

THE HINDU

DINDIGUL, June 11, 2014

2,000 farm ponds to be established

A total of 2,000 farm ponds will be established in the district this year. Farmers should avail this opportunity and recharge irrigation wells, said Collector N. Venkatachalam.

Addressing a special meeting with agriculture, horticulture, fisheries and sericulture officials here on Tuesday, he said that all departments should work with Department of Rural Development and identify beneficiaries who wished to set up farm ponds that will prevent soil erosion and improve groundwater table. A total of 1,012 ponds had been created in the last fiscal, he added.

Similarly, 2.25 lakh individual toilets will be constructed in the district by December 2015 to prevent defecation in open. All line departments should work together in achieving the target under this scheme.

TIRUCHI,

Pest attack hits jasmine cultivation in Tiruchi



Pest invasion: A farmer shows the discoloured buds of jasmine in Mannachanallur.—

Jasmine cultivation in the district has been affected by pest attack causing extensive damage to the crop in a number of villages resulting in poor yield. Although the harvest picked up to some extent in the aftermath of the summer showers last month, the yield has dwindled in the past few days following the pest attack.

Andhanallur block in the district is a major centre for jasmine cultivation. A cluster of villages, including Singapore Othakadai, Puliyur, Podhavur, Theerthapatti, Seplapatti, and Posampatti are known for jasmine cultivation in the district.

R. Thangavel from Inampuliyur village near Andhanallur says he had grown 1,300 plants of jasmine on an acre and the average yield was about 20 kg. “Several farmers adopt their own technique for containing pest attack,” he says.

Pesticides fail

Farmers in Mannachanallur block point out that they have started applying pesticides but the pest attack could not be controlled.

M. Kaliyaperumal of Tiruvarangapatti in the block said the crop yielded flowers from the Tamil month of ‘Thai’ (January – February). Though farmers witnessed a sharp increase in yield after the summer showers, there has now been a dip in the yield as the buds discoloured because of pest attack.

He could not get adequate returns on investment. He had bought the plants from Rameswaram at the rate of Rs. 3 a piece. The average daily yield from his 1,000 plants on one acre was 50 kg which fetched a daily revenue of Rs. 1,000 before the summer showers. But now, the daily returns had come down to Rs. 600. He had invested Rs. 2,000 for applying pesticides on Saturday.

K. Rajasekar, a dealer in the flower, said that absence of irrigational facility and rise in mercury levels had resulted in poor arrivals at the wholesale market in Srirangam.

The arrivals were just 60 per cent of the usual harvest this year, probably because of heat wave. Ettarai and Koppu were the major centres which supplied jasmine flowers to the Srirangam market.

Recurring phenomenon

Ayilai Siva Suriyan, district secretary of the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, said that pest attack had been a recurring phenomenon yet to be resolved.

An official from the Horticulture Department said farmers should apply fertilizers instead of pesticides.

He would study the nature of pest attack and recommend suitable action. The district accounted for about 300 hectares of jasmine with an average daily yield of 20 kg an acre.

B. Krishnan, a former official of Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Society suggested that farmers consult the Horticulture Department officials and carefully select proper pest-specific remedy. He said that bio-pesticides could control the pest attack to some extent. Spraying of neem-based pesticides would be very effective.

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- *Heat wave and no irrigation facility result in poor arrivals at market*
 - *Use of neem-based pesticides and fertilizers suggested*
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TIRUNELVELI,

Save the Tamirabharani from pollution: farmers



Members of Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam staged a demonstration here on Tuesday urging the State Government to initiate immediate steps to protect the Tamirabharani from rampant pollution and provide drought relief to farmers of the district.

The protestors said the Tamirabharani, lifeline of three southern districts, should be protected from domestic and industrial pollution and encroachment by forming a monitoring committee headed by the Collector.

Besides reviewing the state of the perennial river on a regular basis, the proposed committee should take all out efforts to save the river from pollution caused by the industrial houses at Ambasamudram, Cheranmahadevi, Pazhavor etc. and encroachments of all sorts.

According to a study conducted by Sri Paramakalyani Centre for Environmental Science, Alwarkurichi, faecal coliform bacterial content in the 125 km-long Tamirabharani would increase manifold during the past several years, particularly after ‘Aadi amaavaasai’ festival at Sorimuthu Ayyanar temple near Papanasam Dam.

“The faecal coliform bacterial content, which would be in the range of 18 – 24 MPN (Most Probable Number) in 2004 and 30 to 40 MPN in 2010, has crossed 1,100 MPN during the ‘Aadi amaavaasai’ festival and this alarming scenario continues for several days, which shows the gravity of the situation,” says A.G. Murugesan, faculty member of Sri Paramakalyani Centre for Environmental Science, who used to investigate the level of pollution after this celebration every year.

The protesting TNVS activists also suggested that the district administration should take sustained steps for creating awareness among the public, particularly the villagers living close to the watercourse, on conserving the perennial river from being smothered by sand mafia, who plundered arguably the costliest construction material round-the-clock for several years and sold it in neighbouring Kerala for a premium.

“Only by liberating the Tamirabharani from pollution, encroachment and sand mining, the administration can ensure regular supply of safe drinking water to the public in adequate quantity,” said S.V. Krishnan, former MLA and Tirunelveli district president of TNVS.

Though the district administration evicted illegal construction on July 5, 2012 by removing over 300 houses – both temporary and permanent – no sustained action was taken to remove encroachments of all sorts right from Papanasam to the tail-end of the river in neighbouring Tuticorin district.

The protestors also said the State Government should allot Rs. 1,000 crore in five instalments for desilting the dams and irrigations tanks across the district and to repair the shutters of the waterbodies to give impetus to farming activities.

Communist Party of India office bearers S. Kasi Viswanathan, R. Kasamuthu, P. Perumbadaiyaar, A.M. Sathyan, and others spoke.

ELURU,

Will crop loan waiver benefit 'real' farmers?

Will Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's election promise for loan waiver help out the 'real' farmers? This question stares the government though Mr. Naidu signed his first file on farm loan waiver soon after his swearing-in as the Chief Minister.

It may be recalled that the promise helped the TDP to romp home to victory in the agrarian districts like West Godavari in the just concluded elections.

However, it lacked clarity with regards to the applicability on the size of loans and the status of farmers in terms of the size of their land holdings.

