

Re-evaluate crop loss: farmers, political parties

Officials visited the fields after the harvest, says farmers' association

Alleging that there has been a large-scale act of omission and commission in assessing crop damage in the Cauvery delta region of Kulithalai and Krishnaryapuram in Karur district, farmers and political parties have raised a demand to re-evaluate the crop damage assessed. The issue assumes importance since the State government has sanctioned a hefty compensation for the losses suffered by farmers.

“The officials have undertaken the job of assessing paddy crop damage in Krishnarayapuram areas haphazardly to say the least. There have been blatant acts of omission and commission on the part of the Revenue and the Agriculture Department officials. Real sufferers have been left in the lurch and those whose crops have not even been marginally affected queued up to receive the compensation. When the Chief Minister Jayalalithaa wanted to give relief to the genuinely affected farmers, some officials are trying to deny us that benefit and we are sad and cannot do anything more,” says S. Chenniappan of Sithalavai.

“Paddy fields on hundreds of acres of land across Neithalaur, Mudalaipatti, Nangavaram, Lalapet, Mahadanapuram, Marudur, Kumaramangalam, Inngur, Poyyamani, and Suriyanur areas suffered more than 65 per cent damage because of continuing drought. There was no regular supply of water in the ayacuts that enjoyed exclusive irrigation rights. Even in the fields harvested farmers have reported a heavy loss of productivity. But the officials

have glossed over many facts and have prepared a hasty report just to satisfy some higher ups. What we need is a just, speedy, and proper compensation for the real damages we farmers have suffered,” points out deputy secretary of the Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association Kavandampatti R. Subramanian.

One major flaw was that the assessment was carried out in Karur district only after the harvest was over whereas in the neighbouring Tiruchi district, the officials surveyed the loss well before the harvest and were able to get the correct picture, Mr. Subramani said.

“What we need is that the officials must assess the damage properly by conducting a village level screening through proper verbal testimony corroborated by field data and survey by the Revenue and Agriculture Department officials in the presence of farmers to rectify the mistakes already committed,” the association said.

There was a political and communal angle to the dispensation of compensation to the affected farmers in Karur district. The Viduthalai Chiruthagal Katchi and some dalit organisations have staged protests alleging that small and marginal farmers had been denied their due compensation. They along with other oppressed sections had been neglected in the assessment done by the officials.

Nabard organises workshop to sensitise agriculture graduates

The Adilabad district unit of the National Bank for Rural and Agriculture Development (NABARD) on Thursday organised a workshop to sensitise unemployed agriculture and horticulture graduates on agri-clinics and agri-business centres. The aim of the workshop was to support agriculture development besides creating gainful employment for agriculture graduates and extending extension services to farmers.

Addressing the unemployed graduates in the subjects of agriculture and horticulture, NABARD Assistant General Manager (AGM) V.S. Gupta said that both the activities envisaged credit-linked assistance to them. He said that the loans comprised of a backhanded subsidy component of 44 per cent for SC, ST and women candidates while others would get a subsidy of 36 per cent. Explaining in detail about the proposed activities, the AGM said that through agri-clinics the graduates could provide advice on modern farming techniques and crop practices among others. “The agri-business centres are commercial units for sale of farm equipment and inputs,” he added.

The aim is to support agriculture development besides creating gainful employment for agriculture graduates

Provide compensation without linking crop insurance: farmers

‘Only 49,000 acres counted in Mayiladuthurai division’

A large number of farmers staged a demonstration in front of the Revenue Divisional Office here on Thursday demanding a compensation of Rs. 15,000 an acre without linking the crop insurance.

Aaarupathi P.Kalyanam, general secretary, Federation of Farmers’ Associations of Delta Districts, said the Tamil Nadu government's announcement and the G.O. 48 (dated February 13, 2013) failed to give relief to all the affected farmers spread over the delta.

Although the real affected areas in the Mayiladuthurai division is around 1.53 lakh acres out of 1.7 lakh acres, the Agriculture Department had made “table work” and allotted relief for just 49,000 acres of land.

The sugarcane crops were left out. He appealed to the Chief Minister to weed out the “irregularities, anomalies, and violations” made in the drought relief before March 9, the date of her visit to Thanjavur.

He contended that she was misguided by the officials who had wrongly linked insurance with disaster relief and Cauvery delta special drought relief. He alleged that the Ministers were silent over the anomalies.

While the affected areas in the three districts worked out to 10 lakh acres, the high-level committee reported to the Chief Minister on January 31 that it was only 3.61 lakh acres of land in eight districts covering 1.75 lakh farmers. “Not a single village was assessed by the joint committee of Revenue and Agriculture Department officers and the local farmers.”

The agriculture officers and the three district administrations failed to include six lakh acres of paddy which had withered in February for which the counsel for Tamil Nadu strongly pleaded in the Supreme Court to give at least nine tmcft of water to save the crops. However, the Supreme Court ordered release of just 2.44 tmcft.

