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Bid to promote safe vegetables

Hortcorp, SHM-K join hands to promote pesticide-free vegetables

The Kerala State Horticultural Products Development Corporation (Hortcorp) and the State Horticulture Mission-Kerala (SHM-K) are gearing up to promote the production and sale of safe-to-eat vegetables as a premium brand across Kerala.

Addressing a press conference here on Monday, Hortcorp chairman Lal Varghese Kalpakavadi and managing director K. Prathapan, who is also SHM-K director, said a pilot project involving farmers at Pallichal, Kalliyoor, and Venganoor in Thiruvananthapuram was designed to address pesticide contamination of vegetables and ensure food safety. The project taken up by the Department of Agriculture, Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council Keralam (VFPCCK), Kerala Agricultural University (KAU), Hortcorp, and SHM-K would be scaled up and replicated throughout the State.

Dr. Prathapan said the farmers involved in the project were being encouraged to shun the indiscriminate application of chemical pesticides and adopt biocontrol methods. Hortcorp was unable to meet the demand for the vegetables produced under the project, despite the premium price.

The safe-to-eat vegetable programme was launched after the Pesticide Residue Research and Analytical Laboratory at the College of Agriculture, Vellayani, detected abnormal levels of organophosphorous pesticide in most vegetables sold through markets in the district.

Action plan

Mr. Joseph said Hortcorp and the SHM-K were working on an action plan to ensure that Kerala became self-reliant in cool season vegetables and local varieties during the Onam festival season next year.

The plan, he said, was aimed at ramping up domestic production and having a streamlined procurement system in place.

Procurement

“We hope to procure 16,000 tonnes of vegetables this festival season, up from 5,300 tonnes last year. Of the 160 tonnes currently handled by HortiCorp daily this season, 60 per cent has been procured from farmers in Kerala, largely from Idukki, Palakkad, and Wayanad districts and through farmers’ collectives.”

Mr. Joseph said the network of 250 retail outlets of HortiCorp, 24 mobile stalls, Niravu fairs, and 30 festival fairs opened by SupplyCo were selling vegetables at 30 per cent discount. Efforts were on to double the sale of vegetables from 150 to 300 tonnes a day, he added.

Dr. Prathapan said the increased domestic procurement was made possible by eliminating middlemen who fleeced farmers and dictated prices in the open market. “Our market intervention ensured adequate supply of vegetables and succeeded in lowering the price of 27 items. When the price of onion went up to Rs.90 per kg, HortiCorp started procurement from Nasik and sold it at Rs.38, helping to lower the price in the open market.”

HortiCorp has established a regional procurement centre at the agricultural wholesale market, Anayara, as part of its effort to streamline procurement. The facility set up at a cost of Rs.2.25 crore is set to be inaugurated by Chief Minister Oommen Chandy on Wednesday. The centre is equipped with ripening chambers and packing sheds, Dr. Prathapan said.

All is not well at copra centres



Growers allege that staff at the centres take around 10 kg of copra in the guise of sample-testing and charge extra for loading copra bags into lorries.

Coconut growers here are unhappy with the functioning of copra procurement centres at Arsikere and Channarayapatna.

They allege that centre staff take about 10 kg of copra in the guise of sample-testing and charge extra for loading copra bags into lorries.

Coconut growers were overjoyed when the Centre announced a minimum support price (MSP) for copra and the decision to purchase it through the National Agricultural Cooperative

Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) as the dip in yield owing to prolonged drought and the fall in prices had made their lives miserable.

The MSP announced by the Centre was Rs. 5,500 a quintal and the one announced by the State government was Rs. 1,000. Now, growers say that they lose anywhere between Rs. 500 and Rs. 1,000 by the way of sample-testing and loading charges.

Kumar of Devigere said the staff at the procurement centre in Channarayapatna bagged at least seven to eight kg of copra. "It would have cost around Rs. 455 to Rs. 520. Another staff demanded Rs. 75 to load the bags to the lorry," he said.

Complaints

K.M. Nagesh, Deputy Director of Agriculture Marketing, said the district administration had been addressing such complaints.

"The Deputy Commissioner himself gave a direction not to take copra for sample testing. If there are any specific complaints, we will take action," he said.

The growers have to register their names in advance and copra is purchased on a first-come, first-served basis. But, there have been allegations from farmers that this system is being violated.

The Deputy Commissioner too was informed about it. Mr. Nagesh said they were found to be true and NAFED had been directed to take action against the staff.

Egg rate

National Egg Coordination Committee has fixed the price of per egg as Rs. 3. 40

Mettur level

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 111.90 feet on Tuesday against its full reservoir level of 120 feet. The inflow was 9,061 cusecs and the discharge 17,996 cusecs.

Water released for irrigation in Radhapuram channel

Water has been released in Radhapuram Channel from Nilappaarai in Kanyakumari district to save the dying flower farms and to improve the groundwater table in this rain shadow region.

Radhapuram MLA S. Michael Royappan and Chairman of Tamil Nadu Housing Board R. Murugaiah Pandian released 70 cusecs of water in the recently renovated Radhapuram Channel, which will be sustained for 20 days initially.

If the Kothaiyaar and Petchipaarai Dams, from which water is being released, get significant rainfall during next three weeks, release of water from Nilappaarai will be extended to a few more days.

Instead of giving water to 52 irrigation tanks under this channel, it has been decided to take water directly to Radhapuram first and then divert water to the irrigation tanks based on the precipitation in the catchment areas.

Water level

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Tuesday stood at 106.35 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 401.97 cusecs and 1,404.75 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam.

The water level in Manimuthar dam stood at 61.25 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 42 cusecs and 45 cusecs of water was discharged.

Kanyakumari

The water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 23.65 feet, 60.20 feet in Perunchani, 9.91 feet in Chittar I, 10 feet in Chittar II and 30.51 feet in Mambazathuraiyaru dam.

'Government's commitment to plantation sector unconditional'



J.S.Deepak, Additional Secretary, Union Ministry of Commerce, distributing The Golden Leaf India Awards in Coonoor on Tuesday.- Photo: M. Sathyamoorthy

The Government of India is sensitive to the requirements of the plantation sector and does not treat it as just an activity related to trade and commerce, said J.S.Deepak, Additional Secretary, Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry, here on Tuesday.

Participating as the Chief Guest in the 120th annual conference of the United Planters Association of Southern India (UPASI) at Glenview in Coonoor, he said New Delhi was conscious of the sector's role in providing livelihood to lakhs of people and its employment potential.

Pointing out that the Government's commitment to the sector was absolute and unconditional, he said that making plantations viable and profitable was the pre-requisite for providing livelihood and promoting exports.

Adverting to a plea made by the plantation sector to keep it out of the purview of the National Land Reforms Policy, he said that in view of its peculiar nature and benefits the Commerce Ministry had taken it up with the Ministry of Rural Development. He added that steps would be taken to prevent fragmentation. Plantations accounted for about 10 per cent of agricultural exports. They offered a good opportunity to earn in dollars.

Referring to the proposed reduction in funding by the Tea Board for research, Mr.Deepak said that it was only a reform and the objective was to make research need based. The Tea Marketing Control Order was being used to get better returns for small tea growers.

Stating that the 12th plan allocation for research on coffee was Rs. 250 crore, he said that both the Coffee and Spices Boards were in the process of being restructured. The challenge posed by the steady reduction in area under Arabica could be met by building a brand which in course of time should become a household name across the globe. Value addition should be promoted in the spice sector. He urged the planters to play a major role in protecting the ecologically sensitive Western Ghats.

UPASI Chief G.J.Ancheril, who presided, said that though the current price levels of all the plantation crops appeared to be comfortable, the substantial increase in the cost of production was a matter of concern. Despite giving decent wages to the workers labour shortage was a major concern.

While implementing the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in plantation areas appropriate changes should be made to help the plantation activities. Imported machinery should be made available at concessional tariff. The Government should extend all assistance and incentives to growers irrespective of the size of the holdings.

On problems confronting the coffee industry, he said that compared to other coffee growing countries like Brazil and Vietnam, focus on research and development in India was inadequate. The move to discontinue the Quality Upgradation Programme in tea should be reconsidered. Efforts should be made to prevent escalation of human-animal conflict in plantations. UPASI vice-president Peter Mathias spoke.

Mr. Deepak distributed trophies to winners of the 9th edition of The Golden Leaf India Awards-Southern Tea Competition held in Coonoor during March 2013.

Poultry training

The State Poultry Production and Training Centre, Hesarghatta, will conduct a seven-day poultry training programme from September 10.

Those who wish to undergo training can contact the centre on Ph: 080-28466093, according to a release.

Backyard vegetables for Onam feast

Pathanamthitta serves a delectable idea :‘Own vegetables for Onam’



The Onam feast in homes in Pathanamthitta district will be tastier this time. The vegetables for the dishes have been grown locally expressly for the festival.

The sweat and toil of 5,594 women farmers has helped produce this abundance for the harvest festival. They belong to the Kudumbasree Mission, which, along with the district panchayat and the Agriculture Department, is rekindling a farm culture in Pathanamthitta through this vibrant vegetable revolution. The women farmers have been deployed through 969 joint liability groups in the limits of 54 grama panchayats.

“Our mission is to ensure safe and healthy food for all and self-reliance in vegetable production and to make people aware of the need to bring an end to overdependence on the neighbouring States for vegetables and foodgrains,” Saji Chacko, district panchayat president, says.

S. Sabir Hussein, district coordinator of the Kudumbasree Mission, is confident of achieving the goal in a time-bound manner.

