THE HINDU

Published: July 12, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 12, 2011 04:10 IST MUNNAR, July 12, 2011

184 hectares resumed at Munnar

State control:Revenue Minister Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan erecting a board to proclaim the resumption of encroached land at Ezhupathekkar in Chinnakkanal village in Idukki district on Monday.— Photo: By Special Arrangement

Revenue Minister Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan said here on Monday that 455.33 acres (184 hectares) of encroached land here was attached by the Revenue Department and boards notifying the resumption erected on seven plots on Monday.

He told presspersons that a detailed report would be submitted to Chief Minister Oommen Chandy on the encroachments in areas that he visited on Monday. Earlier, he visited several pieces of land cleared of encroachments.

The Minister, who arrived here on Sunday night, first visited Gap Road, where a board proclaiming the resumption of 250 acres (100 ha) of land was erected. The next stop was the catchment areas of the Anayirangal dam, where 50 cents (0.2 ha) and 80 cents (0.3 ha) of land was resumed. After visiting 104 acres (42 ha) resumed in the Sinkukandam area, the Minister moved to the Ezhupathekkar area where various government agencies own nearly 3,000 acres

(1,200 ha) of land. Fifty acres (20 ha) owned by the Revenue Department was resumed there. Court cases are pending on 20 acres (eight ha) of land and a decision to resume this or not will be taken subject to the court verdict. Seven families remain in the area, and the Minister said their cases for rehabilitation would be considered. For the deserving landless Scheduled Tribe categories, alternative land would be provided.

The Minister later visited the Parvathy Hills where 40.33 acres (16.3 ha) of land was resumed.

At Ezhupathekkar, a road was found constructed using grama panchayat funds only for the use of a person who had encroached on land. Even a helipad was set to come up there. The road was closed and a board erected.

Roads constructed by the encroachers around Gap Road and the Anayirangal dam area were also closed.

The Minister directed senior revenue officials to monitor the closed land area. Fencing of the resumed land would be done on a priority basis. He directed filing of criminal cases in case the land was encroached again.

Later, he told presspersons that the drive would be conducted in such a way to give people a clear message that encroachments would not be possible. Devikulam Sub-Collector M.G. Rajamanikyam would consider people's complaints with regard to the drive. Revenue inspectors would be posted to prevent encroachments. They had been asked to submit weekly reports. Officials would monitor the resumed land.

The Minister spoke of a three-step strategy: prevention of encroachments on the resumed land, rehabilitation of evicted people in smallholdings if their cases were genuine, and a legal process to deal with cases related to the resumed land.

Published: July 12, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 12, 2011 04:07 IST MADURAI, July 12, 2011

Workshop on food packaging today

Organised by Indian Institute of Packaging

A one-day workshop on ‘Packaging for Processed Food products' at the all-India level will be held in the city on Tuesday by Indian Institute of Packaging (IIP), an autonomous body in Mumbai that comes under the Union Ministry of Commerce.

Addressing a press conference here on Monday, Institute Director N.C. Saha said the workshop was intended to disseminate information on the latest trends and technology in packaging to micro, small and medium enterprises.

Innovative packaging was needed to export any product. Packaging was very important in the food sector as it could extend the lifetime of a product. Further, 60 per cent of the packing products in the industry were used by the food sector. A total of 14 such workshops were held across the country last year.

The institute was looking to help small industries and this was the reason the workshop was being held at Madurai in Tamil Nadu.

This workshop was completely free and the cost was fully borne by the Union Ministry of Food Processing. Around 1,500 people have benefited from the training courses offered by the Institute in the last 26 years, he informed. The IIP has centres at New Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata and Hyderabad. K Kasi Visweswaran, Chairman of IIP - Chennai, who was at the press meet, said that around 35 per cent of the food products were lost due to inadequate packing. Such workshops could help address this loss.

The president of Madurai District Tiny and Small Scale Industries Association (MADITSSIA) president N. Somasundaram said that entrepreneurs in and around Madurai could benefit greatly from this workshop.

Published: July 12, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 12, 2011 04:10 IST HOSUR, July 12, 2011

Use water with care, Collector tells farmers

For irrigation:Collector C.N. Maheshwaran (second left) releasing water from Kelevarapalli dam near Hosur on Monday.

Farmers should use with care the water from the Kelevarapalli Dam that has been let out into the farmlands of the district, Krishnagiri Collector C.N. Maheshwaran said on Monday.

Mr. Maheshwaran opened the sluice gates of the right main canal (RMC) and left main canal (LMC) of the Dam, near Hosur, to release water for irrigation on Monday.

Branch canals

Present on the occasion was K.E. Krishnamurthy, the ruling party M.L.A. representing Bargur, in the absence of Minister for Municipal Administration and Rural Development K.P. Munusamy, who was busy due to Cabinet meeting at Chennai.

Mr. Maheshwaran said water would be released for 150 days (from July 11 to December 7) from both the main canals and other branch canals.

About 2,082 acres from the right canal and 5,918 acres from the left canal and other branch canals in 22 villages would benefit from the water supply.

Villages

The villages to benefit from the water supply include Thattaganapalli, Boodhinatham, Pethamuthali, Muthali, Aattur, Kathirepalli, Marasandiram, Kothur, Moranapalli, Thorappalli, Tiruchipalli, Kamanthotti, Thinnur, Subagiri, Koneripalli, Chinnakollu, Pethakollu, Samanapalli, Sennathur, Attakuriki Nallakanakothapalli and Marthanapalli.

Water would be released on a rotation basis for 10 days, with an interval of six days in each place, based on the water level in the dam, which was 41.16 feet with a storage of 369.115 mcft against its full level of 44.26 ft and storage capacity of 481 mcft on Monday.

The Collector said duration of release of water would not be extended, and asked the farmers to use the water judiciously with the cooperation of the public works department so that the farms at the finish of the canals would be benefitted.

