of the region. Fog conditions would occur in some parts of Haryana, Punjab, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and north Rajasthan during morning hours.

WARNING: Cold day conditions would prevail over some parts of Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and west Uttar Pradesh during next 48 hours. Dense fog (Visibility less than 200metre) would occur in some parts of Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and north Rajasthan during the next 48 hours. Ground frost would occur in isolated pockets of Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh during next two nights.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 5th JANUARY 2013: Mainly clear sky. Fog in the morning hours.

weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Friday, Jan 4

Max Min

30.6° | 21.3°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 94

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:32

Sunset: 05:55

Barometer: 1013

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Saturday, Jan 5

Max Min

31° | 22°

Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday Jan 6	Monday Jan 7	Tuesday Jan 8	Wednesday Jan 9	Thursday Jan 10
30° 23° Cloudy	25° 23° Overcast	25° 23° Overcast	25° 23° Overcast	25° 23° Overcast

Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Humidity: 100

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 07:14

Sunset: 05:37

Barometer: 1018



THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

04.01.2013 A.M

3st jan 2013

Meet on poverty and climate solutions

The ninth international conference on Finding Poverty and Climate Solutions organised by India Development Coalition of America (IDCA) will be held at Rajagiri Centre for Business Studies (RCBS) on January 11 and 12.

The conference aims to promote networking, collaboration, learning and volunteering among organisations devoted to poverty eradication and climate change mitigation in India.

Speakers and delegates from all over the world will be attending the two day conference which focuses on water, education, livelihoods, healthcare, rural development and renewable energy technologies. For more details, contact 9746970806.

Poultry meat hits record Rs 75 a kg



Buoyed by a strong festival demand, higher feed prices and the onset of winter, broiler prices touched the record levels of Rs 75 a kg seen in 2011.

Broiler meat production in the country registered a 8.97 per cent rise to touch 3.1 million tonnes in 2012 and is likely to touch 3.4 million tonnes (a growth of 8.23 per cent) in 2013, according to the US Department of Agriculture.

Soaring feed prices that account for one-third of cost of production is mainly attributed as a reason to the steady rise in prices - a 75-kg bag of broiler feed costs Rs 2,702.50 in 2012 against Rs 1,894 the previous year.

Meanwhile, egg prices also are on the rise owing to pick-up in retail demand.

The National Egg Coordination Committee (Namakkal zone) has increased the price of an egg by six paise to Rs 3.40.

Pick-up in consumption due to winter and spurt in demand from confectioners are attributed to the rise in prices.

NECC has slashed layer rates (for birds of 1.3 kg) to Rs 35 (Rs 38) to boost consumption as it is a perishable product.

Namakkal and Palladam prices are the benchmarks for eggs and chicken respectively in the country.

Spot turmeric gains on upcountry orders



Spot turmeric prices increased further on Thursday as new orders continued to flow from North India.

“Local bulk buyers quoted higher price and purchased quality turmeric based on upcountry orders. Many traders, too, quoted higher price and purchased 30 per cent stock. As usual, stockists and exporters procured 35 per cent stocks. The uptrend in prices will remain for another few days,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said in the past few days, quality goods are arriving for sale.

The exporters those who received huge orders for such quality turmeric purchased by quoting Rs 150-200 a quintal higher than Wednesday’s price.

Prices of other varieties of turmeric gained Rs 200 a quintal. But the hybrid variety was up by Rs 300.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,296-6,399 a quintal; the root variety Rs 4,196-6,035.

Salem Hybrid crop: The finger variety fetched Rs 5,399-7,411 and the root variety Rs 5,199-6,377. Of the 1,009 bags that arrived, 259 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,609-6,709; the root variety Rs 5,509-6,407. Of the 940 bags that arrived, 921 were lifted.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety quoted Rs 6,089-6,439; the root variety Rs 5343 to Rs 6299 a quintal. Of the 863 bags put up for sale, 755 bags found takers.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,579-6,769; the root variety Rs 4,569-6,169. All the 110 bags on offer were sold.

