

RAMANATHAPURAM

## Rain brings big relief to residents, farmers

*Kamudhi records the highest rainfall of 148.1 mm*



Spell: Rain lashes Ramanathapuram on Tuesday.— Photo: L. BALACHANDAR

After two months of oppressive heat, this drought prone district received widespread rains since May 1, bringing relief to the people and cheer to farmers who cultivated cotton and vegetables and farmers who go for summer ploughing for cultivating pulses and minor millets.

After sparse winter rains in January (39.18 mm) and February (17.15), the mercury shot up sharply as the district remained dry in March and April. As the people feared for the worse during the 'kathiri' season, the district started receiving summer rains much to their glee. Till Tuesday morning, the district has received an average of 41.5 mm of rainfall, the highest summer rains in the last three years.

Official sources said the district had received 11.86 mm of summer rains (March, April and May) in 2011, a paltry 7.01 mm in 2012 and 11.64 mm in 2013. However, in just five days, the district has received an average 41.5 mm with Kamuthi recording the highest rainfall of 148.1 mm, followed by Thiruvadanaï and Vattamai areas with 67 mm rainfall, the sources said.

On Tuesday, several parts of the district received intermittent rains, heavy at times and a couple of spells lasting for more than an hour. Sources in the Agriculture and Horticulture departments said the rains would be beneficial to farmers who had cultivated vegetables, including brinjal, ladies finger and gourd varieties on about 5,000 hectares, cotton on about 2,000 hectares and permanent crop like coconut on 9,000 hectares.

Utilising the rains, farmers could take up summer ploughing and cultivate pulses and minor millets before going in for paddy cultivation during the onset of south west monsoon in September, the

sources added. Farmers could also plough the lands three or four times to get the soil pulverised and prepare the land for direct sowing of paddy in the coming season, the sources added.

The rain was, however, detrimental to the standing chilli crops, cultivated on about 17,000 hectares, the sources said.

Though the pickings have reached the final phase, stagnation of water in the fields would retard the size of the fruits and lead to fungus development. Farmers have already completed seven to eight pickings and are left with two or three pickings in the final phase, the sources added.

TIRUCHI, May 7, 2014

## Onion prices rising again

*Traders keeping a close watch on poll outcome*

| ONIONS TURN PRICEY   |                            |   |
|--|----------------------------|---|
| BELLARY ONION  |                            |   |
| Last week<br><b>Rs. 18</b>   | This week<br><b>Rs. 24</b> | Small onion price<br><b>Rs. 30</b>                                  |
| ● Price of Bellary onion to go up if the new government continues with export of onion |                            | ● Of 200 tonnes of onion received only 50 tonnes was of top quality |
| ● Rain has had dampening effect on the output from Maharashtra                         |                            |   |

The soaring prices of Bellary and sambar (small) onions in the past week has caused concern to the traders and the consumers alike.

The price of Bellary, which was at Rs. 18 a kg till a week ago, has gone up to Rs. 24 in the retail market. The price of small onion has been ruling at about Rs. 30 in the open market for a week.

The traders here are eagerly waiting for the poll outcome and the formation of new government. They expect the price of Bellary onion to go up further, if the new government decided to continue with the policy of bulk export of onion.

The Gandhi Market, the wholesale market, which caters to the most of the retailers in the central region, normally gets about 150 tonnes of Bellary from Maharashtra State and another 50 tonnes from Karnataka every day. Although the arrival was maintained as usual, the increase in the price of Bellary is said to be due to the drastic fall in the receipt of number one quality Bellary, particularly from Maharashtra.

The onion growing areas of Maharashtra experienced hailstones continuously for about five days, when the onion crop was ready for harvest. About 50 per cent of the onion suffered damages. Because of this, the arrival of best quality onion from Maharashtra has dwindled steadily, leading to

price increase, says A. Thangaraj, general secretary, Tiruchi Onion Commission Mandi Traders' Association, and district treasurer of the Tamil Nadu Vanigar Sangangalin Peramaippu.

Of the 200 tonnes of Bellary received by the wholesale dealers of Gandhi Market, only 50 tonnes is best quality and the rest is the damaged and inferior quality Bellary. The wholesale dealers here have to pay higher price for fetching the best quality Bellary and this has led to increase in the price in the retail market, Mr. Thangaraj says.

The price of Bellary is expected to escalate to Rs. 30 during this month. Now, the price of onion was in the hands of the decision of the new government at the Centre on its export policy.

If the new government decided to restrict the export of Bellary, the price will continue to remain stable at Rs. 30 to Rs. 40. If the new government decided to continue with the export of onion, the price would go up, he said.

Meanwhile, the Gandhi Market continues to receive 150 tonnes of small (sambar) onion from Perambalur, Thuraiyur, Palladam, Dharapuram, and Udumalpettai directly. The price of best quality small onion is about Rs. 30 in the open market.

THENI

## **PWD plans to improve storage in Vaigai dam**

With Vaigai dam nearing dead storage, Public Works Department engineers have been taking all measures to improve its storage in order to maintain drinking water supply to urban and rural areas during summer.

If the level touched 20 feet in Vaigai dam, water could not be drawn and Madurai city would be the worst affected. They already alerted Madurai Corporation that water supply from Vaigai dam could be made only for one or two days. Sedapatti and Andipatti too would face similar fate. At present, storage in the dam was 21.06 feet. Inflow in to the dam was a mere 17 cusecs and the discharge was 40 cusecs. The storage was 124 mcft.

Despite sharp slump in inflow, discharge from Periyar dam has been stepped up to 250 cusecs on Tuesday to improve storage in Vaigai dam. Already, 200 cusecs of water released from Periyar dam on Monday reached Veerapandi as water in the Mullai Periyar River near Sri Gowmariamman Temple touched both the banks of the river. The officials hoped that at least 50 cusecs of water would reach Vaigai dam even after the tapping of river water at various points by various sources including pilgrims.

Water level in Periyar dam stood at 110.4 feet with an inflow of 385 cusecs. Storage was 975 cusecs. Gudalur recorded 16 mm rain, Veerapandi 8 mm and Vaigai dam 9 mm. Rainfall was nil in other areas. The district received intermittent showers at various places on Tuesday evening.

## **Dindigul**

Minor showers were recorded in some parts of the district including Dindigul town in the evening. Sky was cloudy bringing mercury level down substantially.

VILLUPURAM

## Artificially ripened mangoes destroyed

Food Safety Officers carried out surprise raids on the shops selling mangoes on the Mahatma Gandhi Road here on Tuesday.

They found heaps of artificially ripened mangoes there. The officials seized about 100 kg of such mangoes and also two kg of powdered calcium carbide used for hastening the ripening process.

The officials warned the traders of stringent action, as provided under the Food Safety and Standards Act, if they continue to market such pre-matured fruits and usage of chemicals for their ripening. Consuming unnaturally ripened mangoes would result in mouth ulcers, skin rashes and gastric problems. Such fruits would have uniform colour on the skin sans the natural aroma.

