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Farmers getting fair deal, asserts FCI chief

By Our Agriculture Correspondent

NEW DELHI, November 2.

MR. J. P. Gupta, zonal manager of the Food Corporation of India (north zone), has denied that Punjab and Haryana farmers are not getting the proper price for paddy.

Addressing a press conference, he said every farmer expected the statutory price of Rs. 95 a quintal for paddy irrespective of grain quality. According to the government's policy, this price was payable only if the stocks met

the required quality standards. If the stocks brought to the market contained more moisture and impurities, the price would be less. The minimum price for the worst quality of paddy acceptable for procurement was Rs. 86.70 a quintal. Better varieties, of course, could get higher prices, he said.

Mr. Gupta said an attempt was being made to educate farmers as well "kutcha ahtiahs" (farmers' selling agents) to clean and dry paddy before offering it for sale to fetch better prices. Almost every mandi in these states had machines which could clean the grains.

Prices fall in U.P.

By Our Staff Correspondent

LUCKNOW, November 2.

A crackdown on erring traders all over the state since April led to a perceptible fall in the prices of food grains and essential commodities.

Nearly 430 traders were arrested in 6,500 raids on shops till Wednesday and hoarded goods were seized.

Compared to the prices prevailing in September the prices ruling today in gram, barley and rice are lower. The decline in respect of wheat, jowar and bajra is, however, only marginal.

Raids and arrests of traders under the Essential Commodities Act by officials of the civil supplies department continue. However, the Preventive Detention Ordinance has not yet been used.

Meanwhile, official sources yesterday denied that there had been any starvation deaths in Bareilly district. A newspaper report said four persons, including a harijan, had died of starvation in Nawabganj tahsil. The district magistrate of Bareilly has contradicted the report that 161 families were facing starvation there.

Jobless pilots demonstrate

By Our Staff Correspondent

NEW DELHI, November 2.

Supporters of the unemployed commercial pilots' association yesterday started a relay hunger-strike near Airline House to demand the selection of pilots by Indian Airlines on the basis of the date of issue of a pilot's licence.

The pilots chanted slogans against the directorate-general of civil aviation. Some held placards with legends reading: "Plans for employment by words only" and "Give us jobs."

Vajpayee's noble gesture

By Our Correspondent

BANDA, November 2.

Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, Janata leader, was so deeply moved by the plight of an emaciated 10-year-old tribal boy of Sujapur village, whose mother had died of starvation, that he offered to adopt him.

But the father of the boy, while touched by the former Union minister's gesture, declined to part with his only son.

The incident was narrated by Mr. Vajpayee—who is, incidentally, a bachelor—while addressing a public meeting here after his tour of some of the drought-hit areas.

Accord on Pillai panel recommendations soon

TIRUPATI, November 2 (UNI): Mr. P. Kotiaiah, president of the All-India State Bank of India Officers' Federation, said here yesterday that the Pillai committee recommendations with suitable modifications would be made applicable to the SBI officers with retrospective effect from December 1, 1978, under an agreement which would be signed soon.

Addressing the regional conference of the SBI officers' association, Hyderabad circle, Mr. Kotiaiah said they were happy to reach a settlement with the bank's management on their demands without having to resort to the agitations.

Property right not basic, says government

NEW DELHI, November 2 (PTI).

THE attorney-general, Mr. Lal Narain Sinha, yesterday opposed the proposition advanced by Mr. Palkhivala in the supreme court that property right was a basic structure of the constitution and could not be abrogated.

Appearing for the Union of India, Mr. Sinha contended before a constitution bench of five judges that seven of the 13 judges in the Kesavananda Bharati case had laid down that the right to property was not a part of the basic structure.

The bench, presided over by the chief justice, Mr. Y. V. Chandrachud, is hearing arguments on writ petitions challenging the 42nd constitution amendment which bars courts from judging the validity of any law made in furtherance of directive principles even on grounds of infringement of fundamental rights.

