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THE HINDU

Agriculture official conducts review meeting

Take all-out measures to ensue that the benefits of the State Government's kuruvai package reached all sections of the intended beneficiaries in the delta region within the shortest possible time and without any delay, Agriculture Commissioner M. Rajendran emphasised here on Monday.

Addressing a review meeting on the implementation of the kuruvai package in delta districts with officials from the Department of Agriculture in Thanjavur, Tiruchi and Ariyalur districts here, he insisted that the time schedule to deliver the objectives of the kuruvai package were met. Mr. Rajendran said that Rs. 19.02 crore has been allotted to Thanjavur district to implement the package. Free transplantation of mat nurseries, supply of micro nutrients and the like would take care of the farmers' needs.

In Thanjavur district, while mat nurseries have been raised on 45 hectares to cover the target, more needed to be raised and it would be done shortly. Plantation had been completed on 413 hectares and the work would gather pace in the days ahead. There were adequate stock of agricultural inputs with cooperative societies and private dealers for the kuruvai season.

Thanjavur Collector N. Subbaiyan was present during the deliberations.

Later, he held a similar meeting with officials in Tiruvarur. Tiruvarur Collector M. Mathivanan was present.

Rally marks World Environment Day

The World Environment Day rally was flagged off by Collector Sajjansingh R. Chavan at a function held at Sethu Lakshmi Bai Government Higher Secondary School on Monday.

Flagging off the rally, Mr. Chavan said that 35 per cent of the district was covered with thick forest, hence, he called upon students to create awareness to save environment and avoid usage of plastic.

The rally that began from SLB Government Higher Secondary School went through Duthie Girls' Higher Secondary School and culminated at Home Church.

Over 500 students from SLB Government Higher Secondary School, Duthie Girls' Higher Secondary School and Home Church School participated in the rally.

Students took out the rally with the placards carrying the message of ``Plant a sapling in every house, safeguard waterbodies'' etc.

Earlier, Mr. Chavan planted saplings to mark the celebration at SLB Higher Secondary School ground in Nagercoil.

Chief Education Officer V. Jayakumar, Revenue Divisional Officer S. Madhiyazhagan, Director of Heal NGO Siluvai Vasthian and others participated.

The Bharavi Foundation working to safeguard environment organised a sapling planting programme on the campus of the Kasturba Middle School in Therur in the presence of District Forest Officer Vismiju Viswanathan, Assistant Conservator of Forest A. Gopal Das.

C. Shoba, Director, Bharavi Foundation, said that pungam and naval saplings were planted on the school campus and students were given a power point presentation on "safeguarding wild animals."

Assistant Director of Town Panchayat R. Muthukumar and others participated.

‘Butterflies of Kudankulam’ released

The Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project, as part of the World Environment Day celebrations, released a book titled 'Butterflies of Kudankulam' on Monday.

This packet-size publication that has been published under the Environment Stewardship Programme of Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL) in which KKNPP is also constituent, features 42 species of butterflies that are found in and around KKNPP site.

Speaking on the occasion, Site Director, KKNPP, R.S. Sundar said the World Environment Day, which was initiated by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972, was being celebrated on June 5 every year to highlight the importance of conserving nature.



Site Director of KKNPP R. S. Sundar watering a sapling to mark the World Environment Day at Kudankulam on Monday.

With ‘Go Wild For Life’ as this year's theme, the global body had requested everyone to spread a word about the protection of wildlife.

“The KKNPP that produces electricity in an environmentally benign way through nuclear technology has been celebrating the World Environment Day every year to raise awareness of the importance of protecting environment by involving everyone here so as to create awareness among the population working at KKNPP site and also living in Anu Vijay Township, Chettikulam,” Mr. Sundar said.

The KKNPP staff and students from Kudankulam Government Higher Secondary school planted 200 trees in its township and also at project site.

In the programme organised at Anu Vijay Township, the employees, their family members, officials of Environment Survey Laboratory and students and staff of Atomic Energy Central School planted about 50 saplings in the AECS school area. Subsequently, a mass plantation of about 105 tree saplings by the students and staff of Government Higher Secondary School, Kudankulam was organised at KKNPP Units 1 and 2. Another 50 trees were planted along the site selected for constructing KKNPP's 3rd and 4th reactors.

“In last one decade KKNPP has developed a lush green cover as part of its greenbelt programme and hence the plant site now houses about 28,000 trees of different sizes while its township has about 16,000 trees,” Mr. Sundar noted.

P. A. Pillai, Project Director, KKNPP 3 and 4, Jayakrishnan, Chief Construction Engineer, G. Ashok, Chief Engineer, M. S. Suresh, Chief Engineer and D. Thanasekaran, Additional General Manager (HR) and Environment Survey Laboratory (ESL) officials were present.

Call to solve water problem

Around 100 persons, including 70 women, laid a siege to the Sankarankovil municipal office with empty pots on Monday after drinking water supply to their houses remained affected for the past 18 days.

The protesting women from wards 1, 3 and 5 of Sankarankovil municipality said drinking water supply to their area, getting drinking water from the Thiruvalluvar Park overhead tank, remained affected for the past 18 days and the people had been consequently forced to buy 20-litre drinking water bottles from private suppliers.

