



### **'Provide quality implements to famers'**

Agricultural tools and implements of high quality that help farmers reduce their expenditure towards labour should be made easily available in the market, said Deputy Commissioner Vipul Bhansal.

He was speaking after inaugurating a three-day 'krishi mela', a convention of farmers, in Holalur near here on Monday. The Department of Agriculture, Asare Social Service Trust, and Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha have organised the event.

It was necessary to popularise mechanised farming. Owing to exodus of rural people towards urban centres, there was a shortage of labour for agriculture and allied activities. Farmers should mechanise farming operations to address this problem, he said. Addressing the gathering, Superintendent of Police Koushalendra Kumar said farmers were spending huge sums of money to settle petty disputes related to property. He urged farmers to explore early solution for such property disputes.

Working president of Karnataka Rajya Raith Sangha H.R. Basavarajappa inaugurated an exhibition of agricultural implements. Seminars on various issues related to agricultural sector and a kabaddi tournament will be held as part of the event. President of asare trust K.M. Satish Gowda was present.

### **Farmers' grievance meet**

The monthly farmers' grievances meeting will be held at the Collector's Office at 10.30 a.m. on May 23, an official press release said.

### **'Earmark a portion of your field for thornless bamboo'**



New applications of bamboo: S. Natarajan, Collector, having a look at the bamboo crop at Valangaiman taluk.

Thornless bamboo is one of the best drought-prone crops with good growth potential in Tiruvarur district and farmers could take advantage of the same for improving their income, Collector S. Natarajan has said.

He inspected the thornless bamboo crop raised in about seven acres in a private farm in Avur village in Valangaiman taluk on Monday. The fertile soil and the temperature in the district are well suited for the crop.

Within six months of sowing, the saplings grow to a height of 10 feet.

The species is used in the production of wood pulp and paper, garments, and colourful handicrafts, and enjoys good demand in the market.

National Bamboo Board is providing the bamboo saplings and is also imparting training to farmers in raising the crop. The farmers can earn between Rs. 50,000 and Rs. 75,000 every year after four years of raising the crop.

The latest bamboo species are non-flowering and hence there is no need for replanting.

Moreover, bamboo has many new applications and is an alternative for other expensive materials.

This is a drought resistant crop, Mr. Natarajan said and urged the farmers to earmark a portion of their fields for raising the crop. K. Mayilvaganan, deputy director of agriculture, accompanied the Collector.

## Organic rice mela from May 23

Different traditional varieties of millets and rice cultivated by indigenous and tribal farmers in Kerala will be showcased at a three-day Organic Rice Mela to be held here from May 23 in connection with the World Biodiversity Day celebrations.

The event is being organised by Thanal, a city-based NGO, at the YMCA Hall. As many as 21 varieties of rice will be put up for sale at the mela, a press note said. Other organic products, including vegetables and groceries, will also be available.

## Call for wider unity among farmers across divides

### 'Some recommendations of Gadgil committee are impractical'



Final march: A rally taken out on the concluding day of the 24th State conference of the Kerala Karshaka Sanghom in Thrissur on Monday.— Photo: K.K. Najeeb

The 24th State conference of the Kerala Karshaka Sanghom called for wider unity of farmers cutting across divides.

Addressing the valedictory function of the conference, All-India Kisan Sabha president S. Ramachandran Pillai said communal organisations should not divide farmers.

“Nothing should prevent the unity of farmers. Kerala Karshaka Sanghom cannot be seen as a feeder organisation of the CPI(M). The Sanghom is independent. It has its own views about issues,” he said.

He stated that neoliberal policies of governments had severely affected the lives of farmers.

“In Kerala, 33 lakh families had benefited by the land reform movement. The State’s achievements in the education and health sectors have been an extension of the historic land reform movement. But today, education and health sectors have been commercialised,” he said.

Those present on the occasion included P.K. Biju, MP; K. Radhakrishnan, B.D. Devassy, Babu M. Palissery, MLAs; K. Varadarajan, national secretary of the All-India Kisan Sabha; Karshaka Sangham state president E. P. Jayarajan; secretary K. V. Ramakrishnan; CPI(M) Central committee member A. Vijayaraghavan; party State secretariat member Baby John; and former Minister M. Vijayakumar.

The conference adopted a resolution demanding constitution of a new committee to study biodiversity in the Western Ghats.

“Some of the recommendations of the Madhav Gadgil and Kasturirangam committees are against the interests of the farming community. They are impractical,” said the resolution. Earlier, a massive rally was taken out in the city.

