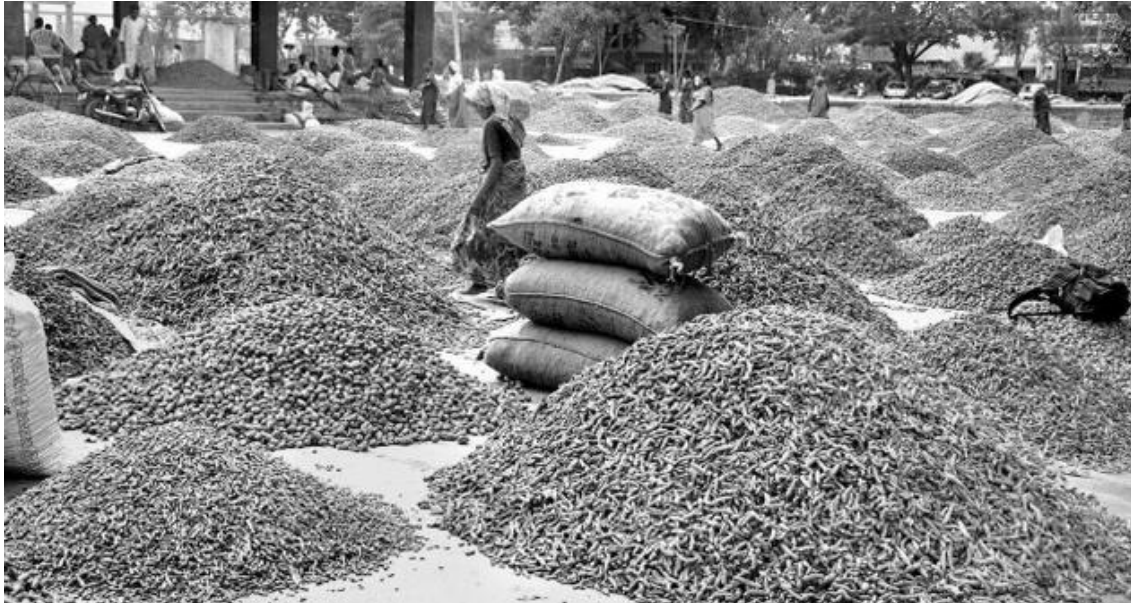


Turmeric farmers facing the heat



Tough times: The turmeric mounds on the agriculture market yard in Nizamabad. (Right) Turmeric farmers under the banner of the Swadeshi Jagaran Manch laying siege to the agriculture market yard in Nizamabad on Tuesday.— Photos: K. V. Ramana

Traders form cartel, deny right price to farmers

Turmeric farmers in the district are in dire straits as they are not getting profitable price to their produce with traders allegedly forming a cartel to rig the turmeric price. Though the price per quintal this year gradually improved and settled between Rs.7,000 and Rs.7,500 it is far below the Sangli market price.

Disparity in prices

In Sangli of Maharashtra, farmers are reportedly getting a maximum of Rs.12,000 per quintal, where as here the price initially when the season had begun was just Rs.4,000.

Over a period of two months it crossed Rs.7,000 which is still not profitable to the farming community given the increase in input costs in the crop cultivation.

Turmeric farmers, under the banner of the Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM), alleging that the traders formed a cartel and denying the right price, lay siege to the agriculture market yard here on Tuesday.

Apart from the remunerative price for turmeric they also demanded the establishment of Turmeric Board on the lines of Spices Board.

Musku Rajeswar, a turmeric farmer from Mendora village of Balkonda mandal, deplored that they were consistently incurring loss by investing thousands of rupees on turmeric crop.

There was no change in the situation in the last couple of years and only last year they could get good price, he added.

No more remunerative

Another farmer Hanmanth Reddy said that the farmers were not gaining more than the amount of their investment and despite the extent of crop sown area and the yield, the price remained the same due to “unholy” understanding among traders.

The SJM State secretary K. Narsihma Naidu urged the government to set up Turmeric Board to look into the problems of farmers and ensure reasonable price to them. The farmers earlier staged a dharna sitting on the floor and holding placards. They withdrew the agitation after the authorities promised them to solve their demands.

Give relief to drought-hit farmers, Centre urged

A 30-member team of farmers, which visited New Delhi recently, has appealed to the Central government to ensure distribution of relief to the drought-hit Tamil Nadu agriculturists on war-footing. The team was in the capital in connection with a three-day workshop at Indian Agriculture and Research Institute, organised under the aegis of Agricultural Technology Management Agency. They called on Union Minister for Shipping G. K. Vasan and Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia. In separate statements, P. Viswanathan, State president of Tamilaga Eri Matrum Aatrupasana Vivasayigal Sangham, and Puliur A. Nagarajan, State vice president of the agriculturists' wing of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, who were members of the team, said that the team told the Minister that agriculture in Tamil Nadu had been hit very hard owing to the failure of monsoon and also the recalcitrance of Karnataka to release water to Tamil Nadu.

According to them, paddy cultivation in as much as 20 lakh acres had suffered seriously resulting in a loss of thousands of crores to Tamil Nadu farmers. Hence, all the crop loans should be written off by both the nationalised and the co-operative banks, they pleaded.

Besides, Cauvery Management Board should be constituted at the earliest in order to ensure Cauvery water to irrigate kuruvai cultivation this year.

Low price worries pepper farmers

All the pepper in Wayanad will be picked in a few weeks, but the poor harvest and price of the produce have left the farmers worried.

At the Meenangadi market, ungarbled pepper fetched a spot price of Rs. 335-340 a kg on Tuesday as against Rs. 390-395 a few weeks ago. It was Rs. 365 as against Rs. 405 for the garbled variety.

The price of ungarbled pepper had shot up to Rs. 430 a kg a few weeks before the harvest, but fell to Rs. 320 a kg a few days ago.

The bulk arrival of pepper from Kodagu is a reason for the declining price, K. Salu, a pepper dealer, says. When production declined drastically in Kerala this year, Karnataka recorded a nearly 20 per cent increase.

Farmers' grievances redress meeting

Farmers' grievances redress day meeting would be held at the Collectorate on March 22 at 12 Noon.

District Collector R. Lilly would preside over the meeting.

'Farmers can harvest better without tilling land'



Eco-friendly: Retired forest officer C. Jagannadha Reddy in his farm at Nelapogula village in Warangal.— Photo: M. Murali

A farmer can harvest better yields without tilling the land and disturbing the biodiversity both above and below the soil, retired forest officer C. Jagannadha Reddy said.

Showing his 16 acres land at Nelapogula village as example, where he had been raising teak, sandalwood besides green chilli, cucumber, tomato and a wide variety of plants, he said that tilling of the land exposed the soil and minute organisms that help the plants in severe heat.

