

THE HINDU

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New services on KVAFSU website

The new website of the Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University (KVAFSU) was inaugurated by Aravind Jannu, Principal Secretary to the Animal Husbandry Department, recently.

It offers students, researchers and farmers nooks to discuss the latest developments and treatments and collaborate online.

The website, which is aimed at farmers as well as students, is also available for mobile phones. Here is a look at some of the new services incorporated into the website:

Circle: This is a platform where people from similar backgrounds can exchange information with their counterparts in other regions or universities.

Doctors from veterinary colleges in Karnataka will have the opportunity to interact with their peers at veterinary colleges in the rest of the country through this service.

Forum: This will work like a message board where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages. Even the public can interact with varsity faculty through this avenue where users can be anonymous or have to register with the forum and then subsequently log in to post messages. Those seeking information and who wish to view the messages posted do not have to log in to read existing messages.

Farmer's Corner: This will be an affordable and easy-to-use platform for farmers to learn and seek advice from experts. It will also connect farmers who can share experiences as well as resources among themselves. It will

help farmers gain confidence by discussing issues with other farmers and experts from the varsity.

Blogs: Soon students, alumni, and faculty of KVAFSU can share their views regarding policy making, best practices, etc., on the university blogging platform.

For the corporate sector: Industry representatives can make suggestions or get to know specific technical details about vaccines, drugs and animal feed-related research by registering on the varsity website.

Transparency: Information regarding MoUs signed by the varsity, funds granted for research, etc., will be uploaded on to the website for everyone to peruse.

From urbanite to farmer



Volunteers work in fields and greenhouses in a farm at Gourin, western France. PHOTO: AFP

Making the switch from urban life to rural bliss is not easy. Luckily for city slicker Nathalie, whose dream is to open a countryside bed and breakfast, her "woofing" experience on a French farm will give her the skills she needs.

World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (Wwoof) began as a fad in 1970s England but is now growing in rural France where organic farmers greet a new wave of acolytes changing the face of the sustainable exchange movement.

Wwoofing, which has existed in France for at least 20 years, gives urban dwellers the chance to try their hand at earthy pursuits such as vegetable cultivation, cheese-making and sustainable construction.

Farmers offer their "woofers" a bed and board in exchange for their labour. For Nathalie, a graphic designer in her forties who has always lived in the city, wwoofing is helping her make some big changes to her life.

"I'm in the process of selling my apartment and setting up an eco bed and breakfast with an organic garden," she says, admitting the lifestyle change is a challenge.

"I'm a real city person, so I have to learn everything," she says.

Much of the satisfaction of wwoofing comes from pitching in and learning as part of a larger group.

"This whole experience will be beneficial for the farm I want to buy," Nathalie says, preparing for a weekend of stuffing straw insulation into the walls of a new building.

For Nathalie and her ilk, wwoofing is an opportunity to meet new people, get to grips with sustainable farming techniques and live a different kind of life for a couple of weeks.

In 2008, France played host to 3,700 wwoofers, but just four years later this had grown to 10,000 amateur farmers, their ranks drawn from France and abroad.

The number of hosts has also multiplied in the same period from 321 to 800 in 2012.

Cecile Narbonnet of Wwoof France believes the "spirit of sharing" is the key to the movement's success. "We share experiences and exchange knowledge, without involving money or any subordination."

New horizons

In Brittany, wwoofer Sarah has spent the morning pulling weeds out of the ground at the Moulin Coz organic farm.

The 20-year-old American says she is spending time there after a year spent perfecting her French in the southern city of Montpellier.

"The way of life here interests me," she says, conceding her main motivation is to practise her language skills.

"It'll be useful" for if she achieves her dream of becoming a midwife for an aid organisation where often "French is the second language", she explains.

And learning "new words related to agriculture" is just a bonus, Sarah says.

For Wilma, a 22-year-old from Berlin, wwoofing is more of a philosophical pursuit, of "experimenting, with nature, in a village, on a farm".

"I know I won't always live in a big city," she adds, as she tends the land at the Pachamama organic farm in Saint-Brice-en-Cogles, north of Rennes.

For farmers, the experience is equally enriching, giving the hosts the opportunity to learn new things.

Nicolas and Anne-Sophie, vegetable farmers in the west of France, have already learned a lot from their first woofers.

They discovered veganism from their visitors, eschewing the consumption of all products derived from animals.

"It was very enlightening," Nicolas says, "We ate differently and they taught us about their diet."

Before the woofers came along, farmers "lived alone, isolated", says Delphine Morel, who runs Pachamama.

"Now people come to us, and we look outwards onto the world outside," she says with affection.

Simone Heidrich agrees. "As soon as we started cultivating our crops, we couldn't really get out any more," she says.

But today, for this veteran traveller who has lived on three different continents, the world comes to her, thanks to her woofers from across the globe.

Full reservoirs augur well for paddy farmers

All the irrigation reservoirs in Adilabad district have been fully fed by the rain in the last three days. This is a happy augury for farmers especially paddy farmers under the Kadem ayacut.

The only unsavoury aspect is the release of flood waters into Peddavagu river from the Komram Bheem project in Asifabad mandal as canals have not been developed to tap even its minimum potential.

The level of water has to be constantly decreased as heavy inflows can threaten habitations close to the reservoir.

Kadem dam is brimming with water bringing good news to paddy farmers in Kadem, Jannaram, Dandepalli, Luxettipet and Mancherial mandals.

Proper irrigation

The level of water in the reservoir will ensure proper irrigation of the crop in these mandals later in the season.

Kadem is also thronged by many tourists owing to the scenic view of its reservoir. The Tourism Department-run boating is also drawing visitors.

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Kuruvai crop on 26,000 hectares in Tiruvarur

Farmers being given inputs free of cost under special package

A total of 12,134 hectares of land had been covered under kuruvai so far and another 14,000 hectares of land will be brought under the crop in the current season in Tiruvarur district, said R. Kamaraj, Minister for Food.

Speaking after distributing agricultural implements under the special kuruvai package for farmers at Valangaiman near here, Mr. Kamaraj said both conventional and System of Rice Intensification (SRI) methods of paddy cultivation were being adopted. While 4,820 hectares of land were covered under the conventional method, 7,314 hectares were covered under SRI method.

The special package complete with fertilisers, bio-fertilisers, pesticides, and borewell pipes has imbued confidence in farmers, he said.

Under the package, farmers would get free implements worth Rs. 4.32 crore before the end of the month.

The inputs under the scheme included 1,589 tonnes of gypsum worth Rs. 55.60 lakh, micronutrients worth Rs. 29.12 lakh. Pesticides worth Rs. 48.14 lakh would be given as part of the package. The Agriculture Department would focus on popularising SRI technique among farmers and demonstration sessions would be held in select villages under the National Agriculture Development Programme and National Food Security Mission to benefit 14,152 paddy cultivators. M. Ganesan, Additional Director of Seeds, and P. Manimaran, District Revenue Officer, spoke.

The Minister distributed free inputs worth Rs.2.70 lakh to 95 farmers.

Stress on sustainable agriculture practices

In a bid to address the issues of sustainable agriculture practices, animal husbandry and environmental conservation, Dhan Foundation organized a one-day farmers' convention on Agricultural Biodiversity- Food and Nutrition Security at the Gandhi Memorial Museum here on Saturday.

Speaking at the event, M.P. Gurusamy, who has written extensively on the Gandhian approach to economics, said westernised practices in agriculture were posing threats to the environment.

Speaking about animal husbandry, P. Vivekanandan, founder of SEVA, stressed on its co-existence with agriculture.

Now, mule-gaur conflict haunts Sirumalai; farmers feel the pain

Wild dogs are another grave threat to mules in these regions

At a loss: A mule, which was gored by an Indian gaur on Sirumalai hills near Dindigul, recently.

Even as the man-animal conflict haunts the hill station, conflicts between wild and domestic animals have threatened the beleaguered farmers and their very survival.

