

MOC NEWS

Digital portal of Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies launched



The digital portal of the Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies (CRCS) has been launched by Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah, at a function held in Pune. Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Eknath Shinde and Union Minister of State for Ministry of Cooperation B.L Verma were also present on the occasion.

Shri Amit Shah in his address lauded the contribution of Maharashtra in spreading Cooperative based model of socio economic development through the country and about the vision of Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi, "Sahakar Se Samridhhi" and the progress achieved in providing basic facilities to poorer section of the country through the medium of cooperation.

Shri Shah further said that 1555 multi-state cooperative societies of the country will be benefited by CRCS portal and 42% of these 1555 societies are in Maharashtra showing the strength of cooperative movement in

Maharashtra.

Shah added that Prime Minister has set a target of making 5 trillion dollar economy and making India the third largest economy in the world, we should set a target for the contribution of the cooperative sector in achieving this goal.

Ministry of Cooperation has taken several initiatives to strengthen the cooperative movement in the country. The main objectives of computerization of the Central Registrar's Office are completely paperless applications for registration, byelaws amendments and reporting, automatic compliance to Multi State Co-operative Societies Act (MSCS Act) and Rules, ease of doing business, digital communication and transparent processing. This computerization project will prove very helpful in new registration.





FEDERATION NEWS

172nd Board Meeting of Federation

172nd Board Meeting of the Federation is scheduled to be held at 5 PM on 10th September, 2023 at Jaipur, Rajasthan.

Annual General Meeting (AGM), 2023 of Federation

The AGM of the Federation is scheduled to be held on 10th September, 2023 at Jaipur, Rajasthan, in conjunction with 172nd Board Meeting.

Workshop on 'Business Development Plans of ARDBs'

The Federation shall be conducting Workshop on Business Development plans of ARDBs at 9.00 am on 11th September 2023 at Hotel Clarks Amer, Jaipur, Rajasthan.

COOPERATIVE NEWS

Rajya Sabha passes Multi-State Cooperative Bill

The Rajya Sabha passed the Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2023, on 01.08.23. Minister of State Cooperation B.L. Verma moved the Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2023, for consideration and passage in Rajya Sabha. The Bill, which had been approved by Lok Sabha on July 25, 2023, was passed in Rajya Sabha by voice vote. While replying to queries on the Bill, Mr. Verma said that the Bill provides norms for appointing employees, ensuring no nepotism practices exist. Noting that there is a limit for the private sector when it comes to employment generation, he said that the cooperative sector can spur jobs as the government is strengthening the cooperatives, by expanding their sphere of work into areas like LPG and petrol pump dealerships. The Bill seeks to establish a 'Cooperative Election Authority' with a view to introducing electoral reforms in the cooperative sector. There are about 8.6 lakh cooperatives in the country, out of which

active Primary Agricultural Cooperatives (PACs) are around 63,000.

Tomatoes at ₹50 per kg from NCCF, NAFED

The Centre on 14.8.23 directed NCCF and NAFED to sell tomatoes at a reduced rate of ₹50 per kg from 15.8.23 in view of the decline in prices in the wholesale markets. Since July, both NCCF and NAFED have been selling tomatoes at a discounted rate on behalf of the consumer affairs ministry in Delhi-NCR, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar to boost domestic availability and contain price rise. Initially, the ministry had asked the two cooperatives to sell tomatoes at a subsidised rate of ₹90 per kg and later reduced the price to ₹80 per kg. Further, the price was cut to ₹70 per kg. The latest reduction to ₹50 per kg will further benefit the consumers. So far, a total of 15 lakh kg of tomatoes have been procured by the two cooperatives which are being continuously disposed of to the retail consumers in major consumption centres in the country.