Higher output hopes, weak exports pound jeera

Jeera price declined in spot as demand from stockists and export front was low. Jeera futures also traded down as speculators trimmed positions, driven by expectations of higher output this year due to favourable weather conditions in producing States.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives (NCDEX), jeera March contracts declined Rs 267.50 to Rs 14,380 a quintal with an open interest of 14,280 lots while April contracts dropped by Rs 292.50 to Rs 14,400 with an open interest of 3,882 lots.

In the spot market, jeera price was down by Rs 25-30 and medium quoted at Rs 2,300-2,400 for 20 kg, NCDEX quality raw quoted at Rs 2,610-2,710 at Unjha market of Gujarat. At Unjha market, jeera arrival stood at 3,000 bags.

Analysts said that offloading of positions by speculators on expectations of higher output this year due to favourable weather conditions in producing States mainly put pressure on jeera futures.

Total production of the spice current year is estimated at 34-35 lakh bags against 32-33 lakh bags last year . This is mainly on the account of strong production estimates in Gujarat. The total carryover stock was estimated at around 8-9 lakh bags, unchanged from last year.

Moderate buying holds rice steady



A steady trend prevailed in the rice market with prices of aromatic and non-basmati varieties maintaining their previous levels on Thursday.

Amit Chandna, proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company, told *Business Line* that moderate buying kept the price unchanged. Retail buyers are purchasing limited quantity following too much volatility in the market. Traders expect the market to witness some good levels in days to come by as market sentiments are still largely positive, he said.

In the physical market, after witnessing an uptrend earlier this week, aromatic and non-basmati varieties remained unaltered.

Pusa-1121 (steam) sold at Rs 6,700-6,800 a quintal while Pusa-1121 (sela) went for Rs 5,800.

Pure basmati (raw) quoted at Rs 8,000. Duplicate basmati (steam) traded at Rs 5,500-5,600.

Sharbati (steam) quoted at Rs 4,300 while Sharbati (sela) was at Rs 4,175.

PR-11 (sela) was sold at Rs 2,550-2,650 while PR-11 (raw) quoted at Rs 2,550-2,600. Permal (raw) sold at Rs 2,200-2,300 while Permal (sela) went for Rs 2,150-2,300.

Paddy Arrivals

About 2,000 bags of PR variety arrived and went for Rs 1,150-1,200, Sharbati arrived with a stock of around 1,500 bags and quoted at Rs 2,100-2,135. About 1,000 bags of Sugandha 999 went for Rs 2,600-2,700.

About 5,000 bags of Pusa-1121 arrived and quoted at Rs 3,000-3,250 a quintal.

Premium for new season sugar dips on slack demand



Sugar prices dropped further by Rs 10-20 a quintal on Thursday at mill level as prices of new and old stocks narrowed due to lack of demand.

Producers who were offering new season's stocks at Rs 100 higher than old stocks have now cut the premium to Rs 40-50.

Market witnessed bearish trend due to this.

Volume was routine as retailers bought need-based, said traders.

A Vashi-based wholesaler told *Business Line*: "Continuous weakness in domestic futures, higher sugar production till December end, routine local demand, lack of neighbouring States buying in Maharashtra and unfavourable exports scenario are the cause for overall slump in sugar trade now. Even at the distribution - trading level, players kept quiet by doing business to match only the needs. On the other hand, producers are continuously offloading sugar in the local market due to peak crushing season and avoid increasing inventories. Sugar prices in other main producing States are at par with Maharashtra – especially in southern States," he added.

In Vashi wholesale market, arrivals were 62-63 truckloads (each of 100 bags), while dispatches were 61-62 loads.

On Wednesday, 15-16 mills offered tenders and sold 54,000-55,000 (each of 100 kg) bags in the range of Rs 3,140-3,190 (Rs 3,160-3,200) for S-grade and Rs 3,260-3,290 (Rs 3,270-3,310) for M-grade.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S-grade Rs 3,266-3,342 (Rs 3,266-3,352) and M-grade Rs 3,351-3,511 (Rs 3,352- 3,511).

Naka delivery rates were: S-grade Rs 3,220-3,260 (Rs 3,220-3,260) and M-grade Rs 3,300-3,400 (Rs 3,300-3,400).