This reported ambiguity is giving rise to apprehensions in the peasant organisations over the scheme benefiting the needy farmers.

Yerneni Nagendranath, president of Andhra Pradesh Rytanga Samakhya, said there was every possibility of the land owners hijacking the package regardless of the fact that they were not engaged in cultivation.

Ultimately, it is the tenant farmers who would feel let down at the end of the day, he said.

True to the apprehensions, 70 to 80 per cent of the agricultural land in the Godavari and the Krishna delta regions 25 lakh acres are under tenancy cultivation since the early 1990s due to diversification of the land owners into a slew of more lucrative non-agricultural economic activities like financing.

It is a common practice that the land owners obtain agricultural loans from banks at lower interest rates (4 per cent) with their land as collateral, resulting in deprivation of tenant farmers of agriculture credit on same land under tenancy cultivation.

The tenant farmers, left with no option, turned to their land owners for credit at a rate of interest ranging up to 24 per cent, it is alleged.

Although the government has introduced the LEC (Loan Eligibility Cards) scheme to provide bank credit to tenant farmers, the total volume of agricultural finance advanced by the banks in the undivided State under this scheme during the year 2013-14 stood at a mere Rs 319 crore out of Rs 1.37 lakh crore earmarked for agriculture finance.

With Mr. Naidu's promise, a major share of the allocations under agriculture would have to be earmarked for implementing the crop loan waiver scheme.

West Godavari Lead District Manager S. Lakshminarayana said the poor targets in the LEC finance was on account of rising overdues up to 30-35 per cent among tenant farmers.

ERODE

Beneficiaries of free goats finalised

Special grama sabha meetings held in select panchayats

Special Grama Sabha meetings were conducted in select panchayats in the district where Below Poverty Line beneficiaries have been identified for receiving free goats under the State Government's scheme during 2014-15. The lists of beneficiaries prepared by 25 panchayat administrations would be ratified over the next three months. Similar meetings would be conducted on July 10 and August 11 for identifying landless poor farmers eligible under the scheme, said Regional Joint Director of Animal Husbandry Department P. Jayaraman.

Each of the 3,123 beneficiaries would receive free goats — three females and one male. In addition to the goats worth Rs. 10,000, a beneficiary is entitled to Rs. 2,000 as seed money that is usually used for putting up sheds.

Goats that are 10-months old are provided to the beneficiaries. The goats get ready for reproduction after six months, and five months later, they give birth. A well-grown goat would weigh 15 to 20 kg and could be sold for meat for up to Rs. 4,000. The beneficiaries are not supposed to sell the goat for two years. In case they flout the norm, they would face legal action, official sources said.

SHIMOGA,

Farmers cultivating school land seek ownership rights

Kallur Megharaj, president of the Karnataka Bhoo-Vidyadana Shala Jaminu Geni Raithara Horata Samiti, a committee of tenants engaged in the cultivation of land donated to government schools, has charged some senior officials of the Department of Public Instruction with harassing the cultivators.

At a meeting held on January 9, in which Minister for Revenue V. Srinivas Prasad and Minister of State for Primary and Secondary Education Kimmane Ratnakar had participated, it had been decided to confer ownership rights to tenants over the school land they were cultivating. Mr. Ratnakar had directed Rajkumar Khatri, Principal Secretary, Department of Primary and Secondary Education, to stop evicting the tenants and hold fresh auctioning of school land through school development and monitoring committees (SDMCs) for granting cultivation rights. It was unfortunate that the officials had failed to follow the instructions and continued to evict the tenants, even as the annual auctioning of school land was going on, he said at a press conference here on Tuesday. The eviction of tenants was against the spirit of Karnataka Land Reforms Act, 1974.

‘Eviction continued’

The government, though had agreed in principle, to confer land ownership rights upon the tenants, the officials concerned and members of SDMCs, to realise their selfish-ends, had continued the eviction and were granting the rights for land cultivation through auctioning, he said.

The tenants had been evicted by SDMCs of government primary schools in Chikkamarasa, Harnahalli, Konagavalli, Erekippa, Nevatur villages in Shimoga district, recently. The government should immediately come for the protection of tenants, he said urged the government to initiate strict action against Mr. Khatri and other officers of the department for their failure to follow the Minister’s instruction. Otherwise, the samiti would launch an agitation for the protection of the rights of tenants, he said.

Kadidal Shamanna, farmer leader; G. Madappa, former MLC; and Suvarna Nagaraj, functionary of the vedike, were present.

CHENNAI,

CM seeks time for naphtha-based fertilizer units to switch over to gas



It is imperative that the Department of Fertilizers grants adequate time to naphtha-based fertilizer companies to switch over to gas-based production, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The major naphtha-based urea fertilizer producing units in the State are SPIC in Tuticorin and the Central public sector undertaking Madras Fertilizers Limited at Manali near Chennai. Together they produce about 10 lakh tonnes per year forming the bulk of naphtha-based urea produced in the country.

Ms. Jayalalithaa, in a letter to Mr. Modi, pointed out that under the New Pricing Scheme III, the Department of Fertilizers, under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, had on April 2 last issued a directive mandating all the naphtha-based urea producing fertilizer plants to switch over to gas and that they would not be eligible for subsidy after June 30.

Pointing out that both the units in Tamil Nadu have invested heavily for the conversion from naphtha as feedstock to gas but they were yet to be given confirmed gas allocation by the Centre, Ms. Jayalalithaa observed in the letter that till such time they were provided gas on an assured basis they could not switch over as imported gas was almost as costly as naphtha.

Ms. Jayalalithaa alleged that despite knowing those facts and when the Lok Sabha election model code of conduct was in place, the previous UPA regime had taken the decision at the “fag-end of its tenure” unmindful of the fact that farmers and hundreds of workers in those two factories would be affected if the plants were to be shut down in the absence of subsidy.

The Chief Minister questioned the rationale of the UPA government’s decision stating that it was the Centre which had to provide gas connectivity and the plants were suffering for no fault of theirs, especially so when one of them was a Central PSU.

It was imperative that the Department of Fertilizers allowed adequate time for the two companies to switch over to gas and that the Central agencies concerned must provide gas connectivity to them, she has stressed.