AGRICULTURE NEWS

Highest number of farmers sign up for ₹1 crop insurance this kharif

The Maharashtra government's scheme of ₹1 premium for farmers to register for the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) has seen a good traction from the beneficiaries. This kharif the state has seen 1.50 crore applications for the scheme, the highest-ever reported in the state. Maharashtra has also become the top state in the country to record the maximum number of registrations for availing the scheme. Since its inception, Maharashtra has always recorded a good number of registrations for the PMFBY scheme. Even when the scheme was made optional, farmers registered for the same in high numbers. According to the old scheme, farmers paid 2-5 % of the premium, while the state and central governments picked up the remaining premium in equal parts. An annual outlay of ₹3,312 crore was set for the scheme, which seems to have worked well with farmers with the maximum number of registrations reported in the state so far. Thus, 1.50 crore applications have been registered from 68.78 lakh farmers who have

insured 99 lakh hectares of their farm land this kharif season. This would be the maximum enrolment under the scheme recorded in the state since its launch thanks to the highly subsidised premium rate, Maharashtra has topped the list.

₹17,000 cr released under the PM-KISAN scheme

₹17,000 crore has been released as the 14th instalment to about 85 million farmer beneficiaries on 27.07.23 under the PM-KISAN scheme. All eligible beneficiaries will receive ₹2,000 as the first instalment under the scheme. During a public rally in Rajasthan, PM Modi said he will also dedicate 1.25 lakh PM Kisan Samridhhi Kendras (PMKSKs) to the country, which are a one-stop shop for farmers that cater to their all needs. A centralised help desk has been introduced to facilitate the beneficiaries to overcome the problems faced during the registration process of PM Kisan scheme. The scheme, which was formally launched in 2019, has transferred a total amount of ₹2.59 lakh crore to beneficiaries since its inception. PM Modi also launched urea gold i.e. sulphur-coated urea. The prime minister also



initiated the on boarding of 1,500 Farmer Producer Organisations on the Open Network for Digital Commerce, fostering further advancements in the agricultural sector.

The happy apple growers of Himachal

The apple season has started in Himachal Pradesh. This year is especially significant as a new practice has come into force: the State's key horticulture crop is being sold by weight instead of the established practice of being sold per box. While this decision has been widely hailed by apple growers, it has been reluctantly accepted by commission agents and middlemen. For a long time, the apple growers of Himachal Pradesh had been demanding that apples be procured in markets (mandis) on the basis of kilogrammes and not per box. This is because they would invariably sell their produce according to the defined weight of the box and not the real weight of the produce, which is usually above the defined weight. This resulted in losses for apple growers. The key problem was that there were no standard cartons in which the apples were packed. The woes of apple growers began when wooden apple boxes were replaced in the late 1990s with cardboard-based telescopic boxes. The wooden boxes were not flexible, which meant that the quantity of apples in every box would remain the same (around 20 kg). However, with the advent of flexible telescopic cartons, boxes with a capacity of 20-24 kg each would end up in mandis with the produce weighing 30-35 kg at times. As a result, they assert that they are suffering huge losses. The State Arhtiya (commission agents) Association has made it clear that after the ongoing marketing season is over, they will clearly spell out their concerns. On April 6, 2023, the government issued a notification under the Himachal Pradesh Agricultural and Horticultural Produce Marketing (Development and Regulation) Act, 2005, which stated that apples brought in boxes to all the fruit markets of the State would be sold on the basis of weight, which would also include the weight of the packing material. The maximum limit of the weight of the box has been set at 24 kg. Influential commission agents resisted this and went on a symbolic strike for a day. This led to a tussle between apple growers and commission agents. The State government eventually prevailed by putting its foot down and saying that apples would be sold by weight instead of by box in the ongoing season. Apple is the most important fruit crop of Himachal Pradesh. It constitutes about 49% of the total area under fruit crops and about 85% of the total fruit production. The apple economy of the State is an estimated ₹5,500 crore-6,000 crore.

