

01 Aug, 2013

Karnataka passes Bill to bring in agricultural marketing reforms



The Hindu Under the agricultural marketing reforms, the committee will collect user charge from the buyer of the produce. Photo: M. Mural
BJP, JD(S) term Bill 'anti-farmer', Opposition stages walkout in Assembly
Amid a walkout by the Bharatiya Janata Party and Janata Dal (Secular) members, the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday passed the Karnataka Agricultural Produce Marketing (Regulation and Development) (Second Amendment) Bill, 2013, which envisages introduction of warehouse-based sales and single unified licence to traders.

Minister for Agricultural Marketing and Horticulture Shamanur Shivashankarappa introduced the Bill and said it proposed to introduce market reforms in the agricultural marketing sector by introduction of warehouse-based sales, single unified licence to traders and improved marketing access. It said no market fee would be levied on flowers, fruits and vegetables and the marketing committee would collect user charge from buyers of the produce at such rates specified in the bylaws approved by the Director of Agriculture Marketing.

The Director of Agriculture Marketing would issue trader licences to operate as trader in any of the APMC yards, private market yards in the State. The existing licensee should obtain a fresh trade licence within a period of six months from the date of commencement of the Karnataka Agricultural Produce Marketing (Regulation and Development) (Second Amendment) Act, 2013. The Bill envisages establishing a direct purchase centre to buy notified agricultural produce directly from an agriculturist. It also proposed to set up a Registering Authority for addressing disputes arising out of contract farming. It would resolve the dispute within 30 days from the date of reference of dispute by giving the parties a reasonable opportunity of being heard.

Earlier, BJP and JD(S) members said the Bill was not in the interest of farmers and demanded its withdrawal. The former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar, K.G. Bopaiah, Basavaraj Bommai, Vishweswara Hegde Kageri, Appachu Ranjan, C.T. Ravi, Govind M. Karjol (all BJP), leader of the Opposition H.D. Kumaraswamy, Shivalinge Gowda and Y.S.V. Datta (all JD-S) urged the government to withdraw the Bill and refer it to the joint House committee for detailed study.

Mr. Shivashankarappa and Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs T.B. Jayachandra defended the Bill and said it would eliminate the role of middlemen in APMCs and allowed traders to sell produce in any market in the State.

Bio control agent to control tree infestations

Different microorganisms including fungal pathogens that live in the soil can cause diseases in plants.

It is necessary to control harmful soil pathogens to avoid economic loss from affected crops. However, using chemical fungicides to control these prove costly and will create environmental problems.

Feasibility

To control the fungal pathogens bio control methods are always advisable and are economically feasible. One such is *Trichoderma viride* (Tv), a soil fungus and found useful as bio control agent for plant diseases.

This fungus controls diseases in plants particularly in trees caused by the other soil fungal pathogens.

Though Tv is also available in the market as a commercial product it can be produced by the farmers using agricultural wastes to reduce cost and is a good alternative for chemical based fungicides.

The following methods can be adopted to produce Tv for application:

Innoculate about one gm or five ml of Tv in the plastic trays (30 x 40 cm) filled with either dried rice straw, or saw dust or sugarcane bagasse.

After inoculation necessary watering must be done to maintain wet condition. The substrates must be tightly closed with a thin muslin or cotton cloth and maintained at room temperature for better growth.

Green mouldsThe culture appears as green moulds on the substrates after 10 days of inoculation. These green moulds can be further allowed to grow for another 2-3 weeks.

After a month the Tv is noticed as a green powder in the substrates.

This can be directly used for controlling the tree saplings in the nursery. It has been found effective in the control of root rot, damping off and leaf blight/wilt diseases that are common infestations.

To obtain the mother culture of Tv, interested farmers can contact the Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding, Coimbatore Tamil Nadu.

Phone: 0422-2484100. on all working days.

(Dr. A. Karthikeyan is scientist and Ms. N.B. Siva Priya is Research scholar, Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree breeding, Coimbatore, mobile: 9443374119, email: karthika@icfre.org)

A robust indigenous poultry breed saved from extinction



A four-month-old bird is sold for Rs. 600-800. Photo: Special Arrangemen
Backyard poultry rearing is nothing new to farmers.

They have been doing it for many years. The birds grow by scavenging on kitchen and other waste, generate some revenue, and also take care of the nutritional need of the farmer.

The last two decades have seen the poultry sector focusing more on commercial poultry rearing like broilers for meat and eggs. As a result many indigenous species have completely become extinct or are on the verge of extinction.

Nativity

One such breed is the Kalamasi or Kadaknath fowl breed that is native of Bhil and Bhila tribal regions in Madhya Pradesh.

The birds are jet black in colour and reared mainly for their meat, which is also black in colour but softer than that of other desi birds.

“A survey programme conducted by the Jhabhua Krishi Vigyan Kendra some years back threw light on the alarming fact that the breed is slowly becoming extinct and only a few hundreds are left. Through the National Agriculture Innovation Project (NAIP) of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) under Rajamata Vijayaraje Scindia Agricultural University,

Gwalior, attempts were made to revive the breed and today nearly several hundred tribal beneficiaries are rearing this breed,” says Dr. I.S.Tomar, Programme Coordinator, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, near Rajgarh Naka, Jhabhua, Madhya Pradesh. The birds are robust by nature and can tolerate extremes of climate.

They can be reared quite easily and there is no need for any special attention or round the clock care for them. They thrive well in a minimal management system and are good scavengers. As a result, feed cost gets considerably reduced. They can be housed in large bamboo baskets or inside store rooms.

Grow fast

Both the cockerels and hens grow quite fast and the hens start laying eggs from sixth month of age onwards. In a year a single hen lays 80-120 eggs. Kadaknath birds are poor brooders. They do not hatch their eggs.

Therefore the tribals use other desi hens to hatch the eggs. The desi hen is

placed on the eggs kept in a bamboo basket lined with dry straw or grass to provide a cushioning effect. This traditional practice is being encouraged to propagate this breed through natural means and ensure availability of chicks in the villages.

Good price

“The birds command a good price in the market. A four month bird is sold for Rs, 600-800 and a one year old bird above Rs. 600 (other desi varieties fetch Rs. 100-150).The eggs are sold at Rs.10-12.

The dark black meat is considered a delicacy by the tribals. Both the eggs and meat are a low source of fat (3-5 per cent) and high source of protein (25-40 per cent),” says Dr.Tomar.

The NAIP initially started a pilot project with only 10 poultry houses each with 100 birds and named it as Kadaknath Murgi Palan Samooh Jhayda. Presently around 500 poultry units are functioning at Jhabhua with active support from Gramin vikas trust and Integrated watershed management programme in Jhansi.

“The tribal beneficiaries rearing this breed are today able to get an income of Rs.80,000-90,000 a year. This has encouraged many people to remain in their lands and continue farming operations in their fields also. In a way this bird has been able to check migration of families from their land in search of work,” says Dr. Tomar.

Hatching unit

A hatching unit has been established at a cost of Rs. 40 lakhs to increase the availability of this breed to other interested growers.

All the growers have been trained on scientific management of this breed, balanced feed, health management and marketing. Timely vaccinations have been administered by specialists and deworming at periodical intervals is also being done.

By adopting such measures they have succeeded in bringing down the mortality of the bird from 50 per cent to 10-12 per cent.

The birds attain a body weight of 1.5 kg in 105- 120 days. This sustainable system of livelihood through Kadaknath rearing has been well recognised by the district administration of Jhabua and the Kadaknath Murgi Palan Samooh Jhayda and awarded a certificate of appreciation by the district administration.

For more information readers can contact Dr. I.S. Tomar, Programme Coordinator, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Near Rajgarh Naka, Jhabua-457661, Madhya Pradesh, phone: 07392-244367, mobile: 09425188028.

Fast growing trees developed



They look like normal eucalyptus trees up to 65 feet tall with a trunk girth of about 19 cm and towering over their peers in an evaluation trial on the foothills of Himalayas here. Actually, they are hybrids, progenies of two high-growth species of eucalyptus parent trees.

The progenies -- just about six-years-old -- have shown a growth pattern which is substantially higher over a commercially available clone variety of their age and with approximate height of 25 feet and girth of 6 cm.

Welcome to the world of tree breeding at the Forest Research Institute (FRI), in the Himalayan foothills, where Indian scientists are working to develop fast—growing, taller and thicker eucalyptus trees so that their plantations can satiate the paper industry’s demand and, in effect, help reduce the load on other species of the natural forests for the purpose.

The fast-growing progenies are the centre of attraction at New Forest in the FRI campus and hold promise of developing future eucalyptus varieties to feed pulp or biomass to the paper industry and other wood-based industries.

“In eucalyptus tree breeding, scientists are developing hybrids with controlled hybridisation among desired genotypes of different eucalyptus species,” said FRI Director P.P. Bhojvoid.

A hybrid that grows taller and faster with greater volume is cloned and multiplied. In this way, the plants produced will have identical features and growth patterns and could be distributed among farmers and growers who undertake captive plantation for the paper industry.

Ashok Kumar, head of the FRI’s Division of Genetics and Tree Propagation, said: “Cloning continues parallel with tree breeding, adopting conventional and tissue culture techniques (in a sophisticated lab).”

Normally, a good quality eucalyptus tree is considered to be one which grows tall and its trunk fast becomes thick.

The FRI, an institute of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education under the ministry of environment and forests, has, over the years improved the quality of eucalyptus to such an extent that a biomass of up to 40 cubic metres per hectare per year could be possible in experimental conditions.

In India, the eucalyptus yield has still been way behind that of Brazil, which had achieved up to 80 cubic metres per hectare per year during 2011, said scientist Parveen.

In a way, the hybrids that have been screened after years of efforts of the scientists of FRI, compete extremely well with commercially available clones, she said. IANS

Bill passed to bring in reforms in agricultural marketing sector

BJP, JD(S) term Bill 'anti-farmer', Opposition stages walkout in Assembly



AIM OF BILL

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| Proposes to introduce single unified licence to traders | Marketing committee will collect user charge from buyer of the produce | Registering authority to address disputes that arise out of contract farming | Warehousing facility to traders in APMCs |
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PHOTO: G.R.N. SOMASHEKAR

Amid a walkout by the Bharatiya Janata Party and Janata Dal (Secular) members, the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday passed the Karnataka Agricultural Produce Marketing (Regulation and Development) (Second Amendment) Bill, 2013, which envisages introduction of warehouse-based sales and single unified licence to traders.