Hence, the municipal administration should take immediate steps for solving this crisis, the petitioner said.

Sanakarankovil municipality officials said the quantity of water being pumped from the Tamirabharani Combined Drinking Water Scheme and Manur Combined Drinking Water Scheme had dwindled sharply while there was no water supply from the Kottamalaiyar Combined Drinking Water Scheme during

this summer. Hence, the municipality had to share the available water among the consumers, which was the prime reason behind the problem.

“We’ve promised the women to ensure drinking water supply at least once a week,” the officials said.

Disaster management meeting held

With the likely onset of southwest monsoon soon, the district administration has geared up precautionary measures to tackle floods, if any, during the rainy season. All low-lying areas and flood-prone areas should be identified and banks of river and bunds of tanks strengthened. Silt in supply channels should be removed to prevent flood in low-lying areas, said Collector N. Venkatachalam.

Addressing a disaster management meeting here on Monday, he said that 12 rain gauges in the district should be maintained properly. Rainfall should be calculated at 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. on daily basis in all weather rain points in the district and should be uploaded in the official website. All supply channels connecting tanks and rivers and storm water channels should be desilted. The Highways officials too were alerted to keep the workforce ready to remove uprooted trees and electric posts on highways, if any.

Flood damage, if any, should be briefed to the district administration immediately. The public may contact toll free number 1070 to pass information about flood damage, he said.

The Collector advised health officials to keep life-saving drugs, vaccines and preventive drugs ready. Schools and marriage halls near flood-prone areas should be identified to evacuate people and harbour them there in case of an emergency. Fisheries Department was also advised to keep boats and swimmers ready to help people in flood-affected areas. Revenue officials should create awareness among people near waterbodies of disaster management and to react during an emergency, he added.

Steep fall in sesame seed prices

The steep fall in the price of 'ellu' (sesame seeds) in Gangavalli and surrounding areas is a matter of concern for the farming community.

Gangavalli is a major production centre for sesame seeds in the district. The farmers managed good sesame seeds crop during harvesting in the months of April and May. The farmers marketed the white and black sesame seeds through the State-regulated markets functioning in Tiruchengode and other neighbouring towns in Namakkal district.

While the black sesame seeds were marketed at Rs. 93 per kg in the beginning of the month of May, the price of white sesame seeds remained at 80 per kg.

The sesame seeds market suffered a fall in the price during this month all of a sudden much to the shock of the farming community.

The black sesame seeds are fetching a price of Rs. 67 per kg at present, the while sesame seeds are being sold at Rs. 60 per kg. Farmers expect the price to stabilise this weekend.

Farmers being encouraged to cultivate cashew in Shivamogga dist.

Arecanut yield is likely to decline by around 40 per cent in the district this year: Official

In the wake of the drying up of arecanut plantations in the perennially drought-hit and arid regions of the district caused by the prolonged dry spell this year, the farmers here are being motivated to take up the cultivation of cashew nut, said M. Vishwanath, Deputy Director, Department of Horticulture. He was speaking at a meeting held to review the progress of implementation of development works of various departments in the city on Monday.

Mr. Vishwanath said that owing to the prolonged dry spell and decline in the ground water level, arecanut trees in 570 hectares of land have dried up in the district.

Owing to moisture stress, the inflorescence part of the flower in the tree is not opening up properly. This has adversely affected the pollination process. In

addition to this, the dropping of arecanut flowers and immature nuts is also being witnessed.



Taking stock:Subhash Chandra, district in-charge Secretary, addressing officials at a review meeting in Shivamoggaon Monday.— Photo: VAIDYA

The arecanut yield is likely to decline by around 40 per cent in the district this year, he said.

Better suited to climate

As cashew crops require less water and are suited to the climate in the region, the farmers from arid and perennially drought-hit areas have been asked to take up cashew cultivation. They will be extended financial assistance under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme for developing cashew plantations, he said.

More borewells needed

Subash Chandra, district-in-charge Secretary, who chaired the meeting, directed the officials to dig public borewells to meet drinking water needs and under the

GangaKalyana scheme after seeking suggestions from hydrogeological experts. CEO of Zilla Panchayat Rakesh Kumar was also present.



Temperatures in Madhya Pradesh to surge by 2045, increasing drought conditions: Study

Increase in temperature will have "profound implications" on agriculture and water resources in this state located in central India where agriculture remains a major sector and source of livelihood.



The study shows how India is stuck in a global problem, which is more severe for developing and poor countries as they lack resources to handle it. (Source: AP)

Madhya Pradesh is likely to see 1-1.2 degree Celsius rise in temperature by 2045, bringing more droughts that will pose “enormous” pressure on agriculture, water resources, infrastructure and energy sectors, according to a study.

The study, “Climate Change in Madhya Pradesh: Indicators, Impacts, and Adaptation,” done jointly by faculty member Veemal Mishra of IIT-Gandhinagar and Amit Garg of IIM-Ahmedabad says that with rise in

temperatures, the “frequency of severe, extreme, and exceptional droughts” will increase.

