

THE HINDU

Farmers told to use water judiciously

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Farmers should adopt drip irrigation methods to minimise water usage because storage level in many waterbodies was very less. This advice was given to farmers at the grievance day meeting held here on Friday. Even as the rainfall in the district till June was 253.32 mm, 21.22 mm more than the average rainfall of 232.1 mm, a majority of tanks and irrigation wells have poor storage. A total of 2,065 irrigation tanks in the district were completely dry. Of the 91,488 irrigation wells, five per cent have water that could be pumped for an hour and the rest have water that could be pumped for less than an hour. Farmers appealed to the government to desilt irrigation water sources and sanction funds to dig supply channels connecting the farm ponds. Farmers expressed concern over the inordinate delay in granting permission to lift silt from irrigation tanks. One farmer complained that the path leading to a rural tank was blocked by the forest officials. Collector N. Venkatachalam reprimanded an Executive Engineer of Agro-Engineering Department for not giving proper reply to the farmers' queries. When farmers said funds were sanctioned to form 5,000 farm ponds in Ramanathapuram district and nothing had been done for Dindigul district, Executive Engineer Rajendran said it was an exclusive scheme for Ramanathapuram. "I think you did not send proposals to the government. If you send 10 proposals, you get two. If you send two, you get nothing," the Collector replied. "Can you tell me how many farmers are there in the district?", the Collector questioned. When the official failed to respond, the Collector retaliated, "How will you send proposals to the government without knowing the total number of farmers in the district. There are 2.25 lakh farmers." He ordered him to submit a report on the steps taken by him to obtain funds for soil testing and the amount sanctioned for it.

Farmers demand drought relief

"5 lakh coconut trees and 2 lakh mango trees have withered"



AGGRIEVED: Farmers speaking to Collector L. Subramanian at a meeting at the Madurai Collectorate on Friday.— Photo: S. James

Farmers from Kottampatti block have demanded adequate compensation for the heavy losses they incurred owing to crop failure. At the monthly grievance day meeting at the Collectorate on Friday, they said thousands of mango trees, coconut trees and sugarcane crop had withered owing to water scarcity. "Nearly five lakh coconut trees and two lakh mango trees have withered. The borewells have gone dry and moreover there is no electricity to operate the motor pumps," they said. "Most of the trees were over 30 years old and we need to be adequately compensated for the losses since we are solely dependent on them for our livelihood," said N. Kathiresan, one of the farmers. N. Palanichamy, president, Tamil Nadu Sugar Cane Farmer's Association, submitted a petition to Collector L. Subramanian stating that sugarcane farmers who had spent over Rs.15,000 per acre for raising the crop and sinking borewells had suffered heavy losses. "The farmers must be given a compensation of Rs.25,000 per acre. No survey of the affected areas has been taken up by the government and we are still waiting for drought relief," he stated in the petition. Thirty farmers from Kottampatti block submitted petitions to the Collector who instructed the revenue officials to carry out a survey of the affected areas.

Bribery allegation

Many farmers levelled bribery allegations against the Village Administrative Officers (VAO). "When we had approached them for the 'adangal' for the lands, we were asked to give Rs.1,000 for it," said S. Chinnan from Kesampatti. The Collector assured them that said strict action would be initiated against the officials.

Farmers told to go for advanced technology

Public Works Minister H.C. Mahadevappa on Friday appealed to farmers to adopt advanced technology and use improvised implements to increase crop yields. Inaugurating the "Krishi Utsav", organised by the Department of Agriculture here on Friday, he said, about 70 per cent of the country's population was directly dependent on agriculture. Unless growth was achieved in this sector, the country could not progress. Farmers should avail themselves of the benefits of various State and Union government sponsored schemes and flourish, he said. Janata Dal (Secular) supremo and the former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, who also attended the programme, said that farmers were unable to get back their investment on field. "Groundwater table has deteriorated, rendering it almost impossible to feed water to the crops at right time. Farmers are forced to look out for other means of getting optimum yields with the available water," he said.

Nut dropping hits areca farmers

RAVIPRASAD KAMILA



Tender nuts are falling off in a plantation near Mani in Bantwal taluk.— PHOTO: RAMESH KAINTHAJE