The heavy monsoon delayed the project in certain places such as Upper Kuttanad because of waterlogging, Mr. Hussein says.

Prof. Chacko says the project, “Onathinu Swanthom Pachakkari Padhathi” (Own vegetables for Onam), was launched on May 30. The project was to start cultivation on 811 acres of land (one acre each in all the 811 panchayat wards in the district). The project coordinators have identified more than 1,000 acres in 54 panchayats in the district for vegetable cultivation, he says.

Mr. Hussein says cultivation was launched on 386 acres three months ago, braving adverse weather. The district panchayat supplied seeds and fertilizers to the Kudumbasree farming groups to set vegetable gardens in their panchayat wards. Cultivation of bitter gourd, snake gourd, green chilli, red amaranthus and long beans has been taken up as part of the project. At present, the area of cultivation has been extended to 600 acres.

Chenneerkara, Pandalam-Thekkekkara, Ranni, Puramattom, Naranganam, Omalloor, Perinad, Seethathode, Vechoochira, Kallooppara, Pramadam, Malayalappuzha, Kaviyur, Kalanjoor, Kadambanad, Pallickal and Thumpamon panchayats have launched the project in a major way. Ambily, Mariyamma Thomas, Mini Benny, Lucy, and Bindu Saji, members of a Kudumbasree farming group in Pandalam-Thekkekkara panchayat, says they received good support from the panchayat authorities, the Kudumbasree Mission and the Agriculture Department. They have launched cultivation of snake gourd, bitter gourd and long beans on sprawling farmlands taken on a yearly lease at Rs. 3,000 an acre in the Pongalady ward of the panchayat. Harvesting of snake gourd farm and beans will begin this week, they say.

Handsome incentives

Mr. Hussein says the Kudumbasree Mission will provide a land area incentive of Rs. 3,200 an acre and a production incentive of Rs. 2,300 an acre to the joint liability groups. A mechanism has been set up to monitor the project. The district panchayat president is the chairman of the district-level monitoring committee.

Prof. Chacko says a block-level coordinator, with an honorarium of Rs. 7,500 a month, has been appointed in all the eight blocks in the district to ensure the smooth and foolproof implementation of the project. As many as 465 master farmers were selected and given special

training by the Kudumbasree Mission as part of the grassroots-level monitoring system. The master farmers will be given an honorarium of Rs. 2,500 a farming season.

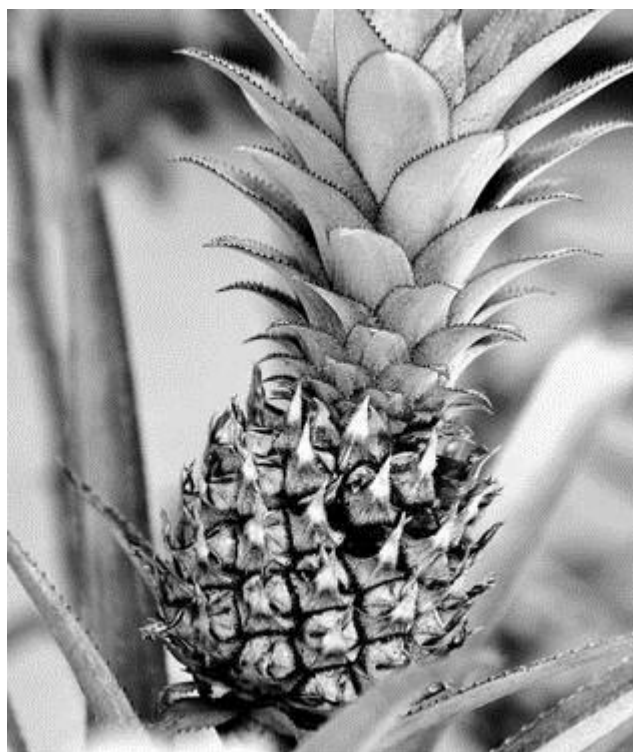
He says the block-level coordinators will give technical support to the farmers with the help of agriculture officers and master farmers in the field. The farmer facilitation centres in the 25 panchayats also help the farmers in the field.

However, there were certain allegations of corruption over the purchase of seeds as well as the quality of organic fertilizers supplied.

Prof. Chacko says the panchayat is firm in its stand against corruption, and supply of quality seeds and fertilizers to the farmers would be given top priority. The vegetable revolution will be a continuing process and appropriate efforts will be made to improve its execution mechanism in the successive years. "The project is also aimed at promoting organic farming, women empowerment, replenishment of groundwater and revival of an agrarian culture," Prof. Chacko says.

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Pineapple farmers' company gets a clone



Pineapple farmers have expressed dismay over the formation of Vazhakkulam Agro and Fruit Processing Company Limited Nadukkara alongside Nadukkara Agro Processing Company Limited (NAPCL), calling the exercise politically motivated.

However, Joseph Vazhakkann, Moovattupuzha MLA, who announced the Cabinet approval for the new company in the pineapple town last week, defended the new company, calling it an intervention on behalf of the farmers.

The MLA alleged that the former management had turned NAPCL administration into a political caucus and had even prevented proper elections to the board by bringing in members who were not pineapple farmers.

Mr. Vazhakkann said the new company would also be a farmers' company like NAPCL with 51 per cent share resting with the government. Thirty per cent of the stakes will be with the farmers and 19 per cent with Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council, Keralam, which is a farmer-based organisation.

On the other side of the debate is veteran pineapple farmer and the first farmer chairman of NAPCL Baby John, who said there was no need for the formation of a new company as NAPCL was doing well. NAPCL had the record of making proper market interventions and helping the farmers whenever price of the fruit came down.

The company had started paying back the loan it had availed from the government, he said. But Mr. Vazhakkann alleged that NAPCL had failed to make timely repayment of a loan of Rs. 4.5 crore.

Another pineapple farmer, who did not want to be named, said the formation of the new company was purely a political exercise. The new company would not do anything that NAPCL did not do so far. The formation of the new company and the time it would take to get its operations on would adversely affect the farmers, he said.

One of the farmers *The Hindu* talked to alleged that Joseph Perumpillykunel, the farmers' representative on the governing council of the new company, was actually a pineapple trader. He also ran a business selling fruit drinks on the lines of the business done by NAPCL and what will be done by the new company in future.

However, Mr. Perumpillykunel said he was on the temporary advisory committee of the company when VFPC took over the administration of NAPCL and not a member of the new governing council. He also said that he was both a farmer and a trader.

A person familiar with the technical aspects of running a fruit processing company said there was absolutely no need for the formation of a new company. One of the reasons cited is that

none of the certificates issued to NAPCL for its products can be used by the new company, which will have to start the process of getting certifications all over again. The formation of the new company, he said, did not mean that the old company had been wound up. And, as long as the old company remains a registered entity, a change in government can see the assets of the new company being transferred to the old one in a political tit-for-tat.

NAPCL, under which the Jive brand of fruit drinks became popular, was commissioned in 1999 with aid from the European Union under the erstwhile Kerala State Horticultural Development Programme, which was later re-named Kerala State Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council, Keralam.

It was incorporated as a farmers' company in which farmers held 41 per cent share and the state government 51 per cent.

However, the State government issued an order in June 2012 to begin the process of takeover of the company. A person familiar with company law and the developments related to the fruit processing company said that NAPCL would continue to exist because the government was only taking over the assets of NAPCL for a new company, the name of which has now been announced.

Agriculture operations pick up pace in Kodagu

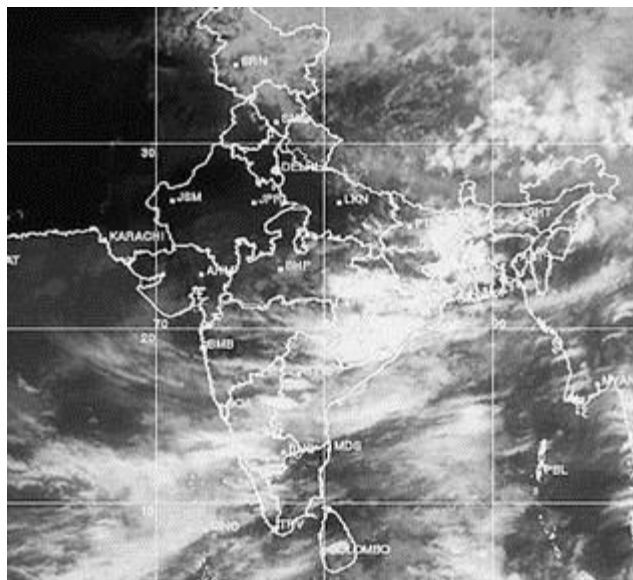
Owing to slackening of rainfall in Kodagu, agricultural activities have picked up pace with the process of paddy transplantation being taken up at a brisk pace. Of the targeted 35,000 hectares (ha) in the district under paddy, transplantation had been completed on 29,300 hectares, amounting to 84 per cent performance. Of the target of 8,000 ha in Madikeri taluk transplantation has been completed on 5,960 ha, of the 11,000 ha on Somwarpet taluk, 10,590 ha has been covered and of the 16,000 ha in Virajpet taluk, 12,750 ha has been completed.

MADIKERI-CHETTALLI ROAD OPENED FOR TRAFFIC

The Madikeri-Chettalli Road at Kathlekkad, which was closed for movement of light and heavy motor vehicles following damage to roads due to damage caused in the recent rainfall was thrown open for vehicular movement on Tuesday following temporary repairs. However, commuters would have to alight at the damaged portion of the road and allow the empty bus to cross over first. They could board the bus again later. Kodagu Deputy Commissioner Anurag Tewari passed an order in this regard on Tuesday. Executive Engineer of the PWD has suggested to

the district administration that vehicular movement should take place in the presence of the police.