It is suggested that before consumption the fruits should be washed under the tap (running water) for few minutes and the skin should be peeled off.

Later, the officials took the seized fruits to the municipality grounds and destroyed the lot.

MADURAI, May 7, 2014

## Safeguarding farmlands

*Women desilting dry lake for three weeks*



SELF-HELP: Women working under rural job scheme at Pappankulam lake near Kadachanenthal in Madurai on Tuesday.— Photo: R. Ashok

The consecutive monsoon failures have turned most of the farmlands surrounding Pappankulam lake near Kadachanenthal here into housing plots.

Yet, in a bid to safeguard the remaining farmlands, womenfolk of Kadachinaru and Kadachanenthal have been desilting the dry lake for three weeks now under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

“Until a few years ago, water from Periyar dam used to be stored in the lake and diverted for agricultural activities in the surrounding areas. These years, water from Periyar dam does not even

last for a week in the lake,” said Karupayee, a 70-year-old-woman from Kadakinaru, involved in the desilting.

The women are in the process of desilting the 20-acre-lake by 3 feet.

“Agricultural activities have dwindled by a large extent around the lake. We want to safeguard at least whatever is remaining now,” said M. Gandhimathi, another woman who was desilting the lake on Tuesday.

Not less than 150 women turn up for work every day, said M. Indraniammal, who supervises the work.

“The women have been desilting the lake for a few years now. They started their work by April to store water in June or July,” she added.

Desilting the rough surface is no easy task, but they are determined to ensure that the water remains in the lake at least for a few weeks, the women say.

“We have been asked to desilt the lake by 3 feet. Sometimes, the tools are unable to go beyond the rough surface,” said M. Muthulakshmi.

The women have not received their wages for three weeks, but that has not hampered their spirit.

“I think they will pay us later. Our concern is to desilt the lake and enhance its storage capacity,” added Ms. Muthulakshmi.

CHENNAI

## **Ostrich farming is a success story here**



Flying high: The farm on GST road sells the flightless bird to zoos across the country, and has turned out to be self-sufficient after an initial period of failure —Photo: Special Arrangement

What was once considered a failed venture has now turned into a golden-egg laying enterprise: the ostrich farm at Kattupakkam has become the major supplier of the world's tallest and heaviest flightless birds to various zoos across the country.

Located near Kattangulathur on Grand Southern Trunk Road, the farm is run by Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS).

Way back in April 2000, when the farm was started, the university imported 100 ostrich chicks from Malaysia. With little experience in raising the exotic birds, the farm struggled and lost 68 chicks within a few months.

A senior officer from the university said the first four years were a learning period. "Introduction of better nutrition, a new breeder and hatchery management techniques helped the farm raise the chicks successfully. Since then, there has been no turning back for us," he said.

Veterinarians at the farm said compatibility between male and female birds was established and less-compatible pairs were changed. The varsity also made a crucial effort at maintaining the temperature and humidity at the farm at specific levels.

In order to maintain lower humidity, the authorities grew bushes to simulate the natural environment of the birds. They also imported an incubator for hatching the eggs.

At present, the farm has nearly 100 birds, including half a dozen chicks. In the last five years, a total of 130 chicks hatched of the 800 eggs laid by the birds. At a time, a female bird lays nearly a dozen eggs, after which it would take a break for a fortnight, and then go on to lay a total of nearly 50 eggs in a year, the veterinarians added.

The farm, so far, has sold 20 pairs of ostriches to various zoos across the country, and has turned out to be self-sufficient even without a government grant, authorities said.

***The farm, which has nearly 100 birds, is run by Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University***

**KARNATAKA**

**BIJAPUR, May**

## **Sugarcane farmers want sweeter deal**

*Association asks government to get pending bills released from mill owners*



Mill owners were supposed to give the farmers Rs. 6000 crore but have given only Rs. 2000 crore

Karnataka State Sugarcane Growers' Association has asked the government to get the pending bills of the sugarcane farmers released from the sugar mill owners in the State.

In a release, the association said that around six mills of the district alone have crushed over 28 lakh tonnes of sugarcane in this year, yet they have not cleared the pending bills to be given to the farmers.

The association said that while the mills were supposed to give Rs. 6,000 crore to the farmers, they have so far given only Rs. 2,000 crore. The government should put pressure on the mill owners to release the pending amount as soon as possible.

Referring to the government order that directed the mill owners to pay Rs. 2,500 per tonne to farmers, the association said that most of the companies have been paying only Rs. 1,800 per tonne, defying the government order. They also urged the government to get the incentive of Rs. 150 per tonne paid to the farmers.

The release said that despite the fact that the cost of sugar had substantially increased in the open market, the mill owners were still reluctant to share their profit.

The association said that if the government failed to meet their demands before May 11, the farmers would stage a dharna in front all the sugar mills, demanding the mill owners to either pay money or give sugar.

The Karnataka Pranta Raita Sangha had also put several demands before the government in the interest of the farmers. Extending their support to the sugarcane farmers, the Sangha demanded the government to get Rs. 2650 per tonne paid to the farmers.

The Sangha, in a release, demanded the government to get toor procurement centres reopened in five districts of North Karnataka region, which they accused were closed even before all the farmers took their grains to the centre.

They said that the government, after the struggle by the farmers, opened the procurement centres, but after a short period of time all the centres were closed without any intimation or logical reason.

# Good pre-monsoon rain spurs farm activities in Mysore

*Sowing of cotton, pulses and jowar in full swing*

AT WORK: A majority of farmers have completed kharif sowing in Mysore district.— Photo: M.A. Sriram

Widespread pre-monsoon rain across Mysore district has prompted brisk agricultural activities. Farmers are busy as the summer showers have brought back the much-needed moisture in the soil for sowing.

Sowing has begun in most parts of the district after over a week of preparing fields for the kharif cultivation. Sowing of jowar, pulses and cotton is in full swing.

Barring some parts of T. Narsipur taluk, sowing has commenced in the other taluks. Rainfall was slightly less in T. Narsipur, compared to other taluks. Here, farmers are awaiting good spells of rain to begin sowing.

Cotton is a prominent crop in H.D. Kote and Nanjangud taluks, while pulses are the major crops in Mysore, Periyapatna, H.D. Kote, T. Narsipur and Nanjangud taluks. Cotton was among the first few crops sown immediately after the first spell of summer rain.

Joint Director of Agriculture Mahantheshappa told *The Hindu* that the pre-monsoon showers had been good. Barring some small pockets, the rainfall was almost widespread, cheering the farmers to take up sowing at a brisk pace.

“Nearly 20 per cent of kharif sowing has been completed,” he said.

Mr. Mahantheshappa described the rainfall recorded so far as above average in all the taluks, barring T. Narsipur. “A good crop can be looked forward to with constant spells of rain, without a long lull,” he said. “A bumper harvest can be expected, provided decent spells of rain until August-September. A slight let up in rain can harm the crops,” he said.