Published: July 11, 2011 19:01 IST | Updated: July 11, 2011 19:01 IST KOTTAYAM, July 11, 2011

Insurance scheme for rubber tappers

Special Arrangement Rubber Board Chairperson Sheela Thomas inaugurating the Board’s Group Life Insurance-Cum-Terminal Benefit Scheme by providing Esavu Kanjirathinkal, a rubber tapper, with the first enrolment during a function held in Kottayam on Monday.

The Rubber Board launched the Group Life Insurance-Cum-Terminal Benefit Scheme for tappers in the small holding sector here on Monday.

Rubber Board Chairperson Sheela Thomas inaugurated the scheme by providing Esavu Kanjirathinkal, a rubber tapper, with the first enrolment.

Rubber Board Director (Finance) Viju Chacko, Joint Rubber Production Commissioners K.V. Mathew and M.N. Gopinath, and Vigilance Officer Thomas Augustine participated in the inaugural function.

The scheme is being implemented in collaboration with the Life Insurance Corporation of India. It provides insurance cover for both natural and accidental deaths, compensation for disabilities due to accidents, and terminal benefits for the members. In addition, the members' children studying in classes 9 to 12 will be eligible for an educational scholarship.

The membership is limited to tappers in the age group of 18 to 59 years. However, without insurance cover, tappers will be permitted to remit their contribution to the retirement scheme till the age of 65 years.

The scheme offers Rs.35,000 for natural death, Rs.80,000 for accidental death, Rs.37,500 for the loss of one limb due to accident, and Rs.75,000 for the loss of two limbs.

The minimum contribution for membership in the scheme is Rs.300 a year. Of this, Rs.133 will be accounted as premium and Rs.167 as contribution to the terminal benefit fund. Those desirous of additional benefits can contribute more. Along with the contribution of the tappers, the employer also can contribute an amount for the tapper. The amount will be added to the contribution of the tapper and will be recorded separately.The Board's contribution to the fund has been fixed at Rs.200. For those tappers who have membership in the tappers bank, the Rubber Producers' Societies concerned will remit Rs.2,000 a year as their contribution.

The application forms for the scheme, declaration forms for self-certification regarding sound health, and the application forms for appointment of nominee will be available at the regional offices of the Board. The application should contain the permit number of the holdings and signature of the employer. In the absence of the above, field officers of the Board or the presidents of the RubberProducers' Societies can certify the holding and employment details.The deadline for submission of applications is July 27.

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hindustantimes
Tue,12 Jul 2011

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather

Partly Cloudy	**Tuesday, Jul 12**
	Max Min
	37.6° | 28.1°
Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs	Sunrise: 5:48
Humidity: 84%	Sunset: 18:39
Wind: Normal	Barometer: 1002

Tomorrow's Forecast

Partly Cloudy	**Wednesday, Jul 13**
	Max Min
	38° | 28°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Jul 14	**Jul 15**	**Jul 16**	**Jul 17**	**Jul 18**
34° | 29°	33° | 27°	33° | 27°	32° | 26°	29° | 26°
Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Cloudy	Rainy

By PTI

11 Jul 2011 10:24:13 PM IST

EGoM clears draft Food Bill

NEW DELHI: Paving the way for making subsidised foodgrains to poor a legal right, a ministerial panel today cleared the draft Food Bill that will benefit 75 per cent of the rural population, against the 90 per cent proposed by Sonia Gandhi-led National Advisory Council (NAC).

The decision, approved by Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee-headed Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM) on Food, would also cover 50 per cent of the country's urban people, highly-placed sources said.

A total of 68 per cent of the population (1.2 billion), living in both villages and cities, will benefit, they said.

The National Food Security Bill, which requires 61 million tonnes of foodgrains in a year to cover the targeted beneficiary, will increase the the current food subsidy bill by Rs 13,000 crore to Rs 95,000 crore in a year.

As per the draft bill, 7 kg of foodgrains per month per person will be given to the 'priority sector' (Below Poverty Line). Rice will be supplied via ration shops at Rs 3 per kg, wheat at Rs 2 per kg and millets at Re 1 per kg.

EGoM was divided over the quantity of foodgrains to be made available for the general category (Above Poverty Line).

Sources said it will be either 3 or 4 kg per person. The rate will be half of the minimum support price (MSP).

Sources said that Defence Minister A K Antony has favoured supply of 4 kg a person in a month to general households, as against Food Ministry's proposal of 3 kg. The NAC too had proposed

4 kg for general household.
They said the EGoM has accepted the NAC's proposal for covering 50 per cent of urban households, but has brought down the rural beneficiaries to 75 per cent, citing constraints of foodgrains supplies.
States which have a crucial role in implementation of the programme will also be taken on board, sources added.
The bill after being vetted by the law ministry would be placed before chief ministers and after that will go to Parliament.
"Our intention is to place it before Parliament in the Monsoon Session," a source said after the EGoM meeting.
Food Minister will meet the Finance Minister tomorrow to decided on the quantity for general households, sources said.
At present, the government provides 35 kg of wheat and rice to 6.52 crore BPL families and at least 15 kg to 11.5 crore families under above poverty line (APL).

11 Jul 2011 11:00:37 AM IST

'Organic farm sector to touch Rs 100 billion'

NEW DELHI: The Indian organic farming sector is likely to be worth Rs.100 billion by 2015 and will create millions of jobs, a leading industry lobby said here on Sunday.
The current market is worth Rs.2,500 crore, said the study, "Organic Products-The Way Ahead", conducted by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham).
"The Indian organic food market is growing at a steady rate of 40 percent annually," said Assocham secretary general D.S. Rawat.
It can create millions of jobs as it can spur over 30 percent of employment per hectare as against non-organic farming, according to Assocham.
"The global organic market currently stands at around $65 billion and is growing at a robust annual rate of over $5 billion," the study said.
Basmati rice, pulses, honey, tea, spices and their value added products are produced organically in India.
Apart from the edible sector, organic cotton fibre, garments, cosmetics and functional food

products are also produced.
Although organic farming is picking up pace in India, the sector has been jostling with lack of awareness, knowledge and confidence.
Farmers as well as consumers do not know about food products. "We have suggested to promote training programmes for farmers, producers and certification programs for agencies to enhance awareness about organic farming, food products and their health benefits," said Rawat.
Besides, there is a limited expertise in marketing of organic products and the government should engage NGOs to establish close linkages with farmers.
"Only the educated and health-conscious urban lot consumes organic food produced in the country as there is a price difference of about 30 percent between organic and non-organic food," said the study.
The government must promote organic farming by providing training, extension services information and marketing services to farming communities, the study said.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Tue, Jul 12, 2011 | Updated 09.37AM IST

11 Jul, 2011, 12.22PM IST,PTI

Sugar futures rise on better demand, low July quota

NEW DELHI: Supported by a pick-up in demand and low quota for July, sugar futures prices rose by 0.61 per cent to Rs 2,817 per quintal today as speculators enlarged their positions.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange , sugar for delivery in August moved up by Rs 17, or 0.61 per cent, to Rs 2,817 per quintal, with an open interest of 25,480 lots.