Rainfall



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on September 3rd.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	36	25	0	518
New Delhi (Sfd)	36	26	0	781
Chandigarh	34	26	0	780
Hissar	36	24	0	507
Bhuntar	33	20	0	399
Shimla	24	16	0	778
Jammu	34	23	3	1185
Srinagar	29	14	tr	217
Amritsar	36	26	0	747
Patiala	36	27	0	690
Jaipur	37	25	0	661
Udaipur	31	23	0	656
Allahabad	33	26	0	943
Lucknow	34	25	0	707
Varanasi	31	27	1	741
Dehradun	32	22	18	2694
Agartala	34	23	9	709
Ahmedabad	33	25	0	749
Bangalore	31	19	13	516
Bhubaneshwar	31	24	27	696
Bhopal	32	23	0	1113
Chennai	34	25	0	470

Guwahati	35	26	tr	699
Hyderabad	32	23	0	525
Kolkata	28	26	0	1440
Mumbai	32	25	0	2060
Nagpur	34	23	0	1328
Patna	31	25	158	522
Pune	31	20	0	535
Thiruvananthapuram	33	24	10	884
Imphal	30	23	2	818
Shillong	25	18	1	828

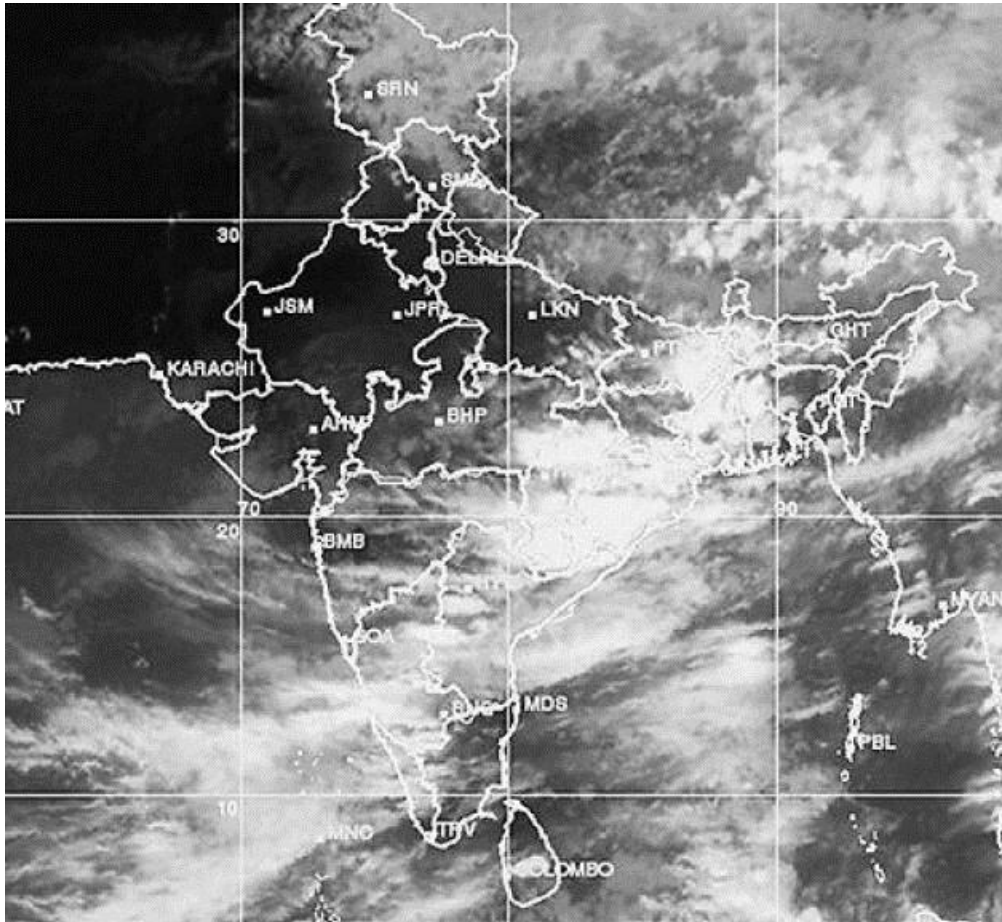
The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (tr-trace) and total rainfall in mm since 1st June.

RAINFALL: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at a few places over Jammu and Kashmir and east Uttar Pradesh and at isolated places over Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, east Rajasthan and Uttarakhand . Weather was dry over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (3 cm and above), EAST UTTAR PRADESH : Bansi 9, Birdghat 8, Regoli and Kakrahi 7, Gorakhpur 6, Rasra and Pharenda 5, Balrampur and Bansaon 4 and Tarabganj, Hata and Khalilabad 3 each.

FORECAST FOR REGION VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 05th SEPTEMBER 2013 : Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places over Jammu and Kashmir and at one or two places over Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over east Uttar Pradesh during next 24 hours and over Punjab during next 48 hours and mainly dry weather thereafter. Weather will be mainly dry over rest of the region.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 05th SEPTEMBER 2013: Mainly clear sky.

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs. Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on Sept. 3.

Cattle ranching goes green in the Amazon



Not anymore Over the past decade, cattle ranching has driven deforestation and many consumers were concerned that the meat they were buying was responsible for destroying the world's biggest rain forest. photo: AFP

In a remote corner of the Brazilian Amazon, farmer Lacir Soares is promoting sustainable cattle rearing that shuns deforestation and meets the environmental requirements of a new forestry law.

His venture, supported by the cattle industry and environmentalists, illustrates how things are changing in the Amazon region.

Over the past decade, cattle ranching has driven deforestation and many consumers were concerned that the meat they were buying was responsible for destroying the world's biggest rain forest.

Today, field rotation coupled with genetic improvement of cattle and better pastures help Soares produce more in his "Boqueirao" farm without damaging the forest.

With more than 200 million head of cattle, Brazil is the world's top beef exporter — 20 percent of beef exports come from the Amazon region — but it also leads in low productivity: one cow per hectare.

Soares manages to feed 2.3 head per hectare thanks to his more sustainable practices.

“The balance between cattle and forest is not just a legal obligation, it also ensures higher productivity,” said Soares, a fit 69-year-old farmer and lawyer sweating under the stifling heat. He knows that respecting the environment is the key to his economic survival.

The fight against deforestation

Four years ago, the fight against deforestation in the Amazon intensified when state prosecutors targeted major meat producers and threatened 72 supermarkets, shoe and cosmetic firms with legal action if they bought products from deforested areas.

The environmental group Greenpeace then released an explosive report alleging that meat and leather from deforested areas were finding their way into the industry that supplies top shoe and fashion companies as well as supermarkets and even the car industry.

The allegations pushed the industry into seeking more effective programs. Part of the solution came from technology.

In a huge area where access is difficult, satellite maps updated almost in real time make it possible to monitor where illegal logging is taking place.

Soares' ranch is touted as proof that sustainability can be good business.

In Paris this year, the luxury brand Gucci launched a bag made with Amazon leather that includes environmental sustainability certification.

“The siege of cattle ranchers relying on deforestation has helped to drastically curb deforestation,” prosecutor Daniel Azeredo Avelino told AFP.

“If they (meat producers) persist in deforesting, they will lose access to markets,” he said.AFP

Coffee Board chief fears drop in output

Heavy rains in June and July this year are likely to affect rubber and coffee production in the country. This was indicated at the commodity outlook session organised as part of the annual meeting of the United Planters' Association of Southern India here on Monday.

The post-blossom estimate of coffee production for 2013-2014 is 3.47 lakh tonnes. However, drought and then continuous rainfall in the coffee-growing areas is reported to have caused fruit drop and incidence of black rot and stalk rot in some areas. Hence, about 10 per cent decline is expected in the estimated production. A clear picture will be available only in October-November, said Jawaid Akhtar, chairman of the Coffee Board.

The Karnataka Planters' Association expects coffee production to be just 2.8 lakh tonnes. When asked about the difference in estimates, J.S. Deepak, Additional Secretary of the Union Ministry of Commerce, told *The Hindu* that the Ministry will look into the mismatch.

According to Toms Joseph, Deputy Director of the Rubber Board, the production of natural rubber estimated for this financial year is 960,000 tonnes and the consumption is 1.2 million tonnes. The import is expected to be 1.8 lakh tonnes.

Heavy rains and associated problems had led to fall in production in June, July and August compared to the same period last year.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

Government to announce hike in support price for paddy, ragi, jowar

The state government has decided to hike the support price for paddy, ragi and jowar, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao said on Monday. According to Rao, this was done as the government plans to buy jowar and ragi in large quantity directly from farmers to distribute these to BPL and Anthyodaya card-holders at `1 per kg from October 2. The minister said the process to purchase jowar and ragi would start from Tuesday and it is expected to be completed in three weeks. The department would fix the quantity of jowar and ragi to be sold to beneficiaries after the procurement process completes. After holding video-conference with deputy commissioners, ZP CEOs and senior officials of the Department of Food and Civil Supplies, he told reporters that a Cabinet sub-committee constituted for the purpose would decide the rate at which it should be purchased from farmers. "The support price to be announced by the government will benefit farmers to a great extent," he added. Fair Price Officers The minister said the department has received 25 lakh applications seeking APL and BPL cards. Of which, 20 lakh applications are for BPL cards. In the light of complaints of delay in allotting cards to beneficiaries, the government decided to appoint fair price-level officers (FLO). "There would be no recruitment for these posts as Gram Panchayat secretaries and panchayat development officers would be entrusted with the responsibility and they will get extra honorarium. This proposal has been submitted to the Chief Minister. Once the proposal gets the Cabinet nod steps would be taken for disposal of applications. "I am optimistic that this process will be completed in two months," he added. Dinesh said the government had decided to inspect BPL cards once a year for which the services of FLO would be utilised. The minister said deputy commissioners have been directed to take responsibility of distribution of food grains to beneficiaries under the Anna Bhagya scheme. "Owners of all fair price shops should be strictly told to lift the stock before the tenth day of every month. Food inspectors have to personally visit all fair price shops in their jurisdiction and send a comprehensive report to their superiors," he said.

