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THE HINDU

Needamangalam records 62 mm rain

Thanjavur and Tiruvarur districts experienced widespread rain on Sunday. Rainfall recorded till 8 a.m. on Monday: Needamangalam 62 mm.; Padavayar head 54.60 mm.; Kumbakonam 37 mm.; Mannargudi 36.20 mm.; Valangaiman 35.4 mm.; Papanasam 29 mm.; Tiruvarur 22.40 mm.; Grand Anicut 20.8 mm.; Peravurani and Kurunkulam 16 mm. each; Kodavasal and Kodavasal 15.2 mm. each; Budalur 11.4 mm.; and Nannilam 10.20 mm.

Egg rate

The National Egg Coordination Committee has fixed the egg rate as Rs. 3.20 on Monday.

Loan distributed

Loans to the tune of Rs. 1.25 crore were distributed to 43 backward class women Self Help Groups of Avalnayakanpatti, Vagurampatti and Ramapuram through the Tamil Nadu Backward Classes Economic Development Corporation (TAPCEDCO). Industries Minister P. Thangamani, who gave away the loans on Saturday, said that the target set for distributing loans to SHGs under the scheme during the financial year 2012-13 was Rs. 3.5 crore.

“However, loan to the tune of Rs. 3.9 crore was distributed to SHGs in that year, which is Rs. 40 lakh more than the target set for that year. The target set for the current financial year is Rs. 4 crore”, he added.

Mettur level

The water level in Mettur dam stood at 119.65 feet on Monday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 11,294 cusecs and the discharge 18,021 cusecs.

— Special Correspondent

Water level



Water level in the Papanasam dam on Monday stood at 127.90 feet (permissible level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 767.13 cusecs and 1,504.75 cusecs of water was discharged. The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 65.92 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 35 cusecs and 55 cusecs was discharged.

Kanyakumari

The level at dams in Kanyakumari district (in ft): Pechipparai - 27.30, Perunchani - 66.20, Chittar I - 11.78, Chittar II - 11.87 and Mambazathuraiyar - 29.69.

Farmer develops device to recharge borewells



The device developed by S. Sivakumar to increase rate of recharge in borewells.

S. Sivakumar (35), a farmer at Manupatty in Udumalpet revenue division, has come out with an innovation in the water conservation front by developing a device to recharge borewells, utilising the impounded runoff rain/storm water in a better manner.

He has developed the cost-effective new gadget using perforated plastic barrels lined with nylon lets and slotted poly-vinyl chloride pipes for carrying water coming through the outlet valve straight into the borewell.

It was the acute water scarcity Mr. Sivakumar faced in the last one-and-a-half years that prompted him to look for a solution to recharge the borewells as well as combat the depletion of underground water table, so that adequate amount of water could be ensured for use in the ensuing summer seasons.

“In fact, I even went to some parts of Karnataka to study about a certain artificial borewell recharge technology being practiced by people there.

But, adoption of that technology resulted in higher cost and results are also not been felt in the areas in Tirupur district which are mostly under rain shadow zone,” he told *The Hindu* .

He admits that the Karnataka model proved an inspiration for him to develop a new modified device that suits this region.

Explaining the salient features of the device, he said that rain/storm water from the entire farm area was first directed to a farm pond/trench set up close to the borewell.

The plastic barrels lined with nylon lets and filled with sand for filtration of water were placed in the farm pond/trench. The water collected in the farm pond/trench enters into the barrels through the nylon lets with impurities and solid particles getting filtered automatically. The filtered water was then taken straight into the borewell through PVC pipes.

New method for improving red gram yield on the anvil

Transplantation methodology for improving the red gram yield, a relatively new tool, is all set to be implemented on a large-scale in the district following the success registered in its implementation on a trial basis during the last fiscal.

A total outlay of Rs. 3 crore is going to be spent by the Department of Agriculture for raising the crop in poly bags under nursery conditions and then transplant it to the main field and for adoption of micro irrigation.

Under the project, vital inputs like seeds, micro nutrient mixtures and growth promoters will be provided cost-free to the farmers.

To add novelty, the department will provide cellulosic hydrogel developed by Indian Agricultural Research Institute to the farmers so that they could apply it in the root zone of the soil and retain water received. "The water retained will be released by the hydrogel to the plant as and when the soil moisture gets depleted," Joint Director of Agriculture Mohammed Kalimullah Sherif told *The Hindu* .

According to him, the main advantage of the transplantation method is that it enables sowing even before the onset of monsoon and input costs could be reduced. "Besides it, optimum plant population can be maintained and pod borer insect damages to the plant can be avoided, both of which automatically leads to higher productivity," he said.

Grama Sabha meeting agenda finalised

The maintenance of the solar lights installed under the Chief Minister's Solar Powered Green Houses Scheme, the increase in the unit cost for the Green House Scheme, enhancement of unit cost for houses under the Indira Awas Yojana, ensuring the functioning of the solar street lights installed in the panchayats, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, THAI (Tamil Nadu Village Habitations Improvement) scheme, Rural Buildings Maintenance and Renovation Scheme (RBMRS), health and self-sufficiency scheme are among the subjects which are to be discussed during the Grama Sabha meetings to be held in the 860 village panchayats in Tiruvannamalai district on August 15 in connection with Independence Day.

Other subjects to be discussed at the Grama Sabha are the Prime Minister's Gram Sadak Yojana (Rural Roads Scheme), renovation of minor and major irrigation tanks and National Rural Livelihoods Mission.

A. Gnanasekaran, Collector of Tiruvannamalai, said in a release that a social audit of the public distribution system would also be conducted at the Grama Sabha. Handloom weavers below the poverty line would be included in the list of beneficiaries under the Green Houses Scheme at the Grama Sabha meetings.

Mr Gnanasekaran requested members of the public to participate in the Grama Sabha.

Maintenance of the solar lights installed under the Chief Minister's Solar Powered Green Houses Scheme, the increase in the unit cost for the Green House Scheme are among subjects

Hike duty drawback for salt export: Tuticorin traders

A boost to curb a gradually declining trend in salt export



A view of the Salt pan in Tuticorin on Sunday .- Photo : N. Rajesh

To bolster salt export trade, duty drawback needs to be hiked at any cost. Salt export trade is gradually witnessing a declining trend. Hence, it needs a boost to achieve market certainty, according to B. Prabakaran John, a Tuticorin-based salt export trader.

Though salt production surged ahead over the past years considerably, its export market was uncertain.

“As per Foreign Trade Policy, duty drawback for salt is only one percentage of Free on Board (FOB) value of exports and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry should volunteer to hike the drawback to three or four percentage to flourish this trade through the salt industry,” Mr. John said here on Sunday.

Overseas shipments are normally being made to Korea, Indonesia, African countries, Sri Lanka, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia and other countries based on demands.

Bulk consignments of salt to the tune of 26, 020 metric tonnes have been shipped to South Korea in two consecutive days in July, 2013 through logistic support of V.O. Chidambaranar Port, Tuticorin.

Korean importers had been diverted from purchasing the large quantities of consignment from Gujarat to Tuticorin, a major contributor of salt production in Tamil Nadu, the second largest producer in India.

On salt export trade, M. Jayabal, Assistant Salt Commissioner (in-charge), Tuticorin, when contacted, said export volume had dipped slightly with a marginal difference of thousand tonnes when compared to records during 2011-12 and the previous fiscal. In 2012-13, export growth slowed with a volume of 1, 54, 000 metric tonnes whereas in 2011-12, a total of 1, 55, 000 tonnes of salt was shipped to countries abroad.

But during 2010-11, salt industry catered to meet higher export demand with a volume of 3,58,000 tonnes.

Salt production is 19.2 lakh tonnes in 2012-13 and over its corresponding previous fiscal, the production level dropped to 18.53 lakh tonnes. With a record of 17.18 lakh tonnes in 2010-11, production plummeted further.

'Release arrears for sugarcane growers'

Members of Kabbu Belegarara Okkootta staged a protest outside the Deputy Commissioner's office here on Monday, urging the State government to instruct the three cooperative sugar factories to release arrears to sugarcane growers.

Bidar Sahakari Sakkare Karakhane, Naranja Sahakari Sakkare Karakhane and Mahatma Gandhi Sahakari Sakkare Karakhane had failed to pay farmers on time.

Some factories had arrears pending for seven to eight years. Protests and petitions had gone unnoticed.

"Factory presidents are acting as if the factories were their personal fiefdoms," they alleged.

The government should supersede the management boards of these factories and appoint administrators, they demanded. — Special Correspondent

1,000 teams to revive horticulture

Each group consists of 15 or 20 MNREGA job-card holders, says official

Dakshina Kannada Zilla Panchayat has begun the process of 1,000 teams of labourers who are job-card holders of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) scheme for promoting horticultural activities in the district, according to Thulasi Maddineni, Chief Executive Officer of the panchayat.

Addressing farmers and officials at a training programme on rejuvenating cashew cultivation and apiculture organised by the Department of Horticulture here, she said that the zilla

panchayat through gram panchayats had so far formed 270 groups. The remaining would be formed by the end of the month. Each group consists of 15 or 20 job-card holders. Leader of each group will get Rs. 3 per person for monitoring and managing group activities. Besides monitoring or managing the activities the leader also will have to work, she said.

Saplings

Ms. Maddineni said that workers in the group could plant saplings of coconut, arecanut, jasmine, cocoa, pepper and other horticultural crops.

The gram panchayats would identify the works to be taken up and with their approval the works would be entrusted to the groups.

She said that such groups could do “bio-fencing” of schools which did not have compound walls. They could plant saplings used for fencing.

The zilla panchayat has directed all schools which did not have compound walls to go for “bio-fencing” by using the help of group of labourers.

Minister for Environment, Ecology and Forests B. Ramanath Rai who inaugurated the programme, said that the government would rescue the areca growers whose plantations have been hit by ‘kole roga’ (fruit rot disease). He said farmers should not encroach upon the reserved forests.