Pepper moves up on limited supply



The pepper market continued to head north on Thursday on circular trading amid limited availability. The active contracts ended much above the previous closing.

The market witnessed high volatility as usual, as a result of the tug of war between the operators. Trading was concentrated on February with 89 per cent of the total turnover in that delivery. But the open interest was only one tonne and that clearly indicated good circular trading. The open interest showed some increase only in April delivery, market sources told *Business Line*.

Bull operators appear to have resorted to circular trading to push up prices supported by the current market fundamentals, they alleged.

There was good domestic demand as the pipelines in the upcountry markets are empty. Pongal demand from Tamil Nadu was also visible. End users were also said to be in need of the material. But, availability continued to remain thin.

On the spot, only eight tonnes of fresh pepper arrived and of this seven tonnes were traded at Rs 350-375 a kg, depending on the bulk density, moisture content, quality and area of production, they said.

There is said to be no stocks at the exchange platform. Validity of 609 tonnes available in December will expire on January 5 while the balance of December has been rematted as the financiers will not finance the material which is not valid, traders said. January is not listed on the exchange citing the month as lean, they said.

Turnover

Total turnover went up by 44 tonnes to close at 1,643 tonnes. Total open interest increased by 43 tonnes to 3,721 tonnes.

February, March and April open interest rose by one tonne, three tonnes and 38 tonnes respectively to close at 2,807 tonnes, 695 tonnes and 197 tonnes.

Spot prices in tandem with the futures market trend and tight supply scenario increased by Rs 300 a quintal to close at Rs 37,100 (ungarbled) and Rs 38,600 (MG 1) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market at spot prices stood at \$7,350 a tonne (c&f) while at Feb prices it was at \$6,700 a tonne (c&f). Strengthening of the rupee against the dollar also aided the rise in the parity, they said.

Chana futures open marginally higher

Chana futures on NCDEX opened marginally higher at Rs 3,925 a quintal on Thursday against the previous close of Rs 3,923. The January contract made a high of Rs 3,935 and low of Rs 3,878. It was down one per cent at Rs 3,884.

Demand in the spot markets remains thin even as spot prices recovered marginally from recent low of Rs 3,800 level. Production is expected to hit record high of 75 lakh tonnes this year due to higher acreage and better weather conditions. Fresh selling may emerge at higher levels as overall trend remain

Agriculture needs scientific debate, not emotion

Adopt a value system based on science, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh urged the youth.

“Complex issues, be they genetically modified food or nuclear energy or the exploration of outer space, cannot be settled by faith, emotion and fear, but by structured debate, analysis and enlightenment,” the Prime Minister said during his speech at the 100th Indian Science Congress.

Transformation of the agricultural sector, Singh said, should be one of the top priorities. The 12th Five-Year Plan, he said, assumed a sustained growth in agriculture at the rate of 4 per cent a year, essential to achieve food security.

“This growth is constrained by shortages of water and also of land. We need new breakthroughs in water-saving technologies, enhancement of land productivity and development of climate-resilient varieties,” he said.

As the country seeks a sustained growth in national income, the Prime Minister said, focus must be on harnessing the tools of science and technology to cater to the needs of the underprivileged and “bridge the gap between have and have-nots.”

According to Singh, a scientific approach and understanding of these issues are, “as vital as our core scientific capabilities.” For this, the country has to invest in popularising science not only in educational institutions but also in homes, workplaces, communities and all available communication methods.

“Eventually, science must help in establishing an inclusive society that seeks to solve major problems through the application of science,” he added.

Plantation sector seeks tax break on export profits



The plantation sector has made a case for restoration of tax breaks for export profits. To boost exports, the sector also wants the Government to extend duty concessions on machinery imports.

In its pre-Budget memorandum submitted to Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, the United Planters Association of Southern India (Upasi) wants import duty concessions on equipment and machinery for the tea sector.

“Since modernisation of the plantation sector is dependent on the latest technology and machinery, it is requested that the concession import tariff be introduced along with full excise and countervailing duty exemption,” Upasi said.

