

Published: July 11, 2010 11:49 IST | Updated: July 11, 2010 11:49 IST Mumbai, July 11, 2010

M&M to ramp-up Samriddhi network, offer farm-tech to farmers

Tractor major, Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M), plans to introduce innovative technologies for the farming community and has set up centres pan-India for this purpose. "We are growing fast in the domestic as well as overseas markets. We are setting up 'Samriddhi' centres to offer Innovative Farming Technologies (IFT) to the farming community in India," Mahindra's Senior Vice-President, Marketing & AppliTrac (Farm Equipment Sector), Sanjeev Goyle, said.

Mahindra aims at delivering Farm Tech Prosperity (FTP) to 10 million farmers by 2020 by offering technological prosperity to the farmers and transforming its dealerships into Samriddhi centres.

"We have set up 75 Samriddhi centres pan-India and plan to set up another 75 centres by end-this fiscal," Mr. Goyle told PTI here. "Our aim is to help the agricultural community reach higher benchmarks in productivity and yield," he said. The Samriddhi centres are transformed tractor dealerships which offer innovative farming technologies to the farming community in order to enable them increase productivity. "Samriddhi centres aim at enhancing rural prosperity by educating farmers and enlightening them about total farming solutions and optimum utilisation of farm mechanisation," he said. Mahindra is also imparting training to women on how to drive tractors.

"We have generated 600 women tractor drivers last year and plan to train 15,000 women tractor drivers by the end of this year," Mr. Goyle said.

Initially, most people refused to accept women driving tractors but with the carrot of supplementary income they came around, he said.

Mettur level

The water level in the Mettur Dam stood at 79.81 feet on Sunday, against its full capacity of 120 feet. The inflow was 2,269 cusecs and the discharge, 1,007 cusecs.

Published: July 12, 2010 00:00 IST | Updated: July 12, 2010 04:14 IST PUDUKOTTAI, July 12, 2010

Farmers briefed on pulses cultivation



New techniques: Pulses growers having a glimpse of the latest crop techniques at an exhibition at Vamban village near Pudukottai. A seminar-cum-exhibition on the "Pulses Mission of the Irrigated Agriculture Modernisation and Water Resource Management" (IAMWARM) was held at Vamban village recently. Farmers of the district were briefed on how to boost their income by raising pulses.

Pulses cultivation requires an extra effort for maximum utilisation of the available sources, better crop protection techniques and timely application of fertilisers. "There are a few techniques like irrigation through rain-gun and spraying of DAP to pulses. A demonstration was done on every cultivation practice," said P. Raju, Joint Director of Agriculture (In-charge), Pudukottai, who organised the exhibition. Scientists and experts offered tips on various pulses protection strategy to the farmers. M. Sundar, associate professor, National Pulses Research Centre, Vamban, spoke on pulses like Vamban Red gram 3-VBN (Rg3) and Vamban Black gram 4-VBN (Bg4) .

Published: July 12, 2010 00:00 IST | Updated: July 12, 2010 04:47 IST ERODE, July 12, 2010

Water released for irrigation purposes



For farmers: Water was released into the Kalingarayan Canal in Erode district for irrigation on Sunday. -
PHOTO: M. GOVARTHAN

Amidst the showering of flower petals, the sluices of the Kalingarayanpalayam check dam were opened at 8.30 a.m. on Sunday to discharge a massive sheet of water into the Kalingarayan Canal for irrigation

Opened

Collector R. Sudalaikannan, who was accompanied by senior government officials, opened the sluices to release water into the canal.

The supply is meant for the irrigation of over 17,000 acres of lands in different parts of the district.

The district administration was not able to release water into the canal on the customary opening date of June 16 this year as the Public Works Department had taken up repair and maintenance works in the 56-and-a-half mile long irrigation canal connecting River Bhavani with River Noyyal.

Repairs were carried out to a large number of shutters in the canal and a few bridges were also constructed across the channel

Sanctioned

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development had sanctioned Rs. 11.64 crore for carrying out the maintenance works and to construct a parapet wall along the canal in order to prevent the flow of untreated effluents from the textile and leather processing units.