Ms. Jayalalithaa urged the Prime Minister to instruct the Department of Fertilizers to take a relook at the whole issue and arrive at a solution keeping in mind the interests of lakhs of farmers and hundreds of workers in those plants by permitting them to receive the subsidy continuously from the Centre till such time gas connectivity was provided to them.

UDHAGAMANDALAM,

Tea growers' plea to Finance Minister

The Small Tea Growers Association of Southern India has urged the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley to give due importance to the small scale tea sector in the Union Budget which was now under preparation.

In a memorandum to the Minister, the Association has asked for the fixing of a minimum support price of Rs.25 per kg. of green leaf supplied by the small tea growers and a matching minimum price for the black tea produced by the factories.

A 50 per cent fertilizer subsidy should be granted and help extended in the form of subsidy with bank finance for setting up micro and mini tea factories. Fifty per cent subsidy should be given for tea machinery upgradation.

The outlay for the tea small scale sector in the 12th Five Year Plan should be hiked from Rs. 200 crore to Rs. 300 crore.

BANGALORE,

SW monsoon likely to be marginally better this year for State's farm sector

Microanalysis indicates 'positive normal' monsoon in south interior Karnataka



Good prospects:According to experts, microanalysis indicates normal monsoon for the north interior subdivision and 'positive normal' for the south interior subdivision.— FILE Photo: K. Murali Kumar

The southwest monsoon, which has just entered Karnataka, is expected to be marginally better for the agricultural sector in the State in terms of quantum of rain compared with the previous year, according to experts.

“The forecast by the Indian Meteorological Department shows that the country as a whole will be affected by the El Nino effect by about 5 per cent. But microanalysis at the level of each of the three climatic subdivisions of Karnataka indicates that the prospects of agriculture is unlikely to be hit in the State,” M.B. Raje Gowda, professor of Agro Meteorology and Registrar of the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, has said.

According to the climatic sub-divisional analysis, south interior Karnataka is likely to get “positive normal” monsoon, which means 3 to 4 per cent more rainfall than the normal figures, he said. The south interior Karnataka subdivision includes the districts of Bangalore, Mysore, Shimoga, Hassan, Chikmagalur, Mandya, Chamarajanagar, Ramanagaram and Davangere.

Southwest monsoon for north interior Karnataka is likely to be normal, that is plus or minus 5 per cent of the total 100 per cent, according to Dr. Gowda.

7 per cent shortage

The forecast indicates a 7 per cent deficiency in rainfall for the coastal subdivision. But considering the fact that the coastal subdivision yields high rainfall of 3,000 to 3,500 mm, a 7 per cent shortage, amounting to 200 mm, may not negatively impact the agricultural sector, Dr. Gowda observed. The forecast for the State as a whole indicates 5 per cent deficiency in the monsoon against 7 per cent witnessed during the previous year, he said.

With the analysis showing that the quantum of Southwest monsoon rains is not going to be a worry for agriculture, weather experts are now watching for the “distribution of monsoon” as that is also a crucial factor impacting agriculture. Dr. Gowda said the distribution of monsoon may also be normal this time if the pattern of pre-monsoon showers was any indication.

The performance of the southwest monsoon is crucial for the State’s agricultural sector as it accounts for 69 per cent of the calendar year’s rainfall.

10 days to cover State

Though monsoon has entered Karnataka, it may take about 10 days for it to cover the entire State, Dr. Gowda said. According to him, the interior and northern parts of Karnataka will get high precipitation by the first or second week of July, setting the stage for sowing.

June

Monsoon likely to be better for farm sector



The southwest monsoon this year is expected to be marginally better for the farm sector in terms of the quantum of rain compared to previous year, say experts.

HASSAN,

Government urged to promote natural farming



Members of the Bharatiya Kissan Sangh submitting a memorandum to Deputy Commissioner V. Anbukkumar in Hassan on Tuesday.— PHOTO: PRAKASH HASSAN

The Hassan district unit of the Bharatiya Kissan Sangh on Tuesday urged the State government to prompt farmers to return to natural farming and start procuring sugarcane, paddy, millets, jowar and other food crops at remunerative prices, directly from farmers.

Members of the sangh, who had come here for a one-day convention, took out a rally from the Kannada Sahitya Parishat Bhavan, the venue, to the Deputy Commissioner's office and submitted a memorandum, along with the resolutions adopted at the meet.

Failure of monsoon

They said the growers of coconut, arecanut, mango, coffee and potato in Hassan district had been hit hard by the failure of monsoon for the last two years. As the groundwater table had also depleted, the farmers had lost all hopes of getting back their investment and the hard labour they had put in, over the years.

The government should compensate the loss incurred by farmers and encourage them for alternative cropping. The farmers were also hit by inadequate power supply. The officers concerned were delaying replacement of faulty electric lines connecting rural areas and

faulty transformers, they alleged and urged the government to immediately address these problems. V. Anbukumar, Deputy Commissioner, received the memorandum. S.P. Rajeev Gowda and Thammappa Gowda of the sangha led the rally.

SHIMOGA,

Cane growers to stage protest

They want factory owners to settle their arrears

Sugarcane growers will stage a protest outside the residence of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in Bangalore on June 20, seeking a directive from him to sugar factory managements to settle their overdue payments at the earliest, said Kurubur Shanthakumar, president of the Karnataka Rajya Kabbu Belegarara Sangha. The State government had fixed Rs. 2,500 a tonne as advisory price for sugarcane. However, the managements of many private and cooperative sugar factories had not settled the full amount to farmers. — Special Correspondent

CHITTOOR,

Spurious cotton seed seized

The vigilance and enforcement officials on Tuesday morning raided a hideout meant for packaging and clandestine transport of spurious cotton seed at B.Kothakota mandal headquarters near Madanapalle. The officials seized stocks worth about Rs 9 lakh, and booked cases against the operator, Lakshmanachari. .

MUMBAI,

Cotton output may be 388.25 lakh bales

Cotton crop for the season 2013-14, beginning October 1, 2013, is estimated at 388.25 lakh bales (170 kg each), the Cotton Association of India (CAI) said in its May estimate on Tuesday. Total cotton supply is estimated at 447.50 lakh bales while domestic consumption is estimated at 295 lakh bales, thus, leaving an available surplus of 152.50 lakh bales. Arrivals as on May 31, 2014, are placed at 370.25 lakh bales. — PTI

Water level

Mettur

The water level in the Mettur Dam stood at 44.37 feet on Tuesday against its full reservoir level of 120 feet. The inflow was 1,313 cusecs and the discharge 804 cusecs.