Duty concession has been sought for import of equipment such as automatic and semi-automatic fresh brew vending and dispensing machines, chain saws, versatile hedge trimmers, earth augers/soil augers and telescopic pruners.

The benefits provided to encourage exports and to earn foreign exchange by way of deduction in respect of profits retained for exports need to be reintroduced, it said.

Upasi further wants the Government to share the social costs being incurred by the sector. Such a move would help bring down the production costs and make the industry competitive, it said.

Further, Upasi urged the Government to include the provisions under the Income-Tax Act relating to the plantation sector, such as the replanting subsidy and deductions for funds earmarked for development of plantations under the Direct Taxes Code (DTC).

It said the subsidy given to tea growers for producing high quality orthodox tea should be excluded from total income like in the case of re-plantation and rejuvenation subsidy.

About 16 lakh growers and 23.5 lakh labourers are involved in raising plantations in the country.

The total area under the plantation crops is estimated at around 17.2 lakh hectares, marginally less than one per cent of the total cropped area in the country.

The value of plantation commodities in 2011-12 was estimated at Rs 41,442 crore, while the export realisation was pegged at Rs 9,532 crore.

Plantation commodity exports accounted for nearly 6.5 per cent of the total agricultural and allied product exports, Upasi said.

Coonoor tea sale turnover up Rs 121 cr last year

Auctions of Coonoor Tea Trade Association reaped a handsome Rs 121.05 crore increase in cumulative turnover last year compared with 2011, reveals an analysis of the market reports.

This has happened because more volume was sold at higher prices,

The increased turnover lay spread among growers, factory owners, dealers, buyers, warehouse keepers and workers.

In all, 51 auctions had been conducted when volume sold increased to 5.53 crore kg from 5.27 crore kg last year.

Helped by increased demand, average price rose to Rs 82.28 a kg from Rs 63.38.

Consequently, overall turnover increased to Rs 455.06 crore from Rs 334.01 crore. This was the highest turnover received since the auctions began here 50 years ago. This increase of Rs 121.05 crore marked a growth of 36.24 per cent.

All through 2012, there has been consistent increase in cumulative turnover.

The increase in cumulative turnover, which was Rs 67 lakh (2.39 per cent) in January over the same month of 2011, rose to Rs 4.70 crore (9.26 per cent) in February, Rs 10.31 crore (13.46 per cent) in March, Rs 15.54 crore (15.94 per cent) in April, Rs 20.15 crore (16.66 per cent) in May, Rs 31.09 crore (19.23 per cent) in June, Rs 52.82 crore (27.65 per cent) in July, Rs 68.25 crore (30.44 per cent) in August, Rs 76.90 crore (30.68 per cent) in September and Rs 83.94 crore (30.09 per cent) in October and Rs 103.02 crore (32.86 per cent) in November before peaking to Rs 121.05 crore (36.24 per cent) at the year end.

Bayer CropScience project a boon for grape growers



A bold experiment initiated by Bayer CropScience that raises the possibility of a substantial scale-up and financial benefits has brought cheer to a sizeable number of Maharashtra's beleaguered grape growers.

A potential game-changer, the experiment has involved the development of a set of good practices by Bayer jointly with the National Research Centre for Grapes.

The Grape project, as the company calls it, has shown decisive results in terms of reduction in number of sprays, cost saving, increase in yield and export demand from overseas markets.

Downey mildew is a fungal attack grapes are susceptible to.

Most grape growers in Nashik, Solapur and Sangli have been habituated to unplanned spray programme to fight the fungus without considering weather information and severity of fungal attack. How does the Bayer CropScience package of good practice work?

According to Joerg Rehbein, Head, Indian Sub-continent, the company's strategy involves predicting the weather through weather station and satellite information and designing the spray calendar accordingly.

"The package involves, among other things, spraying before the rain starts and not during the time it rains," he said.

Operating currently from four locations with different agro-climatic conditions and soil types, the Grape project has expanded the number of grape growers covered. The experimental plots were successfully managed with nine sprays versus 13 rounds of spray in most growers' plots.

Reduction in the number of sprays based on weather information not only resulted in cost saving, but also reduced fungal attack and substantially lower maximum residue limit.

