

27 July, 2013

Drought & deluge

The Krishnaraja Sagar reservoir (KRS) near Srirangapatna had dried up and reached the dead storage level a few months ago. This had drawn the ire of farmers in the Cauvery basin as they had lost crops to a great extent. The agricultural land was badly hit by drought beforehand. But, sharing of water with the neighbouring Tamil Nadu made it worsen the scenario and then, lot of protests were held by farmers. Water to KRS-dependent canals was stopped and farmers had to face hardships with no water and fodder to cattle as well.

Nonetheless, due to copious rainfall in the catchment areas, KRS has regained its glory and is full up to the brim. Thanks to the monsoon that has set on time and brought cheer to the farmers.

KRS, in terms of water level, has witnessed dramatic scenes in the last three months. Photos: Mahadeva B.

Transplantation on 15,933 hectares over

Thanjavur farmers anticipate a good harvest



Bitterness: Sugarcane farmers walk out in protest during the farmers' grievance day meeting in Thanjavur on Friday.— Photo: B. Velankanni Raj

Kuruvai transplantation has been completed on 15,933 hectares of land in pumpset-irrigated areas in Thanjavur district so far, said K. Baskaran, District Collector, here on Friday. Presiding over the monthly farmers' grievances day meeting at the collectorate, Mr. Baskaran said that under Kuruvai special package, 1,560 farmers each were supplied with 30 HDPE pipes an acre.

Eight packets of bio-fertilizers an acre had been supplied to cover 26,600 acres and 200 kg of gypsum an acre for 8,500 acres. Seeds of paddy varieties such as CR-1009 and ADT-46 were kept ready for supply to farmers for the coming long-term samba season.

Under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNRES), it had been planned to create 5,000 farm ponds and beneficiaries were being selected.

There was a stock of 3,783 tonnes of urea, 5,361 tonnes of di-ammonium phosphate, 1,626 tonnes of potash, and 1,327 tonnes of complex fertilizers in the district. Farmers staged a walkout from meeting demanding payment of arrears by private sugar factories such as Thiru Arooran at Thirumandnakudi and Ambika sugars at Kottur near Kumbakonam. Another section of farmers staged a walkout demanding removal of anomalies in the implementation of MGNREGS. They stayed out for a while and returned to the meeting.

V. Jeevakumar, a farmer from Budalur, said the State government should announce the date of release of water from Mettur dam for samba cultivation in delta districts.

It should take up preparatory works for samba cultivation. Crop loans should be given without any conditions to farmers by cooperative and nationalised banks immediately, he said. The Public Works Department should take up dredging of canals.

S.Suresh Kumar, District Revenue Officer; and Sekar, Joint Director of Agriculture; participated

Rs. 140 crore drought relief sanctioned to Tiruvarur



REVIEW MEETING:R. Manoharan (centre), Chairman, Petitions Committee and S. Naratarajan (right), Collector, at a review meeting at Collectorate in Tiruvarur on Friday.

The State government has provided Rs. 140.48 crore as drought relief for Tiruvarur district said R. Manoharan, Chairman of the Petitions Committee of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, here on Friday.

After reviewing the petitions, he said compensation of Rs. 15,000 an acre will be given to drought-affected farmers. The government was committed to protect farmers and farm labourers of the delta districts, Mr. Manoharan said.

The committee had reviewed action taken on petitions in various districts and submitted its report to the Government. "So far, we have tabled 24

reports and the report on Tiruvarur will be placed in the Assembly,” Mr. Manoharan said.

People should submit petitions on public issues. The committee took up for review 53 petitions out of 83 received in the district during the year 2012.

Manoharan said the Chief Minister had implemented various welfare schemes for the benefit of people, including distribution of free milch animals and goats and, providing gold for mangalya.

S. Natarajan, Collector, said that proposal for getting Rs. 10 crore for artificial recharge of groundwater had been submitted to the Government. Sub-surface dykes have been constructed at various places in the district. Artificial recharge has been done in 1620 tanks in the district.

Old age pension is given using biometric cards in 135 villages for 10,000 persons in the district, he said.

Earlier the committee comprising of R.N. Kittusamy, K. Ponnusamy, T. Haridas, K. Ponnupandi, A. Ramasamy, visited Thandalai village and saw plastic powder making unit under Puduvazhvu Thittam

Constitute CMB, farmers demand Centre

The Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam affiliated to the CPI has urged the Central government to constitute the Cauvery Management Board and Water Regulation Committee as per the final award of the Cauvery River Water Disputes Tribunal and get the due share of water from Karnataka for Tamil Nadu.

A resolution to this effect was adopted at a conference of the sangam held here on Friday. The conference also urged the Centre to link all South Indian rivers. It urged the State government to start the second phase of

the laying of cement concrete base at Grand Anicut Canal and Vadavar. The first phase has been completed but there is delay in starting the second phase, the resolution said. The conference also said that a sum of Rs.50 crore has been allotted by the Central government for the development of Indian Institute of Crop Processing Technology (IICPT) in Thanjavur.

Atul Kumar Anjan, all-India general secretary, All India Kisan Sabha, V.Durai Manickam, State general secretary, Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, spoke.

Survey of drought-hit crops to be over soon

Collector appeals to farmers to store rainwater and to go in for crops that consume less water

Lending a ear: Farmers submitting petitions to officials at the agriculturists' grievances day meeting held in Dindigul on Friday.— Photo: G.

Karthikeyan

The survey on drought-affected coconut and sugarcane crops being conducted in the district would be completed in two months, Collector N.Venkatachalam said during the agriculturists' grievances day meeting held at the Collectorate on Friday.

He said farmers could lodge a complaint with him if any Village Administrative Officer, engaged in the survey, refused to inspect drought-hit areas.

If mango production was less than 3.5 tonnes, the areas too would be treated as drought hit, he pointed out.

Compensation would be given to those who had not received any relief in the first batch, the Collector said.

Survey of agriculture lands that were not included in 'Adangal,' a land document, was also on, he said and added that farmers credit cards would be given to 1,500 farmers soon.

Referring to the water storage position, Mr.Venkatachalam said the rainfall recorded till date was 50 per cent less than the average rainfall, with storage in many dams remaining abysmally low. Water level in Palar dam was 17.81 feet, Parappalar dam 28.7, Varadhamanadhi dam 19.42, Kudirayaru dam 19.26, Nanganjjar dam 19.35 feet and Kudaganar dam 8.11 feet.

However, Amaravathi dam had water up to 78.56 feet with an inflow of 2,862 cusecs and a discharge 568 cusecs, he noted.

He appealed to the farmers to store rainwater and to raise short-term crops that consumed less water.

Honoured

The Collector also honoured farmers who achieved bumper harvest in maize and sorghum last season with a cash award of Rs.10,000 and Rs.5,000 respectively.

The district-level toppers in sorghum harvest were D.Selvaraj of Sindhalavadanpatti village who harvested 8,105 kilograms per hectare and N.Chinnadurai of the same village who harvested 7,192 kgs.

The maximum harvest of 16.2 tonnes of maize per hectare was achieved by I.Chinnasamy of Semmadaipatti, followed by A.Muruganandham of Sokkalingapuram who harvested 14.4 tonnes.

Earlier, farmers in Sirumalai appealed to the Collector to give compensation for drought-affected lemon crop as well.

Horticulturist R.Arokia Das of Mariyadhaipuram in Nariyuthu village alleged that assistant agriculture officials demanded Rs.20,000 for sanctioning drip irrigation facility to 32 horticulturists.

Malabar goat, mascot of micro-enterprise



The success story the neighbourhood groups (NHGs) of women in different panchayats in the district are scripting under the Kudumbasree Mission by breeding goats as a means of earning has caught the attention of more micro-enterprise beneficiaries in other panchayats and other districts.

The 'Aadu Gramam' (goat village) project started in 2008 as a comprehensive goat breeding initiative in association with local bodies, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Krishi Vigyan Kendra-Kannur (KVK), and cooperative societies, among others, is part of the Kudumbasree Mission's 'Samagra' scheme aimed at ensuring additional income to the NHG members through rearing Malabar goats. Initially started in a handful of panchayats, the goat rearing scheme offering

subsidies has now been extended to 56 of the total 81 panchayats in the district. More NHGs are being trained under the scheme.

