

## **Farmers to stage demonstration against road projects**

Farmers will stage a demonstration at Gandhipuram here on March 23 seeking alternative routes for three proposed bypass projects in the district.

State president of Thamizhaga Vivasagal Sangam M.R. Sivasami said that nearly 1,500 acres of agriculture land would be affected in the district because of the three projects.

The major impact would be in the Kangeyampalayam belt where water level in the open wells was high even now, when ground water was depleting in other areas.

All the three projects were in the execution stage and land acquisition would start soon.

He said the Government should talk to the farmers directly.

A bypass road of shorter distance should be planned from Neelambur to Mettupalayam instead of Kangeyampalayam to Mettupalayam as proposed now.

With regard to the Western Bypass, the alignment from Madukkarai to Mettupalayam should be modified so that the road did not come into the city.

In the case of S.S. Kulam bypass, instead of the bypass a flyover should be constructed at Kovilpalayam, he said.

## **Sugar unit holds meeting with farmers at Aranthagi**

Over 300 sugarcane farmers of Aranthangi and Kurumbur areas, who have planned to raise cane in the forthcoming cane season, participated in the cane planting facilities festival organised by the Pudukottai sugar factory of EID Parry (India) Ltd., at Aranthagi recently.

The objective of the meeting was to facilitate the farmers to take up cane planting without hassles. Officials of banks, drip irrigation companies, tractor drawn alternator generators concerns, solar panel sets concerns, and so on participated in the meeting and clarified the doubts of cane farmers.

A. Punniamoorthy, deputy general manager (cane), EID Parry, explained various facilities offered to them to get their needs such loans and so on. S. Radhakrishnan, head-operations, inaugurated the exhibition stalls of various concerns. T. Jagan Mohan, regional manager, ICICI Bank, Tiruchi, explained bank services especially to sugarcane farming.

The needs of over 150 cane farmers were attended to by the officials on the occasion and in-principle sanction letters were offered on the spot.

## **TNAU expects government boost for farm mechanisation**

The Tamil Nadu Agriculture University is expecting massive support for mechanisation of agriculture in the State both from the Central and the State governments, its Vice-Chancellor K. Ramasamy told *The Hindu* on Thursday

He was responding to a question on the acute scarcity of agricultural labour in the State, especially because of the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme that ensures 150 days of employment in Tamil Nadu at present.

He admitted that the State was facing labour shortage for farming operations and hence it was imperative to go in for substantial mechanisation. “We have adequate machinery for two major crops — paddy and sugarcane.”

In order to popularise mechanisation, the university had suggested that uneducated youth and engineers should be given loan from the National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development with subsidy. Thus they would be able to purchase tractors, transplanters, weeders, and so on, and they could be permitted to get nominal hiring charges. “Even the State government might be able to help the small farmers by footing these hiring charges”.

The Vice-Chancellor said Chief Minister Jayalalithaa was keen on improving farm mechanisation. However, for mechanising farming operations, it was a must to have uniform maturity of crops. “Hence, we are developing varieties for uniform maturity and we have achieved success both with regard to black gram and green gram”.

The Vice-Chancellor was happy to point out that pulse production in the State was looking up. “As against the previous yield of 850 kg per hectare, now farmers are able to get even as much as 1,600 kg to 2,000 kg per hectare.”

Even in the rice bowl of the State, the delta region, apart from one paddy crop, farmers have chosen to go in for two crops of pulses as they can raise varieties of 65-75 days duration. As pulses and millets provide protein and nutrient, this would be one of the major activities that would require considerable attention. Another important suggestion of the university is to set up Special Purpose Vehicles which would ensure timely supply of nutrients to farmers. Last year, the agri-inputs were supplied to farmers at the “village mahotsavs.” This year, it is likely to be done in the panchayats themselves by procuring these inputs well in advance.

The university wants the government to focus on farm ponds and water saving techniques like micro irrigation and already the State Government had announced a major scheme to set up farm ponds.

The Vice-Chancellor expressed the hope that the State government would give further stimulus to micro-irrigation. He also said that the university had suggested that the government should accord better attention to supplying certified quality planting material as horticulture suffered from this flaw.

Dr. Ramasamy said there was also a suggestion to revive the village shandies so that marketing link could be provided to farmers. “We can even think of networked electronic system and marketing assistance for them”.

To a question on the recent samba crop, which faced serious trouble because of the failure of the North East Monsoon and the recalcitrance of Karnataka to release water to Mettur Dam, Dr. Ramasamy said Tamil Nadu had not totally lost the crop as alleged in some quarters. “Those who have gone in for early sowing, as advised by the university, had good yield. It is only those who have opted for late sowing who are in trouble”, he explained.

## **Farmers seek ban on sand quarrying from June to January**

The Tamilaga Vivasayigal and Thozhilalargal Munnetra Iyakkam has appealed to the State government to ban sand quarrying totally between June and January and during the monsoon seasons. During other periods, only dry sand should be quarried, that too only through local panchayats, it pleaded.

In a statement, Marudur M. Shanmugham, founder of the farmer association, said it was because of indiscriminate sand quarrying that the Cauvery had virtually been ravaged.

He alleged that both the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam governments had been spoiling the “sacredness of the Cauvery and also delta agriculture” for the past 12 years by deploying giant machinery for quarrying. This is despite a rule that sand quarrying should not be done in rivers which are perennial, he said. The sand so quarried is being transported to various other States as well. Such a quarrying has resulted in depletion of groundwater.

For drinking water schemes, these governments have not been tapping the flowing water but sinking giant borewells where there is a major aquifer. The fountain from such water sources goes dry only because the wet sand is being quarried, he alleged. But this is done under the garb of “drinking water”.

Mr. Shanmugham said that since the days of Congress governments, Tamil Nadu used to demand water from Karnataka from April itself for the delta. “We use to give Karnataka bus chassis and electricity in exchange and through talks we got water. Former Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran personally spoke to Karnataka and got water. Since 1998, none of the governments had bothered to demand water from April.

By sand quarrying, public welfare, environment and law and order are affected, he alleged. As there had been poor rains, pests that cause harm to agriculture got a boost, he lamented.

## **New scheme should be launched for drought-hit farmers: Vaiko**

The State Government should come up with a new scheme to mitigate the suffering of the farmers reeling under drought, Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam general secretary, Vaiko said.

Addressing the protestors at a day-long hunger strike here on Thursday, Mr. Vaiko said that it was the right time for the Government to feed the farmers who had been providing food to the people.

Mr. Vaiko sought drought relief to the tune of Rs. 25,000 an acre for Cauvery Delta farmers and wanted the Government to provide Rs. 15,000 an acre for farmers of rain-fed areas. Similarly, farm hands should be given a compensation of Rs. 10,000.

He also sought Rs. 10 lakh compensation to the families of the 13 farmers across the State who had committed suicide following crop failure.

Mr. Vaiko complained that officials had refused to take premium for crop insurance from farmers claiming that the deadline for payment of premium had ended on December 18. There was no announcement by the Government to this effect and he wanted to know whether the Government issued any such instruction.

While the State Government had announced rescheduling of cooperative loans, farmers were issued notice seeking repayment of loan within 15 days. "Is the Government aware of such developments," he asked.

The Centre should come forward to waive the crop loan given to the farmers through nationalised banks, he said.