Importantly, grapes grown under the Bayer CropScience package of good practices have now begun to be accepted in the European market. Earlier, high levels of chemical residue discouraged fastidious buyers.

"Our experiment has demonstrated that chemical residue levels can be lowered to acceptable limit which in turn opens up export markets," a company executive asserted.

According to APEDA data, grapes are grown in an area of about 60,000 hectares.

While most of the produce is consumed in the domestic market, the country exported last year about one lakh tonnes of fresh grapes valued at a little over Rs 600 crore.

Maharashtra is a large and dominant producer of grapes ranking first in terms of production and accounting for over 75 per cent of national output.

Spot rubber rules firm

The rubber market made overall gains on Thursday. A moderate recovery in Bangkok spot and another firm closing in domestic futures catalysed the sentiments further.

According to observers, export possibilities following the widening gap between the domestic and international prices and the absence of sellers in the local markets kept the commodity firm.

Sheet rubber improved to Rs 164 (Rs 162) a kg, according to traders. The grade firmed up to Rs 163 (Rs 162) at Kottayam and Kochi, as quoted by the Rubber Board.

The January series increased to Rs 167.90 (Rs 166.04); February Rs 170.60 (Rs 168.68); March Rs 173.52 (Rs 171.72) and May Rs 179.95 (Rs 177.37) while the April and June series remained inactive on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) finished firm at Rs 180.45 (Rs 178.76) at Bangkok.

Spot rubber rates (Rs/per kg) were: RSS-4: 164.00 (162.00); RSS-5: 158.00 (157.00); Ungraded: 154.00 (152.00); ISNR 20: 153.00 (151.50) and Latex 60%: 108.00 (105.50).

Karnataka to expand orange cultivation

Karnataka is planning to expand area under orange cultivation by 50 per cent to 15,000 hectares in five years.

The horticulture department has identified Kodagu, Chikmagalur and Hassan districts for expansion of orange growing area.

“As per the plan prepared by us, about 1,000-hectare addition is planned annually till we achieve sizable production level,” S.V. Hittalmani, Additional Director, Karnataka Horticulture Department, told *Business Line*.

“Looking at the favourable agro-climatic conditions, the department is planning to expand annually 500 hectares in Kodagu and the rest in Chikmagalur and Hassan districts,” he added.

At present, 10,000 hectares are under orange cultivation, mainly grown as intercrop in coffee estates, though real fruit yield comes only from 5,000 to 6,000 hectares.

“After inclusion of orange under National Horticulture Mission (NHM) in the State seven years ago and also by offering Rs 15,000 per hectares as incentives to growers, we are seeing good quantity of oranges in the market,” said Hittalmani.

“Fairly good yield is being reported from Sidapura and Thitimati in Kodagu. Now we plan to replicate this in other districts where we plan to introduce the crop,” he added.

Current yield

Current orange production (2012-13 crop year) in the State is estimated at 50,000 tonnes as against 45,000 tonnes last year (2011-12 crop year).

The department is also planning to give a boost to orange cultivation by encouraging fruit processing units in the growing regions. According to Hittalmani, at present a couple of processing units are operating under cooperative societies in Kushalnagar and Gonikoppa in Kodagu.

Hittalmani said the revival of orange in the State has led to steady demand. “Prices early in the season (November) average around Rs 60 a kg. Then it drops to Rs 45 a kg by the middle of the season (December/January) and later it quotes around Rs 50 to 60 as the season ends (February-March).

Orange mela

As a step forward to develop farmer-centric business model, National Horticulture Board (NHB) and Karnataka Horticulture Department are holding an 'Orange Mela' in Bangalore from January 4 to 6, said Jagadeesha KG, Director of Horticulture.

For the mela, farmers from orange producing States such as Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, a few States from North-East, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu are taking part.

GNFC to install fertiliser vending machines

Gujarat Narmada Valley Fertilisers and Chemicals (GNFC) today said it would install fertiliser vending machines in the five districts of the state soon.

The managing director of the state-owned company, A M Tiwari, said here today that NABARD has agreed to support the move by arranging installation of 4-5 such machines with the help of farmers' groups in Vadodara, Narmada, Bharuch, Surat and Tapi districts of the state.

