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Advantage mechanisation and women's group approach

M. J. Prabu



Women members of Krishi Sahayi group. Photo: Special arrangement

FARMER'S NOTEBOOK About 35 out of 100 panchayats in the district are adopting this model

Amidst reports of abandoning paddy cultivation due to high labour cost and labour scarcity in Kerala, records maintained by a leading paddy farmers' group named Avunjikad Padashekhara Samithy in Malappuram District point to a saving of Rs. 63,375 on cost of transplanting in an area of 15 acres for paddy.

The records reveal that the total expenditure of fully mechanised paddy cultivation for an area of 3 acres is Rs. 38,430 instead of Rs. 74,890 in conventional method — a saving Rs.12,150 per acre.

A study shows that the cost of transplanting using a transplanter is Rs.36,000 and that of manual transplanting is Rs. 99,375.

Individual help

“This was made possible through the intervention of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Malappuram by developing a fully equipped women’s group named ‘Krishi Sahayi’ aimed at helping individual farmers and farmers’ groups in undertaking mechanised paddy cultivation in a cost effective way,” says Dr. Ayyappan, Director General, ICAR, New Delhi.

On gaining experience in the field under the supervision of Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) scientists, women trainees decided to organise themselves into a self help group (SHG).

Thus, with the support and supervision of KVK, 11 women formed the group named ‘Krishi Sahayi’. KVK Malappuram convinced the paddy growing farmers of the advantages of mechanisation over conventional methods utilising Krishi Sahayi and as a result many farmers who turned away from paddy cultivation came forward to cultivate the crop in their fallow lands.

The group received several calls from farmers to undertake similar mechanised paddy cultivation in their regions.

But there was one problem. The group faced the constraint of repairing and servicing of machinery costing a huge amount from their earnings.

Vocational training

“In order to solve this problem the KVK conducted a vocational training on repair, maintenance and servicing of the paddy transplanting machine for this group with which we could increase their confidence level and income,” explains Dr. Habeeburrahman, Programme Co-ordinator.

Over a period of three years, this group has done mechanized transplanting, harvesting and threshing in an area of more than 300 hectares.

Considering the demand for such work force from different parts of the district, KVK took up a project on “Formation and strengthening of activity groups for mechanized paddy cultivation in all the 14 Blocks” in collaboration with district Panchayat, Department of Agriculture and Kudumbhasree mission under the ‘Haritha Malappuram’ programme by empowering the activity groups with machinery worth Rs. 3 lakh.

With Krishi Sahayi as master trainers, KVK Malappuram became instrumental in the formation of 17 similar groups. The multiple effect of these groups resulted in bringing back 1,200 hectares under paddy cultivation in one year.

Motivational force

This successful model has motivated the KVK to adopt it in 35 out of 100 panchayats in the district.

“The members of Krishi Sahayi belonged to economically backward class earning Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 12,000 annually from poultry, tailoring etc. At present they are having work on all days in the season and each of them earns about Rs. 350-700 a day,” says Er. Sajeena, Senior Assistant Professor, Mallapuram, KVK.

Proves two things

This model proves two things, according to Dr. Prabhukumar, Zonal Project Co-ordinator, ICAR.

One, is that mechanisation can be used to overcome labour shortage as and when required and two, the advantages of a group approach.

It is important for farmers to know the basic mechanism of the machine with which they work.

It will help them save time by taking care of it personally and reduce their dependence on others. Two, instead of a single farmer trying to do something useful, if a group comes together then they can easily upscale their work. For more details contact Ms. Er. Sajeena, S. Assistant Professor and Dr. Habeeburrahman, P.V. Programme Coordinator, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Malappuram, Kerala, 679573 Phone 0494- 2686329, 09895703726.

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Controlling cashew stem borer

R. K. Murali Baskaran, J. Jayaraj

Cashew stem and root borer is a serious pest both in East and West coasts of India capable of destroying an entire cashew tree. Adults are medium in size, dark brown in colour and measure 30-40 mm long.

During the grub stages, the pest feeds inside the tree trunks or branches, boring tunnels causing the tree to wilt. Leaves turn yellow in colour, twigs dry up and the tree dies in 1-3 years depending on the extent of pest infestation.

Infestation extent

Plantations over 15 years old are often infested with this pest. Infestation ranges from 4-10 per cent in affected crops. Adult beetles lay dull white single eggs under loose bark of the stem and roots. Eggs hatch in 4-6 days.

Grubs riddle holes into the stem and bore down into the root. Openings of tunnel are plugged with reddish mass of chewed fibre and excreta with exuding sap at the base of the stem. Larval stage lasts for 6-7 months. Full grown larva measures 7.5 cm long and is creamy white in colour with a brown coloured head. It pupates inside the bore hole in a thick calcareous cocoon. Pupal period lasts for two months. The pest completes one generation in one year.

Control measures

- Survey the plantations during fruiting season and eradicate severely infested trees.
- Adopt phyto-sanitation methods by completely removing the dead trees in advanced stages of infection
- Cut and destroy damaged branches along with eggs and grubs
- Locate loose bark and boreholes and spike out eggs and grubs and kill them periodically.
- Train the newly planted grafts to bear branches at a height of 1metre above ground level. Use light trap at the rate of one per hectare to attract the pest.
- Swab the trunk with a mixture of coal tar and kerosene at the ratio of 1:2 or chloropyrifos 0.02 per cent twice a year once during March-April and again during November-December. Root feeding with monocrotophos at 20 ml/tree is also promising.

(R.K. Murali Baskaran & J. Jayaraj, Department of Agricultural Entomology, Agriculture College and Research Institute, TNAU, Madurai, email: muralibaskaran2007@rediffmail.com, mobile: 9655677669)

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Restore earlier system of fixing fertilizers' MRP: Jayalithaa

Seeks scrapping of nutrient based subsidy policy

Chief Minister Jayalithaa has demanded immediate withdrawal of the nutrient based subsidy (NBS) policy and restoration of the earlier system of fixing the maximum retail price (MRP) of fertilizers.

In a letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday, she stated that the introduction of the policy by the Centre on April 1, 2010, coupled with an unreliable supply of fertilizers to Tamil Nadu, was “threatening to deprive our farmers of their basic means of sustenance and livelihood”.

Pointing out that the annual consumption of chemical fertilizers in the State is about 28 lakh tonnes, she said that the policy had given the liberty to the manufacturers/importers of chemical fertilizers to fix the MRP based on their cost of production/import. Since then, the fertilizer companies had been hiking the retail price of fertilizers at will, causing extreme hardship to farmers.

Explaining how the price of fertilizers had gone up by two or three times, she said the increase had been steep since April.

Between April 17, 2012 and June 18, 2012, the MRP of a 50-kg bag DAP (di-ammonium phosphate) and MOP (muriate of potash) marketed by Indian Potash Limited had risen from Rs.910 to Rs.1200 and Rs.680 to Rs.840 respectively.

Giving details of increase in prices of various fertilizers by other producers, she said, “To add insult to injury, despite such a phenomenal increase in fertilizer prices in the current year, the Department of Fertilizers, GOI [Government of India], has reduced the subsidy for 2012-2013 for DAP to Rs.14,350 per MT [metric tonne] from Rs.19,763 per MT fixed last year, and for MOP to Rs.14,400 per MT as against Rs.16,054 per MT fixed last year.”

The Department of Fertilizers, which had also proposed a hike of another 10 per cent in urea prices, planned to cut subsidies further on the pretext of subsidising bio-fertilizers. “Faced with a steep price rise and having to digest a sharp reduction in subsidy, our farmers have been hit hard in terms of economic returns from farming.”

She said that the State government’s waiver of the levy of 4 per cent Value Added Tax (VAT) on the sale of fertilizers, effective July 12 last year, had given some relief to farmers.

On the problem of shortage of fertilizers, the Chief Minister said that while the DAP requirement for April to May 2012 was 48,000 MT, fertilizer firms supplied only 20,603 MT, resulting in a shortfall of 27,397 MT. In June 2012, the allocation of DAP was only 23,000 MT against the estimated requirement of 30,000 MT.

“I strongly urge you to immediately allocate the estimated full requirement of DAP to the State to meet the demand for the Kuruvai cultivation, which is already under way,” she said.

Despite the constraints of shortage last year, the State, “due to effective measures and timely steps taken by my government,” is expected to achieve an all-time record production of food grains of 103.85 lakh MT, she added.

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Betel vine wilts without State support

Aruna V. Iyer

‘Appeals for setting up betel leaf research institute have fallen on deaf ears’



Hankering for support:Part of a betel vine in Thottiyam.—PHOTO:R.M. RAJARATHINAM.

It is a crop that has a long and often-documented past, but an uncertain future; a part of several home remedies, yet helpless against the diseases that attack its growing leaves and stalks: meet Piper betel, or more commonly, the betel leaf. Indigenous across south and south-east Asia, the betel leaf is a temperamental crop, whose problems are yet to find any research-based solutions.

“Our repeated appeals to the government (through the Department of Horticulture) for the setting up of a betel leaf research institute seem to have fallen on deaf ears,” said N. Thyagarajan, president, Betel Leaf Traders’ Association, Thottiyam, adding that the latest appeal had been made around six months ago.

