

Farm fresh outlets see increase in patronage

COIMBATORE, March 10, 2014 - In the 11 days of its existence the farm fresh vegetable and fruit outlets the State Government opened in the city have found good consumer patronage. According to sources in the Cooperative Department, the 10 outlets in the city had so far sold vegetables worth about Rs. 9 lakh. In terms of quantity, the outlets had sold nearly 48,000 kg.

The district administration along with the Cooperatives Department opened the shops at Flower Market, the milk cooperative federation office (Aavin) on Thadagam Road, Telugupalayam Primary Agriculture Cooperative Credit Society Complex, Chinthamani head office, Chinthamani kerosene distribution centre, Saibaba Colony, Coimbatore District Library Authority building in Town Hall, TUCAS premises, Thudiyalur, Coimbatore Corporation shopping complex, Tatabad, P.N. Pudur and Ondipudur Urban Credit Cooperative Society premises.

The sources said that the Chinthamani cooperative establishment procured the vegetables and fruits from Coimbatore, the Nilgiris, Tirupur and Dindigul districts, through the cooperative institutions there.

The institutions bought the produce at farmers' doorsteps levied a charge of two per cent and then transported it to the Chinthamani head office, from where the officials distribute it to the 10 outlets in the city.

Fish market and Model Code of Conduct



The recently inaugurated modern fish market evoked much interest among the residents of Lawspet as it is the first centralised air conditioned one in the Union Territory.

Many came to soak in the new experience of buying fish under an avid environment. But to their dismay the market is yet to be operational for day-to-day business.

The imminent Model Code of Conduct has hurried its opening officials reasoned out. However they believe that days are not far away for the public to enjoy their fish shopping in the modern market.

NOTHING NEW, THEY CATCH BIRDS

Various organisations and even individuals have been taking rural government school students to Oussudu Lake and other lakes nearby to enable them to appreciate the beauty of the bird species that visit Puducherry. In many cases the students who live near the lake are easily able to identify the birds, not by name of the species or their characteristics, but by how their meat tastes.

One student in particular was completely uninterested in looking through the binoculars, since he had apparently seen many of these birds in even closer range.

“I have seen so many of these birds and even more colourful looking birds up close, when I help my uncle spread nets across his paddy fields to catch them. Our main family vocation is catching and selling these exotic birds, so this is nothing new to me,” he explained.

JJJ

NO BLUE

The Nayak style of painting majestically sprawled over ceilings and walls of the temples and palaces in Madurai and Thanjavur depict large procession, battle scenes and temple festivals. A vibrant mass of colour, these paintings portray men in such detail as the Gods. Thanjavur based Ramesh Raj who switched from Thanjavur paintings to creating replicas of Nayak paintings says, it takes weeks to create any semblance of these rich works and not many are into this style.

“Not many of today’s artists have the time or patience to invest in studying and reviving this style,” he added and wondered “they use red, green, black and white, but the absence of blue in all their works is striking.”

TIGHT WRAP

Usually at the inauguration of most seminars, there is a launch of a booklet or conference souvenir, which is usually opened by the guest of honour and distributed to the others on the dais as a potential photo opportunity. The entire process takes a minute or less. At a recent conference, the Guest of Honour was handed a gift wrapped package and asked to open it and distribute the souvenir to the dignitaries on the dais.

Unfortunately, the person who wrapped the booklets together had taken their job a little too seriously, and it took the energies of three people on the dais and a photographer to unwrap it.

— **Compiled by C. Jaisankar, Kavita Kishore, Olympia Shilpa Gerald**

Farmers’ complaints, action sought

COIMBATORE, March 10, 2014 - The district administration has asked officials in the Agriculture Department to act immediately on farmers’ complaints on traders over charging fertilizers or irregularity in distribution.

The administration had issued an order on September 28, 2013 asking all Assistant Directors of Agriculture in the blocks to take immediate action on farmers’ complaints.

Aflutter with zeal of teaching children biodiversity

Organisations make it a point to take students to the lakes



Informative: School students equipping themselves in one of the bird watching trips at Bahour Lake. — Photo: T. Singaravelou

PUDUCHERRY, March 10, 2014 - The Oussudu, Bahour and Kaliveli Lakes are located close to each other, and they have been identified as important birding wetlands. A variety of migrant birds from across the world come here to nest, roost or just use it as a transit point on

the way to Point Calimere and Sri Lanka.