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Protest

Earlier, BJP and JD(S) members said the Bill was not in the interest of farmers and demanded its withdrawal. The former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar, K.G. Bopaiah, Basavaraj Bommai, Vishweswara Hegde Kageri, Appachu Ranjan, C.T. Ravi, Govind M. Karjol (all BJP), leader of the Opposition H.D. Kumaraswamy, Shivalinge Gowda and Y.S.V. Datta (all JD-S) urged the government to withdraw the Bill and refer it to the joint House committee for detailed study.

Mr. Shivashankarappa and Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs T.B. Jayachandra defended the Bill and said it would eliminate the role of middlemen in APMCs and allowed traders to sell produce in any market in the State. When the government declined to withdraw the Bill, BJP and JD(S) members staged a walkout. When Opposition members expressed their apprehensions over warehouse facility, single unified licence, and facilities at the APMC, Mr. Jayachandra said all issues would be addressed during the framing of the rules to the Act.

KBJNL starts water release into the Bhima

The Krishna Bhagya Jala Nigama Ltd. (KBJNL) has started releasing water from the Indi Branch Canal in Upper Krishna Project into the Bhima.

This is expected to solve the drinking water shortage in villages and towns that draw water from the river and meet the irrigational requirements of farmers.

Deputy Commissioner N.S. Prasanna Kumar told *The Hindu* that water was being released at the rate of more than 630 cubic feet per second (cusecs)

and Irrigation Department officials too had started releasing water from the Bhima Lift Irrigation Project dam at Sonna village.

He said the Saradagi barrage from where drinking water was being pumped for Gulbarga city had been overflowing and the barrages constructed across the Bhima too had received good inflow following the release of water from Bhima Lift Irrigation Project Dam.

Mr. Kumar said illegal extraction of sand had come down in the district following tough measures initiated by the administration. The resumption of flow of water in the river beds of Bhima, Kagina and Bennethora and its subsidiaries due to copious rains had put a break on it too.

Mr. Kumar said the administration had transferred the 1,700 cubic metres of illegally transported sand to the government yard. It would be sold for the construction of residential houses. Mr. Kumar said the sale was limited to a truck load for one house. He said sand was being sold at Rs. 550 per cubic meter

ZP president verifies papers at Horticulture Department office



Zilla panchayat members verifying documents pertaining to government schemes in Chitradurga on Wednesday.

A team of zilla panchayat (ZP) members, led by president Indira Kiran, visited the Horticulture Department and verified documents pertaining to government schemes.

The members said the higher authorities had sent back proposals demanding more funds to the department because of improper use of funds in the last fiscal. "A total of Rs. 16 crore was not utilised properly and it had been returned. Hence, the authorities were not ready to release money this year," they alleged.

The members verified the files of irrigation schemes, farm ponds, community farm ponds, pack houses, and National Horticulture Mission. They told the officers of the department to verify documents provided by farmers for obtaining facilities under different schemes, to ensure that it reached the actual beneficiaries.

Officials of the department informed the ZP president that a letter had been written to the State government explaining the reasons for non-utilisation of funds under some schemes. In response, the government had agreed to release funds shortly to help farmers in the district, they said.

ZP member Ravi Kumar advised the officers concerned to maintain transparency while providing benefits to beneficiaries. "Officers should also create awareness among farmers about the facilities available under various schemes and convince them to make use of them," he added.

The ZP president instructed the officers to follow norms while constructing pack houses in farms. "Stringent action would be taken against officials violating norms," she said

Farmers' association president slams PWD for shoddy work

The Public Works Department has become dysfunctional in the light of its poor maintenance of channels in the Delta. The department's failure is going to water down any benefits that may come out of early release of Mettur water for agriculture, said K. Balakrishnan, State President, Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, here on Wednesday.

While welcoming the timing of the water release, Mr. Balakrishnan said there was insufficient stock of seeds for farmers, and the stock of agricultural inputs were inadequate. District administrations were not adequately geared to meet the demand for seeds, and in addition, there was no clarity on the availability of crop loans. "At this stage, delta farmers do not have funds to invest on cultivation. The State government should give a clear picture on crop loans through the cooperative societies," Mr. Balakrishnan said.

According to him, the scheme of farm ponds is in limbo because of the rigid restrictions on transfer of sand by tractors for personal use. In the light of the last week's arrests of the CPI(M) district secretary along with CITU-affiliated tractor owners here under non-cognizable sections, Mr.

Balakrishnan said the ban on movement of sand from one's patta land for self-use through tractors was unreasonable. This had even affected digging of farm ponds as farmers were not allowed to move the sand from another area by tractors. The sand could only be used to strengthen the embankment and level the area, and not be shifted to another location, even if it were to the owner's own use.

He called for writing off of lease arrears by tenants. "While repayment of loans has been deferred, there has been no respite for tenants despite

drought.” About 90 per cent of farmers in delta were tenant cultivators. They were in distress because of the failure of monsoon. Revenue Courts should stop harassing such farmers and the State government should spell its policy on tenant farmers.

On the Wednesday’s arrest of 65 fishermen from Nagapattinam and Karaikal, Mr. Balakrishnan said the Centre was as “culpable” as the Sri Lankan government on the issue.

Samba crop on 2.51 lakh hectares

Collector appeals to farmers to make judicious use of water

With water set to be released on August 2 from the Mettur dam for samba cultivation, Agriculture Department officials and farmers in the delta districts of Thanjavur and Tiruvarur have begun preparatory works. Thanjavur Collector K.Baskaran, who held a meeting with officials, said that samba and thaladi would be raised on 1.20 lakh hectares and 15,000 hectares respectively in the district.

With respect to seed stock, 465 tonnes of seeds are available with Agriculture Department extension centres and about 620 tonnes are available with private seed vendors.

And 4,005 tonnes of urea, 4,841 tonnes of DAP, 774 tonnes of potash, and 1,300 tonnes of complex fertilisers are available with cooperative societies and private vendors.

A fertilizer sales monitoring committee has been formed to keep track of 245 Primary Agriculture Co-operative Societies and 243 private vendors authorised to sell fertilisers, Mr. Baskaran said. Co-operative banks had been given a target of Rs.160 crore to be disbursed as crop loans for

Samba season. So far, they have disbursed Rs.24.70 crore to 5,700 farmers. The scale of finance is Rs.17,500 an acre.

The target for commercial banks was Rs. 3,016 crore. The Collector appealed to farmers to make judicious use of water.

Sekar, Joint Director of Agriculture, and K.Varadarajan, Project Director, District Rural Development Agency, were present.

Tiruvarur: S.Natarajan, Tiruvarur District Collector, said that the samba crop would be raised on 1.31 lakh hectares of land in Tiruvarur district. Chairing a review meeting with officials of various departments, he said sowing would be taken up on 77,301 hectares of land and transplantation would be done on 53,822 hectares of land.

Already 433.8 tonnes of seeds had been distributed, 305.4 tonnes of seeds were stocked by agriculture department, and the primary agriculture co-operative credit societies had a stock of 640 tonnes. With respect to fertilisers, the collector said that there was a stock of 37,507 tonnes of urea, 14,291 tonnes of DAP, and 10,883 tonnes of potash. P.Manimaran, District Revenue Officer, A.Ganesan, Joint Director of Agriculture, and Ravichandran, Executive Engineer, PWD were present.

Camps for crop loans

The district administration will organise special camps for identifying farmers for the disbursement of crop loans sanctioned by the nationalised banks in various revenue villages on August 1 and 2.

The farmers in need of loans provided in low interest rate could attend the camp with chitta book, no-objection certificate provided by the primary agricultural cooperative banks, pass books of the nationalised banks, and

two passport size photographs. The officials of agriculture, revenue and cooperation departments will participate in the camps, according to a release of the District Collector Darez Ahamed here on Wednesday. The camps will be held in revenue villages of Udumbiyam, Periyavadakarai, and Thondapadi (Veppanthattai block), Nannai east, Tirumanthurai, and Olaipadi east villages in Kunnam block; Melamathur, Naranamangalam, and Varapaddi villages in Alathur block and Esanai, Alangizi, and Kurumbalur south in Perambalur on August 1. On the next day, the camps will be held in Poolambadi east, Noothapur south, and Neikuppai (Veppanthattai block); Nannai west, Pennakonam north, and Olaipadi west (Kunnam block); Azhagiripalaiyam, Nattarmangalam, and Karai east (Alathur block) and Keezhakarai, and Kurumbalur north (Perambalur block).

Tissue culture in traditional varieties

Stakeholder's consultative meeting on plantation development organised by CII



Sweet talk: Ravichandran Purushothaman, chairman, CII TN Banana Festival and President, India Danfoss Industries Ltd, speaking at the consultative meet in Thanjavur on Wednesday.— PHOTO: B.

VELANKANNI RAJ

Steps have been taken to popularise numerous banana varieties produced in Tamil Nadu, said M.M. Mustafa, Director, National Research Centre for Banana (NRCB), Tiruchi, here on Wednesday.

Inaugurating the second stakeholder's consultative meeting on plantation development organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) at the Indian Institute of Crop Processing Technology (IICPT), Thanjavur, Mr. Mustafa said: "G9 (tissue culture) variety is popular and is produced in large quantity.

Efforts are being made to introduce tissue culture in traditional varieties, including Poovan, Nenthiran, Karpooravalli, and Rasthali."

He suggested farmers could go for "Udhayam" variety introduced by the NRCB and said that some farmers have achieved good production.

Sundaram, a plantation farmer from Thirukattuplai, succeeded in producing a bunch weighing 65 to 75 kg.

The director appealed to farmers to adopt drip irrigation, applying fertilizer along with water, and other post-harvest techniques to improve productivity.

K. Alagusundaram, Director, IICPT, said that productivity gap had to be bridged by banana farmers in the State catering to both export and domestic market. He advised going for value addition to compete with Philippines and China in export market. Philippines was exporting banana chips and contributed 10 per cent of world banana export while India had 0.3 per cent. Pack houses, cold storage units, and fruit-ripening units should be established to avoid post-harvest wastage.

"Banana growers in the State could not supply banana to noon meal scheme in 2008, the then State government was ready to introduce banana

in the noon meal scheme,” said G. Ajeethan, General Secretary of Tamil Nadu Banana Growers Federation.

“Although we are a major producer, we are not able to meet the quality requirements of the Government to supply banana. They needed 470 tonnes with a fruit weighing 85 to hundred grams,” he said.

T.N.Balamohan, special officer, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, called for organised plantation sector. He said that only in India banana was grown in all areas like rain fed, irrigated, mountain, and so on.