While enlisting the problems that generally affect the crop, Mr. Thyagarajan uses indigenous names rather than scientific names for the diseases and insects: “Vaadai noi, a monsoon disease that attacks the betel leaves is caused by over retention of moisture by the soil during heavy rains or improper draining of the field after irrigation; the excess moisture sometimes marks the stalks and leaves with black spots as well; the sambal poochi (a local pest) attacks the crop during the monsoons, often rotting the leaves, and drying the stalk,” he said.

In summer, the crop withers under the scorching sun if not irrigated regularly; while the gale, like the one that struck the area recently, can completely flatten the crop out, he added.

One acre of the crop, according to Mr. Thyagarajan, requires the labour of at least 20 people constantly. “Around 10 months after the stalk cuttings from a mature vine have been grafted onto the field, the stalk begins to branch out and sprout leaves, he says, “and the leaves have to be plucked every 20 days.” In this way, the crop requires manual labour for nearly one and half years after planting, thus employing nearly 100 farm labourers. But, with most local labour preferring to work for the MNREGS, Mr. Thyagarajan says finding farm labourers has become a stressful and expensive affair for the cultivators.

“We need to compete with the Rs. 132 (recently hiked from Rs. 119) the labourers get paid by the government,” he said.

It is extremely difficult to predict how the crop would turn out and the unpredictability has made it impossible to devise any insurance scheme for betel leaf cultivators, according to Mr. Thyagarajan. “The farmer is either in for exponential profits or a complete washout, which has forced many farmers to abandon the crop in the area,” he says adding that the need for insurance is another unmet demand.

“You need at least Rs. 2 lakh to plant one acre, making it a crop that is more costly to cultivate than the banana,” he said. Vellaikodi, pachaikodi and karpooram are the main varieties of betel leaf that have presently been planted in about 1000 acres in and around Thottiyam.

The betel leaves, once plucked, are sent to places within the state like Tiruchi, Kumbakonam, Erode, Salem, Tirupur, Nagapattinam, and Mayiladuthurai.

“Till around 25 years back our produce was used by the paan industry in north India, especially Mumbai,” recalls Mr. Thyagarajan.

But with several studies exposing links between betel paan and cancer, the orders began to fall and now the state's produce is mostly consumed locally.

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TNAU students exposed to sustainable sugarcane practices

Noteworthy: Students of Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute at the sugarcane nursery in Nagamangalam village.

A batch of students of Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University benefitted through a practical training on farm-related activities at Ariyalur recently.

They were exposed to various methodologies, including raising nurseries, drip irrigation, integrated pest management, and production of vermicompost at the sugarcane field in Nagamangalam village.

The students understood the techniques of raising nurseries.

They were imparted training on operating bud chipper for preparing bud chips .

They were also exposed to a new technique for raising sugarcane under sustainable sugarcane initiatives (SSI).

They were taken to the main field where the seedlings were transplanted under the SSI system with inland drip irrigation.

Vermicompost

The students were also explained the importance of vermicompost in checking pest attack on sugarcane.

Ramalingam, assistant director, Agriculture, Ariyalur block, said that the new technique increased productivity in sugarcane and helps avoid wastage of sugarcane while raising nurseries.

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Rain brings cheer to farmers



Relief: A farmer preparing his land for kharif sowing at Jambaldinni village in Raichur taluk on Wednesday.

The heavy rain on Tuesday brought some respite from the heat for people of the district, as well as relief to farmers preparing their land for kharif sowing.

With no sign of the monsoon till the third week of this month, the welcome rain has raised hopes among farmers.

According to sources, rainfall was above normal in Raichur and Manvi taluks, but below normal in Deodurga, Sindhanur and Lingsugur taluks.

Raichur taluk received 150 mm of rain as against the month's normal of 128.9 mm. It was 93.4 mm in Manvi taluk (normal is 74.6 mm), 55 mm in Deodurga taluk (79.8 mm), 35 mm in Lingsugur taluk (36.5 mm) and 13 mm in Sindhanur taluk (normal of 67.3 mm).

Target

The Agriculture Department here has set a target of sowing crops on about three lakh hectares during the kharif season.

However, poor rainfall had affected sowing.

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Deficient rain hits sowing operations for paddy

The sowing operations in the district had received a setback this year because of scanty rain.

The average rainfall in the district till June 26 was 372.6 mm against which the actual rainfall

this year was 281.3 mm. Shivamurthappa, Joint Director of Agriculture, told *The Hindu* that this year sowing had taken place only on 45 per cent of the 1.80 lakh hectares of cultivable land in the district.

Of the 68,830 hectares of land in the district in which maize had been grown, sowing had taken place on 37,060 hectares of land.

The poor rain had forced the paddy growers to postpone the sowing and transplantation activities. Paddy is cultivated on 1.08 lakh hectares of land in the district. This year so far, paddy nurseries were developed on 4,767 hectares of land and the saplings in these nurseries would be transplanted on 50,000 hectares of land, he said.

Barring April, the rainfall in other months was below average this year.

The district received 118.4 mm of rain in April against the average of 43.9 mm.

He said the heavy rain which lashed the district in April was not of much use to farmers as agriculture activities had not begun in the district then, he said.

According to the forecast from the Department of Meteorology, monsoon would become active in the district in the coming days. In the taluks which received less rain, farmers would be asked to go for short term crops, he said. Tirthahalli taluk which has thick forest cover had been facing shortage of rain.

The taluk has received 419.6 mm rain in June so far as against the average rainfall of 582.7 mm.

Paddy is cultivated on 14,000 hectares of land in the taluk.

A majority of farmers in villages such as Makkigadde, Malalimakki, and Demlapura had not yet commenced sowing because of shortage of rain.

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- *Shimoga district has received 281.3 mm of rainfall as on June 26*
 - *Sowing has been taken up only on 45 p.c. of the cultivable land*
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KOLKATA, June 28, 2012

Monthly payment to Singur farmers hiked

Five days after a Division Bench of the Calcutta High Court struck down the Singur Land Rehabilitation & Development Act, 2011, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced here on Wednesday that the monthly allowance to be paid to “unwilling farmers” in Singur would be increased to Rs.2,000 every month from July.

“Today [Wednesday] the State Government has taken the decision to increase the amount to be paid to farmers in Singur every month from Rs.1,000 to Rs.2,000. We hope it will suffice till the legal matters regarding the return of the land are sorted out,” Ms. Banerjee told journalists at the State Secretariat, citing the “high price rise” as the reason for the hike.

Ms. Banerjee, who made the announcement at a function to mark the first year of the Trinamool Congress-led government coming to power, said the decision to pay Rs.1,000 to the farmers and agricultural labourers at Singur was taken on May 19.

The sum of Rs.1,000 will be given to them for May and June. From July, they will be given Rs.2,000. The distribution of rice at Rs.2 per kilogram will also continue, Ms. Banerjee said.

The announcement comes even as murmurs of dissent are beginning to be voiced in Singur.

While the verdict of the court, which went against the State Government, has disheartened some, others are beginning to question why they have not received the benefits of the schemes already announced for them.

The State Government announced that this allowance would be paid to the farmers of Singur as long as the case is pending in court.

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- *Move comes five days after the Singur Act ruling*
 - *Mamata cites “high price rise” as the reason for the hike*
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COIMBATORE, June 28, 2012

Horticulture Department to start vegetable kiosks

Says objective is to help farmers in the vicinity of Chennai and Coimbatore

In yet another intervention aimed at helping vegetable farmers get better price for produce and the customer good vegetables at competitive price, the Horticulture Department will establish kiosks, beginning with Chennai and Coimbatore.

The Department will establish around 200 vegetable kiosks in the two cities, says Santhosh Babu, Commissioner Horticulture and Plantation Crops. The number will be increased if the patronage is good.

The Department has planned the kiosks as part of the National Agriculture Initiative, renamed here as Peri-Metro Project. The Chennai part of the project alone will benefit 8,000 farmers, who will be grouped, based on the vegetable they grow.

As for Coimbatore, the Department will spend Rs. 17 crore for the establishment of the kiosks, which will be removable structures, each costing around Rs.2.50 lakh.

Dr. Babu says the idea behind the project is also to help farmers who are in the vicinity of cities like Chennai and Coimbatore.

For the Chennai project, the Department will involve farmers in Villupuram, Vellore and a couple of other districts.

“The Department, after grouping the farmers will either form producers’ company or a cooperative. Then it will also try branding the vegetables to improve marketability. The farmers are being grouped now”.

The market aggregator engaged for the purpose will purchase from farmers right at the farm gate. And his payment will be based on prices in various markets and inputs from the market intelligence cell.

The aggregator will also grade the vegetables and sell these to franchisees who run the kiosks.

And again the price at the kiosks will be determined by market forces.

“It will be a transparent, public-private partnership model with end-to-end computerisation” he says.

The Commissioner also says that the Horticulture Department is also looking at mobile governance for the farmers. It will be a two-way initiative, aimed at getting inputs from farmers and also giving them information to better selling price.

One such project it is considering is the m-krushi from the Tata Consultancy Services.

