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Growers wonder how State will get rice for Anna Bhagya

The State government is all set to launch the Anna Bhagya scheme on July 10, under which BPL card holders will receive 30 kg of rice a month at Re. 1 a kg. Nearly 1 crore households are expected to benefit from the scheme.

However, paddy growers here are wondering how the government will procure huge quantities of rice for the scheme as there has been a gradual decline in paddy production in the State.

According to Kurubur Shanthakumar, chief convener, Federation of Karnataka Farmers' Associations, the government may procure rice from other States, but this is unlikely to be sustainable in the long run.

Growers here pointed out that paddy cultivation was no longer profitable owing to steep increase in cost of cultivation and lack of good returns.

"Price of rice in the open market has gone up as production even in other rice-growing States has declined. Farmers there are switching over to other crops which fetch higher returns," said Mr. Shanthakumar, who is chief convener, Federation of Karnataka Farmers' Associations, Mysore.

COST PER ACRE

Mr. Shanthakumar, who cultivates paddy at T. Narsipur taluk, told *The Hindu* that the cost of cultivating paddy per acre is about Rs. 28,500 and the average yield per acre is around 20 quintals. The support price had been enhanced to Rs. 1,360 per quintal. Considering this, the returns per acre will not be more than Rs. 28,000. If the yield was more by 2 or 3 quintals and the produce fetched a better price (for fine variety), the farmers might make a profit that was between Rs. 3,000 and Rs. 4,000.

“It is not lucrative at all as the labour cost has gone up substantially,” Mr. Shanthakumar explained.

He said that one could get around 65 kg of rice from a quintal of paddy. Including the main byproducts of rice milling, the farmer may get around Rs. 3,335 per quintal. Mr. Shanthakumar, who is also chief convener of Consortium of Indian Farmers’ Association, demanded implementation of the M.S. Swaminathan Commission report on minimum prices. “Fixing scientific price will bring stability to paddy production. Lack of a justifiable support price will discourage growers. In such a situation, how can we ensure food security,” he asked.

Sustaining the rice scheme largely depended on the government’s move to boost paddy cultivation in the State, he said.

Siddesh, a 49-year-old paddy farmer in T. Narsipur taluk, said: “Middlemen were eating away at our profits. I get a yield of about 20 quintals per acre. I have not benefited much by cultivating paddy as the cost of production and the returns I get are almost the same.”

He said farmers had to buy fertilizer, seeds, pesticides and other inputs at retail prices, but their produce was bought at wholesale price.

Another farmer from the same taluk said farmers would be at risk if the government regulated rice transportation to other States as the government here required huge quantities of rice to meet its PDS needs.

Use of chemicals

According to Mr. Shanthakumar, another important reason for the fall in paddy yield is excessive use of chemical fertilizer. “This is harming soil fertility. Nearly 15 to 18 per cent chemical fertilizer is used to boost paddy

output. The yield was earlier over 25 quintals per acre but now is less even after scaling up fertilizer use.”

He suggested that universities develop more high-yielding paddy varieties to boost production.

Paddy is cultivated on over 20 lakh hectares in the State. In Mysore district, it is cultivated on over 1.5 lakh hectares.

When friends and foes are all the same

The hostility to the UPA's food security Bill from both its allies and the Opposition stems not from substantial objections to the draft law itself but from other political grouses

The decision to bring an ordinance to provide food security to 67 per cent of the country's population was received with much hostility by the Opposition parties last week. The latter seemed surprised that the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) could muster the courage to do so in the face of overt opposition from leaders like Sharad Pawar of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). Sharad Pawar and Mulayam Singh Yadav, whose party supports the UPA from outside, have opposed the Bill as being anti-farmer, the implication being that the state, as a monopoly buyer on such a massive scale, would kill the private market for farmers as also small food grain exporters. A closer reading of numbers, however, will show that there is enough scope for the private/export market to coexist. Of the total annual food grain production of 200 million tones, the marketable surplus after self-consumption by small farmers is roughly 140 million tones. Further, the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices estimates a total requirement of 60 million tonnes to meet the commitments of the food security law. So,

a full 80 million tonnes, over half of the marketable surplus, would be available for the private market.

'Anti-farmer'

Frankly, how can the food security Bill be termed anti-farmer when the government provides an assured price for their produce year after year? Predictability in price works like an insurance to farmers. In fact, there has been a long standing debate over providing a minimum support price for food items like vegetables so that farmers do not suffer from price volatility on account of localised swings in production, a bane of the Indian food market. This writer asked the spokesperson of the Samajwadi Party (SP), Kamal Farooqui, to explain the anti-farmer nature of the food security Bill: "My party will explain it when the matter is discussed in Parliament. Why doesn't the UPA show the same haste in bringing the anti-Communal Violence Bill and other Sachar Committee resolutions in Parliament," he asked. That, indeed, let the cat out of the bag. The SP, it appears, may tone down its opposition to the food security Bill if the UPA obliges it with critical legislations that would help it consolidate the Muslim constituency in Uttar Pradesh.

Allies

One gets the feeling that the opposition to the food bill among various regional parties, otherwise not so hostile to the Congress, stems more from a feeling that the UPA must do enough for present and future "secular allies" to consolidate their vote ahead of the coming general election, as it seems to be doing for itself through the food security Bill. However, the Bill has been on the UPA's agenda from the beginning of its present tenure. The UPA has taken nearly two years to fine-tune the provisions after

having it examined within the government, the National Advisory Council (NAC) and a Parliamentary Standing Committee.

Left's position

The Left's position on the food security Bill is more nuanced. It supports the legislation, but has argued that bringing an ordinance is undemocratic as it precludes the possibility of amendments to refine the legislation. The Congress's position is that an ordinance assumes the character of a bill when brought to Parliament and goes through a process of discussions and amendments following which the bill becomes a law, as had happened with the ordinance on the anti-rape bill brought to Parliament some months ago. The shape of the final bill was different from the ordinance when it was brought to Parliament.

Historically, ordinances have probably provided a way of avoiding an immediate discussion in Parliament. But here the Congress seems to be playing a contrarian game, using the ordinance route to ensure that the main Opposition party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), is forced to attend the parliamentary debate on the food security legislation. For, there is a feeling that the BJP will again create conditions for the disruption of the monsoon session, that begins from July 26, even as it mounts a more strident, election-mode campaign against the UPA. Narendra Modi recently hinted at taking the anti-Congress campaign to a new high.

BJP's grounds

Beyond a point, the BJP cannot oppose the food security ordinance because its government in Chhattisgarh has implemented an even more ambitious food security legislation covering 90 per cent of the population. The BJP, too, seems to be raising merely technical issues and questioning

the workability of the UPA's proposed legislation such as how the Centre aims to fund such a programme when the economy is down and the government has embarked on fiscal consolidation to get growth back on track. Of course, these objections are somewhat flimsy because the government is already spending about Rs.95,000 crore on food subsidy, covering about 45 per cent of the population. It probably needs to spend another Rs.30,000 crore to cover 67 per cent of population if it manages a revamped delivery system with minimum leakages.

Identifying beneficiaries

As in other welfare programmes, the UPA has embarked on a new framework of food delivery, without leakages. It has just completed a socio-economic and caste survey to identify deserving beneficiaries as also to exclude the better off segments, based on certain asset ownership patterns. A three-room *pucca* house, a two wheeler, and an income-tax paying member in the household, among others, would be taken together as a basis for excluding households. On a preliminary finding, about 35 per cent of households nationwide might be excluded. Politically, some problems could arise from this exclusion criteria as a section of Dalits and most backward castes could get captured by it for exclusion. For instance, relatively better off Dalits in certain western districts of Uttar Pradesh and Punjab who are benefiting from such programmes at present may get excluded later.

After the exclusion exercise, the socio-economic and caste survey will identify the poor beneficiaries. The poorest households will be identified on the basis of indicators such as the lack of a *pucca* house sans a sanitation facility or water source within the house. This promises to be a complicated

exercise and members of the NAC such as Mr. N.C. Saxena, have spoken about the complexities involved in identifying the beneficiaries based on the socio-economic and caste survey. The UPA's success will depend on how it hones its delivery system with minimum leakages. Shoddy implementation of the food security legislation could prove politically counterproductive at a later stage.

While it is true that no political party can oppose pro-poor legislation to provide food security to 67 per cent of the population, the Manmohan Singh government will have to ensure that all logistical details are in place before such an ambitious plan is rolled out. So far, the government has been tentative as regards the implementation of the law on the ground, with rumbles within the establishment about the asset-based survey to identify the beneficiaries.

Exigencies

Certain clauses in the legislation also show the defensive attitude of lawmakers. The Opposition has criticised a clause which says the food supply programme could be temporarily suspended in the event of, say, an unforeseen drought resulting in a sharp drop in food production. This is possible; in 2002-03, a severe drought caused a sharp drop in food grain production by over 35 million tonnes, as compared with the previous year.

The Agriculture Ministry has proposed a drought-proofing budget of over Rs.1,10,000 crore over five years to enhance irrigation facilities, storage assets and other measures to ensure against a sudden fall in food production. India is currently well placed, with a record 200 million tonnes in production in 2012-13. For the first time ever, over 20 million tonnes of rice, wheat and maize were exported. Stabilising food production over a period

with better infrastructure investments is critical to sustaining the food security legislation.

Caged aquaculture project a success

Project launched by CIFRI, Bangalore, and State Fisheries Department



Vythiri grama panchayat president K. Gagarin inaugurating the caged aquaculture harvest from a demonstration battery set up on Pookode Lake in Wayanad district.

A caged aquaculture demonstration project in inland water, a first in the State in the Pookode Lake in Wayanad district, has proved to be a great success.

It was launched by the Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute (CIFRI), Bangalore, in association with the State Fisheries Department.

Fish harvest

As much as 80 kg fish was caught in the first harvest from a demonstration battery, consisting of two cages measuring nine sq m a cage.

It recorded a good growth of the fish. As many as 200 fingerlings of the Indian major carp species had been deposited in a cage nearly seven

months ago and 160 of them had an average size of 500 g now, B.K. Sudheer Kishan, assistant director-in-charge, Fisheries Department, said. The project was launched to sensitise farmers to the scope of caged fish farming.

Caged aquaculture has a vast potential in the district as the innumerable water bodies, including the reservoirs of the Karapuzha and Banasura Sagar projects, were yet to be tapped properly, M. Feroz Khan, scientist-in-charge, CIFRI, told *The Hindu*. Mr. Khan is supervising the project.

Cost effective

Moreover, it was a cost-effective method of fish farming as the farmers could feed, evaluate the growth of the fish, and harvest without any difficulty. Total harvesting and swift return of investment; less mortality rate; less requirement of manpower; better control of fish population; efficient control of fish competitors and predators; and minimum supervision were the added advantages, he added.

Mr. Khan said the CIRFI was planning to launch caged aquaculture in the Karapuzha reservoir soon. P. Gagarin, president, Vythiri grama panchayat, inaugurated the harvest.

Import duty on sugar hiked to 15 per cent

The government, on Tuesday, hiked the import duty on sugar to 15 per cent from 10 per cent to help the industry clear Rs.9,000 crore cane arrears to farmers — a move that would make the sweetener costlier for the common man.

