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## **MSSRF looks to build on legacy of research**

The M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), which celebrates its silver jubilee on Wednesday, will look to build on its legacy of research that has been both anticipatory in preparing for future challenges and participatory in engaging with local and marginal communities.

President Pranab Mukherjee is scheduled to launch the silver jubilee of the institution which was founded in 1988 as a not-for-profit trust and grown in stature as a premier centre of excellence with over 400 scientists, four regional centres and 29 field sites. Addressing a press conference, MSSRF chairman M. S. Swaminathan said the research initiatives reflected the core mandate of being pro-poor, pro-nature and pro-women, while being scientifically creative and socially meaningful.

“From the outset, we wanted to ensure that MSSRF was not just another institution; rather its work should be scientifically creative and socially meaningful,” Dr. Swaminathan said.

Apart from successful experiments on crop varieties that have vastly improved yields and farmer incomes, the MSSRF counts among its achievements as being instrumental in setting the stage for a coastal zone management policy, restoring the Pichavaram mangrove systems and leveraging technology for helping fishermen raise their catch.

The institution has also contributed to getting Kuttanad in Kerala recognised as a globally important agricultural heritage system by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of United Nations. Kuttanad, along with

Koraput in Orissa, is among the only 26 such sites in the world recognised by the UN.

On Wednesday, the President will hand over the declaration to Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy.

The MSSRF's international engagements include the implementation of a rice biopark project to exploit rice biomass in Myanmar and a genetic garden to salvage endemic germplasm in war-torn Afghanistan and training its scientists.

In its silver jubilee year, the MSSRF will adopt as a flagship initiative research on farming systems for nutrition to bridge the growing disconnect between agriculture and nutrition, said Ajay Parida, MSSRF executive director.

Historically, anaemia and low-birth-weight have been regarded as medical problems needing a drug-based approach, whereas they are nutrition-linked and require a food-based intervention, said Dr. Swaminathan.

While hailing the UPA's Food Security Bill as an important measure to eradicate malnutrition, Dr. Swaminathan said it would, however, only address one kind of hunger — that caused by inadequate consumption of calories.

While protein hunger can be tackled through provision of pulses, milk or eggs, micronutrient deficiency — the most dangerous form — could be tackled only by linking agriculture and nutrition.

Food security, in a holistic sense, would involve integrating PDS with drinking water and sanitation programmes. Backing Chief Minister Jayalalithaa's concerns on the Bill as genuine, Dr. Swaminathan suggested

amendments to the Bill's Rules that would ensure that existing rice allocation to States would remain unaffected.

### **Krishi mela to help city gardeners raise the roof**



Who says your food should come only from the fields of rural Karnataka? The University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore (UAS-B), is organising a three-day Urban Krishi Mela to encourage people in cities to grow horticultural crops in their houses, using techniques such as rooftop gardening.

The university hopes to motivate people to grow vegetables and fruit-yielding plants in addition to the ornamental plants usually seen in city gardens, to ensure availability of nutritious and fresh vegetables and fruits, especially given the decline in land available for agriculture.

Speaking to presspersons here on Monday, UAS-B Vice-Chancellor K. Narayana Gowda said the Urban Krishi Mela would be held from November 3 to 5 on the university campus here.

A seminar on 'urban horticulture and roof gardening' is proposed to be held. Agricultural expert B.N. Vishwanath, a proponent of terrace gardening, would be the main resource person.

Dr. Vishwanath said: “We are looking at urban horticulture including terrace gardening from a holistic perspective. We do not want people to use Cauvery drinking water to take care of their plants. We are promoting the concept of rainwater harvesting to take care of plants. Similarly, we want people to turn their kitchen wastes into vermicompost.”

Using kitchen waste to grow plants would help keep the city clean by reducing the pressure on garbage disposal, he said.

He demanded that civic agencies like the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike and organisations such as the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board should lend a helping hand to urban horticulture initiatives.

#### POSSIBILITIES

According to Dr. Vishwanath, Bangalore city now has 500 to 1,000 terrace gardens. UAS-B Horticulture Department Head B.N. Sathyanarayana said: “It is possible to grow most vegetables required by a family in whatever small garden area and terrace space available in a house built on a 30 ft x 40 ft plot... There are people who have grown even drumstick plants in pots. But you need to replace the plants every year.”

Dr. Narayana Gowda also said the university planned to hold a global innovative farmers’ meet in February 2014, in which over 3,000 farmers were expected to participate.

#### **Pachyderms damage crops in Dinnela**

A herd of 25 elephants strayed into the fields in Dinnela village in Tsundupalle mandal on Monday and damaged groundnut crop in about 10 acres and broke large branches of about 60 mango trees. Six farmers whose crops were damaged by the pachyderms appealed to forest officials

to take steps to prevent crossing over of wild animals from the Kadapa-Chittoor border. They urged the district officials to assess the crop loss and sanction compensation from the Government. –Special Correspondent

### **Reservoirs full**

All major, medium and small reservoirs except the Nizamsagar project in the district are full with water. The SRSP, Koulasnala, Pocharam, Singeetham and Kalyani received water to the full reservoir level, while the water level in the NSP is 1,399 ft as against its FRL of 1,405 ft.

The NSP received 1,079 cusecs of water as of Monday and 10.307 tmcf of water is available in it as against its full capacity of 17.30 tmcf. Farmers are busy with farming activity. According to official information, out of a total of 36 mandals in the district, 35 mandals recorded more than normal rainfall.

### **Onion prices bring tears yet again**

*Sold at Rs. 50 per kg; rain in onion-producing States one of the reasons behind price rise*



After the arrival of fresh stocks later this month, prices are expected to see a downward trend.–Photo: K.K. Mustafah

Onion prices in the Capital have climbed to nearly Rs. 50 per kg in the retail market owing to a variety of reasons like heightened export to neighbouring Pakistan, rain in various States that supply onions, and farmers not having received a substantial rate for their produce last year.

While the wholesale price of onion ranges from Rs. 19 to Rs. 32 per kg, retail prices are 50 – 70 per cent higher. In Mother Dairy's Safal outlets, which number over 400 in the National Capital Region, onions are being sold at Rs. 36-37 per kg while local vendors are charging more than Rs. 40 per kg. Till a month ago, onion was available at Rs. 20 per kg.

Explaining the reason behind the significant rise in onion prices, Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (Azadpur) Chairman Rajinder Kumar Sharma said fresh stocks are expected later this month after which prices will see a downward trend.

“There are many reasons for the increase in prices in the Capital,” he said, adding that “ a large consignment was exported to Pakistan this year since crops there were destroyed due to extreme weather. Also, there have been heavy rains in States such as Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Not only has that destroyed crops but it has also been difficult to transport stocks from these places to the Capital.”

Further, the support price given to farmers last year for their produce was very low, said Mr. Sharma. “ Many farmers shifted to other crops and did not grow onion this year. Consequently, the produce was not as much this year. Also, since landholdings are smaller in our country, the produce is also smaller,” he added. Mr. Sharma said that the public needed to be educated that onions are priced based on size and the smaller ones are

still being sold at a wholesale rate of Rs. 16 per kg. “People are not aware of what they are purchasing. The taste ends up being the same.”

Last month, concerned over escalating vegetables prices, the Delhi Government had decided to conduct raids against hoarders and had asked retail traders to sell vegetables at reasonable rates. Delhi Food and Supplies Minister Haroon Yusuf had declared that there was no scarcity of onions in Delhi. He had also asked the APMC to publish wholesale prices of major vegetables in newspapers on a daily basis so that people know the actual rates.

### **Farmers can test soil at Rs. 20**

The agriculture department has made arrangements for conducting soil test through a mobile laboratory to enable farmers to ascertain the deficiency in soil at their doorsteps.

The laboratory will camp in villages and collect soil samples from fields and furnish the results to the farmers at a nominal cost of Rs. 20 per field.

Darez Ahamed, Collector, inaugurated the services of the laboratory at Nochikulam in Alathur block.

### **‘Farm mechanisation will reduce cultivation cost’**

The Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Puzhutheri, in Karur district organized a farmers’ fair at Panjapatti focusing on the farm mechanization in rainfed areas on Sunday.

Field demonstration was conducted by the scientists from the Department of Farm Machinery of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore

on machineries such as air assisted seed drill for sowing sesame, chisel plough and other implements on the display.

The exercise was part of the frontline demonstrations of the KVK sponsored by Indian Council of Agricultural Research. Following the demonstration, technical session was handled by the coordinator of the KVK, J. Diaviam, who gave an outline of various technologies required for ensuring higher productivity in rainfed areas. Scientist V.J.F. Kumar stressed the need for farm mechanisation to overcome the shortage of labour and also explained the technical advantages of using the air assisted seed drill.