## **Seeds, fertilizers**

The department had set a target of 4.2 lakh hectares for cultivation during the kharif season, including 3.15 lakh hectares of rain-dependant land. Adequate stock of fertilizers and seeds had been kept ready to meet the demand, which would go up in the coming days.

Seeds were being sold at subsidised rates at raitha samparka kendras (RSKs), which are controlled by the department.

There are about 33 such kendras in the district. About 18,000 tonnes of fertilizers is available for immediate distribution.



“There is no scarcity of fertilizers and sowing seeds. Measures have been taken to ensure smooth farm activities,” he said. Last year, about 93 per cent of the cultivation area in the district had been sown during the kharif season.

In Mysore district, irrigation depends mainly on the Kabini, Nugu and Harangi dams. Further, 87,685 hectares of land is irrigated by canals, 17,377 hectares by tanks, 10,323 hectares by wells, 5,795 hectares by borewells and 375 hectares by lift irrigation.

The Kabini dam alone irrigates land in Nanjangud, T. Narsipur and H.D. Kote taluks. Only a small part of Hunsur taluk is fed with water from Harangi dam, while KRS dam irrigates land around Varuna hobli in Mysore taluk.

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- ***Barring T. Narsipur, all other taluks have recorded good pre-monsoon showers***

- ***Target of 4.2 lakh hectares set for cultivation***

***in kharif season***

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## **Seed potato price fixed**

The Hassan district administration, on Tuesday, resolved to fix the price of seed potatoes at Rs.1,900 to Rs.2,000 per quintal after holding talks with merchants here.

Farmers can purchase seed potatoes from the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee market in Hassan from Wednesday onwards.

The district administration had held two meetings on Monday, but no decision was taken. Deputy Commissioner V. Anbukumar convened a meeting on Tuesday, where he announced the price of seed potatoes.

Seed potatoes were sold at Rs.1,500 per quintal last year.

About 27,000 tonnes of seed potatoes are in cold storage units across the city.

According to Horticulture Department authorities, farmers are expected to cultivate potato in about 20,000 hectares in the district.

KARNATAKA

BANGALORE

## Devanahalli farmers will be priced out

The vegetable growers of Devanahalli and surrounding villages, who are among the main suppliers of vegetables to the city, are a worried lot. The nearly four-fold increase in the toll has seriously disturbed their fragile economics.

The toll at Sadahalli gate for a tempo has gone up from Rs. 50 for two-way travel within 24 hours to Rs. 175.

Manjunath, who grows carrot and beetroot on the outskirts of Devanahalli, said that tempo operators are charging Rs. 30 for each sack of vegetables. After the hike, they are demanding at least Rs. 40.

Though transport cost has increased, vegetable prices cannot be raised as the problem is specific to vehicles using NH7. "If we increase prices, we will lose out to the competition. If we don't, we lose on our margins and risk losses," he explained.

Even vehicle owners are a worried lot. Srikanth, who runs a tempo in Devanahalli town, said, "Asking the farmers to pay more is difficult. Their trade will become unprofitable. Even now, we know that they sell their produce at dirt cheap rates."

But farmers fear that eventually they will be forced to bear the burden.

"The toll for a longer stretch on Tumkur Road is Rs. 17 as compared to the Rs. 175 we will have to pay for using about 22 km of the airport road," Basavaraju, a vegetable trader rued.

Vinay Kumar, a tempo operator, said that at least vehicles carrying vegetables, fruits and milk from surrounding villages should be exempt from toll. He also urged that a toll-free service road be provided immediately.

Tempo operators and farmers say that using alternative routes are not feasible. "We have two alternate routes. One is through K.R. Puram and the other through I.V.C. Road and Rajanukunte. Both are longer and will increase fuel cost," Manjunath said.

KARNATAKA

## Organic mangoes

Jaivik Krishik Society will sell organic mangoes on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at all Jaivik stalls in the city from May 9 till the month end. For details, call Jaivik society Mall at Lalbagh (Ph: 9986083656); Sanjaynagar(9900702057); Banshankari(9535658224); and Nandini Layout (9880784167).

ANDHRA PRADESH

NIZAMABAD

## **Fear grips paddy ryots**

Farmers bringing paddy to the purchase centres opened by women self-help groups under the aegis of the Indira Kranthi Patham and also the PACS are gripped by fear with untimely rains and changing weather conditions. Over production coupled with non-cooperation of transporters led to the losses to the farming community.

The official machinery which has been restless hitherto due to series of elections has just started focusing attention on the problem. Like last year, this year too, over 7.5 lakh tonnes of paddy is expected to come to market and it has become a cumbersome task to officials to ensure hassle free purchases with payment of minimum support price.

As many as 277 paddy purchase centres - 51 under the supervision of IKP and the rest of 226 by Primary Agriculture Cooperative Centres were opened across the district. Weighing and moisture measuring machines and gunny bags were kept ready at them. The IKP already purchased over 10,000 tonnes while at PACS centres double to that quantity was purchased.

With the centres being flooded with hundreds of tonnes of paddy at a time paddy bags are being stacked on open place under the open sky. Trucks are not coming on time to shift paddy to rice-mills with the non-cooperation of transporters. Even if the grain is shifted to mills millers are rejecting it citing moisture content more than 17 per cent.

While Project Director, the IKP, Venkatesham is saying that paddy brought by farmers contains less than 17 per cent moisture traders are not prepared to accept paddy. As a result, farmers are forced to sell the produce for less than the MSP fixed Rs.1345 per quintal for A-grade grain (called 1010 variety) and Rs.1310 for sannalu (thin variety).

Grain kept on open place is getting soaked in rain water causing loss to farmers.

With the lack of tarpaulin sheets available at centres there is no protective cover to paddy heaps. If this is the problem at purchase centres some farmers are finding it difficult to engage harvesters as most of them are in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu as crop was sown in vast extents in those States.

If harvesters are available they are charging double the amount to what they collected per acre last year. Therefore, over 50 per cent crop is still on the field, according to sources. Vexed at all these problems farmers are taking to streets staging rasta rokos.

## **Water to reach Vaigai dam today**

Water released from Periyar dam is expected to reach the Vaigai dam by Wednesday.

According to Public Works Department officials, while 250 cusecs of water is being discharged from the Periyar dam, at least 100 cusecs might reach the Vaigai dam on Wednesday and provide a temporary respite from the water shortage.

The Vaigai dam has a storage capacity of 71 feet. Following monsoon failure, the storage levels had fallen.

“For the last few days, there has been steady rain in the catchment areas. There is currently an inflow of 385 cusecs into the Periyar dam. If the rains continue, we can expect a good amount of water to reach the Vaigai dam early on Wednesday,” a PWD official said.

At present, 40 cusecs of water is being drawn from Vaigai dam and supplied by Madurai Corporation once in four days.