In a notification issued by the Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC), the duty on raw and white (refined) sugar has been raised to 15 per cent. — PTI

Kazipet receives 3,000 tonnes of Urea

Urea stocks amounting to 3,000 tonnes had arrived in the district to meet the requirements of the farmers in the current kharif season, said Agriculture Officer Adi Reddy. A total of 1,500 tonnes of Urea would be delivered to Markfed while rest of the stock would be supplied to dealers and societies. This was the fourth time the huge stocks of Urea has arrived at Kazipet for the current kharif season.

- Special Correspondent

Congress honing food security scheme sales pitch

Sonia summons CMs, PCC presidents for discussions on taking message to people



Close on the heels of the UPA government pushing through the food security ordinance, Congress president Sonia Gandhi has summoned her

party's 14 Chief Ministers as well as all PCC presidents to the capital for July 13 to discuss how to take the message of this move to the people.

Saturday's meeting will be attended also by party vice-president Rahul Gandhi, all general-secretaries and members of the Congress Core Group that includes Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Ms. Gandhi's political secretary Ahmed Patel and Union Ministers P. Chidambaram and A.K. Antony. Food Minister K.V. Thomas will also be in attendance.

This will be the party's first major gathering after its *chintan shivir* in Jaipur in January this year.

The party, now in election mode, is determined to use the next 10 months to project its promise of food security to 67 per cent of the population — and the Direct Benefit Transfer scheme — as UPA II's MGNREGA; in UPA I, the rural employment guarantee scheme, along with farm loan waiver, brought an additional 60-odd Lok Sabha seats and a second term in power. In addition, there are Assembly elections due in key States later this year — Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Delhi.

Indeed, the Congress-ruled Delhi is all set to become the first State to roll out the food security scheme. On Monday, Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit said it would be launched on August 20, birth anniversary of the former Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi.

Saturday's meeting will focus on how to ensure that the Congress-ruled States become role models in implementation of the food security measure, said party sources. The party wants the scheme implemented as swiftly as possible so that it will be well in place by the time the Lok Sabha elections take place.

Last Friday, Congress communication chief Ajay Maken, making a pitch for food security, described the government's clearing the ordinance — in fulfilment of a manifesto promise — as a sign of its credibility that people would “take into account” when they cast their votes. “This will be a game-changer,” he said, “for the poor people.”

On Monday, Mr. Maken called a meeting of party spokespersons who were briefed by Mr. Thomas on the various aspects of the ordinance, as well as instructed in responses to Opposition criticism. For instance, while the Bahujan Samaj Party has dismissed the measure as an “election gimmick”, the Samajwadi Party has called it “anti-farmer.” The spokespersons will now travel to all State headquarters and hold press conferences on food security.

When implemented, the UPA's food security programme will be the biggest in the world with the government spending an estimated Rs. 1,25,000 crore annually on 62 million tonnes of rice, wheat and coarse cereals for 67 per cent of the population.

Significant increase in Bhavanisagar reservoir



The storage in the dam has almost doubled in the last three months.

Farmers in the district is looking forward a good irrigation season ahead as the storage in the Bhavanisagar reservoir has witnessed a significant increase.

The storage in the dam has almost doubled in the last three months, which has brought cheer to the farming community. On Monday, the water level stood at 62.89 ft. Three months ago, the level was 33.93 ft.

The dam, the lifeline of thousands of farmers in the district, received copious inflow following good rainfall in its catchments, particularly in parts of the Nilgiris district.

The dam is the primary water resource for more than 2.5 lakh acres in Erode, Karur and Tirupur districts.

Last year, the water level in the dam plummeted fast due to monsoon failure, forcing thousands of farmers in the district to leave their land barren. The situation appears better this year. The recent rain has raised our hope for a good irrigation season, farmers here said.

Many farmers in the district wanted the public works department to implement effective water management practices and ensure adequate water to both old and LBP ayacuts.

Hybrid sorghum from seed farm

The State Seed Farm situated near Pongalur, which is on the revival path after lying defunct for many years, is set to become the 'breeding ground' for production of hybrid sorghum seeds using latest technologies.

Under an initiative mooted by the Department of Agriculture, about eight tonnes of foundation seeds of sorghum will be produced in the first phase that begins immediately.

These foundation seeds will then be distributed to the needy farmers in the district at subsidised rates through various government-sponsored schemes.

“For producing the targeted quantity of foundation seeds of CSH-14 variety of sorghum, we have already stocked breeder seeds procured from the Directorate of Sorghum Research in Hyderabad,” Joint Director of Agriculture Mohammed Kalimullah Sherif told *The Hindu*.

The dry and cool weather conditions prevailing in the Pongalur area has come as a catalyst for the officials to begin the seed production process soon.

Field preparation works will be carried out on the Seed Farm premises which include creation of good drainage facility to avoid water stagnation and places for drying the harvested foundation seeds of sorghum as well as storing them.

To ensure water supply during production, the agriculture department has recently set up three borewells in advance on the Seed Farm premises.

‘Centre should implement Cauvery final award’

The CPI-affiliated Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam has called upon the Centre to ensure that the final award of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal was implemented by Karnataka so as to find a permanent solution to the row.

“The Centre’s lenient attitude towards Karnataka’s adamant stand, disregarding the directives of the Supreme Court, is unacceptable. Without losing time, the Centre should constitute the Cauvery Management Board and the Cauvery Water Regulatory Board,” a resolution adopted at the association’s State Executive Committee and district secretaries meeting held here on Monday with V. Duraimanickam, State general secretary in the chair.

The association pointed out that Tamil Nadu had lost its kuruvasi crop this year too owing to poor storage at the Mettur Reservoir.

It is the duty of the Centre to ensure that Karnataka release Cauvery water as specified in the tribunal award.

Expressing concern over the crisis situation faced by farmers on account of various factors such as non-availability of adequate water, power, increase in price of inputs, subsidy cuts, lack of access to credit, and market instability, the association urged the State government to take steps to protect the interests of farmers.

CPI farmers’ wing demands drought relief for all farmers

Ban on tobacco nixes cultivation

The CPI and CPM have come on board to condemn the ban on chewable tobacco, claiming that the move would harm small farmers cultivating tobacco here in Kodiakkarai and Vedaranyam.

Spearheading the rally and demonstration, V.Marimuthu, ex-MLA, Nagapattinam, claimed that there was no proven scientific evidence suggesting tobacco causes cancer. “Three-year-old child suffers from cancer. Is that because of tobacco,” wondered Mr. Marimuthu. The

government should have given a time-bound period to implement the ban so that the producers would not have invested in cultivation, Mr. Marimuthu said. Equating the continued sale of liquor and cigarettes, with chewable tobacco, the demonstrators, believed that there were double standards in banning chewable tobacco and allowing the others. According to the campaigners, there was no such ban on chewable tobacco in many other states and that the ban in the State is immediately lifted. Vedaranyam has seen considerable number of casualties in cancer, with captive farms used in cultivation of tobacco traditionally. There were stray instances of administrative interventions to create awareness on the ills of tobacco in Vedaranyam in the past. Earlier, speaking to over phone, Mr. Marimuthu claimed that the ban was a policy decision of the Government. However, it cannot affect the 'farmers', he said, claiming that the party was representing the interests of the cultivators.

However, close to 2,000 farm labourers were mobilized in over 50 vehicles from interior villages to Vedaranyam for the protest. The protesters also submitted a petition to the Tahsildar of Vedaranyam. Speaking to on conditions of anonymity, a local activist called the Communists' rally and demonstration irresponsible and needed to be countered by stepping up awareness.

Centre failed to form statutory bodies for Cauvery, say farmers

Running out of patience: Farmers staging a protest in front of the Thanjavur Railway junction on Tuesday.— PHOTO: B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Members of Cauvery Urimai Meetpu Kuzhu and farmers staged a demonstration near the railway station here urging the Union government

to form the Cauvery Management Board and Water Regulation Committee immediately.

The demonstration was led by P. Maniarsan, Convenor of the Kuzhu. Maniarsan said that the union government should have formed the statutory bodies when the final award of the Cauvery River Water Disputes Tribunal was published in the gazette. Due to the delay, Karnataka had not released the due share of Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu this year.

But now 40,000 cusecs of water was released from Karnataka after the state received copious showers due to South West Monsoon and it could not store the excess water in its reservoirs. "Karnataka has been using Tamil Nadu as a spillway by releasing water when it could not store. There should be distress sharing", Mr. Maniarsan said.

The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu should take a delegation of all party leaders to Delhi and appeal to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to interfere and make Karnataka release water, he added.

Durai Balakrishnan, assistant general secretary, Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK), Ayyanapuramj C. Murugesan, general secretary, Thamizhar Desiya Iyakkam, A. Nalladurai, convenor of the Naam Thamizhar Katchi, T. Manimozhiyan, general secretary of Thamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam, and Cauvery Dhanabalan, general secretary of Cauvery Vivasayigal Padukappu Sangam took part in the agitation.

Recovery law invoked against 2 mills

Thanjavur district administration has started collecting the dues to be paid by Thiru Arooran Sugars Ltd, Thirumanankudi and Ambika Sugars Ltd, Kottur, both near Kumbakonam, to sugarcane farmers under Revenue

Recovery Act. Official sources here said that permission has been given by the government to collect the arrears the mills owed to farmers, under the act. "Dues pending to farmers will now be collected from the mills as land revenue arrears. Assessment of movable and immovable properties of the mills is done," sources said.

Thiru Arooran Sugars Ltd. has to pay an arrear of Rs. 42 crore to farmers for the sugarcane it crushed during the crushing season that ended in May this year. It gave an assurance to farmers and the district administration that the arrears would be settled in phases, Rs. 20 crore before June 30 and the rest Rs. 22 crore by July end. The mill had not settled the first instalment by June end as promised by it. With respect to Ambika Sugars Ltd., it has to pay arrears of Rs. 50.06 crore to farmers. It gave an assurance to farmers at the monthly grievances day meeting that Rs. 23 crore would be paid before June end, Rs. 15 crore before July end, and the rest before August end. It had not kept its promise. Following this, the district administration took up the matter with the government and now got permission to collect the dues under the Revenue Recovery Act, official sources said.

Paandagappadi tank dries up farmers' hopes

It irrigates 2,000 acres directly and 5,000 acres indirectly by recharging wells in its periphery



Arid: The Paandagappadi tank near Veppanthattai in Perambalur district.—
PHOTO: R.M. RAJARATHINAM.

The Paandagappadi tank near Veppanthattai, one of the major irrigation sources in Perambalur district, has dried up completely for the first-time in almost four decades, causing much consternation among farmers and residents. The tank has remained dry for the past few months, taking down the water table not just around Veppanthattai panchayat union limits, but also in far off places up to V. Kalathur, farmers complain. The Veppanthattai union will face severe water crisis if the tank did not receive adequate water, they added.

The Paandagapaddi tank, spread over about 300 acres of land, was renovated in 1985 and has been holding up plentiful water received through jungle streams. The tank directly irrigates 2,000 acres and benefits 5,000 acres of land by recharging the wells in its periphery.