Clauses three and four of article 368, which gives parliament unlimited powers of amending the constitution and ousts court jurisdiction from determining the validity of any amendment, have also been challenged.

ACADEMIC ISSUE

According to Mr. Sinha, the question of validity of clauses four and five of article 368 and of the 42nd amendment as a whole could be found to be academic once it was decided what the ratio of judgment in the Kesavananda Bharati case was.

The attorney-general contended that six of the judges in that case came to the conclusion that there were implied limitations on the amending power of parliament. The power was limited to the extent that parliament could not abrogate or damage the basic features of the constitution. The extent of that limitation was itself a basic structure of the constitution.

But six other judges "categorically" rejected this view. Mr. Justice Khanna also did not agree with the view in regard to inherent or implied limitations but said that the amending power could not be so exercised as to take away the basic structure.

According to Mr. Sinha, the basic structure did not include the right to property as decided by Mr. Justice Khanna and six others.

The arguments will continue on Monday. UNI adds: Earlier, concluding his arguments, Mr. Palkhivala said that "the limitation on parliament's amending power was itself a basic structure, which had been taken away by clauses four and five of article 368. "Parliament cannot in exercise of its amend-

RESOLVING DISPUTES

In case of a dispute over the assessment of quality the farmers were free to take the samples to the laboratories of the local food controllers' offices for analysis. The report of the laboratories would be accepted by the FCI staff, he announced.

Under the existing marketing system, the bulk of the paddy coming to mandis was supposed to be bought by rice millers who, after processing, had to give 80 per cent of it to the government as levy. The FCI made purchases only as a price-support measure to avoid distress sales by farmers.

Giving estimates of the expected total rice procurement this year, he said Punjab alone might contribute between 2.5 and 2.7 million tonnes of rice to the Central grain pool. Last year, the state had contributed 2.7 million tonnes. The procurement in Haryana, however, was likely to be substantially less than last year's level of 800,000 tonnes. It might be about 650,000 tonnes this year. Nothing was yet certain about Uttar Pradesh which also contributed about 800,000 tonnes of rice to the Central pool last year. In all probability, the rice procurement in the state this year would be markedly lower than last year.

He conceded that there were "some problems" of grain storage in Punjab but the FCI would be able to manage its stocks as the state government had agreed to place some of its warehouses at the disposal of the corporation. In Haryana, the storage problem was not so acute.

According to the latest information, over 1.2 million tonnes had already arrived in markets in Punjab and nearly 200,000 tonnes in Haryana. In Punjab, the FCI had procured about 470,000 tonnes and the state government about 51,000 tonnes under their price support operation.

Hike in commission rates opposed

By Our Staff Correspondent

SURAT, November 2: The co-operative societies and other farmers' organisations dealing in vegetables have opposed the increase in the commission rates by agents from five per cent to eight per cent. A meeting chaired by the Chorvadi MLA, Mr. Thakorbhai Patel, has decided to represent to the Maharashtra government for applying the provisions of the agricultural marketing act of 1952 to cover vegetables.

A six-member delegation led by Mr. Vallabhbhai Khushalbai Patel, will visit Bombay for talks with government officials and traders.

It has also been decided to request the Gujarat government to obtain the necessary permission from the State Trading Corporation and the Union commerce ministry to enable farmers' organisations and co-operatives to export vegetables directly, avoiding middlemen in Gujarat and Bombay.

Eve gives a boost to sagging belt sales

MADRAS, November 2 (UNI): The growing popularity of leather belts among American women is giving a gentle lift to the sagging business in belts in that country, says "Leathers," a publication of the Leather Export Promotion Council.

It says the sale of men's belts declined by five to seven per cent last year. The increased demand for women's belts helped to compensate the loss to some extent.

The declining trend in men's belts is attributed to a variety of reasons; the price of belts has increased by 50 per cent and the demand for jeans belts has fallen with the decline in the popularity of jeans.