Now, mules, one of the prime modes of transport for farmers to carry agricultural commodities from farms, mostly on hill slopes, to the road, have been facing threat from Indian Gaurs. Four mules were killed within two weeks.

Conflict over space and food between the two species has been increasing in the hill, said A. Malai Raja of Sirumalaipudhur, who lost his mule recently.

Commencement of jackfruit season signals the beginning of mule-gaur conflicts. With no water and food owing to acute drought on the hill, withered jackfruits on the farm are the only feed available to Indian gaurs.

Mules too will fight for the sumptuous feed. In the battle, the wild gaurs kill their weak rival.

When a mule lifts its hind legs to attack, the gaur butts the lower abdomen of the mule killing it instantly, he says.

Wild dogs are another grave threat to mules. They come in groups and attack the lone mule suddenly. When Indian Gaurs kill a mule, they leave the carcass there. But, wild dogs swallow everything leaving no trace of the mule. "In such circumstances, we cannot even get a post mortem certificate."

Already, rising human population and cultivable lands have shrunk the natural habitats for wild animals.

Its impacts are huge. Farmers lose their crops, livestock and property and sometimes, even human lives are lost. On the other side, animals face shrinking habitat and threat to their survival.

Farmers lose 10 to 15 per cent of their total agricultural output to gaurs and other wild animals every year.

The loss is disproportionately high for rural farmers to bear, farmers feel. Compensation for livestock lost to predators is the need of the hour. The only solution to this persistent crisis is to insure animals.

Insurance corporations should offer insurance cover to mules and give compensation in case of death, farmers appeal.

“Loss of a mule and crop to predators would destroy a family’s wealth and the way of life overnight. How can we bear such a loss,” questions S. Periasamy, another farmer.

While accepting that wildlife conflicts adversely affected the well being of communities, forest officials say that wild animals are being squeezed into small and smaller areas.

Depriving animals of their natural habitat, increase in human population, loss and fragmentation of existing habitat worsen animal-human conflicts further.

At the same time, small and tiny farmers are solely dependent on natural ecosystems for their survival.

Two pronged strategies to protect farming community and wild animals is need of the hour.

Minister visits vegetable market on M.G. Road

V. Srinivas Prasad, Minister in-charge of Mysore district, on Sunday inspected the vegetable market on M.G. Road here. A team of officials, including Deputy Commissioner Rame Gowda, accompanied him.

The Minister's visit gains significance in the backdrop of complaints that the market, where farmers from rural areas sell their produce directly to customers from morning till noon, lacks facilities and has been affecting the free movement of traffic on the busy road which leads to many localities and Chamundi Hills.

Despite being the second largest vegetable market after Devaraja Market in the city, vendors, mostly farmers hailing from nearby villages and also neighbouring taluks, do not have a permanent space to do business here. Ever since they began selling vegetables on M.G. Road, the vendors have been demanding a permanent market for themselves.

As people from most parts of the city come to this "open-air market" to buy fresh vegetables, it has emerged as an alternative to Devaraja Market. The vegetable vendors shifted to the vacant land behind the rear compound wall of the Dasara Exhibition Grounds on M.G. Road after they were evicted from the surroundings of Mysore Palace some years ago. Following a reported "dispute" over the land, the government has not provided facilities or develop it into a full-fledged market.

The Minister collected the status of the land from the authorities and promised efforts to find a solution.

He also saw the sheds put up in the rear portion of the market.

The vendors complained that the market gets flooded from the overflowing storm water drain during monsoon.

M.K. Somashekar, Krishnaraja MLA; P.G. Ramesh, Mysore City Corporation Commissioner; Rajshekar Koti, Editor, *Andolana*; C.G. Betsurmath, commissioner, Mysore Urban Development Authority; and Chandrashekar, executive officer, Karnataka Exhibition Authority, were present.

Pulses output may be hit owing to rain failure

Farmers unable to sow enough green and black gram to reach the target

There would be a serious shortage in the production of pulses, particularly green and black gram, due to the sharp decrease in the total sowing area of the two crops this year.

Sources in the Agriculture Department told *The Hindu* here on Saturday that this was caused by rain failure. Farmers were unable to sow enough to reach the target.

As against the target of 40,000 hectares fixed for black gram during kharif season, farmers in the district could complete sowing only on 22,660 hectares (56.65 per cent). Similarly, as opposed to the target for green gram (30,000 ha), farmers could cover only 15,467 ha (51.56 per cent). Now, it is too late to meet those targets. Farmers are more likely to shift to red gram cultivation rather than try to cultivate sunflower, which is seen as a risky move because of the virus attack on the crops two years back which caused severe losses.

Silver lining

However, widespread rain in the past three days in the district has revived the hopes of red gram growers. So far, out of the total target of 3.65 lakh hectares fixed for red gram, farmers have completed sowing in over 1.46

lakh hectares. The seeds sown in this area were withering due to rain failure and dry winds; but the rain has given them a new lease of life.

Rainfall

Sources said the district recorded a total of 41.1 mm rainfall on July 10, followed by 103.4 mm on July 11 and 164.4 mm on July 12.

All seven taluks experienced good rains on all three days. As of July 12, the district had recorded a total rainfall of 573.4 mm, with Sedam recording the highest (117.8 mm), followed by Chittapur (113.5 mm) and Afzalpur (73.8 mm).

In total, farmers have completed sowing in 2,48,999 hectares of land as against the target of 5,71,200 hectares fixed for the kharif season.

Farmers seem to favour soya bean among oilseeds this season.

Raitha Sangha to observe Farmer Martyrs' Day

The Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha and Hasiru Sene will observe Farmer Martyrs' Day on July 21.

Speaking to presspersons here on Saturday, sangha district president Shivangouda Patil said the current year marked the 33rd anniversary of the 'Raitha Bandaya' (farmer's agitation) that took place in Navalgund and Nargund.

To mark the occasion, farmers will pay tributes at the martyr memorial at Nargund, erected in memory of two farmers who died in police firing in 1980. A farmers' meeting will be organised at Annadaneshwar Mutt premises in Mundargi in Gadag district. Sangha office bearers K.S. Puttannaiah, Chamaras Malipatil, and others will participate in the meeting.

Issues faced by the farming community will be discussed and a memorandum will be sent to the State government to address the same.

Regarding the State budget presented on Friday, Mr. Patil said the government had proposed nothing new and had announced new farm loans only to pacify farmers. He said farmers had incurred huge losses because of drought and therefore the government should waive off all farm loans taken from banks and give fresh loans.

New technologies needed to treat waste: Bangalore Mayor

Inaugurates workshop on waste management in Hubli

Underscoring the need for active cooperation of people in effective solid waste management, Bangalore Mayor D. Venkatesh Murthy has said there was a need for alternative technologies to treat solid waste.

Speaking after inaugurating a workshop on 'Waste Management and Best Out of Waste' organised by the Institute of Business Management and Research (IBMR) here on Saturday, Mr. Murthy said the waste disposal methods being undertaken in Bangalore should be adopted across the State.

Underscoring the need for segregation of bio-degradable and non-degradable waste at the point of generation, Mr. Murthy said it was important that people separate waste and put them into separate bags at their houses.

Disposal

Elaborating on the garbage disposal issue Bangalore faced a few months ago, the Bangalore Mayor said garbage clearance had become a problem for the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike because of the inclusion of

many town panchayats and municipal councils under the BBMP without undertaking any planned measures.

He said the farmers of villages surrounding Bangalore, who earlier used garbage as manure for their farmlands, had stopped doing so due to the presence of plastic in garbage.

Mr. Murthy said Bangalore alone generated 5,000 tonnes of solid waste everyday and BBMP had initiated steps to get the waste processed through scientific methods so as to produce crude oil, biomethane and vermicompost.