### **Paddy ryots seek check on fishponds**

**Jalipudi village has 3,000 acres of cultivable land, of which 1,000 acres was converted into fishponds**



Under threat: A paddy field fast turns into a fishpond at Jalipudi, one of the belt villages of Kolleru in West Godavari district. Photo: A. V. G. Prasad

The passionate plea by a farmer, Rangu Veeranjanyulu, from this belt village of Kolleru lake in West Godavari district to the administration to save his paddy fields from the onslaught of pisciculture goes unheard. A paddy grower with 11 acres of cultivable land, Mr. Ramanjaneyulu

has been waging a grim battle for the last five years to din into the minds of the official top brass the problem. He petitioned the higher officials at Prajavani, an official grievance redressal forum, four times with a request for an immediate action.

“When I raised an alarm at the Prajavani on April 15, an extent of 43 acres was under conversion. Now, the area under conversion has gone up to 200 acres. But no action came forth yet from any official quarter”, he lamented. The farmer said he complained to the Collector and the Joint Colletor on the fishpond construction activity in four acres `illegally’. As a knee-jerk reaction, it was stalled for only 10 days and the activity at the same place reportedly gained momentum with renewed vigour.

His land is all set to become an island in the midst of fishponds and likely to become unfit for paddy cultivation in the near future because of the negative effects of fish culture on soil health. The village has 3,000 acres of cultivable land, of which 1,000 acres was converted into fishponds a decade ago. “The ponds with a huge wall-like bunds that are coming up by encroaching upon irrigation canals and drainage channels will prevent the flow of flood waters into the Kolleru Lake, resulting in submergence of paddy fields and habitations on the peripheries of the lake”, Mr. Ramanjaneyulu said.

The small and medium farmers are allegedly subjected to lures and mild threats by the influential aqua lobbies to give away their paddy fields for fish farming. The paddy growers are also said to be forced to enter into a seven-year agreement in favour of conversion for a lease of Rs 30,000 per acre. Aquaculture is flourishing and fast spreading up to 10th contour in the district, engulfing the lush-green paddy fields because of its economic viability and liberal financial help from banks. According to Yerneni Nagendranath of the Andhra Pradesh Rytanga Samakhya, more than 80 per cent of the paddy fields located between the plus five and the plus ten contours of the lake is already subjected to conversion into aqua ponds.

**Tribal farmers urged to make use of package to grow millets**

**Minister Thota Narasimham inaugurates Rythu Sadassu at Rampachodavaram**



Minister Thota Narasimham, MP T. Ratnabai and PO C. Nagarani releasing pigeons to mark the inauguration of Rytu Sadassu at Rampachodavaram on Monday. —Photo-S. Rambabu

Minister for Stamps and Registration Thota Narasimham said on Monday cultivation, which was very rare in the Agency area in the past, was now matching with plain areas. He said the Congress government had changed the complexion of cultivation in the Agency area by constructing Bhupathipalem, Musurumilli and Surampalem irrigation projects.

Inaugurating rythu sadassu at junior college here he called upon tribal farmers to make use of new package being implemented for the cultivation of millets. He said living standards of tribals will be changed significantly with the implementation of SC/ST sub-plan and assured that he will make efforts to set up branch of direct cooperative bank in Rampachodavaram. He reiterated that Rs 167 crore was for East Godavari district as compensation for the losses incurred due to Nilam cyclone and added that Rs 3.33 crore sanctioned for 11 farmers in Rampachodavaram division. He said the State government had enhanced minimum support price for paddy in phased manners and did also sent proposals for further enhancement of MSP.

The Minister said the State government was in the top in the country in extending modern technology to farmers. He said the Congress government had introduced many welfare schemes for farming community like free power, Jalayagnam, loan waiver, interest free loans, loans on 25 paisa interest, agriculture subsidies and loan eligibility for tenant farmers. He said scientists will guide farmers in taking up cultivation of suitable variety of vegetables and orchards.

Speaking on the occasion, MP T Ratna Bai mentioned that the State government was taking steps to support farmers and providing crop loans to help poor tribal farmers to cultivate their lands. Rampa Chodavaram MLA K.K. Viswanath said the Chief Minister gave assurance for

diversion of the water from Pamuleru to Bhupathi Palem reservoir which will transform agency area into another Konaseema. He said anicuts have sanctioned on Maderu stream and Kanneru stream with Rs 16 crore and Rs 22 crore respectively.

ITDA project officer C. Naga Rani, Rampachodavaram Sub-Collector Gandham Chandrudu and Joint Director, agriculture department D Prameela were present on the occasion.

### **Government to promote terrace vegetable gardens**

The beauty of nature should not only be enjoyed but also passed on to posterity, observed the Commissioner, Agricultural Production, Sandeep Saxena, while distributing prizes at the 117th Annual Flower Show in the Government Botanical Garden (GBG) in Udthagamandalam on Sunday.

Pointing out that the flower show here was getting better every year, he said that it reflected the hard work put in by the Department of Horticulture.

He acknowledged the efforts of the district and civic administrations and the police in ensuring that the mega event is organized properly.

### **Focus**

The focus of the government during the current year would be on promoting terrace vegetable gardens.

The Nilgiris Collector Archana Patnaik, who presided, said that the aim of the administration is to offer different kinds of cultural programmes every year.