Saravana Kumar, Scientist from TNAU, highlighted that going for farm mechanisation was sure to reduce cultivation costs. NABARD Assistant General Manager A. Parthiban suggested the farmers to initiate producer organization for sesame through which farmers could take up collective mobilization of inputs, custom hiring of machinery, sorting/grading of produce for better realization of price.

Lead District Manager (Banking) S. M. Murugesan spoke on the credit facilities available through commercial banks for purchase of farm machineries.

### **'Repay in time'**

He also motivated the farmers to repay the loans in time. Deputy Director of Agriculture (Central Schemes) G. Soundaram elaborated the opportunities available for sesame farmers to utilise the available water resources, adopt latest technologies and benefit from government subsidy schemes for getting higher productivity and profitability.



Joint Registrar of Cooperative Societies M. Santhanam spoke on various farm implements being given to farmers through Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies and also assured that steps would be taken for the purchase of air assisted seed drill by select PACS for the benefit of farmers.

### **Samba preparations in full swing**

With water released from the Grand Anicut for samba cultivation on Sunday, samba preparations are going on in full swing in Thanjavur district. K. Baskaran, Collector, directed the Agriculture Department officials to ensure distribution of quality samba seeds to farmers. For this, he urged them to conduct checking in seed processing and selling units in the district. Farmers can contact the Deputy Director, Seeds, Kattuthottam, Marimmankoil post, Thanjavur, either in person or over phone 04362-267959.

### **Farmers in the last-mile areas in Pudukottai district delighted**

Following heavy discharge of water into the Cauvery, about 3,500 cusecs of water was released in the Kallanai Kalvai channel on Sunday benefitting farmers in the tail end area of Aranthangi and Avudaiyarkoil taluks. The released water reached the Tiruvappadi Vaikkal, near Nakudi in Aranthangi taluk for irrigation on Monday.

“There are about 694 system tanks in the Kallanai Kalvai ayacut and the discharge will be sufficient for storing the waters for the samba cultivation,” A. Ramasamy, president of the Federation of Kallanai Kalvai Ayacutdar Welfare Associations said.

Pudukottai district turned a mixed bag in the farming activity. While farmers of the Kallanai Kalvai ayacut have started direct sowing of seeds of 'Deluxe Ponni' variety, those in the non-Cauvery delta keep their fingers crossed.

"The discharge is timely for the single crop of 'samba' and we are safe this year," Mr. Ramasamy said. Apart from irrigating 24,500 acres of samba in the Kallanai Kalvai region, the discharge had come in handy for supplying waters to the livestock, he says.

However, the farmers of non-Cauvery Mettur Project area in the district complain that much of the waters would be wasted and let into sea.

With the discharge into the Coleroon, the waters will soon reach the Veeranam only to be let off into the sea, says G.S. Dhanapathy, Chairman of the Farmers Forum of India.

He said the State government should immediately implement the Cauvery – Kundaru interlinking project.

It would not only benefit irrigation but also ensure drinking water supply by re-charging the water table, he said.

The interlinking of these rivers was first mooted by the late chief minister M.G. Ramachandran.

### **CNNL begins weed removal work in Hosur**

The removal of weeds from the distributaries of the Visvesvaraya canal at Hosur near Srirangapatna, where the waterway was completely choked by weeds and sundry, began on Monday.

The canal's distributaries supply water to several thousand hectares in different parts of the district. However, weeds had made this process unnecessarily difficult, resulting in the improper distribution of water to tail-

end lands. There were allegations that the authorities had neglected the maintenance of the distributaries, which many said were nothing but breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

The major the distributary in Hosur was completely overrun by weeds. Culverts were choked with garbage resulting in backflow of water at several places. Farmers said they had requested authorities to resolve this situation, but the issue has received “no attention. Despite submitting several memoranda to officials, we have not had a response with regard to the weed removal work,” Nanjaiah, a farmer in Hosur, said.

### Technology comes to HOPCOMS' rescue



Bananas ready to be taken to the HOPCOMS ripening chamber in Mysore on Monday.— Photo: M.A. Sriram

Technology has come to the rescue of the Horticultural Producers' Cooperative Marketing and Processing Society (HOPCOMS), which runs a chain of outlets selling vegetables and fruits in Mysore.

With the entry of retail outlets and supermarkets offering farm-fresh fruits and vegetables at unbelievably low prices, HOPCOMS lost its customers, including many regular buyers. It did, however, manage to attract

customers with a few administrative measures and better management reforms.

With about 41 outlets in Mysore, HOPCOMS has managed to improve its daily earnings in about two years. One of the important reasons for this development is the fruit-ripening chamber set up at a cost of Rs. 10 lakh at its distribution centre near K.R. Circle here under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana two years ago.

### **Advantages**

Fruit-ripening technology, which ensures uniform ripening and colouring of fruits (especially banana and mango), has helped HOPCOMS retrieve its customers. A few years back, HOPCOMS' daily business was around Rs. 1.5 lakh to Rs. 2 lakh a couple of years ago. Today, daily earnings have risen to Rs. 2.5 lakh.

On some days, the collective earnings touch Rs. 3 lakh a day. Sales of banana, especially the popular 'pachbale' variety, shot up considerably once the fruit-ripening chamber was put in place.

The demand for 'pachbale' at HOPCOMS outlets has almost doubled because of it. The chamber uses ethylene gas to artificially ripen fruit. HOPCOMS was earlier using traditional methods to ripen fruits. In traditional methods fruits were ripened using ripening agents such as sodium hydroxide at normal temperature or by keeping them in smoke chambers.

Thanks to advanced ripening technology, HOPCOMS is ripening about 10 tonnes of banana in just 72 hours.

On an average, three tonnes of 'pachbale' is sold in HOPCOMS outlets in Mysore. In view of the festive season this month, the sale is likely to peak

and the demand is expected to cross 3 to 3.5 tonnes a day, according to HOPCOMS Managing Director Shivalingappa, who spoke to *The Hindu* on the artificial ripening methods.

“When fruit is uniformly ripe, its shelf life also improves. The pleasant yellow colour of the fruit and the longer shelf life has been drawing customers to our outlets,” he said.

In view of the heightened demand for bananas, HOPCOMS has been using the chamber only for ripening banana varieties, though it can also ripen sapota and papaya.

Another ripening chamber has been set up near Lalitha Mahal Palace, Siddharthanagar, where new facilities have come up for procuring horticultural produce from farmers under the yojana.

A procurement centre and the ripening chamber are awaiting a formal launch. Inauguration has been delayed because of the poll code of conduct.

*Boost to production*

*Ripening chamber set*

*up on an area of*

*10 ft X 20 ft at a cost*

*of Rs. 10 lakh*

*Technology facilitates uniform ripening of fruits, especially banana and mango, giving them a natural colour and taste*

*The sale of the ‘pachbale’ banana variety shot up after HOPCOMS started ripening the fruit artificially*

*Another ripening chamber set up at the horticulture farm in*

*Siddharthanagar is ready for inauguration*

## **Horticulture to get boost in select regions in State**

*Farmers to be trained in cultivation and processing of fruits, flowers*

The government has drawn up plans to promote horticulture in select agro-climatic regions in all the revenue divisions in the State.

Farmers will be trained in cultivation and processing of fruits, vegetables, flowers or spices. They will also be oriented towards better marketing of produce by exposing them to national and international trading trends.

These will be carried out through farmers' groups and cooperative societies, apart from government agencies. Horticulture colleges and other agencies will be given the charge of training. It will be coordinated by the University of Horticulture Sciences, Bagalkot.

Shamanur Shivashankarappa, Minister for Horticulture and Agriculture Marketing, told *The Hindu* that funds for these programmes would be drawn from Centrally-funded schemes such as the National Horticulture Mission and the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana apart from allocations in the State Budget.

The focus would be on strengthening the market system for horticulture crops that are more perishable than field crops such as foodgrains. "Only 6 per cent of the items sold through Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees are horticulture products. Our first task will be to double this in five years," he said.

According to Mr. Shivashankarappa, steps such as training farmers in market analysis, setting up food parks dedicated to horticulture produce, helping farmers' groups or cooperative institutions, and setting up cold storages and processing units, would be taken up in phases.

“All these plans will be centred on specific products through regional crop clusters,” M.K. Shankaralinge Gowda, Principal Secretary, Horticulture, said.

Two horticulture crops would be identified for promotion in each region. “The basis for identifying them will be nativity and suitability to local climatic conditions. For example, a flower, vegetable or an aromatic plant will be coupled with grapes in Bijapur, tomatoes in Kolar, and cashew in Bidar, depending on the climate,” he said.

Horticulture crops are sown on an average of 14 per cent of the total cultivable land in the State. “We will have to bring all districts or sub-regions that have lesser horticulture crop coverage to this level, and to increase the overall State average in the next phase,” Mr. Shankaralinge Gowda said. “Horticulture crops are less labour intensive and fetch better prices in the market. Fruits address malnutrition,” he added.

