

THE HINDU

Poultry farmer turns litter into light

In the poultry hub of Namakkal in Tamil Nadu, almost every farmer owns at least 2,000 birds, grown for egg and meat, but none would take a second look at their droppings though, as an entrepreneur among them says, the litter “holds the key” to electricity generation.

First of its kind

“If the total poultry litter in the district is collected daily [6,000 tonnes] and processed, nearly 16 MW of power an hour can be generated, with 1,000 tonnes of manure and 10,000 litres of liquid biofertilizer as by-products,” says Salai Sivaprakasam, executive director of Subhashree Bioenergies (P) Ltd.

The plant, built on 60 acres at Goundampalayam, Tiruchengode, is touted as the country’s first power project that extracts energy from poultry excrement. It started with a capacity of 2.5 MW, later scaled up to 3.76 MW.

The bird muck is collected daily from several places and brought to the factory, where it is fed into a processing unit. It emits methane gas that is converted into electricity with a patented technology. The slurry, generated as residue, is sold as manure and liquid bio-applications to farmers.

At a time when Tamil Nadu is reeling under severe power shortage, “continuous generation is not that big a problem. It is easy, and we have been doing it since 2006,” says Mr. Sivaprakasam.

The plant has been recognised by the Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy as a demonstration project for sustainable clean energy.

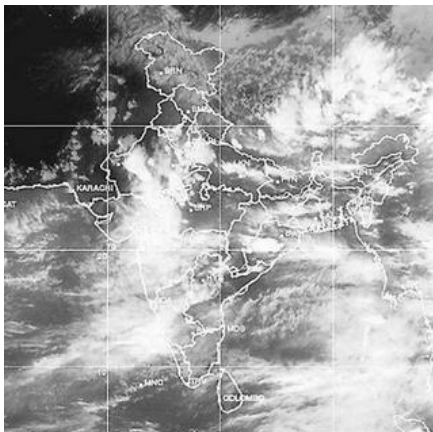
The entire plant, save the engines, is indigenous and is one among the 11 projects worldwide approved by the United Nations Development Programme. It has also been declared a Clean Development Project under the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, says Mr. Sivaprakasam.

So far around 54 lakh units (kW) of power, worth Rs. 2 crore, has been generated and sold to the government, with 10 per cent reserved for the company.

“The company has also got approval from the Union government under the Clean Development Mechanism (a Kyoto Protocol component) since the plant helps to trap greenhouse gases that would otherwise be emitted by the litter left in the open, says Mr. Sivaprakasam.

(Mr. Salai Sivaprakasam can be contacted on 94433 44737, Subhashree Bioenergies (P) Ltd., Goundampalayam, Tiruchengode, Namakkal District, Tamil Nadu-637205.)

weather



	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	38	27	1	156
New Delhi (Sfd)	38	27	2	121
Chandigarh	37	26	1	276
Hissar	41	28	0	101
Bhuntar	34	19	9	146
Shimla	24	15	54	374
Jammu	38	28	0	101
Srinagar	28	16	0	55
Amritsar	38	28	0	139
Patiala	38	26	6	151
Jaipur	36	27	2	172
Udaipur	34	25	4	97
Allahabad	30	27	2	430
Lucknow	32	24	11	337
Varanasi	33	26	17	248
Dehradun	32	23	26	1138
Agartala	33	26	4	403
Ahmedabad	36	28	0	107
Bangalore	28	20	3	176
Bhubaneshwar	29	25	1	300
Bhopal	26	22	37	531
Chennai	38	26	tr	165
Guwahati	35	26	1	302
Hyderabad	34	22	1	204
Kolkata	33	28	0	405
Mumbai	28	26	4	990
Nagpur	29	24	45	502

Patna	35	27	10	138
Pune	28	23	5	304
Thiruvananthapuram	30	23	13	528
Imphal	27	22	9	148
Shillong	25	18	0	379

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

MONSOON ACTIVE

Southwest Monsoon has been active in east Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The axis of Monsoon trough at MSL passes through Bikaner, Jaipur, centre of low pressure area and thence southeast wards.

RAINFALL: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at most places over Uttarakhand, at many places over Himachal Pradesh, east Rajasthan and east Uttar Pradesh, at a few places over west Uttar Pradesh and at isolated places over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (4 cm and above)
HIMACHAL PRADESH : Shimla and Arki 5 each and Nagrota Surian 4, **PUNJAB:** Moga 4, **EAST RAJASTHAN:** Bhinay and Chipabarod 7 each, Nasirabad 6, Ajmer, Arai, Talera, Manoharthana and Malpura 5 each and Srinagar, Chabra, Mandalgarh, Chattorgarh, Dug and Todaraising 4 each, **EAST UTTAR PRADESH:** Sidhauri 6, Ramnagar and Bhatpurwaghat 5 each and Fatehgarh, Dalmau and Neemsar 4 each, **WEST UTTAR PRADESH:** Moth and Kasgang 4 each and **UTTARAKHAND:** Tehri 6.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 05th July 2013: Rain/thundershowers may occur at many places over Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and east Rajasthan. Rain/thundershowers may occur at many places over Himachal Pradesh, at a few places over Haryana and at one or two

places over south Rajasthan during next 48 hours and increase thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over rest of the region.

HEAVY RAINFALL WARNING: Heavy to very rainfall may occur at one or two places over east Rajasthan during next 72 hours. Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places on 04th and Heavy to very rainfall may occur at a few places on 05th over Uttarakhand. Heavy to very rainfall may occur at a few places over west Uttar Pradesh on 05th. Heavy to very rainfall may occur at a few places over Himachal Pradesh on 05th. Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places over Haryana and southwest Rajasthan on 05th.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 05th July 2013: Generally cloudy sky. Light rain/thundershowers may occur in some areas.

Nabard's largesse takes rural poor for ride

New evidence has revealed a pattern of grants by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) to dubious NGOs that are profiting from the rural poor instead of uplifting them. These NGOs have all been found to be connected to those managing Nabard's affairs, either in the board room or in the Finance Ministry.

Janhit Foundation in Lucknow and its banking partner, Shivalik Mercantile Cooperative Bank (SMCB), which are linked to the former Secretary, Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance, D.K. Mittal, — who, in his official capacity, was a strong influence in Nabard's decisions until recently — have been found to be the biggest beneficiaries.

Investigation reveals that Mr. Mittal's brother, Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Mittal is on the Board of Shivalik Bank. During his tenure as DFS Secretary, Nabard, Mr. Mittal

permitted urban cooperative banks, which are under Reserve Bank of India's supervisory jurisdiction, to promote and finance Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) in rural areas. Shivalik Bank went on to become the lone beneficiary of this concession.

Of total grants of Rs 7.88 crore disbursed to 303 NGOs in Uttar Pradesh in 2012-13, Janhit Foundation alone secured Rs. 6.01 crore. A meagre Rs. 1.87 crore, accounting for an average grant size of between Rs. 8,000 to Rs. 80,000, was disbursed to the remaining NGOs.

Janhit-Shivalik's abnormal commercial appetite is laid bare by a Nabard Inter Office Memorandum, which documents the fact that Shivalik Bank mobilises the savings of the poor at a meagre interest rate of 3-4 per cent while lending this money to an urban clientele at a whopping 24 per cent.

Despite its lucrative business model, loans to its associated and poor self help groups (SHGs), which are collectively called Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) – are disbursed at a high 18 per cent, while its group members bear a staggering 24 per cent interest rate, including the 6 per cent service charge paid to Janhit.

“This arrangement has been made without consulting Nabard and the clients concerned,” the memorandum states. It further observes that “99 per cent of the groups promoted and credit linked has been with SMCB only, limiting the clients' choices with such overdependence on one bank” and that the members are not even aware that they are being charged unnaturally high interest rates.

Documents and Nabard file notings relating to requests for grant of funds by Janhit reveal an inexplicable urgency to fasttrack the approval process and release funds to the NGO, admitting that the “office was kept open on Saturday in view of the urgency of the matter.”

Overlooking this exploitation, as well the serious discrepancies documented in the claims made by Janhit, funds were still released to the NGO. “Photographs, as an evidence of conduct of programmes not submitted for all the programmes for which the claims have been made. The dates of the photographs and the date of the programme conducted differ. NGO has been advised. Name of the district also does not match with the claim.... There seems to be a contradiction in the claims as the NGO has submitted claims for training of Group leaders of SHGs, which far exceeds number of SHG formed by the agency so far in the district. If SHGs have not been formed, training for their group leaders cannot be conducted.”

The memorandum says “the quality of group functioning, viz, book keeping, credit decision by groups and other operations needs close attention of the partner NGO.”

While charging crippling interest rates from the rural poor, being an urban mercantile bank, Shivalik Bank, on lends those funds to an urban clientele at lucrative interest rates, further reversing the flow of funds from rural to urban areas. The Nabard report itself acknowledges that while its performance in mopping up rural savings is high (saving linkages were 64 per cent in Unnao and 100 per cent & 76 per cent in projects of Saharanpur in U.P.), it is very slow to provide loans to the groups (credit linkages were 2.5 per cent in Unnao and 8.6 per cent & 55 per cent in Saharanpur).

Responding to detailed questions by *The Hindu*, emailed to its Chairman Prakash Bakshi, Nabard said it “is working with 460 NGOs, including Janhit Foundation for promotion of SHGs in U.P. Janhit Foundation has been partnering with Nabard since 2010.”

Documents additionally establish a clear rise in Janhit's fortunes since 2010, after Mr. Bakshi took over as Chairman in June 2010 and Mr. D.K. Mittal took over as Secretary, DFS. Nabard granted Rs 5.85 crore to Janhit within 18 months of Mr. Mittal's tenure (August 2011 to January 2013). The discovery of other major sources of funding to Janhit from grants and contributions under Corporate Social Responsibility schemes of companies like IOC, ONGC, Petronet, SAIL and NHPC, in the Nabard report, are further co-terminus with Mr. Mittal's stint in the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Department of Commerce and other ministries.

Mr. Mittal did not respond to either SMSs or a detailed email sent by *The Hindu* .

Conflict of interest

Another case of conflict of interest arises from grant of funds by Nabard to the Centre for Collective Development (CCD), Hyderabad. The NGO, which provides support to farmers engaged in groundnut cultivation in Andhra Pradesh, has IIM Bangalore Professor and Independent Director, Nabard, Trilochan Sastry as its secretary.

Interestingly, the CCD, which has a turnover of just Rs 3 crore, was sanctioned soft loans with a subsidy for two projects worth Rs 2 crore each during 2011-12 and 2012-13 for procurement and marketing of agricultural commodities by cooperatives.

Nabard told *The Hindu* , "Professor Sastry came on the Board of Nabard in October 2011. As per information with us, he is an 'Authorised Signatory' for the NGO and does not draw any financial benefits from it. A loan was sanctioned to the NGO for 2012-13 by the Projects Sanctioning Committee and the fact that Professor Sastry is associated with the NGO was brought to the notice of the

Board of Directors of Nabard and duly recorded. All these loans were sanctioned at an interest of 10% per annum as per UPNRM guidelines. Nabard has no business relation with the CCD based at Hyderabad”.

When contacted, Professor Sastry did not deny that the CCD was getting funds from Nabard but stated that he “agreed to join the Board because of some initiatives which one is trying to get Nabard to take that will help all small and marginal farmers, not the CCD”.

Regarding the conflict of interest represented by his being a member of the Nabard Board, Professor Sastry said, “I read through the documents and did not find any conflict of interest since there is no personal or organisational financial benefit to the CCD. Even if you get technical, the written terms show there is no conflict of interest. Then I informed Nabard. They also asked the Ministry of Finance and they cleared it.”

Kharif farming in full swing



A farmer preparing his land for the new crop on the outskirts of Hanamkonda in Warangal district.– Photo : M. Murali

In spite of the week-long dry spell prevailing in the State, the area sown during the kharif season has gone up to 23.3 lakh hectares — 29 per cent of the season’s normal of 81.12 lakh ha.

Sowing of cotton, soyabean, maize and red-gram have picked up though transplantation of paddy remains sluggish all over the State, including rain-fed areas in Krishna, Guntur, East Godavari and West Godavari districts.

Into its 30th day, the South-West monsoon has ensured excess rainfall to Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam, Nizamabad, Medak, Warangal, Karimnagar, Adilabad, Mahabubnagar and Khammam districts, but did not benefit Visakhapatnam, Nellore and Anantapur which reported deficit. The remaining districts received normal rainfall.

