

31 July, 2013

How Nutella disturbed French-Malaysian ties

*Thousands of farmers were full of worry,
Oil palm gave them money for rice and curry,
But the Nutella tax,
Shot their BP to the max,
Lucky for them good news came in a hurry.*

Ever had Nutella with your bread? The rich creamy chocolate paste is a favourite all over the world, but nobody loves their Nutella as much as the French do. They consume around a hundred million pots every year! Nutella consumption makes not just little French kids happy, but also a large number of people far away in Malaysia. Malaysia is the world's second-largest supplier of palm oil, a key ingredient in Nutella and many other biscuits and chips.

Unfortunately for Malaysia, palm oil also has a bad reputation. As the monetary value of palm oil grows, vast swathes of rainforests are being wiped out to accommodate oil palm tree plantations. This is highly degrading to the environment, and eliminates the habitat of thousands of species. Moreover, this burning off of forest cover is also being blamed for the massive smog levels in neighbouring Singapore.

Naturally, the oil palm industry is not a favourite among environmentalists and the Malaysian government has had to repeatedly reassure those concerned. They say that they are committed to preserve at least 50% of their forest cover which they claim is more than the targets set by the United Nations.

But it's not just environmentalists who are unhappy. Lately, some French politicians have raised the issue of the health aspects of palm oil. They say that the high level of saturated fat in it presents an obesity and heart disease risk to the people of France.

One French senator, as a result of these fears, made a proposal recently to slap a heavy tax on palm oil (300 euros/tonne) a rule that would also apply to imported food products. This proposal came to be known as the 'Nutella amendment' and was met with loud protests in nations who rely on revenue generated from the palm oil industry, like Malaysia.

If this tax was imposed it would affect the livelihoods of the 2,40,000 small farmers who grow oil palm in Malaysia. The Malaysian government calls this proposal highly irresponsible, and misinformed because they think France is exaggerating the threat palm oil poses to health and the environment.

So when the French Prime Minister on his visit to Malaysia this week announced that his government did not support this tax, many heaved a sigh of relief. Palm oil will be treated the same way other oils are, he reassured the Malaysians

Farmers complain of bribery

The Nedunchalai (NH-68) Pathikkapatta Vivasayigal Nala Sangam (an association of agriculturists affected by national highways project) has moved the Madras High Court alleging bribery, in Salem district, for a higher compensation for their land that was acquired for widening the Ulundurpet-Salem national highway.

In the petition, the organisation's president, R. Gopalakrishnan, said land and houses on both sides of the existing highway were acquired for widening the carriageway. Because of this project, the association members lost their land, houses and wells. A meagre compensation was paid. The members sought enhanced compensation.

The petitioner alleged that in Salem district, a retired tahsildar and a sub-collector had been entrusted with the arbitration proceedings. Bribe was being demanded for fixing an increased compensation, he said. The association requested the Court to transfer all the claim petitions pending before the Salem collector to some other district collector or to appoint retired district judges as arbitrators.

When the matter came up before Justice K.K. Sasidharan, the petition was adjourned to Friday. He said the competent authority and the special DRO, Salem and Villupuram (land acquisition), NH, be included as parties.

He directed the government to study if the association's applications could be transferred to nearby district collectors to carry out inquiries into the allegations.

462 get farmers' security scheme cover

Benefits amounting to Rs. 20.31 lakh were provided to 462 farmers in Senthurai taluk under Chief Minister's 'Uzhavar Padukappu Thittam' on Tuesday.

There are 660 newly-enrolled members in the taluk under the scheme that aims at the well-being of farmers, irrespective of their castes. The official machinery delivers the benefits at their doorsteps; assistance is provided

for 14 agriculture-allied activities under the scheme, District Collector M. Ravikumar said after handing over the benefits to the farmers. Farmers who are unable to work due to old age and landless farm labourers were entitled to monthly pension of Rs. 1,000. Marriage assistance of Rs. 8,000 for the bridegroom and Rs. 10,000 for the bride was provided. In the event of natural death of a farmer enrolled under the scheme, Rs. 10,000 is given to family members to perform the last rites. The farmers are entitled to accident relief ranging from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 1 lakh and the scheme provides for educational assistance for their children for pursuing diploma, engineering, undergraduate, and post graduate studies, the Collector said. Along with senior officials, the Collector received 1,137 petitions from the farmers.

Farm implements distributed

M. Rangasamy, MLA, distributed agriculture inputs under Kuruvai special package programme here on Tuesday. He distributed high density poly ethylene pipes (HDPP) to five farmers. He distributed eight packets of bio-fertiliser, five kilos of paddy micronutrients, gypsum, and one litre of bio-pesticide each to 23 farmers. M. Rathnasamy, MLA, and Sekar, Joint Director of Agriculture, were present.

Gudalur banana to be shipped to Middle East

Progressive banana growers in Gudalur and nearby areas not only get bumper harvest this season but also get to tap global market, particularly Middle East countries, thanks to the adoption of advanced technologies, precision farming techniques, use of organic manure and effective irrigation

methods, they harvest high quality fruits with better shelf life. “To begin with, we do not directly export banana to foreign countries. We export through exporters. High quality fruit with uniform size and colour, long shelf life help gain access to international market,” says R. Madhan Kumar, banana grower from Lower Gudalur.

The weight of one bunch of the fruit is around 45 to 56 kg. Some farmers have produced fruits weighing up to 62 kg.

Many farmers in Gudalur have shifted to banana cultivation from grape, which is a highly labour-oriented one. Moreover acute care is also necessary to protect the plant till harvest. After 75 per cent of ripening, these fruits will be transported to the harbour in refrigerated containers and shipped to Middle East in 12 days time.

Prices of coconut products may rise

Fall in production in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka

The fall in the production of coconut in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, as reported in a study conducted by the Coconut Development Board, is likely to benefit farmers in Kerala, the government estimates.

The report indicates that the price of coconut oil which had touched Rs.7,000 a quintal may shoot up further in the coming months and in the Onam festival market.

A government press note issued here on Monday said the import of coconut oil from Tamil Nadu had dropped significantly following a 16 per cent fall in coconut production in that State during 2012-13. Karnataka had also reported a fall of 12 per cent in production. The survey was carried out

by the board in association with educational institutions in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

Citing the report, the press note said coconut products were not likely to witness a fall in price in Kerala.

Growth in market

Staff Reporter writes from Palakkad: The market for tender coconut water has registered over 30 per cent growth, renewing hopes in coconut farmers that the present crisis of crash in coconut product prices will soon fade away. The local tender coconut water market is now mainly serviced by imports from neighbouring States.

But Coconut Development Board (CDB), in a recent study, found more than 30 per cent growth in the local tender coconut water market.

Tender coconut water could be made popular as a health and sports drink as done in some other coconut-growing countries.

The draft Agriculture Development Policy of the State government released recently called for “introducing dwarf varieties in at least 25 per cent of the new trees or through under-planting in the existing coconut gardens for meeting the ever-growing requirement of the State’s Official Drink – tender coconut water”. It said the “State government, with assistance from the CDB, should plan to popularise cultivation of dwarf and hybrid varieties through the coconut products’ societies”. The CDB estimated that the share of dwarf coconut trees in Kerala was only one per cent as against a national share of 3.4 per cent.

The dwarf varieties would grow just 20-30 feet high. Its water content was almost double, at 600 ml per nut, than the tall varieties besides bearing fruits from as early as three years.

Kollam turns to Alangulam for vegetables



From where does Kollam get its vegetables? Truckloads of vegetables arrive at the markets here every day but not many know from where these farm produce come from.

Well, different vegetables may be grown in different places, but the bulk of them reach Kollam from the small town of Alangulam in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. This has been happening for more than 60 years, and each day, more than 35 trucks loaded with vegetables from Alangulam reach Kollam city and nearby towns.

No-one knows how Alangulam developed into the main source of greengrocers in Kollam. But the fact is that even potatoes from as far as Agra and onions from Pune reach Kollam via Alangulam. There are at least 12 wholesale vegetable dealers at Alangulam catering to the demand from Kollam city, important towns in the district and parts of Alappuzha and Thiruvananthapuram.