Inadequate follow-up

Mangalore City South MLA J. R. Lobo said that many a training programme of the government failed to achieve the objectives due to inadequate follow-up action. He said that cashew cultivation was less labour-intensive.

Many a cashew processing industries in the coastal belt imported cashew due to shortage in domestic production. It indicated the scope for cashew cultivation.

The Department of Horticulture organised the training on the occasion of the birthday of M. H. Marigowda considered the father of horticulture in the State.

The training was given under a scheme of the National Horticulture Mission.

Suggestions invited for this year's flower arrangement



This year, the authorities want something that will symbolise Mysore and its heritage.— Photo: M.A. Sriram

Do you have a suggestion for the special flower arrangement at this year's Dasara flower show? If so, contact the District Horticulture Society (DHS) here.

Based on public opinion, the flower arrangement, normally done with roses, orchids and other exotic flowers, which is a crowd-puller every year, would be finalised for the show to be held at Curzon Park, adjacent to Mysore Palace.

Speaking to The Hindu , Senior Assistant Director of Horticulture (State sector) M.S. Raju said: "we invited the public to suggest a special flower arrangement. They can write to the society at Curzon Park, Statue Circle, Mysore or call its office (0821-2425523)."

The flower show is organised by the Department of Horticulture and the District Horticulture Society.

A replica of 'Ane Gaadi', a wooden cart for musicians which is pulled by a tusker during Jamboo Savari, was created with one lakh flowers for last year's show. Several years ago, the Ambari elephant was created with 60,000 roses; the same number of roses went into the crafting of Nandi for a similar occasion. A replica of Mahishasura was also crafted with 50,000 flowers.

For this year's crowd-puller, the authorities are looking for something that symbolises Mysore and the region's heritage. Therefore, suggestions are invited till this month-end, he said.

Mr. Raju said the department had received three suggestions for creating replicas of Chamundi Hills, Krishnaraja Sagar Dam and Mysore Palace.

"We are expecting more suggestions. A final call on the replica would be taken by the Deputy Commissioner and the zilla panchayat Chief Executive Officer."

This year's flower show will have many attractive features, Mr. Raju said, such as 82,000 pots with ornamental, flower and vegetable plants which are being raised for display at the show.

This time, seedlings of best varieties of plants reared under controlled conditions were purchased from private companies, including an Indo-American hybrid nursery, for display.

The seedlings would also be planted in the Curzon Park flowerbeds after August 15, he said.

There will also be demonstrations on growing terrace gardens, vertical and wall gardens and kitchen gardens for visitors' benefit, seeing as people in cities have less space for traditional gardens.

If you have a home or kitchen garden which you consider the best, photographs of the garden sent to the society can fetch prizes. It has been decided to recognise the best home and kitchen gardens. Before finalising prizes, the best three gardens in each category would be visited by a team of experts. Further details would be available to participants, he said.

This year's show would also feature a treat for vegetarians: a display of unique and exotic vegetables, particularly those of European stock. Since many are already available in supermarkets, this display would showcase their nutritional significance.

Among them would be sprouts, celery, kale, broccoli and similar produce, according to Mr. Raju.

Diseases dash hopes of ginger farmers

A sharp decline in the price and various crop-decaying diseases affecting ginger rhizomes owing to incessant rain are worrying farmers in Wayanad, a major ginger-growing belt in the State.

The spot price of fresh ginger in Meenangadi market on Monday was Rs.2,500 a bag (60kg) as against Rs.3,000 to Rs.3,500 a bag three weeks ago. Though the all-time high price of monsooned ginger (old ginger) has been ruling over the market for the past four months, Rs.7,500 a bag, it would not be any better for the farming community as the harvest of the produce had almost finished a few weeks ago, farming sources said.

Many farmers in the district have tried their luck in ginger cultivation this year, when the price of the produce reached an all-time high — Rs.7,500 to Rs.8,000 a bag. But, many among them suffered a huge loss owing to various diseases that affected the crop during the incessant rain in the past two months and the declining prices.

Huge arrival of the produce after a premature harvest because of diseases affecting the rhizomes was the major reason for the low price, P.K. Mathew, a ginger dealer at Meenangadi market told *The Hindu* .

“We cannot store the produce for more than a day as it would start to decay. Moreover, the demand for tender ginger was very low in the market,” he said. The diseases affecting the ginger rhizome such as rhizome wilt and bacterial wilt had spread in a considerable area this year because of the heavy rain

Water level rising in Idukki dam

Water level in the Idukki dam was rising at an average of 0.5 ft a day even at the high production level at the Moolamattom power house.

As per the estimate taken on Monday evening, the water level in the dam was 2,396.56 ft against the full reservoir level of 2,403 ft.

Meanwhile, the control room of the Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) functioning at its office in Vazhathoppe was shifted to the arch dam. An official of the control room said that every hour the power generation level was being monitored and at 4 p.m. it was 9.66 mu from the morning level of 14.99 mu.

The production increased to the maximum level to keep the water level at the minimum in view of the good inflow.

There was a rainfall of 37.4 mm in the catchment area on Monday.

Meanwhile, the water level in the Mullaperiyar dam slightly declined to 134.6 ft on Monday with Tamil.Nadu drawing water from it.

Onions in Rythu Bazars

Revenue Divisional Officer of Rajahmundry, M. Venugopala Reddy has announced that all the Rythu Bazars in the division will sell Kurnool variety onions for Rs.44 per kg and Maharashtra onions for Rs.53 per kg. In a meeting with wholesale onion merchants, market yard officer, rythu bazaar estate officers, civil supply officers and deputy tahasildars at Sub-Collector's office on Monday, he said that they decided to bring down the prices as much as possible, but the transportation charges from Kurnool and Maharashtra had forced the merchants to sell the

onions at above prices. He warned that stern action will be taken if there is any difference in quality. -Staff Reporter.

Onion price brings tears to consumers



NOT WITHIN REACH: Onion turns dearer with its price jacked up to Rs.52 per kg at rythu bazaar in Visakhapatnam on Monday.— PhotoS: C.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

Short-supply and heavy hoarding the trigger for abnormal increase in the rate

Rising prices of onions have brought tears in the eyes of Vizagites making them seethe with anger.

Short-supply and massive hoarding has led to increase of onion per kg price to Rs.52 at Rythu Bazaars and Rs.65-Rs.75 in the open market on Monday.

Consumers who resorted to panic buying in the wake of reports for further intensification in agitation in support of Samaikyandhra agitation from Tuesday were in for a shock when they found the price of onion jacked up to Rs.52 at all the 12 Rythu Bazaars.

At departmental stores it was available at Rs.65-Rs.75 per kg.

Of an estimated sale of 100 tonne a day in the city, which mostly brought from Nasik of Maharashtra and Kurnool, 40 tonne is consumed at the Rythu Bazaars – where it is sold at a reasonably less price.

Assistant Director of Marketing P. Ravi Kumar told *The Hindu* that delay in arrival of fresh crop from Kurnool and damage caused due to incessant rain in Maharashtra, there was short-supply. Further, there is also dislocation in supplies due to the ongoing agitation against bifurcation. Taking advantage of the situation, sources said, some unscrupulous traders have resorted to heavy hoarding. "There is policy paralysis with the government failing to introduce market intervention to control the prices. What will be the plight of common man with the skyrocketing prices of vegetables and essential commodities," opined Rammohan Rao, a lecturer in a private college.

Housewives were seen cursing the powers-that-be for its failure to check the prices at Rythu Bazaars. "There is late production in Kurnool and short-supply from Nasik, which have led to increase in prices. Even in Maharashtra and across the country, there is abnormal increase in the prices," pointed out Estate Officer at MVP Rythu Bazaar G. Prasad.

The demand for locally grown onions called desi onion (smaller in size) increased significantly. They were priced at Rs.40 a kg.

Vegetable prices

The list of vegetable prices at various Rythu Bazaars as follows: Chilli Rs.65, brinjal (white) Rs.30, black Rs.26, lady finger Rs.20, beans Rs.38, capsicum Rs.72, bottle gourd Rs.18, parval Rs. 28, Teisel gourd (akakarakaya) Rs.88, carrot Rs.15, tomato Rs.18, gherkin Rs. 20, Colacasia (chema dompa) Rs.22 and ridge gourd Rs.18.

The open market price on each item was higher by Rs.5 to Rs.20 per kg depending on size and quality compared to the Rythu Bazaar rates.

Vegetable prices continue to soar

Retail rates may rise in the coming week, says Azadpur Mandi Onion Merchant Traders' body



People crowding the special counter set up by the Potato and Onion Merchants' Association at the Azadpur wholesale vegetable market in New Delhi on Monday. Photo: Sushil Kumar Verma

After shedding onion tears, Delhiites have now been hit hard by a sharp increase in the prices of almost all the other vegetables as well. The rates have shot up in the wholesale and retail markets due to a variety of reasons ranging from inundation of agricultural fields to a drop in supply from the neighbouring States and hoarding by suppliers at every level of the supply chain.

While onion prices have already touched the Rs.70-Rs 80 per kg-mark in some South Delhi colonies, tomato prices have also risen dramatically over the past week from around Rs.35 per kg to Rs.50 per kg. Apart from this, the prices of green chilli and lemon have shot up to Rs.100 per kg from Rs.60, while ginger is selling at Rs.250 per kg, up from Rs.180 per kg.

Worse still, trade analysts insist the upward spiral is not about to end just yet. Looking at the market trends, traders pointed out that in the coming days retail onion prices can soar up to Rs.80 per kg. "If this continues, the retail prices could touch Rs.80 in the next week or so," said Azadpur Mandi's Onion Merchant Traders' Association president Surendra Budhiraj.

Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (Azadpur) chairman Rajinder Kumar Sharma said the prices will only start to fall when the monsoon comes to an end. "We always see a rise in prices during monsoon since it is difficult to transport vegetables during this time. However, the

monsoon appears to be receding in the South and this will mean our stocks will reach us on time," he said.