Mr. Kalyanam alleged that the administrations were distributing the relief amount of Rs.541.5 crore allotted to the 1.75 lakh farmers to 3.21 lakh farmers. “This is in complete violation of the Government Order.”

He appealed to the Chief Minister to include these six lakh acres for relief and give Rs. 15,000 as compensation delinking crop insurance, to all crops including sugarcane.

Collector hands over power tillers to poor farmers

To seven Adi Dravidar and tribal groups



Kanyakumari Collector S. Nagarajan handing over farm equipment to a beneficiary on Thursday.

The Collector S.Nagarajan handed power tillers to 7 Adi Dravidar and tribal groups with cent percent subsidy under National Agricultural Development Programme on Thursday.

Addressing the group members, the Collector said that government as a part of mechanization in the agriculture field had been giving various machines to farmers to increase productivity. It had been decided to distribute 9 power tillers to 9 groups in the district and in the first phase 7 power tillers had been distributed to 7 groups at a total cost of Rs. 7.66 lakhs.

The beneficiaries were Sabayarkulam village agriculturist group at Rajakkamangalam, Ambedkar men voluntary group at Koziporvilai, Parayadi farmers' club at Kurunthencode, Andipothai tribal farmers' group at Thiruvattar, Agriculture labours union at Mathicode, Agasthiyar village agriculture mantram at Arukani and agriculture labours union at Vazavilai.

Joint Director of Agriculture Syed Ahamed Meeranji, Assistant Commissioner (excise) Paramasivam participated the in the function.

Farmers turn to new crops

Drawn by Central and State government subsidies, farmers are switching from paddy to fruit and vegetable cultivation to offset losses.

Monsoon failure in the district since 2009 has taught the farmers to move from water-intensive paddy cultivation to crops that require less water and also give better income. This has resulted in a significant increase in area brought under cultivation of these new crops. In Tirunelveli district, mango (6,523 hectares), banana (9,700 ha), amla (2,600 ha), acid-lime (2,186 ha) and other fruits (1,136 ha) are being grown to give an annual yield of 5.69 lakh tonnes. Similarly, vegetables such as brinjal, tomato, ladies finger and onion are being grown on 4,544 hectares targeting an annual production of 73,385 tonnes.

Spices and condiments such as chilly, coriander, cardamom, clove, tamarind etc. are being cultivated on an area of 4,218 hectare with an annual production of 19,745 tonnes. Plantation crops such as cashew, coffee, tea, cocoa etc. are cultivated on an area of 6,102 ha and floriculture is being taken up on 1,630 ha to produce 13,382 tonnes of jasmine, rose and margold.

Central and the State Government schemes are being implemented in the district to support the farmers. The National Horticulture Mission (NHM) is being implemented with the view to further increase the area of cultivation and the yield as well. During the current fiscal, subsidy to the tune of Rs. 92.99 lakh has been disbursed to 1,320 farmers under NHM.

To minimize the dependence on water for irrigation, micro irrigation and other techniques have been introduced.

“Since Central and State Governments give attractive subsidy of 100 per cent to small and marginal farmers and 75 per cent to other farmers, micro irrigation is becoming popular among the farming community. So far, we’ve disbursed subsidy to the tune of Rs. 1.54 crore as micro irrigation subsidy to 272 farmers, who have covered 516 hectares under this new technique,” said Collector C.

Samayamoorthy, who visited farms covered by micro irrigation and fertigation in the villages of Maaraanthai, Karumpuliyoothu, Pudur, Sivalaarkulam and Odakkarai Thulukkarpatti on Wednesday. He said hybrid seeds were being distributed to the farmers at 50 per cent subsidised cost and 2,750 farmers had benefited from this scheme to the tune of Rs. 73 lakh.

Feudal, gender prejudices haunt farm workers

For hundreds of women plantation labourers working on coffee estates, harassment begins as soon as they get into the pick-up vehicles sent by the estates.

Men and women are literally “loaded” into vehicles beyond their carrying capacity. Jostling and pushing are the mildest forms of harassment they face in transit. In some places autorickshaws are hired to pick up workers, where the situation is not very different.

Other work

But what they face while travelling is negligible when compared to what they undergo in workplace. In many places, plantation workers are asked to work as domestic help in the houses of the estate owners. “I have seen many women workers being made to wash owners’ innerwear. That is humiliation and harassment,” said H. Venkatesh, a plantation worker of Sringeri.

In a recent incident reported from Rayara Koplū village in Alur taluk, the manager of the estate asked the women worker to climb up trees to reap pepper, against norms. The women workers went on a strike. After senior leaders of the plantation workers' federation intervened, the managers withdrew their order.

There are instances galore of owners, managers or writers forcing women workers for sexual favours. However, hardly any victim of such violence reports to the police. "Hundreds of such cases happen in estates but get buried," said Prasad Raxidi, an agriculturist and theatre activist in Sakaleshpur taluk. He said that locals can recall at least 100 such instances in estates in Sakaleshpur taluk in just one year.