June 28, 2012

'Withdraw Nutrient Based Subsidy policy'

Chief Minister Jayalalithaa has demanded immediate withdrawal of the Nutrient Based Subsidy policy and restoration of the previous system of fixing the maximum retail price of fertilizers.

CHENNAI, June 28, 2012

"Restore earlier system of fixing fertilizers' MRP"

Jayalalithaa seeks scrapping of nutrient based subsidy policy

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In a letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday, she stated that the introduction of the policy by the Centre on April 1, 2010, coupled with an unreliable supply of fertilizers to Tamil Nadu, was “threatening to deprive our farmers of their basic means of sustenance and livelihood”.

Pointing out that the annual consumption of chemical fertilizers in the State is about 28 lakh tonnes, she said that the policy had given the liberty to the manufacturers/importers of chemical fertilizers to fix the MRP based on their cost of production/import. Since then, the fertilizer companies had been hiking the retail price of fertilizers at will, causing extreme hardship to farmers.

Explaining how the price of fertilizers had gone up by two or three times, she said the increase had been steep since April.

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The Department of Fertilizers, which had also proposed a hike of another 10 per cent in urea prices, planned to cut subsidies further on the pretext of subsidising bio-fertilizers.

"Faced with a steep price rise and having to digest a sharp reduction in subsidy, our farmers have been hit hard in terms of economic returns from farming."

She said that the State government's waiver of the levy of 4 per cent Value Added Tax (VAT) on the sale of fertilizers, effective July 12 last year, had given some relief to farmers.

On the problem of shortage of fertilizers, the Chief Minister said that while the DAP requirement for April to May 2012 was 48,000 MT, fertilizer firms supplied only 20,603 MT, resulting in a shortfall of 27,397 MT.

In June 2012, the allocation of DAP was only 23,000 MT against the estimated requirement of 30,000 MT.

"I strongly urge you to immediately allocate the estimated full requirement of DAP to the State to meet the demand for the Kuruvai cultivation, which is already under way," she said.

Despite the constraints of shortage last year, the State, "due to effective measures and timely steps taken by my government," is expected to achieve an all-time record production of food grains of 103.85 lakh MT, she added.

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- *New system gives manufacturers/importers free hand on MRP*
 - *Price of fertilizers hiked at will, causing hardship to ryots*
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KARUR, June 28, 2012

Turmeric trading under market committee to begin in Karur

L. RENGANATHAN

Farmers to be allowed to trade every Wednesday at Rayanur

Following persistent demands from turmeric growers, Department of Agriculture Marketing has arranged trading of turmeric under the market committee in Karur. Thereby the path has been laid for farmers to sell their produce at a better price.

Turmeric caught the imagination of the industrious farmers of Karur after its purchase price skyrocketed over the past few years.

Hundreds of acres in the district were brought under turmeric and scores of farmers vied for the pie that was getting enlarged every season.

With increase in the area under turmeric the growers had been urging the State government and the Department of Agriculture officials to open regulated turmeric market in Karur itself as taking the produce to neighbouring Erode and Tirupur districts was becoming costly.

The glut took its toll as the price plummeted this year leaving growers in the lurch. When saving turned more prudent than earning, turmeric growers demand for a turmeric shandy here grew shriller. The cost of transportation and the time spent on travel turned to be a burden on the grower.

In fact till some two years back, the Market Committee traded in turmeric and the facility was withdrawn due to lack of patronage.

Heeding their demand for revival of the turmeric shandy, the Department of Agricultural Marketing has announced that farmers could trade in turmeric at the Rayanur Regulated Market to meet the demands from ryots in areas such as Sukkaliyur, Velayuthampalayam, K. Paramathi

and their neighbourhoods. The farmers have pledged their support for the plan and consequent to that, farmers would be allowed to trade in turmeric every Wednesday at Rayanur. Besides, the Erode turmeric traders have promised to cooperate in trading turmeric at Velayuthampalayam Uzhavar Sandhai every Thursday where too growers could find profitable means to sell their produce, officials say. Growers can also utilise the Rayanur cold storage facility to mortgage their turmeric produce and get short term loan up to Rs.2 lakh per person. All those measures would help ameliorate the suffering of the turmeric growers in Karur district who have been upset with the plummeting price of turmeric in the market. Unfortunately, officials also aver that the net sown area under turmeric has taken a severe beating and many farmers have turned to sunflower that has a more stable market than turmeric during the current year. Concerned farmers feel that should not be the reason for the officials to withdraw turmeric trading at Rayanur and elsewhere in the district in the year ahead.

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- *Growers can use Rayanur cold storage facility to mortgage turmeric produce*
 - *Officials aver that net sown area under turmeric has taken a severe beating*

BANGALORE, June 28, 2012

A truant monsoon delays kharif sowing

NAGESH PRABHU



Waiting for dark clouds: Deficient rainfall has resulted in delayed planting of kharif crops such as paddy, cotton, sugarcane, oilseeds, pulses and coarse cereals.— File PHOTO

The 41 per cent deficit in the southwest monsoon has resulted in delayed planting of several kharif crops such as paddy, cotton, sugarcane, oilseeds, pulses and coarse cereals.

The State has received 90.1 mm of rain against the normal rainfall of 151.9 mm from June 1 to 24. Bangalore Urban district received only 11.2 mm of rainfall against the normal 62.8 mm.

The rainfall deficit is 68 per cent in south interior Karnataka, 52 per cent in north interior Karnataka, 40 per cent in the Malnad region and 27 per cent in the coastal districts, according to V.S. Prakash, Director, Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC).

The acreage of all kharif crops has declined owing to deficient rainfall. Only 7.79 lakh hectares has been sown against the targeted 74.77 lakh hectares. In 2011, as on June 24, the coverage was 18 lakh hectares, Agriculture Department officials told *The Hindu*.

The sluggish progress of the monsoon has affected the acreage under cereals. The paddy, a major foodgrain crop, has been planted on 0.4 lakh hectares, maize on 0.48 lakh hectares, jowar on 0.39 lakh hectares and bajra on 0.02 lakh hectares. The coverage of cereals was 1.34 lakh hectares.

The area under pulses (1.42 lakh hectares) such as toor, horse gram, black gram, green gram and avare was also below normal due to scanty rainfall in north Karnataka districts. The actual coverage of oilseeds was 0.68 lakh hectares as on June 24, 2012 (2.04 lakh hectares during the same period last year).

Commercial crops — cotton, sugarcane and tobacco — have been planted on 0.9 lakh, 2.43 lakh and 0.56 lakh hectares, respectively. The coverage of these crops was 3.89 lakh hectares (5.28 lakh hectares last year).

Many sugarcane farmers have switched over to alternate crops as they did not receive timely payment from the sugar mills.

Seeds

The department has distributed 1.97 lakh quintals of seeds to 6.49 lakh farmers in the State. The total available seed stock was 9.5 lakh quintals. The State has maintained 6.5 lakh tonnes of fertilizers. The total nutrients required for the season is 24.45 lakh tonnes.

Except Bidar, rainfall was deficit in 15 districts and scanty in 14 districts from the first week of June to June 23. Bidar had received 127.1 mm of rainfall against normal 99.3 mm. In view of deficient rainfall, Chief Minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda has instructed officials to continue drought relief measures such as re-opening goshalas (cattle camps), and resuming supply of drinking water through tankers wherever required. He has also instructed officials to make necessary preparations for cloud seeding in case the State does not get adequate rain in the next few days.

- *State has received 90.1 mm of rain against the normal rainfall of 151.9 mm from June 1 to 24*
- *Only Bidar has received 127.1 mm of rainfall against the normal 99.3 mm*

hindustantimes

Thu, 28 Jun 2012

weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Thursday, Jun 28

Max Min

37.1° | 24.8°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 79%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 5:45

Sunset: 18:39

Barometer: 993

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Friday, Jun 29

Max Min

36° | 28°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday Jun 30	Sunday Jul 1	Monday Jul 2	Tuesday Jul 3	Wednesday Jul 4
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32° 27°	32° 27°	32° 27°	33° 27°	32° 28°
Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

28 JUN, 2012, 03.29AM IST, PK KRISHNAKUMAR,ET BUREAU

Global pepper prices to remain firm despite surplus output

Kochi: International Pepper Community (IPC), an intergovernmental organisation of pepper-producing countries, reckons that black pepper prices will not drop despite surplus production in Vietnam and Indonesia due to an increase in demand.

While the Indian production is expected to be below the estimated 43,000 tonne, the Vietnam crop is better than last year and the output in Indonesia is expected to be higher. This, along with higher inventory kept by importers, will hold the price line, according to S Kannan, executive director of Jakarta-based IPC.

Talking to ET over phone, he said importers used to keep one month's inventory last year as the stock was limited. "But they may keep a higher stock this time. Thus, an excess production of over 21,000 tonne in the world market will be absorbed by the industry to maintain a higher inventory," he said. Global production in 2012 is predicted to be at 3.2 lakh tonne, 7% higher than last year's.

As a result, international prices are likely to stabilise at the current level of around \$7,000 per tonne. "A steady price trend will continue as industry demand has picked up."