Less rain dashes hope of bumper yield

Cultivation process, which began in right earnest in July, is set to be affected as the district received about 41 per cent less than normal rainfall in August.

The farmers in the rain-fed areas, who were looking forward to a bumper yield, are now a worried lot. After receiving 194.59 mm of rain in June against normal 221 mm, it was believed that monsoon would play truant and upset agricultural activities in the district. But hopes were revived with 501.93 mm rain in July against normal rainfall of 429.5 mm.

However, the cheer seemed to be short-lived as the district received only 259.46 mm of rain against normal 442.4 mm. The farmers expected that incessant rain for a couple of days as experienced in July would be repeated in August which would make up the shortfall in June.

While Rairakhol block is the worst affected with only 143 mm of rainfall in August, Rengali recorded 246.20 mm, Dhankauda 238.80 mm and the rain shadow area of Jamankira received 256.40 mm. Similarly, Jujumura block received 276 mm of rainfall, Maneswar 288.20 mm, Kuchinda 296.70 mm and Bamra maximum 311.80 mm.

This year, the Agriculture Department has targeted to cultivate paddy crop in over 1,04,800 hectares of land. While broadcasting of seeds has been targeted in 42,363 hectares of rain-fed land, transplantation would be taken up in 62,437 hectares in command area.

However, as per official figures, while broadcasting has been completed, transplantation is almost over and the farmers are now concerned to save their crop from dying.

Deputy Director, Agriculture, Sambalpur, Ashok Mohanty said if well scattered good rainfall is not received within a week, there will be reasons to worry.

Deficit rainfall will not only stunt the growth of paddy saplings but will also have a direct bearing on the yield. However, he said the situation as of now was under control and the Department is keeping a close watch on the situation.

The Indian **EXPRESS**

Onion prices may ease soon as South India crop hits market: Govt



Onion prices, continues to rule at an unaffordable level of Rs 60-70 per kg. (IE Photo)

Onion prices, which continues to rule at an unaffordable level of Rs 60-70 per kg, are expected to cool down in the coming days as new crop from south India has started hitting the market, the government said today.

Since the last one and half months, retail price of onion skyrocketed upto Rs 80 per kg in most parts of the country, affecting consumer budget and forcing the government to curb exports and allow imports.

Asked when the prices would ease, Agriculture Secretary Ashish Bahuguna said: "New crop of onion from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka has started arriving in the markets. Once the arrivals increase the prices will cool down in coming days."

However, the difference between the wholesale and retail price of onion is huge and retailers need to sell keeping a limited margin, he said on the sidelines of an ICAR event. Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh together produce in the range of 38-40 lakh tonnes in a year, while the country's total output is estimated at 166.55 lakh tonnes in 2012-13.

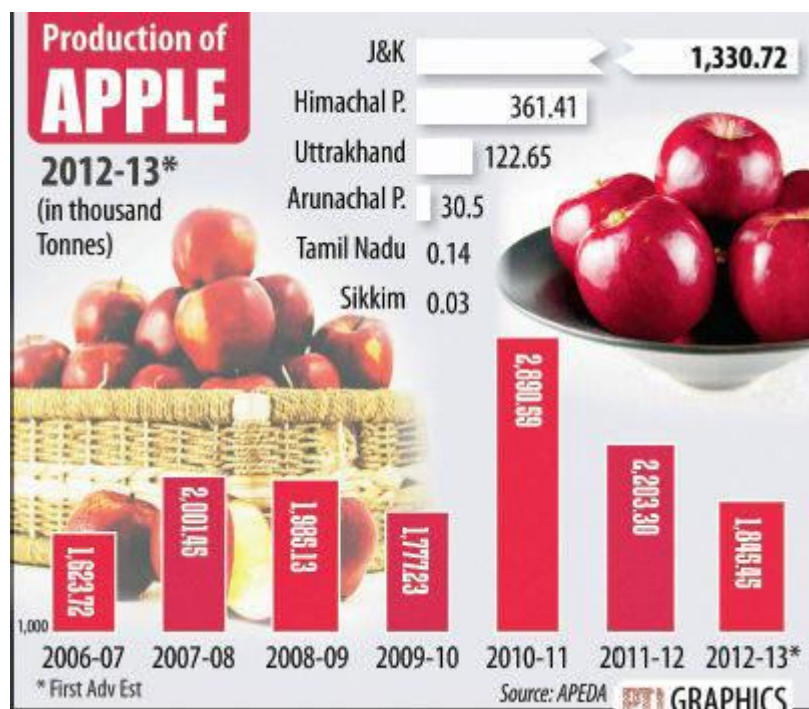
According to the official data, arrival of onion in wholesale mandi has increased almost three times to 30,000 tonnes in Bengaluru and 10,000 tonnes in Hyderabad, respectively, in the last one month.

Bahuguna said the arrivals are expected to increase from South India in the coming days and its supplies to consuming states will check prices of the vegetable. In the national capital, wholesale prices of onion have firmed up by Rs 5 per kg to Rs 45-50 per kg as supplies have come down in the last few days. However, the situation is expected to improve with higher supplies coming from growing states.

To provide relief to consumers, cooperative Nafed has been selling onions at lower price through its five outlets and mobile vans in Delhi. Onion prices at Lasalgaon (Maharashtra), Asia's biggest onion market, have risen by Rs 3 per kg to Rs 43 per kg today due to lower arrivals, the official data showed.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Production of apple in 2012-2013



Kharif output likely to improve by 7.03 pc in 2013-14: NCML



In sugarcane the area is expected to decline by 15.88 per cent and production by 14.61 per cent.

MUMBAI: The National Collateral Management Services Ltd today said with the recent development in the crop weather and sowing updates, total kharif foodgrain output is now expected to improve by 7.03 per cent to 134.53 million tonnes over the government's fourth advance estimates.

According to the government's 4th advance estimates, the total food grain production is estimated to be 125.7 million tonnes (MT).

India's total foodgrain production stood at 255.36 MT, according to government data.

The total food grain area is likely to be 64.95 million hectares over government's fourth advance estimate of 60.08 million hectares, NCML said in a statement.

Earlier in May 2013, NCML estimated the kharif foodgrain production to improve by 8.1 per cent to 135 MT.

There is a marginal drop in production estimate due to recent widespread floods and expectation of lower yield in some producing areas.

Rice is expected to show an increase in both area and production by 4.86 per cent and 5.17 per cent, respectively over last year.

Cereal crops like ragi, jowar and bajra are expected to surpass the last year's production figures by 30 per cent.

Overall oilseed crop production is expected to increase by 16.47 per cent over last year.

Groundnut production is expected to increase by 55.69 per cent and soybean by 6.88 per cent over last year.

However, NCML said, in this current monsoon season, the cash crop section is likely to show a negative growth in terms of both area and production.

In sugarcane the area is expected to decline by 15.88 per cent and production by 14.61 per cent.

Cotton area is likely to decline by 6.29 per cent and production by 6.33 per cent.

'Farmers should register their innovative agri-tech with ICAR'



Technologies developed by the farmers in one part of the country need to be shared with farmers in other parts as well.

NEW DELHI: Farmers, who have innovated agri-technologies, should register with state-run research body ICAR so as to promote widespread use of such technologies across the country and improve production.

"Technologies developed by the farmers in one part of the country need to be shared with farmers in other parts as well and for this, these technologies or innovations need to be registered with ICAR," Agriculture Secretary Ashish Bahuguna said at an ICAR workshop.

Farmers need to adopt efficient and effective farm technologies, he added.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) along with Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAS) and Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI) are organising a three-day workshop on "Out-scaling Farm Innovations" from today.

Speaking at the workshop, ICAR Director General S Ayyappan said, "ICAR is motivating the

farmers to try new innovations at their respective farms. We are also working to register technologies developed by some farmers and share them with other farmers across the country."

Around 350 delegates including farmers, scientists and officials from different state agriculture departments are taking part in the event.

India seeks New Zealand's help for setting up cold storages



The value of annual wastage of fruits and vegetables in India could go up to Rs 44,000 crore.

NEW DELHI: India has sought expertise from New Zealand in development of cold storages in the country, where fruits and vegetables worth thousands of crores go waste every year due to inadequate storage infrastructure.

This was one of the important issues discussed by Indian officials with their New Zealand counterpart during their meeting in Wellington on 29th and 30th July.

"India has 37 million tonne opportunity for developing cold storage. We have asked New Zealand's expertise in this matter," a senior official in the commerce ministry said.

The official said since New Zealand is a major producer of fruits and dairy products, it has expertise and modern technology in setting up of cold storages.

Agriculture and Food Processing Industries Minister Sharad Pawar has recently said that the value of annual wastage of fruits and vegetables was estimated at Rs 13,309 crore.

However, if the wastage value of rice, wheat, cereals and others are taken into account, it would go up to Rs 44,000 crore a year.