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Wednesday, Jun 11

Max Min

39° | 29°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:41

Humidity: 63

Sunset: 06:34

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1003

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Thursday, Jun 12

Max Min

36° | 27°

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday
Jun 13



37° | 27°

Partly Cloudy

Saturday
Jun 14



37° | 29°

Partly Cloudy

Sunday
Jun 15



36° | 30°

Partly Cloudy

Monday
Jun 16



36° | 30°

Cloudy

Tuesday
Jun 17



34° | 29°

Cloudy

Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:22

Humidity: 26

Sunset: 07:18

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1000



THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

Centre Planning Agriculture Universities across Nation

In order to boost the agri-infrastructure, the government is planning more Agriculture Universities across the country, government officials told the Express.

It is learnt that proposals like Pusa institute that has been pending for the past three years will be fast-tracked by the NDA government for agri-sector development.

The government is also planning a university in Jhansi and extending the university status to other institutes it deems fit to promote agro-technology.

“The government is planning to bring Green Revolution in eastern India, which has fertile land, but so far has not been able to cultivate the existing resources. We are also working on a plan of water holding structures which will support the efforts of Green Revolution,” officials added.

The ministry officials already held several rounds of meeting with scientists and experts to chalk out strategy for the next five years.

The President’s address on Monday also outlined several measures including launching of Pradhanmantri Sishayeen Yojna on the lines of Pradhanmantri Gram Sadak Yojna to ensure irrigation facility across the country.

The ministry, which is preparing to tackle situations arising out of poor monsoon, has already issued advisories to the states.

Jaya Asks Modi to Continue Subsidy for Fertilizers

Express News Service

Chennai: Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to continue to extend subsidy to two major Naphtha-based fertiliser plants in Tamil Nadu — SPIC (Tuticorin) and Madras Fertilisers Ltd (Manali) in Chennai — until they are given gas connectivity for switching over to gas-based production.

As per the New Pricing Scheme III, introduced by the Department of Fertilisers under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers on April 2, 2014, it has become mandatory for all the Naphtha-based urea producing fertilizer plants to switch over to gas and the plants would not be eligible for any subsidy after June, 30, 2014.

SPIC and MFL together produce about 10 lakh MT per year forming the bulk of

urea produced in the country, Jayalalithaa said in her letter to the Prime Minister on June 9, and added that both had invested considerably for conversion from Naphtha to gas. However, they were yet to get confirmed gas allocation from the Government of India.

Both these plants had taken up the issue with all the concerned organisations viz: GAIL, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., and ONGC for gas connectivity. “But, till such time as they are given

SPIC and MFL together produce about 10 lakh MT per year forming the bulk of urea produced in the country, Jayalalithaa said in her letter

gas on an assured basis, they will not be able to switch over to gas-based Urea production as imported gas is almost as costly as Naphtha”, she pointed out.

The then UPA government had taken this decision at the fag end of its tenure, completely unmindful of the interest of the farmers who are dependent on this essential fertilizer, and the hundreds of workers employed in these plants which have to be shut down in the absence of the subsidy. Jayalalithaa said the

very rationale of this decision becomes questionable when the Centre, which had to provide gas connectivity, did not do so for no fault of the companies and when one of these plants belongs to a Central PSU. “It is imperative that the Department of Fertilizers allows adequate time to Naphtha-based fertilizer companies to switch over to gas based production and the concerned Ministries and Organisations of Government of India should provide for the gas connectivity”, she added.

The CM requested Modi to issue immediate instructions to the Department of Fertilizers to take a relook at the whole issue and arrive at an immediate solution keeping in mind the interest of lakhs of farmers and hundreds of workers by permitting these plants to continue to receive the subsidy.

Dry spell could wilt cotton output hopes



Withered hopes Though the area under the fibre is likely to rise, delayed monsoon and lack of water may cause some damage.

Bangalore,

The prevailing heat wave across North India has affected the end-season cotton planting, while Maharashtra and Gujarat have expressed concerns over the delay in the progress of monsoon.

However, the cotton industry is hopeful that acreages this would exceed last year's levels attracting farmers' attention from competing crops such as guar and soyabean on higher prices.

“Overall cotton acreages should increase by three-five per cent this year, though the yields will depend on the rainfall,” said Dhiren N Sheth, President of Cotton Association of India.

Cotton acreage was 11.5 million hectares last year and the output had touched a record 38.825 million bales of 170 kg each, according to CAI. For the year ahead, the Government has set a production target of 35 million bales.

Increase in acreage

In North India, where the cotton planting has ended, acreages are higher by about a tenth over last year. Industry sources said plantings are up by about one lakh hectares each in

Haryana and Rajasthan with the total in North India hovering above last year's 3.4 million hectares. A clearer picture on acreage in the North will emerge by July.

Delayed monsoon

The delay in wheat harvest had pushed back the cotton planting that normally starts early May. Moreover, the lack of water in canals, mainly in Rajasthan, also delayed the plantings.

“It has been a mixed season this year. The heat wave has hit sowing and about five-seven per cent of the area in North India is yet to be covered. It may not be covered now as the season has ended,” said Sovan Chakraborty, Business Head, Shriram Farm Solutions, a unit of DCM Shriram Ltd, the largest vendor of cotton seeds in the North.

The dry spell and delay in progress of monsoon over Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat is triggering concerns among seed industry and growers.

Rainfall pattern

In a normal year, monsoon reaches Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, the main cotton growing belt in Central India by June 10, but this year there is no such indication, said KR Kranthi, Director of Nagpur-based Central Institute of Cotton Research.

Rainfall during June 1-8 this year is 44 per cent deficient and the monsoon, which arrived late by six days, is yet to make any progress beyond southern Karnataka. If the rains are normal, cotton acreage could gain in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, Kranthi said.

“The delay in monsoon progress over key cotton growing areas is a concern,” said M Ramasami, Managing Director of Rasi Seeds. He expects that a shrunk sowing window could boost demand for short duration varieties.

Cardamom loses flavour on slack demand



Kochi,

Cardamom continued its downtrend last week on slack demand despite fall in arrivals at the auctions.