A larger area would have been under crop but for the fact that no significant inflows reached the reservoirs of major projects across the Godavari, Krishna, Penna and Vamsadhara.

They are devoid of any inflows because of lack of rains in the catchment areas lying in the neighbouring States.

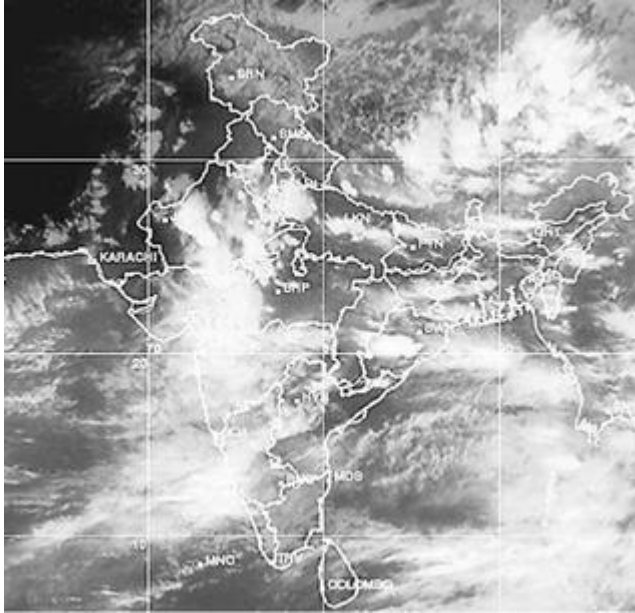
Whatever meagre inflows being received now in the Krishna river, were being absorbed by the

Almatti dam. Andhra Pradesh has to wait for some more time for water to flow into Jurala, Srisailam and Nagarjunasagar. The crest-gates of Almatti will be lifted only after full storage (129 tmcft) is achieved in its reservoir.

All the 15 major projects in the State, including Srisailam and Nagarjunasagar, now account for a combined storage of 243 tmcft and this was 641 tmcft short of their full capacity which is 884 tmcft.

There is no improvement in the storage of Sriramsagar as it was getting a negligible inflow of 267 cusecs.

Weather



ANDHRA PRADESH

Anantapur	35	24	0	100
Arogyavaram	32	21	0	77
Bapatla	39	28	0	125
Calingapatnam	33	28	5	92
Gannavaram	39	28	0	183
Hanamkonda	35	25	0	160
Hyderabad AP	34	22	1	204
Kakinada	36	29	0	90
Kavali	38	28	0	29
Kurnool	34	23	1	59
Mahabubnagar	33	23	1	173
Machilipatnam	40	28	0	119
Narasapur	37	28	0	158
Nellore	38	29	0	102

Nizamabad	33	22	73	298
Ongole	39	28	0	42
Ramagundam	35	24	8	264
Tirupathi AP	39	25	4	59
Tuni	40	26	2	77
Vizag AP	38	29	0	97
Vizag	33	29	0	89

KARNATAKA

Agumbe	23	17	268	2174
Bengaluru AP	29	20	tr	156
Bengaluru	28	20	3	180
Bagalkote	—	—	—	—
Belgaum AP	25	20	8	155
Bellary	32	24	4	155
Bijapur	31	23	0	89
Chitradurga	27	20	5	102
Chickmagalur	25	19	22	125
Chintamani	29	20	1	—
Gadag	29	19	tr	105
Gulbarga	33	22	1	111
Hassan	31	22	6	189
Honavar	27	23	143	1249
Karwar	28	24	92	1135
Madikeri	21	16	67	988
Mangalore AP	28	23	58	1565
Mysore	27	19	2	67
Mandya	28	20	1	30
Panambur	28	24	38	1556

Raichur	35 24 0	40
Shirali	26 24 73	1468

KERALA

Alappuzha	30 22 41	1117
Kannur	28 23 40	1819
Kochi AP	32 21 56	1373
Kottayam	29 22 74	1064
Kozhikode	29 23 83	1257
Punalur	28 23 91	855
Thiruvanantha		
-puram AP	30 23 8	565
Thiruvanantha		
-puram City	30 23 13	527
Vellanikkara	29 22 25	1111

TAMIL NADU

Adiramapattinam	34 27 0	39
Coimbatore AP	31 22 tr	17
Coonoor	21 15 8	60
Cuddalore	37 27 tr	116
Chennai AP	38 26 tr	165
Chennai	38 27 tr	35
Dharmapuri	33 21 tr	1
Kanyakumari	30 24 tr	138
Karaikal	38 28 0	81
Kodaikanal	18 12 2	126
Madurai AP	38 27 0	7
Nagapattinam	38 28 0	4
Palayamkottai	32 27 0	15

Pamban	34 28 0	1
Parangipettai	38 25 8	43
Puducherry	38 25 3	93
Salem	35 24 0	140
Thanjavur	38 29 0	31
Tiruchi AP	38 27 0	4
Tirupattur	33 22 0	44
Tondi	33 27 tr	20
Tuticorin	35 25 0	5
Ooty	17 11 7	146
Valparai	21 18 81	1566
Vellore	36 25 6	150
LAKSHADWEEP		
Amini Divi	30 27 3	510
Minicoy	31 27 0	415
Kavarathi	30 27 3	356
OTHER STATIONS		
Kolkata (Alipore)	33 28 tr	405
Mumbai	28 26 4	989
New Delhi	38 27 2	121

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (trace) and total rainfall in mm since June 01, 2013.

RAIN LIKELY IN COASTAL A.P.

CHENNAI: Southwest monsoon has been vigorous over coastal and south interior Karnataka and active over Kerala and Telangana.

Rainfall occurred at most places over coastal Karnataka and Kerala, at many places over south interior Karnataka, Lakshadweep and Telangana and at a few

places over north interior Karnataka. Isolated rainfall occurred over Tamil Nadu, coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema.

The chief amounts of rainfall recorded in centimetres are:

Tamil Nadu: Valparai PTO (Coimbatore dt.) 8.

Kerala : Vythiri (Wayanad dt.) 18, Irikkur (Kannur dt.) 17, Taliparamba (Kannur dt.) 14.

Andhra Pradesh : Bheemgal (Nizamabad dt.) 9, Nizamabad (Nizamabad dt.) 7, Navipet (Nizamabad dt.) 6.

Karnataka : Kadra (Uttara Kannada dt.) 36, Nilkund (Uttara Kannada dt.) 35, Kollur (Udupi dt.) 30, Hosanagara (Shimoga dt.) 29.




FORECAST (Valid until Friday Morning): Rain or thundershowers would occur at most places over coastal Karnataka and Kerala and at many places over interior Karnataka, Telangana and Lakshadweep and at a few places over coastal Andhra Pradesh. Isolated rain or thundershowers may occur over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Rayalaseema.

Outlook For Subsequent Two Days: No significant change.

Rice scheme to be launched in Hassan on July 10

K. Rameshwarappa, Deputy Director, Food and Civil Supplies, has said that H.C. Mahadevappa, Public Works Minister, will launch the scheme to distribute rice at Re 1 a kilo for below poverty line here on July 10. MLAs would hold similar programmes in their constituencies on July 11, he said on Monday. K.P. Mohan Raj, Deputy Commissioner, said fair price shop owners and gram panchayats had a major role in making it a success

Price forecast for maize, small onions, gingelly, groundnuts

FORECAST (in Rs.)		
Maize 1,400 a quintal	Groundnuts 60 a kg	Small onions 45 a kg
		

The Domestic and Export Market Intelligence Cell (DEMIC) of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has forecast price for kharif crops, for which the sowing season in Tamil Nadu is June-September (Adipattam).

Harvest

The harvest period for these crops is October-December.

DEMIC has said that the price of maize will be around Rs. 1,400 a quintal during the harvest season. With arrivals from Karnataka to enter the Tamil Nadu market in August, the existing price of Rs. 1,500 a quintal is expected to drop.

Sowing

The sowing of kharif crop is progressing in all the major maize growing States of the country, and expected normal monsoon will increase the maize areas in the current season.

Red gingelly is expected to be priced between Rs. 72 a quintal and Rs. 76 a quintal during the harvest period. Nearly 70 per cent of gingelly is cultivated during the kharif season in Tamil Nadu.

While white gingelly, which is highly priced, is preferred for export, red gingelly is used for oil and black gingelly is used for confectionaries.

The price forecast was made by DEMIC based on the analysis made at the Sivagiri Regulated Market.

Groundnut pods in the Sevur Regulated Market of Tirupur are expected to be priced around Rs. 46 a kg. Kernels are expected to be in the range of Rs. 58 a kg to Rs. 60 a kg in the Tindivanam area. More than 60 per cent of the rainfed groundnut is grown in the Adipattam season.

Farm gate price of small onion is expected to be around Rs. 45 a kg during the harvest period.

Quality

The best quality bulb is round shaped with a diameter of 27mm and above, and the colour is pink to red.

From April to June this year, the farm gate price of shallots was between Rs. 45 a kg and Rs. 80 a kg because of lesser arrivals.

Arrivals from Karnataka have started and will continue till end of this July, but their quality is not good due to damage caused by rain.

Based on this price forecast, farmers are asked to make their sowing decisions. For details, contact DEMIC on 0422-2431405.

FORECAST

Maize:Rs. 1,400 a quintal

Groundnuts:Rs. 60 a kg

Small onions:Rs. 45 a kg

'Allot money for irrigation scheme'

The Athikadavu-Avinashi Nilathadi Neer Serivootu Thitta Porattakuzhu has urged the State Government to allocate money for the implementation of the groundwater-cum-irrigation scheme.

The Porattakuzhu or struggle committee has been fighting for the implementation of the scheme, which, it says, will benefit Coimbatore, Tirupur, and Erode districts.

In a release, the committee says that following the recent rains in The Nilgiris, the Pilloor Dam has started overflowing. This has caused flooding in River Bhavani. If the situation continues, the Bhavani Sagar Dam will get filled up and the surplus water will flow into the sea.

In the last 15 years, on five occasions more than 100 thousand million cubic feet surplus water was drained into the sea.

Accent on rainwater harvesting

A seminar on rainwater harvesting (RWH) for panchayat presidents' was held at the Collectorate on Tuesday. All the 333 panchayat presidents participated. They were given a handbook on implementation of rainwater harvesting in individual households in all villages. P. Mandhirasalam, Project Director, DRDA, K. Viswanathan, Executive Engineer, TWAD Board among others participated, according to a press release that was issued here by the district administration.

More beneficiaries to receive subsidy under poultry scheme

The government has proposed to increase the number of beneficiaries under its Poultry Development Scheme in the current fiscal .

The scheme introduced during 212-13 entailed frontend subsidies to 35 farmers each from select districts of the State.

Following the good response for the scheme implemented under the Department of Animal Husbandry, the number of beneficiaries has been increased to 240 in each of the 17 select districts for the current fiscal.

The scheme seeks to cover 4,080 beneficiaries, who will be provided with 25 per cent frontend subsidy and 25 per cent backend subsidy.

The frontend subsidy of Rs.29,250 will be provided by the State government for establishing poultry farm sheds, purchase of country chicks, and fodder.

The remaining 25 per cent subsidy (alternatively 33 per cent for Adi Dravidars) would be provided by the NABARD.

The beneficiaries would be offered five-day certification training at Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University.

The Animal Husbandry department would provide vaccinations and medicines for chicks.

Individuals are eligible for selection under the scheme only once.

Since the growth period of chicks is 12-14 weeks, the scheme has been conceived in a way that country-bird breeders may be able to rear over 250 birds in three rounds of 14 weeks each, the department release said.

Interested persons may apply through department of animal husbandry or the nearest nationalised bank or primary agricultural cooperative society.

Farmers would have to be credit worthy to avail loans from the bank. Farmers are requested to apply by July 15, the release said.

- *5-day certification training at Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University*

- *Frontend subsidy of Rs.29,250 to be provided by the State government*

Inflow to Mettur Dam reduced

The inflow to Mettur Dam reduced from 18,327 cusecs on Tuesday to 8,466 cusecs on Wednesday. PWD officials said the water level in the dam rose from 44.78 feet to 45.88 feet against its full capacity of 120 feet. The current storage has increased from 14.682 thousand million cubic feet (tmcft) to 15.316 tmcft against the full storage of 93 tmcft. They added that the outflow was maintained at 1,001 cusecs for drinking water purpose.

Mettur level

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 46.12 feet on Wednesday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 5,995 cusecs and the discharge 1,000 cusecs.