Collector R. Sudalaikannan, after opening the sluices, told reporters that it was decided to maintain the discharge of 600 cusecs of water a day for irrigation. The discharge of water would be maintained till November 15. The Collector appealed to the farmers to utilise water judiciously.



Press Trust Of India

New Delhi, July 11, 2010

First Published: 12:34 IST(11/7/2010)

Last Updated: 12:44 IST(11/7/2010)

Govt may not allow export of sugar till Diwali

Sugar mills may have to wait till Diwali in November to fulfill their export obligation of nearly 10 lakh tonnes as the Food Ministry is reluctant to permit shipments fearing price rise during the festive season.

Mills had imported 20.75 lakh tonnes of sugar in 2004-05 crop year (October-September) under the Advance Licence Scheme (ALS) as there was a shortfall in production then. Mills are required to export an equal quantity by March 2011.

Out of total imported sugar, export obligation of 9.67 lakh tonnes is yet to be fulfilled.

However, Mills cannot export the sweetener without the release order from the ministry.

"Some of the millers have approached us demanding export release order. But at the moment, we cannot allow... as the sugarcane availability and production estimate for the next season is yet to be firmed up," a senior Food Ministry official said.

The government might consider the millers demand to export after major festivals like Diwali, the official said, adding that consumption of sugar is generally higher during the festive season.

Mills situated in southern India are mainly demanding that they should be allowed to fulfill their export obligation as there is a good demand from Southeast Asia. They have an obligation of about 6-7 lakh tonnes.

The official said that the government does not want to take any chance by allowing export of sugar as prices of the sweetener have moderated only recently owing to an improved domestic output to 18.5 million tonnes for 2009-10 from the earlier estimate of around 16 million tonnes.

Retail sugar prices, which touched nearly Rs 50 a kg in Delhi in mid-January, have come down to Rs 30 per kg now.

In December last year, the Cabinet Committee On Economic Affairs had decided to extend the deadline to meet the export obligation till March 2011, considering the low production of sweetener during the current season ending September.

It also gave an option to the millers to pay customs duty as applicable during the relevant period and get exempted from the export obligation.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/570646.aspx>

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Monday, Jul 12

Max Min
35.7° | 25.2°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 79%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 05:48

Sunset: 18:39

Barometer: 1007.0

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Tuesday, Jul 13

Max Min
33° | 25°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday
Jul 14



33° | 27°
Rainy

Thursday
Jul 15



32° | 28°
Rainy

Friday
Jul 16



32° | 28°
Rainy

Saturday
Jul 17



31° | 27°
Rainy

Sunday
Jul 18



30° | 27°
Rainy

By PTI

12 Jul 2010 09:10:44 AM IST

Sugar export may not be allowed till Diwali

NEW DELHI: Sugar mills may have to wait till Diwali in November to fulfill their export obligation of nearly 10 lakh tonnes as the Food Ministry is reluctant to permit shipments fearing price rise during the festive season.

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By Ratan K Pani

11 Jul 2010 10:21:00 AM IST

Greener grass on the red side

The radicals of the Left may have been a force behind the anti-liquor movement in the tribal heartlands of India, but now they are a reason why hemp is flourishing in the Red Corridor. Large tracts of forest and degraded land, where no enforcement squad dares venture, are under ganja cultivation in Orissa and neighbouring regions in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. Meticulously planned and scientifically grown over hundreds of acres, these slim green plants also help the ultras fight the state while they help people chase pipe dreams of their own.

The Naxal movement, which is about helping the landless and the poor, began as a peasant movement more than four decades ago. It has come a long way since those romantic beginnings. Like any political movement it needs large sums of money to survive and grow. One estimate pegs this amount at Rs 1,500 crore a year to sustain its guerilla war and stay a step ahead of the police and paramilitary forces. Most of the resources, according to the security agencies, come from organised extortion, described as a form

of 'levy' on local businesses. It is the familiar protection racket, only this one is being operated by the 'people's groups'.