Director of Kousali Institute of Management Studies under Karnatak University, A.H. Chachadi said there was a need to look at waste as a resource, as several useful products could be made out of it.

The former mayor of Hubli-Dharwad, Pandurang Patil, said there was a need to adopt technology to mechanically segregate waste at the dumping yard and to treat it on the day of generation.

Karnatak University Registrar G.B. Nandan, chairman of IBMR Group of Institutions Vinaychandra Mahendrakar, dean Rajendra Malowade and others were present.

On the occasion, pourakarmikas Basappa Chandrapur and Durgavva Madar were felicitated.

Plan to expand rubber crop in northeast

With Tripura emerging as the second largest rubber-growing State in the country after Kerala, the Rubber Board of India is planning to make the region a hub of rubber production. Farmers in the northeast find rubber cultivation to be a lucrative venture. The Rubber Board of India said around

4.5 lakh hectares of land was suitable for planting rubber in the region. Tripura had around one lakh hectares of land under rubber cultivation. Now, the board had identified two lakh hectares in Assam with potential for rubber cultivation. "Assam has the maximum potential of 2 lakh hectares. Then Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh, all have potential. In all these States, rubber has come up to some extent," K.G. Mohanan, former Additional Rubber Production Commissioner, said.

Kuruvai area shrinks to 7,507 acres

Agriculture Department begins disbursement of Chief Minister's special package

Kuruvai paddy cultivation is expected to be taken up on 7,507 acres of land in filter point areas of the district this year.

The normal kuruvai area is 16,000 acres in the district. But given the poor storage in the Mettur reservoir and delay in release of water in the Cauvery, kuruvai paddy could be raised in only the filter point areas such as Lalgudi and Anbil this year.

On Friday, the Agriculture Department began distributing the special kuruvai package announced by Chief Minister Jayalalithaa.

Apart from three-phase power supply for 12-hours a day, the package envisages distribution of bio-fertilizers, micronutrients, pipes and other inputs free of cost to farmers in filter point areas to help them raise the kuruvai crop.

In Tiruchi district, the inputs are to be given to 3,872 farmers in the filter point areas at an estimated cost of Rs. 32.31lakh.

S. Damodaran, Minister for Agriculture, inaugurated the process at Lalgudi. T.P. Poonachi, Minister for Khadi and Village Industries, and R. Manoharan, chief whip, were present.

Mr. Damodaran said over one lakh acres was expected to be covered in Tamil Nadu under kuruvai paddy thanks to the package announced by the Chief Minister.

He pointed out that the government had implemented a samba package last year and sanctioned compensation to drought-affected farmers.

No other State had given compensation for drought, he said. Sandeep Saxena, Principal Secretary, Agriculture, said kuruvai special package would be disbursed within 10 days.

Since the water table had slumped at many places, the government was providing gypsum to overcome problems of salinity and alkalinity faced by farmers.

M. Rajendran, Director of Agriculture, said the government had allocated Rs. 18 crore for implementing the special kuruvai package.

Although it was suggested that high-density polyethylene pipes (to help farmers pump water from borewells in neighbouring places) could be provided to farmers at 50 per cent subsidy, the Chief Minister ordered that the pipes be given free of cost.

Collector Jayashree Muralidharan appealed to farmers to switch over to organic farming to preserve the fertility of the soil.

Alternative crop grant in budget 'not enough'

The Rs. 2 crore grant announced in the State Budget to set up demonstration plots on farmer fields to grow crops alternative to arecanut is meagre, said some representatives of arecanut bodies.

The budget document said, "In view of the difficulties faced by arecanut farmers, it is proposed to encourage them in alternative profitable crops in areca gardens. For this purpose demonstration plots on farmers's fields will be established in coastal and Malnad areas."

Sridhar G Bhide, a director in the Board of Mangalore Agriculturists' Sahakari Sangha (MASS) and Konkodi Padmanabha, president, Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Cooperative Ltd. (CAMPCO) said the amount reserved should have been more in order to realise the objective in its true sense.

Mr. Padmanabha said that the need to grow alternative crops to arecanut has high relevance as arecanut growers were facing problems due to the yellow leaf disease (YLD). Mr. Bhide said, "Let them set up the demonstration plants. But what is needed is encouragement to farmers who are already growing alternative crops such as cocoa, nutmeg and other spices in arecanut gardens as an inter-crop. The government can supply their saplings to farmers freely or at subsidised rate."

Manchi Srinivasa Achar, president of the All India Areca Growers' Association, Puttur, said that the association welcomed the announcement. The government should consult progressive farmers before deciding which crops could be grown as an alterative to arecanut, he said.

CPI(M) opposes private firms' move to enter into crop insurance sector

Private general insurance companies, which have failed to gain the confidence the general public, are now using the government to enter into the crop insurance sector in a big way, alleges Odisha unit of the CPI (M).

The party has alleged that both the Central and State governments are promoting these private general insurance companies through the Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (MNAIS). Party State Secretariat member Ali Kishore Patnaik urged the State government not to provide scope to the private general insurance companies to enter into the field of crop insurance through the MNAIS pilot project.

The State government has agreed to implement the MNAIS pilot project in ten districts. In Jajpur, Puri, Ganjam and eight blocks of Balasore and Bhadrak districts, ICICI Lombard GIC Limited and in Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Khurda districts and four blocks of Balasore district, HDFC Ergo GIC Ltd. are the implementing agencies.

In the other districts where MNAIS is being implemented the implementing agency is the public sector agency Agricultural Insurance Company Ltd (AIC). Earlier, AIC was the implementing authority for crop insurance throughout the State.

Mr. Patnaik has pointed out that crop insurance sector has increased many folds during the past few years. According to him, the private insurance agencies which have failed to compete with the public sector organisations like the AIC are now using the government means to have their share in the crop insurance market.

As per the data of the AIC, during the 1999-2000 kharif season, 6,82,000 farmers in the State opted for crop insurance and the gross premium was

Rs. 11 crore. But during the kharif 2011, the number of farmers opting for crop insurance in the State rose to 14,43,260, while gross premium rose to Rs. 74.42 crore.

With rise in consciousness more and more peasants are opting for crop insurance. And this trend will continue, he says. Crop insurance has also increased as it has been made mandatory along with crop loans.

According to Mr. Patnaik, even under the MNAIS, the private general insurance companies are exploitive. He has cited example of Ganjam district. Under the MNAIS, the paddy farmers of Ganjam district would have to pay a premium of 6 per cent instead of earlier premium of 2.5 per cent, which would be extra financial burden on them. The government would also pay more money to the private insurance company in charge of crop insurance in Ganjam district. The actuarial premium for paddy crop in Ganjam district is 16.5 per cent of which 6 per cent is paid by the farmer and the rest is shared by the State and Central governments.

Zero-budget farming to be taken up at Plavila

Five acres of land in Plavila near Neyyattinkara will see a range of vegetables being cultivated using noted agriculturalist Subhash Palekar's Zero Budget Natural Farming.

The project, mooted by the Neyyattinkara Municipality with support from the Agriculture Department, will be implemented in the land provided by NIMS Medicity.

The Municipality plans to utilise Rs.5 lakh from its current year's budget. Special sanction had been sought from the government for carrying out the programme, Chairman S.S. Jayakumar told *The Hindu*.

“Since the project was implemented in a private land, we need to get special permission. The issue was taken up with Agriculture Minister and he has given an assurance to prevail upon the government to give sanction,” he said.

Nod expected

The civic body expected to get clearance from the State government within two weeks, he added.

As per the plan, the Municipality would provide subsidy to women living near the project site to take up cultivation of vegetables using the natural farming technique, an emerging method of farming using dung and urine of local breeds of cows, which were high sources of nutrients and microbes.

This method of farming was highly prevalent in several parts of the country and even practiced in Palakkad district of the State.

The dung and urine generated by one cow could produce manure for cultivation in five acres of land.