About 130 km from Kollam, Alangulam is located on the Tenkasi-Tirunelveli road and the vegetable trucks enter Kollam district through the Shengottai and the Aryankavu border check-posts. Alangulam is a township with its own farms and surrounded by villages that abundantly grow vegetables.

By virtue of being located on a main artery, farmers in the past used to bring their produce to Alangulam to be traded in various markets in Tamil Nadu. These were mainly tomato, brinjal, bitter gourd, green chilli, okra, shallot, snake gourd, drumstick, pumpkin and many varieties of bananas and tamarind. Vegetable traders from Kollam who also went there identified Alangulam as a convenient place to make purchases if it got more organised.

Trade links

The Kollam greengrocers needed more than what was grown in and around Alangulam. S. Christopher, wholesaler, hailing from a family in the job for more than 50 years, says that as trade links were established, the Alangulam wholesalers understood that requirement and began to procure vegetables such as potato, onion, cabbage, carrot, beetroot and cauliflower from distant places for the Kollam markets.

These were mainly sourced from Agra, Indore, Pune, Mettupalayam, Kolar and Hosur. Mr. Christopher says that when it comes to potatoes and onions from Pune or Agra, the minimum order should be for loads of 15 tonnes each. But that is no problem since the demand from Kollam is heavy and there have been occasions when it was difficult to meet the orders.

Seeing the demand, farmers in Tirunelveli started growing other vegetables on an experimental basis and are successful, he says. When locally grown vegetables go out of season, the traders bring them to Alangulam from distant places for the Kollam market. These days, even de-husked coconuts have become a major commodity from Alangulam.

At the wholesale vegetable market at Alangulam, one can see labourers constantly bagging vegetables to be loaded on to trucks bound for Kollam.

Mr. Christopher says that Alangulam's vegetable bond with Kollam is now so strong that it cannot be easily broken.

Cheaper veggies draw crowds to farmers' market

Integrated market concept catching on, but shoppers don't want fruit and meat stalls under one roof



FULL SWING:A busy day at the farmers' market in Bibikulam in the city.—

Photo: R. Ashok

Business is going full swing at the 'Uzhavar Sandhai' (farmers' market) at 7 a.m. at Bibikulam on a Saturday. People walk in with big cloth bags and scouted around to pick fresh vegetables.

An estimated 7,000 people visit the sandhai daily, according to K. Arumugam, an agricultural officer at the market. "We get nearly 45 tonnes of produce a day," he says. The farmers' market, managed by the Agriculture department at Bibikulam, and the Corporation-run Central Market at Mattuthavani have been seeing a steady increase in customers over the years. This is because vegetables are priced lower at these markets than at the retail outlets that stock vegetables and the grocery stores in the city.

Since 2000, when the farmer's market was opened, farmers have been bringing their fresh produce to sell at the market on a daily basis.

"Weekends witness maximum business," says Shanthi, a seller at the sandhai, who hawks vegetables that her family grows in Kodaikanal.

"The prices of vegetables have fallen this month and the demand is steady," she says. Onions are currently sold at Rs.33 per kilo.

The price of vegetables in the sandhai is fixed by a team of agricultural officers who ensure that they are at least 30 per cent less than the prices at the retail outlets. The absence of middlemen in this market has resulted in farmers enjoying a 30 per cent profit.

"The fact that they do not have to pay any rent or commission to sell their produce here adds to their profits," says Mr. Arumugam.

In contrast to this compact Sandhai, the Central Market at Mattuthavani is a sprawling area filled with wholesale dealers.

"Many roadside retailers come and buy vegetables from us owing to the bulk quantity that we have," says shopkeeper G. Balamurugan.

Customers travel long distances to buy vegetables from these two markets over the weekend to stock vegetables for the rest of the week. S. Karthiga, a resident of Aarapalayam, who frequents the Central Market, says that the prices of vegetables are relatively cheaper there.

"As the prices suit our household budgets, we do not mind travelling the distance," she says.

The need for an integrated market is growing, especially among buyers who visit these markets.

“However, we are forced to travel to Simakkal to buy fruits. If fruit and meat are available at the same place, it will be convenient for buyers,” says R. Mahesh, a buyer.

But the feasibility of an integrated market is open to question. “Many people might object to a meat stall located close to vegetable stalls,” said Shankar Narayanan, Assistant General Manager, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

“Integration is possible only if there is space for stalls to be located comfortably apart. We need that kind of a facility for the idea of an integrated market to be implemented,” he reasoned.

The farmers have been receptive to the infrastructure that these markets offer. At the Bibikulam Farmer’s Market, there are restrooms with regular water supply and a canteen that provides free food for the farmers. A cold storage unit at the market ensures that farmers can store unsold vegetables.

“We sell them in the afternoon or the next day,” said a vendor.

The government provides authorised weights and measures, which the farmers use while selling their products. “People frequent this market because they are sure of the quality of the vegetables,” said Mr.

Arumugam. But the vendors at the Central Market complain about the lack of regular drinking water supply. “We bring water cans with us as we have to sit here the whole day,” said Anand, a coconut seller. “Steps should be taken to provide us with drinking water since we are paying close to Rs.800 as rent every month to use these premises,” he points out.

Coconut farmers hopeful

The market for tender coconut water has registered over 30 per cent growth, renewing hopes in coconut farmers that the present crisis of crash in coconut product prices will soon fade away. The local tender coconut water market is now mainly serviced by imports from neighbouring States.

Upward trend

But Coconut Development Board (CDB), in a recent study, found more than 30 per cent growth in the local tender coconut water market.

Tender coconut water could be made popular as a health and sports drink as done in some other coconut-growing countries.

Areca farmers to get payout

Yellow leaf disease has hit plantations in six districts, including Dakshina Kannada, Udupi

The State government has constituted a 16-member committee to recommend special package to arecanut growers whose plantations have been affected by yellow leaf disease (YLD) and other diseases. The committee is headed by S.B. Dandin, Vice-Chancellor, University of Horticultural Sciences, Bagalkot.

The committee would be recommending alternative crop in plantations completely hit by the disease; and inter-crop and mixed crop in partially-hit plantations.

The committee has been asked to find out how affected farmers could be “scientifically compensated”. The government order issued on June 29 has asked the committee to submit its report within two months.

The preamble of the order said the committee was formed after a decision was taken in a meeting presided over by the Speaker of the Assembly

Kagodu Thimmapa on June 6 to send a special package proposal to the Centre. This meeting felt that the special package should enable the farmers whose plantations have been totally hit so that they can remove all the disease-hit palms and grow an alternative crop. In the case of partially-hit plantations, the proposal was for an inter-crop amid arecanut palms that have not been affected.

According to the order, the yellow leaf disease and other diseases have hit arecanut plantations in Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Uttara Kannada, Chikmagalur, Shimoga and Kodagu districts. Arecanut is also grown in Chitradurga, Davangere, Tumkur and Hassan districts.

Among the members of the committee are head of the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI), Vitla, Dakshina Kannada; T. N. Prakash Kmmadari, a professor of agriculture economics, University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore; head, Arecanut Research Centre, Sringeri, Chikmagalur district and other officials of the Department of Horticulture. Meanwhile, in his reply to a non-star question by K. Monappa Bhandary, MLC, in the Legislative Council on July 16, Shamanur Shivashankarappa, Minister for Horticulture and Agricultural Marketing from Cooperation, replied that the State produced 3.66 lakh tonnes of arecanut annually from 2.28 lakh hectares.

Crops rot as monsoon strikes heavy

Paddy, maize and arecanut crops across 12,061 acres of land are damaged



Farmers transplanting paddy crop. Paddy nurseries in 2,900 acres of land have been washed away in rain water in Tirthahalli taluk.– File Photo: B. Velankanni Raj

The incessant rain that has lashed the district for the past few days has wreaked widespread damage to standing crops.

Joint Director of Department of Agriculture Shivamurthappa said that preliminary estimates indicate agriculture crops in 12,061 acres of land, including paddy cultivated in 7,129 acres and maize cultivated in 4,830 acres, has been damaged due to rain. The officials of Agriculture and Revenue departments are conducting a joint survey to assess the actual loss, he said.

