

THE HINDU

Online edition of India's National Newspaper

Thursday, July 4, 2011

Published: July 4, 2011 08:31 IST | Updated: July 4, 2011 08:31 IST Udhagamandalam, July 4, 2011

Spice Garden coming up at Gudalur

Long considered to be a part of the Nilgiris which lacked development, Gudalur at the tri-junction of Tamil Nadu-Kerala and Karnataka has of late been attracting investment in both the Government and private sectors. The latest being a move to establish a Spice Garden by the Department of Horticulture under the Hill Area Development Programme (HADP).

Project Director, HADP, Deepak Srivatsava told *The Hindu* here on Sunday that Rs. 37 lakh had been set aside for the project which was mooted about three years ago. Pointing out that landscaping, planting and related works were now in progress, he said that the HADP had made it clear to the implementing agency that the facility should be eco-friendly and no concrete structures should come up inside.

The agro-climatic conditions favoured cultivation of spices in the area, he said and added that the officials concerned had been asked to complete planting operations before the end of the current South-West Monsoon.

A gene-pool would form part of the Garden. Apart from promoting cultivation of spices as a lucrative commercial activity, the Garden would in course of time become an important tourist attraction.

Joint Director of Horticulture in-charge J.Haldorai said that the Garden would come up over about 15 acres of the Devala State Horticulture farm which extends over 200 acres. It would likely be thrown open to the public early next year. It would feature pepper, nutmeg, cardamom, clover etc.

Basic amenities would be provided for visitors and the formation of a mini lake was also proposed, he added.

Published: July 4, 2011 08:08 IST | Updated: July 4, 2011 08:08 IST PANAJI, July 4, 2011

Goa to promote mechanisation of farming



In the tiny coastal State, agriculture is fast turning into an uneconomic proposition largely because of high level of fragmentation of landholdings leading to very high cost of labour which is scarce.

It is being done to overcome the acute shortage of labour

The Goa government will take steps to promote mechanised farming in Goa.

In the tiny coastal State, agriculture is fast turning into an uneconomic proposition largely because of high level of fragmentation of landholdings leading to very high cost of labour which is scarce.

Much of Goa's agriculture now depends on labour coming from outside the State.

Minister for Agriculture Vishwajit Rane recently told presspersons that the his plans to promote mechanised farming would begin from Sattari taluk, his home constituency in north Goa,

covering 2,500 farmers. After Sattari, the villages of Chodan, Siolim, and Guirim in north Goa will be covered.

The Minister is trying to expedite the State's decision-making level bureaucracy to allow the legal framework to be put into place to allow contract farming in the State.

In the coastal State, the area under agriculture had been stagnant for years if not shrinking, the Minister admitted recently. The cultivated area in Goa was 1.30 lakh hectares. An incentive of Rs. 25,000 would be

given to farmers to bring their fallow land under cultivation. This step would help bring more area under cultivation.

The State's total area was slightly less than 3,700 sq km. With the timely arrival of monsoons in the State, the Directorate of Agriculture has geared its machinery and has taken several steps, including mechanisation of agriculture.

A significant increase in State agriculture budget from Rs. 17 crore four years ago to Rs. 69 crore this year would help bring more area under cultivation, besides offer incentives to farmers and encourage youth to take up farming.

Now, with the onset of rains, agriculture operations were in full swing in Goa. Farmers commenced ploughing the fields to begin kharif cultivation.

The monsoon had facilitated sowing of pulses, paddy, planting of coconut saplings, chillies, brinjals, and other variety of crops. Even as kharif crop covers all taluks, most of kharif crops were sown in Pernem, Sattari, Bicholim, and Bardez taluk of north and Quepem and Sanguem taluks of south Goa.

According to the Agriculture Department's statistics, a total of 30,632 hectares of land was brought under paddy cultivation last kharif season while the total production was 1,08,333 tonnes. Rice production was estimated at 72,221 tonnes. The area under pulses was 180 hectares of land with production at 146 tonnes per hectare and the average yield per kg was at 809 tonnes during the kharif season. Similarly, area covered under groundnut was 461 hectares with production put at 1,390 tonnes per hectare and average yield was 3,015 tonnes. Rice

continued to be the main cereal crop which occupied about 29 per cent of the cropped area followed by cashew and coconut.

In a bid to promote mechanisation in agriculture, the State government has increased the subsidy to 70 per cent of the cost on modern implements and machines. Paddy transplanting machines and paddy combine used for harvesting had provided major relief to the paddy growing farmers in the State, thus reducing dependence on manual labour. Mechanised farming is expected to help farmers overcome the growing problem of high cost of labour.

An official of Agriculture Department said that several schemes had been launched by the government through Directorate of Agriculture to promote farming and attract youth towards this activity. With higher literacy and a very high rate of urbanisation, youth was continually weaning away from agriculture in the State. Farmers could avail the benefit of up to 90 per cent on solar power fencing scheme.

Speaker Pratapsingh Rane, father of Agriculture Minister, who happens to be a successful progressive farmer himself, told *The Hindu* recently that he had successfully used the technology on his pineapple farms at Sattari to protect the fruit from wild animals.

A subsidy of up to 90 per cent was provided for construction of polyhouses and green houses. Similar subsidies were provided for drip irrigation and for construction of biogas plants.