Since the Oussudu Lake was declared a sanctuary, these migrant birds have been a topic of interest for people around the world. People from outside seem to know so much about the wetlands and the birds, it is only natural that the school children and the local public should also be sensitised to their importance.

It is for this reason that a number of organisations have taken up the task of educating children on biodiversity, R. Alexander, a research scholar from Pondicherry University, who has been educating school students on the biodiversity in Oussudu and Kaliveli lakes said. The point is not only to take them to the lakes and show them birds and other species, but also to educate them on the importance of preserving the biodiversity of these areas. He has been working with schools in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, he said.

Another organisation that is working on teaching children the importance of biodiversity is PONDYCAN, through their program 'Seeds of Change.' Through the birding season (December to February), they have been taking students to the Oussudu and Kaliveli lake in order to show them the birds and teach them about their importance.

The project is headed by Auralice Graft, and has been designed as a three day module where the children are given classroom activities as well as one field trip.

At the end of the three days, the team hopes to inspire the children to care more about their environment.

They are working with 12 schools and close to 800 students in this project, Seeds of Change instructor Rajamanickam said.

In addition to this, a few schools have been taking the help of local bird watchers and enthusiasts to visit the lake and explore biodiversity.

Recently, one of the government schools set up a video camera with a projector at the Ashram land near the Oussudu Lake.

The most common birds seen in this area are the spot billed pelican, the painted stork, white stork, black headed ibis, grey heron, purple heron, egrets and a number of duck varieties.

Water level

The water level in Periyar dam stood at 111.20 feet (permissible level is 136 feet) on Sunday with an inflow of 385 cusecs and a discharge of 200 cusecs. The level in Vaigai dam was 32.32 feet (full level is 71 feet) with no inflow and a discharge of 40 cusecs. The combined storage in Periyar credit was 895 mcft.

There was no rainfall recorded during the last 24 hours, ending at 8.30 a.m. on Sunday, PWD officials here said.

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 49.32 feet on Sunday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 597 cusecs and the discharge, 1,000 cusecs.



Water level in the Papanasam dam on Sunday stood at 51.05 feet (maximum level is 143 feet).

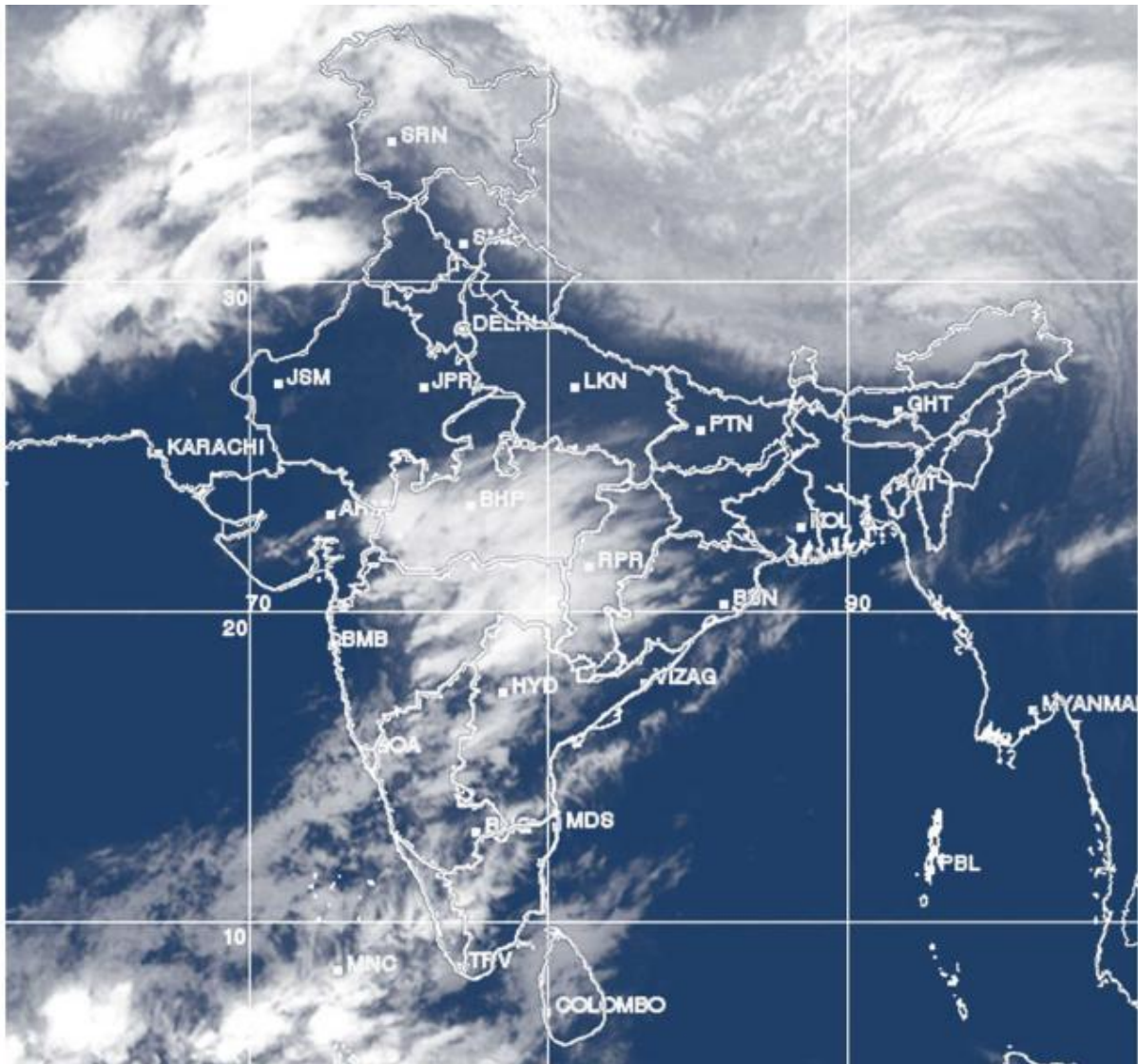
The dam had an inflow of 106.02 cusecs and 54.75 cusecs of water is discharged from the dam. The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 72.87 feet (118 feet).