The grass that grows naturally in fields should not be disturbed as they help maintain moisture and help other plants grow healthy and steadily.

“My experience shows that if we retain the grass without tilling the land, it helps other crops in many ways. All we need to give is little water and supply nitrogen in the form of urea,” he explained.

Mr. Jagannadha Reddy is very popular for raising sandalwood in his over 30 acres of land in his native village.

He had been a consultant to various organisations and was instrumental in planting teak extensively in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

“I have visited US many times and observed the farming methods there. They are adopting our conventional knowledge now avoiding tilling and use of fertilizers. The prairies which were thought to be of disadvantage are now sought after there,” he explained.

According to him, majority of plants are interdependent and hence there was no need to plough the land exclusively to raise one kind of crop. Those sown in grasslands without tilling would grow healthily and give better yields.

He had been experimenting by sowing pomegranate, green chilli, cotton and others crops amidst eucalyptus, teak and subabul plantations. He dug deep trenches on either side of the Eucalyptus

plants to store rain water and even planted grass to make his field appear like a thick green carpet.

Now, Jagannadha Reddy invites other farmers to his field to share his experiences and help them reap rich harvest.

Jagannadha Reddy, a retired forest officer, was instrumental in planting teak extensively in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh

Budget, not farmer friendly, says TDP

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) has dubbed the State budget as jugglery of figures.

Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, TDP official spokesperson Kodela Sivaprasada Rao said that the government claimed it presented a farmer-friendly budget. But, the fact is: the government earmarked mere Rs. 25,900 crore with so many riders-linking it with 14 departments. The farmers were facing untold miseries as there were no remunerative prices. The government hardly took any measures to ensure minimum support price (MSP). It has not learn lessons from the neighbouring states--Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat—which were implementing what they were promising to the people, more particularly farmers, he said.

Referring to power sector, Mr. Rao said that the government was more concerned about merchant power policy rather than people. The power generated in the State was being sold at higher rates to other states, while people here were facing hardship.

At another press conference, Mylavaram MLA and TDP district president Devineni Umamaheswara Rao said that the government was not committed to the Bandar Port. Last year, the allocations

were Rs. 1 crore. Now, it was brought down to mere Rs. 72 lakh. It was enough to say that the government lacked sincerity. Super Specialty hospital and Gannavaram airport expansion remained on papers, he pointed out.

TDP state secretary Gottipati Ramakrishna, Telugu Rythu district president Chalasani Anjaneyulu and others were present.

Opposition set to grill government on 'agriculture budget'

A united Opposition is all set to grill the Government on the fiasco over the presentation of "Agriculture budget" in the Assembly on Monday.

With the TDP, YSR Congress, CPI, CPI (M) and others parties blaming the Government for misleading the House, Speaker Nadendla Manohar is expected to give his ruling on the issue on Wednesday.

After an uproar in the House during the presentation of the document on agriculture, which was later called an action plan, the Speaker had promised to give his ruling on the subject on Wednesday. Lok Satta Party MLA N. Jayaprakash Narayan has already served a privilege notice while the TDP and other Left parties are expected follow suit.

According to knowledgeable sources, Speaker Nadendla Manohar, Council chairman A. Chakrapani and the Legislature Secretariat had no prior information that an agriculture budget would be introduced on Monday. On Saturday, the Legislature Secretariat routinely uploaded on its website the agenda for Monday where there was no mention about the agriculture budget. In fact, the

Legislature Secretariat got wind of the move to introduce such a budget only late on Sunday night.

At the customary Cabinet meeting before the presentation of the annual budget, the issue came up for discussion where Ministers were informed that rules did not permit such a budget. The Speaker convened an emergency breakfast meeting with leaders of the opposition parties when supplementary agenda copies were circulated to them.

These mentioned the budget as agriculture action plan. Floor leaders of opposition parties objected to such action.

Now, it is 'agriculture action plan,' not 'budget'

The government began a fire-fighting operation over the controversy over 'agriculture budget' for 2013-14 on Tuesday when it decided to call the document 'agriculture action plan' instead.

Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy issued the instructions to Ministers -- Anam Ramanarayan Reddy and Kanna Lakshminarayana to effect the change by replacing the word "budget" wherever it occurred in the document by "action plan", sources said.

Speaker's permission

According to sources, the government is expected to seek the Speaker's permission to clarify that the speech read out by the Agriculture Minister was an action plan and not budget as was printed on the copies. Sources said that during the meeting, the Ministers are believed to have conveyed that lack of coordination and communication gap between the officials of Planning, Finance and Agriculture department resulted in the faux pas.

The Agriculture department acted as the nodal agency for the agriculture action plan/budget and it sought inputs from the Finance and Planning officials.

On Monday, members found to their surprise the word “budget” replaced by handwritten word “action plan” on the cover page of the document. However, the word “budget” which figured 42 times in the inside pages, was kept intact without any replacement.

Agricultural labourers migrate to cities



Bag and Baggage: Labourers from various villages await their train to greener pastures at the Yadgir Railway Station. — Photo: Arun Kulkarni

The advent of summer in the Hyderabad Karnataka region opens the floodgates of migration of agricultural labourers to cities like Bangalore in search of jobs. Page 4

18 cattle breeds to be showcased at dairy show

The second edition of the three-day dairy show that will be held at Hitex in Hyderabad will have an exhibition of 18 distinguished

varieties of cattle recognised by Indian Council of Agriculture Research (IACR). The show will be held from March 22 to 24.

Some of the cattle varieties include - in the white cattle category: Sahiwal (Delhi and Uttar Pradesh), Tharparkar (Rajasthan), Gir (Gujarat) and Red Sindhi (Bihar and Uttar Pradesh). All these are high milk yielding varieties.

In the buffalo category: Murrah (Haryana, Punjab and Delhi), Zaffarabadi, Mehasana and Surtiravi (all from Gujarat) and Nagapuri (Maharashtra).

In the foreign breed, Holstein Friesian and Jersey would be on exhibit. The foreign breed is already in use by the farming community.

In addition, milking machines, chaff cutters, grass cutters, various vaccines, bulk cooling units, milk products manufacturing machines would also be put in the show to create awareness among farmers. Seminars and workshops related to farm-based products would also be held at the three-day programme.

Farmers from across the State are expected to take part in the programme.

Alternative source

“The programme is aimed at creating awareness among farmers to show dairy as an alternative source of income for farmers. We are taking select farmers all the three days to the show so that they get exposed to what is available in the market and how can they reap benefit from it,” K. Lakshma Reddy, Joint Director, Animal Husbandry, told *The Hindu*.

KJP fails to clarify stand on cattle slaughter

: The Karnataka Janata Paksha (KJP), led by the former Chief Minister B. S. Yeddyurappa, which claims to have been formed on secular and democratic principles, has failed to clarify its stand on the Prevention of Cattle Slaughter Bill introduced by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government.