The government had taken steps to recognise the contribution of progressive farmers to the State's economy by instituting three State-level awards of Rs. 2 lakh, Rs. 1 lakh, and Rs. 50,000 in the name of Krishi Ratna, Krishi Vibhushan, and Krishi Bhushan, respectively.

A support price scheme was being extended to agriculture produce such as coconut, cashew, areca and beans of local variety. This, along with introduction of systems of procurement of vegetables from farmers at a fixed price, was expected to reduce the continued dependence of the tourist State on vegetables from neighbouring States.

To create skilled manpower, the government plans to train youth this year so that they can operate various types of machineries. The trainees will also be trained in other agricultural operations, the Minister recently said.

The concept of farmers' club is being taken seriously for all these activities. A thrust is being laid on promoting community farming. The critics of the Minister do not believe that the State is really making a headway in agriculture. They describe the Goan agriculture as "Subsidy-Raj" as the State continued to be dependent for agricultural produce on other States. The government has spent Rs. 12.5 crore on extending subsidy to several farmers last year, officials said here.

Published: July 4, 2011 08:04 IST | Updated: July 4, 2011 08:44 IST PATHANAMTHITTA, July 4, 2011

Kudumbasree launches vegetable cultivation project



The Hindu The Kudumbasree Mission has launched a novel vegetable farming scheme, Haritasree, in the district

The Kudumbasree Mission has launched a novel vegetable farming scheme, Haritasree, in the district by engaging its self-help groups in all the 54 grama panchayats and three municipalities with a view to making the district self-sufficient in vegetable production during the ensuing Onam festival.

G. Murukan, Kudumbasree district coordinator, said the objective of the venture was to produce adequate vegetables to meet the increased demand during the Onam festival.

Talking to *The Hindu*, Mr Murukan said the project was being implemented in association with various panchayat committees and Krishi Bhavans in the respective panchayats. Seeds and fertilizers have been supplied to the self-help groups by the Krishi Bhavans in various panchayats.

Mr. Murukan said the Haritasree project was being implemented as collective farming by groups attached to various Kudumbasree units in the district. As many as 1,47,000 Kudumbasree workers were engaged in the new vegetable farming programme, he said.

Apart from collective farming, the mission volunteers have also launched household cultivation of vegetables for the Onam festival. Mr. Murukan said Rs 46,78,198 had already been allotted to various joint liability groups towards area incentives and crop incentive.

He said the mission promoted organic farming in vegetable cultivation.

Kudumbasree workers at a snake gourd farm set up as part of the Haritasree project at Pandalam Thekkekkara panchayat in Pathanamthitta district.

Kudumbasree workers engaged in spinach cultivation in Pandalam Thekkekkara panchayat as part of Hartisree project in Pathanamthitta district.

Published: July 4, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 4, 2011 04:11 IST BANGALORE, July 4, 2011

Harvest prices of ragi, paddy likely to go up, says forecast

The wholesale prices of ragi and paddy, the major staple food crops in the State, are expected to go up during the coming harvest season, according to a price forecast study by the University of Agricultural Sciences-Bangalore.

It also indicated that the harvest price of maize may see a marginal variation over prevailing market rates.

These are the procurement prices which the farmers are likely to get at the time of harvest, according to the study undertaken by the Agricultural Market Intelligence Centre of the UAS-B.

According to the study, the harvest price of ragi is expected to go up by 21 per cent to 24 per cent while that of paddy may increase by 34 per cent to 38 per cent from the present market rates. However, the price of maize may almost remain at the level of the present rate as it is likely to vary by only -1.38 per cent to 1.85 per cent.

C.P. Gracy, Principal Investigator of the UAS-B's Agricultural Market Intelligence Centre, told *The Hindu* that the harvest prices may further increase if the sowing of these crops was affected by poor monsoon activity.

The forecast has been arrived at after analysing ragi prices in the last 10 years besides conducting a survey of traders in major markets of Hassan and Mysore. According to it, the harvest price of ragi may increase from the present Rs. 800 a quintal to Rs. 968 to Rs. 996 a quintal. The crop will come up for harvest in December.

The study notes that the area of ragi cultivation has marginally decreased and this could trigger an increase in the price. The Government has already prescribed a minimum support price of Rs. 965 for a quintal of ragi.

The price of paddy, which has caused concern among farmers, is expected to increase from the present Rs. 1,000 a quintal to the range of Rs. 1,340 to Rs. 1,380 a quintal when the crop comes up for harvest in November-December. Such a conclusion has been arrived at after conducting the econometric analysis of prices of paddy in different months at Maddur market.

The analysis of trends in Davangere, which accounts for one-third of the State's maize production, indicates that the price of maize may hover around Rs. 1,065 to Rs. 1,100 per quintal during the harvest months of September and October as against the present market rate of Rs. 1,080 a quintal. The price is likely to increase further unless there is a substantial increase in the area of cultivation, the study notes.

Prof. Gracy pointed that the demand for Karnataka maize from the starch industry in Gujarat and exports to other areas may further push the price up.

Published: July 4, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 4, 2011 04:12 IST HYDERABAD, July 4, 2011

Dry spell casts a cloud on farm sector

Government officials fear shrinkage in crop area

Is the State heading for a 2009-type prolonged spell covering large number of mandals?