ICAR Sees Normal Paddy Sowing This Season

The country will see "normal sowing" of paddy this kharif season, the National Rice Research Institute (NRRI) at the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) said, allaying fears of any further increase in the food grain's prices that had peaked on account of sluggish sowing and higher exports. The institute's director, AK Nayak, said

there was little cause for worry about the paddy crop despite excessive rainfall and flooding in some parts of the country and rainfall deficiencies in other areas. Retail prices of non-basmati rice had increased 3% in the past one month and 11.5% in one year, despite the imposition of a 20% export duty in September 2022. This prompted the government to impose a ban on the export of non-basmati white rice. In the eastern parts of the country, rainfall activity has picked up, boosting sowing window in these areas is open till August. Talking about northern states such as Punjab and Haryana which have been impacted by excessive rains and flooding, he said the paddy crop has a high tolerance for standing water and any damage is caused only if there is water above the canopy for 6-7 days or if there is submergence. No extensive submergence has been reported yet which will cause a significant decline in output. The institute is satisfied with the way sowing of paddy has panned out in southern states during this kharif season. Despite India seeing a rainfall activity of 5% more than normal, a large part of the country is deficient in rainfall. Most paddy-growing states such Kerala, West Bengal (Gangetic), Bihar, Jharkhand, UP (East) and Telangana have seen deficient rains. Punjab and Haryana, major rice producers in the North have received excessive rain, causing concerns about the standing crop.

Ministry urged to ease non-basmati rice exports ban

Rice exporters have approached the commerce ministry over the ban on the export of non-basmati rice, saying that many of them have letters of credit from foreign buyers and if they do not fulfil the contracts, they could face international arbitration. Failing to fulfil export commitments could also hurt India's image in the global markets. India banned exports of non-basmati white rice on July 20 to keep a lid on the rising price of the staple food grain in the domestic market, as late arrival of monsoon and deficient rains till mid-June had created concerns about paddy output. Companies often include international arbitration agreements in their commercial contracts. So, if a dispute arises, they are obligated to arbitrate rather than pursue traditional court litigation. Sona Masoori non-basmati rice is popular in the African nations and among the Indian diaspora in the US and Europe, the government should look into the matter. Rice exporters are flooded with calls from the Indian diaspora living in the US, UK and Africa for Indian non-basmati Sona Masoori rice whose price has doubled in the global markets since India imposed the ban. In the US, the price of 20 pounds of rice (9 kg) has increased to \$49 (₹ 4,030) from \$16. India is the largest exporter of non-basmati rice with a 45% market share globally. In fiscal 2023, it exported 14.24 million tonnes of non-basmati rice. While India's ban on exports of non-basmati white rice has started impacting global markets, UAE's decision to put a temporary ban on exports and re-exports of rice from the country for four months will further deepen the crisis.



Sugar production expected to see a slight dip amid rising ethanol demand

Sugar production in the 2023-24 sugar season, which starts in October, is expected to be 317 lakh tonnes as against 328 lakh tonnes during the current season (after diversion of supplies for ethanol). Preliminary estimates by the Indian Sugar Mills' Association (ISMA) show that total production will be 362 lakh tonnes compared with 369 lakh tonnes in the ongoing season, which will end on September 30. Sugar diversion for ethanol will be 45 lakh tonnes while it is nearly 41 lakh tonnes this season. Sugar consumption is likely to be 275 lakh tonnes. Meanwhile, in a communication to the Department of Food and Public Distribution, ISMA sought an increase in the price of ethanol made from sugarcane juice/syrup to ₹69.85 a litre from the current ₹65.60. It noted that while the sugar industry requires investments worth ₹17,500 crore to scale up production to meet ethanol requirements, the industry will also need a viable return on investment. Hence, it added, the price of ethanol should rise in tune with the increase in the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) paid by mills to farmers. ISMA expects the FRP of sugarcane to be ₹315 a litre in 2023-24.