Ravichandran Purushothaman, Chairman, CII TN Banana Festival and President India Danfoss Industries Ltd, said that CII has been organising stakeholders consultative meeting for banana plantation development as banana was an important crop in Tamil Nadu which contributes to 30 per cent of national share.

The objectives of the meeting was to make farmers take to a scientific approach in the cultivation, use technology for avoiding post-harvest wastage, and to create a chain of cold storage and other allied facilities for them. Tamil Nadu produces 37 varieties of bananas with high potential for export.

Earlier, CII organised a stake holder consultative meeting in Tuticorin last month, and next meeting would be in Erode, said Mr. Ravichandran.

Satyabrata Sahoo, Commissioner of Horticulture and Plantation crops, said that farmers should explore the possibility of going for alternate crops.

Plantation farmers had been taking efforts to increase production.

They should employ new technologies and follow modern cultivation methods to improve production and income.

K. Baskaran, Collector, A.P. Karupiah, President, Tamil Nadu Banana Growers Federation, and Rani Muralidharan, Chairperson, CII, Tiruchi zone, also spoke.

Drive against foot-and-mouth disease

The Animal Husbandry Department will launch an intensive drive against foot-and-mouth disease in the district from August 1 to 28.

After inaugurating a seminar on the 'Goraksha' project (a disease-control project of the department) for presidents and secretaries of primary milk cooperative societies in the district here on Tuesday, A. Bahulayan, Chief Veterinary officer, said 14 cows had died of the disease in three months and the disease was identified in 142 cows during the period.

He said vaccination was the best option to combat the disease. A vaccination drive would be held from August 1 to 28 in the district and a fee of Rs.5 would be charged from a dairy farmer for vaccinating an animal during the drive. Ear tags would be attached to each vaccinated animal and a blood test would be conducted later to evaluate the result of the vaccination, Dr. Bahulayan said.

Hike in paddy price sought

The paddy farmers have urged the government to fix Rs.30 for per kg. of paddy as new procurement price as against the existing Rs.17. In a statement here on Wednesday, the Desheeya Karshaka Samajam president K.A. Prabhakaran said that the procurement price for the first crop of paddy, that will be harvested by the end of August, should be fixed

by the government immediately. He said that the cost of production has gone up because of the hike in the price of fertilizer, pesticide and labour.

Flower show attracts huge crowd

The two-day flower show organized by the Department of Horticulture at Tamil Nadu's largest Eco Park near Five Falls at Courtallam as part of the ongoing 'Saaral Thiruvizhaa' attracted huge crowd.

More than 50 flower varieties including rose, anthurium, known as tail-flower, orchids, coronation flowers, brought from Ooty, Kodaikanal and Hosur and arranged in the form of peacock, fish and butterfly, provided visual treat to the visitors for two days.

The heliconia flowers, displayed by farmer P. Sashikumar from Thuckalay in Kanayakumari district, running a nursery, too attracted the visitors a lot. The Department of Horticulture will organize spices and condiments expo at the same venue during the last two days of the 'Saaral Thiruvizhaa'.

Training for inland fish farmers in murrel culture

A comprehensive training for inland fish farmers on murrel (a freshwater fish variety known for its medicinal properties,) culture was held at Centre for Aquaculture Research and Extension (CARE) of St. Xavier's College, Palayamkottai, on Wednesday.

The Indian Council for Agriculture Research, under its National Agricultural Innovation Project's Production to Consumption scheme, released a sum of Rs. 3.20 crore in September 2008 as grant to CARE, selected from 12 other research institutions competed for this assistance.

Under this programme, the CARE, in association with Central Institute for Freshwater Aquaculture, Bhubaneswar, Orissa, and the research centre at New College, Chennai, will train 100 inland fish farmers every year in the culture of murrel, provide the beneficiaries with thousands of murrel seeds and fish feed and also assist them in marketing the harvested adult (one-year-old) murrels, weighing about 1 kg to 1.250 kg.

“Since one kg of murrel is being sold between Rs.200 and Rs.250, farmers who go for murrel cultivation will certainly get attractive revenue,” said Principal Investigator of the consortium M.A. Haniffa.

Since only 750 of the 2,250 ponds and small irrigation tanks in the district, having an extent of over 9,600 hectares, have been put into use for fish culture (mostly carp variety), the training is conducted to take murrel culture to the remaining unused wells and ponds also. In the training sessions conducted on Wednesday, nearly 40 fish farmers participated and they were taken to an aqua farm at Veeralaperunchelvi near here in the afternoon after the theoretical sessions in the morning.

CARE has identified Tirunelveli Social Service Society (TSSS), a Palayamkottai-based NGO and one of the stakeholders, for preparing the feed on large scale through its feed mill so that it can be supplied to the fish farmers.

In a minimum area of 1cent, 50 to 75 table-size murrels (each weighing about 750 gm) can be cultured to earn from Rs. 15,000 to 20,000 per year. Aspirants having a minimum area of about 1 cent or more can approach CARE, St. Xavier's College Palayamkottai (0462-2560670). Principal, SXC, Palayamkottai, V. Gilbert Camillus SJ, former Dean of Fisheries College and Research Institute V. Sundararaj, formerly professor of Sri

Paramakalyani Centre for Environmental Sciences, Alwarkurichi G.S. Vijayalakshmi, and others participated.

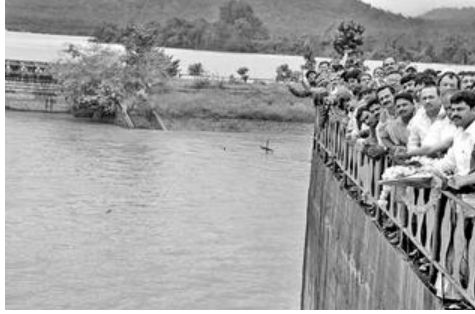
In his remarks, R. Ezekiel, National Coordinator of ICAR-NAIP said his department was prepared to train and support farmers ready for attempting new methods in agro-based ventures that would increase their income.

Farmers asked to get their soil tested

The Department of Horticulture has urged farmers in the Nilgiris district to make use of the soil testing facilities now being extended under the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's second green revolution scheme. In a statement issued here on Wednesday, the Joint Director of Horticulture, N. Mani, said that all the farmers should get their soil tested and set right the deficiencies to receive Integrated Farmers Guides.

Stating that the benefits under the green revolution scheme would be extended only to those in possession of the guides, he said that to carry out various types of soil tests and receive prescriptions for treating them a sum of Rs. 20 should be paid as fees to the soil testing centre of the department near the Government Rose Garden. Details can be obtained from the Agricultural Extension Centres in various parts of the district or the Assistant Directors of Horticulture concerned.

MP urges government to compensate rain-hit farmers



Shimoga MP B.Y. Raghavendra offering Bagina to river Tunga at Gajanur Dam near Shimoga on Wednesday.— Photo : VAIDYA

MP B.Y. Raghavendra has urged the State government to come to the assistance of farmers who have incurred loss due to rain and flood in the district.

The arecanut plantations in Tirthahalli, Sagar and Hosanagar taluks are infected with fruit rot disease, popularly known as *kole roga*, due to excess moisture in the atmosphere. The financial assistance extended by the government to purchase copper sulphate that is used to control *kole roga* should be enhanced, Mr. Raghavendra said.

The ginger crop has also been infected with various diseases due to heavy rain. The government should immediately compensate the farmers who have incurred loss due to rain, he said at a press conference in Gajanur village near here on Wednesday, after offering *bagina* for Tunga reservoir. The officials of the Department of Minor Irrigation should immediately commence the work of repairing the tanks that have breached due to rain, he said. The work of repairing the canals, bridges and drainage damaged due to rain should be executed in a proper manner, he said.

Mr. Raghavendra demanded implementation of the recommendations of the Gorakh Singh panel constituted by the Union government to study the

problems faced by arecanut growers at the earliest. The panel was formed to study the problems faced by the owners of arecanut plantations infected with yellow leaf disease (YLD). It is necessary to address the problems faced by arecanut growers who have incurred loss due to infections other than YLD also. The Union government will be apprised of the need to waive off the loan borrowed by all arecanut growers who have incurred loss due to various pest and fungal infections, he said.

Replying to a query, he informed that passenger train service between Shimoga city and Talaguppa is likely to commence from August 3. Mr. Raghavendra said he met Union Minister for Railways Mallikarjuna Kharge recently and requested him to commence the work of survey on the Shimoga-Shikaripur-Ranibennur railway project. The survey related to Shimoga-Harihar railway line has been completed but the work is yet to commence. T

Banana growers seek relief

Reiterating their demand for sanction of compensation for crop loss suffered by banana growers in Tiruchi district, farmers' representatives of Tiruchi district have urged the government to take steps to sanction money from the calamity relief fund to banana growers sustaining crop losses on account of natural vagaries.

In a representation submitted to the Commissioner of Horticulture in Thanjavur, the farmers observed that banana crop on over 30,000 acres of land had withered because of monsoon failure and lack of flow in the Cauvery over the past six months. This apart, crops in many places were damaged in gale.

Farmers had spent Rs. 1.50 lakh an acre for raising banana and were facing a distress situation now owing to the crop loss, they said in the joint memorandum.

Suriyan, district secretary, Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, Puliur A. Nagarajan, president, Tamil Nadu Horticulture Crop Producers Association, and N. Veerasekaran of Ayyan Vaival Pasanatharar Sangam, were present.

Get seeds from licensed centres'

The Deputy Director of Seed Certification, Vellore, has asked farmers interested in cultivating cotton in Tirupattur, Kandili, Jolarpet, Gudiyatham, Natrampalli and Alangayam areas to get cotton seeds from licensed sales centres .

In a release, he appealed to the farmers to get a receipt containing details while purchasing seeds. He asked them to inform the office of the Deputy Director of Seed Certification functioning in the office of the Joint Director of Agriculture in Thorapadi, Vellore (0416-2264562) if they come across salesmen selling seeds without giving receipt and at prices above MRP.

– Special Correspondent

GI tag for Nagpur orange, Dharmavaram saris

The juicy Nagpur orange, the famous tribal Warli art, Dharmavaram saris and Kerala's Kaipad rice have been cleared for inclusion in Geographical Indications (GI) registry in the country. The logo for Leather Toys of Indore (already a GI product) was also approved.

These products, representing different geographical locations, were approved at a consultative expert meeting organised by Controller General of Patents at Hyderabad last Friday.

They will be notified after providing four months for the public to file its objections.

The Warli tribal art, representing the folklore of the Warli tribe, is mostly practised by women and has become popular among the art connoisseurs in recent times.

