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Centre advises farmers to be ready with alternate crops

Gargi Parsai

With the southwest monsoon playing truant in northeast and central India, the Centre has asked States to be ready with alternate crops that are hardy, and can withstand dry conditions.

There are reports that in some north-western states, farmers have slowed down sowing, in the hope that the monsoon will arrive or revive in the first week of July.

So far, 74 per cent of the country has received deficient rain since the onset of southwest monsoon on June 5, raising serious concerns in the farming community.

Already, there is apprehension that there will be a shortfall in kharif oilseeds, coarse cereals, pulses, and cotton. Even sugarcane may be hit in parts of the country. Parts of Karnataka have reported wilting of oilseed crops.

Minister Sharad Pawar, who is closely monitoring the situation, has asked Karnataka and Maharashtra to be ready to put into action Contingency Plans, if the monsoon doesn't revive early next month.

In its Advisory issued to the states, the Centre has asked states that have been worst-hit, such as Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and parts of Karnataka and Maharashtra, to arrange for alternate seeds, and for their quick movement.

Farmers in some irrigated areas like Punjab and Haryana have been advised to give protective irrigation to paddy nurseries. Sowing of paddy is late in picking up in the two states.

However, paddy cultivation is normal in the north-eastern region that is receiving good rain.

However, 'to sow or not to sow' is the dilemma being faced by farmers in parts of northwest, central, and southern India that are facing deficient monsoon.

According to the IMD forecast for the revival of monsoon in July, the Agriculture Ministry has told states they needn't panic.

There is still time for sowing coarse cereals and short-duration variety of pulses. Normally, sowing is done through July till early August, but the concern is to water the crop that has already been sown. Admitting to “concern building up”, senior officials of the Ministry said consumption of phosphatic and potassium fertilisers has come down by approximately 28 per cent.

Cultivation of crops such as paddy, pulses, and oilseeds, which normally begins from April, hasn't gained momentum. Even pre-monsoon showers were scanty this year.

A meeting of the inter-ministerial Crop and Weather Watch Group noted that sowing of rice, coarse cereals, pulses and oilseeds is lagging this year compared to previous years.

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Move to increase weight of goats, sheep

R. Vimal Kumar

In an attempt to help goats and sheep gain weight, the Animal Husbandry Department plans to conduct a massive de-worming campaign in the district on July 7.

K.M. Sivaprakasam, regional joint director of Animal husbandry, told *The Hindu* that helping the goats gain weight would in turn help the farmers to get better unit value for the animals in the meat market.

“Though the de-worming campaign primarily aims at the farmers who had benefited under the free goat/sheep distribution scheme mooted by the state government, the other farmers could also avail the facilities extended by the de-worming drive,” he said.

The veterinarians and live stock inspectors with the department will be visiting villages to administer the de-worming drugs to the animals.

Dr. Sivaprakasam said that as many as 12,906 goats were given free under the government scheme in the district during 2011-12 financial year.

“Goats from among these bunches have so far given birth to as many as 1,161 kids,” he added.

During the current fiscal, it has been planned to distribute free goats to a total of 4,081 beneficiaries in the district.

Dr. Sivaprakasam said that since the introduction of free goat/sheep and cows distribution scheme on September 15, 2011, a total of 1,00,000 poor women folks were given free goats/sheep in 31 districts and another 12,000 were given cows in 21 district before the end of the 2011-12 fiscal.

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Farmers asked to go in for alternative crops

69 per cent rainfall deficit in Bellary district

In view of deficient in rainfall in the district, which has been declared drought-hit, the district administration has come out with a contingency plan.

In a press release here on Friday, Deputy Commissioner Amlan Aditya Biswas stated that this year the average rainfall in the district was 20.33 mm as against the normal 65.34 mm, a deficit of 69 per cent.

As a result, kharif jowar could not be sown and farmers had been asked to follow an alternative cropping pattern. All the seven taluks in the district were in the northern dry zone category (zone 3). Sowing of suggested alternative crops could be taken up based on the rainfall during July and August, he said.

Toor, bajra and groundnut could be cultivated if rain occurred during the first fortnight of July. If it rained during second fortnight of July, toor, groundnut, castor, horse gram and minor millets (navane) could be cultivated.

Cotton, castor and sunflower could be cultivated during the first fortnight of August. Seeds of all these crops were in stock and could be obtained from raitha samparka kendras at subsidised rates.

The present stock fodder would last for 38 weeks. There were plans to open a goshala at Gudekote in Kudligi taluk, a goshala/fodder bank at Chornur village in Sandur taluk, fodder banks at Chilakanahatti and Mariyammanahalli in Hospet taluk, and at the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee yard in Hagari Bommanahalli. Arrangements had been made to issue job cards to interested persons from July 1 at all gram panchayats, under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, the release said.

