

18.07.2017

BusinessLine

Depression in Bay, to sustain wet climes over East, Central India



A monsoon depression has materialised over North-West and adjoining West-Central Bay of Bengal off the coast of North Andhra Pradesh and Odisha coasts this morning.

The prevailing active monsoon conditions over East India, Central India and adjoining North Peninsular India is expected to get a further boost as a result.

OVERNIGHT RAIN

Already, heavy to very heavy rainfall has been reported overnight over Odisha, Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Marathawada, Madhya Maharashtra, Konka and Goa.

India Met Department (IMD) expected the depression to cross between Gopalpur and Puri in Odisha tonight. It has initially forecast a west-northwest course for system movement into land.

It has forecast rain ranging from heavy to very heavy to extremely heavy at various places over South Odisha and North Andhra Pradesh coast today.

Heavy to very rain has also been forecast for Konkan, Goa, Chhattisgarh, North Odisha and Telangana while it will be heavy over Vidarbha, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya

Maharashtra, Marathwada, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Coastal and South Interior Karnataka.

NO MAJOR CHANGE

Fishermen have been advised not to venture off and along the Odisha and North Andhra Pradesh coasts. Squally winds of up to 45 km/hr and gusting to 55 km/hr have been warned of here.

Weather outlook for tomorrow doesn't show any major change except that the heavy rain belt could enter East Madhya Pradesh and orient further towards Central and adjoining West India.

The initial track for movement of the system suggests that it could land up over Gujarat and South-West Rajasthan, bringing to bear the second consecutive round of heavy rain into the region.

The North-Eastern States as well as parts of the South Peninsula are expected to benefit, though the heavy rain belt is seen skipping Kerala and Tamil Nadu at least for the time being.

No policy decision yet on GM mustard crop: Centre to Supreme Court



The Centre today informed the Supreme Court that so far it has not taken any policy decision on the commercial release of Genetically Modified (GM) mustard crop.

A bench comprising Chief Justice J. S. Khehar and Justice D. Y. Chandrachud considered the statement of Additional Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, that the

government is considering various aspects of the matter and has invited suggestions and objections on the commercial roll-out of GM crops.

The bench granted the government one week's time to apprise it as to by when it will take a "well-informed and well-intentioned" policy decision on the roll-out.

The apex court had on October 17 last year extended the stay on the commercial release of GM mustard crop until further orders.

The court had restrained the commercial release of the crop for 10 days on October 7, 2016.

The court had asked the Centre to seek public opinion on such seeds before releasing it for cultivation purposes, even as government approval is awaited.

Mustard is one of India's most important winter crops, which is sown between mid-October and late-November.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for petitioner Aruna Rodrigues, alleged that the government was sowing the seeds in various fields and said the bio-safety dossier has to be put on the website, which has not been done yet.

Alleging that field trials were being carried out without conducting the relevant tests, he had sought a 10-year moratorium on them. Bhushan said a Technical Expert Committee (TEC) report has pointed out that the entire regulatory system was in shambles and a 10-year moratorium should be given.

Rodrigues had filed the plea seeking a stay on the commercial release of Genetically Modified (GM) mustard crop and prohibition of its open field trials.

He had also urged the court to prohibit open field trials and commercial release of Herbicide Tolerant (HT) crops, including HT Mustard DMH 11 and its parent lines/ variants as recommended by the Technical Expert Committee (TEC) report.



Nitish Kumar wants plan for management of sewage water in Bihar

Bihar CM Nitish Kumar instructed officials to prepare a plan for management of sewage water so that it can be utilised properly, an official statement said. He said the government is giving importance to compost farming.



Bihar CM Nitish Kumar (File photo)

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Monday instructed officials to prepare a plan for management of sewage water and said it can be used in irrigation to augment agriculture. Kumar was holding a meeting with state urban development minister Maheshwar Hazari, chief secretary Anjani Kumar Singh and officials of the department to take feedback on the progress of work under different schemes, which are part of his “seven resolves” of good governance.

Urban development department minister, Chief Secretary Anjani Kumar Singh, Development commissioner Shisir Sinha and Principal Secretary of the department Chaitanya Prasad were present in the meeting during which detailed presentation was give to the CM on progress of different schemes.