MLA M.Buddhichandran said that tourists are flocking to Tamil Nadu because law and order was very good.

So far this year about 7.50 lakh tourists have visited Udthagamandalam.

### **Support**

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Management Committee member K.R.Arjunan said that the kind of support being extended to the agriculture sector by Chief Minister J.Jayalithaa had no parallel.

## **Response**

Welcoming the gathering, the Commissioner, Horticulture and Plantation Crops, Satyabrata Sahoo, said that the organizers were encouraged by the response to the show.

The Vice Chairman, Udthagamandalam Municipal Council, V.Gopalakrishnan and the Chairman, District Panchayat, A.Maneka, also spoke. The Joint Director of Horticulture G.Mohan proposed a vote of thanks.

*'The show reflects the hard work put in by the Department of Horticulture'*

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## **Grameena bank NPA in agriculture lending up**

M. Gopalakrishna, Chairman of the Chaitanya Godavari Grameena Bank (CGGB), on Monday said the incidence of non-performing assets (NPAs) in agriculture lending in his bank had 'slightly' gone up in view of the perceived negative environment caused by the election-eve promises of political parties for debt-waiver. Addressing a media conference here, he said the NPA in the particular segment during the financial year 2012-13 had stood at 25 per cent.

However, the bank had witnessed a spurt in the volume of lending for agriculture from 118 crore to over Rs 704 crore in the previous year. The share of advances in agriculture accounted for 81.44 per cent of the total credit plan outlay during the year, he claimed.

Mr. Gopalakrishna stated that efforts were underway to effectively handle the gross NPAs amounting to Rs 31.09 crore in all the branches under the jurisdiction of the bank in Guntur, East and West Godavari districts.

The CGGB chief informed that it was proposed to establish 15 new branches in its area of operations in the current fiscal in an attempt to expand its clientele base.

The bank was also planning to establish on-site automatic telling machines (ATMs) at all the branches during the year. He said the bank had set up financial literacy centres each at Tenali in Guntur district, Peddapuram in East Godavari and Bhimavaram in West Godavari district under the Financial Inclusion scheme with an objective to create awareness on financial literacy and opening of no-frills accounts in the public.

## **Light grocery bags, heavy on the wallet**



### **With prices of vegetables, meats and seafood shooting up, residents are eating less and haggling more**

Summer is when pickles are made in most homes. Tomatoes, lemons and chillies used to be sold for a song, and were perfect for pickling. Not any more.

“Every year at this time, I would buy about 3 kg of tomatoes for Rs. 10 and make two sets of pickles. This week, one kg of tomatoes costs around Rs. 40. It is simply not affordable anymore,” said K. Jayanthi, a resident of West Mambalam.

Prices of vegetables have shot up this month, with the relentless sun and lack of rain affecting crop yields in States that traditionally send their harvest to the city.

While the cost of the commonplace ginger has more than doubled from Rs. 80 to Rs. 200 per kg, prices of other vegetables such as carrots and beans have also risen.

Over the past few days, the Koyambedu market has received only 3,500 tonnes of vegetables daily, as against the usual 4,500 tonnes.

Traders said the city gets ginger from Kerala, Mysore, Gudalur and West Bengal. “We receive only 30 tonnes of ginger daily, while the demand is for about 60 tonnes,” said S. Chandran, a wholesale merchant.

The hike in transportation charges has also added to the cost of vegetables, he said.

While some residents have decided to shop at the Koyambedu wholesale market for slightly better deals, many others are cutting down on consumption.

Kavitha Kesavaram, a resident of Mahalingapuram, said, “A bunch of coriander costs me Rs. 15 now. Earlier, I used to get it free with the curry leaves and other vegetables. I also spend double the usual amount on frozen seafood.”

Kitchen gardens have come in handy for some. S. Praveena, a resident of Korattur grows tomatoes, bitter gourd and greens in her garden. “I save around Rs. 30 a week,” she said.

### **Fish, chicken cost more**

Fresh fish too, has become more expensive due to the 45-day ban on mechanised boat fishing. “The city consumes around 100 tonnes of fish a day, but the catch has fallen by 60 per cent. This past week has been bad for non-mechanised boats too, as the sea was rough after cyclone Mahasen,” said a fisheries department official.

Non-vegetarian residents are now seeking solace in eggs. According to M. Ashok Kishen, assistant manager, National Egg Coordination Committee – Chennai, around 50 lakh eggs are sold in the city daily and this number increases by 5-10 per cent during the ban season, which translates to an increase of between 2.5 lakh and 5 lakh eggs a day.

“The retail price of eggs varies from area to area. Though the ideal retail price is Rs. 3.25 per egg, it is Rs. 4 at supermarkets. The city gets eggs from Namakkal, Hyderabad, Vijayawada and Bellary,” Mr. Kishen explained. Of the 50 lakh eggs sold, estimates reveal that 10 lakh eggs are consumed in bakeries, hotels and Tasmac bars.