If vast tracts of arecanut plantations had succumbed to 'kole roga' (fruit-rot disease) in Dakshina Kannada last year, farmers have now reported an unusual high tender 'nut dropping' in their plantations. "It is not button shedding or fruit-rot disease. Matured, green colour tender nuts are dropping on a large scale," Ramesh Kainthaje, a grower from near Mani, told *The Hindu*. Mr. Kainthaje, who was a member of G.V. Joshi Committee on production cost of arecanut, said that if it was fruit-rot disease, rotting of nuts could be noticed. "But now, tender nuts are dropping which is a worrisome trend," he said. Badanaje Shankar Bhat, an arecanut researcher, from near Vitla, said tender nut dropping has increased unusually. He said that some farmers in his village have also reported the trend. A farmer from Kukkujadkka in Sullia taluk alluded to this. Expressing concern, Manchi Srinivasa Achar, president, All-India Areca Growers' Association, Puttur, said that some farmers did report about tender nut dropping. "So far, it has not reached an alarming level," he pointed out. Ravikirana Punacha, working president, Dakshina Kannada wing of Hasiru Sene (youth wing) of Karnataka Rajya Raita Sangha (KRRS), said that he noticed heavy tender nut dropping in at least eight plantations in nearby Punacha. A scientist from crop protection (entomology) wing, Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI), Kasaragod, said pentatomid bug also caused tender nut dropping but added that it could not be blamed on the bug alone. Other factors like whether the farmers have sprayed the traditional copper sulphate and lime solution or new brands of solution as a precaution to control the fruit-rot disease also mattered, he elaborated. Deputy Director of Horticulture, Dakshina Kannada, Yogesh H.R., said he department has not received complaints from farmers to this effect. "There could be some stray cases," he added. After the fruit-rot disease scare last year, growers now have to deal with tender nut dropping phenomenon

Bacterial wilt not to bug vegetable farmers anymore

KAU scientists use grafting to produce wilt-resistant vegetable seedlings

The infographic is divided into two main sections. The left section, titled 'Better Returns' in a red header, lists 'KAU's wilt-resistant vegetable seedlings' and 'Successful field trials over one year'. It features a quote from P. Rajendran, Vice Chancellor of KAU, and a circular portrait of him. The right section, titled 'Wilt-resistant varieties' in a blue header, shows a photograph of healthy green vegetable plants. Below the photo, it lists three categories of varieties: BRINJAL (Surya, Swetha, Haritha), CHILLI (Ujjwala, Anugraha), and TOMATO (Sakthi, Anagha, Manulakshmi). At the bottom right, it states 'Bacterial wilt is caused by Ralstonia solanacearum'.

Vegetable farmers in Kerala can now look forward to better returns, thanks to the success achieved by Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) in the fight against bacterial wilt, an infection that has blighted many a crop. The university has come up with a grafting technology to produce wilt-resistant vegetable seedlings. The methodology has been standardised following successful field trials across the State over the past one year. The university has released three wilt-resistant varieties of brinjal, namely Surya, Swetha and Haritha; two varieties of chilli, Ujjwala and Anugraha; and three varieties of tomato, Sakthi, Anagha, and Manulakshmi, all of them suitable for cultivation in wilt-sick soils.

More production

“Immunity to bacterial wilt means a significant enhancement in vegetable production. It is a blessing for the farmers and a small but vital step towards self-sufficiency in vegetable production,” says P. Rajendran, Vice-Chancellor, KAU. Bacterial wilt is caused by *Ralstonia solanacearum*, a soil-borne bacteria which enters the plants through root injuries. Inside the plant, the bacteria multiplies and blocks vascular bundles, the chief conducting system of water and nutrients, leading to sudden wilting of plants. In Kerala, bacterial wilt is common in brinjal, chillies, and tomato, and occasionally found in cucurbitaceous vegetables such as bitter melon, snake melon, cucumber, and ash melon.

Field trials

“Field trials were successful, and the grafted seedlings are gaining popularity,” says C. Narayanankutty, Professor, Agricultural Research Station, Mannuthy, who developed the technology. While brinjal and tomato seedlings were grafted onto wilt-resistant rootstock of *Solanum torvum*, hybrids of chilli and capsicum were grafted on to domestic varieties of wilt-resistant chilli.

Grafted seedlings

The Agricultural Research Station, Mannuthy, started supplying grafted seedlings of tomato, brinjal and chilli in large numbers last year.

“Reports indicate that the technology of combining the yield of hybrids and the wilt-resistance of selected varieties has become a landmark success in vegetable farming in the State,” a university spokesperson said.

Power issue dominates agricultural grievance meet

C. JAISANKAR



A farmer explains his problems at the grievance day meeting in Karur on Friday.—
PHOTO: B. VELANKANNI RAJ

The danger posed by the power lines, which have either fallen on agricultural fields or dangling low in a few areas, dominated the proceedings of the agricultural grievance day meet here on Friday. D. Rajamanickam of Narikattuvalasai, who raised the issue, said that the lives of farmers had become perilous due to falling down of power lines on agricultural fields in some areas of the district. Though the officials concerned were apprised of the situation, the issues were yet to be solved. The field level officials showed lukewarm response to the complaints. The complaint evoked support from various other farmers, who said that many electric posts were badly in need of replacement. Moreover, frequent power cut and low voltage had rendered motor pumps out of gear. Though it was a major issue, the farmers couldn't get quick response from the officials. Responding to the complaints, a district level senior officer of the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (TANGEDCO) said that the officials had received complaints from the consumers in some areas. Steps were being taken to rectify the problems. If there was any specific complaint they could bring it to his attention. Collector S. Jayandhi, who intervened in the discussion, directed the TANGEDCO officials to conduct the power consumers' redressal meeting in all divisions of the district at least once a month. Besides the senior officials of TANGEDCO, the Revenue, Agriculture and Panchayat Union officials should ensure their participation in it. It must be properly advertised in advance so as to reach out to the farmers, domestic consumers and others about the

meeting. She would closely follow the outcome of such meetings. The TANGEDCO officials should ensure that the complaints of farmers were properly addressed.S. Palanisamy of Pudukkanalli said that though he fulfilled all prerequisites for getting power connection under the self finance agriculture scheme about a year back, the connection was yet to be given. Several other farmers also brought to the attention of the Collector that several farmers, who had already paid Rs.50,000 each under the self finance agriculture scheme, couldn't get the connections till date.

