

Date : 19.08.2013



TNAU: pest and disease forecast for the season

The Centre of Plant Protection Studies of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has forecast pest and disease control methods for August in certain districts of the State.

Since the pest and disease incidence will be below the economic threshold level in all districts of Tamil Nadu, farmers are asked to monitor the crops for pest activities by setting light traps and yellow sticky traps in their fields.

Recommendations have been made for the benefit of rice farmers growing samba rice in Cauvery delta zone and other rice growing areas in the State.

In the nursery, thrips and caseworm are the major insect pests to be expected, and in diseases, brown spot and blast are expected to be visible. To manage these, farmers are asked to treat the seeds with Carbendazim 2g / kg or *Pseudomonas fluorescens* 10 g / kg of seeds in one litre of water overnight before sowing.

Application of *Pseudomonas fluorescens* at 1.5 kg / 20 cent nursery along with 30 kg farm yard manure, 48 hours before pulling out seedlings is advocated.

For seedling root dip, select 25 sq metre area in the main field and stagnate water up to a depth of 2.5 cm at one corner and dissolve 2.5 kg of *Pseudomonas fluorescens*. In this stagnated water, dip 20 cent nursery seedlings for 30 minutes and transplant.

For managing insects, set up light trap to monitor adult moths and other insect pests, spraying NSKE 5 per cent with sticking agent at 5 ml / litre, apply neem cake at 12.5 kg / 20 cent nursery as base dose, and spray either neem oil three per cent or chlorpyrifos 20 EC at 2 ml / litre of water, if needed.

If dry weather continued due to delay in monsoon, there was a possibility for multiplication of jassids, thrips, whitefly, spiralling whitefly and different species of mealy bug including papaya mealy bug.

Farmers are asked to monitor sucking pests by installing yellow sticky traps at 5 / acre and if needed to spray neem seed kernel extract 5 per cent of fish oil resin soap at one kg in 40 litres of water.

Contact

For details, contact 0422-6611214 / 6611226.

Farmers are asked to monitor the crops for pest activities by setting light traps and yellow sticky traps in their fields

TNAU inks MoU with University of Tokyo

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has inked two memoranda of understanding with University of Tokyo, Japan, in an effort to take forward academic and research linkages.

One is with the university, for student exchange for academic programmes, while the other is with the Asian Natural Environmental Science Center (ANESC) of the university for faculty exchange, conduct of collaborative research, and exchange of academic information, besides others.

According to a release, TNAU already has linkages with the Japanese University in molecular biology and social sciences.

In an effort to expand the scope of collaboration, Aki Kamoshita of ANESC, visited TNAU and facilitated the inking of MoUs.

Come September, farm fresh outlets in Chennai will abound with vegetables

Batch of 20 farmers each have formed 250 clusters under Chennai Peri-Metro Vegetable Cluster Development programme



Much for less: Chennai is likely to get more vegetables from farmers in nearby districts in the coming weeks as the Horticulture Department is taking steps to produce and procure more at reasonable price.—

Photo: K. Pichumani

About 5,000 farmers in the neighbouring districts have agreed to supply vegetables and greens to farm fresh outlets in the city on priority basis from September onwards.

So far, a batch of 20 farmers each had formed 250 clusters under the Chennai Peri-Metro Vegetable Cluster Development programme, which is a component of the National Agricultural Development Programme.

A sum of Rs. 17 crore has been sanctioned. These farmers will have access to bank-linked subsidised loan for purchase of equipment and vehicles.

19 collection centres

As a recent development, 19 collection centres have been formed in Kancheepuram, Tiruvallur, Vellore and Tiruvannamalai districts to enable the farmers to send in their produce, which in turn would be collected by cooperative societies.

The vegetables and greens will be transported to 29 farm fresh vegetable outlets in the city, where it will be sorted, graded and packed. The farmers will get the procurement price on the same day.

Commissioner of Horticulture and Plantation Crops, Satyabrata Sahoo, who interacted with the farmers in these districts in the last few days, said the agriculturists were free to sell their produce to the farm fresh outlets or the Koyambedu vegetable market or the cooperative societies.

The farmers said their preference was to supply the produce to the farm fresh outlets.

Replicating

Following the formation of clusters for Chennai, the Horticulture Department will move to Coimbatore to replicate this model. It will cover farmers of Coimbatore, Udhagamandalam, Tiruppur and Erode districts.