Other meats too, have become more expensive. The price of chicken has gone up from Rs. 170 per kg last month to Rs. 210 per kg this month. Though mutton has remained at Rs. 400-450 per kg for sometime now, not many people buy it because of the high price.

### **Graphic Box**

Commodity Price in May Price in April

Ginger Rs.175 Rs.80

Tomatoes Rs.35-40 Rs.30

Carrots Rs.40 Rs.35

Beans Rs.70-80 Rs.60-70

Eggs Rs. 4 (each) Rs.3.25 (each)

Prawns Rs.400 Rs.250

Nethili fish Rs. 180 – 200 Rs. 100-120

Seer fish Rs. 700 – 800 Rs. 650

\*Retail prices in kg

## THE HINDU Business Line

### Rice seen ruling unchanged this week

The rice market may continue to rule around current levels with marginal fluctuations this week, said market experts.

The market was mixed with restricted availability pushing PR14 and a few aromatic rice varieties further up, while reduced offtake pulled non basmati varieties down on Monday.

Amit Chandna, Proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company, told *Business Line* that situation of the market was anticipated as market's future is uncertain. According to the trade experts, following too much volatility, the market may witness only need-based buying in coming days.

In the physical market, Pusa-1121 (steam) sold at Rs 8,250 a quintal, while Pusa-1121 (sela) quoted at Rs 7,600-7,700 , Rs 200 up from previous levels.

Pure basmati (raw) remained unchanged at Rs 9,000 . Duplicate basmati (steam) traded Rs 100 up at Rs 7,100-7,300 .

For the brokens of Pusa-1121, Dubar quoted at Rs 4,000, Tibar sold at Rs 4,500 while Mongra was at Rs 3,000 .

In the non-basmati section, after ruling flat for almost two weeks, PR varieties dropped on sluggish demand. Similarly, Sharbati (sela) continued to tumbled on lack of buying.

Sharbati (steam) managed to maintain its previous level and quoted at Rs 5,100-5,150, while Sharbati (sela) was at Rs 4,750 – Rs 100 down.

Permal (raw) went down by Rs 100 and sold at Rs 2,500 while Permal (sela) went for Rs 2,400-2,500 a quintal. PR-11 (sela) moved down by Rs 100 and sold at Rs 3,200-3,300 while PR-11 (Raw) quoted at Rs 3,000, Rs 150 down.

On the other hand, PR14 (steam) moved up by Rs 100 and sold at Rs 3,400-3,550 a quintal.

### Poor meal offtake could keep soya flat



Both soyabean and soya oil ruled flat on lack of buying support and weak global cues.

Soya refined on Monday ruled at Rs 685-95 for 10 kg, while soya solvent ruled at Rs 652-657.

Soya oil futures ruled marginally higher despite weak global cues with its May and June contracts on the NCDEX closing at Rs 727 for 10 kg (up Re 1.5) and Rs 700 (up Re 1.10) respectively.

Soyabean also ruled firm at Rs 3,850-3,950 a quintal amid subdued demand. Plant deliveries in soyabean also ruled steady at Rs 3,975-4,000 a quintal on comparatively slack demand from the crushers. Arrival of soyabean in State mandis continues to be on the lower side with 40,000 bags being offloaded in local mandis on Monday.

Notwithstanding weak global cues, soyabean prices in the futures market were mixed with soyabeans May and June contracts on the NCDEX at Rs 4,030 (down Rs 10.50) and Rs 3,920 a quintal (up Rs 23.50).

Soyameal in the domestic market was steady at Rs 35,000 a quintal on weak domestic demand, while demand in the export market continues to be poor.

### **ACE re-launches futures trading in guar seed, guar gum**

Ace Derivatives and Commodity Exchange Ltd (ACE), a Kotak Mahindra Group anchored commodity exchange, announced commencement of futures trading in guar seed and guar gum effective from Monday.

Last week, Commodity exchanges Multi-Commodity Exchange of India (MCX) and NCDEX restarted futures trading in guar seed and guar gum contracts following which the commodity markets regulator Forward Markets Commission (FMC) decided to lift the ban.

The trading unit for both the guar seed and guar gum contracts is 1 tonne. The tick size is Rs 10. Both are compulsory delivery contracts with staggered delivery mechanism, ACE said in a statement here.

The basis centres for guar seed and gum is Jodhpur and additional delivery centres are in Rajasthan, Haryana and Gujarat, which would be the key regions participating in Guar contracts. Apart from these centres the exchange would also focus on participants from Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata region.

“The re-launch of guar seed and guar gum contract will provide an effective price discovery and risk management platform to all the stakeholders in the economy.

“The players, including farmers, brokers, traders, processors and exporters will be able to efficiently hedge the price risk they carry in their day to day trade through their participation in this contract,” ACE CEO Dilip Bhatia said.