Officials of the Theni and Madurai district administrations have instructed the revenue department, officials from the PWD and police personnel to keep vigil against illegal pumping of water by farmers for irrigation.

Madurai Collector L. Subramanian and Corporation Commissioner S. Kathiravan inspected the water treatment facility for Andipatti-Sedapatti drinking water scheme near the Vaigai dam on Tuesday.

**KERALA**

**KOZHIKODE**

## **A mango treat for Kozhikode**

*Mango exhibition from May 8 to 14 at Gandhi Park*

The 21st Calicut Mango Exhibition 2014 organised by the Calicut Agri- Horticultural Society will be held from May 8 to 14 at Gandhi Park near the fourth railway gate in the city.

Vice-president of the Society P.V. Gangadharan told reporters here on Tuesday that the exhibition is being organised to introduce various types of mangoes from all over the country to the people of Kozhikode as well as to create awareness on the imitation varieties.

Various types of indigenous mangoes as well as the hybrid varieties will be on show at the expo. The noted varieties such as Alphonso, Kudadath, Banganampalli Malgovala and the native Chakkarakkutty besides rare varieties such as Banat Alphonso and Chinna Suvarnarekha, indigenous varieties such as Chandrakkar, Perakka Manga and Ammini, hybrid varieties such as H4, Mallina, H44 and H151 will be on the show. Jahangir, Himayuddin, Himapasand and Banishan, known for their association with the Mughal rulers, will also be a major attraction at the festival.

100 varieties

The exhibition will feature around 100 varieties of mangoes grown at the District Farm in Talipparamba. It will also include a wide collection of grafted mango saplings and vegetable seeds. All customers will be provided a pamphlet describing the way the saplings should be looked after.

The sale of the mangoes is carried out by the Agricultural Improvement Co-operative Society in Muthalamada, Palakkad. A mango-eating competition will be held at 4 p.m. on May 11, at the venue. Value-added products such as mango juice and ice cream will be on sale.

Member of the organising committee M.A. Jacob said the mangoes on show are not ripened using artificial methods and that the rates will be reasonable.

Secretary of the Society Thomas Mathew was also present.

BERHAMPUR

## **Odisha to augment food grain storage**

### *61 godowns to come up in 20 districts*

Several large food grain godowns will come up in 20 districts of Odisha. This was stated during a workshop held here on Monday.

The conference was attended by officials of civil supplies department, storage agents, millers, food grain transport contractors of Ganjam, Gajapati, Kandhamal districts along with experts from consultant agencies of the project.

According to authorities concerned, the new godowns would increase food grain storage capacity in the State by 1,55,000 metric tons. The project is being taken up as a joint venture of the Central and the State governments. At present it has been decided that 61 such projects would be taken up in 20 of the 30 districts in Odisha.

All these projects would be implemented through Public Private Participation (PPP) mode. But for ten years they would have to be rented out to the Odisha State Civil Supplies Corporation (OSCSC).

The godowns would be constructed in an area of 21,000 square feet and would have the capacity to store 2500 tons of food grain. At present most food grain storage units in the State are of 500 ton capacity.

According to an official release, six of the proposed godowns will come up in Ganjam district at Bhanjanagar, Patrapur, Surada, Khallikote, Jagannathprasad and Rangeilunda.

In Gajapati district, they will be established at Mohana, Kashinagar, R.Udaygiri and Paralakhemundi while in Kandhamal district they would be at Tikabali, Tumudbandh and Daringbadi. It has been decided that they would be located at panchayat samity headquarters or in the area within its five kilometre radius.

NEW DELHI, May 7, 2014

## Mother Dairy to keep an eye on procurement cost

Mother Dairy, the largest milk supplier in the Delhi NCR, on Tuesday said it was keeping a close watch on procurement costs, but did not specify whether it will hike prices or not.

“Mother Dairy aims at striking a good balance between the consumer interest and the producers’ interest. Regarding Delhi NCR, we are keeping a close watch on procurement prices and other input costs that finally impact the consumer price,” a Mother Dairy spokesperson said.

On May 3, the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), which sells milk under brand Amul, increased prices by Rs.2 per litre for all variants in Gujarat.

When asked whether the GCMMF would increase prices in other markets, including Delhi NCR, the GCMMF managing director R.S. Sodhi said, “We are holding the price as of now. Let us see.” The last time Mother Dairy raised its prices was on February 1. It increased its rates by Rs.2.

At present, Mother Dairy’s full cream milk in Delhi costs Rs.46 a litre, toned milk Rs.36 a litre, double-toned milk Rs.32 per litre.

Mother Dairy sells about 30 lakh litres milk per day in Delhi NCR. —PTI

## Water level

### Mettur:

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 32.25 feet on Tuesday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 694 cusecs and the discharge 1,000 cusecs.

TIRUNELVELI :

The water level in Papanasam dam on Tuesday stood at 32.55 feet. The dam had an inflow of 83.25 cusecs and a discharge of 104.75 cusecs. The level in Manimuthar dam stood at 61.35 feet. The inflow into the dam was six cusecs and the discharge was 200 cusecs.

### Kanyakumari:

The level in Pechipparai dam stood at 16.15 feet, 36.50 feet in Perunchani, 3.41 feet in Chittar 1, 3.51 feet in Chittar 11, 1.70 feet in Poigai and 43.47 feet in Mamabazathuraiyaru dam.

Chennai - INDIA

## Today's Weather



Cloudy

### Wednesday, May 7

Max 32° | Min 26°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 79

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:45

Sunset: 06:25

Barometer: 1009

## Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

### Thursday, May 8

Max 34° | Min 25°

## Extended Forecast for a week

Friday  
May 9



35° | 25°

Cloudy

Saturday  
May 10



36° | 27°

Partly Cloudy

Sunday  
May 11



38° | 26°

Partly Cloudy

Monday  
May 12



38° | 27°

Partly Cloudy

Tuesday  
May 13



39° | 27°

Partly Cloudy

# THE HINDU BusinessLine

## FinMin seeks special banking facility to pay subsidy dues to fertiliser firms

Wants Rs. 18,000 cr, as the amount set aside in the Interim Budget has been exhausted



## New Delhi

The Finance Ministry is likely to take a call on providing a special banking arrangement of Rs. 18,000 crore for fertiliser companies this week. This will help them get subsidy dues before the full Budget is presented in July.

“The subsidy allocated in the Interim Budget for the April-July period has already been exhausted, which is why the Fertiliser Ministry is seeking this special facility,” a senior Government official told *Business Line*.

Such an arrangement will ensure short-term credit from banks against the subsidy due to fertiliser companies which carries an interest rate of over 10 per cent. Eight per cent or equal to the yield on 10-year G Secs (Government Securities) will be paid by the Government, while the rest has to be borne by the companies.

This is the third consecutive year where the special credit facility is being made available to fertiliser companies.

However, the official said this year the situation is different as competition is heating up among banks to provide short-term credit, which in turn “will lower the overall interest liability.”