The produce, mixed with jaggery and water, would be fermented for two to three days. The farmer would then spray the mixture on the crop and little amount to the field, he added. In Plavila, in the initial stage, vegetables such as bitter gourd, okra, brinjal, chilly, and cowpea would be cultivated.

The civic body also had plans to set up an outlet near the farm site to market the products, Mr. Jayakumar said.

Erstwhile bootleggers show interest in farming

Hundreds of former prohibition offenders who are part of a rehabilitation package have evinced keen interest in farming. Residing in locations spread across Tiruvannamalai district, they were once actively engaged in

brewing or selling of illicit arrack. In a bid to reform and integrate them with society, the Prohibition Enforcement Wing is in the process of rehabilitation them.

While working with them, the enforcement wing came to know about their interest in group farming. Now, the wing has written to the government suggesting that societies be formed to enable these reformed offenders engage themselves in sustainable income-generating activities.

According to Additional Director-General of Police (Enforcement) C.K. Gandhirajan, about 200 people who were given Rs. 30,000 each for purchasing milch animals or setting up grocery shops as part of the rehabilitation package last year met him in Tiruvannamalai on Saturday. At least 650 persons, including many women, in the district were part of the package.

“They evinced interest in maize cultivation, mushroom nursery, honey collection etc. Such group activity can be promoted by way of forming societies. We have written to the government in this regard. The objective is to ensure that they make some decent money and contribute to the family,” he said.

Mr. Gandhirajan said that 42,684 cases of prohibition offences were registered across the State since January 2013 and 39,393 accused, including 3,763 women, were arrested.

“Due to the sustained efforts of the police and law-enforcement agencies, brewing of illicit arrack has been eradicated in the State. We are now focusing on the sale of liquor smuggled from other States. Police are also after those who are selling liquor purchased from TASMAL outlets at a higher price after closing hours,” he said.

The drive against illegal sales had enhanced revenue in State-owned liquor shops. Enforcement officials were intensifying the campaign to create awareness of the evils of liquor.

Programme for agri-business managers

ICFAI B-school, Hyderabad, is organising a five-day Management Development Programme on “Business Efficiency for Agri-Business Managers (BEAM)”, which will help business employers to upgrade their managerial talent and scale-up their efficiency.

The conference to be held from October 23 to 27 will provide a platform for managers of public and private agri-business firms, and banks holding functional responsibility of agri-business.

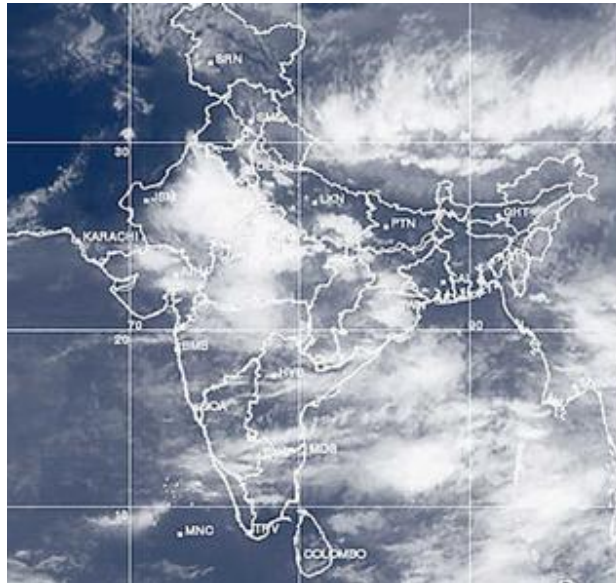
The programme will cover the modules such as - Economics of Strategy, Environment of Business and Public Policy, Financial Markets and Competitive Analysis with reference to Agriculture, Financing Agricultural Operations, Evaluating Firms Internal Capabilities, Strategic Management, Human Resources Management and Soft Skills. Details on ‘www.ibsindia.org/ibs_hyderabad.html’.

ENGAGEMENTS

THRISSUR

Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council Keralam, Agriculture Department: Fruit and vegetable festival; Therambil Ramakrishnan, MLA, inaugurates; Kizhakke Nada, Thekkinkad Maidan; 11 a.m.

weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs. Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on July 14.

ANDHRA PRADESH

Anantapur	33	24	0	119
Arogyavaram	31	20	0	110
Bapatla	35	24	4	175
Calingapatnam	32	26	0	162
Gannavaram	34	26	0	301
Hanamkonda	31	23	11	359
Hyderabad AP	30	23	tr	301
Kakinada	33	24	21	293
Kavali	35	25	3	123
Kurnool	33	23	3	109
Mahabubnagar	30	23	tr	303
Machilipatnam	34	26	0	205
Narasapur	34	23	0	285

Nellore	36 26 24 216
Nizamabad	29 24 0 388
Ongole	35 25 1 93
Ramagundam	32 24 0 333
Tirupathi AP	37 26 2 117
Tuni	33 25 9 109
Vizag AP	34 26 0 133
Vizag	32 26 0 132
KARNATAKA	
Agumbe	23 18 92 3543
Bengaluru AP	27 20 1 188
Bengaluru	27 20 6 234
Belgaum AP	26 19 11 219
Bellary	32 23 0 174
Bijapur	28 21 1 251
Chitradurga	27 20 6 125
Chickmagalur	25 19 2 207
Chintamani	30 20 0 117
Gadag	29 21 1 111
Gulbarga	29 21 25 204
Hassan	30 21 3 258
Honavar	27 23 18 1740
Karwar	27 24 24 1577
Madikeri	21 17 40 1697
Mangalore AP	27 23 37 1935
Mysore	28 19 1 68

Mandya	28	21	1	33
Panambur	27	24	41	1841
Raichur	32	23	1	95
Shirali	27	24	30	1891

KERALA

Alappuzha	29	24	7	1430
Kannur	27	24	27	2207
Kochi AP	31	23	3	1646
Kottayam	30	23	2	1413
Kozhikode	27	24	19	1591
Punalur	29	23	2	1038
Thiruvanantha				
-puram AP	31	24	0	649
Thiruvanantha				
-puram City	31	24	0	613
Vellanikkara	27	23	27	1491

TAMIL NADU

Adiramapattinam	35	24	0	40
Coimbatore AP	31	22	0	19
Coonoor	21	15	1	76
Cuddalore	36	25	0	165
Chennai AP	36	26	0	213
Chennai	37	27	0	109
Dharmapuri	31	22	0	1
Kanyakumari	29	24	9	145
Karaikal	37	26	0	114

Kodaikanal	17	12	tr	147
Madurai AP	39	27	0	7
Nagapattinam	37	27	0	31
Palayamkottai	36	26	0	19
Pamban	33	27	0	1
Parangipettai	37	27	0	48
Puducherry	37	27	0	121
Salem	34	23	0	145
Thanjavur	38	29	0	37
Tiruchi AP	38	27	0	4
Tondi	37	27	0	71
Tuticorin	37	27	0	5
Ooty	16	12	6	187
Valparai	22	19	23	1958
Vellore	35	26	0	199
LAKSHADWEEP				
Amini Divi	29	26	1	623
Minicoy	30	26	tr	524
Kavarathi	30	26	1	480
OTHER STATIONS				
Kolkata (Alipore)	30	27	2	435
Mumbai	29	25	2	1270
New Delhi	37	28	0	217

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

ISOLATED RAIN IN COASTAL A.P.

CHENNAI: Rainfall occurred at most places over Kerala, Coastal Karnataka and at a few places over Rayalaseema, Telangana and interior Karnataka. Isolated rainfall occurred over Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Lakshadweep.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL TUESDAY MORNING: Rain or thundershowers would occur at most places over Coastal Karnataka, Kerala, at many places over Lakshadweep and at a few places over Interior Karnataka, Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Isolated rain or thundershowers may occur over Rayalaseema, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

HEAVY RAINFALL WARNING: Isolated heavy rain may occur over Coastal Karnataka and ghat areas of South Interior Karnataka during the next 48 hours.