### **Organic food is the mantra to be healthy**



It will take time for the public to realise the benefits of organic foods.

Organic food products have started to get generous display space in big retail chains in Hyderabad. However, such food products, which promise freedom from pesticides, have struggled to gain popularity among the masses.

To spread awareness about organic food products and highlight their apparent advantages over traditional foods, city-based Sresta Natural Bioproducts has launched a campaign dubbed as 'Freedom from Pesticides'. "It's difficult to change food habits that are deep rooted among public for so long. In the last few years, however, the acceptance levels towards organic foods have definitely improved in metros. It will take time for general public to realise the advantages of organic foods," said CEO, Sresta Natural Bioproducts, N. Balasubramanian, during the launch of the campaign on Monday.

Organic foods are 30 to 40 per cent more expensive than traditional foods. "Between August 12 and 19, we are offering 30 per cent discount on all our products under the brand '24 Mantra'. Farmers who are working with us get 20 to 25 per cent more than those involved in traditional farming. Moreover, organic food is healthier," he said.

A family of four in Hyderabad, which spends anywhere between Rs.5,000 to Rs.6,000 on traditional food products, will end up spending anywhere between Rs.1,500 to Rs.1,600 more if they switch to organic foods. "But, look at the health advantages because children will not get exposed to pesticides, which will be beneficial in the long run," Mr. Balasubramanian added.

*A city-based firm launches 'Freedom from Pesticides' campaign to create awareness on organic food products*



## **'Kole Roga' gives nightmares to areca farmers in Udupi**

*4,500 farmers growing areca on 3,383 hectares affected*

Arecanut farmers are facing a tough time in Udupi district as 'Kole Roga' or Mahali disease has affected the areca palms. Arecanut is grown on 7,048 hectares of land. Of this 7,048 hectares, 3,383 hectares of land is affected by 'Kole Roga'.

Nearly 80 of the arecanut plantations are in Kundapur and Karkala taluks, while the remaining 20 per cent are in Udupi taluk.

According to the Department of Horticulture, nearly 4,500 farmers had been affected by the Kole Roga in the district and the loss to the yield had been tentatively estimated at Rs. 13.19 crore. Continuous rains are responsible for the rapid spread of 'Kole Roga'.

Udupi district received a rainfall of 2,024 mm from January to July in 2012, while it received 3,117 mm of rainfall during the same period in 2013.

"Since there is continuous rainfall, the loss might increase in the coming days. The 'Kole Roga' is also making its presence felt in the non-traditional areas of the district," said B.P. Harish, Deputy Director of Horticulture.

Narasimha Kamath, who grows arecanut on 1.5 acres of land at Karvalo in Alevoor village, said nearly 75 per cent of arecanut palms in his field had been affected by 'Kole Roga'.

"I will loose 10 to 12 quintals of arecanut this year. There has been continuous rainfall for the last two months. Hence, I could not spray the Bordeaux mixture. There is no chance that the mixture will dry up," he said.

### **Rain damage**

While another farmer Ramakrishna Sharma, who also grows arecanut at Bantakal village, said nearly 60 per cent of arecanuts on his plantation had

withered away. Nearly 75 per cent of the yield might get damaged as the rains were continuing, he said.

Guruprasad, Assistant Horticulture Officer, said the Department was giving a subsidy of Rs. 800 per acre for the copper sulphate used in the Bordeaux mixture. Training on the preparation of the Bordeaux mixture was being given at different places by the scientists of the Krishi Vigyan Kendra, he said.

Jayalakshmi Hegde, Programme Coordinator at Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Brahmavar, said farmers should use the right mixture of Bordeaux spray. They should spray it on arecanut and arecanut leaves before the onset of the monsoon.

“If they notice ‘Kole Roga’ on areca palms, they should spray it, wait for 25 days and then give another spray to control it. The affected nuts, which drop below the trees should be cleared immediately,” she said.

### **‘Irrigation projects will not snatch away farmers’ land’**

*Minister Patil promises high compensation to those who lose land*



Minister for Major and Medium Irrigation and District In-charge Minister, M.B. Patil (second from left) chairing the meeting with the farmers in Bijapur on Monday.

Minister for Major and Medium Irrigation M.B. Patil has asserted that the government will not acquire even an inch of additional land than required from the farmers for irrigation projects in the State.

Interacting with the farmers here on Monday, he assured them that the maximum compensation would be given to farmers who lose land to irrigation projects.

“I assure you (the farmers) that I will not let any additional land be acquired for irrigation projects than required. The farmers need not to have any apprehensions,” he said.

Mr. Patil said the government aimed providing more facilities to the people who lose land than to those who benefit from the projects. The government intended to provide basic amenities along with the highest amount of compensation to those who lose their land to these projects. In order to meet this objective, the government, under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, has constituted a high-level committee for land acquisition and fixing prices of the land.

The government was ready to set aside Rs. 1,000 crore more than required for the projects in order to give adequate compensation to the farmers, the Minister said.

He said high-end foreign technology will be used to implement irrigation projects under the Upper Krishna Project (UKP).

Meanwhile, several farmers of Masuti village of Basavanabagewadi taluk urged Mr. Patil to provide compensation to the crop they would lose to the lift irrigation project.

The Minister directed the Chief Engineer of Krishna Bhagya Jal Nigam Limited (KBJLN) to convene a meeting with the farmers to heed their

grievances. The official said the meeting will be held on August 7 at the KBJNL office.

### **Safe to carry on with farm activities, say agri officers**

*Despite good storage in dams, farmers keep fingers crossed*

How many times do you want us to suffer loss? This was not a question posed to anyone, but the response from many small and marginal farmers in Madurai district to a query as to whether they would carry on with agricultural activities this season.

Farmers in Madurai district raise paddy in about 60,000 hectares in two different seasons. Water is released for irrigation for the double crop (kuruvai) around June 15 every year, and agricultural lands situated between Peranai and Kallanthiri – about 15,000 ha – benefit from this.

Around September 15, water is released for the samba (single) crop, which covers over 45,000 ha from Kallanthiri to Pulipatti, according to Agricultural Department officials.

For a decade or so, the pattern of water release had been volatile, forcing many farmers either to give up agriculture or undertake agricultural activities in smaller areas.

Lands, which were once cultivable in many fertile zones such as Melur, Vadipatti, Thirumangalam and Thiruparankundram blocks, had now turned into housing sites for different reasons.

Technology had indeed enhanced agricultural production in a big way, and also helped in making up for the shortage of farm labourers to some extent.

Today, with comfortable storage in reservoirs (Vaigai and Periyar), the Agricultural Department officials are keen on counselling farmers to start work.

Though initially reluctant, they are convinced with the good rains in catchment areas.

But the problem was no area received sufficient rain locally, Arul Prakasam, a progressive farmer near Melur, said and wanted the officials to release more water for irrigation in order to instil confidence in farmers. The 900 cusecs of water currently released was insufficient, and it should be increased to 1,200 cusecs, he demanded.

A senior PWD official said the main sources of water for irrigation for Madurai region were Periyar and Vaigai reservoirs. Maintaining that the storage level was comfortable in these reservoirs, the official said as on Saturday, the combined storage credit in Periyar reservoir was 7,577 mcft, while it was 2,157 mcft in the corresponding period last year.

The water level in Periyar dam was 132.20 feet (as on Saturday), while it was 114.20 feet the same time last year.

The water level in Vaigai dam was 51.57 feet (on Saturday), while it was 37.01 feet on the same date in 2012. This meant water might flow continuously for the next 100 days to enable the farmers to complete their farm activities, he summed up.

Despite the assurance and the good South-West Monsoon rains, farmers are keeping their fingers crossed, and it is not without reason.

**Collector assures farmers of adequate seeds, fertilizers**

Even as farmers in Cuddalore district are getting ready for samba cultivation, District Collector R. Kirlosh Kumar has given them an assurance that there was adequate supply of seeds and fertilizers for a successful harvest.

In a statement, the Collector said the agriculture extension centres in the district have been stocked with 500 tonnes of paddy seeds of the following varieties: BPT — 5204, Savithri, Aduthurai -38, Aduthurai-39, Co-39 and Co (R) — 50. The seeds would be made available to the farmers at subsidised rate. The Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies and private traders too have been instructed to keep adequate seed stocks. Besides, 3.4 lakh tonnes of fertilizers such as azospirillum and phospo bacteria have been kept ready.

Officials of the agriculture department have been directed to carry out awareness campaign in every revenue village on the technology aspect of crop cultivation and also water management to enable the farmers get better yield.

If the farmers face any shortfall or constraint in accessing seeds, they could contact the Assistant Agricultural Officers on the following cell phone numbers: Parangipettai — 94436-17056, Mel Bhuvanagiri — 75986-91252, Keerapalayam — 75986-91264, Kumaratchi — 79596-91262 and Kattumannarkoil — 75986-91263.