The famous saris coming from Dharmavaram, a weaving cluster in Ananthpur of Andhra Pradesh, have been described by the Andhra Pradesh Weavers Cooperative Society Ltd. as saris with broad solid colour borders with contrast *pallus* woven with brocaded gold patterns. Kaipad rice is the system of paddy cultivation in brackish water.

“The four products approved in the meeting were among the 12 that were taken up for deliberations since they conformed to the norms. The deliberations on others would be taken up again after documents required for GI notification is provided by the applicants,” Chinnaraja G. Naidu, the Assistant Registrar of the Geographical Indications Registry, told *The Hindu*.

Currently, 187 Indian products/agriculture crops and six foreign products, mostly liquor, have entered the GI registry. With the addition of four more, the number is set to increase to 191.

Darjeeling tea was the first to be recognised for GI in India in 2003.

According to Mr. Naidu, a total of 432 applications, including 131 from foreign countries, had been received so far, of which seven have been rejected.

India, China help bust potash cartel

Both stand to win big from the price fall

India and China played a key part in bringing down a giant Russia-Belarus potash cartel, and will reap the fruits of the coming crash in prices for the key crop nutrient, media reports said.

The Belarusian Potash Company (BPC) venture, owned by Russia's Uralkali and Belaruskali, collapsed on Tuesday after the Russian partner walked out of the marketing venture.

The downfall of the cartel, which accounted for 40 per cent of global potash sales, was triggered by a decree signed by Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenka in December that cancelled BPC's exclusive right to export Belarusian potash.

According to Russian media, it was Indian and Chinese potash importers that prevailed upon the Belarus leader to sign the fateful decree.

"Normally, India and China are locked in cut-throat competition, but this time around, they acted in concert to bring down potash prices," a source in the Belarus Ministry of Agricultural Production told Gazeta.ru, a leading Russian online paper.

"The Indian and Chinese importers convinced Mr. Lukashenka that Belarus could earn more if it marketed its potash on its own, rather than through the joint arrangement with Russians," Gazeta.ru said, citing the Belarus official. Potash exports in Belarus contribute 6-10 per cent to budget revenues, and Mr. Lukashenka jumped at the chance to increase the share at a time when the Belarus languishes in deep crisis.

Along with Canada's Canpotex, BPC controlled 70 per cent of global potash trade, and the duopoly was able to keep prices high by cutting

supplies when demand weakened. Both the Russian and Belarus potash producers are now running at about 60 per cent capacity utilisation. Announcing his decision to quit the alliance with Belarus, Uralkali Chief Executive Vladislav Baumgertner said his company was switching to volume-over-price strategy, which could lead to a 25 per cent drop in world prices.

\$300-mark

“We expect the potash price to fall below \$300 a tonne after the change in our trading policy,” he told journalists on Tuesday. The price now stands at about \$400 a tonne.

Uralkali, which has the lowest production costs compared to other potash producers, hopes to recoup losses by hiking output.

Meanwhile, India and China, the two world’s largest importers of potash, stand to win big from the price fall.

Oil palm Bill passed

The Legislative Assembly on Wednesday passed the Karnataka Oil Palm (Regulation of Cultivation, Production and Processing) Bill, 2013, to set up a price fixation committee to ensure the grower reasonable prices for oil palm fresh fruit bunches.

Minister for Agricultural Marketing and Horticulture Shamanur

Shivashankarappa introduced the Bill and said it proposes to assure the grower sale of his produce and payment for sale of the produce.

The Bill envisages constitution of a project management committee to take measures on development of oil palm cultivation through implementation of a programme in the State; appointment of Oil Palm Commissioner to co-ordinate activities of oil palm growers and the industries engaged in

processing oil palm; and for exercising such powers as are indicated by this Act.

Factory zone

It also aims at declaring a factory zone for the purpose of ensuring regular supply of fresh oil palm bunches to the factory situated in the zone, registration of oil palm growers and proposer implementation of the oil palm programme.

Compensation

The Bill that has been passed envisages payment of compensation to the growers by entrepreneurs on account of the failure to buy oil palm fresh fruit bunches by the occupier of the factory.

No shortage of fertilizers: Minister

Minister of State for Agriculture Krishna Byre Gowda on Wednesday said there is fertilizer stock of 6.64 lakh tonnes and there is no shortage of nutrients in districts. Mr. Gowda reviewed the availability of fertilizer stock in the State and said as on July 31, there was 1.53 lakh tonnes of di-ammonium phosphate (DAP), 2.55 lakh tonnes of muriate of potash (MoP), 1.94 lakh tonnes of urea and 63,000 tonnes of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium (NPK).

There was definitely no shortage of fertilizers and normal supply has been maintained in all districts, he said. — Special Correspondent

'Technology is the tool to transform villages

Grama Vigyan Kutir to use science and technology to empower the poor

Appropriate technology that will benefit the poor is a much-banded goal. But the Karaikudi unit of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Central Electrochemical Research Institute (CSIR-CECRI), a premier Research and Development Institute in Electrochemistry is taking concrete steps to turn that slogan into reality.

It proposes to establish a Grama Vigyan Kutir (GVK) at Bogalur near here which will impact the lives of around 40,000 poor people in the cluster of 35 villages in Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga districts by applying science and technology to augment their income and quality of life, according to V.V.Gridhar, Senior Principal Scientist and Project Coordinator, CSIR-800, CECRI.

"We proposed to achieve the objective by using innovative science and technology solutions that are socially and economically relevant in the theme areas of affordable health, energy efficiency, low cost housing and transport, value added agriculture, sustainable energy, potable water and waste to wealth," he told *The Hindu* recently.

He said the project would be implemented in 35 villages, 14 in this district and 11 in Sivaganga, which would be called "Techvil" or Technology enabled villages.

The GVK would function as a common base, from where technology would be rolled out to transform villages into technology-enabled villages, empowering the rural poor, he also added.

Selected after study

The villages have been selected after a preliminary socio-economic study, he said, adding: "We target 40,000 people in the 'Techvil' for providing training programmes and launching schemes by partnering with the district administrations, financial institutions, local colleges and universities, corporate bodies and non governmental organisations."

He said the Ramanathapuram district administration has set apart land in Bogalur for establishing the GVK and for serving the technology villages, located in Ilayangudi block in Sivaganga district and Mandapam, Kadaladi and Bogalur blocks in Ramanathapuram district.

Training for inland fish farmers in murrel culture

A comprehensive training for inland fish farmers on murrel (a freshwater fish variety known for its medicinal properties,) culture was held at Centre for Aquaculture Research and Extension (CARE) of St. Xavier's College, Palayamkottai, on Wednesday.

The Indian Council for Agriculture Research, under its National Agricultural Innovation Project's Production to Consumption scheme, released a sum of Rs. 3.20 crore in September 2008 as grant to CARE, selected from 12 other research institutions competed for this assistance.

Under this programme, the CARE, in association with Central Institute for Freshwater Aquaculture, Bhubaneswar, Orissa, and the research centre at New College, Chennai, will train 100 inland fish farmers every year in the culture of murrel, provide the beneficiaries with thousands of murrel seeds and fish feed and also assist them in marketing the harvested adult (one-year-old) murrels, weighing about 1 kg to 1.250 kg.

“Since one kg of murrel is being sold between Rs.200 and Rs.250, farmers who go for murrel cultivation will certainly get attractive revenue,” said Principal Investigator of the consortium M.A. Haniffa.

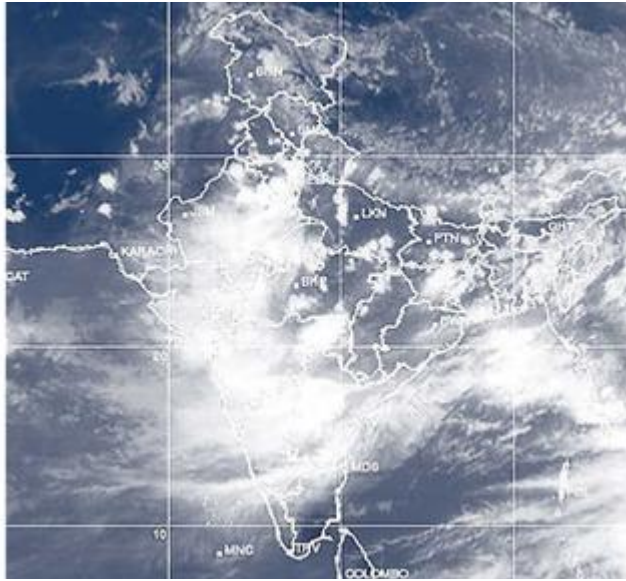
Since only 750 of the 2,250 ponds and small irrigation tanks in the district, having an extent of over 9,600 hectares, have been put into use for fish culture (mostly carp variety), the training is conducted to take murrel culture to the remaining unused wells and ponds also. In the training sessions conducted on Wednesday, nearly 40 fish farmers participated and they were taken to an aqua farm at Veeralaperunchelvi near here in the afternoon after the theoretical sessions in the morning.

CARE has identified Tirunelveli Social Service Society (TSSS), a Palayamkottai-based NGO and one of the stakeholders, for preparing the feed on large scale through its feed mill so that it can be supplied to the fish farmers.

In a minimum area of 1cent, 50 to 75 table-size murrels (each weighing about 750 gm) can be cultured to earn from Rs. 15,000 to 20,000 per year. Aspirants having a minimum area of about 1 cent or more can approach CARE, St. Xavier's College Palayamkottai (0462-2560670). Principal, SXC, Palayamkottai, V. Gilbert Camillus SJ, former Dean of Fisheries College and Research Institute V. Sundararaj, formerly professor of Sri Paramakalyani Centre for Environmental Sciences, Alwarkurichi G.S. Vijayalakshmi, and others participated.

In his remarks, R. Ezekiel, National Coordinator of ICAR-NAIP said his department was prepared to train and support farmers ready for attempting new methods in agro-based ventures that would increase their income.

weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on July 31st.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	34	27	0	343
New Delhi (Sfd)	33	27	0	460
Chandigarh	33	25	9	482
Hissar	36	25	tr	234
Bhuntar	34	20	0	319
Shimla	27	18	0	527
Jammu	33	27	1	477
Srinagar	28	18	0	133
Amritsar	35	26	0	275
Patiala	35	28	0	442
Jaipur	34	27	0	313
Udaipur	29	25	3	447
Allahabad	35	28	15	647

Lucknow	35	25	17	508
Varanasi	35	27	11	400
Dehradun	32	24	22	1802
Agartala	33	26	8	529
Ahmedabad	31	26	tr	575
Bangalore	27	20	0	313
Bhubaneswar	28	25	3	534
Bhopal	25	23	37	889
Chennai	37	27	0	304
Guwahati	35	25	13	560
Hyderabad	31	22	8	401
Kolkata	31	27	1	780
Mumbai	27	25	9	1829
Nagpur	25	24	46	998
Patna	37	28	0	171
Pune	26	22	5	489
Thiruvananthapuram	31	25	0	746
Imphal	31	22	14	471
Shillong	28	18	12	543

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (tr-trace) and total rainfall in mm since 1st June.