Common

Devaki, who worked in an estate near Balehonnur in Chikmagalur for some years, said that sexual harassment and physical abuse are common. "On many occasions, I was beaten up by owners. Once I had to stay put in a forest area adjacent to the estate for two days to escape from the owner, who was waiting to beat me up," she recalled.

V. Sukumar, convener (South Zone) of All India Plantation Workers' Federation, pointed out that harassment had been there wherever the feudal culture continues to exist. "Feudal culture still persists in many estates," he said. "The Plantation Labour Act, 1951, has been in books for decades."

Bank manager booked for farmer's suicide

The police at Jat in Sangli district have registered a criminal complaint against State Bank of India's Jat branch manager Mohammad Basha, who has been accused of harassing a local

farmer over loan repayment, following which the farmer committed suicide.

Anand Shinde's death led to farmers of the area calling for a bandh on Wednesday, demanding that the bank manager be prosecuted.

Appasaheb Saminder, tahsildar, forwarded their statement demanding action to the police.

According to the police, Anand's mother, Muktabai Shinde, in her complaint, said the manager blocked her family pension (her husband was in the military service) for recovery of loan and that triggered her son's suicide.

According to Mr. Saminder, family pension can't be blocked for loan recovery.

SBI's regional manager Geeta Pillai, who reportedly visited the Jat branch for an inquiry, was not available for comment.

TRS seeks 7-hour power supply to farm sector

Party MLAs stage protest in front of AP Transco office

The activists of Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) led by MLAs T. Harish Rao and K.T. Rama Rao staged a protest in front of the AP Transco office here on Thursday alleging discrimination in power supply to Telangana region and demanding 7-hour supply to the farm sector.

Explaining the problem to Chairman and Managing Director of AP Transco Hiralal Samaria, the TRS leaders alleged that standing crops raised under borewells were drying up in Telangana due to

erratic power supply and also not adhering to seven-hour supply to agriculture sector.



Power protest: TRS MLAs Harish Rao and K T Rama Rao receiving an assurance letter from CMD of AP Transco Hiralal Samaria in Hyderabad on Thursday.— Photos: Mohammed Yousuf

Further, they said Telangana districts were being discriminated at the behest of the Chief Minister and the position of power supplied to Chittoor in comparison to Telangana districts was a clear indication in this regard.

Mr. Samaria gave a written assurance to the TRS MLAs stating that 7-hour supply to the farm sector would be ensured.

Speaking to reporters later, Mr. Harish Rao stated that it was for the third time the CMD of AP Transco had promised to ensure 7-hour supply to farm sector.

They would take up an agitation during the coming Assembly session if the assured power supply was not given by then.

‘E-auction better for farmers’

Tobacco Board chief inaugurates new scheme at Tangutur
The maiden E-auction introduced across the tobacco auction platforms this season will enable farmers to get better price for their produce, Tobacco Board chairman K.Gopal said as auctions

commenced in four auction platforms in the Ongole region of the Board on Thursday.

Talking to reporters here, the chairman who inaugurated e-auctioning in Tangatur I platform, said "it just takes five seconds to auction a bale with buyers keying in the bid price in hand-held machines".

Highlight the advantages of e-auction system, he said it would help reduce duration of auctioning period and ensure transparency and accountability as well, he added.

Dr.Gopal interacted with farmers on fields and at curing centres on his first visit to the Ongole region of the Board after assuming office.

Giving a patient hearing to a delegation of farmers cutting across party lines, he assured agriculturists to take up their concerns with the Commerce Ministry.

The Board would provide them with latest international trends in tobacco cultivation for them to make the most of market conditions, he said.

The chairman, who inspected the new e-auction platform under construction in Kandukur along with Executive Director C.V.Subba Rao, urged ryots to strictly adhere to the crop size fixed by the Board in their own interest and keep abreast with latest agronomic practices to cut costs.

Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sangam district secretary N.Ranga Rao wanted the Board to intervene to create buoyancy in the market with the offer price stuck between Rs 120 and Rs 124 per kg for F-1 grade at the beginning stage itself even with farmers adhering to the crop size of 170 million kg.

The price should go up to Rs 140 to Rs 145 for the ryots to make good the losses suffered in the last three seasons, he opined.

Auctions were opened on Thursday at Ongole-II, Tangutur-I, Tangutur-II and Kondepi.

Water level

: Water level in the Periyar dam on Thursday stood at 112.50 feet (136 feet) with an inflow of 297 cusecs and a discharge of 100 cusecs. The level in the Vaigai dam was 47 feet (71 feet) with an inflow of 28 cusecs and a discharge of 60 cusecs. The combined Periyar credit stood at 2,198 mcft.