Onion prices inch up on sluggish kharif sowing

After tomato, and spices like turmeric and jeera, retail prices of onion have started to rise for the first time in nearly two years due to reports of sluggish kharif sowing on delayed arrival of monsoon in the key producing states of Maharashtra and Karnataka. Inflation in onion, which had been in the negative zone since September, 2021, came in at 1.65% in June, 2023. High moisture content in the stored rabi crops because of un-seasonal rains in April in Maharashtra and Karnataka has reduced its shelf-life of the staple vegetable, causing fears of e-supply constraints by September. The benchmark prices at Lasalgaon, Maharashtra, the hub of the country's onion trade was ₹1350/quintal which was ₹1250/quintal just a fortnight back. Two months back the prices were ruling around ₹950/quintal. Prices are expected to firm up as there is a prospects of a lower kharif crops as monsoon rains have not been adequate in Nasik, Pune and Ahemdnagar districts. According to the department of consumer affairs, the modal retail prices of onion rose to ₹25/kg from ₹20/kg. Kharif sowing in Maharashtra has been lagging because of late arrival of monsoon over the key growing districts and farmers are expected to hold on to their rabi harvest anticipating higher prices. Rabi onion harvested during April-June accounts for around 65% of the country's onion production and meets the consumer's demand till the kharif crop is harvested from October-November. Kharif harvested onions are not stored because of higher moisture content thus entering the market directly. The government is likely to sell around 0.3 million tonne (MT) onion purchased in the current rabi season from the farmers in market at an appropriate time.

Govt to offload 0.3 MT onion in open market

To curb price rise, the government on 11.8.23 announced

sale of 0.3 million tonne (MT) of onion in the open market from its buffer stock. "We will release onions from the buffer stock immediately through open auction," said Rohit Kumar Singh, secretary, department of consumer affairs. The quantity and pace of disposal will also be calibrated with the prices and availability situations to make onions available to consumers at affordable prices. Apart from market disposal, onions would be offered to state governments at discounted rates for sale through retail outlets of their consumer cooperatives and corporations. The buffer stock will be released in the key markets and regions where retail prices are above the all-India average and where the rates of increase in prices over previous month and year are above the threshold. The farmers' cooperative Nafed and National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India had procured 0.15 MT of rabi onion each in June and July from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, respectively. Recently, the prices have been looking up mainly because of prospects of supply constraints as unseasonal rains in April in key producing states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan hit the shelf-life of stored rabi harvests. In addition, rabi areas have declined this season because of lower realisation earlier. Two months back the prices were ruling around ₹950/quintal. The modal retail prices of onion rose from ₹20/kg since the beginning of the year, to ₹30/kg on 11.8.23. Inflation in onion, which had been in the negative zone since September, 2021, came in at 1.65% in June 2023. The rating agency Crisil in its report has stated that retail onion prices are expected to hit ₹60-70/kg next month. However, the prices in October, considered a lean month, will remain below the highs of 2020 when prices rose to ₹80/kg in several cities. Rabi onions, harvested during April-June, accounts for around 65% of the country's onion production and meets the consumer's demand till the kharif crop is harvested from October-November. Kharif harvested onions are not stored because of higher moisture content thus entering the market directly. The estimated production of onions during the 2022-23 crop year (July-June) declined marginally 31.01 million tonne (MT) against 31.7 MT reported in the previous year. The output of kitchen bulbs was 26.64 MT in 2020-21.

Olive oil, Makhana get over 80% costlier amid inclement weather

Inclement weather has increased inflation of not only the daily kitchen essentials, but also of the gourmet superfoods consumed by the rich and the health conscious. Drought in Europe, and back home in Bihar, has increased the prices of olive oils and makhana by more than 80% in a year, with further rise in the coming days. An export ban imposed by Turkey, the largest olive oil producer in the world, has increased global olive oil shortages, which will keep prices firm. India meets all its olive oil requirements through imports. Makhana, a traditional food of eastern India made by popping seeds of a water lily, called gorgon seeds, has become a popular snack among high paying consumers across the country since Covid times. Makhana prices have jumped 70% in



the last two months at the factory gate as extreme heat dried up the artificial ponds used for makhana cultivation. Retail prices of olive oils in India have increased by around 70-80%, while the prices have shot up by 20% in the last two months. The prices of extra virgin and extra light categories will go up by another 40% in the next two months, while the pomace category is stable for now. The MRP of the extra virgin olive oils of the leading brands on online platforms is between ₹1000-1400 per litre. India imports about 13,000 tonnes of olive oil of all grades every year. Global olive oil prices will remain firm as supplies from Turkey have stopped. Imports have remained flat for the last few years due to high import duty and increasing prices at origin.