While the farmers sought to nationalise rivers, the Centre was trying to bring forward the National Water Policy 2012 that would prevent local bodies from drawing water for supply to the people. Even farmers would not be allowed to sink deep borewells to irrigate their farmland. Stating that water was a natural resource common to all, he warned that the common man would be affected by the policy.

Among those who took part in the fast were the leader of Five District Farmers' Association, K. M. Abbas, and party Virudhunagar district secretary R.M. Shanmugasundaram.

## **Focus on farmer-friendly research, says expert**

*Indian agriculture is in trouble: AME Foundation chairperson*

Agricultural scientists should concentrate on farmer-friendly research rather than that for publication in international journals, and it is important that the findings of research are passed on to farmers, said R. Dwarakinath, Chairperson of the AME Foundation, on Thursday.

He was speaking at the inauguration of a three-day national conference on 'Farmers First for Conserving Soil and Water Resources in Southern Region' jointly organised by the Indian Association of Soil and Water Conservationists, Dehradun, and the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore. Earlier, delivering the K.G. Tejwani Memorial Lecture, Mr. Dwarakinath said Indian agriculture was in trouble and the growth rates had fallen.



*Exchange of Ideas:(From left) R. Dwarakinath, Chairperson, AME Foundation, Bangalore; K. Narayana Gowda, Vice-Chancellor, UAS, Bangalore;M.V. Rajasekharan, the former Union Minister of State for Planning and MLC; and V.N. Sharda, member, Agricultural Scientists Recruitment Board, New Delhi, at the National Conference on Farmers First for Conserving Soil and Water Resources in Southern Region, in Bangalore on Thursday.— Photo: K. Gopinathan*

“If remedial measures are not taken early, serious consequences may follow,” he said.

He said development of dryland farming will serve a dual purpose of enlarging the national food basket and mitigating rural poverty.

The former Union Minister of State for Planning and MLC M.V. Rajasekharan said rapid growth of agriculture was essential for meeting the food and national security of the country.

More than 250 farmers and scientists from Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have come together on a common platform to share and discuss experiences, requirement of technological advancements and other issues related to the management of natural resources in Southern India.

Recommendations evolved in the conference will be used to draft a policy document for farmers.

The recommendations would be disseminated to the farmers through the Krishi Vigyan Kendras and the Departments of Agriculture and Watershed Development, UAS Vice-Chancellor K. Narayana Gowda said.

## **Supplyco move benefits paddy farmers**

Supplyco’s decision to procure paddy in the second phase at a support price of Rs.17 a kg has ensured one of the decent returns for paddy farmers in the recent past.

Supplyco’s initiative has compelled private mills as well to give higher price to the farmers. Supplyco started procuring paddy since 2005 when farmers failed to manage returns that were good enough to cover at least production costs.

Though the Union government announced a support price of Rs.12.50 a kg for paddy procurement, the State government raised it by Rs.4.50 on its own, a release issued by Supplyco here said.

Supplyco had already procured 2.28 lakh quintal paddy during the second season. Farmers were being given their dues without delay. So far, Rs.28.15 crore had been distributed on this count. About 70,000 farmers had received the benefit of procurement.

Paddy production had taken a severe hit owing to drought and intrusion of saline water. Saline water intrusion had caused widespread crop loss, especially in Kottayam and Alappuzha districts. Quality of paddy from some areas had also suffered owing to these reasons.

The rice produced from the procured paddy along with the rice received from the Food Corporation of India was being used for distribution through public distribution shops.

## **Farmers can apply for LEC in ‘Revenue Sadassulu’**

Collector S. Suresh Kumar said farmers who have not so far applied for Loan Eligibility Cards (LEC) could do so in the on-going ‘Revenue Sadassulu’. Due priority has been attached to issuing LEC in addition to redressing other grievances related to land matters.

Speaking at the ‘Revenue Sadassu’ held at Narakodur near Tenali on Thursday, Mr. Suresh Kumar said most of the grievances pertaining to land were redressed in the Revenue Sadassulu held in January and February last year and in the ‘Revenue Gramabata’ organised in October and November of the same year.

The district administration has been mandated to dispose of the petitions within 90 days of receiving them in the Revenue Sadassulu.

While the requirements of farmers would be met in the Revenue Sadassulu, they could also avail of the services rendered in the Mee Seva centres.

Later, Mr. Suresh Kumar inaugurated Village Revenue Office at Brahmanakodur village in Ponnur mandal. He inquired about the implementation of mid-day meal scheme in the local primary school and ordered that urgent steps should be taken to improve sanitation in the village.

RDO S. Srinivasa Murthy and others participated.

## **Farmers seek freedom to fix price of produce**

*BKS leader says unremunerative price driving farmers to suicide*

Incurring losses year after year with their "hands tied" due to "lopsided" farm products pricing policy of the Union and the State governments, hundreds of farmers on Thursday vowed to wage a relentless struggle to press for their 13-point charter of demands including freedom to market their produce anywhere in the country at the price of their choice.

Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) State vice-president T. Sriram Babu who is leading “Maro Swatantra Rythu Maha Padayatra” from Bendamurulanka in East Godavari district to Tirupati, told reporters here on Thursday that in the name of protecting the interest of consumers, only the farmers had been deprived of their right to fix the sale price.

“It is the unremunerative price for their produce that is driving fellow farmers to end their lives. It is unfair to ask the farmers to make sacrifices for the sake of society,” he lamented. “Even a person running a petty shop adds profit margin before selling his or her goods,” its State secretary Jalagam Kumarasamy said. Expressing disappointment over the amount of compensation released to farmers hit by Nilam cyclone, he said Maharashtra, from where Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar hailed, had got the lion's share due to alleged failure of the ruling Congress in the State to exert pressure on the Centre in the interest of Andhra farmers.

Alleging discrimination in the duration of power cuts in urban and rural areas, he said, “We are being treated as second class citizens. While the power cut in cities and towns were between two to six hours, we are sweating it without power for 12 hours a day.” The 965-km yatra was aimed to unite the farmers for a struggle to get the freedom to sell the produce anywhere in the country at the best price, Sangh West Godavari district president P.Krishnamurthy.

The Sangh also pressed for payment of Rs 2,000 per quintal to cotton growers who had sold their produce to the Cotton Corporation of India, which, he claimed, had made a profit of Rs 3,000 per quintal after purchasing for Rs 3,200 to Rs 3,300 from farmers. They pressed for a remunerative price of Rs 5,000 per quintal for jute.

Their other demands included Kisan Budget on the lines of the railway budget both at the national and State levels, a special seven-day legislature session exclusively to discuss farmers issues, speedy implementation of the Polvaram project as national project, a monthly pension of Rs 2,000 to farmers who had crossed 60 years of age, Sangh State secretary P.Venkateswarulu said.

## Teacher-turned-farmer reaps profit through Apiculture



*Finding new ways:K. Chinnababu showing a unit of honeybee hive at Andapuram near Vuyyuru in Krishna district.- Photo: Ch. Vijaya Bhaskar*

A social science post graduate, K. Chinnababu, resigned his job as a voluntary teacher with the State government to take the plunge as a honeybee farmer.

Just a few years after investing his expertise in Apiculture, he is reaping unmatched profits and helping many debt-ridden farmers of the region to take up his way.