ACE currently offers trading in nine agri commodities - refined soy oil, soybean, soybean meal, RBD palmolein, cotton, mustard seed, castor, chana and sugar.

## Commodity Transaction Tax from June 1?

India's booming futures trade in commodities is likely to be tested soon, when the Government puts the proposed Commodities Transaction Tax (CTT) into effect. CTT will be levied on gold, silver and other non-agricultural commodities traded through commodities exchanges, once the Finance Ministry formally notifies the tax.

New Delhi, May 20:

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CTT will be levied on gold, silver and other non-agricultural commodities traded through commodities exchanges, once the Finance Ministry formally notifies the tax.

The detailed notification is under preparation. While Ministry sources indicated that the new tax could be levied from June 1, the trade is expecting the tax to be imposed from July 1.

### Tax rate

Under the new arrangement, sellers will have to pay 0.01 per cent tax, that is, Rs 10 for a transaction value of Rs 1 lakh. The current transaction cost (without any tax) is less than a third of this.

Analysts say imposition of the tax could affect trading volumes.

Finance Minister P. Chidambaram proposed this tax for non-agro commodities in the 2013-14 Budget. This proposal was part of the Finance Bill, 2013.

The President had given his assent to the Bill after it was approved by Parliament. Now, the notification will pave the way for the implementation of the tax.

The Multi-Commodity Exchange (MCX), which has the biggest share of non-agro commodities trade, declined to comment on the development.

However, soon after the presentation of the Budget on February 28, MCX Managing Director and CEO Shreekant Javalgekar had, in a statement, said Indian commodity exchanges will become 350 per cent more expensive due to the CTT and that a bulk of the trade will shift to unofficial channels or move outside India.

### **'Hoping against hope'**

B. K. Sabbarwal, President, Federation of Commodity Traders in India, said they are hoping against hope for the notification not to be issued. "Still, even if the Finance Ministry brings in the notification next week, implementation will be possible only from July 1 as some logistical requirements will be there."

Sandeep Joon, Senior Research Analyst with SMC Comtrade, said the imposition of CTT will remove the cost advantage commodities exchange have over the stock market as the Securities Transaction Tax is already being levied in the latter.

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### **Exporters log out of cotton market**



Cotton prices remained unchanged on the back of domestic buying support.

According to traders, exporters were out of the market and only south Indian mills were active in the market.

Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton was traded at Rs 37,200-37,500 a candy of 356 kg. Mill delivery price was Rs 37,700-37,800 . V 797 cotton A grade was offered at Rs 27,000-27,300.



Kapas or raw cotton marginally increased by Rs 5 to Rs 950-992 for 20 kg and Kadi delivery kapas at Rs 975-995.

### **low arrivals**

About 12,000 bales of 170 kg each cotton arrived in Gujarat and 33,000-34,000 bales arrived in India.

Arrivals were reported lower in most of the markets due to hot weather.

A Rajkot-based cotton broker said: "Demand is reported to be good from South Indian spinners, while North-based mills are inactive. Ginners' selling is restricted to lower stocks."

Cotton 29 MM (3.8+ micronaire) was at Rs 37,500-38,000, 29 MM (3.6 micronaire) Rs 36,500-37,000 a candy in Maharashtra.

### **Inclement weather likely to hit wheat output in Punjab, Haryana**



Wheat production in Punjab and Haryana will be lower as the crop was hit at the fag end of maturity stage due to inclement weather conditions, a top official of the Karnal based Directorate of Wheat Research said today.

"As per reports from fields, wheat production in Punjab and Haryana has been adversely affected due to unfavourable weather conditions prevailed at the fag end of maturity stage which will have bearing on crop production," said Indu Sharma, Project Director, Directorate of Wheat Research.

However, she expressed optimism that country's wheat output target of 93 million tonne would be achieved.

Inclement weather conditions including untimely rain accompanied by hailstorm prevailed during the month of March this year which raised fear of crop damage in Punjab and Haryana.

Sharma also said the production level in Punjab and Haryana will drop because of exceptionally high output achieved last year.

“Last year, wheat production in Punjab and Haryana was exceptionally high. The drop this year was bound to happen,” she said.

During last season, Punjab had recorded an all—time high wheat yield of 179.82 lakh tonnes on the back of favourable weather conditions, while Haryana had an output of 130.69 lakh tonnes.

For current season, Punjab and Haryana has projected wheat output of 162 lakh tonne and 124 lakh tonne respectively in this season on the back of prolonged winter and absence of major attack of fungal disease on wheat crop.

However, she was optimistic about achievement of 93 million tonne of wheat production across the country. “Wheat output in other states like Madhya Pradesh is expected to be higher, therefore, the output target can be achieved,” she said.

Meanwhile, farmers outfit Indian Farmers Association today sought Rs 500 per quintal as bonus from the Centre for wheat growers in the wake of drop in output of the grain.

