

23 July, 2013

Rs. 2.24 cr. for clearing major canals

Dredging work taken up for about 6 km in Kondiyar channel

The State government has launched 66 dredging works in the major water sources in Tiruvarur district at an outlay of Rs. 2.24 crore.

All the works are progressing at a fast pace much to the delight of farmers.

Minister for Food R. Kamaraj on Sunday inspected the dredging work in Kondiyar channel in Needamangalam area and directed the officials to complete all the works as per schedule.

Dredging has been taken up in the Kondiyar channel to a length of 6 km and the government had allocated Rs. 5.50 lakh for the same.

The dredging would benefit about 4,400 acres of irrigation land in the villages of Vasudevamangalam, Pannimangalam, Sidhamalli, Nagar, Veeravanallur, Kadambur, Parappanaamedu, Poovanur, Rayapuram, and Kalanjimedu.

Mr. Kamaraj told presspersons that the Chief Minister had accorded priority for the proper maintenance of water sources across the State. A total of 66 dredging work in different water sources had been undertaken in the three divisions of Vennar river basin division (Thanjavur), Vennar river basin division (Tiruvarur) and Cauvery river basin division in the district. The Vennar, Vettar, Allanaru, Koraiyaru, and Baminiaru rivers under the Vennar river basin division (Thanjavur) irrigated about 1.26 lakh acres of land.

At WTO, India will face price catch

The country has to primarily convince the U.S. that Food Security Ordinance will not violate Agreement on Agriculture

India is preparing to make out a strong case at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) justifying its much higher foodgrain procurement to meet the requirements of the Food Security Ordinance (FSO). The FSO is sure to face resistance at the WTO committee on agriculture. India will primarily have to convince the United States that the FSO would not violate the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA). These issues will formally figure at the WTO ministerial meeting at Bali in December.

At the root of the current impasse is a commitment given by India under the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) that it would offer local farmers a procurement price below the then notified import price fixed in rupee terms in 1988, when the agreement was being negotiated. Under the AoA, the minimum support price India can offer its farmers is the 1988 notified import price with "due allowance" for inflation in the subsequent years. The problem is India has to negotiate to receive "due allowance" for inflation for these intervening years. If the country fails to get a full allowance for inflation, then its procurement price might exceed the notified import price of 1988. Here lies the catch.

The United States may take a tough stand on granting India full inflation benefit on the 1988 notified import price. This might create problems for operationalising the new FSO. The government is likely to explain to Parliament in detail its commitments under the WTO and its current negotiating stance.

The United States' argument is that if the State agencies start buying from farmers at well above international prices, then it acts as an implicit incentive to the local farmer to produce more than he/she otherwise would. That would squeeze out global grain suppliers, creating a trade distortion. Of course, India is contesting this on the ground that persistently high domestic inflation makes it imperative to raise the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for farmers from time to time. In fact, India will invoke clause 18.4 of the AoA which says that "due allowance shall be given" to the inflation factor while assessing whether the MSP violates the AoA once the FSO becomes law.

Commerce Minister Anand Sharma was recently in the United States and is reported to have taken up the matter with his U.S. counterpart. India's former Deputy Director-General at the WTO Anwarul Hoda, who was actively involved in the signing of the AoA, is confident that India can easily invoke the inflation clause and justify the increase in the procurement prices given to farmers all these years and to be given in the future.

Mr. Hoda says the only point where there could be a dispute with the U.S. trade representatives is on the interpretation of the term "due allowance" to be given to the farmers on account of rising inflation in the developing countries. "While we would argue full allowance for inflation be given while raising the Minimum Support Price, the U.S. might argue that 'due allowance' does not mean full allowance," said Mr. Hoda. That might seem to be a grey area.

As per the AoA signed in 1988, the international rupee price of wheat which India imported was put at Rs. 354 per quintal. This became the base price

and the Indian government could offer local farmers a minimum support price not exceeding 10 per cent above Rs. 354.

Now clause 18.4 implicitly allows India to add the inflation rate for each year to the base price of Rs. 354. According to Mr. Hoda's calculations, which the government is likely to use, India has had 500% inflation since 1988 when the notified import price of Rs. 354 per quintal was determined. If you add 500% inflation to this, the allowable MSP for farmers in 2010-11 would be Rs.1,740 per quintal. The actual MSP offered to farmers for wheat in 2010-11 was Rs.1,170 per quintal, well below the notified benchmark import price of 1988 after loading inflation. That makes it well within the WTO parameter. The ruling international price of wheat in the same year was roughly Rs.1,300 per quintal.

So if full inflation is taken as an allowance, then the FSO will not fall foul of the AoA at the WTO. The U.S. authorities, however, should agree to interpret "due allowance for inflation" as "allowance for full inflation." This is the key in the ongoing negotiations between the two countries. If past history is any guide, the United States may allow India the needed leeway but not before extracting its pound of flesh in some other sector, which is par for the course in WTO negotiations.

Poor natural rubber production puts industry in a spot

PERFORMANCE OF RUBBER

(Tonnes)

	Production	Consumption	Import	Export	Stock at the end
June'12	62,000	83,930	20,726	817	2,21,000
June '13(p)	54,000	82,000	19,695	165	2,25,000
April to June 2012	1,72,700	2,51,370	59,119	3,025	
April to June 2013 (p)	1,66,000	2,47,000	55,000	1,755	
(% Growth)	(-39)	(-1.7)			

(p): provisional

- Production of rubber decreased by **12.9%** to **54,000** tonnes in June 2013 compared to **62,000** tonnes during June 2012. The consumption of rubber during June 2013 decreased by **1.2%** to **82,000** tonnes compared to **83,000** tonnes during the previous month



Rubber-based industries in the State are in a spot of bother as arrival of natural rubber (NR) has dropped to about 10 per cent of normal levels following incessant rain over the last 45 days. The Rubber Board will convene a meeting of all stake-holders on Wednesday in Kottayam to review the situation.

A senior official of the board said on Monday that the situation was quite bad. Rubber-based industries, led by Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ATMA), have appealed for an immediate solution.

Vice-president of Indian Rubber Dealers' Federation Jose Mampambil said farmers had exhausted all stocks. Even those who oversold the stock, expecting to start rubber once the rain relented, are in trouble.

A communication to the Rubber Board by ATMA, which holds the lion's share in the Rs.60,000-crore per year rubber-based industry, said the

situation was critical with rain not allowing the tapping of rubber since June. The level of consumption continued at levels of last year though production had dipped considerably, the ATMA note said.

The communication expressed concern that production in June may have dropped to between 35,000 tonnes and 40,000 tonnes against the Rubber Board estimate of 64,000 tonnes. NR production in June 2012 was 62,000 tonnes.

ATMA director general Rajiv Budhraja was quoted in a press release saying that since the Rubber Board estimated a reserve of 2.6 lakh tonnes of NR in the country, the scarcity situation should not have arisen. He appealed to the board to address the issue. The Rubber Board estimate was that there were 1.1 lakh tonnes of NR with stockists and dealers and 86,000 tonnes with the farmers at the end of March 2013, the ATMA official said.

Figures released by the Rubber Board for the month of June 2013 showed that rubber production decreased 12.9 per cent compared to the same month in 2012. Actual production slowed to 54,000 tonnes compared to 62,000 tonnes. At the same time, consumption has remained at 82,000 tonnes during June 2013 compared to the 83,000 tonnes in May 2013.

The April to June 2013 figures too are disappointing with total production of NR at 1,66,000 tonnes, down by 3.9 per cent compared to the same period in 2012. Consumption level, however, was 2,47,000 tonnes, marginally lower than the previous year period.

Bio-shield protects banana crop from monsoon fury



Casuarina plantations at farm serve as a natural wind-breaker

Monsoon always brings cheer to farmers. But, when accompanied by gusty winds, monsoon rains pose a grave threat to banana plantations and often plants ready for harvest are uprooted.

Now, there is a ray of hope for banana growers, as a pilot project implemented by the Coimbatore-based Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB) has proved to be a relief.

By planting casuarina, a natural wind-breaker, the institute has successfully saved banana plants in Coimbatore.

Giving details to *The Hindu* about the 'Windbreak Agro-forestry System' that protected the banana plantations, institute director N. Krishnakumar said crop damage caused in Coimbatore and adjoining areas during monsoon was very high. Banana is the third important commercial crop in the State and the loss for banana growers in the western part of the State is estimated to be around Rs. 5 crore annually. In Coimbatore and its

surroundings alone, banana is cultivated on 30,000 hectares with an annual production of 11 lakh tonnes of fruit.

In order to help farmers, the institute on a trial basis took up planting of casuarina in four different banana plantations owned by private people on a total of four hectares of land spread in Narasimha Naicken Palayam, Bodi Thimman Palayam, Idigarai and Royarpalayam, he said.

Sharing his experience, N. Velusamy, a farmer from Bodi Thimman Palayam in Coimbatore district around whose banana plantation the institute raised the casuarina as a natural barrier, said he had raised banana crops on five occasions. But, the yield was affected due to monsoon winds.

“The institute raised the bio-shield in my banana plantation in January 2012 and by November, I harvested one crop. This time the yield was more than the previous occasions,” he said.

Mr. Krishnakumar said his organisation had chosen the species of casuarina that is normally grown in the inlands for windbreak system. Casuarina trees increased the revenue to farmers and could be harvested in three years and sold to pulp wood industry. Even in the second year, fully-grown casuarina plantation could be harvested as there is a great demand for this wood in gasifier units of the energy production companies. Thus, bio-shield provided dual income to farmers, he said.

The role of the institute does not end with providing saplings. It also provided the technical knowhow on raising it. Scientists from the institute also make periodical visit to the model farms to check for pest attack and disease on the planted casuarina, he added.

Solar energy powers Kenya's flower farms



Flower Power Horticulture, particularly flower production, is Kenya's third biggest foreign currency earner after tourism and tea. PHOTO: AFP

Flower farms in Kenya, whose products are exported all over Europe and which earned the country \$765 million last year, have started investing in solar power projects as they seek to cut the cost of the “unreliable, low quality” electricity in the country.

The solar power projects are also meant to enable the farms reduce their use of diesel power generators, the main option for many flower farms in Kenya when there is electricity blackout, Xinhua reported.

The latest flower farm to start putting up a solar power project is Red Lands Roses, based in Ruiru, 27 km east of the capital Nairobi.

“We are putting a 30 kilowatt project to help us reduce on our cost of electricity and the amount of diesel we use,” said Aldric Spindler, managing director of the farm.

Several flower farmers said there is a need to cut costs at every level of production because of the increasing costs of growing the flowers, most of which are exported to Europe.

They said cost of fertilisers, labour and air freight have all gone up, necessitating cost reduction measures.