Wholesale prices for tomatoes in the Azadpur Mandi ranged between Rs.27 and Rs.16 per kg; for *bhindi*(lady's finger) between Rs.27.50 and Rs.12.50 per kg; and for the modest potato they have hovered around the Rs.20 per kg-mark.

With a shortage of 629 tonnes of onions this year that is pushing up the prices, a concerned Delhi Government had said a week ago that it may open stalls to make available onions at reasonable rates in the event prices continue to soar.

However, prices continued to rise unabated with residents in East Delhi such as I.P. Extension getting their supplies for close to Rs.60 per kg. "Since the mandi is very far and the produce in Mother Dairy outlets is of poor quality, we have no option but to buy from the vendors who charge indiscriminate prices," said a resident of the area.

Another reason for the rise in the prices, as pointed out by a vendor, was that many traders – including wholesalers, retailers and vendors – have started stocking up to earn higher profits. "Knowing full well that the vegetable prices are on the ascendancy, the traders are keeping their stocks and only releasing small quantities. This is leading to an artificial scarcity which is further pushing up the prices," said a vendor.

DELHI-WEATHER

CLOUDY, HUMID DAY

A day after pleasant weather, Delhiites on Monday experienced a cloudy and relatively humid day. Some areas in the Ridge and the heart of the Capital received traces of rain.

The maximum temperature remained a notch above normal at 34.6 degrees Celsius, while the minimum was 26.7 degrees, normal for this time of the season, the weather department said. The weatherman has forecast a generally cloudy sky, with possibility of light rain or thundershowers for Tuesday. — PTI

Guwahati	32	26	1	604
Hyderabad	31	23	16	452
Kolkata	31	25	29	930
Mumbai	30	25	6	1952
Nagpur	32	24	17	1197
Patna	34	26	4	193
Pune	28	22	tr	530
Thiruvananthapuram	30	24	0	862
Imphal	30	22	7	603
Shillong	24	18	13	608

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

The axis of monsoon trough on SLC passes through Anupgarh, Narnaul, Gwalior and thence south-east wards.

RAINFALL: Rain/thunder-showers have occurred at many places over east- Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, at a few places over Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan and at isolated places over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (3 cm and above) HARYANA: Sadhaura 5, HIMACHAL PRADESH: Dharamshala and Paonta 5 each, JAMMU AND KASHMIR: Katra and Kathua 3 each, PUNJAB: Shahpur Kandi 7, EAST RAJASTHAN: Thanagazi, Nagar, Udaipur, Sapotra and Tonk Tehsil 5 each, Amer and Sawai Madhopur Tehsil 4 each, Jawaja, Jamwaramgarh, Manohar Thana and Sanganer Tehsil 3 each, WEST RAJASTHAN: Khiversan 6, Sujangarh 5, Bikaner and Phalodi 4 each and Shergarh, Makrna and Marwar Junction 3 each, EAST UTTAR PRADESH: Basti and Regoli 7 each, Phoolpur, Churk, Robertsganj and Varanasi City 6 each, Akbarpur and Gonda 5 each, Ballia and Ramnagar and Amethi 3 each and UTTRAKHAND: Rudraprayag 6 and Dehradun and Pantnagar 3 each.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 14th August 2013: Rain/thundershowers would occur at many places over Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan and at a few places over Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana during next 24 hours and increase thereafter.

HEAVY RAINFALL WARNING: Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir during next 72 hours , over east- Rajasthan on 12th , over Himachal Pradesh on 13th and over Uttarakhand on 12th and 14th August.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 14th August 2013: Generally cloudy sky. Light rain/thundershowers may occur in some areas.

GM crops

The article “[Nip this in the bud](#)” (Aug. 12) was well-reasoned. We are not yet clear about the negative impact of genetically modified crops on health. DDT (pesticide) was used extensively in the 1940s and 1950s, until it was discovered that it caused cancer, and was banned in the U.S. in 1972. Wheat, corn, rice and potatoes feed more people than any other crop does. Once these crops go the GM way with IPRs and patent protection, India’s food grains will be the monopoly of a few agri-oligopolies. Top companies will control the vast markets across the world.

India can lose neither its bio-diversity nor food sovereignty. Novel technologies like GMOs are not relevant to the agricultural needs of our country. There is no dearth of food grains as bumper harvests have been delivered by our farmers using conventional methods.

H.N. Ramakrishna,

Bangalore

Whether or not GMOs are safe, whether or not Europe is using them, there is a need to reorient the current approach of short-term gains that create conditions detrimental to seed sovereignty and sustainable food production.

N. Venugopal Rao,

Guntur

Sweet and healthy



PHOTOS: S.SIVA SARAVANAN



K. JESHI breathes in smells of the Vella Mandi at Range Gowder Street in Town Hall as she takes a walk amidst the golden mounds of jaggery

“Gold sold at Rs. 50 those days. Now, a kilo of jaggery sells for that amount,” says K. R. Munusamy. He has been in the business of vellam since the age of 10. He is now 80 and still runs the show. I am at Range Gowder Street and the vella mandi is buzzing. Round, lemon-yellow achchu vellam is piled up in a cane basket. Next to it are golden urundai vellam, brown panangkarupatti and thennangkarupatti in all shapes and sizes.

Open gunny bags are filled to the brim with powdered vellam or karumbu chakkarai. Shoppers stop every now and then to buy jaggery in kilos. Munusamy continues his reminiscences, “It was in 1947 when Range Gowder Street got electricity and its first tube light. We sold only achchu vellam then. Everyone drank karupatti coffee and stayed healthy. We would sell 10,000 kilos a

day, now it's only a few hundred kilos. But people are increasingly buying karumbu chakkarai and karupatti because of their health benefits.”

Munusamy has seen sugarcane farms dotting Thudiyalur, Mettupalayam Road, and from Ganapathy to Thalavadi in Sathyamangalam. “When the farms gave way to highrises, the jaggery business went down. Coconut farms in Telungupalayam, Kuniyamuthur and Pollachi supplied the thenngkarupatti,” says K. R. Munusamy. Now, vellam comes from markets in Erode, Salem, Neykkarapatti in Palani, Gobi and Sathyamangalam, Dharapuram and Udangudi in Thoothukudi. Retailers buy it from auctions at K.K. Market here.

At M. Pappamaal Karupatti Kadai, I taste the cloyingly sweet achchu vellam, as R. Ravikumar, a fourth generation owner, tells me: “The quality of sugarcane determines the taste and the colour.” The dark brown thenngkarupatti (from coconut kernels) has a mild sweet taste while the panangkarupatti (from palm kernels) has a refreshing earthy flavour. The vellam varieties sell at an average of Rs. 50 per kilo, the panangkarupatti is Rs. 140 per kg and the thenngkarupatti sells at Rs. 80 per kilo. “In the last two years, retail business of karupatti picked up because of its medicinal properties. It is used for making sukku kaapi, lehiyam and kashayam,” explains Ravikumar.

G. Senthilkumar, a fifth generation vellam merchant from the 80s, remembers when R.G. Street thronged with jaggery shops. “Now, there are just a handful of them. More than 25,000 bags of vellam at the wholesale market catered to the markets in Kerala and as far as Gujarat. About 30 lorries plied every day with the goodies. Today, it is only about 3,000 bags and mostly for the local market. There were 40 wholesale shops, now there are only one or two left,” he recalls.

S. Sathishkumar at KVS Traders narrates how his great grandmother sat on a platform and sold vellam. “My grandfather bought it at the wholesale auction here. My father started buying it from markets in Chithode, Dharapuram and Salem. We bring about 10 tonnes of vellam every week. Vellam falls into three categories — light, medium and dark. The more the bleaching with hydrose, the lighter the vellam gets,” he explains. He sells tonnes of thenngkarupatti to Kerala markets too, especially during Ramzan. “Our regular customers are mittai makers, hotels, households and temples. Sweetness, appearance and smell define a good vellam. When you store vellam, the entire place smells so good. It's one product that comes with no expiry date,” he says.

Vellam retailers say people are waking up to the health benefits of panangkarupatti. Says Senthil Kumar, “Panangkarupatti gives energy. My grandmother would meticulously dry and powder various ingredients and make the sukku kaapi in a big *anda*. We drank four to five

glasses of sukku kaapi along with our diet of raagi kali and keerai masiyal. What was everyday food has become medicinal food now.”

“Karupatti has rich calcium content and blood purifying properties, say doctors. They recommend black coffee as it also purifies blood. People now treat karupatti as organic food. But sadly, we have no one from the younger generation to climb palm trees now. Only a few farmers over 40 years of age remain. If the government intervenes with some subsidies for this cottage industry, there is a hope for revival.”

Senthil Kumar offers me chillu karuppatti, a specialty at his shop. It has the goodness of sukku and leaves me refreshed. Before I leave, I pop in some panangkalkandu. It sweetly rounds off my vellam experience.

Pay compensation at the earliest

Vivasayeegal Sangham (farmers’ association) has urged the Coimbatore district administration to pay the compensation the State Government ordered to be paid to coconut farmers. In a release, the organisation said that the State Government had ordered a compensation of Rs. 4,000 an acre at Rs. 50 a tree.

Effluents used for watering crops

Though untreated industrial effluents getting mixed with river water has become a common sight, using the contaminated water for agricultural purpose is also becoming rampant in the district.

While passing through the Butterfly Flyover Bridge on the Salem – Coimbatore National Highway 47 towards the city, one could see River Thirumanimutharu carrying untreated effluents and sewage with white foam covering the water layer.

The river, which once served as a major source of water for city residents, has now turned into a major sewage channel passing through the rural areas before entering the neighbouring district. Farmers who cultivate crops along the river said that the practice of using the water for agriculture was continuing for years and they had no other water source. “We have been using the water for coconut trees and other crops for many years,” said a farmer.