The officials in the Disaster Management Department are fearing this situation, going by the present monsoon lull due to which, they say, a 32-day period, crucial for transplantation has been lost so far since June 1, out of the season spanning 120 days.

The latest forecast from India Meteorological Department, which says that the seasonal trough, a key factor to precipitate the monsoon, will shift back southwards to its normal position only after a week, has come as a dampener. This means loss of another seven days for paddy transplantation, T. Radha, commissioner, Disaster Management said.

As many as 805 out of 1,128 mandals in the State have a rainfall deficit with 349 reporting 60-90 per cent shortfall and 452 up to 59 per cent. The shortage that hit the State overall reached 38 per cent on Saturday, with Telangana accounting for 49 per cent.

M. Satyakumar, director, State Meteorological Centre, attributed the monsoon lull, resulting in dry spell and slight rise in temperatures, to the absence of any “trough” in the atmosphere over State and lack of low-pressure-area systems or storms in the Bay of Bengal. Any good trough, which would carry moisture content, and the low-pressure systems would have turned the monsoon active.

He, however, said there was slight improvement in rainfall activity over the State. Enquiries with the Agriculture Department revealed that crops have been sown only over 12.2 hectares in the State till July 2, against the normal of 17.2 lakh ha. An official said they might have to prepare contingency plans if the dry spell continued.

Owing to lack of inflows into the reservoirs, the government is not able to finalise dates to release water .

Published: July 4, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 4, 2011 04:07 IST COIMBATORE, July 4, 2011

Farmers oppose water bottling plant

Farmers in and around Perur have opposed a mineral water bottling plant in Perur village. The farmers, affiliated to the Tamizhaga Vivasayeegal Sangam (farmers' association), also raised the issue with the Collector during the monthly farmers' grievances redress meeting.

P. Kandasamy, secretary of the association, says that the plant is located between River Noyyal and Kurichi Canal – a precarious location considering the facts that it is not only close to water body but also in a groundwater zone that has been declared overexploited.

Water table

He says the farmers have been opposing since February 2011 the project that has the potential to push down the water table. And if the water level were to go down, around 1,000 acres are dependent on water from wells in the area will be affected.

If the plant were to start operations, drinking water will also be affected in Kuniamuthur, Kurichi and Perur.

The farmers after raising objections also wrote to the Public Works Department's Ground Water and Geology Division seeking clarifications. In a response, the Division has said that it has not awarded any no-objection certificate for starting the water bottling plant, nor has it received any application for issuing such a certificate.

It also cited that since the State Government, through the Government Order 51 Public Works (R2), dated February 11, 2004, said that the Thondamuthur Union was an overexploited region, any project using groundwater should not be implemented.

Mr. Kandasamy says though the PWD's Ground Water and Geology Division has not given any NOC, the industry, it appears, has obtained power connection. This is against law and the Collector should probe into how the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation granted permission for a power connection.

Published: July 4, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 4, 2011 04:07 IST ERODE, July 4, 2011

Action against traders selling fertilizers at high prices

The Agriculture Department will initiate stern action against traders if they are found selling fertilizers at higher prices than the government fixed rates.

The department is closely monitoring the fertilizer supply in the district and violation of norms will be viewed seriously, Joint Director of Agriculture R. Akbar has said.

The department has asked the farmers to demand a signed receipt from the traders when they purchase fertilizers. The farmers can send the necessary documents including the receipt to the department, if they found the traders selling the fertilizers at higher rates.

The government has fixed Rs. 278.88 as the price per 50 kg bag of urea, Rs. 312 for IPL Potash, Rs. 315 Zuari potash, Rs. 624 for Iffco DAP, Rs. 630 for Zuari DAP, Rs. 656 for Spic DAP, Rs. 488.50 for Factamfos 20:20:20:0, Rs. 520 for Iffco 20:20:20:13 and Rs. 567.60 for Zuari 10:26:26, a press release says.

The department has transported adequate quantity of fertilizers to all the primary agricultural co-operative credit societies and the private fertilizer sellers in the district.

The co-operative credit societies and the private sellers have been asked to put up a board with the price and the stock information. Stern action will be initiated against the traders who fail to put up on display the information, officials have cautioned.

The co-operative credit societies have a little over 3,000 tonnes of DAP, while the private sellers 716 tonnes. The district also has over 2,000 tonnes of urea, 1,431 tonnes of potash and more than 1,600 tonnes of complex fertilizers.

The department has appealed to the farming community to implement the best fertilizer management techniques during the cultivation activities that will help enhance the crop yield. For details, farmers can contact the nearby agriculture extension centres.

Published: July 4, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 4, 2011 04:11 IST RAMANATHAPURAM,
July 4, 2011

Bankers told to give priority to education and milch animal loans

Self-help groups to get Rs.101-crore loan for current year, says Collector

Collector V. Arun Roy has asked the bankers to give priority for extending educational and milch animal loans.

Speaking at a consultative committee meeting with bankers held here recently, he said the district had excellent potential for rearing milch animals and cattle. It should be exploited well. Similarly, a large number of students would approach banks for education loans as the new academic year would soon begin for professional, and arts and science colleges. All eligible candidates should be provided with educational loan.

The applications should be speedily processed. The Collector said that unnecessary delay should be avoided. Similarly, the applications for housing loans should also be processed quickly.