RAINFALL

South west monsoon has been active over west Uttar Pradesh. The axis of monsoon trough at MSL passes through Amritsar, Patiala, Meerut, Kanpur and thence South-East wards.

RAINFALL: Rain/thunder-showers have occurred at many places over west Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, at a few places over Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, east Rajasthan and east Uttar Pradesh and at isolated places over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (5 cm and above) HARYANA: Safidon and Gohana 6 each and Sonapat 5, EAST RAJASTHAN: Pipalada 11, EAST UTTAR PRADESH: Fursatganj and Raebareli 6 each, WEST UTTAR PRADESH: Aligarh 9 and mauranipur 5 and UTTRAKHAND: Uttarkashi 7, bageshwar and haldwani 6 each and Mussoorie 5.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 2nd August

2013 : Rain/thundershowers may occur at many places over Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, east-Rajasthan and west-Uttar Pradesh. Rain /thundershowers may occur at a few places over rest of the region outside west-Rajasthan where it would be one or two places.

HEAVY RAINFALL WARNING: Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, east-Rajasthan during next 72 hours. Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places over west-Uttar Pradesh and Haryana during next 24 hours.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 2nd August 2013: Generally cloudy sky.

Rain/thundershowers may occur in some areas



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Work on irrigation tank sub-standard, Vijay Pandhare says

Engineer Vijay Pandhare, who blew the whistle on the multicore irrigation scam, has cautioned on the minor irrigation tank at Chinchave, where five engineers were buried alive during repair of a mud wall of the tank on Monday. According to Pandhare, the work is sub-standard and could pose a risk to the officials who visit the accident site for inspection.

Pandhare, now the chief engineer of Maharashtra Engineering Training Academy (META), said that the site has to be fortified to prevent a landslide.

Claiming that the work done at the Chinchave minor irrigation (MI) tank was not up to the mark and that the work under progress was equally dangerous to the structure, the Chief Engineer of Maharashtra Engineering Training Academy (META) Vijay Pandhare, who blew the whistle on the irrigation scam, has asked the water conservation department to ensure the site is secured to ensure nobody trespasses into the area and further aggravate the situation.

"The work done at the site at the time of construction was not up to the mark. otherwise, the accident would not have been so bad. As the minister said that the work of such a huge magnitude was being carried out off the record only underlined the grievous situation as to how the government machinery, sometimes, functioned.

Had this accident not occurred, nobody would have ever come to know that works were being carried out here," Pandhare said.

On Tuesday, Pandhare visited the site where a trench was dug at the jackwell of the Chinchave minor irrigation tank to clear the problems of the water pipelines at the base of the jackwell. Two deputy engineers and three section engineers, who stepped into the trench, died when the mud wall collapsed. One of the victims had been suspended following allegations about poor quality of the tank construction.

It was important for a tainted official to get his name cleared from any such controversy, but the manner in which it was done only harmed the prospects and the life.

"The manner in which a suspended official came to the site and supervised the work is difficult to understand. The works should have been carried out by ensuring safety first," Pandhare said.

He said that walls in huge dams are repaired during monsoon only in case of emergencies. "With proper safety and precautionary measures in place, things can be done. The team of engineers missed this point and the result was disastrous." The chief engineer said that proper safety measures need to be put in place at the earliest at the site, which continues to be dangerous. He cautioned that the site could still prove risky for officials who would visit it for inspection or even others who go there out of curiosity.

"The site has been left as it is, because of investigation issues. The edges of the mud walls are still very sharp. Anybody, who accidentally goes near the wall, is likely to get trapped. It is important that the place is barricaded to keep people and cattle away from the site," Pandhare said. He supported the enquiry into the issue, though it was not related to his department. "Ours is totally a different organisation, but as a part of

Maharashtra Engineering Research Institute, I visited the site. It was important to find out what actually happened here."

Gujarat State Fertilizers and Chemicals Limited gets stay on protests ahead of AGM

Fearing trouble from its union, the Gujarat State Fertilizers and Chemicals Limited (GSFC) has got an ad interim injunction from a local civil court here on any kind of protests.

The state-run public sector undertaking had filed a civil suit seeking an ad interim injunction to ensure smooth conduct of its annual general meeting (AGM) scheduled on August 3.

Vadodara civil court's judge Aane Rao has granted the injunction whereby the GSFC Employees Union cannot resort to any dharna, sloganeering, sit-in till August 5.

"The union cannot hinder the movement of the employees, who are coming to attend their duties and in addition there will not be any hindrance from their side to the shareholders who will be coming to attend the AGM of the company scheduled on August 3," a GSFC official told TOI on Wednesday. The GSFC Employees Union had earlier given a strike call as regards to payment of bonus after the bonus settlement of Rs 50,500 given to all employees expired on March 31, 2012. The union had given a termination notice to arrive at a new settlement and it had also given a strike call as regards to the payment of bonus.

The issue had reached to the assistant labour commissioner, Vadodara even as negotiations between GSFC's management and the employees union are going on. tnn

The workers are also objecting to the performance-based incentive scheme - performance management scheme - which was introduced by the public sector unit and its promotion policy.

Multi-crore prawn cultivation project drains Maharashtra exchequer

THANE: Criminal neglect by the state administration in developing one-of-its kind fresh water prawn hatchery project here has not only resulted in loss of public money exceeding Rs seven cores but also shamed Maharashtra in the international community.

Ambitious plans for developing a modern aquaculture sector in the state with technical and financial assistance of the French government were inked way back in 1997 by the then Shiv Sena-BJP regime. The project aimed at increasing the production of fresh water prawns here and was to be a test case to encourage farmers into similar aquaculture initiatives to help substitute their income and also as a substitute to traditional farming. The golden opportunity, however, was lost due to bureaucratic lethargy in the planning and implementation of the project at Dapchari, a remote tribal village in Thane district where 12 hours of power failure is commonplace, according to the audit observations made by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India against officials of the state fisheries department.

The project took off with all sincerity between 1997-2004 with the French consultant firm COFREPECHE sharing technical expertise including preliminary and detailed engineering designs, installation of equipments etc besides funding 80 per cent of the project on low interest long duration loans. The remainder 20 per cent of the funds were to be pumped in by the Maharashtra government.

The biological start-up was completed in two phases in November-December 2006 and in July-August 2007 and the post-larvae trial production was completed in August 2007. However, five years after the project became fully operational, the production targets were dismal. It was entirely the fault of the state officialdom who failed in the planning and the implementation of the aquaculture project," an official said.

The CAG observers in their report tabled in the budget session of the state legislature in 2013 said, the broad reasons for the failure of the project was in the selection of a wrong location. Multi-crores spent on educating the officials and sponsoring for their visits abroad for the project were simply lost.

The project was located in a remote tribal district with frequent power failures for 12 hours to 15 hours every day. This despite the knowledge that the project requires continuous power supply. Moreover, the generator set supplied by the French government could not be repaired due to non-availability of spare parts. The faulty construction of the breeder ponds resulted in water seepage and water could not be stored for more than 24 hours," the report said.

The French consultants then suggested alternative water supply arrangements, construction of storage ponds and tube wells and also recommended privatization of the farm. The state government, however, failed to comply with any of the recommendations resulting in loss of revenue. The stated objective of supporting and developing a modern aquaculture sector could not be achieved, the CAG said.

At 19-year high, June-July rains to boost farm output, fill dams

Monsoon rains have been the wettest in 19 years at the midway point of the four-month season, setting the stage for a big jump in agricultural output although excessive rains may damage some crops such as soybean in central and western India.

Rainfall in June and July, the first two months of the season, has been 17% above normal, slowing down from a 32% surplus at the end of June, data from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) showed. In July, the country received 311.8 mm rainfall, which is around 7.5% above normal. Barring eastern and northeastern regions, which have received much lower rainfall than average, almost all regions in the rest of the country received either normal or excessive rainfall. Heavy showers in June helped farmers plant crops on a much larger area than last year, when monsoon rainfall made a shaky start. From June 1 to July 31, the country received 528.1 mm of rainfall, which is 17% more than the average of 453 mm. In 1994, the country received 24.65% above normal rains at 564.7 mm.

"The country has received good rainfall in June-July. We will be sharing the August-September outlook on Thursday," said Laxman Singh Rathore, director general, IMD. So far, 86% of the country has received normal or excess seasonal rainfall. The cumulative seasonal rainfall activity continued to be excess over all the four homogeneous regions except East and Northeast India, where it was 33% below average. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura have received over 40% below normal rainfall in the June-July period. Similarly, Jharkhand and Bihar have received over 26% below normal rains. Vital for the Indian economy, the rains have boosted sowing across the country apart from reducing farmers' dependence on electricity and diesel

for irrigation. The even distribution of rains has ensured an increase in kharif sown area by over 18% to 74.78 million hectare compared to a year ago. Acreage under oilseeds, particularly in groundnut and soybean, has increased due to timely onset of monsoon and widespread distribution of rainfall in oilseeds growing regions.

The improved rainfall has brightened the prospects of a better kharif output. It has also improved the water storage capacity in 85 major reservoirs of the country. As on July 26, live storage available in these reservoirs was 80.920 billion cubic meters which is 52% of total live storage capacity of these reservoirs.

This year's storage was 227% of the storage of the corresponding period of the past year and 166% average storage for the past ten years. India received 92% of the 50-year average of about 89 cm rain in the June-to-September monsoon season in 2012, triggering drought in Maharashtra and Karnataka.

Sowing completed in 369500 hectars in Kutch region

The sowing in Kutch region has completed in 369500 hectars area so far. According to agriculture department, the sowing has been slow in Kutch region as compare to other parts of the region.

Kutch region has so far received only 50 percent of its average annual rainfall which is the lowest as compare to other parts of the state.

Total agriculture areas in Kutch region is 538700 hectars. Sources said the region still require good spell of rainfall to accelerate sowing operations.

There are ten talukas in Kutch region. Out of the ten talukas, Rapar taluka received the highest rainfall with 326 mm rainfall which is 81 percent of its

average annual rainfall. While lowest rainfall in Kutch was reported in Lakhpat. Lakhpat has just received 16 percent of its average annual rainfall.

