

# THE HINDU

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## Mango growers expect bumper yield

Staff Reporter

THENI: Mango growers are in a jubilant mood as they are expecting a bumper yield and a reasonable price for their produce this season, thanks to sufficient rainfall at the right time and conducive weather through out this summer.

Mangoes of different varieties are being cultivated across over 6,000 hectares in the district. Periakulam and nearby areas are the major mango producing centres. Mangoes are also being cultivated in some pockets of Bodinayakkanur, Thevaram and Cumbum, Cumbum Anumanthampatti in Cumbum valley.

The Banganapalli variety of mango is being cultivated in 3,000 hectares, Kallamai variety in 2,000 hectares and neelam and sendura varieties in 1,200 hectares.

After a gap of two years, neelam mango trees have also started producing fruits. Last year, due to the scorching heat and shortage of water, there was no flowering in these trees.

Harvesting of Banganapalli, Sendura and Kallamai varieties is on in full swing in many areas. Buyers too are willing to pay a good price for the produce this year as prices of mango in retail market are quite high. Depending on quality, the Banganapalli variety is currently being procured for Rs.20 to Rs.30 a kg and the Sendura varieties for Rs.10. In the retail market, Banganapalli is sold at Rs.40 a kg and Sendura at Rs.25 a kg. Harvesting will continue till next month, farmers hope.

## Mettur dam thrown open

Special Correspondent

*First time since Independence water is released a week in advance*

— Photo: P. Goutham



**Gush of joy:Water being released from Stanley reservoir on Monday for irrigation.**

METTUR: Good water management and surprise summer rains have prompted the State to throw open the big sluices of Stanley reservoir here on Monday, a week prior to June 12, the dam's customary date of opening, for the Delta region irrigation. The dam's water level stood at 116 at the time of opening.

The PWD has decided to maintain staggered discharges. It released 6000 cusecs at 10 a.m. in the river course and later increased it to 12000 cusecs, which, according to S. Asokan, SE, WRD, Lower Cauvery Basin Circle, Thanjavur, "will continue till further orders."

The collectors in downstream districts had been alerted to make those living nearer to the river course and low lying areas to vacate to safer places.

A record

This is the first time in 64 years in the dam's 78-year old history and after Independence that the water was released for Delta a week in advance against the customary date of opening, i.e.

June 12. The last earlier opening was June 1, 1947. And this was the first time the dam was opened in advance when its water level stood at 116 feet with storage of 87.232 tmcft bettering its previous best hydraulic details of 114.70 feet of water level and 85.269 tmcft of storage on June 9, 1941.

The dam was opened 10 times including this irrigation year in advance to the customary date while it was opened on June 12 for 16 years. Water was released after June 12 for 52 times including that of last year – July 28. The dam released water for Delta for the first time on June 12, 1934, after it was commissioned.

The rains after November last year especially in the Delta region and copious flows in Bhavani and Amaravathi had reduced the water needs in Delta considerably. Hence the level could be built up and maintained at a steady 100 feet. Surprise summer rains in April and May enhanced the inflows into the dam itself thus bringing the level to 116 feet on Monday. “Better water management and summer showers in catchment areas have enabled us to open the dam in advance,” pointed out an official.

State PWD Minister K.V. Ramalingam who opened the sluices said nearly 16 lakh acres would be irrigated this year and said water would reach Kallanai on June 9. PWD secretary M. Saikumar said the water release would continue till January 28, 2012. He asked the ryots of Cauvery Delta region to use the water economically and cooperate for its proper distribution and efficient utilisation. “If necessary turn system will be introduced,” he said.

Water managers claimed that water could reach tail-end areas quicker this time since rivers and water carrying channels had been desilted for a distance of 1,656 kms. State Highways and Minor Ports Minister Edappadi K. Palanisamy, Collector K. Maharabushanam, former AIADMK Minister C. Ponnaiyan and other senior officials including PWD SE Ganesamarachanm, EE S. Chandrasekaran, AEEs S. Kumarasamy and K. Murugesan were present.

Date:07/06/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/06/07/stories/2011060760650500.htm>

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## Food Minister warns of action

Special Correspondent

TIRUVANNAMALAI: Food Minister 'Agri' S. S. Krishnamoorthy has warned that severe action will be taken against those who indulge in smuggling of free rice meant for supply under the public distribution system (PDS).

Inaugurating a direct paddy procurement centre (DPC) in Periyakozhappalur and part-time fair price shops in Ramapuram, Kudisaikkarai and Aviyanthangal in Tiruvannamalai district on Sunday, Mr. Krishnamoorthy said that the aim of the scheme of distribution of free rice under the PDS was to ensure supply of quality rice to people below the poverty line. Therefore, the State would stern action against the smugglers, and the fair price shops. A total of 1,00,85,000 family card-holders would benefit by the scheme of distribution of 20 kg rice per month free of cost while 18 lakh card-holders would benefit by the scheme of supplying 35 kg of free rice per month throughout Tamil Nadu. The minister said that the opening of DPCs would enable the farmers not only to bring the paddy produced by them directly to the DPCs for procurement but also to get the benefit of the entire sale.

Date:07/06/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/06/07/stories/2011060756970300.htm>

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## Agriculture official's statements spark debate on organic farming

*Official said organic farming was 'impractical' Organic farmers take offence to the statements*

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Bidar: A recent speech by an Agriculture Department official at a taluk panchayat meeting in Aurad has sparked a debate on the positives and negatives of organic farming.

Among other points he made about advanced farming methods, Assistant Director of Agriculture Kashinath Haibatti said the benefits of organic farming were “over-hyped”. He also said it was “impractical”.

The agriculture science graduate also said if all farmers adopted organic methods, they would never be able to produce enough food for the people of the country.

He challenged promoters of the concept to take up organic farming on his 10-acre farm and produce a good harvest.

He said inorganic farming methods that led to the green revolution were the results of decades of research.

They were credible and time-tested. Organic farming, he felt, was just “a body of romantic ideas” that have not been verified in the laboratory.