As per estimates, there is requirement of about 60 million tonnes of cold storage in the country against the present capacity of around 29 million tonnes.

The government also provides financial assistance for construction of cold chain infrastructure.

Further, India has also suggested New Zealand to invest in the dairy sector.

"New Zealand dairy sector can invest in India to produce dairy items that India does not produce," the official added.

Besides, the country has sought greater market access to export items like gems and jewellery, pharmaceutical, engineering goods, leather products and sports goods in order to increase bilateral trade between the countries.

Both the countries are also negotiating a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement since 2010. The broad-based free trade agreement proposes to cover goods, services and investment.

The bilateral trade between the two countries stood at meagre USD 998.68 million in 2012-13. It was USD 1.07 billion in the previous fiscal.

The FTA is important for India as it hopes to get more work visas for its professionals especially teachers, healthcare providers, technicians, IT experts, architects and hospitality providers in New Zealand.

New Zealand wants access to Indian markets for its agri products like apple, kiwi, dairy and also wine.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Flowers may cost more this Onam as output falls

MADURAI: Multi-coloured floral carpets of intricate designs are laid out by Malayalis during Onam celebrations. Flower supply for the 10-day festivities later this month may be hit due to high prices of flowers caused by fall in production in the drought-affected farms in Tamil Nadu. The rains in the coming days will play a crucial role in the adequate supply of flowers this Onam.

Colourful flowers like marigolds, vadamalli (bachelor button flower), arali (nerium oleander), tuberose, and a variety of jasmines and roses are usually ferried to Kerala from Tamil Nadu for the festival. Thovalai flower market in Kanayakumari district is one of the biggest flower markets in the state. The market used to transact nearly 20 tonnes of flowers in a single day on Onam eve and nearly 5,000 traders from Kerala throng the market. The market receives flowers from across the state as far as from Hosur and Sathyamangalam in north Tamil Nadu and from more than 50 villages surrounding the market. More than 60 flower merchants and hundreds of flower farmers depend on the market and Onam is significant for them. But the farmers are keeping their fingers crossed as the region is yet to get sufficient rains favouring flower growth.

"The flower cultivation turned out to be a tough ordeal this year without water. Many of us raised flowers with minimum water from wells but even they dried out at one point," said P Durairaj, a flower farmer from Leppaikudiyiruppu in the region, adding that flower cultivation has fallen from more than 100 acres in the surrounding villages to 50 to 60 acres. "Many farmers have not raised the flower crops this year, hence the flower supply will be less for Onam," Durairaj said.

A Karunanidhi, flower merchant in Thovalai, said that reduced supply will eventually inflate the prices. "It is evident that the supply will be less this year, thus pulling up the prices. But it all depends on the last few days ahead of Onam," he commented.

The farmers and merchants are pinning their hopes on rains in the next 15 days. "The rains are going to be crucial in the coming days. Good rains will produce quality flowers and improve the supply, but the situation is dicey as heavy rains may spoil the harvest," Durairaj explained.

Apart from Thovalai, Nilakottai and surrounding villages in Dindigul district supply flowers to Kerala. Madurai flower market, which once had a major share in the flower supply, eventually lost to Thovalai.

Agriculture business conclave held at IIM-Lucknow

LUCKNOW: Indian Institute of Management(IIM), Lucknow organised the second edition of Sankalp, the annual agribusiness conclave. The message 're-imagine agribusiness and rediscover India' was sent out in the conclave.

Experts who participated in the event said with area under cultivation being increased by 9.1%, stagnating urban demand and good monsoons indicating a rise in rural India income, it's the time major FMCG and telecom companies geared up their rural marketing strategies through innovation in production, processes and promotion.

Major attraction of the event was panel discussion on 'product development and innovations in the field of agribusiness'. Entrepreneur and co-founder of Farm and Farmers (FnF), Shashank Kumar pointed out that the major challenge faced in the agribusiness sector is not aggressive competition but its lack. Due to lack of experienced players in the area, existing practices and processes are un-structured and inefficient. Shashank is also the director of Green Agrevolution Pvt Ltd.

Regional manager of United Phosphorus Ltd Sunil Rana emphasised increasing role of technology and the need to adopt advanced methodologies in agricultural practices in order to raise the level of product quality and yield. Tnn

During the two-day conclave that ended on Saturday, case study competitions like C Trader, Valoracian and Lakshya were organised. The conclave gave an opportunity to budding managers to connect with top executives and get a holistic view of the agribusiness industry.

Price of essential vegetables goes through the roof

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The sumptuous [Onam sadhya](#) may prove to be a costly affair for Keralites with the prices of all essential commodities increasing astronomically in the last one year alone.

The price of green chilli, which is an integral ingredient to spice up any curry, increased by 104% from Rs 3.64 to Rs 7.43 for just 100 grams.

The prices of onion, which is used in 'sambar' and 'thoran', increased by a whopping 237% from Rs 15.43 to Rs 52.11 per kg, showed the latest data released by department of economics and statistics (DES) that monitors the price of essential commodities on a daily basis.

Similarly, the price of banana, which is an essential ingredient in 'avial', 'kalan' and chips, increased by 63.17% in the last one year.

The price of homegrown tuber crops like tapioca increased by 87.65%, while the price of small onions increased by 81.76%.

Out of the 50 vegetables, fruits and spices that were monitored by department of economics and statistics till September 1 this year, only eight items showed a negative price rise, while prices of all other items increased in the range of 20% to 200%.

Economists say that speculative commodity trading of vegetables has increased the prices of vegetables and fruits and this has, in turn, kept the prices very high for the last one year.

"Farmers who cultivate vegetables still do not make any great profit and it is traders who make a killing," [Mary George](#), member of Kerala public expenditure review committee said.

She said though there has been a good harvest of vegetables in neighbouring Tamil Nadu, an artificial shortage has been created looking at the huge Onam retail market.

"The blame squarely is on Keralites who refuse to cultivate anything in the backyards. We have

now to depend on the pesticide-ridden vegetables that are flooding the market without any quality control," she said.

The department of economics and statistics study also showed that the prices of coriander increased by 30.51%, beetroot by 38.89%, garlic by 42.60% and turmeric by 33.54% in the last one year.

State horticulture mission director K Prathapan said vegetable prices have increased due to rise in labour and fertiliser input costs.

"The state horticulture mission outlets have been providing vegetables at a lesser price than in the open market and this has eased the problem to a great extent.

"We need to also promote new high tech initiatives like polyhouse farming that can produce greater yields and better quality of vegetables. The state is already moving in this direction but it also requires greater participation from youngsters who have turned away from traditional farming as it is no longer economically viable," he said.

DECCAN Chronicle

Coffee can combat diseases: Coffee Board



Coonoor, Sept 3: The 120th annual conference of UPASI (United Planters Association of Southern India) here has provided an opportunity for the Coffee Board of India to spread health benefits of coffee that includes coffee and liver health and the role of coffee in combating type-II diabetes and Parkinson's disease.

The officials on duty, at the stall put up by the Coffee Board, at the exhibition connected with the conference at UPASI, were seen distributing pamphlets educating on the health benefits of coffee, besides briefing the visitors on the varieties and grades of coffee beans that are grown in the country.

An official said coffee is one of the most widely researched ingredients and the growing body of scientific research shows that coffee, when drunk in moderation (around four to five cups a day), is safe for healthy adults. Coffee in a measure is a treasure, the official pointed.

"A study by Prof. D'Amicis, head of the Nutrition Information Unit in Rome, showed that role of coffee as liver protective agent as it reduces the risk of cirrhosis of the liver and its role in reducing the gallstone formation.

The pamphlets issued by the Coffee Board on "coffee and diabetes" noted that for several years research studies have been published consistently suggesting that coffee drinking may be protective against the development of type II diabetes.

However, the exact mechanism by which coffee may be protective is not yet fully understood.

On Parkinson's disease, a research conducted in 2002 by Hernan and his group demonstrated that coffee drinkers had 31% less chance of developing Parkinson's disease than non-coffee drinkers.

However, the mechanism of action for this effect has yet to be fully identified.

While Coffee Board spreads the message of the health benefits of coffee, doctors say we need more evidencebased studies that could prove them.

"That coffee helps in treating Parkinson's disease is just an association. There's no statistics to prove it. It's also said that people who smoke have less chance of getting Parkinson's disease.

"But these are just associations observed," said Dr Dr. Halprashanth DS, consultant neurologist specialist in epilepsy and Parkinson's disease at Global Hospitals.

He said that the Journal of the American Medical Association has published a study that says age-adjusted incidence of PD declined consistently with increased amounts of coffee intake, from 10.4 per 10,000 persons in men who drank no coffee to 1.9 per 10,000 persons in men who drank coffee.

"The conclusions said that the higher coffee and caffeine intake is associated with a significantly lower incidence of PD.

"This effect appears to be independent of smoking. The data suggest that the mechanism is related to caffeine intake and not to other nutrients contained in coffee," he informed, adding that we need to have a larger study with more number of patients and the study should not be confined to one demographic area.

Dr A.R. Venkateswaran, HOD, gastroenterology, Government Stanley Hospital mentions that an American journal had published benefits of coffee. "It applies only to patients with non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. India is a diabetic capital and diabetes affect liver. We need more trials," he said.

Nutritionist Meenakshi Bajaj said now there are different qualities of coffee. "We can't individualize as each one's body condition differs. Beyond 300 mg of caffeine is not safe for pregnant women," she added.