“Increased warming under the projected future climate may lead to more frequent, severe, and wide-spread droughts during the monsoons season. The frequency of hot days, hot nights, and heat waves is projected to increase in the state,” it says.

Amit said, “This rise in temperature is much beyond the target set by 194 countries as per the Paris Climate Agreement to keep global temperature rise below 2 degree Celsius by the end of the century from pre-industrial level. But here we have temperatures breaching the target much quickly, which is a cause of concern.”

“The study shows how India is stuck in a global problem, which is more severe for developing and poor countries as they lack resources to handle it. Madhya Pradesh has not created the problem but will have to suffer severely,” he said.

“We can conduct similar study for other states as well. While projected changes under the future climate may vary from one state to another, warming as observed on large scale is prominent and could lead to increased frequency of heat waves, hot days and hot nights in future,” said Mishra.

The authors had in December published a similar study covering India, in which they concluded that the country as a whole will experience 1-1.5 degree Celsius increase in temperature by 2045, which could have profound implications for agriculture and crop production.

It said that India would require over USD 1 trillion in the next 15 years to adapt to the adverse impacts of the climate change.

The researchers took into account data of rainfall and temperature between 1951 and 2014 that is available with the India Meteorological Department, and the outcome of appropriate global climate models downscaled to Madhya Pradesh to make these projections. As per the study on Madhya Pradesh, with rising temperature, droughts in the state are projected to become “more frequent...and the state may witness a 2-3 fold increase in the number of hot days in near-term (2016-2045) and 4-6 times in the mid-term (2046-2075)....

“The frequency of heatwaves is projected to increase to 1-2 heat waves every year under the projected future climate in most of the districts in the state.”

Increase in temperature will have “profound implications” on agriculture and water resources in this state located in central India where agriculture remains a major sector and source of livelihood, the study says.

The change in climate may impact agriculture output of the state, where about 75 per cent of the total population in rural areas is engaged in agriculture-related activities, it said.

Agriculture plays an important role in economy and socio-economic conditions of the state where sugarcane, soybean, wheat and ‘jwar’ are among important crops grown over a total sown area of 15,000 hectares.

“A significant increase in the number of hot days, hot nights, droughts and extreme precipitation may pose enormous pressure on agriculture, water resources, tourism, infrastructure and energy sectors,” the authors say.

More effective local level policies will be required which has to be framed after a “careful analysis of the natural resources and impacts of climate change on various sectors”, they say.

Disconnect with nature giving rise to mental illnesses in urban areas

Reduced engagement with nature in urban areas is partly responsible for rising statistics of mental illness.

“As we build bigger cities, we are not aware of how much and how fast we are undermining our connection to nature.” (Source: Thinkstock Images) According to researchers, mental illnesses and mood disorders are more common in urban areas partly due to reduced access to nature.

“There is an enormous amount of disease largely tied to our removal from the natural environment,” said Peter Kahn, Professor at the University of Washington.



In a perspective piece published in the journal *Science*, the authors discussed the growing tension between an arguably necessary role urban areas play in society and the numbing — even debilitating — aspects of cities that disconnect humans from the natural world.

“Kids in large cities are growing up having never seen the stars. Can you imagine that having never in your life walked under the vastness of the star-lit sky and there is that feeling of awe, restoration and imaginative spark?” Kahn said.

“As we build bigger cities, we are not aware of how much and how fast we are undermining our connection to nature and wilder nature which is the wellspring of our existence,” he pointed out.

In the article, Kahn and co-author Terry Hartig at Uppsala University in Sweden pointed to research that shows the emotional and mental strain cities can have on people.

“I am willing to say there is a naturalness we can achieve in cities, but not at the scale we are building or at the scale we are headed with many cities,” Kahn said.

“There is nothing natural about a megacity,” he noted.

There are several steps cities can take to introduce nature into the urban core — including requiring buildings to have windows that open to allow fresh air and natural light, incorporating more rooftop gardens and urban agriculture and creating spaces within and around buildings to touch, see and smell native plants.

But these remedies first require an appreciation for nature in urban centres as well as space, resources and collective will to make these changes.

Kahn also argues that it is more than just introducing nature into urban areas.

People should be willing to interact with these elements using more of their senses in order to experience physical and psychological benefits of nature, as well as to shift the collective baseline toward better understanding and appreciation of the natural world.

For example, looking at an office plant on the windowsill might be soothing, but having a place to sit in the grass on a lunch break and perhaps even sink one's feet into the soil are sensory experiences that can deepen a person's engagement with nature.

Therefore, thoughtfully designed cities with nature can offer both the stimulation and energy of an urban area and meaningful interaction with a psychologically restorative natural environment.

“Thus, cities designed well, with nature in mind and at hand, can be understood as natural — supportive of both ecosystem integrity and public health,” the authors noted.

Jalyukta Shivar to be extended to all 40,000 villages across Maharashtra

The Jalyukta Shivar Yojna, which was till date meant for the 25,000 villages reeling under drought, will now be extended to the remaining 15,000 villages for scientific water conservation.

IN A bid to enable farmers to cultivate at least two to three crops along with short term sowing of vegetables for sustainable agriculture practices, the state

government has decided to extend its flagship project Jalyukta Shivar Yojna in all villages.