The literature and documents of the rebels seized by security agencies during operations show intricate details of the 'levy' that they extort. From contractors working in Naxal-dominated areas to industrial bodies, from mining houses to stone crusher owners, everybody has to pay up. In return, the Naxals offer 'protection'.

While part of the funds collected by the CPI (Maoist), which still remains the prominent Naxal group, are pumped back into the organisation, other splinter groups have taken to kidnapping, looting, extortion and spending the money obtained on a luxurious lifestyle.

The word is that the Naxals demand five to 10 per cent on the construction projects, while a levy is fixed for industries functioning in the areas where they are dominant. When 40-year-old Bhabagrahi Sandha from Hikapali village near Kisinda in Sambalpur district was arrested on February 11 police say he had Rs 3.40 lakh on his person. He has been charged with acting as a conduit for the Naxals and his bank accounts have been frozen. He is said to have been collecting 'levy' for the Naxals. Interrogation revealed four accounts in the State Bank of India at Rairakhol, United Bank of India at Naktideul, Utkal Gramya Bank, Naktideul and Sambalpur District Central Co-operative Bank. Sandha had transacted Rs 9.70 lakh in these four bank accounts over last three years and had about Rs 1.39 lakh lying idle in these accounts. This is not, however, the limit of Naxal enterprise. They are encouraging villagers to cultivate ganja and opium, just as the insurgents did in Northeast India. The profits from this venture into agriculture will help fund the revolution to come.

Cultivation is scientific, to ensure optimum yield, complete with irrigation facilities. In several places, pump sets have been seized from the site of farming, as in Pindki village in Khalasuni Reserve Forest in Sambalpur. A visit to the interior reveals that many farmers have turned to hemp. It is grown along all nullahs and water sources. Funded by unidentified persons and smuggled out after the harvest with support from the Naxals the hemp fetches handsome returns for the farmers. At many places even forests are being cleared for cultivation and farmers take special pain to irrigate the land for a better harvest. The villagers of Jamjuri Gram Panchayat in Rairakhol sub-division even complained to the Sambalpur district collector that subsidised fertiliser, pesticide and kerosene oil needed to operate the water pumps were being siphoned off as hemp cultivators procured it in bulk to run their operations.

To get an idea of the scale of operations, consider the following figures. In Sambalpur district, the number of hemp plants destroyed jointly by the excise and police in fiscal 2008-2009 came to 3,22,000 valued at a whopping Rs 32.2 crore at the rate of Rs 1,000 per plant. In the financial year 2009-10, 10,55,200 mature hemp plants worth Rs 105 crore were destroyed. While no arrest was made in fiscal 2008-09, 11 were arrested during a raid in the villages of Jamjuri, Gadadharpur, Batgaon, Brahmani, Gopalpur, Rukmanipur, Badmal and Gudipani in Rairakhol sub-division in the last financial year.

On April 24, hundreds of people from Rairakhol sub-division took out a rally in Sambalpur under the banner of Rairakhol Sachetan Nagarik Brunda, complaining of the terror tactics employed by the hemp

cultivators under the patronage of a local leader from the ruling party.

In Nuapada district, where the Naxals have set their sights on the Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary, which opens up to neighbouring Chattisgarh, hemp cultivation has been reported in the villages of Jamgaon, Datunama, Kharipani, Kenchupakhan, Deosil, Gatibeda and Kutrabeda — all inside the sanctuary.

According to official reports, plants worth Rs 50 crore were destroyed three years ago, while the operation had to be suspended from 2008-09 after the Naxals resorted to murder inside the protected area.

This may be just the tip of the iceberg as police, excise and revenue officials find it nearly impossible to trudge through the inhospitable terrain for operations. In village after village, the story is the same as in Sambalpur district's Naxal-dominated Rairakhol sub-division. In Kandhamal and the neighbouring Boudh district which have of late become the meeting grounds of Naxals for formation of their proposed Red Corridor, large tracts of hemp have been destroyed by the authorities.