Vaigai dam recorded 17 mm of rainfall followed by Tekkadi 16.2, Peranai and Sittampatti 16 mm each, Kodaikanal 15.2, Uthamapalayam 15, Idayapatti 10, Veerapandi 8, Viraghanoor dam 6, Sattaiyar dam and Pulipatti 5 mm each, Gudalur 4.6, Periyar 4, Thaniyamangalam 3.5, Marudhanadi and Andipatti 3 mm each, Manjalar dam, Sothuparai dam, Kallandiri 2 mm each, Melur 1.6 and Madurai 1.

The water level in the Papanasam dam on Thursday stood at 52.50 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 3,298.82 cusecs and no water is discharged from the dam.

The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 83.80 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 2,258 cusecs and no water is discharged.

The water level stood at 3.75 feet in Pechipparai dam, 31.75 feet in Perunchani, 4.88 feet in Chittar I, 4.95 feet in Chittar II and 5.50 feet in Poigai dam.

Water level in Mettur Dam recedes

Arrangements made to continue pumping out stored water



To maintain water supply:Raw water being pumped from Mettur Dam and fed into the tank of A.V. Raman Valve Tower for supply to Salem Corporation areas, on Thursday. -PHOTO: P. GOUTHAM

With the water level at Mettur Dam continue to recede below 30 feet, pumping of water to the A.V. Raman Valve Tower is still carried out by three submergible motors and one horizontal centrifugal motor.

The three powerful electric motors at the tower, two with 135 HP capacity and one with 175 HP capacity, pump about 21 million litre of raw water from the dam and convey it to the online booster station at Karumalai Koodal through two pipes.

The process was carried out since the tower's inception in 1952. However, when the water level at the dam falls below 30 feet, raw water does not reach the tower for pumping and water has to be fed into the tower's tank.

Hence by installing motors at the dam, water is pumped and fed into the tank. Officials said that the system was earlier followed in 1986 and 2002, when the dam level was too low for drawing water.

“It is almost two months now that water was drawn and fed in the tank for pumping. If a motor is non-functional, back up motor is

already in place and hence we can ensure continuous supply,” added the official.

Officials said that with the pulling power of the 135 HP capacity motors fallen, one was replaced with 175 HP capacity motor on Thursday and the other would be replaced shortly.

They added that if the water level continues to recede, submergible motors will continue to function and there would be no hindrance to the water drawing capacity.

The scheme was initially designed for 12 MLD in 1952 but the motors were upgraded in 1980 for drawing additional quantity of 15 MLD.

hindustantimes Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Friday, Mar 8

Max Min

30° | 25°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 06:21

Humidity: 94

Sunset: 06:18

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1014.0

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Saturday, Mar 9

Max Min

33° | 25°

Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday Mar 10	Monday Mar 11	Tuesday Mar 12	Wednesday Mar 13	Thursday Mar 14
32° 26°	32° 23°	32° 23°	32° 23°	34° 22°
Partly Cloudy	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast

Goa's dairy farming rises, milk production up 20%



The number of dairy farmers in Goa has more than doubled during the past year, boosting the production of milk by almost 20 per cent, signalling a white revolution in rural areas of the coastal state.

State government officials claim that schemes implemented by Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services (AHVS) are driving the production as more people take to dairy farming.

Official statistics reveal that the production has risen from 40,000 litres per day during 2011 to 51,000 litres per day from December 2012 onwards.

Officials also claim that milk production will touch 68,000 litres by end of fiscal 2013. The number of farmers registered under various schemes implemented by Animal Husbandry And Veterinary Services (AHVS) has increased from 6,067 last year to 15,557 in the current year.

Giriraj Vernekar, Special Assistant to Chief Minister in-charge of agriculture and AHVS said that the schemes were tailor-made for the requirements of dairy farmers.

"The aim was to make dairy business lucrative. The farmers should get the profits," he said. The flagship Kamdhenu scheme was modified after Manohar Parrikar took over the reins giving more incentives to the farmers, Vernekar said. Official records reveal that Kamdhenu scheme subsidy worth Rs 1.9 crore was distributed during the current fiscal as against Rs 82 lakh during last fiscal. The incentives worked and the number of farmers swelled. "I have come across a dairy farmer who has constructed a house and can afford a monthly EMI of Rs 25,000," Vernekar said.

Goa, which has a requirement of 3.5-4 lakh litres of milk every day is largely dependent on neighbouring states for the supply. The cooperative movement in Goa Milk Union was not fruitful, as milk production remained low till end of last year. "Things are changing now for better. We have set a target of having one lakh litres of additional milk production from Goa itself, which will decrease our dependence on other states, B Braganza, Director, AVHS said.

Around 5,000 new animals would be purchased by various farmers in the state, he added.

New crop arrivals see wheat prices fall in Madhya Pradesh

The Madhya Pradesh government had announced a bonus of Rs 150 over and above the MSP



Owing to arrival of the new wheat crop in western states, prices of the commodity have started falling. In Madhya Pradesh, set to be the largest wheat producer in a year, prices have fallen to below the minimum support price (MSP). Farmers in the state are selling wheat at Rs 1,350 a quintal, against the MSP of Rs 1,500 a quintal.