“Running the 80-honeybee box unit at my home, I have around 500 regular customers, who visit to buy the pure natural honey. The guaranteed monthly income on the small unit is Rs. 30,000,” said K. Chinnababu. However, the honey produce has been expected between November and April in Krishna district due to its climatic conditions.

The 48-year-old farmer from Anandapuram hamlet in Vuyyuru mandal had chosen the way of engaging in Apiculture to overcome the family’s financial constraints a few years ago.

He arranged some boxes with hives in gardens and other strategic places to attract the honey bees. Once the bees set the box as their home, the boxes would be taken to his unit during the night time.

The bees would extract honey from its sources within the radius of three kms and develop the hive in the box into a honey hive within a week.

“Bees collect and place one kg of honey in each box every week. As one kilo honey fetches Rs. 300 and customers throng to buy the produce, there was no tension of marketing and making profits,” told Mr. Chinnababu to *The Hindu*. Mr. Chinnababu earned expertise in Apiculture and has also been credited with introducing the farming method to many debt-ridden farmers of the region to help them come out of their crisis.

“A box of honey hive with bees will be sold at Rs. 4,500 to the new farmer to start a unit. The price is including the technical support and guidance till the farmer masters the management of his own unit,” says Mr. Chinnababu, who has also been making money by training the farmers through NABARD and Tribal Development Authorities’ support.

“Regular watch and patience to manage the unit is the only investment required to reap profits in the Apiculture. This is a boon to the farmers, who own small holdings of land,” he opined.

## **Agriculture sector records low growth**

### *A negative growth of 1.3 per cent during Eleventh Plan*

: Kerala has ceased to be an agrarian economy with the contribution of agriculture to the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) coming down over the past two decades.

The agriculture sector in the State recorded a negative growth of 1.3 per cent during the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan period (2007-2012). Its share in the GSDP dropped to 9.1 per cent in 2011-12 compared to 26.9 per cent in 1990-91.

At the same time, a large section of the rural population is still dependent on agriculture for employment and livelihood, posing a serious challenge to planners and administrators.



The Economic Review, 2012, which was released on the eve of presentation of the State Budget, says that reviving the agriculture sector will require a quantum increase in productivity from the current levels. This, in turn, requires technological breakthrough given the limited supply of land and other structural rigidities; addressing low level of mechanisation, shortage of irrigation facilities, treatment of soil acidity and multiple nutrient deficiencies; plant health management; remunerative prices and poor extension services.

The Review notes that growth performance of agriculture sector in the State has been fluctuating with a positive growth of 1.8 per cent in the Tenth Plan period. Quick estimate of 2011-12 indicated a negative growth of 1.6 per cent over the previous year. The provisional estimate of agriculture income showed negative growth of 4.5 per cent during 2010-11.

It observes that the crippling growth rate in agriculture as against a reasonably robust annual growth rate of GSDP is a cause of concern. The drop in its contribution to the GSDP indicates a shift from agrarian economy towards a service sector dominated economy.

Although the share of agriculture GDP (agriculture and animal husbandry alone) has declined in almost all States, agriculture is an important contributor to GSDP in some States in 2011-12.

## **Agri-business opportunities**

The Business Planning and Development (BPD) Unit of the Directorate of Agri-Business Development of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University will organise a workshop on “Agri-Business Opportunities in Food Processing and Biotechnology” here on March 19.

The programme is being organised to identify potential agriculture-based entrepreneurs and start-up companies and enrol them as members under the BPD-TNAU to provide various incubation services.

BPD-TNAU provides incubation support for entrepreneurs in food processing and agri-biotechnology. Entrepreneurs can avail themselves of services such as business consultancy, technical consultancy, capacity building, market linkages, brand promotions, quality and testing, certification of products, and financial assistance from various financial institutions.

Entrepreneurs from the food processing and biotechnology sector or small companies, who are into food processing or agri-biotechnology, can participate in the workshop.

For details, contact P. Sivasubramanian, Director, Directorate of Agri-Business Development, TNAU, on 0422-6611377 / 10 / 99428-96222; e-mail [tobusiness@tnau.ac.in](mailto:tobusiness@tnau.ac.in); or visit the website [www.bpdtnau.org](http://www.bpdtnau.org).

## **Course in agri-business**

The Institute of Co-operative Management (ICM) here will conduct a course in agri-clinic and agri-business, sponsored by the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management, Hyderabad.

This programme of the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operation, Government of India, aims at enabling graduates in agriculture and agro-related fields to become self-employed agricultural entrepreneurs by setting up their own ventures, according to a press release issued here on Thursday.

### **Free of charges**

The duration of the training programme is 60 days and the institute will provide training, boarding and lodging to the participants free of charge. All matters required for starting an agri-business enterprise such as entrepreneurship skills; personality development, including communication skill; domain knowledge relating to market; and technical aspects of agri-business; account keeping; hands-on-experience in successful agri-business ventures; and preparation of detailed project report will be covered in the programme, according to the release.

Graduates, postgraduates, diploma holders, those who have passed the vocational higher secondary education in agriculture, horticulture, sericulture, silviculture, dairying, animal husbandry and veterinary science, fisheries, agri-engineering and other agro-related areas are eligible to apply.

Biological science graduates or postgraduates, diploma holders having 60 per cent or more course content related to agri or agri-related content in the syllabus may also apply. Applications are invited from eligible candidates, including retired persons, for the programme that will begin by mid April, 2013. Programme details and application forms can be downloaded from [www.icmkannur.org](http://www.icmkannur.org).

Application forms can also be had by post by sending self-addressed envelop (22 cm x 12 cm ) stamped for Rs.10 to The Director, Institute of Cooperative Management, Parassinikadavu, Kannur – 670 563. Completed applications shall reach the institute by April 5. For details, call: 0497-2784002/2784044/2784088.

## **Need to save agriculture produce**

Expressing concern over the fact that agricultural produce, food and vegetables worth Rs.50,000 crore in the country every year perish due to lack of proper cold-storage, distribution and market channels, transportation and other facilities, Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Processing Industries Charan Das Mahant on Thursday called for tapping the vast potential of food processing and hospitality sectors for future socio-economic progress of the country.

Inaugurating the five-day “Aahar-2013-International Food and Hospitality Fair” at Pragati Maidan here, Dr. Mahant said the Ministry of Agriculture has undertaken various policy initiatives to save agriculture produce. “Such initiatives can generate substantial foreign exchange and also create tremendous job opportunities in the country.”

While stressing the need to focus on the judicious management of agri-products the Minister evinced hope that India Trade Promotion Organisation would continue to promote Indian products and services not only within the country but also overseas.

ITPO Chairperson-cum-Managing Director Rita Menon said “Aahar” has surpassed all previous records in terms of participation with over 676 exhibitors including 50 from 17 countries such as

Austria, Canada, China, Denmark, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Korea, Malaysia, Romania, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, UAE and USA.

## Hassan union increases milk procurement price

The Hassan Milk Producers Union has increased milk procurement price by Rs. 2 a litre with effect from Friday.

Milk producers will now get Rs. 22.50 for a litre.

Union president and Janata Dal (Secular) leader H.D. Revanna told journalists here on Thursday that the procurement price was fixed at Rs. 20.50 a litre on February 15 following the Karnataka Milk Federation's decision to increase the milk price.