“We are yet to take a final call on this issue as it can’t be stated without taking the consent of other leaders of the party,” said B.R. Patil, State convener of the KJP.

Replying to a question at a press conference here on Tuesday, he was non-committal whether his party supports or rejects the Bill.

However, he kept asserting that his party had no communal agenda and that it adhered to a secular and democratic ideology.

However, he did not clarify how his party would keep away leaders with a communal background from entering the party. “We will do a proper scrutiny of the candidates before inducting them into the party,” was the reply of Shobha Karandlaje, KJP leader and a former Minister in the BJP government.

She reiterated that if the KJP comes into power, her party would allocate at least Rs. 1,000 crore for the development of minorities.

Mr. Patil said the KJP had decided to constitute a ‘united forum’ of like-minded organisations, including farmers’ unions, Dalit organisations, pro-Kannada organisations and noted writers.

He said the KJP had contacted Karnataka Rajya Raita Sangha (KRRS) leaders such as K.S. Puttannaiah and Kodihalli Chandrashekar.

“We have decided not to field our candidates in places where members of the KRRS will contest,” he said. However, he made it clear that the KRRS was free to contest on their own party symbol.

Mr. Patil said the time was ripe for a regional party like the KJP to make an impact on the State’s politics.

Water level

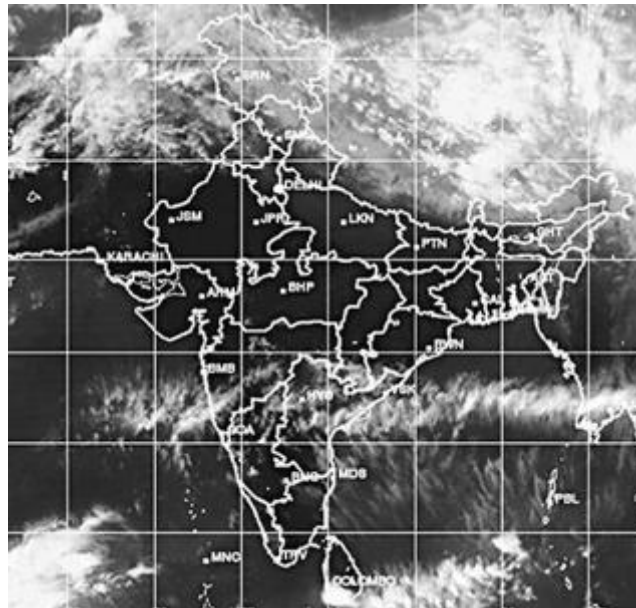
Water level in Periyar dam stood at 113 feet with an inflow of 100 cusecs and discharge of 100 cusecs on Tuesday. The level in Vaigai dam was 46.16 feet with nil inflow and a discharge of 60 cusecs. The combined water storage was 2,197 mcft. There was no rain in the region, PWD authorities said.

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Tuesday stood at 80 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 203.24 cusecs and no water was discharged from the dam. The water level in Manimuthar dam stood at 92.03 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 53cusecs and no water was discharged.

Kanyakumari

The water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 6.30 feet, 30.65 feet in Perunchani, 4.49 feet in Chittar I, 4.59 feet in Chittar II and 4.30 feet in Poigai dam.

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs. Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on Mar. 19.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	31	16	0	0
New Delhi (Sfd)	31	18	0	0
Chandigarh	27	16	0	12
Hissar	29	16	0	36
Bhuntar	26	6	0	51
Shimla	18	10	0	44
Jammu	26	13	0	8
Srinagar	19	5	0	19
Amritsar	28	13	0	2
Patiala	28	16	0	14
Jaipur	33	18	0	0
Udaipur	33	16	0	0
Allahabad	33	16	0	3
Lucknow	31	15	0	0
Varanasi	33	17	0	2
Dehradun	28	13	0	15
Agartala	31	19	0	22
Ahmedabad	37	19	0	0
Bangalore	34	20	0	1
Bhubaneshwar	37	21	0	0
Bhopal	31	17	0	16
Chennai	33	22	0	32
Guwahati	32	16	0	0
Hyderabad	35	23	0	0
Kolkata	34	23	0	0
Mumbai	32	23	0	0
Nagpur	35	18	0	15
Patna	32	18	0	0

Pune	36	15	0	3
Thiruvananthapuram	33	25	0	69
Imphal	28	11	0	4
Shillong	27	10	0	13

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

RAIN AT MANY PLACES

RAINFALL: Weather was dry over the region.

MAXIMUM TEMPERATURES: The maximum temperatures changed little over the region. They were markedly above normal in Jammu and Kashmir, appreciably above normal in Himachal Pradesh and west Rajasthan, below normal in east Uttar Pradesh and normal in rest of the region. The highest maximum temperature in the region was 38.0°C recorded at Phalodi (Rajasthan).

MINIIMUM TEMPERATURES : The minimum temperatures rose in Haryana and Uttarakhand and changed little elsewhere. They were above normal in Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and west Rajasthan and normal in rest of the region. The lowest minimum temperature in the plains was 11.6°C recorded at Adampur (Punjab).

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 21st March 2013: Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir. Weather would be mainly dry over rest of the region.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 21st March 2013: Mainly clear sky. Mist in the morning.

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Wednesday, Mar 20

Max Min

31° | 25°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 06:13

Humidity: 94

Sunset: 06:19

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1012

Tomorrow's Forecast



Sunny

Thursday, Mar 21

Max Min

35° | 23°

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday Mar 22	Saturday Mar 23	Sunday Mar 24	Monday Mar 25	Tuesday Mar 26
35° 23°	35° 22°	35° 23°	35° 23°	35° 23°
Partly Cloudy	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast

To avoid conflict with NCP, Cong ignores low irrigation potential

The Congress-led agriculture department has avoided a direct conflict with the Nationalist Congress Party-led water resources department by ignoring an observation in this year's economic survey that the irrigation potential created was much less than claimed by the department concerned.

But, it has said that there was a huge gap between the irrigation potential created and the actual area irrigated with the help of the projects undertaken by the water resources department.

The agriculture department has provided the statistics to the planning department, which has predicted a drastic reduction in farm produce this year because of deficit rainfall. Projections say that the total production of food grain will reduce by 18% and sugarcane output will drop by a whopping 33%.

This year's survey says that the total irrigation potential created by major, minor and minor projects till June 2011 was 48.25 lakh hectares, of which only 32.52 lakh hectares were used in 2011-12. This is a slight increase from the 29.55 lakh hectares used in 2010-11. The utilisation includes not only the actual irrigation by projects, but also by canals, lift and water released in rivers and nullahs. The area under irrigation by wells (12 lakh hectares) has been mentioned separately.