Training in banana fibre craft



Irula tribe members being trained in banana fibre craft at Vazhaithottam, near Udthagamandalam. — Photo: M. Sathyamoorthy

The Irula tribal people of the Nilgiris were provided primary level training in banana fibre craft from March 22 to June 22.

According to a release, the training was conducted by C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation with financial assistance from Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED). It was to provide an alternative income to the tribal people whose only source of income was from selling minor forest produce from the nearby forest area.

Paintings

The Foundation had already conducted training programmes on Kota pottery and Kurumba painting in 2011-12.

The training on banana fibre craft included making of coin purse, wall hanging, table mats, pooja baskets, hats, pen holders, flower vase, vegetable baskets, fruit baskets, floor mats, dining table mats, and tea coasters.

The valediction of the training will be held on Thursday at Vazhathottam village.

Collector of the Nilgiris Archana Patnaik will be the guest of honour.

Coconut: modified insurance policy likely

With few takers for the Agriculture Insurance Company's (AIC) Coconut Palm Insurance Scheme (CPIS) in the State and other parts of the country, the Coconut Development Board (CDB) has proposed to bring out a modified insurance policy.

The scheme, which was introduced during 2009-10, has negligible number of buyers in the State.

Only 694 growers opted for the scheme covering 95,746 palms covered under the scheme in 2012-13, according to Agriculture Insurance Company and Coconut Development Board officials here.

Agriculture Insurance Company launched the scheme for 18 coconut growing districts of the State to provide insurance to coconut growers against natural calamities.

A few number of growers in Tiptur, Honnali, Davangere, Harappanahalli, Jagalur and Challakere opted for the scheme.

The scheme entered the fifth year this year (2013-14) and the Coconut Development Board has proposed some modifications to the scheme to the Union Ministry of Agriculture, to increase area coverage well as to make it cost effective. It was proposed to include areas or regions under the scheme to ensure coverage to all palms or entire palm plantations, the officials said.

The coverage of one or two palms was not cost effective for the Coconut Development Board or the Agriculture Insurance Company since assessing the

damage to a few palms was time consuming and financially unviable, the officials said.

The other suggested modifications include the extension of the scheme for three years instead of one, and increase the insurance amount from Rs. 600 per coconut palm to Rs. 2,000.

“It is economically unviable to us to assess the insurance claims of one or two trees in some remote villages. Areas or region-wise coverage of all palms will make the scheme cost effective,” the officials said.

Coconut trees are spread over 4.86 lakh hectares in Karnataka. While the annual production is 3,056 million tonnes of coconuts, the productivity per hectare is 7,100 coconuts.

Insure crops, farmers told

The Department of Agriculture has appealed to farmers to utilise the national crop insurance scheme for current kharif crops by paying the premium before August 31.

Farmers who have taken loans to cultivate notified crops must register their crops under the scheme, while other growers who have planted notified crops can also avail themselves of the scheme.

Extension

Joint Director of Agriculture V.J. Patil said here on Wednesday that the government, which launched the scheme in 2000, extended it for the year 2013

with the objective of provide insurance coverage to crops in the event of failure of the notified crop due to natural calamities, pests or diseases.

He said the government expected farmers to adopt progressive farming practices to improve productivity and stabilise their income from agricultural produce.

Hoblis

The hoblis covered under the scheme are Athani taluk — Anantpur, Athani, Kagwad, Telsang; Bailhongal taluk — Bailhongal, Kittur, Nesargi; Belgaum taluk — Belgaum, Hirebagewadi, Kakti, Uchagaon; Chikkodi taluk — Chikkodi, Nagarmunolli, Nippani, Sadalga; Gokak taluk — Arabhavi, Gokak, Koujalgi; Hukkeri taluk — Sankeshwar, Hukkeri, Yamkanmardi; Khanapur taluk — Bidi, Gunji, Jamboti, Khanapur; Raibag taluk — Kudachi, Raibag; Ramdurg taluk — K. Chandargi, Katkol, Mudkavi, Sureban; and Saundatti taluk — Munavalli, Murgod, Soundatti, Yergatti.

The crops in irrigated and rain-fed areas covered under the scheme are paddy, sesame (til), jowar, ragi, navani, soyabean, avare, black gram, green gram, toor, horse gram (hurali), sunflower, groundnut, bajra and maize.

Sowing

Sowing operations are still in progress in the district. So far, against the target of 6,65,200 ha (3,53,630 ha under irrigation and 3,11,570 ha rain-fed) set for the kharif sowing this year, sowing has been completed in 4,24,046 ha, which accounts for 63.7 per cent of the target.

Sowing has been highest with 93.9 per cent coverage of the targeted area of 61,650 ha in Hukkeri taluk and the lowest with 31.9 per cent of 46,875 ha in Ramdurg taluk.

Coverage in Athani taluk accounted for 81.5 per cent of 76,835 ha; in Raibag taluk 72 per cent of 51,595 ha; in Soundatti taluk 35.1 per cent of 73,150 ha; in Khanapur taluk 68.9 per cent of 44,350 ha; in Bailhongal taluk 71.9per cent of 72,950 ha; in Belgaum taluka 61.4per cent of 52,050 ha; in Chikodi taluka 61.5per cent of 97,795 ha and in Gokak taluka 57.5per cent of 88,000 ha.

Officials said there was no shortage of seeds or fertilizers for distribution among the farmers, even as they warned traders against selling poor quality seeds or charging more than the maximum retail price printed on seed bags.

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- *Farmers told to adopt progressive farming techniques to improve productivity*
 - *Around 63.7 per cent of sowing target in 6,65,200 ha has been met so far*

Pilot project to be taken up to promote use of millets

Farmers to be trained in their storage, and sale

The district administration and farmers' associations will take up a pilot project here to promote the use of minor millets.

Farmers will be trained in their cultivation, storage, and sale, and farmwomen and self-help groups in the use of millets in their daily diet. The millets will also be served in anganwadi centres.

Besides, extension officers of the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) will promote cultivation of micro grain by training farmers and by setting up demonstration farms.

Deputy Commissioner P.C. Jaffer said it was the members of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha who came up with the idea.

Millets would be introduced on an experimental basis in anganwadi centres, where some villages would act as control groups and some as conditioned groups.

“We will study its effect on malnourished children here and extend the programme if it is beneficial, he said.

“This would address malnutrition and benefit farmers by reducing the cost of cultivation and providing an assured market for these grain. Importantly, it would pave the way for conserving traditional crop varieties,” Dr. Jaffer said.

Grant

The KVK will get Rs. 10-lakh grant for promoting cultivation of crops such as sajjje, navane, save and ragi, among others.

Resource persons from the Zaheerabad-based Deccan Development Society (DDS) will help the district administration in the project. The DDS has been promoting millets for nearly three decades.

They have succeeded in forming women’s groups that save native seeds, store grain and prepare processed food prepared from these grains. It also runs the Café Ethnic, a restaurant in Zaheerabad, that uses only millets.

Founder of DDS, P.V. Sateesh, held consultations with officials and farmers in the district. The society has offered to train SHG members in preparing food items from millets that could be supplied to anganwadis. “Seed companies are slowly enslaving farmers. If we have to come out of their clutches, we have to look for such innovative interventions,” Veerabhushan Nandagave, KRRS leader, said.

First, the names of farmers who had been growing millets would be listed out. Then, more farmers would be motivated to take to millets.

“We will also organise field trips to millet farms and to the DDS office in Zaheerabad,” Mr. Nandagave added.

- *Extension officers of Krishi Vigyan Kendra to promote cultivation of micro grain by training farmers*

- *Farmwomen and self-help groups will be made to use millets in their daily diet*

Dehydrated sour fruits appear in the market

The local markets in Mangalore are sometimes more interesting than the supermarkets. They reflect the season’s produce and with the current season, the fare for sale in some shops has already changed.

With the monsoon, the shops in the State Bank area, near the fish market, have at least three new products on display in gunny sacks. They are not new to people familiar with the products but they are novel to those who are used to seeing the regular fare the rest of the year.

All the three “products” are dehydrated fruits, sour in taste and used like tamarind, in particular to cook fish, said Varadaraj Nayak, owner of a shop in the area.

They are *Jarigepuli* (*Garcinia morella*), *Ontepuli* in Kannada or *Kodampuli* in Malayalam (*Garcinia cambogia*), and *manthupuli*. Mr. Nayak said that *jarigepuli* is harvested twice in a year, in February and March, and in November. It is bought only by people from Mumbai in Mangalore and that Mangaloens hardly buy it.

He did not disclose the wholesale price he buys it at and instead said that the price depends “entirely on demand and supply”.

According to him, *Kodampuli* or *Ontepuli* in Kannada is grown in the forests of the Western Ghats and appears only during the rains.

He buys it at a wholesale rate from traders in the Bunder area for Rs. 160 a kg, mainly for buyers from Kerala. There are buyers for *Hesalupuli* in Mangalore, which is grown locally. He sells all three at a retail price with a 10 per cent margin.

He has been selling the fruits for the past 38 years, ever since he took over the shop from his father.

Sumithra Karanth, a Mangalore resident, said she believed the fruits are healthier substitutes for tamarind.

She said, “They are extremely sour and are added to vegetarian dishes as well.”

The three products are dehydrated fruits, sour in taste and used like tamarind, to cook fish

The fruits are healthier substitutes for tamarind, says a resident of Mangalore

Vegetables on court premises harvested

The harvest of vegetables cultivated on the District Court premises with the help of the State Agriculture Department was conducted on Tuesday.

A press release issued by the Trivandrum Bar Association said the harvest of the crop gave encouraging results. District Judge B. Sudheendra Kumar inaugurated the harvest in the presence of additional district judges K.P. Indira, C. Jayachandran, Principal Munsiff A. Ijaz, Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Tomy and others.

Farming in Karimnagar picks up

Area of cultivation to increase considerably from 4.54 lakh hectares to 6.34 lakh hectares, say agricultural department authorities

Thanks to the arrival of the early monsoons and bountiful rainfall during the month of June, agricultural operations have been intensified considerably for this kharif season.

Usually, kharif operations begin in the month of July in Karimnagar. However, agricultural operations were intensified in the month of June itself following the

good rainfall. Against the normal rainfall of 153 mm in the month of June, the district received 208 mm rainfall boosting the morale of the farming community. In the month of July, the district receives normal rainfall of 283 mm. On Tuesday night alone, the district received heavy rainfall and recovered an average of 15 mm rainfall.

Buoyed over the rainfall, the agricultural department authorities said that the area of cultivation would increase considerably from 4.54 lakh hectares to 6.34 lakh hectares. The authorities said that paddy cultivation would be increased from 1.79 lakh hectares during the last kharif season to 1.97 lakh hectares in this season. Farmers have already planted paddy nurseries in 25,000 hectares in the district.

Cotton cultivation

The other major crop in Karimnagar district is cotton and its cultivation is likely to go up from 2.55 lakh hectares to 2.80 lakh hectares. Maize cultivation is also likely to increase from 54,702 hectares to 60,780 hectares. Authorities said that soyabean cultivation is also likely to increase in Karimnagar district. The cultivation of other irrigated dry (ID) crops such as red gram, green gram, castor etc. was also in full swing. So far, the farmers have sown their crops in around 2 lakh hectares and the authorities say that the sowing will be completed by this month's end following the rains.

Krishna farmers migrate to Godavari districts



Uncertain future: Farmers of Krishna on a journey to Godavari districts on Machilipatnam-Visakhapatnam passenger train.

We are in July now, but there is hardly any agriculture activity in Krishna district. The impact of lack of irrigation water was visible on Sunday when the Machilipatnam - Visakhapatnam passenger train came on the platform – there was a beeline of rural folk in their traditional attire ready for boarding the train.

They did not care for the rain, and marched or ran towards the coaches carrying bags of clothes in hands and heavy iron boxes of rice on their shoulders. This grim picture at the Machilipatnam railway station reveals a pathetic tale of invisible migration of farmers from Krishna district to the Godavari districts in search of livelihood.

“Each of the 15 families, that boarded the train, hails from Diviseema villages and holds a piece of land along the Krishna river. Few possess own land while others are into tenancy” said a tenant farmer Koranki Somayya of Mandapakala village in Koduru mandal. Above 40 men and women, including Mr. Somayya’s wife Subbamma and his only son Yuvaraju, a BCom drop out, had to reach their temporary workplace by early July to get some income.