### Criticism

However, his statements have come under fire from several organic farmers. The district Organic and Natural Farmers' Association has issued a letter accusing the officer of “misleading the farmers of the district”.

“While the State Government is trying to promote organic farming, Mr. Haibatti is trying to discourage farmers from following it,” said association president Srimanth Biradar. Organic farming proponent Shankar Patil Atiwal also sought a public apology from the officer.

### Struggle

“After years of struggle, we have begun to create awareness among farmers about the benefits of organic farming in the district and then you have something like this negate all that,” he said.

Other organic farmers such as Gundappa Biradar, Prakash Bavage and APMC member Govindrao Ingale have expressed similar feelings.

In an apology issued on Monday, Mr. Haibatti has withdrawn his statements.

Date:07/06/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/06/07/stories/2011060758970300.htm>

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## Farmers told to conserve soil, water

Staff Reporter



**For close links:K. Lakshmanan, president of the Kinanur-Karindalam panchayat, inaugurating the second phase of the Farmer's Participatory Action Research Programme at Choyangod in Kasaragod district on Monday.**

KASARAGOD: The second phase of the Farmer's Participatory Action Research Programme (FPARP), sponsored by the Union Water Resources Ministry, was launched at Choyangod in Kinanur-Karindalam panchayat in the district on Monday.

Inaugurating the project, panchayat president K. Lakshmanan stressed the significance of soil and water conservation and extended the panchayat's full-fledged support to the farmers for the endeavour.

Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI) Director George V. Thomas, in his presidential address, urged the farmers to conserve water and soil in their agricultural land so as to enhance productivity by following the "more drop per crop" principle.

Sunil Kumar, Assistant Agricultural Director emphasised the importance of water conservation.

Veena Rani, Agriculture Officer, Kinanur-Karindalam, addressed the function.

Senior CPCRI scientist C. Thamban briefed about the project.

A.C. Mathew, senior scientist, spoke on soil and water conservation techniques in coconut and arecanut gardens, a CPCRI release here said.

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## Government to revive farm sector

Staff Reporter



**FARM TALES:** Agriculture Minister K.P. Mohanan releasing a book '101 success stories' by handing over a copy to district panchayat president Kanathil Jameela at a function at the Kozhikode Collectorate on Monday. A. Pradeepkumar, MLA, is seen.

**KOZHIKODE:** An anthology of success stories of farmers in various fields of activity, '101 Vijayagathakal' was released at a function held at the District Collectorate here on Monday.

Agriculture Minister K.P. Mohanan released the compilation by handing over a copy to Kozhikode district panchayat president Kanathil Jameela. District Collector P.B. Salim is the chief editor of the book.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Mohanan said the State government had taken up a project to attract students and youths to agriculture in the 100-day programme. For that, a Rs. 9 crore Agriculture Research Training Institute would be set up in the Koothuparamba Assembly segment in Kannur district.

The government was committed to reviving the agriculture sector by assisting the farmers and boosting production through various schemes. The department had worked out a scheme to convert the defunct coconut processing centre at Koyilandy in the district into a cattle-feed plant, he said.

He said farmers in north Kerala were not aware of many of the schemes of the Centre and the State government. The Centre provided a sum of Rs.800 crore annually for agriculture and allied activities. Only a few farmers utilised the opportunity but the State needed promoters in agriculture.

Under the 100-day programme of the government, the Krishi Bhavans in the State would distribute seeds of vegetables to all households. The government planned to introduce organic pesticides along with its promotion of organic farming, Mr. Mohanan said.

Introducing the collection, District Collector P.B. Salim said the stories on achievements of farmers would be beneficial to those willing to take up farming. A major share of the book, almost 60 per cent, was devoted to agriculture. The remaining portions dwelt with cattle rearing, rabbit breeding, ornamental fishes, animal husbandry, dairy production, horticulture and fisheries, Dr. Salim said. The compilation was recognition for the farming community. The experiences of farmers documented would introduce to new aspects such as bonsai cultivation, kitchen gardening and farming through rain harvesting. The book is published by Mathrubhumi Books.

**Date:07/06/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/06/07/stories/2011060761910200.htm>**

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## **Organic farming initiative for school students**

Special Correspondent

KOCHI: A memorandum of understanding was signed between the Kerala Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and the Chellanam Agri Tourism Development Society here on Sunday for taking up activities to encourage students of six schools in Chellanam panchayat to adapt agricultural practices in general, and organic cultivation of vegetables in particular. The

project was initiated as part of the Environment Day celebrations organised by the chamber, in association with 'Organic BPS'.

Inaugurating the Environment Day celebrations, C.N. Ramachandran Nair, Judge, High Court of Kerala, said that environment protection and growth should go hand in hand. P. I. Sheik Pareeth, district Collector, in his keynote address, said that tree planting drives should be strengthened. Deepak L. Aswani, KCCI chairman, Dileep Narayanan, CEO, Organic BPS, E.S. Jose, former chairman of KCCI, spoke.

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**hindustantimes**



**Charu Sudan Kasturi, Hindustan Times**

Email Author

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### **Climate change induced food nightmare stares India**

Large parts of India that already face chronic food shortages are staring at further, climate change induced food insecurity by 2050, new research by a global partnership of agricultural research institutions has found.

Researchers at the Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) have found a worrying match between regions that are most likely to face climate change induced reduction in crop yield, and areas that already suffer from chronic food shortage.

The fertile Indo-Gangetic plains are likely to face a drop in precipitation by over 5%, and this decrease is crucially likely to coincide with the growing season, the study has found, in conclusions that are alarming for India.

Large chunks of central India – Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, eastern Maharashtra, Chattisgarh and northern parts of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka – and the Western Ghats are

likely to experience major upward temperature shifts. These shifts are expected to affect yield of most crops adversely.

The scientists found a match between the regions likely to suffer in terms of crop yield most from climate change effects, and the regions that already suffer from high malnutrition, stunting and other indicators of chronic food shortage.