However, heavy rainfall continues to occur across the state since last one week. Meanwhile, Met Department officials said that heavy to very heavy rains would occur at many places in the Saurashtra during the next 24 hours.

Meanwhile, the fresh inflows of rain water have been reported in all major dams in the Saurashtra region over the last one week due to heavy downpour. There are 135 dams in the region and they are 28.62 percent filled as on Wednesday.

Karnataka government withdraws APMC amendment bill

After forcing the government to refer the Panchayat Raj Amendment Bill to a joint committee of the legislature, the BJP made the Siddaramaiah government withdraw the Karnataka Agriculture Produce Marketing (Regulation and Development) (Second Amendment) Bill, 2013 in the legislative council.

In the 75-member Upper House, BJP is in a stronger position with 39 members as against Congress, with a mere 17 members and JD(S), only 12.

Amid a walkout by the JD(S) and BJP, the legislative assembly passed the controversial bill and sent it to the council for approval. Here, BJP members did not allow horticulture minister Shamanur Shivashankarappa to explain its contents.

The bill provides exemption from payment of market fee on fruits and vegetables. Opposition members maintained that the move would only benefit traders and not farmers. Some also pressed for a joint committee of the House to study the issues.

Piloting the bill, Shivashankarappa said the legislation was necessary to carry out reforms in agriculture marketing sector. "We anticipate a revenue loss of about Rs 7 crore once the bill is introduced but it will greatly help farmers," he added.

But BJP members felt it would help middlemen rule APMC. Sensing that combined opposition would defeat it, the government decided to withdraw the bill.

Farmers divided over concrete lining of LBP Canal

The farmers who depend on the Lower Bhavani Project (LBP) Canal are unhappy about the maintenance of the canal which serves as the lifeline for Erode, Tirupur and Karur districts. The situation, if not addressed soon, may turn violent with the prevailing dispute between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu over Cauvery water adding fuel to the fire.

The farmers of the three districts are opposed to the state government's resolution to seek Rs1,210cr loan from the World Bank for the concrete lining of the LBP Canal banks. They believe the move would affect the ground water discharge. An equally strong rival group of farmers, who live on the tail end of the canal, has demanded early implementation of the project, believing that only the concrete lining can ensure them a fair share of the Bhavani water.

"It is unfortunate that a section of farmers are welcoming the draconian move. Lining the river bed will prevent percolation of river water. Aquifers in the entire area won't be recharged. Those who demand concrete lining are only concerned about short term gains and not about long term needs of the region," said C Nallasamy of Lower Bhavani Farmers' Welfare Association, which first spoke against the project.

"Forty among the 44 ayacuts in the LBP region are in favour of concrete lining. It is the only proven solution to the high level of seepage which prevents flow of water to the tail end of the canal. We too, have lands, that need to be irrigated and those living in the mouth of the canal must understand the perils of those struggling at the tail end," said M

Kasiyannan, a farmers' leader, who has formed an action council to press for early implementation of the project. Kasiyannan has already organised a rally in support of the project that was attended by over 2,000 people.

Nallasamy acknowledged the existence of seepage but pointed out that the cure proposed by the state government is far worse than the disease itself.

The LBP canal is a 125-mile long irrigation canal that runs mostly through Erode and Tirupur and terminates in Karur district after irrigating 2.07 lakh hectares. According to Kasiyannan, more than 40 per cent of the water released in the canal is wasted due to seepage.

"We have consulted experts and they believe that a concrete lining would fail to arrest seepage," said Nallasamy. "The seepage actually helps people fill wells. The wells helped us water crops when Bhavanisagar dam was closed. If a concrete lining is done, it would adversely affect groundwater recharge and destroy a number of trees on both sides of the bunds," claimed Nallasamy. He alleged that the police and revenue authorities have

not acted impartially and so they were not given permission to hold any programme against the project. Even hunger-strikes were not permitted, he claimed.

"The proposal would ensure effective water management and reduce wastage. Water from the canal would ultimately enter farm lands and recharge groundwater," said Kasiyannan.

Coimbatore: Yet another dispute is brewing among farmers who dependent on the Lower Bhavani Project (LBP) Canal over the maintenance of this life line of Erode, Tirupur and Karur districts and it may turn a replica of the prevailing interstate water dispute between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu over sharing Cauvery river water if not addressed properly.

While a large number of farmers in the three districts are opposing state's government decision to seek a Rs 1,210-crore loan from the World Bank for concrete lining of the LBP Canal banks saying the move would affect adversely the ground water discharge, an equally strong rival group of farmers who live on the tail end of the canal demands early implementation of the project. The pro-concrete lining farmers say only such a move would ensure them enough share of the Bhavani water and any attempt to put it on hold will invite severe resistance.

It is unfortunate that a section of farmers are welcoming the draconian move. Lining the river bed will prevent percolation of river water. Aquifers in the entire area won't be recharged. Those who demand concrete lining are only concerned of short term gains and not about long term needs of the region," said C Nallasamy of Lower Bhavani Farmers' Welfare Association, which first came out against the concrete lining concept.

Equally adamant are the rival group which demand early concrete lining of the entire stretch. Forty among the 44 ayacuts in the LBP region are in favour of concrete lining. It is the only proven solution to the high level of seepage which prevents flow of water to the tail end of the canal. We too have agriculture to irrigate and those who living in the beginning of the canal must understand difficulties of those who struggling hard at the tail end," says M Kasiyannan, a farmers leader who now forming an action council to press for concrete lining. Kasiyannan has already organized a rally of like minded farmers in Erode saying lining would help prevent loss of water through seepage and it had participation of over 2000 people. Nallasamy too admits to the problem of seepage but says the cure proposed by state government is worse than the disease.

The LBP canal is a 125-mile long irrigation canal that runs mostly through Erode district, Tirupur district and terminates in Karur district after irrigating 2.07 lakh hectares of land. According to Kasiyannan, more than 40 per cent of the water released in the canal was lost through seepage, he added. Farmers owing allegiance to Nallasamy, however, disagree. "Our people also consulted experts and they are of the opinion that concrete lining would arrest the seepage is unrealistic," says Nallasamy. "The seepage from the canal had hitherto helped recharge the wells in our areas and helped us get adequate water for crops when water was not released from the Bhavanisagar dam. If the lining is done, it would adversely affect groundwater recharge and destroy a number of trees on both sides of the bunds of the waterway," claims Nallasamy. According to him, police and revenue authorities are also turning partial and that is why no permission was given so far to conduct anti-concrete lining protests. Even a hunger

fast was not permitted, he claims. He even hints of violating the police orders to prevent concrete lining.

However, Kasiyannan rubbish the fear of Nallasamy. "The proposal would ensure effective water management and reduce wastage. Water from the canal would ultimately enter farmers' lands and recharge groundwater. There is no basis for their arguments," he said..

Tree adoption fizzles out at Botanic Garden

The Alipore zoo may be well on its way to allowing animals for adoption, but a similar plan at the Indian Botanic Garden at Shibpur fell flat. Not because no one was keen on 'adopting' a tree but because the casual staff members protested fearing it was a shrewd plan of retrenchment. The garden authorities have finally aborted the idea.

H S Debnath, the joint director of Botanical Survey of India (BSI), floated the idea soon after he joined the Garden in 2010 as the in-charge. "The idea was to raise awareness and love for the plant kingdom, which gives us so much. 'Parenting' a plant would cost one a nominal annual fee. We had also thought of issuing all-day free passes to the adopters so that they could visit the adopted tree," said Debnath.

The adoption scheme would also have given a boost to ex-situ conservation (process of protecting an endangered species of plant or animal outside its natural habitat) in the largest and oldest botanic garden in Asia which has 14,220 trees of 1,377 different species spread across 273 acres.

"The adopting parent could also have funded the delicate breeding of such plants so that single-species trees became multi-species," said Dr Debnath,

adding: "You simply would not be able to adopt such trees anywhere else in India, even if you paid a huge amount of money."

According to India Trees Foundation president Ravi Menon, the bonding between a man and a tree is more important than that between men. "You can feel the difference if you adopt a tree like it were your child," he said. Menon, who champions transplantation rather than felling of trees, said a lot of trees become 'orphans' because of transplantation and so, adoption now has more relevance. "It is sad that the Botanic Garden authority had to abort the idea," he added.

Debnath made it clear that 'adoption' meant bonding, but not ownership of trees. The adopter, for instance, would have the right to name the tree. "We had also thought that the adopter's name would be put somewhere close to the information board. We had also laid down strict dos and don'ts for adopters. They would not be allowed to touch the tree though they could, of course, raise a hue and cry if even the slightest damage was done to it. In that way, the project would have facilitated better surveillance, too," he pointed out.

After the annual tree census at the Garden, the authorities are now mapping them with the help of a software so that anyone from anywhere in the world can locate a rare tree online. With the map, people can figure out the exact flowering and fruiting details of each tree from the site itself, said Debnath.

Debnath said he had got many queries after the programme was announced. "Many of the aspirants said that at least their progeny would come to the Garden and remember them long after they were dead. They believed that their progeny would continue the adoption after them," said

Debnath.

"But opposition from casual staff members forced us to abort the plan," said a senior official.

Weather-Chennai

Today's Weather



Sunny

Thursday, Aug 1

Max Min

36° | 27°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:54

Humidity: 52

Sunset: 06:36

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1004

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Friday, Aug 2

Max Min

36° | 27°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday

Aug 3



36° | 26°

Cloudy

Sunday

Aug 4



35° | 27°

Overcast

Monday

Aug 5



35° | 28°

Overcast

Tuesday

Aug 6



35° | 28°

Overcast

Wednesday

Aug 7



35° | 28°

Overcast

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:54

Humidity: 52

Sunset: 06:36

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1004



Pepper may regain Rs 400/ kg level

Pepper continued to rule steady with marginal fluctuations in the futures on limited activities.

Even though there were reports of some arrivals at the primary markets, the dealers were not ready to sell anticipating the prices would touch Rs 400 a kg.

In fact, availability is believed to be very tight and in fact, “we do not have pepper”, the trade said adding, “hence, the grinding industry and value addition units are now looking at Sri Lanka which is offering 500 GL pepper at Rs 356 a kg (c.i.f) Kochi”.

On the NMCE, August and October contracts decreased by Rs 98 and Rs 99 respectively to Rs 41,300 and Rs 41,565 a quintal.

Sept moved up by Rs 17 to Rs 41,650. Total turnover dropped by 16 tonnes to 25 tonnes while total open interest declined by seven tonnes to 69 tonnes.

Spot prices remained unchanged at Rs 39,000 (ungarbled) and Rs 41,000 (garbled) on limited activities.