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The initiative comes after gram panchayats from across all villages in the state approached the government asking the CM to help them out as well.

With this new move, the chief minister has turned his focus on making all the 40,000 villages self-reliant when it comes to water.

Efforts will be made to create smaller water bodies, which would tap every drop of rain water.

Fadnavis said, “We are working towards making farming economically sustainable.

Through some policy initiatives and corrections, we want to bring down the investments in farming to help the small and marginal farmers. Reduction in investment cost coupled with higher yield and financial returns would make farming more economical.”

On Sunday, during his visit to Kati village in Yavatmal district in Vidarbha, he said, “We should maximise the Jalyukata Shivar works designed as per the requirements of every village to enable us to tap every drop of rain water.”

hindustantimes

Punjab govt asks farmers to opt for maize

An agriculture department spokesperson said this would help farmers come out of the vicious circle of debt. (HT Representative Image)

The Punjab government has urged farmers to cultivate maize as an alternative crop to the water-guzzling paddy. For this, the government will provide subsidy on maize seed, which will be available at Rs 84 per kg.

An agriculture department spokesperson said this would help farmers come out of the vicious circle of debt. He said varieties of maize seed giving higher yield were being promoted by the government.



The spokesperson said the farmers could get maize seed by contacting district chief agriculture officer, block agriculture officer or agriculture development officer.

He said the subsidy for maize seed, pesticides and insecticides would be directly credited to the farmer's bank account under the direct benefit transfer (DBT) scheme. He said the farmers have been advised to sow maize on the field beds to get higher yield.

Temperatures in MP to surge by 1-1.5 degrees by 2045: Study

People take a boat ride at Upper Lake in Bhopal. (Praveen Bajpai/HT File Photo)

Madhya Pradesh is likely to see 1-1.2 degree Celsius rise in temperature by 2045, bringing more droughts that will pose "enormous" pressure on agriculture, water resources, infrastructure and energy sectors, according to a study

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“Increased warming under the projected future climate may lead to more frequent, severe, and wide-spread droughts during the monsoons season. The frequency of hot days, hot nights, and heat waves is projected to increase in the state,” it says.

Amit said, “This rise in temperature is much beyond the target set by 194 countries as per the Paris Climate Agreement to keep global temperature rise below 2 degree Celsius by the end of the century from pre-industrial level. But here we have temperatures breaching the target much quickly, which is a cause of concern.”

“The study shows how India is stuck in a global problem, which is more severe for developing and poor countries as they lack resources to handle it. Madhya Pradesh has not created the problem but will have to suffer severely,” he said.

“We can conduct similar study for other states as well. While projected changes under the future climate may vary from one state to another, warming as

observed on large scale is prominent and could lead to increased frequency of heat waves, hot days and hot nights in future,” said Mishra.

The authors had in December published a similar study covering India, in which they concluded that the country as a whole will experience 1-1.5 degree Celsius increase in temperature by 2045, which could have profound implications for agriculture and crop production.

It said that India would require over USD 1 trillion in the next 15 years to adapt to the adverse impacts of the climate change.



All you wanted to know about minimum support prices

The Centre recently announced an increase in the minimum support prices (MSP) for pulses, oil seeds and paddy for the upcoming kharif season. While the MSP hike was modest for cereals, pulses saw a 375 to 425 a quintal hike from last year's levels.

What is it?

In theory, an MSP is the minimum price set by the Government at which farmers can expect to sell their produce for the season. When market prices fall below the announced MSPs, procurement agencies step in to procure the crop and 'support' the prices. The Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs announces MSP for various crops at the beginning of each sowing season based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). The CACP takes into account demand and supply, the cost of production and price trends in the market among other things when fixing MSPs.



The FCI and Nafed help the Centre procure select food crops with the help of the States. Procured farm products are kept in government warehouses and distributed through the PDS and various food security programmes. Currently, there are 20-plus crops that have an MSP announced for them every year before the beginning of the kharif and rabi seasons. Gram, tur, urad, moong and lentil under pulses and cereals and oilseeds have official MSPs.

Why is it important?

Price volatility makes life difficult for farmers. Though prices of agri commodities may soar while in short supply, during years of bumper production, prices of the very same commodities plummet. MSPs ensure that farmers get a minimum price for their produce in adverse markets. MSPs have also been used as a tool by the Government to incentivise farmers to grow crops that are in short supply.

But while this sounds good in theory, it has not worked perfectly in practise. Yes, India's foodgrain crops have seen sharp increases in acreage in the last few years and the Centre's buffer stocks now exceed the minimum norms in rice and wheat, after many years of increases in MSP. The government's central pool

carries 39.8 million tonnes (vs. norm of 20.1 mt) of rice and wheat, up from 24.27 mt in 2010-11.

In pulses and oilseeds though, increases in MSP have not proved as effective with production struggling to keep up with demand. This appears to be because actual procurement by Central agencies has been low. Nafed, for instance, procured only 3.21 per cent of kharif oilseeds in 2014-15 season. There is thus a call for the Centre to walk the talk by procuring sizeable quantities at the MSP.

Why should I care?

