

QUICKLY.

Copper bounces despite jump in inventories



London: Copper prices bounced on Wednesday as focus switched to shortages while fund buying added momentum, but concerns about demand prospects in top consumer China were highlighted by rising inventories. Benchmark copper on the LME was up 1.2 per cent at \$9,786 a tonne by 0942 GMT. REUTERS

Palm oil tracks rival vegetable oils higher

Jakarta: Malaysian palm oil futures rose on Wednesday, tracking rival vegetable oils on the Dalian Commodity Exchange, recouping some of the losses in the previous session but stronger Malaysian ringgit limited gains. The benchmark palm oil contract for September delivery on the Bursa Malaysia Derivatives Exchange gained 46 ringgit to 3,922 ringgit (\$833.58) a tonne at closing. REUTERS

London cocoa steadies at higher levels in volatile trade



London: London cocoa futures on ICE rose for a second day on Wednesday in thin but volatile trading, with investors unsure whether a steep supply shortage is priced in. September London cocoa was up 0.3 per cent at 7,776 pounds per tonne by 1305 GMT, extending Tuesday's 1.4 per cent gain after a decline of nearly 6 per cent on Monday. REUTERS

Basmati growers seek higher returns

EXPORTS TO BE HIT. Farmers seek premium as Chhattisgarh buys common paddy at ₹3,100/quintal

Prabhudatta Mishra
New Delhi

Basmati (paddy) farmers in Haryana and Punjab will be highly disappointed if they do not get a premium over non-Basmati paddy as farmers' demand for a hike in common variety of paddy price has begun to gain ground after Chhattisgarh started buying at ₹3,100/quintal. It will soon be a reality in Odisha with the change of government.

But, Basmati exporters are more concerned about overseas demand rather than domestic prices after some of them incurred losses by purchasing at higher rates and being not able to sell at a profit. "Basmati price should be at least 30 per cent more than non-Basmati and if a (State) government is buying paddy at ₹3,100/quintal, there should be a minimum price also for Basmati," said Ashok Singh, a Basmati farmer from Sonapat, Haryana.

In Odisha, BJP has promised to procure paddy at

₹3,100 per quintal and transfer the payment to farmers within 48 hours through direct benefit transfer. It has also promised that procurement will be done through electronic weighing machines in all mandis, eliminating the present practice of "katni-chhatni" (deduction).

Chhattisgarh started buying paddy at ₹3,100 per quintal from January after the formation of the BJP Government.

A former president of All India Rice Exporters Association said some millers who had purchased Basmati paddy in the hope of getting higher realisation are finally selling at a loss as global Basmati prices have come down. Stressing on the need for removal of the minimum export price (MEP), he said that this will help more players to operate in the next season and allow competition, potentially ensuring good prices for farmers.

He also said due to very small carry forward stocks in 2022-23, the Basmati industry aggressively purchased at a very high prices from farmers



IN A SPOT. Basmati exporters are concerned about overseas demand after some of them incurred losses by purchasing at higher rates and not being able to sell at a profit

in October-December 2023. On the other hand, the crop size was large in both India and Pakistan, he said.

SHIELD AGAINST CARTELS

"Exports data for April and May looked encouraging, but ground reality is entirely different. Prices of Pusa Basmati 1509 when next crop arrives in October.

The government stipulates registration of all Basmati rice export contract with APEDA at minimum \$950 per tonne.

However, trade policy expert S Chandrasekaran differs as he said that MEP is a shield

pay higher price," the exporter said and warned that millers and exporters may not be in a position to offer ₹3,000-3,100 per quintal for Pusa Basmati 1509 when next crop arrives in October.

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However, trade policy expert S Chandrasekaran differs as he said that MEP is a shield

for the exporters against possible cartelisation in importing countries to lower their contract prices.

"The excess export supply by 20 per cent has created an inordinate pressure on Basmati prices. The support level of MEP has prevented price crash. Current MEP policy has saved the millers from NPA who procured the Basmati paddy at higher price from farmers," Chandrasekaran said.

EXPORTS UP IN APRIL

Trade sources said the average Basmati export price was \$1,127/tonne in February which has dropped to \$1,096/tonne in May and is likely to further fall this month.

Basmati rice exports were 14 per cent up at \$534 million during April against over \$470 million in the same period a year ago. In volume terms also, the growth was 17 per cent at over 0.5 million tonnes (mt) compared with 0.43 mt a year ago. During 2023-24, shipments clocked 15 per cent growth to a record 5.24 mt.

Area under cotton likely to shrink as farmers shift to pulses, maize

Vishwanath Kulkarni
Bengaluru

The area under cotton across the country this cropping season is likely to be lower as farmers in Gujarat and Maharashtra — key producers — are preferring to plant lucrative crops such as pulses and maize amidst a weakening trend in global prices.