Kumar instructed officials to prepare a plan for management of sewage water so that it can be utilised properly, an official statement said. He said the government is giving importance to compost farming. “Sewage water can be utilised for irrigation purpose,” he said.

Discussions were held on the progress of urbanisation in Bihar, schemes for providing drinking water, sewage facility and toilet to every household in the state, which are part of the “seven resolves” adopted by the grand alliance government for good governance, the statement said. The meeting also discussed the Metro project for Patna, installing energy efficient street light and arrangements for removal of garbage, it said.

Good news: Heavy rain brings down vegetable prices in Mumbai



The prices of cauliflower dropped by half – Rs40 a kg – compared to Rs80 last week, while prices of green peas came down to Rs100 a kg from last week’s Rs160 a kg.(File photo)

While traffic snarls and train disruptions owing to heavy rain may have hassled Mumbaiites, here’s some good news – the downpour has brought down the vegetable prices.

The prices of cauliflower dropped by half – Rs40 a kg – compared to Rs80 last week, while prices of green peas came down to Rs100 a kg from last week’s Rs160 a kg. The rates of tomatoes, too, have dropped to Rs80 a kg from last week’s Rs100 a kg.

Shankar Pingle, former director, Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC), said, “Heavy rain over the past two days brought down the prices.”

Rajesh Kori, a vegetable vendor at Lalbaug, said, “In monsoon, there is a danger that the veggies may get spoilt, so we sell it at lower prices if there is a drop in business.”

Also, heavy rain disrupts traffic, in turn affecting the supply chain. With the supplies reaching the market late, vendors have no choice but to sell it cheaper so they don’t rot.

The price of coriander too dropped to Rs20 a bundle compared to Rs40 last week. Onions and potatoes, however, continued to be priced at Rs16-Rs 20 a kg.

“The prices rose rapidly this month and vegetables became too costly in the past few days,” said Manisha Parmar, a housewife from Parel.

Maharashtra stares at losses of 200cr as tur dal prices dip

Mumbai city news: The state, which has bought 15.38 lakh quintal of tur dal stock from farmers and will buy another 10 lakh quintal soon, is staring at losses of more than Rs200 crore



The state, which has bought 15.38 lakh quintal of tur dal stock from farmers and will buy another 10 lakh quintal soon, is staring at losses of more than Rs200 crore as the prices of the pulse drops in the market.

The government is now forced to decide quickly about what to do with this stock.

To help farmers, the state decided to procure 15.38 lakh quintal of tur dal from them at the minimum support price of Rs5,050 a quintal, after the Centre stopped procurement in April (the Centre bought 51.5 lakh quintal). The state also recently announced it would procure 23 quintals of tur dal lying at procurement centres.

For months now, the state has been tapping various options to dispose of the 15.38 lakh quintal, for which it has already paid more than Rs750 crore. Among the options it has, the government is considering auctioning the stock through the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), sell it at retail outlets or to other states.

“We had a meeting with big retailers to sell tur at wholesale rate. They insisted the product be supplied at Rs65 to Rs70 a kg. We will now check the cost of milling and transportation.

Even if retailers agree to buy, their requirement is just 50,000 quintal, a fraction of our stock,” said an official from the state’s marketing department.

He said even if they try to sell to other states, the sale would not be more than 1.5 lakh quintal and will not resolve the crisis. “We may have to sell in the open market at a much lower rate. This may lead to losses of Rs200 crore,” he said.

Bijay Kumar, principal secretary, agriculture and marketing department, said, “We are also keeping an eye on the monsoon and production in other states and countries like Myanmar. While selling stock, we will also have to take care of balance between demand and supply. We can wait for the higher prices to avoid the losses.”

Israeli help for developing four hydroponic farms in Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand will develop four hydroponic farms - to be known as ‘Kamalphonic’ - on experimental basis with help of Israel to promote aqua farming in the hill state



Hydroponic farming is the system of growing food in water without the use of soils.(REUTERS)

Uttarakhand will develop four hydroponic farms - to be known as ‘Kamalphonic’ - on experimental basis with help of Israel to promote aqua farming in the hill state, irrigation minister Satpal Maharaj said on Monday.

Hydroponic farming is the system of growing food in water without the use of soils. “We will call it ‘Kamalphonic’ farm as lotus is also grown naturally on water,” said Maharaj.

The irrigation department has already began work to create infrastructure for the four farms in Dehradun, Pauri, Chamoli and Almora districts, he said.