The concerned bank officials should be sensitised to take immediate steps on demands of educational and milch animal loans, he added.

Mr. Roy said that it had been decided to extend loan for self-help groups to the tune of Rs.101 crore for the current year.

The target had been divided among the nationalised banks.

The bank officials should achieve the target within the stipulated period, he said.

P. Anandraj, Project Director, District Rural Development Agency; Rasheed Khan, Chief Manager, Indian Overseas Bank, Tuticorin Region; S. Kannapiran, Assistant General Manager, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development; V. Sivakumar, Project Officer, Mahalir Thittam; and A. Sadagopan, Lead Bank Manager, and others took part.

Skewed sex ratio among rhinos worries foresters

The number of male rhinoceroses in the forest areas of north Bengal nearly equals the number of females – a statistic that is worrying officials of the State's Forest Department as it is a far cry from the ideal 1:3 ratio that is recommended for the species in the wild.

Officials have written to their counterparts in Assam's Forest Department proposing an exchange of male rhinos with female rhinos from the Kaziranga National Park to better the skewed sex ratio, Raj K. Mahtolia, Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife) told *The Hindu* over telephone on Sunday.

With a larger number of male rhinoceroses, more clashes between the animals are occurring, leaving them injured. Incidents of females being injured by extreme violence of males when they refused mating have also been reported, said a senior official. "We have proposed that we shall exchange 20 male rhinoceroses for 20 female ones. Apart from improving the sex ratio, it will also improve the genetic diversity," Mr. Mahtolia said.

© The Hindu



Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Monday, Jul 4

Max Min
34.8° | 23.7°

Rain: 0.2 mm in 24hrs

Sunrise: 5:46

Humidity: 75%

Sunset: 18:39

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy


Tuesday, Jul 5

Max Min
36° | 26°

Wind: Normal

Barometer: 1004

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Jul 6	Jul 7	Jul 8	Jul 9	Jul 10
				
33° 27°	31° 27°	30° 27°	29° 26°	31° 27°
Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy

express[™]
buzz

By Express News Service

03 Jul 2011 11:54:00 PM IST

Farmers relate woes to planning officials

PUDUCHERRY: The sub-group VIII of the planning commission, led by Dr C Prasad, met farmers at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) here, on Saturday. In the discussion that followed, planning officials took note of the many problems assailing the farmers, which would come up for consideration before the commission and much before the finalisation of the 12th five-year plan.

Nine groups had been formed, who going from one region to the other, would get to the bottom of the difficulties faced by the farmers. During such interactive sessions, a couple of issues such as crop insurance schemes, cold storage and transport facilities were highlighted.

Women entrepreneurs sought assistance for setting up more firms.

The farmers also sought more training programmes regarding the latest scientific techniques used in the agriculture sector.

One farmer even complained about the corrupt practices of the agriculture department and criticised the officials for not making field visits to guide them.

Other members of the delegation were Swamy Shashankananda, Sadish Pratap Singh, Chetan Thakur, Pratab Gridutta and Dr S V N Rao. A Ramamourti, principal of KVK, welcomed the gathering.

© Copyright 2008 ExpressBuzz



Veggie prices nearly double, Govt blames blackmarketeers

July 04, 2011 12:26:57 AM

Sana Shakil | New Delhi

With prices of essential vegetables increasing by over 50 per cent over the past one week, housewives are crying foul while Government sources have put the blame on blackmarketeers who are using the monsoon as an excuse for jacking up prices.

Despite the wholesale prices of vegetables still under control, vegetable vendors are taking full advantage of the situation and fleecing customers. The price of peas this week is Rs 100 whereas last week it was rated at Rs 60 per kg.

Similarly, cauliflower has also managed to get its name in this 'high price' list with its price climbing from Rs 40 a kilo last week to Rs 60 this week. The biggest blow to family budgets can be gauged by the rising prices of green coriander as its cost has doubled to Rs 200 a kg from Rs 100 per kg last week. Not too far behind is tomato, a part of almost every Indian dish, which is being sold in the market at Rs 45-60 in most of the subzi mandis across the Capital this week, whilst it was priced at Rs 20 per kg last week.

Furthermore, vegetable sellers have predicted a dark cloud over the Capital's residents as they say that the rise in prices of their products will continue to increase in the near future due to the coming monsoons rain.

Sources in the Government admitted increase in the prices of vegetables but maintained that it was the lack of effective mechanism to check retailers from unnecessarily charging extra that is the cause of these woes. Sonali Kapoor, a home maker from East Delhi, alarmed at the highly priced vegetables said, "At least the prices of essentials like tomato and green vegetables should be controlled. I have no option but to compromise on other things to feed my family," she said.

When confronted, vegetable sellers put the blame of price rise on rain and rising fuel prices. Suraj Patel, a vegetable seller in South Delhi said, "The rise in the price of vegetables at this time of the year is an annual phenomenon. I have a sustained customer base but people complain of the high priced tomato, *dhania*, cucumber etc. Because of rains the stuff gets spoilt easily and prices rise that is why we are charging more. The Government should do something about it."

Another vegetable seller Amit Kumar from West Delhi said, "It is tough to transport vegetables in this season. We have no other option but to charge more for the vegetables as the wholesale prices of vegetables also rise."