The Madhya Pradesh government had announced a bonus of Rs 150 over and above the MSP. Last year, the MSP for wheat was Rs 1,285 a quintal. This year, the Ministry of Agriculture raised this by Rs 65.

R K Garg, president of the Confederation of Roller Flour Millers' of Northern Zone, said by and large, wheat harvest in the 2012-13 rabi season would be delayed across all states, owing to cool weather conditions in February. As early varieties of wheat have high moisture content, farmers get a discount on these. Garg said in Madhya Pradesh, the procurement of wheat would start on March 15. Currently, private traders are buying the crop at cheaper prices. As farmers received spot payments from private buyers, they resorted to early harvests, Garg added.

Wheat arrivals have started in the state's Malwa belt.

In Alwar, Rajasthan, arrivals have started in small quantities, with prices of Rs 1,400-1,500 a quintal. Before the arrivals, prices stood at Rs 1,580-1,590 a quintal. Ravi Golyan, vice-president of the Roller Flour Millers Association of Rajasthan, said the announcement of a bonus of Rs 150 a quintal on wheat in the state budget would raise procurement in the state, as farmers would have no incentive to sell the commodity to neighbouring states. Procurement in Rajasthan would start on April 13.

STORING UP Wheat procurement

(in million tonne)

	All India	Madhya Pradesh
2011-12	28.3	4.5
2012-13	38.1	8.5
2013-14	44.0	13.0

source—Ministry of Food,
Government of India

Golyan said the price of wheat sold through the open market sales scheme in Rajasthan was Rs 1,552 a quintal. Therefore, the bonus wouldn't restrain private traders from buying wheat in the open market, as they would be spending the same amount.

In Gujarat, early crop arrivals have hit prevailing prices. The commodity is available at Rs 1,485 a quintal. After the new arrivals, prices had fallen Rs 150-200 a quintal, said Ramesh Saraf, president of the Roller Flour Millers Association of Gujarat. As drought in a few areas in the state might hit the crop, prices were likely to remain higher than the MSP of Rs 1,350, if the state government didn't offer a bonus, he added.

THE HINDU Business Line

Spices Board to provide slots to farmers in trade fairs



Kochi, March 7: The Spices Board is providing opportunities for growers for upcountry marketing of cardamom, clove and nutmeg, the three spices which are facing market fluctuations.

The Board will be providing slots for farmers and farmer groups to participate in the leading national and international shows in India to showcase products and to meet with upcountry merchants and traders.

Focus

The Board is focusing on cardamom, cloves and nutmeg in the forthcoming AHAR International Trade Fair being organised at Pragathi Maidan, New Delhi from March 14-18.

interaction with farmers

During the India International Trade Fair in Delhi during November last year, around 20 representatives from different cardamom growers' organisations have participated and interacted with upcountry merchants and traders.

The Board is inviting leading merchants to the stand for direct one-to-one interaction with farmers.

The stand will also showcase different culinary applications and educate the public on varied uses of these spices.

The Spices Board also extended invitation to most of the farmer groups in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Similar efforts will be taken up in the coming months in fairs Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Sikkim.

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Import duty talks lift rubber

Kottayam, March 7: Spot rubber improved further on Wednesday. The expectations on fixing the import duty at 20 per cent and the decline in production due to the change in climate succeeding the peak production season are the supporting factors behind the current uptrend. Though major consuming industries preferred to stay back from the market, they are expected to return soon after the current financial year.

Sheet rubber finished firm at Rs 159.50 (Rs 159) a kg, according to traders.

The grade increased to Rs 160 (Rs 159) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi as quoted by the Rubber Board.

The March series improved to Rs 159.30 (Rs 158.17), April Rs 163.05 (Rs 162.09), May Rs 166.45 (Rs 165.31) and June to Rs 168.52 (Rs 168.25) a kg for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE).

RSS 3 (spot) closed at Rs 165.59 (Rs 164.17) at Bangkok.

The March futures for the grade slipped to ¥274.6 (Rs 159.24) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM).

Spot rubber rates Rs/kg were: RSS-4: 159.50 (159); RSS-5: 156 (155); Ungraded: 152.50 (152); ISNR 20: 156 (155) and Latex 60 per cent: 103.50 (102).

Oilmeal exports up 35% on higher demand



Mumbai, March 7: Oilmeal exports increased 35 per cent in February to 656,948 tonnes against 485,564 tonnes on the back improved demand for soyameal.

However, overall exports in the first 11 months of this fiscal was down 13 per cent at 4,335,809 tonnes (4,970,761 tonnes), due to weak demand during the major portion of this fiscal.

Soyameal prices were marked up to \$530 a tonne in February against \$517 registered in January even as rapeseed meal dipped to \$263 a tonne (\$293).

Rupee appreciated against dollar to 53.81 (54.23) in February.