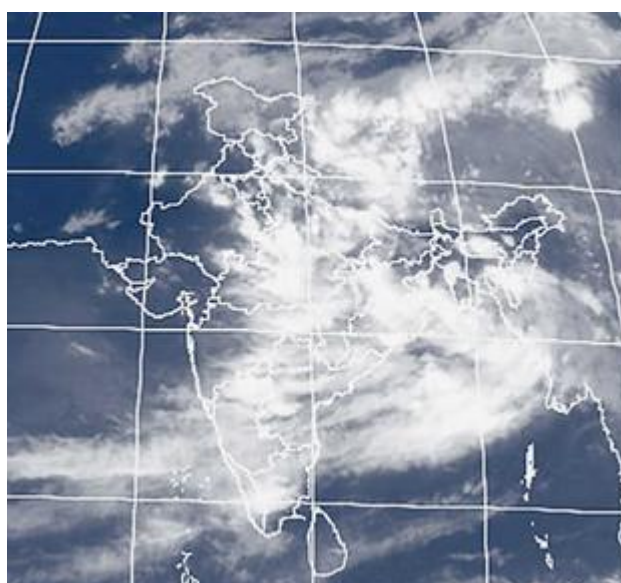
The Horticulture Department also planned to open 50 farm fresh outlets additionally in the city. But, the progress had been slow due to non-availability of “aggregators,” meaning those running the entire supply chain management to keep the vegetables fresh as per the guidelines of small farmer agri-business consortium.

Talking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Sahoo said: “We thought we can make a beginning by joining hands with the Cooperative Department. The farmers are supportive as they came to know about the collective bargaining power and high returns. The farmers will start supplying vegetables in the morning and greens in the evening. In a way, the Horticulture Department will kick start its programme in a month or two.”

Mentioning that the sales of farm fresh vegetable outlets in the city since its launch on June 20 was Rs. 2.75 crore, Registrar of Cooperative Societies P. Seetharaman said a sum of Rs. 25 crore had been sanctioned as crop loans to those farmers for cultivating vegetables in Krishnagiri, Udhagamandalam and Dindigul districts.

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weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on August 18th.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	32	25	17	456
New Delhi (Sfd)	33	24	44	637
Chandigarh	30	27	0	665
Hissar	31	25	0	507
Bhuntar	28	19	5	379
Shimla	21	16	tr	675
Jammu	30	24	1	1027
Srinagar	24	18	3	208
Amritsar	31	24	93	719
Patiala	29	26	6	637
Jaipur	33	25	4	543
Udaipur	30	24	0	617
Allahabad	33	25	37	847
Lucknow	33	22	39	638

Varanasi	31	26	9	531
Dehradun	32	22	54	2421
Agartala	33	25	tr	671
Ahmedabad	32	26	1	739
Bangalore	26	20	2	377
Bhubaneshwar	35	25	12	609
Bhopal	28	24	0	992
Chennai	33	25	0	423
Guwahati	34	26	0	626
Hyderabad	29	22	2	499
Kolkata	33	27	0	1012
Mumbai	31	25	10	2018
Nagpur	32	25	8	1237
Patna	33	25	15	273
Pune	29	22	tr	532
Thiruvananthapuram	31	24	0	864
Imphal	29	23	4	733
Shillong	24	17	5	693

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

Southwest Monsoon has been active over Punjab. The axis of monsoon trough on S.L.C. passes through Sriganaganagar, Agra, Allahabad and thence South-east wards.

RAINFALL: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at many places over Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, east Rajasthan and east Uttar Pradesh and at a few places over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (4 cm and above) HARYANA: Tohana 9, Gurgaon 5 and Sonipat New Delhi Safdarjung 4 each, PUNJAB: Talwandi Sabo 11, Amritsar 9, Faridkot 5 and Putti 4, EAST RAJASTHAN: Baseri and Swai Madhopur 7 each, Pipalda and Dholpur 5 each and Tizara, Nainwa and Rajakhera 4 each, WEST RAJASTHAN: Nokha 5, EAST UTTAR PRADESH: Bara 11, Chhatnag 9, Phoolpur, Chhibraman, Bani and Sitapur 7 each, Handia and Mau 6 each, Kunda 5 and Lucknow, Kakrahi, Regoli and Allahabad 4 each. WEST UTTAR PRADESH: Mauranipur 6 and Aligarh, Etawah and Chilaghat 5 each UTTARAKHAND: Dehradun 5. FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 20th August 2013 : Rain/thundershowers would occur at many places over Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and east-Rajasthan. Rain/thundershowers would occur at a few places over rest of region.