However, compared with the individual auction average in the same period a year ago and the year before that, the average price was higher.

Severe heat wave conditions prevailing in the North have affected the retail business in those regions and that in turn has slowed down upcountry buying, market sources told *Business Line*.

On the other hand, they said export buying has also been poor because of a slack demand. Guatemala seems to cater to major markets such as Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries at competitive prices when Indian prices were ruling high.

This year, Ramzan falls early almost before the beginning of harvest in India and hence, buying has also taken place early, they said.

At the KCPMC auction, arrivals dropped to 30.2 tonnes from 46.4 tonnes the previous Sunday and the entire quantity was sold out, PC Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC, Kumily, said.

The maximum price was Rs. 933/kg and the minimum Rs. 417. Auction average fell to Rs. 701.07 from Rs. 721.73 the previous Sunday, he said.

In fact, prices dropped to below Rs. 700 from Wednesday onwards to Saturday last, he said.

During the current season of the crop, arrivals stood at 20,418 tonnes against 14,041 tonnes as on June 8 during the last season.

Sales were 19,798 tonnes against 13,424 tonnes.

The weighted average price as on June 8 stood at Rs. 641.23 (Rs. 709.09). Prices of all graded varieties (Rs. /kg): AGEB 920-930; AGB 720-730; AGS 690-700 and AGS -1: 670-680.

Monsoon will bounce back next week after Arabian Sea storm dies out

Thiruvananthapuram,

A prevailing storm in the Arabian Sea may be the most predominant monsoon feature now, but rains may lash the mainland in right earnest from next week.

India Met Department has classified the storm as a well-marked low-pressure area but the US Joint Typhoon Warning Centre has given it a 'numbered cyclone' status.

It calls the system '02A,' the penultimate procedure step before it gives a 'name' to it (Nanauk, contributed by Myanmar as per regional naming protocol for cyclones).

Back to life

The storm is now well on its west-northwest course towards Oman, but is forecast to lose some steam before approaching for landfall.

According to the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, the monsoon would roar back to life from Monday onwards.

It says back-up flows from the southern hemisphere are just waiting for the would-be cyclone in the Arabian Sea to spend itself out before rushing towards India's west coast.

Revival signs

Signs of monsoon revival will be evident even as the remnant of the cyclone would be wallowing in the Oman waters, according to this outlook.

The flows will build up to peak strength towards the middle of the next week and might remain as such through the weekend.

The pattern would be such that the flows would set up a full-fledged monsoon onset conditions for a second time on the west coast.

The flows will spread across entire peninsula, and grow along the east coast with the Bay of Bengal also getting into a song.

Major beneficiaries

Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana, Seemandhra, and southern parts of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, West Bengal and the North-East are all seen gaining from this run of the monsoon.

A similar scenario is being forecast by the Climate Prediction Centre of the US National Weather Services.

It sees enhanced rain activity over east India and North-East India with a flare-up over Gangetic West Bengal.

But monsoon easterlies from the Bay of Bengal are not seen making much headway into the North and North-West during this period.

Cotton output seen at 388 lakh bales

Mumbai,

The Cotton Association of India has estimated the cotton crop output at 388.25 lakh bales (of 170 kg each) for the 2013-14 season ending September.

Cotton output was at 357 lakh bales last year.

Total cotton supply is estimated at 447.50 lakh bales, while domestic consumption is pegged at 295 lakh bales, leaving a surplus of 152.50 lakh bales. As on May 31, arrivals were at 370.25 lakh bales.

The highlight of this cotton season is the remarkable improvement in yield shown by regions with smaller acreage such as lower Rajasthan and Karnataka.

Fisheries body dismisses fears of low catch as seasonal phenomenon



Kochi,

The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute has dismissed fears of low catch on the Indian coast, describing it as a seasonal phenomenon varying each year.

The total marine capture fish landings in 2013 on the coast is less than four per cent, touching 3.78 million tonnes against 3.94 million tonnes in the previous year.

CMFRI Director A Gopalakrishnan said that the low availability of Indian oil sardines has reflected in the overall landings and there is no immediate threat to the fisheries sector going by the overall production of the landings.

Kerala can be cited as an example where the dip in catch is due to the reduction in the most dominant resource of sardines and there is no reduction in the catch per boat involved in fishing.

He said that the reduction is due to less number of fishing days due to weather conditions and the drop in a particular year is not a reason to panic.

Speaking to reporters after releasing the Marine Fish Landings in India for 2013 on Tuesday, he said Gujarat emerged as the leading State in marine fish landings with 7.17 lakh tonnes (lt) followed by Tamil Nadu at 6.88 lt and Kerala with 6.77 lt.

Jay Tea's new bag range for India

Kolkata,

The Rs. 350-crore tea packer, blender and exporter Madhu Jayanti International Limited – better known as Jay Tea – on Tuesday launched its “TE-A-ME” tea bag range for Indian markets.

According to Harish Shah, Managing Director, the Kolkata-based company has earmarked Rs. 15 crore outlay for brand building in India over the next two years.

Though it constitutes a mere two per cent of the overall tea sales in the country, tea bag consumption is growing by nearly 25 per cent a year.

The company currently sells two CTC brands – Lalpan and Saraswati Tea – in rural Karnataka and Maharashtra. Four more packet tea and tea bag brands – Old England, Victoria, Gold Bond and Indus – are sold in Russia and West Africa.

The company is a significant player in the private label market catering to 80 major international retailers.

In India, Café Coffee Day, Fresh and Honest, Costa Coffee, Aditya Birla's More retail chain and HyperCity Retail procure teas from Madhu Jayanti.

Of the Rs. 350 crore turnover, roughly Rs. 150 crore is earned from the export-driven private labelling business. Earnings from Russia alone is pegged at Rs. 100 crore.



Jaya seeks continuation of subsidy for urea plants

The Tamil Nadu government on Tuesday urged the central government to continue to provide subsidy to the state's fertiliser plants that use naphtha as fuel.

The department of chemical fertilisers, under the New Pricing Scheme III (NPS III), had in April directed all naphtha-based fertiliser plants to switch over to gas on or before June 30 or else become ineligible for subsidy.

CM J Jayalalithaa, in her letter to PM Narendra Modi, urged him to issue immediate instructions to the department concerned to take a relook at the issue and arrive at an

immediate solution, keeping in mind the interests of farmers and hundreds of workers, by permitting these plants to continue to receive subsidy from the union government till the time gas connectivity is given to them.