"When you put these maps together they reveal places around the world where the arrival of stressful growing conditions could be especially disastrous," said Polly Erickson, the lead author of the study and senior scientist at the CGIAR's International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) in Nairobi.

"These are areas highly exposed to climate shifts, where survival is strongly linked to the fate of the regional crop and livestock yields, and where chronic food problems indicate that farmers are already struggling and they lack the capacity to adapt to new weather patterns," she added.

Africa, Latin America and even parts of southern China are also likely to face the double whammy of chronic food shortages and worsening crop yields because of climate change.

Indo-Gangetic plains and fertile areas in southern river deltas among global hotspots likely to experience an over 5 % decrease in length of growing period.

This decrease will take the length of growing period below 120 days -- a decisive minimum length -- for large parts of the Indo-Gangetic plains.

Almost all of India will suffer from a rainfall variability greater than 21 % -- a key danger indicator.

Almost all of India faces at least two climate change related threats -- from among dangerous changes in length of growin period, precipitation and temperature.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/706704.aspx>

## Weather

Chennai - INDIA

### Today's Weather

	<b>Tuesday, Jun 7</b>
	Max    Min
Partly Cloudy	38.8°   23.5°
Rain: 53.0 mm in 24hrs	Sunrise: 5:41
Humidity: 45%	Sunset: 18:33
Wind: Normal	Barometer: 1003.0

### Tomorrow's Forecast

	<b>Wednesday, Jun 8</b>
	Max    Min
Rainy	36°   28°

### Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday Jun 9	Friday Jun 10	Saturday Jun 11	Sunday Jun 12	Monday Jun 13
34°   29°	34°   27°	34°   27°	33°   28°	34°   28°
Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy

7 Jun, 2011, 09.47AM IST, Reuters

## **GRAINS: U.S. wheat, soy tick up after selloff; corn steady**

SINGAPORE: U.S. wheat edged higher on Tuesday, recovering from a three-week low, while corn was little changed as bargain-hunters and end-users stepped in following last session's steep losses, triggered by improved crop weather.

Investors in Chicago grains and oilseeds markets remained cautious ahead a key U.S. government report on global demand and supply of agricultural products due on Thursday.

"Whenever there is price pull-back, it attracts some bargain hunting from countries that are suffering from tight supplies of grains," said Ker Chung Yang, analyst at Phillip Futures in Singapore.

"For a couple of days, the focus will be on the demand and supply report as everyone is looking at what kind of numbers will be published on Thursday."

On Monday, grain prices tumbled as improved crop weather in the United States and Europe pushed wheat down nearly 4 percent to a three-week low and corn to a near two-week low. Soybeans posted their biggest daily drop in a month.

Chicago Board of Trade July wheat rose 0.3 percent to 7.46 a bushel by 0329 GMT and soybeans for July delivery also gained 0.3 percent to \$13.88 a bushel. July corn rose three quarters of a cent to \$7.32-3/4 a bushel.

The U.S. Agriculture Department's monthly supply and demand report later this week will update

winter wheat production and corn and soybean ending stocks.

Near-record high corn prices have done little to slow demand for the grain from U.S. livestock feeders and ethanol producers -- a factor that should prompt the USDA to lower its forecast of U.S. old-crop corn inventories this week, analysts said.

WINDOW OF WARM, DRY WEATHER Warm and dry conditions provided a window for farmers in the eastern U.S. Corn Belt to catch up on plantings last week but seedings remained behind schedule, especially in Ohio where only about half of the crop was in the ground, USDA said after the market closed on Monday.

It put corn plantings at 94 percent complete, below the five-year average pace of 98 percent but above analysts' forecast of 93 percent.

Soybean plantings were 68 percent done, below both the normal pace of 82 percent complete and the average guess of 69 percent complete.

There is more dry weather forecast this week in the U.S. Midwest, which should enable farmers to make further planting progress.

Technical charts indicate July corn may dip further, as a double-top pattern is likely to be confirmed soon.

The sharp fall during the previous trading session has accumulated a strong bearish momentum which has made support at \$7.26-3/4 look vulnerable, according to Reuters technical analyst Wang Tao.

Spring wheat futures fell 0.7 percent after surging as much as 3 percent to touch a near three-year high on Monday.

But analysts say the market is likely to be supported by slow seedings in the northern U.S. Plains and strong demand for the grain.

Spring wheat plantings in North Dakota, the No. 1 grower of the variety, were 69 percent complete as of Sunday, down from the average pace of 97 percent done, USDA said.

## Business Standard

Jun 07, 2011

### **Stone fruits price skyrocketing in Himachal Pradesh**

**Baldev S Chauhan / New Delhi/ Shimla June 07, 2011, 0:05 IST**

The prices of stone fruits produced in Himachal Pradesh is reported to be around double or more than last year's prices due to a low output of these fruits this year, say traders and farmers.

Peach was selling for Rs 30 per kg last year in the markets of Himachal Pradesh and neighbouring states but the prices this time are hovering around Rs 80 a kg.

Plum, apricot and raw almonds sold for Rs 30 to Rs 40 last year but this season the prices have shot up to Rs 80 a kg. While cherry is selling between Rs 140 and Rs 220, a year ago the price ranged between Rs 80 and Rs 140.

Farmers and traders say the reason for high prices is a poor crop, this time due to unfavourable weather conditions — including frost and hailstorms — when the stone fruit orchards flowered in March and April. Stone fruit orchards are found in the mid hills of Himachal Pradesh. Last year, the production was over 61,000 tonnes, but is likely to drop.

### **Storm damages 5% maize crop in Bihar**

**Sharleen Dsouza / Mumbai June 07, 2011, 0:11 IST**

Around 5 per cent of the standing maize crop in Bihar, India's fourth largest producer, has been destroyed by a pre-monsoon storm. The crop was also reported to have caught fungus, which may potentially cause more damage.