Besides, agriculture cooperative societies will also be encouraged to install few such machines, Tiwari informed.

The vending machines would help farmers buy fertilisers in the desired quantity. Currently, farmers tend to over stock fertilisers as it comes in standard packing of 50 kg and the supply is also irregular.

The machine developed by GNFC can be installed in an area of 400 sq ft of land or also near a petrol pump, Tiwari said.

These machines are designed to dispense fertilisers in units of minimum 500 gm and above and the company would ensure round the clock supply of fertilisers in these vending machines, he stated.

The first such machine was installed in the country at NARDES Cold Storage, Zaghadiya in September by the company.

Synthetic rubber consumption rises 6% in H1

India's synthetic rubber consumption rose by 6 per cent to 2.26 lakh tonnes in the first half of this fiscal, while, production rose marginally to 54,778 tonnes during the period, Rubber Board said.

The country consumed 2.13 lakh tonnes of synthetic rubber in April—September of 2011—12 fiscal, while the output stood at 54,750 tonnes during the period.

The consumption by the auto tyre industry rose by 8 per cent to 1.67 lakh tonnes during the period as against 1.55 lakh tonnes in the year—ago period.

Imports of synthetic rubber declined by 3 per cent to 1.69 lakh tonnes from 1.75 lakh tonnes.

In September this year, the consumption of synthetic rubber increased to 37,150 tonnes from 33,510 tonnes in the same period in 2011, whereas, its use in the auto tyre industry rose to 27,535 tonnes from 24,016 tonnes during the period.

The production of synthetic rubber, however, declined to 7,934 tonnes in September 2012 as compared to 8,421 tonnes.

India imported 31,265 tonnes of the commodity in September this year as against 26,760 tonnes in September 2011.

Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

04.01.2013 A.M

Jeera weakens by 0.63% on higher output hopes

Jeera futures declined by Rs 92.50 to Rs 14,555 per quintal today.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, the March contract declined by Rs 92.50, or 0.63% to Rs 14,555 per quintal in 14,898 lots.



The April contract too went down 0.63% to Rs 14,600 per quintal in 3,510 lots.

Analysts said, off-loading of positions by speculators on hopes of higher output due to favourable weather in producing states put pressure on jeera futures.

Chana slips 0.14% as speculators offload positions

Chana futures extended losses for the second day and shed 0.14% to Rs 3,576 per quintal today.



At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, the April contract declined by Rs 5, or 0.14% to Rs 3,576 per quintal in 44,930 lots.

The January contract shed Rs 4, or 0.10% to Rs 3,919 per quintal in 55,870 lots.

Analysts said chana futures slipped further as speculators offloaded their positions alongside sluggish spot market demand.

Potato up 0.21% on demand

Potato futures gained 0.21% to Rs 726.30 per quintal today.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, the April contract rose by Rs 1.50, or 0.21% to Rs 726.30 per quintal in 6 lots.

The March contract edged up by 50 paise, or 0.07% to Rs 768.20 per quintal in 53 lots.

Analysts said fresh positions by traders after a rise in spot market demand and less arrivals from producing region influenced potato futures trade.

Pepper up 0.33% on spot market demand

Pepper futures moved up by Rs 115 to Rs 34,575 per quintal today.



However, expectations of higher output and weak export demand capped the gain.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, the February contract rose by Rs 115, or 0.33% to Rs 34,575 per quintal in 2,872 lots.

The March contract gained Rs 50, or 0.15% to Rs 33,875 per quintal in 699 lots.

Analysts said speculators enlarging their positions, pick-up in spot markets demand led to pepper futures trading high.

Turmeric rises on lower output estimates

Turmeric futures rose by Rs 40 to Rs 6,842 per quintal today.



At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, the May contract rose by Rs 40, or 0.59% to Rs 6,842 per quintal in 6,535 lots.

The April contract moved up by Rs 34, or 0.51% to Rs 6,730 per quintal in 27,775 lots.

Analysts said speculators enlarged their positions and pick-up in spot market demand led to rise in turmeric futures prices.