He said the final estimate of Vietnam export for 2012 is 1.25 lakh tonne, and the country, the largest producer, is estimated to have shipped around 62,000 tonne in the first half of 2012, which is almost similar to the volume shipped during the same period of 2011. However, there is a 25% rise in value. The official production figure in Vietnam for 2012 is 1.10 lakh tonne.

Importers are waiting for the Indonesian crop, which should start reaching the markets in a few days. "The Indonesian production is expected to be around 41,000 tonne compared with 33,000 tonne last year. But traders have sold some quantities in advance. So arrivals may not impact prices much."

The Indian production is slated to drop from the earlier estimate of 43,000 tonne. Kannan said it could fall below 40,000 tonne. "But this will be made up by surplus production by Vietnam and Indonesian and better demand." Indian exports have been dull because of uncompetitive price, lower production and rupee depreciation.

27 JUN, 2012, 05.06PM IST, PTI

Cashew declines on subdued demand

NEW DELHI: Cashew prices fell by Rs 5 per kg in the national capital today owing to fall in demand from retailers and stockists.

Adequate stocks position following increased arrivals from producing belts also weighed on the cashew prices.

Cashew kernel (No 180, 210, 240 and 320) prices fell by Rs 5 each to settle at Rs 700-730, Rs 670-675, Rs 600-615 and Rs 540-580 per kg, respectively.

Marketmen said subdued demand from retailers and stockists against adequate stocks mainly led to decline in cashew kernel prices.

The following are today's quotations (per 40 kg): Almond (California) Rs 12,000 Almond (Gurbandi-new) Rs 6,500-7,200; Almond (Girdhi) Rs 2,800-3,000; Abjosh Afghani Rs 6,000-20,000.

Almond Kernel (California) Rs 425-430 per kg, Almond Kernel (Gurbandi-new) Rs 320-440 per kg.

Seeds supply: BJP Morcha debunks govt claim of supplying 3.5 lakh quintals

Author: Express News Service Published Date: Jun 27, 2012 12:11 PM Last Updated: Jun 27, 2012 12:11 PM

The Pradesh BJP Krushak Morcha on Tuesday dismissed the State Government's claim of supplying nearly 3.50 lakh quintals of certified paddy seeds to the districts.

Presiding over a meeting of State functionaries and district presidents of the morcha, State unit president Maheswar Sahu said many districts have not received certified seeds and the few districts, which have received the seeds, are not in a position to supply them to farmers.

As the State Government has decided to supply paddy seeds through primary agriculture cooperative societies (PACs), pani panchayats, farmers' clubs and self- help groups, the morcha apprehended large- scale irregularities in seeds supply in the absence of monitoring.

The Agriculture Department is not interested to be a part of the seeds distribution because of manpower shortage. However, the major bone of contention between the Agriculture Department and the Odisha State Seeds Corporation is the service charge. The department is asking five per cent service charge from the corporation towards sale and supply of certified seeds to the farmers.

Apart from 2,254 private dealers, the corporation has been supplying certified seeds at subsidised rate to the farmers through 628 seed sale centres of the Agriculture Department for the last seven years. At least two persons of the department are engaged in each sale centre which is causing a lot of inconvenience to the department in carrying out the extension activities.

The State Government has set an ambitious target of supplying 6.98 lakh quintal seeds to the farmers during the ensuing kharif. Of the total target, 6.72 lakh quintal will be paddy seeds whereas 26,518 quintal will be non-paddy seeds.

So far, 4.25 lakh quintal seeds have been collected out of which 3.50 lakh quintal seeds supplied to the districts. As much as 1.53 lakh quintal seeds have already been supplied to the farmers, official sources said.

The BJP morcha further alleged that the State Government is yet to keep required stock of chemical fertilisers in the districts. Kharif operation has started all over the State after the recent spell of monsoon rains.

The Morcha decided to organise a massive rally of farmers at Sonapur on July 16, the scheduled day of the next State executive committee meeting of the body.

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MoS urges Centre to lift its share of surplus wheat

TUESDAY, 26 JUNE 2012 23:55

STAFF REPORTER | BHOPAL

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Minister of State for Food and Civil Supplies Paras Chandra Jain has written a letter to Union Minister of State for Food and Public Distribution (Independent charge) Prof KV Thomas urging him that Centre should lift its share of surplus wheat at the earliest.

Jain has informed Thomas that record 85.06 lakh metric tonnes wheat was procured in Madhya Pradesh in Rabi distribution season this year. This quantity has gone up to 88.95 lakh metric tonnes by adding last year's surplus. He informed that Madhya Pradesh's requirement is about 29.27 lakh metric tonnes whereas 59.68 lakh metric tonnes wheat of Central pool is to be lifted by Food Corporation of India.

He informed in the letter that Food Corporation of India has lifted only 5.65 lakh metric tonnes wheat of Central pool as on June 14. Thus, 54.03 lakh metric tonnes wheat is surplus in the State. It is necessary to transfer this surplus wheat to Central pool at the earliest. Paras Jain

urged Thomas to issue necessary directives to Food Corporation of India to lift surplus wheat at the earliest.

According to Jain, wheat procurement process has been completed at all the procurement centres in the State. Wheat procured from farmers has also been safely stored. Now, wheat is not stored in open anywhere in the State.

Notably, the State Government has urged the Union Minister for lifting the procured wheat earlier too, but there has always been delay on the part of Central Government.

Basnikar tells officials to hand out quality fertilizer

WEDNESDAY, 27 JUNE 2012 23:24

STAFF REPORTER | RAIPUR

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Giving a stern warning that no lethargy in distribution of fertilisers or any compromise in quality will be tolerated, Gariaband district collector Dilip Basnikar has asked concerned official to pull up their socks to ensure systematic and timely distribution of standard quality of fertiliser to the farmers.

The official also expressed displeasure over the absence of Tribal department officials at the headquarters.

In a meeting held recently, Collector Basnikar insisted that the retailers or any organisation found in selling of substandard fertilisers will be subjected to strict action under Agriculture Act. Moreover, concerned officials were also instructed to ensure timely distribution of fertilisers and seeds so as to save the farmers from inconvenience caused due to delay.

Meanwhile, detailed discussion over storage, transportation and distribution of fertilisers, seeds stock in Gariaband district was also held. While reviewing the time-bound cases of Food department at the weekly meeting, Basnikar instructed Food department officials to complete data entry process of all the BPL and APL ration cardholders by the end of this month, which otherwise strict action would be deliberated.

Collector was more upset to learn that data entry of 91,800 families is still pending, as informed by Food Officer Rathiya at the meeting. The collector immediately issued a showcause notice to the responsible Food officer.

In the mean time, Collector expressed pleasure over the fact that Gariaband district ranks top in the entire State as far as transportation of foodgrain is concerned. Basbujar also ordered Food officer to probe the complaint received about declination in procurement of paddy at support price by three times at Rajim and Beltukri, as compared to last year, within seven days.

Collector also instructed the nodal officer of Women and Child Development department AK Biswal to forward the report of Sabla Yojana to Government with immediate effect. Moreover, nodal officer of Public Health Engineering GL Gupta was instructed to monitor and review the construction of toilets in Primary and Secondary Schools of Gariaband.

Besides, the official also ordered Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) Revenue, Gariaband and Devbhog to constantly monitor projects underway in district and also to work in coordination with other departments.

Business Standard

Thursday, Jun 28, 2012

Tea deficit rises with season progress, prices shoot up

Ishita Ayan Dutt / Kolkata June 28, 2012, 0:07 IST

With a slump in output and poor weather, the tea industry is staring at a cumulative deficit of 160 million kg. The season started with a pipeline deficit of 130 million kg. The shortfall over January to May, sector representatives indicate, was an additional 30 million kg.

Consumption in India grows at three per cent yearly. Lower output and increasing domestic consumption over the past three to four years resulted in a cumulative deficit of 130 million kg. The latest figures from the Indian Tea Association (ITA) indicate that till April, the output across India was lower by 24 million kg, with North India (Assam and Bengal) accounting for 15.8 million kg.

“North India has been losing crop since November. While that has reflected in higher prices,

it also means we lost crop in the quality period,” said Aditya Khaitan, the India managing director of McLeod Russel, the world’s largest bulk tea producer.

There is segmentation of the tea market in two tiers, with the good ones fetching much higher prices and medium teas getting relatively less. Top-level teas are Rs 250-290 a kg, higher this year by Rs 30-40 a kg. Medium teas are Rs 130-250 a kg, higher by Rs 10-15 a kg.

The high prices have reflected in packet tea, too. “Regional packet tea companies have been forced to raise prices. We increased prices by Rs 12 a kg in May and by the same amount in June. We cannot go on increasing prices; we have to keep our customers’ interests in mind,” said Piyush Desai, chairman of the Wagh Bakri tea group.

The trend in pricing and supply is not restricted to India. According to ITA officials, the crop was lower by 64 million kg globally till April/May. In May, Sri Lanka’s output was down 8.4 per cent, while in the first five months, the decline was 3.8 per cent. Kenya’s tea production during January-April was lower by 22 per cent. India, Sri Lanka and Kenya account for 70 per cent of global black tea output.