Experts are yet to assess the magnitude of the total damage as intermittent rainfall continues. But, they believe nearly 60 per cent of the crop in the state has already been processed and is suitable for marketing. Fear of heavier damage to the remaining 40 per cent crop in the state looms large. Maize is sown and harvested in both the summer and winter seasons. In Bihar, harvesting is coming to an end while in south and west India, sowing is all set to start with the onset of monsoon rains.

The impact of the crop damage has already started showing on the prices in the spot market. Maize prices of seed industrial grade quality have already moved up Rs 20-40 a quintal in the last couple of days to trade currently at Rs 1,174.75 a quintal in Nizamabad. Similar price appreciation was witnessed in Bihar, where good quality maize was quoted at Rs 1,070 a quintal.

In the Nizamabad mandi, farmers and stockists have started releasing last year's crop gradually in anticipation of a bumper crop. Since seasonal rainfall has hit India over a week ahead of schedule, farmers and traders anticipate a favourable monsoon season this year.

### **Wheat rallying 20% as fields wilt from China to Kansas**

**Bloomberg / June 07, 2011, 0:13 IST**

The worst droughts in decades are wilting wheat fields from China to the US to the UK, overwhelming Russia's return to grain markets and driving prices to the highest levels since 2008.

Parts of China, the biggest grower, had the least rain in a century, some European regions are the driest in 50 years and almost half the winter-wheat crop in the US, the largest exporter, is rated poor or worse. Inventory is dropping 8.8 per cent, the most in five years, Rabobank International says. Prices will advance 20 per cent to as high as \$9.25 a bushel by December 31, a Bloomberg survey of 14 analysts and traders shows.

Wheat as much as doubled in the past year as crops failed, spurring Ukraine and Russia to curb shipments and increasing the US share of global sales by the most since 2004. Russia ending its export ban on July 1 and Ukraine lifting quotas may not be enough as crops wither elsewhere, fuelling gains in food prices which the United Nations says are already near a record.

“In 32 years, I’ve never seen so many problems in so many places,” said Dan Basse, the president of AgResource Co., a farm researcher in Chicago. “We’re concerned about the world story now,” said Basse, who has been studying agricultural markets since 1979 and expects prices as high as \$10 this year.

For Paolo Barilla, vice chairman of Parma, Italy-based Barilla Holding SpA, the largest pasta maker, the yo-yo price moves are his biggest business worry, he said in an interview last month. Rising demand means grains will keep costing more, John Bryant, the chief executive officer of Battle Creek, Michigan-based Kellogg Co., the largest US maker of breakfast cereal, said in a conference call last month.

## **GRAIN PRICES**

Higher prices will help US farm income rise 20 per cent to a record \$94.7 billion this year, the government estimates. It also means the most profit ever for Moline, Illinois-based Deere & Co, the largest maker of agriculture equipment, analysts’ estimates compiled by Bloomberg show.

Futures traders anticipate rising wheat prices through March 2013, according to data from the Chicago Board of Trade. Speculators almost tripled their bets on gains in the two weeks ended May 31, figures from the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission show. The most widely held option gives the holder the right to buy wheat at \$9 for July. Wheat fell 2.6 per cent to \$7.7375 a bushel this year by the close on June 3, trailing the 11 per cent gain in the Standard & Poor’s GSCI Index of 24 commodities. The MSCI All-Country World Index of equities rose 2.8 per cent and Treasuries also returned 2.8 per cent. Wheat declined 1.2 per cent on Monday to \$7.6425.

## **PRICE SURVEY**

Prices were last as high as the \$9.25 predicted in the Bloomberg survey in 2008, the middle of a three-year period when the US State Department estimates more than 60 food riots erupted worldwide. No one is predicting a return to the record \$13.495 reached in February of that year,

and global inventory will still be 44 per cent higher than it was then, according to US Department of Agriculture estimates.

Wheat slumped 7.4 per cent in the two days after Russia, formerly the second-largest exporter behind the US, said on May 28 its ban would end.

The country's total grain harvest, decimated last year by the worst drought in a half century, may expand as much as 48 percent to 90 million tons this year, the Agriculture Ministry estimates. Exports of wheat will more than double to 10 million tons, the USDA said in May.

### **Cotton, rice regions in India get early monsoon, aid crop sowing**

**Bloomberg / New Delhi June 07, 2011, 0:16 IST**

India's monsoon, the main source of irrigation for the nation's 235 million farmers, advanced to the biggest cotton, sugar cane and rice-producing regions almost a week ahead of schedule, aiding early planting of crops.

Monsoonal rains covered Mumbai, most parts of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh states, and conditions are "favorable" for their advance to south Gujarat and parts of Karnataka in the next two days, the India Meteorological Department said in a statement on Monday. Maharashtra is the nation's biggest sugar producer, while Gujarat is the biggest cotton grower.

Timely precipitation is critical for the nation's farmers, collectively the world's second-biggest producer of rice, sugar and cotton, in boosting yields and deciding which crop to grow. Agriculture makes up 14 per cent of the economy and a bumper harvest will boost rural incomes, lifting sales of tractors, cars and refrigerators and cool food inflation.

"We expect a bumper crop this year," said P Chengal Reddy, secretary-general of Consortium of Indian Farmers Associations, whose members represent about 40 million growers. The rainfall will help farmers begin sowing early, he said.

Monsoon-sown rice production may climb as much as 7 per cent to a record 86 million metric tons as normal monsoon rains spur planting, Tarsem Saini, president of the Federation of All India Rice Millers Association, said last week. That should prompt the government to ease a ban on grain exports, Reddy said.

India banned shipments of non-basmati rice in April 2008 and wheat in early 2007 to bolster domestic supplies. State reserves of rice and wheat totaled 59.3 million tons in state warehouses as of May 1, according to the Food Corp of India.

### **'HUGE STOCKS'**

"The government should allow exports of food grains and help farmers make more money," Reddy said. "We have huge stocks and there is also need for food in some countries."