Anyone who dares raise a voice against these cultivators is intimidated. There have been at least four cases in which persons identified as Prahallad Pradhan, Khulana Dhal, Indramani Sahu and Bidhan Sahu left took their families and left their homes in Jamjuri after being threatened by hemp cultivators. The four had led the villagers to the Sambalpur district collector demanding an end to hemp cultivation and complained that water from the minor irrigation project of Khalbala Nullah was being diverted for this purpose.

Dhenkanal Superintendent of Police Satish Gajbhaiye, who served in the Naxal-hotbed Malkangiri, says he has reports of hemp cultivation in far flung areas. During his stint he brought to light large scale cultivation in Kandhamal and says the contraband funds Maoist activities in the formation of their proposed 'Red-Corridor'. Even Puri Superintendent of Police Sanjay Kumar, once Sambalpur SP, says profits from hemp are channelled to the ultras.

Dr Rajat Kujur, co-author of *Maoism In India: Reincarnation of Ultra Left Extremism in 21st Century*, says it is now a growing trend and a time tested way to fill coffers by the Left ultras. And given the official attitude, there is little hope that the revolution's dependence on dope will be reduced in any way.

— ratan@expressbuzz.com

Revolutionary highs

The Naxals are not the first rebels to trade in drugs to fund their activities. For years the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam were rumoured to be involved in smuggling drugs. But it is in Afghanistan that the nexus between insurgency, politics and drugs has been most obvious in recent years. Afghanistan is the world's largest producer of illicit opium, with about 90 per cent of opium coming from the war-torn country. While opium, derived from poppy seeds, is no longer used as a drug directly, it contains morphine and can be chemically converted to heroin.

In Afghanistan opium cultivation began in earnest in the late '70s during the Soviet invasion. Warlords mushroomed and turned to opium cultivation to generate funds to arm themselves. The US turned a blind eye to the export of opium because it was funding the Afghan resistance against the Soviets. Opium cultivation flourished even through the years of Taliban rule. But in 2000, Mullah Mohammad Omar

collaborated with the UN in an anti-drugs campaign and declared the cultivation “un-Islamic”. Cultivation fell by 91 per cent in a year but by the end of 2001, farmers were once again turning to opium cultivation as the economy collapsed.

In the years since, the link between insurgents and opium has been made, though officially acknowledged only five years ago. However, little has been done to stop cultivation and export because everyone from the country’s government to the Taliban and insurgents is said to benefit from the trade.

The stuff of legend

There is an ancient village, deep in the Kulu valley, that has been the stuff of legend for a while now. Or to be more precise produces stuff that is legend. The village is Malana and the product? The famous Malana cream, once considered the finest hashish in the world. Malana Cream put the tiny village on the global map, and has drawn visitors from all over the world to seek it out. Now, however, with Nepali traders selling Nepali charas under the Malana ‘name’, and increased vigilance from police officials, Malana cream is no longer the dream product it once was.

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Business Standard

Monday, Jul 12, 2010

Global coffee exports fall 8%: ICO

Press Trust of India / New Delhi July 11, 2010, 14:11 IST

Global coffee exports declined by more than eight per cent in the first eight months of the current coffee year to 61 million bags of 60 kg each, according to the International Coffee Organisation (ICO).

Coffee exports were at 66.3 million bags in the same period last year. Coffee years starts from October to September.

The dip was recorded in both varieties of coffee--- Arabicas declined by 7.34 per cent to 42.7 million bags and Robustas dipped by 9.44 per cent to 23.5 million bags.

ICO had estimated that during the calendar year 2009, the global exports of coffee would be 95.5 million bags compared to 97.7 million bags in 2008.

The total exports was estimated at \$13.2 billion in 2009 compared to \$15.4 billion in 2008.

"The fall in the value of exports between 2008 and 2009 can be attributed not only to the fall in the prices of coffee over this period but also to the reduced volume of exports in 2009," ICO said.

Exports from India, the fifth-largest coffee producer in the world and the third-largest in Asia, increased by 42.64 per cent to 2.9 million bags, during the first eight months of the coffee year from 2.1 million bags in the same period last year.