Staff crunch in Agriculture Dept. may hit farm activities

KUMAR BURADIKATTI

With the onset of monsoon on the west coast of Karnataka, the farmers have intensified their farm activities in a full swing across the rural areas of Raichur district, just as everywhere and every year.However, their agricultural activities are likely to be hit by severe shortage of staff in the Department of Agriculture that would assist the farmers in various ways during monsoon.As per the official documents obtained by *The Hindu* , the Department of Agriculture in Raichur district has apparently been paralysed by lack of staff. The department that is suffering with around 57 percent of vacancies is finding it difficult to manage the gigantic monsoon tasks with only 43 percent of working staff.Of the 277 sanctioned posts, only 121 are filled with regular staff. The regular staff is burdened with the additional tasks of 157 vacant posts. “We can somehow manage the tasks of higher level posts with the existing Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors.However, the real challenge to manage the gigantic field tasks without field level officers and staff,” says Mr. Rudreshappa, who is serving as an in-charge Joint Director as the top post is also vacant. The department, he added, finding it difficult to impart technical knowledge to farmers at grassroots level thanks to the acute shortage of technically qualified officers.

Few employees

There should have been 59 Agriculture Officers in the district. However, only 5 officers are working at present. Dhadesugur district agriculture training center, Deodurg, Lingasugur taluks and Soil Testing Centre in Raichur don't have even single Agriculture Officer, against their combined sanctioned strength of 19 posts. While the office of Assistant Director in Sindhanur taluk is suffering with the vacancies 15 of the 16 sanctioned posts, the same office in Manvi is paralysed with the vacancies of 10 of the 11 sanctioned posts.The district should have had 24 Agriculture Assistants as per the sanctioned posts. However, only two posts are filled and remaining 22 are vacant since long. Of the 89 sanctioned posts of Assistant Agriculture Officer, 39 are vacant. All the 37 Farmers' Facilitation Centres spread across the district are, with no exception, almost defunct with little regular staff.While interacting with *The Hindu*, Mr. Rudreshappa, who is leading the department that is paralysed with severe shortage of manpower, said that the department had decided to handle the manpower crisis by outsourcing the work and taking the people on contract basis.

Kharif sowing lagging by 17.64%

GARGI PARSAI

The overall 45 per cent deficiency in the southwest monsoon so far has impacted kharif sowing, which is lagging by 17.64 per cent over the previous year. Sowing of rice, pulses, coarse cereals, oilseeds, sugarcane, cotton, jute and mesta is lower compared to the corresponding period last year. An Agriculture Ministry-headed inter-ministerial group reviewed the crop and weather situation on Friday. It was informed that rainfall is deficient in the country as a whole. The deficiency is 62 per cent in the east and northeast region, 40 per cent in the northwest, 38 per cent in south Peninsula and 32 per cent in central India. Of the 36 met sub-divisions, rain has been deficient in over 14 and scanty in 13 sub-divisions. It was normal in only five sub-divisions and excess in four, according to the India Meteorological Department. The forecast is that till June 26, north-eastern States as well as coastal Karnataka will receive widespread rains, while the rest of the country will get either scattered or isolated rain.

Glitches scuttle vegetable exports

S. GANESAN

Airlines cite technical reasons and load restrictions

Export of vegetables from Tiruchi Airport has been on the downswing over the past three weeks owing to frequent offloading of cargo by airlines citing technical reasons and load restrictions in passenger aircraft. Perishables constitute nearly 90 per cent of the cargo exports from here. Vegetables, including onions, coconuts are exported to Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Kuwait, Dubai and Colombo. On an average, 14 tonnes of perishables were exported from here a day.

However, it has come down to 10 tonnes now, sources in the airport said.