### **Hilly states face logistics issues for buying PDS sugar**

North Eastern and hilly states, including Jammu & Kashmir, have expressed concerns over logistics for undertaking sugar procurement from the open market for PDS purpose, while big states like Andhra Pradesh have already issued tenders for the same.

The Centre has partially decontrolled the sugar sector and mills are no longer obligated to supply sweetener to the Centre for the Public Distribution System (PDS). States are asked to start procurement of sugar from the open market to meet the PDS demand from next month onwards.

“Some states such as Delhi and Andhra Pradesh have issued tenders for procurement of sugar. However north eastern, hilly states and island territories have said they do not have a system in place to understate the procurement,” a senior Food Ministry official told PTI.

According to sources, states such as Assam, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Jammu & Kashmir, Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar - have suggested that Food Corporation of India (FCI) should buy for them from the open market for PDS sale at Rs 13.50 per kg.

Also, these state governments have argued that subsidy of Rs 18.50 per kg (including all administrative, transportation, distribution and other expenses) would not be sufficient as sugar prices are more than Rs 45 per kg in the retail market of hilly and north eastern states.

Since much of the expense in hilly areas is on transportation, the states feel that it would be better if the FCI provides sugar for PDS sale for an year and within that time, the states will put in place a system for sugar procurement, they added.

Meanwhile, the Delhi government has invited tenders for procurement of 700-2,000 tonnes of sugar per month for PDS supply during June, July and August. Andhra Pradesh has issued tenders for procurement of 11,000 tonnes for supply in June.

To ensure that sugar is sold at subsidised price of Rs 13.50 per kg in PDS shops, the centre has decided to give a subsidy of Rs 18.50 per kg to the states effective from June 1, this year, for next two years.

The annual demand of PDS sugar is around 2 million tonnes, while the country's total production is estimated at 24.5 million tonnes in the 2012-13 marketing year (October-September).

### **Former CMD of J Thomas & Co Ashok Batra joins Rainforest Alliance**

Ashok Batra, till recently the Chairman & Managing Director of J. Thomas & Company Pvt Ltd, the world's largest and oldest tea auctioning, broking and tasting firm, has joined international conservation organisation, Rainforest Alliance, as consultant in India.

At present, 70 tea and 38 coffee estates carry the Rainforest Alliance certification for sustainable agriculture, producing more than 80,000 tonnes and 13,000 tonnes of tea and coffee respectively. Some of the biggest tea and coffee brands source from these and other certified estates around the world, according to Rainforest Alliance sources.

### **Farmers decide to hold on to turmeric**

Rising temperature and non-receipt of upcountry orders have resulted in turmeric price declining by Rs 200 a quintal.

“The spice is ruling low in all the four markets in Erode and in other markets such as Nizamabad . The futures remained steady at Rs 6,200 a quintal. Despite a low arrival of 3,000 bags in Erode, prices were on the decline,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

Farmers said that due to drop in turmeric price on a daily basis, they have decided to bring only limited stocks.

On Monday, they brought 3000 bags only.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,100-7,067 a quintal and the root variety Rs 4,014-6,132.

**Salem Hybrid Crop:** The finger variety fetched Rs 5,899-7,369; the the root variety Rs 5,588-6,714.

Of the 676 bags that arrived, only 25 per cent was sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 6,109-6,966; the root variety at Rs 5,312-6,114.

Of the 358 bags on offer, 266 found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety quoted Rs 5,878-7,009 and the root variety Rs 5,611-6,169.

All the 335 bags put up for sale were traded.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,991-7,412; the root variety Rs 5,040-6,212.

All the 118 bags found takers.

### **Sellers offer pepper at discount**



Pepper prices fell sharply on selling pressure on Monday due to the maturity of May contract in futures.

Added to this, need for growers to have some cash on hand for their children's education prompted them to liquidate creating an upsurge in arrivals.

The turnover moved up marginally.

Activities were limited. Buyers were quoting lower rates.

Sellers were also seen ready to discount their price because of high moisture content caused by the recent summer rains in the growing areas of Kerala, market sources told *Business Line*.

May contracts on the NCDEX decreased by Rs 940 to Rs 34,480 a quintal.

Total turnover moved up by 22 tonnes to 52 tonnes. Total open interest dropped by 19 tonnes to 41 tonnes.

Spot prices fell on selling pressure by Rs 100 to Rs 33,500 (ungarbled) and Rs 35,000 (garbled) a quintal.

In the commodity-specific regional exchange, IPSTA, which has been permitted to conduct futures trading in pepper for six months from July, the closing prices for June, July and August today were Rs 34,868, Rs 35,200 and Rs 35,000 a quintal.

The total turnover for the three contracts was at 36 tonnes, IPSTA sources told *Business Line*.

Indian parity in the international market was at \$ 6,600 a tonne (c&f) for May shipments and becoming close to competitive levels with other origins, they added.