Owing to scanty rainfall in the district last year, the farmers in some parts of Shikaripur, Sorab and Sagar taluks who had cultivated paddy, had incurred loss. They had switched over to maize crop that requires less water this year. Owing to heavy rain this year, the maize saplings are rotting in the water.

The excess moisture has resulted in downy mildew disease in maize crops, due to which the leaf turns yellow, resulting in the death of the plant later.

The paddy nurseries in 2,900 acres of land have been washed away in rain water in Tirthahalli taluk. In Talaguppa hobli limits in Sagar taluk, paddy crop in 1,100 acres of land has remained inundated in the waters of Varada river that is flowing above the danger mark for the past 10 days.

The agricultural operations like removal of weeds, providing additional dose of fertilisers, and transplantation of paddy saplings have been paralysed due to heavy rain.

The excess moisture content has also resulted in fruit-rot disease, popularly known as kole roga, in the arecanut crop. Arecanut is grown in an area of 46,000 hectares in the district. Deputy Director of Horticulture M. Vishwanath told *The Hindu* that nearly 40 per cent of the arecanut plantations in the district was infected with kole roga.

Sadashivappa, a farmer in Anavatti village in Sorab taluk, said that normally copper sulphate mixture is sprayed to arecanut trees in the month of June to avoid kole roga.

As monsoon became active since the first week of June this year, the farmers could not spray copper sulphate.

He said the arecanut yield in his plantation is likely to come down by 50 per cent due to kole roga.

Mr. Vishwanath said that the ginger crop in Anandapuram, Kumsi, Harnahalli, Avinahalli and surrounding villages have been infected by soft rot, leaf spot and stem borer diseases.

Ginger has been cultivated in 12,000 acres of land in the district this year. According to preliminary survey, 25 per cent of ginger has been infected with these diseases.

Mr. Vishwanath said awareness programmes are being conducted for farmers at hobli level on pest and fungal management.

Create sustainable agriculture models'

Litterateur S.G. Siddaramaiah has called upon the agriculture colleges to work towards evolving sustainable agriculture models.

He was addressing a programme organised to mark the inauguration of students' cultural forum of University of Agriculture and Horticulture Sciences (UAHS), Shimoga, in the city on Tuesday.

He said the agriculture sector was commercialised in recent times. Aiming to enhance the profit, farmers are opting for high-yield varieties of crops. Unmindful of the soil and climatic conditions, the farmers have undertaken cultivation of commercial crops due to which they have incurred heavy loss, he said.

The fruits of study and research that take place in agriculture colleges should reach the farmers. The farmers in rural India also have good understanding of climate, soil conditions and pest management.

The agriculture colleges should strive to work out a convergence between the modern and native agriculture practices, Mr. Siddaramaiah said. The agriculture models practiced in Western nations should not be considered as infallible, he said.

The agriculture colleges should popularise sustainable and eco-friendly farming practices, he said. They should publish books in Kannada on native seeds and non-chemical farming for the benefit of farmers.

After the completion of their course, the agriculture students will have to interact with the farmers regularly. It is necessary for the agriculture

graduates to develop skills of conversing in Kannada language to reach the farmers in an effective manner, he said.

The forum was inaugurated by Vice Chancellor P.M. Salimath. Speaking on the occasion, he said that issues related to agriculture should become part of curriculum at primary school level.

Anwar predicts record rice production



Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Processing Industries, Tariq Anwar, with ASSOCHAM secretary general D.S. Rawat at ASSOCHAM's Bio-Agri 2013 Summit in New Delhi on Monday. Photo: PTI

India's rice production is likely to hit an all-time high in the ongoing Kharif season on the back of good monsoon that has propelled sowing area, Minister of State for Agriculture Tariq Anwar said on Tuesday.

"Monsoon has been good so far this year. As per the reports received from the states, sowing area is higher and it seems that this time we will set new records in food grain production during Kharif," Mr. Anwar said on the sidelines of an ASSOCHAM's Bio-Agri summit. Rice production is expected to set a record in Kharif season, he added.

Earlier Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar had also said the production of food grains in Kharif season could break all previous records.

The all-time high in food grains output for Kharif season was 131.27 million tonnes (MT) set in 2011-12. However, the output fell during last year because of drought in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan. The all-time high output of rice was also in 2011-12 at 92.78 MT. Area under Kharif crops, including paddy, had increased by 17.70 per cent to 747.78 lakh hectares till last week. The acreage of paddy, a major kharif (summer-sown) crop, rose by 8.58 per cent to 196.38 lakh hectares. Sowing of kharif (summer) crops begins with the onset of South-west monsoon from June. The country had received an excess of 21 per cent rainfall till last week. The advancement of monsoon rains had also pushed area under pulses by 90 per cent to 73.62 lakh hectares. Similarly, area sown for coarse cereals has increased to 148.82 lakh hectares from 117.48 lakh hectares in the review period.

School students learn vermicomposting technologies



VERMICOMPOSTING

The Directorate of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University conducted a six-month certificate course on 'Solid Waste Management and Vermicompost Production Technology' for

students of Cambridge Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Tirupur. Students learnt the technology from experts of the university at the school during 2012-13.

Those who had completed the course were awarded certificates. M. Maheswaran, Director of Research, TNAU, gave away the certificates to students.

P. Santhy, Director in-charge, ODL, spoke on the importance of composting the disposed waste as manure for a healthy environment.

K. Duraisamy, Secretary of the school, explained the practical uses that the knowledge of students on vermicomposting would be put to.

Training in bakery products

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University will organise a training in preparing novel bakery products on August 6 and 7. The training will cover varieties of breads, cakes, and biscuits.

Those interested can attend the training by paying a fee of Rs. 1,000. For details, contact Head, Post Harvest Technology Centre, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore – 641003. For details, contact 0422-6611340 / 6611268.

Training

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University will organise a training in bee keeping on August 6 on the university premises.

According to a university release, hands-on training will be imparted in identification of bee species and social organisation of bees, rearing Indian bees in boxes, general and seasonal management and bee forage among others. Interested candidates have to reach the Department of Entomology

before 9 a.m. The fee of Rs. 250 has to be remitted. The training is from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. A certificate will be given at the end of the training.

Candidates can call 0422-6611214, or e-mail to entomology@tnau.ac.in. for details.

Standing crops inundated on more than 400 acres in Yadgir

Water release from Narayanpur dam increased to 2.69 lakh cusecs on Tuesday



damaged: Paddy, sugarcane, and cotton crops are under water in five villages on the banks of the Krishna in Yadgir district.

Standing crops in more than 400 acres in five villages on the banks of the Krishna were inundated on Tuesday following the release of water from the Narayanpur dam.

Official sources told *The Hindu* here on Tuesday that paddy, sugarcane, and cotton crops were under water in Chowdeshwarihal in Surpur taluk and Kollur, Anaskasugur, Hayyal and Ikur villages in Shahapur taluk.

While the Krishna Bhagya Jala Nigama Ltd (KBJNL) authorities stepped up the release of water from the Narayanpur dam to 2.62 lakh cusecs from

Monday evening to midnight, it was increased to 2.69 lakh cusecs on Tuesday following heavy inflow into the dam.

According to reports reaching the district headquarters, floodwaters have not entered human habitations so far. No loss of life has been reported.

Bridge submerged

Flash floods once again disrupted movement of traffic on the Kollur bridge that connects Yadgir with Raichur via Deodurg.

The bridge is submerged. According to estimates, the floodwaters were flowing 2 ft over the submerged bridge. Traffic has been diverted via Surpur and Tinthini bridge to get to Raichur from Yadgir and Gulbarga districts.

Deputy Commissioner F.R. Jamadar has instructed officials of the Revenue and Agriculture departments to conduct a detailed survey of the affected areas and submit a comprehensive report on the crop loss at the earliest.

Meanwhile, the situation of people marooned on Neelakantarayanagaddi islet continues to be precarious with the authorities yet to fix the puncture in the punctured motorised inflatable boat.

They are also facing a shortage of foodgrains.

Of the four persons from the islet who were stranded at Benchigaddi village on the banks of the river, one swam back to the islet.