As of now 785 NHGs, each having five members, are already in the goat rearing business under the scheme and 359 more groups are waiting for release of funds by banks. Each group being given 20 goats (19 does and one buck), over 15,000 goats have already been distributed among the groups so far.

Under the scheme each household in the group should keep at least four goats. They are free to sell the excess animals. According to Kannur District Goat Breeders Society (KDGBS), which is coordinating the project, 3,526 goats have been sold through local-level goat fairs and 1,575 goats to goat rearing farmers in other districts. While, most of the goats are sold for breeding, seasonal fairs are conducted during festival seasons to sell them for meat.

Monitoring mechanism

“What has made the project successful and attractive is the continuous monitoring mechanism in the form of a veterinary extension team,” said Shyja Cheleri, KDGBS secretary and Kudumbasree micro-enterprise committee member.

A team member looks after 25 NHGs and visits the member households once in two weeks. The NHGs are offered a subsidy of Rs.50,000 each by the Kudumbasree Mission and Rs.20,000 each by respective local bodies. The beneficiaries should be Kudumbasree members for a period of minimum six months to be included in the goat village project, Ms. Shyja said.

Initially, a major obstacle to the goat breeding project was the difficulty of selling the goats. Periodic fairs are being organised in different centres to tide over the marketing problem. Since the society was formed in September 2011, 42 such fairs have been conducted.

“The fairs are held in a systematic way and the body weight of each goat on display for sale is indicated on tags attached, so that the beneficiaries get the price calculated on the weight,” said T. Giggin, Assistant Professor at the KVK who is involved in offering training to the NHG members. The four-day training given to each NHG included imparting of skills and orientation. The objective is to make goat breeding more scientific. Last year 349 groups were trained, he said.

The society has set up at Thillankery here a unit for processing goat droppings to be sold as compost. Its future plans include a goat milk society, a meat processing unit and cultivation of fodder grass, disclosed Ms. Shyja.

The goat village project is so successful that it will be extended to the entire district.

A goat rearing project, started in a few panchayats in 2008 under the Kudumbasree Mission, has been extended to 56 of the 81 panchayats in the district

KAU finds organic substitutes for endosulfan effective

Intercropping on cashew estates mooted for better results

Field tests for organic substitutes for endosulfan conducted at Kerala Agricultural University’s Cashew Research Station, Madakkathara, are yielding positive results.

“For long, the search for organic alternatives has been on. The health impact of the use of endosulfan in cashew plantations in north Kerala, especially of aerial spraying of the pesticide in Kasaragod, has been much discussed. The KAU’s research on organic cashew farming gained momentum after the State government had banned the use of endosulfan,” said P. Rajendran, KAU Vice Chancellor.

After field trials in KAU’s cashew plantations, scientists vouch for the efficacy of bio-agents such as entopathogenic nematodes, beauveria bassiana, metarhizium anisopliae, verticillium lecanii, hirsutella thompsonii, and pseudomonas fluorescens. To control pests, scientists have also used pongamia oil, tapioca leaf extract, and azadirachtin concentration.

The major pests of cashew are tea mosquito bug and cashew-stem-and-root borer. Twenty pests have been identified by the Cashew Research Station. Two minor pests of cashew — spiralling whitefly and mango leaf webber — too have been spotted in KAU’s cashew plantations in Madakkathara.

“There are reports of endosulfan being smuggled into Kerala from Tamil Nadu. Farmers still use synthetic insecticides, though less toxic ones, in cashew plantations. For organic farming, bio-control measures should be regularly adopted and this would involve increased labour costs. Hence, farmers are reluctant to try them out. Organic cashew nuts fetch higher price than the chemically-grown ones,” said P.B. Pushpalatha, head of the Cashew Research Station and former KAU Registrar.

Gavas Raghesh, assistant professor (Agricultural Entomology), has been consistently carrying out experiments to find whether bio-control agents are

effective. "They indeed are. The plantations should be closely monitored and bio-control agents frequently applied," he said.

According to Economic Review 2012, the area under cashew cultivation declined in Kerala from 1.25 lakh hectares (ha) in 1988-89 to 44,000 ha in 2010-11. In 2011-12, there was 23.3 per cent increase in the farming area. "The KAU has found that inter-cropping (practice of growing two or more crops in proximity) may help cashew farmers. They may grow pepper, passion fruit, and pineapple. The research station has tried out all these crops and found it profitable. Some cashew farmers in Mananthavady in Wayanad district are already growing pepper in cashew fields," said Ms. Puspalatha.

She said 60 to 75 per cent of cashew apple produced in Kerala was being wasted.

The research station has spent much energy in formulating cashew apple processing methods and developing products such as vinegar, jam, halwa, candy, pickles, cashew apple soda, and cashew apple chocolate.

NCRB data's reported fall in farmer suicides spurious: P. Sainath

'Chhattisgarh, West Bengal said to have not filed suicide figures from their respective States'

The purported decline in the number of farmer suicides in the country, as recorded by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for 2012, was because some States "did not furnish" the pertinent data, according to P. Sainath, Rural Affairs Editor of *The Hindu*.

The Magsaysay-award-winning journalist on Friday said Chhattisgarh was said to have reported zero farmer suicides and West Bengal not filed any numbers at all.

He was delivering a public lecture here on “Seed, Food, Gene: Freedom at Crossroads”.

At the bottom of NCRB’s table on farmer suicides, a note reads: “The State of West Bengal did not submit data on this subject”. This was “unprecedented”, said Mr. Sainath.

The lecture was organised by the Forum Against Monopolistic Aggression — a conglomeration of voluntary organisations and individuals.

West Bengal did, Mr. Sainath pointed out, submit a figure of suicides that was the third-highest in the country alongside Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.

But no break-ups — of the number of students, women, farmers — of those who committed suicide were provided, he said.

Referring to Chhattisgarh as “one of the five worst States in the country in farmer suicides”, Mr. Sainath said the annual average of farmer suicides was 1,800 and about 18,000 farmers there had killed themselves over the past ten years.

According to the NCRB data, 2,84,694 farmers in India had committed suicide between 1995 and 2012. “The bulk of them so have done so after 2001 and the rate at which farmers are killing themselves in this country now stands at one every 31 minutes,” Mr. Sainath said.

As a result of farmers losing their status as main cultivators, dropping out of agriculture and becoming landless farm labourers, the country was experiencing the “biggest human displacement in history”, said Mr. Sainath:

“Such a displacement [is] being achieved without tanks, aircrafts and bazookas though we do occasionally use those too.”

Between 1991 and 2011, 15 million farmers had joined the agrarian underclass, Mr. Sainath said.

Between 2001 and 2011, “the drop [has been] 7.7 million and the rate at which we are losing farmers is 2,000 a day”.

Physicist and environmentalist Vandana Shiva emphasised the need for laws that celebrated diversity in seeds and food.

“Nothing could be more vital than food, and [the] seed is the first link to the food-chain,” Ms. Shiva said, adding that the monopolies of major multinational seed giants amounted to “genocide and ecocide”.

“We could see the end of this monopolist aggression through our creative resistance,” she said.

Job programme for farmers

Chief Minister Oommen Chandy has directed officials to prepare schemes for the implementation of the special employment programme targeting 1,00,000 young farmers. At a meeting held here on Wednesday, Mr. Chandy directed the officials to prepare the schemes within two months. He said the additional funds for the programme would be decided by the Cabinet.

The meeting also decided to constitute a committee led by T.K. Jose, chairman, Coconut Board, to prepare the schemes.

Heavy rain damages banana crops in district



Banana crops affected by cucumber mosaic virus.— PHOTO: BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Krishi Vigyan Kendra has reported damage to banana crops, following heavy rain in different parts of the district. The base of plantains planted in low-lying areas and converted paddy fields is rotting from stagnant water. Bacterial and virus diseases are also spreading in the banana fields, reports the KVK.