Cotton acreage up, yield may touch 35 mn bales

B Krishna Mohan / Chennai/ Hyderabad July 12, 2010, 0:49 IST

The steady monsoon so far this season is expected to raise the cotton production in the country to 35 million bales, the highest ever. The average production is around 30 million bales, having touched 32 million two years ago.

Cotton acreage this year increased three per cent, particularly in Andhra Pradesh and southern states. A few tradesmen believe the increase could even be seven percent. Last year, cotton was sown in 10.2 million hectare and this year it is likely to touch 11 million hectare. This increased acreage would result in additional cotton production of about 2 million bales.

The production of Bt cotton seeds dropped 25 to 30 per cent last year due to unfavourable agroclimatic conditions. Each acre gives about 300 packets of 450 gram each. The yield last year was around 250 packets per acre. Though the productivity in Andhra Pradesh remained high at 400 packets, this is low compared with the average 500 packets produced in the state.

"There is no shortage this year. We can say the situation is just enough," said N Prabhakar Rao, chairman of NSL Group, owners of Nuziveedu Seeds Private Limited. The company claims a 30 per cent market-share in Bt cotton seeds.

However, the increase in acreage and the fall in productivity is reducing the demand-supply ratio, he said.

Cotton during 2009-10 fetched an average of Rs 29,000 to Rs 30,000 per candy (355 kg). This prompted more farmers to take to cotton farming. The price during the year did not go below Rs 27,000 per candy.

Cotton pricing is based on international trade. Also, the international demand for cotton from India is likely to sustain this year too mainly for two reasons - the crop failure in Pakistan and the increase in demand from China, which accounts for 70 to 80 per cent of cotton exports. The exports this year is likely to be around 10 million bales.

Moreover, the US is shifting from maize to cotton in view of the cotton prices. There is no scope for capacity addition in China. The product and yield in the US will command a better value, say industry experts.

The cotton sector is unorganised but is among the largest provider of employment. It is estimated that one bale of cotton needs 40 man-days.

According to a representative of a seeds company, sowing is nearing completion in most of the areas as the monsoon has been active. The crop has a cycle of five to six months and the yield could be gauged in 90 days. "We are optimistic of a good crop this year in view of the good rains," he said.

THE HINDU Business Line

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Agri-commodity futures may witness profit-booking this week

The overall fundamentals continue to be firm, said Angel Broking, adding that any correction on the downside will be an opportunity to buy.

M.R. Subramani

Chennai, July 11

Agricultural commodities contracts on the futures exchanges witnessed a bullish trend last week.

The gains were on the back of monsoon playing truant, despite the India Meteorological Department's statement of monsoon having covered the entire country.

In particular, the monsoon has been deficient over key States such as Madhya Pradesh, western Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Guarseed, pepper and jeera (cumin) futures increased over six per cent, while turmeric gained over five per cent, most of it coming during the weekend trading.

Soyabean and refined soyabean oil too gained on fundamental factors such as increasing Chinese imports and adverse weather conditions in the soyabean-growing areas of the US.

According to Angel Broking, agricultural commodities that have witnessed sharp rise last week are likely to experience profit booking this week.

Guarseed, an outperformer last week, could continue to gain further in view of poor rainfall in the growing areas.

Last year, too, guarseed production was hit by poor monsoon coverage.

Guar output slid to 2.25 lakh tonnes, almost 75 per cent lower than 2008 production.

Fundamentally, firm crude oil prices and a likely rebound in the global economy are seen supporting the counter.

The broking house said technically, the counter has broken through Rs 2,430 a quintal on the upside and there is a strong support for it at Rs 2,450.

Guarseed closed at Rs 2,466 last week. If it is unable to hold on to the support of Rs 2,450, then further down, there is support at Rs 2,400.

On the upside, it could meet with resistance at Rs 2,500 and thereafter, at Rs 2,550.

Pepper, in particular, could bear the brunt of profit booking after having gained nearly Rs 1,200 a quintal last week.

Fundamentals firm

However, the overall fundamentals continue to be firm, said Angel Broking, adding that any correction on the downside will be an opportunity to buy.