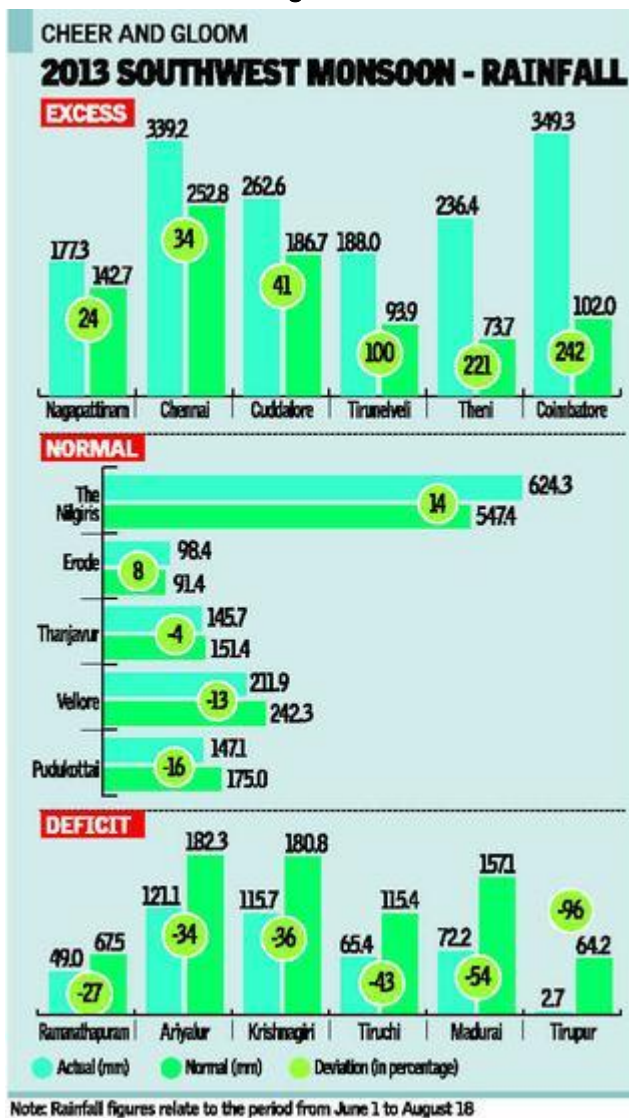
HEAVY RAINFALL WARNING: Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places over Jammu division of Jammu and Kashmir, west Uttar Pradesh and Punjab during next 24 hours.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 20th August 2013: Generally cloudy sky.

Rain/thundershowers would occur.

11 districts receive excess rainfall

State, as a whole, records 16.64 cm rainfall against the normal of 16 cm



Two-and-a-half months after the advent of southwest monsoon, an interesting scenario has emerged in the State. While 11 out of 32 districts have recorded excess rainfall, an equal number of districts has registered deficit rainfall.

Chennai and Coimbatore districts come under the excess rainfall category, whereas Tiruchi and Madurai are not that lucky as they are among those with deficit rainfall.

The remaining 10 districts have witnessed, what is called in meteorological parlance, normal rainfall with a deviation of minus or plus 19 per cent of the expected rainfall.

An analysis of districts reveals that a majority of northern districts has seen surplus rainfall whereas the situation is the opposite in the south. Chennai, Kancheepuram, Cuddalore, Villupuram and Tiruvallur have got much more than their average rainfall up to the period ending August 18. Kanyakumari, Theni and Tirunelveli are the southern districts to get surplus rainfall.

In respect of deficit rainfall, Dindigul, Ramanathapuram, Tuticorin and Virudhunagar fall under this category besides Madurai. The State, as a whole, received 16.64 cm rainfall against the normal of 16 cm, a deviation of four per cent, which is considered normal. Y.E.A. Raj, Deputy Director General of Meteorology, points out that till about a week ago, Tamil Nadu's rainfall was close to deficit with a deviation of minus 18 or 19 per cent. But, the monsoon picked up rapidly.

A significant aspect of the rainfall pattern this time is that of the composite Thanjavur district, Nagapattinam has registered excess rainfall and Thanjavur and Tiruvarur districts have recorded normal rainfall. With the Mettur dam's water level remaining more or less at full level, a fairly good amount of rainfall in the Cauvery delta during the southwest monsoon brightens the prospects of a bumper samba crop.

As both Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur districts along with Chennai have seen surplus rainfall, people in the three districts, one among the populous belts of the State, may not have much problem with regard to drinking water supply at least for the next few months.

What should be of concern to the authorities is that the districts of Ariyalur, Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri, conventionally considered less developed, have experienced deficit rainfall. However, one saving grace for Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri is that no problem of drinking water supply is anticipated as plenty of water continues to flow through the Cauvery this year and providing assured supply for the newly-commissioned Hogenakkal Water Supply Project.

Though it is during the northeast monsoon (October-December) that the State gets benefitted hugely, the current season – southwest monsoon (June-September) – does play a role in ensuring a relatively-comfortable level of groundwater table, before the onset of the northeast monsoon.

Continuous rain affects plantations

Workers unable to harvest tea leaves; coffee growers could not complete pre-monsoon sprays

Continuous rain in the plantation zones in the State during the South West Monsoon season this year seems to be affecting the crop.

A source in the plantation sector here said that coffee plantations in the State are small holdings compared to tea and these are located mainly in Kodaikanal and Yercaud.

Tea plantations are found in the Nilgiris and Anamalai areas. Tea leaves are harvested throughout the year. If the pre-summer showers are on time and good, the plantations have a good production between January and March. The other major season is after the South West Monsoon.

However, because of heavy and continuous rain in many plantation areas in June and July, the workers were unable to harvest the tea leaves. Kerala plantations received excess rainfall and tea production in south India during June and July could be nearly 10 per cent lower than the usual production, the source said.

The office of the Deputy Director of Extension, Coffee Board, has said in a press release that the coffee growing zones are experiencing moderate to heavy continuous rainfall this monsoon season. Because of the early commencement of the monsoon and continuous rain, many coffee growers are unable to complete the pre-monsoon sprays and manure schedules. This has resulted in incidences of Black Rot, Stalk Rot of berries and pre-mature fruit drop.