- *Seeds of suggested alternative crops can be obtained from raitha samparka kendras*
 - *Job cards under MNREGA scheme to be issued from July 1*
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'Reserve seats for farmers'

Social activist Charan Singh Rathod of Aurad has urged the Union government to amend the Constitution to reserve seats in all elected bodies for representatives of farmers' associations. In a memorandum to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Mr. Rathod said that several MPs falsely claim to be farmers. They cannot address the issues farmers face properly; only practising farmers who have been associated with farmers' associations can make a difference in legislatures, he said.

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Banks should not deny loans to farmers: Davangere MP

G.M. Siddeshwar, MP, has instructed officials of different banks, including nationalised ones, to extend loans to farmers and fishermen in view of the likely failure of the monsoon this year.

Reviewing the performance of various banks here on Friday, Mr. Siddeshwar expressed concern over banks not providing loans to farmers who, he said, were making a beeline to his office almost every day and appealing to him direct banks to sanction loans.

He urged banks to inform farmers about various facilities available to them, including waiver of 3 per cent interest for clearing the loan within the stipulated time. He said that it had come to his notice that some banks in Honnali had refused to provide loans to many fishermen there.

He asked Lead Bank Manager B. Mallikarjunappa to fix a certain target for all the banks and keep a tab on whether the targets were being achieved.

Mr. Siddeshwar took exception to loans being denied to students and asked banks not to hesitate to sanction loans to students to pursue education.

He said that he would again hold a meeting two months later and assess the performance.

If any bank denies loans to farmers, fishermen or students, the matter will be brought to the notice of the Union Finance Minister and senior officials of such banks, he said.

A.B. Hemachandra, chief executive officer of the zilla panchayat, expressed concern over officers of many banks not attending the review meeting.

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- *Agriculturists are facing hardship owing to failure of monsoon*
 - *Banks directed to sanction loans sought by students*
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Interest on loans taken by farmers likely to be waived

It is in view of the prevailing drought in the State: Sadananda Gowda



Chief Minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda addressing a gathering at Kushalnagar in Kodagu on Friday.

The State Government is thinking of waiving interest on farm loans in the State in view of the prevailing drought, Chief Minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda said on Friday.

He was speaking to presspersons after laying the foundation stone for a kala bhavan at Kushalnagar in Kodagu, according to information received here.

The State Government had sought Rs. 6,000 crore to tackle drought in the State. The Centre had given Rs. 280 crore. Additional funds had been sought from the Centre, Mr. Sadananda Gowda said.

Referring to the confusion because of the bickering in the Bharatiya Janata Party in the State, he said it had not affected the process of development. He compared politics to an ocean stating that waves would keep coming and he was used to fighting them. The Chief Minister said that he had reeled out statistics of the progress made by the State Government since it assumed charge four years ago in Bangalore a few days ago. He was committed to providing a corruption-free, transparent and pro-people Government in the State, he said. On whether Madikeri MLA M.P. Appachu Ranjan would be made Minister in the next Cabinet reshuffle, Mr. Sadananda Gowda replied in the affirmative. There was nothing wrong in a party to seek ministership, he said.

He attended a marriage in Kushlanagar later. The Chief Minister was accorded a guard of honour when he arrived in Kushalnagar.

The State Government was committed to the all-round development of Kodagu. It had sanctioned more than Rs. 700 crore in the past four years to the district, he said. The kala bhavan project would be taken up at a cost of Rs. 3 crore. The Government would extend the Sakaala scheme from the Vidhana Soudha to the last village in the State, he said.

He lauded Speaker of the Legislative Assembly K.G. Bopaiah, who represented Virajpet constituency in the Assembly, and Mr. Ranjan for securing a huge amount of funds for the development of Kodagu. Mr. Sadananda Gowda announced that the Government would release Rs. 5 crore to beautify the Harangi reservoir gardens in Kushalnagar. Mr. Bopaiah hoped that the culture of Kodagu would be unveiled at the kala bhavan after its completion. Forest Minister C.P. Yogeshwar, Chairman of the Karnataka Housing Board G.T. Deve Gowda, Mr. Ranjan, president of the Kodagu Zilla Panchayat, Ravi Kushalappa, BJP State Mahila Morcha president Reena Prakash, president of the Kushalnagar Town Panchayat Charita Prakash, IGP (Southern Range), A.S.N. Murthy were present.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

30 JUN, 2012, 11.01AM IST, PTI

Mixed trend prevails in wholesale foodgrain market

CHENNAI: Prices of thoor dal, urad dal and gram dal went up, moong dal moved down and all other [commodities](#) traded at their previous week's close in the wholesale foodgrains market

during the week ended today.

Gram dal opened at Rs 5,300 and went up by Rs 200 per quintal to Rs 5,500 on Thursday to end the week at the same rate.