Indian parity in the international market was down at \$6,975 a tonne (c&f) Europe at \$7,275 a tonne (c&f) US.

Coonoor tea auction volume rises

A volume of 19.08 lakh kg has been catalogued for Sale No: 31 of the Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions to be held on Thursday and Friday, reveals an analysis of the brokers' listings.

It is about 51,000 kg more than last week's offer and 5.60 lakh kg more than the offer this time last year.

Of the 19.08 lakh kg on offer, 13.65 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 5.43 lakh kg to the dust grades.

As much as 18.26 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 0.82 lakh kg, orthodox variety.

The proportion of orthodox teas continues to be low in both the leaf and dust grades.

In the leaf counter, only 0.42 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 13.23 lakh kg, CTC. Among the dusts, only 0.40 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 5.03 lakh kg, CTC.

Of the 19.07 lakh kg coming up for sale, fresh tea accounts for 15.57 lakh kg. As much as 3.51 lakh kg comprises teas which had remained unsold in previous auctions.

Spot rubber turns weak

Spot rubber turned weak on Wednesday. A positive change in weather during the last couple of days as rains subsided is expected to initiate an improvement in arrivals.

Sheet rubber finished declined to Rs 194 (Rs 195) a kg, both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to traders and the Rubber Board.

August futures improved to Rs 192.30 (Rs 190.65), September Rs 179.91 (Rs 178.19), October Rs 169.43 (Rs 167.77), November Rs 164.99 (Rs 163.35) and December Rs 164.11 (Rs 162.73) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) inched up to Rs 147.41 (Rs 147.38) at Bangkok.

August futures closed at ¥239.7 (Rs 149.42) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates Rs/kg were : RSS-4: 194 (195); RSS-5: 189 (189); Ungraded: 179 (179); ISNR 20: 177 (178) and Latex 60%: 161 (163).

Maharashtra to frame new law for sugarcane sale

The sale and purchase of sugarcane in Maharashtra will soon be governed by a new law.

The proposed law will help farmers get a better price for their crop.

It will also help in setting the appropriate price for cane by-products such as bagasse, molasses and press mud.

The new Act will incorporate recommendations of the Rangarajan Committee report on deregulation of sugar sector.

Under the Act, a board would be formed, which will have a mandate to set cane prices and have supervisory powers over the cooperative sugar mills.

The board will consist of ministers, government officers and farmer representatives. The Minister for Cooperation will be the Chairman of the board.

A senior official of Maharashtra Government told *Business Line* that the Act will have certain provisions that will ensure that co-operative sugar mills pay all the outstanding dues to the farmers within a fortnight.

They would also be forced to make payments to the farmers based on the cane weight recorded at the mill gate, the official said.

The board will set the cane price based on the 'fair and remunerative price' declared by the Centre for sugarcane, the official added.

Due to this mechanism, the confrontation between the farmers and the State Government will be reduced considerably.

Farmers will not have to resort to violent agitations to get the appropriate cane price.

The Act splits the revenue between the farmers and mills at 70:30, if the sugarcane is processed and byproducts such as bagasse, molasses and press mud are sold by the mill.

If the mill only produces sugar, then the revenue split would be 75:25, the official said.

The official pointed that for those violating the Act, there was a provision of one-year jail term and a fine of Rs 25,000.

Farmers' leader and Member of Parliament from Kolhapur Raju Shetti said that the State Government is attempting to incorporate only a few suggestions from the Rangarajan Committee report in the Act.

But farmers want all the suggestion to be implemented.

"If the government tries to push this act down our throats, then we will launch a state wide protest," he warned.

Balrampur Chini plans to make fresh investments

After a gap of six years, Kolkata-based sugar major, Balrampur Chini Mills Ltd (BCML), is set to make fresh capital investments.

Plans are afoot to add 12.7 MW cogeneration capacity at Rs 52 crore and acquisition of a sick sugar mill in Uttar Pradesh with a debt liability of Rs 100 crore from BIFR.

“We have already started investing in scaling up our cogeneration capacity at Kumbhi in Uttar Pradesh.

Orders are placed for equipment.

The plant will be commissioned by March 2014,” Kishor Shah, Director and CFO of Balrampur Chini, told *Business Line*.

Balrampur has 128.5 MW of existing generation capacities.

Power sales contributed close to 10 per cent of the company’s turnover of Rs 3,275 crore in 2012-13.

Fresh acquisition

Balrampur proposes to acquire the sick Khalilabad Sugar Mills Ltd (KSMPL) in UP.

Khalilabad Sugar has a crushing capacity of 2,500 TCD (tonnes crushed a day) and has around Rs 100 crore debts on its books.

According to Shah, the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) is likely to sanction the proposal during its next hearing on August 14.

Balrampur currently has a capacity to crush 76,500 tonnes of sugarcane a day.

“KSMPL sugar factory is in close proximity of the existing Babhnan unit of BCML.....the proposed merger shall result in various locational and other synergies,” the company said in the annual report for 2012-13.

Results

During the quarter ended June 30, Balrampur posted net loss of Rs 10 crore. Losses, however, narrowed from a net loss of Rs 18 crore during same period last year.

Net sales also dropped by over one per cent to Rs 682 crore.

On Wednesday, the company’s share on BSE, closed lower at Rs 36.15.

Fishermen hope for bumper catch as trawling ban ends

At pre-dawn on Thursday, about 2,000 Kerala-registered trawl-fitted mechanised fishing boats as well as around 1,000 from Tamil Nadu and Karnakaka will rush to the sea off Kerala after a 47-day-long forced vacation.

Along with them thousands of fishing boats on the western coast too will head for the waters after the Union Government-mandated annual ban on fishing using trawls ends at midnight on Wednesday. Fishworkers in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnantaka and Kerala are excited that the ban period, the toughest time for them and their families each year, is finally over. This time the fishing community is in an upbeat mood. “We are all expecting a bumper harvest because of the heavy rains,” says Joseph Xavier Kalappurackal, General Secretary of the All-Kerala Mechanised Fishing Boat Operators Association. He said that the fishing community hopes for generous catch of oil sardines, mackerel and anchovies. In Kerala, coastal hamlets and fishing harbours have sprung to life after the

one-and-a-half month ban, which was made worse by the continual raining. Over the past week, boats, their crews and on-shore fishworkers have been getting ready for the day.

Boats have been refuelled, nets have been tended and the cold storage packed with ice blocks. Since trawler boats normally go fishing for 3-7 days on end, they are also loaded with goods and conveniences needed for the fishermen. Trawlers carry dozens of fishermen on board to help with the heady task of fishing midsea on a large scale.

BAN RATIONALE

Kerala, which is the largest producer of marine fishes, has had statutory trawl-fishing holiday in place for a quarter century now. Since monsoon is the breeding season for a range of fishes in the Arabian Sea, fishing by mechanised boats using trawl nets tend to harm the regeneration of fish stock — this is the rationale for the trawl ban.

Of the nearly 100 commercial fish varieties, three-fourths are caught by trawlers. Several studies have proved its effectiveness. The Central Government had recently made it mandatory for all coastal States to clamp the ban for a minimum period of June 15-31 on the West Coast and from April 15-May 31 on the East Coast.

Festival demand may sweeten sugar

Sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale market gained Rs 12 a quintal for some variety of S-grade, while M-grade was unchanged on Wednesday. Naka rates were steady.

Mill tender rates were discounted by Rs 20 for M-grade in absence of demand.

Producers sold sugar in local market as upcountry buying was still lacking. A Vashi-based wholesaler told *Business Line*: "Sugar prices across the country ruled steady on need-based demand and ample supply with Rs 20-30 volatility. August and September futures dropped by Rs 40-60 on higher selling pressure. But now festival demand may support market sentiment. Prices may show positive sign. Enough inventory stocks at market and producing level will still weigh on morale."

Arrivals in the market continued to be a level of 62-63 truckloads (of 100 bags each), while local dispatches remain routine at 61-62 loads.

On Tuesday evening, about 11-12 mills offered tenders and sold about 43,000-45,000 bags at Rs 2,900-70 (Rs 2,900-70) for S-grade and Rs 2,980-3,120 (Rs 2,980- 3,140) for M-grade.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates : S-grade Rs 3,052-3,132 (Rs 3,040-3,132) and M-grade Rs 3,160-3,311 (Rs 3,160-3,311).

Naka delivery rates : S-grade Rs 3,000-50 (Rs 3,000-50) and M-grade Rs 3,080-3,190 (Rs 3,080-3,190).

Turmeric traders begin to get upcountry orders

Turmeric prices continued to be subdued in Erode markets despite lower arrivals.

"Arrivals decreased to 3,800 bags against 6,000 and odd bags on Tuesday. But prices did not rise despite low arrivals. The sale was encouraging with 60 per cent of the arrivals being sold. Buyers, mainly traders who got some upcountry orders, procured limited stocks giving preference to the quality turmeric. Stockists who already have more than 15 lakh bags with them

also purchased few bags,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said that local traders are getting few local and North Indian orders for quality turmeric.

Traders said that they may get fresh orders only in the middle of August . The price of all varieties including the hybrid remained same.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,811-6,017; the root variety Rs 3,811-5,611 a quintal.

Salem Hybrid Crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,499-7,389 and the root variety Rs 4,769-5,806. Of the 630 bags that arrived, 201 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety fetched Rs 5,139-6,114; the root variety Rs 5,044-5,836. Of the 589 bags put up for sale, 562 found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety quoted Rs 5,264-6,119; the root variety Rs 4,699-5,829. All the 324 bags on offer were traded.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 5,001-6,219 and the root variety Rs 4,969-5,919. All the 125 bags were sold.

Fresh buying boosts castorseed

Castorseed futures moved up by more than 2 per cent on the back of fresh buying by traders at existing lower levels.

On the NCDEX, castor August contract increased by Rs 85 or 2.71 per cent to Rs 3,225 a quintal with an open interest of 89,020 lots.

The most active September contract gained Rs 65 or 2.01 per cent to Rs 3,301 with an open interest of 123,400 lots.

On the Rajkot Commodity Exchange (RCX), castor September contract recovered Rs 78 to Rs 3,452 .

RCX spot castor was down Rs 2.50 to Rs 3,280 .

inflow

Market sources said that low level buying by traders in spot markets amid restricted supply mainly led to a rise in futures.

About 12,000-13,000 bags of castor arrived in Gujarat and the price was at Rs 648-660 for 20 kg.

Similarly, about 1,200-1,300 bags arrived in Saurashtra and price stood at Rs 625-650.

Castor oil was traded at Rs 695/10 kg.