Similarly, sugar for delivery in current month July also edged up by Rs 16, or 0.58 per cent, to

Rs 2,773 per quintal, with an open interest in 28,710 lots. It had ended 1.32 per cent higher at Rs 2,766 per quintal in the previous session.

Analysts said the rise in sugar futures prices was mostly attributed to pick up in demand from bulk consumers amid announcement of lower quota for July and hopes that more exports of the sweetener may be allowed by the government.

Meanwhile, the government has allowed millers to sell a total of 17.72 lakh tonnes of sugar via ration shops and in the open market for July month as against 18.57 lakh tonnes allocated in the previous month.

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the pioneer

State introduces Fish Credit Cards for farmers

July 11, 2011 11:23:42 PM

PNS | Koraput

For the first time, the State has introduced Fish Credit Cards to fishermen in the format of the Kisan Credit Cards. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the new system to empower the farmers who have started multipurpose farm ponds.

On Sunday, at a special function at Umeri gram panchayat in Jeypore block, Patnaik handed over the Fish Credit Cards to 15 farmers. Minister Fisheries and Animal Resources Development (ARD) Ramesh Chandra Majhi and ARD Commissioner-cum-Secretary Satyabrat Sahu were also present.

The Government has decided to extend this facility to all the districts. This year, at least 4,000 farmers would be provided the cards, which would allow them to take a loan up to `30,000 each. A 50 per cent subsidy would be provided to them, said Sahu. This step has been taken in an attempt to increase the production of fish in the State, he added.

Minister Majhi said steps have been taken to start Fish Credit Cards in all the districts, and the Government has roped in the State Cooperative Bank to give loan to the farmers. With the help of the Fish Credit Cards, farmers would now be able to take loan easily. The credit would be valid for a year.

The Rashtriya Krishi Vikash Yojana (RKVY) would be funding this initiative, said Sahu. While the Chief Minister is insisting on self-sufficiency in fish requirement of the State, this facility would go a long way in fulfilling the target, he said.

Jeypore MLA, another BJD MLA Manohar Randhari and Koraput BJD MP Jairam Pangi were also present in the meeting.

CM launches mobile veterinary service

July 11, 2011 11:21:08 PM

PNS | Jeypore

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Sunday inaugurated an innovative mobile veterinary service to expand and ensure maximum coverage of livestock in far-flung areas of the State. Patnaik launched the facility at Umeri gram panchayat of Jeypore block in Koraput district.

The use of veterinary mobile vans is being deemed as an effective measure, which will cover districts like Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Balangir, Sonepur, Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar, said Patnaik addressing a gathering here.

“The move will help out the tribals and poor farmers in KBK districts in general and unreachable zones of the State in particular,” Patnaik asserted.

The Chief Minister said better veterinary services would give boost to various types of animal rearing and enable the State to lessen the reliance on huge imports of meat, milk and chicken.

“It has been observed, after close study that the States which have made substantial progress in this vital sector are using mobile veterinary vans for reaching out to the livestock for proper medical care,” Patnaik said, adding that a visit schedule for these mobile centres would be prepared to make available veterinary service to every nook and corner of the State.

Fisheries & Animal Resources Development Minister Ramesh Chandra Majhi presided over the meeting, while among others former Minister and Jeypore MLA Rabi Narayan Nanda and Commissioner-cum-Secretary of Fisheries & ARD, Satyabrat Sahu were present.

In Odisha, out of the 314 blocks, at least 2, 939 GPs are covered with veterinary dispensaries and live stock inspection centres. In 10 districts at least 40 far-flung blocks will be covered by the mobile veterinary vans, provided out of Rashtriya Krishi Vikash Yojana (RKVY), said sources.

Business Standard

Tuesday, Jul 12, 2011

Patchy rainfall may affect soybean acreage

Dilip Kumar Jha / Mumbai July 12, 2011, 0:27 IST

Patchy and uneven distribution of rainfall in soybean growing regions has left industry experts divided over acreage and production this season.

Satyanarayan Agarwal, president, Central Organisation for Oil

Industry & Trade (COOIT) said the overall area under soybean may remain less between five and seven per cent this year due to a shortfall in rain across major growing states, including Maharashtra. “The loss in acreage, especially in Maharashtra, is unlikely to be recovered even if the intensity increases.” Soybean sowing starts with the onset of monsoon and continues until the second week of July, while in areas where crops are damaged, re-sowing begins and concludes in the third week of July.

Maharashtra, which contributes nearly one-third of soybean output in India, has reported only 977,900 hectares (ha) sown till July 9, against a target of 2.53 million ha. Although the state has received 152.18 mm of rainfall, scattered rain in soybean-rich western Maharashtra has resulted in lower overall acreage.

However, Soybean Processors’ Association spokesperson Rajesh Agrawal said the shortfall in acreage in some parts of the country will comfortably be bridged by the end of the season.

“Last year, total area under soybean was reported at 93 lakh ha. This year, we will surely achieve this figure of not higher.”