Trends in MSP impact the availability of key food crops and food inflation. MSP is also good tool to ensure that farmers produce what is most lucrative for them, given consumer demand. Therefore, you should be pleased that the Centre is pegging up MSPs for crops such as pulses and oilseeds which are in short supply and holding back on MSPs for foodgrains.

In recent years, there have been large-scale imports of pulses and oil seeds into India with high costs adding to Consumer Price inflation. Unless the Centre increases State procurement of these crops, the bias towards rice, wheat and sugarcane (where minimum prices are fixed by States) may continue. Pulses are a cheap source of protein for the masses.

The bottom line

As you pay, so shall you reap.

A weekly column that puts the fun into learning

Poor offtake crushes soyabean

Soya oil in Indore mandis traded lower on weak physical demand and global cues with refined soya being quoted at 635-40 for 10 kg, while soya solvent ruled at 600-605. Compared to last week, soya oil is down 5.

Besides sluggish domestic demand, pressure of imported oils has also reined in the uptrend in soya oil. Soyabean ruled flat at 4,000 a quintal on weak physical demand and decline in soyameal export. Similarly, plant deliveries of soyabean were quoted lower at 4,000 a quintal on slack demand in soya oil from crushers. Soyameal on the spot fetched 35,000-36,000 a quintal.

Soyameal exports dip

Meanwhile, export of soyameal from the country this year has declined by 75.9 per cent, says a report released by the Soyabean Processors Association of India.

According to SOPA Chairman Davish Jain, export of soybean meal in May was reported at 10,404 tonnes compared with 43,173 tonnes in May 2015, showing a decrease of 75.9 per cent. On a financial year basis, export between April 2015 and May 2016 stood at 22,700 tonnes (89,562 tonnes).

Monsoon will hit Kerala in 48 hours: Met



Heavy rain likely for two weeks along West Coast region

The India Meteorology Department has extended to Friday the outlook for heavy (7-11 cm) to very heavy (12-20 cm) rainfall at one or two places in Kerala as the countdown for the monsoon onset continues.

Conditions continue to be favourable for the onset of the South-West monsoon over the Kerala coast during the next 48 hours, it said in a bulletin.

The 24 hours ending Monday morning witnessed rain at most places in the State and at many places in Lakshadweep.

Stations reporting heavy rain included Vaikom (8 cm) and Piravom (7 cm). Other chief amounts of rainfall (in cm) are: Mancompu-6; Taliparamba and Kurudamannil-5 each; and Kayamkulam and Aluva - 4 each.

The Met has retained the outlook for strong westerly winds with speeds occasionally reaching up to 55 km/hr along and off the Kerala coast and over the Lakshadweep archipelago for the next 24 hours.

There is an emerging model consensus on the probability of heavy-to-very heavy rain along the West Coast for the first two weeks after the onset of the monsoon.

A cyclonic circulation over East-central Arabian Sea off Karnataka should keep the pot boiling here as it breathes in moisture-laden winds from the Arabian Sea and pumps rain along the coast.

Heading north

Projections by most models suggest that the circulation will carry with it the 'leading edge' of the monsoon further into the north into Goa, Konkan-Mumbai, and adjoining Gujarat.

On the other side, a persisting cyclonic circulation over the West-central Bay of Bengal off the Andhra Pradesh and South Odisha coast will keep the monsoon in good stead over the East Coast.

The presence of a cyclonic circulation on each side of the peninsula will ensure that most parts of the interior peninsula too will stay wet, with heavy rain forecast over Central Maharashtra and its neighbourhood.

Storm watch

The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts is of the opinion that the cyclonic circulation off the Andhra Pradesh coast may intensify as it moves north-east towards the Gangetic West Bengal coast.

The agency has put a watch for intensification of the system into a minor storm by Saturday before it washes ashore over the Bangladesh coast the next day.

A storm tracker of the US Climate Prediction Centre agrees with this scenario but indicates a 'splash-over' at the Gangetic West Bengal coast instead of Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, ideal conditions for the onset and advance of the monsoon are evolving elsewhere with seasonal heat-wave conditions getting anchored over North-West India. A severe heat wave has been reported from isolated places over Rajasthan, while it was only slightly cooler over Gujarat and West and East Madhya Pradesh during the 24 hours ending on Monday morning.

The extent to which the North-West heats up will determine how low atmospheric pressure can get so that the monsoon winds can blow in from a high-pressure area in the Arabian Sea/Bay of Bengal.

Spot rubber toes futures, gains

Spot rubber improved tracking the moderate gains in domestic futures on Monday. RSS 4 flared up to 133 (130) a kg, according to traders.

The grade closed firm at 130.50 (130) and 127.50 (127) respectively, according to Rubber Board and dealers.

June futures firmed up to 132.81 (128.95), July to 133.73 (129.06), August to 133.29 (128.33) and September to 131.75 (127.97) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.



RSS 3 (spot) weakened to 102.17 (102.53) at Bangkok.

June futures closed at ¥159.8 (99.98) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates / kg were: RSS-4: 133 (130); RSS-5: 129 (126); Ungraded: 112 (109); ISNR 20: 113 (110.50) and Latex (60% drc): 95 (94).