Of the 355 talukas in the state, 39% talukas in 15 districts have received scanty rainfall. Majority areas in the western and central Maharashtra and few districts in north Maharashtra and Vidarbha are fighting a serious water scarcity in peak summer. Experts feel that efficient planning and execution by the water resources department could have offered significant relief to the drought-affected areas. In January this year, chief minister Prithviraj Chavan had, in an interview with HT, blamed the drought on bad planning by water resources department.

Last year's finding that the irrigation potential increased by only 0.01% had created a rift between the Congress and NCP. Chavan had asked for a white paper from water resources department, following which many scams came to the fore and deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar had to resign.

Officials in the agriculture department said that they, including the minister in-charge Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil, are firm on their stand. "There was no point in giving the same figure to surveyors," said a senior bureaucrat.

Drought reflects on economic survey: Agriculture growth negative

A day ahead of presentation of the annual budget of the state reeling under a severe drought in 15 districts, the state economic survey tabled in the state legislature painted a grim picture.

The agriculture, infrastructure, and industrial sectors are likely to be hurt.

The annual Economic Survey tabled on tuesday stated that as per advance estimates, the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) is expected to grow at 7.1 per cent in 2012-13 against last year's estimate of 8.5 per cent.

The survey adds that agricultural sector is expected to see a negative growth of 1.4 per cent while agricultural and allied activities will see a negative growth of 2.1 per cent.

"The rain-fed agricultural sector was affected again this year due about 10 per cent less than normal rainfall," the survey states.

Industry is expected to grow at 7 per cent as compared to estimates of 9.1 per cent. The services sector is expected to grow at 8.5 per cent, lower than the estimated 10.1 per cent.

The problems seem to be compounded by state debt expected to spiral to Rs 2.53 lakh crore by the end of 2012-13 as against Rs 2.28 lakh crore in 2011-12.

In the last six years, from 2006-07, debt has almost doubled from Rs 1.33 lakh crore.

The survey projects a revenue surplus of Rs 153 crore, with the revenue generation pegged at Rs 1,36,712 crore and revenue expenditure at Rs 1,36,559 crore.

Nearly 50 per cent of the money the state will spend will go into salaries and pension of employees.

The fiscal deficit projected for 2012-13 is Rs 23,066 crore.



Farm writing workshop

The Farm Information Bureau is holding a workshop on farm writing, 'Njattuvela 2013', on March 22.

Classes will be held in scripting for audio and video documentaries and photography by Muraleedharan Thazhakkara,

who had been conducting the Vayalum Veedum programme, Dr Shine Kumar of the Animal Husbandry Department and B L Bijulal.

The participants will be given a hands-on training in scripting. Those interested in participating in the workshop to be held at Vyloppilly Samskrithi Bhavan can contact the Farm Information Bureau over telephone numbers 9447902400 (Ajithlal) or 9495200255 (S Jayakumar).

Agri sector a big draw for investors

The Kingdom of Bahrain offers opportunities aplenty in the agriculture and food processing sectors. The firms in both the countries are keen to invest in these sectors.

The business to business meet (B2B) which was held in Kochi on the sidelines of the visit of the Crown Prince of Bahrain, here on Monday, put forward opportunities in the food processing sectors.

“There is huge opportunity in the food processing sector in Bahrain. We are also exploring opportunities in Kerala in this sector. If suitable proposals emerge we will definitely invest in the sector,” Ebrahim Zainal, vice-chairman, Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry told Express.

The delegates who participated in the B2B meet from the food processing sector in Kerala also said that some of the delegates from Bahrain expressed interest in the food processing sector in the state.

Market pulse for several agro commodities: Mangal Keshav

Arrivals of jeera crop were unchanged at 35,000 bags while demand too was seen steady around 30,000 bags at auctions held at Unjha market

Arrivals of chilli crop increased to ~1lakh bags while demand too had lifted for new crop at auctions. Spot rates were closed slight higher but remained in the range of '62-'65 per kg & prices on futures recovered after declining in the initial session.

Arrivals of jeera crop were unchanged at 35,000 bags while demand too was seen steady ~30,000 bags at auctions held at Unjha market. Spot rates are trading firm & quoted in the range of '133-'135 per kg, as per local traders.

Spot rates of pepper garbled declined '363 per kg and that of un-garbled was down at '348 per kg. Arrivals increased to 37 tons while trades too were up at 35 tons at auctions held at Kochi market, as per IPSTA.

Arrivals of turmeric crop increased about 23,000 bags at Nizamabad market & ~7,000 bags across mandis of Erode. Spot rates were down by '200-'300 per quintal across major trading centers, as per local traders.

Average price of small cardamom declined to '631.4 per kg while maximum price offered was down at '850 per kg, as per spice board.

Total inflow of small cardamom crop declined to 12.6 tons & the same were sold at STCL auction held at Kumily. Arrivals of Soya bean crop increased to

more than 1lakh bags across MP market & about 2,500-3,000 bags at mandis of Indore while supply was steady between to 0.2-0.25 lakh bags each across mandis Maharashtra & Rajasthan, as per local traders.

Spot rates of soya bean crop offered by planters were up at '35-'36 per kg while rates across mandis of Indore were up at '34.5-'35 per kg, as per local traders.

Inflow of mustard seed crop increased to 240,856 quintals, while average of closing spot rates were down at '3,130.6 per quintal, as per agriculture marketing board of Rajasthan.

Total arrivals of mustard seed crop were steady above 5lakh bags across major trading center while spot rates eased slightly & were quoted in the range of '34.5-'35.5 per kg based on location, as per market reports.

Chana futures traded positively on the exchange counter, supported by festive demand & steady supply of crop at mandis. Spot rates were quoted steady & offered at '34.5-'35 per kg, as per trade reports.

Spot rates of mentha oil were down by '25-'30 per kg while supply too had dropped to about 180-200 drums, across major trading centers. Prices on futures fell sharply, but later recovered on short-covering/ buying support at lower levels.

Commodity Strategies: Buy Chana, Chilli, Coriander on dips

Cyprus woes weigh on agro-commodities. Buy Chana, Chilli, Coriander on dips, while sell all other commodities

Red Chilli Guntur market was reported steady on Monday. Shiv Kumar Mahadev Kumar, Guntur chief Shiv Kumar Banka says, red chilli production in Guntur area is down by 25-30 per cent and total production may be around 70-75 lakh bags. However, carry forward stock may be around 20 lakh bags. Stockists and exporters are active, as red chilli production is down; hence prices may get support in coming days. Banka says, red chilli arrival will be more till 10-12 days, but after that lower arrival may support the prices. In Dharwad district, Karnataka chilli production has been on the decline in the district. In 2011-12, chilli was cultivated on 34,186 hectares of land whereas the yield was 25,639 tonne. In 2012-13, area under cultivation has fallen to 7,790 hectares and the yield is down to 9,000 tonne. Bangladesh buyers are actively trading in Teja variety.