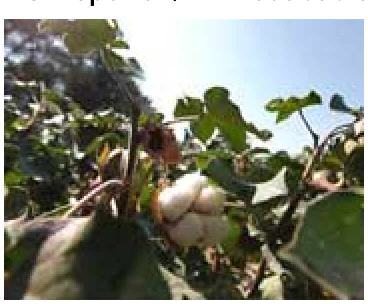
The monsoon started on a good note, with 11 per cent above normal rainfall in June However, rain in July were not adequate with 25 per cent below normal rainfall for the week ended July 6. Rainfall for the season as a whole narrowed to one per cent above normal between June 1 and July 6, a Citi report said.

The ministry of agriculture reported eight per cent increase in total sowing area at 3.68 million ha as on July 8 this year, against 3.42 million ha at the same time last year.

Soybean sowing has been a cause of concern for the vegetable oil industry, said B V Mehta, executive director of the Solvent Extractors’ Association.

Rains to boost groundnut, cotton output in Gujarat

BS Reporter / Ahmedabad July 12, 2011, 0:26 IST



Groundnut and cotton growing farmers had a narrow escape from their crops and suffering losses, as widespread rain lashed Gujarat over the past week. The monsoon was delayed by 20 days from the earlier forecast of June 15, leaving farmers worried.

However, rainfall in the state is still 60 per cent below normal, at 96.2 millimeters. Gujarat is a leader in cotton and groundnut cultivation, with a total area under sown of about 2.5 million hectares and 1.75 hectares, respectively. The sowing for groundnut and cotton normally starts from June. “There was good rain in key cotton growing regions over the past one week. We expect sowing to pick up from this week onwards. The concern about a possible decline in the cotton acreage due to a delayed monsoon seems to be fading away and we may see good production this year,” said Dhiren Sheth, president, Cotton Association of India .

“Had the rain got delayed by another week or so, it would have turned out to be a catastrophe for the cotton and groundnut farmers. Though it rained a bit late, it came just in time to save the farmers. However, the harvest may be delayed by a month or so,” informed Biren Vakil, a commodity analyst in Ahmedabad. The recent rain has covered most parts of the state, including Saurashtra, central and south Gujarat. The government is expecting further progress in sowing of kharif crops. “However, we are in the process of obtaining sowing data from respective districts and will compile it in some time,” said a senior official from the directorate of agriculture.

Agriculture experts maintained that farmers having irrigation facilities had taken up cotton sowing on about 452,000 hectares in the early phase of the kharif season, while groundnut sowing was complete on about 376,000 hectares.

However, most of the cotton growing region in the state is rain-fed, where cultivation would be possible only with monsoon.

“Almost 30 per cent sowing is over in cotton and farmers feel happy about the late, but timely rain. However, there are some concerns about the production due to the delay. But for groundnut, there doesn’t seem to be much problem,” maintained C J Dangaria, director of research at Junagadh Agricultural University. According to experts, sowing for other kharif crops, including sesamum, bajara and pulses, would also be ramped up in the coming days. Castor sowing is expected to take off from July-end. “The recent rain has built hopes of good sowing for castor. The sowing will start from July-end and there are good prospects, as the rain has set the scene,” said Vakil.

THE HINDU Business Line

AP seeks Rs 120 a quintal bonus on paddy

Hyderabad, July 11:

The Andhra Pradesh Government has asked the Union Government to announce a bonus of Rs 120 a quintal for paddy farmers, keeping in view the steep increase in cost of cultivation.

In a letter here on Monday, the Chief Minister, Mr N Kiran Kumar Reddy, asked the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh to consider bonus in addition to the increase of Rs 80 in minimum support price.

Welcoming the Centre's move to allow export of 10 lakh tonnes of non-basmati rice, he said this would help ease pressure on storage capacities and get additional income to farmers. "The move would help the Food Corporation of India and rice millers to procure more paddy from farmers," he said.

Farmers in several parts of the State were forced to keep paddy stocks in the fields with FCI and millers finding no storage capacity to store the commodity. Farmers unions had been asking the Government to allow them to export non-basmati rice.

Rasoya Proteins starts solvent extraction at Buldhana

Mumbai, July 11:

BSE-listed Rasoya Proteins, producers of soya-based products and edible oils, has commenced commercial production of 1,000 tonnes a day at the solvent extraction unit at Buldhana in Maharashtra.

The solvent unit was part of the new extraction and refinery unit being set up by the company in Buldhana. The company's investment in the refinery had received the Mega Project status from the Maharashtra Government.

The Nagpur-based company intends to utilise the Rs 146 crore raised recently through issue of Global Depository Receipts for funding the Buldhana project. It had allotted 10,44,571 GDR to the Bank of New York, depository to the GDR holders. The GDR allocation was equivalent to 2,08,91,420 equity shares.

At present, the company has a modern crushing factory spread on 70 acres at Wani in Yavatmal, Maharashtra. Last fiscal, Rasoya Proteins had crushed 1.62 lakh tonnes of soyabean and registered a turnover of Rs 424 crore against Rs 370 crore, recording a rise of 15 per cent. The company expects its turnover to double by next fiscal with the production at Buldhana achieving its optimal capacity.

Sale of surplus power produced at the 10-MW captive plant also helped the company boost its revenue. It had signed a power purchase agreement with Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company for sale of 7.5 MW a hour. Rasoya Proteins has managed to achieve economy of scale in power production by entering into long term supply contract with coal producers in Wani which is known for its coal reserves.

The company's shares on BSE hit a new high of Rs 89.40 on Monday.

TN sugar mills ask Govt to offer support package

Sugar mills in Tamil Nadu have sought support package to bail out the industry.

Moot steps to link sugarcane price to that of by-products

Chennai, July 11:

Sugar mills in Tamil Nadu have sought a comprehensive support package including sugarcane pricing reform, capital subsidy for mechanised harvesting and tax reforms to bail out the industry.

In a representation through the South Indian Sugar Mills Association – Tamil Nadu, the industry has suggested that the State Government take steps to link sugarcane price to prices of sugar and by-products. An expert committee constituted by the Centre in August 2010 suggested that sugarcane price could be set at 62 per cent of the gross realisation from sugar and by-products – molasses and bagasse – or simply at 70 per cent of sugar realisation.