Wheat futures, which have jumped 80 per cent in the past year, advanced for a third day on speculation that the US government may pare its estimate for global supply as droughts parch crops from the US to China. The July-delivery contract gained as much as 0.6 per cent to \$7.78 per bushel on the Chicago Board of Trade and traded at \$7.7575 at 1:37 pm in Mumbai. Rough rice futures have advanced 32 per cent in the past year.

Rains were 36 per cent above average until yesterday, according to the India Meteorological Department. The nation received 21.3 millimeters (0.8 inch) of rain in the June 1 to June 5 period, it said on its website. That's more than the 15.7 millimeters average considered normal for the period.

"It is July, not the June rains that matter for the agriculture sector," Sonal Varma, a Mumbai-based economist at Nomura Holdings Inc., said in a report on Monday. "July rains determine the soil moisture and ensure proper development of the crops planted in June."

### **CANE PLANTING**

Indian farmers planted sugar cane in 5.06 million hectares (12.5 million acres) as of June 3, compared with 4.86 million hectares a year earlier, the farm ministry said last week. Cotton was sown in 1.48 million hectares from 1.15 million hectares a year ago, it said.

Sowing of monsoon crops begins in June and harvesting starts in September. The monsoon reached Mumbai yesterday, five days earlier than normal, and typically blankets the entire nation by July 15.

Rainfall may "slightly weaken" in the week beginning June 11, delaying the advance of the moisture-laden winds over the eastern parts of the country, the bureau said June 3

## Decision on cotton export today

Komal Amit Gera / Chandigarh June 7, 2011, 0:22 IST

1.5 million bales under consideration, spinning units averse to exports.



The spinning industry is keeping its fingers crossed ahead of tomorrow's meeting between the Commerce Ministry and exporters to review the export of cotton.

A decision will be taken on the demand of allowing exports of another 15 lakh bales of cotton to exhaust the excess stocks.

But, the spinning units are averse to any such decision as further exports may create scarcity of cotton supplies in the domestic market.

Confederation of Cotton Textiles Industry (CITI) Chairman Shishir Jaipuria, said the country has an ending stock (as on 30 September 2011) of 2.75 million bales of cotton according to the balance sheet prepared by the Cotton Advisory Board. An additional export quota may put the spinning mills in a tight spot.

Dilip Bhai Patel, president of All Gujarat Ginners' Association, said, the traders, ginners and exporters have a surplus of 5 million bales and 4 million bales, so there is sufficient stock.

But a senior official in Cotton Corporation of India confirmed that the unsold stock with the traders is about 45 lakh bales and about 1.5 million bales may be brought to the market by the farmers.

The sentiments in the global market are low for cotton and cotton yarn in anticipation of a higher yield and increase in the area under cotton cultivation this year. But countries such as

Bangladesh, Pakistan and China need cotton to make value addition as there is a shortage of cotton worldwide.

Mukund Chowdhary, president of North India Textile Millers Association (NITMA), said if the export quota for cotton is revised, it will only benefit the middlemen as the farmers do not have excess stock.

Despite lifting the quota barrier on the export of cotton yarn since April 1, 2011, the spinning mills are fishing in troubled waters as they are pressed to sell yarn in the international market at an unviable price (Rs 180-Rs 185 ex-mill for 30s comb against the minimum viable price is Rs 220 for 30s comb).

“Cotton prices have softened to about Rs 45,000 a candy from Rs 62,000 a candy. If the exports are resumed, the millers will have to suspend operations. Given the high cotton prices at present, they would not even recover the variable cost component for the spinning industry.”

## THE HINDU Business Line

### **Genes extracted from Bt may be harmful to plant growth**



A boll in the 135-day old Bt Cotton Hybrid Brahma BG - II raised by South India Cotton Association and Monsanto in Coimbatore. (file photo)

DELHI UNIVERSITY STUDY

Hyderabad, June 6:

For years, despite controversy, the genetically engineered insect-resistant crop plants, using Cry genes extracted from the soil bacterium —*Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) — have been perceived to be beneficial to the growth of the plants. New research by Indian scientists shows that the expression of the Bt toxin Cry1Ac in cotton and tobacco transgenics is detrimental to the growth and development of the plants. The proteins encoded by Cry genes are called Bt-toxins. They are thought to specifically affect only certain insects and not other organisms.

This interesting result observed by Dr Pradeep Burma has been published in the June issue of the *Journal of Biosciences*, brought out by the Indian Academy of Sciences.

### **Developmental defects**

In the scientific paper, Dr Burma and researchers from the University of Delhi, South Campus state that many of the transgenic plants obtained showed developmental defects like abnormal growth (stunting) and/or sterility.

These symptoms suggest that expression of Cry1Ac could be causing growth defects in plants, they inferred.

In line with this explanation, the researchers also found that a majority of transgenic plants had very low or undetectable levels of Cry1Ac. Further, all plants having appreciable levels of Cry1Ac showed developmental abnormalities indicating a correlation between the levels of toxin expression and the developmental defects in the plants.

### **Insect toxins**

The results are significant in the background of considerable interest and activity in genetically engineering insect-resistant crop plants using Cry genes encoding insect toxins from Bt.

Since the process of creating transgenic plants involves variability between different transgenics with regard to the expression of the Bt, the researchers suggest that there is a definite preferential selection happening during the evolution.

For plants that express low level of Cry1Ac there are reduced chances of expressing appreciable levels of the toxin in the overall process.

The authors go on to show that if the Cry1Ac is modified to be located in one part of the cell – the chloroplast which is the site of photosynthesis in plant cells, they are now able to recover plants that show higher levels of expression of the toxin and the plants do not show developmental abnormalities.

Thus, compartmentalisation of Cry1Ac within the plant cell so that it is confined to chloroplasts seems to alleviate the detrimental effects. Hence, the authors suggest that targeting Cry1Ac to chloroplasts can lead to plants expressing higher levels of toxin and better insect resistance.

At the same time, the researchers contend that finding that expression of a Bt-toxin to be detrimental to plants was unanticipated since the toxin is thought to be very specific to certain insects.

