

Published: July 30, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 30, 2011 04:10 IST DINDIGUL, July 30, 2011

Soil test card to be given to 40,000 farmers

District receives mobile veterinary laboratory

Farmers taking part in agriculturist' grievance day meet held at the collectorate in Dindigul on Friday. — PHOTO: G. KARTHIKEYAN

Soil test card will be given to around 40,000 farmers in the district to enable them choose the type and the quantity of fertilizers needed to raise crops. All preventive measures will be taken to protect animals from seasonal diseases. The district has received a mobile veterinary lab, said Collector K. Nagarajan. He was presiding over the agriculturists' grievance day meeting here on Friday.

The agriculture officials would inform about the condition of soil, input required for enriching it, and make them fit for cultivation and assist in selecting crops suitable to the soil condition.

It would also help them not only scale down use of fertilizers but also cut their production costs substantially, he added.

The district had received 362.04 mm rainfall in June as against an average rainfall of 262 mm, which was 99.34 mm more than the average. At present, 20 per cent of irrigation tanks had storage to irrigate crops for one month and the rest of the rain-fed tanks had a little storage only.

He appealed to the farmers to cultivate small grains and oil seeds using the available water judiciously.

The mobile lab would visit various villages and diagnose seasonal diseases of domestic animals and birds on the spot and prescribe medicines to them. Preventive measures would also be taught to farmers.

'Kanai' disease control scheme would be implemented in the district this year. The scheme would be implemented in 205 villages.

Farmers complained that large tracts of cultivable lands were completely destroyed owing to indiscriminate discharge of effluents from a factory at Manur in Palani block. No action had been initiated against it.

Mr. Nagarajan ordered the Revenue officials to inspect the unit and submit a report. If it failed to comply with the Pollution Control Board norms, it would be sealed immediately.

Farmers from Emakkalapuram charged that soil had been lifted in large-scale before the Siva Temple at their village for the past two years. The farmers complained that Block Divisional Official did not respond to repeated complaints. Farmers' association members complained that Vettuvankulam tank was not desilted.

But officials told that desilting work was over. In many places, execution of 100-day work was in paper only. Officials created records without executing any work under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. Collector ordered Reddiyarchatram Block Development Officer to inquire into the issue.

Published: July 30, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 30, 2011 04:08 IST KRISHNAGIRI, July 30, 2011

Make Krishnagiri green, farmers told

Massive tree planting on in the district since the beginning of July



Lending them an ear: Krishnagiri Collector C.N. Maheshwaran (third left) addressing the monthly Farmers' grievances day at the Collectorate on Friday. -Photo: Special Arrangement

Farmers should help the district administration make Krishnagiri a 'Green' district, District Collector C.N. Maheshwaran has said.

Addressing the Farmers' Grievances Day meeting at the Collectorate on Friday, Mr. Maheshwaran said the district administration had taken up a massive tree-planting programme during this month across Krishnagiri district.

As part of this programme, a special initiative has been started to improve the green cover in colleges, government offices, private lands, and along the roads of Krishnagiri within a month.

Not just tree-planting

The programme will not just stop with planting the trees, but also focus on nurturing the trees and preventing it from being destroyed. And it was in that area that farmers needed to help, Mr. Maheshwaran said.

Replying to the demand to remove the garbage dumped on the banks of the South Pennar River in Kaveripattinam area, the Collector said the work in this field would be taken up shortly through a non-government agency.

A proposal had been mooted to produce fertiliser through Solid Waste Management from the garbage collected from in and around Kaveripattinam.

In reply to the demand of K.M. Ramagoundar, state secretary of the Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam, the Collector said the district administration would take the initiative to open more paddy procurement centres.

He also gave instruction to the Deputy Director of Animal Husbandry department to make necessary arrangements to open Sub Veterinary Health Centres and to write to the government to buy mobile veterinary clinics.

An official from the agriculture department announced that the district had got 468 tonnes of DAP fertilizer and it had been distributed to 1,330 acres across the district.

The rest of the farmers would be issued DAP within a week.

The department would soon get 100 cono-weeders for distribution.

On a complaint that banks were denying farm loans, the district collector asked the details of the banks and assured that action would be taken against the banks that denied farm loans.

Prior to the grievances meeting, 115 petitions were received from the farmers.

Published: July 30, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 30, 2011 04:07 IST TIRUVARUR, July 30, 2011

'Stop MNREGS during kuruvai cultivation'

Farmers of the district appealed to Collector C. Munianathan to see to it that the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee scheme is not implemented during 'Kuruvai' and samba cultivation days as it results in shortage of labour for agricultural works in the district.

To the plea from farmers at the grievances day meeting held here recently, the Collector said that a proposal for stopping the NREGS at the time of cultivation will be sent to the Central government for consideration.

Farmers also demanded supply of adequate quantity of fertilisers, co-operative loans and implementing turn system of water release in the Cauvery and Vennar systems for four days instead of six days.

Published: July 30, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 30, 2011 04:10 IST MYSORE, July 30, 2011

Agitating cane farmers held



Crying foul: Police taking agitating sugarcane farmers into custody in Mysore on Friday. —
PHOTO: M.A. SRIRAM

Tension prevailed near the Deputy Commissioner's office here on Friday with the police arresting scores of farmers who were protesting against the support price fixed by the Government.