International pepper prices of major origins such as Vietnam, India, Indonesia and Brazil increased last week. Lower availability globally, added to the gains.

Pepper, which closed at Rs 19,039 a quintal last week, has support at Rs 18,500 and below that at Rs 17,500.

On the upside, there can be initial resistance at Rs 19,560 and thereafter at Rs 19,800, the broking house said.

Jeera and turmeric, too, made handsome gains last week.

The trend is likely to continue, despite bouts of profit taking, in view of demand outstripping supply.

Edible oils are expected to rule sideways but could turn bullish if there were any fundamental reasons.

Soyabean that closed at Rs 1,955 a quintal has strong support at Rs 1,930 and below it at Rs 1,880.

Resistance is expected to be pretty strong at Rs 1,970-1,980 levels.

Date:12/07/2010 URL: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/07/12/stories/2010071250981200.htm>

Good demand perks up dust tea prices

Top prices		(in Rs)	
Dust		Leaf	
Pasuparai SFD	150	Glendale FP-Sup	222
Manjolai SFD	119	Chamraj FP-Sup	220
Chinnar SFD	118	Pascoe's Woodlands Hyson Green tea	220
Kil-kotagiri BOPD	118	Sutton TGFOP/FP-Sup	199

Kochi July 11

There was good demand at the dust tea auction where prices of most grades moved up. The prices of good liquoring and other popular CTC dust grades which opened Rs 3 – 5 stronger, moved up further as the auction progressed. Medium and plain dust grades as well as powdery teas remained firm to dearer.

Buying by AVT was the strong feature at the dust auction. Tata Tea, Hindustan Unilever and Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation were also active along with loose tea traders.

There were export enquiries for high priced CTC teas as well as for bolder dust grades. High grown orthodox dust quoted firm while medium grades eased. Bulk of the orthodox dust offering was absorbed by exporters.

Leaf Auction

Prices of Nilgiri and medium grades remained irregular at the orthodox leaf auction. Exporters to Russia remained selective. Purchases for the Tunisian market continued to be active. HUL confined its purchases to high grown whole leaf grades. Fannings were mainly absorbed by tea bag manufacturers and other exporters. Best CTC leaf grades continued to remain firm while others remained irregular and quoted lower. Fannings moved up in value. Exporters continued to remain active. HUL and Tata Tea did not operate in the CTC leaf auction. Interstate buyers lent some support.

Top Prices

Pasuparai SFD fetched the top price at the dust auction at Rs 150 followed by Manjolai SFD at Rs 119, Chinnar SFD and Kil-kotagiri at Rs 118.

At the leaf auction, Glendale FP fetched the top price at Rs 222 followed by Chamraj FP and Pascoe's Woodland green tea at Rs 220 while Sutton TGFOP fetched Rs 199.

Date:12/07/2010 **URL:** <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/07/12/stories/2010071251011200.htm>

Ginger prices soar on short supply, rising consumption

Kochi, July 11

Short supply coupled with strong demand for raw (vegetable) ginger has pushed up its prices to the highest ever levels of Rs 3,000 a quintal in the country while fall in supply from the other origins raised the price of dry ginger in the world market.

The demand for vegetable ginger has risen to 15,000 bags of 60 kg moving out of the growing centres in South India, Mr P.V. Elias, a Karnataka-based major ginger grower-cum-trader, told Business Line.

Raw ginger prices

“The supply made is through out the year and about 90 per cent of ginger is grown in Karnataka”, he said.

This year, raw ginger prices have shot up to Rs 2,900 a quintal in Karnataka and Rs 2,700 in Kerala's Wayanad. The next crop is expected to be up 30-50 per cent as more areas have been brought under ginger this year.

It is now grown in 40,000 acres in south India as against 25,000 acres last season.

The cost of production, at present, per acre would come to Rs 3 lakh and, hence, if “we get Rs 900-1,000 a bag, it is remunerative”, Mr Elias said.

The spurt in demand this year was caused by non-supply from the north eastern States due to highway blockades there, he said.

Dry ginger prices have shot up to Rs 250 a kg, they said.