The locals also made good money through inland fishing when the tank thrived with abundance. The sprawling tank also attracted birds from even foreign countries.

“We never expected the tank to go fully dry and it’s a shock to every one. The surrounding villages have already started feeling the pinch as the water table has gone down even in far off areas,” says C.Palanimuthu, president, Paandagapadi village panchayat. The farmers of Paandagapadi and the nearby villages also face the problem of animals straying into their fields in search of water, particularly during summers. Animals like deer, rabbits, peacocks, and monkeys enter the fields from the Venbavur forest area and destroy not only the standing paddy and maize, but also casuarinas and teak plantations.

Though the soil condition in these villages is best suited for maize, many farmers prefer alternative crops to keep wild animals at bay, as most of these wild animals prefer to feed on maize, says Mr. Palanimuthu. The seriousness of the problem could be gauged from the fact that many farmers have received compensation from the forest department in the past.

The locals have been demanding the forest department for a long time to set up mini water ponds in the reserve forest area and fencing forest boundaries to prevent animals from entering the fields, he adds.

'Traditional paddy varieties good for health'

Traditional paddy varieties are good for health but they have disappeared due to the wrong economic policies of the government, said agriculturist G.Nammalvar here on Tuesday.

Speaking at a national workshop organised in connection with the 33rd All India Farmers' Association, he said over two and a half lakh farmers had committed suicide during the last 15 years as the government was supporting global agricultural companies and not traditional farmers.

Allopathic medicines were slowly incapacitating human organs. Hospitals had become business centres and they did not think about serving society. On the other hand, native herbal medicines were highly useful, he noted.

Farmers write to CM

Around 2,800 farmers in the command area of Lower Bhavani irrigation project have sent a joint representation to the Chief Minister, Jayalalitha,

urging the State Government to drop the proposal for concrete lining the canals in the area.

A few days back, the farmers had also made a representation to World Bank asking the organisation not to fund the said project.

Ecological damage

In the representation to the Government, the farmers had highlighted the ecological damage that the project could cause as well as its cascading effect on the rural economy.

C. Nallasami of Lower Bhavani Farmers Association, and Karthikeya Sivasenapathy, managing trustee of Senapathy Kangayam Cattle Research Foundation, pointed out that the project not only affects the crop cultivation but also affects the cattle rearing activities in the region.

Once the concrete floors were laid, around 900 wells and ponds in the command area could go dry as underwater recharging would not take place.

“Because of the said condition, the hamlets along the banks of the canals will face drinking water shortage,” the farmers pointed out.

Farmers should become catalysts of change: Sainath

District-level research cells should be set up to help farmers address region-specific technological issues, he says

Calling upon the farmers to become catalysts of change, the Rural Affairs Editor of *The Hindu*, P. Sainath, has asked the farmers' groups/forums like All India Kisan Sabha to set up district-level research cells for helping farmers address region-specific technological issues and increase profitability.

“The farmers, through mass movements, also have to fight against the ‘corporate takeover’ of agriculture sector if they have to get back to the days of prosperity enjoyed in 1960s and 1970s,” he said.

Mr. Sainath told this while addressing the farmers on the topic ‘Agrarian crisis and possible solution’ at a seminar organised by the All India Kisan Sabha in Tirupur on Monday evening. According to him, the government policies during the last two decades have been anti-agrarian and there has been a collapse of investment in agriculture in the period.

Wrong policies

“The wrong policies only favoured the corporate houses. It seems that the ruling class in the country has decided to take agriculture out of the hands of small farmers and hand it over to the rich and big corporates,” he said.

He cited the example of farmers in Vidharbha, one of the prominent cotton growing areas in the country. They were not poor in the 1960s and 1970s. One quintal of cotton was fetching for them more price than 10 gm of gold, and cotton in the 1960s was considered as ‘white gold’, he pointed out.

“But the situation changed due to the incorrect governmental steps and farm credits started drifting to the rich. According to an RBI official, only 38 per cent of agriculture credit disbursed through banking network in Maharastra in 2010 has been through branches in rural areas where the actual farmers’ population is concentrated,” he said.

Mr. Sainath pointed out that Aurangabad gained attention after businessmen there purchased 150 luxury cars in 2010.

“Here, the interesting aspect is that State Bank of India extended loans to purchase these cars at 7 per cent interest. An enquiry with the official of the

same bank revealed that during the period, the bank has been levying 14 per cent interest for purchase of tractors by the farmers”.

Mr. Sainath asked the small farmers to challenge neo-liberal regimes and fight for implementation of at least the main recommendations in the report of M.S. Swaminathan-headed National Commission of Farmers for their rejuvenation. “Unfortunately, no discussion has taken place on the National Commission of Farmers’ report though it was submitted almost six years back,” he added.

K. Thangavel, MLA (Tirupur South), and P. Mohan, the district president of All India Kisan Sabha, spoke.

Food situation grim: Chandy

Says value addition, product diversification essential for State



Welcome: ICAR Director General A. Ayyappan receives Chief Minister Oommen Chandy to the inaugural function of the International Conference on Tropical Roots and Tubers organised by CTCRI in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday. Union Minister of State for Human Resource Shashi Tharoor is also seen.— Photo: S. Mahinsha

The Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) is working on a comprehensive tuber crops development programme for the Attappady area to ensure the food and nutritional security of the tribal population, Chief Minister Oommen Chandy has said.

Delivering the inaugural address on the opening day of the International Conference on Tropical Roots and Tubers organised by the Central Tuber Crops Research Institute and the Indian Society for Root Crops, he said the high mortality of infants and pregnant women among the tribals in Attappady was a matter of grave concern. “We have requested ICAR to chalk out a programme to exploit the potential of tubers for food and nutritional security of the tribal folk. The programme is expected to be launched shortly through CTCRI,” he said.

Mr. Chandy who arrived for the function amid a day of hectic political activity and violence on the streets, stressed the need for large-scale value addition and product diversification to sustain the production and interest of farmers in tuber cultivation.

He said the food scenario in Kerala was turning grim due to a variety of factors like unseasonal rainfall, rise in temperature, depletion of groundwater, and scarcity of farm workers.

“In this situation, tubers offer ample scope for sustainable food production and livelihood means for millions of people. At 37 tonnes per hectare, India has the world’s highest productivity of cassava, thanks to the high-yielding varieties and cropping techniques developed by CTCRI. We have to sustain this production,” the Chief Minister said.

Mr. Chandy said CTCRI would soon set up a technology incubation centre with financial assistance from the Small Farmers Agri Business Consortium to produce value-added products from tubers.

S. Ayyappan, Director General, ICAR, presided over the function. Union Minister of State for Human Resource Development Shashi Tharoor; Deputy Director General, ICAR, N.K. Krishnakumar; Director, CTCRI, S.K. Chakrabarti; Director, Postal Services, Sumathi Ravichandran; president, ISRC, S. Ramanathan; and secretary G. Byju also spoke.

Minimum price for farmers



The service co-operative bank in Thankamani and Udumpannur and the Thodupuzha Taluk Rubber Marketing Co-Operative Society have been selected to provide the financial support for farmers under the minimum price scheme. The minimum price for milling copra per quintal is Rs. 5,250 and Rs. 5, 500 for the ball copra. Farmers should contact these co-operative societies for details, said an official release here.

GSL to venture into dairy farming

The south Goa-based defence undertaking Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL), as part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR), has ventured into dairy farming to assist Goan farmers to boost milk production in the State.

Speaker of the Goa Legislative Assembly Rajendra Arlekar on Tuesday inaugurated the “Dairy (Collective Farming) Cooperative,” a project initiated by GSL in collaboration with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) at Korgao Pernem in north Goa

Mr. Arlekar appreciated the GSL for venturing into sectors like health, agriculture, water harvesting and initiating agro-dairy projects for the State’s welfare. He called for more cooperation from farmers to help boost milk production. The State, he said, must be self sufficient in milk production.

Vinit Bakshi, chairman and managing director, GSL, said the GSL has initiated collective farming projects in various parts of the State.

The GSL has planned to undertake five collective farming projects in Pernem taluk out of which three had commenced in Korgao, Pernem and Ibrampur. Under these projects 44 cows have been distributed to farmers, 34 more cows will be supplied in another few days, and by end of this year, 150 cows will be supplied to farmers.

The objective behind this endeavour was to extend a helping hand to increase milk production, said CMD of GSL.

Protesters demand inclusion of jowar in Anna Bhagya scheme

Samiti members submit memorandum to government



Members of the Karnataka Rajya Bilijola Abhivrudhdhi Samiti taking out a protest in Bijapur on Tuesday.— Photo: Rajendra Singh Hajeri

Members of the Karnataka Rajya Bilijola Abhivrudhdhi Samiti on Tuesday took out a really here, seeking distribution of jowar to below the poverty line (BPL) families under the public distribution system.

In a memorandum submitted to the Chief Minister through the district administration, president of the samiti Panchappa Kalburgi, said the government should distribute jowar as well as rice, which is being distributed as part of the Anna Bhagya scheme, to the poor.

He said jowar was an intrinsic part of the diet of the people of the north Karnataka region, and added that the government should protect the dietary habits of the people.

Mr. Kalburgi claimed that jowar was more nutritious and healthy, when compared to rice, and the people of the region were accustomed to this staple diet.

While a limited quantity of water was sufficient to cultivate jowar, the quantity of water needed to cultivate rice was very high, he pointed out.

Listing out other benefits of distributing jowar, he said the government could save nearly Rs. 600 crore on the procurement of jowar. While the

cost of procurement of rice was about Rs. 30 a kg, the jowar would cost a meagre Rs. 22 a kg, he said.

Mr. Kalburgi said the government had decided to provide a maximum of 30 kg rice to each BPL family. After including jowar, it could give 15 kg each of jowar and rice to every BPL family in north Karnataka.

Distribution of jowar would also help farmers earn higher profits, which would, in turn, encourage them to take up large-scale cultivation of jowar, he said.

Mr. Kalburgi urged the government to fix Rs. 2,500 a quintal as minimum support price (MSP) for jowar.

Working president of the samiti S.V. Patil was present.

Guntur district chosen for Norway institute's project

To encourage direct sowing of paddy to tide over adverse climatic conditions

The Norwegian Centre for Agriculture & Environment has selected Guntur district for yet another project related to direct sowing of paddy to tide over water scarcity problems.

The new project called, 'CLIMAADAPT,' is the second project after the district has successfully implemented 'CLIMARICE,' a project assisted by the Norwegian Centre. The Regional Agricultural Research Station, Lam has provided the technical assistance to the farmers.

The projects promote direct sowing of paddy to tide over the adverse weather conditions, including deficit rainfall, scarce water releases and also the shortage of manual labour.

A preparatory meeting for farmers and agricultural scientists is being held at RARS, Lam on July 11.

Joint Director of Agriculture, A. Sridhar said direct sowing of paddy has been gaining acceptance in the district and claimed that over 1 lakh acres had been brought under cultivation during last year.

The process involves, sowing of paddy in the field through seed-cum-fertiliser drill fitted to a tractor.