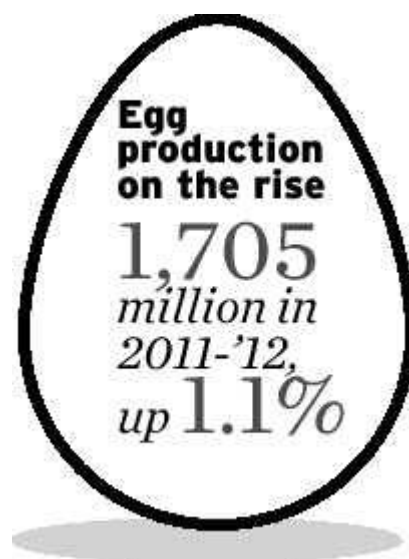
"The financial position of the union has improved now. From Friday, milk producers' cooperative societies will get Rs. 23.06 for a litre of milk, while producers will get Rs. 22.50 for a litre," Mr. Revanna said.

He said the Hassan union was expecting a profit of Rs. 2.5 crore to Rs. 3 crore in 2012-13.

## Milk price increase

The Bidar-Gulbarga Milk Union will increase the procurement price of milk by Rs. 1.5 a litre from March 16. With this, milk prices will rule between Rs. 21.7 and Rs. 29.4 a litre, depending on quality. This was decided at an administrative board meeting of the union in Gulbarga, said Mallikarjun Biradar, union president. — Special Correspondent

## Milk, egg, meat production up



The total milk production in Kerala was 27.2 lakh tonnes in 2011-12, an increase of 0.73 lakh tonnes over the previous year, the Economic Review for 2012 reveals. But the contribution of Kerala to national milk production declined to 2.1 per cent.

A total of 4,518 lakh litres of milk was procured by dairy cooperative societies in Kerala in 2011-12. The procurement is only about 15-16 per cent of the total estimated production.

Kerala has the third highest milk yield per day of exotic and non-descript cows in India and the second highest yield of buffaloes.

## **Meat**

All categories of meat except broiler chicken registered an increase in price during 2011-12 compared to the previous year. Mutton registered the highest increase in price (18.9 per cent) followed by pork (10.4 per cent). The price of fowl-white egg increased by 4.2 per cent, brown egg by 8.8 per cent, and duck egg by 6.2 per cent.

Poultry meat production went up from 16,153 tonnes in 2010-11 to 1,84,000 tonnes in 2011-12 while production of meat other than poultry increased from 1,08,398 tonnes to 2,42,000 tonnes during the same period.

The gap between the production and demand of egg is increasing at an alarming rate, the review notes. Egg production in Kerala was 1,705 million in 2011-12, an increase of 1.1 per cent over the previous year. The per capita availability of egg per year in Kerala during 2011-12 was 51, compared to 50 in the previous year.

## **Milk producers to get PF, pension**

*'Paala Nidhi' to be created to fund the scheme in Karimnagar from Ugadi*

The Karimnagar Dairy, which had won accolades for launching several welfare schemes for the well-being of milk producers as part of its 'White Revolution' campaign to increase milk production, has decided to launch the ambitious 'Paala Nidhi' (Milk Fund) programme to provide Provident Fund (PF) and pension to the milk producers.

The scheme may be launched from from Ugadi, the Telugu New Year day.

As part of the scheme, the Dairy would collect Rs. 0.20 per litre from milk producers and contribute an equal amount itself to the fund.

Another Rs. 0.15 per litre would be contributed by the milk producers' institution in the village.

Talking to *The Hindu* here on Thursday, Karimnagar Dairy chairman Ch. Rajeshwara Rao said that the total amount of Rs. 0.55 per litre collected would be deposited in the bank.

The milk producers between the ages of 18 years and 60 years were eligible for this scheme.

However, the pension would be given only after completion of minimum of a five-year period of contributions and that too only for those farmers who complete 60 years of age, he said.

“If the milk producer dies, the contributions made by him or her would be given to his nominee immediately”, he added.

Mr. Rajeshwara Rao said that “our idea is to provide some confidence to the milk producers that he too can live happily on par with other organised sector employees with the monthly pension amount without depending on others after attaining the age of 60 years.

## **Fillip to village-based milk procurement system**

The National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) has selected the Krishnaveni Krishna District Milk Producers Cooperative Union Limited for its five-year National Dairy Plan-1 project to strengthen village-based milk procurement system and for providing technical services to the producers.

The NDDB will release Rs. 4.3 crore to the cooperative union in a phased manner for the period 2013-18.

“NDDB approved the five-year National Dairy Plan-1 project in February. We have to chalk out a plan selecting some key areas for strengthening,” said Krishnaveni Krishna District Milk Producers’ Union Limited chairman D. Ramakrishna Prasad.

He added that over 12,000 farmers were engaged in dairying with the union and the procurement capacity was above 56,000 litres from the 526 procurement centres across the district.

“Requirement of new Bulk Milk Cooler Units (BMCs) to manage the huge milk production will be addressed under the project. At least five more BMCs will be set up under the project,” said Mr. Prasad.

Only 12 BMCs are available in the district to manage 56,000 litres of buffalo milk per day. On the other hand, the work on the five new BMCs sanctioned under Rastriya Krishi Vignana Yojana will commence soon.

“We will strive to increase the BMCs at strategic places from the existing 12 to 22 in a couple of years,” Mr. Prasad told *The Hindu*. He added: “The union has plans to improve veterinary services to manage cattle and distribute fodder seed under the project in Krishna district.” “Around 20,000 litres of milk is being sold in Vijayawada city and 33,000 litres are being supplied every day to the AP Dairy Federation,” said Mr. Prasad, and added that the NDDB support would boost the milk production and attract new farmers to take up dairying in Krishna district.

National Dairy Development Board, published in its website, that it also selected Krishna District Milk Producers Mutually Aided Cooperative Union Limited, Vijayawada, for the National Dairy Plan -1.

***NDDB selects Krishnaveni Krishna District Milk Producers Cooperative Union for its five-year National Dairy Plan***

## Weather

### Chennai - INDIA

#### Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

**Rain:** 0

**Humidity:** 89

**Wind:** normal

**Friday, Mar 15**

**Max**   **Min**

29° | 25°

**Sunrise:** 06:16

**Sunset:** 06:19

**Barometer:** 1014

#### Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

**Saturday, Mar 16**

**Max**   **Min**

33° | 22°

#### Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday Mar 17	Monday Mar 18	Tuesday Mar 19	Wednesday Mar 20	Thursday Mar 21
34°   22° Partly Cloudy	32°   22° Cloudy	33°   22° Overcast	33°   22° Overcast	33°   22° Overcast

## Gujarat to waive interest on farm loans

AHMEDABAD: The state government has decided to waive off the interest on loans taken by farmers between April 1 and August 15, 2012. The decision to waive off the interest was taken keeping in view the inadequate rains Gujarat during the monsoon.

Speaking on the budgetary demands, agriculture minister [Babu Bokhiria](#) said that anticipating good [monsoon](#) the farmers had taken loans. But due to delayed rains, the crops were adversely affected and in many places it failed altogether, leading to losses to the farmers in the state.

Bokhiria said that to free them from the debt, the farmers, who had taken loans up to Rs 3 lakh, won't be needed to pay the interest, provided the loans were taken between April and August.