Another flower farm, Uhuru Flowers, has launched a 72 kilowatt solar power plant in a bid to cut its spending on electricity by about 50 percent, from \$6,000 per month six months ago.

“The unreliable, low quality electricity created a need for an alternative source of energy,” said flower farm owner Invan Freeman.

The farm, which exports exclusively to the Russian market, is located in Nanyuki, 230 km from Nairobi.

The solar power project at Uhuru Flowers is now being used by the Kenya Flower Council as a case study of how other flower farms can use solar technology to cut the cost of production.

Kenya is the leading exporter of rose cut flowers to the European Union, according to the Kenya Flower Council.

The Kenya Economic Survey 2013 said the cut flower sector earned the country \$765 million in 2012, up from \$694 million in 2011.

Kenya Flower Council data shows that about 65 percent of exported flowers are sold through Dutch auctions for re—export, with the British market buying 25 percent of the produce, and the rest going to Japan, US, Russia, France and Germany.IANS

Efforts on to revive submerged crops

Improvement in power supply in villages hit by rains



Residents of Pitchukallanka coming out of their village in Atreyapuram mandal of East Godavari after the floodwater entered their houses on Monday.– PHOTO: S. RAMBABU

With a slight respite in rains in some parts of the State on Sunday, water receded from 40,000 hectares of submerged crops and efforts are on to salvage the crops, said Revenue Minister N. Raghuvveera Reddy here on Monday.

The Minister said agriculture scientists and officials were examining whether the crops in these areas could be revived with a fresh dose of fertilizers or whether seeds should be distributed for raising alternative crops. A decision would be taken soon.

There was improvement in power supply in villages affected by heavy rains. Of 884 villages which went without power for three days, supply was restored in 480 villages, he added.

But the State was bracing for rains for another 48 hours as per the IMD forecast, specially in Telangana and Coastal areas. Speaking to media persons, Mr. Reddy said the State had recorded 29 per cent excess rainfall, although Anantapur and Visakhapatnam districts had received less than normal.

The flood level in Bhadrachalam came down from 55.8 feet to 50.6 feet. The death toll in the last 20 days stood at 12 and instructions were issued to release Rs.1.5 lakh ex gratia to the families of the deceased and another Rs.50,000 each would be released under Apathbandhu in 15 days.

YSR Congress has accused the State government of failing totally in providing relief to flood victims and demanded convening of an all-party

meeting to discuss various measures to be taken up. While thousands were stranded, only 2,000 to 3,000 people were shifted to relief shelters.

In a statement, party MLAs B. Shobha Nagi Reddy, Dharmana Krishna Prasad and M. Sucharitha urged the government to make immediate payment of arrears to farmers who suffered in Neelam and Jal cyclones in the past.

Crops in 25,000 ha damaged in Nizamabad



The government has received reports of the damage caused to various crops in 25,000 hectares due to heavy rains and floods in the district, Principal Secretary, Animal Husbandry, Manmohan Singh, has said.

Talking to reporters after holding a review with officials of 13 departments and going round the town, here on Monday, he said that soya bean alone was lost in 15,000 hectares and compensation to farmers would be paid after full details were received. He said that he had directed the officials to immediately undertake the works and repairs wherever they were required with available resources.

Dr. Singh said that about 3,800 houses were damaged due to the rains and of them, 388 were totally damaged, 1,188 damaged to a great extent and 2,366 up to 50 per cent.

Authorities made immediate arrangements to rescue the victims and rehabilitated 2,000 individuals at seven relief camps, he said.

The cost of the damage to roads was estimated at Rs.7.70 crore and the officials concerned were asked to launch repair works with Rs.1.80 crore that was available with the Roads and Buildings department, he said adding that power supply was restored in the villages where wires had got snapped and transformers failed.

As many as 70 cattle had died of rains and Rs.4.86 lakh was required to pay compensation to the farmers. Drinking water supply had come to a halt in nine residential colonies, he added

Don't just go green, grow green

Many Bangaloreans are turning to gardening to beat stress and veggie prices



Proud gardener:Jayanagar resident Vijay Satish admires his handiwork.—

PHOTO: NIHARIKA HEMA RAJ

o tomatoes, instead of onions, bring tears to your eyes? Are you uneasy about all those chemicals in your veggies? Do you ache to bring a green relief from the concrete eyesores that hem you in? Perhaps a solution could be turning a corner of your home into a kitchen garden.

Garden City has always had gardening enthusiasts. But, as gracious homes with vast backyards make way for glass-and-chrome edifices, Bangaloreans are looking at more modest spaces to have a go at gardening. So today's green thumbs have a go at it through vegetable and fruit patches they grow in their backyards, terraces and even balconies. Kitchen gardens don't cost much and don't require a lot of time too. Depending on the varieties you want to grow, just an initial investment of Rs. 2,000 can get to started.

Jayanagar resident Vijay Satish says his organic garden meets 90 per cent of his kitchen needs.

He is proud of his brinjal, cucumber, chillies, coriander, fenugreek, tomatoes, beetroot, turnip, carrots and radish. "I go to the market only for potatoes and onions!"

He even experiments with exotic varieties of vegetables like broccoli, Chinese cabbage, brown zucchinis, purple capsicum to name a few. He minimises the costs of his terrace garden by recycling almost everything he can lay his hands on — plastic sheets, disposal barrels, even noodles cups. Ask him if having green fingers is a prerequisite, he replies: "It's not rocket science: anybody can do it. But gardening certainly requires patience and self-motivation."

Online communities

Social networking sites like Facebook are proving to be a great boon for enthusiasts who want to make their house greener but don't know where to start. Members of online groups share their experiments, pictures and techniques, creating a pool for newer members to learn from. Mr. Laxminarayan, an active member of the group Organic Terrace Gardening on Facebook, has been terrace-gardening for almost four years now. "I started it to reduce job stress."

His Facebook group boasts a membership of more than 5,900 — almost 3,000 of them are from Bangalore — members from across the country and even abroad.

B.N. Vishwanath of the Garden City Farmers' Trust observes the trend really picked up after 2005 with a number of young doctors, engineers, BPO employees and working couples wanted to experiment with greenery in their homes. His NGO, which conducts workshops in Bangalore to teach budding gardeners about the basic techniques involved, can be contacted on 9845627217.

URBAN RITES

Many Bangaloreans are turning to gardening to beat stress and veggie prices

As food prices tank, it's time to stand up and eat

If you don't mind carrying your food to a table and eating it while standing, a trip to the restaurant has just become lighter on the pocket. Major vegetarian restaurant chains in the city are encouraging customers to opt for the self-service section, with some even slashing prices. Around 10 per

cent of hotel customers, who are either in a hurry or don't mind standing while eating, prefer the self-service option.

The reduction is also aimed at customers who are reluctant to pay the newly-introduced service tax for air conditioned restaurants. Many customers were also unhappy over having to pay nearly the same amount at self-service counters and sections where waiters took orders. The stabilising of vegetable prices and that of coffee beans also contributed to the move.

Hotel Saravana Bhavan has slashed prices in the six outlets where the self-service option is available. "The prices of coffee beans have come down from Rs. 290 – Rs. 310 to Rs. 190- 210. So, we decided to pass on the benefit to customers," said a source in the restaurant chain.

M. Ravi of Vasantha Bhavan said that many customers were unhappy about the service tax. "We are encouraging these customers to use fast food counters where this tax is not levied. The reduction of prices for the self-service segment is to attract such customers," he said

Prices have come down in Adyar Ananda Bhavan and Hot Chips too. A source with the latter said meals now cost Rs. 60 as opposed to Rs. 80 earlier. K.T. Srinivasaraja, president, Chennai Hotels Association, said that many hotels are also highlighting the self-service mode in order to deal with the labour shortage.

A more alert and cautious customer base is a factor too. "Like every other bill, I check hotel bills to see if I have been charged for what I ate. Similarly, I have asked the manager at my regular hotel why I should pay the same amount for door delivery when I don't utilise their air-conditioning," said S. Varadan, a resident of Rangarajapuram and a frequent visitor to a

restaurant chain. And for those who still prefer to sit and eat, the prices of fast-moving items saw a rapid decline over the past two weeks. Hotel industry sources said that prices of many food items had been brought down even for air-conditioned restaurant customers.

“The prices of vegetables have stabilised and those in the know have forecast that there will not be any fluctuation in prices for the next three months. Oil prices too have come down. These factors contributed to our decision to reduce prices,” said a source. Many hotels are also procuring milk directly from farmers or have even set up their own dairies to ensure the stability of milk prices.

Mr. Srinivasaraja added that the reduction in prices was also driven by a drop of 10 – 15 per cent in the number of customers in all classes of restaurants. “High prices were driving customers away. This has led to hoteliers reducing prices of fast moving items,” he added

Aliyar water released

Minister for Public Works Department K.V. Ramalingam and Minister for Agriculture S. Damodaran on Monday opened the shutters of Aliyar Dam.

A release here says that farmers in Anamalai and Ambarampalayam will be able to take up cultivation on 6,400 acre as they will they will get 100 cusecs. The Pollachi Municipality will get 50 cusecs. This discharge will continue till October 15.

The Ministers then inspected the works being carried out on the Contour Canal.

180-hectare target fixed for drip irrigation



seeing is believing: S. Natarajan, Collector, at a seminar organised by the Department of Horticulture in Tiruvarur district.

A target of 180 hectares has been fixed for popularising drip irrigation among farmers in the current year in the district, said S. Natarajan, Collector.

Presiding over a motivation programme to sensitise farmers to drip irrigation organised by the Horticulture Department at Vadavur Melpathi Kondaiyur village near here, Mr. Natarajan said drip irrigation brought down the quantum of water use and ensured economy in utilising water.

The State government has sanctioned subsidy-based programmes to encourage farmers to take up drip irrigation.

Seventy five percent of subsidy was available for big farmers, while small and marginal farmers were eligible for 100 per cent subsidy.

The Collector said that a total of 384.16 hectares had been covered under drip irrigation benefiting 326 farmers.

TNFU begins commercialisation of technologies

Tamil Nadu Fisheries University (TNFU), Nagapattinam, has signed a memoranda of understanding (MoU) with like minded fish farmers on cobia technologies.

Baskaran Manimaran, Vice Chancellor of TNFU in a statement issued through Fisheries College and Research Institute (FCRI), Tuticorin, a constituent of TNFU, on Monday said the agreements were signed at a two-day 'Agri –Tech Investors Meet' organised by the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) under the sponsorship of National Agricultural Innovation Project (NAIP) at NASC Complex, New Delhi from July 18 to commercialise the technologies developed in the field of agriculture, veterinary and fisheries. The technologies were presented before the stakeholders, who subsequently engaged with experts in discussions on adoption of these technologies.