Oilmeal import by South Korea between April 2012 and February 2013 was at 844,015 tonnes (717,274 tonnes) consisting of 173,568 tonnes of soyameal, 313,613 tonnes of castor meal and 356,834 tonnes of rapeseed meal.

During the corresponding period, Vietnam's imports stood lower at 657,704 tonnes (848,230 tonnes) consisting of 408,454 tonnes of soyameal, 29,736 tonnes of rapeseed meal, 1,412 tonnes of groundnut meal, 502 tonnes of castor meal and entire quantity of 217,600 tonnes of rice bran extraction.

Iran has emerged as a new major importer by shipping in 744,733 tonnes (190,962 tonnes).

This consisted of 728,733 tonnes of soyameal and 16,000 tonnes of rapeseed meal.

Japan and Thailand imported 555,529 tonnes (1,140,597 tonnes) and 407,082 tonnes (450,344 tonnes), respectively.

‘Silver needles’ tea to be available at specialty auction

Coonoor, March 7: A unique Nilgiri product catalogued as ‘Avaata Silver Needles’, will be available at the Tea-Board sponsored ‘Nilgiri Winter Specialty Tea Auction 2013’ to be conducted by The Nilgiri Planters’ Association on March 23.

“Inspired by the record price of Rs 9,010 a kg fetched by a different grade called ‘Silver Tips’ manufactured by UPASI at last year’s speciality auction, we have come out with this innovative product engaging modern technology that retains high concentration of polyphenols – nature’s support for antioxidants which the Tea Board recommends as good for health”, G. Udayakumar, Director, Bluegate Beverages Avataa tea specialists, told *Business Line*.

“Instead of the usual two-leaf-and-a-bud harvested to manufacture tea, ‘Avataa Silver Needles’ are hand cured from tender buds plucked from earmarked clones with original silver hairs at 6,400 feet-high Billimalai single estate.

The buds have enjoyed winter sun basking and emanate natural flavour leaving pleasant after-taste.

This multi-brew tea can be consumed just by adding hot water many times to the same leaves”, he detailed.

“Avataa Virgin Green Tea which fetched the highest price of Rs 6,011 a kg at last year’s Specialty Tea Auction, Avataa Long Ding Green Tea, winner of North American Tea Championship, Avataa White Tea (last year’s price: Rs

5,642) and Avataa Twirl Green Tea (Rs 5,632) will also be available at this year's specialty auction", Udayakumar said.

Clove prices rule lower despite fall in output



Poor crop: Cloves at a spices sales outlet, in Kochi.

Kochi, March 7: The Indian cloves output is estimated to be below 50 per cent of the normal crop during the current season following continuous dry spell in the growing areas in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Harvesting in many of the estates in Kanyakumari district is over; including that in Kerala would be completed by month-end, growers in Kerala and Tamil Nadu said.

These are the two main States where this crop is grown.

“What I have got is nearly 25 per cent only of what I got from my cloves estate last season”, Subramanian, Nagercoil-based grower, told *Business Line*. He said despite a very poor crop, the prices here are not moving up because of imports of cheap produce from the other origins.

The prices prevailing currently is Rs 800 a kg in Kanyakumari district, he said. “Given the high inputs cost, of late, it won’t be remunerative if sold below Rs 850 a kg”, he claimed. “Therefore, we have fixed a ‘cut of rate’ of Rs 850-900”, he said.

The cloves growers, he said, have made a representation to the Spices Board recently and no results from the Board so far.

“We are now planning to put forward our grievances before the Union Commerce Minister requesting him to initiate steps to raise the import duty on cloves so as to ensure the indigenous growers of remunerative prices”, he said.

Normally the indigenous production of cloves would be 1,500-2,500 tonnes against a national demand of over 15,000 tonnes. Hence, the country is a net importer of this commodity.

During 2011-12, India imported 12,175 tonnes valued at Rs 440.82 crore against 7,000 tonnes valued at Rs 153.37 crore in 2010-11, according to official sources.

Meanwhile, the upcountry cloves market witnessed high fluctuation as speculators were trying to push up so as to sell off their stocks while buyers were trying to push it down.

Current domestic prices in the upcountry markets are in the range of Rs 640-720 while in the international markets at \$11,000 a tonne, they said.

According to some of the dealers who had attended the “Gulfood Exhibition 2013” in Dubai recently, leading

exporters “are waiting for the Indonesian new crop estimated around 80,000 tonnes.

“If this projection is turned out to be true and such a huge quantity of the commodity came to the markets then, there is a possibility for the markets to crash”, they pointed out.

Colombo cloves are at \$11,000 a tonne and the estimated stocks there are at 2,000 tonnes, while Madagascar which is estimated to have stock of 5,000 tonnes was also offering at \$11,000 a tonne. Zanzibar was at \$11,500 a tonne. New Comoros crop will start from May/June, they said.

However, the trade is of the opinion that the market is likely to remain at the current levels in the domestic market with the possibility for an easier trend.