Revenue Department officials did not prevent him from venturing into the swollen river. The remaining three are staying in the village.

The authorities said that the puncture in the boat would be fixed on Wednesday morning and the boat service would be resumed.

Standing crops on 824 ha destroyed

111 houses damaged in four taluks in Belgaum district

Standing crops on 824 ha have been destroyed by floods in the district.

Agriculture Department officials said here on Tuesday that preliminary reports indicated standing crops in 39 villages along the Krishna in Chikkodi, Raibag and Athani taluks were destroyed. The loss was estimated to be around Rs. 332.65 lakh.

A proper survey would be conducted once the flood situation eased and the level of the Krishna and other rivers in the district receded to assess the extent of crop loss, officials said.

Due to continuous rainfall, 111 houses were partially damaged during the last 24 hours in the district. As many as 97 houses were damaged in Chikkodi taluk, 11 in Belgaum taluk, one in Raibag and two in Gokak.

District administration officials said the loss was estimated to be around Rs. 22.08 lakh.

In spate

The Krishna, the Vedganga and the Doodhganga continued to be in spate, leaving 21 bridges, barrages and roads in Chikkodi, Athani and Raibag taluks submerged for yet another day on Tuesday. The Rajapur barrage was overflowing at the rate of 1,71,109 cusecs. The outflow from Koyna the dam upstream in Maharashtra had come down to 30,103 cusecs during the day.

Sources said the Alamatti dam continued to receive an inflow of 2,37,359 cusecs. The outflow stood at 2,59,600 cusecs.

Storage

The storage level at the dam had been marginally reduced to 517.25 m (maximum 519.6 m).

The Hippargi barrage continued to overflow and the level was 525 m (maximum 524.87 m). Rain continued in Belgaum city and other parts of

the district with occasional periods of sunshine, keeping the day temperature less than 24 degrees Celsius. The district received a total rainfall of 176.3 mm during the month as against the normal of 197.1 mm for July.

Water-levels

Hidkal dam across the Ghataprabha river: 2,158.13 ft (maximum 2175 ft), inflow 16,982 cusecs, outflow 119 cusecs.

Navilteerth dam across the Malaprabha river: ,2061.2 ft (maximum 2079 ft), inflow 8,239 cusecs, outflow 624 cusecs.

Campaign to popularise 'Neera'

The Kerala State Coconut Producers Society has decided to send representations to all concerned, including Chief Minister Oommen Chandy and Agriculture Minister K.P. Mohanan, to offer more incentives to coconut producers to produce 'Neera.'

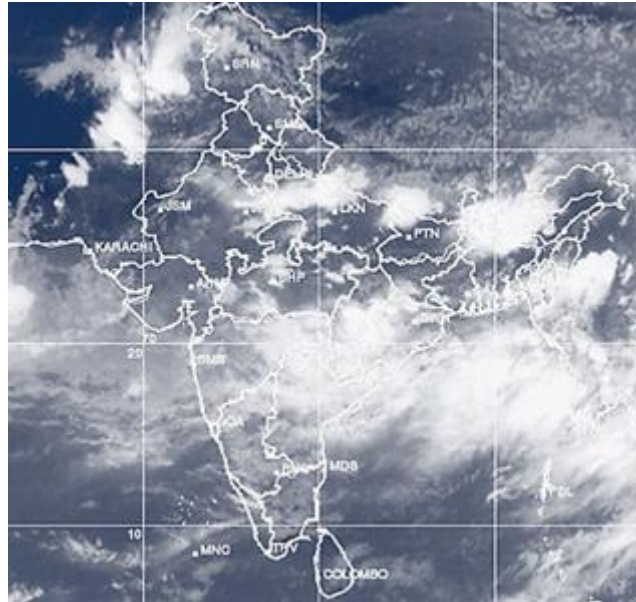
P. Pradeep Kumar, president of the society, said in Kozhikode on Tuesday that the government should take measures to ensure 10 per cent of coconut trees in the State should be tapped for 'Neera' and training programmes should be arranged for 'Neera' technicians with support of Coconut Development Board.

The society demanded formation of Neera Development Corporation and exemption for 'Neera' from purview of Abkari Act.

Inauguration

Mr. Chandy is expected in Kozhikode on August 3 to inaugurate the society's programmes. The society will write to all MLAs seeking their support to the campaign to popularise 'Neera.'

weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on July 30th.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	37	27	21	343
New Delhi (Sfd)	36	26	29	460
Chandigarh	36	28	22	473
Hissar	39	28	0	234
Bhantar	33	23	0	319
Shimla	24	19	0	527
Jammu	34	24	34	478
Srinagar	35	23	0	133
Amritsar	37	25	22	275
Patiala	37	28	0	442
Jaipur	33	27	1	313
Udaipur	28	24	0	444
Allahabad	32	27	0	632

Lucknow	33	26	0	491	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 South west monsoon has been active over Jammu & Kashmir. The axis of monsoon trough on S.L.C passes through Ferozpur, Karnal, Merrut, Mainpuri and Allahabad and thence South East wards. RAINFALL: Rain/thunder-showers have occurred at many places over Jammu and Kashmir and east Rajasthan, at a few places over Himachal Pradesh and Punjab and at isolated places over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (5 cm and above) HIMACHAL PRADESH: Saloni 9 and Nurpur 5, JAMMU AND KASHMIR: Jammu Aero 6, Bhaderwah and Katra 5, EAST RAJASTHAN: Pipalada 11, Mangrol, Manohar thana and Neem Kathana 9 each, Atru 8, Kisanganj 7, Sikar Tehsil 6, Raipur, Sahada, Aklera, Asnawar and Bonli each 5, WEST UTTAR PRADESH : Deoband 11.
Varanasi	33	27	0	389	
Dehradun	28	26	14	1780	
Agartala	32	25	tr	521	
Ahmedabad	29	24	7	575	
Bangalore	26	19	0	313	
Bhubaneshwar	30	25	17	530	
Bhopal	24	23	26	852	
Chennai	34	26	0	304	
Guwahati	36	27	0	547	
Hyderabad	31	22	0	393	
Kolkata	30	25	77	780	
Mumbai	29	25	1	1820	
Nagpur	30	23	1	952	
Patna	34	27	3	171	
Pune	27	21	5	485	
Thiruvananthapuram	33	25	0	746	
Imphal	30	24	3	457	
Shillong	27	20	0	531	

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 1st August

2013 : Rain/thundershowers may occur at many places over Haryana,

Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and west Uttar Pradesh. Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places over east Rajasthan and Punjab during next 24 hrs and increase thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places over east Uttar Pradesh and at one or two places over west Rajasthan. Rain/thundershowers may occur at few places over rest of the region.

HEAVY RAINFALL WARNING: Heavy rain fall may occur at one or two places over Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir during next 72 hrs and west Uttar pradesh on 31st July and 1st August.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 1st August 2013: Generally cloudy sky.

Rain/thundershowers would occur in some areas.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Rain-battered orange growers demand Rs 25,000 per acre compensation

Early monsoon with unusually heavy and continuous rains have not only caused severe crop damage to conventional kharif crops like cotton, soyabean, paddy etc but it has adversely affected both the orange crops in the region, the mrig bahar which brings fruit from February onwards as well as ambia bahar which brings fruits from October onwards. But comparatively mrig bahar is almost doomed with just 20-30% area orchards bearing some fruits and remaining area with no fruiting.

It has given a huge setback to all orange growers. Various orange growers' associations are thus demanding a compensation of at least Rs 25,000 per acre. Sunil Shinde former MLA, Manoj Jawanjil of the Santra Utpadak Sangh from Katol, Shridhar Thakre of Maha Orange and Ramesh Jichkar of Maharashtra Orange Growers Association (MOGA) are all demanding this compensation to all affected farmers. It is second consecutive year that Mrig has failed completely.

Speaking to TOI Jawanjil said that it is after a period of about 15 years that both mrig bahar, which covers 70% area and ambia bahar with remaining 30% area, have been drastically affected. Technically to fruit properly the orchards should get about 150mm of rainfall till mid July but it had rained almost double this figure in June itself. But this year the monsoon arrived about a fortnight earlier and it continued to rain with no sunlight exposure to the trees. Orange trees require a break in rain and fruiting is good only if the water stress is adequate. It has had a telling effect on the carbon-nitrogen ratio and overall metabolism of the plant.