Agricultural commodities outperform industrial consumables in 2012

Agri commodities outperformed industrial consumables with an impressive margin in 2012 due to strong fundamental support from the American continent.

While the drought in Brazil and Argentina kept the global sentiments firm, the Indian government's decision to raise the minimum support price (MSP) of agri produce helped the price remain on a firm footing. On the other hand, demand for industrial commodities remained low due to the prevailing uncertainty in the global economy.

Commodities like cardamom offered returns of 70 per cent followed by turmeric and soybean with 38 per cent and 29 per cent, respectively. Gold and silver, meanwhile, continued with double-digit returns this year on strong consumer support. At Rs 30,703 per 10 gm, gold on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) posted a gain of 12.66 per cent, while silver surged 12.78 per cent to close the year at Rs 57,731 a kg.

MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE			
Commodity	Opening price on Jan 1	Closing price on Dec 28	Chg (%)
Cardamom (Rs/kg)	598.3	1016	70
Turmeric (Rs/qtl)	4770	6600	38
Soybean (Rs/qtl)	2521	3240	29
Chana(Rs/qtl)	3339	3825	15
Sugar(Rs/qtl)	2875	3248	13
RM seed(Rs/qtl)	3722	4170	12
Aluminium (Rs/kg)	106.95	112.7	5.38
Copper (Rs/kg)	406	438.8	8
Zinc (Rs/kg)	98.45	112.4	14.17
Gold (Rs/10 gm)	27,253	30,703	12.66
Silver (Rs/kg)	51,190	57,731	12.78
Brent crude (Rs/bbl)	5,710	6,100	6.83

Rubber (Rs/qrtl)	19,875	16,541	-16.77
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Source : Commodity exchanges, Price for near month contracts

“The year 2012 was not only an action-packed year from the commodities market perspective, but also a remarkable one for many agricultural commodities, which touched new highs on supply fears. Significant gains in the prices of most agricultural commodities were observed during June-July as a result of deficient rains in the first two months of the monsoon season 2012 in India, coupled with drought conditions in the US,” said Naveen Mathur, associate director, Angel Broking.

Revival of monsoon in India during the second half of the season helped ease some pressure on sowing and yield. Also, rabi sowing progressed well, which exerted downward pressure on agri commodity prices towards the last quarter of the year 2012. Yet, commodities like wheat registered significant gains of around 28.7 per cent and kapas 14.8 per cent.

A recent report from Religare Commodities said unfavorable weather conditions in Kerala are set to lower the cardamom output this year. During 2011-12, cardamom production went up 25 per cent to 12,975 tonnes against 10,380 tonnes in the previous year. On top of that, the production in Guatemala, too, has reportedly been adversely affected. Hence, the commodity’s price was supported by the overall estimates of supply shortage.

The year 2013 is likely to be even more exciting as improved production prospects for many crops in Indian and international markets have kept sentiments weak for most agri products as of now. Some more selling pressure thus, cannot be ruled out in the near term as arrivals of new crops start over the next two-three months for some commodities. But with reports of falling acreage for most rabi crops due to lower rains and weather uncertainties likely to continue from May onwards, price of agri commodities may remain firm until the third quarter of 2013, forecasts Prasoon Mathur, senior manager (retail research) of Religare Commodities.

In a major support of the agri commodity’s upward march, the government raised the benchmark MSP by up to 30 per cent. MSP for cotton (medium staple) was raised to Rs 3,600 a quintal from Rs 2,800 a quintal and that of soybean (yellow) was hiked by Rs 550 to Rs 2,240 a quintal. Traders generally raise their quotes proportionately for their stocks also.

Kunal Soni, an analyst with Emkay Commotrade Ltd, however, feels gold will continue its upsurge this year as well, as the fiscal cliff deal in the US continues to attract investors, translating into higher prices in India due to weaker rupee and demand from rural areas.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

TODAY FARM NEWS

04.01.2013 A.M

Farmers demand aid for agricultural loss due to less water supply

AURANGABAD: [Jayakwadi project](#) affected farmers from the Marathwada region resorted to gherao the chief engineer of [Command Area Development Authority](#) (CADA) officer on Thursday demanding monetary compensation for loss incurred due to [scarcity of water](#).