“The farms will be set up with the help of Israeli agricultural experts. These are completely aquatic farming that don’t require earth to grow crops or plants,” the minister said.

“It can help hill farmers to get better yields in terms of quantity as well as quality. We have small land holdings in hill areas and hydroponic farming can support farmers take up vertical cropping with water storage facilities on the base of every stair.

The minister said the irrigation department would create and maintain the hydroponic farms as a pilot project to help the agriculture and horticulture departments to take up and promote the new pattern of farming specially in hills, where size of farmland was small and per unit area yield was low.

Irrigation secretary Anand Bardhan said: “This (new system) can open a gateway for new mode of farming in the state and lead to augment farmers’ income by many folds.”

Hydroponic farming is an Israeli agricultural technique based completely on circulating water that carries all essential macro and micro nutrients needed by plants.

Business Standard

Finance panel may be asked to suggest ways to deal with states' farm crises

Commission to help states in making recommendations towards fiscal prudence

The 15th Finance Commission (FFC) might be asked to suggest ways of providing more fiscal space and resources for states to deal with agricultural crises. The terms of reference and composition of the commission are being decided and could be finalised by October.

Business Standard has learnt the FFC could be told to study the impact of drought and price crashes due to oversupply on farmers and agricultural income. And, suggest how states could deal with such issues without breaking their fiscal limits. There have been large-scale protests by farmers across the country.

Government buying of pulses falls 86% short of target

Nafed blames buffer limit and price fall for poor performance



After a big success during the earlier kharif season, government agencies have failed in pulses procurement in the ongoing rabi marketing season, missing their target by 86 per cent.






Data compiled by the government-owned grain procurement agency, Food Corporation of India (FCI), showed that the only nominated agency, National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (Nafed), procured only 19,779 tonnes of masur (red gram) as on July 3, against the target of 100,000 tonnes. And, 51,059 tonnes of chana (Bengal gram), against the procurement target of 400,000 tonnes. Respectively, 19.8 per cent and 12.8 per cent of the rabi marketing target.

Worried, the food ministry has extended the MSP (minimum support price) operation by three weeks for pulses. “The government has set a buffer limit of two million tonnes for both kharif and rabi seasons, which is almost achieved. So, the ministry initially set the procurement target of 500,000 tonnes, later reduced to 400,000 tonnes. We were advised to go slow on pulses procurement for rabi, as farmers in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka continue to bring kharif tur (red gram) to mandis even after closure of the season. The government directed state agencies to procure more tur, resulting in a slowdown in chana and masur procurement. Since the government has extended procurement time by three weeks, we have time to procure more,” said Sanjeev Chadha, managing director of Nafed. Earlier, the ministry had asked Nafed, FCI and the Small Farmers’ Agribusiness

Consortium, all government owned, to purchase kharif pulses at the MSP. The three procured 1.47 mn tonnes, about 55 per cent more than the target of 950,000 tonnes fixed by the government. Nafed itself procured 67 per cent more than the target of 665,000 tonnes of the three leading pulses – moong, urad and tur.

PROCUREMENT WHEEL

Kharif pulses ('000 tonnes)

Pulses	Target	Achievement	Achievement percentage (%)
Moong	250	219.84	87.94 
Urad	100	88.58	88.58 
Tur	600	1,166.04	194.34 
Total	950	1,474.47	155.21
Rabi			
Masur	100	19.78	19.78 
Chana	400	51.06	12.76 
Total	500	70.84	14.17

Source: Food Corporation of India

Note: Figures for kharif season are a cumulative of all agencies – FCI, NAFED and SFAC – involved and up to April 22; figures for rabi only the Ministry of Consumer Affairs' assigned procurement to Nafed and of up to July 3

A senior FCI official attributed the low procurement figure to the prevailing prices of these pulses in spot mandis. “Chana is selling currently at above the MSP. So, why will any chana farmer sell their produce to the government agency for less? But, masur is quoted at below the MSP. So, perhaps Nafed is slow in buying,” said the official. “FCI is not involved in procurement of rabi pulses. The ministry is directly looking after pulses procurement,” said Rajat Sharma, deputy general manager (procurement), FCI.

Price is a factor which prompted farmers to hold on to their produce.