The State Government could constitute an expert committee to adopt this system. Additionally, the formula could provide for a buffer by ensuring during high sugar prices there is a ceiling on the price of sugarcane.

The balance should go into a fund to be paid out when sugar prices are low. The Government could directly pay farmers when there is a price shortfall.

Biggest challenge

The association has pointed out that sugar output has declined sharply from the peak levels, despite strong increases in sugarcane prices which have nearly doubled to about Rs 2,000 a tonne in the last few years.

Economic factors more than just prices have affected the development, the association said. High labour costs and shortage are the biggest challenge for the mills and farmers.

On mechanisation of harvesting, the sugar mills have asked for 50 per cent capital subsidy for investments in mechanisation of harvesting operations; exemption from purchase tax to enable balance investments in mechanisation; deployment of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme labour for harvesting; and exemption of value-added tax on harvesting equipment.

High labour costs

In the last few years, labour costs have increased from about Rs 100 a tonne of cane to over Rs 700. Shortage and high cost of harvest labour is the biggest challenge facing the industry.

Despite mobilising labour from other States, mills' capacity utilisation range around 50-60 per cent on a daily basis because they are not able to move adequate cane from the field to the mills.

Similarly, micro irrigation has to be expanded with adequate changes in the existing support systems. Though 65 per cent financial support is available from the Centre and State, the ceiling is at a ‘ridiculously' low level and discourages farmers, SISMA has said.

SISMA has also asked the State Government to endorse the country's ethanol-blended fuel programme in line with the election manifesto.

Input tax credit

On taxes, SISMA has said mills now pay sales tax on molasses and purchase tax on cane but are not allowed to avail of input tax credit which is against the principle of VAT.

Sugar mills should be allowed the benefit of input tax credit.

With Goods and Services Tax in the offing, the tax rate on sugar when it comes into vogue should not exceed Rs 37 a quintal, which was prevalent under the Additional Excise Duty earlier in practice. Levy of GST should be co-ordinated with other States.

VAT on ethanol

Sugar mills have requested that the tax on molasses be levied at Rs 100 a tonne with the tax paid to be ‘vattable' since all output products of the distillery are taxable at maximum rates under VAT.

VAT rate on ethanol should also be brought down to 4 per cent from the prevailing 12.5 per cent like other States.

The industry has also asked the State Government to consider bringing down the tax on rectified spirit and extra neutral alcohol and do away with tax on co-generation and self-generation.

Sale percentage for leaf, dust dips at Coonoor

Coonoor, July 11:

The sale percentage has fallen for both leaf and dust at the auctions of Coonoor Tea Trade Association this week, reveals an analysis of the market reports.

In the leaf auction, only 75.77 per cent was sold this week against 83.27 per cent last week. This meant that despite shedding prices by Rs 2-3 a kg, there were no takers for about a quarter of the volume this week against about 17 per cent last week.

In the dust auction, only 58.11 per cent was sold against 75.30 per cent last week. That meant, there were no takers for as much as 42 per cent this week despite shedding Rs 3 a kg, even as the producers were worried that a quarter of their supplies of last week had remained unsold.

The highest sale percentage among the brokers in the leaf auction was 81.28 and the lowest 62.23. In the dust auction, the highest percentage was only 77.71, while the lowest was 34.88 closely followed by another broker at 35.19. This is forcing the brokers to find markets outside the auction or re-catalogue the unsold teas in future auctions.

Spot rubber declines on global cues

Kottayam, July 11:

Spot rubber declined on Monday. Another bearish closing in the domestic and international futures put further pressure on sentiments during the day.

There were no fresh enquiries in the market and it slipped mainly on buyer resistance. Marginal selling pressure from dealers was also experienced during closing hours. The transactions were dull.

Sheet rubber weakened to Rs 213.50 (215) a kg, according to traders. The grade slipped to Rs 214 (215) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, as reported by the Rubber Board.

In futures, the July series surrendered to Rs 210.13 (213.54), August to Rs 212.90 (215.97), September to Rs 212 (214.93), October to Rs 213 (216.13), November to Rs 213.50 (216.50) and December to Rs 215.10 (219.70) a kg for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 declined to Rs 209.60 (212.47) a kg at Bangkok. The July futures for the grade dropped to ¥380 (Rs 209.55) from ¥389.6 during the day session and then to ¥378 (Rs 208.45) a kg in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 213.50 (215); RSS-5: 211 (213); ungraded: 208 (209); ISNR 20: 211 (214) and latex 60 per cent: 137 (138).

Maharashtra cotton output trebles after end to monopoly in procurement

Mumbai, July 11:

Cotton production in Maharashtra has almost trebled in the last five years. From a mere 35 lakh bales in 2005-06, the production has increased to 92 lakh bales in 2010-11, a growth of 162 per cent, according to the figures released by the Cotton Advisory Board.

Government officials and industry experts attribute this rise in production to the termination of Cotton Monopoly Act of Maharashtra Government. The Act, which came into force in 1972, ensured that only the State Government could procure cotton from farmers, at a predetermined price. The act was repealed in 2004, after heated discussions in the State Assembly.

The Cotton Advisory Board (CAB) statistics show that while production in Maharashtra has increased considerably, the actual area under cotton has gone up by 38 per cent. During the same period, in neighbouring Gujarat, production increased by 15 per cent and cotton area by 33 per cent. Andhra Pradesh's cotton production increased by 66 per cent, riding on a 70 per cent growth in area under production.

Maharashtra Government's Principal Secretary (Textile), Mr Sunil Porwal, told Business Line that repealing the act has created a virtually new market not only for cotton trading but also for ginning and pressing industry. “In the next two years, Maharashtra could become the largest producer of cotton in the country,” he said.

“Many attribute higher production of cotton in Maharashtra to the success of Bt cotton seeds. But if that was the case then many other States would have shown similar numbers. Plus Maharashtra's irrigation potential has only increased marginally in the last five years. Therefore, what has emerged as a key differentiator is the sunset of the Monopoly Act,” he said.