The MoUs were signed with three entrepreneurs — with Patnadkar of Ankola, Karnataka; Rajkumar of N. N.Chavadi, Nagapattinam district, and Gunasekaran of Kuttiyandiyur, Nagapattinam district. According to the MoU, the TNFU would provide necessary technical inputs to entrepreneurs throughout the cobia culture period and during the process of value addition in the products.

A closer look at the herbs and their healing touch

New perspective: Students visiting a fair displaying herbal and medicinal plants in Ramanathapuram on Monday.— Photo: L. Balachandar

Asserting that nature would never harm mankind, eminent organic scientist G.Nammalvar said people suffer from diseases only because they deviated from nature and stopped using herbal medicine ignoring its value.

After inaugurating an exhibition of herbal plants, showcasing more than 200 varieties here on Monday, he said nature has a cure for every disease, but man has distanced himself from nature. Stating that people could avert half

of the misery by following strict food habits and eating only for hunger, the scientist said “our forefathers led a healthy life as they always lived in union with nature.” B. Ilangovan, Joint Director, Horticulture stressed the need for growing medicinal plants in home gardens and called upon the people to approach the department for setting up terrace gardens to grow plants and vegetables.

Dr R. Kalimuthu, who is running a herbal clinic, had organised the exhibition in a bid to popularise medicinal plants and their healing properties among the younger generation.

More than 200 students visited the exhibition on the opening day. M. Egambaram, organic subject specialist, said the exhibition was organised to give an impetus to farmers to cultivate herbal and medicinal plants, while cultivating traditional crops.

More than 2,000 school students and farmers are expected to visit the month-long exhibition, he said.

Farmers express concern over discarding liquor bottles in canals

“Farmers have expressed concern over discarding empty liquor bottles into irrigation canals, ponds, tanks, streams and fields. They said that remains of broken liquor bottles do not cause much damage to crops, but it injures labourers and farmers working in the fields or when they step into the irrigational canals.

S. Chellamuthu (54), who cultivates banana near the Mohanur Canal, said that farmers are having a tough time working in the fields without getting their hands and legs cut by pieces of broken bottles. “We can spend money

for pesticides to save crops from an infection, but it is not easy to remove all the broken pieces from the fields”, he said.

According to S. Kandasamy, District Vice President of Tamil Nadu Vivasayegal Sangam, illegal sale of liquor in rural pockets was the main reason for alcoholics to discard liquor bottles in water bodies and in the fields. Since consumption of liquor in open places had been banned, they hide in fields and bunds close to the water bodies and discard the bottles”, he added.

He said that people of a village at Rasipuram Taluk have petitioned the Collector six months ago in this connection. G. Ajeethan, Technical Secretary of the Consortium of Indian Farmers Association, for Tamil Nadu, suggested that the Tasmac could introduce a buy-back scheme.

‘Panel report will not help farmers’

Bommaï dubs budget a bunch of contradictions

Dubbing the budget presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah as a “bunch of contradictions”, the former Water Resources Minister Basavaraj Bommai said in the Legislative Assembly that the government speaks about formation of the Agriculture Prices Commission on the one hand, and affirms its commitment on implementing the report of the Agriculture Market Reforms Committee from this year on the other.

The report, submitted to the Union government in 2012, recommended doing away with the regulation of agricultural marketing and argued against Minimum Support Price, he said.

Questioning the decision to allow Foreign Direct Investment in multi-brand retail, he sought to know how it would protect the interests of farmers. He

urged the Chief Minister to commence the process of raising the height of Alamatti reservoir to ease the water crisis in Bagalkot and take up work on modernisation of canals as it has the sanction of the Central Water Commission. Leader of the Opposition H.D. Kumaraswamy shared Mr. Bommai's views. President of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha, Puttannaiah said the implementation of the Agriculture Market Reforms Committee report would be detrimental to the interest of farmers.

Centre's horticultural assistance bears fruit in Mysore

Area under horticultural crops in Mysore has gone up by 8,137 ha in eight years



Growers associations for crops such as Mysore Betel vine were formed in the district under the National Horticultural Mission.— Photo: M.A. Sriram

The area under horticultural crops in Mysore has gone up by 8,137 hectares between 2005–06 and 2012–13, thanks to the National Horticulture Mission (NHM). A subsidy of Rs. 15.61 crore was released to the district under NHM for this purpose.

A substantial increase in the cultivation of fruits was noticed. Several fruit varieties were cultivated in 4,732 ha in the last eight years. Likewise, spices were cultivated in 1,571.36 ha and flowers in 1,833.2 ha.

With this, the total area under horticulture has increased from 33,238 ha in 2005–06 to 53,294 ha in 2012–13, a rise of about 60.34 per cent in eight years, a press release said here.

The horticultural output has also increased correspondingly from 2.40 lakh tonnes in 2005–06 to 8.22 lakh tonnes in 2012–13. With the objective of improving the yield of horticultural crops, 4,263 ha were brought under drip irrigation in the last eight years.

About 4,162 farmers had availed subsidies of Rs. 14.33 crore under NHM for installing drip irrigation systems in their fields, the release stated.

A wholesale vegetable market was constructed in the APMC market in Bandipalya here at a cost of Rs. 10.2 crore, along with a high-tech flower market (at a cost of Rs. 3.43 crore). Under the NGM, Rs. 2.55 crore was released for the wholesale vegetable market Rs. 85 lakh for the flower market.

Growers associations promoting GI crops such as Jasmine, Mysore Betel Vine and Nanjangud Rasabale were formed in the district, the release added.

They were cultivated at a horticultural farm near Kukkarahalli Lake here in a pilot project. Now, the Nanjangud Rasabale is being cultivated through tissue culture there.

A 'horti-clinic' was also set up to promote horticultural crops and help farmers maximise their returns by providing timely support and advice from professionals.

The clinic was functioning adjacent to the office of the Deputy Director of Horticulture, in Curzon Park, next to the Mysore palace. The clinic is headed by a consultant with a PG degree in agriculture, who assists farmers, entrepreneurs and those intending to develop horticultural gardens, home gardens, kitchen gardens, vegetable gardens and so on.

The establishment of the clinic gains significance as the Department of Horticulture is encouraging farmers and entrepreneurs to seek assistance under the National Horticulture Mission (NHM) and the National Horticulture Board (NHB).

New varieties of crops recommended

The Zonal Research Extension Advisory Committee (ZREAC) of the Central Zone has recommended adoption of several new varieties of crops and promotion of integrated packages for management of pests, diseases and weeds.

A meeting of the committee, chaired by Kerala Agricultural University Director of Research T. R. Gopalakrishnan, was held at the Regional Agricultural Research Station, Pattambi, last week. KAU scientists, officials with the Agricultural Department and farmers took part in the meeting.

The meeting recommended promotion of a new saline tolerant rice variety suitable for kole lands, with a yield of more than six tonnes per hectare.

A new hybrid of salad cucumber for green house cultivation developed at the Olericulture wing of College of Horticulture yielding more than 3 kg per plant has also been recommended to farmers. The cocoa research group has come up with five high yielding hybrids for release. Two medium-duration cultures of rice, two selections of cow pea, a number of tropical

types of cabbage and cauliflower, two types of seedless watermelon, a kind of okra resistant to yellow vein mosaic disease have been cleared for farm trials.

An integrated pest management schedule has been proposed for rice. A new fungicide has been recommended for control of blast and sheath blight in rice. Pre-emergent weedicides containing Pretilachlor has been recommended for cow pea. The committee alerted farmers about outbreak of mite attack in rice and banana fields.

Research committee recommends promotion of a new saline tolerant rice variety suitable for koler lands.

Aid for rain-hit Vidarbha farmers

Relentless rains in Maharashtra's Vidarbha region since June has claimed more than 50 lives and damaged crops on thousands of hectares of land.

The government on Monday announced assistance of Rs. 25,000 per hectare for affected farmers and Rs. 1.5 lakh to the family of the deceased.

Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan will be visiting Vidarbha on Saturday to assess the crisis.

'Jackfruit cultivation should be promoted'

Director of Malnad Arecanut Marketing Cooperative Society (MAMCOS) L.T. Thimmappa has called upon the farmers to undertake cultivation of jackfruit as an intercrop in arecanut plantations.

He was speaking after inaugurating a campaign to promote the cultivation of jackfruit at the premises of Ramakrishna Residential School in Madasur-Lingadahalli village in Sagar taluk on Monday. The programme was

organised by Village Forest Committee (VFC) of Maradavalli and Vruksha Laksha Andolana.

The decision by the State government to ban gutkha has created panic among the arecanut growers. This is the right time for the arecanut growers to contemplate on taking up inter-cropping in their plantations, Mr. Thimmappa said. Even if there is slump in the price of arecanut, the farmers can make good the loss as they will get income by selling the jackfruit, he said.

He stressed on the need to provide proper training for the farmers in order to cultivate jackfruit. The activities related to value addition for jackfruit should also be promoted, he said.

Ravi Padavagodu presented a demonstration on grafting jackfruit saplings. Convener of Vruksha Laksha Andolana B.H. Raghavendra, President of VFC K.V. Manjunath, Founder President of Ramakrishna Residential School Devaraj, and Range Forest Officer Ramakrishna were present.

Various measures planned to increase food grain production

Focus on bridging the yield gap and address constraints faced by farmers in Tirupur

To arrest the shrinking food grain production in Tirupur district over the last four fiscals, the different stakeholders involved in the agrarian activities have conceptualised a multiple cropping approach, extension activities and scientific water/nutrient management techniques for increasing the yield.

The main focus would be to bridge the existing yield gap and address the constraints encountered by the farmers in the district when it comes to improving productivity.

The official statistics, available with *The Hindu*, indicate that acreage of main food grains under cereals segment including paddy, grain cholam and maize, and pulses category that include red gram, black gram, Bengal gram, cow pea and green gram, have shrunk considerably since 2009-10 financial year.

The most worrying aspect was that the decline in area had been steep in the case of many varieties.

Crop-wise, the area under paddy came down from 11,957 ha in 2009-10 to 10,612 ha in 2011-12 and then plummeted to 166 ha last fiscal.

“Last year, the area significantly dropped in the case of most of the crops primarily because of drought,” farmers pointed out.

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The maize acreage dipped from 26,078 ha in 2009-10 to 17,593 ha in 2012-13 fiscal.

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The overall pulses acreage stood at 14,157 ha in 2012-13 from 20,646 ha registered in 2009-10.

A study by the Department of Agriculture with the help of different stakeholders brought out the constraints faced in the sector which led to the decline in the acreage of the main food grains.

Some of them listed were cultivation of low potential and pest susceptible varieties, lack of hybrid cultivation, and lack of adequate usage of nutrient management techniques.