After coming to know that the farmers were planning to lay siege to the office of the Deputy Commissioner, prohibitory orders were imposed, banned their entry into the premises.

The Sugarcane Farmers' Association had been holding a series of agitations after the State Government announced a support price of Rs. 1,850 a tonne of sugarcane for 2010-11 and Rs. 1,900 for 2011-12.

“We have been agitating for the last few days and there has been no untoward incident. Yet, you're trying to throttle a peaceful agitation by farmers fighting for their demands,” said an angry Kurubur Shanthakumar, association president, after the farmers were prevented from assembling there.

According to Mr. Shanthakumar, the Government was being unfair in fixing such low support price that even failed to meet the input cost, which came to Rs. 2,250 for a tonne of sugarcane.

The association pointed out that neighbouring States, such as Tamil Nadu, had fixed higher rates though their yield of sugar per tonne of sugarcane was around 9.5 per cent. This was in contrast to an average yield of 11.5 per cent in Karnataka, where the support price was low despite higher yield, he added.

When the farmers refused to disperse despite persuasion by the police, Mr. Shanthakumar and other farmers were taken into custody and subsequently released.

Published: July 30, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 30, 2011 04:12 IST KADAPA, July 30, 2011

Crop loans for tenant farmers by Aug. 15

Crop loans should be disbursed to all eligible tenant farmers by August 15 without any surety, district Collector V. Anil Kumar told officials on Friday.

Addressing a meeting in the Collectorate mini-conference hall on disbursement of loans to tenant farmers and mahila samakhya members, he directed officials to hand over the loan eligibility cards with bankers to tenant farmers . Officials were told to send details of all such farmers to him by July 30 evening. Mr. Anil Kumar told officials to take steps to inform tenant farmers about the specific date of loan disbursement to them. It's the responsibility of Tahsildars, MPDOs, agriculture and Indira Kranti Patham officials to ensure that farmers turned up at banks and loans were disbursed to them, the Collector said. Officials should compile data of landlords who secured bank loans. He sought mandal-wise details of pensioners who died recently.

Published: July 30, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 30, 2011 04:12 IST MAHABUBNAGAR, July 30, 2011

1,200 acres for horticulture

The plantation will be under MGNREGS

To encourage horticulture the district administration has decided to cultivate 1,200 acres under horticulture in the district under Mahatama Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and so far digging of pits and plantation were completed in nearly 700 acres and the remaining would be completed by August 15, informed district Collector M. Purshotham Reddy.

The Collector planted mango saplings at Madaram village in Hunwada mandal on Thursday.

Meeting with farmers

He also interacted with farmers and told them that the government was sanctioning an amount of Rs.40,000 per acre including wage component digging of pits and other materials. During the first year Rs.24,000 would be sanctioned and Rs. 7,200 would be paid in second year if 75 per cent of plants were protected, for there in third year also Rs.7,200 would be paid if 90 per cent plants were protected.

The Collector asked the farmers to take all precautionary measures to protect the plants and use less quantity of fertilizer.

He also asked the farmers to utilise crop insurance scheme by paying premium before July 31.

In demand

Later speaking to the presspersons, Mr. Purshotham Reddy said that farmers are showing interest in raising horticulture under MGNREGA, and more and more demand is coming from the farmers.

The Collector said that the farmers may also raise inter crops and horticulture at the same time which are very useful.

Published: July 30, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 30, 2011 04:12 IST NALGONDA, July 30, 2011

Women to be trained in food processing technology

Considering the importance given by the Centre to promote the food-processing industry, the Andhra Pradesh Women's Cooperative Finance Corporation Ltd, Nalgonda (Durgabai Mahila Sishu Vikasa Kendram) is embarking next month on an ambitious programme to launch a month-long training course for 20 women. There will be one batch every month.

The selection process is on in co-ordination with the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), district manager A.Vijayasri told *The Hindu* .

She said the candidates have to be above 18 years of age and preference will be given to women who have an interest in setting up food-processing units that will be financed by government agencies like the Khadi and Village Industries Board/Commission and NABARD.

Initially the candidates will be selected from mandals that are nearby like Tipparti, Kanagal, besides Nalgonda. The training programme under a Central scheme is part of a two-year project for 2011 and 2012.

The corporation is also reviving community health work and is starting a course on that in August.

The three-month training will be for 30 women, who should either be SSC pass or school dropouts.

The selected candidates will be trained to become efficient in basic health work, with stress on meeting minimum health care. They will also be able to provide first-aid, do basic nursing and bedside assistance.

She said the kendram, spread over ten acre, has a hostel, classrooms, dormitories, and staff quarters. It runs courses to benefit destitute, deserted, socially/economically backward women.

Started in 1989, it offered various courses such as tailoring, bakery, computer programming, web designing to about 10,000 women from 1990 to 2010. 15 women trained in tailoring were employed with Kakatiya Textiles in Kodad mandal.