Business Standard

Soybean up by 3.4% on global cues

Rise in other edible oils prices too brought the upsurge in soybean prices



Soyabean prices rose by Rs 117.50 to Rs 3,557.50 per quintal in futures trade today following brisk buying by traders driven by firm overseas markets cues.

Marketmen said tracking higher global markets sentiment, traders preferred to enlarge their holdings.

Rise in other edible oils prices too brought the upsurge in soybean prices, they said.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, soybean prices for most active November month hardened by Rs 117.50, or 3.42% to Rs 3,557.50 per quintal, with an open interest of 1,21,090 lots.

Similarly, October month rose by Rs 110.50, or 3.22% to Rs 3,537 per quintal, having an open interest of 96,080 lots.

Chana rises by 0.7% as demand picks up

Speculators created fresh positions, tracking a firm trend at spot market



Chana prices rose by Rs 22 to Rs 3212 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators created fresh positions, tracking a firm trend at spot market on pick up in demand against tight supplies.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, chana for delivery in September rose by Rs 22, or 0.69% to Rs 3212 per quintal with an open interest of 82500 lots.

Similarly, the commodity for delivery in October traded higher by Rs 22, or 0.68% to Rs 3273 per quintal in 113150 lots.

Traders said speculators created fresh positions, tracking a firm trend at spot market on pick up in demand against tight supplies from producing belts mainly led to rise in chana prices at futures trade.

Refined soya gains 2.1% on strong demand

Strong demand in the spot markets mainly influenced refined soya prices



Refined soya oil prices rose 2.14% to Rs 694.80 per 10 kg in futures trade today as speculators enlarged their positions, driven by strong demand in the spot market against tight supplies from producing regions.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, refined soya oil for delivery in October rose by Rs 14.55, or 2.14% to Rs 694.80 per 10 kg with an open interest of 87,120 lots.

Similarly, the oil for delivery in September moved up by Rs 12.65, or 1.82% to Rs 707.50 per 10 kg in 59,850 lots.

Market analysts said strong demand in the spot markets mainly influenced refined soya prices at futures trade here.

Sugar slide 0.3% on ample supply

Speculators reduced their positions due to weak demand in the spot market



Sugar prices eased 0.30% to Rs 3,004 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators reduced positions due to weak demand in the spot market against ample supplies from producing regions.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, sugar for delivery in September declined by Rs 9, or 0.30% to Rs 3,004 per quintal with an open interest of 13,030 lots.

Similarly, the sweetener for delivery in October traded lower by Rs 7, or 0.23% to Rs 3,025 per quintal in 5,050 lots.

Market analysts attributed the decline in sugar futures to speculators reducing their positions due to weak demand in the spot market against ample supplies from producing regions.

Potato remains up by 0.5% on increased demand

Market analysts say increased demand in the spot market led to an upward movement in prices



In restricted deals, potato prices remained up for the second straight day and rose by another Rs 4 to Rs 794 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators enlarged their positions on the back of increased demand in the spot market.

Besides, tight stocks position in physical market due to less arrivals from producing region supported the upsurge.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, potato for delivery in September added another Rs 4, or 0.52% to Rs 794 per quintal in business turnover of 39 lots.

Market analysts said speculators enlarged their positions on the back of increased demand in the spot market amid lower arrivals from producing regions mainly led to an upward movement in potato prices at futures trade.

Crude palm oil rebound 0.7% as demand picks up

Crude palm oil for delivery in October edged up by 0.67%



Crude palm oil prices recovered by 0.70% to Rs 558 per 10 kg in futures trading today as speculators created fresh positions at existing lower levels, supported by rising demand in the spot market.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude palm oil for delivery in September rebounded by Rs 3.90, or 0.70% to Rs 558 per 10 kg in business turnover of 182 lots.

Similarly, the oil for delivery in October edged up by Rs 3.70 or 0.67% to Rs 553 per 10 kg in 84 lots.

Market analysts said fresh positions built-up by speculators driven by a pick up in demand in the spot market mainly led to rise in crude palm oil prices at futures trade.

Cardamom recover by 0.5% on spot demand

Cardamom for delivery in October traded higher by 0.19%



Cardamom prices recovered by 0.58% to Rs 833 per kg in futures market today as speculators created fresh positions after an improvement in demand in the spot market amid restricted arrivals from producing regions.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, cardamom for delivery in November rose by Rs 4.80, or 0.58% to Rs 833 per kg in business turnover of 51 lots.

Likewise, cardamom for delivery in October traded higher by Rs 1.50, or 0.19% to Rs 793 per kg in 116 lots.

Market analysts said the rise in cardamom prices at futures trade was mostly attributed to speculators creating fresh positions after an improvement in demand in the spot market amid restricted arrivals from producing regions.

THE HINDU Business Line

Rains, floods could hit kharif crops output

Rising kharif hopes				
Tempered by floods				
Crops	2012-13 Govt Estimate		NCML latest estimate	
	Area	Production	Area	Production
Rice	39.12	92.75	41.02	97.55
Maize	7.19	16.08	7.36	16.50
Ragi	1.17	1.61	1.29	2.12
Jowar	2.41	2.71	22.78	3.54
Bajra	6.51	8.71	8.68	11.61
Tur	3.68	3.04	3.82	3.22
Foodgrains	60.08	124.90	64.95	134.53
Soybean	10.59	14.14	11.32	15.11
Groundnut	3.78	3.46	4.62	5.39
Oilseed	14.37	17.60	15.94	20.50
Cotton*	11.61	33.80	10.88	31.66
Sugarcane	5.10	336.15	4.29	287.05

Area in million hectares; Production in million tonnes
*Cotton production in million bales of 170 kg each

Source: NCML

Chennai, Sept 3:

Continuous rain and floods in different parts of the country are forcing revision of kharif crop estimates for the current crop year that began in July.

According to the National Collateral Management Services Ltd (NCML), kharif foodgrain production is likely to increase by 7.71 per cent at 134.53 million tonnes (mt).

This is against the earlier estimate of 135 mt by NCML, which provides commodity and risk management services across the country.

The National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange is among the various stake holders of the services firm.

Production is expected to be lower as yield in some areas could be lower, NCML said in a press release. While the area under rice and its production is set to rise by about five per cent, production of coarse cereals ragi, jowar and bajra could increase by 30 per cent. Oilseeds output may increased 16.47 per cent with groundnut production rising over 50 per cent compared with last year. However, cash crops such as sugarcane and cotton are likely to witness a drop in production.

'Exempt plantations sector from Land Ceiling Act'

Commerce Ministry tells Dept of Rural Development it won't accept cap

Coonoor, Sept. 3:

The Commerce Ministry has told the Department of Rural Development that it is unlikely to accept the provisions in the Land Ceiling Act for the plantations sector to save it from fragmentation, according to a Commerce Ministry official.

"This has a bearing on our competitiveness and the economies of scale of operations. We have put forth the argument with the Department of Rural Development and believe that the provisions are unlikely to be accepted and we will be able to save the plantations from fragmentation," said J.S. Deepak, Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce.

"This is an issue that is agitating the plantation industry all over the country. The view of the Commerce Department and the Centre is clear on this. Large tea, coffee and rubber estates have been successful models in bringing investments to the plantation sector," he said in his inaugural address at the 120th UPASI Annual Conference.

A draft land reforms Bill issued by the Centre proposes to put a ceiling on agricultural land up to 5 to 10 acres, if irrigation facility is available. If the land is rain-fed, the ceiling will be 10-15 acres.

Urging the plantation sector to take to exporting product rather than commodity, he said: "You should look to export value-added plantation products to the developed markets as the additional value that this will unleash, will result in realisations snowballing and benefiting the stakeholders along the value chain."

Hailing the Rubber Board for its outstanding extension works in Assam, Meghalaya and Tirupura in eco-conservation, Deepak voiced concern over the ecological destruction in the Western Ghats. "The plantations have a major role to play in preserving the environment," he said.

"The only way to prevent destruction of the ecology would be to ensure that the price realised for our shade grown coffees, (which are considered among the best in the world) is more than the commoditised price. These coffees should not be sold as commodities, but as prized products," he said.

Emphasising the need to align under the national and cooperative aegis towards building world class tea and coffee brands, he said: "I think, this is the call of the hour and need of the day; the need for household brands to be known across the globe, standing for superior R& D,

impeccable quality and enduring trust and above all, getting the best price for the growers, factory owners and every one in the value chain.”

The official further said that he has asked the Chairman of the Coffee Board to anchor this initiative for promoting Indian coffee. “The Government is committed to support this initiative, provided we get support from the private sector. We want and believe in public-private partnership in branding coffees to start with, and other products from the region,” he said.

“Branding is a critical area and we are committed to provide support through the Indian Brand Equity Fund,” he said.

Responding to the issues raised by UPASI President G J Ancheril, he said that there were delays in sanctioning the 12th Plan schemes for the commodity boards. “We are chasing it and are hopeful of getting the approval by the end of this month,” he said.

Referring to the establishment of the Codex Committee on Spice Standard, Deepak said: “It is perhaps a path breaking decision. The code has not yet been realised. But this will help us develop spice standard at a par with international standard and help the industry move forward in spices trade.”

On the tariff imposed on rubber imports, he said: “Our policy aims at protecting growers who provide bulk of domestic natural rubber. When there was a surge in imports six months ago, we made a provision for increasing the customs duty. We have been monitoring the prices keenly. We have not notified the increase in duties at this point in time as the domestic prices are Rs 40/kg higher than international prices. The notification is ready and we will initiate it as and when required to protect the domestic sector.”