However, the domestic sector hopes that over the next three months, supply would improve, resulting in prices coming off these highs. However, the increase expected in the coming months is unlikely to make up for the crop loss in the first half of the year.

India nears top in coconut output, not in value addition

George Joseph / Kochi June 28, 2012, 0:06 IST

India ranks second in the output of coconuts, and first in productivity, with an annual average of 8,303 nuts per hectare.

According to the Asian and Pacific Coconut Community (APCC), India produces 15,730 million nuts annually, next to Indonesia with 16,498 million. In area under cultivation, India is third; Indonesia again comes first, with a total of 385 million hectare; India’s area is 189.4 million hectare. Sri Lanka is second in global productivity, with 7,223 nuts per hectare.

India is also the highest domestic consumer, at 1,494.4 million nuts annually, followed by Indonesia with 996.5 million. India consumes 95 per cent of its total output; Indonesia consumes 60 per cent. According to the APCC, Malaysia is the largest importer of coconut and coconut-based products; it imports 1,400 million nuts. It produces 379 million nuts from 10 million hectare, the consumption being 112.9 per cent of their total production, according to APCC's 2009 estimates.

Sri Lanka ranks first in percentage of total export earning, with 3.6 per cent (from \$253 million of coconut export). India's annual export earnings from coconut and coconut-based products is \$178.2 million, the contribution to total export earning being only 0.1 per cent. The highest export earner is Philippines, with \$884 million.

APCC is an inter-government body, set up in 1969 under the aegis of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, headquartered at Jakarta. India is a founder-member and APCC now has 16 member-countries. Plus, two associate members, Jamaica and Kenya.

India lags far in processing and export when compared to other major producers. Sri Lanka's production and productivity are less than that of Tamil Nadu, but their export of value-added products is manifold of India.

In India, coconut is commercially produced in 18 states and three Union Territories but huge variations are observed in productivity. The highest, 19,630 nuts per hectare, is in Lakshadweep. That of the major growing states of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh are 5,193, 7,365, 13,771 and 9,327 nuts, respectively, show data from the Coconut Development Board.

DSCL plans to launch tomatoes with long shelf life by 2016

DSCI signed an agreement with Arcadia Biosciences to produce these tomatoes

Press Trust of India / New Delhi June 27, 2012, 16:16 IST



Agri inputs major DCM Shriram Consolidated Ltd (DSCL) today said it plans to commercially launch a new variety of tomato with long shelf life by 2016, using a non-GM advanced screening and breeding technique.

"We have signed an agreement with Arcadia Biosciences today to develop long shelf life tomatoes. We plan to have initial trials in 3 years and to launch the variety by 2016," DSCL Vice-Chairman and MD Vikram Shriram said.

DSCL's wholly-owned subsidiary Bioseed Research India (BRI), a hybrid seed development company, has signed an agreement with US-based agri-technology company Arcadia Biosciences to develop Long Shelf Life (LSL) tomatoes.

The tomato variety would be created using a non-GM (Genetically Modified) advanced screening and breeding technique called 'Tilling', Shriram added.

Arcadia has identified a number of genetic variations that allow tomatoes to fully ripen on the vine, yet still remain durable enough to survive the packing and shipping process, he said.

"An estimated 20-35 per cent of tomatoes on average are lost to post-harvest damage in Asia. As the fourth largest producer of tomatoes globally, India represents a significant market opportunity for LSL tomato technology," he said.

Arcadia Biosciences is an agricultural technology company focused on the development of agricultural products.

DSCL is an integrated business entity with operations in sugar, fertilisers, chloro-vinyl, bioseeds and farm solutions.

Tea production down 16% to 61 mn kg in April

India produced 73.04 mn kg of tea in the year ago period

Press Trust of India / New Delhi June 27, 2012, 16:10 IST



India's tea production fell by 16% to 61 million kg in April this year on account of drop in output in North and South India, latest Tea Board data said.

The country had produced 73.04 million kg of tea in the same month of 2011.

Production of the brew in North India declined by 16% to 41.63 million kg in April 2012 from 49.45 million kg in April, 2011, while output in South India fell by 18% to 19.36 million kg from 23.59 million kg in the same period.

In the first four months of the current calender year, tea production fell by 14% to 143.29 million kg from 167.46 million kg in January-April 2011. Tea production has been lagging since the start of the current calender year. According to the Tea Board data, tea output fell by 16% to 47.60 million kg in March this year from 56.73 million kg in the year-ago period. Similarly, production of the brew fell 11% to 18.69 million kg in January 2012 from 20.93 million kg in the same month last year, while output was down by 4% to 16 million kg in February 2012 from 16.73 million kg in same period in 2011.

India is the world's second-largest producer and the biggest consumer of tea.

THE HINDU Business Line

Profit-taking drags pepper futures

Suresh P. Iyengar



Traders expect the drop in supply may lead to a reversal in trend and the prices may gain.

Mumbai, June 28:

Pepper futures on the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange Ltd (NCDEX) closed lower by Rs 120 at Rs 41,115 a quintal on Wednesday. This was largely due to profit-booking after recent rise in prices.

However, the drop in supply in the last few days may lead to a reversal in trend and the prices may gain in coming days, traders expect.

Export demand still remains low due to price disparity. The volatility in rupee value against dollar has also taken a toll on exports. This has led to pepper from Vietnam quoting cheaper than India.

Indian prices for Asta grade were quoted at \$7,250 a tonne (FOB), while that of Vietnam were sold at \$6,800 a tonne.

Production has been falling in the last three years and is expected to drop further next year. The country produced 43,000 tonnes of pepper last year.

Turmeric growers clampdown on stocks



Erode, June 27:

Spot turmeric prices increased on Wednesday but most farmers refused to sell, expecting a higher price for their produce.

“For the past couple of days spot turmeric prices have increased. But growers, expecting prices to increase further, refused to sell.

However, there is no sign of prices improving,” said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said that arrivals are lower now compared with the same period a year ago. Similarly, prices too are low, as exporters have not received fresh orders.

Only a few traders and bulk buyers have received local orders. Most of the orders are for the fine variety.

On Wednesday, a very low quantity of fine variety turmeric arrived for sale, so prices increased by Rs 200 a quintal. But the price of Hybrid Salem crop decreased by Rs 265 a quintal due to low quality of offerings.

Some turmeric grower farmers said that the Government already declared the procurement of turmeric at Rs 4,000 a quintal.

But so far no procurement has been made. Further, no farmer is willing to sell turmeric at Rs 4,000 a quintal.

If the Government procures turmeric at Rs 7,000 a quintal, farmers will sell their 50 per cent of the stock.

On Wednesday 9,540 bags of turmeric arrived for sale, but only half the stocks were sold. Most of the bags were procured by the stockists.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales yard, the finger variety turmeric was sold at Rs 2,339-4,009 a quintal and the root variety Rs 2,299-3,690.

Salem Crop: The finger variety fetched Rs 3,949-4,399 and the root variety Rs 3,409-3,899. Of the 1,504 bags kept for sale, 1,004 were sold.

At the Regulated Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,531-4,067 and the root variety Rs 3,404-3,845. Of 1,004 bags that arrived, 949 were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,169-4,409 and the root variety Rs 3,059 -3,799.

All the arrived 1,174 bags of turmeric were sold. At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,372- 4,286 and the root variety Rs 2,740-3,889. All 175 bags on offer were sold.

Sugar market waits Q2 free sale quota



Mumbai, June 27:

Sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale market ruled steady on Wednesday as local demand eased. Naka rates saw a positive trend on lower resale of fine variety. Expectation of higher festival demand next month for the premium variety sugar kept mill tender rates firm. Naka and tender rates were up by Rs 5-10.

A Vashi-based wholesaler said that the market is now waiting for announcement July-September quarter free sale quota. If it is more considering festivals then prices may rule steady at current levels. If it is same as the previous quarter, then prices increase. In the July-September quarter, traders hope to see improvement in all-round demand as cane crushing season is drawing to a close. Millers are not under pressure to sell their allotted quarterly quota, which is due on Saturday, as they have continuously sold sugar in local markets with steady rise in price this month.

Delay in monsoon across the country is raising fear about the kharif production, including sugarcane. Sugar production in season year 2012-2013 is initially estimated at 260-265 lakh tonnes but it will depend upon the progress of monsoon. All this indicates firm trend in coming days.

In Vashi market, arrivals were 52-54 truckloads and local dispatches were lower at 47-48 loads lead to increase in inventory. On Tuesday, only about 10 mills offered tenders and sold 20,000-22,000 bags in the range of Rs 2,880-2,930 (Rs 2,880-2,930) for S-grade and Rs 2,960-3,030 (Rs 2,960-3,030) for M-grade.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates (Rs/quintal): S-grade Rs 2,982-3,026 (Rs 2,980-3,055) and M-grade Rs 3,041- 3,181 (Rs 3,052-3,181).

Naka delivery rates: S-grade Rs 2,945-3,000 (Rs 2,940-2,970) and M-grade Rs 3,040-3,110 (Rs 3,020-3,100).

Profit booking likely to continue in castorseed



Rajkot, June 27:

Castorseed futures declined on Wednesday due to profit booking by traders. Moreover, buying also was slow in the spot market as prices have shot up in the past two weeks.