The Cotton Association of India, the apex trade body for the sector, sees the acreage declining in the kharif 2024 season over the previous year's 124.69 lakh hectare (lh).

In North India, where the planting for kharif has almost been carried out, the acreages are down by close to half as farmers in Punjab and Haryana faced crop losses due to a rise in pest attacks — mainly the pink boll worm — last year amidst rising production costs. "As per information received from North India members in the recent CAI meeting, cotton sowing in the current kharif season is lower by 40 to 60 per cent in Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab," said Atul Ganatra, President, CAI.

In Gujarat, the largest producer, the cotton acreage is expected to decline by 12-15 per cent this year, Ganatra said, based on the trade feedback from the State. With parts of Gujarat receiving rains, farmers have already shifted to groundnut and other crops, he said.

SEED SALES FEEDBACK

In Maharashtra, which has the largest cotton area in the country, the scene is no different from Gujarat.

"Maharashtra State association and other trade members are expecting a 10-15 per cent reduction in area," Ganatra said. Maharashtra farmers are shifting from cotton to tur (pigeon pea), maize and soyabean, the CAI President said.

Based on the feedback from



BIG PLUNGE. The acreage is down by close to half in the North as farmers in Punjab and Haryana faced crop losses due to rise in pest attacks

the seed distributors, Ganatra said the sales of cotton seeds are slow in the State.

"As per information received from the members, due to shortage of water not much of early cotton sowing is done in Central and South India," he said. In MP, the area is likely to be lower by a tenth, while in the South, farmers are waiting for the minimum support price (MSP) to be declared, he said.

The CAI President also said the bearish trend in ICE Futures is influencing cotton sowing. ICE cotton futures for December 2024 are trending lower at 70 cents per pound, which works out to the Indian rupee equivalent of ₹47,000 per candy. Presently, the cotton prices in India are hovering in the ₹55,000-57,000 range for the 29 mm.

"Lower December ICE futures is not good for the upcoming cotton sowing. The lower futures is affecting cotton sowing as Indian farmers are keenly waiting and watching the ICE futures on a day-to-day basis and then taking a decision on sowing," Ganatra said.

Cotton was planted in 124.69 lh during the 2023-24 season, with Maharashtra topping the acreages at 42.34 lh, followed by Gujarat at 26.83 lh and Telangana at 18.18 lh.

IMD revises June rainfall forecast to 'below normal'

Our Bureau
New Delhi

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has revised the monsoon forecast for June to "below normal" from the earlier prediction of "normal" rainfall after the monsoon's progress has stalled over the past few days.

Rainfall between 92 per cent and 108 per cent of the long period average (LPA) of 166.9 mm is categorised as 'normal', whereas it is 'below normal' if precipitation for a month is less than 92 per cent of the LPA. "Normal to above normal monthly rainfall is most likely over most areas of the south peninsula and some areas of the North-East. Below



FALLING SHORT. Rainfall over the country as a whole during June 1-19 was 70.7 mm, which is 18% less than the LPA of 86.7 mm

normal rainfall is most likely over many areas of the North-West and the adjoining Central region and some areas of North-East India," IMD said on Tuesday night. In its forecast for June, issued in the last week of May, IMD had said the average rainfall over the coun-

try as a whole "is most likely to be normal."

ABOVE NORMAL IN SOUTH

According to a previous forecast, above normal monthly rainfall was likely over most areas of the south peninsula and adjoining areas of central

India, and over isolated areas of north-west and north-east India. But "below normal" rainfall was predicted for June over many areas of northern and eastern parts of north-west India and the eastern part of Central India, and over some areas over north-east India.

Rainfall over the country as a whole during June 1-19 was 70.7 mm, which is 18 per cent less than its Long Period Average (LPA) of 86.7 mm. The precipitation was 1 per cent above average on Wednesday, IMD data show. So far, monsoon rainfall is deficient in all regions except south peninsula where it is 15 per cent above normal. The east and north-east meteorological subdivision comprising all NE states

as well as Bihar, West Bengal and Jharkhand is deficient by 8 per cent while Central India has received 32 per cent below normal rain.

North-west India comprising Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and other States has received 10.8 mm rainfall which is 70 per cent less than normal until June 19. IMD said that the Southwest Monsoon advanced into some parts of Nicobar Islands on May 19 and simultaneously reached Kerala and some north-eastern States on May 30, two days before normal schedule for Kerala and six days ahead in the North-East. Thereafter, the northward progress of monsoon was gradual. However, monsoon has not progressed thereafter.

As prices plunge 90% in 6 months, vanilla cultivation loses flavour

V Sajeer Kumar
Kochi

A 90 per cent drop in vanilla prices over the past six months has made the spice lose its flavour in the global markets.