Effluents from illegal dyeing units and untreated industrial effluents mix with the river water at many points.

Officials at the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board told *The Hindu* that samples were taken every month from the river and reports were sent to the Central Government.

Coop banks to protest Nabard's 'anti-farmer' fiat

PACS told not to disburse loans to farmers and accept deposits

District cooperative banks from across the State will participate in a protest meet in Bangalore on Friday against the circular issued by the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (Nabard) to cooperative banks on the role of Primary Agricultural Co-operative Societies (PACS), said M. N. Rajendra Kumar, Chairman, South Canara District Central Co-operative Bank here on Monday.

Addressing presspersons he said the circular would not allow the PACS to disburse loans to farmers and accept deposits from farmers, who would have no option but to go to moneylenders. If the circular was implemented, the PACS would be reduced to commission takers. He urged the intervention of the Chief Minister and MLAs to resolve the issue, he said.

PACS told not to disburse loans to farmers and accept deposits

'Biofuel sector needs support'



Visitors taking a look at paintings and drawings at a World Biofuel Day function in Bangalore on Monday.— Photo: K. Murali Kumar

The biofuel sector needs government support till it (the sector) becomes stable, said V. Umesh, Additional Chief Secretary and Development Commissioner.

Inaugurating the World Biofuel Day celebrations organised by the Karnataka State Biofuel Board here on Monday, Mr. Umesh, who is also the executive chairman of the board, said that people had criticised government subsidy to wind energy sector once.

However, that sector is catering to substantial energy requirements in the State now.

Similarly, the biofuel sector, which is in the initial stages of development, needs government intervention, Mr. Umesh said. It should be a community event to become popular and commercially viable, he said.

The former executive chairman of the board Y.B. Ramakrishna, in his keynote address, said that though about 400 varieties of biofuel plants were available in the country, about 100 are available in Karnataka but only about 10 plants are being cultivated.

Biofuel plants can be grown easily and with the intervention of the board, about six crore saplings have been planted in about 1.5 lakh hectares of land in the last five years, he said. Fossil fuel would get exhausted in about four decades with the present rate of usage, Mr. Ramakrishna said.

Karnataka State Council for Science and Technology had partnered the event. An exhibition on biofuel plants and biofuel production was organised.

Joint meeting on KE



Worried lot: Farmers of Vasantavada village under the Krishna-Eluru canal ayacut pleading with the officials of the Irrigation department to ensure water for tail-end fields on Monday. —Photo: A.V.G. Prasad

Collector Siddharth Jain convened a joint meeting on the water-stress conditions under the ayacut of the Krishna-Eluru canal here on Monday with the peasant representatives from Denduluru, Jalipudi and Somavarappadu, and irrigation and agriculture officials.

Around 200 farmers from the tail-end areas, led by TDP former minister Maganti Venkateswara Rao (Babu), went in a procession to the Collectorate to represent the problem to Mr. Jain. Peasant leaders Maganti Sitarama Swamy from Somavarappadu, Parvataneni Ranga Rao from Sitampet under the Denduluru mandal and Maganti Bose from Jalipudi appraised the Collector of the gravity of problem. They said water was failing to reach the tail-end areas even a month after the release at Prakasam barrage due to poor carrying capacity of the canal. As a result, nursery beds were withering away in some areas and transplantation was getting delayed all over the ayacut with a paddy area of 34,000 acres in the district, they said. Mr. Jain allayed the fears of the ayacut farmers over the khariff prospects with a promise to take all the steps for the canal water to reach the tail-end areas.

He said the Irrigation Department had agreed to release 1,300 cusecs of water into the Krishna-Eluru canal on a daily basis since Monday following a request from him.

Later, he instructed Superintending Engineer Venkateswarlu and Divisional Engineer Tirumala Rao of the Irrigation department to inspect the canal and get back to him with a feedback on the bottlenecks preventing the water flow and the remedial measures to be initiated. V.D. Krupadas, Joint Director, Agriculture Department, in a background note submitted to the Collector, admitted that paddy transplantation had taken place in only 2,525 acres out of the total paddy area of 34,000 acres in the canal ayacut falling under West Godavari district as on Monday.

Planting was likely to be extended up to September 10 in Pedapadu, August 31 in Denduluru and August 25 in Eluru mandals, he added.

-Canal farmers' woes held

Plan for kharif season unveiled

The Agriculture Department has targeted 16.82 lakh MT of paddy and other food crops in the district for 2013-14 Kharif season and action plan for that has been set in motion by Agriculture Minister Kanna Lakshminarayana on Monday.

On the occasion, he said targeted yield of the State stood at 225 lakh MT and the actual yield could surpass that due to copious rains received by most parts of the State. Steps for making adequate quantities of seeds available to the farmers were taken. The State has so far purchased 16.50 lakh MT of urea and it asked the Central government to supply one lakh MT more for meeting the farmers' requirement. The officials concerned are in touch with the Ministry

of Chemicals and Fertilizers. Mr. Lakshminarayana said it was targeted to extend crop loans amounting to Rs. 67,000 crore in the current financial year.

Khadi sales outlet at collectorate complex



*a big draw:Customers purchasing from khadi outlet In Tiruchi on Monday. —photo:
A.Muralitharan*

As part of a strategy to improve the sale of khadi products by extending their availability beyond conventional outlets, a sales outlet was opened at the collectorate complex here on Monday. This follows the suggestion made by the Minister for Khadi and Village Industries, T.P.Poonachi, at a review meeting conducted here on Thursday.

The Minister, while expressing concern over many districts not being able to achieve the target in manufacture and sale of khadi products, called upon officials to devise new strategies to improve the performance. He suggested that khadi outlets could function at the collectorate during government functions and on days when the public and farmers come to present their grievances. The khadi sales outlet, inaugurated by the Collector, Jayashree Muralidharan, will function on all working days, according to an official press release.

THE HINDU Business Line

Coonor tea sale turnover up 35.16%

The cumulative turnover of Coonor Tea Trade Association auctions in the first seven months has risen by Rs 85.75 crore over last year but there was a marginal fall compared to the increase of Rs 88.02 crore recorded till June-end.

The increase in cumulative turnover had risen from Rs 25.28 crore in January to Rs 46.01 crore in February, Rs 57.93 crore in March, Rs 65.20 crore in April, Rs 79.87 crore in May and Rs 88.02 crore in June before registering Rs 85.75 crore.

This has happened because some 28 lakh kg more volume had been sold with average prices increasing by Rs 20 a kg, reveals an analysis of market reports.

In all, 30 auctions had been held till July-end when 3.43 crore kg had been sold against 3.15 crore kg in 2012.

Export purchase showed improvements while upcountry buyers demanded top liquoring tea resulting in average price increasing to Rs 96.10 a kg from Rs 77.42 last year.

In fact, the average price had fallen from Rs 97.83 registered till June-end (till June-end last year: Rs 77.41).

Consequently, between January and July, the cumulative turnover increased to Rs 329.62 crore from Rs 243.87 crore – up by Rs 85.75 crore or 35.16 per cent.

The increased turnover lay spread among factory owners, growers, traders, workers, auctioneers and warehouse keepers.

'Farm research needs regulator to be predictable'



A 24-year agriculture veteran, Dr Gyanendra Shukla, Ph.D. (Agriculture Botany) and MBA, recently took over as Regional Lead and CEO, Monsanto India, with a group turnover of Rs 1,000 crore. He is the first scientist to become the company's CEO, succeeding finance and strategy experts who held the position before him.

Business Line caught up with Dr Shukla to get to know his vision for Indian agriculture and his company's plans. Excerpts:

Can you enumerate some of the latest research initiatives of the Indian agri-biotech industry and how these will benefit the country?

India's large pool of agriculture science talent, entrepreneurial farmers and diverse natural resources can together enable farmers' progress, self-sufficiency and contribute to helping meet other nations' needs.

There are over 150 local and international private and public sector institutions developing better seeds to offer farmers choices for superior insect protection, efficient weed management, drought and flood tolerance, nitrogen use efficiency, heat and cold tolerance, salt tolerance, virus and disease tolerance, and higher yield. Researchers are also evaluating introduction of seeds that deliver consumer benefits such as healthier oils and improved nutritional content.

The Indian agri-biotech industry's focus is on innovation and partnerships to enable farmers to improve lives by producing more and conserving more. We invest about \$1.4 billion or Rs 7,500 crore annually in R&D to offer farmers improved seeds in corn, cotton, soya, canola and vegetables – two-thirds of which is advanced seed breeding and about a third on biotechnology traits.

There is a perception the Indian agri-biotech industry has stagnated in recent years and policymaking has reached a dead-end. Is this perception correct? What's holding up growth-oriented policies?

Policymakers say they want farmers to progress, and our nation to be self-sufficient. These objectives are shared by private and development sector as well, albeit our routes sometimes create partnerships, sometimes differ.

While farmers in our fellow emerging nations such as Brazil and China access the latest advances in cutting-edge agri biotechnologies for planting and/or import, and six million Indian farmers once again plant hybrid Bt cotton seeds on over 90 per cent of cotton acres, it has been quite a few years since India approved any new agriculture biotechnology for our farmers.

In June this year, Brazil and China approved the world's latest biotechnologies – China approved Drought Tolerant Corn technologies; and a Brazil-specific Soyabean Insect Protection Technology was approved in both Brazil and China. Farmers in the US and sub-Saharan Africa will access Drought Tolerant corn seeds in the next 12 months.

On the other hand, farmers in India who faced a drought last year have no sight of when, if ever, they will have these choices. Brazil has approved new biotechnologies in double digits in the past five years. The last one approved for Indian farmers was Bt cotton technology in 2008.

Approving in-the-seed insect protection Bt cotton technology in 2002, India was one of the early starters. Farmers doubled the nation's cotton production, earned higher income, created rural jobs due to more cotton picking, experienced convenience and better health from less insecticide sprays for bollworms. Cottonseed oil contributes to domestic edible oil needs (it's the top choice in Gujarat). And farmers turned India from a net importer to the world's second largest cotton producer and exporter.