Coonor tea prices at 3-month high

The average price at Sale No: 22 of Coonor Tea Trade Association (CTTA) auctions rose to 98.39 a kg from 97.92 in the previous week. This was the highest price in the last three months.

Darmona Estate's Pekoe Dust, auctioned by Paramount Tea Marketing, topped the Dust tea auction and the entire CTC market when GLT Enterprises bought it for 219 a kg. Darmona Estate's Red Dust, auctioned by Paramount Tea Marketing, followed at 212.

These were the only CTC grades which crossed 200/kg mark. In CTC Leaf market, Darmona Estate's Broken Orange Pekoe topped at 171 followed by Darmona Estate's Broken Orange Pekoe Fannings at 167. In the orthodox market, Kodanad topped at 252 a kg followed by Chamraj 230, Havukal and Karibetta 223 each.

Chana soars on supply crunch, firm demand



Importers cut shipments on stock-limit fears; expectations of an MSP hike may hold prices firm

Chana prices on the NCDEX hit a new high on Monday with the near month June contract touching 6,440 a quintal from 6,250 recorded on Friday.

Chana for delivery in July was up 3 per cent at 6,475 (6,306) a quintal.

In fact, chana prices have been rising for the last few days on the back of lower supply and firm demand in the spot market.

This apart, the government decision to hike the minimum support price for kharif pulses has led to expectations that chana, a rabi crop, would receive the same benefits.

Veeresh Hiremath, Research Analyst, Karvy Comtrade, said import price of chana has also been rising steadily with the landed cost hitting ₹ 57 a kg against ₹ 50 in May.

In the last four months, import prices have gone up by ₹ 2,000 a quintal, he added.

Demand strong

The demand for chana has remained strong over the last few days with Ramzan starting on Monday followed by Hindu festivals, he added. Most importers have cut shipments on fear of the Centre imposing stock limits to bring down prices.

Incidentally, the government's plan to build a buffer stock of pulses has boosted prices in the international markets.

MSP expectations

The minimum support prices for the kharif pulse of tur was hiked by ₹ 425 a quintal to ₹ 5,050, while that of moong and urad was marked up by ₹ 375 to ₹ 5,225 and ₹ 5,000, respectively, to encourage farmers to grow more pulses and reduce the country's dependence on imports.

“Traders expect the government to carry forward the largesse to the rabi crop and if the monsoon turns out to be good till September as widely expected it would improve the moisture leading to better chana coverage and higher output. Until then chana prices will remain firm,” said Sunil Deshpande, a pulses trader.

Rising imports

To meet the growing demand, the country imports over 70 per cent of its chana requirement from Australia, which is turning out to be a costly proposition.

The Centre is also weighing the option to import chana from Myanmar by entering into a long-term contract.

Chana imports touched about 10.31 lakh tonnes in the last financial year — up 146 per cent compared to financial year 2014-15.

India, the largest producer, consumer and importer of pulses, produced 17.5 million tonnes of pulses and imported another 5.2 million tonnes.

Business Standard

Licensing of Bt cottonseed to hamper growth of GM seeds: ICRA

India embraced its first GM crop in 2002 by Monsanto and now Bt Cotton now covers 95% of total area devoted to cotton

Price controls and compulsory licensing guidelines, as enacted in case of Bt Cottonseed, are likely to have an adverse impact on the long-term growth of the Genetically Modified (GM) seeds industry, ICRA said in a report.

ICRA opined that while the Cottonseed Price (Control) Order, 2015, aims to notify the maximum selling price for Bt Cottonseed along with the trait-value, the Licensing and Formats for GM Technology Agreement Guidelines, 2016, if implemented, require the technology providers to compulsorily give license to all applicants.

These steps are likely to have an adverse impact on the technology providers, it pointed out.

This, at a time when the roll-out of more GM crops has been slow, would hamper the adoption of GM crops in the country, it added.



"While the current situation of financial stress on cotton farmers may justify some intervention on part of the government, a more conducive regulatory environment is critical for the long-term growth of the GM seeds," ICRA AVP, Corporate Sector ratings, Harsh Jagnani said.

India embraced its first GM crop in 2002 with the commercialisation of Bt Cottonseed developed by Mahyco Monsanto Biotech (India).

Bt Cotton now covers 95% of total area devoted to cotton.

However, no other GM crop has been approved since then, notwithstanding the roll-out of field trials to assess the bio-safety of GM crops in 2009.

ICRA said, at such time, controlling the GM seeds licensing of technology providers may further restrict research and development of GM crops in the country.

India with its fairly low seed replacement ratio and a higher proportion of extant varieties in its commercial seed portfolio can ill-afford to lower the research spends, it added.

Going forward, ICRA said, growth lies in promoting research for development of GM seeds for new crops- both by public and private technology providers and according timely approvals for commercialisation of new varieties.