Over half of pending claims from Rajasthan

Agriculture insurance claims worth over ₹2,760 crore till the year 2021-22 remain pending under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), with Rajasthan accounting for over half the awaited reimbursement for

farm losses. State-wise details of PMFBY claims till 2021-22 that were pending as on June 30, shared by Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Narendra Tomar in the Lok Sabha on 8.8.23, pegged outstanding claims from Rajasthan's farmers at ₹1,387.34 crore, followed by Maharashtra (₹336.22 crore) and Gujarat (₹258.87 crore). While these three States accounted for over 71% of the pending claims till 2021-22, seven other States' farmers await claims of over ₹50 crore. These include Karnataka (₹132.25 crore), Jharkhand (₹128.24 crore), Tamil Nadu (₹83.55 crore), Madhya Pradesh (₹77.7 crore), Kerala (₹53.96 crore) and Haryana (₹51.90 crore). "Claims are generally paid by the insurance companies concerned within two months of completion of crop cutting experiments (CCEs)/harvesting period and one month of notification for invoking the risks/perils of prevented sowing, mid-season adversity and post-harvest losses subject to receipt of total share of premium subsidy from the government concerned within time," Mr. Tomar said.

NEWS & NOTES

Sugar Mills Body seeks clear policy direction for ethanol distilleries

The Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) has sought a "clear policy direction" from the government on setting up new ethanol distilleries, saying policies prioritising procurement of ethanol from grain-based distilleries in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh (MP) have affected the viability of sugar-based ethanol manufacturers in these states. Sugar-based ethanol manufacturers in Bihar and MP have been forced to supply ethanol to southern states, which is causing them huge losses as they have to bear the high transportation costs. One sugar-based ethanol supplier from Bihar was asked to supply to the southern states. However, the transport charges given by the OMCs are less than the actual cost of transport incurred by the ethanol suppliers. In a letter to the secretary, Department of Food and Public Distribution, ISMA said to achieve 20% blending by 2025-26, the government needs to incentivise ethanol from sugar by increasing its price and extending similar benefits as given to the grain-based distilleries. Oil marketing companies (OMCs) have signed long-term purchase agreements with the new grain-based distilleries in Bihar and MP. According to ISMA, the preference given to grain-based distilleries in these states has resulted in making ethanol supplies non-viable for the sugar-based distilleries from these two states.

Govt extends enrolment dates for Fasal Bima

The government has extended the cut-off date for enrolment of farmers under the revamped Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) for kharif 2023 up to August 16, 2023 across 15 states and union territories due delay issuing notification as well as application of new technologies. According to an official communication, states, including Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh's

enrolment date for farmers has been extended by few days for allowing more coverage of crop insurance. In Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, the date of enrolment has been extended till August 10. Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, the new enrolment date is August 16. So far, 12.5 million farmers have enrolled under PMFBY in the current kharif season against 17.9 million farmers in 2022. The new guidelines issued earlier for PMFBY aims to "universalise" the scheme, with measures including digitised land records, farm level season-wise crop data, farm-level farmer's KYC and application programme interface (API) based data exchange. Thrust on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) based technologies for timely assessment of crop yield data and resultant quicker claim settlement will be the other key features of the renewed crop insurance scheme. The claim-premium ratio which was 99% in 2018-19 has declined to 65% in 2021-22, the claims for FY22 are still being settled. Since the launch of the PMFBY in Kharif 2016, the gross premium collected has been around ₹1.7 trillion till the end of FY22, against reported claims of ₹1.33 trillion. During 2016-17-2021-22, ₹25,181 crore have been paid by farmers as the premium, while the balance was paid by the government. Under PMFBY, the premium to be paid by farmers is fixed at just 1.5% of the sum insured for rabi crops and 2% for kharif crops, while it is 5% for cash crops. The balance premium is equally shared amongst the Centre and states and in case of North-Eastern states, the premium is split between the Centre and states in a 9:1 ratio. The government has allocated ₹13,625 crore for implementation of PMFBY in 2023-24.