A team of experts constituted by the KVK spotted rhizome rot caused by the bacteria, *Erwinia carotovora*, in areas where drainage was inadequate. Yellowing of leaves and gradual rotting of rhizomes and falling down of plants are reported.

Improving drainage in the field, removal and burial of seriously affected plants, and application of *Pseudomonas fluorescens* with 20 kg cow dung powder or sand mixture at the rate of 100 gm per plant basins are recommended.

At the initial stage of infection, application of lime in soil and drenching the soil in copper oxychloride solution at the rate of 3 gm a litre of water with 200 mg Streptocycline can curb the disease, maintain scientists. Cucumber mosaic virus infection has been spotted in plantations in panchayats such as Vallachira. This is caused by the virus spread through Aphids (*Aphis crassivora* and *Aphis gossipii*).

The symptoms include chlorotic streaks on younger leaves and drying of young shoots. The team recommended removal of weeds from the plot and elimination of seriously damaged plants. To prevent both the diseases in the next season, farmers have been asked to avoid using suckers from the infected plots and leguminous and cucurbitaceous intercrops.

The team included S. Estelitta, P. Prameela and officials of the Department of Agriculture. For consultation, contact 0487-2375855 and 2370773.

Bacterial and virus diseases are spreading in banana fields, reports KVK.

Water released for 'kar' crop

The water from Manimuthar Dam to benefit 7,524 acres of land



In time:Water being released from Manimuthar Dam in Tirunelveli District.— Photo: A. SHAIKMOHIDEEN

Subsequent to the Chief Minister's announcement, water was released from Manimuthar Dam in Maruthur Melakaal and Maruthur Keezhakaal channels on Friday for the 'kar' paddy cultivation.

Minister for Tourism S.P. Shanmuganathan, Minister for Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment P. Senthurpandian, Collector C.

Samayamoorthy, chairman of Tamil Nadu Housing Board R. Murugaiah Pandian and Sub-Collector Cheranmahadevi Rohini Ramdas released water from the dam. Special prayers were offered earlier.

The release of 75 cusecs of water in Maruthur Melakaal and Maruthur Keezhakaal channels would benefit 7,524 acres of land for the next 100 days and hence the farmers should use the water judiciously, Mr.

Shanmuganathan said. Superintending Engineer, Public Works Department, Cyril Christopher, Executive Engineers Muthupandian and Kumarasamy participated.

Delta Farmers demand immediate release of water from Mettur dam

The Delta Farmers' Welfare Association has appealed to Chief Minister Jayalalithaa to immediately release water from Mettur dam for irrigation.

"This will not only enable the farmers to take up samba cultivation but will also recharge the subsurface water adequately," said K.V. Kannan, vice-president of the association.

In a representation to the Chief Minister, the association noted that Karnataka was experiencing a vigorous monsoon and Kabini and Krishnarajasagar dams were getting heavy inflow from torrential rains in the catchment areas. As usual Karnataka was letting out excess water from

these reservoirs, and as a result Mettur dam was realising ample inflow raising its storage level to above 86 ft as on Friday.

Therefore, the farmers in the delta districts of Tiruchi, Thanjavur, Thiruvavur, Cuddalore, Nagapattinam and Ariyalur were eagerly anticipating water release from Mettur. As both the south-west and north-east monsoon failed last year, the delta farmers were forced to leave their lands almost fallow. There was a rapid depletion of groundwater level too, making it difficult even to draw water for drinking water schemes. With the inflow increasing by the day, the water level in the dam would soon reach the 90-ft mark. Therefore, to enable the farmers in the entire delta region, including tail-end areas such as Kattumannarkoil, Chidambaram and Kumaratchi, the government should maintain the initial discharge at 10,000 cusecs which should be scaled up gradually to 20,000 cusecs, Mr. Kannan demanded.

Once water was released from the dam, thousands of canals criss-crossing the delta region would be fed which in turn would amply recharge the groundwater, he added.

100 farmers court arrest

FARMERS COURT ARREST

About 100 members of the Kollidam - Keelanai Paasana Vivasayigal Sangam, led by its president P. Vinayagamoorthy, courted arrest at Kattumannarkoil on Friday when they tried to take out a cycle rally towards Cuddalore defying police direction. Mr. Vinayagamoorthy said the rally was intended to attract the attention of the State government to the crying need

for construction of barrages across the Kollidam, downstream of Anikkarai.
— Special Correspondent

Reschedule all crop loans: farmers

Association cites unprecedented drought, wants even interest to be written off



making a point: A farmer speaking at the farmers' grievances day meeting in Tiruchi on Friday. —PHOTO: A. MURALITHARAN

Amidst calls for waiver of crop loans from some of their colleagues, a section of farmers' representatives of the district have appealed to the State government to relax the conditions for rescheduling cooperative crop loans and extend the benefit to all farmers. The credit rescheduling scheme announced by Chief Minister Jayalalithaa after declaring 31 districts as drought hit had strings attached to it, the farmers said.

In a joint representation submitted to T.Thiyagarajan, District Revenue Officer, during the farmers' grievances day meeting here on Friday, farmers said as per a circular sent to primary agricultural cooperative societies, only loans taken for crops specified in the Annavari certificates issued by the tahsildars were eligible for rescheduling. Besides, farmers were asked to give an undertaking agreeing to pay 10.25 per cent interest for the medium-term loan and a penal interest of 3 per cent for defaults. "Given the

unprecedented crisis faced by farmers in view of the drought, farmers demanded that all crop loans should be rescheduled without any condition. Besides, the interest on loans should be waived,” they demanded. The farmers pressed for rescheduling crop loans, along with an interest waiver, sanctioned by nationalised banks. The representation was signed by R.Raja Chidambaram, State Secretary, Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam; V. Rajaram, Working President, Cauvery Delta Farmers’ Association; C.Masilamani and Ayilai Sivasuriyan, district secretaries of the farmers associations affiliated to the CPI and CPI(M) respectively, P. Ayyakannu of Bharathiya Kisan Sangam, and R. Nagarajan, president, Tamil Nadu Horticulture Crop Producers’ Association.

However, while speaking at a meeting, Mr. Ayilai Sivasuriyan said rescheduling of the loans would not give relief to farmers and demanded that all crop loans sanctioned last year be waived. A section of farmers led by Mr. Ayyakannu and Mr. Nagarajan alleged that farmers defaulting on crop loans were subject to harassment by officials of nationalised banks demanding repayment. Farmers’ representatives demanded sanction of compensation to banana crop that had withered because of drought. A large number of banana growers were in distress after having sustained heavy losses owing to the drought and gales, said Mr. Nagarajan. They were unable to repay their loans and hence the government should waive the loans.

Mr. Masilamani said cooperative societies had deducted Rs. 3,519 a hectare towards premium for crop insurance at the time of sanction of loans to banana growers. But till date, compensation had not been given. Some farmers insisted that officials conduct a survey to assess the extent of

damage to banana crop in the district. Mr. Thiyagarajan said banana crop on about 10,000 acres of land were estimated to have been damaged and the district administration had forwarded a report to the government. Farmers reiterated the demand for stepping up release of water from Mettur dam to save the standing horticulture crops that were fed by 17 irrigation canals in Tiruchi and other neighbouring districts.

Farmers complain poor dredging of canals

With less than a month left for release of Mettur water, complaints of poor dredging of canals that would eventually carry the water to the field channels, dominated the monthly farmers' grievances meeting here on Friday. Farmers came together to criticize the dredging work taken up by the Public Works Department. Collector T. Munusamy said that complaints against the PWD were intense in the Vennar division. Farmers called for the release of Mettur water in the first week of August to plant the samba crop. However, a few farmers said that second week of August would do justice to the cropping pattern.

Alexander from Mayiladuthurai called for disbursement of outstanding dues by sugarcane cooperatives to cane growers. The dues were outstanding for over four months, and cane growers were caught in a cycle of debt. Kaveri Danapalan of Cauvery Delta Farmers Protection Association wanted to know the details of use and working hours of tractors available with the agricultural engineering department. The 20 tractors available with the department were put to use sparingly, but diesel funds were being claimed.