Any enquiries regarding fertilizer availability could be obtained from the Assistant Agricultural Officer (Quality control) on cell phone 79586-91270.

### **Arrangements for fertilizers**

Cooperative Department officials have made arrangements for stocking fertilizer and seeds at the godowns for the upcoming samba cultivation in villages irrigated by the Cauvery in the district.

A meeting of officials from the Tamil Nadu Cooperative Marketing Federation (TANFED), District Central Cooperative Bank and Primary Agricultural Cooperative Credit Societies was held here on Saturday, when an action plan for supply of fertilizers and seeds was evolved.

A total of 27 primary agricultural cooperative credit societies are located in the area irrigated by the Cauvery in the district. There has been a growing demand for DAP and arrangements have been made for stocking 1,966 tonnes of DAP at these societies, said K.V.S. Kumar, Joint Director of Cooperative Societies, who presided over the meeting.

About 1,876 tonnes of urea, 1,300 tonnes of potash, and 964 tonnes of complex have been distributed to the societies.

### **Standing crops damaged in floods**

The floods in the Godavari caused damage to the tune of 13.39 crore to East Godavari district as the standing crops of agriculture and horticulture got damaged in an extent of 4,102 hectares. As per the official estimates, 65 villages in 19 mandals were affected by the floods, creating inconvenience to about 1.5 lakh people. In all, 24 relief camps were arranged and rehabilitation was provided to 24,852 people. Three persons were killed and another man went missing in the floods, according to an official release issued here on Monday.

### **Food processing workshop on Thursday**

One-day workshop on food processing will be held under the aegis of Agriculture, Horticulture, Commerce, and Industries departments at Hotel Jewel Rock here on Thursday. The workshop will commence at 10 a.m. Experts from Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI), Mysore, University of Agriculture and Horticulture Sciences (UAHS), Shimoga, will provide information on processing and value-addition activities related to paddy, maize, arecanut, pineapple, ginger, and dairy products, and on financial assistance extended by banks for the establishment of food-processing industries. For details, call 08182 222635.

### **Farmers stage rasta roko**

The farmers of Husnabad mandal headquarters staged a rasta roko here on Monday protesting the district administration's failure to provide adequate fertilizers.

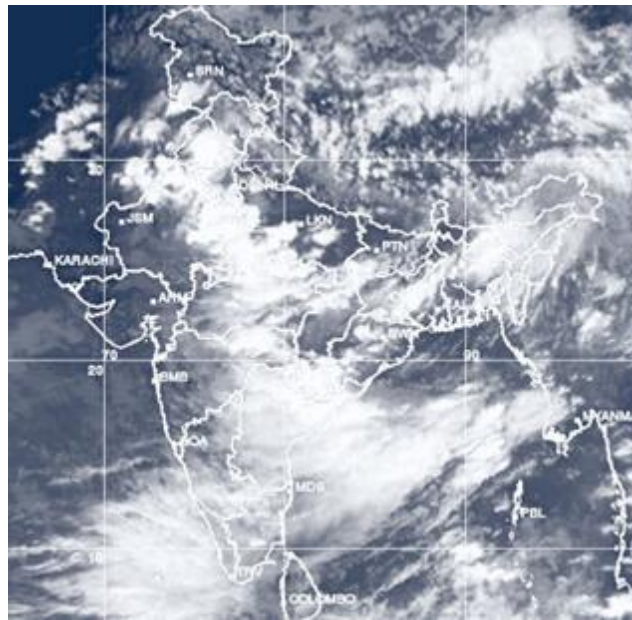
With bountiful rainfall and copious inflows into all the irrigation sources, the farming activities have intensified in various parts of the district. For a good harvest, the farmers need fertilizers in abundance.

Though the district authorities claimed that there was abundant stock of fertilizers in the district, Husnabad mandal farmers complained of not getting adequate supply. On Monday, the farmers formed serpentine queues in front of a primary agricultural cooperative society (PACS), but most of them could not get the fertilizers owing to inadequate supply. Irked over this, the farmers took to roads and staged a massive rasta roko on the busy Husnabad and Siddipet road obstructing the traffic for about two hours.



The farmers called off their agitation only after the mandal agricultural officer assured them of securing the fertilizer stocks very soon.

**weather**



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on August 5th.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	38	28	0	346
New Delhi (Sfd)	36	28	0	460
Chandigarh	35	28	0	491
Hissar	35	27	0	315
Bhuntar	33	23	0	323
Shimla	23	18	1	552
Jammu	34	25	56	679

Srinagar	33	21	0	149
Amritsar	34	28	tr	322
Patiala	36	28	0	459
Jaipur	33	25	6	338
Udaipur	28	25	1	508
Allahabad	36	27	3	657
Lucknow	36	25	1	510
Varanasi	36	27	9	428
Dehradun	32	23	912047	
Agartala	32	27	0	545
Ahmedabad	31	25	0	673
Bangalore	28	21	0	329
Bhubaneshwar	33	26	9	543
Bhopal	31	24	0	954
Chennai	36	23	5	318
Guwahati	37	27	0	565
Hyderabad	31	21	6	421
Kolkata	35	28	0	785
Mumbai	31	26	0	1915
Nagpur	32	25	0	1142
Patna	37	26	5	179
Pune	27	21	3	527
Thiruvananthapuram	25	21	68843	
Imphal	35	22	69557	
Shillong	26	19	7	566

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

#### MONSOON

The axis of monsoon trough on MSL passes through Bhatinda, Karnal, Meerut, Kanpur, Allahabad and thence south-east wards.

**RAINFALL:** Rain/thundershowers have occurred at many places over Uttarakhand, at a few places over Himachal Pradesh and east Uttar Pradesh and at isolated places over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (3 cm and above) HIMACHAL PRADESH: Dharamsala 7, Kheri and Guler 6 each and Sujampur Tira, Baijnath, Baldwara, Karsog, Mandi and Sangraha 3 each, JAMMU AND KASHMIR: Katra 14, Jammu 6, Samba 5 and Kathua 3, PUNJAB: Ropar 5 and R.S.Dam Site and Kapurthala 3 each, EAST RAJASTHAN: Chothkabarwara and Aligarh 4 each and Chittorgarh, Jaipur tehsil, Viratnagar, Udaipur Vati, Mount Abu and Pindwara 3 each, WEST RAJASTHAN: Lunkaransar 3, EAST UTTAR PRADESH: Faizabad 7, Salempur and Varanasi city 6 each, Lalganj, Phoolpur and Birdghat 5 each, Bahraich, Balrampur and Sultanpur 4 each and Akbarpur, Sardanagar, Lucknow CR and Patti 3 each, WEST UTTAR PRADESH: Jalaun 3 and UTTARAKHAND: Dehradun 9, Uttarkashi 8 and Bageshwar, Tehri and Bhatwari 3 each.

#### **FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 7th August**

**2013 :** Rain/thundershowers may occur at many places over Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places over Punjab, Haryana and east Rajasthan during next 24 hrs and increase thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over rest of the region.

**HEAVY RAINFALL WARNING:** Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh during next 72 hours

**FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 7th August 2013:** Generally cloudy sky.

Rain/thundershowers would occur.



# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## **Celebrating hope, Raia harvests first sheaves**

Heralding the beginning of the harvesting season in Goa, the villagers of Raia converged to celebrate the age-old 'Konsanchem fest' on Monday. The feast was celebrated with great enthusiasm when the parish priest descended into the fields at 9.30am and cut the first sheaves of paddy using a silver sickle, to ceremoniously reap the fruits of the farmers' labour. The feast mass was held at 8.15am.

"This is a very important day as it marks the great season of harvest and this is a tradition that has been followed by our ancestors," said Ashley Fernandes from Rachol.

The feast celebrates the cutting of the first sheaves 'konsa' of the rice harvest.

To commemorate it, farmers and other villagers participate enthusiastically and collect the blessed sheaves.

"Raia is the first village to harvest paddy and have this 'Konsanchem fest' and this attracts people from all over Salcete," said Xavier Fernandes, Raia sarpanch.

He added that other villages in Goa have a similar tradition later in the year. Local farmers say it is a celebration of hope that the feast brings in lots of blessings to their field for a good crop. Former parish priest of Our Lady of Snows church, Raia, Fr Cipriano da Silva, said the church was built by the 'gaunkars' of Raia and Camurlim in the year 1699 and this traditional ceremony of cutting of the corn was later introduced and made part of the feast of Our Lady of Snows.

"The first parish priest of Raia church was Fr Jorge Caldeira SJ of Italy and so the Raia church is named after the Cathedral of Santa Majorie in Rome," adds da Silva. Parish priest Fr Leonard Moraes said that the feast brings about 10,000 people together for the ceremony and masses.

The ceremony takes place in an area of the field called 'Saibinnichem Konjem', where seeds for the special sheaves are planted in early April so that the paddy is ready for the August 5 harvest. After being cut, the sheaves are blessed by the parish priest and distributed amongst those present.