TERI and IFFCO Kisan Sanchar to partner for improving farmer livelihood

The partnership will provide bio-based products such as pesticides and fertilisers, and create awareness about efficient use of natural resources among farmers



TERI's DG Dr Ajay Mathur (left) and IKSL's CEO Sandeep Malhotra

TERI (The Energy and Resources Institute) and IFFCO Kisan Sanchar Limited (IKSL) have forged an alliance to educate and train farmers about latest farming and energy-efficient technologies aimed at improving their livelihood. As per the memorandum of understanding (MoU), signed by two sides on June 2, 2016, the objective of the partnership is to empower farmers and people living in rural India with pertinent and high quality information and services through affordable communication network in a sustainable manner.

Dr Ajay Mathur, director general, TERI, commented, “The TERI-IFFCO Kisan Sanchar Ltd partnership will provide bio-based products such as pesticides and

fertilisers, and awareness about efficient use of natural resources to farmers in order to support increased productivity with increased sustainability.

This will enhance the livelihoods and the quality of life of over one billion Indians who depend on agriculture.”

The partnership is based on TERI’s expertise in developing knowledge based sustainable solutions in the field of agriculture and rural electrification, with the aim of mitigating impact of climate change and promoting efficient use of natural resources.

While IKSL has extensive experience in broadcasting informal messages to rural communities, this is the first time that the organisation will venture into enlightening rural households as part of its mandate.

In this, IKSL finds an appropriate partner in TERI, which works with the underlying philosophy of implementing solutions at the grass root level to provide proof of concept and scale up solutions that work.

Sandeep Malhotra, CEO, IKSL, said, “We are relying on the technology developed by TERI to provide the kind of support that will empower the farmer, and disseminate that research knowledge through our platforms.

We hope to synergise on each other’s strengths. This is a great opportunity, and we hope to deepen this partnership further by exploring more areas for collaboration.”

IKSL, a subsidiary of IFFCO (Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited), works with the mandate to empower rural India by providing voice and text based alert, advisories and information for farmers to make informed decisions.

Every day, it provides customised voice and text advisories to farmers in local languages free of cost.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Nine new crops by IGKV to be grown for commercial use

Nine new varieties of crops developed by Indira Gandhi Agricultural University (IGKV) Raipur have been notified for commercial use across India.

AN IGKV spokesman said Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) at New Delhi has notified varieties of paddy, flax seed, soybean, 'kutki', peas and pulse variety- urad, certifying them as quality seeds .

Badshah Bhog selection-1, Dubraj selection-1, Tarun Bhog Selection-1,

Vishnu Bhog Selection-1, Chhattisgarh Zinc Rice-1 (all paddy),

Chhattisgarh Flaxseed-1, Chhattisgarh Soyabean-1, Chhattisgarh Kutki-2,

Indira Peas-1, and Indira Urad-1 are the varieties proposed for cultivation.

Chief minister Raman Singh, agriculture minister Brijmohan Agrawal and Indira Gandhi Agriculture University vice-chancellor Dr SK Patil congratulated scientists and other staff of genetics and plant breeding, plant molecular biology department and biotechnology department for this achievement.

IGKV officials said the university has developed 22 new varieties of 15 different crops last year.

These varieties were approved in the state seed sub-committee meeting.

Later, 22 new varieties were sent for notification to Central Seed Sub-Committee.

Deputy director general (Crop Science) of Indian Agricultural Research Council, New Delhi, Dr JS Sandhu chaired a meeting and notified nine out of 22 varieties for quality seed production.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Punjab urges farmers to grow maize instead of paddy, provides subsidised seeds



A spokesperson of the agriculture department said the move is aimed at pulling the debt-ridden peasantry of the state out of the vicious cycle of wheat-paddy cultivation.

CHANDIGARH: Punjab government has urged farmers to cultivate maize instead of the water-guzzling paddy . The state is providing subsidy on maize seed at the rate of Rs 84 per kilogram.

A spokesperson of the agriculture department said the move is aimed at pulling the debt-ridden peasantry of the state out of the vicious cycle of wheat-paddy cultivation. He said the government is promoting varieties of maize seed that produce higher yield.

He said that maize seed of Lakshmi-333 variety is available to the farmers at Rs 168 per kg, DKC-9125 at Rs 220, DKC-9140/II8017 at Rs 225, PAC-751 at Rs 210, LY-558/4558 at Rs 190, PMH-2255 at Rs 179, TX-369 at Rs 180, P-3396 at Rs 265, P-3401 at Rs 375 and PMH-1 at Rs 175.

'Licensing of Bt cottonseed to hamper growth of Ind GM seeds'



MUMBAI: Price controls and compulsory licensing guidelines , as enacted in case of Bt Cottonseed , are likely to have an adverse impact on the long-term growth of the Genetically Modified (GM) seeds industry, ICRA BSE -0.59 % said in a report.

ICRA opined that while the Cottonseed Price (Control) Order, 2015, aims to notify the maximum selling price for Bt Cottonseed along with the trait-value, the Licensing and Formats for GM Technology Agreement Guidelines , 2016, if implemented, require the technology providers to compulsorily give license to all applicants.

These steps are likely to have an adverse impact on the technology providers, it pointed out.

This, at a time when the roll-out of more GM crops has been slow, would hamper the adoption of GM crops in the country, it added.