Contract price

They fear that the usual contract price for kharif operations per acre in those districts too might come down from present Rs. 2,500 to less than Rs. 2,000 as

many migrants from Diviseema villages are vying for the same work. During the migration period, major farmers give certain extent of land to the migrant labourers on contract to complete the entire operation – from preparation of the land, collection of paddy saplings to sowing.

In June, the irrigation authorities announced that Krishna river water was likely to be released into its canals by July-end due to uncompleted canal modernisation works in the Diviseema area. “In the rabi season, we were agricultural labourers in Nellore district as there was no water in Krishna district. Kharif operations will start by July-end. Now, we should generate income to start operations in our own lands,” said another migrant K. Srinivasa Rao.

He boarded the train along with his wife and teenage daughter. Farmers from Koduru, Nagayalanka, Avanigadda mandals in the Diviseema area have been migrating for the past couple of days. With heavy inflows into the Godavari, kharif operations are in full swing in the Godavari Districts.

[KKMC protests against different premium rates for crop insurance](#)

Kisan Khet Mazdoor Congress (KKMC) protested against recent decision to have different premium rates for crop insurance in different districts of Odisha.

Speaking to newsmen in the city on Wednesday, State convenor of KKMC Subash Raut and Ganjam district president of the peasants’ organisation Brundaban Khatai said this decision would only create differences among farmers of the State. They demanded the State government to initiate measures so that there would be uniform premium for crop insurance throughout the State.

According to these peasants’ leaders earlier the crop insurance premium was 2.5 per cent of the availed agricultural loan. In case of farmers who were investing on their own for cultivation, the premium was 2.5 per cent of the expected total yield.

In case the peasant who was investing his own money for cultivation wanted to ensure 150 per cent of his expected yield, then his premium was 6 per cent of the expected yield.

'Tough measure'

They alleged that it was quite hard for peasants who were not taking agricultural loans to ensure their crops. "Out of the 2.5 per cent premium 0.25 per cent was borne by the government while the rest was borne by the peasants," Mr Khatai said.

But as per recent decision crop insurance premium had been hiked many folds in districts like Ganjam district, while it was too low in some districts like Bhadrak. "In Ganjam district the crop insurance premium has been decided to be six per cent of the agricultural loan while it is only 1.56 per cent in Bhadrak district," Mr Khatai said. He added that in Gajapati district adjoining Ganjam, the crop insurance premium remains at 2.5 per cent. The peasants' leaders alleged that this difference in insurance premium rate and its increase in some areas was only meant to benefit the insurance companies.

Some private insurance companies had also entered the field of crop insurance would get benefited at the cost of poor peasants, they said.

In Ganjam district the crop insurance premium has been decided to be six per cent of the agricultural loan while it is only 1.56 per cent in Bhadrak district

Brundaban Khatai

Ganjam district president of the peasants' organisation

The crop insurance premium was 2.5 per cent earlier, say farmers

Increase of premium in some areas is meant to benefit insurance companies, they say

‘It is quite difficult for peasants who were not taking agricultural loans to ensure their crops’

Of the 2.5 per cent premium 0.25 per cent was borne by the government while the rest was borne by the peasants: Khatai

Orchard cultivation with beans as intercrop to stop farm migration



Bejjalatti village in Erode, Tamil Nadu, is mainly dominated by tribal population. Being a predominantly dry area, ragi and maize are the main crops grown, intercropped with mustard.

Since farm activities are only for six to seven months the farming population moves out to nearby towns in search of work for the rest of the year leaving the fields fallow. After monsoon they would come back and start working on their lands again.

“This annual migration was a result of no work or income during the lean season. If some sort of agriculture work could be provided during this time, then the

tribals would not move to towns in search of work,” says Dr.P.Alagesan, Programme Coordinator, MYRADA (The Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency) in the region who came up with an idea of setting up orchards since this would need constant attention during the first two years and also can provide a perennial income.

Crop varieties

Accordingly, amla, mango and citrus were selected to be grown in orchards and trees like silver oak, tamarind and some cassia species were to be planted as fence crops on the borders of the fields,

Since the area is bone dry during summer three conditions were essential to keep the orchard development programme alive – one, the farmer must be made to stay back in his field and work. For this he should be remunerated well so that he doesn't feel the need to leave his field barren and till the orchards come to bearing an alternate source of income for the waiting period must be introduced.

Economics

After a thorough study of the economics and the climatic conditions of the region, vegetable beans was selected to be grown as an intercrop in the orchards because the crop thrives well in hilly regions and being a short duration variety, it can be harvested within 90 days, filling the income gap till the trees start bearing.

“Usually, in this region, beans sowing starts in late April and all the farmers complete their last picking by mid July. When optimum conditions prevail, an average of 1.5 to 2 tonnes of beans can be harvested in an acre.

“Based on personal interaction with 25 farmers in the village it was found that the total yield after four pickings was 49,985 kg. On an average, farmers were able to harvest around 1,800 – 2,100 kg of beans from a one acre plot.”

The highest yield from a single plot was that of farmer Manian. The yield from his one acre plot was 2,480 kg, fetching him a gross income of Rs. 55,830. After deducting the input costs, the net income was Rs. 48,480.

“All the farmers uniformly spent Rs.1,500 for buying seeds and Rs.1,650 on fertilizers. Labour costs varied from Rs.3,500 to Rs.4,000 on an average. Overall, the total expenditure on the crop for three months was between Rs.5,000 and Rs.7,000. This is a huge sum, given the fact that the tribals move out of their village during this season looking for casual employment outside, before this project was introduced,” says Dr. Alagesan.

Women involved

The women too have evinced great interest in tending to the crops and taking care of the entire process right from sowing till the vegetable is harvested. Wild animals like boar, which are common in the area, are also kept at bay since the tribals maintain constant vigil over the crops.

“Being rain fed, non-availability of water had been a problem initially. Only farmers having their fields along the stream used to take up vegetable cultivation, that too, only on a small scale. After the introduction of community irrigation like checkdams and water percolation pits, glitches in water availability have become an issue of the past. When rains fail, irrigation from a perennial stream close by comes to the rescue,” explains Dr. Alagesan.

Five communities-managed resource centres (CMRC) have been set up and they provide information on seed availability and technical information on time.

Revolving fund

In order to get the initial impetus, Myrada helped to set up a revolving fund to assist farmers in dealing with the initial fund crunch.

Farmers took an initial loan of Rs.1,500 per acre from group corpus for the purchase of seeds, and once the harvest was completed and sold, they returned the loan along with a nominal service charge. This system was designed to keep the community cushioned when it comes to critical fund availability.

For more details readers can contact Dr.P.Alagesan, Programme Coordinator, Myrada Krishi Vigyan Kendra, 272, Perumal Nagar, Pudukkottai Road, Kalingiam Post, Gobichettipalayam taluk, Erode District, Tamil Nadu: 638 453, E-mail: myradakvk@gmail.com, Phone: 04285 241626.

'Why harp on rice alone, why not jowar or ragi?'

While discussions on the Public Distribution System in the State has centred around providing rice at Re. 1 per kg to BPL families, experts and farmers' groups said the government should procure wheat, jowar, ragi and minor millets from farmers and distribute them at ration shops.

They also felt it would benefit farmers if the government buys grains directly from farmers at the district-level.

"This is a golden opportunity for the government to help farmers and the common man," said Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha leader Veerbhushan Nandagave. "If the government were to replace the word rice with jowar or ragi, it would save the

lives of lakhs of farmers. It would also address the issue of malnutrition,” he said. “We have been urging successive governments to include jowar and ragi in the public distribution system. We had recently sent a memorandum to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to distribute minor millets through ration shops,” he said.

Experts support decentralised procurement and diversification in foodgrains. “Local procurement is a good idea. So is diversification in grain distribution,” said Abdul Aziz, professor emeritus of the Institute of Social and Economic Change. Local procurement makes great economic sense as it reduces the cost of transport and storage. Guarantee of a minimum price by the government would encourage farmers to grow jowar or ragi on larger tracts of land, Prof. Aziz said.

He also argued against diversification for socio-cultural reasons. “The government should not force people who are accustomed to eat a particular grain into switching to other grains,” added Srinivas Kakkilaya, a Mangalore-based physician. “Successive governments have neglected jowar,” a senior scientist and sorghum breeder with the university of agriculture science, Dharwad, said. “Area under jowar has fallen to 10 lakh hectares from 18 lakh hectares in the last ten years. We have been appealing to the government that this trend can be arrested if they can procure the grain for a minimum of Rs. 15 per kg. Then, more farmers will venture into jowar,” he said.

However, Maruti Manpade, Karnataka Pranta Raitha Sangha president, said though it was a good idea, it would be difficult to implement. “It is easier to procure rice because paddy is grown on large tracts of land and the processing industry is concentrated in a few towns,” he said.

According to him, procurement is a highly politicised process. “The foodgrain merchants lobby will oppose any move that could reduce its profits. Rice millers and traders are already opposing levy collection. If the government were to try to

procure jowar or ragi, the traders are bound to create obstacles. They could also create deliberate shortages and push up prices of these grains, Mr. Manpade said.

Harsha Gupta, Commissioner, Food and Civil Supplies, said the government is examining proposals for local procurement and distribution of grains other than rice.

Mango mania



Mangoes named 'Haathi' (on account of its size), 'Veer Zara', 'Gulab Jamun' (from Muzzafarnagar, 1.5 times bigger than an average mango) and 'Sugar Baby' (small, round and extraordinarily sweet, from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka) were only some of the reasons to visit the recently concluded International Mango Festival at Dilli Haat, Pitampura.

Organised by the Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation (DTTDC) in collaboration with Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export

Development Authority, National Horticultural Board and New Delhi Municipal Council, the three-day festival displayed a wide variety of mangoes, including alphonso, mallika, amrapali, himsagar, malda, meena, balia, sohan pasand and tukmi.

The festival is being held since 1988. To commemorate the silver jubilee, a pictorial souvenir was also released on the occasion. While the first day of the event was relaxing, the second became more eventful with slogan writing competition, story telling by Story Ghar, mango quiz, magic show and other events. The third day, being a Sunday, saw the maximum participation.

“To be honest there is nothing new this year, we have just changed the presentation. The 26th mango festival will have more international varieties of mangoes,” said a Delhi Tourism official. “It is very encouraging to see more than 50,000 people turn up in three days.”

“I m surprised to see different varieties of mangoes which are as small as a grape and as big as a papaya,” said Deeksha, a young visitor.

1,400 hectares of land to be developed in Iyampalayam



The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and the State Government will jointly invest around Rs.1.5crore to develop 1,400 hectares of land in Iyampalayam as part of watershed development programme.

Launching the project at Iyyampalayam near here on Tuesday, Collector N.Venktachalam said Iyyampalayam, Devarappanpatti, Chinnagoundenpatti and Vinobaji Nagar in Athoor block would benefit.

About 50,000 saplings would be planted on the land within the watershed area as part of agro-forestry development, he added.

Conservation, regeneration, and judicious utilisation of natural resources were the prime components of watershed management which aimed at bringing about an optimum balance between the demand and use of natural resources. The State Government and the NABARD contributed equally for this project. The prime objective was to create adequate and sustainable livelihood opportunities for the inhabitants of this area, he added.

It would empower people to control resource utilisation, management and conservation, he said. "Sustainable natural resource management could be possible only through the active participation of communities within the watershed." Besides, training on agro-based industries would be imparted to women at these villages as part of sustainable income generation activities.

In his address, NABARD General Manager S.Natarajan said 105.4 hectares would be developed in the first phase and 1,427 hectares in the next phase. Field bunds, water absorption structures and contour trenches would be constructed in the fields to prevent soil erosion.

Check dams

Gabion check dams would also be constructed to scale down velocity of rain water flowing downstream.

NABARD Assistant General Manager L.Sanjeevi said public participation would be 16 per cent of the total project. They would select the work on the basis of their need and local importance. Joint Director of Agriculture D.Sampath Kumar also spoke.

Farm ponds to be dug under MGNREGS

Agriculturists who want to create farm ponds in their land under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) have been asked to approach the officials concerned.

In a statement issued here, Collector C.Samayamoorthy said the Central government had allowed digging of 103 farm ponds at a cost of Rs.1.50 lakh each in private lands under the MGNREGS with the objective of saving rainwater and raising groundwater table.

The farmers could also convert them into fish ponds, the Collector noted.

Work had already started on 23 ponds, he said, and added that three of them had been completed too.