According to market analysts, market participants have begun to book profits after the market rallied in last 8-10 days. A Rajkot-based trader said that profit booking may continue for the next few days as prices have increased by over Rs 350 a quintal this month. Due to this, demand at current levels has declined and price could head south further.

On Rajkot Commodity Exchange (RCX), September castorseed contracts decreased by Rs 44 to Rs 3,484 a quintal. Spot castorseed was traded marginally lower by Rs 2.50 to Rs 3,235.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), castorseed July contract slipped by Rs 25 to Rs 3,361 a quintal with an open interest of 23,620 lots. NCDEX August contracts declined by Rs 27 to Rs 3,421, with an open interest of 34,060 lots.

About 55,000-60,000 bags of 75-kg each arrived in Gujarat and quoted at Rs 625-645 for a *maund* of 20 kg and 5,000-5,500 bags arrived in Saurashtra quoting Rs 595-640.

Stockists avoid building edible oils inventory

Mumbai, June 27:

Mustard oil extended its gain on Wednesday by Rs 5 for 10-kg to hit Rs 830 for 10 kg – the highest since April 17.

As the market has gone up sharply in last 10 days most traders – stockists chose to stay away from fresh buying and concentrated on fulfilling old commitments.

A Mumbai-based edible oil broker, Mr Shailesh Kataria, said that poor monsoon in the oilseeds growing areas, and strong dollar making import parity costlier are supporting the sentiment. Increased price gap in soya oil futures between near and far months indicate a strong and bullish sentiment ahead.

August futures were higher by Rs 10 than July against the normal Rs 2-5 difference, he said.

In absence of demand, about 80-100 tonnes of palmolein were traded in resale at Rs 609-610 ex- JNPT.

There were no direct trade with refiners. Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 617-619, super palmolein at Rs 650, soya oil at Rs 740 and sunflower refined oil at Rs 745. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 618 for July and Rs 623 for August.

Soya refined oil was offered at Rs 740-745. Sunflower refined oil was quoted at Rs 745-750. Allana's rate for palmolein was Rs 615. Bunge quoted palmolein at Rs 615. In Saurashtra – Rajkot, groundnut oil dropped by Rs 20 to Rs 1,820 (Rs 1,840) for *Telia* tin and by Rs 20 to Rs 1,180 (Rs 1,200) for loose-10kg.

Malaysia's crude palm oil August contract settled at MYR 3,011 (MYR 3,023), September at MYR 3,016 (MYR 3,032) and October at MYR 3,019 (MYR 3,037) a tonne.

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates were (Rs/10 kg): groundnut oil 1,185 (1,185), soya refined oil 735 (735), sunflower exp. ref. 670 (670), sunflower ref. 745 (745), rapeseed ref. oil 830 (825), rapeseed expeller ref. 800 (795) cotton ref. oil 705 (705) and palmolein 612 (612).

Rally in tur may continue on erratic monsoon



Indore, June 27:

The rally in tur is likely to continue in the near futures if monsoon continues to play spoilsport. This is since any further delay in rain will delay sowing, according to Mr Hanuman Jain, an Indore-based pulses trader.

Rising demand and need for imports could also lift its prices, another trader said.

However, the rally in tur took a break on Wednesday with tur (Maharashtra) in Indore mandis declining to Rs 4,350-75 a quintal, while tur (Indore variety) ruled at Rs 3,200-3,600.

Weak arrivals have resulted in a bullish run in tur, coupled with enthusiastic buying support from millers and increased demand. Besides improved buying support, traders have also attributed rise in tur to delay in monsoon, thereby prompting farmers to hold up stock.

Tur (Maharashtra) on Wednesday declined to Rs 4,350-75 a quintal. Compared with last week, tur (Maharashtra) is ruling Rs 75-100 higher. Tur dal has perked up in the past one week by Rs 400 a quintal. In the spot, tur dal (full) on Wednesday ruled at Rs 6,200-6,300, tur dal (sawa no.) ruled at Rs 5,400-5,500, while tur marka ruled at Rs 7,100-7,200 against Rs 6,800 last week.

Moong has rallied by almost Rs 400 a quintal in the past one week.

Amid apprehension of decline in sowing of moong in kharif season in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and rise in prices of imported Australian moong, moong (best quality) in Indore mandis in the past couple of days has gone up by Rs 300-400 a quintal with moong (best quality) in local

mandis on Wednesday being quoted at Rs 4,300-4,400 , while moong (medium) ruled at Rs 3,800-4,000. With rise in spot moong, its dal has also gained Rs 100 in Indore mandis with moong dal (medium) being quoted at Rs 5,100-5,200 , moong dal (bold) ruling at Rs 5,700, while moong mongar ruled at Rs 5,300-5,500.

Urad prices have increased by over Rs 200 a quintal. Urad (best quality) ruled firm on Wednesday at Rs 3,800-3,850, while urad (medium) ruled at Rs 2,900-3,200 . Similarly, urad dal (medium) was quoted at Rs 4,000-4,100, urad dal (bold) at Rs 4,800-4,900, while urad mongar ruled at Rs 5,700-6,100.

Pepper drops on bearish sentiments

G. K. Nair

Kochi, June 27:

The pepper market on Wednesday dropped on bearish sentiments despite positive trend in opening interest.

The trade said it is going against market fundamentals. International players and Indian bear operators were trying had to push the market down, trade alleged.

There is fear that those who buy now will liquidate and the market may drop. The stocks received by investors are still lying in the exchange platform, market sources told *Business Line*.

No selling pressure

There was no selling pressure. Some 15 tonnes of pepper arrived and that was traded at Rs 388-390 and Rs 392 a kg depending on the quality, grade and area of production.

In Karnataka also there is reportedly shortage of material and hence the prices there also have increased. Kodagu pepper was being offered at Rs 390 - 395 levels on cash and carry basis, they said. Domestic dealers have turned to Wayanad and the material is being taken via Gudalur, they said.

July contract on NCDEX dropped by Rs 225 a quintal to the last traded price (LTP) of Rs 41,010 a quintal. August slipped by Rs 30 to the LTP of Rs 41,525 a quintal while September increased by Rs 200 to the LTP of Rs 41,800 a quintal.

Turnover

Total turnover dropped by 178 tonnes to 1,683 tonnes. Total open interest increased by 154 tonnes to 5,235 tonnes.

July, August and September open interest increased by 74 tonnes, 76 tonnes and 4 tonnes respectively to 3,257 tonnes, 1,889 tonnes and 82 tonnes.

Spot prices remained steady at the previous levels in matching demand and supply situation at Rs 38,800 (ungarbled) and Rs 40,300 (Garbled) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market remained at around \$7,450 a tonne (c&f) for the Europe and about \$7,750 a tonne (c&f) for the US.

Overseas trend

International markets were stable at present, according to an overseas report today. Vietnam farmers are said to be holding back and there has emerged a view now that “Vietnam crop may not be as high as the figures of 140 K which came earlier.”

Exporters from Vietnam have not been able to cover as much quantity as required. However, the demand side has been slow, the report said.

Another report said today that both Brazil as well as Vietnam were reluctant and unwilling to adjust (decrease) their prices.

At the same time, buyers are reportedly “becoming somewhat impatient and more or less being forced to pay sellers levels.”

Assam flood situation turns worse

Guwahati, June 27:

Incessant rainfall in Assam has led to worsening of the flood situation in the State on Wednesday triggering fresh inundation and landslides in 23 districts that left 10 more dead, taking the toll in this wave of floods to 20.

While a woman and her two children were buried in a landslide at Dhirenpara area of the city, two others met a similar fate in Dima Hasao district and one each in Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Nagaon, Kamrup(Rural) and Cachar districts, official sources said.

The 23 affected districts are Tinsukia, Darrang, Bongaigaon, Jorhat, Kamrup (Metro), Golaghat, Cachar, Kokrajhar, Nalbari, Sonitpur, Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao, Nagaon, Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Dhubri, Kamrup(Rural), Karimganj, Hailakandi, Morigaon, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji and Goalpara, the sources said.

Heavy rainfall has caused Brahmaputra to swell and is threatening to submerge Majuli, Asia's largest river island in Jorhat district, where a red alert has been sounded after the river breached its embankments at Sonowal Kachari.

Water levels of various rivers are rising in both Brahmaputra and Barak valleys, while landslides have disrupted road and rail networks at the Dima Hasao hill district.

Jorhat district officials said a National Disaster Response Force team will soon arrive from Kolkata for relief and rescue operations in Majuli where over 50,000 families were affected by the flood in the island.

Road service in the island has been disrupted due to submergence of many roads. State Minister for Water Resources and local MLA Rajib Lochan Pegu visited the island, where six camps were set up for rehabilitation.

In Lakhimpur district over two lakh people have been affected by flood in Brahmaputra and Subansiri rivers, among others. The NDRF has started operations in the district, as well as in neighbouring Dhemaji, where over 2.5 lakh people have been affected.

Tobacco auctions in AP gather momentum

R. S. Sharma



A file photo of a tobacco packaging unit.