However, Government sources denied such theories saying prices have only increased nominally due to rains. A source said, "Retailers are falsely using the rains to charge customers extra money. The wholesale prices of vegetables have not increased much but the retailers are charging way too much."

Prices of other vegetables are also giving Delhiites a hard time, forcing many to cut corners in other expenditures to put food on the table. Parwal this week is being priced at Rs 25/kg as

opposed to Rs 16/kg the previous week. Price of cucumber, a must have for green salads that accompanies many a spicy dish has also increased. Prices of other vegetables like ridge ground, capsicum, spinach, parwal are also giving Delhiites a hard time.

Shomur Das, a vegetable seller at CR Park said, "The prices of spinach, green coriander and *torai* will definitely rise in the future as these vegetables get easily spoiled by intense heat and rain."

Chili production a major industry in MP

July 04, 2011 12:10:15 AM

Staff Reporter | Bhopal

Chili has all along been a major ingredient of myriad of Indian dishes. Indians, especially north Indians are well-known for their penchant for spicy food. Chili or mirchi is widely used not only to spice and flavour the food but also conversations, Hindi idioms and sayings aimed at coming the acid. The strong taste of chili in food tempts even the most jaded palate.

Another special thing about chili is that the very mention of Mirchi or chili reminds an Indian of Patna, the Bihar town widely known for growing the most pungent chili in the country. But MP resident, too, have the reason to boast of chili that may not dethrone the Patna chili but is certainly a preferred choice of the gourmets both local and global.

Although almost all districts of Madhya Pradesh grow chili, but major growers are Indore, Jhabua, Khandwa, Khargone, Mandla, Mandsaur, Raisen, Rewa, Satna, Sehore, Chhatarpur, Damoh, Panna, Sagar, Tikamgarh and Datia. Alirajpur, Barwani, Betul, Chhindwara, Dewas, Harda, Dindori and Jabalpur are also not behind.

Bedia in Khargone district is the largest chili market of Madhya Pradesh. The chili grown in Khargone-Khandwa area is very pungent and gives good dry matter. The chili business in Khandwa alone amounts to `70-80 lakh annually.

In Barwani drying of chili on house roofs and open spaces in the sun is a common sight, giving an impression that deep red colour carpets are spread all over the area. It also gives good dry matter.

The chili of Dhar district is of dark green hue. Its skin is thick so its shelf life is longer. Nisapur, Manawar, Dharampur, Sardarpur and Badnawar are major chili growers in the district.

In fact, it is like a cottage industry for chili growers. When they have surplus production they dry and pulverise it to powder. If they manage to tie up with a good brand like Vindhya, then they can not ask for more. Hybrid chili is very popular. Under the National Horticulture Mission only hybrid seeds are provided to the farmers. A farmer is provided cash grant at `12 thousand 500 per hectare. The remaining part of the package is given in the form of seeds. The area under chili crop and the production have increased over last five years. In year 2004-05 the State sowed 47 thousand hectare and produced over 47 thousand metric tonne.

Business Standard

Monday, Jul 04, 2011

Garlic prices double in 2 mths

BS Reporter / Mumbai July 3, 2011, 0:45 IST

Garlic prices doubled in the last two months in retail Mumbai suburban markets despite bumper production this year. In wholesale Vashi Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) mandi, however, prices remained rangebound. Traders believe that middlemen (arhatiyas) are holding stock in anticipation of higher prices, like last year.



The price of garlic in the retail market hit Rs 300 a kg last year on surging export demand, especially from China, where traders cornered a huge quantity for its medicinal applications. Many consumers in India stopped using garlic in any form of their daily meal. Garlic is used as a spice, pickle and other purposes.

In retail Thane market, garlic was sold at Rs 100-120 a kg, a rise of over 100 per cent from Rs 50-55 a kg about a fortnight ago. Some traders say prices have gone up because benchmark quality garlic, for which there is high demand, has been in short supply. In the wholesale Vashi APMC, the commodity is selling rangebound at Rs 55-65 a kg.

“Despite the price rise, consumers need not worry as garlic output this year is record. The middlemen and stockists are holding the commodity in anticipation of higher prices. They are bound to release sooner or later,” said a Vashi-based trader Dixit Shah, partner of a spices trading firm Chillies and Garlic Commission Company.

National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation (NHRDF) estimated India’s garlic production in 2010-11 at 1.13 million tonnes as against 925,000 tonnes last year.

Currently, export demand is good. But, it is likely to decline in the coming months due to tough competition by Chinese traders in the major destination - West Asian markets.

Farmers brought more area under garlic this year due to record high prices last year.

Last year, China-origin garlic was sold in overseas market at \$2,000 a tonne which on Saturday is quoted at \$600 a tonne this year.

