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Pepper contract receives good response: NCDEX

NCDEX said the re-launched pepper contract has evoked a good response over the last couple of days, with a healthy build-up in open interest.

The pepper contract, launched on Monday after almost five years, registered a total volume of 41.66 crore, with 871 tonnes traded. The open interest stood at 169 tonnes on Thursday, said Sarat Mulukutla, Chief, Commercial Segment, NCDEX.

NCDEX has added Hassan as an additional delivery centre for the contract in Karnataka, where production has picked up in recent years. Karnataka accounts for about 45 per cent of India's output of 55,000 tonnes. Kerala also has a similar share.

(This article was published on July 27, 2017)

North stays wet, South still dry



Scorecard: Monsoon rainfall June 1- July 27

	Actual (mm)	Normal (mm)	% Departure
East & North East	697.2	735.6	-5
North West India	304.4	257.7	18
Central India	502.7	445.1	13
South Peninsula	297.0	350.9	-15
All India	432.3	415.3	4

Focus shifts to rainfall in August

The weakening of Wednesday's depression was the only sign of relent on another hyperactive monsoon day in North India today. But this may not bring much relief to the drenched West and Central India since the 'low' is still capable of generating rain as it moves slowly towards Gujarat and Rajasthan.

This is in direct contrast to the scenario in the southern half of the country, where persistently dry conditions have ruled most of the Met subdivisions.

July, the rainiest month, has failed to deliver as the monsoon prepares to enter the second half. The focus will now shift to the outlook for August, normally the second rainiest.

July accounts for 32 per cent of the total monsoon rainfall. August yields 28 per cent and September 23 per cent. At 17 per cent, June is the least productive.

Indications are that the first week (beginning Tuesday next) would leave generally drier conditions over most parts of the country. This is the consensus outlook from the India Met Department (IMD) and the US Climate Prediction Centre.

Pacific storms

The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts hints that a string of storms, including a powerful typhoon brewing in the North-West Pacific, may usurp the Indian monsoon during this period.

Here, monsoon flows will be pulled across the South Peninsula and around the peninsular tip into the Bay of Bengal before being directed to feed into the Pacific storms.

First typhoon of season

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology said that typhoon 'Noru', which raced to the south-east of Japan last week, had marked the beginning of the season in the North-West Pacific.

This is only the second time since 1950 that the first typhoon of the season materialised in the North-West Pacific this early, the Bureau said.

India has begun to reverse 50-year-dry spell: MIT study



‘North central region seeing much wetter pattern, with stronger monsoons over the last 15 years’

Monsoon has strengthened over north central India in the last 15 years, researchers from the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) have said, indicating a reversal in the general perception that the region has dried up in over a decade.

Chien Wang, a senior research scientist in MIT’s Department of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences, the Center for Global Change Science, co-authored the study with Qinjian Jin, a postdoctoral researcher in the Joint Programme for the Science and Policy of Global Change, on Indian Monsoon was published yesterday in Nature Climate Change. “The Indian monsoon is considered a textbook, clearly defined phenomenon, and we think we know a lot about it, but we don’t. Here, we identify a phenomenon that was mostly overlooked,” said Chien Wang.

The study said heightened monsoon activity has reversed a 50-year drying period during which the monsoon season brought relatively little rain to northern and central India. Since 2002, the researchers have found, this drying trend has given way to a much wetter pattern, with stronger monsoons supplying much-needed rain, along with powerful, damaging floods, to the populous north central region of India.

A shift in India's land and sea temperatures may partially explain this increase in monsoon rainfall. The researchers note that starting in 2002, nearly the entire Indian subcontinent has experienced very strong warming, reaching between 0.1 and 1 degree Celsius per year. Meanwhile, a rise in temperatures over the Indian Ocean has slowed significantly, it said.

Indian Ocean warming slows

“Climatologically, India went through a sudden, drastic warming, while the Indian Ocean, which used to be warm, all of a sudden slowed its warming,” Wang said. “This may have been from a combination of natural variability and anthropogenic influences, and we are still trying to get to the bottom of the physical processes that caused this reversal,” he said in a statement.

Scientists had previously observed that, since the 1950s, the Indian monsoons were bringing less rain to north central India - a drying period that didn't seem to let up, compared to a similar monsoon system over Africa and East Asia, which appeared to reverse its drying trend in the 1980s.

“There's this idea in people's minds that India is going to dry up. The Indian monsoon season is undergoing a longer drying than all other systems, and this created a hypothesis that, since India is heavily polluted by manmade aerosols and is also heavily deforested, these may be factors that cause this drying. Modelling studies also projected that this drying would continue to this century,” Wang wrote.

Reversal of dry spell

In their research, Wang and Jin found that India has already begun to reverse its dry spell. The team tracked India's average daily monsoon rainfall from 1950 to the present day, using six global precipitation datasets, each of which aggregate measurements from the thousands of rain gauges in India, as well as measurements of rainfall and temperature from satellites monitoring land and sea surfaces.