Good inflows bring cheer to delta farmers

The inflows into Srisaillam dam increased to 2.5 lakh cusecs on Friday and it will be full within a week if the inflows continue at the present rate. All reservoirs upstream the Srisaillam are full and still receiving heavy inflows. There is good news for Krishna Delta farmers in the form of heavy rain along the West Coast of India. Rains in the West Coast will ensure good inflows into the reservoirs across the River Krishna. The first major dam on the river, the Almatti that has a maximum storage capacity of 130 tmcft, is 81 per cent full. The remaining 19 per cent is kept as buffer and will be filled as the inflows come down.

The authorities, anticipating greater inflows at Almatti, are releasing more than what they are receiving. While an inflow of 1.95 lakh cusecs was recorded on Friday morning, the outflow from the reservoir was increased to 2.36 lakh cusecs by the authorities.

The water released from Alamatti lands in Srisaillam after passing through the comparatively minor Narayanapur and Jurala dams. Srisaillam receives water from the Tungabhadra reservoir also which is on the tributary of the River Krishna. Tungadhada Dam that is 96 per cent full is releasing nearly one lakh cusecs downstream the Srisaillam.

Another 70 tmcft is required to fill Nagarjuna Sagar, but the filling of Srisaillam is good news for the farmers of Andhra Pradesh.

Monsoon deficiency in East and North-East raises kharif concern

Overall sowing of kharif crops is higher this season so far than in a normal year, but still there is disquiet in the Agriculture Ministry over the 37 per

cent deficiency in the southwest monsoon in East and North-East India. Rainfall was 'scanty' in Bihar and Jharkhand in the week ending July 24. Experts caution against hasty comparisons with last year's kharif cultivation as there was drought in parts of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Gujarat at this time. Comparisons of kharif sowing, therefore, should be with a normal year in the corresponding week to get a correct picture of where the country stands in terms of plantations.

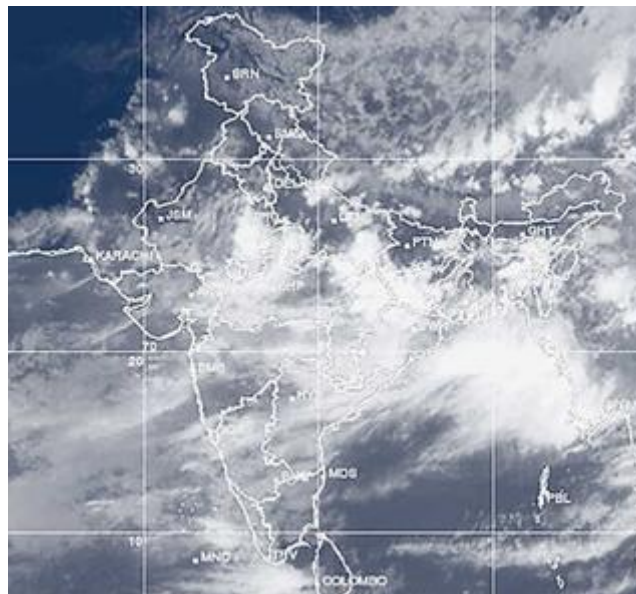
This season, of the total 36 meteorological divisions in the country, monsoon is deficient over seven. These include Jharkhand, Bihar, Gangetic West Bengal, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and the entire north-east (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura). If the situation continues it might hit paddy cultivation. Last week rainfall was scanty in Bihar and Jharkhand. As per the India Meteorological Department, between June 1 and July 24, in area-wise distribution, 83 per cent area of the country has received excess/normal rainfall, while 17 per cent area is so far deficient. In East and North-East, there is a 37 per cent departure from normal.

Senior Agriculture Ministry officials who reviewed the situation on Friday said they would still wait and watch the situation till the sowing period ends towards the end of August.

If one goes by statistics, then the total area under kharif (paddy) cultivation so far is 747.78 lakh hectares which is higher by 67.02 lakh hectares if compared with the normal of a corresponding week. But for coarse cereals, sowing of rice, pulses, oilseeds, sugarcane, cotton, jute and mesta are higher this year than a normal week in the corresponding period.

Yet there are concerns about paddy sowing being impacted in parts of Jharkhand, Bihar, Gangetic West Bengal, Haryana and Chandigarh and the northeast. Last season, the kharif production was lower by about 6 million tonnes on account of drought in parts of the country.

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on July 26th.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	35	25	3	317
New Delhi (Sfd)	34	25	9	415
Chandigarh	35	26	11	448
Hissar	37	25	0	234
Bhuntar	32	20	1	313
Shimla	23	17	1	522
Jammu	33	24	1	438
Srinagar	29	18	0	133

Amritsar	35	26	0	253
Patiala	35	25	1	442
Jaipur	34	26	1	278
Udaipur	30	23	21	403
Allahabad	35	26	37	565
Lucknow	34	24	13	489
Varanasi	37	25	33	374
Dehradun	32	23	1	1697
Agartala	34	26	3	442
Ahmedabad	30	26	1	482
Bangalore	28	20	0	311
Bhubaneshwar	29	23	6	499
Bhopal	28	23	15	738
Chennai	30	26	0	302
Guwahati	35	27	tr	491
Hyderabad	29	23	0	392
Kolkata	35	26	17	597
Mumbai	29	24	8	1775
Nagpur	27	24	9	942
Patna	37	29	0	155
Pune	26	21	7	453
Thiruvananthapuram	29	22	5	727
Imphal	30	23	1	433
Shillong	26	18	7	488

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (tr-trace) and total rainfall in mm since 1st June.

RAINFALL

South-west Monsoon has been Vigorous over west-Rajasthan and active over east-Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The axis of monsoon trough at mean sea level passes through Anupgarh, Churu, Dholpur and thence south-east wards.

RAINFALL: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at most places over west Uttar Pradesh, at many places over Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, east Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, at a few places over Haryana and Punjab and at isolated places over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (5 cm and above) HARYANA: Ballabgarh 9 and Faridabad and Taoru 6 each, IMACHAL PRADESH: Guler and Baldwara 7 each and Kheri 5, PUNJAB: Madhopur 6, EAST RAJASTHAN: Khusalgarh 10, Salumber 9, Dungerpur 8, Garhi, Chikali, Jhalawar and Girwa 7 each, Banswara, Sajjangarh, Atru, Mangrol, Raipur, Rajakhera and Jhadol 6 each, Kesarpura, Sallopat, Beir, Hindoli and Chittorgarh 5 each, WEST RAJASTHAN: Barmer, Chotan and Shiv 9 each, Sinderi and Sangaria 7 each, Fatehgargh and Shergarh 6 each and Bagoda, Jodhpur, Luni and Bali 5 each, EAST UTTAR PRADESH: Hardoi tehsil and Kanpur tehsil 13 each, Misrikh 11, Ankinghat 9, Akbarpur and Kunda 8 each, Neemsar 7, Bilgram, Muhammadi and Katerniaghat 5 each, WEST UTTAR PRADESH: Aligarh 10, Aonla and Najibabad 8 each, Moradabad 7, Budaun and Kayamganj 6 each and Bisauli, Bareilly, Lalitpur, Pawayan and Shahajahanpur 5 each and UTTARAKHAND: Kashipur 6.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 28th July

2013 : Rain/thundershowers may occur at many places over Himachal

Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and east- Rajasthan.

Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places over rest of the region.

HEAVY RAINFALL WARNING: Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places over east Rajasthan on 28th July.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 28th July 2013: Generally cloudy sky. Light rain/thundershowers may occur in some areas.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Garhwa gets good rainfall, farmers hopeful

After a hiatus of 12-13 days, Garhwa received good rainfall and respite from the sweltering heat on Friday. Rain lashed the agricultural fields in the district making farmers hopeful of healthy crops.

The maximum temperature came down by five degrees from 45°Celsius to 40°Celsius on Friday after the downpour. The two-day rain coupled with cool breeze brought much relief to the residents.

Farmers were disappointed with the unfavourable weather conditions for the past couple of weeks.

Fields were parched and people queued up for drinking water as wells, ponds and rivers ran dry.