The board has said that in the case of Black Rot affected plants, the growers should remove the affected leaves and berries along with the fungal thread and destroy them by burying or burning. In the case of Stalk Rot affected bushes, the growers should remove the diseased berries and destroy them.

In healthy plants, they should remove the fallen leaves and branches.

The drain canals, trenches and pits should be cleaned and the mulch should be heaped towards the centre of four plants.

Water from Bhavani Sagar dam to be released on August 23



Water to be released for irrigation from Bhavani Sagar dam.— PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Water will be released from Bhavani Sagar Dam for irrigation on August 23.

A press release issued by Chief Minister Jayalalithaa on Sunday stated that the water release would benefit 1,03,500 acres in Erode, Tirupur and Karur districts. This followed representation from farmers in the areas.

Public Works Department (PWD) officials said they were yet to get instructions from the government regarding the quantity of water and number of days of release. The details were expected on Monday.

According to PWD officials, water level in the dam stood at 85.21 feet during the reading taken at 8 am on Sunday against its full capacity of 105 feet.

“The storage was 18.610 TMC (thousand million cubic feet) against the full storage capacity of 32.8TMC,” they said and added that the inflow was 2,276 cusecs while the outflow was 1,200 cusecs.

The officials said that the inflow and outflow were almost the same for about a week.

“The water level, which was a mere 48.08 feet on June 18, increased steadily over the next few weeks due to good showers received in catchment areas. The maximum inflow was 14,028 cusecs which was recorded on July 22.

Farmers have welcomed the government’s decision to open sluices of the canal for irrigation. They said that usually, the water release would begin on August 15.

K.S. Sivasenapathy, chairman of the joint action committee, comprising more than 20 farmers and NGOs, formed to save Lower Bhavani Project Canal from the proposed concrete lining, told *The Hindu* that water released from the canal would indirectly benefit over 3 lakh acres.

Water level- Madurai

WATER LEVEL

Water level in Periyar dam stood at 132.30 feet on Sunday with an inflow of 700 cusecs and discharge of 1,761 cusecs. In Vaigai dam, the water level was 57.12 feet with an inflow and a discharge of 1,468 cusecs and 1,860 cusecs respectively.

Rainfall

Rainfall recorded was: Periyar dam 9.2 mm, Mettupatti 5 mm, Kallandhiri 12 mm, Chittampatti 25.2 mm, Melur 1 mm and Kodaikanal 8.4 mm, according to the Public Works Department.

Ramnad farmers urged to revive millet cultivation

Retired district judge R. Sadayandi and State coordinator of Consumer Research Education Action Training and Empowerment (CREATE) K. Jayaraman exhorted Ramanathapuram farmers to revive cultivation of millets and traditional paddy varieties, assuring them that there was a good demand for the same.

Speaking at the farmers' grievance redress meeting, chaired by Collector K. Nanthakumar here on Friday, Mr. Sadayandi, former registrar of Madurai bench of Madras High Court and a practicing organic farmer, lamented that ignorant of the value of millets farmers had almost gave up its cultivation. He wondered why farmers were not showing interest in cultivating millets when they commanded a good demand in the market. He wanted the farmers to diversify into millet cultivation and increase their earnings.

'Traders from north India visit Tamil Nadu markets to procure millets for their nutritious and medicinal values'

Mettur level

The water level in Mettur dam stood at 118.62 feet on Sunday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 11,067 cusecs and the discharge 10,000 cusecs.

— Special Correspondent

Water level



Water level in the Papanasam dam on Sunday stood at 123.95 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 606.13 cusecs and 1,454.75 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam.

The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 65.58 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 28 cusecs and 55 cusecs was discharged.

Nagercoil

Water level in the Pechipparai dam stood at 26.55 feet, while it was 65.05 feet in Perunchani, 11.22 feet in Chittar I, 11.31 feet in Chittar II and 30.35 feet in the Mambazathuraiyaru dam.

Vegetable collection centre

A vegetable collection centre will come up in Mothakkal village near Thanippadi. After visiting the site, Principal Secretary to government for agriculture Sandeep Saxena made an announcement in this regard.

District Collector A. Gnanasekaran accompanied him on the site visit.

'Nendran' plantain price soars in Wayanad

Fall in supply after heavy cross loss in rains

The price of the 'nendran' variety of plantain is spiralling in Wayanad district, a major plantain cultivating region in the State.

The spot price for the first quality of nendran variety touched a record Rs. 45 a kg at Meenangadi on Saturday. The price was Rs.30 toRs.32 a kg during the corresponding period last year. The price of second quality of plantain was Rs.39 a kg.

The availability of the plantain has not kept pace with the demand after huge crop losses during the heavy downpour a few weeks ago, trading sources said. The size of the banana plantations in the district also shrank this year following a sharp increase in production cost and climatic vagaries, sources added.

Though the price has reached an all-time high, many of the farmers have nothing to cheer about as they are faced with a huge crop loss this year, farming sources said.

The data available with the Agriculture Department reveals that nearly 8,000 hectares of land has been utilized for banana cultivation this year against 10,000 hectares two years ago. According to the department, as many as 15,31,700 bunched and non-bunched bananas planted on 612.58 hectares were uprooted in the rain in the district this year.