Assistance

“To overcome these lacunae, we are going to distribute seeds of hybrid varieties at subsidised rates, implement ‘Farm Cropping Management System’ to address farmer-specific problems and extend assistance to use micro irrigation at critical stage,” Joint Director of Agriculture M.K. Sherif told *The Hindu* .

With the steps planned, the Department of Agriculture plans to augment the average yield of paddy from the present 5,160 kg per ha to 6,827 kg/ha in 2015-16 fiscal, maize from 8,468 kg/ha to 11,203 kg/ha in 2015-16 and pulses from the present 525 kg/ha to 694 kg/ha in 2015-16 fiscal.

Kuruvai package to help delta farmers

The Tamil Nadu Government announced a Kuruvai special package with a view to help farmers of Cauvery delta districts of Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam to raise the crop in one lakh acre using agriculture pumpsets this year, said R. Vaithilingam, Minister for Housing and Urban Development, at Orathanadu on Saturday.

He inaugurated the special package in Orathanadu and said that the Government has planned to provide eight packets of bio-fertilisers per acre of land, one litre of bio-pesticide and five kg of paddy micro nutrients. It has also planned to give gypsum to 33,000 acres. High-density polyethylene pipes will also be distributed to farmers free of cost to pump water from the nearest water source. In Thanjavur district alone the Kuruvai special package will cover 26,857 acres. A total of 1,610 units will be distributed for Thanjavur district.

The minister handed over the agriculture inputs to 23 farmers at Orathanadu.

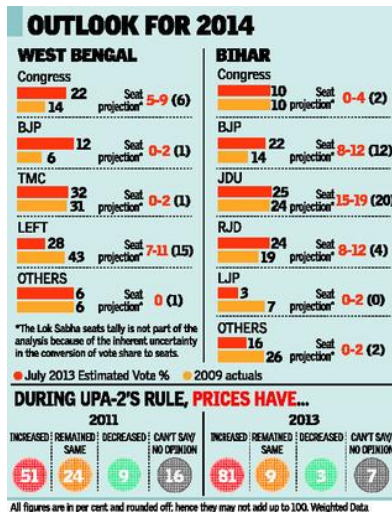
High-density polyethylene pipes will also be distributed to farmers free of cost to pump water

Farmers' grievances day meet

A farmers grievances day meeting will be held at the collectorate here at 10.30 a.m. on July 26. District Collector Jayashree Muralidharan will preside over the meeting. An official press release called upon the farmers and their representatives to participate in the meeting and get their grievances solved.

It really is the economy, stupid

Development, price rise and jobs will be the overriding voter concerns in 2014 Lok Sabha poll



Results from a nearly 20,000-strong opinion poll conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) for CNN-IBN and *The Hindu* indicate that 'development and the economy' and 'price rise' will

dominate voter concerns in 2014. Corruption comes in at a distant fifth, just half as important to voters as 'development and the economy'.

Moreover, these numbers hold strong, with small variations, across income groups and social categories. 'Development and the economy' is the top concern for all groups including Muslims, except women for whom 'price rise' is the greatest concern; unsurprising in a country in which women still do the lion's share of household work.

With the International Monetary Fund lowering India's growth projections for this fiscal year to 5.6% and food price inflation escalating further towards the end of June when the survey was conducted, it seems only logical that the economy and price rise were of greatest concern to voters. The perception of the economy is largely fair or 'bad', with just over 20% seeing the economy in "very good" or "good" shape.

Respondents from western and central India are more positive about the state of the economy than those in the north, east and south. But with the rupee in trouble and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh warning that there's a tough year ahead, the UPA has reason to worry that respondents, especially those better off and those living in cities, viewed the BJP as being better at handling economic crises than the economist-led Congress. More people reported being satisfied with their personal financial conditions than dissatisfied — 59% as against 34% — but this satisfaction rating has been dropping sharply since 2011. The poor report consistently lower satisfaction with their financial situation than the rich in all surveys. Across the spectrum, most seem to agree inequality has risen.

Although income and consumption expenditure have risen and poverty, as the latest Planning Commission figures show, has fallen, the picture on real

wages is at best mixed, but with substantial declines in several sectors. But high inflation, especially of food, is eroding the purchasing power of many, particularly the poor. The urban poor, whose real wages have not had the bolstering effect of an employment guarantee scheme and do not produce any food...

Annamalai University welcomes 1,605 students to agriculture faculty



Shiv Das Meena, Administrator of Annamalai University addressing students of first year B.Sc Agriculture and Horticulture in Chidambaram on Monday. Photo: G.Krishnaswamy

Administrator Shiv Das Meena makes a concession of 5 per cent in attendance

As many as 1,605 students who joined the first year B.Sc. agriculture and horticulture courses in Annamalai University were given a warm reception by the members of the Faculty of Agriculture and senior students on the “Commencement Day” function held on the university premises on Monday.

A majority of them happens to be women, numbering over 950. Most of them are coming from the north western districts of Tamil Nadu, such as Salem, Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Namakkal, Erode and Coimbatore.

Addressing the fresh batch of students, University Administrator Shiv Das Meena said that they had made a wise decision in taking up the agriculture/horticulture courses in the university.

He said, "Chief Minister Jayalalithaa is quite keen on restoring the past glory of the university and giving chance to the meritorious students to pursue higher education in the university."

On the orders of the Chief Minister entrance examinations were conducted for admission to the professional courses. For the agriculture/horticulture courses 6,800 students took the entrance examinations and of them 1,605 had been selected. For the remaining 120 seats in the faculty of agriculture, second round of counselling would be held on Tuesday.

Mr. Meena said that even in the age of high technology agriculture continued to be the backbone of Indian economy. Though agriculture was a vital sector it was facing many problems owing to floods, cyclone and drought which scorched the crop prospects.

Mr. Meena said that the agricultural graduates had many job avenues open to them in government departments, and, the banking and insurance sectors. "The recent trend is that the agricultural graduates prefer to take civil services examinations and make a mark at that."

The hostels would facilitate a better interaction among the students hailing from various parts of the State and cutting across caste and creed.

Mr. Meena made a concession of 5 per cent in attendance to the agricultural students as they would have to put in 75 per cent of attendance as against 80 per cent attendance for other courses.

Rm. Kathiresan, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, said that it was for the first time in the 84-year history of the university that admissions to the professional courses were being made in a transparent manner.

Making an analogy to cultivation, Mr. Kathiresan said, "As good seeds are now being sown the faculty would reap a bountiful harvest." The alumni of the faculty had come to occupy position of eminence all over the country and abroad.

He said that the faculty had made many innovations for which it had earned accolades from the Indian Council for Agricultural Research. The faculty had revised the syllabus only last year so as to keep it abreast of developments in the sphere of agriculture, Mr. Kathiresan said.

Registrar Incharge N. Panchanatham said that fully qualified faculty existed in the university. "Getting a degree is not a syllabus completion mela but thoroughly learning the theoretical and practical aspects of a subject," he said.

District Revenue Officers Dinesh Ponraj Oliver and T. Christuraj, two officers assisting Mr. Meena in administration, also spoke

'No new agricultural colleges for two years'

Minister of State for Agriculture Krishna Byre Gowda on Monday informed H.D. Revanna (JD-S) in the Legislative Assembly that no new agricultural colleges would be opened for another two years as the government was busy recruiting staff and providing other infrastructure for the colleges

already opened during the tenure of the Bharatiya Janata Party government.

Replying to a discussion on the issue, the Minister echoed what the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had informed the member earlier on another question that first grade colleges were opened, especially in Hassan district's Holenarsipur taluk without proper financial back up.

Mr. Krishna Byre Gowda said that process was on to recruit teaching and non-teaching staff in the colleges. Mr. Revanna said that more than 3,000 of the 5,000 posts were vacant. He said that Rs. 8,432.50 lakh and Rs.14,000 lakh had been provided to four farm universities for education and under the National Agriculture Expansion scheme of the Union government, respectively.

Sanction of colleges

The remarks by Mr. Siddaramaiah and Mr. Krishna Byre Gowda that more colleges were sanctioned in Hassan district triggered criticism by Mr. Revanna and he said that the results in first grade colleges in Holenarasipur taluk were very good.

No GM field trials till regulation gaps are addressed, says TEC final report

The final report of the Technical Expert Committee (TEC) set up by the Supreme Court in a Public Interest Litigation on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) has said that it will not be "advisable" to conduct more field trials till gaps in the regulatory system are addressed.

The report was much awaited as a representative of the Union Agriculture Ministry (R.S. Paroda) was added on the panel after the submission of its interim report in October last on the Court's directions at the behest of the

Ministry. The farm Ministry had objected to the absence of its representative on the panel.

However, Dr. Paroda has not signed the report and there is no clarity on whether he gave a “dissenting note” or his comments were annexed to the report. He attended the meetings but did not attend the signing of the report on June 30 in Chennai, *The Hindu* was told by a member of the panel. Dr. Paroda was not available for comment.

In its final report, the TEC has suggested that the members of the regulatory authority be free of conflict of interest, such a body be set up under the Ministry of Environment or Health. There should be a secretariat of dedicated scientists with area expertise.

Stakeholder participation, need, socioeconomic considerations, societal impact, and sustainability should be some of the dimensions to be incorporated in the risk assessment and this should be done at an early stage in the risk assessment process.

There is a need to include chronic and trans-generational toxicity testing.

The single largest number of applications for field trials to the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee is for Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis* — a commonly occurring bacterium found in insect-rich habitats and soils) transgenic (including food crops such as rice and a range of vegetables).

The TEC pointed out that the safety of Bt transgenics with regard to chronic toxicity had not been established and this needs to be done before it can be considered safe. In this regard, the largest deployment of transgenics worldwide is in soybean, corn, cotton, and canola, all of which are used primarily for oil or feed. Nowhere are Bt transgenics being widely consumed in large amounts for any major food crop that is directly used for human

consumption. The TEC found no compelling reason for India to be the first to do so.