### **Haryana farmers ask PM to let them sell organs to pay off debt**

To highlight the issue of rising financial burden, a group of farmers of Haryana on Monday sought permission from the Prime Minister to sell their organs to pay off their debt. At a mahapanchayat (big rally) in Kurukshetra on Monday, farmers of the state also displayed a rate of list of their organs, They even submitted a letter signed by more than hundreds to the tehsildar in Kurukshetra to be sent to the Prime Minister. The rally was organized by Bhartiya Kissan Union (BKU).

They expressed deep concern over death of 20,000 farmers who ended their lives due debt burden. At Jat Dharmshala, farmers also expressed condolence over death of Mukesh of Panipat who had to go jail when he could not pay debt and later died due to shock. Marching towards the mini secretariat, farmers shouted slogans against the government. "The government is tightlipped over the debt burden of farmers. If it is incapable

of taking some steps, we should at least be allowed to sell organs and repay debt," said Gurnam Singh Chaduni, state president of BKU.

### **Kaipad farming to be mechanized**

With the Kaipad rice getting recognized for the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, people who were behind the prolonged effort to acquire this status for the organic rice variety say the next step is to mechanize Kaipad farming and take efforts to attract the younger generation to this type of agriculture.

"Though it is estimated that there are nearly 4,100 hectares of Kaipad land in Kasaragod, Kannur and Kozhikode, a considerable portion still lies waste and our hope is that the GI recognition will attract the young generation to this field, because the tag also underscores the dignity of farming," said

Vanaja T of the department of Plant Breeding at the College of Agriculture, Padannakkad under Kerala Agricultural University. She is the principal investigator of the project and had initiated steps to get the tag with the support of the Malabar Kaipad Farmers' Society, formed for this purpose.

Though farming is a dignified occupation in many parts of the world, it is yet to be recognized here and such recognition adds dignity to the field, she said. The recognition also comes with financial benefits as it will provide global acceptance to Kaipad rice, which is completely organic and high in nutrition.

"The advantage is that the GI tag gives financial security to small and marginalized farmers besides giving them food and nutritional security," she observed. "Moreover, it has an ecological relevance too because once we start utilizing the Kaipad lands completely for agriculture, the possibility of land reclamation comes down, boosting ecological equilibrium."

However, research in this field should get more funding, say experts.

"First of all we have to try mechanization, because the equipment used currently is not suitable for cultivating shallow fields. The next step of research should be in that direction," said Valsala.

It was in 2000 that the agricultural university started developing high-yielding rice varieties for Kaipad lands. With this the productivity has increased by almost 70%, according to M Govindhan, associate dean at the College of Agriculture, Padannakkad. Instead of merely developing varieties in the lab, he they tested it on Kaipad farms and noticed considerable improvement. This also helped in getting the GI tag.

In order to promote Kaipad farming, the agriculture department has also trained 80 members of the food security army, mainly women, in four panchayats in the district- Pattuvam, Cherukunnu, Ezhom and Kannapuram- with 20 women in each panchayat. Once the mechanization is implemented successfully, the service can be better utilized, opine experts.

Kaipad rice is much in demand abroad and now the Malabar Kaipad Farmers' Society plans to market it as a trade brand, said K V Karunakaran, secretary of the society. "We have sought the help of the district panchayat to set up a mill to process the rice and market it globally, because it has great acceptance in the international market," said.

However, Valsala, who is the force behind the Kaipad rice getting GI tag, has only one word of advice. "Farmers may definitely explore the international market but they should make sure they also use it for themselves to ensure that the nutritional quality of the rice reaches them as well."



## Onion prices rise by over 32% in a week

The average wholesale price of onions at Lasalgaon Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) in the district, the largest onion market in the country, soared to the season's highest at Rs 3,000 a quintal on Monday. This is an increase of 32.15% in a week.

The average wholesale onion prices in the district APMCs were in the range of Rs 2,240 to Rs 2,280 a quintal on July 29. In city markets, good quality onions were sold for Rs 35 per kg as against Rs 20-25 last week. A senior Lasalgaon APMC official told TOI, "The demand for onions from states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar has increased due to the decline in supply. Onions arriving in the market are summer crops, and have a shelf life of around seven months, so farmers and traders prefer storing onions in the hope of getting better prices.

"Due to continuous rain over the past two weeks, the farmers and traders have stored onions and have not brought it in sufficient quantity for auctions in the APMCs.

As a result, the arrival of onions, which was in the range of 12,000-15,000 quintals a week ago, has reduced to 8,000 quintals a day.



**Will back Food Bill if farmers' interests are protected: SP**

Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav on Monday said his party was ready to support the food security Bill if the government promises to protect the interests of farmers and ensures that they get profit over their produce.

His remarks are significant as they come against the backdrop of reports that the issue of suspended IAS officer Durga Shakti Nagpal could cast a shadow over Congress' bid to secure Samajwadi Party's support on the food measure.

"If they promise that the farmers' interests will not be ignored and they will get profit over their produce, then we can support the Bill," Yadav said.

### **'Global warming has dried up monsoon over past decades'**

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While global warming continues to be debated in various circles, latest research has proved that in the past few decades, global warming has "effected a drying up of Indian monsoon" but has anchored rainfall increase over the tropical western Pacific Ocean. This, researchers claim, has increased the fresh water content of the ocean and also increased the sea surface temperature.

Researchers from International Pacific Research Centre (IPRC), University of Hawaii, and Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), lead by H Annamalai, used computer models and performed experiments to study the effect of increase in sea surface temperature on Indian monsoon.

Highlighting the study, Annamalai said, "Various observations have shown that the Indian monsoon has weakened by around 5-6 per cent over the past few decades. Also, there has been an increase in the instances of rainfall over the west Pacific ocean. In fact, India has not observed any strong rainfall activity (e.g. 10 per cent above its climatological seasonal mean rainfall) since the monsoon of 1994," he said.

He said unprecedented concentration of greenhouse gases being injected into the atmosphere has been observed during the same time period.

While the monsoon over the country has been drying up, rainfall activity over the tropical western Pacific ocean has been rising steadily.

"Measurement of sea surface salinity (salt amount) of the west Pacific oceanic region has been showing a steady decrease. This is possible because of more fresh water being introduced in the region due to increased in situ rainfall," he said.

Correspondingly, there has been a steady increase in the sea surface temperature over the same region.

Computer model simulations were designed to study the east-west shift in the monsoon rainfall.

Talking about the model, Annamalai said the simulations showed that the shift can be explained only when information about the greenhouse gas concentration was fed in the model simulations. "Carefully designed experiments with computer model confirm that the ocean temperature rise, in particular, over the tropical western Pacific is responsible for the observed east-west shift in monsoon rainfall. Within the current limitations in observations and computer model simulations, our study paints a coherent picture that increase in ocean temperatures, perhaps induced by increase in greenhouse gas concentrations, may be responsible for the weakening tendency in monsoon rainfall," he said.

### **Banana candy to be on state mid-day meal menu**

A nutritious candy rich in vitamins and iron made from banana stem could be part of the mid-day meal scheme for Gujarat schoolchildren grappling with the problem of malnutrition. Recently, a state government official has shown interest in introducing the candy in mid-day meal scheme of the

state schools, Navsari Agriculture University (NAU) scientist B L Kolambe said on Monday.

"Costing less than a rupee, the candy made out of banana plant has medicinal value. It is made out of central core (stem) of the plant's pseudostem," Kolambe said.

"The candy is rich in fibre, iron and vitamin B, and suitable to meet the nutritive requirements in anaemic (having less than normal quantity of hemoglobin in blood) children," Kolambe said. "During tests conducted at Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI), Mysore, the candy was found safe for human consumption, and all the fibre in it was revealed to be digestible fibre," he claimed.

When contacted, Gujarat government spokesperson Saurabh Patel said that it was a positive development to deal with malnutrition problem and the government would look over it. As per National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-III, 49.2 per cent of the state's children were stunted. It was realised that malnutrition among women, adolescent girls and children was the underlying cause of death due to common ailments. Thus, state government has given top priority to malnutrition, says Gujarat's Socio-Economic Review 2012-13 report.

During 2011-12, on an average 41.40 lakh children of standard I to VIII were provided hot cooked meal per day in 33,396 schools through 29,977 MDM (mid-day meal) centres. The number of children went up to 43.17 lakh up to September 2012, says a state report. NAU has standardised the technology to convert the waste of banana plant into various useful products, including this edible candy with nutritional values. "At present, in one batch we make just 12 kg of candy, but once the technology is licensed

for commercialisation, the production can always be scaled up," Kolambe said.