Guntur, June 28:

Tobacco auctions in Andhra Pradesh have gathered momentum during the past two to three weeks and so far 103 million kg have been sold on the floors at an average price of Rs 98.99 a kg. According to Mr V. Kannaiah, Manager (Auctions), the performance was comparatively much better than last year, as it took 124 days then to market a similar quantity. The average price was, however, slightly higher last year at Rs 101.50 a kg. He said exports orders had been received by the trade and therefore the auctions had picked up momentum of late. "We are confident of completing the auction process in Andhra Pradesh by August 15. Last year the last auction day was October 13," he said.

Crop size

He said the Tobacco Board had authorised a crop size of 162 mkg in Andhra Pradesh, but the actual crop size may be 164 mkg. The surplus in the state was negligible. He said in Karnataka, where plantation was currently going on, the board had authorised a crop size of 98 mkg. But the progress of plantation was not fast, as the monsoon was not encouraging. Auctions in the state would begin in the second week of September. It may be noted that the cropping seasons differ in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, with virginia tobacco being an early monsoon (or kharif) crop in Karnataka, whereas it is a late kharif (or early rabi) crop in Andhra Pradesh. Therefore, auctions are held by the Tobacco Board alternatively in the two states and sometimes they are also held concurrently for a short of period of time, if there is a delay in either state.

Costlier ingredients could turn poultry feed dearer



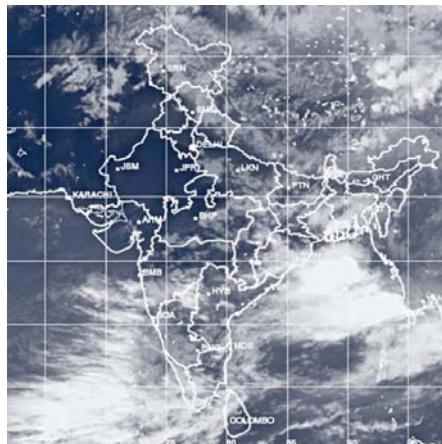
Karnal, June 27:

With the prices of soyameal and other key ingredients rising in view of monsoon playing truant, prices of poultry feed products may become dearer in the coming weeks. Prices of soyameal and other key ingredients have improved over the last one week unexpectedly, said Mr Subhash Sharma, Financial Head, Sarvottam Poultry Feed Supply Centre Pvt Ltd. Prices of soyameal are likely to increase further, while maize and bajra may remain range-bound, he said.

As a result, prices of poultry feed products may witness some hike in the first week of July, said Mr Sharma. On Wednesday, soyameal prices increased by Rs 260 and quoted at around Rs 3,300 a quintal. Similarly, maize prices went up by Rs 10 to Rs 1,060 a quintal. Bajra increased by Rs 25 and settled at Rs 1,010 a quintal. On the other hand, DCP was at Rs 35 a kg, Re 1 below the previous level, and fish oil quoted at Rs 82 a litre, also down by Re 1. Prices of poultry feed products remained unchanged. Broiler concentrates feed quoted at Rs 1,560, while broiler starter mash at Rs 1,240 for a 50-kg bag. Broiler pre-starter concentrate sold at Rs 1,370 for a 30-kg bag, while layer concentrate at Rs 1,200 for a 50-kg bag. Pre-lay mash quoted at Rs 800, while broiler finisher sold at Rs 1,220 for a 50-kg bag. Meanwhile, a big fall in production coupled with good domestic demand, pushed up egg, chick and broiler prices further. On Wednesday, broiler quoted at Rs 120 a kg against Rs 105 last week. The price of an egg was up by 24 paise to Rs 3.10, while that of a chick went up by Rs 2 to Rs 17-18.

Pacific storm 'Doksuri' could boost monsoon

Vinson Kurian



Thiruvananthapuram, June 27:

As expected, tropical depression 'Doksuri' in northwest Pacific has intensified into a tropical storm (deep depression).

It is tracking west-northwest towards northernmost Philippines.

This is the fifth storm marching just outside of India's territorial waters, as if from an assembly line, and with implications for the concurrent monsoon here.

IN LIMBO

The monsoon continues to be in a limbo and has hardly recovered from the draining impact of the preceding storm 'Talim' raging in the same location as 'Doksuri's.

'Talim' had followed in the heels of destructive typhoons (tropical cyclones) 'Mawar' and 'Guchol' in the northwest Pacific.

All three had tracked a north-northeast track into the north-central Pacific, considered inimical to the interests of the monsoon.

Viewed from that context, the tropical storm 'Doksuri' comes as a relief in that the forecast direction of movement is west-northwest into East China Sea.

The storm is forecast to bypass Hong Kong and hit the south China coast to the southwest of Zhangzhou in another three to four days.

RELIEF RALLY

This would mean that 'Doksuri' would command the southwesterly monsoon flows for as many days.

The odd forecasts, though, indicate that the Bay of Bengal might also witness some churn during the period.

The 'Doksuri' track also raises the possibility of a 'pulse' continuing to track west to reach the Bay of Bengal, which could ultimately boost the monsoon performance.

In any case, the monsoon is forecast to make a relief rally over mainland India after 'Doksuri' dies off, with a surge of flows across the Arabian Sea.

The India Meteorological Department indicated an increase in rainfall activity over east and adjoining central India, north Andhra Pradesh and interior Maharashtra in its extended outlook valid until July 4.

The moot question is how long this rally would sustain. Early forecasts indicate it may not hold beyond three to four days.

Langharjan estate's tea fetches record prices

Santanu Sanyal

Kolkata, June 27:

Six packages of whole leaf orthodox (Grade TGFOP1, Tippy, J Thomas list), totalling 103 kg, all produced from the Langharjan tea estate in Assam's Naharkatiya district, were sold at a record price of Rs 2,589 a kg at Kolkata tea auctions on Wednesday, according to tea auction sources.

This is the highest price recorded this year at a Kolkata auction for the whole leaf orthodox variety. The garden belongs to Jorehaut Tea Limited, which also has three other gardens in Assam.

In Wednesday's auction, a line of broken orthodox (Grade TGBOP Tippy, J Thomas list) totalling 135 kg, also produced by Langharjan tea estate, was sold at Rs 1,200 a kg. This was considered a good price, even though it was not a record. Two lines of CTC, both produce from the Halmari tea estate in Assam, were also sold at a higher price. Twelve bags of Grade BOP totalling 307 kg were sold at Rs 321 a kg, the highest so far this year for the CTC variety at a Kolkata auction. Another 11 bags of Grade BP totalling 303 kg were sold at Rs 302 a kg, sources added.

Cottonseed shortage: Mahyco refutes AP charges

Hyderabad, June 27:

Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company Ltd (Mahyco) has denied reports of short supply of its Bt cottonseed in Andhra Pradesh.

Responding to reports of seed supply shortage and State Agriculture Minister, Mr Kanna Lakshminarayana, asking the firm to ensure enough supply of the seed, the Maharashtra-based company said that it promised to sell 5.90 lakh packets of various hybrid Bt cottonseed. "We wrote a letter to the State Agriculture Department on May 7 assuring the State in this regard," the company said here in a statement.

With reports of severe scarcity of certain branded seeds, including the Mahyco seeds, the Minister had warned the company more than once that the Government would take action if it failed to meet the demand.

“As of today, we have supplied 6.20 lakh packets in various districts of Andhra Pradesh far exceeding the targets in the sales plan,” the company said.

Keeping in view the increasing demand for the seed, the company said it would further augment supplies going forward by increasing production acreage during the 2012 kharif season.

DCM Shriram arm joins hands with US firm to boost tomato's shelf-life

New Delhi, June 27:

Bioseed Research Pvt Ltd has partnered with US-based firm Arcadia Biosciences Inc to enhance the shelf life of tomatoes in India and Asia.

Bioseed, a subsidiary of DCM Shriram Consolidated Ltd (DSCL), will incorporate the shelf life-enhancing traits developed by Arcadia into four of its proprietary hybrids.

“We expect to commercialise the new varieties in about four years, first in India and then take it to other Asian countries like the Philippines and Vietnam,” said Mr Vikram. S. Shriram, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director, DSCL. However, he did not disclose the financials of the deal, but said it involved an upfront payment and a royalty pay-out linked to sales.

Arcadia uses a non-genetically modified screening and breeding technique called TILLING (Targeting Induced Local Lesions in Genomes). It has identified a number of genetic variations that allow tomatoes to fully ripen on the vine yet remain durable enough to survive the packing and shipping process.

“These traits will be incorporated into our germplasm using the hi-throughput molecular marker platform,” said Dr Paresh Verma, Director, Research, at Bioseed. The shelf life of the new variety would more than double to over two weeks from the present five-seven days, he said.

“This will mean reduced losses during harvest while ensuring that the produce is fully fresh and ripened when it reaches the consumer,” Dr Verma said. In Asia, an estimated 20-35 per cent of tomatoes are on average lost to post-harvest damages.

Tomato is one of the fast growing segments in the vegetable seeds portfolio of Bioseed, which accounts for a fifth of its sales. Bt cotton, rice and corn are the major hybrids in the seeds

portfolio of Bioseed, which clocked a sales turnover of Rs 391 crore in the year ended March 2012. "We expect to grow by over 30 per cent in the current year," Mr Shriram said.