"There has been some flowering in light soil but not heavy and medium soil orchards for mrig crop. Temperature in April-May had even touched 45-47 degrees Celsius. So now with heavy rains there is fruit drop even in ambia crop due to attack of pathogen due to high humidity. The ambia fruits are not growing at right pace," said the director of the National Research Centre for Citrus (NRCC) VJ Shivankar. He said that though his centre has not conducted any formal survey as yet, but the gross reality is that mrig has fruited only 20-40% whereas ambia is slightly better, but not in all areas.

Ramesh Matkar, an engineer turned farmer from Jawada Khurd village in Anjangaon Surji taluka of Amravati district, Nandkumar Madge from Chandurbazar area and Bandu Wasankar from Paratwada who take mainly ambia bahar as they have irrigation facility, say that due to continuous rains there is big fruit drop even in ambia bahar and only about 40 to 50% farmers or orchards could get some fruits. But Swapnil Dhote from Katol taluka says that mrig is completely gone and one could get just 10-20% fruits.

Mohammad Iliyas, a trader from Paratwada area is uncertain about the future of both crops. "You never know the bad quality could fetch low price or less quantity may bring some profits. But overall orange farmer as well as buyers are in loss," he said.

Jeevan Kadu from Morshi area says that mostly mrig orchards have survived in Satpuda's hilly areas due to light soil. This year mrig has fruited in only Temburkheda, Gawan Kund, Padsona, Dhamandas, Jamgaon in Warud taluka and Hiwarkheda bala, Salburdi and Ghat ladki villages in

Morshi taluka.

Compensation call

- * After 15 years both mrig bahar and ambia bahar have been drastically affected
- * Mrig bahar covers 70% area and ambia bahar remaining 30%
- * Since mrig bahar has almost completely failed and ambia has only about 50% fruit survival the orange growers are demanding a compensation of Rs 25,000 per acre this year for mrig bahar
- * To fruit properly orchards should get 150mm rainfall till mid-July
- * But it rained almost the double in June itself
- * Former MLA Sunil Shinde is demanding parallel compensation for pomegranate due to Lal Chatta and loss of ambia bahar
- * Suitable compensation to ambia bahar growers depending on the survival rate of fruits

Rain damages standing crop in 23 districts

The standing crop spread over seven lakh hectares of land in 23 districts of the state has been damaged by rain, data compiled by the state agriculture department has said. The state has 135 lakh hectares of land under cultivation for the kharif season.

About 50% of vegetables, fruits and cash crops like sugarcane in four lakh hectares of land have suffered. A thick layer of soil in about 25,500 hectares has been washed away, apart from the 1,056 hectares of land where the damage is irreparable. More than a meter of productive, nutrient-rich soil was washed away by rain and cannot be reclaimed.

"Excessive rain tends to wash away the upper layer of soil. This means that the productive layer, carrying several essential nutrients, is washed away," an official said.

The irreparable damage to soil due to floods has been reported in Akola (117 hectares), Washim (474 hectares) and Chandrapur (465 hectares) districts of Vidarbha. "Most of this land was adjacent to a river or a nullah. Floods take away soil up to a meter or more," he said.

As many as 147 blocks from the 23 districts have reported damage to crops. A senior official told TOI that of the seven lakh hectares of cultivated land affected, three lakh hectares show below 50% damage and the remaining land showed more than 50% crop damage.

The crops that suffered more than 50% damage due to rain include paddy, soybean, cotton, tur, vegetables, fruit plantations such as banana, grapes and cash crops like sugarcane. In addition, paddy nurseries too have suffered.

Shop owners struggle to meet flower demand in

With the beginning of the month of Shraavan, sale of flowers and coconuts has shot up in the city. Throughout the season shopkeepers are unable to meet the great demand for flowers and coconuts leading to a shortage in supply. Especially on Mondays during this month, people visit various Shiva temples in Ranchi thus making these items essential.

Manoj Prasad, a flower vendor near Pahari Mandir, said, "I earn four times more in the month of Shraavan than what I earn in any other month. The sale of flowers goes up in this month as almost every Hindu in the city offer flowers to Lord Shiva this time of the year."

Coconut also forms an important part of the puja. So, it too is in great demand during Shravan. The mushrooming shops selling flowers and coconuts around the major temples during this month try to cater to the people's demand. But, these too fall short of delivering the amount which people in the city require.

Satyavrata Das, a flower vendor, said, "Now we are bringing flowers from other cities every alternate day to meet the demand. We are getting flowers from Kolkata and Medinipur in West Bengal. Some vendors are even bringing flowers from Chhattisgarh." He added, "The problem is that the production of flowers at the local level is very less so we have to bring them from other states. It would have been more convenient and cheaper for us if the flowers were available in Ranchi through proper horticulture."

Secretary of Market Committee of Ranchi, Amlendu Kumar, said he will be taking an initiative to increase the production of flowers. "If the production of flowers is increased at the local level then many will be employed. An amendment under the Jharkhand Agriculture Production Market Act, 2000 says that any private entrepreneur can get a licence for flower production. Thus, when the production starts we can also help in marketing it," Kumar said.

Coconuts are also brought to the city from West Bengal, Odisha and Kerala. A coconut vendor, Mahendra Patel, said, "There are more than 250 coconut vendors in the city and the approximate sale of coconuts in the month of Shravan can be estimated to be more than Rs2-3 crores. There is a probability that I alone will be able to sell coconuts worth more than Rs3 lakh."

Adopt state's model for food security'

Chhattisgarh chief minister Dr Raman Singh on Tuesday urged the Centre to rise above partisan politics and emulate the state's food security model for the betterment of poor in the country. He said he had written to the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh suggesting changes in the present Food Security Act.

Addressing the symposium on National Food Security Act, 2013 in Delhi, Raman said the state had been successful to a great extent in mitigating the problems faced by poor families by providing them subsidized food grains under the Chhattisgarh Food and Nutrition Security Act. "The implementation of the state's Food and Nutrition Act had been the most fulfilling achievement in my entire political career," he said adding that this had ensured access to food by all poor families.

Maintaining that no magical wand had drafted the Act in a single day, the chief minister said it was the result of eight years of hard work and meditation. He said no political figure who is at the helm of affairs should be at peace until availability of food is ensured to each individual of the country. "All talks of development are useless if citizens are not guaranteed a right to food," he said.

Saying that the state's model had been appreciated across the world, Singh highlighted how his government had been working since 2004 for bringing in reforms in the Public Distribution System. "We have proved that even a corrupt system like the PDS could be turned into a well-functioning, robust system if there is political will," he said.

The Chhattisgarh government made the entire procurement process hassle-free and simple and has created a record this year by procuring 71

lakh metric tonnes of paddy at payment of over Rs 10,000 thousand crores to farmers. The entire payment process was made computerized and immediate payment through cheque was introduced.

Surplus sowing in Saurashtra

More than 100 per cent sowing has been carried out in Saurashtra as moderate rainfall continued to lash parts of Saurashtra on Tuesday. The region has been receiving regular showers over the last fortnight.

The farmers are happy over the continuing showers and have gone in for excess sowing that has crossed the 100 per cent mark.

Agriculture department officials said that farmers have largely sown groundnut, cotton, bajra, sesame, guvar, vegetable and fodder in the region. In fact, the sowing of groundnut, guvar, soyabean and some oilseeds has crossed the 100 per cent mark in the entire state.

In Saurashtra, groundnut has been sown in 1407000 hectares and cotton has been sown in 1686900 hectares. In all sowing has been reported in 3709400 hectares of land against the average cultivable area of 3615500 hectares in the region. The early arrival of monsoon had triggered widespread sowing in June itself.

The continuing spell of precipitation has led to an increase in the storage levels of the 135 dams in the region. At present these dams have been filled 29.07 per cent on an average. Sources said that three dams in Junagadh and Surendranagar districts are overflowing.