During the Onam season, the major share of the 'nendran' variety of banana is contributed by the district. But this year the availability of the variety shrank considerably, M.D. Ibrahim, a leading plantain trader in Meenangadi said.

The situation is a temporary one– when the banana begins to arrive from Pollachi and Tiruchirapali in Tamil Nadu by the middle of September, the price will come down, trading sources said.

Class in mushroom farming

The Mushroom Growers' Association is organising a mushroom farming class at Shikshak Sadan at 10 a.m. on Tuesday. The class is only for 30 persons and those interested should register their names.

For registration, contact 9605450281 or 9349491001, a press release issued here said.

Farmers honoured

Six farmers, including a standard VII student, were honoured at the Farmers Day celebrations held at Athavanad, near Kottakkal, on Sunday. The farmers were also given implements on the occasion. Athavanad panchayat president Hafsa Ismail inaugurated the celebrations and vice-president Abdul Kareem presided over the function. Agriculture Officer, Athavanad, K. Bindumol

welcomed the gathering and P.N. Krishnakumar, Assistant Agriculture Officer, proposed a vote of thanks.

Withering time for flower market

Of the 68 merchants, only 12 are currently operating; Sattara street remains the hot spot



Daily flower market in Srirangam inaugurated on January 18 this year seems to have belied the hopes of small-time flower dealers.

The market that was inaugurated after a two-year delay since its construction was mainly to decongest the overcrowded Sattara street in Srirangam where various flower traders and allied labourers, particularly garland makers, apart from wholesale units are located. The daily market constructed by Tiruchirapalli City Corporation is not far away from the Sattara street.

The traders on the Sattara street include a mix of various dealers and they have been in the trade for several decades. Commission agents run wholesale units.

They procure flowers from growers directly and sell it to retail vendors. Some of them own their houses on the Sattara street and utilise the front portion for their business. The street also accounts for allied trades – small-time merchants selling 'thulasi', dried banana fibre bundles, and garland labourers.

Over the years, the strength of traders and allied workers got increased on the narrow street resulting in encroachments by pavement vendors and garland makers. The problem is acute in the morning when a large number of flower cultivators reach the street to sell their produce to commission agents.

The Sattara street turned out to be a seat of congestion forcing the need for construction of a daily market by the corporation. The daily flower market, built at an estimate of about Rs. 30 lakh, remained unutilised for about two years till a section of flower merchants, particularly garland makers, were shifted there.

“The Sattara street has earned a reputation in flower trade, but the daily market, in its initial phase, is yet to attract buyers. We make garlands only to throw them away as there are no takers here,” says K. Rajasekar, one of the traders at the daily market.

He is one of the 68 merchants, who had occupied the shops at the market, after depositing some money with the corporation. The daily rent for his shop measuring 48 square feet is Rs. 31.

“I am unable to remit the daily rent and have given up the trade altogether for the past few weeks. Of the 68 shops, only a dozen traders have been operating at the market, that too without any prospects,” he adds.

At the Sattara street, he used to engage at least five labourers to make garlands. “The wage per garland varies between Rs. 40 and Rs. 45 a piece,” he says.

Only small traders have occupied the shops at daily flower market.

Seera Kathan, senior trader.

Anti-encroachment drive has forced us to occupy this market.

K.Rajasekar, merchant

We expect that the market act as a bridge between commission agents and flower traders.

E. Malayali, president, Srirangam Pushpa Thozhilalar Sangam

My long wait for a prospective business at the daily market has come a cropperS.

Muthukannu, trader

Business Standard

Onion prices hover around Rs 60; peas soars to Rs 100

Due to heavy rains in Himachal, Punjab and Haryana, the price of tomato too had jumped to around Rs 40 per kg as against Rs 20-30 a few days back



Onion prices continued to hover around Rs 60 per kg across retail markets in Punjab and Haryana, while peas jumped to Rs 80-100 per kg.

After witnessing a steep hike from Rs 30 per kg a fortnight back, onion prices have been hovering around Rs 60 per kg for the past few days, traders said today.

They said it was not just the price of onion, which was in short supply from source point, adversely hitting the common man's budget, but many other vegetables too had become expensive.

Due to heavy rains in Himachal Pradesh and many parts of Punjab and Haryana during the past few days, the price of tomato too had jumped to around Rs 40 per kg as against Rs 20-30 a few days back.

The prices of peas have soared to Rs 80-100 per kg as against Rs 50-60 on Thursday, they said.

Cauliflower prices have climbed sharply from Rs 40-50 per kg to Rs 80 per kg.

Lady finger, which was readily available for around Rs 30 per kg just a few days back, is now selling at Rs 50 per kg. The prices of gourd had jumped from Rs 25 per kg to Rs 40-Rs 50 per kg. Brinjal, too, has become expensive at Rs 40-Rs 50 per kg.

Ginger prices, meanwhile, continued to hover around Rs 50 for 250 gram.

Among the fruits, prices of apples had come down sharply after abundant supplies have reached the markets from Himachal Pradesh and J&K.