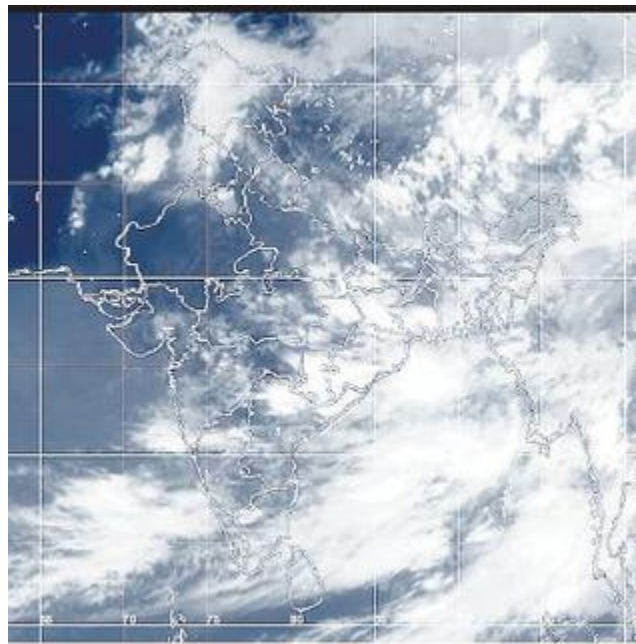
Traders believe the current high price is not sustainable and will decline in coming days.

Stockists will release extra quantity to cash in on the current spike in prices and hence, price is bound to decline, Shah said.

Ashok Walunj, the Vashi APMC director, however, attributed the price rise to a substantial increase in input cost including transport, fertiliser, pesticides and above all labour charges. The price is set to decline due to record high crop this year, said Moin Ali, a partner of Ali Exports, an Indore-based trading firm.

THE HINDU Business Line

Rains over central India from tomorrow



India Meteorological dept picture at 15-30 hrs

Thiruvananthapuram, July 3:

An India Meteorological Department (IMD) update on Sunday evening has said that the “break monsoon” conditions over the country are expected to lift in the next two days.

“There are indications of slight southward shifting of the eastern end of the monsoon trough. This would subsequently lead to revival of rainfall activity from Tuesday onwards,” the IMD statement said.

The land-based monsoon trough is currently nestling along the foothills of the Himalayas, a condition normally associated with weak/break monsoon.

“Break monsoon” refers to the natural but inevitable pause in rainfall activity over large parts of the country after a busy first spell.

During this period, rains are confined mostly along the Himalayan foothills and parts of the eastern coast of India, especially Tamil Nadu.

Movement of the land-based monsoon trough across northwest to southeast India towards its normal position to the south is associated with a reviving monsoon.

Indications are that the revival may not be spectacular given there is no forecast of a strong low-pressure area forming in the Bay.

The eastern end of the monsoon is normally hooked on to a weather system forming in this manner in the Bay whose strength in turn determines the endurance capacity of the trough and by extension the prospects of the monsoon.

Global models indicate the possibility of a cyclonic circulation forming straddling the northwest Bay and adjoining Orissa and Gangetic West Bengal coasts early this week to signal revival of rains over east and adjoining central India.

These are expected to spread to west India and adjoining west-central India from Friday. Even parts of north peninsular India, too, are expected to receive what are now considered life-saving rains.

The last 24 hours ending Sunday morning saw widespread rainfall being reported from West Bengal, Sikkim, Konkan, Goa, coastal Karnataka and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

It was fairly widespread over Bihar, the Northeastern States and interior Karnataka and scattered over Jharkhand, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Lakshadweep.

A warning valid for the next two days said that isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall would break out over Bihar, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam and Meghalaya.

New schemes for Maharashtra dairy soon

Aurangabad, July 3:

Maharashtra Minister for Dairy Development, Mr Madhukar Chavan, said that the State government was committed to implement new policies for boosting dairy industry in Marathwada region.

“The government has come out with few new schemes for the milk-giving animals and the poultry, and has urged the office bearers to disseminate the information regarding it to the people involved in dairy farming,” Mr Chavan said while addressing a meeting of dairy farm associations from the region.

He also said that the government was leaving no stone unturned to set up a cattle feed factory in the region.

Indian pepper becomes attractive at competitive price

Kochi, July 3:

The downtrend in the pepper futures last week brought the Indian parity to competitive levels, paving the way for orders likely to come to India.

But it will turn out to be a reality only when the Indian prices ruled steady at competitive levels, trade sources said. Since the market remains by and large in the hands of operators, more often than not, uncertainty prevails in the market consequent to the “push and pull”. The currency fluctuation is also a dissuading factor, they said.

But contrary to expectations that in line with the trend here, there would be a corresponding decline in prices in other origins, the markets overseas remained firm and that gives the impression that there is virtually a mismatch in demand and supply, the former outweighing the latter, prevailing in the market world over.

The next crop in Indonesia, said to be around the corner, is reportedly less and the prevailing situation drives one to the conjecture that the overall world output does not appear to be rising corresponding to the growth in demand. Consequently, there exists disequilibrium in demand

and supply and that is likely to persist for some time given the unfavourable climatic conditions in growing countries, of late.

Availability in India, at present, is only on the exchange platform and that is of validity expired stocks and some farm grade pepper, market sources claimed.

Growers and primary market dealers are not said to be ready to part with their stocks at current levels. Thus, there seems to be a supply squeeze here. Karnataka growers and dealers have slowed down their aggressive selling following sharp fall in the prices, they told *Business Line*.

All the contracts on the NCDEX last week declined. July, August and September contracts dropped by Rs 129, Rs 127 and Rs 136 respectively to close at Rs 27,297, Rs 27,616 and Rs 27,904 a quintal.

Total turnover fell by 30,147 tonnes during the week to close at 47,703 tonnes on Saturday.

Total open interest increased by 1,692 tonnes to 12,452 tonnes at the weekend close.