Mr Ashish Gujarati,Vice-President, Maharashtra Ginners and Pressers Association, said that farmers and traders are getting better rates only due to the termination of the act. The processing units are also getting better quality cotton because of the competition between traders for acquiring quality cotton. During the monopoly regime, there was no premium on fine quality cotton,” he said.

The Secretary of the Khandesh Ginners and Pressers Association, Mr Bharat Agarwal said that as long as the Monopoly Act was in force, cotton prices never went beyond Rs 3,200 a quintal but now the rates have touched Rs 7,000 a quintal.

Moderate demand raises turmeric a tad

Erode, July 11:

Spot turmeric prices rose marginally on moderate demand on Monday.

“Bulk buyers received a few orders, which led to limited stock-buying in the spot market on Monday. Fifty-five per cent of the 7,500-odd bags that arrived for sale were sold. Both varieties of turmeric improved by Rs 150-200 a quintal,” said Mr R.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

north indian markets

Prices remained depressed in north Indian markets such as Sangli and Nizamabad. Turmeric futures ruled steady. Higher export orders for hybrid varieties boosted sales.

At the Regulated Marketing Committee, poor quality pulled down prices by Rs 200 a quintal. Only 527 bags arrived there.

While traders expect arrivals to cross 15,000 bags by the end of this month, prices may go up by Rs 200-Rs 500 a quintal to Rs 9,500-10,000 a quintal. In the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,311-8,026 a quintal and the root variety at Rs 5,169-7,296.

Salem Crop: The finger variety fetched Rs 7,691-84,16 and root variety Rs 6,989-7,489. Out of the 1,613 bags that arrived, 250 were sold.At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 6,495-8,059 and the root variety Rs 6,270-7,469. All the 313 bags were sold.At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 6,161-7,974 and the root variety at Rs 6,106-7,407. Of the 822 bags that arrived, 761 were sold.At the Regulated Marketing Committee, the finger variety fetched Rs 7,430-8,001 and the root variety Rs 7,019-7,365. All the 527 bags were sold.

Poor offtake, widespread rain dampen cotton

Rajkot, July 11:

Poor demand depressed cotton prices which fell Rs 1,000-1,500 a candy of 356 kg. Widespreak rain in Gujarat raised hopes of better sowing, adding to the drop and leading to expectations of a further fall in prices.Sankar-6 variety sold at Rs 34,000-36,000 a candy and low-grade at Rs 28,000-30,000 a candy. Kalyan variety fetched Rs 19,000-23,000 a candy.

Raw cotton dropped by Rs 20-25 for a maund of 20 kg to Rs 800-830. While 5,000-7,000 bales arrived in Gujarat, 10,000 bales arrived in the rest of the country.

Cotton futures were down for the seventh day on Monday in the global markets, tumbling to an eight-month low even as concerns remain over a slowdown in Chinese demand, the world's largest cotton consumer.Cotton for October delivery traded at $1.1279 a pound during European morning trade on ICE futures US, tumbling 3.17 per cent.Though sowing of cotton is down nearly 20 lakh hectares (lh) at 44.62 lh until last week compared with the corresponding period a year ago, it is expected to pick up with monsoon covering cotton-growing areas in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra in the last 10 days.

Mixed trend continues in rice market

Karnal, July 11:

The rice market on Monday witnessed a mixed trend, with the prices of Pusa-1121 dropping marginally, that of PR and Permal varieties changing marginally , and all other aromatic and non-basmati varieties remaining unchanged.

On Monday, Pusa-1121 (steam) and Pusa-1121 (raw) fell marginally by Rs 20 a quintal each, to quote at Rs 4,880 and Rs 4,380 respectively, while Pusa-1121 (sela) was down by Rs 25, and sold at Rs 3,875-3,900, .

Duplicate basmati ruled flat at 3,500-3,530 a quintal. Pure basmati (raw) remained unchanged at Rs 5,900-6,000, while basmati (sela) ruled at Rs 4,000-4,025.Among the brokens of Pusa-1121, Tibar sold at Rs 3,100-3,270, Dubar around Rs 2,550, and Mongra at Rs 1,900-2,080 a quintal.Sharbati (steam) quoted at Rs 2,900-2,980, while Sharbati (sela) sold at Rs 2,750-2,800 a quintal.PR-11 (sela) sold at Rs 2,000-2,175, while PR-11(raw) quoted at Rs 1,950-2,130.

Permal (sela) sold at Rs 1,700-1,920 a quintal, while Permal (raw) ruled at Rs 1,900-2,080.

Among the brokens of the Sharbati variety, Tibar quoted at Rs 2,350-2,475, Dubar was at 2,100-2,200 and Mongra, at Rs 1,700-1,730.

Paddy Arrival

Just around 2,000 bags of Govinda, Sathi varieties arrived from Uttar Pradesh and quoted at Rs 800-850 a quintal.

The arrivals have not been regular with very little stock coming from various parts of Uttar Pradesh and Uttrakhand, said Mr Sewa Singh Arya, a commission agent and State President of Bhartiya Kissan Union.

Sugar market looks to Govt for sweetener

Mumbai, July 11:

Spot sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale market ruled steady on Monday as the market was closed for Ashadhi Ekadashi and due to the sudden demise of Mathadi Kamgar leader, Mr Shambhajirao Patil.

Naka and mill tender rates were range-bound, said traders.Mr Mukesh Kuwadia, secretary of Bombay Sugar Merchants Association, said as the market was closed, there was no physical movement of goods in Vashi market. Upper-level Naka rates were expected to be higher by Rs 5-10 on thin resale. Mill tender rates were expected to be down by Rs 5-10 a quintal due to lack of demand.Sugar market is now waiting for some cues from Government on policy changes. Out of the export permission for 10 lakh tonnes, a good quantity has to wait for confirmation for shipment. International sugar prices are ruling higher than Indian price, providing advantage to shippers, he said.According to traders, the local demand at the start of the month has eased. Traders and retailers will buy hand-to-mouth till the month-end. Favourable supply position will keep the market subdued and price movement range-bound.