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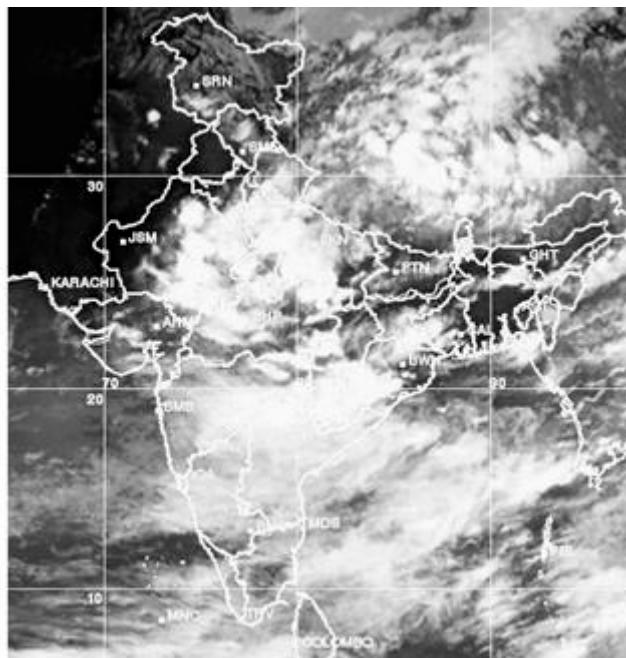
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Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on July 22nd.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	32	27	0	305
New Delhi (Sfd)	34	27	0	385
Chandigarh	34	24	0	435
Hissar	35	25	4	234
Bhantar	32	22	0	256
Shimla	23	17	tr	446
Jammu	33	27	0	383
Srinagar	31	20	0	115
Amritsar	33	27	0	253
Patiala	34	27	0	441
Jaipur	32	26	0	277
Udaipur	28	25	2	347
Allahabad	35	26	4	504
Lucknow	35	25	2	427
Varanasi	35	27	0	331
Dehradun	31	23	86	1650
Agartala	34	27	0	430
Ahmedabad	35	26	0	409
Bangalore	26	20	tr	308
Bhubaneswar	31	24	3	439
Bhopal	26	24	2	647
Chennai	34	25	2	299
Guwahati	33	26	7	486

Hyderabad	30	22	7	355
Kolkata	34	28	14	523
Mumbai	28	25	22	1487
Nagpur	32	25	0	908
Patna	34	28	0	154
Pune	27	22	6	397
Thiruvananthapuram	27	24	8	681
Imphal	31	23	tr	422
Shillong	25	19	8	480

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

RAINFALL

The axis of Monsoon trough at mean Sea level passes through Anupgarh, Sikar, Dholpur, Ori and thence southeast-wards.

RAINFALL: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at many places over Uttarakhand, at a few places over Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and at isolated places over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (3 cm and above) HARYANA: jagadhari 9, Bilaspur 6 and Chhachhrauli 5 each, HIMACHAL PRADESH: Paonta 22, Rajgarh 6, Kasaili 5, Tissa 4 and Dharamsala, Shimla, Nahan and Sangrah 3 each, JAMMU AND KASHMIR: Katra 5 and Udhampur 3, PUNJAB: Nakodar 9, EAST RAJASTHAN: Mount Abu 11, Baseri and Iadpura 7 each, Baran and Gangapur 6 each, Kota and Bamanwas 5 each, Arthuna, Anta, Atru, Patan, Degod and Vallabh Nagar 4 each and Talera, Sangod and Tonk 3 each, WEST RAJASTHAN: Sardarshahr 6, Osian 5, Bikaner and Pali 4 each and Bhopalgarh, Nagaur, Erinpura and Sumerpur 3 each EAST UTTAR

PRADESH: Sidhauri 10, Balrampur 9, Chhatnag 7, Bhatpurwaghat 6, Unnao tehsil 5, Fursatganj 4 and Bahraich, Bhinga and Laharpur 3 each, WEST UTTAR PRADESH: Deoband 9, Saharanpur 6 and Moradabad 5, and UTTARAKHAND: Dehradun 9, Jakholi 7, Uttarkashi 6, Purola 5, Mussoorie and Rudraprayag 4 each and Joshimath, Karanprayag, Bhatwari and Dunda 3 each.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 24th July 2013 : Rain/thundershowers may occur at many places over Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, east Rajasthan and Haryana. Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places over west Rajasthan.

HEAVY RAINFALL WARNING: Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places over Uttarakhand during next 48 hours. Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir during next 24 hours Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places over east Rajasthan on 23rd July.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 24th July 2013: Generally cloudy sky. Rain/thundershowers may occur in some areas



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Natural fertilizer gains popularity

When it comes to applying the traditional ways of farming, the demand for natural fertilizer Jeevamrat made of cow dung and urine is gaining popularity in the region.

Jeevamrat comprises different components like cow urine, cow dung, gram flour (besan) and jaggery (gur). It strengthens the fertility of soil three times in comparison to other fertilizers.

Farmers and others interested in growing vegetables/fruits traditionally, inquire about the advantages of Jeevamrat products being grown with its help.

Nidhi Yadav, president of Shree Vashudevya Namah Lok Kalyan Sansthan, located at Ghosra village in Bahria block, claims more and more people are coming forward to know about the fertilizer. People from districts like Banda, Chitrakoot and other place show interest to know about it.

"We take 10 litres of cow urine, 10 kgs cow dung, 1½ kg gram flour, ½ kg of jaggery and add water into a big utensil. The mixture is kept for three days. It is stirred clock-wise and anti-clock wise to prepare Jeevamrat," she said. Jeevamrat has all components for better cultivation of crops and it has also hidden capability of natural pesticide.

Nidhi said: "Less people know about the technique of preparing jeevamrat and we are making efforts to spread it so that cultivation takes place traditionally, instead of using harmful pesticides and chemicals.

A survey undertaken by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry had revealed that around 62% of households prefer organic

products due to rising awareness.

In metropolitan cities and big towns, there has been a major shift for organic products, especially fruit and vegetables and people are willing to buy fruits and vegetables grown in natural fertilizers.

District horticulture officer PK Shukla said that natural fertilizers play a vital role in crop cultivation and people are inclined to buy products being grown through natural fertilizers. Jeevamrat is a natural fertilizer, having unlimited benefits of increasing the fertility of soil. The fruits and vegetables grown through it have a rich taste.

Officials are promoting farming through natural fertilizers. Farmers, farmhouse owners and individuals are being roped in to apprise farmers about the benefits of natural fertilizers.

Claiming that the land at Kaurihar, Bahdurpur, Chaka, Bahria and Soraon blocks is suitable for natural fertilizers, the horticulture department aims to spread the preparation of natural fertilizers among farmers and individuals. They aim to encourage cultivation of guava, tomato, cabbage, peas, ladyfinger, carrot, litchi and amla through organic farming.

Farmers in 17 out of 20 blocks are approaching agriculture experts to adopt natural farming.

Tomato, onion prices stay on the higher side

Tomato and onion prices have continued with their upward swing despite correction in most other vegetables, including potato, cucumber, ladyfinger, bottle gourd, ginger and garlic.

Retailers are charging anything from Rs 40 to Rs 60 per kg for tomatoes and Rs 30 to Rs 40 for onions in different parts of the city. Sellers at The

vegetable's rate has been on an upward swing since the last three weeks along with that of onions, which are currently selling for Rs 30 to Rs 40 per kilo. The good news, however, is that there has been a correction in rates of most other vegetables in the city, including potato, cucumber, ladyfinger, bottle gourd, green leafy vegetables and even ginger and garlic. Sellers at Gultekdi Market Yard, the main wholesale market in the city, have blamed the incessant rains for the prevailing prices of the two kitchen staples.

According to Noor Bagwan, a vegetable wholesaler and retailer, the rates are being dictated by poor and erratic supply of the vegetables. "As compared to the demand, the quantity of vegetables reaching Market Yard is much less because of the rains, which is making transportation difficult. Moreover, we need to keep a substantial margin as we lose a lot of stock due to wastage," he said, explaining that sellers lose anything from two to three kg to spoilage in every 10 kg. Bagwan said prices will come down as soon as the rains subside.

Ritesh Poman, a wholesale dealer of onions, however, expects the prices to stabilize only by October, which is when the fresh crop is expected to reach the city markets. "So far, we are only receiving the old stock of onions, which the farmers are releasing gradually as the rates remain high. Rates are expected to go up further in the coming days, as their stocks begin to rot," he said. Retailer margins are also playing spoilsport considering onion is selling in the wholesale market for Rs 250-265 for 10 kg, he added.

The proposal to allow farmers to sell their produce directly to end-users at Market Yard has not taken off, so far. Sanjiv Khadke, administrator of the Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee, admits the scheme has

found no takers among the farmers, so far. "We have allocated space for farmers. But, the farmer groups are not coming forward as they have their own anxieties of transportation, storage and their ability to sell all of their produce. We are trying to find a solution to the problem," he said.

Monthly budgets of families, however, continue to suffer as prices remain high in the retail market. "Rates of everything are just too high, particularly of onions, tomatoes and even potatoes, which I bought for Rs 30 for a kg. These vegetables are needed for anything I cook, so I had to buy them at whatever rate the shopkeepers were selling," said Wanowrie resident Sapna Rungta.

Rungta added that she prefers to do her weekly vegetable shopping from a big Mandai like Pulgate since the produce on sale is better there as compared to what is available at small retail vendors.

Wet drought' rocks state legislative assembly

The state legislative assembly was adjourned for the entire Monday amid chaos over torrential rain in Vidarbha and a demand for a relief package for farmers of the region and the government's "apathy" to announce relief package.

Trouble began with the discussion on rain in Vidarbha and other areas over the last two weeks. Legislators, especially those from Vidarbha, persistently demanded that the government should declare 'wet drought' in the region so that farmers can avail of the relief package. Raising a calling attention motion, Devendra Fadnis (BJP) slammed the government's apathy towards farmers affected due to the torrential rain in Vidarbha region.

"The government should announce a relief package for the farmers now," demanded Fadnavis, backed by treasury benches and opposition MLAs from Vidarbha.

As the chaos increased and several MLAs rushed to the well, deputy speaker Vasant Purke adjourned the assembly four times in quick succession.

Later, CM Prithviraj Chavan said, "I am aware of the gravity of the situation. We are gathering all the information. I will visit Vidarbha on Friday and make a statement (about the package and other related issue) on Monday after I come back from the tour." But, the MLAs continued the uproar. Purke then quickly wrapped up the day's proceedings and hastily put through the business in flat twenty minutes. He adjourned the House for the entire day. Talking to the media, Fadnavis and other Vidarbha MLAs demanded Rs 25,000 per acre for affected farmers.

Farmers request govt to release more water from Mettur dam

Cauvery delta farmers welfare association (CDFWA) has appealed to chief minister Jayalalithaa to increase the outflow from Mettur dam to 6,000 cusecs for at least 10 days so that water could be released in the 17 channels from Salem to Trichy. At present, 3,000 cusecs are being released for the purpose of drinking water. "Now that the water situation is satisfactory in Karnataka, an increase to 6,000 cusecs at least for 10 days would help the 17-channel area and thus save the horticulture plants cultivated over 1.25 lakh acres," said Mahadanapuram Rajaram, the working president of CDFWA.

Rajaram said the water level in Cauvery basin has reached comfortable levels, the state government should step in and release water so that crops like banana, sugarcane, betel and coconut, which have been cultivated in areas such as Salem, Namakkal, Erode, Karur and Trichy, do not wither away. At present, officials noted that the inflow to Mettur was 32,680 cusecs and the outflow was maintained at 3000 cusecs. The dam on Monday had a total of 41.9 tmcft.