## Weather-Chennai

### Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

**Tuesday, Aug 6**

Max Min

34° | 25°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:55

Humidity: 74

Sunset: 06:34

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1007

### Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

**Wednesday, Aug 7**

Max Min

35° | 26°

### Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Monday

Aug 8

Aug 9

Aug 10

Aug 11

Aug 12



34° | 26°

35° | 26°

36° | 26°

36° | 26°

36° | 26°

Cloudy

Overcast

Overcast

Overcast

Overcast

### Airport weather

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:45

Humidity: 94

Sunset: 07:08

Wind: normal Barometer: 1004



## **Badal blames Centre for woes of agriculturists**

Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal has claimed that the Congress-led UPA government was responsible for woes of the state's farmers. Badal was in town to administer the oath of office and secrecy to newly-elected 170 sarpanches and 1,259 panches of Barnala.

He added that on the issue of displacement of farmers from Kutch, a delegation led by deputy CM Sukhbir Singh Badal will visit Gujarat soon to work out modalities necessary to prevent ousting of farmers. A controversy over the issue erupted after Kutch district collector issued eviction notices to resettled farmers of Punjab and Haryana by invoking a clause of Gujarat Revenue Act, which had been dormant for years.

Claiming that only irrigation for crops was directly under the state government, it had done its duty by providing free electricity worth Rs. 5,000 to farmers every year.

"Sarpanches are the chief ministers of villages. More than 65% of the state's population lives in villages," he said.

The CM said that to tap hidden potential amongst the bright students of the rural areas, special schools were being opened in six districts of the state to impart quality education to students securing 80% or more marks at the matric exams in the government schools. Badal said that these students would be provided free coaching for entrance exams along with boarding and lodging facility to enable them to compete with their convent-educated peers.

He said he started his career as sarpanch and rose to become chief minister.

"Dhindsa, Maluka, Bhundar, late Beant Singh and many others started their political career as sarpanch."

Punjab rural development and panchayat minister Surjit Singh Rakhra advised elected representatives to take help from self-help groups, youth clubs and community organizations in discharge of their duties.

Rajya Sabha MP Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa applauded chief minister for administering the oath himself to sarpanches and panches.

### **Debt-ridden farmers seek permission to sell organs**

Demanding official permission to sell their body organs to overcome heavy losses faced by the farming community, members of the Bhartiya Kishan Union (BKU) staged a protest in Kurukshetra on Monday.

Led by the BKU's state president Gurnam Singh Chaduni, farmers submitted a memorandum addressed to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to frame a policy under which farmers should be allowed to sell their organs.

A total of 33 farmers submitted their protest letter to the tehlisdar.

"Owing to the poor policies, farmers are neck-deep in debts. We are being paid a meager amount of the actual cost of production of various crops," Chaduni said.

He said the Center and the Haryana governments were doing a lip service for the welfare of farmers and resisted from implementing the MS Swaminathan Committee.

"According to the National Crime Record Bureau every year 20,000 farmers commit suicide. The anti-farmer policies where farmers are unable to clear their debts are responsible for the dismal condition," he said.



"If the Center could do nothing then it should allow farmers to sell their body organs to pay back their debts," Chaduni said.

Onion prices almost double in one month

The price of onions continues to rise in both wholesale as well as retail markets.

In the wholesale market, the price has risen from Rs15-20 per kg last month to Rs. 32-35 per kg. In the retail market, onions that were selling for Rs20-25 per kg last month are now selling at Rs40-45 per kg.

Traders at the wholesale Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) say the sudden increase in prices is because a lot of the crop was destroyed during transportation due to the rain, leading to high wastage. According to APMC director Ashok Walunj, "Usually around 125 vehicles carrying onions come to the market every day. The arrivals at present are around 80 vehicles."

With the crop production already low this year, and the current stock coming to an end, traders fear the prices could go up even higher as the new crop is expected after a few months.

"This year, initially there was severe drought and then very heavy rains, which had a negative effect on several crops including onion. That is why arrivals have reduced at the APMC market. The reduced supply has naturally led to an increase in prices," Walunj said.

"While prices do come down on days when arrivals are on the higher side, this is not often reflected in the retail market."

Retailers say they are suffering losses and hence have hiked their prices.

“We suffer additional losses as onion rots early in the monsoon and there is wastage which we need to cover,” said Rajesh Gupta, an onion retailer from Nerul.

“Just because the wholesale price reduces by a couple of rupees on a particular day doesn’t mean that we reduce our prices immediately. We have to average our costs and losses.”

The situation could get worse.

According to Walunj, “There has not been much production of onion in neighbouring states either. The current stock of the crop is almost over and the new crop will arrive only after a few months. Till then, prices could go up even further.”

## Higher sowing



Prices may slide: A maize seller looks for customers in a cloudy afternoon in Lucknow. Maize has been sown on 7.49 million hectares as of August 1, up from 6.29 million hectares a year earlier, according to Agriculture Ministry data. As such, prices are expected to decline on expectations of higher output and on weak overseas demand. — A. Roy Chowdhury

## Tea prices gather steam at Kochi sale

Demand lifted prices of some varieties of tea at the Kochi auction.

In sale no 31, the quantity on offer in dust CTC grades was 8,76,500 kg.

The market for best CTC's was fully firm to dearer.

Good liquoring medium steady to firm and sometimes dearer.

Others were irregular and lower and witnessed some withdrawals.

However, there was a subdued demand from upcountry buyers and less enquiry from exporters.

The quantity on offer in orthodox grades was low with only 3,500 kg .

The market was steady with operations from upcountry buyers and exporters, the auctioneers Forbes, Ewart & Figgis said.

In the best CTC dusts, PD grades quoted Rs 109/126, RD grades fetched Rs 118/148, SRD ruled at Rs 121/157 while SFD stood at Rs 126/170.

The leaf sale also witnessed a good demand for select varieties.

The quantity on offer in Orthodox grades was 112,500 kg.

The market for highgrown brokens, whole leaf and fannings was fully firm to dearer following quality.

Clean, black, well-made, medium bolder brokens, tippy grades and whole leaf was fully firm to dearer.

Others were irregular and sometimes easier. Corresponding fannings was dearer.

The quantity on offer in CTC leaf was 70,500 kg and the market for good liquoring teas was fully firm to dearer.

Others were irregular and lower. There was a subdued demand from upcountry buyers.

In the dust grades, Monica SFD fetched the best prices of Rs 171 followed by Mayura SFD and Waterfall SFD at Rs 169.

In the leaf varieties, Chamraj Green FOP (S) quoted the best prices of Rs 268 and Chamraj OP at Rs 261.

### **Nearly 23% Coonoor tea unsold**

Some 23 per cent of the 19.07 lakh kg offered for Sale No: 31 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions remained unsold for want of buyers.

The orthodox teas of Chamraj (Rs 252 a kg) and Corsley (Rs 200) were the only ones to touch Rs 200 and above.

“For the seventh consecutive week, our Orange Pekoe has topped the market reflecting the choice of discerning domestic consumers and exporters with about 90 per cent of our production being exported,” Chamraj Director D. Hegde told *Business Line*.

Havukal got Rs 178, Kairbetta Rs 174, Kodanad Rs 173 and Highfield Estate Rs 173.

In all, 37 marks got Rs 125 and more.

Homedale Estate topped CTC market when its Pekoe Dust grade, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, was bought by Paras Tea Co., for Rs 191 a kg.

Vigneshwar Estate got Rs 171, Crosshill Estate Rs 169 and Hittakkal Estate Rs 166.

In all, 39 marks got Rs 125 and more .

### **exports**

Exporters to Pakistan paid Rs 70-103 and to the CIS, Rs 68-77.

There was some purchase for some European ports for Rs 80-96.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 68-71 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 115-150 for brighter liquoring sorts.

They ranged Rs 68-74 for plain dusts and Rs 120-160 for brighter liquoring dusts.

### **Heavy rain spells trouble for cardamom plantations**

Incessant rains accompanied by strong winds have damaged good number of cardamom plants in almost all the growing areas in the Idukki district of Kerala last week.

Consequently, the expectation of a good crop this season has been shattered and it is now being projected as a normal crop, market sources in Kumily and Bodinayakannur told *Business Line*.

The cardamom market has been steady on matching demand and supply at auctions held in Kerala and Tamil Nadu last week.

An estimated 25 tonnes of fresh capsules were bought by exporters. 90 per cent of the arrivals were of new crop.

Upcountry buyers were also covering.

Individual auction average continued to vacillate between Rs 555 and Rs 600 a kg.

During 2012-13, the total output of small cardamom, according to Spices Board sources, was estimated at 12,420 tonnes from a total area of 69,870 hectares.

The current average price is between Rs 560 and Rs 600 and that is not at all remunerative, they claimed.

According to them, anything below Rs 750 would not be remunerative given the high input costs, especially the high labour wages.

The first round of picking is underway and around 80 per cent of the arrivals was of the new crop. But 7-8 mm capsules were much less. The current round of picking may last till the month-end while the second round of picking will commence from mid-Aug. Total arrivals at the Sunday auction held by KCPMC increased to 65 tonnes from 63.5 tonnes on the previous Sunday and the entire quantity was sold out, P.C. Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC, told *Business Line*.