In contrast, conventional transplantation farming practices begin with setting up a nursery bed and after a 45-day period, the plants are transplanted in the field.

The direct sowing operation starts with the onset of monsoon. Farmers usually prepare the land during summer season. Green manure is used to improve the soil carbon content. The land is ploughed and levelling is carried just before the onset of monsoon.

Once the field is ready, farmers collect seeds and fill up the boxes in the seed-cum-fertiliser drill fitted to a tractor. The seeds are funneled to the soil through ductile pipes fitted to the drill. Even as the tractor ploughs the field, the sowing is done simultaneously. The operation is quick and it just takes about 90 minutes to sow seeds in an acre.

The Department of Agriculture and RARS, Lam have chosen Jonnalagadda village for the project.

Scientists say that the direct sowing of paddy is a boon to lands where water is delivered late to the tail end areas of canals. The technology is also helping in reduction of 20-40 per cent of water usage when compared to transplantation technology.

Over 1 lakh acres had been brought under cultivation during last year, Joint Director of Agriculture, A. Sridhar

5,000 farm ponds for Villupuram

The State government has sanctioned 5,000 farm ponds for Villupuram district, each to be dug at a cost of Rs. 1.50 lakh. Besides storing water these ponds would also help in recharging groundwater, according to V. Sampath, District Collector.

These ponds would be set up in the lands owned by Adi Dravidars, Scheduled Tribes and small and marginal farmers. They would be allowed to engage workforce under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme. — Special Correspondent

Sheep rearing

The Livestock Management Training Centre at Kudappanakunnu will conduct a programme to train farmers in sheep farming on July 15 and 16. Those interested in attending the programme may report at the centre before 9 a.m. on July 15.

Collector clarifies

District Collector K.N. Satheesh has refuted reports of the government collecting money from farmlands owners whose land was taken up for soil-water conservation programmes under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. Such misleading reports would dissuade farmers from joining the programme, a release said. — Staff Reporter

Growers taught canopy management of mango

The mango export market has expanded to U.S and E urope



REACHING FOR THE BIGE ONES: Training programme of 'Canopy management in Mango and Guava' organised by Anbil Dharmalingam College for Agriculture and Research Institute, Horticultural College and Research Institute for Women in Tiruchi on Tuesday.— PHOTO: A. MURALITHARAN

Lack of awareness about pruning of trees has been a major bottleneck in both yield and export of mango and farmers should resort to the technique for registering higher and attractive returns, said scientists who spoke at the day-long training-cum-demonstration on “canopy management in mango and guava” held at Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute here on Tuesday. To drive home the importance of sunlight in increasing the yield, they conducted a practical session on the pruning technique.

T.N. Balamohan, Special Officer, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University-Horticultural College and Research Institute for Women, in his keynote address, said that pruning was imperative for registering high and quality yield in mango as it facilitated penetration of sunlight.

Several techniques were involved in canopy management depending upon the age of the tree and nature of branches. He said canopy management would go a long way in enhancing yield and profitability for mango growers. P. Pandiyarajan, Dean, TNAU - Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute, said the training formed part of “supply chain programme in mango and guava” being implemented under the National Agricultural Initiative Project. Our country accounted for a variety of mango species but not much importance was being attached to canopy management.

Farmers from Krishnagiri and surrounding belts benefited a lot through the training. Indian mango, which was popular only in West Asia, so far, had now started attracting export market in the U.S. and Europe. He appealed to farmers to adhere to good agricultural practices for not only increasing the yield but to expand their trade in export zones.

A. Alagusundaram, Director, Indian Institute of Crop Processing Technology, Thanjavur, in his inaugural address, spoke on the importance of post-harvesting technique. Farmers should adopt cold storage technique for either avoiding or minimising post-harvest loss. Adoption of pulping technology would increase the productivity.

K. Ramasamy, Dean, Agricultural Engineering College and Research Institute, said a series of imported machinery was now available for adopting canopy management. A question hour session was held in which K. Bhuvaneshwari and D. Dinakaran, both Professors in Horticulture, offered clarification to farmers’ doubts.

About 200 farmers from various parts of Tamil Nadu participated.

R. Arulmozhiyan and A. Nithya, both faculty members, spoke.

Rs.56.25 crore set apart for vegetable cultivation

Second year of scheme to include distribution of 50 lakh seed kits in schools

In a bid to maintain the momentum towards self-sustainability started last year through the State Agriculture Department's comprehensive vegetable cultivation development scheme, funds to the tune of Rs.56.25 crore are being set aside for the purpose this financial year.

The inauguration of the second year of the scheme and a prize distribution ceremony based on last year's achievements were held at Cotton Hill Government Higher Secondary School for Girls here on Tuesday.

Around 50 lakh seed kits will be distributed for free in all schools this year. On July 20, students will plant the seeds they have been given in their houses. The project aims at turning 12,000 hectares of land into vegetable gardens to yield a surplus of 96,000 tonnes of vegetables from schools itself. The schools will be financially supported to carry out such activities. Taking into account community-based and block-panchayat level activities, the scheme aims to improve production by 2.65 crore tonnes.

Minister for Agriculture K.P. Mohanan, who inaugurated the second year of the scheme, noted how the students were able to take up the campaign in the right spirit.

Underlining the objectives of self-sustainability and safe-to-eat vegetables, the Minister said the schools would be financially aided to set up biogas plants.

Health Minister V.S. Sivakumar spoke of how promoting the programme had a huge impact in terms of health, as the vegetables brought into the State could be contaminated by hazardous pesticides. "Urbanisation has

reduced the capacity for cultivation, as there is simply no space for growth. But through such interventions, we can bring back a culture where people consciously grow their own vegetables in the little space they have available, or on terraces,” Mr. Sivakumar said.

A prize distribution ceremony to applaud the achievements of certain schools, organisations, and individuals in promoting vegetable cultivation was held. Union Minister of State for Human Resource Development Shashi Tharoor and district panchayat president Ansajitha Russel and vice-president Rufus Daniel were present.

short takes

HAMID ANSARI CALLS FOR AGRICULTURAL GROWTH

Vice-President Hamid Ansari has called for accelerating the growth of agriculture production as a means for achieving an overall high GDP growth rate and to meet the rising demand for food.

He expressed the views while speaking at the release a book titled *The Future of Indian Agriculture* in the Capital last week. Shedding light on the book authored by agricultural economist Yoginder K. Alagh, Union Rural Development Minister Jairam Ramesh said: “The key message of the book is centrality of agriculture as an important aspect of our economic development programme.”

Land sharks ride roughshod over wetlands guidelines



Active connivance of corrupt Revenue and Agriculture department officials have helped land-grabbers convert ecologically important paddy lands to prime real estate in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Pathanamthitta districts, the Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau (VACB) has reported to the State government.

The agency has recommended that the District Collectors constitute special teams to assess the extent of the illegal conversion, register cases wherever necessary and investigate the role of certain village and agriculture officers.

Bar-attached hotels, large houses with long driveways and big gardens, fuel outlets, resorts, marble and tile showrooms with their expansive yards and auditoriums now stand on what were wetlands less than 10 years ago.

Land developers have built roads even over rivulets to link their newly reclaimed properties, disrupting natural drainage systems.

A random assessment survey done by the agency pointed out that the land grab had become more rampant after the Kerala Conservation of Paddy Land and Wetland Act, 2008, came into force.

The Act required village officers and agriculture officers to identify wetlands and maintain a databank of such properties in the village offices.

It mandated that the basic tax register at village offices should reflect the nature of the land (basically whether it is wetland or not), and notified wetlands should not be reclaimed for any purpose, except for building houses on less than five cents.

The agency says that corrupt officials facilitated wetland reclamation mainly by manipulating the basic tax register records in village offices.

For one, the remarks column of the register will not mention whether the property is wetland or not and the space will be left empty for manipulation.

In many cases, officials on the payroll of land-grabbers will show on record that the land has been reclaimed long before the Act came into force and thus allow transfer of registry, or mutation, for construction.

For this, they will encourage land-grabbers to transplant aged coconut trees on wetlands so that they can report that the land was reclaimed much before the Act was enforced.

The agency says the provisions of the Act that give powers to revenue and police officials to stop illegal reclamation of wetlands, seize equipment used for illegal reclamation and ensure that the reclaimed land is reverted to its original state at the expense of the land-grabber has rarely been used in the three districts.

Village officers rarely inform revenue divisional officers or the Collector of illegal reclamations, though they are supposed to report such matters within 48 hours.

The VACB's southern range unit, headed by the Superintendent of Police S.S. Firoz, conducted the survey.

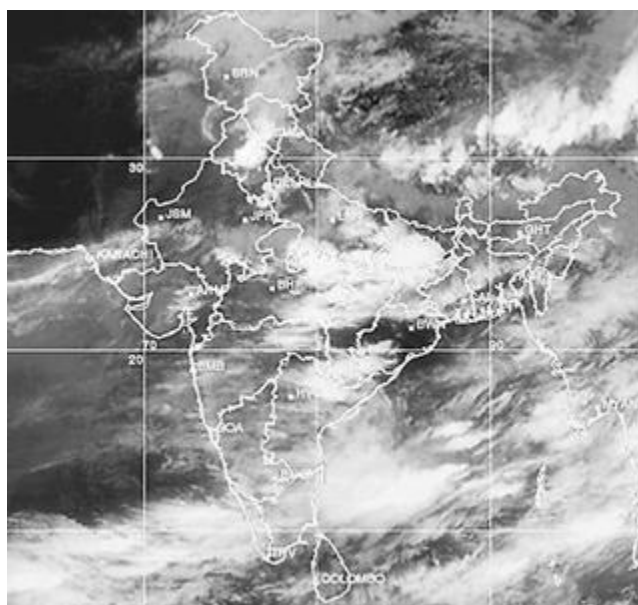
Wanton destruction

Reclamation rampant after Paddy Land and Wetland Act came into force

VACB finds official connivance

Tax registers manipulated in village offices

weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs. Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on July 09.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	37	26	7	179
New Delhi (Sfd)	36	26	2	124
Chandigarh	29	26	15	329

Hissar	36	24	19165
Bhuntar	28	19	7 207
Shimla	23	16	21415
Jammu	33	27	1 234
Srinagar	31	17	1982
Amritsar	32	23	5 181
Patiala	29	23	99250
Jaipur	34	23	19201
Udaipur	31	26	9 173
Allahabad	33	27	3 445
Lucknow	33	24	1 340
Varanasi	34	27	tr 256
Dehradun	28	24	5 1315
Agartala	33	27	0 405
Ahmedabad	34	26	5 276
Bangalore	29	20	tr 190
Bhubaneshwar	35	25	tr 321
Bhopal	31	23	6 553
Chennai	32	26	0 192
Guwahati	32	26	15384
Hyderabad	31	23	1 207
Kolkata	35	28	0 405
Mumbai	27	25	36107
Nagpur	34	24	10535
Patna	34	26	10151
Pune	29	22	0 312

Thiruvananthapuram	29	23	19	579
Imphal	30	23	1	179
Shillong	25	18	6	403

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 Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab. The axis of Monsoon trough at MSL passes through Firozpur, Muzaffarnagar, Hardoi, Ballia and thence east-wards.