The dam had an inflow of 132 cusecs and no water is discharged.

Kanyakumari - The level in the Pechipparai dam stood at 7.95 feet,

while it was 38.35 feet in Perunchani, 3.18 feet in Chittar 1, 3.28 feet in Chittar 11, 3.40 feet in Poigai and 42.24 feet in Mamabazathuraiyaru.

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs. Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on March 09.

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Rain: 0

Humidity: 79

Wind: normal

Monday, Mar 10Max Min
30° | 25°

Sunrise: 06:20

Sunset: 06:18

Barometer: 1013

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Tuesday, Mar 11Max Min
32° | 22°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday
Mar 12

32° | 23°

Partly Cloudy

Thursday
Mar 13

26° | 24°

Overcast

Friday
Mar 14

27° | 24°

Overcast

Saturday
Mar 15

28° | 22°

Sunny

Sunday
Mar 16

28° | 23°

Sunny



Fair deal for farmers

SUMMARY

At annual expo Krishi Vasant, over 6 lakh farmers from all over India get to know new farm practices, machines and techniques.

Over a decade ago, Raghav Gowda, a primary school teacher-cum-farmer in the Dakshin Kannada district of Karnataka, wanted to buy a milking machine for his dairy business. But he had to drop the idea as he could not afford to shell out Rs 96,000 for the product. He then thought of making a machine himself — an easy-to-operate hand-operated one. In 2002, Gowda made his Milkmaster, which has now been patented and commercialised in many parts of the country. He later made an electric-operated, which made his poultry business much more profitable. In 2005, he won the National Innovation Foundation (NIF) award.

Gowda's was among the over 90 extraordinary success stories on display at Krishi Vasant, the largest agriculture fair held here from February 9 to 13. The fair attracted over 6 lakh farmers from all over the country. Over 25,000 farmers interacted with scientists, over 20,000 got training in best agricultural practices ranging from crop to fisheries and from allied poultry and dairy to manure-making. Many shop-ped for machines with costs running into lakhs. Those who couldn't, however, spent a lot of time in the machines pavilion, wondering if they could ever buy one of them.

But Gowda and others like him provided them with the options they could afford. Milkmaster costs between Rs 14,000 and Rs 35,000.

At another corner stood a machine that does everything from making juices, shampoo and ketchup to gels and jellies. Called multipurpose processing machine, it can be used like a pressure cooker, a homogeniser and a steriliser alike. And its innovator is Dharambir Kamboj, a rickshaw-puller-turned-farmer from Damla village, Haryana.