A good quality apple from Himachal is available here for Rs 50-Rs 60 per kg as against earlier Rs 100-Rs 120 per kg.

However, as the season of king of fruits - mango - is nearing its end, the prices of many of its varieties have started to soar.

Vidarbha, West MP get highest rain



As the southwest monsoon enters the last leg of its four-month journey, 2013 will be remembered as one of the best years in overall quantum and distribution of rainfall across India. More than expected rain so far have pushed up kharif sowing in a big way, which will not only add its bit to gross domestic product (GDP) growth but blunt inflationary pressures.

If the intensity is maintained, India Meteorological Department (IMD) officials are hopeful the country might get more than 100 per cent of long period average (LPA) rains against the forecast of 98 per cent of LPA. Normal rainfall is 96-104 per cent of LPA, which is the average of rain received in the last 50 years, estimated at 890 millimetres.

"The trend is more or less on course for having good rain during the remaining part of the monsoon," D S Pai, director of Long Range Forecast in IMD told Business Standard. If the forecast comes correct, rainfall in 2013 will be among the best in the past decade.

The rains entered India on its normal arrival day, June 1 and thereafter has maintained a stupendous run across most states, barring some parts of the eastern and north-eastern areas.

In June, the country received 32 per cent more rain than normal, a record in itself. The last time June rains were better than this year's was in 2001, when rainfall in the month all over India was 36 per cent more than normal. In July, too, the country received 306.2 millimetres of rainfall, six per cent more than normal. So far in August, the rains have been 271.4 millimetres, which is four per cent more than the full-month normal. All over the country, rainfall was 14 per cent more than normal between June 1 and August 17. Except for the northeastern states and some parts of Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal, the southwest monsoon has been excellent this time. Vidarbha, West Madhya Pradesh, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Telangana, Jammu and Kashmir and West Rajasthan had the most torrential rain till Saturday. In Vidarbha, which witnessed a drought last year, rainfall has been a whopping 70 per cent more than normal so far.

Rains have been 67 per cent more than normal in west Madhya Pradesh and 49 per cent in Telangana till August 17, data released by IMD showed. Arunachal Pradesh, with 41 per cent less than normal rainfall, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura with similar shortfall and Assam with 35 per cent less than normal rainfall have been the driest areas so far in this southwest monsoon.



However, normal rains in the northeast are much more than other parts of the country. "The total quantum of rainfall in North-eastern states is much more than any other place, hence the shortfall does not mean that there have been no rains in the region," said a senior met

The strong showing of southwest monsoon has boosted sowing of kharif crops this year. Till last week, kharif crops have been sown in over 90 million hectares, which is almost 8-9 million hectares more than last year. In total, kharif crops are sown in around 108 million hectares.

The biggest gainers of this surge in monsoon have been rice, coarse cereals, oilseeds, cotton and pulses. Officials from the agriculture department said that if there is no major disruption in rains or prolonged dry period, India is on course to harvest a bumper crop.

This should come as good news to the government battling high inflation as production of pulses, which have a bearing on food inflation, and oil seeds, which impacts non-food primary goods inflation, is expected to be good. Production of vegetables, which pushed up wholesale price index-based inflation beyond the Reserve Bank of India's comfort zone in July, has also got a boost because of the good showers, experts said. Rise in agri production will marginally push up the GDP growth, which fell to a decade low of five per cent in 2011-12, and provide impetus to the industry by increasing the rural demand and inputs for use to the secondary sector. Production in the secondary sector of the economy (industrial sector) contracted for the second month in a row in July, 2013 year-on-year. Eighty-four major reservoirs in India are brimming with water because of the rains. According to the latest data from the Central Water Commission (CWC), water level in reservoirs is estimated to be 116.34 billion cubic metres, which is 145 per cent of last year's storage and 139 per cent of 10-year average storage. This should give a big boost to crop sowing in the following rabi crop, which relies largely on reservoirs and groundwater for its moisture. Going forward, too, the met office is confident that rainfall in the remaining days of August and in September will be normal at around 96 per cent of LPA. In September, India receives around 160 millimeters of rainfall out of the total 890 millimeters received in the full four-months. If that happens, 2013 will go down in history as one of the years witnessing the maximum rains.

THE HINDU Business Line

Excess rains may lead to lower coffee output this year

Coffee Board post-blossom forecast for 2013-14 projects 3.47 lakh tonnes output



Falling berries: A nine per cent increase over last year's 3.18 lakh tonnes.

New Delhi, Aug 18:

Excess rainfall in key coffee growing areas of Karnataka has hit plantations badly and growers expect the output to shrink by 10-30 per cent over initial crop estimates.

production hit

Heavy and continuous rainfall in coffee growing regions of Coorg, Chikmagalur and Hassan districts has triggered berry droppings and fungal disease black rot of coffee, which is seen affecting the production.

These three districts accounted for over 72 per cent of the country's coffee output of 3.18 lakh tonnes last year.

The Coffee Board in its post-blossom forecast for 2013-14 had projected an output of 3.47 lakh tonnes, a nine per cent increase over last year's 3.18 lakh tonnes.