On Saturday, 16-18 mills offered tenders and sold 45,000-50,000 bags (100 kg each) in the range of Rs 2,680-2,730 (Rs 2,670-2,720) for S-grade and Rs 2,760-2,840 (Rs 2,750-2,830) for M-grade. Arrival in the market was 35-40 truckloads (100 bags each) but there were no local dispatches due to the bandh. Sugar spot prices are expected to be Rs 2,765-2,840 for S-grade and Rs 2,845-3,005 for M-grade. Naka delivery rates for S-grade were Rs 2,775-2,810 and M-grade Rs 2,820-2,955.

Low buying cools palmolein

Mumbai, July 11:

Edible oils market witnessed a cautious mood on Monday as main producing centres in the country remained bearish and foreign markets range-bound. Crude palm oil (CPO) futures on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives (BMD) closed marginally lower. Volumes were negligible in the local market due to a festival. Lack of new demand cooled palmolein and cotton oil by Re 1 for 10 kg each.

Soya, sunflower and rapeseed oils rule steady. Groundnut oil rose by Rs 5, ignoring a sharp decline in Saurashtra. Domestic futures market remained volatile on speculation. Widespread rain in main producing centres such as Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, have improved prospects for kharif sowing. As of July 8, 54.36 lakh hectares have been covered under oilseeds. In Rajkot and Saurashtra, groundnut oil declined sharply by Rs 25 to Rs 1,475 (Rs 1,500) for a telia tin and by Rs 15 to Rs 955 (Rs 970) for loose (10 kg) as exporters bought lesser amount of HPS groundnuts.

In the local market, Liberty sold palmolein at Rs 535-536. Ruchi's rate for palmolein was Rs 532, for soya refined oil Rs 626 and for sunflower oil Rs 681-682. Allana's palmolein was at Rs 532. Malaysia's BMD CPO August contracts closed at MYR3,078 (MYR3,085), September at MYR3,074 (MYR3,077) and October at MYR3,070 (MYR3,078) a tonne.

Mumbai commodity exchange spot rate (Rs/10 kg): Groundnut oil 965 (960), soya refined oil 630 (630), sunflower exp. ref. 650 (645), sunflower ref. 690 (690), rapeseed ref. oil 662 (662), rapeseed expeller ref. 632 (632), cotton ref. oil 644 (645) and palmolein 532 (533).

Soya oil unfazed by weak foreign markets

Indore, July 11:

Soya oil and soyabean prices remained steady even as foreign markets weakened. Soya refined, which opened at Rs 615 for 10 kg in the morning, declined in late afternoon as weak global cues depressed Malaysian palm oil futures. By and large, soya refined saw bulk-trading at Rs 612-613 for 10 kg.

While resellers here sold soya refined at Rs 612 for 10 kg, they sold it at Rs 610-611 for 10 kg in Neemuch and Mandsaur.

Declining foreign markets also pulled down soya solvent, as it fetched Rs 582 for 10 kg in the spot market and Rs 585 for 10 kg in the delivery market.

Unlike spot soya oil prices, soya refined futures traded higher on improved buying. July contract for soya refined on the National Board of Trade, closed Rs 2.70 higher at Rs 643.70. Similarly, soya oil futures closed marginally higher on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, with its July and August contracts opening at Rs 642.60 and Rs 641.90.

soya seeds

Soya seeds also remained firm though demand remained subdued at the plant level and as the Chicago Board of Trade made weak projections. In the spot market, soyabean sold at Rs 2,180-2,220 a quintal across mandis in Madhya Pradesh ex-Indore against Rs 2,170-2,140 a quintal in Indore mandis.

On the NCDEX, soya seeds traded lower with its July and August contracts closing at Rs 2,285 and Rs 2,303.

While 35,000-40,000 bags arrived in State ex-Indore mandis, 2,500 bags arrived in Indore mandis.

Soya de-oiled cake continued to remain firm on subdued export demand.

In Kandla port, soya de-oiled cake was quoted at Rs 17,500 a quintal, while in the domestic market it was quoted at Rs 16,400 a quintal.

Insurance scheme for rubber tappers launched

Kottayam, July 11:

Ms Sheela Thomas, Chairman, Rubber Board, inaugurated the Group Life Insurance cum Terminal Benefit Scheme in collaboration with the Life Insurance Corporation of India for tappers working in the small holding sector giving the first enrolment to Mr Esavu, Kanjirathinkal, a rubber tapper.

The scheme provides insurance cover (both for natural and accidental death), compensation for disabilities due to accidents and terminal benefits for the members. Additionally the member's children, studying from class 9 to 12 are eligible for educational scholarship also.

The membership is limited to tappers in the age group of 18 to 59 years. But, without insurance cover, tappers are permitted to remit their contribution to the retirement scheme till the age of 65 years. The scheme offers Rs 35,000 for natural death, Rs 80,000 for accidental death, Rs 37,500 for the loss of one limb due to accident and Rs 75,000 for the loss of two limbs.

The minimum contribution for membership in the scheme is Rs 300 an year. Of this amount, Rs 133 will be accounted as premium and Rs 167 as contribution to the terminal benefit fund. Those who want additional benefits can contribute more. Along with the tappers contribution, the employer also can contribute an additional amount. It will be added to the contribution of the tapper and will be recorded separately. The Board's contribution to the fund is fixed at Rs 200.

For the tappers who have membership in tappers' bank, the Rubber Producers' Societies concerned will remit Rs 2,000 an year as their contribution.

The application forms for the scheme are available at the regional offices of the Board free of cost. The application should contain permit number of the holdings and signature of the employer. In the absence of the above, field officers of the Board or the presidents of the Rubber Producers' Societies can certify the holding and employment details. The last date for submitting applications is July 27.

Kisan Call Centre to assist farmers

Hubli, July 11:

University of Agricultural Sciences–Dharwad has urged the farmers and extension workers in north Karnataka to make use of Kisan Call Centre.

The university release said call centre has been set up for the benefit of the farming community and will provide information on Agriculture and allied subjects.

Kisan Call Centre Telephone number is 0836-2740851 is working at Agriculture Information Technology Centre (ATIC).