"While the current situation of financial stress on Cotton farmers may justify some intervention on part of the government, a more conducive regulatory environment is critical for the long-term growth of the GM seeds," ICRA AVP, Corporate Sector ratings, Harsh Jagnani said.

India embraced its first GM crop in 2002 with the commercialisation of Bt Cottonseed developed by Mahyco Monsanto BSE -0.27 % Biotech (India).

Bt Cotton now covers 95 per cent of total area devoted to cotton.

However, no other GM crop has been approved since then, notwithstanding the roll-out of field trials to assess the bio-safety of GM crops in 2009.

ICRA said, at such time, controlling the GM seeds licensing of technology providers may further restrict research and development of GM crops in the country.

India with its fairly low seed replacement ratio and a higher proportion of extant varieties in its commercial seed portfolio can ill-afford to lower the research spends, it added.

Going forward, ICRA said, growth lies in promoting research for development of GM seeds for new crops- both by public and private technology providers and according timely approvals for commercialisation of new varieties.

Compulsory licensing guidelines as enacted in case of Bt Cottonseed to impact GM seeds industry: ICRA



India embraced its first GM crop in 2002 with the commercialisation of Bt Cottonseed developed by Mahyco Monsanto Biotech (India) Private Limited.

KOLKATA: ICRA expects that price controls and compulsory licensing guidelines, as enacted in case of Bt Cottonseed are likely to have an adverse impact on the long-term growth of the Genetically Modified (GM) seeds industry.

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These steps are likely to have an adverse impact on the technology providers. This, at a time when the roll-out of more GM crops has been slow, would hamper the adoption of GM crops in the country.

Says Mr. Harsh Jagnani, AVP, Corporate Sector ratings,

"While the current situation of financial stress on cotton farmers may justify some intervention on part of the government, a more conducive regulatory environment is critical for the long-term growth of the GM seeds."

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At such time, controlling the GM seeds licensing of technology providers may further restrict research and development of GM crops in India.

India with its fairly low seed replacement ratio and a higher proportion of extant varieties in its commercial seed portfolio can ill-afford to lower the research spends.

ICRA notes that the way forward lies in promoting research for development of GM seeds for new crops- both by public and private technology providers and according timely approvals for commercialisation of new varieties.

ICRA notes that the public sector (comprising Indian Council of Agricultural Research and State Agricultural Universities) breeding programs have been a major source of germplasm and finished in-bred lines to many private breeding programs in the past.

Thus, public investments in research efforts assumes greater importance in the era of GM crops, especially in addressing concerns regarding the harmful environmental / health impact, and concentration of pricing power with the private sector.

ICRA believes that expanding the pool of GM crops and allowing more technology providers to operate could create healthy competition in the market and lead to fair pricing of license fees such as Trait Fee on the basis of market forces, thereby alleviating the primary concern of the policymakers from GM seeds.

Mr. Jagnani concludes: "The institutional structure governing agricultural research and policy; and biosafety framework plays an important role in advancing the implementation of GM technology.

Certain aspects such as state-level approvals for field trials and in-ordinate delays in commercialisation of GM products are potentially limiting factors for the growth of the sector.

While there is a need to protect the interests of small and marginal farmers, the regulations should aim at creating an enabling environment to promote healthy competition in the market which would ensure fair pricing of trait fees."

Temperatures in Madhya Pradesh to surge by 1-1.5 degrees by 2045: Study

Madhya Pradesh is likely to see 1-1.2 degree Celsius rise in temperature by 2045, bringing more droughts that will pose "enormous" pressure on agriculture, water resources, infrastructure and energy sectors, according to a study

AHMEDABAD: Madhya Pradesh is likely to see 1-1.2 degree Celsius rise in temperature by 2045, bringing more droughts that will pose "enormous"

pressure on agriculture, water resources, infrastructure and energy sectors, according to a study



The study, "Climate Change in Madhya Pradesh: Indicators , Impacts , and Adaptation," done jointly by faculty member Veemal Mishra of IIT-Gandhinagar and Amit Garg of IIM-Ahmedabad says that with rise in temperatures, the "frequency of severe, extreme, and exceptional droughts" will increase.

"Increased warming under the projected future climate may lead to more frequent, severe, and wide-spread droughts during the monsoons season. The frequency of hot days, hot nights, and heat waves is projected to increase in the state," it says.

Amit said, "This rise in temperature is much beyond the target set by 194 countries as per the Paris Climate Agreement to keep global temperature rise below 2 degree Celsius by the end of the century from pre-industrial level. But here we have temperatures breaching the target much quickly, which is a cause of concern."

"The study shows how India is stuck in a global problem, which is more severe for developing and poor countries as they lack resources to handle it. Madhya Pradesh has not created the problem but will have to suffer severely," he said.

"We can conduct similar study for other states as well. While projected changes under the future climate may vary from one state to another, warming as observed on large scale is prominent and could lead to increased frequency of heat waves, hot days and hot nights in future," said Mishra.

The authors had in December published a similar study covering India, in which they concluded that the country as a whole will experience 1-1.5 degree Celsius increase in temperature by 2045, which could have profound implications for agriculture and crop production.

It said that India would require over \$1 trillion in the next 15 years to adapt to the adverse impacts of the climate change.