Interested farmers, having land sites measuring 25 metre X 25 metre, could approach the Assistant Director of Agriculture or the Block Development Officer concerned with copies of land documents, patta, ration card and name of the revenue village and submit their application in a Rs.2 stamp paper.

Details

For more information, they could contact the Project Director, District Rural Development Agency, Mr.Samayamoorthy said.

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Farmers can convert these ponds into fish ponds: Collector

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Good rains boost water table



The good beginning to the monsoon has not only brought cheer to farmers in Adilabad but also given much relief to the administration by way of quick recharge of groundwater. “The administration only needs to keep a check on sanitation in rural areas so that there is no outbreak of an epidemic,” opines a doctor from the agency area while warning against any complacency on the part of authorities.

Unlike in the past several years, rains arrived in the beginning of June and the intensity helped in the quick recovery of groundwater levels across the district. Against an average depth of 9.75 metres and 11.71 metres, over which water was available in the ground in June 2001 and 2012, the level has climbed up to 7.85 metres for the corresponding period.

The recharge of groundwater is visible from the fact that tribal people are able to draw drinking water from open wells, the main source in many habitations in tribal areas. Also, unlike the trend in the previous years, water in open sources is free of contamination so far, which comes as a feel good factor for the administration.

Records of the last several years reveal that the district, especially the tribal mandals, get caught in the grip of seasonal diseases right from the start of the monsoon. The number of deaths each year, mostly of tribal people is usually in the vicinity of 200.

“The break in the routine of timing of rainfall has resulted in the control of seasonal diseases like diarrhoea. Owing to frequent spells of rain, there is no stagnation of water anywhere,” said K. Tirupati of the water testing laboratory at Zilla Parishad office.

Close to 400 samples of drinking water from as many sources, particularly from epidemic prone mandals from across the district were subjected to bacteriological tests during June. Not even one sample tested positive for contamination.

70 per cent excess sowing of Kharif crops this year

Sowing of foodgrains, cashcrops and oilseeds is underway in full swing across the State and by June-end 27.62 lakh hectares has been covered.

This constitutes 37 per cent of the targeted area of 74.29 lakh hectares for the kharif season. The sowing is 70 per cent in excess compared to corresponding coverage of last year's 16.07 lakh hectares.

Crops like cotton, sugarcane, tobacco, maize and soybean have seen above normal quantity of sowing.

According to Agriculture Department data, there has been above normal sowing in Bangalore, Bidar, Chitradurga, Davangere, Mandya, Ramnagar and Gadag districts. However, sowing is going on in slow pace due to shortage of rain in the districts of Gulbarga, Bijapur and Yadgir.

"The State has so far distributed around 2.59 lakh quintals of seeds to around 7.91 lakh farmers. This apart, an additional 1.89 lakh quintals of seeds is available in various Raitha Samparka Kendras. With a total requirement of 23.40 lakh tonnes of fertilisers for the season, we have already distributed 6.61 lakh tonnes to the farmers," Director of Agriculture K V Sarvesh said.

Meanwhile, taking a dig at the government, Opposition Leader in the Assembly H D Kumaraswamy said: "As against the requirement of 9.2 lakh tonnes of fertiliser (from April to June), farmers have availed around 6 lakh tonnes. In reality, this clearly indicates that the farmers are unable to purchase fertilisers due to its high cost."

221 mm Rainfall

According to the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre data, the state as a whole recorded 221 mm rainfall as against the normal rainfall of 205 mm during June. However, the cumulative rain for the month was deficit by 15-25 percent in Yadgir, Dharwad, Kolar and Chikballapur districts.

For June, of the 176 taluks, the rainfall was excess in 61 taluks, normal in 82 and deficit in 33 taluks. Last year for the same period rainfall was excess in three taluks, normal in 14 taluks, deficit in 83 taluks and scanty in 76 taluks.

Storage Tanks

Of the total 3,524 minor irrigation tanks in the state, only two per cent of the tanks had storage of more than 50 per cent of their total capacity. While 26 per cent of the tanks had storage capacity of 30 per cent to 50 per cent and the remaining 72 per cent of the tanks were dry, a KSNMDC report said.

No takers for treated sewage water



Claims by Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) that treated sewage water in the city is being recycled and utilised have turned out to be hollow with not even parks maintained by Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) utilising this water resource despite acute water scarcity in the city. In fact, recycled water is purchased by only a few units including Bangalore

International Airport and some factories in Peenya, while the rest goes down the 'drain'. This is the prevailing scenario in the Garden City where 460 million litres per day (mld) of sewage is scientifically processed by the BWSSB.

On the other hand, the situation in BBMP maintained parks is so bad that their water requirements are neither met by borewells nor water tankers. In fact, park contractors and authorities wait for seasonal rains as an alternative source of water when the bore wells in the premises go dry.

Although treated water is available at an affordable cost, BBMP officers have not yet given any direction to the concerned authorities regarding the usage of treated sewage water. Besides Cubbon Park and Lalbagh where Tertiary Treatment Plants (TTPs) have been set up, no other park in the city has this facility.

BBMP chief engineer Siddegowda seems to have no knowledge on the maintenance of parks as he said, "Treated sewage is feasible for planting purposes in the parks. But this suggestion is yet to be passed on to the horticulture department. We hope to discuss the issue in the coming days."

Most of the BBMP parks in the city are maintained by private contractors at a fixed fee per annum and there is no specified source of water to be utilised in the event of borewells drying up. "The contractors themselves must find out an alternate source of water while the horticulture superintendent will guide them with a probable solution. The Conservator of Forests is responsible for the maintenance of parks," Siddegowda added.

But when City Express spoke to Chief Conservator of Forests (Bangalore Division), Brijesh Kumar, he on his part said that maintenance of parks had been handed over to zonal additional commissioners of Horticulture from May onwards.

However, a BBMP Horticulture official said that watering of parks with treated sewage water had not been implemented in BBMP-maintained parks at all. He said, “The parks that have been handed over to contractors are in localities where water supply is sufficient. In case, if the borewells here dry up, water tankers have been marked to supply water to these parks.”

Even so BWSSB officials claimed that treated sewage water is provided mainly to industries, factories and other commercial ventures. When asked, BWSSB spokesperson Sarala Kumari said, “Installing pipelines for supply of treated sewage is very expensive. Currently, we are providing treated water to major industries, factories and the international airport for non-potable purposes like flushing, gardening, washing and others. Though we treat more than 460 mld, we are not providing it for domestic purposes. And, if the BBMP Horticulture department approaches us for treated water, then we shall provide them through tankers.”

The BWSSB explained that out of 460 mld, only a meagre 30 mld is utilised by industries. Now what happens to the rest ? Sarala Kumari claimed that the rest 430 mld is channelised to valleys on the outskirts where it might be used for agricultural purposes or it flows into lakes.

Subsidy to boost poultry farming

The district administration has urged farmers, entrepreneurs to go in for poultry farming as the state government is extending at least 50 per cent subsidy in total to establish its infrastructure facilities.

The balance 50 per cent of the total cost is to be invested by the beneficiaries either on their own or through bank loans. Selected beneficiaries in this scheme would undergo a five-day training.

Applications in this regard can be submitted to the nearest District Veterinary Office or contact the animal husbandry department in Vellore-9994066308, Tirupattur-9445032576, Ranipet-9445001159.

As prices soar, many in city take to veggie gardening



Along with the wilting summer heat came the spike in vegetable prices, hitting middle and lower income families hard.

With the price of spices and vegetables such as ginger, garlic and potatoes hovering above Rs 150, Rs 30 and Rs 35 a kg respectively, many families in the city have either changed their shopping destinations or taken to vegetable gardening in order to cut down on their expenses.

Though the prices of vegetables, which had peaked in May, have gradually come down after good rains in Karnataka and Kerala — the major sourcing centres for markets in Chennai — prices of vegetables are still a long way off from being affordable to the average middle class and lower middle class consumers.

Sumathi S, a housewife from Koyambedu says though the drop in vegetable prices is welcome, key staples such as tomatoes, beans and lady's finger, which are selling for around Rs 45, Rs 80 and Rs 45 respectively, are still out of reach for her due to her modest income.

"I usually go to the wholesale market on Sunday and buy whatever is cheaper. But these days, most vegetables are at least 15 to 20 per cent more expensive than what they were a couple of months ago. So I shop less and make do with whatever is available," she adds.

Families across the city have also been forced to cut down on vegetable purchases.

Ranjeev, a bachelor from Choolaimedu, says he does his shopping at the Amma fair price shop, where vegetables are slightly cheaper than at the markets.

"Even if the Amma fair price shop is crowded, I still prefer shopping there, as I have to cook on my own and I don't prefer eating outside. I have to wait in the morning rush just to buy a little amount of vegetables," he says.

Some families living in independent houses have taken to vegetable gardening.

Amuthavalli, who lives in Anna Nagar, believes that every house owner who has some space to spare should grow their own vegetables. "It is a visceral feeling to produce your own vegetables. It doesn't take a lot of effort. Not only do you save on costs, but you are assured that the vegetables you are consuming and are cooking for your children are healthy and organic," she says.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Panel for lesser Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) like plans

NEW DELHI: The Planning Commission has characterised the special schemes under the [Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana](#) (RKVY) as pay-offs and asked the agriculture ministry to reduce such schemes, the proportion to overall allocation of which has touched a whopping 30% over the past two years.

The size of the special component is the real problem with RKVY, a senior official of the Planning Commission told ET. "The states have been complaining that what is distributed as per the formula to them is that part of [RKVY](#) which is not covered already by the special components. Since the size of special components has gone up over the last two years, the states end up getting less for agricultural development and the scheme itself has become diluted," said the official.

Some of these schemes do not make sense as these are basically pay-offs to different parts of country during the finalisation of the budget each year, the official said, adding, "Consequently, it was decided that the agriculture ministry would come up with a revised structure of RKVY wherein the special schemes have a substantially lower component and at least 80% of the overall allocation under RKVY is given to the states."

However, since the allocations for the current fiscal have already been made, the modified structure of RKVY will come into effect from the next financial year, once it is prepared by the concerned ministry and approved by the Cabinet. The RKVY was launched in 2007 to incentivise states to [invest](#) in agriculture and achieve 4% growth during the 11th plan period.

Green cover equal to 23% of Delhi lost in 13 years

NEW DELHI: Green cover and water bodies almost equal to a quarter (23%) of Delhi's area have been lost to development works and rabid urbanization in [the](#)

[National](#) Capital Region in just the past 13 years.

The first comparative satellite-based study of change in land use in NCR has shown that between 1999 and 2012, the region lost 32,769 hectares of green areas and 1,464 hectares of water bodies, both crucial for sustainability and quality of life in the region.

During the same period, the study found that built-up area in NCR grew by a massive 34%, bringing 95,803 hectares of land into the construction zone.

The study was conducted by the National Remote Sensing Centre at the instance of the NCR Planning Board (NCRPB). It's most striking finding was the substantial loss of green cover across Delhi and regions of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan.

Of the total loss of 32,769 hectares of green cover, the maximum loss was recorded in NCR areas of UP (17,386 hectares), followed by Haryana at 8,716 hectares. 'Green' Delhi too lost 733 hectares of forest/green land during this period, according to the draft regional plan prepared by the NCRPB.

The other alarming indicator was unsustainable growth in NCR was the loss of water bodies. These reduced by 1,464 hectares. Again, the maximum loss took place in UP sub-region at 934 hectares. Commendably, the Haryana sub-region bucked the trend by increasing the area under water bodies by 261 hectares.

The NRSC report also shows that environmentally fragile areas such as the Yamuna riverbed, wetlands, ridge areas and forests were being steadily usurped

for development activities.

The UP and Haryana sub-regions, which include Gurgaon, Noida, Ghaziabad and Faridabad, showed a massive increase in built-up area during the study period. According to the report, the maximum increase took place in the UP sub-region, where built-up area jumped from 83,214 hectares in 1999 to 1.24 lakh hectares in 2012. NCR areas of Haryana, which have the highest concentration of land under built-up area at 35.46%, were a close second. The built-up area there grew from 93,996 hectares to 1.32 lakh hectares.

The Rajasthan sub-region was the only area under NCR which actually registered an increase in the area under agriculture use by 23,966 hectares. In contrast, Haryana saw the highest conversion of agriculture land (17,539 hectares) for non-agricultural use.

The report says that the increase in built up area mainly came from conversion of agriculture land, green areas, water bodies and waste land. It says in the absence of proper legislation to control land use in the agricultural (rural) zone, the conversion of these areas for use by industries and educational institutions has continued unabated.