The minister said that the government, which was being accused of being anti-farmer, had allocated Rs 12,054 crore more in the nearly 12 years of its rule since 2001. He said that the income from agriculture produce was Rs 9,000 crore, which increased to Rs 1 lakh crore.

The state legislative assembly witnessed loud protests and walkout by the opposition over a private member resolution attacking the Centre in the second session.

## Building resilience to climate change for farming

BHOPAL: A consultation was held for reviewing the progress of European Union-supported Strengthening Adaptive Farming in Bangladesh, India and Nepal (SAFBIN) programme at Sagar on Wednesday. This program is being implemented in three districts of each of these countries.

The chief objective of the programme is building climate change resilience of small holder farming systems and helping small holder farmers achieve food and nutrition security by making small farming practices more sustainable and profitable.

Addressing the delegates, Collector of Sagar Yogendra Sharma said, "Developing strategies for tackling the consequences of climate change holds critical importance in securing livelihoods of rural population in Madhya Pradesh."

Dr Manfred Aichinger, Caritas Austria, highlighted the losses that smallholder farmers frequently suffer across the world due to wild weather fluctuations. While Sunil Simon, [south Asia](#) programme manager of SAFBIN, gave a presentation on the progress of the project.



### Idukki fast losing its agri-charm

The hill district, once known for its enviable agro-climatic conditions, is fast losing the charm, if the reports of crop reduction are an indication.

The quantum of the crop loss in Idukki may not be on account of the prevailing drought conditions alone. Experts have attributed the fall in production to factors like increasing demand on land for real estate development, shortage of labour and migration of farmers to other areas due to increased input cost.

Dairy farming, which plays a major role in the agro-economy of the region, has also been affected on account of the drought and the shortage of green fodder.

The district, which produces 3.5 lakh litres of milk every day, has seen a fall by 12,000 litres since February. The milk production is likely to go down further in the coming months when the temperature will go up.

The spice growers who needed artificial irrigation only twice in an year have been doing it for six times a year since last year.

With the district receiving deficient rainfall, the planters of cardamom and pepper had to depend on irrigation using diesel pump sets. Increase of diesel price has added to the worries of the farmers.

Kanthaloor and Vattavada panchayats which produce winter vegetables like cabbage, potato, butter beans and carrot are the areas worst hit by drought.

The condition of farmers in these panchayats remains grim as they continue to be deprived of irrigation facility.

Farmers from the region say the government has turned a deaf ear to their long lasting demand of constructing check dams at important water bodies so that the water could be used during summer days.

Another worry is the depletion of groundwater, now attributed to the indiscriminate planting of Eucalyptus grandis.

## Farmers wait for yield

The expectations from the state budget for agriculture are high with regard to the relief expected to the farmers to tide over their losses owing to drought.

The state needs intervention of the government to arrest the fall in the prices of rubber, cardamom, coffee, tea, pepper and rubber, said Muthalamthode Mani, president of the Desiya Karshaka Samajam.

A new law has to be enacted to include those farmers who are not covered in the present provisions of the Debt Relief Commission, said K A Prabhakaran Master, president Kerala Karshaka Samrakshana Samithi.

Similarly the procurement price of paddy should be raised to Rs 30 from Rs 17 per kg so that the paddy farmers can stay in the profession. A separate corpus fund should be floated for undertaking the procurement of paddy so that the delay experienced in getting payment from Supplyco is avoided. The pension of the farmers should also be raised to Rs 5,000 per month, said Prabhakaran Master.

Currently the Agriculture Debt Relief Commission have covered only the loans taken from the co-operative banks but the scheduled banks and nationalised banks also need to be covered. The debt relief for those who took loans above Rs one lakh should also be covered, said Muthalamthode Mani.



Status of announcements of last budget: A sum of Rs 10 crore was earmarked in the last state budget for setting up a rice bio park in Palakkad and Kuttanad.

The project has been approved in principle and the concept note has been prepared. The official sanction of the government has also been received, said Dr P V Balachandran, Director of Extension of the Kerala Agriculture University.

Three coconut bio-parks, namely Aaralam farm in Kannur, department farm in Chelakara and in Kollam, were also planned for which Rs 15 crore was earmarked.

Dr Balachandran said that since rice and coconut parks comprised both agriculture and business, we have suggested that a governing council be constituted like that of Technopark for managing the bio-parks.



## **Cabinet okays relief to farmers on power bills**

**The State Cabinet on Wednesday decided to waive the surcharge on electricity bills of permanent agricultural pump consumers as on February 28, 2013. Fifty per cent of the original bills of the farmers would be paid by the State Government and the remaining 50 per cent can be paid by the farmers in 10 installments. The State Government would pay about Rs1,100 crore on behalf of the farmers.**

The Cabinet decided that henceforth farmers would be required to pay electricity bills at the rate of Rs600 per horsepower every six months in a year. They would be issued the bills at flat rate of Rs600 per horsepower each in April and October. The remaining amount of electricity bills payable as fixed by the MP Electricity Regulatory Commission would be paid by the State government as subsidy in monthly installments. The interest payable on the amount deposited by the consumers would be deemed adjusted in the subsidy given by the State government.

For all consumers other than the ones covered under the above scheme of flat rate, the rates of subsidy payable by the State Government in financial year 2013-14 would remain the same as in financial year 2012-13. The burden of fuel cost adjustment for the electricity consumers for financial year 2013-14 would be borne by the State government.

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## **Business Standard** <sup>beta</sup>

### **Karnataka set to reap bumper mango crop**

Karnataka is in for a bumper mango harvest this year, with production expected to more than double at 700,000-800,000 metric tonnes, compared to 300,000 tonnes last year.

"Despite drought in a majority of the growing regions for the past two years, the state is set for a bumper crop this year as mango is a dry-land fruit and does not require irrigation. The moisture levels were good in most of

the areas, though there was drought. However, the fruit size will depend on the rains in March or early April," S V Hittalmani, additional director (fruits and flowers), department of horticulture said.



He said the year 2012 was an 'Off Year' and so the production was around 300,000 tonnes, leading to a huge rise in the prices. However, this year, he expects prices to come down due to a bumper crop. The bumper crop is expected in view of widespread flowering in December and January this year.

K Rudresha, deputy director, Karnataka State Mango Development and Market Corporation (KSMDMC), said the area under mango has gone up by about 10,000 hectares this year. The total area under mango is now estimated at 160,000 hectares.

Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Dharwad, Belgaum, Ramanagar, Haveri, Tumkur and Mysore are major growing districts in the state. Kolar and Chikkaballapur together contribute half of the total.

Alphonso, Mallika, Raspuri, Bainganpalli, Sendhura, Totapuri are major varieties grown in the state. Of these, Alphonso contributes about 30 per cent of the total production.

Considering the bumper crop this year, KSMDMC is planning to organise direct market linkage programmes for growers in 10 districts. It is also planning to promote the Totapuri variety as a table fruit this year. "The sugar content in the Totapuri variety is considerably less when compared to the Alphonso. Even diabetics can consume this variety," Hittalmani said.

He said for the first time, mango 'melas' (farmer to consumer initiative) are being organized by KSMDMC instead of the horticulture department.

"We will organise mango melas in 10 major district headquarters and many taluk places this year to provide direct market access to growers. We are looking at selling at least Rs 20 crore worth of mangoes through these melas as against fruit worth Rs 10 crore sold last year," he added.