Published: July 30, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 30, 2011 04:12 IST VISAKHAPATNAM, July 30, 2011

Biotechnology can solve all problems, say experts

Students encouraged to take up stem cell research, synthetic biology



President of Gitam University M.V.V.S. Murthi having a word with General Partner of Venturaeast (US) Bobba Venkatadri during the inaugural session of an international conference on biotechnology in pharma and food industries at Gitam Univeristy, Visakhapatnam on Firday. — Photo: C.V. Subrahmanyam

Biotechnology, which reportedly came into being three decades ago has developed a lot and is in a position to tackle all global problems in the coming years, experts felt during the inaugural session of a two-day international conference on “biotechnology in pharma and food industries”, being organised by Gitam University here on Friday.

While inaugurating the conference, general partner of Ventureast (USA) Bobba Venkatadri said that after a decade of hard work in the basic science of genomics, the health benefits were beginning to be felt and the leading edge of advances in diagnosis, prevention, and treatment has arrived.

China

He explained the various innovative treatments and said that China was in top position in research activity. Mr. Venkatardi advised youngsters to take up challenges in biotechnology and concentrate their research activities in areas like stem cell research, synthetic biology, telemedicine and real designer drugs which would really work for the right patient.

Gitam University President M.V.V.S. Murthi said that the Indian pharmaceutical industry has registered a steady growth and has become a world class industry providing quality drugs at affordable cost.

Biotechnology would improve food production in the country to meet the future demand, Dr. Murthi said. He wanted the Indian industry to encourage the young talents in the fields of pharmacy and biotechnology.

Indian Pharmaceutical sector is the third largest in the world and India being the second largest food producer, offers a huge market for biotechnology products while marine resource development and aqua culture hold a great potential with the country having more than 8,000 kilometers of coastline, observed Sparsha Pharma International's managing director and CEO Dange Veerapaneni.

Applied research

Every possible opportunity should be looked into to involve the entire teaching community from different campuses of India to get exposed to the concept of industry oriented applied research work, Dr. Dange Veerapaneni said.

Vice-Chancellor G. Subramanyam said that the university was ready to allocate its research laboratories to the pharma and biotech industries to take up R and D activities along with the university researchers.

Conference Convener Prof. P. Suresh, experts from pharmaceutical industries, scientists and drug control administrative officials participated in the inaugural function.

Non-basmati rice exports put on hold

BS Reporter / New Delhi July 30, 2011, 0:56 IST

Following allegations of malpractice and a Delhi High Court order, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) on Friday decided to put exports of one million tonnes of non-basmati rice on hold. An empowered group of ministers set up by the Commerce Ministry had recently lifted a three-year ban on the exports.

“Operation and implementation of the allocation made in terms of the trade notice of July 27 is stayed in view of the order passed by the High Court,” said a press release. On July 19, DGFT had notified the Centre’s decision to allow exports and made allocations of the entire quota to 82 exporters on July 27. Each exporter was allowed to export 12,500 tonnes of basmati rice at a minimum export price of \$400 per tonne.

Traders were directed to submit their requests for exports between 10 am on July 21 and 5 pm on July 22. Applications that failed to make the cut-off date were not entertained. Meanwhile, the Delhi High Court stayed the allocation after a group of traders moved court challenging the process alleging malpractices. However, by the time the court order reached DGFT, the process had been completed. The traders alleged a few rice exporting companies had managed to flood the IT server at DGFT by repeatedly sending the same application which resulted in a system failure. As a consequence, despite submitting requests for export at 10 am on July 21 and receiving duly signed acknowledgements from the authorities, some of them were denied export

quantities. While applications that were filed at a later time and date were allocated the quantities.

While the DGFT has sought the Law Ministry's opinion, it had to stay the allotment process. The government had allowed one million tonnes of non-basmati rice exports following record output. Exports of rice had been prohibited since April 2008.

Cotton yarn stock has eased: industry

BS Reporter / Chennai July 30, 2011, 0:27 IST

Spinning Mills across the country, which had a stock of more than 500 million kgs of cotton yarn following last year's restrictions on exports, have reported significant easing of the cotton yarn stock position. This was due to cut in the production by the Mills across the country.

Shishir Jaipuria, chairman, Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI) stated from May 23, 2011, onwards spinning mills all over the country had resorted to significant production cuts. Presently, 25-30 per cent of capacity for cotton yarn production in the country is lying closed. Meanwhile, restriction on export of cotton yarn has been lifted by the government and current cotton yarn exports are comparable with those of the same period last year.

"There has also been some positive movement in domestic demand for cotton yarn and he expects this trend to continue," he said.

Jaipuria stated that from a peak level of 500 million kilo grams, cotton yarn stocks with the mills have now come down to around 350 million kilo grams and he expects these to come down further in the coming months.

He added that the festival season in the country starting from September onwards is expected to see significant improvement in demand for all textile products and this would also help the spinning sector to dispose of their accumulated stocks of cotton yarn.

Meanwhile, CITI has requested the government for a comprehensive relief package for the spinning industry in order to tackle the losses suffered by the industry in recent months because of restrictions in cotton yarn exports, fluctuation in cotton and cotton yarn prices and accumulation of stocks both of fibre and yarn.