Insurance plan to hold farm price

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Scheme launch on August 17

A crop insurance scheme will be launched to check the fall in price of farm produce on the farmers' day being observed on August 17, the first day of the Malayalam month of Chingam, Agriculture Minister K.P. Mohanan said in the Assembly on Friday. The scheme will cover destruction caused to crops by lightning, the Minister said replying to questions. The government will also come up with separate schemes to help farmers overcome crop loss. As many as 51 farmers committed suicide after the UDF government came to power three years ago. During the tenure of the LDF government, 110 farmers committed suicide in five years. The production of paddy that was 5,68,993 tonnes in 2011-12 had come down to 5,08,299 tonnes in 2012-13. Paddy cultivation was affected in 16,338.3 hectares in 2012-13 due to drought. Cultivation of other crops was not affected in the State, the Minister said in reply to a query. Minister for Panchayats M.K. Muneer

said permanent shops would be set up in all districts to sell Kudumbasree products. The land or the shop for the purpose would have to be identified by local bodies. The first such shop had come up at Ettumanur in Kottayam. A proposal to upgrade city corporations was under the consideration of the government, Minister for Urban Affairs Manjalamkuzhi Ali informed the House. The State Institute of Encyclopaedic Publications would digitise all volumes of the Sarva Vijnana Kosam and make it available on the web, Minister for Ports K. Babu said. The 16th volume would be released in November. The Knowledge Web Repository project of the SIEP on the lines of Wikipedia was in the final phase, he added.

Kuruvai paddy to be raised on 8,000 acres

S. GANESAN

Rs. 1.47 crore allocated for Tiruchi district out of Rs. 32.95 cr.

Kuruvai paddy cultivation is expected to be taken up on 8,000 acres in filter point areas of the district this year with farmers being supported under the special package announced by the State government. The normal kuruvai area is 16,000 acres in the district. But given the poor storage in the Mettur reservoir and delay in release of water in the Cauvery, kuruvai paddy could be raised in only the filter point areas in the district. The Agriculture Department is gearing up to implement the special kuruvai package announced by Chief Minister Jayalalithaa to help farmers raise the crop. The package will be implemented in filter point areas in Andhanallur, Musiri, Manachanallur, and Lalgudi areas. The government has allocated Rs. 1.47 crore for Tiruchi district out of Rs. 32.95 crore sanctioned for implementing the special package in delta districts. Apart from three-phase power supply for 12 hours a day, the package envisages distribution of bio-fertilisers, micronutrients, pipes, and other inputs free of cost to farmers in filter point areas.

'Conversion of paddy fields into aqua farms alarming'

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) Chief General Manager Jiji Mammen on Friday expressed serious concern over fast disappearance of lush green paddy fields which were being converted into aqua farms. Addressing a gathering of bankers and officials after inaugurating a financial literacy centre (FLC) at the office of the District Central Cooperative Bank (DCCB) here, he warned that the trend might raise serious food security concerns in the future. He called upon the bankers to exercise caution while lending for aquaculture. Meanwhile, the DCCB has kick-started a campaign for financial literacy in its operational area in West Godavari district with the inauguration of the centre.

Financial literacy

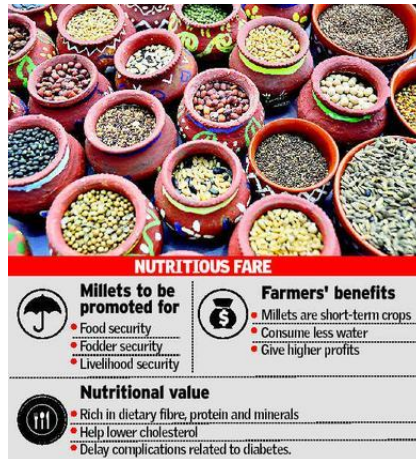
It is proposed to launch five more FLCs in different parts of the district as part of its endeavour to spread financial literacy among the residents in villages where banking facilities are not available, according to its Chief Executive Officer V. Phanikumar. He informed that the financial literacy campaign was aimed at identifying the people still uncovered by banks, encourage them to open no-frills accounts in the nearest banks and letting them know of various products and financial services offered by banks. The CGM said that the Nabard would extend technical assistance to the DCCB in conducting programmes for promotion of financial literacy by supplying the required material for the trainers. DCCB Chairman M. Venkateswara Rao, Andhra Bank Deputy General Manager D. Nagaraja Naidu and Lead District Manager S. Lakshminarayana participated in the programme.

Kuthiraivaali cultivation promises to make farming profitable

S. SUNDAR



• A farmer explaining the salient features of cultivating Kuthiraivaali (Barnyard Millet) during summer in Watrap region of Virudhunagar district.— Photo G. Moorthy



Virudhunagar district to produce 12.5 tonnes of seeds

Summer cultivation of ‘Kuthiraivaali’ (Barnyard Millet), introduced for the first time by the Department of Agriculture, has been a hit among farmers of Virudhunagar district. While, initially, officials found it tough to convince farmers to come forward to cultivate the minor millet as a major alternative crop to cotton and paddy, the success tasted by a few farmers has helped more farmers evince interest in this crop. Virudhunagar has been chosen to produce 12.5 tonnes of ‘Kuthiraivaali’ seeds as part of the State government’s ambitious project to increase the area under millet cultivation to ensure food, fodder and livelihood security. “We have given 125 kg of CO (KV) 2 seeds provided by Tamil Nadu Agricultural University to 25 farmers. Cultivation of minor millets has been taken up on 50 acres,” Joint Director of Agriculture K. Subbiah said. The seeds are expected to be ready by August for sowing in September across the State.