Maharashtra introduces bill to compensate farmers for adulterated seeds, insecticides and fertilizers

In response to reports of farmers facing financial losses due to the use of adulterated, substandard or misbranded



seeds, insecticides and fertilizers, the Maharashtra Government on 4.8.23 introduced a bill in the legislative assembly to address the issue and provide compensation. The bill, which was introduced by Agriculture Minister Dhananjay Munde provides for the payment of compensation within a month or with an interest of 12% in case of a delay. It also provides for payment of a deposit of 50% of the compensation amount before filing of an appeal. The bill also provides for a procedure for filing and dealing with farmers complaints and investigation for assessment and evaluation of crop losses. As per the amendment to the Seeds Act of 1966, any seed dealer who obstructs a seed inspector from taking samples or exercising any other power conferred under the Act will face penalties. The punishment ranges from three months and three years of imprisonment, or a fine of ₹10,000 to ₹50,000, or both. For repeat offences, the penalty will be more severe with imprisonment from six months to five years or a fine of ₹25,000 to ₹1 lakh, or both. According to the new bill, these offences will be considered cognisable, meaning the police can make an arrest without requiring a court's permission, and they will also be non-bailable. "Currently, the first offence is punishable with a fine of ₹500 and six-month imprisonment or a fine of ₹1,000, or both. The government believes that this punishment is too lenient," Mr. Munde informed the Assembly. He also introduced the Insecticides (Maharashtra Amendment) Act, 2023, and Seeds (Maharashtra Amendment) Act, 2023, to prevent the manufacture and sale of misbranded insecticides and seeds, making the offence cognisable and non-bailable. Another bill, Essential Commodities (Maharashtra Amendment) Act, 2023, introduced by Mr. Munde, enhances punishment for the manufacture, supply, distribution or sale of adulterated, non-standard or misbranded fertilizers, which causes loss to farmers. "The offences will be cognisable and non-bailable and the imprisonment will be between six months to seven years or a fine of ₹25,000 to ₹1 lakh," the Agriculture Minister told the House. The Monsoon Session of the Legislative Assembly, which began on July 17, was prorogued till 4.8.23. The winter session of the legislature will commence in Nagpur from December 7. The prorogation order by Maharashtra Governor Ramesh Bais was read out by Speaker Rahul Narwekar. Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said that the business (proceedings of the house) went peacefully for 13 days without any adjournment. The session was successful. All important issues were discussed in both Houses. Of 27 bills tabled, 17 were cleared.

Wheat prices jump to 6-month high

Indian wheat prices surged to a six-month high on 8.8.23 due to limited supplies and robust demand ahead of the festival season. The increasing prices may prompt New Delhi to eliminate import duties on the cereal to bolster supplies and control prices ahead of key state polls and

next year's general election. Rising wheat prices could contribute to food inflation and potentially complicate the efforts of both the government and the central bank to contain inflation. In all key producing states, farmer supplies have nearly come to a halt. Flour mills are struggling to obtain sufficient supplies in the market. Wheat prices at Indore in the central state of Madhya Pradesh rose by 1.5% to ₹25,446 (\$307.33) per metric ton, the highest since Feb.10. Prices have surged by nearly 18% over the past four months. India's wheat harvest in 2023 was at least 10% lower than the farm ministry's estimate.