Spot prices moved up marginally by Rs 100 to close at Rs 26,300 (ungarbled) and Rs 27,300 (MG 1) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market was competitive at \$6,400 — \$6,450 a tonne (c&f) and it would have been even cheaper but for the strong rupee against the dollar, they said.

Overseas trend

The black pepper market, according to the International Pepper Community (IPC) was volatile in India last week probably due to speculation rather than market forces.

Fob prices were reportedly stable at most origins with the exception of India. Other than Malabar Garbeled 1, c&f price of all origins also increased in the US.

At Kochi, local price dropped from Rs 27,500 per 100 kg last week to Rs 26,200 on Monday and Rs 26,100 on Tuesday. On Wednesday, the price moved up to Rs 26,300. On an average pepper prices in India decreased by 5 per cent.

In Lampung, there was a marginal fall in local prices.

Release more foodgrains to tame inflation: Bimal Jalan

New Delhi, July 3:

Eminent economist, Mr Bimal Jalan, said the Centre should release more wheat and rice into the open market from its "large stocks", a move that will help in taming food inflation. His comments come at a time when the government is also contemplating the relaxation of an export ban on wheat and rice.

"We have large stocks. We should not hesitate to release much more food grains like rice and wheat in the market," the former Reserve Bank Governor told PTI.

For the week ending June 18, food inflation declined to 7.78 per cent from over 9.13 per cent in the previous week.

Both the Government and Reserve Bank had been maintaining that the high inflation is largely due to supply side constraints.

Food prices are rising even as the government godowns are overflowing on the back of bumper production and procurement in the last three-four years.

The government had record rice and wheat stocks of 65.59 million tonnes in its godowns at the beginning of June.

As per the buffer stock norm, government godowns should have 31.9 million tonnes as of July 1 of any year.

The former RBI Governor further said that if required, the government should not hesitate to import food items.

Tea offerings at N. Indian auctions rise

Kolkata, July 3:

Last week, at Sale 26, the total offerings (packages) at three North Indian tea auction centres of Kolkata, Guwahati and Siliguri were 325,628 compared with 312,537 in the corresponding sale of last year, according to J Thomas & Company Pvt Ltd, the tea auctioneers.

The offerings at Kolkata were 154,469 (135,517) comprising CTC/dust 116,475 (86,371), Orthodox 33,698 (43,072) and Darjeeling 4,296 (6074).

The corresponding figures for Guwahati and Siliguri were 94,780 (98,530) and Siliguri 76,379 (78,490).

Good liquoring Assam CTC teas continued to meet with strong demand and appreciated in value. The remainder tended irregularly easier, particularly plainer sorts. Dooars sold irregularly lower. Tata Global was less active while Hindustan Unilever was selective. Western India dealers were active for the improved sorts. There was good support from local and other internal sections. Exporters operated on bolder broken and grainy fannings.

Homedale Tea beats own record at Coonoor sale

Coonoor, July 3:

Homedale Tea Factory created yet another price record this week beating its last week's record. "At Sale No: 26 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions, our Red Dust grade, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, was bought by Raj Traders for Rs 162 a kg. This was the highest price fetched by any CTC leaf or dust grade of any bought-leaf factory in this sale. It is also the highest price fetched by our teas since manufacture started in our factory 60 years ago. We beat our last week record of Rs 160," Homedale Managing Partner, Mr Prashant Menon told *Business Line*.

Vigneshwar Estate got Rs 146, Hittakkal Estate Rs 135, Blue Monte Speciality and Shanthy Supreme Rs 134 each and Sreeram Supreme Special Rs 131. In all, 78 marks got Rs 100 and more.

Among orthodox teas from corporate sector, Chamraj got Rs 178, Havukal Rs 152, Quinshola clonal Rs 151 and Kairbetta Rs 142. In all, 23 marks got Rs 100 and more.

ITC to develop 12,000 ha of plantations

Hyderabad, July 3:

The Paperboards and Speciality Papers Division of the diversified ITC Ltd, which is in the process of taking up expansion of its manufacturing capacity, has sewn up plans to develop 12,000 hectares of forest cover under social forestry project during 2011-12 and follow this up over the next two years, according to Mr Sanjay K.Singh, Divisional Chief Executive, ITC Ltd.

The company, which currently has developed about 1,15,000 hectares of forest cover over the last 30 years at Badrachalam in Khammam district of Andhra Pradesh, involving local farmers, land holders and tribals, sees this fresh addition serving twin objectives of meeting raw material requirement for the paper mill and for engaging various stakeholders.

“We had no choice but to develop green cover for the raw material requirement for the paper mill. It is estimated that we need about 15,000 hectares to run one new mill. This fresh addition would be able to meet the requirement for a new expansion project coming up at Badrachalam,” Mr Singh told *Business Line*.

“The yield in India was about 6 tonnes a hectare against 25 tonnes a hectare in Brazil. Bringing in best practices, we had to innovate and improve the yield by integrating tribals into the company business. Every one gains in the system,” he said.

“While one hears of farmers facing difficulty due to one problem or the other over the years, have you ever heard about any farmer taking to plantations losing or facing hardship?” Mr Singh asked.

The diversified group had earlier outlined plans to invest up to Rs 3,000 crore in the expansion of its paper making facility at Badrachalam, which effectively would nearly double its capacity over the next five years to 1 million tonnes an annum from about 4.5 lakh tonnes an annum.