Assured yield

Deputy Director P. Vanniyarajan said diversification to millet cultivation, especially during summer, would give assured yield with higher returns. P. Poongavanam, a farmer in W. Pudupatti, said he had increased the extent of summer cultivation to eight acres because of ‘Kuthiraivaali’ that consumed less than 50 per cent of the water required for paddy or cotton. S. Vijayakumar (54) of Maharajapuram is used to rain-fed irrigation of ‘Kuthiraivaali.’ He expected more than double the yield now, thanks to the improved variety of seeds and modern irrigation technique. Another farmer, R. Gnanagurusamy (63), said that cultivation of the minor millet had the advantages of less water and fertilizer, no pesticide and free from crop damage by birds and animals.

Input cost less

“The input cost is less because of decreased need for weeding and farm preparation,” he said. Stating that the plants grew taller (up to 6.25 feet) under irrigated condition, the Assistant Director (Seed Certification), S. Ramamoorthy, said farmers had the benefit of

getting more quantity of fodder. Besides getting higher yield and higher price, farmers who have taken up 'Kuthiraivaali' for seed production are given higher price. "While the market price is Rs. 25 to 30 a kg, we have promised to give them Rs. 50 a kg," Muthaiah, an Agricultural Officer, said. The officials are also planning to set up a unit to process the minor millet at a cost of Rs. 2.20 lakh after forming a cluster of 'Kuthiraivaali' farmers. "The farmers will get a better price for value addition," Mr. Vanniyarajan said.

Water level

Mettur

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 43.95 feet on Friday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 348 cusecs and the discharge 800 cusecs.



Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Saturday, Jun 21

Max Min
37° | 30°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 52

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:43

Sunset: 06:37

Barometer: 1006

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Sunday, Jun 22

Max Min
39° | 30°

Extended Forecast for a week

Monday
Jun 23



39° | 30°
Cloudy

Tuesday
Jun 24



39° | 29°
Cloudy

Wednesday
Jun 25



39° | 30°
Cloudy

Thursday
Jun 26



40° | 31°
Partly Cloudy

Friday
Jun 27



40° | 31°
Partly Cloudy

Airport Weather

Delhi

Rain: 0

Humidity: 42

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:23

Sunset: 07:21

Barometer: 997



THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

Farmers Demand Drought Relief From State

VELLORE: Farmers from across the district have demanded the district administration to take necessary steps to get drought relief fund for them from the State government. A cross-section of farmers, who participated in the farmers' grievance day meeting at the collectorate on Friday, said the district had been facing drought for the last 14 years. The State had announced the Vellore district as a drought-hit one, along with 31 others. But, the farmers had not been given the drought relief fund till date. The farmers urged Collector R Nanthagopal to take the issue to the notice of State to arrange for the relief fund. "We are hoping that the government will release the fund to bail us out from the present pathetic condition," said a farmer. The Collector said, "Give your demands in writing so that we can send it along with our reports to the government to arrange for the relief fund." The coconut farmers, stated that they had also not been given the relief for the coconut trees that had withered. "The officials in Chennai stated that Vellore district had a few coconut growers. The district will not be considered for compensation. The failure of agriculture and revenue departments' officials in updating the areas of coconut plantation is stopping us from availing ourselves of the compensation," said a farmer. Joint Director of Agriculture R Jayasundar said, "We have taken steps to get the compensation for the coconut growers, who were affected due to insufficient rain." The farmers criticised the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme workers for poor quality of farm ponds work. The Collector said he would instruct the department officials concerned to monitor the work properly. An DRDA official said a total of 3,000 farm ponds would be taken up from the coming week. "The administration sanctions orders had also been received to carry out the work," she added.

Onion, Potato Prices Go up in Rourkela



ROURKELA: Prices of onion and potatoes have gone up in the Steel City again, burning a deep hole in pockets of commonman. While good quality onions are selling at Rs 24 per kg in retail market, the slightly damaged ones are priced `4 less. Potatoes are available at Rs 20 to Rs 22 per kg. In the last few days, price of onion has witnessed a hike of Rs 4 to Rs 6 per kg and potato prices have increased by Rs3 to Rs5 a kg. In the absence of an effective price control mechanism, vendors rule the roost with whimsical price rise. Administration's focus, on the other hand, has always been on the wholesalers. While a roadside kiosk near Uditnagar playground sold damaged onions at Rs 24 per kg, it was Rs20 at another shop nearby. The city procures onion from Nasik and the monthly requirement is 480 to 540 tonnes. Potato is procured from West Bengal with the city's monthly requirement being 1000 to 1200 tonnes. Wholesaler Dina Bandhu Kundu said wholesale price of potato on Tuesday rose to Rs16 and it might increase by another Rs 2 at the procurement sources in Bengal. He said depending on quality, wholesale price of onion ranges between Rs 10 and Rs18 per kg. He said potato farmers are demanding Rs 10 per kg and along with transportation cost of Rs2 per kg and the profit share of Bengal traders, their Rourkela counterparts get less than Rs 2 per kg. Kundu said onion price in Nasik has seen a hike due to crop damage and traders here pay Rs 5 per kg for transportation. "We have little control over the price," he said. toes in Rourkela city.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