RBI to launch pilot for public tech platform

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 14.8.23 said it will launch a pilot project on the public tech platform that seeks to facilitate credit through a seamless flow of required digital information to lenders. The tech platform, which is being built by RBI's wholly owned subsidiary Reserve Bank Innovation Hub, will commence from August 17. The end-to-end digital platform will have an open architecture, open application programming interfaces and standards, to which all financial sector players can connect in a 'plug and play' model. The platform will focus on products such as Kisan Credit Card loans of up to ₹160,000 per borrower, dairy loans, MSME loans without collateral, personal loans and home loans. The platform will also enable linkage with services such as Aadhaar e-KYC and land records from on boarded state governments of Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra. It will also share satellite data, conduct PAN card validation, transliteration, Aadhaar e-signing and account aggregation, among others. The platform is intended to be rolled out as a pilot project in a calibrated fashion, both in terms of access to information providers and use cases. It shall bring about efficiency in the lending process in terms of reduction of costs, quicker disbursement, and scalability, based on the learning from the pilot, the scope and coverage would be expanded to include more products, information providers and lenders.

Govt to sell 1 mt of chana in open market to curb prices

With mandi prices of chana (gram), commonly consumer pulses, ruling above the minimum support price (MSP) of ₹5350/quintal for the first time in many years, the government is aiming to sell one million tonne (MT) of the variety in the open market from its buffer. The aim is to bring down retail inflation of chana, which has a share of 50% in the country's pulses production, in the coming months so that overall food inflation could be curbed. Inflation in chana, was 1.72% in July on year while the prices were in the negative during January-May period this year. The retail inflation in "pulses and products" category rose to 13.27% in July on year from 4.27% in January, 2023. The farmers' cooperative NAFED which had commenced selling chana in the open market since beginning of last month has sold more than 0.5 MT of pulses so far through



daily electronic- auction from its buffer of 3.3 MT. The average prices in the open market sale has been ₹5-25/quintal above MSP, which could push up the inflation in pulses further. The trading price of chana surpassing the MSP in various mandis or markets indicates a positive market sentiment and strong demand-supply dynamics. In addition to e-auction, the government is currently selling subsidised chana dal at ₹60 per kg under a brand name 'Bharat Dal' to provide pulses at an affordable rate to consumers through NAFED outlets. NAFED is currently selling around 50,000 tonne of tur through e-auction from its buffer stock of around 0.15 MT. However due to sluggish kharif sowing which has been lagging by around 5.3% at 4.02 million hectare till August 11 and patchy monsoon rains in the key growing regions of Karnataka and Maharashtra, tur prices are likely to remain elevated in the coming festive months. Mandi prices of tur at Latur, Maharashtra, the hub of trade, where harvest from last

year is still being sold was around ₹104/kg against the MSP of ₹6600/quintal. Tur prices are likely to stay firm because of the lack of any private stock with traders. The likely shortfall in output in current season and imports from the African countries only entering the market by September, is unlikely to bring down price. Retail inflation in tur in July, 2023 rose to 34.05% from 10.9% in January. The modal retail prices of tur on 17.8.23 was ₹140/kg, an increase of 17% of the price prevailed two month back. To curb hoarding and speculation amid rising prices, the government in May had imposed limits on the stocks of tur and urad dal till October 31. The import duty on tur, urad and masur has been abolished to improve domestic stocks. Under the bilateral agreement signed in 2021, India has committed to import 0.25 MT urad and 0.1 MT tur annually from Myanmar between 2021-22 and 2025-26. Same year, India entered into a MoU with Malawi for the annual import of 0.05 MT tur till 2025.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

In a first, Bengaluru set to host World Coffee Conference in September

Bengaluru, the coffee capital of India, is all set to host the fifth edition of the World Coffee Conference (WCC 2023) between September 25 and 28. Interestingly, this is the first time India and Asia are preparing to host this most prestigious global coffee event, WCC, a property of the London-based International Coffee Organisation (ICO), a body set up in 1963 under the auspices of the United Nations to boost the economic importance of coffee globally. The earlier editions of WCC were held in London (2001), Brazil (2005), Guatemala (2010), and Ethiopia (2016). K.G. Jagadeesha, CEO and secretary, Coffee Board of India, said Bengaluru winning host position of WCC meant a lot for India and Asia and it indicated the growing dominance of Indian coffee in the global markets. Hosting WCC is a lifetime opportunity for India, because ISO has 70 coffee producing and coffee consuming countries as members and we may not witness another WCC in India in our lifetime, he said. Mr Jagadeesha further said WCC 2023 held a great promises for the global coffee sector, especially when the Indian coffee industry was fostering growth and sustainable practices while showcasing its coffee heritage to the world.