As the public works department officials expressed hope that the government might order to release water for irrigation from Mettur in the first week of August, Rajaram contended that the next 10 days would be crucial for the horticulture crop and the government could well order to increase to the outflow to at least 6,000 cusecs and this would be a great boon to the farmers.

Moreover, the water situation this year was more than satisfactory as Kabini was already releasing 40,000 cusecs. The officials also expressed hope that the Mettur dam, which on Monday contained 79.94 ft would notch up to 90 ft level by the end of this week and since water was not released for kuruvai this year, the government should consider our request positively, he opined. The timing of providing water to crops is of paramount importance, and here any amount of retrospective back up would not help, Rajaram said.

Govt gives boost to green fodder production in Madurai, Theni

The shortage of green fodder in Madurai and Theni districts, which has taken a toll on the development of milk production, is likely to end soon as the government has proposed green fodder production schemes in both the

drought-hit areas. The scheme would be implemented from the chief minister's drought relief fund, informed V Moorthy, state minister for dairy development after an inspection at the Aavin unit in Madurai on Monday.

He said the green fodder production scheme would be implemented on 1,250 and 800 acres in Madurai and Theni districts respectively. The scheme would leverage the milk production in the two districts. Under the scheme, farmers in both the districts would be encouraged to grow green fodder. The fodder would be distributed to milk producers in both the districts at 50% cost subsidy.

At present, the milk produced in the two districts stand at 1.86 lakh litres per day. Milk production in Madurai district is higher than that of its neighbouring district Theni. The total milk produced in Madurai district, accounts for 1.13 lakh litre. The district has the strength of 465 milk producing societies with 17,830 members. Theni district with a strength of 336 societies with 14,832 members produces 73,000 litres of milk every day.

The major share of the milk produced is supplied to the people, with 1.55 lakh litres distributed to Madurai district and 10,000 litres to Theni district. The remaining milk is utilised for the production of dairy products in the Aavin units. The units have been running successfully as Madurai unit generates Rs 20 crore as profit each year.

The minister also informed that a new freezing facility with the capacity of three lakh litres would be set up at cost of Rs 5 crore. L Subramanian, Madurai district collector along with authorities of Aavin accompanied the minister in the visit.

Three more farmer suicides in Vidarbha

Three more cotton farmers in Vidarbha have committed suicide in the region over the last two days.

According to reports, all three victims ended their lives when their newly sown seeds were washed away by heavy rains.

The victims were identified as Santosh Ramkrishna Sidam, 34, of Mangi village, Anil Marape, 38, of Thanegaon while 60-year-old Charan Singh Rathod was from Parsode in Amravati district, the reports said.

Kishore Tiwari, president of Vidarbha Janandolan Samiti said that all three farmers killed themselves by consuming pesticides when they realised that they would not be able to regenerate their funds following the destruction of their crops.

He said the fact that farmers have to buy new seeds every year, the costly use of genetic manufactured (GM) seeds, the use of pesticides and a reduction in crop value have often left farmers bankrupt.

Many farmers are now falling into an endless cycle of debts, depression and despair.

The washing away of their crop was a big blow for them.

Tiwari urged the government to assure farmers that it would provide new loans immediately, to help them in the wake of a flood-like situation in Vidarbha and help the needy farmers.

With these three deaths, the toll has risen to 32 this month. Last month accounted for 69 deaths.

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Tuesday, Jul 23

Max Min

32° | 26°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:52

Humidity: 66

Sunset: 06:38

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1003

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Wednesday, Jul 24

Max Min

34° | 25°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Monday

Jul 25

Jul 26

Jul 27

Jul 28

Jul 29



34° | 25°

35° | 25°

33° | 24°

34° | 25°

31° | 25°

Cloudy

Overcast

Overcast

Overcast

Overcast

Airport Weather

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:37

Humidity: 79

Sunset: 07:17

Wind: normal Barometer: 1002

Delhi



Delhi



THE HINDU Business Line

Spot rubber firm on short covering

Domestic rubber markets improved on Monday. In spot, the prices firmed up mainly on covering purchases following the moderate gains on the NMCE. But the gains in the local markets were limited as traders fear that the wide gap between the domestic and global rates might lead to further imports.

The trend was mixed as ungraded rubber finished flat amidst dull volumes. Sheet rubber improved to Rs 194 (Rs 192) a kg, according to traders. The grade firmed up to Rs 193.50 (Rs 192.50) both at Kottayam and Kochi as quoted by the Rubber Board.

August futures increased to Rs 196 (Rs 193.31), September to Rs 185.50 (Rs 182.94), October to Rs 174.60 (Rs 172.08), November to Rs 167 (Rs 166.45) and December to Rs 165.25 (Rs 165.12) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. July futures closed at ¥252.0 (Rs 150.19) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates Rs/kg were: RSS-4: 194 (192); RSS-5: 188 (187); Ungraded: 177 (177); ISNR 20: 177 (175.50); and Latex 60%: 158 (155).

Coffee Board ups output forecast to 3.47 lakh tonnes

Coffee blossom estimate			
State	Arabica	Robusta	Total
Karnataka	86,735	1,62,380	2,49,115
Kerala	2,000	68,558	70,550
Tamil Nadu	14,185	4,940	19,125
NTA*	7,950	60	8,010
North East	130	70	200
Total	1,11,000	2,36,000	3,47,000

* Non-traditional areas
Source: Coffee Board

Despite rampant white stem borer (WSB) menace and long days of dry period after blossom, coffee production is set to increase by 28,800 tonnes (9.05 per cent) over the final estimate of previous year 2012-13 (3,18,200 tonnes).

The Coffee Board, which released the post-blossom crop forecast, said for the year 2013-14, coffee production is estimated at 3,47,000 tonnes.

Of the total estimate, the arabica and robusta break up is 1,11,000 tonnes and 2,36,000 tonnes respectively. Arabica production has shown an increase of 12,400 tonnes (12.88 per cent) over the final estimate of 2012-13, while robusta increased by 16,400 tonnes (7.47 per cent).

By the states, the production gain has mainly come from Karnataka to the tune of 18,890 tonnes (8.21 per cent) and non-traditional areas (NTA) with 1,780 tonnes (28.57 per cent) while Kerala has shown an increase of 6,350 tonnes (9.89 per cent) and Tamil Nadu by 1,755 tonnes (10.10 per cent) compared to the previous 2012-13 season's final estimate.

“Due to the drought like conditions (April-May), the crop setting in arabica and robusta has been severely effected. Also there were many incidences of WSB in arabica plantations.

The Karnataka Planters' Association (KPA) estimates that there will be a drop of 20 per cent due to this weather-related problems, said Nishant R. Gurjer, Chairman, KPA.

In Karnataka, all the three districts recorded increase in production over the previous year with an almost equal share of arabica and robusta. Kodagu district recorded the highest increase of 14,420 tonnes (12.02 per cent) which is mainly accrued from robusta (11,620 tonnes or 11.77 per cent) and arabica gained by 2,800 tonnes (13.15 per cent).

Hassan district recorded an increase of 3,535 tonnes (10.84 per cent) which has come from both arabica (2,635 tonnes or 14.02 per cent) and robusta (900 tonnes or 6.52 per cent).

While Chikmagalur showed an increase of 935 tonnes from Arabica, the robusta production showed a decline of 2,940 tonnes (-7.30 per cent) over the previous year final estimate.

“Due to prolonged and unprecedented drought of over 50 days, there has been a spurt in the WSB pest that has devastated the arabica plants. We have also been unable to carry out the regular operations like spraying and manuring on time due to lack of rains in May. As for robusta, due to severe constraints of power and water resources, we were unable to cover our entire area for blossom and backing irrigation. We feel the blossom estimate may have to be revised further downward in view of prevailing conditions,” said Sahadev Balakrishna, Partner, Netraconda Estates, Chikmagalur.

“The arabica production regained in 2013-14 season in Karnataka mainly because of the biennial bearing nature of arabica as last year's final estimate was low,” said the coffee board official.

The blossom showers are reported to be normal in all most all the coffee growing zones, while there was a delay in backing showers in certain pockets were reported. "In general good crop condition and better husbandry practices have helped to invigorate production in Karnataka. The crop forecast for Karnataka is placed at 86,735 tonnes of arabica and 1,62,380 tonnes of robusta totalling 2,49,115 tonnes," the official explained. Kerala coffee zones also have received adequate and timely blossom and backing showers. There was no adverse effect on crop was reported. Accounting this, the post-blossom estimates for the 2013-14 is placed at 70,550 tonnes, which is an increase of 9.89 per cent (6,350 tonnes) over the previous 2012-13 final estimate of 64,200 tonnes. Tamil Nadu post-blossom forecast is placed at 19,125 tonnes which also showed an increase of 1,755 tonnes (10.10 per cent) mainly in Pulneys and Shevroys region against the previous year final estimate of 17,370 tonnes. In non-traditional areas of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa and north eastern region, the post-blossom forecast is placed at 8,210 tonnes against previous final estimate of 6,405 tonnes. The higher forecast has come mainly from Andhra Pradesh and Orissa due to increase in bearing area.

2012-13 production was 3,18,200 tonnes

The final coffee production 2012-13 estimate is 3,18,200 tonnes, an increase of 2,700 tonnes (0.86 per cent) over the post-monsoon estimate of 3,15,500 tonnes and an increase of 4,200 tonnes (1.34 per cent) over the previous year's 2011-12 final estimate of 3,14,000 tonnes.

The Coffee Board, which released the final crop estimate for 2012-13, said of the total final estimate, the share of arabica is 98,600 tonnes and that of robusta is 2,19,600 tonnes. The production of arabica has shown a marginal decline of 1,625 tonnes (-1.62 per cent) while robusta increased by 4,235 tonnes (2.01 per cent) over the post-monsoon estimate made before crop harvesting in 2012. The loss in arabica production and the production gain in robusta has mainly come from Karnataka.

The final crop estimate for Karnataka is placed at 2,30,225 tonnes with a break up of 77,425 tonnes of arabica and 1,52,800 tonnes of robusta. The final production in Karnataka has shown a marginal increase of 3,020 tonnes (1.33 per cent).

The arabica production has marginally declined in Chikmagalur (-1.32 per cent), Kodagu (-1.87 per cent) and Hassan of (-1.96 per cent) districts, while robusta production shown an increase in Chikmagalur (8.33 per cent), Kodagu (1.15 per cent) and in Hassan (0.55 per cent) districts.

In Kerala, the final estimate of 2012-13 is placed at 64,200 tonnes with an increase of 375 tonnes (0.59 per cent) from the post monsoon estimate of 63,825 tonnes.

Tamil Nadu final production of 2012-13 is placed at 17,370 tonnes which is a marginal decline of 380 tonnes over the post monsoon estimate of 17,750 tonnes.