On Tuesday, the districts that received showers included Jamnagar, Amreli, Junagadh and Surendranagar districts. Visavadar taluka of Junagadh district which received 29 mm of rainfall, followed by Talala (26

mm), Keshod (21 mm) and Una (15 mm) while Dhari in Amreli district received 25 mm of rainfall.

According to the data available with State Emergency Response Centre, Saurashtra has already received over 79 per cent of its average annual rainfall.

Meanwhile, Met department officials said that heavy rains would occur at isolated places in the state including Saurashtra during the next 24 hours.

Mixed trend in spot rubber

Spot rubber prices were mixed on Tuesday.

The undercurrent was weak following the continuous decline in the domestic futures market, though sheet rubber managed to hold on to prevailing levels on supply concerns.

The absence of genuine buyers kept the commodity under pressure during late trading hours and selected counters slipped amidst scattered transactions.

Sheet rubber finished unchanged at Rs 195 a kg at Kottayam and Kochi, according to traders and the Rubber Board. Volumes were dull.

August futures weakened to Rs 190.60 (Rs 191.27), September to Rs 178.15 (Rs 179.12), October to Rs 168 (Rs 169.17), November to Rs 163.55 (Rs 164.63) and December to Rs 163 (Rs 163.54) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) slipped to Rs 147.38 (Rs 148.19) at Bangkok.

August futures closed at ¥ 236.4 (Rs 145.57) on Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates Rs/kg were: RSS-4: 195 (195); RSS-5: 189 (190); ungraded: 179 (179); ISNR 20: 178 (179) and latex 60%: 163 (166).

'Tea exporters likely to gain on rupee's fall'

Despite tea prices in the international market ruling lower in dollar this year, exporters of Assam tea are likely to end up with a net gain this year, riding on rupee depreciation.

The Indian currency has depreciated by 12 per cent since April this year.

The gains may reflect in the balance sheet of exporters in the peak seasons of second and third quarter of this fiscal.

“In dollar terms, the international prices may have come down a little bit but, in rupee terms, it is not so,” said Kamal Baheti, Chief Financial Officer of McLeod Russel Ltd. Baheti, however, restricted his argument mostly to quality Assam tea in an interview to *Business Line*.

The world's largest tea producer is targeting to increase its exports to 27 million kg from 25 million kg last fiscal.

According to him, higher production in Kenya has affected the demand for CTC tea. This apart, Egypt, which is a big tea consumer, has not been active so far this year due to civil disturbances.

Demand for CTC tea is slightly subdued. However, demand for quality tea from Assam has not been impacted. Any exports of quality tea from India should be in line with last year. Exports of orthodox tea will increase because of demand from West Asia and shipments to Iran through resumed rupee trade, Baheti said.

Interestingly, Baheti expects global tea prices to firm up during the residual part of the fiscal to end at the same level as last year, or slightly higher.

The move is anticipated to be driven by recovery in Kenyan tea during the later parts of the year.

During the January-May 2013 period, tea production in Kenya was up 52 per cent at 195.1 million kg compared with 128 million kg during the same period last year.

During January-March 2013, exports were higher by 15 million kg. “Though we are yet to see the April-June figures, it is likely that the total exports will be higher during the first half of 2013,” an official with the Indian Tea Association said.

He confirmed that despite the overall softening of global prices, quality teas are earning handsome returns. shobha.roy@thehindu.co.in

Kharif rice output may hit record on good monsoon

Rice production in the current kharif season may touch a record high on an increase in acreage aided by beneficial monsoon, said Tariq Anwar, Minister of State for Agriculture.

“Monsoon has been good so far this year. The sowing area is higher and it seems this time we will set new records in foodgrain production, including rice, during kharif,” Anwar told reporters on the sidelines of the Assocham Agri-Biotech event here.

Kharif rice output last year stood at 92.76 million tonnes, according to the Government’s recently-released fourth advance estimates. Total rice production last year stood at 104.40 million tonne, marginally lower than the previous year’s record 105.3 million tonnes.

Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar also said that even spread of monsoon this year could help the country break the last two years’ record in foodgrains output. Last year, kharif foodgrain output was a record high of 131.27 million tonnes.

During the current kharif season, rice has been planted on 196.38 lakh hectares area (ha) as on July 26, against 184.24 lakh ha in the corresponding period a year ago. Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab and Arunachal Pradesh have reported a higher acreage this year, while West Bengal, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh have registered a lower area.

GM crops safety

Earlier, addressing the Agri-Biotech event, Anwar said there was need to clearly establish protocols and systems through which we could come to a definite conclusion about the long-term safety of genetically modified crops. He also suggested the scientific community come together to develop a procedure through which risk assessment can be done objectively.

Reiterating the recommendation made in its interim report, the Supreme Court-appointed Technical Expert Committee recently said there should be a moratorium on field trials for Bt in food crops (those that are directly used for food) intended for commercialisation (not research) until there is more definitive information from a sufficient number of studies as to the long-term safety of Bt in food crops.

Stating that ensuring food security to the growing population was the biggest challenge that the country faced, Anwar said biotechnology was expected to play a major role.

Though the country has seen an increase in food production, it still has a long way to go in improving productivity levels.

Monsoon could be heading for a 'break'

Current weather data indicate that there could be a short 'break monsoon' spell during the first week of August, according to P.V. Joseph, expert researcher and former director of Met Department.

This will decrease the rains over most of India but increase the activity in the Northeast and hopefully wipe off the existing large deficiency there, he told *Business Line*.

LULL IN ACTIVITY

'Break monsoon' refers to the lull in monsoon activity across the country except in the Northeast after it runs through its initial course.

On occasions in the past, the 'break' has prolonged, leading to moisture stress and resultant adverse implications for standing crops.

But, as Joseph hinted, the break is expected to be short this time, which is amply supported by the outlook from international forecasting agencies.

Giving an update, he said the long-period average date of monsoon onset over Kerala was June 1 (based on a hundred years of data).

The onset happened on June 1 this year, but the rains needed just two weeks to move to the northern parts of the country. This usually takes a month.

Thus, the second half of June delivered huge excess rains over the northern parts except the northeastern States, which had deficit rains.

There was no "break" in monsoon in June and July and it was a continuously active monsoon in 2013, Joseph said.

Explaining, he said that there is a feature of the monsoon called low level jetstream, a fast-flowing air current with high winds of 40 to 60 km/hr flowing at an altitude of 1.5 km.

This stream is a carrier of the moisture required for monsoon rains and it gives the large scale dynamics for monsoon rain production.

LOW-LEVEL STREAM

During an active monsoon, the stream flows through peninsular India with its axis close to the latitude of Goa.

Heavy rains occur north of the axis. Low-pressure systems and monsoon depressions form and move in this zone north of the axis. This was happening in the second half of June and the whole of July this year, a continuous active phase of the monsoon.

As on July 29, the rainfall that India got from June 1 is 19 per cent in excess. During the same period, Kerala received 39 per cent excess rains. In a 'break' monsoon, the low-level jetstream moves south and begins to flow south of Sri Lanka, shutting off the moisture supply to India and stopping the production of low-pressure systems.

It is during this phase that Assam and adjacent States get copious rains and the rest of India will have subdued rainfall, Joseph added.

Two factors adverse to monsoon rains in India are the El Nino warming of the East Pacific and excess tropical cyclone activity in the West Pacific Ocean.

So far, conditions in the East Pacific (actual and forecast) are El Nino-neutral and the West Pacific is forecast to have a normal season for cyclones.

In June and July, the West Pacific produced five named tropical cyclones (Yagi, Leepi, Bebinca, Rumbia, and Cimaron) and one typhoon, Soulik. This activity is just around the normal, Joseph said.

Uncertainty prevails in chana market

The downtrend continued in chana with prices of chana (kanta) declining to Rs 2,775-2,800 a quintal (Rs 2,825-50) on slack demand and buying support in local mandis on Tuesday.

Similarly chana (desi) declined to Rs 2,650, chana (mausmi) Rs 3,000-3,200, while Kabuli Bitki slipped to Rs 2,700-Rs 2,800. Compared to last week, chana (kanta) is down Rs 75-Rs 100 a quintal. In the past fortnight or so, chana prices have tumbled by almost Rs 350-400.