Wheat for Bhutan: Exporters told to apply

The government has invited applications from exporters to allocate quota for exports of wheat to Bhutan during 2023-24 on humanitarian and food security grounds. It said the government has approved export of 14,184 tonne of wheat grain; 5,326 tonne of wheat flour (atta); 15,226 tonne of maida to Bhutan in 2023-24.

Russian wheat may shore up domestic stock

The Centre is considering import of 9 million tonnes (mt) of wheat from Russia via a government-to-government deal to augment domestic stocks amid rising prices. The All-India Consumer Wholesale Price of wheat was up 6.2% to

₹2,633 per quintal, from ₹2,480 a year ago. Prices have risen as the government has imposed stockholding limits and sold the grain in the open market to traders amid concerns about a shortfall in domestic production. The possibility (of imports) is being discussed at the highest levels. All-India retail inflation in cereals and products was 16.3% in June. Wholesale cumulative inflation in FY24 till June-end was 7.6%, having spiked 10.7% in FY23. Wheat, rice and coarse cereals have seen double-digit inflation over the past six months. A combination of low production, declining stocks and rising demand has fuelled the price rise. The government pegged India's wheat production at a record 112.7 mt in 2023, but traders and millers estimate harvest at 101-103 mt due to unseasonal rains and hailstorms in February-March in the northern, central and western plains, which damaged the ripening crop. The Foreign Agricultural Service of the US Department of Agriculture recently estimated India's wheat production at around 108 mt. Wheat output fell to 107.7 million tonnes in 2022, from 109.6 mt a year earlier because of a heat wave in March. The low harvest and rising demand depleted wheat stocks, causing market prices to inch up. The central pool held 30.1 mt of wheat as of July 1, higher than the buffer norm of 27.6 mt but less than half the 60.3 mt it did in July 2021. The Centre's wheat purchases under its minimum support price (MSP) programme amounted to 26.14 mt, below the target of 34 mt, triggering a rally in prices during the harvest season, when they are usually low. In June, the food ministry had to impose a stock limit on the cereal for the first time since 2008. India, the second largest producer of wheat, is mostly self-sufficient in foodgrains, although it did import wheat in 2016-17 after back-to-back droughts reduced output. The global geopolitical situation is also driving wheat prices. Russia pulling out of the Black Sea grain deal has also raised inflationary risks since Russia and Ukraine are the world's largest suppliers of wheat and sunflower oil.



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GUJARAT SCARDB : The public function in conjunction with 71st Annual Day of Gujarat SCARDB was held on 28th August, 2023 at Bodakdev Convention Hall, Ahmedabad. The theme of the conference was natural farming. The event attended by around 1600 delegates was inaugurated by Shri Acharya Devrat, Governor of Gujarat in the presence of Shri Raghavji Patel, Minister of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Gujarat, Shri Jagdish Vishwakarma, Minister of State for Co-Operation, and Shri Dollarai Kotecha, Chairman, Gujarat SCARDB and other important dignitaries.

Governor Shri Acharya Devrat who is also a well-known advocate and practitioner of natural farming talked at length on the occasion about its advantages including higher returns while protecting the environment.



West Bengal SCARDB : ARDB conference with WBSARDB held at Institute of Co-operative Management for Agricultural & Rural Development (ICMARD), Ultadanga, Kolkata on 25th August, 2023.



J & K SCARDB : Commissioner Secretary Cooperatives, Ms. Yasha Mudgal, J & K, reviewed functioning of J & K SCARDB branches operational in Kashmir division on 7th August, 2023.



Editor : K.K. Ravindran, Managing Director, NAFCARD

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