RAINFALL: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at most places over Himachal Pradesh, at many places over Haryana, Punjab, east Rajasthan and Uttarakhand, at a few places over Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh and at isolated places over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (5 cm and above) HARYANA: Naraingarh 9, Nilokheri 6, HIMACHAL PRADESH: Mehre 8, Una 5, PUNJAB: Patiala 10, Rajpur 7, Fatehgarh 6, Balachaur 5, EAST RAJASTHAN: Viratnagar 15, Phagi and Srimadhapur 10, Sajjangarg and Kotri 9, Patan 8, Bansur 7, Govindgarh, Rajgarh, Thanagazi, chomu, Shahpur and Malpura 6 each, Sallopat, Alwar, Bahadurpur, Nainwa, Baswa, Sikrai, Bamanwas, Sanganer Tehsil and Jamwaramgarh 5 each, EAST UTTAR PRADESH: Gaighat and Katerniaghat 9 each, Akbarpur and Regoli 7 each, Haidagarh, Pharenda and Amethi 6 each, Kaimganj and Bhinga 5 each, WEST UTTAR PRADESH: Garotha 6 and Etawah 5 and UTTARAKHAND: Chamoli and Nainital 5 each.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 11th July 2013: Rain/thundershowers may occur at many places over Jammu and

Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand Punjab and Haryana during next 48 hours and decrease thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at many places over Uttar Pradesh and east Rajasthan . Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over west Rajasthan.

HEAVY RAINFALL WARNING: Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir during next 24 hours, over Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana during next 48 hours. Isolated Heavy rainfall may occur over east Uttar Pradesh on 10th.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 11th July 2013: Generally cloudy sky. Rain/thundershowers may occur in some areas.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Williamnagar to host jackfruit fest from July 11

Over Rs 434 crore is wasted every year in Garo hills region of the state.

Reason: People in the area do not fully utilize the abundantly available jackfruit. This has been revealed in a detailed project report prepared to calculate the economical value of the organic fruit.

The report states that East Garo Hills district alone wastes Rs 118 crore per season by failing to make optimum use of this giant fruit which grows in the district abundantly. With the aim to propagate large scale utility of jackfruit, literally the biggest organic fruit with edible seeds and source of ready nutrition, the Meghalaya Basin Development Authority (MBDA) in collaboration with East Garo Hills District Basin Unit is preparing to hold a two-day jackfruit festival from July 11 at Williamnagar.

Informing that the festival would be held under the aegis of the Meghalaya Integrated Basin Development and Livelihood Promotion Program (MIBDLP), East Garo Hills deputy commissioner Vijay Mantri said, "It is paradoxical that Garo Hills wastes 80 per cent of the fruits while people suffer from lack of proper nutrition and income". Pointing out that this year too a large numbers of jackfruits would rot under the tree if proper interventions are not made, Mantri said: "The festival will be an attempt to create large scale awareness about the utility of the fruit as well as to explore and nurture its livelihood opportunities."

The festival will have exhibition stalls, workshops on 'Jackfruit for local food security and livelihood', cooking competition on jackfruit by-products, jackfruit eating competition, biggest jackfruit competition etc.

"We expect a lot of enthusiastic participation from all over Garo Hills for the biggest jackfruit competition," Mantri said adding that it can also be a platform for setting probable world records.

The Guinness World Record for the biggest jackfruit weighing 34.4kg stands in the name of a Hawaiian farmer. "Garo Hills has the potential to beat this record if awareness is made through these kinds of festivals," the DC said.

Sugar industry employs 55 lakh people

Lectures were delivered on the second day of the five-day refresher course being conducted by National Sugar Institute for professionals. The first lecture was delivered by MK Banerjee on 'Minimizing TDP using computerised control'.

Later, Narendra Mohan, director of National Sugar institute delivered lecture on 'Waste to wealth'. He said that sugar industry the largest agro-based industry and nearly 50-55 lakh persons/families are associated with the industry directly or indirectly.

Secretary general, Sugar Technologists Association of India, New Delhi, Anil Shukla delivered lecture on 'Water Management in Modern Sugar

Plant'. Addressing the participants, Shukla said that out of total water available on earth, only 3% is available for domestic and industrial use and this is continuously decreasing as a result of population explosion. Sugar industry consumes huge quantity and it can be reduced to a large extent if one uses modern techniques. The effluent water after treatment should be recycled.

Former additional cane commissioner of Uttar Pradesh Rama Murthy delivered a talk on 'Sugarcane management to increase productivity'. He emphasized the need for development of high yielding varieties since 12.5% of cane area is under un-approved rejected varieties, resulting in low sugar recovery. He said that most of the factories have increased their capacity but cane procurement method is old which needs to be improved.

As many as 70 professionals belonging to UP, Bihar, Haryana, Punjab, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh are taking part in the course. The participants are working as sugar technologists, and sugar engineer.

The course was inaugurated on Monday by managing director, UP Co-operative Sugar Factories Federation BK Yadav. In his inaugural address, Yadav emphasized on development of high yielding varieties to improve profitability of sugar units and meet requirements of the country which would be approximately 370 lakh tonnes by 2025.

Mohan urged the participants to extract as much knowledge as possible

from the lectures on various topics which cover cane management, processing techniques, newer techniques for better by-product utilisation, energy conservation and pollution control which are of importance to sugar and allied industries. Mohan stressed the need for maximum utilisation of byproducts of sugarcane industry in order to reduce cost of manufacture of sugar.

Bitten by veggie prices, people think retail stores

Where the economy is concerned, optimism is difficult to come by. But even as inflation weighs heavier and heavier, you still have recourse to reasonable options, like retail stores. This is where you get the best quality vegetables at low prices, almost half the normal price.

As the open market succumbs to the dynamics of price rise, retail outlets come as a welcome respite. Sunanda Khanna, a resident of Ghumar Mandi said, "Earlier, we, like the others, used to buy vegetables from the open market. But when we saw better options available at retail stores, we started buying vegetables from there," she said.

The price of vegetables in the open market is higher because vendors add each expenditure in the process to the end price. Therefore, consumers end up paying for transportation, middle men and everything else, besides the profit for the vendor. This is why prices have gone up. The erratic monsoon has damaged the produce and middlemen have added to the woes of the harried consumers.

As harried consumers demand fair prices, they turn to retail outlets, which

not only benefit owners but also consumers, who get almost everything in one place and at much cheaper prices. "If we talk about vegetables, sales have gone up to 45% in the last one month. Consumer prefer retail stores now as they get good stock and fresh vegetables here," said Upneet, manager of a retail store at Model Town and Ferozpur Road.

Residents also suspect vegetable vendors of following unfair practices. They say vendors keep vegetables wet so that they weigh more on being measured. Moreover, they charge more. "At least retail stores don't play tricks and provide us vegetables without dipping them in water. Vendors outside are cheating consumers," said Gurinder Chaddha, a resident of Kidwai Nagar.

Flower market to be shifted on Friday

The flower market at SarafBazar will be shifted to the space near the vegetable market along the Godavari river in Panchavati on Friday.

This was decided at a meeting between the Nashik Municipal Corporation (NMC) officials and the Flower Vendors Association (FVA) on Tuesday. The administration has already marked space at the new market for 45 flower sellers from the existing flower market.

A senior NMC official told TOI: "We have decided to shift the flower market to the new space. Today, we had meeting with the office-bearers of the FVA, who agreed to shift to the new place from Friday."

Association president Krishna Kumar Mali said, "The administration has

given us the allotment letters. We are happy to shift to the new space as we have got our own market." The decision to shift the market was taken in view of the frequent traffic jams at Saraf Bazaar areas.

Not a farmer? May not be able to buy farm land anymore

Nearly five months ahead of the assembly polls, the BJP government in Chhattisgarh is coming up with a legislation to prohibit non-farmers from purchasing farm land within the state where there have been numerous controversies in the past over farm land acquisition for industrial and other purposes.

The state cabinet, presided over by chief minister Raman Singh, on Tuesday approved the draft bill for amendment of Chhattisgarh land revenue code to include a provision under which none other than farmers could purchase agriculture land from the farmers. The amendment bill would come up for consideration during the state assembly's upcoming monsoon session- the last session before the assembly polls.

Briefing newsmen after the cabinet meeting, chief minister Raman Singh said the cabinet also approved the supplementary demands for which the state government plans to seek approval of the house during the monsoon session, beginning on July 15.

In order to cut down delays in revenue courts, Singh said these courts would not be able to extend the hearing dates for more than four times and it would have to deliver its order within this period. Besides, revenue courts cannot grant stay for more than a period of three months.

The chief minister said the state government was also contemplating a legislation to regulate the institutes of higher education in private sector.

Any such institute, which fails to discharge their responsibilities and protect the interests of students or are on the verge of closure, would be taken over by the government for a period of five years.

The move to enact such legislation comes in the wake of on-going tiff between the state government and O P Jindal Institute of Technology (OJIT) of Jindal Group and the latter's threat to close down alleging that the state was using arm twisting tactics to get 168 students, who have cleared pre-engineering test (PET), admitted to the institute. However, the state government maintained that Jindal Institute was trying to bring the institute under its proposed private university- so that it could escape from the obligation of providing admissions to students from within the state.

Deficit rain in state worries farmers

Farmers are apprehensive as the shadow of deficit rain looms large over agricultural operations in the state. Deficit rain was recorded in at least 10 out of the 30 districts even as the state received 2% more rainfall.

Officials in the agriculture department said if the situation persists it may create some problem. "It is too early to worry about deficit rain. We should wait for a few more days," said director of agriculture and food production RS Gopalan. The state government is monitoring the situation, he said, adding, a contingency plan has been drawn and will be put to use if any of these district records 60% deficit.

According to reports, Jagatsinghpur district so far experienced the highest deficit rainfall of 47% followed by Deogarh (44%) and Jajpur (42%). The other districts that received less rain are Mayurbhanj (41%), Sambalpur

(40%), Sundargarh (39%), Jharsuguda (38%), Balangir (26%) and Bhadrak (24%). The state has so far received 309.8 mm rain against the normal 302.7 mm.

Director of India Meteorological Centre, Odisha, S C Sahoo said though monsoon had weakened in the last few days, there was nothing to worry. "There is a cyclonic circulation over the Bay of Bengal and it may bring more rain from Thursday," he said. The state earlier experienced rain under the influence of two low pressure systems, he added.

After foodgrain, UPA plans to subsidise edible oil and pulses

After the ambitious food security law, the UPA government is preparing another populist scheme to expand the supply of subsidised edible oil and pulses through the countrywide network of ration shops in the next two to three months.

"It will be the next major thing. We are working at the earliest. We propose that state governments purchase pulses and edible oil either through imports or locally. We will give subsidy to this. In the next 2-3 months, we will definitely work it out," food minister KV Thomas told ET. The government hopes to provide reliable and affordable supply of the two commodities, which see a lot of market volatility most of the time.


"One way to control the rising prices of commodities is to add in more items to the public distribution system. Some states have done it. We are working on a scheme to give subsidy to states for imported or domestic pulses and edible oil so that both the commodities are available to people. They are an important constituent of nutrition," he said.