The reason for the detrimental effects of Cry1Ac on plant growth and development is not known and its understanding would require further investigation, they state in the paper.

### **Soyameal export jumps nearly three-fold in May**



New Delhi, June 6:

India's soyameal exports jumped nearly three-fold at 1,76,816 tonnes in May on record output of soyabean, according to industry data.

The country had in May 2010 exported 60,228 tonnes of soyameal, which is used as animal feed, Indore-based Soyabean Processors Association of India said in a statement.

In the first eight months of the current oil year (October—September), exports more than doubled to 3.47 million tonnes as against 1.62 million tonnes in the corresponding period of 2009—10 oil year.

India exports soyameal to Japan, Vietnam, Indonesia and China among others. According to the government data, the country is estimated to have harvested a record 12.58 million tonnes of soyabean in July 2010—June 2011 crop year.

### **Pre-monsoon showers aid 2.65 lakh ha kharif coverage in Karnataka**



Getting ready: With the early onset of the rains, the farmers have taken up the land levelling operations prior to the sowing operations in Gulbarga district.

Bangalore, June 6:

Pre-monsoon (April-May) showers have facilitated early sowing of pulses, oilseeds, maize, cotton and potato in few districts such as Chamarajanagar, Mysore, Hassan, Chikmagalur, Dharwad, Bijapur, Belgaum and Haveri.

According to Agriculture Department, 74.65 lakh hectares target has been set for this kharif season. As per the data (as on May 31) about 2.65 lakh hectares has been covered in the State as against the normal coverage of 2.82 lakh hectares, in the same period last year 3.61 lakh hectares was achieved.

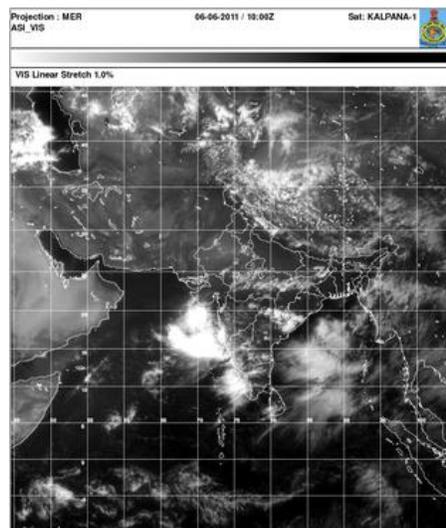
Total food grains (cereals+ pulses) coverage is down 29.62 per cent at 1.14 lakh hectare as against last year coverage (target for the season is 51.58 lakh hectares).

Cereals coverage is down by 33.87 per cent at 0.41 lakh hectares as against last year coverage. Jowar area coverage is 0.26 lakh hectare (last year 0.39 lakh hectare), ragi 0.02 lakh hectare (0.03 lakh hectare) maize 0.13 lakh hectare (0.16 lakh hectare).Pulses coverage is down by 27 per cent at 0.73 lakh hectares as against last year coverage.

Tur coverage is 0.05 lakh hectare (last year 0.11 lakh hectare), blackgram 0.14 lakh hectare (0.15 lakh hectare), Greengram 0.23 lakh hectare (0.34 lakh hectare), Cow pea and others 0.30 lakh hectare (0.40 lakh hectare).Oil seeds coverage is down 32.46 per cent at 0.52 lakh hectare as against previous year coverage. (Target for the season is 13.75 lakh hectares).Groundnut 0.12 lakh hectare (0.10 lakh hectare), Sesum 0.30 lakh hectare (0.41 lakh hectare), Sunflower 0.08 lakh hectare (0.21 lakh hectare), Castor 0.02 lakh hectare (0.05 lakh hectare).

Cashcrops - Cotton 0.57 lakh hectare (0.48 lakh hectare), Sugar 0.12 lakh hectare (0.15 lakh hectare) and Tobacco 0.29 lakh hectare (0.59 lakh hectare).

### **Evasive 'low' shows up in Arabian Sea, may intensify**



Thiruvananthapuram, June 6:

After being evasive over the past five days, a low-pressure area has tossed itself up over east-central Arabian Sea on Monday afternoon, and is expected to rev up the monsoon.

India Meteorological Department (IMD) expected the system to get more marked in time, an evening update said on Monday.

According to the US Joint Typhoon Warning Centre (JTWC), the area of convection was located approximately 55 nautical miles (101 km) southwest of Mumbai on Monday morning.

It showed increased convection around a weakly defined low-level circulation centre (storm nucleus) and featured weak banding of clouds, presenting an overall picture of a fragmented and disorganized system.

But upper level analysis showed marginal divergence (window effect on top that helps storm breathe through) and low vertical wind shear (shear is change in wind speeds with height that kills storms).

Additionally, sea surface temperatures prevail in the 29 deg Celsius to 30 deg Celsius field, which is beyond the threshold of 27.5 deg Celsius needed for sustaining a weather system in the waters.

There is a small pool of seawaters warmest at 31 to 32 deg Celsius off the Konkan coast where most of the intensification is expected to happen.

Due to the favorable upper level environment and increase in central convection, JTWC assessed the potential (on a scale of three) at 'medium' (on a scale of 1 to 3) for further intensification of the system.

A few global models see the possibility of the strong monsoon flows 'exciting' some action in the Bay of Bengal through the course of the week.

They have also drawn up a scenario where southwesterly flows from the Arabian Sea, easterlies to south easterlies from the Bay of Bengal and a passing westerly trough from across the border setting up a productive monsoon session over east and central India early next week.

The interaction of monsoon flows and a westerly trough from the opposite direction have a significant bearing on the prospects of rain coverage over parts of northwest India as well.

In fact, the IMD has on Monday traced an upper air cyclonic circulation to northwest Rajasthan, having crossed in from across the border.

Presently, it would only go to sustain the pre-monsoon build over east and northeast India. The pre-monsoon showers have to shut out before the 'real thing' can unfold.