Rising demand from consuming industries such as paint, lubricants and soap makers also influenced trading sentiments.

Panic selling by stockists pounds moong

Sluggish trend continued in pulse seeds and pulses on slack demand and buying support, albeit chana which gained marginally on rise in futures and improved buying support.

Arrival of new moong in Karnataka and expected arrival of new crop in Madhya Pradesh have led to panic selling among stockists leading to a sharp fall in moong prices. On Wednesday, moong (best quality) in Indore mandis ruled at Rs 4,600-4,800 a quintal (down Rs 200 from last week).

Similarly, moong (medium) has also declined by Rs 200 in the past one week to Rs 4,200-4,500 on poor buying support.

Moong dal (medium) ruled stable at Rs 6,000-6,100, moong dal (bold) declined to Rs 6,500-6,600 (down Rs 100 from last week), while moong mongar declined to Rs 6,600-6,700 (down Rs 200 from last week). Urad also ruled sluggish at Rs 3,350-3,400 while urad (medium) ruled at Rs 3,000-3,200. Urad dal (medium) stood at Rs 3,900-4,000 (down Rs 100 from last week), while urad dal (bold) was stable at Rs 4,500-4,600. Urad mongar also fell by Rs 100 to Rs 5,400-5,700. Tur (Madhya Pradesh) ruled stable at Rs 3,600-3,700. Tur dal (full) was steady at Rs 6,100-6,200 , tur dal (sawa no.) at Rs 5,600-5,700(down Rs 100 from last week), while tur marka ruled at Rs 6,600-6,700 .

Chana rose marginally to Rs 2,900-25 (Rs 2,850) . Chana dal (average) was at Rs 3,500-25 , chana dal (medium) at Rs 3,600-25 , while chana dal (bold) rose to Rs 3,800-25 a quintal.

Falling rupee drives up edible oils

Edible oils market witnessed a sudden spurt in price on Wednesday. Weak domestic currency pushed up import parity higher forcing local refineries to raise their rates by Rs 9-20 for 10 kg which led market rates to rise.

Expectation of higher festival demand in August onwards kept the sentiment positive.

According to the Bombay Commodity Exchange, imported palmolein and soyabean refined oil were up Rs 9 and Rs 14 for 10 kg. Sunflower and cotton refined oil gained Rs 10 and Rs 2 each. Stockists kept away due to sudden spurt in price and as they have covered over 4,500 tonnes of edible oils especially palmolein and soyabean oil previous day.

The volume was thin with a meagre 150-200 tonnes of palmolein traded in resale at Rs 520-52,1 ex-JNPT, and Rs 523-524, ex-Shahpur.

Towards the day's close, Liberty quoted palmolein Rs 530, super palmolein Rs 565 and super deluxe Rs 585. Ruchi quoted palmolein Rs 530, soyabean refined oil Rs 628 and sunflower refined oil Rs 800. Allana was quoting palmolein at Rs 532 and super palmolein Rs 570. Gokul's rates were Rs 530 and Vaibhavi quoted Rs 525 for nearer delivery.

In Rajkot, groundnut oil was Rs 1,510 for *telia* tin and loose (10 kg) was Rs 975 (Rs 975). **Malaysia BMD crude palm oil's** August contracts settled at MYR 2,280 (MYR 2,283), September at MYR 2,262 (MYR 2,256) and October at MYR 2,238 (MYR 2,215) a tonne.

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) : groundnut oil 970 (970), soya refined oil 625 (611), sunflower exp. ref. 720 (720), sunflower ref. 800 (790), rapeseed ref. oil 672 (672), rapeseed expeller ref. 642 (642) cottonseed ref. oil 630 (628) and palmolein 522 (513).

Vikram Global Commodities (P) Ltd quoted Rs 580/10 kg for Malaysian super palmolein - August delivery.

Poultry feed seen flat on steady input costs

Steady cost of production will keep poultry feed products unchanged in the coming days, said market experts. With the cost of production being steady, prices of poultry feed products remained unchanged this week.

Aditya Mishra, a commodity expert, told *Business Line* that after witnessing a fall last weekend, poultry feed prices have been ruling unchanged since then. Soyameal has recovered over the last couple of days but it may not sustain at current levels and prices may fall, he said.

It is unlikely to see any fluctuation in the feed prices for the next few days. In the physical market, after witnessing a continuous fall in recent past, soyameal recovered by Rs 1,000 to Rs 30,700 a tonne.

Bajra improved by Rs 20 to Rs 1,320 a quintal, di-calcium phosphate improved by 10 paise to Rs 34.80 a kg; MBM sold at 33 a kg while maize dropped by Rs 30 to Rs 1,400-1,500 a quintal.

Mustard de-oiled cake moved up by Rs 600 and sold at Rs 14,100 a tonne, DRB went for Rs 10,000 a tonne, while rice bran oil ruled at 54 a kg, remained unchanged.

Feed products

Broiler concentrate feed quoted at Rs 1,970 for a 50-kg bag, while Broiler starter mash was at Rs 1,510. Pre-lay mash sold at Rs 1,015, while layer grower mash quoted at Rs 955.

Layer concentrate 25 per cent was sold at Rs 1,465 while layer concentrate 35 per cent was at Rs 1,150 .

Poultry Products

Meanwhile, a range-bound trend was seen in the poultry products markets on Wednesday.

Broiler improved by Rs 2 and quoted at Rs 62-64 a kg, egg eased by 10 paise and sold at Rs 2.60, while chick went for Rs 12, Re 1 up from previous levels.

Business Standard

China, India gain upper hand as potash cartel crumbles

The two Asian countries account for about 30% of global demand for crop nutrient potash

Agriculture in China and India would be the biggest winner after Russia's Uralkali walked away from one of the world's two big potash cartels, paving the way for consumers to demand hefty price cuts. The two Asian countries account for about 30 per cent of global demand for crop nutrient potash, and had been forced to swallow high prices for a decade in a market dominated by Uralkali's Belarus Potash Company and Canpotex, a North American producer group.

Potash prices could drop by about 25 per cent this year, Uralkali said on Tuesday, to about \$300 per tonne.

The Russian firm now plans to boost production in a bid to increase sales to India, Brazil and China, where it will ship more than 2.5 million tonnes in 2013, up from two million last year.

"(Uralkali) has thrown a bomb by saying prices will go down to \$300 per tonne," a senior executive at an Indian fertiliser firm said, declining to be identified

Coriander rises by 3% on high demand

Pick up in demand against less arrivals influenced coriander prices

Coriander prices rose by Rs 157 to Rs 5,363 per quintal in futures trade today, as speculators created fresh positions, driven by pick-up in spot demand.

The sentiment further improved on limited stocks position on account of restricted arrivals from major growing areas.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange, coriander for August delivery rose by Rs 157, or 3.02% to Rs 5,363 per quintal, with an open interest of 15,080 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in September rose by Rs 150, or 2.84%, to Rs 5,435 per quintal, with open interest of 12,860 lots.

Market analysts said fresh buying by speculators following pick-up in demand in the spot market against less arrivals mainly pushed up coriander prices at futures trade

Castor seed recovers on fresh buying

Low levels buying by traders on a firming trend in spot markets influenced prices

Castor seed prices rose by Rs 126 to Rs 3,455 per quintal in futures trade today following revival of buying by traders at existing lower levels.

Marketmen said low levels buying by traders on a firming trend in spot markets amid restricted supply mainly led rise here in future prices of castorseed.

Rising demand from consuming industries like paint, lubricants and soap makers also influenced trading sentiments.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, castorseed for November contract rose by Rs 126, or 3.78%, to Rs.3,455 per quintal in open interest of 3,050 lots.

August contract gained Rs 57, or 1.82%, to Rs 3,197 per quintal in 1,03,490 lots.

Most active September contract regained Rs.56, or 1.73% to Rs.3,292 per quintal, in an open interest of 1,11,120 lots

Potato up by 3% on spot demand

Increased demand in the spot market against tight supplies influenced potato prices

Potato futures prices rose by 3% to Rs 718 per quintal today on increased spot demand.

Besides, restricted arrivals from producing regions also supported the upside.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, potato for delivery in September rose by Rs 20.90, or 3%, to Rs 718 per quintal, with trading volume of 321 lots.

The potato for delivery in August also moved up by Rs 11, or 1.47%, to Rs 755 per quintal, with a trade volume of 171 lots.

Analysts said increased demand in the spot market against tight supplies from producing regions mainly pushed up potato prices at futures trade.

Mentha oil declines by 1.9% on profit-booking

The fall in mentha oil prices at futures trade was mostly due to profit-booking by speculators

Mentha oil prices fell by 1.91% to Rs 869.80 per kg in futures trade today as speculators indulged in profit-booking amid subdued spot demand.

Besides, adequate stocks position following increased arrivals from Chandousi in Uttar Pradesh.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, mentha oil for delivery in July fell by Rs 17, or 1.91%, to Rs 869.80 per kg with a business volume of 147 lots.

Similarly, mentha oil prices for the August delivery drifted by Rs 7.70, or 0.85%, to Rs 890.60 per kg, with a business turnover of 475 lots.

The fall in mentha oil prices at futures trade was mostly due to profit-booking by speculators and weak trend at spot market on subdued demand, traders said.

Crude palm oil up by 0.3% on global cues

Fresh buying by traders influenced prices

Supported by a firming trend overseas, crude palm oil prices up by Rs 9 to Rs 498.50 per 10 kg in futures trade today.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude palm oil for delivery in August rose by Rs 9, or 1.83%, to Rs 498.50 per 10 kg, with a business turnover of 530 lots.

Oil prices for July contract increased by Rs 1.50, or 0.32%, to Rs 497.60 per 10 kg with a volume of 94 lots.

In Malaysia, palm oil gained as much as 1.40% to 2,245 ringgit (\$691) a tonne on the Malaysia Derivatives Exchange.

Market analysts said fresh buying by traders, influenced by a firming global trend mainly helped crude palm oil prices to trade higher at futures trade.

Cardamom up by 1.8% on spot demand

Tight stocks position in the spot market following lower arrivals from producing regions also influenced prices

Cardamom prices rose by Rs 13.50 to Rs 768 per kg in futures trade today as traders enlarged commitments, supported by a pick-up in export and domestic demand.

Tight stocks position in the spot market following lower arrivals from producing regions also influenced prices, traders said.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, cardamom for delivery in September rose by Rs 13.50, or 1.78%, to Rs 768 per kg, with a business turnover of 1,092 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in August edged up by Rs 5.80, or 0.85%, to Rs 687.90 per kg in 1,189 lots