FARMERS WEATHER BULLETIN FOR TAMIL NADU AND PUDUCHERRY FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 16th July 2013: Isolated light to moderate rain may occur over Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: No significant chan



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Water resources department fears abnormal rains in Nepal catchment areas

Even as the natural and normal arrival of the rain-bearing dense and black clouds are awaited by farmers in the state, water resources department (WRD) is worried about abnormal rains in the catchment areas of rivers originating in Nepal or outside the state that lead to swelling of water level in the rivers in north Bihar and consequent threat to their embankments.

"By and large, farmers have harvested their maize crop. Now, they are waiting for rains for paddy cultivation," said farmers Pushpraj Singh of Shivganj village under East Rangpura panchayat in Purnia district and Akhilesh Kumar Singh of Chandwa village under Pirmokam panchayat of Katihar district.

Last week, such an abnormal rain had caused flood menace in parts of Araria and Kishanganj districts. "Catchment areas of Mahananda river received abnormal rains in the Kurseong valley of Darjeeling district in West Bengal. As a result, it started flowing seven to eight feet above the danger mark in its stretch in Bihar. It caused sudden flood in Kishanganj and Katihar districts," said a WRD official on Sunday.

The WRD sources, however, heaved a sigh of relief as the 3,700km-long embankments were safe and protected. "Nowhere has any damage been caused to embankments in any part of the state. The abnormal and heavy

rains, however, cannot be ruled out. But, we are not saying anything concrete about rains, like if they will occur or not in the near future," the WRD source said.

Accordingly, the department has sent an alert to its divisional officials concerned to maintain utmost vigil about the protection to embankments. Yet, another high alert has also been sounded, asking the junior and other engineers concerned to ensure that the canals, too, were kept safe and protected from the vandals who damage them for local reasons, causing the canal water to overflow and inundate arable tracts of land unnecessarily. If any damage was done to the canals, the junior and other engineers concerned would be held accountable, the alert has pointed out. "The high alert notice to the junior and other engineers concerned was sent a week ago," said the WRD official.

Besides, WRD principal secretary Arun Kumar Singh visited the Kosi canal system area, including the Birpur barrage, a week ago. The modernization of the Eastern Kosi Canal System was completed in March this year. "The aim of his visit was to personally inspect the Kosi canal system and keep the engineers and officials geared up for protecting the embankments and canals, apart from maintaining vigil," said a WRD official.

Bank of Baroda opens 14 new branches

Bank of Baroda has added 14 new branches and 25 ATMs in Bihar, Odisha and Jharkhand zone with headquarters in Patna, taking the tally of its branches and ATMs in the zone to 151 and 69, respectively, said the bank's chairman-cum-managing director, S S Mundra, on Sunday.

"There is a vast scope of agriculture and its allied activities in Bihar. In order to speed up the process, a specialized agriculture loan unit has already been started in Purnia where agriculture loan applications are processed on a larger scale and it takes minimal time in their disposal. The farmers of the state are now getting direct benefit of this new initiative of the bank," Mundra said.

He said, "SME loan factory is working in all these three states and loan applications for small scale and medium industries as well as services sector are processed in shortest possible time and it is doing a good job in Bihar."

Mundra further said there is good opportunity of home loan and traders' loan in Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha. The retail loan factories in all these three states are working in the area whereas home loan is sanctioned within six days. Bank of Baroda has already undertaken new initiative of providing home loan at the base rate of 10.25% (at present) irrespective of the loan amount and tenure.

The CMD also said the bank is to celebrate its 106th anniversary and several activities under corporate social responsibility would be organized all over India.

'Food security is good, but what about food safety?'

While the National Food Security Bill(now an ordinance) has been widely debated by political parties and experts, a professor of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) wants to draw attention of policy makers towards proper implementation of Food Safety and Standard Act (FSSA) 2006.

"Why only Food Security Bill is in agenda of political parties, why is the Food Safety and Standard Act 2006 not being highlighted," wondered Anand Chaudhary, associate professor at the faculty of Ayurveda, Institute of Medical Sciences, BHU, Chaudhary.

High drama is on in political circle regarding food security bill that ensures cheap grain for one-third population of the country. Congress is adamant for the bill as game changer and other political parties are considering it as vote bank politics. "As an academician and university teacher, may I ask these policy makers about some facts. Who will take care of implementation of FSSA, which was made to ensure service to the masses (poor as well as prosperous), regarding food available in market, either readymade, ready to eat or raw form," he said. Why policy makers are not ensuring the best services to commoner by strict implementation of provisions of FSSA 2006 amended in 2008, 2010 and 2012 for better services to every section of society. Why they are eyeing only vote bank that may be an easy target?

Expressing concerns regarding Ayurveda in FSSA, Chaudhary said: "I oppose the move of the government in which it permitted sale of honey by mixing antibiotics in a certain concentration. Honey is used as carrier in these permissible substances as food. Honey is a medicine and used in Ayurveda as an adjuvant to potentiate the effects of several Ayurvedic formulations. Antibiotics in honey need further debate from all angles."

"We invite attention of government on a clause of FSSA where it kept Ayurvedic medicinal oil at par to the edible oils. These are not the same. So, the criteria, quality and standard parameter of Ayurvedic oils may not be same as per pure edible coconut and mustard oil, he said. Ayurvedic

oils are processed as per principles of Ayurvedic Pharmaceutics with many herbs and minerals. Parameters of these Ayurvedic oils are notified in Ayurvedic Pharmacopiea of India /Ayurvedic Formulary of India separately as medicine.

VOP seeks debate on bill

The Voice of People (VOP), an alliance of 16 civil society organisations from various districts of Uttar Pradesh, with the help of Child Rights and You (CRY), urges the central government to bring the National Food Security Bill after debate and discussion in Parliament.

National Food Security Bill is a crucial opportunity to end hunger and malnutrition in India and we hope that this will not be missed. The Right to Food Campaign will continue to protest against a process that stops debate and discussion over an issue that affects millions in the country," said Sruti Nagavashi, executive council member of VOP. She said the VOP is appalled by the undemocratic decision to promulgate an ordinance on food security.

"We are also concerned that the process of implementation and identification of beneficiaries will not be done properly if such a hurried approach is taken," she said adding that there were many shortcomings in the bill, which is now an ordinance. The Bill does not provide any agriculture and production-related entitlements for farmers in spite of the fact that more than 60% of the people in this country were dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods.

It's official: No drought in state

Drought is officially over in Karnataka. With water levels in all major dams almost to the brim owing to heavy rains this year, it brings an end to the two-year drought period in the state.

In the summer before the 2013 assembly elections, drought had officially hit 70 per cent of Karnataka. State government had declared 142 of the 176 taluks as drought-affected and had sought Rs 4,500 crore relief from the Centre.

But the latest weekly update from the Drought Monitoring Cell shows drought in less than 13 per cent of the state, while another 14 per cent is seen as abnormally dry.

Till July end, the state government and people in the state were afraid of insufficient rains in Karnataka. But the last 10 days has changed the situation with heavy rains being reported especially in the catchments areas of all major rivers.

Of the 15 major dams, four, including Almatti dam across Krishna in Bagalkot district, are on high alert. Three more are on alert warning. According to data by state water resources department, 55 small and medium sized dams received 100% of their storage capacity, a first in two years.

Bangalore and Mysore can cheer as storage level in the Krishnaraja Sagara (KRS) Dam is set to touch maximum 124 ft following good rains in the catchment areas of Cauvery in Kodagu.

Chief minister Siddaramaiah can breathe easy now as it will help meet Karnataka's water commitment to Tamil Nadu. Karnataka has to release about 194 tmc of water to Tamil Nadu by the end of monsoon and has so

far released about 34 tmc.

The lifelines of north Karnataka - Malaprabha, Ghataprabha and Krishna - are flowing close to the danger level after some good rains and Maharashtra government's decision to increase the discharge from its dams.