CISTA demands agriculture status for tea plantation

Small tea growers (STG) community, that contribute over 36% to the Indian national tea production, wants agriculture status for tea plantation for entitlement to subsidized rate of fertilizer, an essential item for the beverage production. If heard by Government, it can be a boon for established and large scale tea gardens too. As resolved in the platform of Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers Association (CISTA), the national umbrella organization of 2 lakh small tea growers of India, "We have been demanding official status similar to Agriculture for small tea plantations sine long. That can ensure us few benefits including fertilizer at subsidized rate," said Mr. Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty, all India General Secretary of CISTA. Failing to draw attention of previous Government, now the body has requested the same through its pre budget memorandum sent to union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley "This is a common problem in all tea producing states. Tea plantations are not considered as agriculture practice. So, during indenting fertilizer quota, state Agriculture departments do not include the heavy amount of fertilizer tea sector needs. Naturally, the indented volume always remains much less than actual combined need of tea and other agriculture sectors," explained a senior Indian Tea Board official. "This gives rise of artificial crisis and the overall situation forces us to procure

fertilizer at 30% to 40% higher price from open market. Availability of that at a fare price could ensure 3-4% higher profit margin. Recent price hike of urea or potash has created a huge financial loss to the STGs," said Mr. Chakroborty. "Agriculture status for tea will be highly beneficial to organized tea plantations too. Around 10% of our production cost goes behind fertilizer," said Mr. Sujit Seal Director of an organized tea Company. According to Tea Research Association of India experts, the average need of three most important fertilizer items, Urea, Super Phosphate and Potash put together is around 50 kg, per acre per annum. As it has been reported to Indian Tea Board, STGs throughout the whole country need 50 lakh metric ton of fertilizer per annum.

Tea production in April dips by 24.48%



India's tea production in April this year fell by 24.48 per cent to 56.77 million kg due to lower output in Assam and other regions. The production stood at 75.17 million kg in April 2013, according to Tea Board data. Output in Assam, the largest tea-producing state, decreased by 40.34 per cent to 25.33 million kg in April this year from 42.46 million kg a year earlier. However, in West Bengal, production was up by 21.58 per cent to 13.41 million kg during the month, from 11.03 million kg in April 2013. The combined production of tea in the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka decreased by 18.41 per cent to 16.53 million kg from 20.26 million kg in the year-ago period. India's tea production in 2013-14 increased by 6.19 per cent to 1,205.40 million kg from 1,135.07 million kg in 2012-13, according to Tea Board of India. India is the world's second-largest producer and biggest consumer of tea

Business Standard

Tea production in April dips by 24.5%



India's tea production in April this year fell by 24.48% to 56.77 million kg due to lower output in Assam and other regions. The production stood at 75.17 million kg in April 2013, according to Tea Board data. Output in Assam, the largest tea-producing state, decreased by 40.34% to 25.33 million kg in April this year from 42.46 million kg a year earlier. However, in West Bengal, production was up by 21.58% to 13.41 million kg during the month, from 11.03 million kg in April 2013. The combined production of tea in the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka decreased by 18.41% to 16.53 million kg from 20.26 million kg in the year-ago period. India's tea production in 2013-14 increased by 6.19% to 1,205.40 million kg from 1,135.07 million kg in 2012-13, according to Tea Board of India. India is the world's second-largest producer and biggest consumer of tea.

Cardamom up 0.2% as demand rises



Supported by rising demand in the spot market cardamom prices recovered by 0.22% to Rs 910.10 per kg in futures trade today as speculators created fresh positions. At the Multi Commodity Exchange, cardamom for delivery in July month rose by Rs 2, or 0.22%, to Rs 910.10 per kg in business turnover of 170 lots. Similarly, the spice for delivery in August contracts traded marginally up by 10 paise, or 0.01%, to Rs 887.90 per kg in 19

lots. Analysts said fresh positions, created by speculators amidst pick up in demand in the spot market, mainly led to the rise in cardamom prices in futures trade.