Between 1950 and 2002, they found that north central India experienced a decrease in daily rainfall average, of 0.18 millimetres per decade, during the monsoon season. To their surprise, they discovered that since 2002, precipitation in the region has revived, increasing daily rainfall average by 1.34 millimetres per decade.

Wang and Jin believe the current strong monsoon trend is a result of higher land temperatures in combination with lower ocean temperatures. Wang noted that ocean cooling could be a result of the natural ebb and flow of long-term sea temperatures. India's land warming on the other hand, could trace back to reduced cloud cover — particularly at low altitudes — in recent years. The possible reason for the reduced cloud cover could be in response to an increase in anthropogenic aerosols such as black carbon or soot, which can simultaneously absorb and heat the surrounding air preventing the formation of clouds. However, Wang is doubtful about the same, stating, "These aerosols have been around even during the drying period, so there must be something else at work. This raises a lot more questions than answers, and that's why we're so excited to figure this out".

(This article was published on July 27, 2017)

Centre plans to procure 37.5 million tonnes of rice

The Government plans to procure 37.5 mt of paddy in the current kharif marketing season, beginning October, an official release said on Thursday.

The target is 3.15 mt more than the 34.35 mt the government procured in the previous kharif season.

The paddy procurement targets for different States were set during a meeting of state food secretaries on Thursday, the statement said.

Punjab, with a target of 11.5 mt, tops the list in procurement targets. Following suit is Chhattisgarh which is to procure 4.8 mt. Among other States that will witness heavy procurement are Uttar Pradesh (3.7 mt), Haryana (3 mt), Odisha (3 mt), Andhra Pradesh (2.5 mt) and West Bengal (2.3 mt).

With most rice growing states getting good South-West monsoon rains this year, rice sowing has picked up momentum. Farmers have so far sown paddy in 17.7 million hectares till July 21.

As of July, rice stocks in the Central pool stood at 21 mt.

(This article was published on July 27, 2017)

Crops damaged, vegetable prices skyrocket in Kolkata

The price of pointed gourd, which had earlier been Rs 20 to Rs 25 per kg, is now Rs 40. The price of papaya has also gone up to Rs 30 per kg, while earlier it was Rs 20 per kg.

With a large portion of south Bengal inundated due to heavy rains, and crops getting damaged in the process, the prices of vegetables have gone up in Kolkata.

“At this time of the year, most vegetables come from Burdwan, which has been badly affected by flood. The present crops have been damaged, and prices will continue to rise till cultivation of new crops, which happens during Durga Puja. As a result, prices of vegetables will be high till Durga Puja,” said a member of Hatibagan Bazar Byabsayi Samiti advisory committee, Abhijit Saha, to The Indian Express.

Saha also said procuring vegetables from wholesale markets has not been easy in recent days. “We are not getting enough vegetables from wholesale markets. Farmers who have already stored the vegetables are unable to send them due to the flood,” he added.

The price of tomatoes is hovering around Rs 90 to Rs 100 per kg, rising from Rs 60 to Rs 70 a few days earlier. The price of brinjal (eggplant) has gone up to Rs 40 to Rs 50 per kg, while earlier it was around Rs 20 to Rs 30. The price of cucumber went up to Rs 60 per kg, which vegetable sellers had earlier sold at Rs 30 per kg.

“During monsoon season, the prices of vegetables get higher, and there was no exception this year. However, the recent flood in several districts has forced prices to go up further. With the situation persisting, the prices of vegetables will not come down soon,” said Rabindranath Koley, general secretary of Forum of Traders Organisation of Paschimbanga (FTOP).

The general secretary of Maniktala Market, Prabhat Das, agreed with the prediction.

“In this kind of situation, the prices of vegetables go up automatically,” he said. The price of pointed gourd, which had earlier been Rs 20 to Rs 25 per kg, is now Rs 40. The price of papaya has also gone up to Rs 30 per kg, while earlier it was Rs 20 per kg.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

University of Agricultural Sciences invites application for best farmer awards

BENGALURU: The University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Bengaluru has invited applications for the following state level, district level and taluk level awards (10 districts coming under its jurisdiction) from the interested farmer and farmwomen.

State level awards include Late Sri C Byregowda state level Best Farmer award, Dr MH Marigowda state level Best Horticulture Farmer award, Dr R Dwarakinath Best Farmer award, Dr R Dwarakinath Best Extension Worker award, Canara Bank sponsored Can Bank Best Farmer award and Farm women award.

District level award include District level Best Farmer awards and Farm women awards and Taluk level awards include taluk level Best Youth Farmer awards and Best Youth Farm women awards.

The above awards will be presented during Krishimela to be held during November 2017. The prescribed application form can be obtained from the office of the Joint Directors of Agriculture of respective districts or Krishi Vigyan Kendras (Hadonahalli-Doddaballapur; Chandurayanahalli-Magadi, Kandali-Hassan, Konehalli-Tiptur, V.C.Farm-Mandya, Kurubur Farm-Chintamani and Haradanahalli-Chamarajanagar) or Extension Education Unit (Naganahalli-Mysore) or from the office of the Directorate of Extension, UAS, Hebbal, Bengaluru.