Spot rubber steady amidst supply concern

Kottayam, Sept.3:

Physical rubber prices were almost unchanged on Tuesday. Sharp declines in the stock markets following another fall in the rupee and the absence of genuine buyers in the local trading houses kept the sentiments under pressure during the day.

But prices managed to sustain at the current levels on supply concerns and an almost similar closing in the domestic futures. The trend was partially mixed.

Sheet rubber closed steady at Rs 186 a kg, according to traders.

The grade improved to Rs 186 (Rs 185.50) at Kottayam and Kochi, as quoted by the Rubber Board.

September futures weakened to Rs 186 (Rs 186.57) and October to Rs 185 (Rs 185.36) while the November futures firmed up marginally to Rs 186 (Rs 185.99) and December to Rs 187.70 (Rs 187.07) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) slipped to Rs 176.65 (Rs 176.66) at Bangkok. September futures closed at ₹269.1 (Rs 183.84) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates Rs/kg were: RSS-4: 186 (186); RSS-5: 182.50 (182.50); Ungraded: 176 (176); ISNR 20: 167 (167) and Latex 60%: 141 (145).

Tobacco prices top Rs 150/kg in Karnataka sale

Bangalore, Sept. 3:

Karnataka's Flue Cured Virginia tobacco prices touched Rs 150.20 a kg, a record high, on the first day of tobacco auctions on Tuesday.

The price is 7.28 per cent higher than last year (Rs 140).

On the first day of auction, some eight companies participated in the auctions held on 11 platforms.

At the end of second day (September 2), 288 bales (32,051.7 kg) were marketed.

According to the trade estimate, Karnataka is likely to harvest about 120 mkg this crop year (2013-14) compared with 94 mkg marketed during the previous crop year (2012-13). According to a Tobacco Board official, 315 bales were offered for sale of on the first day and 314 bales got sold at an average price of Rs 145.”

Permit cleaning of tainted pepper stocks: NCDEX

Mumbai, Sept 3:

The National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange has requested the Government authorities to allow market participants to improve the quality of pepper stocks at its six accredited warehouses that were found to contain carcinogenic mineral oil.

Industry players have informed the exchange that farmers and traders adopt various methods to preserve pepper, including by addition of small quantity of mineral oil as a fungicide. Traders routinely use a process of steaming to later remove the mineral oil coating.

Since the traces of mineral oil appear to reflect long-standing industry practice, the exchange has sought the Government intervention in the industry's interest to give an opportunity to remove the mineral oil coating and improve the quality, said NCDEX in a press release.

Earlier, acting on complaint filed by traders, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India order for destruction of 93 lots found with mineral oil traces. The Kalimirchi Vyapari Association, which has to receive delivery of 7,000 tonnes worth Rs 300 crore, has filed a writ petition against the exchange in the Madhya Pradesh High Court. The matter is expected to come up for hearing on September 17. In fact, it said, most of the stocks in the six warehouses sealed by the authorities were bought by the holders in the off-market transactions outside the exchange platform.

“The Exchange only provides a trading platform for trading in forward contracts. It does not own, deposit or deal with the goods in the warehouses,” it said. Pradeep Acharya, Vice-President, Kalimirichi Vyapari Association, said the exchange cannot deny responsibility. According to bylaws of the Exchange and as stated by the regulator FMC, the exchange is the counter party to every buyer and seller.

Board to encourage export of quality, value-added teas



M.G.V.K. Bhanu

Coonoor, Sept. 3:

The tea industry is expecting to achieve an export target of 230 million kg (mkg) during the current financial year.

In the last fiscal, 220.46 mkg of tea were exported against 214.35 mkg in 2011-12.

The quantum of teas exported in 2012-13 was 6.11 mkg more than the 2011-12 volume of 214.35 mkg. Iran is a major buyer of teas produced in India. Exports to Iran in 2011 were 11 mkg. It touched 17 mkg last year.

Tea Board Chairman M.G.V.K. Bhanu is confident of crossing the 20-mkg mark this year.

Orthodox tea exports are also expected to go up, he said and added that he was referring only to quantity and did not mean in value terms.

“Our strategy for exports will be further strengthened to ensure that the performance on the export front is laudable,” he said. The Tea Board Chief, however, said that the Board would encourage export of high quality, value-added teas. “We have identified five focus markets such as Kazhakstan, Iran, Egypt, the US and Russia.

“A number of initiatives have been taken towards strengthening our stand in these markets and we have achieved tremendous success,” he said. “We could not achieve success in branding of Indian teas though. We export in bulk,” he added.

The Board is now in talks with the various stakeholders of the tea industry for branding of Indian teas.

“We need a brand identity for Indian teas,” he said.

Sugar mills want UP to rationalise cane price policy

New Delhi, Sept 3:

Ahead of the new crushing season starting October, the beleaguered sugar industry has urged Uttar Pradesh, the country’s largest sugarcane producing State, to rationalise its cane pricing policy.

In effect, the millers want the Akilesh Yadav Government to fix a lower cane price this year linking it to the sugar price . However, the demand may be difficult to meet considering the forthcoming elections to the Lok Sabha.

UP declares its own State advised price for cane, which is typically higher than the fair and remunerative price announced by the Centre.

For 2012-13 season, UP fixed the price at Rs 280 a quintal for the general variety, the highest in the country.

As a result, millers in the State have been reeling under the impact of high cane price amidst a bearish trend in sugar prices on higher supplies.

“We are trying to debate it out and convince the UP Government on the need to link price of cane to that of sugar for 2013-14 as suggested by the Rangarajan Committee” said Abinash Verma, Director General of the Indian Sugar Mills Association.

The Rangarajan Committee on sugar decontrol had proposed that at time of cane supply, farmers be paid the fair and remunerative price as the minimum and subsequently on a half

yearly basis, the State Government concerned would announce the ex-mill prices of sugar and its by-products and farmers would be entitled to a 70 per cent share in the value of sugar and by-products.

“The mills are not able to afford the high cane costs fixed on the non-economic consideration. With the ex-factory prices ruling at Rs 3,050 or Rs 3,100, the factories are not in a position to pay more than Rs 240. UP needs to rationalise sugar cane pricing policy,” Verma said.

Karnataka has already set up a sugar control board to decide the cane price on scientific basis adopting the Rangarajan formula, while Maharashtra is actively considering it.

Maharashtra and Karnataka, which account for close to 45 per cent of the cane produced in the country, have already out-priced UP in terms of sugar prices as cost of production is lower due to a higher recovery.

The production cost in UP is higher by at least Rs 4-5 a kg when compared to these states due to higher cane price and lower recovery. Reeling under the impact of rising cane prices over the past three to four years, the sugar industry in UP is on the verge of closure.

“Any hike in cane price will continue to bleed the industry,” Verma said adding that the UP mills still owed Rs 2,400 crore to the farmers. In the past four years, the SAP in UP has seen an increase of around 70 per cent from Rs 165 in 2009-10 to Rs 280 in 2012-13.

Also, the industry has asked the State to increase the transport rebate provided for moving the cane from purchase centre to mill gate to Rs 20 from the current Rs 8.75 on rising diesel costs.

UP is the only State that announces prices for the rejected cane varieties that have a recovery rate of only 7-7.5 per cent. However, the difference in prices between the fair and rejected varieties is only Rs 5 per quintal.

“We have urged the Government to increase the price difference between fair and the rejected varieties to at least Rs 20 so that the farmers are discouraged to grow them” he added.

About 22 per cent of the cane produced in UP is of the rejected varieties.

Coffee planters attempt to draw lessons from S. America

Coonoor, Sept. 3:

After visiting plantations in Brazil and Colombia, coffee planters in the country admit that the industry here will have to change the way of planting and look for better varieties and clones to compete and sustain in the global market.

Karnataka Planters' Association had organised a tour of Brazil and Colombia in July. A 35-member team (comprising coffee farmers and industry people) visited Brazil and 17 of them went to Colombia as well.

"We can adopt simple things such as hedge-row planting. Our terrain may not be suitable for harvester, but drip irrigation should be possible here," said Chairman of Karnataka Planters' Association Nishant R. Gurjer. Sharing his experience, he said: "Coffee plantations in Brazil are highly mechanised. This has resulted in overcoming dependence on scarce and expensive labour. They have also put in place drip/ fertigation systems and water management technology, contributing to high productivity."

Brazil's annual coffee production has surged from 30-35 million bags (of 60 kg) a decade ago to 50-55 million bags at present. There has not been a corresponding increase in area, but they have improved in cultural practice and come up with better coffee varieties.

There is no such thing as 'off-year' and 'on-year' any more. This year, despite being an 'off-year' Brazil's coffee production has been estimated at 55 million bags. Brazil planters have moved away from frost areas to newer areas. They grow sugarcane, soya, corn in these areas. The varieties and clones that they have come up with is amazing. Colombia is the hub of coffee, but there is no robusta here. Here, there is massive replanting taking place, he said. Are Indian coffee planters threatened? "Yes," he says, before admitting to the need for changing planting practices, opting for newer varieties and improving productivity per acre.

As arrivals rise, chana could be range-bound



Indore, Sept. 3:

Subdued demand and buying support are keeping chana prices stable for the past few days.

On Tuesday, chana (kanta) ruled at Rs 3,200-25, while chana (desi) ruled at Rs 3,000. Chana (masumi) was Rs 3,000-3,300, while Kabuli Bitki ruled at Rs 2,900-3,100 a quintal.

According to traders, chana prices are expected to remain range-bound in the coming days with its arrivals resuming to normalcy after spate of rains in the State.

With adequate stock and rise in arrivals, chana prices will likely to remain range-bound between Rs 3,200 and Rs 3,300 a quintal in near future, said Rahul Vora, a local trader.