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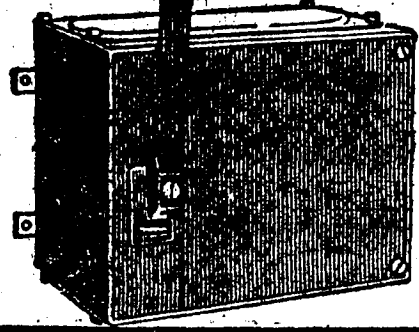
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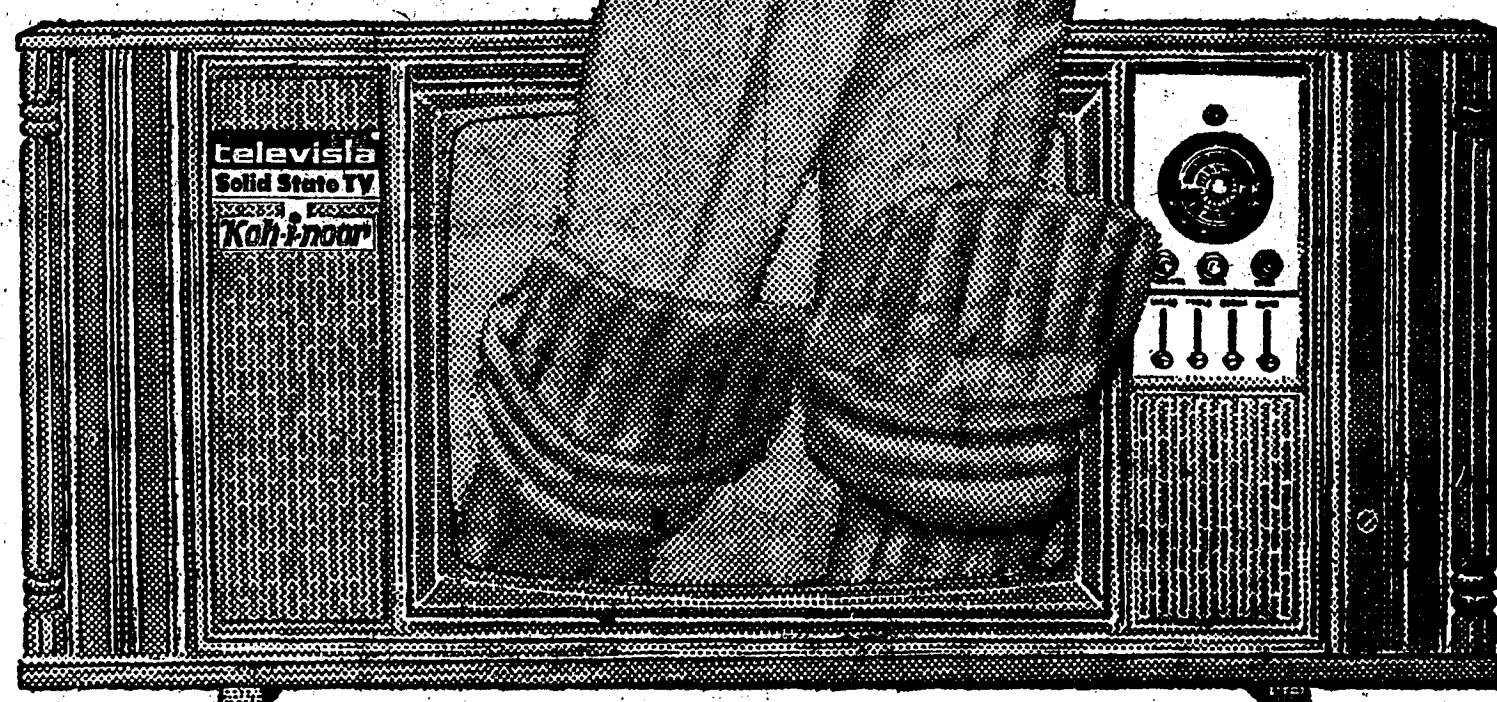
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