Vasant Patil from Karanji village of Yavatmal district's Umarkhed tahsil has made many farm implements that can be attached to both bullocks and tractors. Along with Narayan Deshmukh of the adjoining Nanded district, he runs Nirmiti Krishi Avjare Utpadan Gat that has manufactured hundreds of machines so far.

Assam thrives on improved kids

SUMMARY

ATMA is also part of Assam Agricultural Competitiveness Project (AACP) that was launched in 2005-06, with goat scheme beginning a year ago.

When Jiten Chandra Bora, 45, retired from the BSF four years ago and returned to his home at Diffolo village in Assam's Nagaon district, he initially thought of buying a truck or a bus to make a living. But with a goat breed upgrade programme arriving in the district, he now not only owns goats of a superior breed that multiply faster, but is also helping other farmers take up goat breeding as an additional source of income.

"Until two years ago my goat, of local breed, used to produce at the most two kids a year. But with a male beetal (a buck that cross-breeds with local goats) I bought a year ago, I have got six kids in 12 months," said Bora. He bought the beetal at Rs 4,500 through Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA), a World Bank-aided initiative, and it has also supplemented his income through servicing of goats that his fellow villagers bring for cross-breeding.

ATMA is also part of the Assam Agricultural Competitiveness Project (AACP) that was launched in 2005-06, with the goat scheme beginning a year ago. The basic objective of AACP is to increase the productivity and market access of targeted farmers and community groups. The beetal is a goat found originally in Gurdaspur and Amritsar, Punjab, and is now being promoted to produce goats of better quality in several states.

With the introduction of cross-breeding, goats are now healthier, taller and weigh more, thus bringing more money to farmers. The arithmetic that Bora has worked out is: he has 11 females of which five have already given birth to nine improved kids while a sixth goat is pregnant. While each local-bred goat weighs about 16 kg at two years, a cross-bred goat is expected to weigh around 27 kg at the same age, an incremental weight of 11 kg per goat. With goats selling at Rs 300 per kg, each cross-bred goat is expected to fetch Rs 3,300 more. "If one goat gives on an average two kids in six months, then Bora will be owner of 22 goats in two years, which will give an incremental benefit of Rs 72,600 in two years," says Nikhil Narayan Baruah, ATMA convener at the Block Resource Centre at Khagorijan, Nagaon. The farmer also earns Rs 150 per servicing of a female goat with his buck, though he restricts the servicing to not more than six in a month. Bora is among 174 owners in the district who have in the process already brought about a sea-change in goat-rearing.

Yusuf Ali of Deodhar village, about a kilometre from Diffolo, has two female goats each of which was so long producing only two kids a year. "Now that I have got the two females serviced through Bora's buck, both my goats have given birth to three kids each in the last six months," said Ali. Twenty villagers have got their female goats serviced by Bora's buck in the past year. "With Jiten Bora providing us such a service, we now have larger and healthier goats," said Biswajit Saikia of Itapara village.

According to ATMA convener Sarma, if the 174 buck-owners have serviced an average 20 female goats, then farmers under 18 block resource centres in Nagaon district are heading for owning at least 13,760 healthier, weightier goats in the next 12 months. Goat meat has a

huge demand in Assam; truck-loads of goats come from Bengal and Bihar to meet the deficit.

Punjab farmers go desi with sturdy, competitive horses

SUMMARY

Farmers breed desi horses in four or five stud farms, sell horses and foals and get cash awards at horse shows.

Punjab's livestock farmers are betting on desi horses to make an extra buck, though not on the racecourse. The state is not new to horse breeding but had for decades been working only with imported breeds in high-profile stud farms. The desis, a sturdy breed but not a racehorse, are being bred by the average farmer.

Farmers breed desi horses in four or five stud farms, sell horses and foals and get cash awards at horse shows. The government is aiding farmers. The breeds include the nukra (white horse) of Punjab, besides horses indigenous to Rajasthan and Gujarat.

"Indigenous horse breeding has changed since 2008-09 after the Punjab government started organising horse shows at district, state and national levels," said horse breeding expert H S Kahlon, veterinary officer with the animal husbandry department.

Kahlon added indigenous breeds are ideal for sport, and for ceremonial purposes during weddings and religious processions. They are also popular in the army, police and other forces. The nukra is considered auspicious for religious functions, he said.

Director, animal husbandry, Dr H S Sandha said farmers are being attracted by the profits.