"The extreme heat caused us lot of discomfort in the past few weeks.

Thankfully, the shower has ushered in freshness," said Hasan Imam, resident of Garhwa town. "The discomfort vanished after Thursday and Friday's rain along with breeze," said Raman Kesri, a cloth merchant in Purani Bazaar of Garhwa.

The less than average rainfall in the district has raised serious concern regarding the impact of monsoon on agriculture. Experts, however, are optimistic as they expect that the deficit will be compensated once rains start again. "The delayed monsoon this year is unlikely to affect the overall prospect of crop cultivation," said a scientist of local Krishi Vigyan Kendra.

Haryana govt justifies Rs 2-3 compensation to rain-hit farmers

Rubbing salt into the wounds of rain-hit farmers who were issued cheques of Rs 2 and Rs 3 as compensation, the Haryana government on Friday justified the criteria on which the entitlement was based, even claiming that in some were paid in excess.

A farmer who got a cheque of Rs 3 in Jhajjar district, was actually given 33 paise in excess, according to a press note issued by Prof Virender, political advisor to chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda.

The government said another farmer, Satnarayan, received a cheque for Rs 2 though his entitlement worked out to be Rs 2.08. Explaining that the compensation amount was calculated on the basis of a farmer's share in the land, Prof Viredner explained: "The share of Satnarayan is 1 out of 1680 shares in an acre of land and compensation at the rate of Rs 3,500 per acre worked out to be Rs 2.08 for him... Another farmer, Tekchand, has a share of 1/1260 in one acre ... His compensation works out to be Rs 2.77 but he has been given Rs 3."

These were among 10,316 farmers who got the compensation for damage caused over 3,269 acres of land due to waterlogging. Sources said there are many more farmers who got compensation in the range of Rs 2 to Rs 4. A section of the affected farmers of Paharipur village told TOI that they were even given cheques of Rs 6, 12 and 30.

"The state government, headed by Hooda, has hiked the compensation for crop loss by 250% over what was paid by the previous INLD government," the CM's political advisor said. The compensation was given on the basis of percentage of damage to the crop at slabs of Rs 2500, Rs 3500, Rs 4,500 and Rs 5,500 per acre for various crops whereas during the INLD

regime, the amount was Rs 1,000, Rs 1,500 and Rs 2,000 per acre, he said.

Prof Virender said the farmers didn't need to open an account to deposit the cheques. "The farmers were given option that in case of compensation of Rs 500 or less, they could get the amount in cash. Besides, the banks were asked to open accounts on zero balance," he said.

"After insulting farmers by giving them a compensation of Rs 2 and Rs 3, now the government is shamelessly defending it," said INLD state president Ashok Arora.

Onion prices likely to shoot further

Onion prices in the city that have more than doubled over the past few weeks, are likely to shoot further now, thanks to a severe shortage in supply.

On Friday, Rythu Bazaars across Hyderabad were found selling onions for a steep Rs 22 per kg. In supermarkets, the rate hovered around anywhere between Rs 36 and 40 per kg. Sources said that the short supply is expected to last for another two weeks at least.

So far, local markets have already witnessed a 50% fall in arrivals. At Mahboob Mansion onion market, the arrivals that were around 15,000 quintals per day during this time last year, stand at just about 8,000 quintals this time around.

"There is a shortage of about 40% in arrivals. The huge difference between supply and demand has pushed the prices up. We expect the shortage to last for another 15 to 20 days," said M Kalpana, deputy director and selection grade secretary, Mahboob Mansion market.

The city gets about three quarters of its supply from Maharashtra and the remaining from neighboring districts of the state. Deficit rainfall in Maharashtra has affected the crop yield and thereby, caused a drop in supply to Hyderabad. However, compensating the shortage through supply from districts has not been possible as heavy rains in the state over the last few days have prevented farmers from drying their harvested crops, said observers. The shortfall this time around can be reversed only when rains subside and farmers in Kurnool and Karimnagar, major centres of onion production in the state, are able to dry their harvest.

Anticipating this fluctuation in price, the government this week started supplying limited quantities of onion to Rythu Bazaars on a no-profit no-loss basis. "The government's initiative will be in place until the prices stabilise when the supply increases," said K R Vijay Kumar, estate officer, Mehdipatnam Rythu Bazaar. Sources said that without government intervention these bazaars would be selling onions at Rs 30 per kg as against the prevailing Rs 22.

Consumers, meanwhile, are already feeling the pinch. "We have reduced the use of onion. While we were used to buy 20 kgs daily, we now buy only 15 kgs and do with the limited quantity," said Malik Parsean, a restaurateur from Abids.

CM and deputy to tour rain-hit Vidarbha today

Amidst reports of widespread devastation of crops and property caused by excessive rains in Vidarbha, chief minister Prithviraj Chavan and deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar will spend Saturday touring some places in west as well as east Vidarbha to get first hand information of the situation.

In the first two months of this monsoon, the region has already received rainfall that it generally gets in full season lasting four months. There are official reports of crops in over two lakh hectares getting washed away because of 100mm to 300mm of rains received within a span of 24 hours at several places this season.

The unusual downpours have eroded soil beyond repair in some talukas while thousands of houses have been totally damaged all over the region. Normally, agriculture and the revenue departments have a long drawn process of arriving at crop loss data. But looking at the gravity of the situation and persistent demand of members from ruling as well as opposition ranks in the legislature currently in session, the government is under pressure to declare a relief package for farmers at the earliest so they can go ahead with fresh sowing of alternative crops where possible. Meanwhile, in indication that politics of one-upmanship must have come into play, the deputy CM is also accompanying the CM. On Thursday, officials here had received a separate programme for Pawar's likely visit on Friday while the CM's tour was pushed to Sunday as weather would not allow helicopter flight to affected areas. Now they will be coming together. They will be accompanied by relief and rehabilitation minister Patangrao Kadam as well as officials of respective department.

They will land by a special plane in Amravati around 9.30am on Saturday and proceed by road to Karanja Lad to inspect flood affected area. After returning to Amravati they will fly to Chandrapur and reach there around 2.30pm and proceed to visit some flood-hit areas of east Vidarbha. They will then fly to Nagpur and hold a special meeting with divisional commissioners of Nagpur as well as Amravati and officials of two divisions.

With the assembly session on, Chavan or Pawar may not make any announcements here about the situation. Any relief measure would be announced in the legislature on Monday.

14% cropland in Nagpur division hit by heavy rains

Over 14% cropland in Nagpur division has been affected by heavy rainfall, the primary survey done by government has revealed. In absolute terms, the figure is 2.69 lakh hectare of which 1.49 lakh hectare (55%) has sustained more than 50% damage. The crop damage in Gadchiroli has not been added as the survey is yet to be completed.

According to government figures, 53 persons have lost their lives due to rains. "Sixteen were struck by lightning, 23 were swept away in rivers, five died due to house collapse and another six lost their life when a tree fell on them," a revenue official said. Some 17,540 houses have been damaged due to rains of which 1,140 have been completely destroyed. The villagers have lost 673 farm animals. The total relief distributed in the division so far is around Rs45 lakh.

Five talukas in the division are the worst affected. Three of them are in Gondia district - Deori, Amgaon and Salekasa. The other two are Chandrapur and Dhanora taluka of Gadchiroli district. The average rainfall in the division is 1,173mm between June 1 and September 30. It has already received 980mm. Rainfall is 80% excess.

However, the record rainfall may allow farmers in many areas to go in for a third crop. The sixteen major dams of the division have 75% storage, the medium dams are 82% full while the minor dams have 74% storage. The medium and minor dams rarely have so much water even in September.

Buy vegetables directly from farmers now

If shopping for vegetables in the retail market is too costly for you, here is some respite. Starting Monday, the agriculture produce market committee (APMC) will have farmers selling their produce directly to consumers and has even allotted stalls to farmers in the Gultekdi Market Yard.

Officials said the vegetable prices here would be around 25% lower than retail prices, as no middlemen will be involved. State agriculture commissioner Umakant Dangat will inaugurate the initiative at 9 am on Monday.