42% of minor irrigation tanks in Karnataka dry

A file photo of Dore Kere tank in Bangalore.

Bangalore, July 11:

About 42 per cent of the 3,457 minor irrigation tanks in Karnataka are dry after one month of monsoon rains and 49 per cent of the tanks has storage capacity between 30 and 50 per cent of their respective capacity. It is only in 9 per cent of the tanks that the water storage is more than 50 per cent.

A total of 3,457 minor irrigation tanks in the State has total atchkat area of 4.16 lakh hectares.

According to Karnataka minor irrigation department statistics, as on July 2, about 19 tanks are reported to be filled up to their full capacity in the 17 southern districts. A total number of 1,963 minor irrigation tanks are existing in the southern region.

In the 13 northern districts, about 52 tanks are reported to have been filled up to their full capacity. The region has 1,494 tanks.

Monsoon Progress

During July 2-8, the south-west monsoon was active with widespread rainfall over south interior Karnataka and north interior Karnataka while it was normal to weak with scattered to widespread rainfall in Malnad and Coastal regions.

South interior Karnataka: rainfall was excess in Bangalore rural, Bangalore urban, Chikkaballapura, Kolar, Ramanagara and Tumkur districts, and deficit in Chamarajanagara, Chitradurga, Davanagere, Mandya and Mysore districts. Among the 63 taluks, rainfall was excess in 29 taluks, normal in 9 taluks, deficit in 17 taluks and scanty in 8 taluks. Last year for the same period rainfall was excess in 15 taluks, normal in 12 taluks, deficit in 25 taluks and scanty in 11 taluks.

North interior Karnataka: rainfall was excess in Bagalkote, Bellary, Bidar, Bijapur, Gadag, Gulbarga, Koppala, Raichur and Yadgir districts, and deficit in Belgaum, Dharwad and Haveri districts. Among the 69 taluks, rainfall was excess in 46 taluks, normal in 9 taluks, deficit in 9 taluks and scanty in 5 taluks. Last year for the same period rainfall was excess in 36 taluks, normal in 11 taluks, deficit in 12 taluks and scanty in 10 taluks.

Malnad: it was deficit in Kodagu and Shimoga districts, and scanty in Chikamagalur and Hassan districts. Among the 25 taluks, rainfall was normal in one taluk, deficit in 13 taluks and scanty in

11 taluks. Last year for the same period rainfall was excess in 1 taluk, normal in 7 taluks, deficit in 13 taluks and scanty in 4 taluks.

Coastal: rainfall was normal in Uttara Kannada district, and deficit in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts. Among the 19 taluks, rainfall was excess in 4 taluks, normal in 4 taluks and deficit in 11 taluks. Last year for the same period rainfall was excess in 7 taluks, normal in 5 taluks and deficit in 7 taluks.

Haryana farmers on dharna against land acquisition

Rewari, July 11:

Farmers of five villages here commenced an indefinite dharna in protest against the land being acquired by the Government-owned Haryana Urban Development Authority (HUDA) for setting up residential sectors.

The farmers, who commenced their agitation on Sunday, are demanding immediate cessation of the proceedings to acquire their 454 acres of fertile land by HUDA.

Expressing solidarity with the agitating farmers, Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) legislator, Rao Bahadur Singh, District party chief, Mr Sunil Chaudhary, INLD state executive committee member, Mr Satish Yadav and other party leaders joined the dharna.

Addressing a press conference, the INLD leaders said that the agitating farmers in Haryana urgently needed Congress General Secretary, Mr Rahul Gandhi's stewardship to ward off their “deepening crisis.”

“He should come over here and see for himself the predicament that was being faced by the hapless farmers here notwithstanding the much-acclaimed acquisition policy of the Hooda Government,” they said.

Besides, they also wanted the state Youth Congress President, Mr Chiranjeev Rao, to support the farmers' cause.

Jordan-India Fertiliser Co gets $10 m loan from Canada's Cordiant Capital

Dubai, July 11:

Cordiant Capital, a Montreal-based fund manager that specialises in loans to private borrowers in emerging markets, has committed a $10 million loan to Jordan-India Fertiliser Company 'JIFCO'

The loan will finance the construction of a new $186 million plant in Jordan using phosphate rocks from local mines to produce phosphoric acid, a fertiliser, for the Indian market, a statement released here said.

"With the recent dramatic rise in the cost of basic foodstuff in India, demand for fertilisers is increasing rapidly across the country. Demand for phosphoric acid is likely to keep rising in the longer term as the growth of the Indian middle class and their demand for higher protein content food put more pressure on food supply," said the statement.

In the last 10 years, Cordiant funds have provided loans to several agri-businesses in emerging markets, including a sugar producer in India, a crusher and exporter of soyabean and ancillary products in Argentina, a banana exporter in Ecuador and a leading farm operator and agri-business group in South America that produces a diversified combination of grain crops such as soy, corn, wheat and barley.

The plant's strategic location near the Eshidiya phosphate mines and its proximity to Jordan's only seaport will keep production and transport costs to a minimum, making the JIFCO fertiliser project very competitive.

The quantity of fertiliser used per hectare in India is only a quarter of that applied in developed economies, making Indian agriculture far less productive.

JIFCO's fertiliser output will be exported to thousands of Indian farmers, improving the productivity of agricultural production and helping ease India's food shortage.

According to the statement, the project will also have a substantial developmental impact on the Jordanian economy as the construction and operation of the plant is expected to directly generate 600 to 1,000 new jobs in South Jordan, where the average income is much lower than in the rest of the country.

The Jordan-India Fertiliser Company project will receive a $125 million loan arranged by the International Financial Corporation (IFC), which includes a $90.1 million IFC B Loan raised from a syndicate of commercial banks and Cordiant Capital. The European Investment Bank (EIB) is also providing a parallel loan of 81 million euros.

The project is sponsored by the India Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO), which sources and distributes fertilisers on behalf of 40,000 farmers' cooperatives across India, and Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC), which owns and operates a large number of phosphate mines in Jordan.