From around 2023-end, vanilla prices have dropped from \$600/kg to \$60, especially when prices of other commodities witnessed a rising trend. Industry sources in the domestic market say vanilla is available at as low as \$20 per kg, especially from African countries such as Uganda and Tanzania.

Vanilla, a flavouring ingredient, is predominantly an export crop and its domestic consumption is minimal. The industry mainly uses synthetic vanilla. Madagascar accounts for 80 per cent of the global production. Joseph Sebastian, a vanilla farmer in Idukki and owner of EcoSpice, a spice processing firm, attributed the reasons for the price drop to increased production globally



As farmers in North-East have traditional multi-storeyed horticulture gardens, they can easily grow vanilla without sacrificing additional land

that led to abundant availability across the markets. Earlier, Madagascar was a major production centre followed by Indonesia and India, which produces a minimal quantity.

However, there is no official data on production as it is mainly confined to Kerala's Idukki region and Karnataka in the South. Indian production has been limited to about 20 tonnes. This is mainly because of the uncertainty in prices and

fungus diseases. Moreover, it is a labour-intensive crop which requires skilled work especially for pollination of the plants, he said. Many farmers took up vanilla farming in various countries when its prices peaked. This resulted in ample supply in the market, leading to increased inventories in producing countries. The price fluctuation is cyclical, which is seen once in 10-12 years.

DM Barman, Deputy Director, Spices Board, Regional Office, Guwahati, said a few farmers from Meghalaya and Assam had started vanilla cultivation and they are selling the beans to traders in Karnataka. This year, they sold dry vanilla beans at ₹10,000 to ₹12,000 per kg and approximately 1,000 kg dry vanilla beans were sold out from north-eastern States. As farmers of the North-East have traditional multi-storeyed horticulture gardens, they can easily grow vanilla without sacrificing additional land.

Aluminium futures: Go short; stop-loss at ₹240

Akhil Nallamuthu
bl. research bureau

Aluminium futures on the MCX, over the past three weeks, has been on a decline. It started falling on the back of the barrier at ₹250.

COMMODITY CALL.

In the last three weeks, aluminium futures has slipped below key support points. The contract is now below both the 20- and 50-day moving average, and early this week it dropped below a key support at ₹232. These factors point to a possible downward movement from the current level. But there could be a minor rally from here, which can be capped at ₹235.

As per the chart, the nearest support for aluminium futures from the current level is at ₹225. But



given the momentum, the contract will most likely fall below this and touch ₹210 in the short-term.

Aluminium futures can turn the trend bullish only if it can recover above ₹240, which at the moment appears unlikely. So, traders can consider short positions.

Short aluminium futures now at ₹230 and add shorts if the price rises to ₹235. Place stop-loss at ₹240. When the contract drops below ₹225, revise the stop-loss to ₹232. Bring the stop-loss further down to ₹222 when the price touches ₹215. Book profits at ₹210.

Tea output in Dooars, Terai may fall 30% due to adverse weather

Mithun Dasgupta
Kolkata

Tea production across estates of the Dooars and Terai regions in West Bengal is likely to witness around 30-35 per cent year-on-year fall during this year so far as first and second flush yields dropped due to adverse weather conditions.

"In the Dooars and Terai region, first and second flush productions were down compared to last year as rain remained elusive till April. The region received rainfall during May-end after a long gap. And now, for the last nine days we have been witnessing continuous rain and no sunshine. Heavy rain and lack of sunlight adversely affect growth of tea bushes," said Bijooy Gopal Chakraborty, President, Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers' Associations (CISTA).

According to the latest Tea



Board India data, total production of Dooars and Terai region during January-April this year stood at 42.35 million kg against 54.64 million kg during the same period last year.

"In the region, tea production during this year so far is likely to be lower by around 30-35 per cent compared to the same period last year," Chakraborty said.

LOWER-THAN-EXPECTED

Total production in the Dooars and Terai in 2023 stood at 427.53 million kg, and of that around 64 per cent of the brew was pro-

duced by small tea growers. Notably, Dooars and Terai contribute around 98 per cent to West Bengal's total tea production. Last year Darjeeling produced only 6.1 million kg against 6.93 million kg in 2022.

Chakraborty said small tea growers are getting higher prices for their produce this year as production fell. Small tea growers sell around 80 per cent of their produce to bought leaf tea factories (BLFs).

"Bought leaf factories are paying higher prices compared to last year while purchasing green leaf. However, we had expected that prices would be much higher," the CISTA president said.

The Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers' Associations (CISTA), the apex body of small tea growers, has welcomed the West Bengal government's proposed road map to achieve the MRL (Maximum Residue Levels) standards tea.

AVPL to train agri drone operators to work in Australia, Brazil, Spain

Subramani Ra Mancombu
Chennai

AITMC Ventures Limited (AVPL) International, an integrated agri-drone company, will set up 20 World Skill and Incubation hubs and 50 Global Skill and Incubation hubs in 12 States to train agriculture drone pilots and entrepreneurs, said Preet Sandhu, co-founder and Chairman, AVPL International.