With the improvement in the demand position, spinning industry is expected to come out of its present problems during the second half of the current fiscal. However, the mills will find it extremely difficult to repay loans and find working capital in the coming months because of the huge losses they suffered during the first half of the fiscal, Jaipuria said.

CITI has sought a two year moratorium on repayment of loans and interest and a few other facilities from the Reserve Bank of India, in order to avoid the accounts becoming Non Performing Assets and added that the industry is confident that the current challenges can be met with the help of the relief which the industry has sought from government and the RBI and this will help the industry to revive its operations in full during the coming months and to avoid retrenchment of any workers.

Andhra moves to end crop holiday, farmers want stock to be lifted

B Ramakrishna / Hyderabad July 30, 2011, 0:24 IST

Close to two months into the kharif season, the Andhra Pradesh government has moved to end the 'crop holiday' by paddy farmers in East Godavari district.

According to sources in the agriculture department, the district collector has formed committees in each of the 16 mandals that have been officially accepted as under a 'holiday,' to persuade paddy growers to resume cultivation this season. This decision was taken around 10 days ago.

The government officials maintain that only 30,000-35,000 acres in East Godavari district is under crop holiday. This is far lower than the figure of 140,000 acres being claimed by the Consortium of Indian Farmers' Associations (CIFA).

Whether the government's moves will bear fruit would be known in about a week, sources said. "If farmers go for growing paddy nurseries once the water is released, the result would be clear," the official said.

According to CIFA secretary general P Chengal Reddy, 133,000 acres are not being cultivated in East Godavari alone, while smaller extents have been reported from Prakasam and Kurnool districts. He said the farmers were forming associations and the decision on a holiday was collective.

Farmers' representatives demand two major policy changes. The first is the application of the Swaminathan formula for minimum support price (MSP), which is cost of cultivation plus 50 per cent. Second, procurement by the government of all the production. MSP this year is Rs 1,000 and Rs 1,030 for coarse and fine varieties of paddy, respectively.

THE HINDU Business Line

DGFT blamed for court staying rice export process

Kakinada, July 29:

Rice millers and exporters are disillusioned with the Director-General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)'s move of 'devising deficient procedures' for rice exports, leading to the Delhi High Court staying the measures, said Mr Vinod Agarwal, President of AP Rice Exporters' Association.

In a statement issued here on Friday, he pleaded with the DGFT to take quick steps to get the matter cleared in the Court and expedite rice exports.

A division bench of the Delhi High Court stayed the operation of DGFT notification of July 19, for export of non-basmati rice on Tuesday due to some anomalies in registration procedures and other problems.

Mr Agarwal said that despite orders of the Court not to allocate any quota before the next hearing on August 10, the DGFT has listed parties on its Web site, many of them of not related to rice trade and several others who have cornered the quota through sister companies or intermediaries.

Instead of non-basmati rice being traded internationally, quota trading has started domestically even though the matter is *sub judice*, he alleged.

The export procedures formulated by the DGFT were bound to be stayed by any judicial intervention, he alleged, as they provided enough scope for brokers, agents and middlemen to manipulate.

"Therefore, the purpose of opening exports of one million tonnes of rice stands defeated for the time being." he said.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated July 30, 2011)

Spot rubber rules steady

Kottayam, July 29:

Physical rubber prices ruled steady on Friday. The market managed to sustain at the prevailing levels on covering purchases following a partial recovery in domestic futures on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. Volumes were dull.

RSS-4 in Kottayam market could not track the rising trend of Bangkok's RSS-3 beyond July 20, according to the Association of Natural Rubber Producing Countries. The grade lost momentum from this date onwards and reversed the trend falling marginally to rule below the rates prevailed in Bangkok. This was the market's response to a move by the Centre to allow import of 40,000 tonnes at a concessional import duty. However, any considerable volume is unlikely to be imported given the premium price prevailing in corresponding overseas markets.

Sheet rubber finished unchanged at Rs 206 a kg, according to traders. The grade closed steady at Rs 207 a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, as reported by the Rubber Board.

The August series improved to Rs 208.80 (206.36), September to Rs 208.66 (206.32), October to Rs 209 (206.07), November to Rs 209.90 (206.40), December to Rs 210 (207.45) and January to Rs 212 (209.01) a kg on the NMCE.

RSS 3 (spot) firmed up to Rs 215.72 (214.99) a kg at Bangkok. The August futures for the grade slipped to ₹380.9 (Rs 216.94) from ₹382.9 during the day session and then to ₹380 (Rs 216.42) a kg in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 206 (206); RSS-5: 204 (204); ungraded: 197 (197); ISNR 20: 206 (206) and latex 60 per cent: 136 (136).

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McLeod Russel net up 98% on higher tea output

Kolkata, July 29:

World's largest tea planter, McLeod Russel India Ltd, fetched an average premium in the first quarter of Rs 12.59 a kg over the average price of the corresponding quarter in the previous fiscal. In the first quarter, it produced 45 lakh kg more at 222 lakh kg (177 lakh kg). The average selling price in the first quarter was Rs 152.56 a kg.

This pushed the standalone net profit by 98 per cent to Rs 37.33 crore (Rs 18.85 crore).