The official said the State Bank of India and Punjab National Bank were competing to provide such loans.

A special banking arrangement worth Rs. 5,000 crore was given to fertiliser companies in 2012-13, while two tranches of Rs. 5,500 crore and Rs. 9,000 crore each were made available in 2013-14.

The Interim Budget made a provision of Rs. 67,970.3 crore in the Budget for 2014-15. Out of this, Rs. 28,000 crore was provided for first four months (April-July,) for urea (imported and indigenous) and de-controlled fertiliser.

A change in the total amount is possible once the new Government presents its full Budget in July.

Meanwhile, the Fertiliser Ministry feels the total subsidy may touch Rs. 90,000 crore (including Rs. 10,000 crore on account of gas price revision) this fiscal.



The increase is also due to the change in fixed cost of urea. Earlier, the Government approved an increase in fixed cost by Rs. 150/tonne to Rs. 350/tonne. Since there is no revision in the selling price and the difference between cost and selling price is paid by the Government, the subsidy will go up.

However, the Ministry estimates that this is less than the industry's estimates of Rs. 1.07-lakh crore, which includes the carry-over from the last fiscal.

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***This is the third consecutive year where the special credit facility is being made available to fertiliser companies***

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## **Export demand subdued at Kochi tea sale**

### **Kochi :**

Prices of some varieties of tea increased at Kochi tea auctions last week on good demand. At sale no 18, the quantity on offer in CTC dust grades was 10,05,500 kg.

Following better demand, the market opened on a strong note. The popular marks and good liquoring teas were dearer by Rs. 3- Rs. 5 and more.

### **Resistance seen**

As the sale progressed, the market witnessed some resistance with prices being irregular and sometimes ruling easy. There was a subdued demand from exporters and was confined to medium and plainer teas.

With only 7,000 kg on offer in orthodox grades, primary grades were unsold due to low bids, while secondaries were sold at around last levels.

A small quantity of orthodox dust was absorbed by upcountry buyers and exporters. In best CTC dusts, PD grades quoted Rs. 103-118, RD varieties fetched Rs. 111-127, SRD ruled at Rs. 124-156, and SFD stood at Rs. 131-157.

The leaf sale also witnessed a spurt in prices with 1,08,500 kg on offer in orthodox grades. The market for good liquoring Nilgiri smaller brokens and Fannings was firm to dearer, while whole leaf and bolder brokens was irregular and sometimes easier.

It also witnessed some withdrawals.

Medium bolder brokens, tippy grades was firm to dearer. Whole leaf witnessed strong feature and appreciated with longer margins of Rs. 5-10 and sometimes more.

The quantity on offer in CTC grades was 69,000 kg. The market for high-priced brokens witnessed a correction and prices declined. Smaller brokens and Fannings were firm to dearer following quality.

## Cashew prices soften a tad in April

### **Kochi :**

The cashew market was steady last month with prices softening a tad for W240 and W320 at the lower end of the range. Prices ruled steady at the higher end of the range for forward positions. There was reasonable sale to many markets at both the ends of the range.

There was a pick up in the offtake in the Indian market but not much increase in prices, said market sources. The price range last fortnight was: W240 (\$3.50 to \$3.70); W320 (\$3.10 to \$3.30); W450 (\$2.90 to \$3.00); SW320 (\$2.95 to \$3.05); SW360 (\$2.75 to \$2.85); butts \$2.60; splits \$2.40 to \$2.50; and pieces \$1.55 to \$1.75 per lb (f.o.b).

Raw cashew decline

After firming up marginally in March, there was a decline in raw cashew nut prices in April. New trades have been limited as the kernel market has been slow. Current raw cashew prices for shipment are: Ivory Coast (between \$925 to \$950 a tonne c&f); Ghana (\$1,000. tonne); Benin (\$1,025 ); SEGABI (\$1,100 ).

## Spot sugar falls with futures

### **Mumbai :**

Sugar prices ruled weak on Tuesday tracking a Rs. 100 drop in the domestic futures market. Due to this, fair quality sugar was sold at the naka level at Rs. 100-120 lower on Tuesday. However, in Vashi, the drop in spot prices was limited to Rs. 10-20 on the heels of similar drop in mills rate. Ample stocks at the Vashi market kept stockists away from fresh bulk buying, said sources. Arrivals at the Vashi market were around 63-64 truckloads (each 100 bags) and local dispatches were 60-61 loads. On Monday evening, about 13-14 mills offered tenders and sold 38,000-40,000 bags at Rs. 10-20 lower at Rs. 2,970-3,130 ( Rs. 2,980-3,130) for S-grade, and Rs. 3,120-3,280 ( Rs. 3,150-3,300) for M-grade. Our Correspondent

## Erode turmeric drops with weak futures

### **Erode :**

Spot turmeric price decreased by Rs. 200 a quintal in line with the developments on the futures market.

“Prices decreased in the futures market traders who have orders from North India, on seeing the drop in futures market, quoted a lower price. Overall, there was a decrease of Rs. 200 a quintal,” said RKV Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said there no orders are expected from North India, but traders are keen to buy quality goods as they expect demand to emerge soon. On Tuesday, 8,700 bags of turmeric arrived for sale and 60 per cent of it was sold.

Due to the arrival of medium quality hybrid turmeric, prices decreased by Rs. 500 a quintal. Prices dropped sharply at the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, but the sale was encouraging as most of the produce was procured by stockists.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety turmeric was sold at Rs. 5,161-7,119 a quintal and the root variety Rs. 4,806-6,835.

### **Salem hybrid**

The finger variety turmeric was sold at Rs. 6,209-7,689, the root variety Rs. 5,896-7,269. Of the 2,120 bags that arrived for sale, 899 were sold.

At the Regulated marketing Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs. 6,499-7,419, the root variety Rs. 6,219-7,009. Of the the 1,025 bags on offer, 914 found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, finger turmeric was sold at Rs. 6,439-7,399 and the root variety at Rs. 6,039-6,939. All 1,226 bags put up for sale were picked up.

## **Chana turns sluggish on weak buying**

### **Indore, May 6:**

#### CHANA SLUGGISH ON WEAK BUYING

The sluggish trend continued in chana on weak buying with chana (kanta) on Tuesday declining to Rs. 2,800 a quintal. Chana (desi) ruled at Rs. 2,500-2,600 a quintal; chana (mausmi) at Rs. 3,100-3,400; Kabuli Bitki at Rs. 3,100-3,200; chana (vishal) at Rs. 2,700-2,800; and Kaktu at Rs. 3,100-3,200 a quintal. Compared with last week, chana is ruling Rs. 100 a quintal lower. Chana dal also ruled stable on subdued demand with chana dal (average) quoting at Rs. 3,300-3,325; chana dal (medium) at Rs. 3,400-3,425; while chana dal (bold) ruled at Rs. 3,550 a quintal. Dollar chana (chickpea) also witnessed a sluggish trend on weak domestic and export demand. In the physical market, dollar chana declined to Rs. 4,500-5,000 a quintal ( Rs. 4,800-5,500 last week), amid arrival of 5,500 bags in Indore against 17,000-18,000 bags in Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday. Our Correspondent

## **Sugar mills may owe farmers Rs. 12,000 cr for cane by end of crushing season**

With prices down, chances of cane price arrears getting cleared early seem remote

### **New Delhi :**

Sugar mills across the country are set to end the 2013-14 crushing season with cane arrears of over Rs. 12,000 crore.