Dry ginger

The stocks had been depleted and there are about three more months to go for the next crop in Oct/Nov.

India is a major consumer of ginger as vegetable. Almost 90 per cent of the production is absorbed as raw while the rest is processed as dry ginger. The monthly consumption of dry ginger in the country is estimated at 3,500-4,000 bags (of 60 kg), he said.

Kochi market

In Kochi, dried ginger was traded at Rs 220-250 a kg, traders said. This unique variety, having a low fibre content, special aroma, and pungency is mainly grown in Kerala and the bordering states.

It is estimated that annually about 1.5 million tonnes of ginger is produced all over the world and India and China contribute almost 50 per cent of it.

The country has emerged as a major producer and exporter of value-added products of ginger such as ginger oil and oleoresin, with 90 per cent of the extraction units located in India.

The production, which was a meagre 29,290 tonnes from 21,590 hectare 37 years ago, had now gone up to an estimated 3,50,000 tonnes in 2009-10 and 90 per cent of it is consumed by the domestic market, he said.

Date:12/07/2010 URL: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/07/12/stories/2010071251021200.htm>

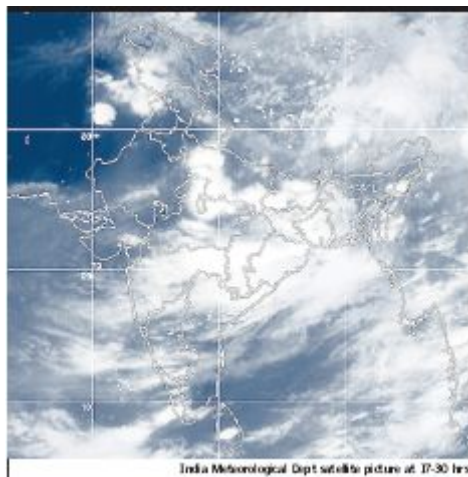
Dearer cucumber



Production hit: The cucumber prices have been skyrocketing in the wholesale vegetable markets in Kolkata. According to the traders, the delayed monsoon has affected the crop and the fuel price hike has led to rise in prices

Date:12/07/2010 URL: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/07/12/stories/2010071251041200.htm>

Rains seen returning to north-west this week



Vinson Kurian

Thiruvananthapuram, July 11

Parts of north-west as well as east India are likely to receive heavy to very heavy rains over the next few days, according to various forecast models.

While west coast may see varying episodes of rainfall, interior peninsula is likely to dry up gradually during this period.

Strong winds

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in its update on Sunday that strong south westerly winds prevailed over Gujarat and Rajasthan in the lower levels of the atmosphere. They originate from the North Arabian Sea and are expected to carry enough moisture as they blow inland.

A prevailing western disturbance and the presence of the monsoon trough nestling in the foothills of the Himalayas would help engender conditions favourable for wet weather in the region.

The IMD has said that the western disturbance would affect the western Himalayan region during the next three to four days.

West to east

According to the International Research Institute (IRI) for Climate and Society at Columbia University, the five-day-period up to July 15 would see wet sessions of varying intensity over the region. The IRI has indicated a south-west to north-east to south-southeast swathe originating from Gujarat crossing Rajasthan (save extreme west border), Haryana, Delhi, entire Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, parts of Jharkhand, east Madhya Pradesh and Gangetic West Bengal may benefit from the rains.

The IRI has also warned of extremely heavy rainfall in parts of Uttar Pradesh during this period, and has raised flood alert in the region.

Convective clouds

Satellite cloud imagery on Sunday revealed the presence of convective (rain-producing) clouds over parts of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Gangetic West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, east Madhya Pradesh, and Vidarbha.

The US National Centres for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) too has given out broadly similar forecast of rains for east India, but hinted they might take more time to unravel over the north-west.

According to the IMD, the previous day's upper air cyclonic circulation over east Uttar Pradesh has on Sunday taken the shape of a trough extending into North Bay of Bengal across Bihar and Gangetic west Bengal and, hence, the clouding in those parts. A heavy rainfall warning valid for the next two days said that isolated heavy rainfall would occur over Konkan, Goa and Uttar Pradesh.