92% sowing

Meanwhile 92% sowing in the state was reported by the state agriculture ministry. But the rain also is creating planting delays for some farmers.

Gopal Gowda who grows paddy and sugarcane on about 33 acres in Mandya said some of his land in a watershed is covered in several feet of water after about 10 inches of rain in the past two weeks. He said he's not worried yet, because with some warm weather, he can still get his crop in by mid-September.

Power woes eased

People can also heave a sigh of relief as good rains have helped ease the grim power situation. The water levels in Linganamakki, Sharavathi and Gerusoppe reservoirs, whose hydel power generating stations account for a third of the state's power supply, are all brimming now due to heavy inflow. The demand for power in the state too has decreased because of overcast conditions.

Hope mushrooms for tribals in Keonjhar

With monsoon in full vigour, it's mushroom time in the district. Tribal wake up early in the morning and go to hills and forests to collect mushrooms. They sell the exotic variety at Rs 20 a piece in the market. But there is no proper marketing facility to sell the products. Hence many times they are

exploited by middlemen. Paturia, angaru and manda are some of the varieties of mushroom available in the market now a days.

There are more than 30 varieties of mushroom available in the forest out of which bali chhatu, bihuduni chhatu, rutuka chhatu and kuta chhatu are most sought-after. Mushrooms come in different colours like red, yellow, white, black, brown and blue. After industries came up and massive mining activities took place, the climate changed, affecting production of mushroom, said an environmentalist.

Sources said the district, which was rich in forests and hills, had a conducive climate for growth of mushrooms. Thousands of tribals earned livelihood for at least two to three months in a year by collecting and selling mushrooms. Now the situation has changed.

The mushrooms are in high demand in cities. These are transported to Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Bhadrak and Jajpur and sold between Rs 150 and Rs 180 a kg. But the tribals hardly manage to earn Rs 100 to Rs 200 per day. In most cases, middlemen eat into their profits.

"Mushroom dishes are sought-after even in star hotels. Naturally-sprouted mushrooms have a different taste than those cultivated by farmers," said local Alekh Chandra Patra. The ORMAS chief executive S Hota said, "We have no marketing facility for sale of mushrooms. But we are encouraging mushroom farming through self-help groups at different places."

SSB celebrates golden jubilee

On the occasion of the golden jubilee celebration of the Sashastra Seema Bal(SSB), the 37 battalion of the SSB recently conducted a 'Samajik Chetna Abhiyan' for the welfare of people living in the border areas of

Rajagarh. The SSB organized a study tour for 22 border youths to Himachal Pradesh and imparted free computer training. Forty farmers of the border areas were trained on agriculture, horticulture, animal Husbandry and bee-keeping.

The SSB said that it will sponsor vocational training of the youths and help them with their placements in various industries through reputed NGOs.

Sandiksha, the wives' welfare association of the SSB organized a cooking competition in the city's Game Village on Sunday.

Sugarcane growers threaten to go on indefinite stir

Trouble for the district administration grew on Sunday in the confrontation between sugarcane growers and sugar factories as the latter deciding to up the ante.

The Sugarcane Growers Association decided to launch an indefinite strike from Wednesday in front of the DC office accusing the Bannari Amman Sugar factory of failing to pay the dues to them. Referring to a meeting the district administration had called last week to discuss the issue, the association said the sugar factory management has not heeded to the directive of DC Ramegowda to clear the dues and to announce its stand within two days. This is an affront to the district administration and the government, they said.

"While officials are silent about the management's failure to pay the dues, we will launch an indefinite protest to get the money due to us. The officials should also initiate action against the sugar factory and seize the sugar stocked at the factory," the association general secretary Attanahalli Devaraj said.

Officials should scrutinize the records and verify its documents related to production of sugar, spirit and power. According to the association, the factory located near Nanjangud owes dues of Rs 75 crore for 2011-12 and Rs 78 crore for 2012-13.

Food security scheme in Delhi from Sept 2: Sheila

Gearing up to launch the UPA's food security scheme next month, Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit on Sunday stated that benefits would start percolating to beneficiaries by September. With Assembly elections scheduled to be held in November, the Delhi government and the Centre are hoping to play up the scheme and its implementation.

While addressing a Residential Welfare Association (RWA) workshop on Sunday, Dikshit said the food security scheme would ensure a hunger-free Delhi. "After the formal launch on August 20, the benefits will start percolating to those who need it the most with effect from September 2, for which comprehensive arrangements are being made," Dikshit said. She added that the government would begin issuing food security cards during the formal launch.

According to the Delhi government, BPL families and families with Jhuggi Ration Card and Antyodaya Anna Yojana cards would get wheat at Rs 2 per kg, rice at Rs 3 per kg and coarse grain at Rs 1 per kg. The scheme intends to benefit at least 5.1 lakh families or 32 lakh people in Delhi. "The benefit will be given through the eldest female member of the family in order to further empower women in the city," Dikshit said. She added that the government would eventually include more families under the ambit of Food Security.

After announcing last week that Delhi would be the first state to implement the Union government's ambitious scheme, Dikshit had ordered all agencies and departments to complete the ground work for rollout of the

scheme. A committee under the chairmanship of Food and Supply Minister Haroon Yusuf was also constituted to oversee preparations.

The CM also spoke about the government's Jan Aahar and Aap Ki Rasoi centres. In December last year, Dikshit had launched the Annashri Yojana, also a food security programme, under which a monthly cash subsidy of Rs 600 is transferred into Aadhaar-linked bank accounts of the eldest female members of at least one lakh poor families.

Green spaces in city should be inviolable, stresses Master Plan

Encroachments of open spaces by vehicles for parking and unauthorised construction are some of the hindrances being faced in the city in maintaining the green cover. However, the Draft Master Plan proposes some measures to preserve the green cover that is left in the city, which has an increasing population and faces an acute need for further development.

As per the Master Plan, there are a number of problems that are being encountered in preserving the green spaces or the open spaces. It is stated that building byelaws, zoning regulations and boundary wall stipulations should be synchronised and effectively implemented to ensure that encroachment by way of unauthorised projections, courtyards, opening of doors, and putting up fencing do not blemish the quality and nature of open spaces.

The average green space available in 2001 was 17 square metre per person. It has been projected that this would reduce to 10.7 sqm/person in 2031.

Another problem is that due to tremendous rise in the ownership of cars and shift from plotted development to group housing and multiple families inhabiting one plot, a large number of open spaces between clusters have been encroached upon for parking of cars. The city has one of the highest per capita number of vehicles. It is common to find cars parked around cars. For this purpose, at some places the size of the parks was reduced and paver blocks installed around these.

The Master Plan proposes that the open or green spaces in the city should be recognised as inviolable open spaces to prevent them from being diverted to other land uses. A system of pedestrian greenways and nature walking systems would be developed which would link existing and future open spaces, parks and forest areas.

Twelve longitudinal green corridors have been proposed connecting the greens of the city in the north-south direction which will offer diverse experiences as one moves across them. While some will cut across the sectoral grid of the city connecting sector-level greens, eg Shanti Path with Rose Garden and Leisure Valley, others will move at the city fringe exposing unknown natural areas.

Today's Weather



Sunny

Monday, Jul 15

Max Min

33° | 25°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:49

Humidity: 79

Sunset: 06:39

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1003

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Tuesday, Jul 16

Max Min

36° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Jul 17	Jul 18	Jul 19	Jul 20	Jul 21
35° 25°	35° 26°	35° 26°	34° 26°	34° 26°
Cloudy	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast

Airport weather

Rain: 0 Sunrise: 05:49

Humidity: 79 Sunset: 06:39

Wind: normal Barometer: 1003

Good rain will lower veggie prices sooner than expected

You can expect vegetable prices in the wholesale market to drop in the first week of August as the new crop could arrive a month earlier this year, traders said.