Mills in Uttar Pradesh may end the crushing season (likely in June) with close to Rs. 7,800 crore arrears, followed by their counterparts in Karnataka with around Rs. 3,600 crore.

The delay in payments has irked cane growers in Karnataka who have demanded that the State Government confiscate sugar stocks and sell them to clear their dues.

“Payments due for the current season are about Rs. 3,400 crore. Including last year, the total arrears stand at around Rs. 3,600 crore. We also want the mills to pay interest of 15 per cent on outstanding payments for over 14 days,” a farmer leader said.

With the decline in sugar prices over the last fortnight, the chances of cane price arrears getting cleared early seems remote, industry sources said.

The build-up in cane arrears is attributed to the high cost of production, driven by higher cane price and lower-than-expected realisations. Though sugar prices rebounded from a five-year low in February this year, millers said it may take a while to recover.

Meanwhile, the Indian Sugar Mills Association said the output of the sweetener till April-end was down 3.45 per cent at 23.75 million tonnes, against the corresponding last year’s 24.6 million tonnes. About 80 factories were still crushing cane as of April-end, with the 2013-14 season almost coming to an end.

### **Sugar output**

In Maharashtra, the largest sugar producing State, output was down 2 per cent at 7.65 million tonnes, against 7.81 mt last year. About 15 factories were still crushing cane, mainly in the Kolhapur and Pune region. Sugar recovery averaged at 11.4 per cent during the current season.

Similarly, in Uttar Pradesh, production was 14 per cent lower at 6.41 mt against 7.48 mt last year.

About 10 factories were still in operation as on April-end, while the average recovery was marginally higher at 9.27 per cent against last year’s 9.18 per cent.

However, in Karnataka, sugar output was about 23 per cent higher at 4.17 mt against last year’s 3.4 mt, aided by an increase in recovery at 10.99 per cent.

ISMA said the delay in notifying the sugar exports incentive is also keeping millers in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu in uncertainty. Millers in these States hold stocks of about six lakh tonne of raw sugar as of March-end.

## **Mixed trend in spot rubber**

Spot rubber was mixed on Tuesday. Major counters remained unchanged in the absence of genuine buyers and sellers despite sharp fall in the domestic futures market.

Ungraded rubber declined marginally on ample supplies amidst low volumes. Sheet rubber closed steady at Rs. 139 a kg, according to traders.

The grade moved down to Rs. 139 ( Rs. 140) and Rs. 136 ( Rs. 137), respectively, according to the Rubber Board and dealers. May futures declined to Rs. 135.30 ( Rs. 139.29), June to Rs. 138.40 ( Rs. 142.12), July to Rs. 139.25 ( Rs. 143.33) and August to Rs. 139.01 ( Rs. 142.82) while the Rubber mini May futures weakened to Rs. 137.20 ( Rs. 139.29) and June to Rs. 139.50 ( Rs. 142.12) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) surrendered to Rs. 123.53 ( Rs. 127.24) at Bangkok. Spot rubber rates ( Rs. /kg) were: RSS-4: 139 (139); RSS-5: 136 (136.50); Ungraded: 131 (133); ISNR 20: 131 (131) and Latex 60%: 114 (114).

## **McLeod Russel hopes Assam tea output will recover**

### **Kolkata :**

McLeod Russel, the world's largest tea producer, is hopeful of a recovery in Assam crop during May-June if weather conditions improve in the days to come.

According to industry estimates, April tea production is down by 30-40 per cent in Assam due to an unusual dry spell. In a release issued on April 23, the Indian Tea Association expressed concerns over the crop prospects due to "drought conditions."

Kamal Kishore Baheti, CFO of McLeod, admits that April crop output is down. However, since April is not a major production season, it would be incorrect to project the annual crop estimates at this juncture. Tea production increased 6.5 per cent to 1,200 million kg in 2013. Though official estimates are not available, industry sources expect production to remain stagnant during January-March this year.

Higher production notwithstanding, there was no decline in tea prices in India in the last season.

This is in sharp contrast to major international markets such as in Kenya where tea prices are still ruling low due to over production in 2013.

"Prices are low in Mombassa (Kenya). We expect international prices to firm up in the next two to three months once the carry forward stock is extinguished," Baheti said.

## **Wheat may rule at current levels over the next few days**

### **Karnal :**

#### **WHEAT MAY RULE AT CURRENT LEVELS**

Dara wheat and flour prices may rule around the current levels on steady demand and ample stocks in the coming days, said trade experts. In the physical market, dara wheat was sold at Rs. 1,485-1,490 a quintal. Around 2,000 bags of wheat arrived and stocks were directly offloaded at the mills. Mill delivery was at Rs. 1,485 a quintal, while delivery at the chakki was at Rs. 1,490. A down trend was witnessed on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange. May contracts dropped by Rs. 4 and traded at Rs. 1,553 a quintal, with an open interest of 5,920 lots. The grain had touched a high of Rs. 1,560 earlier in the day. May contracts have some support at Rs. 1,552, while resistance is at Rs. 1,564. Our Correspondent

# Prices of rabi crops may rebound

Current downtrend is due to seasonal supply pressure; downside seen limited due to cyclical patterns

Harvesting of rabi crops is nearing completion and arrivals in mandis have peaked. Although unseasonal rains in February-end and early March delayed harvest this year, it picked up pace in the later part of March. While seasonal supply has put pressure on prices of most rabi crops, particularly chana, mustard and wheat, a further downside seems limited, considering the cyclical price patterns of these crops.

## Seasonal price patterns

Agricultural commodities tend to follow seasonal price patterns that are linked to growing and harvesting seasons. While deciding on the price trend, one should not miss out this significant feature of price determination.

According to the seasonality pattern, prices are usually at their bottom during the harvesting season due to supply pressure.

On the other hand, prices normally bottom out when arrivals peak and gradually start rising. However, in the years of surplus or deficit production, the price behaviour deviates from the normal course. In case of vast divergence of actual from expected supplies caused by vagaries of weather, these factors can have a distinct impact on seasonal price patterns.

As far as chana is concerned, sowing of this pulse crop takes place during October-December, while harvesting is done in January and continues till May. Accordingly, chana prices decline from February onwards and bottom out in May when arrivals from Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan reach their peak.

In the current scenario, the Government has estimated record chana output at 92 lakh tonnes this season to June, in the second advance estimates released in February 2014.