In the first phase, these hubs, to come up in partnership with the National Skill Development Council (NSDC) will be utilised to train and send them to Australia, Brazil, Latin America, and Spain over the next two years, she told *businessline* in an online interaction.

TIE-UP WITH IFFCO

The Gurugram-based company has signed an agreement

with multi-State cooperative fertilizer firm IFFCO to collaborate on drone spraying in over 50 lakh hectares across 8 States in the country. "The drone spraying project is a direct one which could earn the company ₹200 crore. If we get ₹400 for spraying one acre, we will get that much. We will hire 7,000 pilots who will spray 10 acres a day each. In 90 days, we would have sprayed on 63 lakh acres," she said.

Founded in 2016, AVPL has been training farmers for the empowerment of their families. "We are providing training on soil testing on pesticide application on agri inputs. Since 2021, we have transferred the pesticide application training into pesticide spraying by drones upgraded version of pesticide applications," said Sandhu.

Drone spraying will help farmers overcome any after-effects of spraying pesticides, while water consumption is



Preet Sandhu, Chairman, AVPL International

down to almost 15 per cent to around 16 litres per acre from 100-120 litres.

DRONE MANUFACTURING

AVPL is the largest remote pilot training organisation (RPTO) and it got clearance for drone manufacturing this year, she said. "We have the largest drone training institutes in the country," she said.

The company has about 35 drone servicing centres, which are also associated with

NSDC and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

On setting up the skill and incubation hubs, Sandhu said the 20 World Skill and Incubation hubs are institutions with 50,000-plus sq ft area, while the Global Skill and Incubation hubs will have 25,000 sq ft area.

In countries such as Brazil, Australia, and Latin America, the land holdings are huge and individual farmers can buy drones for various farm activities. "We need to train pilots to export drones. AVPL will be the first company in India focusing on international placements of drone pilots along with domestic deployment in each village," the company's co-founder and chairman said.

On training, Sandhu said the company provides RPTO training of 5 days followed by comprehensive remote pilot training. Drone pilots need Directorate-General of Civil

Aviation clearance to get an RPTO licence.

These candidates will then take a comprehensive 3-month training to become agriculture drone pilots or *kisan* drone operators. "You first need a drone pilot licence before you can start flying one," she said.

During the training for agriculture drones, the company provides them with on-the-job training for three months, Sandhu said.

Candidates who successfully undergo the agri drone pilot training will get a dual certification, including the one from NSDC. The other certification will be from countries such as Australia or Brazil accreditation bodies. "If a person wants to migrate to Australia as an agri drone pilot, he/she needs dual certification, including from the Civil Aviation Safety Authority," the company co-founder and Chairman said.

Sasken Technologies Limited

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NOTICE

Pursuant to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs General Circular No. 09/2023 dated September 25, 2023 and SEBI Circular No. SEBI/HO/CFD/CFD-PoD-2/P/CIR/2023/167 dated October 7, 2023 ensuing Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Company will be held through Video Conferencing/Other Audio-Visual means. In compliance with said circulars, the Notice convening 36th AGM and Annual Report 2023-24 will be sent by way of email to the shareholders at their email IDs registered with the Company/Depository Participant (DP) as on cut-off date.

Also, shareholders holding physical securities are mandated vide SEBI Circular No. SEBI/HO/MIRSD/PoD-1/P/CIR/2023/181 dated November 17, 2023 and Master Circular No. SEBI/HO/MIRSD/PoD-1/P/CIR/2024/37 dated May 7, 2024 to update their KYC details viz. PAN, Bank account details, Contact details (Mobile number and address with PIN), Specimen Signature and Nomination details against their Folio in the prescribed formats made available on the website of the Company-www.sasken.com/investors/frequently-asked-questions and Registrar and Transfer Agent (RTA)-www.kfintech.com. Any service request of the physical shareholders shall be entertained only upon updation of their KYC. For shares held in demat form, please update your KYC details with respective DPs.

Shareholders may check the status of KYC updation in their physical Folio, details of queries, if any, details of paid / unclaimed dividend lying against their Folio, download Forms for updation of KYC, etc. by accessing ris.kfintech.com/clientservices/isc/.

For any queries on the above matter, please contact our RTA viz. KFin Technologies Limited, Unit: Sasken Technologies Limited, Selenium Tower B, Plot No.31 & 32, Gachibowli, Financial District, Nanakramuda, Serilingampally Mandal, Hyderabad - 500 032, Toll Free No: 1800 309 4001, Email: einwardr.is@kfintech.com.

For Sasken Technologies Limited
Paawan Bhargava
Company Secretary

Place: Bengaluru
Date: June 19, 2024