Demand growth of around 3 per cent and lower opening stock due to production shortfall last year saw the new season begin with Rs 10-15 a kg premium for the quality tea.

“Lower inventory in India, production shortfall in Kenya and other African countries and strong consumption growth should have positive impact on prices during 2011. Costs per kg are expected to go up marginally,” McLeod Russel said.

During the first quarter to June 30, the total export of the company was 1.5 million kg.

Production from its own leaf was higher by 33 lakh kg on improved weather during the foregone quarter. Output from bought leaf was also higher, by around 12 lakh kg.

In 2010-11, owing to crop loss McLeod Russel had produced 749 lakh kg teas against 772 lakh kg in the previous financial year. The average price realisation of the BM Khaitan group company, however, had been at Rs 145.11 a kg, higher than the North Indian average of Rs 124.18. During the FY 2011, the city-headquartered company exported 210 lakh kg of tea. The average yield per hectare was also higher than the industry average.

During the six months ended June 30, its Vietnamese subsidiary Phu Ben Tea Co achieved a total production of 1.44 million kg (1.42 million kg). McLeod Russel Uganda Ltd, the other overseas plantation subsidiary, in the first six months of the calendar year produced 7.3 million kg (8.7 million kg)

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Cotton, soya may be headed for record crop

Kharif sowing gathers pace as monsoon coverage improves

Kharif sowing progress			
(in lakh hectares)			
	Normal*	2011	2010
1. Rice	393.620	209.930	199.820
2. Coarse Grains	219.944	151.883	166.99
(a) Maize	68.654	59.302	63.915
(b) Bajra	91.523	60.715	69.790
(c) Jowar	35.984	22.274	24.047
3. Pulses	106.610	73.906	81.829
(a) Arhar	34.187	26.194	30.720
(b) Urad	23.147	17.559	15.611
(c) Moong	26.136	18.518	20.894
4. Oilseeds	174.250	149.731	142.129
(a) Groundnut	51.540	34.402	43.017
(b) Soyabean	88.330	97.822	85.337
(c) Sesamum	15.360	11.719	8.318
(d) Sunflower	7.540	1.302	1.855
(e) Castor	7.850	3.730	2.793
5. Cotton	97.100	105.561	101.430
6. Sugarcane	47.460	51.810	49.020
7. Jute & Mesta	9.199	8.924	8.308

*Full year average for 2005-06 to 2009-10.

New Delhi, July 29:

There has been a significant improvement in kharif sowing levels, with the monsoon rains reviving over much of peninsular India during the current month.

The latest sowing data from States compiled by the Agriculture Ministry show progressive plantings of most crops, barring coarse cereals and pulses, to be higher relative to the area covered during this time last year.

Cotton

The real improvement has taken place in cotton, where till last week, the area sown was trailing compared with last year.

But the trend has reversed now, with farmers across the country planting 4.13 lakh hectares (lh) more compared with the corresponding acreage achieved at this time last year.

Most cotton-growing States have registered higher area coverage under cotton: Gujarat (25.80 lh versus 23.70 lh), Madhya Pradesh (7.06 versus 6.20), Haryana (5.981 versus 4.92), Punjab (5.75 versus 5.59), Rajasthan 4.39 versus 3.35), and Karnataka (3.47 versus 3.03).

Even in the two States where sowing is still lagging, Maharashtra (36.79 versus 38.45) and Andhra Pradesh (14.89 versus 15.17), the gap has narrowed down considerably.

Rainfall

Much of this improvement, which is also reflected in the area under other crops, is on account of the recent spell of rain across the entire stretch from Gujarat and Saurashtra-Kutch to Vidarbha, Marathwada, Telangana, Rayalaseema and North Interior Karnataka.

This largely rain-fed belt had received very poor rains during June, raising concerns over kharif sowing prospects.

But July has seen a reasonably good rainfall in these regions, leading to a lowering of the cumulative monsoon rain deficit in Marathwada from 52 per cent (till June) to 7 per cent and, likewise, from 41 per cent to 15 per cent in Telangana, from 88 per cent to 40 per cent in Gujarat and from 72 per cent to 20 per cent in Saurashtra-Kutch.

Bumper soyabean

Besides cotton, the country also appears to be heading for a bumper crop of soyabean, with about 12.5 lh additional area being sown this time.

That could be the precursor to production surpassing even last year's all-time-high of 12.66 million tonnes.

Maize, groundnut

But there are two important crops, sowings of which are still lagging.

The first is maize, where plantings are lower in Madhya Pradesh (8.1 versus 8.13), Uttar Pradesh (7.14 lh versus 7.89 lh), Maharashtra (5.062 versus 6.284), Andhra Pradesh (3.65 versus 3.92) and Gujarat (2.65 versus 3.428), even while ahead in Rajasthan (10.357 versus 9.40) and Karnataka (8.51 versus 8.26).

The second crop is groundnut, where farmers have planted less in Gujarat (13.101 versus 16.287), Andhra Pradesh (7.85 versus 11.69) and Karnataka (2.68 versus 5.12) and marginally more in Rajasthan (3.945 versus 2.65) and Madhya Pradesh (2.17 versus 1.71).