KSMDMC is setting up a forward linkage centre in Chintamani, which will provide post-harvest training to farmers and entrepreneurs. The backward linkage centre will be set up at Srinivisapura, which will provide knowhow for production. It will have a germ plasm station and laboratory for testing and training centres. About 50-100 varieties of mango germ plasm will be stored in this centre, Rudresha added.

The state government has earmarked a budgetary allocation of Rs 5 crore for the two-year old corporation in the next financial year.

# Dairy firms upbeat on milk powder exports

**With an inventory of about 1,00,000 tonnes of skimmed milk powder (SMP) in the country, dairy cooperatives and private companies are upbeat on exports**



After the government had lifted the ban on export of milk powder in June last year, India exported about 60,000 tonnes of SMP. Industry sources said if there was no cap, the country could export about 100,000 tonnes a year.

In the last five years, SMP export had been banned twice.

India processes about 370,000 tonnes of SMP a year. This year, owing to depressed domestic demand and good milk production, there is surplus stock. The oversupply resulted in SMP prices falling from Rs 180-200 a kg in 2011-12 to Rs 140-150 a kg in the last few months of 2012-13.

In the last nine months, private dairy products company Hatsun Agro Products has exported about 12,000 tonnes of SMP. R G Chandramogan, the company's chairman and managing director, says, "After the government allowed exports, it took around three months for players to secure contracts, and the bulk of the exporting took place in the last six months. We have also sold about 6,000 tonnes of SMP in the domestic market." He added SMP accounted for only about 15-20 per cent of Hatsun's net sales.

Currently, prices of Indian SMP range from \$2,800 to \$3,200 a tonne in the international market, against \$2,600-2,700 a tonne three to four months ago. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Afghanistan and some Southeast Asian countries are the major buyers of Indian SMP. SMP from New Zealand and Australia, two major exporters, costs \$3,500-3,600 a tonne, against \$3,400 per tonne in November 2012.

"Exports have gained momentum due to the drought-like situation in some parts of New Zealand and Australia," said R S Sodhi, managing director, Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation, which owns and markets the Amul brand of milk and milk products. Since June 2012, Amul has exported 6,000-7,000 tonnes of SMP.

Delhi-based Sterling Agro Industries has exported about 8,000 tonnes of SMP. Managing Director Kuldeep Saluja expects exports would touch 9,000 tonnes by the end of this month.

While Parag Milk Foods, which sells products under the Gowardhan brand, has exported 400-600 tonnes in the last nine months, Bhole Baba (which sells milk powder under the Krishna brand) has exported 500-600 tonnes.

Saluja said, "Demand is likely to pick up in the domestic market around Holi. Milk production would also drop during summers. In the last two weeks, prices have already risen from Rs 145-150 per kg to about Rs 160 a kg."

Sandeep Aggarwal, director of SMC Foods, said, "We expect prices to touch Rs 180 a kg during the summer months, when there would be more demand from ice cream makers." Creamy Foods, an SMC group company

that manufactures pure ghee, SMP, white melted butter and processed liquid milk, has exported about 1,000 tonnes of SMP since June 2012. Aggarwal said if exports continued to be allowed, the company could export about 1,500 tonnes in the next financial year.

Dairy product companies are, however, cautious in their optimism, as multiple bans on exports in the last five years had hit India's reputation of a major exporter of milk powder. Aggarwal said, "Indian players are unable to secure long-term contracts, as buyers are apprehensive about a ban being reinforced." Chandramogan said if another ban was enforced, the market created in the last few months would be hit.

## Chilli remains weak on subdued demand

**It remained weak for the second day**



Chilli futures for April declined by Rs 84, or 1.21% to Rs 6,874 per quintal in 9820 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the March contract shed Rs 58, or 86% to Rs 6680 per quintal in 1030 lots.

Chilli remained weak for the second day.

Weakened as speculators reduced their positions, driven by weak spot market trends against adequate supplies.

## Maize falls 1.7% on selling pressure

**Prices fell due to lower spot markets cue**



Maize futures for July fell by Rs 21 or 1.65% to Rs 1,253 per quintal, in 120 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the April contract slid by Rs 15, or 1.13% to

Rs 1,311 per quintal in 40,980 lots.

Prices fell due to lower spot markets cue.

Fall in its prices at domestic markets put pressure here in maize futures trade.

The March contract also dropped by Rs 14, or 1.07% to Rs 1,295 per quintal in 1,820 lots.

## Coriander falls for second day on weak demand

Prices went down tracking weak spot market trend



Coriander futures for May fell further by Rs 71, or 1.05% to Rs 6,698 per quintal in 15,590 lots.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the April contract declined by Rs 65, or 0.98% to Rs 6,584 per quintal in 28,940 lots.

Prices went down tracking weak spot market trend on sluggish demand.

Adequate stocks in the physical market due to increased arrivals from producing belts further fuelled the downtrend.

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# THE HINDU Business Line

## Vannamei shrimp farmers in AP facing problems, say experts

**Kakinada, March 14:** Vannamei shrimp culture, which has taken roots in Andhra Pradesh, is now facing some problems, as there is an outbreak of disease and the enthusiasm of farmers is waning, according to experts.

At a kisan mela organised here on Thursday by the Kakinada centre of the Central Institute of Fisheries Education (CIFE), T. Rajyalakshmi, former director of the Central Institute for Brackish

Water Aquaculture, said “Vannamei prawn farmers are facing problems. Greater caution should have been exercised in introducing the species.”

### **Licences**

P. Brahmeswara Rao, Deputy Director of the MPEDA, said Vannamei shrimp farmers should necessarily obtain licence from the Coastal Aquaculture Authority and should stick to prescribed practices. He admitted that Vannamei farmers were now facing some problems in the State, with seed scarcity and diseases. In culturing an exotic species, he said, bio-security measures were of utmost importance. L. Satyanarayana, President of All-India Shrimp Hatcheries' Association, said shrimp farmers and hatchery owners should follow the guidelines and at present both were violating them and suffering heavy losses.

### **Domestic market**

He felt that domestic market for shrimps should be developed by opening retail outlets in metros and other places, and “we should not depend on exports alone.” He also said there was need for a separate Ministry for fisheries. ‘Seafood exports are fetching more than Rs 20,000 crore in foreign exchange and the sector should be given due importance,’ he said.

### **Returns to farmers**

Neetu Prasad, East Godavari Collector, said paddy-cum-fish culture should be promoted to maximise returns for farmers.

Earlier, S.S.H. Razvi, Officer-in-Charge and Principal Scientist of the CIFE, spoke about the educational programmes taken up by the institute for fish farmers.

## **Sheet rubber steady**

**Kottayam, March 14:** Spot rubber prices were not available owing to the demise of N. Baby, one of the Directors of Indian Rubber Dealers Federation.

The dealers' shops remained closed following a hartal announced by the Federation.

Meanwhile, sheet rubber was quoted steady at Rs 162 a kg at Kottayam and Kochi according to the Rubber Board.

The key TOCOM rubber futures dipped to a three-month low on early trades extending the losses into a third straight session following the news that the monetary policy in China had shifted to neutral. The market regained the initial losses during late trades on fresh buying and short covering.