In the letter, she said: "Tamil Nadu has two major urea/fertiliser plants — SPIC in Tuticorin and Madras Fertilisers in Chennai (a central PSU), which together produce about 10 lakh mt per year, forming the bulk of naphtha-based urea produced in the country. Both have invested considerably for conversion from naphtha to gas. However, they are yet to be given confirmed gas allocation by the union government. They have taken up the issue with all the organisations concerned, such as GAIL, IOC and ONGC, for gas connectivity but, till such time as they are given gas on an assured basis, they will not be able to switch over to gas-based urea production as imported gas is almost as costly as naphtha."

"Despite knowing these facts and especially when the model code of conduct was already in place, the then UPA government had taken this decision at the end of its tenure..." the letter added.

In medium term, our focus to remain on tea, coffee & water: Ajoy Misra

Tata Global Beverages (TGBL), maker of Tetley tea and Eight O' Clock coffee, is a \$1.5-billion company, selling tea and coffee and running retail operations, including a joint venture with Starbucks in India. Nearly 70% of the company's turnover comes from tea while 20% comes from coffee and the rest from its enhanced water, plantation and extraction businesses. FE's Rajesh Ravi spoke to managing director and CEO of Tata Global Beverages Limited Ajoy Misra at Munnar in Kerala. Misra was in Kerala for the inauguration of DARE (Development Activities in Rehabilitative Education) School, a CSR project of the company.

Beverage companies like Pepsi and Coca-Cola are venturing into health drinks due to a sluggish growth in the carbonated drink market. Given your base in India, do you see yourself entering into the health drink market, may be with coconut?

We don't want to lose our focus by getting diverted into several product categories. For the medium term, we shall remain focused on our core products — tea, coffee and water. We expect growth to come from the enhanced water sector as demand for bottled water is robust in most markets. The market for bottled water is growing in double digits and we see a good scope in future. We are not saying that we will not enter other segments, but for time being, we don't want to lose focus on our core area.

What are your plans for the bottled water segment?

Himalayan, our premium natural water, is now sold in Singapore and we would soon expand to other markets. It would be gradually expanded to all Starbucks stores and taken to other markets. There is a good space for premium sourced water in the international

market. In India, we see a scope for water that has essential minerals and compounds. Tata Water Plus, India's first nutrient water, would be launched in more states. It is currently available in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, and will be taken to Gujarat and other states.

What about the presence in the tea and coffee markets?

We are second to Unilever in the branded tea segment occupying 7- 8% space of the total market. The company has operations in 30 countries and plans to concentrate on coffee in some of the markets where coffee is more popular. The branded coffee market is seen growing. We recently acquired an Australian company engaged in the coffee business under the MAP

Business Standard

TN asks Centre to extend deadline for fertiliser plants to switch to gas

The Tamil Nadu government has asked Centre to give adequate time to naphtha-based fertiliser plants to switch to gas-based production. It also said the ministries and organisations concerned under the Government of India should provide for the gas connectivity.

The state has two major urea fertiliser plants — SPIC, Tuticorin, and Madras Fertilizers Ltd, Manali, in Chennai, a central PSU. They together produce about 1 million tonne per annum, forming bulk of naphtha-based urea produced in the country. SPIC alone has a capacity of 62.5 million tonnes per annum and most of the year the facility is up and running.

Under the New Pricing Scheme III (NPS III), the Department of Fertilisers under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers had issued a directive on April 2, 2014, mandating that all naphtha-based urea-producing fertiliser plants switch to gas and that they would not be eligible for any subsidy after June 30, 2014.

Both companies have invested considerably in conversion from naphtha to gas, and they are yet to be given the confirmed gas allocation by the Centre. SPIC had earlier said it had invested around Rs 300 crore in conversion of its facility, from naphtha to gas.

“They have taken up the issue with all the organisations concerned viz GAIL, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd and ONGC for the gas connectivity. But, till such time as they are given

gas on an assured basis, they will not be able to switch over to gas-based urea production as imported gas is almost as costly as naphtha,” said the chief minister in her letter.

She alleged: “Despite knowing all these facts and especially when the model code of conduct for the general elections were in place, the then Congress-led UPA government had taken this decision at the fag end of its tenure, completely unmindful of the interest of the farmers who are dependent on this essential fertiliser, and the hundreds of workers employed in these plants, which have to be shut down in the absence of the subsidy. The very rationale of the decision is questionable when the Government of India, which has to provide gas connectivity has not done it for no fault of the plants, and when one of these plants belongs to a central PSU.”

She asked the Prime Minister to issue immediate instructions to the fertilisers department to take a relook at the whole issue and arrive at an immediate solution keeping in mind the interests of millions of farmers and hundreds of workers by permitting these plants to continue to receive the subsidy from the Centre till such time the gas connectivity is given to them.

Coffee price declines 17% since March, worries growers



Coffee planters in the major growing regions of South India are in in distress as the price of the Robusta variety has been falling in the past two weeks. Especially hit were some who were holding on to their stocks in anticipation of bumper prices.

The farmgate price of Robusta cherry are now Rs 3,300 a 50-kg bag from Rs 4,000 a bag in March. “The prices have fallen in India mainly due to the decline in global prices. The news of Brazil not going to see a drop in production and a bumper Robusta crop in Vietnam this year has influenced prices globally. The price of Robusta has come down by about \$350 a tonne in recent days, after a high of \$2,200 a tonne,” said Damodar Kamath, an exporter from Mangalore.



The price is currently \$1,885 a tonne, less by 14.3 per cent compared to \$2,200 a tonne in February and March this year. “ICE Arabica coffee futures on Monday sank to their lowest since late February, as speculators exited due to lingering uncertainty over potential drought damage in top producer Brazil and sell-stops deepened losses,” said the Coffee Board.

According to the International Coffee Organisation, certified stocks of Robusta on the London futures market have jumped significantly, more than tripling from 274,000 to 855,000 bags (each bag here is 60 kg) at the end of April.

Vietnam, a major producer of Robusta, is said to be harvesting a record crop of 29.3 million bags for 2014-15, about 1.7 mn bags more than the previous year. In Brazil, set to reap a higher crop, the average yield for Robusta production is expected to increase from 24.1 bags a hectare in 2013-14 to 27.5 bags in 2014-15.