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Heavy monsoon rain returns to north-west

Thiruvananthapuram, July 29:

Widespread rainfall has been reported from northwest India, east India and along the west coast during the 24 hours ending Friday morning helping retain the overall deficit at five percent from overnight. An India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in the evening update that the axis of the monsoon has generally reverted to the normal position.

But interestingly, the monsoon trough had broken up into two – one dry-docked with its eastern end running through land into Mizoram and the other one passed through Allahabad, Pandra, Jagdalpur, Kakinada and then south-eastwards to dip into south-east Bay of Bengal.

The trough continues to be vulnerable to lateral movement during the next two to three days, the IMD said.

Meanwhile, an ex-typhoon and now a tropical storm, Nock-Ten, was preparing to wash over the China/Vietnam coast after having triggered heavy rains all the way from the Philippine Sea. A remnant circulation from Nock-Ten is forecast by global models to drift across Indi-China and set up some activity in the Bay of Bengal during the next week.

BIGGER STORM

Close on the heels of Nock-Ten, another bigger storm is forecast to brew over west Pacific and head west-northwest towards the eastern Chinese coast. Meanwhile, a weather warning by the IMD and valid for the next two days said that heavy to very heavy rainfall would break out over Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim. Fairly widespread rain or thundershowers are also likely over northwest, central and adjoining peninsular India. But rainfall activity would decrease over parts of northwest India after two days.

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Cotton blooms as Govt restores sops for exports



Rajkot, July 29:

The Centre's decision to restore the duty entitlement pass book scheme for cotton and yarn exports checked further fall in prices.

The *Sankar-6* variety rose by Rs 500-700 to Rs 29,000-31,000 a candy of 356 kg in the last couple of days. Raw cotton traded at Rs 755-760 for a *maund* of 20 kg.

Arrivals also increased during the week. While about 3,000 bales (1,500-1,800 bales) of 170 kg each arrived in Gujarat, 6,000-7,000 bales (4,000-5,000 bales) arrived in the rest of the country.

As on July 25, around 26 lakh hectares has been sown in Gujarat according to the Cotton Corporation of India's weekly report.

However, brokers believe the Centre's decision will lift cotton prices by only Rs 1,000-2,000 a candy.

The Cotton Advisory Board, in its meeting held on July 25 had projected acreage under cotton in season 2011-12 at 111.42 lakh hectares as against 103.10 lakh hectares in the previous year. The board has revised up cotton production estimate for the season to 325 lakh bales (295 lakh bales). Earlier, it had projected it at 312 lakh bales.

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Mixed trend seen in edible oil



Mumbai, July 29:

Edible oil prices witnessed a mixed trend on Friday. Volatility in domestic and international futures along with need-based physical demand arrested market activity and limited resale in palmolein.

Stockists unloaded old commitments of indigenous oils. Bursa Malaysia Derivatives (BMD) crude palm oil futures extended loss on technical selling. Concerns over the global debt crisis prompted investors to reduce positions.

In Mumbai, groundnut oil lost Rs 5, soya oil declined by Rs 2 and cotton oil dropped by Rs 8 for 10 kg, tracking weak trend at producing level centres on increased selling and weak futures market. Palmolein rose by Re 1, Rapeseed oil recovered by Rs 2. Sunflower oil ruled steady on subdued demand.

According to wholesaler, in absence of demand local refineries have kept palmolein, soya oil and sunflower oil rates unchanged. The market remained dull as the month is getting over. About 400-500 tonnes of palmolein were traded in resale at Rs 553-554. Towards close, resellers were offering palmolein at Rs 554. Liberty's rates for palmolein was Rs 557, soya oil Rs 641, and sunflower oil Rs 695. Ruchi was quoting palmolein was Rs 555, soya refined oil Rs 639 and sunflower oil Rs 695. Allana's palmolein was Rs 557.

Malaysia's BMD CPO September contracts closed at MYR 3097 (3122), October at MYR 3096 (3116) and November at MYR 3093 (3117) a tonne.

Mumbai Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) : Groundnut oil 965 (970), soya refined oil 638 (640), sunflower exp. ref. 655 (655), sunflower ref. 705 (705), rapeseed ref. oil 695 (693), rapeseed expeller ref. 665 (663), cotton ref. oil 658 (666) and palmolein was 554 (553).

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Weak offtake keeps pulses sluggish



Indore, July 29:

Sluggish trend prevailed in pulses and pulse seeds, with urad, chana and masoor showing a decline on weak demand. On the other hand, dollar chana continued to rise on robust export and domestic demand.

Weak demand dragged urad by Rs 100 with its prices in the spot being quoted at Rs 3,800-4,000 a quintal. Urad (medium) ruled at Rs 3,600-3,800. Urad dal, however, remained unaffected with urad (monger) in the physical market remaining firm at Rs 6,500-6,700 a quintal, urad dal (bold) at Rs 5,500-5,600 and urad dal (average) at Rs 4,600-4,700 a quintal.