India's science-based regulatory system is comparable with the best in the world; yet can evolve in predictability. Research needs the encouragement of regulatory predictability; so, after research, testing and meeting stated protocols, we can offer farmers new technologies.

What's the industry's gameplan to wrest a favourable policy from the Government?

All forecasts indicate domestic food, feed and fibre needs doubling between 2020 and 2030, on the back of rising incomes, fuelled by a rapidly growing GDP. The use of the latest seeds, technologies, knowledge, practices, and market access must be encouraged.

While we are a growing industry, 200+ seed companies, and 12 companies focused on agri-biotech R&D, we continue to represent the potential to create shared value for 130 million farmers, processing and user industry, and enhance rural income and jobs. The goal is to increase productivity and, by extension, farmers' incomes. We hope continuous dialogue with Governments and other stakeholders will enable farmers, research and development, and India's scientific talent in agriculture to flourish.

The industry seems to be under steady attack from activists. How does it propose to counter them?

Certain anti-technology activists continue to deny farmers this credit. Let each farmer make his own choices. We are focused on education and communication. Our field team, 80 per cent of whom are from rural backgrounds, work in villages daily, and are focused round-the-year on working with farmers in their fields to help them optimise their yields across States. We have been partnering with Indian farmers for over four decades. Our researchers are simultaneously creating technologies so farmers can produce more and earn more, with greater efficiency, convenience, and less risk.

Now that you are in-charge, what are your priorities for the company (Monsanto) in terms of research, in terms of market share for products and turnover?

I believe enabling farmers to improve their lives through innovative products, services, partnerships, and passionate people can make India a self-sufficient global contributor in agriculture. That's our priority.

In order to meet farmers' needs, we have seven seed R&D sites across States focused on innovating, developing and testing our India-relevant seeds under diverse agro-climatic conditions, as well as a biotech research centre in Karnataka. We have enhanced our seed R&D footprint and initiatives to develop newer and better India-relevant hybrid seeds for farmers for the rabi and kharif seasons.

In services and improving agronomic practices, our field sales and market development team contacted over a million farmers directly across States, and our 'Monsanto Farm AgVisory Service (MFAS)' offered over 900,000 farmers timely, customised crop management advisory from sowing-to-harvest, enabling farmers to enhance yields and income.

Lastly, we are working to build more partnerships. We are participating in Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Jammu & Kashmir, Odisha, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh; and in development sector partnerships for sustainable agriculture to improve farmers' lives by increasing yields via better inputs, knowledge and market linkages.

Cardamom gains flavour on demand



Cardamom gained flavour on good buying support after Ramzan sales at auctions held .

“Good sales during Ramzan and the festival days seem to have led to good buying by exporters and that in turn aided the price rise,” trade sources in Kumily and Bodinayakannur told *Business Line*.

According to the trade, good export inquiries were pouring in but the overseas buyers were said to be quoting \$12-14 a kg claiming that Guatemala was offering at lower rates. Weakening of the rupee is said to be one of the reasons for quoting lower rates, they said. However, exportable grade capsules i.e., 7mm – 8mm size bold green cardamom haven't yet started arriving in good volume and that phenomenon also seems to have slowed down export buying, they said.

Export buying last week is estimated at some where in the range of 30-40 tonnes, they said. Exportable varieties of capsules would come from the second round of picking which is expected to commence by the month-end. Last week total arrivals showed a decline because of

the disruption in picking and decaying of capsules due to incessant rains. Any way, now the weather conditions have improved and there has been a reduction in the rains from late last week, they said.

Individual auction average, which was vacillating between Rs 560 and Rs 600 a kg, has touched around Rs 640 . However, according to the growers, anything below Rs 750 would not be remunerative given high input costs, especially the high labour wages.

Total arrivals at the Sunday auction held by KCPMC increased to 70 tonnes from 65 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 996 and the minimum at Rs 439. The auction average price went up to Rs 638.05 from Rs 576.19 from at previous Sunday's level. The current season has begun officially from Aug 1 and hence the total arrival during the season stood at 537 tonnes as against 610 tonnes during the same period last season. The sales were at 533 tonnes and 579 tonnes respectively.

The weighted average price as on Aug 11, 2013 stood at Rs 592.03 against Rs 809.85 on the same date last year.

Prices of graded varieties (Rs/kg) : AGEB 800-810; AGB 590-600; AGS 570-580 and AGS -1: 550-560. Bulk was being sold at Rs 400-950 a kg.

Indian onion gets outpriced in export market

Production effect		
Year	Area (in lakh hectares)	Production (in million tonnes)
2009-10	7.56	12.159
2010-11	10.64	15.118
2011-12	10.87	17.511
2012-13*	9.92	16.655

***2nd estimates**
Source: National Horticulture Board



Onion prices in key markets such as Pimpalgaon around Nashik in Maharashtra shot up almost at a par with consuming centres such as Delhi and Kolkata.

Maharashtra accounts for a third of the onions produced in the country, followed by Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh.

“There is no shortage in stocks. The stored stocks are sufficient to meet the demand for next two months,” said R.P. Gupta, Director of the Niphad-based National Horticulture Research Development Foundation (NHRDF).

About 10 lakh tonnes of onion in storage were available for consumption across the country, while fresh arrivals have started coming into markets such as Bangalore, Kurnool and Hyderabad, Gupta said.

Terming reports that excess rains have hit the crop as baseless, Gupta said that rains were not an issue in onion growing areas around Nashik and Pune. “It is difficult to say why the prices are going up despite enough stocks,” Gupta said in what could be taken as a hint that speculators were driving up the prices. Since early July till date, the onion prices have gone up at least 400 per cent.

Gupta expects the fresh onion crop from Maharashtra to start coming into market from September 15. Though the new crop arrival has started from areas around Bangalore, the variety – mainly the rose onion which has a high pungency – is not a preferred one in the northern markets, a trader said. The Bangalore rose onion is largely exported to countries such as Bangladesh and the Far-East.

C.B. Holkar, Vice-President of National Agriculture Co-operative Marketing Federation, said that there is shortage all over the country and prices could rule firm for another one and a half months until early kharif onion hits the market.

Exports

An exporter said that not many shipments have been happening currently and even if the Government imposes a ban on exports, there won't be any impact on prices.

As such, India has been outpriced in the export market with cheaper Pakistani and Chinese onion gaining acceptance in the Gulf. In Lanka, arrivals of the domestic crop have begun, resulting in the island-nation raising import duty on onions.

The Competition Commission of India had initiated a probe into the high prices of onion in 2011. The commission found some anomaly but no one was specifically charged for the soaring prices that hit Rs 100 a kg in retail outlets then.

Spot rubber rules steady

Spot rubber finished almost steady on Monday.

According to sources, the transactions continued to be low and there were no fresh factors, to set a definite trend in the market.

But RSS 4, the only loser of the day, slid marginally on buyer resistance amidst scattered transactions.

Sheet rubber declined to Rs 196 (Rs 196.50) a kg, according to traders.

The grade weakened to Rs 195.50 (Rs 196) both at Kottayam and Kochi, as reported by the Rubber Board.

August futures closed at Rs 195 (Rs 195.47), September at Rs 186.33 (Rs 185.28), October at Rs 177.10 (Rs 175.78), November at Rs 170.50 (Rs 169.59) and December at Rs 170 (170.25) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 August futures closed at ¥258.5 (Rs 163.08) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates (Rs/kg) : RSS-4: 196 (196.50); RSS-5: 192 (192); Ungraded: 182 (182); ISNR 20: 177 (177) and Latex 60 per cent: 165 (165).

Domestic buying lifts pepper



Pepper prices moved up on domestic demand.

Good buying activities were seen on the spot and many including exporters having pending commitments are said to have also bought. Besides, upcountry buyers from all the centres were also covering.

On the spot, 25 tonnes of pepper arrived and 30 tonnes were traded at an average price of Rs 393 a kg.

Local arm of multinational companies with multi-origin operations were also showing interest to buy from the ready market.

The bullish trend in the market aided the price rise on both the futures and the spot.

Sri Lanka was exporting 500 GL pepper to India, Dubai, Vietnam etc., at \$5,800 a tonne while Indonesia is reportedly to offer from this week.

In the international markets no activities were reported. Europeans are on summer holidays.

Overseas buyers are also said to be waiting for the arrival of Indonesian crop.

Aug, Sep and Oct contract on the NMCE increased by Rs 268, Rs 551 and Rs 274 a quintal respectively to Rs 41,700, Rs 42,500 and Rs 41,925.

Total turnover moved up by eight tonnes to 32 tonnes.

Total open interest decreased by eight tonnes to 67 tonnes.

Spot prices gained Rs 200 to close at Rs 39,300 (ungarbled) and Rs 41,300 (garbled) on limited activities.

Indian parity in the international market was at \$7,000 (c&f) Europe at \$7,250 a tonne (c&f) US and remained outpriced.

Insecticides Q1 net up 21% on higher sales

Agrochemical maker Insecticides (India) Ltd has registered a 21 per cent increase in net profits for the June quarter over the corresponding last year on higher sales.

ILL reported a net profit of Rs 14.17 crore on net sales of Rs 197.63 crore for June quarter.

In the corresponding quarter last year, the company had reported a net of Rs 11.72 crore on net sales of Rs 148.83 crore.

Sales of branded formulations grew 40 per cent during the quarter, while the technicals business saw a growth of 19 per cent.

Two new products — Hakama and Nuvan — that were launched last year, also boosted the revenues.

“The encouraging June quarter numbers clearly reflect the increasing demand for our products. It is good to see that Indian farmers are adopting new technology.

“We expect good contribution from our new product in the second quarter as well,” said Rajesh Aggarwal, Managing Director, Insecticides (India) Ltd.