The draft regional plan asks states to follow stricter norms to protect and increase green cover. The plan proposes that expressways be lined with 100-metre wide green buffer zones on each side. It recommends a 60-metre green belt for national highways and 30 metres for state highways and railway lines.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Farmers want state govt to oppose biotechnology bill

JAIPUR: Seeking an extension of the July 10 deadline for public [feedback](#) on the [Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India](#) (BRAI) Bill 2013, farmers and NGOs have requested the state government to send its objections to the bill in the interests of farmers and consumers in the state. The feedback was sought by the parliamentary standing committee on science & technology.

"This Bill will decide what food will be grown and eaten in India, including Rajasthan. This Bill has been designed to promote the business interests of big corporations by proposing a single-window, fast-track clearance system without any mandate for protection to citizens from risks of modern biotechnology. When things go wrong, state governments will have to bear the brunt. We would like the [Rajasthan government](#) to write to the standing committee its objections to the Bill," said Dr Alok Vyas of CECOEDECON.

The BRAI Bill was tabled in the Parliament by the Minister for Science & Technology on April 22, 2013. But soon many parliamentarians themselves started mounting pressure on the government to withdraw the Bill. Later, an advertisement was published granting 30 days' time for public feedback on the Bill from June 10 to July 10.

"This Bill is retrograde and goes over the few improvements made in the regulatory regime in India over the past few years. Last year, the state government was proactive in protecting the state's interests when it found irregularities in open air field trials of GM Mustard in our state. Earlier, too, the government considered the concerns expressed by various stakeholders in

entering public-private partnership agreements with multinational corporations and annulled the same. We hope that keeping the same spirit alive, the state government will now study the Bill and send its feedback accordingly," he added.

"We hope that party affiliations do not come into the picture when it comes to critical matters such as food and farming. The state government knows that in the event of adverse impact on the fields or on the health of consumers, citizens will come knocking on the state government's doors for redressal and not the Centre's. Further, agriculture and health, as per the Constitution are state subjects and we expect that the state government will fulfill its mandate in envisioning the future proactively and not let the Union ride roughshod over the concerns and issues at the grassroots level," said Bhagwan Singh Dadhich of Kisan Seva Samiti.

Cabinet clears food security via ordinance

NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet on Wednesday cleared an ordinance to implement the politically significant national [food security bill](#) without waiting for Parliament's monsoon session that is about a month away.

The decision to press ahead with the ordinance - delayed after the government sought to enlarge political support for the bill - is rooted in Congress's determination to project commitment to food security as an key aspect of its 2014 campaign.

Once the ordinance is signed into law by President Pranab Mukherjee, it will be incumbent on the government to provide 5 kg of subsidized rice and wheat to 67% of India's population.

Seen to have [Congress](#) chief Sonia Gandhi's backing, the move is intended to refurbish the party's aam aadmi credentials by adding another entitlement with the government embossing its political stamp on the law.

Read with initiatives like Aadhaar-linked transfer of subsidies and benefits to the socio-economically disadvantaged, food security is Congress's bid repeat the success of rural employment guarantee and loan waiver in the 2009 poll.

Experts, however, say the Food Security Act will have an enormous impact on the cereals market and the farm economy and presents significant operational challenges. The Act will also impact government finances and widen the subsidy bill.

The cost is budgeted at around Rs 124,000 crore a year. Some estimates say to implement the Act in a sustainable and reliable manner can cost Rs 200,000 crore a year keeping in mind investment for stabilizing production, creating infrastructure for storage and railways and upgrading public distribution system as well as an expected increase in the minimum support price.

"The objective of providing food and nutritional security to the masses is laudable one but the challenge is getting it right, fixing the leaky public distribution system and providing adequate infrastructure for storage and movement," said Ashok Gulati, chairman of the Commission for Agriculture Costs and Prices.

"It will impact the finances of the government unless there are commensurate cuts in other subsidies," Gulati said.

Congress managers are fairly confident that the ordinance will be passed by

Parliament even though several parties have sought amendments like extending the coverage to 100% as already provided by states like Tamil Nadu.

BJP was quick to attack the ordinance, saying the haste to pass it reveals Congress's political motive in pulling off an "election gimmick" in the last leg of its tenure in office.

92% sowing over in Saurashtra

RAJKOT: The early [monsoon](#) has triggered widespread [sowing](#) operations across [Saurashtra region](#). Sowing has been completed on around 92 per cent cultivable land.

According to [agriculture department](#), out total 36 lakh hectares land, sowing has been completed in 33 lakh hectares in the region.

State emergency operation centre said Saurashtra has received 37 per cent of its average annual rainfall. Now, farmers are awaiting the second spell of rainfall. Farmers are opting for groundnut and cotton as major crops in the region. As per the data, total area covered under the groundnut crops was registered at 13,28,700 hectares in Saurashtra, while area covered under cotton was 15,47,000 hectares. The other crops include bajra, sesame, guvar, vegetable and fodder.

"Next week good spell of rainfall would be highly beneficial for our crops. The early rainfall has resulted in check dams brimming and ground water recharged. This has prompted us to go for widespread sowing," a farmer from Dudhala village in Bhavnagar district Babubhai Vala said. Agriculture experts have said

that the recent dry spell is not a cause for concern as the soil can retain humidity for a long time.

Veggies costlier, reason unclear

After two weeks, the floods have hit home. Vegetable prices, which were expected to rise due to crop and [road damage](#), have soared in the past few days. Tomatoes are Rs 90/kg in north Delhi; capsicum is at Rs 110/kg in east Delhi. Even potatoes are retailing above Rs 20/kg across the city. While hawkers blame the bad weather, in the wholesale hub of Azadpur Mandi, agents say, prices haven't changed at all. Are the prices up because of profiteering by retailers?

TOI visited many localities on Wednesday and found [vegetable prices](#) have increased 2-4 times. And the rates differ between colonies depending on residents' paying capacity. At times, the price difference goes up to Rs 50 for the same vegetable.

In their defence, hawkers say the rains have not only affected the availability of vegetables but also their quality: a lot of produce is not fit to sell. Ram Singh, who sells only tomatoes at his shop in Indra Market, is charging Rs 80/kg. "We used to buy tomatoes from Punjab and the Karnal region but now the produce arrives only from Shimla and Nainital," he said, referring to the high cost of transportation. Capsicum has become a luxury, especially in east Delhi (supplied from Ghazipur Mandi). In west Delhi, where stocks arrive from the Azadpur Mandi, it is cheaper.

The high prices have also changed the buying pattern. "People have stopped buying in large quantities. They only buy around 250-500 grams of everything,"

said Suresh, a vegetable vendor in Sarojini Nagar. "I avoid vegetable shops in and around upscale colonies as they always charge more than the market rate," said Anand Prakash, resident of Palam Vihar.

Organized retailers such as Reliance and Safal, though, continue to sell at near-wholesale rates, with tomatoes at Rs 45-50/kg. But many people still prefer to buy from hawkers. "The big stores neither bargain nor give regular customers a better deal," said Smita Khurana, resident of Rajouri Garden. Tomatoes are at Rs 90/kg in Model Town, north Delhi that has a large student population. "The main market is quite far, so we have to make do with the local vendors for our everyday supplies," said Neel Jha, resident of Hudson Lane.

The wholesalers in Azadpur Mandi have a different take on the situation. "Retailers are earning much more than what they should. Our supplies come mainly from the neighbouring regions of Haryana and Punjab, and these have not been affected much by the Uttarakhand floods. Road transport has become a hassle, but this is just an excuse to drive up rates," said Surender Kohli, president of the mandi's Vegetable and Fruits Trading Association.

Cultivation of exotic flowers in Allahabad soon

With the setting up of three [greenhouses](#) for better flower cultivation, the citizens of the Sangam city will be getting exotic flower species like Gardenias, Tulips, Oriental Lily, Ecuadorian roses, Lilacs etc. In fact, exotic flowers, which are generally grown in cold regions, would be grown by the farmers with the help of climate control techniques being introduced by the district horticulture department.

In fact, the work of setting up of greenhouses is underway by the authorities of district horticulture department at Holagarh and Saidabad blocks of the district. District horticulture officer, PK Shukla said more stress is being laid to introduce the climate control techniques with an objective to cultivate not only exotic flower species but European vegetable too at the same place. He added that the greenhouse technique is the best source of protective cultivation of highly improved vegetables and flowers. The horticulture department is setting up two greenhouses at Holagarh and one at Saidabad at around 1,000 square meters each and each greenhouse costs around Rs 9.35 lakh.

Shukla informed, "we would also be producing [European vegetables](#). The department has decided to offer useful tips to farmers which are helpful in cultivating vegetables and flowers under controlled climate as the farmers could yield more crops in less investment."

Experts, however, claim that cultivating the favourite fruits, flowers, and vegetables in the greenhouse throughout the year requires maintaining a favorable temperature inside the greenhouse for the plants.

A warm greenhouse must maintain a minimum temperature of 55 degrees fahrenheit. In the summer months, the warm greenhouse must be cooled to maintain a temperature under 100 degrees fahrenheit to continue the growth. Any fruits or vegetables, like tomatoes, stop growing once the air temperature reaches 100 degrees or more.

In the current scenario, greenhouses have been a popular mode among farmers even in small towns as they are well acquainted with the growth techniques.

DECCAN Chronicle

Cabinet clears Ordinance to implement Food Security Bill



Brushing aside political opposition, the Government on Wednesday decided to issue an ordinance to give nation's two-third population the right to get 5 kgs of foodgrains every month at highly subsidised rates of Rs 1-3 per kg.

The Food Security programme when implemented will be the biggest in the world with the government spending estimated at Rs 125,000 crore annually on supply of about 62 million tonnes of rice, wheat and coarse cereals to 67 per cent of the population.

The Cabinet, which had last month deferred a decision on the issue following differences within, approved promulgation of an ordinance to implement the Food Security Bill.

"The Food Security Ordinance was unanimously approved by the Cabinet. It will now go to the Rashtrapati Bhavan for its assent," Food Minister K.V. Thomas told reporters here.

The Ordinance is being promulgated just weeks before the scheduled Monsoon session of Parliament and there has been intense opposition from political parties which want the Bill to be debated in Parliament before being passed.

Left parties attacked the government for taking the ordinance route saying the UPA-II has shown contempt for Parliament while BJP termed it an 'election gimmick' saying Congress was running away from a debate in the House.

Samajwadi Party, a key outside supporter of UPA, also sharply opposed promulgation of the ordinance saying it was undemocratic and the programme would derail the food economy. The Ordinance will have to be approved by both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha within six months of promulgation.

The Ordinance, which will guarantee 5 kg of rice, wheat and coarse cereals per month per person at a fixed price of Rs 3, 2, 1, respectively, will come into effect after President Pranab Mukherjee signs it. However, about 2.43 crore poorest of the poor families covered under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) scheme under PDS (Public Distribution System) would continue to get 35 kg of foodgrains per family per month but with legal entitlement.

Some ministers at the Cabinet meeting desired that the provisions be converted into a law passed by Parliament at the earliest.

Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar, who was said to have had reservations on the Bill, said at the meeting that more funds should be provided for irrigation. He also wanted that pulses and cereals be included in the scheme to give proper nutrition to the poor.

Sources said he batted for genetically-modified (GM) food to meet the increased demand. Officials said once President signs it, rules will be framed and the programme will be rolled-out from August after state governments prepare the beneficiary list. The scheme will take at least six months to cover the entire country, they said.

As per law ministry officials, the advantage of issuing the Food Security ordinance is that the shape of the Bill is intact and the clauses cannot be amended if changes are proposed by any party during its passage in Parliament. The ordinance will timely confer the right to food to a larger section of population, allocate sufficient foodgrains on regulator basis under PDS and enable state governments to handle unforeseen situation caused by drought, sources said.

The government is believed to have opted for an ordinance route as some BJP-ruled states like Chattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh are already issuing foodgrains at Rs 1 per kg.

Commenting on the Ordinance, Commission for Agriculture Costs and Prices (CACP) Chairman Ashok Gulati said, "At present, it can be a blessing in disguise as there is huge foodgrains stock with the government. But how far it will remain sustainable unless we fix PDS, stabilise production and invest in storage and transportation?"

"The biggest challenge is fixing leakage in PDS in states where poverty is more. The second biggest threat will be that higher procurement of foodgrains to meet foodbill demand, will drive out private players from wheat and rice market," he said.