Firm sentiment witnessed in Coriander spot market on Monday. Market witnessed strong buying for well-dried crop while the new coriander crop contains high moisture content. Demand continued from South India. Coriander output estimated at 50 lakh bags in the major producing states – Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, while carry forward stocks pegged at 20 lakh bags.

In Chana, steady movement has witnessed at NCDEX. Moreover renewed buying interest reported in domestic cash markets. Desi chana moved up by Rs 25-50 per quintal at the major trading center across Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh on some good demand tracking positive futures. Meanwhile, desi chana ruled steady in Maharashtra and Karnataka. Chana quoted up Rs 75 a quintal in Kanpur pulses market on Monday. Australia chana is offering stable at \$660-665/MT for March-April shipment at the Nhava Sheva port. Chennai port manifest from 8th March to 15th March 2013.

Coffee exports likely to drop 12-15% in FY13

Coffee exports from India, the sixth-largest exporter in the world, are likely to decline 12-15 per cent for the current financial year ending March. Between

April 2012 and March 18, 2012, exports were 294,242 tonnes, a decline of 15.41 per cent.

The decline is due to a combination of factors, including weak demand from the European Union, shortage of crop and low carryover stock at the beginning of the financial year.



During FY12, India had exported 347,855 tonnes, including re-exports, a growth of 16.4 per cent over the previous year. Apart from domestic production, Processing houses also import raw coffee and re-export after making value addition.

With another 12 days for the financial year to end, exports could go up a few more thousands tonnes to cross the 300,000-tonne mark, analysts said.

"A large number of buyers had shifted their preference to the robusta variety following the steep rise in arabica prices. Second, the economic slowdown in Europe continued to cut the demand," Nishant R Gurjer, chairman, Karnataka Planters' Association (KPA), said.

Production of robusta picked up between December 2011 and March 2012 but was less compared to the previous year. As a result, there was less quantity in the hands of exporters during the year, said Gurjer, who represents the export house, Kaapi Royale.

India mostly exports coffee to Italy, Germany, the Russian Federation, Belgium and Spain. Robusta variety coffee is mainly used in preparation of

instant drinks and espressos worldwide.

In value terms, India's exports were worth Rs 4,507.25 crore between April 2012 and March 18, 2013. The unit realisation was Rs 1,53,181 a tonne as against Rs 1,40,551 in the previous financial year.

During the current year, for the first time, there was no difference in the farm gate prices of both arabica and robusta varieties. From June to August 2012, the prices were hovering in the range of Rs 7,000 to Rs 7,500 a bag at the farm gate. This trend is continuing as on date, with a marginal difference of Rs 150 a bag.

THE CUP AND THE SLIP **India's coffee exports & production (in tonnes)**

Year	Exports	Production
2009-10	196,003	289,600
2010-11	298,813	302,000
2011-12	347,855	314,000
2012-13	294,242 [#]	315,000 [*]

^{*} Post monsoon estimates [#] Till March 18
Source: Coffee Board

The outlook for 2013-14 is also not very promising. The country's exports next financial year are likely to more or less remain flat at around 300,000 tonnes level. This is mainly because of the stagnating domestic production.

The Coffee Board of India estimates the production at 315,000 tonnes for 2012-13 crop year. However, the KPA expects arabica production to be lesser than the earlier estimates and stay at

80,000 tonnes to 85,000 tonnes, while the robusta production is estimated at 210,000 tonnes.

As far as domestic production in 2013-14 is concerned, the country will see an off year for robusta and the production will more or less remain in the range of 310,000 tonnes.

THE HINDU Business Line

Going organic



In modern times: An organic manufacturing unit at the Organic Jaggery Technology Park at Sankeshwar (Belgaum District), Karnataka. There is also a laboratory, which can be used for conducting research on sugarcane. The jaggery production unit is equipped with modern juice extraction mechanism with optimum fuel efficiency as it uses fibre and insulation bricks. — D.B. Patil

AP area under sugarcane may drop

Hyderabad, March 19: Even as the crushing season coming to a close in Andhra Pradesh, sugarcane farmers seem to have decided to shift to other crops next year. The area is expected to come down

by one-third as farmers are turning to crops such as maize, discouraged by poor returns.

The State is expected to close the season with 90 lakh tonnes cane crushed against the expectation of 103 lakh tonnes.

This is less than half of the crushing capacity of 200 lakh tonnes.

“We are expecting a decline in the crop area. Crushing could fall to 70 lakh tonnes next year if one goes by the poor cane plantation this year,” Nanduru Satyavenkateswara Sharma, Secretary of Federation of Sugarcane Producers’ Associations, told *Business Line* over phone from Hanuman Junction in Krishna district.

The average price farmers received was Rs 2,200-2,500 a tonne this season against their demand for Rs 3,500.

Farmers are showing interest in the short duration crop of maize.

“Unlike sugarcane that has a gestation period of 12-15 months, maize takes only three months to reap benefits,” he said. As a result, the new plantation sees a decline. With ratoon crop (the second or third crop from the same plant) fast depleting, the State is expected to grow sugarcane in two lakh acres, a drop by one lakh acres in the current year.

Rodent attack

It has not been a great year for sugar farmers in the area.

With farmers shunning paddy this rabi for want of water, rats have turned their attention to sugarcane.

“Farmers have lost heavily. They have attacked the crop on side of the National Highway, sparing the other side for want of right of way. “In some cases, farmers have lost up to 90 per cent,” Sharma said.

Demand

Farmers have recently met former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, who is on a State-wide padayatra. “We have submitted a memorandum, asking for a price of Rs 3,500 a tonne.

“We have also demanded introduction of mechanisation in the cane farming, besides seeking a share in revenues from the by-products,” he said.

Speculators push up chana

Indore, March 19: Bearish sentiment in chana seem to have got over as the speculators in the past two-three days have pushed up chana prices almost by Rs 150-200 a quintal, notwithstanding bumper crop this year.

Cashing in on damage to chana in the wake of recent rains and hailstorm in Madhya Pradesh, speculators appear to be in complete grip of chana prices both in the future and physical markets and making every efforts to push up its prices notwithstanding bumper chana production this year, said a trader Sanjay Agdrawal.

On Tuesday, chana (kanta) prices ruled at Rs 34,50-75 a quintal (Rs 3,250-3,300 last week) amid arrival of 3,000 bags. However, decline in buying support at the higher rate, chana (kanta) was down marginally today.

Among other varieties, chana (desi) ruled at Rs 3,200, chana (Mausmi) at Rs 3,500-4,000, chana (Annagiri) at Rs 3,000-3,200, Kabuli Bitki at Rs 3,000-3,400, while chana (Russian) ruled at Rs 3,500.