Heavy rain alert

Heavy to very heavy rainfall has also been forecast at a few places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, West Bengal, Sikkim and Bihar during this period.

In its detailed forecast valid until Wednesday, the IMD saw the possibility of widespread rain or thundershowers over the north eastern States, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, Bihar and east Uttar Pradesh.

Fairly widespread rain or thundershowers has been forecast over Konkan, Goa, coastal Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, West Bengal, Sikkim, west Uttar Pradesh, Uttarkhand, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi.

Only scattered rain or thundershowers is forecast for interior Maharashtra, east Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, interior Karnataka, Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

In its outlook until Friday, the IMD saw a decrease in rainfall activity over parts of Gujarat, north-west, central and interior peninsular India.

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Pepper market to turn hot on tight availability

Kochi, July 11

The pepper market might move up on a tight supply position, till the new crop hits the market in Indonesia late this month/early next month and Brazil in September/October, and comparatively thin carryover stocks in all these origins.

At the same time, the production is also projected to be less in 2010 and hence there is likely disequilibrium in demand and supply.

However, such a scenario would emerge only if the projections and estimates of various agencies about the output, availability etc, turned out to be true. Such apprehensions have cropped up as past experiences have taught the market not to trust these projections and figures about output and availability in the South East Asian origins, market sources told Business Line.

The trend in Vietnam at present gives the impression that they do not have Asta grade pepper or they were not interested to sell their heavy pepper.

They are, said to be, converting the heavy pepper into white which is highly profitable because of the low conversion cost, they said.

White pepper

White pepper prices were shooting up to above \$5,800 a tonne (c&f). Given this scenario, there is every possibility of a squeeze in Vietnamese availability. The sharp rise in prices in Vietnam for 500 GL and 550 GL pepper gives the impression that such a tight scenario is going to emerge.

Also, the reported indications about the Vietnam-based exporters with multi-origin operations eyeing India for Asta grade pepper might point towards a tight availability situation in Vietnam.

An overseas report said that Brazil would not be able to produce 30,000 tonnes from the two states of Para and Espirito Santo.

The report said Indonesia will harvest quickly in view of the beginning of Ramadan early this year.

Already 20-30 per cent of the crop has been harvested, it is learnt. In the futures market here stockists who have been holding pepper for long, i.e., five years and above were ready to sell Rs 2 below the July price.

Meanwhile, leading exporters value-added pepper, mainly from grinding industry, and dealers who do the processing for the exchange were on a buying spree.

Exchange pepper is bought for value addition and export, mostly by the grinding industry, they said.

According to the International Pepper Community (IPC), the global black pepper situation generally witnessed a bullish trend in the market. In India, prices fluctuated with an increasing trend. Trading at the Commodity Exchange was more active as indicated by the increase in the volume of trade.

In Vietnam, sellers continued to offer higher prices at local market.

In Daklak, Vietnam, it was reported that price increased significantly by VND 5,000 a kg (16 US cents) from VND 62,500 a kg (\$3.27) last week to VND 67,500 (\$3.53) this week.

In Lampung, the harvest is going on and is anticipated to last longer. The harvest has experienced a slight delay, due to prolonged wet weather during ripening. Under this situation, production of light berries is predicted to be higher. Continuous rains have refrained farmers from picking and drying pepper.

Consequently, material from new harvest flowed slowly and prices moved up subsequently. In Sarawak, prices were stable as last week's. In dollar terms, local prices increased marginally by 1 per cent. In Sri Lanka, pepper price at growing areas increased by 6 per cent.

White pepper: Similar to the black pepper, market for white pepper also firmed up. Prices in Bangka and Sarawak increased marginally, while in Vietnam sharp increase was reported locally.

Export from Brazil: During January – June 2010, total export from Brazil was 14,373 tonnes, a marginal increase of 410 tonnes (3 per cent) from 13,963 tonnes in the same period last year. The United States absorbed 42 per cent of pepper exported from Brazil. Egypt, Germany, France and Mexico imported around 6-7 per cent each.

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