In the non-traditional areas and North Eastern region, the final estimate of 2012-13 is placed at 6,405 tonnes against post monsoon estimate of 6,720 tonnes which showed a marginal decline of 215 tonnes in Andhra Pradesh.

K.V. Thomas allays States' fears on Food Security Bill



The apprehension of State Governments receiving lower food grains under the Food Security Bill is unwarranted, said K.V. Thomas, Minister for Consumer Affairs, who termed it a misconception.

Speaking to the media after inaugurating an investor awareness programme, organised jointly by the NCDEX and *Business Line* on Monday, Thomas said the Congress-ruled Maharashtra Government also expressed its apprehension on its diminishing food grain supply, after the implementation of the Bill.

After an analysis, however, it was found that the State would be receiving a higher supply and that too at a lower price.

Confirming that the subsidiary burden on the Government would increase to Rs 1.35 lakh crore from Rs 1.09 lakh crore, Thomas said the country could definitely absorb this burden for a good cause.

On the concern of the food security Bill stoking up inflation, Thomas said the Government is concerned about rising food inflation. However, rising inflation is due to various factors such as minimum support price doubling in last five years, increase in petrol prices and change in consumption pattern.

“This is a disturbing trend considering that the Government has a huge inventory of food grains. In fact, we are deliberating to release some wheat at a subsidised rate in the open market,” he said.

On the issue of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister opposing the Bill, Thomas said that the State gives free rice when the Central Government supplies it at Rs 5 a kg.

“After implementation of the Food Security Act, the Central Government will supply rice at Rs 3 a kg. So the Tamil Nadu Government should be happy that its subsidy bill will come down to Rs 3 a kg from Rs 5 a kg. Moreover, the quality also will be better,” he said.

State governments have taken various measures to deal with bogus ration cards and have cancelled six crore cards in the last three years. The number of ration cards in circulation has come down to 16 crore from 22 crore in the last three years.

The Government is also working on modalities to improve the quality of food grains that would be distributed under the Food Security Act.

On wild fluctuation in the onion and potato prices, Thomas said that the Government is working on an export import policy and has directed Nafed to procure these commodities during the peak arrival season and sell them to the State Governments when they need them.

Tea prices plummet to year's lowest at Coonoor auction

The average prices plummeted to the year's lowest level of Rs 85.61 a kg at Sale No: 29 of the Coonoor Tea Trade Association auction.

Last week's average price of Rs 88.25 was the lowest until then this calendar.

Prices dropped in the background of enormous supply. The offer of 20.53 lakh kg was the highest so far this calendar.

The lorry strike threatening the blockade of transport of the purchased tea to Kerala through Walayar check-post curtailed the interest of some buyers. There was only select purchase for Pakistan at Rs 75-102. Purchase for the CIS was confined to a few consignments at Rs 71-89. Some odd shipments for European ports were bid for Rs 68-86.

“Whole leaf orthodox fetched Rs 4-5 a kg more. High-priced CTC leaf gained Rs 1-2 while mediums eased Rs 2-4 with many plainers remaining unsold despite shedding up to Rs 4. Orthodox leaf eased Rs 1-2.

High-priced CTC dust gained Rs 2-3 and mediums Rs 1-2 while plainers lot up to Rs 2”, an auctioneer told *Business Line*.

In effect, 15.11 lakh kg was sold this week against 13.10 lakh kg last week. The turnover rose to Rs 12.94 crore from Rs 11.56 crore, marking a growth of 12 per cent in one week.

Pulses output at record high

Production of pulses touched an all-time high of 18.45 million tonnes in 2012-13 aided a record output of gram (chana), tur (arhar) and urad.

Latest Government estimates peg chana output at a record 8.88 mt over the previous year's 7.70 mt.

Similarly production of tur touched a new high of 3.07 mt, marginally lower than the targeted 3.09 mt, but higher than previous year's 2.65 mt.

Output of urad also touched a new high 1.90 mt, surpassing previous year's 1.77 mt. However, the production of moong declined 26 per cent to 1.20 mt, from the previous year's 1.63 mt.

The Government estimates overall foodgrain output of 255.36 mt during 2012-13, down 1.51 per cent from the previous year's 259.29 mt. Wheat output has been pegged at 92.46 mt, down 2.55 per cent over previous year's 94.88 mt. Cotton output was pegged at 340 lakh bales of 170 kg each, down from the previous year's 352 lakh bales. Maize output has also been pegged at a record high of 22.23 mt.

Wheat production pegged lower at 92.46 mt

Wheat stats		(in mt)
	This Year	Last Year
Crop size (Govt estimate)	92.46*	94.88
Procured by Govt	25.08	38
Spot price Delhi Rs/quintal	1,568	1,350

*Fourth advance estimate Source: Agri-Ministry

The wheat trade is sceptical about the latest Government projections on crop size for 2012-13, estimated at 92.46 million tonnes.

Though the Government's fourth advanced estimates released on Monday pegged the crop a tad lower than its earlier estimate of 93.62 mt, the trade believes that the crop could be much lower than last year – based on the procurement and the pricing trends.

The country had produced a record 94.88 mt wheat last year.

Wheat procurement by Government agencies this year was down by a third at 25.08 mt against last year's 38 mt. Prices continue to rule high despite the Government's latest estimate of a large crop.

In Uttar Pradesh, the country's largest wheat producing State, market prices during the procurement season crossed the minimum support price (MSP) levels for the first time in five years.

The higher-than-MSP was attributed to the poor market arrivals as farmers held back their produce in anticipation of better prices.

Citing the trade in Punjab and Haryana, Adi Narayan Gupta, President of Roller Flour Millers Federation of India, estimates the crop to be lower by 10-15 per cent over the Government's estimates.

The extended cold wave conditions and erratic rains in the key growing regions of Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh during February and March did affect the yields and the crop this year.

Also the emergence of diseases such as yellow rust and higher than normal temperatures and humidity levels during February-March did impact the crop.

Even the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) had recently projected a lower Indian wheat crop at 87 mt from its earlier estimates of 92 mt.

The USDA had based its projection on the preliminary harvest reports from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, which indicated a 8-10 per cent lower yields compared to last year due to smaller kernel size and increase in shrunken kernels compared to last year.

The USDA had traditionally revised its estimates after the Indian Government releases its fourth advance estimates.

But whether, the USDA will revise upwards its estimate to the latest one of the Indian Government is to be seen.

"If one goes by the lower procurement by Food Corporation of India and other State agencies and market prices of around Rs 1,550 a quintal, the latest estimate of 92.46 mt doesn't appear to be justified.

Any downward revision of the crop size may stoke inflationary pressures and that could be the concern of the Government,” said Tejinder Narang, grains trade analyst.

Cotton wilts on good sowing prospects



Cotton prices declined on the back of lower buying by mills and favourable weather condition in cotton growing areas.

Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton was down at Rs 41,700-42,300 a candy of 356 kg, average grade cotton was traded at Rs 41,100-41,500.

About 3,000-4,000 bales of 170 kg arrived in Gujarat and 7,000-8,000 bales arrived in India.

Kapas or raw cotton declined by Rs 15-20 to Rs 1,070-1,100 a maund of 20 kg in Saurashtra . For kadi delivery, kapas was quoted at Rs 1,080-1,110.

A broker said that mills are not buying heavily as price was higher .
Moreover, good sowing and favourable weather condition also pressurised the cotton price.

Good rains over Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have come as a big boon for millions of cotton farmers.

They have sown almost 75 per cent more area under cotton as compared to the same period last year in response to the benign weather.

On the ICE US, October cotton settled at 86.52 cents a pound, up 1.53 cents.

Demand-supply match keeps cardamom flavour intact



Cardamom prices continued to stay steady last week on nearly matching demand and supply at the auctions.

Arrivals were picking up slowly with more presence of the new crop.

Buyers, both exporters and from the upcountry, were not aggressive.

The first round of picking is underway and around 80 per cent of the arrivals were of the new crop. But 7-8 mm capsules were much less.

The current round of picking may last till the month-end while the second round of picking will commence from mid-Aug. Superior grade material is

expected to arrive during the second round, market sources told *Business Line*.

Overall the market showed a slightly positive trend following the arrival of fresh green bold capsules of the new crop, they said.

Exporters are said to have bought an estimated 20 tonnes of the material last week.

Individual auction average price was vacillating between Rs 525 and Rs 575 a kg last week. As the weather conditions are favourable, the next crop is expected to be better than that of the current season, the trade said.

Total arrivals at the Sunday auction held by KCPMC increased to 55.8 tonnes from 51 tonnes on the previous Sunday and the entire quantity was sold out, P.C. Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC, told *Business Line*.

The maximum price was at Rs 905 and the minimum at Rs 410.

The auction average price remained steady at previous Sunday's level of Rs 570.

Total arrivals and sales during the current season from Aug 1, 2012 to July 21 were at 16,018 tonnes and 15,365 tonnes respectively.

Total arrivals and sales during the corresponding period last year were at 20,539 tonnes and 19,754 tonnes respectively.

The weighted average price as on July 21 stood at Rs 691.33 (Rs 641.04).

Prices of graded varieties (in Rs/kg): AGEB 790-800; AGB 580-590; AGS 560-570 and AGS-1: 540-550. Bulk was being sold at Rs 400-550 a kg

Aromatic rice may see decline in prices



Aromatic varieties may witness some downward revision while non-basmati varieties may continue to rule around current levels in the coming days, said trade experts.

An unexpected rally in the market pushed up Pusa-1121 and Duplicate basmati rice prices by Rs 400-800 a quintal on Monday, while all the other aromatic and non-basmati varieties remained unchanged.

Amit Chandna, proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company, told *Business Line* that sudden demand by the rice exporters pushed pusa-1121 and Duplicate basmati rice prices upwards.

Rally in the market at this time of the year was not expected.

Traders see this situation as a temporary phase and expect that market may witness some correction in the coming days, he added.

In the physical market, Pusa-1121 (steam) improved by Rs 700 and sold at Rs 8,300-8,400 a quintal, while Pusa-1121 (sela) quoted at Rs 7,800-7,900, Rs 800 up from previous levels.

Pure basmati (raw) quoted at Rs 8,800-8,820.

Duplicate basmati (steam) improved by Rs 400 and sold at Rs 7,000.

For the brokens of Pusa-1121, Dubar quoted at Rs 3,600, Tibar sold at Rs 4,250 while Mongra was at Rs 2,900 .

In the non-basmati section, Sharbati (Steam) sold at Rs 4,750-4,800 while Sharbati (Sela) quoted at Rs 4,300 .

Permal (raw) sold at Rs 2,300-2,350 , Permal (sela) went for Rs 2,300 ,

PR-11 (sela) sold at Rs 2,900 while PR-11 (Raw) quoted at Rs 2,750 .