Rise in spot chana also lifted its dal by Rs 200 in the past one week with chana dal (average) being quoted at Rs 4,100-4,125 (Rs 3,900-3,925), chana dal (medium) at Rs 4,200-4,225 (Rs 4,025-4,050), while chana dal (bold) has risen to Rs 4,350-75 (Rs 4,175-4,200).

Dollar chana ruled firm at Rs 4,200-4,700 amid arrival of 10,000 bags.

Groundnut oil rules flat

Rajkot, March 19: Despite lower production by mills, groundnut oil prices ruled unchanged as demand was poor in retail and wholesale markets. Cotton oil declined nominally on Tuesday. Groundnut oil loose was traded at Rs 1,190-1,195 for 10 kg, Jamnagar line *telia* tin was quoted at Rs 1,827-1,828 for 15 kg and groundnut oil new tin price was Rs 2,045-2,050 at Rajkot. About 4-5 tankers were traded in Saurashtra.

According to a Rajkot-based edible oil trader, demand in groundnut oil is very nominal. People are waiting for prices to decline further .

A Gondal-based miller said that groundnut oil mills are not producing the oil in bigger quantity as brands and stockists are not buying. Arrivals stood at 1,000 bags in Rajkot which was sold for Rs 900-1,020 for 20 kg.

HPS TJ37 80-90 count was offered at Rs 61,000 a tonne, G2 80-90 count at Rs 63,000 and bold 50-60 count at Rs 70,000 . Tamil Nadu origin 80-90 count HPS was offered at Rs 66,000.

Cotton oil price was down as cottonseed price declined in the past few days. Cotton oil new tin price decreased Rs 5 to Rs 1,030-1,040 for 15 kg and cotton oil wash stood at Rs 575-578 for 10 kg. About 30-40 tankers were traded.

Spot rubber improves on short covering

Kottayam, March 19: Domestic rubber prices improved on Tuesday. On the spot, the market made overall gains on fresh buying and short covering following the firm closing on the National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE). Meanwhile, the Tokyo rubber futures staged a technical rebound after hitting a three-month low a day earlier.

Sheet rubber improved to Rs 163.50 (162.50) a kg according to traders. The grade firmed up to Rs 163 (162.50) a kg at Kottayam and Kochi, as quoted by the Rubber Board. The sentiments were moderately bullish.

The April futures increased to Rs 165.39 (163.78), May to Rs 168.49 (167.15), June to Rs 170.50 (169.03), July to Rs 170 (170.50) and August to Rs 171.75 (169.55) a kg for RSS 4 on the NMCE.

RSS 3 (spot) inched up to Rs 157.60 (157.22) a kg at Bangkok. The March futures recovered partially to ₹258.5 (Rs 147.72) from ₹256 a kg during the day session, but then remained inactive during the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 163.50 (162.50); RSS-5: 160.50 (160); ungraded: 157 (156.50); ISNR 20: 160 (160) and latex 60 per cent: 109.25 (108).

Dairy research body produces world's 2nd cloned male calf Swaran

Karnal, March 19: A male buffalo calf has been produced through at the Karnal-based National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI). This is the world's second male cloned calf. The calf, named Swaran, was born through the new and advanced 'hand-guided cloning technique'.

The calf, born by normal parturition and weighs 55 kg, is reported to be normal and healthy.

"Swaran" is keeping good health and has started suckling milk, said A.K. Srivastava, Director, National Dairy Research Institute.

This cloned buffalo calf is unique and different from the earlier clones because, in this case, the donor somatic cell used was isolated from the seminal plasma of a bull which is currently being used for donating semen at the Animal Breeding Research Centre of NDRI, Karnal, said Srivastava.

achievement

The scientists said that this achievement was of particular interest to them because, using the same approach, they expect to re-create highly valuable progeny tested bulls, which may have died long ago, using their frozen semen available at breeding centre.

Srivastava said that there is an acute shortage of bulls and that this may enable scientists to shrink the gap between the demand and supply of the bulls in a short time.

Swaran is the second male cloned calf in the world. Before Swaran, Shreshth was born on August 26, 2010 at NDRI.

Shreshth was the first male buffalo born through the "hand-guided cloning technique" developed at NDRI.

Earlier this year, on January 25, the cloned buffalo Garima II gave birth to a calf and she was named Mahima.

Egypt in talks to import wheat from India

Mulls changing food safety rules to facilitate farm shipments

New Delhi, March 19: India may find a buyer for its burgeoning stock of wheat in Egypt, the world's largest organised importer of the commodity.

The African nation is actively considering wheat imports from India and is also changing its food safety rules that could facilitate imports of agriculture produce, Osama Saleh, Minister of Investment, Egypt, said in an exclusive interaction with *Business Line*.

"Yes, we are definitely looking at India as an importing country for wheat. We want to have several diversified sources and not just the EU or the US or Canada," Saleh said.



Osama Saleh

Delegation visit

The Minister is in India with a trade and investment delegation to attend the African ministers' conclave.

Senior officials from the Commerce Department have already had consultations with the Egyptian Agriculture Minister Salah Mohamed Abdel Moamen and Supply Minister Bassem Ouda earlier this month on the issue.

India is out to woo Egypt as it is the world's largest buyer of wheat, an estimated 11.5 million tonnes (mt) annually. India is desperate to find buyers for its wheat as the Government's granaries are overflowing with stock - estimated at around 30.80 mt last month - and there is no room to store fresh procure. The country's buffer requirement at 11.2 mt is almost a third of the stock.

Concessions

New Delhi has already discussed offering various concessions to Egypt including a longer credit period in order to compete with the US and Russia in the meeting earlier this month, a Commerce Department official said. While India mostly exports through international trading agencies such as Cargill, Glencore and Louis Dreyfus, it may also look at exporting on Government-to-Government basis through Central Public Sector Undertakings for Egypt.

Egypt may amend law

The Egyptian Investment Minister said that his country was working on amending its food security laws which will make it easier for wheat and meat exporters from India to meet quality norms.

“Our Food Safety Measures law is being amended. It would give more flexibility to exporters. Issues of quality control apply to both wheat and meat. So it should help exporters of both commodities,” Saleh said.

About seven million tonnes of wheat have been exported from India last year, out of which, 2.5 mt had been exported by government agencies and the rest through private traders.

The Government has recently allowed private traders to export five million tonnes increasing total exports allowed to 9.5 mt.

Surplus producer

Assuring continued supply to Egypt would not be a problem, the Commerce Department official said.

“India is a surplus producer of wheat with production now in the range of 90-95 mt a year. Since our consumption is not more than 82 mt, India could be relied on for supply of wheat on a sustained basis,” he said.