The IIL scrip gained 2.73 per cent to end at Rs 342.90 on the BSE on Monday.

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Cotton rules firm on mills' buying



Cotton price ruled unchanged at the higher level with normal buying by mills and exporter.

According to market sources, cotton prices may sustain at current levels as stocks are low.

Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton traded at Rs 44,500-44,700 for a candy of 356 kg, while raw cotton or *kapas* price ruled at Rs 1,100-1,130 for *amaund* of 20 kg at Saurashtra and gin delivery *kapas* quoted at Rs 1,135-1,160.

About 2,500-2,700 bales arrived in Gujarat and 5,000-5,200 bales arrived in the country.

A Rajkot-based cotton broker said that cotton was traded steady on Monday.

However, prices may ruled at current levels in the coming days.

Meanwhile, cotton exports dropped by 31 per cent to 9.8 million bales in 2012-13 marketing year that ended last month, but imports rose slightly to 1.47 million bales in the same period, a report said.

Trade sources indicate that domestic consumption will remain strong as small to medium sized mills seek to cover their position till September this year.

Meanwhile, Union Minister of State for Textiles Panabaka Lakshmi told the Lok Sabha on Monday that the Cotton Corporation of India has sold 13.83 lakh bales (170 kg each) of the natural fibre this season and will offload another 9.03 lakh bales in a gradual manner in the domestic market.

Edible oils perk up on weak rupee



Higher volumes kept the sentiment positive in the edible oils market on Monday, taking cues from firm overseas market, weak domestic currency and higher local demand ahead of festivals. In Rajkot, groundnut oil dropped sharply by Rs 40 on hopes that the kharif crop will arrive early, said sources.

During the day, over 2,500 tonnes palmolein and soyabean oils were contracted for delivery up to this month end. Local refineries have increased their rates by Re 1-Rs 2 in evening for the commodities.

At the end of the day, Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 547, super palmolein at Rs 575 and super deluxe Rs 595, soyabean refined oil Rs 642 and sunflower refined oil Rs 805.

Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 546, soyabean refined oil Rs 638 and sunflower refined oil Rs 800. Allana quoted palmolein at Rs 546, super palmolein at Rs 575, soyabean refined oil Rs 640 and sunflower refined oil Rs 800.

Gokul quoted palmolein at Rs 540.

In Rajkot, groundnut oil declined by Rs 40 to Rs 1,520 (Rs 1,560) for *telia* tin and loose (10 kg) dropped by Rs 25 to Rs 975 (Rs 1,000).

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, soyabean refined oil's September futures were higher by Rs 2.90 to Rs 654.70 (Rs 651.80), October up at Rs 625.20 (Rs 624.45) and November increased to Rs 620.30 (Rs 619.60).

Malaysia BMD crude palm oil's September-13 contracts ended higher at MYR 2,274 (MYR 2,236), October at MYR 2,241 (MYR 2,207) and November at MYR 2,235 (MYR 2,201).

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were: Groundnut oil 990 (990), soya refined oil 636 (635), sunflower exp. ref. 720 (720), sunflower ref. 800 (795), rapeseed ref. oil 695 (694), rapeseed expeller ref. 665 (664) cottonseed ref. oil 645 (645) and palmolein 540 (540).

Vikram Global Commodities (P) Ltd has quoted Rs 585 for 10 kg - ex -stock for Malaysia super palmolein and Rs 590 for forward delivery.

Rice trade in 'wait-n-watch' mode



Paddy arrivals dropped to just around 1,500 bags on Monday against the daily arrivals of about 4,000 bags till last weekend.

Tara Chand Sharma, Proprietor of Tara Chand and Sons, told *Business Line* that there is no particular reason behind it and arrivals are likely to touch the 10,000-bags-a-day mark within the next couple of weeks, he said.

In the physical market, rice may rule range-bound in the coming days as bulk buyers are keeping out of the market, said trade experts.

There is no bulk buying in the market currently as traders have adopted a wait-and-watch policy following too much volatility in the market in the recent past, said Amit Chandna.

Alteration of Rs 50-100 a quintal wouldn't make much difference and market may continue to rule around current levels with marginal fluctuations this week, he added.

Pusa-1121 (steam) sold at Rs 8,000, while Pusa-1121 (sela) quoted at Rs 7,650-7,700.

Pure basmati (raw) quoted at Rs 8,650. Duplicate basmati (steam) sold at Rs 6,550. 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.

Similarly, non-basmati varieties remained unchanged. 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 1,500 bags of different paddy varieties arrived at the Karnal Grain Market Terminal on Monday from the Uttar Pradesh.

About 500 bags of Pusa-1121 arrived and quoted at Rs 3,250. Around 1,000 bags of PR arrived and quoted at Rs 1,000-1,175.

Soyabean oil up amidst scattered purchases



Soyabean oil traded higher on strong global cues, despite scattering buying.

Soya refined ruled at Rs 645-50, while soya solvent ruled at Rs 615-20 for 10 kg on Monday.

Compared with last week, soya oil is up Rs 10.

In the futures market also, soya oil traded higher on global cues and buying support with August and September contracts on the NCDEX closing at Rs 676.45 (up Rs 5.40) and Rs 655 (up Rs 3.20).

Given the decline in arrival of soya seeds and festive demand ahead, bearish sentiment in soya oil appears unlikely in the coming days, said Mukesh Purohit, an Indore-based soya oil trader.

Amid weak arrival with merely 25,000 bags of soyabean being offloaded in Madhya Pradesh mandis, uptrend in soyabean continued.

On Monday, soyabean in the State mandis ruled at Rs 3,350-3,500 (up Rs 200 from last week).

In the futures market, October contract on the NCDEX closed higher at Rs 2,966 (up Rs 39.50).

While November contracts closed lower at Rs 2,995 (down Rs 35.50).

Weak arrival and improved demand from crushers also lifted plant deliveries of soyabean on Monday to Rs 3,550-3,600 (up Rs 150 from last week).

According to traders here, prices of soyabean and soya oil in the coming days would be influenced by the USAID report which was slated to be released late Monday evening.

Improved demand and buying support in the past few days have also lifted soya DOC with its prices in the domestic market on Monday being quoted at 30,000-30,500, while it ruled at Rs 32,000-32,200 on the port (up Rs 2,000 a quintal from last week).

Festival demand lends support to sugar



Sugar prices ruled steady on Monday on routine demand and ample supply.

Freight rates which improved slightly the previous week on shortage of trucks due to Ramzan Id again came to normal level led to ample arrivals in the market.

Prices at all level spot, Naka and mill level were unchanged.

In futures market, prices were range-bound with thin volatility.

A Vashi-based wholesale trader said that supply improved after last week's tight position as availability of trucks was normal at producing centres.

Freight rates also eased by Rs 2-4 a bag.

Arrivals and local dispatches were at par as retailers' demand for festivals such as August 15, *Raksha Bandhan* and *Janmashtami* provided support. Sugar prices will not see any volatility in the near-term as supply outstrips demand, he said.

Analyst said that Maharashtra's producers are forced to sell in the local market due to surplus production and stocks besides absence of neighbouring States buying.

Prospects for sugar output next year is also bright as Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, the top two sugar producers, have received excess rainfall, boosting prospects of higher yield and production.

Sources said that arrivals in the Vashi wholesale market were 61-62 truckloads (each 100 bags) while local dispatches were 60-61.

On Saturday evening, 11-12 mills offered tenders and sold about 38,000-40,000 bags at Rs 2,910-2,980 (Rs 2,920-2,980) for S-grade and Rs 3,000-3,110 (Rs 3,000-3,120) for M-grade.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, sugar September futures were up by Re 1 at Rs 3,018 (Rs 3,017); October was down by Rs 3 to Rs 3,028 (Rs 3,031) and November declined by Rs 12 to Rs 3,005 (Rs 3,017).

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S-grade Rs 3,052-3,142 (Rs 3,052-3,142) and M-grade Rs 3,172-3,352 (Rs 3,172-3,352). **Naka delivery rates were:** S-grade Rs 3,010-3,070 (Rs 3,010-3,070) and M-grade Rs 3,100-3,210 (Rs 3,100-3,210).

Turmeric gleams despite higher arrivals



Turmeric prices increased despite higher arrivals on Monday as exporters and traders hunted for quality produce.

Though traders did not get fresh orders from North India, along with exporters they bought quality produce for meeting local orders and stocking them.

On Monday, 5,500 bags arrived for sale and 60 per cent was sold. Prices increased by Rs 200 a quintal. "We are expecting fresh orders in a couple of days from North India," said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

Ravishankar said that except for the hybrid turmeric, other finger variety prices increased on grounds of quality.

Only medium variety hybrid arrived for sale, so prices did not improve, prices remain the same of last week. The price of root variety decreased by Rs 200 in all the markets.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety sold at Rs 3,5600-5,961, the root variety Rs 3,449- 5,106.

Salem hybrid crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,289-6,409, the root variety Rs 5,124-5,916. Of the 982 bags that arrived, 401 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,209-6,217, the root variety Rs 4,899-5,719. All the 409 bags on offer found takers.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 5,317-6,001, the root variety Rs 4,747-5,547. All the 119 bags were sold.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Onions all set to hit 100/kg, traders importing cheaper variety from Pakistan & China



Chinese and Pakistani onions, which some traders have already placed orders for and are likely to arrive in 15 days, may be the consumer's best ally.

PUNE: This will really sting — the staple of cooking and salad plates, the onion, is all set to hit Rs 100/per kg in retail markets in a week. Traders say Indian onions, already retailing at Rs 80/ per kg in some cities, are now the "most expensive" in the world.

And that Chinese and Pakistani onions, which some traders have already placed orders for and are likely to arrive in 15 days, may be the consumer's best ally. Delhi may be the only major metro to escape the Rs 100 onion sting for now because the state government has been intervening in the markets, selling onions at Rs 35-40 per kg through government outlets.