Potato hits lower circuit, plunge 4% on FMC curbs



Potato prices fell by 4% to hit lower circuit at Rs 1,220.70 per quintal in futures trade today on offloading of positions by nervous speculators after commodity markets regulator FMC imposed restrictions in order to check rising prices in physical markets. Besides, increased supplies in physical markets following fresh arrivals from producing regions in UP, Punjab, MP and West Bengal too weighed on prices.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, potato for delivery in June-month contracts plunged by Rs 50.80, or 4%, to hit a lower circuit at Rs 1,220.70 per quintal, with a business turnover of 184 lots. The July delivery also fell by a similar margin to hit lower circuit at Rs 1,280.60 per quintal in a business turnover of 12 lots. Analysts said a steep fall in potato prices in futures trade was mostly attributed to commodity markets regulator FMC decision to curb futures trading in contracts for July, August and September in order to check prices by disallowing fresh positions and hiking deposit amount on buyers. MCX has hiked the margin money from 5% to 30% of the value of the commodity to restrict buyers. Meanwhile, both wholesale and retail prices of potato are on rise even as the domestic production is estimated to be higher by 2.3% at 46.4 million tonnes in 2013-14.

THE HINDU
BusinessLine

Root turmeric gains colour on demand

Spot turmeric prices in Erode markets inched up on Friday as the root variety was in demand. “All the 1,480 bags of turmeric were sold for a higher price as traders have received fresh upcountry demand for the root variety. Further, quality root variety arrived for sale and all bags were sold,” said RKV Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric

Merchants Association. Of the 4,900 bags that arrived, 65 per cent was sold. The hybrid finger and root varieties increased by ₹200 due to arrival of good quality. Other varieties were up by ₹150-250 a quintal. Of the total sale, stockists procured 850-1,000 bags. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety fetched ₹4,196-6,415 and the root variety ₹4,091-6,449 a quintal. Salem Hybrid: The finger turmeric was sold at ₹5,891-7,300; the root variety ₹5,329-6,559 a quintal. Of the 1,005 bags on offer, 439 were sold. At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger turmeric quoted ₹5,629-6,593; the root variety ₹5,567-6,459. Of the 1,291 bags that were put up for sale, 1,111 bags were traded. At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger turmeric was sold at ₹5,699-6,507; the root variety ₹5,594-6,439. All the 1,231 bags found takers. At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger turmeric fetched ₹5,626-6,516; the root variety ₹5,326-6,299. Of the 308 bags offered, 291 were sold.

Ample supplies hold sugar steady

Sugar prices ruled steady on Friday on routine demand amid ample supply. Vashi market's 110-115 truckloads inventory is keeping stockists away from. They prefer to buy fine varieties at a slight premium. Hence, both varieties were sold at ₹5-10 higher and lower respectively. *Naka* and mill tender rates were unchanged. Arrivals at Vashi market continued at about 60-61 truckloads and local offtake was 59-60 loads. On Thursday evening, 19-20 mills offered tenders and sold about 48,000-50,000 bags at ₹2,900-3,000 (₹2,900-3,000) for S-grade and ₹3,000-3,150 (₹3,000-3,150) for M-grade. Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade ₹3,005-3,152 (₹3,003-3,152) and M-grade was ₹3,152-3,301 (₹3,142-3,292). *Naka* delivery rates: S-grade ₹2,970-3,050 (₹2,970-3,020) and M-grade ₹3,070-3,190 (₹3,070-3,190).

Pepper surges on supply squeeze

GK NAIR

Pepper markets continued to surge ahead on Friday on tight supply amid strong demand. On the regional exchange, there were buyers at ₹73,775 a quintal for July contract but no sellers were forthcoming. On the spot, there was neither any arrival nor any offtake

today, they said. Spot prices shot up by ₹1,000 to ₹69,000 (ungarbled) and ₹71,500 (garbled) a quintal. Upcountry buyers were actively looking for the material in Kerala and Karnataka. Export prices were up at \$12,400 (c&f) for Europe and \$12,650 a tonne (c&f) for the US.

Cotton rules flat on weak offtake

RAJKOT, JUNE 20:

Cotton price remained unchanged as demand from domestic mills was very limited. *Kapas* or raw cotton also traded steady. Arrival of cotton across India has come down and sowing activity is reported in many parts of the country. Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton for best quality was traded at ₹42,000-43,500 for a candy of 356 kg. Average grade cotton was ₹38,000-40,000 and lower grade ₹34,000-36,000. Arrival of the fibre in Gujarat declined from 25,000 bales to 15,000 bales (of 170 kg each) during this week. Similarly, cotton arrival across the country is down from 60,000 bales to 45,000-46,000 bales. *Kapas* was traded at ₹850-1,070 in Rajkot and gin delivery *kapas* at ₹1,030-75 for a *maund* of 20 kg. Cotton seed was quoted at ₹390-415 and washed cotton oil lost ₹3 to ₹615-617/10 kg.