Fresh vegetables from different parts of Maharashtra normally come to the city by mid-August, but owing to the heavy rainfall in June, the produce is likely to be up for sale in the first week of the month.

This is likely to bring down the prices of cabbage, cauliflower, brinjal, french beans, tomatoes and green peas — all vegetables that are in high demand. “The price of green peas has already started coming down because of the arrival of the Belgaum produce. Similarly, the supply of all vegetables such as ladyfinger, cluster beans and brinjal is likely to increase gradually thanks to the timely rainfall,” said Shankar Pingale, director, APMC vegetable market.

Experts said April-May-June is the off-season for vegetables because of water scarcity, but after it rains, vegetables start making their way to the market and prices drop.

However, this year, vegetable prices have remained high in the retail market even though the supply was high and the state receiving abundant rainfall.

To control prices in the open market, the state government set up 106 centres that sell vegetables at wholesale prices. But this move has hardly affected retail prices, which remain high in localities that don't have these centres.

The government is now planning to expand these centers as soon as possible.

“Apart from the different districts of Maharashtra, we received a large vegetable supply from other states such as Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The transportation cost for vegetables coming from there is high, so once the Maharashtra supply starts, the prices are bound to come down,” said an official from the agriculture and marketing department, requesting anonymity as he is not allowed to speak to the media.

THE HINDU Business Line

Carry-over stocks, low demand may put pressure on raw jute prices

Raw jute prices (TD5 variety) have dropped by nearly 13 per cent in the last three months.

Prices are hovering around Rs 2,700-2,800 a quintal currently, down from Rs 3,200 in April.

According to Raghav Gupta, Chairman of Indian Jute Mills' Association, sowing was down by 5-10 per cent this year in most parts of North and South Bengal and Assam.

South Bengal districts of Murshidabad and Nadia together account for almost 60 per cent of the country's total jute production.

"Despite a lower sowing, production is estimated to be 5-7 per cent higher this year on account of a better yield aided by good weather conditions and rains," Gupta told *Business Line*. Area under jute cultivation was also down by 11 per cent to eight lakh hectares this year. Raw jute cultivation typically happens on an area of about nine lakh hectare and Bengal accounts for almost 67 per cent of the total area under cultivation.

Sluggish demand

The carry-over stock is close to 27 lakh bales this year.

The high carry-over stocks was primarily due to sluggish demand and poor procurement by food grains industry during the rabi season (mid November to April), Gupta said.

The likelihood of a further dilution in the mandatory Jute Packaging Materials Act (JPMA) of 1987 for packing food grain and sugar might further suppress the demand.

JPMA provides for mandatory use of jute bags for packaging of food grain and sugar up to 100 per cent by the Government procurement agencies. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs had allowed for 60 per cent and 10 per cent dilution in the JPMA for packing sugar and food grain respectively in 2012-13.

The industry produces nearly 16-18 lakh tonnes of jute bags and clothes annually.

Of this, about 35-40 per cent is purchased by the Food Ministry on behalf of different State food procuring agencies and the Food Corporation of India. According to industry insiders the Cabinet might approve further dilution in JPMA to the extent of 20-30 per cent for food grains and up to 80 per cent for sugar.

“We are yet to get information on this (dilution) but a further dilution looks most likely this year,” Gupta said.

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Delhi to host two-day agri-tech investors meet

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) will hold a two-day Agri-Tech Investors Meet in Delhi during July 18-19 to showcase and commercialise agri-technologies developed under the World Bank-funded National Agriculture Innovation Project.

The two-day event is being organised in collaboration with the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi Arid Tropics.

The extraction of organic liquid fertiliser from banana pseudostem sap and a process to produce virgin coconut oil are some of the 70 technologies that were likely to be commercialised during the two-day event – which will be attended by executives from companies such as Mother Dairy, Pepsi and Coromandel International among others.

different technologies

The technologies are from different sectors such as crops, horticulture, food technology, veterinary, agri-engineering, agri-inputs and fisheries among others.

“We are bringing in investors for the first time to the event” said S. Ayyappan, Director General, ICAR, stating that creating a robust entrepreneurship climate was the way forward to accelerate agricultural growth.

Mous to be signed

About 45 memoranda of understandings are expected to be signed between the developers of these technologies and companies, which want to commercialise them.

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry is the industrial partner for the event.

Revenues

The national innovation project, since its inception in 2009, has so far commercialised 72 agro-technologies and generated revenues worth Rs 9 crore to the parent institutes – the ICAR institutes and the State Agricultural Universities.

Mixed trend in Kochi tea sale

A mixed trend witnessed for almost all varieties of tea at the Kochi tea auction.

In sale no: 28, the quantity on offer in the dust CTC grades was 11,55,500 kg.

The market for good liquoring varieties was fully firm to dearer by Rs 3-5.

Others were irregular and lower and witnessed some withdrawals.

Besides, there was a subdued demand from exporters and upcountry buyers lent fair support.

The demand was less for orthodox dust varieties with less participation from exporters and internal buyers.

The quantity on offer was 12,000 kg. The market was lower with many withdrawals.

In the best CTC dusts, PD varieties fetched Rs 104-120, RD grades quoted at Rs 106-135, SRD ruled at Rs 110-143 and SFD at Rs 112-155.

The leaf sales also witnessed a mixed trend and the quantity on offer in the orthodox grades was 1,48,500 kg.

The market for good liquoring Nilgiri broken, smaller broken and fannings was fully firm to dearer.

Others were irregular and lower.

Corresponding whole leaf registered strong feature and was higher by Rs 5-10 and sometimes more.

Well made clean black medium bolder broken, tippy grades and whole leaf was steady to firm and sometimes dearer.

Of the quantity of 71,500 kg on offer in CTC grades, the market for better types was barely steady to firm. Others were irregular and lower by Rs 3-5.

Exporters and upcountry buyers absorbed bulk of the offerings.

In the dust category, Kallayar SFD fetched the best prices of Rs 156 followed by Monica SFD at Rs 155.

In the leaf varieties, Chamraj OP quoted the best prices of Rs 281 followed by Chamraj FOP at Rs 251.

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Coonoor tea prices plunge to year's lowest

Prices plummeted to the year's lowest average of Rs 88.25 a kg at Sale No: 28 of the auction of Coonoor Tea Trade Association (CTTA), which ended on Friday.

Prices had averaged Rs 91.23 last week, which itself was the second lowest this calendar.

For the first time in the 50 years of CTTA auction, average prices shot over Rs 100-a-kg mark on March 8 and remained at that level till April 26.

excessive offer

Thereafter, prices plunged but this was the first time this calendar that prices have fallen to Rs 90-a-kg level.

Prices slumped because of excessive offer and matchless demand.

The offer of 20.40 lakh kg was the highest so far this calendar.

Only 13.10 lakh kg was sold.

Some exporters cited operational problems arising from the new procedures being laid by the Tea Council of South India.

Export purchase to Egypt has come to standstill due to political upheavals there.

Purchases to Pakistan and the CIS had also been weak.

lower demand

With less competition from exporters, internal demand was confined to lower bids.

Consequently, nearly 35 per cent of the offer could not be sold even after shedding prices by Rs 3 a kg.

Overall, the turnover last week dropped to Rs 11.56 crore from Rs 12.12 crore the previous week, marking a fall of Rs 56 lakh or 46.20 per cent in one week.

bl15_agri_gnana

Comex gold futures ended lower on Friday due to profit-taking after four days of gains but was on track for its biggest weekly gain in nearly two years on easing fears of an early end to the US monetary stimulus that has boosted bullion's appeal as a hedge against inflation.

Federal Reserve chief Bernanke has suggested the bond purchases could last longer.

And minutes from a June Fed meeting showed officials were divided over when to end the stimulus.

India on Friday reported a 70 per cent drop in monthly gold and silver imports, with shipments down sharply in June from May.