“Added to this, the rupee’s appreciation against the dollar in recent days has also dampened the spirits of exporters. However, we do not expect any major impact on exporters from the price fall because most of the coffee stock is normally sold before the onset of monsoon,” said Kamath.

Some growers who were holding on to their stocks are worried as the cost of production has gone up and the current prices are not remunerative.

The white stem borer is adding to the problem. “In addition to price fall, we are worried about its spread this year. It is likely to damage the crop for the coming year,” said Marvin Rodrigues, managing partner of the James Rodrigues Group of Plantations in Coorg.

Pepper imports from Vietnam double in Jan-April this year



Pepper import from Vietnam doubled during January–April, according to estimates by the ministry of agriculture and rural development of Vietnam.

India has imported roughly 4,500 tonnes, mainly for producing value-added items such as oil and oleoresin. India's total export during the period was 4,620 tonnes. India's total import (from all origins) is likely to cross 20,000 tonnes this year, which will be the highest.

India imported 15,600 tonnes of pepper in 2012-13 and 17,800 tonnes in 2013-14, as per the estimates of export traders in Kochi. In the previous financial year, the total import from Vietnam was 5,200 tonnes.

Growers told Business Standard that imported black pepper was being traded in major north Indian cities at a price lower by Rs 200 a kg than that of the local variety. This is a threat to the local growers, as the price dropped to Rs 690 a kg from Rs 735 a kg two weeks ago.

According to leading traders, the price advantage tempt manufacturers to import pepper. The local prices of pepper were higher by \$3,000 per tonne. Currently, India offers ASTA grade pepper at \$12,000 a tonne, while the price of Vietnam pepper is \$8,200 a tonne. In the local market, the price had more than doubled in 12 months.

Towards the end of May, the price had increased to Rs 718 a kg as against Rs 350 a kg in May 2013. During this season, Vietnam is reported to have a production of around 150,000 tonnes, while India's production confine to less than 35,000 tonnes, although the Spices Board projects 45,000 tonnes. The leverage of large scale production and productivity help Vietnam growers to offer much lower price tags than India and thus the country became the nerve center of world pepper trade.

According to the ministry, pepper export volume of Vietnam by the end of first four months of this year increased to 92,000 tonnes with a value of \$ 645 million -- an increase of 33.6 per cent in volume and 42.3 per cent in value. Exports to the US, Singapore and India surged heavily during the period and shipment to these countries accounted for 40.6 per cent of the total exports.

In particular, export to the US market increased 34.49 per cent in volume and 39.12 per cent in value. Shipment to Singapore increased 2.8 times in volume and 3.4 times in value and to India it rose more than two times in both volume and value. Notably, Pakistan's market witnessed the strongest growth, nearly four times during the first four months of 2014.

It is expected that in 2014, Vietnam pepper export will cross \$1 billion mark and the yearly export will reach a record high in the history of planting pepper in Vietnam according to the estimates of the Ministry.

'Cotton output estimated at 38.82 million bales for FY14'



The cotton crop for the season 2013-14, beginning October 1, 2013, is estimated at 38.82 million bales (170 kg each), the Cotton Association of India (CAI) said today.

"We have placed the cotton crop for the season 2013-14 beginning on October 1, 2013, at 38.82 million bales of 170 kg each," CAI said in its May estimate of the cotton crop.

The crop in Gujarat is estimated at 12.08 million bales in 2013-14 compared to 8.33 million bales in the previous season.

Similarly, in Maharashtra the total output is estimated at 7.92 million bales in 2013-14 season, compared to 7.25 million bales in 2012-13, according to CAI data.

The total cotton supply is estimated at 44.75 million bales while the domestic consumption is estimated at 29.5 million bales, thus, leaving an available surplus of 15.25 million bales.

The arrivals as on May 31, 2014, are placed at 37.02 million bales.

Natural rubber imports up 80 per cent in April-May



Natural rubber imports were up 80 per cent during the April – May period compared with the same period in 2013-14 according to the latest figures of the Rubber Board. About 63,559 tonnes were brought in during the two months compared with imports during the corresponding period last year.

However, India's exports put up a poor show, dropping 98 per cent to just 40 tonnes, compared with the 1,723 tonnes during the April – May period of 2013-14. Only 11 tonnes were exported in May.

A sharp drop in the international prices of natural rubber over the local prices is the chief reason for the rise in imports. For the last one year, local prices were up Rs 20 on average over the prices recorded in the global markets, mainly in the Bangkok market. The Bangkok market on Monday quoted Rs 119 for a kg while the price in Kottayam and Kochimarkets was Rs 144 per kg.

The price of SMR-20, which is almost equivalent to RSS-4grade for all practical purposes, is available at Rs 98 per kg in Bangkok trading. So, import is the natural option for the industries, especially for the tyre makers, even at remitting the import duty. According to experts, import is likely to be 50 per cent of the annual production in India during the present financial year. This financial year, imports are likely to cross 400,000 tonnes going by the trends.

India's imports in 2013-14 was 324,467 tonnes while the yearly production was 844,000 tonnes. For the first time, imports crossed the 300,000-tonne mark. This year, it is expected to cross 400,000 tonnes. Natural rubber prices nosedived in the world market due to a glut, visible continuously for the last four years. The weakening of global demand, especially in China, world's largest consumer, is the main factor for the incessant fall in prices during the last 12 months.

Meanwhile, production during April and May dropped 7 per cent to 104,000 tonnes compared with 112,000 tonnes during the same period of the previous financial year. According to Rubber Board data, consumption had a slight increase of 0.4 per cent at 165,000 tonnes. This was 164,305 tonnes in April – May period of last FY.

According to the board, production during 2013-14 was down 7.6 per cent at 844,000 tonnes as against 913,700 tonnes in last financial year. This is for the first time during last 10-year period that natural rubber production recorded a dip.

The Telegraph

calcutta, india

Ginger price soars in lower Assam

Dhubri: The price of ginger is soaring in lower Assam markets, being sold for Rs 200 to Rs 240 per kg since the past eight months because of market manipulation and control.

Traders of lower Assam district alleged that despite farmers selling ginger at the markets of Romram, Dadang, and Damal in Garo hills in Meghalaya, buyers from Goalpara, Bongaigaon, Barpeta and Dhubri hardly get any opportunity to buy it from the markets.