Chana dal also ruled stable on subdued buying support, barring chana dal (bold) which rose marginally to Rs 4,200-25 on improved demand. Chana dal (average) ruled flat at Rs 3,750-3,850, while chana dal (medium) ruled at Rs 3,950-4,050.

Dollar chana gained on improved domestic and export demand. In the physical market, dollar chana was quoted Rs 200 higher at Rs 4,000-4,700, dollar chana (silver) ruled at Rs 4,300, while dollar chana (Nilanjana) was quoted at Rs 3,600.

In container, also, dollar chana gained Rs 200 on improved export demand with 42/44 count at Rs 5,650-75, dollar chana (44/46 count) at Rs 5,450-75, 46/48 count ruled at Rs 5,250-75, 58/60 count at Rs 3,950-75, while dollar chana (60/62 count) ruled at Rs 3,800-25 a quintal respectively.

Weaker rupee has edible oils on the boil



Mumbai, Sept. 3:

Edible oils witnessed a bullish trend on Tuesday following a sharp drop (more than Rs 2) in the rupee making imports costly. Local refineries have increased their rates by Rs 10 for 10 kg while in resale prices jumped by Rs 15-17 in mid-session. Increase in the tariff value of edible oils for import also fuelled the fire.

The volume jumped as everyone tried to buy the commodity on expectation of higher festival demand . About 3,500-3,800 tonnes of palmolein and soya oil were traded during the day, said an observer.

The Centre has raised tariff value for import of crude palm oil and RBD palmolein by \$25 to \$833 and \$882 respectively while for crude soya oil it raised by \$23 to \$951 a tonne, tracking the weakness in domestic currency.

Liberty sold about 1,450-1,500 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 611-615, Ruchi sold about 1,350-1,400 tonnes in the range of Rs 605-614. Allana and Ruchi both sold about 400-450 tonnes of soyabean refined oil at Rs 675.

Resellers off loaded 250-300 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 600-605 and soyabean refined oil 80-100 tonnes at Rs 665-670.

Towards the day's close, Liberty was quoting palmolein Rs 620, super palmolein Rs 650 and super deluxe Rs 670, soyabean refined oil Rs 685 and sunflower refined oil Rs 835. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 614, soyabean refined oil Rs 675 and sunflower refined oil Rs 830.

Allana was quoting palmolein at Rs 620, super palmolein Rs 650, soyabean refined oil Rs 685 and sunflower refined oil Rs 835. Gokul's rate were Rs 610 for palmolein.

At Rajkot, groundnut oil rose to Rs 1,325 (Rs 1,300) for telia tin and loose (10 kg) Rs 850 (Rs 835). Soyabean arrivals rose to 90,000 bags and its prices were Rs 3,350-3,450 ex mandi and

Rs 3,500-75 for plant delivery. Mustard seed arrivals were 70,000 bags and prices were Rs 3,250-3,775.

Malaysia BMD crude palm oil's October contracts settled lower at MYR 2,419 (MYR 2,430), November at MYR 2,417 (MYR 2,428) and December at MYR 2,419 (MYR 2,428).

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were: groundnut oil 860 (860), soya refined oil 675 (680), sunflower exp. ref. 750 (745), sunflower ref. 830 (830), rapeseed ref. oil 735 (735), rapeseed expeller ref. 705 (705) cottonseed ref. oil 670 (670) and palmolein 600 (596).

Vikram Global Commodities (P) Ltd quoted Rs 665/10 kg for Malaysia super palmolein - forward delivery.

Turmeric pales on cheaper AP offers



Erode, Sept. 3:

Fluctuating price, lack of export orders and availability of cheaper varieties from Andhra Pradesh have taken sheen off turmeric.

“Because of the fluctuation and often decreasing turmeric price has affected the traders. They could not rely upon the pricing and buy huge stocks to stock them. If they purchase the commodity heavily when the commodity was available at low price, suddenly it goes further down caused loss to the traders. Such decrease is due to the availability of the stock at low price in other stations like Andhra Pradesh. This year, no exporter has received heavy demand form North India and they are getting very few orders, so many of the exporters and bulk buyers are not buying huge stock,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

Turmeric exporters usually during this period will get ample number of orders from North India, but this year they are getting only one fourth of the regular order.

On Tuesday, the price of both the root and finger varieties were almost stable. Of the 3,479 bags that arrived for sale, 70 per cent stocks were sold.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,761-5,815; and the root variety Rs 3,518-5,366 a quintal.

Salem Hybrid Crop: The finger variety fetched Rs 4,717-6,433; the root variety Rs 4,689-5,674. Of the arrival of 757 bags, 356 were sold. At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,034-5,917 and the root variety Rs 4,801-5,529 . Of the arrival of 642 bags, 570 found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,099-5,984 and the root variety Rs 4,889-5,517. Of the 697 bags that arrived, 649 were traded.

Continuous selling dissolves sugar



Mumbai, Sept. 3:

Sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale market ruled range-bound on Tuesday despite higher demand amid higher supply. Mills are continuously selling to reduce surplus stock before new crushing season starts in which the prospect for sugar output is very bright. Naka rates were steady - slightly weak. Mill tender rates for S-grade dropped by Rs 10-20 a quintal. Trend in futures market was bearish, said sources.

Jagdish Rawal of B. Bhogilal & Co, told *Business Line*: "Sugar prices since last Diwali are ruling range-bound with Rs 50-60 volatility due to lack of export and neighbouring State's demands. "

Another wholesaler said: “Henceforth domestic consumption demand is expected to rise as September – December is a peak festival quarter for India. Though due to higher production and limited offtake current year surplus sugar stocks continuously available at producing and market level. Vashi market carries stock of more than 120 truckloads leaving stockists to do business as needed. New crushing season is expected to start timely from October if any problem could not arise.”

Arrivals at the Vashi market were 61-62 truckloads (100 bags each) while local dispatches were 60-61 loads. On Monday, 16-17 mills offered tenders and sold about 85,000-90,000 bags at Rs 2,880-2,960 (Rs 2,900-70) for S-grade and Rs 2,990-3,060 (Rs 2,990-3,060) for M-grade.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S-grade Rs 3,032-3,135 (Rs 3,026-3,135) and M-grade Rs 3,132-3,312 (Rs 3,132-3,342). *Naka* delivery rates were: S-grade Rs 2,965 -3,040 (Rs 2,965-3,040) and M-grade Rs 3,090-3,220 (Rs 3,090-3,220). Uttar Pradesh rates were: Lakhimpur Rs 3,300 and Muzaffarnagar Rs 3,300.

Dara wheat likely to be range-bound



Karnal, Sept. 3:

Dara wheat prices in the physical market are likely to rule range-bound in the coming days on steady buying and ample stocks, said trade experts.

Restricted trading kept dara wheat and flour prices unchanged on Tuesday.

Radhey Sham, a commodity expert, told *Business Line* that absence of worthwhile activity by stockists and retailers, mainly kept dara prices unaltered at previous levels.

It is unlikely to see any major alteration this week and market may continue to rule around current levels without much fluctuation, he said.

In the physical market, after witnessing a fall last week, dara wheat remained unchanged and quoted at Rs 1,450-1,455 a quintal. Around 1,000 bags of wheat arrived and stocks were directly offloaded at the mills. Mill delivery was at Rs 1,450 while delivery at the chakki was at Rs 1,455 .

Wheat futures witnessed heavy fluctuation on Tuesday. On the NCDEX, wheat for September contracts dropped by Rs 13 and traded at 1,564 with an open interest of 9,220 lots. September contracts have some support at Rs 1,552 while resistance at Rs 1,593 .

October contracts were fluctuating between negative and positive territory, went down by Rs 5 and traded at Rs 1,592 .

In the spot market, wheat spot prices on the exchange went down by Rs 35 to Rs 1,500 .

Flour Prices

Following a steady trend in wheat, flour too rule flat and quoted at Rs 1,710-1,720 . Similarly, Chokar remained unchanged and sold at Rs 1,150-1,200 a quintal.

Copra, coconut oil rise to record



Kochi, Sept. 3:

Copra and coconut oil prices have increased to a record following thin arrivals in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Coconut oil prices in Kerala touched Rs 80 a kg (Rs 77) in Kerala, while it went up to Rs 76.50 (Rs 74.50) in Tamil Nadu.

Copra prices also shown an upward trend at Rs 6,000 a quintal (Rs 5,600) in Kerala while the figure at Tamil Nadu is at Rs 5,800 against last week's Rs 5,500.

Prakash B.Rao, the newly-appointed President of the Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA), said that large scale traders in Tamil Nadu started stocking copra in huge quantities and this has resulted in a price rally.

With the starting of off season next month in Tamil Nadu, he said that the prices will firm up further in the coming weeks due to copra scarcity. This is likely to continue until new arrivals starts in February next year, he said, adding that there might be a small volatility in prices.

He pointed out that the upcountry demand has slowed down due to this immediate price rise. Major corporates are finding it difficult to get bulk quantity of copra and this has also attributed to price increase. Other than Onam, the market is also pinning its hopes on the festival demand from North India, he added.

Palm oil prices remained unchanged at Rs 68/kg while the palm kernel oil prices went up to Rs 71 (Rs 70). Bharat N. Khona, former Board Member, COMA, said that the rising price of copra

and its shortage has an impact on the coconut oil market resulting in price rise and less upcountry demand. The loose oil market for 15-kg coconut oil in Tamil Nadu is ruling at the same level of Rs 1,140 quoted last week.