The maximum price was at Rs 1,013 and the minimum at Rs 481.

The auction average price slipped to Rs 576.19 from Rs 582.45 .

The current season has begun officially from August 1 and hence the total arrivals during the season stood at 226 tonnes as against 229 tonnes in the same period last season.

The sales were at 223 tonnes and 225 tonnes respectively.

The weighted average price as on August 4 stood at Rs 573.13 against Rs 857.82 as on the same date last year.

**Prices of graded varieties (Rs/kg):** AGEB 790-800; AGB 580-590; AGS 560-570 and AGS -1: 540-550. Bulk was being sold at Rs 400-550 a kg.

### **Mixed trend in spot rubber**

Spot rubber was mixed on Monday. The undercurrent appeared to be firm as certain counters finished higher amidst scattered transactions. Sheet rubber closed steady at Rs 195 a kg, according to traders. The grade improved to Rs 195 (Rs 194.50) both at Kottayam and Kochi, as quoted by the Rubber Board.

August futures improved to Rs 194.50 (Rs 193.46), September to Rs 184.35 (Rs 182.01), October to Rs 174.80 (Rs 173.28) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) slipped to Rs 150.11 (Rs 150.42) at Bangkok. August futures closed at ¥245.5 (Rs151.67) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

**Spot rubber (Rs/kg):** RSS-4: 195 (195); RSS-5: 191 (190); Ungraded: 180 (180); ISNR 20: 177 (176.50) and Latex 60 per cent: 162 (161).

### **Govt scraps customs duty on rice bran**

There will be no customs duty on import of rice bran and rice bran oil cake from October 1, against 15 per cent currently, according to a Finance Ministry notification.

As a result, import of rice bran from neighbouring countries such as Pakistan and Bangladesh may turn viable.

“An estimated 50,000 to one lakh tonnes of rice bran could be imported from neighbouring countries, depending on the price parity,” said B.V. Mehta, Executive Director, Solvent Extractors Association of India (SEAI). Rice bran oil is normally extracted from bran through the solvent extraction method. Bran, the brown layer on rice grain, has 10-25 per cent oil content. After extracting the oil, the meal or the rice bran oil cake is used as cattle feed.

So far, there were no imports of rice bran as it was unviable due to a high customs duty of 15 per cent.

SEAI had recently urged the Government to reduce the customs duty to make imports more attractive to meet rising domestic demand for the oil.

### **output**

India’s rice bran oil production is estimated at around nine lakh tonnes a year, according to industry estimates.

Of this, about three lakh tonnes are used directly as edible oil and the rest for blending with other edible oils and in vanaspati.

The demand for rice bran oil is on the rise, as it is considered a healthy and affordable cooking medium.

### **imports**



India's total vegetable oil imports for the first eight months of the oil year, starting November 2012 till June 2013, were up 12 per cent at 7.14 million tonnes over corresponding last year's 6.39 million tonnes.

### **Cotton may gain on export buying**

Cotton prices have started to move up on fresh export buying after the Government removed restrictions on the Cotton Corporation of India to export cotton.

Moreover, short supply in the domestic market also strengthened the market.

Gujarat Sankar-6 increased by Rs 300 to Rs 43,000-43,500 for a candy of 356 kg. B-grade cotton traded at Rs 42,200-42,700.

Raw cotton or *kapas* also rose by 10-12 to Rs 890-1,075 for 20 kg, while gin delivery kapas was quoted at Rs 1,100-1,105.

About 2,000-2,200 bales cotton arrived in Gujarat and 4,000-4,500 bales arrived in India on Monday.

According to cotton traders, supply is very thin and demand is going up. During past two days, cotton price has increased over Rs 500 for a candy. Moreover, fresh export buying seen in the market, may strengthen cotton prices further in the coming days.

After the Government eased quantitative restrictions for export by the Cotton Corporation, exporters have been active in the market.

However, traders also believe that cotton price will not move much as sowing is good and weather is favourable in cotton producing States including Gujarat.

## **Rice trade sluggish on lack of demand**

The rice market saw a steady trend with prices of aromatic and non-basmati varieties ruling unchanged on Monday.

Due to restricted trading, rice prices have been ruling almost unchanged since last week, said market sources.

Tara Chand Sharma, Proprietor of Tara Chand and Sons, told *Business Line* that lack of trading at all levels kept aromatic and non-basmati rice prices unchanged.

The market is moving at snail's pace and sluggish domestic and overseas demand is the prime reason behind the current situation, he said.

In the physical market, Pusa-1121 (steam) sold at Rs 8,000-8,100 a quintal, while Pusa-1121 (sela) quoted at Rs 7,600-7,800.

Pure basmati (raw) quoted at Rs 8,800. Duplicate basmati (steam) sold at Rs 6,600.

For the brokens of Pusa-1121, Dubar quoted at Rs 3,600, Tibar sold at Rs 4,250 while Mongra was at Rs 2,900.

In the non-basmati section, Sharbati (Steam) sold at Rs 4,500-4,600 while Sharbati (Sela) quoted at Rs 4,300.

Permal (raw) sold at Rs 2,300-2,350 while Permal (sela) went for Rs 2,300.

PR-11 (sela) sold at Rs 2,900 while PR-11 (raw) quoted at Rs 2,750.

PR14 (steam) sold at Rs 3,100.

## **Paddy arrivals**

Around 5,500 bags of different paddy varieties arrived at the Karnal Grain Market Terminal on Monday from Uttar Pradesh.

About 500 bags of Pusa-1121 arrived and quoted at Rs 3,150-3,200.

Around 5,000 bags of PR arrived and quoted at Rs 1,100-1,180.

### **Weak offtake likely to keep soya oil subdued**

Weak global cues and decline in buying support at higher rate, dragged soyabean oil.

On Monday, soya refined oil in Indore mandis ruled at Rs 635-40 for 10 kg (Rs 638-41), while soya solvent ruled at Rs 600-610.

Strong global cues and apprehension of damage to soyabean crops on account of excessive rains in the State last week had lifted soya oil prices in the past few days with prices of soya refined in the spot at Rs 644 two days back.

However, with the weather condition improving in the last two days, soya oil prices have either declined marginally or ruled firm even as demand in soya oil continues to be weak at the higher rate, said Mukesh Purohit, an Indore-based soya oil manufacturer.

However, compared with last week, soya oil in Indore is ruling Rs 20 higher.

In futures also, soya oil traded lower on slack buying support and weak global cues with its August and September contracts on the NCEDX closing at Rs 662.65 (down Rs 1.85) and Rs 642.90 (down 55 paise).

However, compared to last week, soya oil's August contracts on the NCEDX is ruling Rs 23.55 higher.

Soyabean futures traded low on weak global cues and buying support with its October and November contracts on the NCEDX closing at Rs 2,936 (down Rs 3) and Rs 2,950 (down Rs 2).

Weak arrivals and improved buying support from the crushers also lifted soyabean's plant deliveries to Rs 3,380-3,450 (Rs 3,200-3,275 last week). According to statistics, against a target of 62.35 lakh hectares, soyabean sowing has been completed in 61.35 lakh hectares in the state. Soya DOC continues to witness a downtrend on weak export and domestic demand with its prices in the domestic market quoted at Rs 28,800-29,200, while on the port, it ruled at Rs 30,300-500.

### **Limited inflow supports turmeric**

Spot turmeric prices ruled stable in Erode on Monday.

“ Spot turmeric did not show any improvement, though arrival dropped to 2,800 bags on Monday. This is because farmers are busy with agricultural operations and also due to the festive season. Virtually, no trader received fresh upcountry orders for the past couple of days, so prices have not improved,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said that the farmers are having ample stocks but are waiting for better price. So, they are bringing limited stock to the market for their daily expenses.

Prices increased on Monday but still remained below Rs 5,500 a quintal in Andhra Pradesh, Warangal and Sangli.

Of the 2,800 bags that arrived, 55 per cent was sold. The price of hybrid increased by Rs 300 due to quality; but still it is selling below Rs 7,000.

Similarly the finger variety at the Gobichettipalayam cooperative marketing society, decreased by Rs 500 due to quality.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,011-5,975 a quintal, the root variety Rs 3,636-5,561.

**Salem hybrid crop:** The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,489-6,821, the root variety Rs 4,711-6,009. Of 136 bags put up for sale, 70 found takers.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,949-6,290, the root variety Rs 4,891-5,906. Of 121 bags on offer, 116 were traded.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,239-6,195, the root variety Rs 4,899-5,697. All the 687 bags were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 4,851-5,987, the root variety Rs 4,611-5,657. All the 156 bags were auctioned.

### **Supply disruption keeps pepper hot**

Pepper futures declined on limited activities, while the spot remained steady. Heavy and incessant rains, cloud-bursts and landslides in the high ranges have disrupted the supply and that was reflected on the prices.