With chana prices dropping sharply all of a sudden, uncertainty prevails in the market on where the commodity is headed.

Last year during the same period, chana prices were ruling as high as Rs 4,600.

Besides, huge domestic stock and large stock of imported Australian chickpea at the Mumbai port and bumper production of dollar chana (chickpea) in the country have contributed to current downtrend in chana.

The trend has further been weakened by reports of higher sowing in pulses during the current kharif season.

Weak demand in pulses and spot chana continue to drag chana dal as well with chana dal (average) on Tuesday being quoted at Rs 3,425-50 (Rs 3,475-3,500), chana dal (medium) declined to Rs 3,525-50 (Rs 3,550-3,600), while chana dal (bold) ruled at Rs 3,750-75.

Weak demand has also dragged dollar chana with its prices in Indore mandis on Tuesday being quoted at Rs 3,600-3,800 (down Rs 200 from last week).

Similarly, slack export demand has dragged prices of dollar chana in container by Rs 300 in the past one week.

On Tuesday, dollar chana (42/44 count) in container ruled at Rs 5,200-5,225, 44/46 count at Rs 5,000-5,025, 46/48 count at Rs 4,800-4,825, while dollar chana (58/60 count) ruled at Rs 3,400-3,425.

Arrival of dollar chana on Tuesday was recorded at 7,000-8,000 bags.

Short-covering heats up edible oil futures

The sentiment in the edible oils market turned positive late on Tuesday evening on Tuesday after the n futures market rebounded.

The futures market rebounded on short-covering by speculators.

Despite higher activities, palmolein extended loss by Re 1. Soyabean and sunflower expeller refined oils dropped by Rs 10 each. Cotton and rapeseed oil declined by Rs 2 and Rs 3 each. Higher Malaysian palm oil and domestic soyabean oil futures closing pushed up the physical market. Following renewed demand, local refineries increased their rates by Rs 3-6 in the evening trade.

Sources said that groundnut oil extended previous day's gain by Rs 10, tracking continuous rise in Saurashtra market.

In Rajkot, groundnut oil gained by Rs 15 on improved demand at lower level.

Demand for edible oils rises during Aug-Dec festival season, said broker.

Liberty sold about 2,500-3,000 tonnes palmolein at Rs 515, super palmolein 300-350 tonnes at Rs 545. Ruchi sold 1,000-1,200 tonnes soyabean refined oil at Rs 611 and 200-300 tonnes palmolein at Rs 515. Vaibhavi sold 150-200 tonnes Palmolein at Rs 511. Resellers offloaded

350-400 tonnes palmolein at Rs 510-514. In Rajkot, groundnut oil shot up by Rs 40 to Rs 1,510 (Rs 1,470) for *telia* tin rising Rs 100 in the last two days. Loose (10 kg) rates were up by Rs 15 to Rs 975 (Rs 960). Soyabean arrivals were about 75,000 bags at national level at Rs 3,100-3,150 ex-mandi and Rs 3,200-3,250 for plant delivery. Mustard seeds arrivals were 65,000 bags at Rs 2,800-3,500.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, soyabean refined oil August futures rose by Rs 7.65 to Rs 647 (Rs 639.35), September higher by Rs 11.70 to Rs 631.35 (Rs 619.65) and October increased by Rs 10.70 to Rs 604.90 (594.20).

Malaysia BMD crude palm oil August futures settled higher at MYR 2,283 (MYR 2,253), September at MYR 2,256 (MYR 2,211) and October at MYR 2,215 (MYR 2,167).

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were: Groundnut oil 970 (960), soya refined oil 611 (621), sunflower exp. ref. 720 (730), sunflower ref. 790 (790), rapeseed ref. oil 672 (675), rapeseed expeller ref. 642 (645) cottonseed ref. oil 628 (630) and palmolein 513 (514).

Vikram Global Commodities (P) Ltd has quoted Rs 570 for 10 kg for Malaysian super palmolein - August delivery.

Retailers await new month to buy sugar

Sugar prices ruled steady across the country on slack demand and ample supply on Tuesday.

The Vashi spot market witnessed small drop of Rs 2-4 a quintal as stockists offloaded at lower prices to manage the financial liquidity.

Naka rates were unchanged, while mill tender rates for M-grade declined by Rs 10 due to ease and need based month-end local demand.

Sentiment remained weak said traders. Sources said that enough inventory stocks on hand and lower retail demand keep stockists away from fresh buying.

They preferred to sell stocks on hand at discount to avoid deterioration quality due to rain. Retailers are waiting for the new month to start purchases. . The market carries above 120 truckloads of inventory since start of the month.

Industry sources said bearish trend in sugar prices since the start of the season year and higher sugarcane prices are crushing sugar mills, which need to increase efficiency and yield for viability. Despite being decontrolled, government policies rather than economic considerations influence sugarcane and sugar prices.

At the end of the current year (September end) closing stocks is expected around 85-90 lakh tonnes.

Arrivals in the market were 63-64 truckloads (each 100 bags) and local dispatches were 61-62 truckloads. On Monday evening, 14-15 mills offered tenders and sold about 35,000 – 36,000 bags at Rs 2,900-2,970 (Rs 2,900-Rs 2,970) for S-grade and Rs 2,980-Rs 3,140 (Rs 2,990-3,150) for M-grade.

On National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, sugar August futures were down by Rs 5 to Rs 3,011 (Rs 3,016), September lower by the same to Rs 3,029 (Rs 3,034) and October dropped by Rs 5 to Rs 3,053 (Rs 3,058).

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S-grade Rs 3,040-3,132 (Rs 3,040-3,132) and M-grade Rs 3,160-3,311 (Rs 3,162-3,311). **Naka delivery rates were:** S-grade Rs 3,000-3,050 (Rs 3,000-3,050) and M-grade Rs 3,080-3,190 (Rs 3,080-3,190).

Heavy arrivals pound spot turmeric

Heavy arrivals pounded turmeric prices on Tuesday with a two per cent drop in the futures marketing adding to the growers' woes. On Tuesday, arrivals increased to 6,000 bags dragging prices. Prices in the other markets in Andhra Pradesh and Assam also decreased, said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

Of the 6,017 bags that arrived, 45 per cent was sold. Stockists purchased more than 1,000 bags.

Because of the arrival of quality hybrid finger variety, its prices increased, but other varieties decreased.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety sold at Rs 4,011-6,011 a quintal, the root variety Rs 3,999-5,517 .

Salem hybrid crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,119-7,323, root variety Rs 5,399-6,134. Of 1,136 bags on offer, 496 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,099-6,209, the root variety Rs 4,809-5,826. Of the 306 bags put up for sale, 300 were picked up.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society finger variety was sold at Rs 5,029-6,151 a quintal, root variety Rs 4,739-5,816. All the 470 bags found takers.

Wheat may have found its floor level

A range-bound to weak movement is likely to be witnessed in the futures market, while *dara* in physical market may rule firm, said trade experts.

Prices of *dara* wheat and flour dropped by Rs 5-25 a quintal on Tuesday.

Radhey Shyam, a trade expert, told *Business Line* that ample stock coupled with reduced off-take pulled wheat prices down.

Domestic demand is unlikely to improve, but wheat prices may not go further down from here and may continue to rule around current levels for the next few days, he added.

In the physical market, *dara* wheat dropped further by Rs 5 and sold at Rs 1,460-1,465. Mill delivery was at Rs 1,460 while delivery at the *chakki* was at Rs 1,465. Similarly, after ruling flat for almost three weeks, the *desi* wheat variety dropped by Rs 50 and ruled at Rs 2,600-2,650 a quintal.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat for August contracts dropped by Rs 6 and traded at 1,562 a quintal with an open interest of 12,910 lots. September contracts went down by Rs 1 and traded at Rs 1,563. In the spot, wheat prices traded at Rs 1,500.

Following sluggish demand, flour dropped by Rs 25 to Rs 1,700. Similarly, *Chokar* moved down by Rs 50 to Rs 1,175.