India is the world's largest gold consumer, accounting for roughly a third of global gold demand, and weaker demand is fundamentally not good for gold prices.

Comex gold futures moved according to expectations.

As mentioned the previous update, prices have to cross above \$1,277 to hint that a stronger upward retracement might have started in order to correct the overdone conditions and positive divergence in the indicators.

Such a rise could be seen targeting \$1,320 levels which could be a significant resistance to surpass in the medium-term.

Continuing bullish momentum suggests that dips could be held above \$1,255-1,265 area for another push higher towards \$1,315-1,325.

It has to fall below \$1,250 to cause doubts about this mildly bullish expectation.

Favoured view expects supports mentioned above to hold for a push higher towards \$1,320 levels in the coming week.

The wave counts need to be reviewed once again.

As mentioned earlier, a possible corrective wave "C" has ended at \$1,523 and a possible new impulse has begun with a potential to test \$2,025-30 levels in the form of a fifth wave move.

However, a move below \$1,690 has increased the possibility that the broad corrective consolidation is in progress now and the impulse has been converted to a corrective move in the form of a wave "C".

Wave "A" begun from \$1,920, and ended at \$1,527.

Wave "B" begun from \$1,527 and ended at \$1,798.

Wave "C" has begun from there.

Projected targeted for the wave "C" is at now at \$1,155. RSI is in the neutral zone now indicating that it is neither oversold nor overbought.

The averages in MACD are still below the zero line of the indicator hinting at bearishness to be intact.

Therefore, look for gold futures to test the test the supports and the rise higher again.

Supports are at \$1,265, \$1,245 and \$1,185 and resistances are at \$1,298, \$1,320 and \$1,345.

Pepper stays firm on lack of buying support

Incessant rains in the growing areas of Kerala and Karnataka have disrupted movement of the material and consequently the arrivals remained squeezed.

Heavy downpour, according to growers, has negatively affected the pollination process in certain parts of the growing regions in Kerala.

likely less output

“As a result, the number of berries in the spikes is sparsely placed and, hence, the overall output is likely to be less”, Swami Garudadwajananda, a pepper grower and Secretary, Theerthapada Ashramam, Vazhoor in Kottayam district of Kerala told *Business Line*.

A similar situation prevails in some areas of Pathanathitta and Idukki districts, growers there claimed.

However, a real picture about the crop would be known by next month end, trade sources said.

Availability at present is tight, they said.

availability

Those having modern storage facilities are said to be not ready to release their stocks at the current rates.

Fluctuation in the exchange rates with the rupee depreciating against the dollar earlier in the weak and gaining marginally in the latter part has kept the importers in uncertainty.

Conflicting reports from different overseas trading hubs about the availability in the other origins are also confusing the trade. In the domestic market also, buyers were buying hand to mouth on the hope that the prices

would fall when some part of the 6,800 tonnes of pepper is released after being cleared by the Food Safety Authorities.

Market sources claimed that the 35 per cent of an estimated 1.5 tonnespepper locked up in two warehouses in Kochi from which samples have been drawn by the food safety authorities might be released after being cleared by the designated laboratories.

apprehensive

But, the trade is apprehensive about the quality of the material and the time of its release, market sources said.

Meanwhile, because of the high price and tight availability small and medium masala manufactures were looking for lower grade material.

Karnataka sellers who were offering at lower rates delivered anywhere in the country earlier in the week are said to have withdrawn from the market now.

All the active contracts on the NMCE last weak were nearly steady with marginal decline. Aug, Sep and Oct contracts decreased by Rs 61, Rs 17 and Rs 66 respectively to the last traded prices of Rs 40,580, Rs 40,310 and Rs 40,360 a quintal.

Total open interest dropped by 12 tonnes to 113 tonnes. Total turnover declined by one tonne to 240 tonnes.

spot prices

Spot prices remained unchanged at the previous weekend levels of Rs 38,500 (ungarbled) and Rs 40,500 (garbled) on thin activities.

Strengthening of the rupee against the dollar later in the week has pushed up the Indian parity in the international market marginally.

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

Prices quoted from overseas markets were Vietnam black pepper Asta \$6,650 a tonne (c&f) New York; Brazil B1 560g/l \$6,450 (f.o.b.); Sri Lanka 525g/l –\$5,875-5,900 (f.o.b.) and Indonesia 500g/l \$6,050 (f.o.b.).

Tomato arrivals may improve in August

Tomato prices are likely to rule around current levels with marginal fluctuations and the quality of stocks will also be good in the coming days, said trade experts.

Lower arrivals coupled with good quality stocks pushed tomato prices further up by Rs 150-300 a quintal, on Sunday.

Vikas Sachdeva, a trade expert, told *Business Line* that unwanted rainfall earlier this month has affected the yield of the new crop.

Traders expect that the market may continue to rule around current levels for the next few days.

Just around 550 crates (a crate is 25 kg) of different varieties of tomatoes arrived at the Karnal vegetable market and quoted at Rs 1,700-5,200.

Out of total arrivals, about 20 per cent was of low quality; around 30 per cent medium quality while about 50 per cent was of superior quality.

Prices of superior quality increased by Rs 300 and quoted at Rs 5,100-5,200.

The prices of medium quality produce went up by Rs 200 and quoted at Rs 3,500-4,200 while low quality produce was Rs 150 up from previous levels at Rs 1,700-2,800.

On Sunday, not a single crate remained unsold because of low stocks.

Arrivals may improve later this month and prices may come down in the first week of August, said trade experts.

Business Standard

UP govt's sugarcane policy not best for farmers: ISMA

ISMA director says the policy has also not helped in improving the cane varieties, cane yields or sugar recovery

The sugarcane pricing policy followed by Uttar Pradesh government has not been the best for farmers in the state, say sugar producers.

"As compared to Maharashtra, which holds the number one status in sugar production, there is wider range of fluctuation in cane payments in UP, which is resulting in arrears," ISMA Director General Abinash Verma told PTI.

He said while cane price payments have varied in the range of 65% to 86% of the sugar price realised by the mills in Maharashtra, the fluctuations have been wider in Uttar Pradesh.

"It has fluctuated in a wider range of 48% to 96% of sugar price realisation in the case of UP cane farmers," he said.

Verma said average payments over eight years works out to 75 % and 72% for Maharashtra and UP, respectively.

"In other words though on an average UP farmers did receive 72% of sugar price realised in the last eight years, they suffered major fluctuations in their returns as also the burden of delayed payments with arrears building up to very high levels in some years," he said.

"It is therefore important to note from all aspects that the current cane pricing policy followed by the state has not been the best for the farmers," he added.

ISMA is one the oldest industrial associations in the country and its members account for about half of country's sugar output.

Verma said the policy has also not helped in improving the cane varieties, cane yields or sugar recovery. "If the current pricing policy is not benefiting the farmers or the millers then the time has come to review the current policy."

The ISMA DG said the state advisory price (SAP) announced has increased from Rs 165 per quintal in 2009-10 to Rs 280 per quintal in 2012-13. "This means an increase of Rs 115 per quintal at the rate of Rs 40 per quintal per annum and in turn it has increased the cost of production from Rs 24 per kilogram to Rs 35 per kilogram in this period," he said.

To promote the industry, which is facing tough times in the state, recommendations of Rangarajan Committee for revenue sharing should be adopted, the ISMA Director General said.

"It recommended that cane price be fixed at 75% of the sugar price realisation ex-mill, which will be subject to a minimum guaranteed cane price at the level of FRP (Fair and Remunerative Price)," he said.

The DG said it would be simple to understand for all stakeholders and guarantee a stable return to both the farmers and the millers.

"Moreover, the farmers and millers become partners to the business of sugar making where the former are guaranteed a share of better realisation if the sugar price improves even during the off season," he said.

Verma said ISMA was taking up the issue with the state government and recently a delegation met Chief Secretary of UP in this regard.