New pests begin to suck Bt cotton yields in Punjab

Rising expense on insecticides, labour shortage pose twin challenge

(quantity in tonnes)

Rebound in insecticide usage				
Year	Sucking pests	Bollworms	Others	Total insecticides
2001	3,312	9,410	454	13,176
2002	2,110	4,470	283	6,863
2003	2,909	6,599	537	10,045
2004	2,735	6,454	178	9,367
2005	2,688	2,923	302	5,914
2006	2,374	1,874	375	4,623
2007	3,805	1,201	536	5,543
2008	3,877	652	528	5,057
2009	5,816	500	410	6,726
2010	7,270	249	366	7,885
2011	6,372	222	234	6,828

Source: CICR

Recently in Bhatinda: Cotton farmer Sandura Singh from Gulabgarh near Bhatinda is facing problems from the growing menace of white fly that cripples the growth of cotton plant. This has resulted in the yield of Bt cotton on his farm dropping.

Farmers' woes

In the last two years, the average yield in Sandura's farm has dropped by about 20 per cent to 10 quintals an acre from 12 quintals earlier.

In addition, his cultivation costs have gone up considerably, as he has to spray at least four to five insecticides to keep the white fly under check.

Singh is not alone. Scores of cotton growers across the Malwa region in Punjab are facing the twin challenge of a rebound in rising insecticide and pesticide costs and increase in labour charges, attributed mainly to labour shortage during the cotton plucking season.

Pest control

When Bt cotton was introduced in Punjab eight years ago, growers in Malwa region, comprising 12 districts including Bhatinda and Patiala, were able to tackle the bollworm menace and almost double their yields.

However, the emergence of sucking pests such as white fly, mealy bug and jassid are posing threat to cotton crop not only in Malwa, but across the country.

“In the pre-Bt cotton days, the extensive pesticide sprays undertaken to control the bollworm had kept these sucking pests under check,” says Balwinder Singh, another farmer in the neighbouring Mour. The decline in pesticide usage in the post-Bt era has resulted in a flare-up of these sucking pests, he says.

insecticide usage

According to Kiran Kranthi, Director of the Nagpur-based Central Institute of Cotton Research (CICR), insecticide usage for bollworm control decreased after 2004, while the usage for sucking pest control increased after 2006.

Though Bt cotton was introduced in India in 2002, States such as Punjab had delayed the introduction by three years.

According to the statistics compiled by Kranthi, the use of insecticide to control bollworm has dropped by 6,599 tonnes in 2003 to 222 tonnes in 2011.

Similarly, the use of insecticides to control sucking pests has more than doubled from 2,909 tonnes in 2003 to 6,372 tonnes in 2011.

Costs involved

Though insecticide costs that accounts for 8-10 per cent of the cultivation costs are on the rise, labour shortage and rising wages are a major worry for Punjab cotton growers, who still depend on migrant labour from Bihar and other States, especially during the picking season.

“Labour costs have more than doubled in the past few years,” says Sandura.

Labour problems

“Besides paying wages, we also have to provide food and pay for transportation. Sometimes during the picking season, we have to go as far as 200 km to fetch labour,” he says.

The implementation of the rural job guarantee scheme, MGNREGA, has led to labour shortage in villages. Also, the dwindling in-house family labour – as children of farmers opt for studies and take up jobs in cities – has compounded the growers’ woes. Labour now accounts for close to half of their cultivation costs.

“The Government should cover activities such as cotton plucking under MGNREGA,” says Balbir Singh Gadwal of Fatehabad in Haryana, a farmer and leader of the local kisan club.

Last season, at an average price of Rs 4,000 a quintal, cotton growers in Malwa made decent profits, but are now under pressure.

Though paddy is a relatively profitable alternative, these farmers prefer to grow cotton, as the declining groundwater table has left them with no other choice.

Edible oils slip on higher inflow of seeds



Mumbai, March 19: Activities in edible oils markets were calm on Tuesday, tracking bearish futures market. As the fiscal year end approaches, stockists prefer to bet for April and keep away from

nearby buying. The overall volume was thin. In the absence of active demand palmolein, rapeseed and cotton refined oil declined in the range of Re 1-Rs 3. Groundnut oil dropped by Rs 5 tracking a fall of Rs 25 in telia tin in Rajkot. Firmness in the Malaysian palm oil futures failed to lift the sentiment here as most wholesalers preferred to fulfil old commitments.

In local market during the day activities remained dull on slack demand. Importers offloaded 550-600 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 500 for delivery between April 20 and May 10. About 150-200 tonnes of palmolein were traded at Rs 502 for nearby delivery. Indigenous oils were under pressure of higher arrivals of seeds. Mustard seeds arrivals were 5.50 lakh bags and prices were Rs 3,150-3,450 at spot level. Towards the day's close, Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 511 ex-Shahpur and Rs 508 ex-JNPT. Super palmolein was Rs 550 and sunflower refined oil Rs 780. Ruchi was quoting palmolein at Rs 510 Patalganga and Rs 507 ex-JNPT, soyabean refined oil Rs 641 and sunflower refined oil Rs 771. Allana quoted super palmolein at Rs 545. In Saurashtra-Rajkot, groundnut oil declined further to Rs 1,835 (Rs 1,860) for *telia* tin and Rs 1,200 (Rs 1,210) for loose (10 kg).

On the NCDEX, soyabean refined oil's April futures dropped to Rs 668.90 (Rs 671.40), May closed lower to Rs 662 (Rs 664.10) and May was Rs 660.95 (Rs 662.20).

Malaysian BMD crude palm oil's April futures settled higher at MYR 2,414 (MYR 2,386), May at MYR 2,416 (MYR 2,386) and June at MYR 2,415 (MYR 2,385) a tonne.

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg): groundnut oil 1,205 (1,210), soya refined oil 640 (640), sunflower exp. ref. 685 (685), sunflower ref. 770 (770), rapeseed ref. oil 695 (697), rapeseed expeller ref. 665 (667) cottonseed ref. oil 605 (608) and palmolein 504 (505).

Vikram Global Commodities, Chennai, has quoted Malaysian super palmolein at Rs.555 ex-Chennai for April delivery.

Pressure to sell pepper continues in Karnataka



Kochi, March 19: Pepper prices continued to fall with the March contract dropping substantially on Tuesday. There was circular trading buying and selling as is evident from the rise in turnover, market sources told *Business Line*.

Selling pressure continued to persist in Karnataka and it was offering 525-535-540 GL pepper at Rs 335-345 and an estimated 55 tonnes of pepper with 13-13.5 per cent moisture content were traded by Kochi-based exporters, they said. Karnataka-based exporters were also shipping out pepper from Mangalore port, they said.

Meanwhile, 12 tonnes of fresh pepper from Kerala were traded at an average price of Rs 346 a kg, they said. According to the trade, imports have also shown a substantial increase. During April-January 2013 total imports stood at 12,712 tonnes against 9,650 tonnes in the same period last fiscal. Imports increased by 32 per cent, while exports dropped by 33 per cent, they said.