Two horse markets come up in Muktsar during Maghi Mela in January and Dussehra to facilitate buying and selling. "Buyers come from Delhi, Rajasthan, UP and Mumbai and farmers earn Rs 2 lakh to Rs 10 lakh," he said, adding the department organises

competitions to increase awareness and make horse breeding a source of income for small and marginal farmers and produce half-breed horses for sports, polo and police duties.

"Punjab owns over 29,000 horses, over 15 per cent of the number in the country, which is the highest in any state. Around 70 per cent of white horses in the country are available in Punjab," said Dr Kahlon.

It takes around three years for the returns to come. A foal is born in about 11 months. A foal of five months can be sold between Rs 30,000 and Rs 1.5 lakh.

Baldeep Singh of Nanaksar village in Ludhiana said, "I bought a mare for Rs 17,000 and groomed her and she has won me Rs 3.5 lakh as awards in competitions over the past few months, including Rs 2 lakh in Muktsar mela and Rs 1 lakh in Chapparchiri's agriculture summit recently."

Baldeep owns four mares, a male and two foals. "My business is doing well and I go to Rajasthan to cross-mate my mares with the best stallions. I usually sell foals at ages between six months and a year. If a foal is beautiful, I keep it with me and prefer to sell after it turns four when it can fetch Rs 8 to 10 lakh," he said. Dr Kahlon said Punjab's horses are in great demand with the police of various states. Raising mules, in demand in the army, is an option for small farmers.

Nahar Singh Brar of Khunan Kalan in Muktsar owns six mares. Eight-year-old mare Razia won him Rs 13.50 lakh from 2008 to 2013 in competitions, said Gurjit Singh, son of Nahar Singh, adding he could ask for any amount for the mare. "We keep only five to seven animals and look after them very well, including exercising and grooming them... their beauty brings us fortune in competitions. People of the Marwari community prefer to keep at least one horse at their place as they consider it auspicious so there is huge demand of horses from Gujarat," said Gurjit.

It gives good returns but involves high costs as horses demand great care and owners have to spend Rs 5,000 per month on an adult horse on diet, grooming and medicines, said

Ravinder Singh of Bathinda, who owns four animals. A stallion can impregnate 60 mares during breeding season, February to July.

“I have one of the best stallions and many horse breeders approach me to get their mares mated,” said Hardeep Singh of Hamad village in Firozpur district. “I earn Rs 3,500 to 4,000 per servicing, Rs 10,000 to Rs 12,000 per day. I own around 15 animals and have won 13 to 14 awards since 2009 thanks to breeding with beautiful horses and mares,” said Hardeep. Jaspal Singh of Khunan Kalan village, who owns 10 nukras, finds buyers on the Internet. Experts said horse breeding can enhance the market for oats, grass, horse gram and barley, besides bridles, saddles, horse shoes, and medicine. It can also generate employment for riding boys, trainers, jockeys and veterinarians.

THE HINDU Business Line

Cotton body keen to invest in crop development in Africa

Wants direct links between Indian mills, African growers

Coimbatore, March 9: The Indian Cotton Federation (ICF) is keen on investing in cotton development in Africa.

Senior ICF officials indicated this to the 16-member African delegation, which was on a visit to this part of the country to understand the mill sector’s requirement.

ICF Vice-President KN Viswanathan said: “We are interested in investing in cotton development in Africa and improving trade relationship between African countries and India.” “The textile sector here is dependent on international merchants for sourcing cotton from African countries. The expression of interest by these African cotton farmers and ginneries would go a long way in establishing direct trade links between the mill sector and the growers of cotton in Africa,” he said.

The Federation sought production details from the members of the delegation from six African countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Nigeria, Uganda and Malawi.

Late shipment, shade variation, contamination and delays in presenting documents are some of the major concerns that we face at present, said Nataraj, Managing Director, KPR Mills and Vice-President, ICF. KPR Mills, according to Nataraj, has been sourcing close to 40 per cent of the mill’s cotton requirement from Africa. “We depend on merchant exporters,” Nataraj said.

This is the fourth delegation in three months. The delegation’s visit is said to be part of the Centre’s Cotton Technical Assistance Programme for Africa.

It is a three-year project and is expected to come to an end in 2015. The initiative includes setting up of a knowledge cluster in Benin, bio pesticide lab in Uganda and skill development programmes in Nigeria in association with CICR and CIRCOT, said Milan Sharma, Head – Africa Initiatives, IL&FS Cluster Development Initiative Ltd.