The list of beneficiaries would be prepared by the state governments. Other major highlights of the the Food Security Ordinance are Rs 6,000 as maternity benefit and home ration or hot cooked food for children in the age group of 6 months to 14 years.

The eldest woman will be Head of the household for issue of ration card. If not available, the eldest male member will then be the head of the household for these purposes.

Industry body Assocham President Rajkumar N. Dhoot said, "The Ordinance will insulate a large number of people from the inflation and would ultimately help the country in human development index."

The government must be complimented for taking a courageous decision even though it will strain the government finances. However, the pilferages in PDS can be avoided with better implementation of the scheme, he said. The only answer to tackle foodsupply and better nutrition for people is through better supply, he added.

The other provisions of the Ordinance include providing central funds to states in case of short supply of foodgrains in case of natural calamity. The Centre would also provide assistance to states towards cost of transportation, handling of foodgrains and FPS dealers' margin.

The state and district level redressal mechanism will be set up to ensure transparency and accountability. A penalty will be imposed on public servants or authority, if found guilty of failing to comply with the relief recommended by the District Grievance Redressal Officer.

At present, Centre supplies 35 kg of foodgrains to BPL/AAY families and atleast 15 kg to APL families. Wheat is supplied at Rs 2/kg for AAY, while BPL gets wheat at Rs 4.15/kg and APL at Rs 6.10/kg. Rice is given at Rs 3/kg to AAY, Rs 5.65/kg to BPL and Rs 8.30/kg to APL. There are currently 6.52 crore BPL families, which include 2.43 crore AAY families. The number of APL families are 11.5 crore.

Business Standard

Heavy crop damage in hilly states lifts onion, potato prices



Onion and potato prices shot up sharply across the country, except north India, on supportive fundamentals. While the damage of potato crop in the hilly areas, especially in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, lifted traders' sentiments, stockists held onion in anticipation of further price rise until the new season crop hits the market in October.

Data compiled by the Nashik-based National Horticulture Research & Development Foundation (NHRDF) showed that onion prices rose by up to 41 per cent in the last two weeks on reduced supply from stockists. Guwahati was the worst hit in price rise with 41 per cent, followed by Mumbai at 31.48 per cent.

Potato followed suit with prices swelling by up to 42 per cent in Hubli (Karnataka). In Kanpur, one of India's largest producing centres, potato prices jumped a marginal 7.14 per cent in the last fortnight.

"Stockists have started releasing stocks intermittently in anticipation of lower quantity of goods in warehouses. Since stocks at 2.7 million tonnes are 5-10 per cent lower across the country, compared to the last year, stockists are making profits to the maximum extent possible," said R P Gupta, director, NHRDF.

According to Tariq Anwar, minister of state for agriculture, onion production is estimated to remain lower by 4 per cent at 16.82 million tonnes during FY13.

This year, however, early monsoon rainfall has benefited onion sowing. Thus, overall area during the kharif sowing season is estimated to remain 15-20 per cent higher from the level of around 200,000 hectare (ha) in the previous year. Early and late kharif seasons constitute around 20 per cent each, while the remaining 60 per cent of around 1 million ha acreage is covered in rabi season.

Apparently, onion arrivals have declined steadily during the past two weeks. Plying of truck was hampered due to heavy rainfalls across the country. For potato, however, June-July is a harvesting season when crop matures in hilly areas. Because of the recent flood in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, a major portion of crop has been damaged.

SHEDDING TEARS						
Model price ₹/quintal						
Markets	June 21		July 3		% change	
	Onion	Potato	Onion	Potato	Onion	Potato
Agra	1,040	1,020	1,150	1,000	10.58	-2
Delhi	1,430	1,260	1,600	1,225	11.89	-2.78
Guwahati	1,600	900	2,250	940	40.63	4.45
Hubli	1,300	1,200	1,475	1,700	13.46	41.67
Kanpur	-	980	-	1,050	-	7.14
Jaipur	1,050	-	1,150	-	9.52	-
Kolkata	1,950	830	2,190	830	12.31	0
Lasalgaon	1,425	-	1,660	-	16.49	-
Mumbai*	1,350	1,200	1,775	1,100	31.48	8.33
Patna*	1,450	900	1,700	-	17.24	-
Pimpalgaon	1,450	-	1,650	-	13.79	-

* Last update

Source: NHRDF

“While the assessment of crop damage is yet to be done, we believe a major portion of around 20,000 ha of sowing area in Uttarakhand has been washed away due to the devastating flood,” said a senior official with a potato research firm.

Meanwhile, exports to Bangladesh have opened through the land route.

Additionally, excessive demand from north India is keeping pressure on existing stocks. Since the new crop is set to hit the market only in October, the prices of these sensitive commodities are set to remain firm.

A Mumbai-based trader does not rule out onion and potato price to hit Rs 30 a kg and Rs 20 a kg in nearby APMC mandi.

THE HINDU Business Line

Rich harvest for agri-biz grads

Top multinationals such as DuPont, Bayer Crop Science to Cadbury and Indian biggies such as ITC Agri, Mahindra, Shriram Bioseed, YES Bank and Bharat Insecticide have lapped up management graduates in agri-biz.

The handsome salaries offered to the batch of 2013 at MANAGE here show that the demand continues to be high in the sector, despite the general slowdown in hiring in corporate sector in the country.

The Post-Graduate programme offered here has been a big draw.

With 100 per cent placement to show, the average, annual cost to company (CTC), for students is Rs 7 lakhs.

A girl student got the highest CTC of Rs 18 lakhs.

The post-graduate diploma in management programme (agri-business management), offered by the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) had a total of 58 students in the batch of 2013, that graduated recently.

About 30 companies participated in the campus placement this year said B. Srinivas, Director-General of the premier Institute. MANAGE started this course 17 years ago to prepare skilled agri-business managers for the growing domestic agriculture sector.

It has been having a good run as far as placements are concerned, he said.

Interestingly, the average CTC for the earlier batch of 2012 was around Rs 6.9 lakhs and the highest offer was Rs 13.5 lakhs.

The IIM, Ahmedabad offers a post-graduate programme in agri-biz, said K. Anand Reddy, Director (HR) at MANAGE.

In the last few years, the institute has helped NAARM, Hyderabad, and the Choudhury Charan Singh, National Institute of Agriculture Marketing, Jaipur, to start similar programmes to prepare more professional managers, he said.

Among the corporates who participated in the campus placement were Advanta, Connect Agri, Dhanuka, FINO, IFFCO Kisan Sanchar, ITC Foods, KEMIN, Magma, MTR, Nabcons, NCDEX, NETAFIM, NSEL, Rasi Seeds, Sathguru, Sresta, Super Agri, etc.

The two-year programme at MANAGE is meeting the demand for professional managers capable of handling a whole gamut of operations from farming to procurement, supply chain and retailing.

It is also providing impetus and encouraging students to entrepreneurship and create techno-managers to serve public, private and farming sectors.

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Chamraj continues to top Coonoor tea auctions

Chamraj Estate continued to top Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions last week with its orange pekoe orthodox leaf grade at Sale No: 26 fetching Rs 256 a kg against the previous week's Rs 220.

“The high price is due to modernisation of Chamraj making it the only fully automatic factory in the world to manufacture orthodox tea variety with computer-controlled fermentation process for humidity management.

It has mono-rail facility to handle green leaf. Of the 2.5 million kg of Nilgiri premium tea annually produced in Chamraj factory and its associate, Korakundah factory, 90 per cent is exported to the US, the UK, Germany and Japan”, D Hegde, member of Tea Board’s Tea Council of South India monitoring exports, told *Business Line*.

Among orthodox teas, Kodanad got Rs 190, Highfield Estate Rs 183, Havukal and Kairbetta Rs 176 each and Glendale Rs 175. In all, 39 marks got Rs 125.

Homedale Estate tea, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped CTC market when Belmont Tea and Produce Co bought it for Rs 171. Crosshill Estate and Vigneshwar Estate got Rs 169 each, Shanthi Supreme Rs 161 and Hittakkal Estate Rs 160. In all, 62 marks got Rs 125 and more. As much as 25 per cent of 18.87 lakh kg remained unsold.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 70-75 for plain leaf grades and Rs 110-150 for brighter liquoring sorts.

Maize may fall to Rs 1,300-1,400



The kharif sowing season has just commenced in Tamil Nadu. Crops such as maize, gingelly, groundnut and small onions are sown during this period.

To help farmers take apt decision about sowing of these crops, the National Agri Innovation Project (NAIP) – Domestic and Export Market Intelligence Cell (DEMIC) conducted a study of the price movement of these crops at harvest.

The findings reveal that the price of maize could decline from the current level of Rs 1,550 a quintal to around Rs 1,300 and Rs 1,400 at harvest (between October and December 2013).

Experts estimate the price of red gingelly to hover around Rs 72-76 during harvest period (September-December) and that of the groundnut pods at Rs 45 and Rs 47 a kg in Sevr Regulated Market, Tirupur District.

Small onion incidentally is grown all through the year in the State. DEMIC experts, therefore, preferred to advise farmers to raise such varieties that would ultimately fetch them better price.

Maize, Gingelly

Analysts say that the sowing of maize was progressing well across all major maize growing states in the country. 'Farmers have taken to sowing in anticipation of normal monsoon.

This coupled with the increase in the price because of lean arrivals and higher demand from the poultry industry has led to an increase in the area under maize this season.'

Sesamum is an important edible oilseed in India.

The main varieties cultivated in Tamil Nadu are TMV3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 (brown gingelly), CO1 (Black gingelly) and SVPR1 (white gingelly) and red gingelly varieties.

While the white gingelly is priced high and preferred for export purpose, nearly 75 per cent of the gingelly trade in the State is for the red varieties.

Red Gingelly, trade sources say, would rule at Rs 72-76 at harvest.

Groundnut

The price of competing oilseeds such as soyabean, palm oil, sunflower and mustard is expected to influence the price of the peanut and oil.

India's import of edible oil during 2012-13 is expected to surge to 103.1 lakh tonnes compared to 97.8 lakh tonnes in 2011-12.

Under the circumstance, the price of the groundnut pod could fetch Rs 45-47 in Sevir Regulated Market, while the price of the kernel in Tindivanam market could range at Rs 58-60.

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Spot rubber rises further

Spot rubber scaled further on Wednesday despite a weak closing on the NMCE.

The prices improved sharply reducing the gap between the cash and the futures markets. The commodity continued to suffer from short supplies following incessant rains all over the plantation areas.

Sheet rubber improved to Rs 189 (Rs 184.50), according to traders. The grade firmed up to Rs 188 (Rs 184), as reported by the Rubber Board.

July futures weakened to Rs 187.77 (Rs 192.04), August to Rs 182.10 (Rs 186.90), September to Rs 175.55 (Rs 180.13), October to Rs 173.11 (Rs 175.44), November to Rs 174.20 (Rs 174.28) while the December futures remained inactive on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) slid to Rs 161.14 (Rs 161.28) at Bangkok. July futures dropped to ¥238.0 (Rs 143.78) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange. **Spot rubber rates Rs/kg** : RSS-4: 189 (184.50); RSS-5: 179 (176); Ungraded: 169 (167); ISNR 20: 169 (167.50) and Latex 60%: 135.50 (132.50).

Pepper recovers

Pepper futures gained marginally on Wednesday following withdrawal by sellers in Karnataka and Kerala on the national exchange. Spot prices decreased by Rs 300 a quintal.

Arrivals stood at 3 tonnes while 7 tonnes of high range pepper were traded at Rs 390-400 a kg, market sources said.

On the NMCE, July and Aug contracts moved up by Rs 7 and Rs 419 respectively to Rs 40,050 and Rs 40,600.

However, September showed a marginal decrease by Rs 62 to Rs 40,199. Total turn over increased by 4 tonnes to 46 tonnes while total net open position went up by 12 tonnes to 112 tonnes.

However, spot prices decreased by Rs 300 at Rs 38,700 (ungarbled) and Rs 40,700 (MG 1) despite a decline in selling interest, they said.

At New York food show, coconut items come out of the shell

Coconut products from India have received overwhelming response in the Summer Fancy Food Show 2013 held at New York City.