The new unit with a capacity of about 3 lakh tonnes an annum has secured State clearance.

'There is no zero risk in agriculture'; biotech is a necessity



Business Line Mr Clive James, ISAAA Chief

'We need to have simple, responsible regulations'

Mr Clive James, who is the Founder and Chairman of ISAAA (International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications) is a strong votary of biotechnology in agriculture. He says biotechnology is not a panacea for the food problems of the world. It, he emphatically says, is a necessity. Mr James was in Hyderabad to address a global meet, on Demystifying crop biotechnology – issues and concepts for mass media, recently. In an interview, he talks on the growth prospects for biotech in agriculture, challenges and on the concerns about the safety of genetically modified (GM) food.

You are arguing that biotech crops are a must to feed the world but there have been widespread apprehensions about their safety. How do you explain?

There is no zero risk in agriculture. This holds good for conventional crops as well. But biotech maize and papaya have been introduced in countries such as the US and China. BT maize, in fact, showed reduced levels of micro toxins.

You have seen reports of people getting killed after consuming food with E.coli in Germany. That is conventional technology.

I can tell you that there is no suggestion of any health risk (in biotech food).

But regulatory framework that governs biotech crops is very weak, particularly in developing countries. People are more concerned about this. How to ensure fool-proof supervision of trials?

Regulation has been there in the last 15 years to guide the growth of biotech crops. In the beginning scientists had asked whether it poses a risk. But evidence shows that it is safe. We have to use 15 years of experience (in building regulation). We need to have simple and responsible regulations. About 1,000 people are dying every hour due to hunger and malnutrition. Countries like India need biotech in agriculture.

Resistance is fast building up to technology. Also, utter disregard in sparing space for refugia too is a concern. This results in contamination and increase prospects of development of resistance.

Refugia are just one element of managing resistance. It has been 15 years of biotech in maize and cotton and resistance has not broken down yet. Also, resistance is not a problem that is limited to biotech crops. We need to use new genes that back up.

How do you see biotech in agriculture growing in the next few years particularly in the light of growing opposition from some sections?

You need to have biotech crops in order to feed the world. By 2050, the world would have nine billion people. The next five years would witness much faster growth of biotech crops. Indications show that the number of countries that adopted biotech in commercial agriculture would grow to 40-42 by 2015 from the present 29. Growth would more accentuated in developing countries in Asia and Africa.

Potential is quite huge. Maize, soybean, cotton and canola collectively represented 150 million hectares of biotech crops last year. There is a scope to reach out to 150 million more hectares.

Karnataka plans welfare schemes for plantation sector

To cover 5 lakh workers in cashew, coffee and tea plantation

Bangalore, July 1:

The Karnataka Government is working out a mechanism with the Centre to bring in plantation (cashew, coffee and tea) workers under the ambit of social welfare schemes.

“Since the Plantation Act is Centre's subject, we have initiated a dialogue with the Central Government to bring in social welfare schemes to the plantation sector in Karnataka,” said Mr B.N. Bache Gowda, Karnataka Minister for Labour and Sericulture.

“At present nearly 5 lakh workers are engaged in cashew, coffee and tea plantation spread across five districts in the State and plantation workers are facing problems in taking care of the social cost,” he added.

Modified central scheme

The State Government is planning to roll out a modified version of the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) - a Central scheme which takes care of the healthcare cost of people in below poverty line (BPL) category in all the 30 districts in the State.

The Union Minister for Labour and Employment, Mr Mallikarjuna Kharge, said “we are concentrating on the unorganised sector workers like rural BPL families, beedi workers, rickshaw pullers, taxi drivers, auto drivers and sanitary workers.”

“Just like Karnataka, we have got few requests from other plantation states. We will engage them shortly,” he added.

The United Planters' Association of Southern India (Upasi) and Karnataka Planters' Association (KPA) have been demanding that both the Central and state governments should share the social cost.

The Upasi President, Mr C.N. Nataraj, in his pre-budget memorandum to the Centre had said:

“One of the main reasons that the Indian plantation sector is not able to withstand the competition from other producing countries on account of high cost of production which is directly linked to the social costs which is not there in any of the other competing producing countries.”

Sharing social costs

“The least the government can do is extend a helping hand by sharing the social costs of the plantations which in the case of other sectors are borne by the Government or its agencies,” he added.

Welcoming such a move, the KPA Chairman, Mr Sahadev Balakrishna, said: “The Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) constituted by the Central Government few years ago to look into the various issues relating to plantation sector had recommended that sharing of social costs by management 50 per cent, Centre 40 per cent and State 10 per cent should be kindly implemented.”

Punjab package to boost pulses output

Chandigarh, July 3:

The Punjab Government today announced a new package promising heavy subsidy on farm equipment, seeds and fertilisers for farmers to motivate them to grow pulses on a large scale.

Under the package, the State Government would provide subsidies on pulses seeds, pesticides to be used for pulses cultivation and the agro machinery besides providing total technical support. The new incentive is part of ongoing crop diversification drive which aims at expanding areas under cultivation of pulses. The State Agriculture Minister, Mr Sucha Singh Langah, said here that the Government would provide 50 per cent or maximum subsidy of Rs 15,000 on 'Zero Till' machines and 50 per cent subsidy would be given on 'seed drill machines'.