In futures, the March series improved to Rs 161 (Rs 160.13), April to Rs 164.04 (Rs 163.56), May to Rs 167.50 (Rs 166.83), and June to Rs 169.75 (Rs 168.59) a kg, while the July series slipped to Rs 170.25 (Rs 171.94) and August to Rs 174 (Rs 174.35) a kg on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) declined to Rs 158.14 (Rs 162.39) a kg at Bangkok. The March futures were at ¥267.7 (Rs 150.88) a kg on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

## Dairy industry urged to build, expand domestic market



*Amrita Patel*

**Ahmedabad, March 14:** National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) Chairman Amrita Patel on Thursday said with increased income levels, the demand for milk is expected to go up to 200 - 210 million tonnes by 2020-21, and called for collective efforts and increased productivity. While delivering the keynote address at the 41st Dairy Industry Conference, with the theme “Global Dairy Industry and Food Security” in Mumbai, she said the first obligation of the dairy industry is to continue to build and expand the domestic market and find creative ways with the Central and State Governments to ensure that an increasing proportion of children drink milk, according to an NDDB release here.

Dr Patel pointed out that milk production has been growing at over four per cent annually compared to the growth in world milk production which is 2.75 per cent. Per capita availability of milk has also increased to 290 gm a day, which is comparable with the world per capita availability of 289 gm/day.

Stressing upon a scientific approach, she said a comprehensive Web-based National Information Network covering all aspects of productivity enhancement, i.e., breeding, feeding and healthcare, has been developed at NDDB and is available to any organisation, producer, service provider and policy maker that wishes to link up. The NDDB is also setting up a national HRD facility to offer need-based technical, managerial and leadership training programmes, deliver distance education and facilitate training of trainers. The dairy industry must ensure that prices remained affordable and competitive, she added.

## Veg oil imports up 11% on lower palm prices

**Mumbai, March 14:** Vegetable oil imports increased 11 per cent to 9,69,175 tonnes in February against 8,76,669 tonnes logged in the same period last year. The demand for palm oil moved up on the back of huge discounts offered by Malaysia and Indonesia.

Palm oil imports at 8,05,362 tonnes accounted for 84 per cent of the total imports in February.

Soft oil imports were at 1,48,814 tonnes which include soyabean (62,585 tonnes), sunflower (84,310 tonnes) and others (1,919 tonnes).

Refined palmolein prices have fallen 21 per cent to \$870 a tonne in February against \$1,104 a tonne recorded in the same period last year, largely due to over-supply in the market.

Crude palm oil was down 24 per cent at \$816 a tonne (\$1,073 a tonne) while soft oil prices remained almost at the same level.

However, Indian consumers did not benefit much from the drop in palm oil prices as the rupee depreciated by about nine per cent in the last one year, making imports a costlier affair.

In the first four months of the oil year, imports were up 22 per cent to 37,35,263 tonnes (30,61,923 tonnes), according to a Solvent Extractors' Association (SEA) of India statement.

### **Non-edible oil imports**

Non-edible oil imports were up 52 per cent at 88,733 tonnes (58,519 tonnes).

The share of crude oil imports had risen sharply to 31,63,239 tonnes (23,68,232 tonnes) and accounted for 86 per cent of the total imports between November and February.

Refined oil (RBD palmolein) imports were at 4,83,291 tonnes (6,35,172 tonnes). Palm oil shipments increased to 31,03,835 tonnes (24,70,692 tonnes), while that of soft oils were up marginally at 5,42,695 tonnes (5,32,712 tonnes) between November and February.

### **Stocks position**

As on March 1, edible oil stock at various ports was estimated at 9,30,000 tonnes that includes CPO (crude palm oil) of 6,80,000 tonnes, RBD (refined) palmolein 1,05,000 tonnes, degummed soyabean oil 35,000 tonnes and crude sunflower oil of 1,10,000 tonnes. Another 10,30,000 tonnes are in transit, said the SEA release.

### **Inventories**

The total stocks at the ports and in pipelines have increased to 19,60,000 tonnes, which will suffice 40 days of the country's consumption.

Usually, the country holds an inventory of 30 days.

The large inventory was on the back of excessive imports in the last three months, the release said.

## **Offer at Coonoor tea auction at year's low**

**Coonoor, March 14:** With drought reducing the green leaf supply, majority of the factories are working only for three days in a week and that too for a single shift. So, the declining trend in the arrival of tea for the auctions of Coonoor Tea Trade Association witnessed in the last few weeks continues.

The volume of offer for Sale No: 11 ending Friday has declined to the lowest so far this calendar. Of the 8.60 lakh kg coming up for sale, about 59,000 kg comprises unsold in previous auctions. Fresh tea accounts for 8.01 lakh kg – among the lowest so far this year.



This volume is as much as one lakh kg less than the hitherto lowest volume offered last week and 1.28 lakh kg less than the offer this time last year.

Of the 8.60 lakh kg on offer, 6.46 lakh kg are leaf grade and 2.14 lakh kg dust grade.

As much as 8.05 lakh kg belong to CTC variety and only 0.55 lakh kg, orthodox variety. The proportion of orthodox teas continues to be low in both the leaf and dust grades. In the leaf counter, only 0.35 lakh kg were orthodox while 6.11 lakh kg, CTC. Among the dusts, only 0.20 lakh kg was accounted for by orthodox while 1.94 lakh kg, CTC.

The low offer is helping increased absorption to satisfy upcountry demand. Last week, as much as 97 per cent of the offer were sold. Homedale Tea Factory tea, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped the CTC market when Mittal Tea Company bought it for Rs 209 a kg.

The pekoe dust grade of Cross Hill Tea Factory, auctioned by J. Thomas and Company, topped CTC Dust auction when Santosh Tea Industries bought it for Rs 199 a kg. Vigneshwar Estate got Rs 181. In all, 104 CTC marks got Rs 125 and more a kg. Among orthodox teas, Chamraj got Rs 275 a kg, Highfield Estate Rs 220, Kodanad Rs 188, Kairbetta Rs 184, Kil Kotagiri Rs 181 and Corsley Rs 180. In all, 33 marks got Rs 125 and more.

## Rising mercury cools down poultry prices



**Chennai, March 14:** With the winter season in the North coming to an end and resurfacing of avian flu in Bihar, prices of poultry products are on the decline.

In the last six days, wholesale price of egg has plummeted 40 paise to Rs 3.05.

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

It is mainly due to end of the winter in the northern States — when egg consumption is normally high. Added to this is the observance of Lent days in Kerala, a major market for TN's poultry industry.

The resurfacing of avian flu in Bihar, where more than 2,000 birds were culled, is also a reason, said an NECC official.

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

Meanwhile, prices of NECC's layer birds are ruling flat at Rs 49/kg while Palladam-based Broiler Coordination Committee has slashed chicken prices to Rs 40/kg (Rs 50).

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

## Edible oils slip as new crop arrivals flood market



**Mumbai, March 14:** Edible oil prices in spot and futures market continued their bearish run following pick-up in arrivals of new crops in producing States.

In Mumbai, except groundnut oil, all other oils dropped by Rs 5-13 for 10 kg on slack demand. Local refineries have reduced their rates in line with lower import parity tracking bearish world market, said traders.

According to Bombay Commodity Exchange, palmolein and soyabean refined oil dropped by Rs 5 and Rs 9 each. Sunflower oil slipped by Rs 5-10, cotton oil by Rs 3 and rapeseed oil lost Rs 13 on higher selling pressure.