Thoor dal and urad dal moved up by Rs 100 each per quintal on Thursday from their opening rate of Rs 7,000 and Rs 5,400, respectively and ended Rs 7,100 and Rs 5,500.

Moong dal opened by Rs 6,500 on Monday, a loss of Rs 100 per quintal and went down further on Thursday by Rs 300 to end the week at Rs 6,200.

Prices of sugar, wheat, Maida (90 kg) and sooji (90 kg) remained unaltered throughout the week.

Business Standard

Monday, Jul 02, 2012

Cardamom rises 1.23% on spot demand

Slim arrivals in the market also pressurised prices

Press Trust of India / New Delhi June 29, 2012, 14:38 IST



Cardamom prices rose by Rs 15.20 to Rs 1,250 per kg in futures trade today as speculators enlarged their positions, supported by pick up in spot market demand for the ongoing marriage season.

Tight stocks position following restricted arrivals from producing regions further fuelled the uptrend in cardamom prices.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, cardamom for August contract rose by Rs 15.20, or 1.23%, to Rs 1,250 per kg, with business volume of 47 lots.

The July contract gained Rs 10, or 0.75%, to Rs 1,332 per kg, with a business volume of 305 lots.

Traders said pick up in demand in the spot market, supported by the ongoing marriage season, mainly led to a rise in cardamom prices at futures market.

They said tight stocks following restricted supplies from Southern region also influenced prices.

Chana futures shed 0.13% on profit-booking

Sluggish demand in spot market also pressurised prices

Press Trust of India / New Delhi June 29, 2012, 14:12 IST

Chana prices declined by Rs 6 to Rs 4,397 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators booked profits amid sluggish demand in the spot market.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, chana for delivery in August declined by Rs 6, or 0.13%, to Rs 4,397 per quintal, with an open interest of 70,025 lots.

The July contract shed Rs 5, or 0.11%, to Rs 4,321 per quintal in 64,150 lots.

Market analysts said besides profit-booking by speculators, sluggish spot market demand mainly helped chana prices to trade lower at futures market.

Commodities up most in six months on Europe optimism

Bloomberg / Moscow June 30, 2012, 0:25 IST

Commodities jumped the most in almost six months on optimism that Europe's debt crisis may be contained after leaders agreed to ease repayment rules for emergency loans to Spanish banks and relax conditions on possible help for Italy.

The Standard & Poor's GSCI Spot Index of 24 raw materials rose as much as 2.6 per cent to 582.39 points, the biggest intraday gain since January 3, before trading at 581.84 at 12.15 pm in London. Crude oil jumped as much as 3.9 per cent in New York and copper rose 2.7 per cent in

London. The gain in the index trimmed its quarterly loss to 15.5 per cent, still the worst since the final three months of 2008.

After 12 hours of talks that ended at 4.30 am in Brussels on Friday, leaders of the 17 euro countries dropped the requirement that governments get preferred creditor status on crisis loans to Spain's blighted banks, European Union President Herman Van Rompuy said. Banks can also be recapitalised directly with funds rather than going through governments, he said.

"Investor sentiment improved on news from the EU summit and many commodity prices rebounded," Anton Zakharov, a commodity analyst at OAO Promsvyazbank in Moscow, said on Friday by e-mail. "Comments by Chinese monetary policy makers on possible further rate reductions also gave them support."

European leaders discussed ways to reduce the risk premiums on Italian and Spanish bonds, which have driven concern by economists, investors and Europe's global partners including the US that the currency union risks coming apart.

Quarterly slump

The commodities gauge plunged 44 per cent in the final quarter of 2008 when the bursting of the US real-estate bubble and collapse of Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc pitched the world into a recession. Raw materials entered a bear-market last week as Europe's crisis escalated and concern mounted that the US recovery was faltering.

Losses in the quarter have been led by cotton, crude oil and gasoline, with the decline in the S&P GSCI exceeding the 7.6 per cent fall in the MSCI All-Country World Index of equities. Raw materials have also been hurt by signs of slower growth in China, the world's largest user of base metals.

Central Silk Board draws up plan to promote Eri, Tussar silk

Mahesh Kulkarni / Bangalore June 30, 2012, 0:24 IST

The Central Silk Board (CSB), under the ministry of textiles, has drawn up a plan to promote cultivation of Tussar and Eri silk varieties in the central and eastern states. The CSB has jointly mooted the proposal with the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) to implement the scheme during the current financial year.

“Silk is an essential item to achieve inclusive growth. It is a secondary occupation in major growing states like Karnataka. We have prepared a programme for the promotion of lesser-known varieties like Eri and Tussar in some of the Naxal-affected areas in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. We would roll out the programme in two months in these states,” Ishita Roy, member secretary & chief executive officer, Central Silk Board, said.