“Last year from January markets climbed up from \$4,000 a tonne to \$21,000 a tonne following failure of the June 2011 crop in Indonesia. But, its Dec 2011 crop turned out to be good and that in turn started pulling down the prices”, trade sources added.

Wheat exports: Govt opens its godowns to private players

Move aimed at creating storage space for bumper wheat harvest



New Delhi, March 7: The Government has finally decided to open up its wheat stocks for private trade to export.

An inter-ministerial panel, headed by Agriculture Minister, Sharad Pawar, decided to allow an additional 5 million tonnes of wheat for exports from the Food Corporation of India stocks by the private trade.

Recognised private exporters will be allowed to export 2011-12 crop through a bidding process at a floor price of Rs 1,480 a quintal.

The latest move assumes significance as the country heads for yet another bumper wheat harvest that has created pressure for the Government to create storage space for the new crop.

Freight

However, analysts said the price fixed by the Government is not workable, as the global prices are on the decline.

“Assuming domestic freight from Punjab godowns to the ports, shipping, finance and other costs of Rs 2,500 a tonne, the export price at current exchange rate of Rs 54.78 translates to \$315.8 a tonne f.o.b. Indian west coast”, said Tejinder Narang, grains analyst.

The workable price for export is \$280 a tonne free-on-board (f.o.b.) for soft red winter wheat of the US.

“If the Government does not align the prices to the global market, buyers will shift to wheat of other origins,” Narang said.

He further added that India’s decision to offload more wheat could dampen global wheat prices further.

Wheat prices have declined by about five per cent in the past one week on expectations of better crop in Australia and improving weather in the US.

The Government has so far allowed exports of 4.5 million tonnes by the public sector entities such as PEC, STC and MMTC.

Of this, the PSUs have so far exported 2.3 mt and private players around 2 mt, taking the country’s total wheat exports to 4.3 mt.

The country is expected to produce wheat crop of 92.3 mt this year and the harvest is likely to begin by the month-end.

As on February 1, wheat stocks in the Central pool stood at 30.80 mt, against the actual requirement of 11.2 mt.

The Government aims to procure a record 44 mt in the 2013-14 rabi marketing season starting April.

Jeera loses flavour on rising inflows



Rajkot, March 7: Mixed trend prevailed in jeera with its spot prices declining while futures gained. Spot prices were down on the back of increasing arrivals while futures were up on sustainable export demand.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange jeera for March delivery gained Rs 80 to Rs 12,940 a quintal with an open interest of 1,773 lots. NCDEX April series rose Rs 97.50 to Rs 13,42.50 with an open interest of 12,294 lots.

At the Unjha mandi of Gujarat, the spice Rs 15-20 and medium jeera quoted at Rs 2,205-2,305 for 20 kg, NCDEX quality quoted at Rs 2,380-2,480 .

Arrival stood at 25,000-26,000 bags (of 55 kg each) and traded around 25,000 bags. Daily arrivals are expected to touch 30,000 bags by next week.

According to traders, export and upcountry demand in spot market is still strong but increasing new crop arrival is pressurising the price.

According to market sources, total jeera production in the country may be around 38-40 lakh bags and carry forward stock may be around 4 lakh bags.

Lean consumption cools poultry products



Chennai, March 7: With the winter season in the North coming to an end, prices of poultry products are on the decline.

The wholesale price of egg has dropped by 30 paise to Rs 3.45 in the last six days.

The price drop was announced in two phases — 10 and 15 paise respectively on Thursday and Saturday — by the National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC) at its rate fixation meeting here.

The decline is mainly due to end of the winter season in the northern States — when egg consumption is high. Added to this is the observance of Lent in Kerala, a major market for Tamil Nadu's poultry industry, said an NECC official.

After touching a record price of Rs 3.85 a piece on February 25, egg prices were drifting slowly to maintain demand. Prices are likely to plummet further when the supply of about 45 lakh eggs to noon meal centres to Government school would be suspended during the annual examinations.

Meanwhile, prices of NECC's layer birds are down a tad at Rs 49/kg (Rs 50) while Palladam-based Broiler Coordination Committee has slashed chicken prices to Rs 50/kg (Rs 55).

Namakkal and Palladam are the benchmark prices of eggs and broiler in the country.

Mixed trend in pepper market



Kochi, March 7: The pepper market showed a mixed trend on Thursday with the running contract declining marginally while the nearbys inching up to end above the previous day closing.

Activities were limited today. March contract witnessed high volatility with very thin turnover. Much of the

trading was concentrated in April with a volume of 71 per cent. May delivery, which was trading at heavy discount, has now started recovering.

Selling pressure continued in Karnataka, but for lower grade pepper of below 500 GL bulk density at Rs 325 a kg locally and at Rs 330 delivered anywhere in India.

On the Exchange, there was liquidation of small quantity in March and May while some purchases were seen in April. Exporters were said to be hedging on the exchange platform. Arrivals on the spot stood at only 15 tonnes of fresh pepper and that were traded at Rs 345, Rs 350 and Rs 355 a kg all afloat, market sources told *Business Line*.