Reaching Out Further

- The government hopes to provide reliable and affordable supply of pulses and edible oil, which see market volatility most of the time
- Consistent efforts by government have led to a 2.9% increase in pulses production in 2012-13 at 17.6 million tonne from the previous year
- Food minister Thomas suggests that domestic crops could be included in the program because the country's own production was increasing
- In an earlier scheme, a kg each of imported pulses and edible oil were given to BPL cardholders by state governments at subsidised rates

18.5-20mt
Demand by India, the largest user of pulses

15-18mt
Production by India, the biggest producer



2.5-3mt
Purchases by India, the biggest importer

One way to control the rising prices of commodities is to add in more items to the public distribution system. Some states have done it. We are working on a scheme to give subsidy to states for imported or domestic pulses and edible oil so that they are available to people

KV THOMAS,
Union Food Minister

India is the world's largest consumer of pulses, with a demand of 18.5-20 million tonne. It is also the world's biggest producer, with an output of 15-18 million tonne as well as the biggest importer, buying 2.5-3 million tonne of pulses, which are an important source of protein for most vegetarians in the country. Consistent efforts by government have led to a 2.9% increase in pulses production in 2012-13 at 17.6 million tonne from the previous year. Thomas added that domestic crops could be included in the program because the country's own production was increasing. "We are studying what quantity will be required and what will be the financial burden to the Centre," he said adding that depending on the financial burden, it would be further decided whether the scheme would cover more people or the quantity would be increased.

In an earlier scheme -- which was on till March 2013 for pulses and will continue till September 2013 for edible oil -- a kilogram each of imported pulses and edible oil were given to below poverty line (BPL) cardholders by states at subsidised rates. Under the scheme, the Centre was giving a subsidy of ₹20 a kg on pulses and ₹15 a kg on imported edible oil (refined

palmolein or soyabean oil) for BPL families. However, officials at the Food ministry said that the infrastructure and procurement operations had to be made strong similar to wheat and rice.

"It is a good move as fair price shops will see more footfalls and increased sales when new products will be added. It will also encourage farmers to grow more pulses. We need to now work on infrastructure and procurement mechanism," said a person familiar with the development.

Imphal gears up for pineapple festival

The Development Organization AndroKendra (Doak), a local social body, is all set to organize the sixth edition of Pineapple Fair-cum-Youth Festival from July 10 at ThambalnuMarket at Andro in Imphal East. The first local tourism festival will also be held here for four days.

Manipur pineapple is known for its extraordinary taste and the state produces around 7000 MT of the fruit annually. Imphal East and Churachandpur are the biggest pineapple producing districts in the state. In view of the climatic and soil suitability of the fruit in addition its high yielding factor, local pineapple growers have already sought the government to declare it as a state fruit.

While the pineapple festival will conclude on July 14, the tourism festival will commence the following day till July 18.

Around 300 MT of pineapple of different varieties including the queen variety grown by the local farmers are expected to be showcased in 150 stalls during the festival.

During the last edition of the festival, 280 MT of pineapple were sold, Doak secretary general Abungcha Konthoujam said, adding that they are

planning to set up a pineapple juice producing unit at Andro to export the products to other states and abroad.

Besides the huge display of pineapple, the other highlights will be showcasing of a spectrum of cultural programmes by around 100 troupes, Abungcha said.

With the primary objective to promote pineapple cultivation in the state, Doak has been organizing the festival for the last five years, he said, adding that cash incentives will be given to the farmers in different categories.

The fruit, which is grown widely in Andro and its surrounding areas, will be made available to the public at the same venue from July 5, he said.

On the Andro Tourism Festival, which aims to promote the Sanhei Natural Park and the indigenous cuisines, the Doak secretary general said it will witness the opening of around 100 indigenous food stalls.

Monsanto's climate-resilient crop patent claims rejected

India's patent appeals board has denied Monsanto BSE -0.92 % a patent for a genetically-engineered method of increasing climate resilience in plants. The decision is significant not only for Monsanto's loss of possible exclusivity in an increasingly important segment but also for the interpretation of India's home-grown clauses in patent law — these are unpopular with global companies — for the first time in the case of plants. The Intellectual Property Appellate Board, in rejecting the American seed company's patent claims, said the technology is merely a discovery of a new property of known substance and not an invention under Section 3(d) of the Indian Patent Act. Section 3(d) is the same Section under which the

Swiss drug-maker Novartis' patent claim for its cancer drug Glivec was rejected. An appeal was turned down by the Supreme Court in April. Developing countries are looking to include this clause in their own patent laws.

Checkmate

INDIA'S PATENT appeals board said the US co's technology is merely a discovery of a new property of known substance and not an invention under Section 3(d) of the Indian Patent Act

EARLIER, THE Swiss drug-maker Novartis' patent claim for its cancer drug Glivec was rejected under the same section

ENVIRONMENTALIST Vandana Shiva said Monsanto cannot do with climate resilient crops what it did with Bt cotton

Monsanto's method of "enhancing stress tolerance in plants and methods thereof" has already been accepted in the US and Europe. "This is the first time Section 3(d) has been used on plant patents, and its implications are farreaching," said environmentalist Vandana Shiva. This is also the first judgement citing Section 3(j), which specifies that plants and animals aren't patentable.

Monsanto, which earned over \$13 billion in revenue last year, played down the decision while its baiters welcomed it. In an emailed statement, Monsanto said the company is in the process of evaluating possible actions with its advisers, but does not foresee any special implications from this decision.

"The patents are essential for continued investments. Research and development efforts take over a decade to develop and patent protection is a must."

But Shiva said that if the judgement is upheld, "Monsanto cannot do with climate resilient crops what it did with Bt cotton." Critics such as Shiva blame Bt cotton for the ills in the cotton belt, including high cost of the seed, which they argue is one of the reasons for farmer suicides. Shiva said she

is ready to intervene in case Monsanto appeals in the Supreme Court. Though Monsanto played down the decision, observers described it as a possible loss of an exclusive market.

"This is a setback to Monsanto because they were betting on transgenic crops," said Subhra Priyadarshini, who tracks genetically modified technology closely and is editor of online science portal Nature India.

Rahul Dev, Patent Attorney Partner at Delhi-based Tech Corp Legal, said the invention would have been applicable to a wide range of seeds, including soybean, corn, canola, rice, cotton, barley, oats, turf grasses, cotton and wheat.

"This patent was very crucial for Monsanto. Although currently, Monsanto sells only one variety of seeds (hybrid maize seeds) in India. Had this patent been awarded, Monsanto could have enjoyed exclusive patent rights for all the seeds sold in India that used this technology." This view was shared by Meenakshi Khurana, patent attorney at Khurana and Khurana. She said climate-resilient plants will be important in times of climate instabilities, which are predicted to be increasingly common in coming years. "In calamities like the Uttarakhand floods, salt-tolerant crop varieties are needed in large amounts by the farmers who otherwise cannot produce crops because of sea salt deposition." No protection for such patents means prices of such plants will remain in check.

According to a report by the Washington-based Center for Food Safety, Monsanto had received over \$23.5 million from patent infringement lawsuits against farmers and farm business by end of 2012. It also said three agrichemical firms — Monsanto, Du Pont and Syngenta — now control 53% of the global commercial seed market.

Tech Corp's Rahul Dev said the implications could be farreaching. He said the judgement could also set precedent for debates around genetically modified crops, including the Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India Bill which would set rules for regulating such corps. "Companies like Monsanto will now have to plan their business strategies accordingly. After crossing all hurdles, even if such genetically modified crops are allowed to be sold in future, they might not be able to enjoy exclusive patent rights, which will definitely lead to more competition and low pricing of such seeds."

Forest department to grow mangoes in Bokaro

In a bid to expand green cover in the district and boost the income of the farmers here, the forest department has planned to grow mango groves in the red zones of Bokaro. The plantation of high breed mango saplings would begin in few weeks time.

The district, comprising eight blocks, has geared up to become one of the major mango producers in the state.

"It will be not be wrong to say that in coming decade, the residents here can boast of successful mango plantations in the district," said K Manish Arvind, divisional forest officer, Bokaro.

The forest department has identified raiyati land in Chandankyari, Jaridih, Kasmar, Gomia and Nawadih blocks. The officials have already taken up the task of tutoring the farmers about the various advantages of growing mangoes here. In the first phase, the forest officials will distribute 3200 mango saplings among the farmers, the number of which will be increased in the second phase.

Arvind said they have bought mango saplings of superior breed from Birsa Agricultural Institute, Ranchi. We intend to plant 160 saplings per acre. In the first phase, we will plant cover 20 acres in different blocks.

"The farmers are keen to turn their farmland into Mango groves. We will begin planting saplings soon," he said. Bokaro has favourable climate and fertile soil for mango plantation, the officials said after surveying the district. One of the farmers in Chandankyari said he is looking forward to the venture with high hopes. Though we have to wait for few years rearing the plants, once production begins we will make good money.

New policy for land regularization in Kutch

Gujarat government on the Kutchi new year announced a new policy for regularizing excess land holdings in Kutch district. Under the new policy, lands found to be up to 20% more than that mentioned in records will be regularized by charging one time jantri rate. In case, the land holding is more than 20% in excess of size mentioned in records, double the jantri rate will be charged to regularize it.

Due to earlier irregularities in the land survey, several cases of excess land holdings have come to light in Kutch. The government has now decided to regularize all excessive land holdings by charging premium.

The district collector will decide on regularizing land whose value is up to Rs 15 lakh. For bigger land pieces, the final decision will be taken by the state government. Under the new policy, the land holding would be settled after recovering 20% of the increased area as premium, keeping intact prevailing conditions concerning thoroughfare roads or bunds.

Moreover, the jantri rates of all original land holdings in all rural areas, including nagarpalikas, will be decided after deducting 20% of the increased area at the prevailing rates.

In addition, the process is being decentralized empowering the collector to settle 40% of total area with financial limit of Rs 15 lakh (or four acres of land). The idea is to quickly solve the problems of small farmers and land holders.

Weather-Chennai

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Wednesday, Jul 10

Max Min

29° | 24°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:48

Humidity: 74

Sunset: 06:39

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1004

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Thursday, Jul 11

Max Min

33° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Jul 12	Jul 13	Jul 14	Jul 15	Jul 16
33° 26°	34° 26°	35° 25°	34° 25°	33° 25°
Cloudy	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast

Airport Weather

Rain: 70.1 Sunrise: 05:30

Humidity: 84 Sunset: 07:22

Wind: normal Barometer: 999

THE HINDU Business Line

Guar beckons Maharashtra farmers

With the demand for guar gum on the rise in domestic and international markets, farmers' groups have started cultivating guar crop in over 1,000 acres in central Maharashtra. The first crop is expected to be harvested early October.

Over 750 farmers in Maharashtra, belonging to about 100 groups in the Jalna district, have now come together to collectively sow, harvest and market the crop.

Jalna has a dry climate, best suited for guar cultivation.

Indian Council for Agriculture Research-supported Kisan Vikas Kendra has taken a lead in helping the farmers.