Thrissur to host commodity education seminar today

BUSINESS LINE INITIATIVE

Mumbai, June 27:

A stakeholder awareness and education seminar on agribusiness and commodities price risk management will be held at 5.00 p.m. on Thursday at Hotel Ashoka Inn, Sakthan Thampuran Nagar, T.B. Road, Thrissur.

Organised by *The Hindu, Business Line*, jointly with commodity futures market regulator - Forward Markets Commission (FMC) - under the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs and the largest agri-commodity futures exchange - National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) - the seminar seeks to bring together stakeholders such as producers, processors, trading houses, importers, exporters and others operating in the physical market with a view to creating awareness about the need to manage commodity price risks arising out of volatile market conditions.

Experts will make presentations on various topics to market participants. These include 'Commodities as critical driver of India's economic growth' by Mr G. Chandrashekar of Business Line; 'Benefits of commodity futures trading and exchange perspective' by Mr V.V. Ganesan, Vice-President, NCDEX; 'Regulator's perspective' by Mr V.C. Chaturvedi, Director, FMC; and 'Role of a broker in commodity trading' by Mr Akshay Agarwal, Managing Director, Acumen Commodities (India) Ltd.

There will be an open-house discussion where the experts will respond to queries from the participants.

Due to limited number of seats, registration is necessary. Please contact: Mr P.P. Sanil 80897 76943.

Await announcement about a similar event in Kottayam on June 29 and in Kochi on June 30.

Tea offers hit new high at Coonoor

P. S. Sundar

Coonoor, June 27:

For the third consecutive week, offers for Coonoor Tea Trade Association's auctions have hit new highs.

The 21.14 lakh kg offered for the sale to be held on Thursday and Friday is the highest volume this year.

It surpasses the hitherto highest volume offered last week by as much 1.11 lakh kg. It is as much as 4.60 lakh kg more than the offer this time last year.

Of the 21.14 lakh kg on offer, 15.54 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 5.60 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades.

As much as 19.97 lakh kg belongs to the CTC variety and only 1.17 lakh kg to the orthodox variety.

The proportion of orthodox teas continues to be low in both the leaf and dust grades. In the leaf counter, only 0.68 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 14.86 lakh kg was CTC.

Among the dusts, only 0.49 lakh kg was orthodox while 5.11 lakh kg was CTC.

A substantial portion of this huge volume comprises fresh teas totalling 18.59 lakh kg. About 2.55 lakh kg comprises teas which were unsold in previous auctions.

The increased offer is due to two factors – one, the Nilgiri harvest has been high due to periodical showers and two, the arrival of teas for the auctions from other districts which was fuelled by the encouraging prices of the last few weeks.

Clove prices set to crash as supply outstrips demand

G. K. Nair



Kochi, June 27:

The cloves market which has been moving south fast in the recent weeks is now heading to a crash with the prices consistently dropping for the past few days, according to upcountry trade sources.

Prices of imported cloves have dropped in India to the range of Rs 500-550 a kg for Colombo; Rs 625-675 a kg for Madagascar and Rs 675 for Zanzibar.

Increased availability has pulled the prices down and it has been on the downward trend from late last year. In fact, the prices plummeted from \$21,000 a tonne to \$7,500 a tonne now and one cannot rule out a further fall in the wake of increased arrivals of new crop in Indonesia, upcountry trade sources said.

“Last year, from January, markets climbed up from \$4,000 a tonne to \$21,000 a tonne following failure of the June crop in Indonesia. But, the December crop turned out to be good and that in turn started pulling down the prices. Cigar companies claimed to have bought good quantities of cloves last year which is said to have formed part of their inventory. Added to this, the ban on

tobacco smoking by children is likely to have a negative impact on cloves-flavoured cigars in the world market which in turn would affect cloves intake by cigar companies,” market sources claimed.

The Indonesian crop this year is estimated to be at around 90,000 tonnes and the crop is expected to arrive in the markets next month. The prices have now dropped to \$7,800 a tonne and is likely to gradually fall to \$6,000 a tonne. The cigar companies are waiting for the prices to drop to such levels, they said.

“Prices in Indonesia have fallen today to \$7,800 a tonne and it is likely to drop to \$6,000 a tonne,” some of traders/sellers in Indonesia were quoted today as saying. “Cigar companies will not buy, they want below \$5,000”. This year, Indonesia crop is above 90,000 tonnes,” they said.

Meanwhile, the Indonesian government is reported to have banned imports of cloves to safeguard the local farmers so that the cigar companies would buy from farmers. “This step will be a big blow to international cloves trader farmers, as the biggest buyer will be out of markets,” they pointed out.

The combined output this year of Comoros, Zanzibar, Madagascar, Brazil etc is estimated at 35,000 tonnes. Thus, there is going to be huge buffer stock. All the buyers are on a wait-and-watch mode.

India is estimated to have a stock of over 3,000 tonnes. The Indian output last season was at around 1,400 tonnes, according to growers in Nagercoil region of Tamil Nadu.

In Nagercoil, cloves are sold at Rs 775-800 a kg and local dealers were buying. However, there was no demand from upcountry buyers, Mr Subramanian, a major cloves grower, told *Business Line*.

He said the production is high because of high cost of inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides and the labour. “There is an acute shortage of skilled agriculture labour”. All these factors are forcing growers to move away from the estates to other activities which are more lucrative and without much investment, he said.

The growers claimed that the current prices are not remunerative given the high cost of production.

The import duty on cloves according to the free trade agreements is expected to be brought down to 7 per cent from 15 per cent. This would bring down the prices further. Those who are

holding stocks, estimated at over 3,000 tonnes of cloves imported earlier at higher prices, may loose heavily, market sources pointed out.

For the last couple of years, the growers were getting good prices and any fall in it now to below remunerative levels would have a serious impact on the next crop, growers in Nagercoil told *Business Line*. The cost of inputs also increased correspondingly following the rise in prices, they added.

Indian consumption is estimated at 12,000–15,000 tonnes and the country is a major consumer of cloves and as the normal indigenous production is estimated at somewhere between 1,500 and 2,000 tonnes, India continues to remain a net importer.

The Public Ledger has also reported that clove prices have shown “downward pressure of late on expectations of new crop availability”. However, it quoted dealers as casting “doubt over the potential for any major price declines ahead”.

Bt cottonseed shortage: Mahyco refutes AP govt charges

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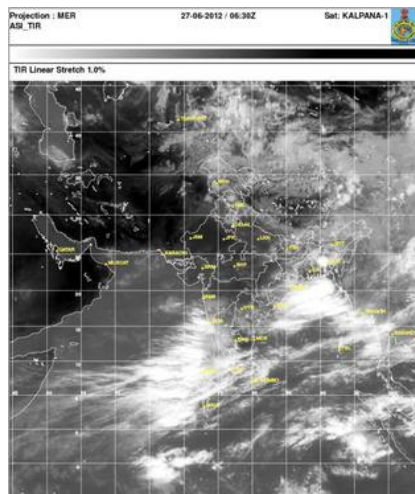
PEC, STC invite bids for importing palm, soya oil

New Delhi, June 27:

The State-owned trading firms STC and PEC have invited bids for importing 12,000 tonnes of palm oil and 5,000 tonnes of soyabean oil. While PEC has invited bids for 3,000 tonnes of crude palm oil and 9,000 tonnes of refined, bleached and deodorised (RBD) palmolein, STC has asked for the import of 5,000 tonnes of crude de-gummed soyabean oil (CDSO). The last date for submission of bids for all the three tenders is July 2 and a decision on awarding the contracts will be taken on the same day, notifications on the PEC and STC Web sites said. PEC has asked for the delivery of 5,500 tonnes and 3,500 tonnes of RBD palmolein at Chennai and Tuticorin ports in Tamil Nadu respectively from July 20-30. The firm has also asked for the delivery of 3,000 tonnes of crude palm oil for immediate shipment at the Haldia port in West Bengal. In case of STC, it wants the shipment of 5,000 tonnes of CDSO for delivery at Kandla port in Gujarat by July 20. STC has asked to source CDSO from the US and/or Argentina, whereas, PEC wants both crude and refined palm oil to be sourced from Indonesia and/or Malaysia. Currently the import duty on crude edible oil is nil and it is 7.5 per cent on refined oil. MMTTC, PEC and STC import edible oils on behalf of the Government for distribution through ration shops. India had imported around 8.37 million tonnes of edible oil in the 2010-11 oil year (November-October).

Monsoon stares at tropical storm 'Doksuri'

Vinson Kurian



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'Talim' had followed on the heels of destructive typhoons (tropical cyclones) 'Mawar' and 'Guchol' in the northwest Pacific.

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Relief rally

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Its track also raises the possibility of a 'pulse' continuing to track west to reach Bay of Bengal, which could ultimately boost the monsoon performance.

In any case, the monsoon is forecast to make a relief rally over mainland India after 'Doksuri' dies off, with a surge of flows across the Arabian Sea.

The moot question is how long this rally would be able to sustain. Early forecasts indicate it may not hold beyond three to four days.