“We are able to buy only from non-farming groups (syndicates) which charge high prices from us citing payment of hefty amount to local criminals and militants. We have to purchase ginger at Rs 90 per kg there in Garo hills and add the cost of transportation and our profit. So, we sell it at Rs 120 to Rs 140 per kg in the wholesale market,” a trader said.

Retailers in the market alleged that this is not seasonal rise of price of ginger. Huge

quantities of ginger are hoarded by the syndicates and they sell them at a high price to wholesalers, they alleged.

The retailers then have no option but to sell it between Rs 200 and Rs 240 as the commodity is a perishable one, Sadin Ghose, a retailer in Dhubri market, said.

Ginger sold for Rs 40 to Rs 60 per kg last year. It rose to Rs 100 in October after which prices refused to climb down, retailers of Bongaigaon, Barpeta and Goalpara said.



United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization focuses on small-scale fisheries for food security

The Committee on Fisheries (COFI) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), adopted International Guidelines on Small-Scale Fisheries giving increasing recognition to small-scale fisheries as a principal contributor to poverty alleviation and food security.

This was adopted at the 31st session of the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) held in Rome on Tuesday.

M Ilango, Chairperson, National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF), stated the Guidelines, which will be voluntary, focus on the needs of developing countries, and are relevant to small-scale fisheries in marine and inland waters, covering fishing as well as related post-harvest and upstream activities.

They will be in support of national, regional and international initiatives for poverty alleviation and equitable social and economic development, and for improving governance of fisheries and promoting sustainable resource utilization. Their objective is to provide advice and recommendations, establish principles and criteria, and information to assist States and stakeholders to achieve secure and sustainable small-scale fisheries and related livelihoods.

The Committee on Fisheries (COFI), a subsidiary body of the FAO Council, was established by the FAO Conference at its 13th Session in 1965.

The Committee presently constitutes the only global inter-governmental forum where

major international fisheries and aquaculture problems and issues are examined and recommendations addressed to governments, regional fishery bodies, NGOs, fish workers, FAO and international community, periodically on a world-wide basis.

The guidelines opened for discussion at 10.15am Italian time in Rome and were adopted at 10.22am, Ilango added.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Create income-generating schemes in farming sector: Arunachal Agriculture Minister



: Arunachal Pradesh Agriculture minister Chowna Mein has stressed the need for motivation of all stakeholders, introduction of high yielding varieties of crops and involvement of rural youths in farming by creating income-generating schemes in the farming sector.

During a meeting with departmental officers here yesterday to review the status of schemes and programmes of the department, the minister emphasized the need to explore the feasibility for creation of more irrigation systems particularly in the foothill areas for higher production, a press release said here today.

he minister appreciated the plea of the department for arrangement of state matching share to access central government funding against various innovative schemes and assured to take up the matter with appropriate authority.

Earlier, in a power point presentation, Agriculture Advisor A K Purkayastha elucidated the present status and future strategies for food and farm income security of the state and

pointed out few important issues for consideration of the state government.

The Agri & allied sectors' contribution to state GDP was 31.6 per cent during 2011-12 as against 24.9 per cent during 2006-07 and the crop production programme in the state has maintained around 8 per cent annual growth rate in the first two years (2012-14) of the XII Plan against 6.5 per cent target, the release said.

Bigger bag of woes: Met deparment warns of 7% rain deficit, 70% chance of El Nino



The weather department on Monday forecast a below-normal rainfall for the year, presenting the Narendra Modi government its first big challenge of drought-like conditions in some parts of the country and subsequent pressure on food prices.

India is forecast to get 93 per cent of its average rainfall this monsoon because of a 70 per cent chance of the El Nino factor by July and early August. This is lower than the April estimate that had forecast 95 per cent rainfall.

"Without sounding alarmist or making the media panicky, we wish to inform that the southwest monsoon will be below normal," said Jitendra Singh, minister of state for science & technology and earth sciences, pegging the rainfall at 90-96 per cent of average. Agriculture contributes about 14 per cent to the economic output.

Nearly half of India's population has its livelihood in the sector and a poor monsoon has a ripple effect on the rural economy and demand for consumer goods. "A 7 per cent deficient monsoon rains will impact agriculture output and farmers' income," said

Ramesh Chand, director, National Centre for Agricultural Economics and Policy Research, New Delhi.

Fast moving consumer goods companies are also somewhat gloomy about their prospects. "By disturbing the crop cycle, it affects farm income which in turn translates into weak spending at rural markets," said Mayank Shah, group product manager at Parle Products. But the government says it is prepared to meet any deficiency in the rainfall.

States have been suitably advised, sufficient foodstocks are in place, and quick action would be taken to tackle any situation arising out of deficient monsoon, said agriculture minister Radha Mohan Singh, promising diesel subsidy, cheaper loans and seeds, should the situation warrant.

Ashok Gulati, professor, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, urged greater preparedness to deal with the issue, seeing rainfall deficit a big concern in states like Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat and Rajasthan where irrigation infrastructure isn't adequate.

"The government should immediately come with a support mechanism for farmers by way of compensation package or insurance policy. Prices of essential commodities will get out of gear, hence steps will have to be taken to tame inflation. In the long run, provide irrigation to these states," said Gulati.

The poor monsoon could be a challenge for the new government that is looking to step up growth from the sub 5 per cent recorded in the last couple of years.

"Our interactions with the FMCG distribution ecosystem and business heads suggest that overall FMCG sales will maintain 9-11 per cent growth for the next 12 months, and no significant sign of revival is visible ICICI Securities said in a note, adding "bad monsoon shall impact the demand growth for the industry by about 2-3 per cent".

FMCG companies get about a third of their sales from rural areas. But not everyone is ready to press the panic button yet. "If rain distribution is even and occurs on time, there will not be any major impact," Chand said. "The fact remains that even after poor monsoons, demand for daily use products are not hit that hard. We will have to wait and watch how the situation develops," Dabur's chief financial officer Lalit Malik said.

International forecasters have been almost unanimous in issuing warnings that El Nino, associated with warmer temperatures in the Pacific Ocean, is likely to disrupt global rainfall patterns, which can parch parts of Asia and Australia, and trigger storms and floods in other regions.