New rice processor launched

Kakinada, March 9: A new rice processor – Sortex S Ultravision – was launched here on Sunday on the second day of the three-day Rice Tech Expo being organised by Vijayawada-based Shiny Trade Expositions.

Nick Wilkins, Director and the head of Rice Processing wing of the London-based Buhler company, said the new version of Sortex S was on display here and “we have decided to launch it here as a part of global release. We have chosen Kakinada as it is the rice bowl of Andhra Pradesh and India. It is an improved version of Sortex rice processors already being used in rice mills in Andhra Pradesh and India. The new processor has higher capacity, better performance and it is simple to use.” “Rice exports are also taking place through Kakinada port and therefore they want to provide quality rice for domestic and international markets,” he added.

Agri commodities turn hot again



Weather watch El Nino may not always mean a bad monsoon for India

Impact on monsoon	
El Nino year	% Rainfall Departure*
1982 (S)	-14.5
1986 (M)	-12.7
1987 (M)	-19.4
1991 (M)	-9.3
1994 (M)	12.5
1997 (S)	2.2
2002 (M)	-19.2
2004 (W)	-13.8
2005 (W)	-0.4
2009 (M)	-21.8

Deviation from all-India long period average during July-September.
S-Strong; M-Moderate; W-Weak

Weather watch El Nino may not always mean a bad monsoon for India



Weather watch El Nino may not always mean a bad monsoon for India

Dry weather could worsen the drought in Australia, a major global supplier of wheat. Year 2013 was a forgettable one for farm commodities, as corn futures in Chicago plunged 39.6 per cent, global prices of coffee, wheat, sugar, soyabean and palm oil fell 23, 22.2, 15.9, 8.3 and 0.9 per cent respectively, in dollar terms.

But since the start of this year coffee has gained 77.8 per cent, corn 15.9, soyabean 12.8, sugar 9.8, palm oil 8.6 and wheat 8.1 per cent. This recovery can largely be put down to a single factor: El Nino, which refers to the unusually warm ocean temperatures in the tropical Pacific off the coasts of Ecuador and Peru.

A Pacific phenomenon

Such abnormal warming of eastern Pacific Ocean waters leads to increased evaporation and concentrated cloud-formation activity around South America.

This region, along with the southern part of the US, then receives heavy rains causing flooding occasionally.

The other end of the tropical Pacific towards Indonesia and Australia is, by contrast, deprived of any such convective currents. The result is below-average rainfall and drought, whose effects may also percolate to India.

Since February, many global weather agencies have warned of an “early developing” El Nino with the appearance of warm ocean currents along the western coasts of South America. There is no clarity, however, whether and when this warming will turn into a full-fledged El Nino.

The US Climate Prediction Centre, on Thursday, predicted a 45 per cent chance of El Nino during June-July-August and 50 per cent over August-September-October.

This is consistent with the projections of most other official forecasters — of El Nino returning after five years, with its effects more pronounced towards August. For India, that coincides with the second half of the south-west monsoon season from June to September.

The Indian record

So, does it mean India will have a poor monsoon this time, especially in the latter part of the season? Well, it's difficult to say really. The table shows that every drought year in India over the last three decades — 1982, 1986, 1987, 2002, 2004 and 2009 — was an El Nino year. But the reverse — every El Nino year being a drought year — doesn't hold. Take 1994 and 1997, the first a ‘moderate’ and the second a ‘strong’ El Nino year. In both these years, the country registered above normal monsoon precipitation. This was more or less the same in 2006 too, a ‘weak’ El Nino year.

Mixed prospects

While El Nino's impact on India is debatable, there is less doubt though, over it wreaking havoc in South-East Asia and Australia. El Nino-induced dry weather could worsen an already severe drought in Australia, a major global supplier of wheat, beef, sugar and cotton. It could similarly hurt palm oil production in Indonesia and Malaysia, coffee and cocoa in Indonesia and Vietnam, and rice in Thailand and Vietnam. But if El Nino's effects do not percolate to India as in 1997 or 2006, it could actually prove beneficial to India's \$45-billion agri-export industry.

India is, after all, the world's No. 1 exporter of rice and beef, No. 2 in cotton, and also a significant shipper of soya meal, sugar and corn. Right now, with India's major reservoirs holding enough water from last year's excellent monsoon and also from the winter rainfall, there isn't much to worry.