PR14 (steam) sold at Rs 3,400 .

Paddy arrivals

Around 3,000 bags of different paddy varieties arrived at the Karnal Grain Market Terminal on Monday from the Uttar Pradesh.

About 1,000 bags of Pusa-1121 arrived and quoted at Rs 3,100-3,150.

Around 2,000 bags of PR arrived and quoted at Rs 1,000-1,100 a quintal.

Monsoon, slack buying crush soyabean, oil



Notwithstanding strong global cues, poor demand and slack buying support continue to drag soya oil and soyabean prices in Indore mandis. With selling pressure outstripping demand, soya refined further declined to Rs

642-45 (Rs 648-51). Similarly, soya solvent also declined to Rs 608-10 for 10 kg (Rs 618-22).

Favourable sowing report in soyabean and adequate monsoon showers in the State have made stockists and farmers release their existing stock .

Soya oil futures also traded marginally lower despite positive CBOT projections with its August and September contracts on the NCDEX closing at Rs 664.85 for 10 kg (down 10 paise) and Rs 649.55 (down Rs 1.10).

Rise in arrivals and slack demand have also dragged soyabean prices in Indore mandis in the past one week by about Rs 200 a quintal. Amid arrival of 75,000 bags (55,000-60,000 bags last week), soyabean declined to Rs 3,350-3,450 a quintal. Soyabean futures also traded low on weak buying support with its October and November contracts on the NCDEX closing at Rs 3,078 (down Rs 45) and Rs 3,087 (down Rs 32).

Plant deliveries also declined by Rs 60 to Rs 3,450-3,550 on weak buying support from the crushers. Both soyabean and soya oil will witness sluggish trend in the coming days with favourable monsoon and rise in acherage , said a trader Mukesh Purohit .

Sluggish trend also continued in soyameal on slack demand with its prices in the domestic market at Rs 33,200-300, while on the port it was quoted at Rs 33,100 a quintal.

Turmeric pales on poor quality



Spot turmeric prices posted a decline for want of good quality turmeric.

“Usually July is a lean month for turmeric sale and now no trader has received any upcountry order. The medium variety turmeric arrives to the market and stockists have purchased the turmeric,” said R.K.V.

Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

Even for the medium quality hybrid turmeric, the price was down Rs 600 a quintal and also the price of finger and root varieties were decreased by Rs 200 . But the arrival was only 168 bags, which was lower than previous day arrival. Totally 2,600 bags arrived for sale in all the four markets, but only 60 per cent stocks were sold.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,329-6,434, the root variety Rs 3,769-5,681 a quintal.

Salem Hybrid Crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 6,139-7,111; the root variety Rs 5,639-6,191. Of the arrival of 550 bags, 198 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety fetched Rs 5,401-6,619; the root variety Rs 4,872-5,909. All the 168 bags found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety quoted Rs 5,081-6,591 ; the root variety Rs 4,789-5,922. Of the 323 bags arrived, 313 were sold.

Business Standard

**Ruling, Opposition members seek special package for Vidarbha farmers
Members have demanded a compensation of Rs 25,000 per hectare to
farmers affected in the Vidarbha region**

Proceedings of the Maharashtra legislative assembly on Monday were rocked by the strong demand made by ruling and opposition members for the immediate declaration of wet drought and the compensation of Rs 25,000 per hectare to the farmers affected in the Vidarbha region due to incessant rainfall and the loss to kharif crops.

Dissatisfied by the chief minister Prithviraj Chavan's statement that he will make a detailed announcement next week after his visit to the affected region pandemonium prevailed. Members were also not happy with the minister for rehabilitation Patangrao Kadam's statement that the decision with regard to the formal announcement of wet drought and compensation will be taken after a three member committee carries out a detailed on the ground survey.

However, members stuck to their stand and insisted that the minister should make the necessary announcement today on the floor of the house. The issue was raised through a calling attention motion moved by BJP legislator Devendra Phadanvis and others. Phadanvis informed the house that the Vidarbha region had received a major rainfall this year and majority of districts were facing flood like situation. Farms are under heavy water and the kharif crops have been damaged.

He was supported by Congress legislators Vijay Wadattiwar and Virendra Jagtap said the situation was quite grim and the heavy rainfall is still continuing in the region. Wadattiwar noted that the reply issued by the

ministry of rehabilitation based on the rainfall in June and not the present one. He and other members demanded that the reply needs to be corrected and the government should immediately announce a special package on the line of what offered to farmers from the Western Region during drought conditions. They wanted that the government should relax the existing norms. Some of the members wanted the chair to withhold the calling attention until the reply is corrected.

The deputy speaker Vasant Purke, who was on chair, adjourned the house for three times and when resumed members were shouting slogans. Purke amidst slogan shouting called the house agenda including supplementary demands and conducted the proceedings.

Maha forms flying squads to tackle onion hoarding

Rising mismatch and spiralling prices triggered the govt move

Maharashtra government has cracked the whip by forming special flying squads to take severe action against the hoarders and speculators to pave for smooth supply of onions in the market. The government has swung into action in the wake of present mismatch between the demand and supply of onion and the subsequent rise in the prices.

State agriculture minister Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil told Business Standard "In view of rise in sudden demand for onions in the northern India there has been deficit in the onion supply. This is a temporary phenomenon but still the government does not want to take any chance and therefore has set up flying squads to avoid hoarding and speculation especially by farmers and traders in Mumbai and around."

He admitted that the onion prices have surged and thereby the local market has gone up. "The rise in onion price is for time being. Onion prices in Nashik, Pune and Ahmednagar have increased to Rs 2,400 per ton as on July 21 compared to Rs 1,500-1,800 per ton during the corresponding period of last year. In the retail market the prices are in the range of Rs 32-35 per kg.

Arrival of onions in Nashik, which contributes 35-40% to the state production, has been 83,000 quintal against 82,000 quintal last year. Maharashtra produces 1.2 million ton of onions annually on an area spread over 1.75 lakh hectares. Incidentally, of which onion in Nashik is produced on 70,000 hectares. Other onion growing regions include Pune, Ahmednagar, Satara, Solapur and Pune.

Meanwhile, Ashok Walunj, director, Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee said farmers should not be blamed for hoarding and speculation. "Farmers, who are affected due to last year's drought, are facing water logging in their fields due to heavy rains. They generally get onion crop in April-May after sowing in December. Practically, for June, July and August they have to struggle to sell their onions in the volatile market. Only after September farmers go for fresh onion crop," he informed.

PE/VC investment in Indian agri-business increases

Investments in the sector rose 75% in the first six months of 2013

Private equity and venture capital are increasingly eyeing the Indian agri-business. Investments in the sector rose 75% in the first six months of 2013.

PE and VC firms invested \$126 million across nine Indian Agri-Business companies during the first six months of 2013, up from the \$72 million (invested across six companies) during the same period last year, said data from Venture Intelligence, a research service focused on private company financials, transactions and valuations in India.

In one of the largest PE investment in this segment during 2013, Multiples Private Equity's invested Rs 250 crore (\$43.24 million) in Bangalore-based Milltec Group which develops technology and machinery for rice milling, roller flour milling, maize (corn) milling and agro processing plants.

India Value Fund, has committed \$40 million to pick up a majority stake in Kochi-based spices firm VKL Seasoning. VKL, a spin out from the Vallabhdas Kanji Group, provides seasonings and flavors to customers - typically Quick Service Restaurants (QSR) - in India, the Middle East and Africa.

"In February, Qatar-based Hassad Food had acquired a 69% stake in PE-backed rice exporter Bush Foods Overseas for \$135 million, fetching StanChart PE a 2.5 times return on its investment. And just last week, the publicly listed rice exporter Kohinoor Foods agreed to sell a 20% stake for almost Rs 113 crore (\$18.8 million) to Al Dahra Holdings, an Abu Dhabi-based agriculture focused investment firm," said Arun Natarajan, CEO of Venture Intelligence.

Apart from Private Equity buyouts, the latest quarter (ending June 2013) also witnessed Venture Capital funds and specialist agri-business focused funds stepping up their investment activity in Agri-Businesses. So much so that Agri-Business was tied with Healthcare as the second favorite industry among VCs (after Information Technology) based on the number of

investments during Q2'13, the Venture Intelligence data shows. The Agri-Business focused Omnivore Partners announced two new investments in the latest quarter: in pork products firm Arohan Foods and fly trap maker Barrix Agro Sciences. Two other companies in the industry that attracted VC investors during Q2'13 included Khyati Foods (focused on Soybeans, Oilseeds, Spices) from SEAF and Sarona Asset Management and Lawrenceedale Agroprocessing (focused on Agri Logistics) from Aspada Investments.

"The rising appetite for such companies among overseas investors and also the higher prices being enjoyed by agri commodities in recent years could continue to sustain Private Equity interest in the industry," added Natarajan.

Potato up by 2.9% on rising demand

Speculators created fresh positions supported by rising demand in the spot market

Potato prices surged by 2.93% to Rs 643.70 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators created fresh positions supported by rising demand in the spot market.

Tight stocks availability in the physical market due to restricted arrivals from producing belts following heavy rains further fuelled the uptrend.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, potato for delivery in September shot up by Rs 18.30, or 2.93%, to Rs 643.70 per quintal in business turnover of 385 lots.

Likewise, the potato for delivery in August shot up by Rs 14.50, or 2.13% to Rs 696 per quintal in 267 lots.

Market analysts attributed the sharp rise in potato futures to an upsurge in demand in the spot market against restricted arrivals from producing regions

Refined soya oil falls by 0.8% on sluggish demand

Speculators reduced their holdings due to sluggish demand in the spot market against adequate stocks position

Refined soya oil prices fell by 0.75% to Rs 645.80 per 10 kg in futures trade today as speculators reduced their holdings due to sluggish demand in the spot market against adequate stocks position.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, refined soya oil for delivery in September month fell by Rs 4.85, or 0.75% to Rs 645.80 per 10 kg with an open interest of 52,350 lots.

Similarly, the oil for delivery in August traded lower by Rs 4.35, or 0.65% to Rs 661.10 per 10 kg in 1,04,220 lots.

Analysts said speculators reduced their positions due to subdued demand in the spot market against adequate stocks position mainly influenced refined soya oil prices at futures trade

Sugar falls by 0.6% on sluggish demand

Market analysts attributed the fall in sugar futures to increased supplies against subdued demand from bulk consumers

Sugar prices fell by 0.59% to Rs 3,016 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators trimmed positions on the back of sluggish demand from bulk consumers in the spot market against increased supplies.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, sugar for delivery in August month fell by Rs 18, or 0.59% to Rs 3016 per quintal with an open interest of 34510 lots.

Similarly, the sweetener for delivery September contract traded lower by the same margin to Rs 3038 per quintal in 17710 lots.

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