Coconut oil may scale new peak on festival demand

The ensuing festival demand in Kerala may push coconut oil prices to new highs, according to a survey report published by the Coconut Development Board for the current season. The report says that prices are likely to go up Rs 7,000 a quintal during the Onam and subsequent months.

According to the report, production of raw nuts in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu is lower and this could, in turn, benefit coconut farmers in Kerala.

The arrival of coconut oil from neighbouring States has been affected due to lower production. A 16 per cent drop in production has been reported in Tamil Nadu, while in Karnataka the fall is 12 per cent.

The Coconut Development Board and leading educational institutions in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu jointly conducted the survey.

The study also revealed that prices will not crash for coconut products in Kerala.

Meanwhile, coconut oil prices fell marginally in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Prices quoted were 1 rupee lower at Rs 69 a kg in Kerala (Rs 70) and Rs 64 in Tamil Nadu (Rs 65).

However, copra prices rose to Rs 4,850 a quintal (Rs 4,800) in Kerala whereas it touched Rs 4,750 in Tamil Nadu (Rs 4,700).

Prakash B. Rao, Vice-President, Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA), attributed low corporate buying for the declining trend in the market.

He said that upcountry buyers have reduced their inventories in the last two weeks and will re-enter the market once the prices turn attractive for them.

The palm oil price was also slightly weak this week at Rs 53 a kg, while palm kernel oil increased by 1 rupee at Rs 56 compared to last week.

Thalath Mahamood, former President, COMA, said that the market is in a sluggish mood and lack of outside demand resulted in a price drop.

Traders are pinning their hopes on local demand in the festival season of Ramadan and Onam for a price revival, he said.

Bharat N. Khona, former Board Member, COMA, said the market may stabilise once the upcountry demand improves. This was evident from the decline of

prices of loose coconut oil that has come down to Rs 970 for 15 kg this week from Rs 1,005.

Business Standard

Farmers demand return of land bought for KVK power project

KVK Nilachal Power plans to set up 1400 Mw coal-based power project at Athagarh in two phases with Rs 5,000 crore investment

The farmers of Cuttack district, through an open letter to Chief Minister Naveen Pattnaik, have demanded return of farm land bought by KVK Energy for establishment of a power plant, citing delay in establishment of the project.

“We are requesting you to take steps to ensure that KVK Energy, which had acquired our farm lands in 2006 and is yet to construct its plant, return our land and also request you to delete our villages from the process of land acquisition,” said a letter written by villagers of Kandarei, Rahangol, Khanduali, Dalua of Cuttack district.

KVK Nilachal Power has plans to set up 1400 Mw coal-based power project at Athagarh in two phases with Rs 5000 crore investment. The power plant will come up on an area of more than 900 acres.

It had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Odisha government on September 26, 2006 for 600 Mw capacity, which was later enhanced to 1200 Mw through a supplementary MoU in 2008. But it has been facing problems in acquiring land due to opposition by a section of people in Athagarh.

In May 2012, the Cuttack High Court had imposed an interim stay on the construction of the power project on grounds of violation of wildlife and forest protection norms based on a petition filed by Charades Krushak Surakhya Sangh represented by its president, Narayan Sahoo.

In August 2012, the court had refused to vacate the stay order.

The company had faced a jolt in 2009 when the HC imposed stay on construction of the plant, based on a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) accusing that the funds invested in the project are proceeds of frauds made in Satyam Computer case. It may be noted, Maytas Infrastructure Limited, a sister company of Satyam was a key stake holder in KVK Neelachal Power Company, the owner of Cuttack plant. The company got a reprieve later as the Supreme Court squashed the High Court's stay order.

US, India to help improve African agriculture

Programme result of global strategic partnership announced by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and US President Barack Obama in 2010

The United States and India today launched the second India-US-Africa triangular agricultural training programme supported by the US Government's global hunger and food security initiative -- Feed the Future. This partnership aims to improve agricultural productivity and support market institutions in Kenya, Liberia, and Malawi.

"As part of the broader US-India global partnership, the triangular engagement will share proven innovations from India's private and public sector to address food insecurity, malnutrition, and poverty in the target African countries," United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Food Security Office Director Bahiru Duguma said in a statement. Duguma kicked off the initiative today. The initiative, led by USAID and National Institute of Agricultural Marketing (NIAM), is part of a three-year training programme and one of several activities resulting from the global strategic partnership announced by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and

US President Barack Obama in 2010.

Under the programme, 180 agricultural professionals from these three African countries will be trained. They will be provided marketing and extension management training at the Chaudhury Charan Singh National Institute of Agricultural Marketing in Jaipur and at the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management in Hyderabad.

Castor seed falls by 1.5% on renewed selling

Speculators reducing their positions driven by weak trend in the spot market mainly pulled down prices

Castor seed prices drifted by Rs 48 to Rs 3,073 per quintal in futures trade today following selling by traders, sparked by heavy stocks position in the spot markets.

Marketmen said speculators reducing their positions driven by weak trend in the spot market mainly pulled down prices.

They said less demand from consuming industries such as paint, soap and lubricant also brought down the trading sentiments.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, castor seed prices for August delivery slipped again by Rs 48, or 1.54%, to Rs 3,073 per quintal, with an open interest of 1,16,840 lots.

Near September contract fell by Rs 45, or 1.40%, to Rs 3,170 per quintal, in an open interest of 1,04,660 lots

Coriander down 1.7% on profit-booking

Adequate stocks in the physical markets, increased arrivals from producing belts weakened the trading sentiment

Coriander prices fell further by Rs 94 to Rs 5,340 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators booked profits at existing higher levels amid fall in spot markets demand.

The trading sentiment weakened further on adequate stocks in the physical markets following increased arrivals from producing belts.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, coriander prices for delivery in September fell by Rs 94, or 1.73%, to Rs 5,340 per quintal with open interest of 2,700 lots.

The price for August delivery declined by Rs 34, or 0.64% to Rs 5,260 per quintal with open interest of 10,990 lots.

Market analysts said besides profit-booking by speculators at existing higher levels on subdued demand in spot markets led to the fall in coriander futures prices

Mentha oil extend losses by 0.5% on profit-booking

The oil for delivery in July declined by 0.42%

Mentha oil prices fell further by Rs 4.70 to Rs 897.60 per kg in futures trading today as investors reduced their positions on weak spot demand amid higher arrivals.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, mentha oil for delivery in August fell by Rs 4.70, or 0.52%, to Rs 897.60 per kg, with a business turnover of Rs 361 lots.

Similarly, the oil for delivery in July declined by Rs 3.80, or 0.42%, to Rs 885.60 per kg in 125 lots.

Traders said sentiments weakened further as speculators offloaded their positions on falling demand from consuming industries against higher arrivals from Chandausi in Uttar Pradesh.

Potato rises by 4% on high spot demand

Speculators continued to enlarge their positions, supported by the pick up in spot market demand

Potato prices hit another daily upper limit of 4% to Rs 751.40 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators continued to enlarge their positions largely supported by pick-up in spot markets demand.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, potato for August contract rose by Rs 28.30, or 4%, to Rs 751.40 per quintal with a trading volume of 302 lots. It had gained 4% yesterday.

The delivery for the September contract also traded higher by Rs 26.80, or 4%, to Rs 697.60 per quintal with a business volume of 251 lots.

Marketmen said the rise in potato prices at futures trade due to rising spot demand and restricted arrivals from producing belts in UP, Punjab, MP and West Bengal.

Cardamom falls 0.9% on profit-booking

Subdued demand in the spot market also kept pressure on cardamom prices

Cardamom prices fell by 0.90% to Rs 702.30 per kg in futures trade today as speculators booked profits at prevailing levels amid subdued demand in the spot market.

Adequate stocks in the physical market also put pressure on the cardamom prices.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, cardamom for delivery in August declined by Rs 6.40, or 0.90%, to Rs 702.30 per kg in business turnover of 688 lots.

Likewise, the spice for delivery in the September contract shed Rs 4.30, or 0.55%, to Rs 776.20 per kg with trading volume of 304 lots.

Market analysts said profit-booking by speculators at prevailing higher levels and subdued demand in the spot market mainly kept pressure on the cardamom prices at futures trade.