“We calibrated the procurement for pulses that are quoted above MSP. Since the Cabinet had given us a mandate to create a buffer of two mn tonnes, which we almost achieved; our target for rabi was reduced again to 200,000 tonnes. Also, farmers are bringing lower quantity of pulses to mandis in anticipation of price rise in the future,” said Chadha.

Faced with a sharp increase in the prices of pulses two years earlier, the government started procurement for direct intervention in case of a re-occurrence of this.

Sugar prices up on supply crunch, rising demand

Sugar ready M-30 and S-30 prices up by Rs 100 to end at Rs 4,150-4,300 and Rs 4,140-4,290/quintal



Sugar prices climbed up by Rs 100 per quintal at the wholesale market in the national capital on Monday following considerable fall in supplies amid heavy buying by stockists.

Marketmen said negligible arrivals from mills due to blockage and diversion of roads in view of ongoing "Kanwar- yatra", sparked by strong buying by stockists and bulk consumers, supported the upside in the sweetener prices.

Sugar ready M-30 and S-30 prices jumped up by Rs 100 to end at Rs 4,150-4,300 and Rs 4,140-4,290 per quintal.

Mill delivery M-30 and S-30 too traded higher by Rs 40 each to conclude at Rs 3,690-3,900 and Rs 3,680-3,890 per quintal.

In the millgate section, sugar Dhanora and Chandpur hardened by Rs 80 each to Rs 3,860 and Rs 3,800, while Dhampur rose by Rs 75 to Rs 3,800 and Sakoti by Rs 70 to Rs 3,800 per quintal.

Sugar Budhana, Thanabhavan, Simbholi and Shamli also strengthened by Rs 65 each to Rs 3,835, Rs 3,830, Rs 3,880 and Rs 3,810, while Khatuli, Asmoli, Doral and Nazibabad advanced by Rs 50 each to Rs 3,880, Rs 3,850, Rs 3,830 and Rs 3,715 per quintal.

Following are today's quotations (in Rs per quintal)

Sugar retail markets: Rs 45.00-50.00 per kg.

Sugar ready: M-30 Rs 4,150-4,300, S-30 Rs 4,140-4,290.

Mill delivery: M-30 Rs 3,690-3,900, S-30 Rs 3,680-3,890.

Sugar millgate (including duty): Mawana Rs N.Q., Kinnoni Rs 3,900, Asmoli Rs 3,850, Dorala Rs 3,830, Budhana Rs 3,835, Thanabhavan Rs 3,830, Dhanora Rs 3,860, Simbholi Rs 3,880, Khatuli Rs 3,880, Dhampur Rs 3,800, Ramala Rs 3,710, Anupshaher Rs 3,690, Baghpat Rs 3,730, Morna Rs 3,720, Sakoti Rs 3,800, Chandpur Rs 3,800, Nazibabad Rs 3,715, Modinagar N.Q., Shamli 3,810 and Nanota 3,710.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

New rules hit agriculture credit societies

Primary agricultural credit societies (PACS) in the state are facing a crisis as the new rules issued by the Reserve Bank does not allow them to do financial transactions over Rs 20,000 by cash. Also, the income tax department is adamant on charging tax deducted at source (TDS) on interest payment and has moved the Supreme Court in this connection challenging the high court verdict.

"Though we somehow managed the crisis during the demonetisation, the situation has worsened after RBI issued new regulations. Our business has been affected," said district secretary of Kerala Primary Cooperative Societies' Association (KPCSA) K Narayanan. In the cooperative societies, the main business is loan, including gold loan, and in many cases it would be to the tune of a few lakhs. With RBI's new rule, such transactions are impossible and PACS are in crisis, he said.

When the government said the details of people who had Rs 25 lakh or more as deposit had to be submitted, primary cooperative banks did it but nothing fraudulent in this connection has come to the light, he said, adding that the rural economy will be affected if regulations and restrictions are imposed beyond a limit.

Now, PACS are lobbying to get a licence to do financial transactions in the same manner as district cooperative and urban banks. KPCSA district president V Kunhikrishnan said their association is planning a statelevel meeting on July 25 to decide the future course of action regarding TDS.

"When the banking sector is ruled by a few monopolies, we survive on small-time deposits and loans. Now, we are being denied even that freedom. We have to fight to survive in this field because we play a major role in sustaining the rural economy," he said.