Masoor also declined by Rs 25 on subdued demand with masoor (bold) in the spot slipping to Rs 2,775 a quintal and masoor (medium) ruling at Rs 2,550. Masoor dal, on the other hand, ruled firm with masoor dal (bold) ruling at Rs 3,400-3,425, masoor dal (medium) at Rs 3,300-3,325 and masoor dal (average) at Rs 3,175-3,200.

Chana continued to drop on weak buying. In the spot market, chana (kanta) declined by Rs 50 at Rs 2,850-2,900 a quintal and chana (desi) ruled at Rs 2,850. Arrivals of chana in local *mandis* was recorded at around 2,000 bags. With poor support to spot chana, chana dal also declined on sluggish demand. Spot chana dal (bold) quoted Rs 25 down at Rs 3,675-3,700, chana dal (medium) at Rs 3,575-3,600 and chana dal (average) at Rs 3,475-3,500 a quintal.

Tur and moong ruled firm on restricted queries. While tur (Maharashtra) remained firm at Rs 3,000 in the physical market, tur (Nimari) ruled at Rs 2,500-2,600. Weak demand dragged tur dal (full) by Rs 50 at Rs 5,250-5,300 a quintal. Tur (marka), however, ruled firm at Rs 5,900 a quintal. Tur dal (*sawa* no.) ruled steady at Rs 4,350-4,400 a quintal.

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Retail demand sweetens spot sugar



Mumbai, July 29:

Spot sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale market increased by Rs 10-20 a quintal on Friday, making up for the previous day's decline.

A sudden spurt in the futures market and support of fresh retail demand help the recovery. The rebound in the futures market improved the sentiment with mills tender and naka rates increasing by Rs 30-40 a quintal.

According to traders, uncertainty over free sale sugar quota for August kept the market volatile. The volume increased. Rumours of over 17 lakh tonnes free-sale quota for August kept sentiments steady till noon, but no announcement was made.

On Wednesday, the futures market fell by Rs 85-90 a quintal and recovered a tad on Thursday. By noon, prices were higher by Rs 40 to Rs 50. A spokesman of the Bombay Sugar merchants Association said only five or six mills came with tender offers on Thursday evening, forcing stockists to cover some quantity in resale delivery orders — naka delivery.

Mills were tracking changes in the futures market and were not keen on selling at low price — they expect some improvement in local demand at the beginning of August.

On Thursday, five or six mills have sold about 6,000-6,500 bags (100 kg each) in the range of Rs2,670-2,680 for S-grade and Rs 2,770-2,780 for M-grade. Another 5,500-6,000 bags were traded in resale delivery orders and naka business. Till noon on Friday, about 3,000-4,000 bags were sold by mills Rs 10-20 higher.

Last tender rates were expected — Rs 2,690-2,735 for S-grade and Rs 2,750-2,820 for M-grade. About 45 truckloads (100 bags each) arrived at the market and local dispatches were 48-50 truckloads.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: Spot: S-grade Rs 2,771-2,851 (Rs 2,771-2,822) and M-grade Rs 2,851-2,971 (Rs 2,841-2,951).

Naka delivery rates: S-grade Rs 2,730-2,780 (Rs 2,710-2,760) and M grade Rs 2,800-2,930 (Rs 2,770-2,900).

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Turmeric drops below Rs 7,000 a quintal



Erode, July 29:

Spot turmeric prices decreased by Rs 500 a quintal as arrivals flooded Erode markets and futures declined.

“No one expected a drastic fall of Rs 500 a quintal in spot turmeric. On Friday, over 15,000 bags (65 kg each) of turmeric arrived for sale in Erode markets. Traders quoted lower price and even the hybrid variety declined Rs 531/quintal. Other varieties dropped by Rs 300-480 . Due to heavy arrivals, prices decreased,” said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

In the Regulated Marketing Committee, prices decreased below Rs 7,000/quintal. Prices decreased by Rs 590/quintal in the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society.

Prices in the futures market were down by over Rs 600 in the last two days, so north Indian merchants did not place orders for Erode turmeric. Due to this, prices decreased and also sales. If prices in futures rule steady, then spot prices may go up, said Mr Ravishankar. He said he expects arrivals on Monday to decrease and the prices to go up.

Stocks

He also said turmeric farmers have heavy stocks with them and for their domestic expenses they need money, so are bringing heavy stock to the market. But only forty per cent of the arrived stocks were sold on Friday.

Turmeric growers said they never expected such a steep fall.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,236-7,039/quintal and the root variety Rs 5,161-6,264.

Salem Crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 6,789-7,610 and the root variety Rs 6,175-6,896. Of the 2,486 bags that arrived, 712 were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,050-7050 and the root variety Rs 5,010-6,369. Of the 227 bags, 221 were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,069-7,009 and the root variety Rs 5,739-6,189. Of the 2,055 bags that arrived, 1,850 were sold.

At the Regulated Marketing Committee, the finger variety fetched Rs 6,472- 6,986 and the root variety Rs 5,690-6,299. Of the 1,588 bags kept for sale, 1,257 were sold.

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Pusa, permal rice varieties fall on poor buying



Karnal, July 29:

Prices of Pusa-1121 and permal varieties dropped by Rs 20-35 a quintal on Friday due to lack of buying of rice in the market.