The output of arabica, a milder and premium variety was projected to increase by 13 per cent to 1.11 lakh tonnes, while robusta was expected to grow 7.5 per cent at 2.36 lakh tonnes.

excess rains

“We expect the output to decline by about 20-30 per cent over the Coffee Board’s initial estimates as excess rains have caused damage to plantations,” said H.T. Mohankumar, General Secretary of Karnataka Growers Federation, in Sakleshpur of Hassan district.

KGF, which represents the small coffee growers in the State, estimates the 2013-14 crop at around 2.8 lakh tonnes.

lower output

“The continuing drizzle across the coffee growing areas has triggered black rot disease” Mohankumar added.

Anil Bhandari, a large coffee grower, said the arabica output will be lower by about 10,000-15,000 tonnes this year due to heavy infestation of white stem borer during April-May.

Also, the berry dropping due to excess rains in several pockets will bring down the robusta output by 15,000-20,000 tonnes.

“The overall output this year will barely touch around lakh lakh tonnes,” Bhandari said.

Coorg, Hassan

Officials at the Coffee Board admit that heavy rains this year have affected the plantations mainly in parts of Coorg and Hassan.

Though berry drop of 6-7 per cent is common during the monsoon period, this year it is slightly more.

However, officials said it is too early to estimate the losses as the monsoon rains are still continuing and will go on till end-September.

The Board normally comes out with post-monsoon estimates sometime in November every year.

According to the Indian Meteorological Department, the country has received 14 per cent excess rains till August 16, since the onset in June.

The south interior Karnataka, where most of the coffee growing regions fall, has received 30 per cent more rains this year.

Tomato arrivals may continue to improve



Karnal, Aug 18:

An increase in arrivals dragged tomato prices by Rs 200-500 a quintal on Sunday. Around 800 crates (of 25 kg each) of different varieties of tomatoes arrived at the Karnal vegetable market and were quoted at Rs 2,000-4,000. Around 1,300 crates of varieties such as Himsona and Hybrid were received in the markets of Karnal district.

Vikas Sachdeva, a trade expert, told *Business Line* that easy availability of stocks mainly pulled tomato prices down. Arrivals have improved over the last few days and it may increase gradually in the coming weeks. Arrivals are mainly from Kullu, Nashik and Solan, said Vikas Sachdeva.

Out of total arrivals, about five per cent stock was of low quality; around 35 per cent stock was of medium quality while about 60 per cent of total arrivals was of superior quality.

Prices of superior quality decreased by Rs 500 and quoted at Rs 3,800-4,000.

The prices of medium quality produce went down by Rs 300 and quoted at 2,900-3,000 while Low quality produce was at Rs 2,000-2,200, Rs 200 down from previous levels.

On Sunday, some 3-5 per cent the total arrival remained unsold.

According to the market experts, arrivals are likely to improve in the coming days while local arrivals may start by the end of September or in the first week of October.

Any major alteration in tomato prices is unlikely and it may continue to rule around current levels with marginal fluctuations, said Vikas Sachdeva.

Upsurge continues in futures, spot pepper

Kochi, Aug 18:

Pepper futures and the spot, were on the upward move last week on good demand amid tight availability. All the active contracts on the national exchange shot up last week. Similarly, spot prices soared to Rs 400 a kg for ungarbled and Rs 420 for garbled on the terminal market. Small processors were buying small quantities of low bulk density from the plains.

Tamil Nadu based dealers were active buying from Idukki farm grade pepper at Rs 400-405 depending upon the quality of the material.

Exporters who have imported 500 GL pepper at Rs 355 a kg were looking for high bulk density pepper at a premium for mixing with the imported material and re-exporting, they said.

In Tamil Nadu, Erode, Cumbum, Theni and Gudalur have become major pepper trading hubs because of tax benefits, they said.

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

All the active contracts last week increased on the NMCE.

Sept and Oct contracts went up by Rs 1,021 and Rs 1,459 respectively a quintal to Rs 42,970 and Rs 43,110. Total turn over decreased by two tonnes to 152 tonnes. Total open interest fell by 49 tonnes to 26 tonnes.

Spot prices moved up by Rs 900 a quintal last week on strong demand amid tight availability to close at Rs 40,000 (ungarbled) and Rs 42,0100 (MG 1).

In the international market, everybody was buying from Sri Lanka. Anticipating the arrival of Brazilian new crop in September, Indonesia started offering, said an overseas report.