In the absence of local demand and increased selling by resellers and refineries, volume remained negligible. Resellers were quoting Rs 503-504 for palmolein. Bearish futures markets also weighed on physical market. New mustard seeds arrivals crossed 5 lakh bags. Soyabean arrivals were 75,000 bags in Madhya Pradesh. Towards the day's close, Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 511-512 ex Shahpur – Mumbai and Rs 508 ex-JNPT up to April 15. Super palmolein was Rs 550 for March-April, sunflower refined oil Rs 780. Ruchi was quoting palmolein at Rs 510 up to April 15 and Rs 508 for March 15-31 ex-JNPT, soyabean refined oil Rs 645 and sunflower refined oil Rs 771. Allana quoted super palmolein at Rs 550. In Saurashtra – Rajkot, groundnut oil was Rs 1,885 (Rs 1,880) for *telia* tin and Rs 1,225 (Rs 1,225) for loose (10 kg).

**Malaysian BMD crude palm oil's** April contracts settled at MYR 2,352 (MYR 2,386), May at MYR 2,364 (MYR 2,397) and June at MYR 2,370 (MYR 2,401) a tonne.

**The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg):** groundnut oil 1,220 (1,220), soya refined oil 641 (650), sunflower exp. ref. 690 (700), sunflower ref. 770 (775), rapeseed ref. oil 695 (708), rapeseed expeller ref. 665(678) cottonseed ref. oil 612 (615) and palmolein 505 (510).

**Vikram Global** has quoted Malaysian super palmolein at Rs 543 ex-Chennai and Rs 542 for April delivery. Also quoted \$918 CIF JNPT and \$924 CIF Kandla in container (Flexibag).

## Mixed trend in pepper



**Kochi, March 14:** Pepper prices showed a mixed trend on Thursday with the running contract moving up slightly while the nearbys declined on bearish activities. The market was highly volatile. The turnover dropped across the board.

“There was a calculated move to depress the market,” market sources told *Business Line*. Liquidation/switching over were seen.

The bear operators managed to get back in the driving seat, they alleged.

There was no selling pressure on the spot in general and yet the market fell, they said.

March contract on the NCDEX moved up by Rs 30 to Rs 37,155 a quintal.

April and May contracts dropped by Rs 110 and Rs 85 respectively to Rs 35,885 and Rs 35,785.

Total turnover decreased by 1,528 tonnes to 2,027 tonnes. Total open interest declined by 37 tonnes to 3,051 tonnes.

Spot prices remained steady at Rs 35,100 (ungarbled) and Rs 36,600 (MG 1) a quintal on limited activities.

On the spot, 57 tonnes of fresh pepper arrived and that were traded afloat to different directions at the average price of Rs 351 a kg.

### overseas trend

Indian parity in the international market also remained unchanged at yesterday's levels of \$7,100 (c&f) for March shipment and \$7,050 and \$7,000 a tonne (c&f) for April and May shipments respectively.

## Demand holds rice firm



**Karnal, March 14:** After hitting the peak for this season earlier this week, aromatic and non-basmati rice varieties ruled firm on Thursday.

Amit Chandna, proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company, told *Business Line* that the market is moving range-bound but within a positive territory.

After witnessing an uptrend earlier on Monday, market is maintaining its upper levels since then as rising domestic demand and trade enquiries are supporting the market, he added.

Demand for full grain varieties and brokens of both aromatic and non-basmati varieties is good. Restricted availability of stocks is also a big reason behind the current situation of the market.

Rice millers are not showing much interest in selling at current levels as they are expecting another uptrend in coming weeks, said market sources.

In the physical market, Pusa-1121 (steam) sold at Rs 7,650-7,700 a quintal while Pusa-1121 (sela) quoted at Rs 6,700-6,800. Sharbati (steam) quoted at Rs 4,900-5,000, while Sharbati (sela) was at Rs 4,800-4,850. Pure basmati (raw) quoted at Rs 8,500 .

Duplicate basmati (steam) traded at Rs 6,500. PR-11 (sela) was at Rs 3,200-3,250 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 3,300, Tibar sold at Rs 4,300 while Mongra was at Rs 2,600 a quintal.

## Sugar rules steady

**Mumbai, March 14:** Sugar prices on the Vashi market ruled almost steady with thin volatility on sixth consecutive day on Thursday.

Stockists offloaded fair varieties at Rs 4-5 lower in Vashi spot market to ease inventory.

Naka and mill tender rates were unchanged.

Despite reports of expectation of sharp drop in sugar output in Maharashtra next season domestic futures market witnessed bearish trend.

Futures prices were down by Rs 20-28 till noon. Morale was slightly weak, said sources.

A wholesaler said, "In physical market with routine demand-supply overall activities remained thin and need-based.

No one was interested in taking big risk as futures prices were weak.

There is ample and regular supply from mills in local markets and Vashi Bazar carries more than 125 truckloads of stocks.

Upper level upcountry buying is still missing forcing the producers to concentrate on local markets."

**On the NCDEX**, sugar April futures declined to Rs 3,056 (Rs 3,076), May contracts down to Rs 3,108 (Rs 3,135) and June was lower at Rs 3,207 (Rs 3,235) till noon.

In Vashi market, arrivals were 63-64 truck loads (each of 100 bags) and local dispatches were 61-62 truck loads.

On Wednesday evening, about 14-15 mills sold 54,000-55,000 bags to the local traders at steady range of Rs 3,000-3,060 for S-grade and Rs 3,100-3,200 for M-grade.

**Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates:** S-grade Rs 3,142-3,236 (Rs 3,142-3,241) and M-grade Rs 3,236-3,421 (Rs 3,232- 3,421).

**Naka delivery rates were:** S-grade Rs 3,095-3,150 (Rs 3,095-3,150) and M-grade Rs 3,160-3,305 (Rs 3,160-3,305).

## Demand for root variety lends colour to turmeric



**Erode, March 14:** Spot turmeric prices increased Rs 100 a quintal as demand for the root variety picked up.

"The finger variety contains good curcumin content than the root variety. But now the demand for root variety has increased as it is selling Rs 1,000 less than the finger variety. Delhi merchants have placed good number of orders for the root variety. Erode traders also received reasonable orders for finger variety from North India and are quoting higher prices," said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said of the total arrival of 4,980 bags of turmeric on Thursday, the root variety's share was 20 per cent and all was sold. The buyers dispatched the purchased turmeric to Kolkata, Bihar, Odisha and some other North Indian States.

Demand for the hybrid turmeric is also on the rise. The buyers, quoting Rs 8,280 a quintal, have procured more than 200 bags.

Turmeric farmers said that they are on a wait and watch mode and if the price increases further they would bring daily more than 10,000 bags. Because of the quality produce available here, even traders from Andhra are placing orders.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,706-7,599, the root variety Rs 5,666-6,599.

**Salem Hybrid Crop:** The finger variety fetched Rs 7,479-8,280 and the root variety Rs 6,277-6,789.

Of the arrival of 1,443 bags, 870 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety ruled at Rs 6,209- 7,695; the root variety Rs 5,809-6,884.

Of the 463 bags arrived, 451 found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 6,477-7,689; the root variety Rs 6,089-6,749. All the 452 bags were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 6,563-7,659 and the root variety Rs 6,244-6,749. Of the 152 bags 145 found takers.

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