Mr Amit Chandna, Proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company, said adequate stocks and low buying pulled the prices down. There is some pressure on Permal varieties as traders are already holding huge inventories and new stock will arrive in the market in August, he added.

Pusa-1121 (steam) declined by Rs 25 and was sold at Rs 4,950-5,175 a quintal. Pusa-1121 (sela) and Pusa-1121 (raw) dropped by Rs 20 each and were ruling at Rs 4,000 and Rs 4,400 a quintal, respectively.

Duplicate basmati ruled flat and sold at Rs 3,450 a quintal. Pure basmati (raw) was ruling around Rs 5,900 a quintal while basmati (sela) quoted at Rs 4,000-4,020 a quintal.

Broken of Pusa-1121 continued to rule firm, Tibar sold at Rs 3,100-3,320, Dubar ruled at Rs 2,650 and Mongra was trading at Rs 1,900-2,130 a quintal. Sharbati varieties managed to maintain their levels amid slack trading. Sharbati (steam) was ruling around Rs 2,900 while the Sharbati (Sela) was at Rs 2,740-2,760 a quintal.

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AP bans starving of hens to manipulate egg-laying cycle

Hyderabad, July 29:

Poultry farmers or egg production centres in Andhra Pradesh, the largest producer of eggs that continue to practice the starvation force molting regimes on hens, will have to discontinue it or else face action.

The practice, in vogue, especially at egg production facilities throughout India involves depriving hens of food upto 14 days. It can also involve denial of water for a couple of days. The overall intent is to manipulate the egg-laying cycle or rejuvenate the reproductive cycle so that the hen lays more eggs.

Starvation force molting dramatically increases the risk of hens' laying salmonella-infected eggs. The practice is also a short cut to maximize profits, says the Humane Society Internationale, that champions animal rights.

35% weight loss

During a forced molt, hens suffer and lose up to 35 per cent of their body weight. This practice of food withdrawal has been widely questioned throughout the world and is prohibited in Australia, the European Union, and the US, under the American egg industry's animal husbandry program.

In March, the Animal Welfare Board of India confirmed that starvation force molting is a punishable offence under India's Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act of 1960. It ordered all egg production facilities to immediately discontinue the practice, Mr N.G. Jayasimha of the HSI told *Business Line*.

Now, the Director of Animal Husbandry in Andhra Pradesh has directed the Joint Directors (Animal Husbandry) and District Officers to ensure that the State's egg producers comply with the Animal Welfare Board of India's order.

Mr Jayasimha said the AP Government's directive comes as a strong support along with those of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Goa etc. to curb this practice.

The order against starvation force molting comes on the heels of a growing movement against battery cage egg production and farm animal cruelty. India's factory farms confine 140-200 million hens in barren battery cages, where each bird lives within a space smaller than a single standard sized sheet of paper, the HSI alleged.

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Priority for organic spice cultivation in 12 {+t} {+h} plan

Kochi, July 29:

Organic spice cultivation should find priority in the 12 {+t} {+h} Plan programmes, according to a report which is to be submitted to the Centre.

Addressing a meeting of the state holders of organic spice industry at Myladumpara in Idukki district of Kerala, Dr A Jayathilak, Chairman of Spices Board, promised all support to organic farmers to gain experience through exposure visits to farms of elite cultivators in various states.

Dr Jayathilak promised to establish an organic input and output testing laboratory at the Indian Cardamom Research Institute in Myladumpara, during the first year of the 12 {+t} {+h} Plan which is slated to commence from next year onwards. With the world sourcing natural products and increasingly moving away from fertiliser-pesticide based commercial agriculture, the demand for organic spices has been growing.

And more importantly, consumers from the US , Europe and Japan are increasingly willing to pay a substantially higher price for such products, spice cultivators said. To facilitate increased export of organic spices from the country, spices producer companies will be formed and the Spices Board would also set up e-Research cum Demonstration plot for organic farming of cardamom.

In order to suggest modalities for promoting organic production and marketing of cardamom, a committee consisting of organic growers, organic groups, scientists and development officers

has been constituted. This committee is expected to examine the present constraints before organic farming and suggest various measures to promote organic cultivation and marketing of organic spices.

Dr Jayathilak inaugurated the personal accident insurance scheme initiated by the Spices Board and Union Ministry of Commerce under the Price Stabilisation Fund Trust scheme targeted to benefit cardamom-growers and workers. He gave away insurance policy certificates to the beneficiaries.

To achieve ideal results in organic cultivation, the farmer should start practising simplicity in his lifestyle and farming practices, Dr Narayana Reddy from Bangalore and Mr Sundarama Iyer from Sathyamangalam said. Rev Fr. Sabu John of Peermade Development Society, Mr N M Kurian of High Range Organic Producers Society and Mr P C Joseph highlighted the problems of the existing players in the organic field. The importance of cattle rearing as a facilitator for organic farming and the maximum use of cow dung and urine in cultivation was also stressed upon.

Dr Jayathilak also met the representatives of the cardamom-growers' associations, traders and auctioneers and promised to take action on implementing several programmes to sustain cardamom prices, which have witnessed serious erosion in recent times.

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