March contract on the NCDEX slipped by Rs 15 to Rs 36,025 a quintal. April and May increased by Rs 125 and Rs 390 respectively to close at Rs 34,635 and Rs 34,205 a quintal.

Total turn over decreased by 302 tonnes to 1,402 tonnes. Total open interest declined by 10 tonnes to 3,404 tonnes.

Spot prices were unchanged at Rs 35,100 (ungarbled) and Rs 36,600 (MG 1) a quintal.

Mustard oil slips on increased arrivals

Indore, March 7: Sluggish trend continued in mustard oil and seeds on slack demand and higher arrivals.

On Thursday, mustard oil ruled at Rs 648 for 10 kg, while it was Rs 640 in Neemuch and Rs 655 in Moorena. In Rajasthan and Gujarat mandis also, mustard oil ruled

stable with its price in Kota and Ganga Nagar being quoted at Rs 670 each, while it was Rs 695 in Jaipur and Rs 640 in Gujarat respectively.



Sluggish sentiment also prevailed in mustard seeds. It was quoted Rs 200 up in Indore mandis at Rs 3,800-4,200 a quintal, while *raida* in Indore mandis was quoted Rs 100 up at Rs 3,000-3,200. In Neemuch, mustard seeds (best quality) were quoted at Rs 3,050. On the other hand, mustard seeds with high moisture content ruled at Rs 2,950-3,000. Mustard seeds futures traded higher on improved buying support with its April and May contracts closing at Rs 3,406 (up Rs 20) and Rs 3,449 a quintal (up Rs 21).

With rise in arrivals, downtrend was also witnessed in plant deliveries of mustard seeds. Plant deliveries for Jaipur line declined to Rs 3,500 a quintal.

Arrival of new mustard seeds rose to 42.40 lakh bags (against 4 lakh bags yesterday and 2.50 bags last week). Among various States, Rajasthan witnessed the highest arrival with 1,25,000 bags, followed by Madhya Pradesh with 80,000 bags, Uttar Pradesh - 70,000, Punjab/Haryana - 20,000 bags, Gujarat 35,000 bags and 25,000 bags elsewhere in the country.

Rice prices in a temporary downtrend



Karnal, March 7: Rice market witnessed a mixed trend on Thursday.

Slack buying pulled Pusa-1121 and sharbati varieties marginally down by Rs 50-100 a quintal while all other rice varieties continued to rule stable.

After witnessing some good levels over the last few days, prices of pusa-1121 and sharbati varieties have come unexpectedly down, said Amit Chandna, proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company.

In the physical market, after witnessing a good uptrend earlier this week, Sharbati (steam) eased by Rs 50 and quoted at Rs 4,950, while Sharbati (sela) was at Rs 4,700 a quintal, down Rs 100.

Pusa-1121 (steam) went down by Rs 70 and sold at Rs 7,430 while Pusa-1121 (sela) eased by Rs 100 and quoted at Rs 6,500.

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

PR-11 (sela) was at Rs 3,175 while PR-11 (Raw) quoted at Rs 2,850-2,900 . Permal (raw) sold at Rs 2,400 while Permal (sela) went for Rs 2,350 a quintal.

For the brokens of Pusa-1121, Dubar quoted at Rs 3,250, Tibar sold at Rs 4,300 while Mongra was at Rs 2,540 a quintal.

Spot turmeric gains on upcountry orders



Erode, March 7: Spot turmeric prices gained Rs 200 a quintal on the back of upcountry orders and increasing price in other major trading centres. “Price of the turmeric has increased in Warangal, Nizamabad and Sangli, which has reflected in Erode and the traders quoted higher price and purchased huge stock. For the past few days, the bulk buyers have received fresh orders from North India so they quoted Rs 200 a quintal higher than Wednesday’s price,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said the exporters are getting reasonable orders for the past couple of days and immediately after purchase of the

turmeric dispatched them. They also expected more orders. Of the arrival of 5,200 bags of turmeric 30 per cent are new crop that fetched Rs 6,700-6,800 a quintal. It is also expected that the prices may increase soon.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association, the (New crop) finger variety was sold at Rs 4,232-6,969; the root variety Rs 4,119-5,996. The finger variety (Old crop) was sold at Rs 5,611-6,989; the root variety Rs 5,499-6,011.

Salem Hybrid Crop: The finger variety fetched Rs 5,919-7,389 and the root variety Rs 5,799-6,344. Of the total arrival of 1,233 bags, only 310 bags were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety ruled at Rs 5,940-6,999 and the root variety Rs 5,375-5,966. Of the 569 bags arrived, 547 found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,599-6,979; the root variety Rs 4,369-5,989. Of the 349 bags arrived, 342 bags were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 5,062-6,799; the root variety Rs 4,717-6,119. Of the 135 bags arrived, 128 found takers.