## Business Standard

Tuesday, May 21, 2013 | 09:58 AM IST

### Coffee edges higher as export demand rises



Indian coffee prices edged higher at the last week's auction on strong demand from exporters. Of the total 277,339 kg offered for sale, about 119,000 kg were sold, which consisted of 137,880 kg of arabica coffee, and robusta coffee stood at 139,459 kg.

Arabica plantation grades were quoted Rs 50-250 per 50 kg, higher compared with the last auction, while robusta parchment was higher by Rs 100 per 50 kg. Coffee exports were almost steady at 197,304 tonnes from October 1 to

May 17, data from the state-run Coffee Board showed.

India's state-run Coffee Board has cut the country's coffee output estimate to 315,500 tonnes for the crop year to September 2013, down three per cent from an earlier projection.

## THE TIMES OF INDIA

### Credit crunch hits farmers with sowing season looming

NAGPUR: NamdeoGadhewar, a farmer from Pumpri village in Yavatmal'sKelapurataluka, killed himself on Monday by consuming a pesticide. While he became this year's 268th victim to end his life, unable to bear rigours of the agrarian cycle, farm activists said his case was symptomatic of the trouble arising out of inability to get credit in time for the impending sowing season.

Gandhewar, 47, had reportedly taken a loan of Rs40,000 from Bank of Maharashtra last year. This year, under pressure from bankers to repay the loan, he cleared the dues. But the nationalized bank officials had not issued him fresh credit even as time was running out for the start of kharif operations.

"He was asked to wait till next month for fresh credit," said Kishore Tiwari, president of Vidarbha [Jan Andolan Samiti](#), who keeps track of the agrarian crisis that has refused to die down in the last decade. This has led to the suicide of thousands of farmers unable to withstand intense stress and strain of [dryland cotton farming](#).

"The Amravati divisional commissioner's appeal to nationalized bank officials to taken a proactive stance and expedite farm credit disbursal on priority seems to have fallen on deaf ears," said Tiwari. According to him, only 10% of the targeted Rs5,200 crore farm loan target has been disbursed among farmers in the region, with less than two weeks left for arrival of rains.

"To make matters worse, cooperative banks in the region are hamstrung. Major district cooperative banks in the region are led by government appointed administrators, as banks are in huge crisis and losses. In such a situation, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development ( [NABARD](#) ) should intervene to bail out the farmers," said Tiwari. He also pointed

out that even as crop season was nearing, there was no rush at farm input stores. "This is because farmers do not have cash to make even the necessary purchases," said Tiwari.

### **State comes up with steps to counter overpricing of seeds**

AURANGABAD: The state government has instructed all Bt cotton seed manufacturers to publish an advertisement in leading newspapers mentioning the district-wise availability, variety and size of the seeds. State agriculture minister Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil said that since the seeds are available in plenty, the move would prevent artificial shortage and overpricing.

As a precautionary measure and taking a cue from this year's drought condition, the agriculture department and the seed companies called a meeting on Monday to take stock of the approaching Kharif season. About 90 representatives of various seed companies from across the country attended the meeting.

State agriculture commissioner, Umakant Dangat, said, "This year around 150 lakh hectares of land is expected to be cultivated during Kharif season, of which cotton would be cultivated on around 40 lakh hectares of land. Considering satisfactory rainfall prediction by the meteorological department, the focus would be on cultivation of cotton, soyabean, tur, moong, black gram, etc."

He said that earlier the state government had banned the advance booking of Bt cotton seeds. Major companies were not supplying seeds to farmers despite advance bookings, said senior officials. Farmers usually deposit high amounts with dealers because of concern over rising prices and find that they do not get seeds on time and retailers end up facing problems, said officials.

"Last year, the market experienced shortage of seeds which compelled farmers to buy them at higher rates. This year measures for proper distribution of seeds would not cause any shortage of seeds," said Dangat.

He said, "The seed companies have been urged to plan according to the requirement. The companies should focus on seed production on large scale in the state which would not only



benefit the farmers but will also boost the government's revenue and generate employment."

Dangat also urged the multi-national seed companies to conduct research on drought problem and bring in new varieties which are tolerant to drought.

Approximate sale of Bt cotton seeds in 2013-14 season is expected to reach 1.60 crore packets, while the availability is more than 2 crore packets.

Earlier, Dangat said that farmers in Maharashtra had been complaining of shortage of certain varieties of Bt cotton seeds. The government, however, is going all out to promote other varieties and is encouraging farmers to tap these, he said.

"Last year, it was witnessed that many retailers were involved in black-marketing of seeds in Aurangabad, Jalna and Beed. This year the government will take strict measures and has set up flying squads comprising around 1,900 agriculture officers," said Dangat.

### **Paddy Lowe reunited with Hamilton at Mercedes**

LONDON: [Lewis Hamilton](#) will be reunited with [Paddy Lowe](#) sooner than expected after Mercedes announced on Monday that the former [McLaren](#) technical head was joining their [Formula One](#) team next month.