APMC administrator Sanjeev Khadke told TOI the initiative was being launched on a permanent basis and would benefit both consumers and farmers. "Farmers will be able to sell their produce directly to the consumers, with processes such as seeking various permissions to sell produce being eliminated. The system will also help the farmers earn better returns," he said.

Khadke said nearly 10 farmer groups from different parts of the state, such as Junnar, Ambegaon, Baramati and Shirur, will sell their produce in the market from Monday. "The prices of vegetables sold here will be 25% lower than those in retail markets. Moreover, farmers are expected to get a 25% increase in profits via this system," he said.

The Gultekdi Market Yard is a wholesale market where farmers bring their produce and sell it to wholesalers, who in turn sell it to retailers. Market officials said the direct sale system will minimise the role of middlemen and help restrict price escalation. They added that at present, vegetable prices were mainly being decided by middlemen. Farmers fail to get the expected

remuneration and the margins of middlemen are often included in the final price.

Khadke said agriculture minister Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil has directed all market committees to adopt such a system.

Agriculture thrives in concrete jungle

Large swathes of agriculture land in Rangareddy district surrounding the city might be falling prey to real estate ventures, industries, IT parks and government projects, but on paper agri-business is booming, if one is willing to believe government data.

In what could come as a surprise, the yet-to-be released figures compiled by the district collectorate show that total sown area in the district in 2012-13 is the highest since 2004, which means 1/3rd of the district land was utilized for agriculture. About 2,57,625 hectares of land was used to sow kharif and rabi crops in the last financial year in Rangareddy district, whose total geographical size is 7,49,300 hectares. In 2011-12, the total net area sown was 2,34,557 hectares. The data also mentions that land used for non-agricultural purpose increased sharply by 23,620 hectares since 2004. However, rubbishing these statistics, experts and agriculture activists blamed rising inflation for the shrinking cultivation area in several GHMC mandals in Rangareddy. "There is no farming of any kind done on such land even though they are mentioned in the records as agriculture land," said G V Ramanjaneyulu of Hyderabad-based Centre for Sustainable Agriculture.

"Many of those who have land are taking loans for farming but actually utilizing it for some other purposes. We have observed that most often agriculture officials are in collusion with such people," he said. He added that many layouts on city outskirts have still not officially been converted into non-agriculture usage, as a result of which the figures are misleading. Several commercial complexes have come up in the mandals of Balanagar, Qutbullahpur, Medchal and Shamirpet but these localities were shown as agriculture land, some activists said. "I know of some big residential layouts which are still being considered as agriculture," said Rajkumar Thakur, activist from Serilingampally of Rangareddy district.

"Forget about private land, several acres of government land are allotted to various projects but revenue officials still count them as agriculture land. The local revenue department does not have manpower or a system to actually survey lakhs of hectares in each mandal. Hence, most often these figures are incorrect," he said.

Officials, however, have stuck to their point and said increased rain and demand for certain crops has helped revive agri-business in the district.

"The rains last year were abundant and uniform throughout the district. This helped recharge the ground water," said Vijay Kumar, joint director, agriculture, Rangareddy district. "There is a big demand for cotton crops and many have started sowing it. Encouraged by the prevailing market, many on the outskirts of Hyderabad too have begun farming instead of leaving the land barren." But few institutes and activists are willing to tow the government line.

Weather-Chennai

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Saturday, Jul 27

Max Min

33° | 27°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:53

Humidity: 52

Sunset: 06:37

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1007

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Sunday, Jul 28

Max Min

33° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Jul 29

Jul 30

Jul 31

Aug 1

Aug 2



33° | 26°

32° | 26°

34° | 26°

34° | 26°

33° | 26°

Cloudy

Overcast

Overcast

Overcast

Overcast

THE HINDU Business Line

Mixed trend in spot rubber

Physical rubber prices showed a mixed mood on Friday.

According to observers, the market activities were in an extremely low key as there were no genuine buyers or sellers on any counter to set a definite trend.

Practically not even a single transaction was recorded during late trading hours in the local market.

Meanwhile, latex and RSS 5 gained marginally amidst scattered transactions.

Sheet rubber

Sheet rubber closed unchanged at Rs 195 a kg, according to traders.

The grade was flat at Rs 194.50, at Kottayam and Kochi, as reported by the Rubber Board.

August futures improved to Rs 194 (Rs 191.52), September to Rs 181.85 (Rs 180.59), October to Rs 170.50 (Rs 170.11), November to Rs 165.25 (Rs 165.25) and December to Rs 164.50 (Rs 162.99) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) dropped to Rs 150.31 (Rs 152.92) at Bangkok.

August futures closed at ¥244.0 (Rs 146.06) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates Rs/kg were: RSS-4: 195 (195); RSS-5: 190 (189);

Ungraded: 179 (179); ISNR 20: 179 (180)

and Latex 60%: 166 (165).

Sugarcane, sugar price mismatch crushes industry

Rising sugarcane rates and stagnant sugar prices are crushing sugar mills, which need to increase efficiency and yield for viability, according to A. Vellayan, Executive Chairman, Murugappa Group.

Despite being decontrolled, Government policies rather than economic considerations influence sugarcane and sugar prices.

Only the lowest cost producer is profitable, he said.

“Whatever we do in the factory, the battle is won or lost in the farm,” he said referring to the need to increase sugarcane yield and sugar recovery, addressing the annual meeting of the South Indian Sugarcane and Sugar Technologists Association.

The country produces 66 tonnes sugarcane for a hectare against more than 75 tonnes in Brazil and Australia.

value-added products

Sugar mills also need to better exploit alcohol, cogeneration and organic manure; look at value-added products in sugar.

The association felicitated Padma Shree Award winner Rajshree Pathy, Chairperson and Managing Director, Rajshree Sugars.

Pathy said the Government recognition for her contribution to trade and industry also throws light on the sugar industry, which is going through a difficult time. Technology will come to the fore in the coming year as sugarcane prices increase even as product price stagnates.

M. Manickam, President, South Indian Sugar Mills Association – Tamil Nadu, said it was regrettable that the Rangarajan Committee’s suggestions

on sugar industry reforms had been implemented without the key feature of linking sugar and sugarcane price.

The political leaders continue to push up sugarcane price even as they keep sugar prices low for populist reasons.

Farmers can benefit only if the sugarcane prices are commensurate with sugar prices.

R.V. Tyagarajan, Chairman and Managing Director, Thiru Arooran Sugars, said the sugarcane and sugar price mismatch has put the industry in a tough position.

Sugar mills need to look at higher realisation for byproducts including electricity tariff from cogeneration and ethanol. Palani G. Periasamy, Executive Chairman, Dharani Sugars and Chemicals, said sugarcane prices have increased by 14 per cent while sugar prices by three per cent in recent years.

Government policies are a stumbling block to fully tapping the potential of distilleries and cogeneration plants linked to sugar mills.

The ethanol-blended fuel programme is a non-starter.

Manasa group ties up with Ghana

Indian agricultural firms investing in Africa are looking for opportunities beyond farming. They are now tapping opportunities in developing integrated models by sharing best agricultural practices in vogue in India. Manasa Group, which does contract farming in rice and lemon grass in Odisha and Karnataka, will develop crop-specific integrated models that can be emulated by the local farming communities. The Hyderabad-based company registered a turnover of Rs 10 crore, including Rs 4 crore from

farm activities. The company signed an agreement with Savannah Accelerated Development Authority, a Government of Ghana agency, for development of such models in an extent of 5,000 acres. The company has presence in Malawi in South Africa where it does contract farming in 1,000 acres.

Ghana set up SADA in 2010 to address the issues of growth and sustainable development to increase incomes of farmers, Mustapha Ahmed, Minister of State in-charge of Development Authorities of Ghana, said after the two sides signed the deal.

“We will establish Integrated Agriculture Enterprises in the SADA region as part of the government plan to modernise agriculture in order to ensure food security and provide employment opportunities,” R S N Raju told reporters after signing the agreement here on Friday.