Congress-ruled Delhi goes to elections in November. In 1989, the then BJP-ruled Delhi state government was famously voted out on the back of the electorate's anger at high onion prices. Onion's century has come at a first clip. Retail prices were around Rs 20 only two months ago. Onion's Second Century A weak crop, partly thanks to heavy rains, and price expectations that are as yet discounting new supplies are pushing onions to the Rs 100/kg territory. This is onion's second century. Retail prices had climbed to Rs 100/kg in December 2010 too. But wholesalers point out that market conditions this time are more forbidding for consumers

because wholesale prices have reached never-seen high levels. Wholesale prices have risen to Rs 47/kg in the principal wholesale markets of Maharashtra, the biggest onion producer.

"For the first time, average onion prices have become so high in the country. In December 2010, when retail prices had touched Rs 100/kg, the average prices were not more than Rs 40/kg," said RP Gupta, director, National Horticulture Research and Development Foundation (NHRDF) at Nashik. Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar has, however, ruled out a ban on onion exports, saying a ban would do "injustice to onion famers".

Sugar barons turn to Africa for growth opportunities; Maharashtra minister to lease 27k acres in Mozambique



Abundance of land and natural resources in Africa and prospects of serving both the local market as well as shipping to India are a big attraction for Maharashtra's Rural Development Minister Jayant Patil.

PUNE: A sugar cooperative run by a minister in Maharashtra will lease 27,000 hectares in Mozambique to cultivate corn, soyabean and rice, and is eyeing a sugar mill in Kenya as scarcity of resources and oppressive regulations goad sugar barons to turn to Africa for growth opportunities.

Abundance of land and natural resources in Africa and prospects of serving both the local market as well as shipping to India are a big attraction for Maharashtra's Rural Development Minister Jayant Patil, who controls Rajarambapu Patil Saharaki Sakhar Karkhana Ltd, a sugar cooperative. He is not alone. Natural Sugar and Allied Industries (NSAI), a private mill in

Marathwada, kicked off the trend when the Mozambique government gave it 10,000 hectares to set up a sugar mill in 2011-12 with an investment of Rs 150 crore. Others are likely to follow. "Africa is the next destination for the world sugar industry due to huge land available in that continent," said Abinash Verma, director-general of the Indian Sugar Mills Association. In this continent, Patil's influence will be handy. Africa has lured companies from all over the world in the agriculture, mining and energy businesses. Minister's Involvement to Help But several firms have struggled with opaque rules and complex procedures in that continent. The involvement of a minister, and the associated clout and protocol, should smoothen the path for the cooperative, which has a turnover of more than Rs 1,000 crore.

Weather

Chennai
▼

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather

Tuesday, Aug 13

Max | Min

30° | 24°

Rain: 0 Sunrise: 05:56
 Humidity: 75 Sunset: 06:31
 Wind: normal Barometer: 1005

Tomorrow's Forecast

Wednesday, Aug 14

Max | Min

32° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday Aug 15	Friday Aug 16	Saturday Aug 17	Sunday Aug 18	Monday Aug 19
33° 25° Cloudy	33° 25° Overcast	33° 25° Overcast	33° 25° Overcast	33° 26° Overcast

Airport Weather

Chennai
▼
Chennai

Rain: 0 Sunrise: 05:56
 Humidity: 75 Sunset: 06:31
 Wind: normal Barometer: 1005

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Onion prices become pungent

Onions have slid off tables in Ahmedabad city. Onion prices have touched Rs50 per kg in the wholesale market, while they were over Rs 65 per kg in retail on Monday. Even in malls, the price had crossed Rs 55 per kg. According to the wholesale dealers in the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC), Ahmedabad's onion prices were the highest in August since 1997-98. It is worth recalling that the prices had moved to around the Rs 45 level in the wholesale

market in 2010. The prices had touched Rs 45 in October 2010 following heavy rains. The current price surge in Ahmedabad has affected not only households but also eateries. Onions have gone missing from stalls selling Gujarati snacks and the puri bhaji dish. Sources in the APMC said that this year the entire country would be dependent on Nasik for onion crop till October. But because of inadequate yield this year in that region, farmers were not selling to other states. "A farmer gets Rs 30-35 per kg in the market in Nasik and hence does not come to Ahmedabad to sell his produce," said Kishan Karamchandani, a wholesale dealer in APMC Ahmedabad. "A farmer who comes to Gujarat has to spend Rs 8-12 per kg for transportation and carting. This also includes the cost of about 10% of the crop that perishes in transit."

Maharashtra is the leading producer of onions in the country with a contribution of 32.6% of production followed by Karnataka (17.6%); Gujarat (10%); and Bihar (7%). In Gujarat, Saurashtra is the top onion-producing area. Because of unseasonal rains, area under onion production came down in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat and Haryana.

Officials of the APMC said that the inflow of onion was only 17 to 18 trucks daily against 44-45 trucks last year. The price of the crop never crossed Rs 25 per kg last year. Each truck carried about 10 tonnes of onion. Deepak Patel, the secretary of the APMC, said: "Inadequate rains in Saurashtra and even in Maharashtra have led to the increase in prices." The prices will become stable only when the new crop arrives in December.

Onion consumption in city drops by 30-40%

The increasing onion prices have adversely affected its consumption. About 40% of the consumption mostly in the retail has dropped by 30-40%. Retailers who used to purchase nearly 250 kg onions are buying only 50 to 100 kg. According to whole sale dealers, the biggest consumers of onions in the city were the road side omelet snack stalls and the consumption in this segment has also reduced. "The increasing prices have forced the women to cut down on their onion consumption. This has precipitated fall in the consumption in the city by 30 per cent," said trader Haresh Karamchandani adding that the housewives and the small hotels have cut down drastically on the use of onions. Kishan of Rajkumar kishanchand whole sale firm said, "A retailer who used to purchase 200-250 kg of onion for sale is now purchasing not more than 100

kg. We are even getting reports that not more than 20 trucks of onions will arrive in the market on Tuesday. The prices of onion in the market have increased even in Nasik and the retail price there is around Rs 55 per kg." Nimita Patel, a resident of Drive-in Road, said, "On Sunday when I went to buy vegetables, I was told that the price of onion was Rs 65 per kg. I usually buy about 2 kg for the weekly consumption, but on Sunday, I bought only 500 grams. I will have to ration the use of Onion." For Shweta Shah, a resident of Satellite, the salad which she serves during the dinner to the family is minus onion. "We are even cutting on the salad consumption as the prices of tomato and other vegetable are also increasing," she said.

The poor who used to have onion as a cheap option of vegetable have been worst hit by the price hike, she added. Saleha Tirmizi, Housewife The monthly budget of vegetable is getting disturbed. The increasing onion and vegetable prices are not only forcing us to cut down on the consumption, but are bringing tears to our eyes. Mital Patel-Housewife: Looking at the price of Rs 65 per kg, I brought only 250 grams of onions and will now be using it in cooking only where it is necessary. Even in salad I have stopped using onions.

Dams in the state brimming with water

Incessant rain in almost every part of the state has helped water reach the catchment areas of various dams and reservoirs across the state. A majority of small to big dams across the state are close to their full capacity mark, while some are yet to get ample water.

With the monsoon forecast of continued rainfall in eastern and southern parts of the state, it seems that many dams and reservoirs, especially in southern Rajasthan including Kota, Jhalawar and Baran could touch their full capacity mark. Districts including Kota, Jhalawar, Baran, Bundi, Tonk, Sawai Madhopur, Dholpur, Karauli, Alwar and Jaipur have received normal to excess rain so far. Except Ramgarh dam on Jaipur outskirts, majority dams are near the full capacity mark. Chittorgarh's Rana Pratap Sagar dam is 94.19 per cent full in this season so far. "The full capacity of this dam is 2,905.23 cusec meter and till Monday it reached 2,736.58 cusec meter. If monsoon continues the same way, it may be filled up to the brim," said an official with the water resources department. Galwa dam in Tonk district reached full capacity mark on Monday as it is 100 percent filled with water. "The full capacity of the dam is 48.750cusec meter which was attained by the dam. It might overflow in the next few days," the official added.

Another dam which is completely full is Jakham dam in Chittorgarh which has attained the full capacity mark of 142.030 cusec meter. Mansarovar dam in SawaiMadhopur too has received water to its full capacity of 17.487 cusec meter. Kota barrage has received 93.25 per cent of its capacity of 112.010 cusec meter. Jawahar Sagar in Kota has 65.700 cusec meter against a capacity of 67.110 cusec meter, Mahi dam (Banswara) has received 2,147.193 cusec meter against the capacity of 2,179.870 cusec meter and Parvati dam (Dholpur) has received 113.820 cusec meter against the full capacity of 120.880 cusec meter and is 94.16 percent filled.

Prices of flowers rise with demand

The demand and sale of flowers had shot up in the city. The florists are unable to meet the demands. It had doubled the price of flowers. 'Bel patras' is the most costly leaf in the season due to heavy demand. In Shrawan month, floral decorations are in vogue. Flowers are also required in rituals like 'Rudrabhishek' and 'Shringar'. A flower vendor near Kidwai Nagar Phool Mandi said that the demand had gone up these days. "I earn four times more due to rising demand and low supply," he said. Marigold, rose and bela are much in demand. These flowers are used for Rudrabhishek. People are also demanding orchids, daisies and lilies for floral decorations in temples also known as Shringar. A florist said that production of flowers at the local level is less. "We have to bring flowers from the villages. It would have been more convenient and cheaper for us if the flowers are available in city through the horticulture department," he said. "The maximum demand is of bel patra these days. Available free for rest of the year, [bel patras](#) are available at Rs 2 to 5 per stick which comprises three leaves. In bulk, bel patras are being sold at Rs 130 to Rs 150 per kg," an stockist said. Coconut also forms an important part of puja. It too is in demand during Shrawan. The shops selling flowers and coconuts near temples during this month try to cater to the demand."Coconut sold at Rs 20 to 25 per piece normally, now costs Rs 35 to Rs 40. In some areas, shopkeepers are not offering coconut in the prasad bucket due to high prices," said Manoj, a regular visitor at Parmat temple.