The IMD has warned of the possibility of isolated dust storm or thunder storm breaking out over Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana and west Uttar Pradesh until Thursday.

Isolated thunder squall could stalk Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the northern limit of monsoon remained unchanged from the previous day's alignment across Dahanu, Nasik, Gulbarga, Anantapur and Nellore, the IMD update said. The offshore trough held on to its perch from Konkan coast to Kerala.

### **Centre approves separate cell for small tea growers**

Kolkata, June 6:

The Union Government has given its approval for the setting up of a separate cell under the Tea Board to look after the interests of small tea-growers. The Commerce Ministry has issued a notification in this regard.

The number of small tea growers in the country is estimated at 1,57,500, accounting for a production of about 257 million kg of made tea, or roughly about 26 per cent of the country's total production.

Confirming this, Mr. G Boria, Director of Tea Development, Tea Board, said the Ministry has sanctioned 95 posts for the cell and the recruitment would start in due course. With this, issues facing the small tea growers, mostly unorganised, being different from those in organised tea sector, should receive due attention. They, as he explained, related to collectivising the growers, quality, pricing, bought leaf factory etc. The proposed cell, he felt, should be able to devise a mechanism to ensure fair price to growers as well as bought leaf factories.

Welcoming the Government announcement,, Mr Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty, President, Confederation Indian Small Tea Growers Associations (CISTA), said it was long overdue. He however felt that mere constitution of a cell would not be enough as certain issues critical for the small tea growers must be addressed properly by the authorities concerned.

Mr Chakraborty particularly demanded enhancement of the amount of one time capital grant from the present Rs five lakh to Rs seven lakh to each primary producer society of small growers in the 12<sup>th</sup> Plan. Also, each society having a minimum membership of 40 growers against the present stipulation of 50 and minimum command area of not less than 20 hectares, should be eligible for the grant. Revolving corpus fund should be provided to each society according to their total land holding at the rate of Rs 10,000 per hectare.

All these and several other demands such as consolidation of uneconomic holdings, setting up of processing unit by primary producer society, assistance for promotion of organic tea cultivation, formation of a model self-help group and scheme for welfare of workers had been placed before the consultation workshop on plantations for preparing approach paper for the 12<sup>th</sup> plan, he said.

### **Spot rubber improves on supply worries**

Kottayam, June 6:

Physical rubber prices improved on Monday. The continuing torrential showers have affected arrivals of the raw material and the market firmed up further on supply concerns. According to observers, trading volumes were poor and hence, it was difficult to get the exact closing prices in certain counters.

Sheet rubber increased to Rs 227 (226) a kg amidst scattered transactions. The grade closed at Rs 226.50 (226) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to the Rubber Board.

In futures, the June series closed at Rs 227.38 (227.29), July at Rs 231.55 (232.06), August at Rs 233 (233.69), September at Rs 232.25 (232.51), October at Rs 231.50 (231.95) and November at Rs 231.50 (231.80 ) a kg for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

The key Tokyo rubber futures were firm on early trades but the gains were limited due to lack of trading incentives particularly since the Chinese markets were closed owing to a public holiday.

The June futures inched up to ¥422 (Rs 235.86) from ¥421 a kg for RSS 3 during the day session but then remained inactive during the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) finished marginally higher at Rs 234.91 (234.72) a kg at Bangkok.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 227 (226); RSS-5: 225 (222); ungraded: 221 (218); ISNR 20: 218 (215) and latex 60 per cent: 140 (135).

### **Cardamom prices recover on export demand**

Kochi, June 6:

Cardamom prices recovered last week on good export demand, amid declining arrivals at auctions held in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

“There was an improvement of about Rs 100 a kg last week, compared to the previous week on good demand from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries for Ramzan. To make things better, the arrivals have shown a declining trend following sharp fall in the prices during the week before last,” trade sources in Bodinayakannur told *Business Line* on Monday. They said the price for 8mm bold was at Rs 1,100 a kg.

Those holding back their produce might have either exhausted their stocks or resorted to a regulated release to arrest further fall in the prices, they said. “Any way the export buying has helped in stopping the fall besides aiding the price rise,” the sources claimed.

There is unlikely to be a break in supply this year because of the favourable weather conditions. Normally, there used to be a lean period, between the previous crop season and the next, spanning nearly six to eight weeks from June- July. Breaking this cycle, the new crop is expected to arrive in the markets by late this month. The auctions are, therefore, going to be held this year without any interruption usually necessitated during the lean period by very thin arrivals, they said.

## **Total arrivals fall**

Total arrivals during last week dropped to around 230 tonnes from about 300 tonnes the week before.

At the Sunday auction held by the KCPMC, arrivals declined to 42.7 tonnes from 64 tonnes and the entire quantity was sold out. The auction average improved to Rs 647.93 a kg from the previous Sunday's Rs 588.59 a kg, Mr P. C. Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC, told *Business Line*. He said exporters covered good quantities while upcountry buyers were slow.

An estimated 50 tonnes of capsules were bought by exporters last week, and they are holding orders for the ensuing Ramzan, export sources said.

Total arrivals during the current season from August 1 to June 5, 2011 stood at 10,601 tonnes. Of this, 10,334 tonnes were sold.

Arrivals and sales in the same period of the previous season were 9,935 tonnes and 9,690 tonnes, respectively.

Weighted average price as on June 5 was at around Rs 1,003 a kg, against about Rs 828.50 a kg for the same day last year.

## **Ramzan**

Exporters are holding orders in hand, and hence are expected to buy good quantity to meet their overseas Ramzan requirement, a major dealer in Bodi said on Monday. He said in the open market today good colour 8mm bold is sold at Rs 1,100 a kg. Prices of graded varieties improved and they in rupees per kg were: AGEB (7mm) 900; AGB (6mm) 800; AGS (5mm – 6mm) 650 -700 and AGS 1: 650. Good bulk was being sold at Rs 675-725 a kg, while medium bulk at Rs 600 a kg, he said.