REALLY?

El Nino could hurt palm oil production in Indonesia and Malaysia

Fertiliser consumption set to fall for second year running

Urea bucks the trend as it is out of the ambit of the nutrient-based regime

Fertiliser consumption: A profile (lakh tonnes)						
	Urea	DAP	SSP	MOP	NP/NPK	Total+
2003-04	197.67	56.25	25.44	18.41	47.57	353.13
2005-06	222.98	67.64	27.56	27.31	66.94	420.73
2007-08	259.63	74.97	22.88	28.81	65.71	459.06
2009-10	266.73	104.92	26.51	46.34	80.25	533.05
2010-11	281.13	108.70	38.25	39.32	97.64	574.41
2011-12	295.65	101.91	47.46	30.29	103.95	589.93
2012-13	300.02	91.54	40.30	22.11	75.27	537.72
Apr-Jan 12-13*	253.58	76.69	34.09	17.96	62.88	—
Apr-Jan 13-14*	263.89	58.27	33.00	17.47	59.03	—

+includes ammonium sulphate, mono-ammonium phosphate and other fertilisers; *Sales.

New Delhi, March 9: Total fertiliser consumption in the country rose every year from 2002-03 to 2011-12, when it peaked at 59 million tonnes (mt). But last year, it fell bellow 54 mt. Based on the trend of sales by companies during April-January, consumption could dip further in 2013-14.

"It won't cross 52 mt: 31 mt urea, 7 mt

di-ammonium phosphate (DAP), 6.5 mt NP/NPK complexes, 4 mt single super phosphate (SSP), 2.5 mt muriate of potash (MOP) and one mt of other fertilisers," industry sources told *Business Line*.

Blessed by NBS

The declining consumption has been across all non-urea fertilisers, especially in so-called low-analysis products such as SSP and NP/NPK complexes.

Sales of these fertilisers had received a boost initially after the Centre ushered in a nutrient-based subsidy (NBS) system from April 2010.

The new regime – linking subsidy payable to the nutrient composition of individual fertilisers as against being limited to specific products (urea, DAP, MOP) – made it more attractive for firms to market SSP and complexes with varying proportions of nitrogen, phosphorous, potash and sulphur.

Between 2009-10 and 2011-12, combined consumption of SSP (having lower phosphorus than DAP, but containing sulphur) and complexes like 10:26:26 and 12:32:16 (alternatives to both DAP and MOP) zoomed from 10.7 mt to 15.1 mt.

Setback

Since then, however, there has been a plunge in consumption of not only these 'low-analysis' fertilisers to a likely 10.5 mt this fiscal, but even DAP and MOP.

Only urea has continued to register increased consumption.

The reason: Urea being kept outside the purview of NBS and its administered maximum retail price (MRP) going up only marginally from Rs. 4,830 to Rs. 5,360 a tonne since April 2010.

On the other hand, the corresponding increases in MRPs have been from Rs. 9,350 to Rs. 22,500 for DAP, Rs. 4,455 to Rs. 16,000 for MOP, and Rs. 7,197 to Rs. 20,900 for 10:26:26.

"The price differentials over urea were manageable till around October 2011, when DAP was retailing at Rs. 14,000 and most complexes at Rs. 11,000-12,000 a tonne. But from kharif 2012, the gap became too large, leading to farmers applying more urea and less of other fertilisers," the sources pointed out.

Urea distortion

The villain here was urea prices that were left unchanged, while companies had no option but to raise MRPs for other fertilisers, with international prices of both inputs and finished nutrients going up alongside a depreciating rupee.

While landed prices of DAP eased from an average \$580 a tonne (cost & freight) in 2012-13 to a low of \$340 in October, they have started firming up again to \$500 levels in line with the overall El Nino-induced spike in global agri-commodity prices.

“We have reduced MRPs that had touched Rs. 24,000-26,000 for DAP and Rs. 17,000-18,000 for MOP at one point. But now, we may have to raise them again, which will further distort nutrient application by farmers,” the sources added.

Cardamom producers can sell directly to dealers

No need to route the produce through auction centres: Spices Board

Kochi, March 9: Giving a freeway to the cardamom trade, the Spices Board India has allowed cardamom producers to sell their produce directly to dealers licensed by the Board.

E-auctions

The decision was taken at the 76th board meeting. It has been clarified that cardamom growers can sell their produce directly to a dealer or through e-auctions conducted by the auctioneers licensed by the board; this overturns the prevailing misconception that e-auction, by mandate, is the only platform to sell cardamom.