Availability has also fallen sharply.

Tamil Nadu dealers were actively buying from Kerala. Erode, Cumbum, Theni and Gudalur have become major pepper trading hubs in Tamil Nadu because of tax benefits, they said.

Many of the inter-State dealers have shifted their operations to Karnataka due to availability of pepper there.

September contract decreased while October increased. On the spot, no activities were reported as many of the investors' finance alleged to have been stuck up with the National Stock Exchange.

On the spot, 15 tonnes of pepper arrived and 10 tonnes were traded at Rs 390 a kg.

On the NMCE, August, September and October contracts decreased by Rs 42, Rs 106 and Rs 84 respectively to Rs 41,150 and Rs 41,350 and 41,400.

Total turnover dropped by 22 tonnes to 29 tonnes . Total open interest increased by three tonnes to 90 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 at \$6,925 a tonne (c&f) Europe at \$7,175 a tonne (c&f) US and remained out priced.

# Business Standard

**U'khand gov to buy horticulture produce from farmers**

**State has also decided to send proposals to Centre to give grants to mule operators under NADS**

The Uttarakhand cabinet on Monday decided to buy horticulture produce like potatoes and apples from farmers in the disaster affected areas.

A meeting of the state cabinet held at the state secretariat here decided to buy the produce of potatoes and apples from farmers following heavy losses incurred by them due to the flash floods.

The government also decided to send proposals to the Centre to give grants to mule operators under the National Agriculture Development Scheme (NADS) and set up seed storehouses and build small ropeways for the convenience of farmers in the state.

The decisions were meant to mitigate losses suffered by farmers in the disaster hit areas and the damage caused to agricultural land by the June calamity.

The Chief Minister Vijay Bahuguna gave directions to officials at the meeting to formulate action plans on the proposals regarding agriculture sector that have received grants from the Centre.

He also asked them to speed up the work being undertaken. The District Magistrates were told that in areas where connecting roads have still not been built, the government would buy the produce of potato and apple growers.

The Chief Minister also said that mule operators whose families were dependent on their earnings from the business would also get grants from the government under the National Agriculture Development Scheme.

The CM laid emphasis on preparing DPRs for ropeways immediately and establishing seed centres at Nyay Panchayat level. He also asked the authorities to give importance to modernisation of dairies. He discussed the possibilities of building Cold Storages in the hill areas besides expressing hope that departments dealing with agricultural development will work in close association with each other.

Earlier at a meeting here yesterday, Union Agriculture Secretary, Ashish Bahuguna, asked all departments concerned to make reports on the losses incurred in all areas and also to prepare reports on controlling further damage.

He said immediate action would be taken on any proposal received under the National Agriculture Development Scheme. He assured that monetary aid would be provided for all proposals including those on conservation of agricultural land.

Bahuguna assured the Chief Minister that the Central Government would give full compensation for the damage caused to agricultural land.

### **Castor seed gains by 2.3% on fresh buying**

### **Marketmen said traders preferred to built new positions at existing lower levels amid rising spot demand**

Castor seed prices surged by Rs 79 to Rs 3,540 per quintal in future trading today following low levels buying by traders in line with firm spot market cues.



Marketmen said traders preferred to built new positions at existing lower levels amid rising spot demand.

They said pick up in industrial demand against less supply in physical markets too influenced the sentiments.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, castorseed for October contract spurred by Rs 79, or 2.28% to Rs 3,540 per quintal, having an open interest of 17,630 lots.

Most active near September contract rose by Rs 73, or 2.16% to Rs 3,459 per quintal, with an open interest of 1,52,310 lots.

Current August contract also showed a rise of Rs 69, or 2.08% at Rs 3,415 per quintal, in an open interest of 61,580 lots

### **Maize up by 2.2% on global cues**

**Restricted supply and pick up in domestic demand also gave a push to the prices**

Maize prices improved by Rs 28 to Rs 1,285 per quintal in futures trading today following increased buying by speculators on firm overseas market cues.

Marketmen said tracking firm global markets trend, speculators preferred to enlarge their holdings in maize in futures trading.

Restricted supply and pick up in domestic demand also gave a push to the prices, they said.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, maize for August contract rose by Rs 28, or 2.23% to Rs 1,285 per quintal, with an open interest of 20,190 lots.

Most active near September contract too looked up by Rs 24, or 1.91% to Rs 1,278 per quintal, having an open interest of 29,410 lots.

### **Chana up by 0.7% on spot demand**

#### **Speculators increasing their holdings after a rise in demand in the spot market**

Chana prices rose by 0.71% to Rs 2,821 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators enlarged their holdings on rise in spot market demand.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, chana for delivery in September rose by Rs 20, or 0.71% to Rs 2,821 per quintal with an open interest of 1,31,480 lots.

Similarly, the commodity for delivery in August traded higher by Rs 18, or 0.65% to Rs 2,771 per quintal in 73,480 lots.

Market analysts said speculators increasing their holdings after a rise in demand in the spot market, mainly led to rise in chana prices at futures trade.

### **Potato up by 2.3% on rising demand**

#### **Restricted arrivals from producing regions mainly pushed up potato prices**

Potato prices moved up by Rs 18.10 to Rs 778 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators enlarged their positions amid rising demand in the spot market against restricted arrivals from producing belts.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, potato for delivery in September moved up by Rs 18.10, or 2.38% to Rs 778 per quintal in business turnover of 341 lots.

The potato for delivery in August also went up by Rs 10.20, or 1.33% to Rs 778.90 per quintal in 113 lots.

Market analysts said apart from firm trend at spot market on rising demand, restricted arrivals from producing regions mainly pushed up potato prices at futures trade.

### **Refined soya falls by 0.5% on sluggish demand**

#### **Speculators reduced their holdings amid sluggish demand in the spot market against adequate stocks position**

Refined soya oil prices fell 0.47% to Rs 661.40 per 10 kg in futures market today as speculators reduced their holdings amid sluggish demand in the spot market against adequate stocks position.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, refined soya oil for delivery in August declined by Rs 3.10, or 0.47% to Rs 661.40 per 10 kg with an open interest of 46,310 lots.

Similarly, the oil for delivery in September traded lower by Rs 1.20, or 0.19% to Rs 642.25 per 10 kg in 46,920 lots.

Analysts said offloading of positions by speculators amid sluggish demand in the spot market against adequate stocks position mainly kept pressure on refined soya oil at futures trade

## **Cardamom up by 4% on spot demand**

### **Strong domestic and export demand in the spot market helped cardamom prices**

Cardamom prices surged by Rs 28, or 4% to hit upper circuit at Rs 728.30 per kg in futures trading today as speculators enlarged their positions, driven by a surge in domestic and export demand in the spot market.

Besides, tight stocks in the physical market following restricted arrivals from producing regions also supported the uptrend.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, cardamom for delivery in August spurted by Rs 28, or 4% to hit upper circuit at Rs 728.30 per kg in business turnover of 152 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in September traded higher by Rs 3.70, or 0.42% to Rs 792 per kg in 452 lots.

Traders said besides strong domestic and export demand in the spot market, tight supplies on restricted arrivals from producing regions also helped cardamom to hit upper limit of 4% at futures trade.

## **Mentha oil futures gain 0.9% on increased demand**

### **A firm trend at the spot markets also influenced mentha oil prices**

Mentha oil prices rose 0.86% to Rs 898 per kg in futures market today as speculators created positions, tracking a firm trend at spot market on increased demand from consuming industries amid restricted arrivals.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, mentha oil for delivery in September was up by Rs 7.60, or 0.86% to Rs 898 per kg in business turnover of 63 lots.

Likewise, oil for delivery in August traded higher by Rs 6.70, or 0.76% to Rs 885 per kg in 447 lots.

Market analysts said besides a firming trend at the spot markets on increased demand from consuming industries in the spot market, tight supplies on restricted arrivals from Chandausi in Uttar Pradesh mainly led to rise in mentha oil prices at futures trade

### **Crude palm oil futures fall 0.4% on overseas cues**

**Speculators offloaded their positions in tandem with a weak global trend**

Crude palm oil prices fell by 0.36% to Rs 493.90 per 10 kg in futures trade today as speculators offloaded their positions, tracking a weak global trend.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude palm oil for delivery in August declined by Rs 1.80, or 0.36% to Rs 493.90 per 10 kg in business turnover of 16 lots.

Similarly, oil for delivery in September shed Rs 1.60, or 0.33% to Rs 486.30 per 10 kg in 10 lots.

Analysts said speculators offloaded their positions in tandem with a weak global trend as a decline in crude oil prices reduced the appeal of vegetable oils as biofuels, mainly influenced the sentiment.

Meanwhile, palm oil contract for October lost 0.8% to \$690 a tonne on the Malaysia Derivatives