Planting of key kharif crops gets a boost from July rains

Planting of key kharif crops such as pulses, oilseeds, coarse cereals and cotton is complete in over two-thirds of the normal area on the back of continued surplus rains in July in major parts of the country.

Oilseeds, with over 93 per cent of the normal area, was the most covered kharif crop, followed by cotton at 89 per cent, coarse cereals at 70 per cent and pulses at 66 per cent. Rice was planted in half of the normal area and the transplantation will go on till early September.

Among oilseeds, soyabean was planted in 117.33 lakh hectares (ha), about 16 per cent more than in the corresponding period last year.

Groundnut was planted in about 10 per cent more area, while the total oilseeds acreage was up 29 per cent over last year. A higher area was

reported in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh.

Cotton acreage was about eight per cent higher than last year at 105.06 lakh ha over last year with higher coverage in States such as Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh.

However, in Maharashtra, the total acreage so far is marginally lower at 37.37 lakh ha over last year's 38.77 lakh ha.

About half of the 36 meteorological sub-divisions have reported excess rainfall since the onset of monsoon, one has reported normal rains, while the remaining eight, deficient.

The impact of the excess rains in States such as Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, which are witnessing floods in some parts, was not known.

So far, the crop condition has been reported normal and satisfactory.

The surplus rain has helped improve the live storage levels in about 85 key reservoirs monitored by the Central Water Commission.

The live storage in these 85 reservoirs stood at 52 per cent of their capacity.

Rice acreage stood at 196.38 lakh ha, about 6.5 per cent more than corresponding last year.

States such as Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Gujarat have reported higher acreages.

In case of pulses, tur or arhar has been planted in total of 29.65 lakh ha against last year's 17.8 lakh ha, with Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh reporting higher areas.

Urad has been planted in 16.98 lakh ha over last year's 10.31 lakh ha and moong bean in 17.52 lakh ha over last year's 7.72 lakh ha.

Among coarse cereals, maize has been planted in 71.10 lakh ha against last year's 57.15 lakh ha.

Bajra has been sown in 53.38 lakh ha (37.10 lakh ha in last year), and jowar in 17.53 lakh ha (17.24 lakh ha).

Marginal rise in coconut oil, copra

Copra and coconut oil prices went up slightly on Friday.

"The copra farmers were happy over the increase in prices by Rs 250-300 a quintal and similarly, coconut oil prices were raised by Rs 40 for a 15 kg loose pack. But still, the present prices are not feasible, say farmers and oil crushers. Still the price of palm kernel is available at low price than coconut oil and so the users are still patronising palm kernel", said R.M.

Palanisamy, a coconut oil trader of Erode. He said the coconut oil crushers are having adequate stocks of copra and for the past few months, no Kerala coconut oil crusher has visited the Avalpoondurai regulated market committee to participate in the auction.

Further, the onset of south-west monsoon will not affect the copra trade, as the farmers are keeping their stocks in safe premises and will bring huge copra for sale as usual.

At the auction held at the Avalpoondurai regulated market committee on Friday, the prices of both varieties have increased. The first grade was sold at Rs 4,625-4,950. This is Rs 250 more than last week's price and the second quality was sold at Rs 4,035-4,710. This is also Rs 200 more than last week .

All the 1,122 quintals (2,243 bags) were sold.

The farmers said that they would bring more quantity from next week.

Similarly, the copra was sold at Rs 3,919-4,646 at the Anthiyur regulated market committee on Wednesday. Only 400 quintals arrived and were sold.

Cotton weak on low demand

Rajkot, cotton price on Friday declined by Rs 200-300 a candy of 356 kg in Gujarat as demand was weak. Good sowing activity and favourable weather condition also affected the market sentiments. Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton was traded down by Rs 200-300 to Rs 41,500-42,000.

Kapas or raw cotton decreased by Rs 7-10 to Rs 1,050-1,075 for 20 kg in Saurashtra region. About 2,500-3,000 bales (a bale is 170 kg) arrived in Gujarat and 7,000 bales arrived in India. A Rajkot-based cotton broker said that buyers are waiting for more downfall in cotton prices.

According to traders, sowing activity including Gujarat is good and the weather is also favourable. Prices may continue to fall in the next week also.

According to Gujarat State Agriculture Department data, as on July 22, cotton sowing was done in 25.67 lakh hectares (19.83 lakh ha last year).

The State has completed over 95 per cent cotton sowing.

India's Cotton exports are estimated to have plummeted by 36 per cent to 9.14 million bales in the first 11 months ended June of the current marketing year, a latest USDA report said.

Prospects of early kharif crop drag edible oils

Edible oils skid further on Friday, as local refineries have reduced their rates for oils by Rs 5-12 tracking weak Malaysian palm oil and on expectation of higher supply of indigenous edible oils.

Kharif crops arrivals are expected early due to increase in oilseeds sowing area and good prospects for standing crops in field, said traders.

In Mumbai, groundnut oil declined by Rs 35 following extended loss in main Saurashtra market where it dropped by Rs 50 for 10 kg, taking a total loss of Rs 75 in the last three days on expectation of early kharif crops arrivals. Sunflower, rapeseed and cotton refined oils declined by Rs 5, Rs 10 and Rs 2 each. Imported palmolein and soyabean refined oil fell by Rs 3 and Rs 5 each.

Trading sentiments have been affected by rains in most growing States.

Resellers offloaded about 80-100 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 515-516.

Barring that, there were no activities. Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 522-524; super palmolein Rs 555; super deluxe Rs 575. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 525 for July-Sept; soyabean refined oil Rs 628; sunflower refined oil Rs 795 for July-Aug. Allana quoted palmolein at Rs 522-525; super palmolein Rs 560. Gokul's rates were Rs 517.

In Rajkot, groundnut oil dropped by Rs 65 to Rs 1,410 (Rs 1,475) for *telia* tin and by Rs 50 to Rs 900 (Rs 950) for loose 10 kg.

Soyabean arrivals at national level were about 1.25 lakh bags-1.30 lakh bags at Rs 3,100-3,200 ex mandi and Rs 3,170-3,220 for plant delivery.

Mustard seeds were 70,000 bags at Rs 2,860-3,400.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, soyabean refined oil's August futures were up by Rs 5.50 to Rs 638.30 (Rs 632.80); Sept higher by Rs 5.95 to Rs 621.25 (Rs 615.30) and Oct increased by Rs 6.50 to Rs 602.70 (Rs 596.20).

Malaysia BMD crude palm oil's August futures contracts closed at MYR 2,256 (MYR 2,271); September at MYR 2,220 (MYR 2,199); October at MYR 2,178 (MYR 2,170).

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were: Groundnut oil 940 (975), soya refined oil 626 (631), sunflower exp. ref. 740 (740), sunflower ref. 795 (800), rapeseed ref. oil 665 (675), rapeseed expeller ref. 635 (645) cottonseed ref. oil 621 (623) and palmolein 518 (521).

Sluggish trend continues in pulses

Sluggish trend continued in pulses and pulse seeds on slow demand and rise in selling pressure.

With continuous decline in demand, masoor (bold) slipped to Rs 4,100-4,150 a quintal (almost down Rs 200 from last week). Similarly masoor (Madhya Pradesh) declined to Rs 3,700-3,900 (also down Rs 200). In the past three weeks or so, masoor prices have almost fallen by Rs 400.

Besides slack demand and hopes of bumper crop, large stock of imported masoor on the port has been causing a downtrend in its prices, said a trader. Decline in spot masoor has also dragged its dal by Rs 100 with masoor dal (average) was ruling at Rs 4,825-50, masoor dal (medium) Rs 4,925-50, while masoor dal (bold) at Rs 5,025-50.

Moong (best) in the past one week has almost declined by Rs 300 with its price in Indore being quoted at Rs 4,800, moong (medium) Rs 4,400-4,500 a quintal (down Rs 300 from last week).

Moong dal has also declined on weak buying support; moong dal (bold) at Rs 6,500-6,600 (down Rs 100); moong mongar Rs 6,600-6,700 (down Rs 400).

Moong dal (medium) stable at Rs 6,000-6,100.

Similarly urad also declined by Rs 100 in the past one week on weak buying support; urad (bold) at Rs 3,300-3,350; urad (medium) Rs 3,000-3,100.