Moreover, dealers can sell the cardamom in any manner and do not require routing the same through the auction centres.

A Jayathilak, Chairman, Spices Board India, said the board is committed to promoting free trade in small cardamom and is in the process of exploring all avenues for facilitating the opening of alternate marketing channels for small cardamom.

For the Indian small cardamom industry to remain competitive in the global markets, he said the free trade of the commodity must be promoted and alternate channels for the domestic marketing of small cardamom devised, along with the removal of the rules that restrict the domestic marketing and sale of small cardamom.

The erstwhile practice of depending on e-auctions as the primary venue for cardamom trade can turn out to be a restrictive for the grower, limiting his basic right to sell the produce at his will and desire.

To fetch a better price

The decision is expected to pave the way for free trade in cardamom market.

This will attract more players to the small cardamom trade and result in better price realisation for the grower through increased sales transactions and buyer participation, Jayathilak said.

The decision is expected to pave the way for free trade in the cardamom market

Business Standard

Coriander at all-time high in spot market

[Coriander](#) (dhaniya) prices have reached an all-time high of Rs 13,000 a quintal due to heavy rain in crop-growing areas.

“Due to hailstorms in major dhaniya producing areas, the quality of the crop has been impacted, which has also had an impact on arrivals,” said Deepak Jaju, a Rajasthan-based coriander trader.

Since its quality has been impacted to a great extent, the crop has turned black and farmers are dumping such low grade quality coriander, which is selling at Rs 5,000 a quintal at the spot markets. Traders say that 70 per cent of the arrivals which are coming into the market are damaged crop.

Arrivals in the major crop-growing areas of Rajasthan and Gujarat have reduced to half when they should have been in full swing. Arrivals all over India are now at 100,000 bags (1 bag = 40 kg).

“As the stock which is hitting the [spot market](#) is damaged, good quality coriander prices might move even higher, to Rs 15,000 a quintal, in the next few days,” said Gireesh Rathod, a Rajasthan-based coriander trader.

In the past one month, dhaniya prices on the National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange have seen a jump of 16.3 per cent to Rs 9,546 a quintal.

The futures continue to trade at a huge discount to spot, because of an overhang of bad quality crop.

Coriander production last year stood at .52 million tonnes, while this year, it is estimated to be .4 million tonnes.

This time, the carry-forward stock was also lower and stood at 1 to 1.2 million bags, compared to 2.5 million to 3 million last year.

Currently, most of the demand for dhaniya has emerged from major ready-made masala producers like [MDH](#), [Everest](#) and [Ramdev Masala](#).

They start buying in a big way when fresh arrivals start to hit the market. Exporters are currently not buying from the Indian market as the quality of coriander which is on the spot market is bad.

Exporters are expected to start buying after March 20. Retailers and stockists are also buying in a big way, which has also caused prices to go to an all-time high.

Despite lower arrivals, jaggery prices head south

Jaggery arrivals to [Anakapalli](#) here have been reducing significantly over the last three years. This year, due to bad weather conditions [sugarcane](#) productivity per acre reduced about 30 per cent in this region; the main reason for the drop in jaggery arrivals, according to KLN Rao, president, Anakapalli Jaggery Merchants Association.

In the 2011-12 season, Anakapalli received 2.9 million lumps (each lump contains 15kg) up to February. As compared with this, in the 2012-13 season, this was down to 2.5 million till February and in the current season (2013-14) this has further declined to 1.9 million lumps.

Sugarcane [farmers](#) produce 75 lumps of jaggery on average on an acre. This time, the productivity has dropped to 45-50 lumps as there had been a decline in cane production, he added.

"However, as the sugarcane crushing season is coming to an end, mills expect jaggery arrivals to gradually increase by May. At present, 35,000-40,000 lumps arrive in the market daily," he said. Anakapalli received 789,000 lumps in February as against 857,000 during the same period last year.

However, despite lower arrivals, rates too are heading south. Last August, black jaggery quoted at Rs 270-280 per 10 kg, and now it has declined to Rs 220-225. From the last few months, state excise department officials are not allowing movement of black jaggery in the Telangana area, and this has resulted in the fall in prices, said K Buchi Raju, a trader.

Black jaggery is used in making country liquor and as the government is seizing it, traders have become cautious.