Guar gum is derived from the endosperm — a soft tissue — enclosed in guarseed.

The seed is dehusked, milled and screened to obtain gum, which is India's top agri export commodity.

The gum is used in shale oil and gas extraction apart from other industrial applications. Due to the boom in the shale gas industry, especially in the US, demand for the gum has increased considerably over the past five years. Rajasthan produces almost 90 per cent of the crop.

Agriculture Coordinator for the Kisan Vikas Kendra in Jalna S.V. Sonune told *Business Line* that the idea of planting guar emerged from last year's drought in the district. This year, he said, the farmers decided to

experiment with guar as the crop is not water intensive, is hardy and fetches a good price in the market.

Sonune said that in some areas of the district, planting had already commenced and, by mid-July, about 1,000 acres would be covered.

Cost control

The seeds had been bought in bulk from Rajasthan, which helped control the input cost. After harvest, guarseed would again be sold collectively to processors, so that the farmers can get good returns, he added.

From an acre of farmland, about 400 kg of guarseed can be harvested, Sonune said. Therefore, by October, Jalna would be able to supply about 400 tonnes.

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Rubber import fears loom as spot prices flare up

Spot rubber flared up on Tuesday. The market gathered momentum tracking the sustained gains in domestic futures and catalysed by the acute shortage of the raw material.

According to observers, there were no sellers in the local trading houses even at higher levels.

The market seemed poised to break the Rs 200-a-kg-level soon but the widening gap between the domestic and international prices may lead to import fears in the days ahead.

Sheet rubber improved to Rs 194 (Rs 191) a kg, according to traders.

The grade firmed up to Rs 192 (Rs 190), as reported by the Rubber Board.

July futures increased to Rs 196 (Rs 193.61), August to Rs 192 (Rs 189.47), September to Rs 184.61 (Rs 181.92), October to Rs 178.99 (Rs

177.32), November to Rs 173.50 (Rs 173.12) and December to Rs 174.98 (Rs 173.77) for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) weakened to Rs 159.20 (Rs 160.24) at Bangkok. July futures inched up to ₹233.5 (Rs 138.89) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates (Rs/kg) were : RSS-4: 194.00 (191); RSS-5: 184 (181); Ungraded: 174 (171); ISNR 20: 172 (171) and Latex 60%: 141.00 (138.50).

Higher crop in South may squeeze potato prices in W. Bengal

Even while a supply glut has brought down potato prices in West Bengal to its cost of production this year, the prospect of a higher crop in South India is likely to further depress prices.

West Bengal is the second largest potato-growing State in the country.

Nearly 40 per cent of the State's production is sold in Odisha, Assam, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

According to Patit Paban De, a member of the West Bengal Cold Storage Association, there has been a 25-30 per cent rise in potato sowing in South India this year.

In the South, potato is primarily grown in the Hassan district of Karnataka. Smaller quantities are grown in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Together, the southern States produce around 7 lakh tonnes each year with Hassan alone growing around 5 lakh tonnes. Harvesting of potatoes in South India begins by July-end and goes on till September-end.

Favourable weather

“The weather in South India is favourable for harvesting the crop. The sowing has been higher this year. If the weather continues to be like this, then there could be a 25-30 per cent higher crop touching 9 lakh tonnes this year,” De told *Business Line*.

Unlike in the southern States, sowing in West Bengal begins by October-end and goes on till mid-December, following which the harvest begins. There has been a 12 per cent rise in potato production in West Bengal to nearly 98 lakh tonnes this year.

Around 50-55 lakh tonnes are consumed in the local markets.

“A higher crop in South India will bring down the demand for our produce in the southern markets, thereby impacting prices,” said Sukumar Samanta, General Secretary, Singur Ratanpur Aloo Byabasayi Samiti.

Higher stock

Meanwhile, the wholesale prices of potatoes in West Bengal are ruling steady at last week’s level at around Rs 400 a quintal.

A higher production coupled with a delay in the process of unloading from cold storages has left higher stocks in storage units this year compared with last year.

Only 23 per cent of the potatoes kept in cold storages have come into the market this year compared with 30 per cent last year, Samanta said.

Close to 59 lakh tonnes of potatoes have been stored in the 425-odd cold storages in the State this year.

Typically, potatoes find their way out of these cold storages by the end of November and the storage house is cleared and kept closed for maintenance between early December and mid-February.

“If the trend continues like this and if there is a drop in demand from southern States then we might be left with more than 15 per cent of the stock even till the end of December this year,” Samanta said.

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Coonor tea turnover up 46% in H1

The cumulative turnover of Coonor Tea Trade Association auctions in the first half of the current calendar has risen by 45.67 per cent over the previous year period, reveals an analysis of market reports.

This is owing to an additional volume of some 38 lakh kg being sold at a higher price of Rs 20 a kg on an average.

In all, 26 auctions have been held till June-end with 2.87 crore kg being sold, against 2.49 crore kg in 2012.

Export buying was less with Pakistan refraining from purchases due to border tensions. However, upcountry buyers demanded top liquoring tea due to winter closure of plantations in the North. This resulted in the average price increasing to Rs 97.83 a kg from Rs 77.41 last year.

Consequently, between January and June, the cumulative turnover increased to Rs 280.77 crore from Rs 192.75 crore, up by Rs 88.02 crore or 45.67 per cent.

The cumulative turnover has increased in all the months so far – from Rs 25.28 crore (85.12 per cent) in January to Rs 46.01 crore (82.96 per cent) in February, Rs 57.93 crore (66.64 per cent) in March, Rs 65.20 crore (57.69 per cent) in April and Rs 79.87 crore (53.39 per cent) in May before peaking to Rs 88.02 crore (45.67 per cent) in June.

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

Industry seeks higher import duty

The sugar industry has demanded a further increase in import duty as a weak rupee and declining global prices have offset the impact of the latest duty hike.

Last week, the Government decided to hike the import duty to 15 per cent from 10 per cent. On Monday, the Department of Revenue issued a notification on the duty hike on raw and white sugar.

“The increase in import duty is too little and too late,” the Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) said in a statement. With falling international prices, imports are still viable. Along with the Indian rupee, the Brazilian real has also weakened against the dollar.

“Therefore, the depreciated rupee has not made raw sugar imports coming from Brazil unviable due to this small increase in duty,” ISMA said. It demanded that the import duty be raised to about 40 per cent to check any kind of sugar imports.

Pointing out that import duties on other similar agri-products such as coffee and tea were ranging from 30 per cent to 100 per cent, ISMA said it “found no justification for a meagre duty of 15 per cent on sugar.”

Can help cut CAD

“Completely stopping sugar imports will not only be in the interest of the domestic sugar industry and our own cane farmers but will also help in

reducing the Current Account Deficit, which is only further depreciating the Indian rupee at an unbearable phase,” ISMA added.

According to industry estimates, about six lakh tonnes of sugar has been imported into the country under a open general licence.

Raw sugar imports under advance licensing for re-exports were estimated at around 1.2 million tonnes.

Sugar output may drop on lower cane acreage

Sugar output in 2013-14 season beginning October may decline by about five per cent to 23.7 million tonnes over the current year’s 25 million tonnes, according to early estimates by the Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA).

The projected decline is on account of a 1.5 per cent drop in cane acreage for the next crushing season on lower planting in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. A record planting in Uttar Pradesh, the country’s largest cane growing State, is unlikely to offset the decline in the southern States. ISMA, based on the satellite images in June and field visits by its research team, expects cane acreage to be 51.50 lakh ha, compared with last year’s 52.30 lakh ha. In UP, the area is expected to be 3.1 per cent higher at 25 lakh ha, despite pending cane of payments of about 4,000 crore to farmers. The substantially higher sugar cane prices in comparison to other competing crops in UP such as paddy and wheat is seen luring more farmers to the crop. The other sub-tropical States such as Haryana, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh are also witnessing a rising trend in sugarcane acreage over last year, ISMA said.

However, drought in Maharashtra last year could shrink the cane area by 12.5 per cent to around 8.2 lakh ha against last year's 9.4 lakh ha.

Similarly, in Karnataka the acreage is expected to be lower by eight per cent to 3.9 lakh ha for the 2013-14 season against last year's 3.9 lakh ha.

However, the worst affected among the tropical States is Tamil Nadu, where the cane area may decline by 16 per cent at 2.7 lakh ha over last year's 3.2 lakh ha due to poor rains last year.

The reported sugarcane acreage of ISMA is, however, about eight per cent higher compared with the Government's latest estimates. The difference might be due to the fact that the Ministry of Agriculture's reported figures are based on a still ongoing field survey in a couple of States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and other sub-tropical zones, where the 2012-13 crushing season started later than usual. Therefore, the survey is still not complete. ISMA expects the opening sugar balance for the next season starting October at 80 lakh tonnes, about 20 lakh tonnes more than the normative opening balance that the Government would like to have. The sugar body is expected to review the estimates based on the August satellite imagery ahead of the 2013-14 crushing season.

Festivals may light up demand for chana

Notwithstanding sluggish demand in pulses and besan, chana inched up to Rs 3,100 a quintal (Rs 3,050-75) on rise in futures.

Besides huge crop production, bumper yield in dollar chana this year has also been keeping chana prices under leash, said a trader adding that with increased use of dollar chana and other lower varieties such as kaktu and

Kabuli Bitki by the millers for manufacturing 'besan', demand for chana from the millers in the past sometime has declined sharply this year.

Traders, however, expect some gain in chana prices in the coming days as demand for chana from the millers will likely to increase during the festive season next month.

Chana dal (average) was at Rs 3,600-25 a quintal, chana dal (medium) at Rs 3,725-50, chana dal (bold) ruled at Rs 3,900-50 .

Dollar chana ruled flat at Rs 3,500-4,500 a quintal on steady demand. In container, however, improved export demand perked up dollar chana prices by Rs 100 a quintal in the past one week.

On Tuesday, dollar chana (42/44 count) was quoted at Rs 5,400-25 , 44/46 count at Rs 5,175-5,200, 46/48 count at Rs 4,975-5,000, while 58/60 count ruled at Rs 3,425-50 and dollar chana (60/62 count) ruled at Rs 3,300-25 a quintal respectively.

Speculative sales sour sugar futures

Sugar prices ruled steady on Tuesday on routine physical demand and sufficient supply. Prices in the futures market extended losses by Rs 15 on speculative selling.

Naka and mill tender rates were unchanged. Volume remained subdued as demand for Ramzan and *Ashadhi Ekadashi* festivals was below expectation.

Sources said that in the Vashi wholesale market arrivals continued to be higher while local demand remained low.

Despite festival season, offtake remained steady except some improvement in bold variety. As supply from mills is ample, shortage of fine – bold variety could not get support.

Producers are continuously selling in local market in absence of upcountry demand.

Arrivals at Vashi market were 64-65 truckloads (of 100 bags each) while local dispatches were 61- 62 loads.

On Monday, about 14-15 mills offered tenders and sold about 48,000-50,000 bags to local traders at Rs 2,940-3,000 (Rs 2,940-3,000) for S-grade and Rs 3,040-3,120 (Rs 3,040-3,120) for M-grade.