The growing areas have been receiving good rains with occasional sun shine, and overall the weather conditions are favourable so far for the plants and hence the next crop is likely to be good, growers in Kumily said.

## **Campaign launched to check aflatoxin in spices**

Kochi, June 6:

The Spices Board has launched a campaign to educate farmers, traders and exporters about aflatoxin, a naturally occurring toxin, that degrades spices exported from India. This follows rapid alerts issued by the European Union against aflatoxin in nutmeg and mace exported from the country.

“Nutmeg and mace are important spices that find wide application in food industry and medicine, and hence the paramount importance in monitoring their quality,” the board said. Countries from the EU and West Asia, and South Africa and Japan have been importing large quantities of these products in the raw form and as value-added spice oils and oleoresins.

To address this major issue, the board is launching a nationwide publicity campaign to create awareness on the need to get rid of the toxin.

Exporters, scientists from the Indian Institute of Spices Research and Kerala Agricultural University, the board, and educated farmers will address the campaign meetings. The meetings will focus on the major nutmeg- and mace-growing regions of Kerala, Konkan coast and Raigad district of Maharashtra.

### **Cause**

Poor primary processes followed by the farmers result in the presence of aflatoxin in nutmeg. As the crop is often harvested during monsoon, drying in the sun is usually not feasible, and farmers adopt other traditional methods to dry the harvested nutmeg.

Due to inadequate drying and storage practices of farmers, the crop becomes susceptible to fungal attacks. Farmers need to dry the produce well to avoid growth of fungi and mould in nutmeg, the board pointed out. Though aflatoxin contamination does not hamper productivity, it makes the produce unfit for consumption.

Due to stringent standards on the permissible limits of aflatoxin by importing countries, Indian produce becomes less acceptable in global markets.

The European Spice Association, comprising of members of the EU, has prescribed limits for aflatoxin at 5 parts per billion for B-1 grade and 10 parts per billion for the toxin in general. Member countries can fix their own limits.

B-1 grade aflatoxin is considered the most virulent cancer-causing agent. Aflatoxins are a group of secondary metabolites of the fungi, *Aspergillus flavus* and *Aspergillus parasiticus*, and are rated as 'potent carcinogens'. Nutmeg and mace exports from the country have been on a rapid upward spiral growing to Rs 91.86 crore in 2009-10 from Rs 31.17 crore in 2005-06.

### **Fish output, value jump in Dakshin Kannada, Udipi**

Mangalore, June 6:

The quantity and the value of fish production went up by more than 30 per cent in Dakshina Kannada and Udipi districts in Karnataka during 2010-11. Fishermen in these districts got 2.52 lakh tonnes of fish in 2010-11 as against 1.89 lakh tonnes in 2009-10, recording a growth of 33 per cent.

The value of the fish-catch stood at Rs 1,032.42 crore during 2010-11 as against Rs 764.86 crore in 2009-10, recording a growth of 34.98 per cent.

Mr Suresh Kumar Ullal, Deputy Director, Fisheries Department, Mangalore, told *Business Line* that oil sardine species has contributed significantly to the increase in the fish production during the year.

The share of oil sardine stood at 38,940 tonnes. Of this, Udipi district garnered a major share with 25,685 tonnes. The value of oil-sardine catch stood at Rs 38.31 crore.

The second biggest catch by volumes during the year was that of Indian mackerel. The catch of Indian mackerel was at 32,333 tonnes. Of this, the share of Udipi district was 19,022 tonnes. The total catch fetched around Rs 140.17 crore in the market.

Though the catch of cuttlefish stood at 10,576 tonnes in these two districts, the variety earned Rs 147.75 crore in the market.

With a production of 21,164 tonnes, ribbon fish contributed 8.38 per cent to fish production in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts. This catch of ribbon fish recorded a price of around Rs 128.30 crore during 2010-11.

A catch of 16,648 tonnes of squids along the coast of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi commanded a price of Rs 116.86 crore in the market during the period.

The threadfin breams variety with 20,066 tonnes of fish catch helped earn Rs 80.11 crore to fishermen in these districts.

Asked about growth in the value of fish production during 2010-11, Mr Ullal said there was around 30 per cent increase in the cost of fish, irrespective of species, during the year. This was the main reason for the total value crossing Rs 1,000 crore in these two districts, he said.

### **Mettur dam opened ahead of schedule**

Salem, June 6:

Water was released from the Mettur dam here today one week ahead of schedule in order to aid the samba crop across 11 districts.

Six thousand cusecs of water was released on higher sluice at 10:10 this morning by ministers, Mr K.V. Ramalingam (PWD), and Mr Edappadi Palanichamy (Highways and Minor Ports), and by the evening, 12,000 cusecs would have been released, officials said.

Water from the dam is normally released in the evening. The present water level of the dam is 116 ft, as against its full level of 120 ft, they said.

Water from the dam is normally released on June 12, but it has been opened a week ahead of schedule and will aid 16.5 lakh acres of samba crop across 11 districts including Salem, Namakkal, Tanjore and Tiruchi, officials said.

They added that by releasing the water, a total of 370 MW power would be generated through hydroelectricity.

The dam would be open till January 28 next year, they said.

## **Global coffee exports up 24% in April**

New Delhi, June 6:

Global coffee exports rose 24 per cent in April to 9.73 million bags against 7.84 million bags in the year-ago period, according to the latest International Coffee Organisation (ICO) data.

One bag equals 60 kg.

Global exports in April, however, were less compared with the record exports achieved in March this year at 10.4 million bags.

During the first seven months of the current coffee year (October 2010-April 2011), exports have increased by 16.7 per cent to 62.7 million bags against 53.7 million bags in the year-ago period.

Higher exports can be attributed to rise in global output by 8.1 per cent to 133 million bags in 2010-11 crop year. The crop year varies from country to country.

Global consumption of coffee continues to maintain some buoyancy. It is estimated at 134 million bags in the calendar year 2010 compared with 130.9 million bags in 2009, the ICO said.