Stockists stay away from edible oils

MUMBAI, JUNE 20:

The edible oils market ruled weak on Friday in the absence of demand amid bearish futures. The volume in physical markets remained nil for second consecutive day ahead of Malaysian export data. Local refiners kept prices unchanged. However, on the Bombay Commodity Exchange, palmolein declined by ₹3 for 0 kg, while soya oil and rapeseed oil rose by ₹2 and ₹1 for 10 kg each. Stockists stayed away from fresh bets tracking weak futures and reports of kharif planting starting in areas such as Saurashtra, Maharashtra and other central and northern parts of India. Vikram Global Commodities (P) Ltd, Chennai, quoted ₹600/10 kg for July delivery of Malaysian super palmolein. Liberty traded palmolein for ₹580, super palmolein ₹597 and soyabean refined oil ₹660. Ruchi was quoting palmolein at ₹578, soyabean refined oil ₹656 and sunflower refined oil ₹653. Allana was quoting palmolein at ₹576, soyabean refined oil ₹656 and sunflower refined oil ₹655. In Saurashtra, groundnut oil *Telia* tin was steady at ₹1,105 and loose (10 kg) at ₹700. BCE spot rates (₹/10 kg): groundnut oil 740 (740), soya refined oil 655 (653), sunflower exp. ref. 580 (580), sunflower ref. 650 (650), rapeseed ref. oil 694 (693),

rapeseed expeller ref. 664 (663) cottonseed ref. oil 665 (665) and palmolein 572 (575).

Upasi welcomes move to formulate national rubber policy

ANIL URS

The United Planters' Association of Southern India (Upasi) has welcomed the move to formulate a national rubber policy. Peter Mathias, President, Upasi, said: "We are of the view that the Rubber Board, an institution enacted by the law of Parliament, comprising stakeholders representing all segments could have been the appropriate entity entrusted with the formulation of a national rubber policy." "The current state of affairs in natural rubber sector, with prices on a free fall, there is no doubt on the need for a comprehensive review of the issues that confront the rubber sector such as cultivation, production, processing, sale, availability and the whole gambit of issues in the value chain," he added. Upasi is of the view that any policy formulation should be inclusive by addressing the real concerns of the sector, which comprise more than a million natural rubber growers, 6,000 micro, small and medium rubber manufacturing units and a few tyre manufacturers in the country.

Price crisis

According to Mathias, the main concern for the million plus rubber growers is the serious price crisis as they are solely dependent on rubber for their livelihood. Natural rubber prices (RSS IV), after reaching a high at Rs 243 per Kg in April 2011, has registered a sharp decline since then. The latest available price for May 2014 at Rs 143.50 per kg highlight the magnitude of the crisis in the sector. If the price decline continues unabated, majority of the growers will be forced either to abandon rubber cultivation or switch over to other activity.

Mixed trend in spot rubber

Physical rubber prices were mixed on Friday. RSS 4 stretched early gains on covering purchases at lower levels. Meanwhile, latex lost further on dull demand. Sheet rubber firmed up to ₹146 (₹145.50) a kg, according to traders and the Rubber Board. The grade improved to ₹143 (₹142.50) as reported by the dealers. July futures inched up to ₹146.65 (₹146.26), August to ₹145.55 (₹145.36), September to ₹144.48 (₹143.74) and October to ₹142.40 (₹141.92) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) closed

marginally higher at ₹127.99 (₹127.93) at Bangkok. June futures closed at slipped to ₹200.4 (₹118.16) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange. Spot rubber rates (₹/kg): RSS-4: 146 (145.50); RSS-5: 141 (141); Ungraded: 137 (137) ISNR 20: 132 (132) and Latex 60%: 122 (123).

Adequate stocks keep wheat, flour unchanged

Steady domestic demand, coupled with easy availability of stocks, kept dara wheat and flour prices unaltered on Friday. Radhey Shyam, a trade expert, told *Business Line* that with demand being steady for the dara variety, prices are ruling flat. In the absence of any major market-moving factors, a steady trend has prevailed in the market, he said. After witnessing a marginal uptrend last weekend, Dara wheat in the physical market ruled flat and sold at ₹1,455-1,460 a quintal. Around 2,000 bags of wheat arrived and stocks were directly offloaded at the mills. Mill delivery was at ₹1,455 a quintal while delivery at the chakki was at ₹1,460 a quintal.

NCDEX

A mixed trend was witnessed on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange. June contracts moved up by ₹4 to ₹1,511 a quintal with an open interest of 340 lots. July contracts dropped by ₹1 and traded at ₹1,521 a quintal with an open interest of 14,380 lots. The grain had touched a high at ₹1,525 a quintal earlier in the day. July contracts had some support at ₹1,511 a quintal while resistance at ₹1,527 a quintal.

Flour prices

Following good demand in the region, flour continued to rule firm and sold at ₹1,680 a quintal. Similarly, Chokar was unchanged at ₹1,350 a quintal.

(This article was published on June 20, 2014)

Kharif crop sowing area crosses 95 lakh hectare

The kharif crop sowing area has crossed 95 lakh hectare, as per reports received by the Agriculture Ministry from the States. As on June 20, rice has been sown/transplanted in 7.59 lakh ha, pulses in 2.60 lakh ha, coarse cereals in 12.29 lakh ha, and oilseeds in 1.23 lakh ha. Planting of sugarcane and cotton was still in progress, the Ministry said. So far, sugarcane had been planted in 43.92 lakh ha and cotton in 20 lakh ha.