However, the unseasonal rains damaged some crop in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. But the extent of the loss is not huge; and thus output projections might be pruned. Supply side scenario looks normal for chana and we expect bottom fishing opportunity during mid-May once supplies start declining.

## Wheat, mustard

In the case of wheat, harvesting takes place during March-May and prices generally start moving southwards from February onwards. The Government starts procuring wheat from farmers at minimum support price in April, and consequently prices bottom during this period.

However, in the current season, wheat prices have moved against seasonality due to a host of factors. Since the beginning of the year, exporters have placed forward contracts for March-April-May delivery ahead of the wheat crop arrival from Russia, Ukraine, America and Australia.

Moreover, in February, domestic wheat prices were well supported by unseasonal rains in Rajasthan and parts of Gujarat which raised fears over delay in harvesting.

Added to this was the Ukraine-Russia crisis and mounting concerns over the health of the US winter-wheat crop.

With some correction in prices in March and early April, the north-ward journey in wheat remains intact. Price trend over the medium-term will remain positive, considering the strong domestic demand from private traders and millers.

As far as mustard is concerned, February-March is the peak arrival period, and therefore price of this oilseed generally remains under pressure in these two months. But in the current season, heavy rains affected harvesting and the moisture level increased substantially.

Prices remained at elevated levels even in February. With weather becoming clearer after mid-March across major growing belts in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, prices declined sharply thereafter.

Going forward, a downside trend in mustard seems to be limited with the yield of the standing crop being poor; arrival pressure will start diminishing early this season in the case of mustard seed.

At the current juncture, seasonality pattern points towards a gradual recovery for most rabi crops.

However, it is of prime importance to study these patterns, along with other important indicators affecting that particular commodity, as seasonal cycles alone may sometime misread the trend.

The author is the Associate Director of Commodities & Currencies at Angel Commodities Broking

## Business Standard

### It's milk price rise season

#### **Cost of production has gone up coupled with lower supply of milk during summer months**

Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation ([GCMMF](#)), a leading entity in the dairy sector (it owns the [Amul](#) brand) raised prices of milk by Rs 2 a litre in parts of the state earlier this week. Several dairies in the north and west are likely to follow.

Though, Chennai-based [Hatsun Agro](#), a leading private company in the sector, after having raised prices around a month and a half earlier, has ruled out any rise for now.

GCMMF raised prices from Sunday in the Ahmedabad and Saurashtra areas, saying other regions in the state would follow soon. R S Sodhi, managing director, said the cost of production had gone up, coupled with the lower supply of milk during summer months.

“In the last two to three months, we are already paying 10-12 per cent higher procurement price to

farmers, and if we compare to the year-before period, the prices are up around 18 per cent. Milk production is also down by around 25 per cent during the summer months," he said.

GCMF procures nearly 12 million litres of milk daily and sells around 4.5 million litres a day in Gujarat.

Vipin Gupta, managing director of Delhi-based Karnal Milk Foods, said: "Production of liquid milk is down around 30 per cent compared to the flush season, and there is a possibility of a price rise in the region in a week or two."

In western India, several dairies plan to meet and decide whether to raise prices in the near term. "We are planning a meeting in a week or 10 days. Production has already gone down, and procurement prices are up almost 30 per cent on a year-on-year basis," said Devendra Shah, chairman and managing director of Parag Milk Foods.

Maharashtra-based Mahanand Dairy says it is keeping a watch on the supply side. Explains V K Agnihotri, general manager, marketing: "We already raised prices in February. Some dairies in the region have also raised prices recently. We will consider raising prices if the supply goes down considerably. As of now, with skimmed milk powder exports down, and lesser demand of liquid milk with the closing of schools and colleges, the supply has more or less been able to meet demand so far."

Demand for value-added products such as yogurt and ice-creams, however, had gone up, he said.

In the south, however, supply has improved after a few rainy spells. "We are expecting arrivals to improve in the coming few days, as summer rains have come. Also, we had raised prices around a month and a half back. We have no plans of a price increase for the next two to three months," said R G Chandramogan, chairman and managing director of Hatsun Agro.

"Mother Dairy aims at a good balance between the consumer interest and the producers' interest. Regarding Delhi and the National Capital Region, we are keeping a close watch on procurement prices and other input costs," said a Mother Dairy spokesperson.



# Sugar output dips marginally



India produced 23.75 million tonnes of [sugar](#) till April-end in the 2013-14 sugar season that started in November, almost 3.57 per cent less than that of the corresponding period last year. Also, sugar dues accruing to farmers touched Rs 12,000 crore across the country, due to falling prices in the domestic market and high purchase price of sugarcane.

According to a statement issued by the Indian Sugar Mills Association ([Isma](#)), there is a remote possibility of the sugarcane arrears being cleared, as sugar prices have again started falling since the last fortnight.

Isma said measures initiated by the government to bailout mills and help them clear sugarcane dues such as interest-free loans, incentive on export of raw sugar are also not yielding the desired results due to official delays.

“The sanction and disbursement of the interest-free loans are slow and only about 50 per cent of the intended loans have been received by the mills, delaying clearance of farmers’ arrears,” ISMA said.

On the cash incentive given by the government to help mills export raw sugar, ISMA said the raw sugar production incentive and [exports](#) thereof had also not given the desired benefits to millers and farmers, when against the targeted export of 40 lakh tonnes, only about three-four lakh tonnes were exported.

“Delay by the government to announce the incentive rate for April–May is further harming the sector,” the body of millers said.

ISMA said, till April-end, Maharashtra produced 7.65 million tonnes of sugar, as against 7.98 million tonnes during the same period last year, while in Uttar Pradesh, around 6.41 million tonnes had been produced as against 7.48 million tonnes last year. Maharashtra along with Uttar Pradesh produce more than 80 per cent of the total sugar production in India.

The production, however, has been more than the last year's in Karnataka, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, the statement said. "Delay in sugar exports incentive notification is also keeping Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu millers in uncertainty, who still have raw sugar stocks of about six lakh tonnes, at the end of March 31 this year," ISMA said, adding that several export contracts, which were finalised with the expectation of Rs 3,300 per tonne of incentives are not getting executed.

ISMA said the delay in announcing the incentive for export of raw sugar for April-May is keeping Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu millers in uncertainty. They had raw sugar stocks of about 6 lakh tons at the end of March 31.

Export contracts finalised on the expectation of Rs 3,300 per ton as incentive are not being executed, burdening the domestic market with extra sugar, it added.

## Barley down 1.3% on ample supply



[Barley](#) prices dropped by Rs.19.50 to Rs.1,378.50 per quintal in futures trade today following offloading of positions by traders amid mounting stocks following higher supplies in spot markets.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#) counter, barley prices for most-active far-month July delivery contracts dipped by Rs.19.50, or 1.39% to Rs.1,378.50 per quintal, in an open interest of 1,130 lots.