Urad dal (average) at Rs 4,000-4,100, urad dal (bold) at Rs 4,500-4,600, urad mongar at Rs 5,500-5,800.

Sugar steady on continuous selling

Sugar prices in the Vashi-Mumbai wholesale sugar market ruled steady on Friday.

Spot prices for S-grade declined by Rs 10.

Naka and mill tender rates were unchanged on month-end slack demand.

Traders said continuous selling by producers offset even the slight improvement in retail demand.

Sugar output in 2013-14 marketing year beginning October is likely to drop 5.2 per cent from a year earlier to 237 lakh tonnes, compared with a local demand of around 230 lakh tonnes.

Sugar production in the current year is expected at 250 lakh tonnes, according to the industry.

Prices in the upcountry market also ruled at par with Maharashtra's parity.

In the Vashi market, arrivals were 61-62 truck loads (each of 100 bags) and local dispatches were 60-61 truck loads. On Thursday, about 14-15 mills offered tenders and sold about 34,000-35,000 bags at Rs 2,920-2,990 (Rs 2,920-Rs 2,990) for S-grade and Rs 3,010-3,200 (Rs 3,010-3,200) for M-grade.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, sugar August futures at Rs 3,026 (Rs 3,025), Sept higher by Rs 10 to Rs 3,044 (Rs 3,034) till noon.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S-grade Rs 3,052-3,135 (Rs 3,052-3,145) and M-grade Rs 3,172-3,321 (Rs 3,162-3,321). *Naka* delivery rates were: S-grade Rs 3,020-3,080 (Rs 3,020-3,080) and M-grade Rs 3,130-3,220 (Rs 3,130-3,220).

Turmeric falls by Rs 200/quintal

Turmeric prices decreased, but sales were encouraging.

“Expecting good price, farmers brought 3,200 bags of turmeric for sale on Friday in the four turmeric markets.

But the traders, after inspecting the samples, quoted lower price and purchased 60 per cent stocks.

All the 1,780 bags were procured by traders, said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said such decrease in price of Rs 200 a quintal is due to the fall of six per cent in two days in the turmeric futures. Further, only the medium quality came up for sale. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,832-6,596 a quintal, the root variety Rs 3,633-5,786.

Salem hybrid crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,681-7,236, the root variety Rs 5,499-6,091. Of 769 bags that arrived, 310 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,419-6,584, the root variety Rs 5,134-5,997. Of 713 bags, 693 were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,199-6,637, the root variety Rs 5,099-6,060. Of 640 bags, 624 were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 5,889-6,529, the root variety Rs 5,566-6,167. Of 224 bags, 204 were sold.

Wheat prices may remain range-bound

A range bound movement is likely to be witnessed in the wheat physical and futures markets for the next few days, said trade sources.

After ruling flat for almost two weeks, dara wheat dropped marginally while flour managed to maintain its previous level on Friday.

Sluggish domestic demand coupled with ample availability of stocks pulled wheat prices marginally down, said Sewa Ram, a wheat trader.

Only need-based buying is taking place in the market and any major alteration is unlikely at present, he added.

Uncertain weather is also keeping bulk buyers out of the market, said trade sources.

In the physical market, dara wheat dropped by Rs 5 and sold at Rs 1,465-1,470 a quintal. Mill delivery was at Rs 1,465 while delivery at the chakki was at Rs 1,470. On the other hand, desi wheat variety ruled flat at Rs 2,600-2,700. On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat for August contracts improved by Rs 8 and traded at Rs 1,567 with an open interest of 13,790 lots. The grain had touched a high at Rs 1,580 earlier in the day. August contracts went up by Rs 12 and traded at Rs 1,574.

In the spot market, wheat prices on the exchange improved by Rs 35 and traded at Rs 1,525.

Flour Prices

Despite downtrend in wheat, flour continued to rule flat and quoted at Rs 1,725. Similarly, Chokar ruled flat and sold at Rs 1,225.

Business Standard

Barley up by 1.5% on short covering

Low levels buying by traders influenced barley prices

Barley prices recovered by Rs 18 to Rs 1,210.50 per quintal in futures trading today owing to low levels buying by traders, supported by emerging physical markets sentiments.

Marketmen said pick up in demand in spot markets at existing lower levels mainly pushed up barley prices in futures trading.

Strong demand from beer making industries also boosted the trading sentiment, they said.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, barley for August month gained by Rs 18, or 1.51% to Rs 1,210.50 per quintal, open interest was 22,960 lots.

Near September contract also looked up by Rs 14, or 1.15% to Rs 1,231 per quintal, with an open interest of 10,520 lots

Castor seed falls by 2.3% on weak domestic demand

Falling demand in domestic as well as overseas markets further dampened the trend

Castor seed prices lost Rs 102 to Rs 3,453 per quintal in futures trade today on bumper stocks position against weak overseas and domestic demand.

Marketmen said besides heavy stocks position, reports of higher production this season following favourable monsoon rains mainly influenced the sentiment.

They said falling demand in domestic as well as overseas markets further dampened the trend.

India is the largest producer and exporter of castorseed and its oils in the world.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, castorseed for far November contract slid by Rs 102, or 2.87% to Rs 3,453 per quintal, with an open interest of 2,120 lots.

Most active August contract also fell further by Rs 54, or 1.67%, to Rs 3,182 per quintal, with an open interest of 1,51,570 lots

Potato falls by 2.6% on sluggish demand

Low demand and high supplies affected potato prices

Amid sluggish demand against higher supplies, potato prices fell by 2.58% to Rs 631.10 per quintal in futures market today as speculators offloaded positions.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, potato for delivery in September month fell by Rs 16.70, or 2.58% to Rs 631.10 per quintal in business turnover of 165 lots.

The potato for delivery in August lost Rs 14.50, or 2.08% to Rs 682 per quintal in 107 lots.

Market analysts said fall in potato prices was mostly due to offloading of positions by speculators, driven by sluggish demand at prevailing higher levels in the spot market

Chana up by 0.5% on spot demand

Rise in demand influenced chana prices

Chana prices rose by 0.48% to Rs 2,696 per quintal in futures market today as speculators created fresh positions amid rising demand in the spot market.

At the National Commodity Derivatives Exchange, chana for for delivery in September month rose by Rs 13, or 0.48%, to Rs 2,696 per quintal with an open interest of 97,400 lots.

Likewise, the commodity for delivery in August edged up by Rs 2, or 0.08% to Rs 2,639 per quintal in 1,48,060 lots.

Analysts said fresh positions created by speculators following a rise in demand in the spot market mainly influenced chana prices at futures trade.

Coriander falls by 1.3% on sluggish demand

Speculators reduced their holdings on account of sluggish demand

Coriander fell by 1.26% to Rs 5,414 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators reduced their holdings on account of sluggish demand in the spot market against adequate stocks position.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, coriander for delivery in September fell by Rs 69, or 1.26%, to Rs 5,414 per quintal with an open interest of 8,820 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in August traded lower by Rs 60, or 1.11%, to Rs 5,369 per quintal in 20,670 lots.

Market analysts said speculators reduced their holdings on the back of sluggish demand in the spot market against adequate stocks position mainly kept pressure on coriander prices at futures trade.

Mentha oil extend losses, shed 0.7%

Low demand from consuming industries influenced mentha oil prices

Mentha oil extended losses for third straight day with prices falling by 0.68% to Rs 903.80 per kg in futures trading today owing to slackened demand from consuming industries in the spot market.

Besides, higher supplies in the physical market on increased arrivals from Chandausi in Uttar Pradesh also kept pressure on mentha oil.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, mentha oil for delivery in July fell further by Rs 6.20, or 0.68%, to Rs 903.80 per kg in business turnover of 213 lots. Similarly, the oil prices for delivery in August declined by Rs 6.30, or 0.68% to Rs 915.00 per kg in 266 lots.

Market analysts said speculators reduced positions on the back of subdued demand from consuming industries in the spot market against adequate stocks position mainly helped mentha oil prices to extend losses at futures trade for third day.