Mercedes said in a statement that the Briton had been appointed executive director (technical) and would start on June 3 - the week of the Canadian Grand Prix - after agreement was reached with McLaren for him to be released from the remaining seven months of his contract.

Lowe will work closely with team principal Ross Brawn, the man he could one day replace, who retains overall responsibility for technical and sporting matters.

McLaren had already put Lowe on 'gardening leave', removing him from sensitive work, with Tim Goss being promoted to the role of technical director. They announced last week that they would switch from Mercedes engines to Honda in 2015.

Lowe's arrival at Mercedes, who signed 2008 world champion Hamilton last year, had been

flagged up since January when reports indicated that he was being lined up as Brawn's replacement.

"I am delighted to welcome Paddy to the team and to begin working together. He has an excellent record of success in the sport and would be an asset to any of our rivals in the pit lane," said Brawn.

"It is no secret that every team is facing a significant balancing act between this year and next. But it is perhaps less obvious that we will also see major changes for the 2015 and 2016 seasons, as development progresses with the new generation of car design and Power Unit," he added.

"To deliver in these circumstances, a successful team needs strength in depth. Paddy's arrival will further strengthen our organisation and puts us in a strong position for the future."

The rules are changing significantly next year, with a new 1.6 litre turbocharged V6 engine with energy recovery systems replacing the current 2.4 litre V8 units.

### **Considerable Advantage**

Mercedes already have a long list of former team technical directors working for them, while Toto Wolff is executive director for business and head of Mercedes' motorsport programme.

Brawn, Bob Bell, Geoff Willis and Aldo Costa were all previously technical directors at other teams and Lowe makes it a quintet on a Mercedes payroll that also includes outspoken former champion Niki Lauda as non-executive chairman and shareholder.

"The team has already produced probably the fastest car of the 2013 season while the technical challenges of the new regulations for 2014 will give us the opportunity to maximise the synergies available to a works manufacturer," said Lowe in the team statement.

"That is a challenge I am relishing. I have worked closely with Mercedes-Benz for almost 20 years and deeply admire the company's phenomenal commitment to Formula One. I look

forward to much success together in the years ahead."

Mercedes have been on pole position for the last three races but have had problems managing the tyres and have faded on the Sunday, with Hamilton slipping from second on the grid to 12th at the last race in Spain.

Hamilton and German team mate [Nico Rosberg](#) will however be among the favourites at this weekend's Monaco Grand Prix, where overtaking is tricky and the driver starting on pole has a considerable advantage.

### **AP Mango Mela: 800 metric tonnes of mangoes sold**

*State sells around 800 [metric](#) tonnes of mangoes, as against the 600 MT sold last year.*

The state's mango farmers, whose spirit was dampened after unseasonal rains lashed the state and destroyed mango orchards, had a big reason to cheer as this year's AP Mango Mela witnessed sales that were perhaps the best in two years.

The exhibition, which sold carbide-free fruits, saw a total stock clearance and sold around 800 metric tonnes (MT) of mangos, as compared to the 600 MT it sold last year. The [King](#) of Fruits made a clean sweep at the mela that was held in four districts —Hyderabad, Vizag, Tirupati and Khammam. While the city sold 225 MT, other districts sold around 200 MT within a week. "All farmers are jubilant. Usually, on a daily basis, we sell around eight to nine metric tonnes, but on May 17, Hyderabad set a new record by selling 31 MT of mangoes. Its triple the usual amount," says K Balaji Naik, deputy director, office of the [commissioner](#) of [Andhra Pradesh](#) horticulture. The department introduced the concept of carbide-free ripening in 2012. Officials say the demand for organic and carbide-free mangoes encouraged them to organise the exhibition this year as well. Elaborating on this Naik says, "People were not happy with the artificially-ripened mangoes, which were prematurely ripened using a banned chemical called calcium carbide, whose consumption could lead to cancer. We have ripened mangoes using ethane gas; it is a harmless and a tried and tested method of ripening."

The initially beat-down farmers too claim that this year, the turnout was decent. "The sale was excellent this year. Although I made good sales last year too, the rates we procured this year are a reason to rejoice," says Ranga Reddy, a [mango farmer](#) from Mahaboobnagar district.

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

### Today's Weather



Sunny

### Tuesday, May 21

Max Min

35° | 29°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 66

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:42

Sunset: 06:28

Barometer: 1007

### Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

### Wednesday, May 22

Max Min

36° | 28°

### Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday  
May 23



37° | 29°  
Partly Cloudy

Friday  
May 24



36° | 29°  
Sunny

Saturday  
May 25



37° | 29°  
Sunny

Sunday  
May 26



38° | 29°  
Overcast

Monday  
May 27



38° | 29°  
Overcast

### Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:27

Humidity: 20

Sunset: 07:08

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1004