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Business Standard

GJM strike takes a toll on Darjeeling tea industry

According to the latest figures by ITA, Darjeeling tea output stood at 2.39 mn kg in January-May 2013, against 2.24 mn kg in the year-ago period



The indefinite strike called by the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) has hit the Rs 360-crore tea industry in Darjeeling, more so as this is the peak production period in the region. Though workers continued to pluck leaves at the gardens, the strike, which entered its tenth day on Monday, severely affected the flow of goods. About 95 per cent of Darjeeling tea is exported. But now, the tea can't be transported to sales centres or for exports; it is piling up at factories. Also, fuel supply and rations are running out. "These are perishable goods; these can't be stored forever," said A N Singh, chairman of Indian Tea Association (ITA) and managing director and chief executive of Goodricke. ITA has convened an emergency meeting of its members on Tuesday. "We are in a wait-and-watch mode. If the strike is called off, the losses will be contained," said Singh. Though the GJM held a meeting on Monday, it remained inconclusive and it was decided the strike would continue. The party is demanding the creation of a state of Gorkhaland, separate from West Bengal. The demands have gained momentum in the wake of the decision to bifurcate Andhra Pradesh. On an average, Darjeeling produces 1.3 million kg of tea in July. Earlier, the Consultative Committee of Plantation Associations had estimated losses incurred by the tea industry in the region due to a three-day strike last month stood at Rs 11 crore. According to the latest figures by ITA, Darjeeling tea production stood at 2.39 million kg in January-May 2013, against 2.24 million kg in the year-ago period. In the January-March period, tea exports rose 33.7 per cent to 59.8 million kg, compared to the corresponding period last year. If the tea industry in Darjeeling continues to be hit, exports could

be affected. The average price of Darjeeling tea is Rs 375 a kg, against Rs 215 a kg for tea from other regions in north India. The all-India average stands at Rs 154.83 a kg.

Onion prices spurts 40% in Lasalgaon to Rs 46/kg

Prices went up due to higher demand as markets were closed in Nashik on account of Eid



Wholesale onion prices have shot up by 40% in the last three days to Rs 46 a kg at Lasalgaon market in Nashik, the highest in the last two-and-a-half years, and the spurt could further push up the already high retail rate of Rs 60 per kg in the national capital. Traders said prices went up due to higher demand as markets were closed in Nashik on account of Eid on Friday, followed by weekend holidays. Officials, however, did not rule out the possibility of hoarding by traders.

According to data compiled by National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation (NHRDF), prices at Lasalgaon, Asia's largest wholesale market for onion, spurted to Rs 45.91 a kg today from Rs 33.11 on August 8. The last time rate was at this level or even higher was between December, 2010 and January 2011, as per the data. The model rate, at which bulk of the onion is being traded, rose by 36% to Rs 43 per kg at Lasalgaon from Rs 31.50 per kg on August 8, despite increased arrival in the mandi, according to data compiled by NHRDF.

Higher prices in Lasalgaon were reflected in Delhi's Azadpur market where rates have gone up today by Rs 10 per kg to Rs 50-55 per kg from Saturday. "There is no shortage in production of onion and there is enough stock at godowns. It is difficult to say why prices are rising. It could be because of slow release of stock from godowns," NHRDF Director R P Gupta told PTI.

This is possibly for the first time that prices have risen in July and August, Gupta said, adding

that new crop starts arriving from June. Another official with NHRDF, which was established by co-operative Nafed, said traders resort to manipulation during the election year.

"Prices have risen in Nashik because of higher demand from across the country compared with supply as markets were closed on Eid festival and weekend," a senior official with co-operative Nafed said. India has exported 6.39 lakh tonnes during April-July period of this fiscal compared with 6.94 lakh tonnes in the year-ago period. Production stood at 16.6 million tonnes in 2012-13.

Potato futures rise 3% as demand picks up

Speculators created fresh positions, driven by increased buying in spot market amid fall in supplies



Potato prices rose by 2.99% to Rs 802.20 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators created fresh positions, driven by increased buying in spot market amid fall in supplies.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, potato for delivery in September rose by Rs 23.30, or 2.99%, to Rs 802.20 per quintal, with a business turnover of 187 lots.

The potato for delivery in August gained Rs 5.30, or 0.66%, to Rs 797 per quintal in 21 lots.

Marketmen said fresh buying by speculators following a rise in demand in the spot market against restricted arrivals from producing belts mainly helped potato futures to trade higher.

Crude palm oil futures up on global cues

Oil prices for August contract increased by 0.51%



Supported by a firming trend overseas, crude palm oil prices up by Rs 3 to Rs 496 per 10 kg in futures trade today. At the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude palm oil for delivery in September rose by Rs 3, or 0.60%, to Rs 496 per 10 kg, with a business turnover of 60 lots.

Oil prices for August contract increased by Rs 2.60, or 0.51%, to Rs 503 per 10 kg with a volume of 50 lots. 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. Palm oil gained 1.70% to \$693 per tonne on the Malaysia Derivatives Exchange.

Fish prices increased 131% in 5 years : ASSOCHAM

Growing appetite for fish, over-exploitation of stock in the country hiked fish prices

Wholesale fish prices rose by a whopping 131% during past five years as India's growing appetite for fish owing to rising per-capita income, urbanisation and evolving eating patterns. This is fast leading to depletion and over-exploitation of fish stocks in the country, a recent ASSOCHAM study on this sector said.

“While index value of fish was over 126 during 2008-09, it rose past 291 as of 2012-13 due to a combination of factors. Falling fish catch owing to rising water pollution, dumping of plastic and other harmful materials, absence of organized retail in fish trade, persistence of age-old distribution system, post-harvest losses and rising operating costs due to unabated

diesel price rise resulting are the main factors behind this, said a sector-specific analysis of fish prices.

Alarming, growth of fish production in India has declined to half i.e. from about 7% in 2008-09 to 3.5% during 2012-13.

“Wholesale inland fish prices rose by a whopping 200% and marine fish prices rose by about 91% during the period,” said D.S. Rawat, national secretary general of ASSOCHAM.

Growing urbanization and advent of supermarkets has led to growth in fish consumption across India, but lack of poor post-harvesting equipment, inadequate food processing technology and storage facilities is bleeding the fishing industry, hampering its growth prospects.

Besides, India's traditional fishing communities are over-exploiting coastal waters thereby leading to fast depletion of marine resources and shrinking catch from coastal regions. The study also highlighted that due to severe dearth of suitable fishing vessels fish stocks in India's territorial deep-sea waters remain untapped leading to potential income loss to fishing community and other stakeholders. Lack of proper post-harvest fish handling infrastructure in India leads to wastage of about 25% of total fisheries resources thereby causing a staggering Rs 15,000 crore annual losses, it said.

Poor handling and processing of catch, inadequate packaging, and storage facilities clubbed with marketing malpractices and other related factors are leading to massive losses worth Rs 61,000 crore to the marine and fish industry.

With over 8,100 kilometers of marine coastline, four million hectares of reservoirs, two million hectares of brackish water and nearly 51,000 square kilometers of continental shelf area, India is ranked as the second largest fish producer in the world after China and accounts for nearly six% of global fish production of about 180 million tones annually.

ASSOCHAM has suggested developing technology for value addition and infrastructure for fish production based on public private partnership (PPP) model to overcome the setbacks.

More investments should be made in value added fish and marine products in ready-to-eat and ready-to-serve categories more so as growing domestic market also offers opportunity for such products in the fast growing retail sector, study said.

There is also a need to nurture, protect and carefully exploit marine capture as the industry is directly linked to India's food and nutritional security.

Cardamom up by 4% on spot demand

Tight stocks position in the spot market following lower arrivals influence the prices



Cardamom prices rose by 3.99% to Rs 883.60 per kg in futures trade today as traders enlarged their commitments, supported by a pick-up in export and domestic demand.

Besides, 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 August spurted by Rs 33.90, or 3.99%, to Rs 883.60 per kg, with a business turnover of 905 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in September edged up by Rs 9.50, or 1.12%, to Rs 851.90 per kg with trading volume of 1,655 lots.

The logo for The Indian Express, featuring a stylized red and white flag icon to the left of the text "The Indian EXPRESS" in a serif font.

Retail inflation a tad lower at 9.64 pct in July



Retail inflation marginally declined to 9.64 per cent in July from 9.87 per cent in the preceding month as prices of cereal, pulses, fruits and sugar softened.

The consumer price index-based inflation had been falling for three consecutive months before June.

The food inflation in July softened to 11.24 per cent from 11.84 per cent in the previous month, according to the official data released today.

Prices of cereal and pulses came down to 16.03 per cent (from 17.59) and 5.55 per cent (from 8.82 per cent) respectively in July.

Fruit prices also fell by 6.81 per cent during the month from 7.49 per cent a month ago.

Prices of milk and milk products rose by 8.14 per cent in July from 7.96 per cent a month earlier.

Eggs, fish and meat and vegetables prices went up by 13.82 per cent versus 12.69 per cent in June.

Also, retail inflation in vegetable prices went up by 16.40 per cent in July, from 14.55 per cent in the previous month, the data showed.

"Vegetable prices are also going up because of heavy rain," Chairman of Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council C Rangarajan said.

He said the scope for the RBI to take monetary action is limited to the primary condition of "what is happening to rupee in the foreign exchange market".

RBI keeps a close watch on the inflation data to decide its monetary policy. However, in its first quarter monetary policy in the previous month, RBI had kept its key policy rates unchanged to stabilise the rupee and contain the escalating current account deficit.

Besides, the industry for long has been demanding for a cut in the key policy rate by the RBI to thrust investment and spur economic activities.