Tussar (Tussah) is copperish coloured, coarse silk, mainly used for furnishings and interiors. It's produced in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. Eri is a multivoltine silk spun from open-ended cocoons. Eri silk is the product of the domesticated silkworm. Eri culture is practiced for pupae, a delicacy for tribals. It is used for making chaddars for use by the tribals. This culture is practiced in Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa.

Southern spinners import cotton

International price of cotton has seen a fall of 20 per cent exports come to a virtual halt

Sharleen D'Souza / Mumbai June 30, 2012, 0:22 IST

As the fall in cotton prices in the international markets has been much sharper than in India, spinners in south India are now looking to import cotton. Moreover, spinners have the choice of making payments within six months without paying any interest, after which they will have to pay a nominal interest of below three per cent per annum.

From 85.7 cents per pound in the beginning of May, international prices of cotton have slid 20 per cent to 70.52 cents per pound now. But the rupee has fallen during the period, making imports costlier. Consequently, the fall works out to 5.06 per cent.

The price of cotton in the Indian market, however, has remained stable. It traded at around Rs 9,200 per quintal on Friday.

The price of imported cotton, similar to Shankar 6, is 75 cents per point while Indian cotton is being exported at 80 cents per pound.

South India-based spinners are currently importing from Africa, as it is cheaper.

So far, mills in the south have imported 70,500 bales (one bale = 170 kg) of cotton, according to indenting agents. The import cost is Rs 34,000 per candy. This, while Gujarat cotton is available in Coimbatore at Rs 37,000 and Andhra Pradesh's version at Rs 38,000. "We are getting orders from spinners from the south to import cotton. They fear the delay in monsoon will cause cotton acreage to shrink, which will eventually cause prices to go up in the coming cotton year," said Umang Kapasi, joint managing director of Coimbatore-based Shri Vardhaman Cotton Corporation, which also operates as an indenting agent. He said the only issue is it takes 40 days for imports to arrive. Since May, export orders for cotton have remained almost stagnant. During October-May, 11 million bales were exported. However, since then, only one million bales were exported. Since the fall in international prices has been much sharper than in India, exports have almost stagnated. Demand usually arises from China, but that country has already created a buffer stock by heavily importing from the US, the largest producer of cotton in the world. Even Bangladesh, which procures cotton from India, has not been importing in the last few weeks. "There is very little demand from Bangladesh and China for cotton," said M B Lal, a Mumbai-based cotton exporter. Even after India threw open its exports after the ban, exports in the month of May stood at only one million bales. Domestic demand has also taken a hit as many mills have resorted to need-based buying. Traders are not selling to mills on credit, as they are not sure if the latter will be in a position to pay back later, due to overall weakness in demand.

THE HINDU Business Line

Mixed trend prevails in foodgrains market

PTI



Chennai, June 30:

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Moong dal opened at Rs 6,500 on Monday, a loss of Rs 100 per quintal and went down further on Thursday by Rs 300 to end the week at Rs 6,200.

Prices of sugar, wheat, maida (90 kg) and sooji (90 kg) remained unaltered throughout the week.

Insecticides India launches 3 products in Rajasthan

Jaipur, June 30:

Agro chemical manufacturing company Insecticides India Ltd (IIL) on Saturday launched three agro chemical products in the Rajasthan market.

"The products — Nuvan, Hakama and Pulsor — are popular and potential products and will help farmers to protect their crops," Mr Rajesh Aggarwal, MD of the company said here.

Nuvan, insecticide brand used in major crops, has been launched after IIL's technical collaboration with US—based American Vanguard Corporation (AMVAC) under which the product will be now manufactured and marketed by domestic company, he said.

IIL also introduced PULSOR, a new generation fungicide, and Hakama, an herbicide, both from Japanese company Nissan Chemical Industries Ltd.

"IIL joined hands with Nissan Chemicals earlier this year and we are in full swing to capture the all India" market for these products," he said.

Pulsor has a huge scope across India and is extremely important for paddy growing states whereas Hakama is used in various crops in Soyabean, Groundnut and Cotton for narrow weeds.

Mr Aggarwal said the product has a huge potential as the market for herbicides is increasing in India at a fast pace.

AP to pay paddy farmers Rs 220 more than MSP

Our Bureau



File photo of farmers harvesting paddy in Ragolu village of Srikakulam district. -- Basheer Hyderabad, June 30:

The Andhra Pradesh Government will pay Rs 220 more to paddy farmers in the State, over the Rs 1,280 a quintal announced by the Centre as minimum support price.

The farmers will get Rs 1,500 a quintal of paddy on Sona Masuri and other BPT varieties that fall in the Grade A category for the ensuing kharif marketing season.

Announcing this at a press conference here on Saturday, Mr D. Sridhar Babu, Minister for Food and Civil Supplies, said the State Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd would open exclusive centres for purchase of the Grade A varieties.

“Those who want to sell the commodity at the rate can contact the district managers of the department in their respective districts,” he said.