Similarly delivery in current month, May contracts shed Rs.15, or 1.16% to Rs.1,320 per quintal, with an open interest of 3,120 lots, while delivery in June month contracts moved down by Rs.12,50, or 0.92% to Rs.1,347.50 per quintal, clocking an open interest of 10,590 lots.

Marketmen attributed fall in barley prices at futures trade to huge stocks following higher supplies but seasonal demand from consuming industries, particularly beer makers, capped the losses.

## Potato down 1.2% on higher supply



[Potato](#) prices fell by 1.21% to Rs 1,433 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators offloaded their positions, triggered by higher supplies from producing regions.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), potato for delivery in June fell by Rs 17.60, or 1.21% to Rs 1,433 per quintal in business turnover of 164 lots.

Similarly, the potato for delivery in May lost Rs 15.10, or 1.11% to Rs 1,351 per quintal in 119 lots.

Analysts said fall in potato prices was mostly due to offloading of positions by speculators, triggered by higher supplies from producing region against lower demand in the spot markets.

## Chana down 0.3% increased supply



[Chana](#) prices fell 0.30% to Rs 3,008 per quintal in futures trade today largely due to increased supplies in the spot markets against subdued demand.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange, chana for delivery in May shed Rs 9, or 0.30% to Rs 3,008 per quintal with an open interest of 69,980 lots.

Similarly, the commodity for delivery in June traded lower by Rs 8, or 0.26% to Rs 3,075 per quintal in 97,660 lots.

Market analysts said increased supplies in the spot markets from producing regions against low demand in the spot markets mainly put pressure on chana prices at futures trade. Speculators trimmed positions due to increased supplies from producing region against subdued demand in the spot market mainly influenced chana prices at futures

## Palm oil up 0.2% on good spot demand



[Crude palm oil](#) prices rose further by 0.20% to Rs 546 per 10 kg in futures market today as speculators enlarged their positions, taking positive cues from the spot market.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), crude palm oil for delivery in June gained Rs 1.10, or 0.20% to Rs 546 per 10 kg in business turnover of 5 lots.

Similarly, the oil for delivery in May edged up by 30 paise, or 0.05% to Rs 549.50 per 10 kg in 25 lots.

Analysts said speculators enlarged their positions on the back of good spot market demand against tight supplies and this mainly kept crude palm oil prices up at futures trade.

## Chilli down 2.6% on weak demand, adequate supply



Amid sluggish domestic demand and adequate supplies from producing regions, [chilli](#) prices fell further by 2.67% to Rs 9,398 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators trimmed positions.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange, chilli teja for delivery in June fell by Rs 258, or 2.67% to Rs 9,398 per quintal with an open interest of 1,290 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in July declined by Rs 218, or 2.19% to Rs 9,730 per quintal in 100 lots.

Analysts said offloading of positions by speculators due to weak demand in the spot market against adequate supplies from producing belts mainly put pressure on chilli prices at futures trade for the second-day.

## Cardamom up 0.5% as demand rises

**Analysts attributed gains in cardamom prices at futures trade to rising demand in the spot markets**



[Cardamom](#) prices moved up by 0.54% to Rs 984.50 per kg in futures trading today as speculators built up fresh positions following pick up in demand at the spot market.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), cardamom for delivery in May traded higher by Rs 5.30, or 0.54% to Rs 984.50 per kg in business turnover of 287 lots.

Analysts attributed gains in cardamom prices at futures trade to rising demand in the spot markets.

# THE INDIAN EXPRESS

## Crop-change plan to tide over late monsoon

The Indian Meteorology Department (IMD) predicting below-normal rain this year and the Centre for Research in Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA) forecasting a delayed monsoon in Maharashtra have prompted the authorities to keep a contingency plan ready.

Suggestions include farmers opting for crops that can give adequate yields if a delayed monsoon brings in less rain. P N Deshmukh, Deputy Director, Extension (Agriculture), said a contingency plan was needed for farmers. Agriculture universities — Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth, Rahuri, Marathwada Krishi Vidyapeeth, Parbhani, Punjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapeeth Akola and Dr Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth Dapoli — were asked to prepare area-specific plans. This assumes importance as 82 per cent of the 173.4 lakh hectares of cultivated land in Maharashtra are rain-fed.

Deshmukh said the plan was devised keeping in view monsoon failure, taking cropping cycle and crop and seed availability into account. "In case monsoon is delayed by 15 to 30 days, agricultural extension officers would advise farmers to go for crops that need less water," he said.

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Maharashtra usually receives 45 per cent of the monsoon in June. By July-August it often touches 100 percent. Often it exceeds the normal. Major sowing takes place in June in the state.

For districts in Western Maharashtra and Khandesh, bajra, tur and sunflower have been recommended instead of pulses. For Marathwada where pulses and groundnut are sown, bajra, soyabean, tur and sunflower have been recommended.

This would require 3115.2 quintals of bajra, 5,841 quintals of tur and 3,894 quintals of sunflower seeds for Western Maharashtra and Khandesh. Similarly, 5,066 quintals of bajra, 56,992.5 quintals of soyabean, 7,599 quintals of tur and 5,066 quintals of sunflower seed would be required for Marathwada.

Deshmukh said seed corporations and fertiliser companies have to be ready to meet the demand. "The revenue department would be roped in," he said.

## THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

### Rains Help Increase Water Storage Levels



The rain has brought some cheer to water managers and the trend of depletion of water has been reversed with inflow of additional water due to the rain during the last few days.

Metro Water officials maintain that the inflow of water to the reservoirs is still meagre and are pinning their hope on more rain.

The level of water in the reservoirs is higher than that recorded last year, when the total volume of water in Poondi, Cholavaram, Red Hills and Chembarambakkam was 2.955 tmc feet. The storage level now is above 3 tmc feet. And if one goes by the quantity of water present in Veeranam, water managers feel the city currently has somewhere around 3.9 to 4 tmc feet of water.

A senior Metro Water official said that this was made possible since Metro Water started implementing the contingency plan to ensure Chennai's thirst is quenched during the summer.

Metro Water has ramped up the supply from the two desalination plants in Nemelli, which was shut down for maintenance last month, and Minjur and added an additional tanker fleet to supply water.

A Metro Water official said that the city would be able to maintain a steady supply of water during the summer following two crucial meetings the Chief Minister had with officials. After the meeting the contingency plans were implemented. As per those plans, Metro Water has already made arrangements to have an additional 80 MLD of ground water.

Even the number of tankers has been increased. "Earlier we used to supply water in 2,400 to 2,500 tankers. Now we have 3,800 to 3,900 tankers, which supply water to the city," a Metro Water source said.

Metro Water heaved a sigh of relief with the availability of Krishna water, which has brought much needed relief to the Poondi reservoir. "We are getting it at the right time, when there is maximum vapourisation from the reservoirs," sources in Chennai Metro Water said.

Metro Water's contingency plan focuses on tapping ground water resources by drilling additional borewells and hiring more agricultural wells.