Indian parity last weekend was at \$7,025 a tonne (c&f) for Europe and \$7,275 a tonne (c&f) for the US and remained out priced.

hindustantimes

Weather

Chennai 

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Rain: 0
Humidity: 66
Wind: normal

Monday, Aug 19

Max Min
33° | 26°

Sunrise: 05:56
Sunset: 06:28
Barometer: 1007

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Tuesday, Aug 20

Max Min
34° | 24°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday
Aug 21



33° | 25°
Cloudy

Thursday
Aug 22



34° | 24°
Overcast

Friday
Aug 23



33° | 24°
Overcast

Saturday
Aug 24




33° | 25°
Overcast

Sunday
Aug 25



33° | 25°
Overcast

Airport Weather

Chennai 

Chennai

Rain: 0 Sunrise: 05:56
Humidity: 66 Sunset: 06:28
Wind: normal Barometer: 1007





THE TIMES OF INDIA

Rains take heavy toll on cotton crop

BATHINDA: Hot and humid atmosphere during the sowing season and now the heavy rains, when the picking season is about to start. It is a double whammy for cotton farmers in south western Punjab. The accumulation of water in cotton farms after the rains in the past three days has damaged crop in Malwa region of Punjab. The farmers have been badly hit as the rains lashed the region when they were about to start picking of cotton. The cotton crop, which is in flowering stage, is the worst hit. Cotton was sown in about 5.3 lakh hectares in Punjab and as per farmers more than 20% cotton could be damaged due to heavy rains and water accumulation in farms. Widespread damage has been caused in Bathinda, Muktsar and Ferozepur districts of Punjab. The agriculture department officials termed the situation as not that serious but added that more rains could cause damage. "The rains in cotton belt of Bathinda, Muktsar, Ferozepur and Mansa have led to submerging of the cotton crop in many places at a time when it is ripening fast and plucking season was about to start," said Buta Singh, a farmer of Burjgill village in Bathinda. "I had sown cotton crop in 5 acres and due to heavy rains it has suffered extensive damage," claimed Mohinder Singh in Muktsar. Udekaran sarpanch Gurlab Singh said the cotton crop in about 5,000 acres has been damaged due to water-logging in the fields. Farmer union BKU Dakonda leader Manjit Singh and labourer union leader Lachman Singh Sewewala said as the cotton crop has seen extensive damage, the state government needs to order special girdawari to compensate the aggrieved farmers. Punjab agriculture department joint director Gurdial Singh said, "The damage to cotton crop due to rains is not widespread. The crop could have been damaged to some extent at places where it was in flowering stage or had ripened, but if more rains continue to lash the region it can cause damage."

Earlier during May, unfavourable hot and humid conditions had got the cotton leaves wilting.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Why popcorn business is booming in India, with high sales & margins and new investments



Nationwide regularised production, sales and profit data on the popcorn business is tougher to find than a Bollywood movie with a tragic ending.

NEW DELHI: Where, everyone is asking, is a business that's got some serious pop and crackle? With double-digit growth rates, new investments, great margins? If you are watching a movie, you are most likely munching on the answer. Popcorn, that eternal movie-time munchy, has become a sizzling business in India, as much of a slowdown-buster as movies are. Sales, say industry watchers, are growing 10% annually. Nationwide regularised production, sales and profit data on the popcorn business is tougher to find than a Bollywood movie with a tragic ending. But ET's close study of the popcorn economy produced enough evidence to support the claim that the business of heating corn kernels is, well, a hot new business.

Consider the following:

So high is the demand that despite a 56% Customs duty on quality imported corn (sourced mostly from the American continent), the two major popcorn players - Agro Tech Food, which has India rights for American company Con Agra's Act II brand, and Banaco Overseas - import around 23,000 tonnes annually. That makes a lot of multiplex-style popcorn tubs (35-120 gm) and microwavable popcorn packages (50-100 gm). Agro Tech didn't respond to ET's questions, though Banaco did. Agro Tech's import estimates are sourced from industry.



PVR, India's leading multiplex chain with 383 screens in 90 locations, sells on average 18,000 popcorn tubs daily. Popcorn sales are growing very fast, says Rahul Singh, senior VP, operations, PVR. Banaco's proprietor Vinod Kansal says 70% of multiplex revenues come from popcorn and soft drinks. Banaco supplies corn kernels to almost 80% of India's 500-plus multiplexes. You now know just the Khans can't keep movie halls going, they need the corn too.

The popcorn business has margins that the wildest movie script can't dream of. A bulk supplier of corn kernels, who did not wish to be identified, said the raw material is sold to movie halls for Rs 120-130 per kg. You buy, say, a 110 gm of popcorn tub in a multiplex for Rs 150. The retail price of popcorn is around Rs 1,500 a kg. Accounting for everything from equipment to labour to packaging costs, that's an eye-popping margin. Almost a similar kind of math applies to the microwavable variety of popcorn that retails for Rs 35 for 85 gm packs. Consumers are happily paying these prices, industry says, because India's love for this very American snack seems inexhaustible. The high demand/high margin popcorn business is inducing a major change in India's agriculture. Traditional Indian corn, used mostly in poultry and starch industries, is deemed unsuitable for popping kernels. But farmers are responding to the market. Total area under maize cultivation is 8.5 million hectare. Around 25% of corn produce goes to the food industry, but the share of popcorn-worthy corn (small-kernelled, flinty type corn with very low

starch content) is still small. But acreage devoted to popcorn-worthy corn is growing fast, says OP Yadav, director, Directorate of Maize Research, a government body. Popcorn-worthy corn grown around Bangalore is seeing 25-30% growth in acreage. This corn variety, experts say, will typically be cultivated in areas close to urban centres, partly because the popping strength of corn depends on good storage.