March contract on the NCDEX fell by Rs 1,040 to Rs 36,100 a quintal and converged with the spot price.

April and May decreased by Rs 305 each to Rs 35,285 and Rs 35,330.

Total turnover increased by 959 tonnes to 2,101 tonnes whereas the total open interest declined by 58 tonnes to 2,448 tonnes. Spot prices dropped by Rs 200 to Rs 34,600 (ungarbled) and Rs 36,100 (M G 1) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market was at \$6,900 (c&f) for March shipment while April and May shipments were at \$6,850 a tonne (c&f).

Turmeric arrivals rise as prices improve



Erode, March 19: Spot turmeric prices inched down on Tuesday due to arrival of medium variety. Quality turmeric fetched good price.

“Almost all the exporters have received reasonable orders for the yellow spice from North India and they are buying mainly the quality and hybrid variety turmeric paying a higher price. But they quoted a lower price of Rs 150 a quintal on Tuesday for the medium variety. A few bags of fine variety turmeric fetched good price. We are expecting the traders to get more upcountry orders within a week’s time,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said that after shifting to their own premises, arrivals have increased. About 6,000 bags of turmeric arrived for sale in the new premises. Sales also increased to 65 per cent. He said because of arrival of quality hybrid turmeric, prices touched Rs 8,400 a quintal and in the Regulated Market Committee it was Rs 8,029 for the finger variety and Rs 6,739 for the root variety.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,411-7,799 and the root variety Rs 4,101-6,499.

Salem Hybrid Crop: The finger variety fetched Rs 5,511-8,406 and the root variety Rs 5,406-6,912. Of the arrival of 1,416 bags, 60 per cent stocks were sold. At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 7,301-8,029; the root variety Rs 6,068-6,739. Of the arrival of 358 bags, 303 found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety quoted Rs 6,091-8,077 and the root variety Rs 5,899-6,746. Of the 717 bags arrived, 687 were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 6,047-7,899; the root variety Rs 5,417-6,960. All the 101 bags found takers.

Holi fails to boost demand for sugar



Mumbai, March 19: Sugar prices on the Vashi spot market dropped by Rs 6-10 a quintal on regular supply from producers and slack demand. Naka rates witnessed a mixed trend with S-grade

declining Rs 10, while M-grade inched up by Rs 10. Mill tender rates were down by Rs 5-10 as producers continued selling. Need-based local demand and bearish futures kept morale weak in physical market, said traders.

Jagdish Rawal of B. Bhogilal & Co., said: “Activities remained calm at market and mill level as local demand was need-based due to month-end. Producers were eager to sell as financial year closing comes nearer. Despite Holi festival next week, retail offtake has not picked up as expected. Higher and continuous supply from mills resulted in building up sufficient stocks in Vashi markets. Market carries more than 120 truckloads of stocks and hence stockists keep away from fresh bulk buying,” he said.

On the NCDEX, sugar April futures were down by Rs 11 to Rs 3,017 , May contracts dropped by Rs 13 to Rs 3,058 and June was lower by Rs 17 to Rs 3,132 till noon. In Vashi market, arrivals were 63-64 truckloads (each of 100 bags) and local dispatches were 60-62 loads. On Monday evening, about 18-20 mills sold about 47,000-48,000 bags to local traders in the lower range of Rs 2,995-3,050 (Rs 3,000-3,060) for S-grade and Rs 3,090-3,200 (Rs 3,100-3,200) for M-grade.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs 3,136-3,221 (Rs 3,142-3,221) and M-grade Rs 3,226-3,391 (Rs 3,226- 3,401).

Naka delivery rates: S-grade Rs 3,090-3,130 (Rs 3,100-3,130) and M-grade Rs 3,180-3,280 (Rs 3,170-3,270).

Wheat rules flat as market awaits new crop



Karnal, March 19: With not much trading taking place in the market, dara wheat and flour prices remained unchanged on Tuesday.

Radhey Shyam, a trade expert, told *Business Line* that after witnessing a fall last week, wheat prices have been ruling unchanged since then.

Bulk buyers are keeping themselves out of the market as wheat prices are likely to fall in coming days, he said.

In the physical market, dara quoted at Rs 1,545-1,550 a quintal. Around 200 quintals of dara variety arrived from Uttar Pradesh and the stocks were directly offloaded at the mills.

Mill delivery was at Rs 1,545 while delivery at the chakki was Rs 1,550.

On the NCDEX, wheat futures remained bearish on lack of buying interest.

Wheat for March contracts decreased by Rs 12 and traded at 1,525

With an open interest of 2,550 lots. April contracts went down by Rs 2 to Rs 1,426.

According to the market experts, the market witnessed sluggish trend on weak demand and in expectation of a higher new crop in coming weeks. Market is likely to move weak to range-bound in coming days, said experts.

While, wheat spot prices on the exchange improved by Rs 7.5 and traded at Rs 1,512.5.

Flour Prices

With a steady trend in wheat, flour prices too remained unchanged and quoted at Rs 1,760-1,770. Similarly, Chokar remained unchanged and sold at Rs 1,360-1,400.

Exports

MMTC Ltd has issued an international tender to export 65,000 tonnes of milling wheat for shipment in April. MMTC, STC and PEC have exported 25.58 lakh tonnes of wheat so far from the Government godowns.

Fears of new copra arrivals crush coconut oil



Kochi, March 19: Expectation of arrivals of new stocks of copra from next month is dragging the coconut oil market. Prices in Kerala have dropped to Rs 63 a kg (Rs 63.50) while in Tamil Nadu, the drop was Re 1 to Rs 61.

According to Prakash B. Rao, Vice-President, Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA), farmers are selling their stocks anticipating a downtrend. This would result in further decline in prices in the coming weeks.

It is reported that majority of the traders are liquidating old stocks as they expect fresh arrivals from first week of April with the commencement of season in the Kerala market, he said.

Copra prices also declined to Rs 4,550 a quintal in Kerala (Rs 4,600), while in Tamil Nadu it quoted at Rs 4,350 (Rs 4,500).

Other edible oils such as palm oil and palm kernel oil remained unchanged at Rs 52 and Rs 53 a kg respectively. Ample stock of edible oils with importers was the reason for the prices remaining stagnant, he said.

Thalath Mahamood, former President, COMA, said that the market is showing a steady decline and is likely to continue for the next couple of weeks. Major corporate buyers are looking at fresh copra stocks. The market is sluggish due to year ending in Kerala and this

coupled with lack of local demand has affected the sales in the last few weeks, he said.

Bharat N. Khona, former Board Member, COMA, said that upcountry buyers and corporates are adopting a wait-and-watch approach and they may enter the market once it stabilises. The market is dropping due to lack of demand, he said.