Mill tender rates were unchanged since last Friday.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S-grade Rs 3,066-3,145 (Rs 3,066-3,145) and M-grade Rs 3,192-3,311 (Rs 3,202-3,311). **Naka delivery rates were:** S-grade Rs 3,010-3,080 (Rs 3,010-3,080) and M-grade Rs 3,120-3,230 (Rs 3,130-3,230).

Indigenous edible oils cool on monsoon effect

Indigenous edible oils, groundnut, rapeseed and cotton, declined by Rs 5, Rs 3 and Rs 10 for 10 kg each on expectation of higher kharif output due to timely monsoon. Palmolein dropped by Rs 4 on eased demand amid selling pressure. Soyabean and sunflower oil ruled unchanged.

Sources said that good progress of monsoon in most of the producing States bolstered kharif oilseeds sowing especially groundnut and cotton and in turn, weighing on indigenous edible oils.

During the day, hardly 150-200 tonnes of palmolein were traded in resale at Rs 537-538 for ready-near term delivery.

Refineries direct rates were higher. Hence, activities remained limited. Further oilseeds arrivals also improved at producing centres. The sentiment was positive ahead of Ramzan.”

Soyabean arrivals were about 1-1.10 lakh bags and prices were Rs 3,550-60 ex-mandi and Rs 3,750-3,800 for plant delivery. Mustard seeds arrivals were 1.10-1.15 lakh bags and prices were Rs 3,080-3,590.

Towards the day's close, Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 550-552, super palmolein Rs 587 and super deluxe Rs 607. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 551, soyabean refined oil Rs 670 and sunflower refined oil Rs 821. Allana was quoting palmolein at Rs 549-552 and super palmolein Rs 585. In Rajkot, groundnut oil ruled steady at Rs 1,480 for *tellia* tin and Rs 950 for loose (10 kg).

Malaysia BMD crude palm oil's August contracts settled higher by 29 to MYR 2,405 (MYR 2,378), September higher by 23 to MYR 2,397 (MYR 2,376) a tonne.

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were: groundnut oil 970 (975), soya refined oil 670 (670), sunflower exp. ref. 760 (755), sunflower ref. 820 (820), rapeseed ref. oil 692 (695), rapeseed expeller ref. 662 (665) cottonseed ref. oil 655 (665) and palmolein 538 (542).

Vikram Global Commodities (P) Ltd quoted Malaysian super palmolein at Rs 592 for 10 kg - July delivery.

Rain hits pepper arrivals, disrupts spot trade

Pepper prices were mixed with the running contract slipping marginally, while others moved up on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. Spot prices were unchanged.

No activity was seen on the spot as there was no arrival of the material due to heavy rains through out Kerala disrupting movement of goods, market sources told *Business Line*.

Meanwhile, based on reports of likely release of 35 per cent of around 6,800 tonnes of pepper locked up in the warehouses since December by the Food Safety authorities, a bearish sentiment is gripping the market, they said.

Added to this, overseas reports claiming that Sri Lankan pepper of 520 GL is being offered at \$5,850 a tonne (c&f) Kochi and quoting of Vietnam Asta grade sterilised at \$6,700 (c&f) have strengthened the bears.

It was also reported from the upcountry markets that Karnataka was offering its pepper at Rs 393 a kg, delivered anywhere in Madhya Pradesh. The strengthening of the rupee against the dollar pushed up the Indian parity in the international market marginally.

On the NMCE, July contract declined by Rs 34 to Rs 40,625 while August and September increased by Rs 86 and Rs 403 respectively to Rs 40,950 and Rs 40,310 a quintal.

Total open interest declined by one tonne to 119 tonnes. Total turnover moved up by nine tonnes to 43 tonnes.

Spot prices remained steady at Rs 38,500 (ungarbled) and Rs 40,500 (garbled) a quintal on matching demand and supply.

Indian parity in the international market was at \$6,900 (c&f) Europe and \$7,150 a tonne (c&f) for the US and remained unchanged, they said.

Improved sowing grinds turmeric

Turmeric futures closed down over one per cent due to profit booking after having risen in the previous session.

Lack of buying interest from local and overseas buyers weighed on prices, spot traders and analysts said.

The turmeric market in Erode was closed on Tuesday due to the death of an association member.

Turmeric futures fell on Tuesday on good progress in sowing due to favourable weather and higher carry-forward stocks.

Turmeric cultivation usually starts in June and continues until August. A lengthy harvesting process begins in January.

The key August turmeric contract was down 1.25 per cent at Rs 5,824 on the NCDEX at 1025 GMT.

“Improvement in sowing and a good progress of monsoon is keeping turmeric prices under check,” said Vedika Narvekar, a senior analyst at Angel Commodities.

Spot turmeric price in Nizamabad, a key market in Andhra Pradesh, was almost steady at Rs 5,657.

However, spot supplies have declined as the season has drawn to a close and farmers are busy planting.

Wheat may rule unchanged on slack buying

Dara wheat prices in the physical market are likely to rule unchanged this week on lack of buying and ample stocks, said trade experts.

Dara wheat and flour prices dropped further on lack of buying on Tuesday.

Radhey Sham, a commodity expert, told *Business Line* that the situation was anticipated in the market as domestic demand is not picking up and stocks are easily available.

It is unlikely to see any major alteration this month and market may continue to rule around current levels with marginal fluctuations, he added. Around 1,000 bags of wheat arrived and stocks were directly offloaded at the mills.

In the physical market, dara wheat prices eased further by Rs 10 and sold at Rs 1,470-75 a quintal.

Mill delivery was at Rs 1,470 while delivery at the chakki was at Rs 1,475. On the NCDEX, a weak tone was witnessed with July contracts easing by Re 1 and trading at Rs 1,553 with an open interest of 810 lots. The grain had made a low at Rs 1,547 a quintal earlier in the day.

August contracts dropped by Rs 10 and traded at Rs 1,576.

Wheat spot prices on the exchange dropped by Rs 12.5 traded at Rs 1,465.

Flour Prices

Following a downtrend in wheat, flour too dropped further by Rs 15 and quoted at Rs 1,725.

On the other hand, Chokar ruled flat and sold at Rs 1,225 a quintal.

Business Standard

Chana up 0.8% on firm spot demand

Chana for July moved up by 0.23%

Chana prices rose by Rs 27 to Rs 3,103 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators created fresh positions, driven by an improvement in spot market demand.

At the National Commodity Derivatives Exchange, chana for delivery in August month rose by Rs 27, or 0.88%, to Rs 3,103 per quintal, with an open interest of 2,16,420 lots.

Similarly, chana for July moved up by Rs 7, or 0.23%, to Rs 3,030 per quintal in 4,190 lots.

Analysts said fresh positions created by speculators after an improvement in spot market demand mainly led to rise in chana prices at futures trade.

Castorseed down 1.4% on selling pressure

Most active near August contract moved down by 1.26%

Castorseed prices fell by Rs 64 to Rs 3,782 per quintal in future trade today on the back of fresh selling by traders in line with weak physical markets sentiment.

Marketmen said besides profit booking after yesterday's rise, fall in demand and increased arrivals in spot markets mainly led the fall here in future price of castorseed.

Low demand from consuming industries such as paint and lubricant makers against weak export demand mainly pulled down the prices.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange, castorseed prices for far October dropped by Rs 64, or 1.66%, to Rs 3,782 per quintal, with an open interest of 3,670 lots.

Current month July's contract weakened by Rs 50, or 1.41%, to Rs 3,492 per quintal, having an open interest of 3,660 lots.

Most active near August contract moved down by Rs 46, or 1.26%, to Rs 3,598 per quintal, in an open interest of 2,24,840 lots.

Sugar down 0.3% on subdued demand, higher supply

Market analysts attributed the fall to subdued demand from bulk consumers in the spot market against higher supplies

Sugar prices weakened by Rs 10 to Rs 3,054 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators reduced their holdings on the back of subdued demand from bulk consumers against higher supplies.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, sugar for delivery in August declined by Rs 10, or 0.33%, to Rs 3,054 per quintal, with an open interest of 39,180 lots.

Similarly, sugar for September contract shed Rs 19, or 0.32%, to Rs 3,097 per quintal in 14,090 lots.

Market analysts attributed the fall in sugar futures to subdued demand from bulk consumers in the spot market against higher supplies.

Mentha oil up 0.6% on spot demand

Tight stocks availability in the physical market on less arrivals from producing area supported the uptrend

Mentha oil prices moved up by 0.62% to Rs 921 per kg in futures trade today as traders created fresh positions, driven by a rise in demand from consuming industries in the spot market.

Tight stocks availability in the physical market on less arrivals from producing area of Chandausi in Uttar Pradesh further supported the uptrend.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, mentha oil for delivery in July rose by Rs 5.70, or 0.62%, to Rs 921 per kg in business turnover of 204 lots.

Similarly, the oil prices for delivery in August moved up by Rs 5.60, or 0.60%, to Rs 934.50 per kg in 36 lots.

Market analysts said speculators created fresh positions, driven by a rise in demand from consuming industries in the spot market against restricted arrivals from Chandausi in Uttar Pradesh, mainly led to the rise in mentha oil prices at futures trade.

Potato down 1.5% on subdued demand

The potato prices for August contract declined by 1.17%

Potato prices moved down by 1.51% to Rs 685 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators offloaded their positions, driven by subdued demand in the spot market against adequate stocks position.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, potato for delivery in September moved down by Rs 10.50, or 1.51%, to Rs 685 per quintal in business turnover of 53 lots.

The potato prices for August contract declined by Rs 8.60, or 1.17%, to Rs 728.70 per quintal in 67 lots.

Market experts said fall in potato prices was mostly due to offloading of positions by speculators, driven by subdued demand in the spot market against adequate stocks position.

Crude palm oil softens 0.5% on sluggish demand

Crude palm oil for delivery in July traded lower by 0.51%

Crude palm oil prices softened by 0.52% to Rs 511.90 per 10 kg in futures trading today as speculators reduced their positions, tracking a weak trend at spot market on sluggish demand against adequate supplies.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude palm oil prices for delivery in August declined by Rs 2.70, or 0.52%, to Rs 511.90 per 10 kg in business turnover of 200 lots.

Likewise, the oil for delivery in July traded lower by Rs 2.60, or 0.51%, to Rs 510.90 per 10 kg in 270 lots.

Analysts said speculators trimmed their positions, tracking a weak trend at spot market on sluggish demand against supplies from producing regions.

Cardamom down 1.1% on weak demand, higher supply

Cardamom for delivery in August shed 0.77%

Cardamom prices fell by 1.15% to Rs 705 per kg in futures market today as speculators trimmed their positions, driven by weak demand in the spot market against higher supplies from the producing belts.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, cardamom prices for delivery in July fell by Rs 8.20, or 1.15%, to Rs 705 per kg in business turnover of 158 lots. Similarly, cardamom for delivery in August shed Rs 5.90, or 0.77%, to Rs 758 per kg in 1,047 lots.

Market analysts attributed the fall in cardamom futures to speculators trimmed their positions on the back of weak demand in the spot market against higher supplies from producing belts.