This 59 {+t} {+h} food show is North America's largest food exhibition. K. Muralidharan, Director, Coconut Development Board, who represented the event, said that many enquiries on Indian coconut products especially tender coconut water, coconut cream, coconut milk, low-fat coconut milk, coconut milk powder, virgin coconut oil and RBD oil have been received. The Board had displayed many value-added products such as desiccated coconut powder, coconut milk powder, tender coconut water in cans/tetra packs, varieties of coconut oil etc. in the stall, he said. The focus of the event was to synergise the efforts of the export promotion councils/trade bodies to highlight the project 'Brand India' concept and present a single 'India Pavilion' image. The Board's participation in Summer Fancy is being arranged by India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) wherein, many pavilions from the Government as well as private sectors are participating under the banner of 'India Pavilion'.

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India to ask Mauritius to expedite basmati rice inspection system



To continue smooth exports of Basmati rice to Mauritius, India is for an early decision on putting in place the proposed export inspection and certification system for the same.

Last April, Mauritius had conveyed to the Government that the Basmati rice imported from India and Pakistan was being adulterated by local traders.

To regulate the import and sale of Basmati rice, Mauritian authorities sought a certificate of authenticity (CoA) to be issued by the Indian authorities for exports. Quick to respond, India nominated the Export Inspection Council as the nodal agency which will issue a certificate of authenticity (CoA) for all Basmati rice exports from India to Mauritius.

India has already shared a draft of the proposed agreement with Mauritius for recognition of Export Inspection and Certification System for export of Basmati rice.

Sources said that now India was looking for an early conclusion of the agreement.

The issue is likely to be raised by Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma when he meets his counterpart Sayyad Abd-Al-Cader Sayed Hossen, Minister of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection, in Mauritius at the the First Trade Ministerial Level Economic and Business Conference of Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC) nations in Port Louis starting July 4.

India exported cereals worth \$37.9 million to Mauritius in 2012-13 which was 25 per cent higher than the previous year. Basmati rice is a unique GI product under the WTO and standards in India are dynamic in nature. Efforts are being made to harmonise the standards, an official said.

The Government of Mauritius also proposed an MoU, on the lines signed with the EU in this regard.

Mauritius had also asked for DNA testing of Basmati rice (prior to shipment), but India requested that exports may be permitted on the strength of the Export Inspection Council's CoA.

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Pulses trade opposes import duty move

The Indian Pulses and Grains Association (IPGA) on Wednesday said it was not in favour of any import duty on pulses.

Currently, importers can bring in pulses duty-free till March 31 next year.

However, the Commission for Agriculture Costs and Prices (CACCP) in its recent recommendations has suggested that the Government impose a 10 per cent duty on imports to boost domestic production.

Pravin Dongre, President, IPGA, clarified that his association was not in favour of any import duty but wanted the Government to consider opening up exports. "We believe in free trade and are against any kind of impediments" he said.

Further, opening up exports could help stabilise prices, which are at present ruling below the minimum support price levels in some markets.

The recent 10 per cent decline in rupee against the dollar has made pulses imports costlier and reduced the price differential between the domestic and imported varieties. "The impact of the rupee decline is like a duty too," he said.

India's pulses imports stood at around 3 million tonnes in 2012-13 and in value term they were estimated at over \$1.5 billion.

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Festival demand gets edible oils on a sizzle



Edible oils market turned hot late evening on strong demand ahead of festival amid firm futures market on Wednesday. Groundnut oil rose by Rs 20 and cotton refined oil by Rs 4 for 10 kg each tacking bullish trend in Saurashtra.

Palmolein, soyabean, sunflower and rapeseed oil ruled unchanged. The volume was higher in palmolein and soyabean refined oil.

Sources said that in local market about 350-400 tonnes of palmolein were resale traded at Rs 530-532 for July.

Ruchi sold 350-400 tonnes of super palmolein at Rs 570-572 for July and soyabean refined oil about 650-700 tonnes at Rs 660 for August. Bunge sold 1,000-1,200 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 528 for July 15/20. Stockists have covered the commodity to fill the demand for Ramadan and Ashadhi Ekdashi.

Soyabean arrivals were about 1 lakh bags and its prices were Rs 3,500-3,600 ex-mandi and Rs 3,675-3,750 for plant delivery. Mustard seeds arrivals were 1.20- 1.25 lakh bags and the prices were Rs 3,000-3,525.

Towards the day's close, Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 545, super palmolein Rs 580 and super deluxe Rs 600. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 540 for July 10 and Rs 545 for July-August, super palmolein at Rs 575, soyabean

refined oil Rs 660 for July-August and sunflower refined oil Rs 810 for July-August.

Allana's rate for palmolein was Rs 540 and for super palmolein Rs 580. Gokul was quoting palmolein at Rs 535 for July 15. Resellers rates were Rs 530-532.

In Rajkot, groundnut oil shot up by Rs 70 to Rs 1,440 for *telia* tin and by Rs 45 to Rs 925 for loose (10 kg).

Malaysian BMD crude palm oil's August contracts settled at MYR 2,368 (MYR 2,342), September at MYR 2,365 (MYR 2,339) and October at MYR 2,358 (MYR 2,332) a tonne.

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were: groundnut oil Rs 930 (910), soya refined oil Rs 660 (660), sunflower exp. ref.Rs 750 (750), sunflower ref.Rs 805 (805), rapeseed ref. oil Rs 688 (688), rapeseed expeller ref.Rs 658 (658) cottonseed ref. oil Rs 655 (651) and palmolein Rs 528 (528).

Vikram Global Commodities, Chennai quoted Malaysian super palmolein at Rs 575 ex-Chennai for 15 days delivery.

Poultry feed seen ruling flat



Despite a downtrend in the prices of its key ingredients, poultry feed prices remained unchanged this week.

Aditya Mishra, a commodity expert, told *Business Line* that prices of a few ingredients have come down but it hasn't made any major impact on the cost of production.

Demand for feed is steady in the market and feed products may continue to rule without alteration for the next few days, he said.

In the physical market, soyameal dropped by Rs 500 and sold at Rs 34,400 a tonne.

Bajra dropped by Rs 100 to Rs 1,460 a quintal, DCP was at Rs 35 a kg, MBM eased by Rs 200 a quintal and sold at Rs 35,300 while maize went down by Rs 100 to Rs 15,100 a quintal.

Mustard De-oiled cake dropped by Rs 100 and sold at Rs 14,900 a tonne, DRB quoted at Rs 11,000 a tonne while rice bran oil went down by Re 1 and ruled at Rs 53/kg. Broiler concentrate feed quoted at Rs 2,050 for a 50-kg bag while Broiler starter mash was at Rs 1,550. Pre-lay mash sold at Rs 1,040 while layer grower mash quoted at Rs 980.

Layer concentrate 25 per cent was Rs 1,490 while layer concentrate 35 per cent went for Rs 1,175.

Poultry Products

Meanwhile, a downtrend was witnessed in the poultry products market on reduced offtake. Egg decreased by 18 paise and sold at Rs 2.96. Broiler dropped

by Rs 8 and quoted at Rs 78/kg, while chick went for Rs 11, Re 1 down from previous level.

Mixed trend in sugar



Spot sugar showed a mixed trend on Wednesday.

On the Vashi wholesale market, price for bold – fine variety increased by Rs 2-5 a quintal while fair quality dropped by Rs 2-3.

In the futures, it extended loss on second consecutive day by Rs 13-15 in early session in absence of any supportive cues.

Thin volatility in most wholesale markets kept overall sentiment weak as demand still remained need-based, said sources.

A Vashi-based wholesaler said that the market still witnessed ample supply position.

Producers are continuously selling in local markets in absence of neighbouring States' buying as prices in other centres are ruling at par with Maharashtra.

Arrivals at Vashi market were about 63-64 truck loads (of 100 bags each) while local dispatches were 62-63 truck loads.

On Tuesday, about 15-16 mills offered tenders and sold about 54,000-55,000 bags at a steady price of Rs 2,925-2,990 for S-grade and Rs 3,020-3,110 for M-grade.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S-grade Rs 3,062-3,135 (Rs 3,060-3,135) and M-grade Rs 3,192-3,291 (Rs 3,182-3,291). **Naka delivery rates were:** S-grade Rs 3,010-3,070 (Rs 3,010-3,060) and M-grade Rs 3,110-3,200 (Rs 3,110-3,200).

Erode turmeric loses out to AP varieties



Spot turmeric decreased by Rs 200 a quintal on Wednesday due to competition from cheaper varieties in Andhra Pradesh.

“Despite adverse seasonal conditions in North India some traders and exporters have received few upcountry orders and so they are purchasing . Further some of them buy the commodity from Warangal and Nizamabad where the prices are Rs 600 a quintal less than Erode market. For a cheaper price, the traders are receiving the goods on their doorsteps with low cost. After polishing them and grading the same, they despatch to North India. So the local turmeric fetches lesser price,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

Of the arrival of 4,022 bags, only 50 per cent were sold.

The finger variety was down by Rs 200 a quintal in all the markets and even the hybrid finger variety showed a decrease of Rs 450.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,099-7,077 a quintal and the root variety Rs 4,063-6,211.

Salem Hybrid Crop: The finger variety fetched Rs 6,199-8,209; the root variety Rs 6,009-6,589 . Of the arrival of 982 bags, only 401 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 6,139-7,539; the root variety Rs 5,219-6,234 . Of the 666 bags arrived, 358 were traded.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,919-7,369; the root variety Rs 5,399-6,389. All the 507 bags found takers.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,507-6,944 and the root variety Rs 6,147-6,253. All the 62 bags were sold.

Pulses subdued on poor demand



Sluggish trend continued in pulses and pulse seeds on poor demand and weak buying support.

Heavy rains which have been lashing the State for the past few days have also affected trading sentiment, leading to decline in demand for pulses. Tur

Downtrend continued in tur on weak buying support with tur (Maharashtra) being quoted at Rs 4,300-25 a quintal, while tur (Madhya Pradesh) ruled at Rs 3,600-3,800 a quintal.

Notwithstanding lower domestic crop output and rising dollar, tur prices had been ruling sluggish .

Decline in spot tur has also dragged its dal with tur dal (full) at Rs 6,100-6,200, tur dal (sawa no.) at Rs 5,400-5,500, while tur marka ruled at Rs 6,800 a quintal.

Sluggish trend also prevailed in moong and urad on slack demand.

Besides, report of better crop prospect of moong and urad has also led to downtrend.

moong

Moong dal declined by Rs 100 with moong dal (medium) being quoted Rs 6,000-6,100 , moong dal (bold) at Rs 6,500-6,600, while moong mongar ruled at Rs 7,000 a quintal.

urad

Urad and its dal also ruled sluggish on weak buying support with urad (bold) being quoted at Rs 3,400-25 , while urad (medium) ruled at Rs 3,000-3,100 .

Similarly, urad dal declined on weak demand with urad dal (medium) being quoted at Rs 4,000-4,100, urad dal (bold) at Rs 4,500-4,600 , while urad mongar ruled at Rs 5,500-5,800 a quintal (down Rs 100 from last week).

Panic sales cool down coconut oil



Panic sales coupled with low corporate demand have impacted the coconut oil market both in Kerala and Tamil Nadu this week.

The market, after a spurt in prices that went up to Rs 73/kg few weeks back, has declined sharply to Rs 68 in Kerala this week due to lower demand from corporates as well as local consumers.

Last week, the prices were quoted at Rs 70 a kg in the State.

According to Prakash B. Rao, Vice-President, Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA), the market is witnessing a panic trend due to quoting of oil at much lower price by large scale producers. Elsewhere in Tamil Nadu, the prices, after hitting Rs 70, came down to Rs 63 .

Copra prices also declined sharply to Rs 4,600 a quintal in Kerala (Rs 5,200) and Rs 4,400 in Tamil Nadu (Rs 5,000). The availability of copra in Kerala is very low compared to Tamil Nadu, he said.

It is also reported that large quantities of dry coconuts are being stocked by traders as well as major corporates on anticipation of future needs. This has also affected the availability of the commodity in the market, he said.

Even the subsidiary oils such as palm oil and palm kernel oil are quoting Re 1 lower at Rs 54 a kg and Rs 52 a kg respectively.

Thalath Mahamood, former President, COMA, pointed out that his assessment that the market was going through an 'artificial boom' had proved correct as is evident from the huge drop in prices this week.

He said that the absence of an upcountry and local demand resulted in the downward trend in prices and this selling trend may witness in the next couple of weeks before it goes up.

Bharat N. Khona, former Board Member, COMA, said that continuing monsoon and lack of an upcountry demand had also made an impact in the market, he said.

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