The water supply authority has decided not to release water from Jayakwadi reservoir this year, as water received from the upstream dams of the state are reserved for drought conditions.

Jayajirao Suryavanshi, president of Sangharsh Kruti Samiti said, "The farmers demand an amount of Rs two lakh as compensation for the loss incurred due to the drought conditions. No water for farming is available, which will make it hard to sustain the existing plantation that has been sown for the season."

Suryavanshi said that farmers will be affected economically as there will be no agricultural produce this year. "The compensation received will help them to sustain till the arrival of monsoon," he added.

He added that the reservoir has around 35% of water in its storage. The dam is spread across more than five kilometres in breadth and 50 kilometres in length. The depth of the dam is almost 200 feet. Suryavanshi alleged that the authorities have deliberately released false information to protect the interests of the industrialists.

There is sufficient amount of water in dam to last for the next two years, he added.

The farmers also demanded that the beer and distillery industries should be shut down as they require a considerable amount of water for production.

Suryavanshi further said that the electricity supply in the villages has already been cut for the last two months which is adding to the woes of the farmers.

"The animals, fields and the farmers do not have access to water, as it cannot be pumped up without electricity. The electricity supply should be restored or else the water supply for the city and the industrial area will be stopped," Suryavanshi said.

Chill to bring warmth to farm output, may cool inflation

KOLKATA/NEW DELHI/AHMEDABAD: The icy [winter](#) in north India, along with morning dew and sunny conditions in rural areas, have sown the seeds for bumper harvests, which will cool food prices that had galloped after erratic monsoon rains hurt farm output last year.

Consumers are already seeing a downward trend in prices of potato, wheat and pulses. Potato prices had soared 91% from March to November while wheat climbed 18% and pulses 22% since the start of the fiscal year. Vegetable prices have been falling since September while wheat has dropped 7% in two months, and analysts say more good news will follow.

PGI, National Fertilizers Ltd top officials go to jail for violent clash with cops

LUCKNOW: Unruly behaviour of [Bharat Singh](#) the main accused of the Wednesday night clash between some miscreants and policemen in Gomtinagar area failed to shock some of his colleagues. "He is an aggressive person," said one of his colleagues. Bharat Singh, is employed as senior administrative official at Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Science ([SGPGIMS](#)). The Gomtinagar police too claimed Singh had been implicated under attempt to murder charges a few years back and had been suspended from PGI.

RK Sharma director of the premiere institute refused to comment on the matter, but said his

suspension had been revoked some years back as he was exonerated of the criminal charges against him.

Meanwhile, police pressed stringent charges on Thursday against five persons, including a trio arrested and two absconders who reportedly ran riot at the Patrakarpuram crossing in Gomtinagar. The absconders include Bharat Singh's son Ayush and their driver. The group of five allegedly bashed up policemen with sticks inside the police outpost on Wednesday night in full public view.

S K Singh area manager at [National Fertilizers Ltd](#) (NFL) and Gyaneshwar Singh, agricultural scientist, the two other accused arrested by the police are related to Bharat Singh. The trio was sent to jail on Thursday evening. S K Singh's superior said he is a mild and law abiding person. "I am surprised to hear about the incident and hope Singh comes out clean in the matter," said V K Yadav, zonal manager NFL. According to service rules, government servants face suspension if they spend more than 24 hours in jail.

Meanwhile, persons responsible for the brawl are still at large. "Bharat Singh, the main accused went too far to protect his son Ayush Singh (also named in the FIR) by taking law in his hands," said Nityanand Rai, circle official Gomtinagar. "My near ones were protesting against extortion by constable from hawkers," said Bharat Singh.

The policemen who sustained injuries, sub-inspector Neeraj Singh (in charge of Patrakarpuram police outpost), constables Arun Singh and Vijay Kumar, were sent to Ram Manohar Lohia hospital for medical examination. The report established injuries on the policemen and various IPC sections including of rioting with deadly weapon, causing grievous hurt and robbery among others pressed against the five accused.

