

Need to conserve available water in Cauvery basin for irrigation



Experts say there is still scope for building check dams and barrages on the Cauvery. One such check dam in Kambarasampettai, near Tiruchi, under construction.

It is imperative not only to get the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal award of 192 thousand million cubic feet (tmcft) of water from Karnataka but also to conserve and utilise optimally the water available in the Cauvery basin of Tamil Nadu for irrigation, assert farmers.

Mahadhanapuram V. Rajaram, working president of the Cauvery Delta Farmers' Welfare Association, and M. Natarajan, former Superintending Engineer, PWD, appeal to the State government to initiate steps on war-footing to remove silt from tanks; raise and strengthen the tank bunds to improve their storage. Besides, more barrages across the Cauvery and the Coleroon (Kollidam) should be constructed.

While about 100 tmcft is available between Mettur Dam and Grand Anicut, an equal quantity would be available beyond the Grand Anicut. It is imperative to store this water and utilise it optimally for irrigation, apart from drinking water.

Mr. Natarajan, who was earlier in charge of the River Conservation Division, says that of the 23 barrages suggested, including seven across the Kollidam, so far only eight had been completed.

“When this project was mooted in 1980s by the (now-defunct) Tamil Nadu Electricity Board, the total cost of the barrage including the power house was only Rs. 12 crore. The first four barrages constructed across the Cauvery had cost in total only Rs. 50 crore. Now, it would cost a minimum of Rs 100 crore each.”

Mr. Natarajan says that the Grand Anicut Canal alone serves 745 tanks, while Pullambadi canal serves 30 tanks and Kattalai Canal 106 tanks.

“Thus about 1,000 tanks with various ayacuts could be used to store water and raise one crop.”

All India Kisan Sabha National general secretary and CPI (M) Polit Bureau member K. Varadharajan on Sunday exhorted the farmers to gear up for militant struggles to get a fair deal for themselves.

Delivering the inaugural address at the AIKS State conference here, a precursor to the AIKS national meet at Cuddalore next month, he sought to instil courage in farmers as more and more peasants perished like flies or joined the ranks of agricultural labourers losing out to the market forces with the multinational corporations ruling the roost.

“You are not alone in the fight against the MNCs who are out to control the means of farm production through seeds.

More and more sections of people including traders hit by FDI in multi brand retail, are joining hands with us to oppose tooth and nail globalisation,” he observed.

The time was ripe for bringing together like-minded farmer organisations for a protracted struggle against the neo-liberal economic policies which made the lives of peasants miserable, he said, setting the tone for a serious debate by over 600 delegates on the various issues concerning farmers, including high cost of all farm inputs and un-remunerative prices for all farm produce.

Noting that hike in MSP for paddy and issuance of loan eligibility card for tenants was as a result of series of stirs by peasants, CPI led AIKS State general secretary Ravula Venkaiah, a special invitee for the conference, called for a united struggle by farmers cutting across party lines to protect the interest of small and marginal farmers as also tenant farmers.

Resolutions

The conference, attended by, among others, AIKS National vice-president S. Malla Reddy, AIKS National joint secretary Vijoo Krishnan, AIKS State president V. Subba Rao and State general secretary S. Rama Rao, adopted resolutions including the one opposing public private partnership in agriculture as the same would provide space for MNCs to control farm production right from sowing, to harvesting and marketing.

CPM demands timely supply of seeds, fertilizers

'Ryots suffered due to shortage last year'



CPI (M) district secretary K. Prabhakar Reddy addressing a press conference in Kurnool on Sunday.— Photo: U. Subramanyam

CPI (M) leaders urged the authorities to make arrangements for adequate and early supply of seeds and fertilizers in Kurnool district in view of the onset of monsoon.

Talking to reporters here on Sunday, party State committee member T. Shadrak and district secretary K. Prabhakar Reddy said last year, the farmers suffered on account of shortage of seed and fertilizers.

Mr. Shadrak said the elected representatives of the ruling party had failed to place the burning issues in the district on the agenda since the last four years. On the other hand, they were busy pursuing their personal political agenda. He said the flood protection walls around Kurnool city sanctioned in 2007 could not be constructed even six years after the sanction. The ruling party should take the blame for the delay.

Mr. Prabhakar Reddy criticised the undue speed in sanction and proposal for the construction of sub-surface dam across Tungabhadra saying it was more helpful for industrialists than the public. The residents of Tandrapadu

and Gondiparla are demanding a cause-way that can shorten the distance to Kurnool city, he said.

Tirupur farmers off to Gujarat

A group of 55 farmers involved in dairy activities in and around Tirupur have embarked upon a trip to Gujarat on Sunday with a purpose.

They wanted to extract a leaf or two out of the impressive success story of the cooperative dairy movement in Gujarat which is more synonymous with the outside world by its brand name Amul, the dairy cooperative based in Anand in Gujarat.

The farmers will also be studying the novel reforms initiated by the Narendra Modi-regime to help the agriculture sector flourish.

On June 11 (Tuesday), the farmers will attend a conference on livestock and dairy development at Gandhinagar where they will get an opportunity to interact with peers from other parts of the country.

Tete-a-tete with Narendra Modi

The members of the entourage will also have an opportunity to have a tete-a-tete with Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi during the visit.

“As per the invitation received, it will be a 15 minutes interaction with the Chief Minister on Tuesday,” E. R. Eswaran, general secretary of Kongunadu Makkal Desiya Katchi and a farmer himself, who has coordinated the trip said.

On Wednesday, the farmers will visit Anand to study the growth of the brand Amul.

“Interactions with progressive farmers are part of the itinerary. This will help the farmers here to understand more about cattle rearing and how the milk can effectively be collected and processed through the cooperative

movements with farmers getting the maximum benefit of the revenues,” Mr. Eswaran said.

Start ploughing, farmers told

Taking advantage of the showers which parts of the district experienced in the last few days, farmers should take to summer ploughing for proper protection of soil nutrients and protecting moisture, said S. Natarajan, Collector. In a release on Saturday, the Collector said that summer ploughing resulted in absorption of moisture and helped in protection of soil nutrients. The ploughing would come in handy as a crop protection strategy.

Plan to improve green cover in Virudhunagar

Over two lakh saplings being raised for distribution



Students planting a sapling in an educational institution in Virudhunagar district.

: The Forest Department will distribute over two lakh saplings, free of cost, to residents of Virudhunagar district for improving the green cover.

The spadework has begun and the distribution exercise will begin in October, according to a top official.

Being a dry belt, saplings ideal for cultivation in black cotton soil are being produced. Individuals, farmers, educational institutions, private and government establishments can approach the department for their requirements. The Forest Department officials also offer their service for planting the saplings. The only requirement on the part of those who buy saplings is that they should nurture them by watering the plants regularly. Though it plans to rope in all departments in this big exercise, it wants to involve the Highways Department first to plant saplings on highways. Avenue trees too can be grown in Virudhunagar despite scanty rainfall and make it similar to Bangalore city.

The dry conditions are not an excuse but it all depends on the attitude of the people.

Lands or houses with green cover will not only provide aesthetic look and pleasant atmosphere but fetch good returns also. Land value will go up wherever good green cover is there, he said.

Inside the grizzled squirrel sanctuary also, steps are being taken to improve the green over so that the conditions are conducive for birth and growth of territorial birds and wild animals. Spread over 480 square kilometres and located on the eastern slopes of the Western Ghats, the sanctuary receives less rainfall.

Being a home for endemic species like grizzled squirrel, which is arboreal, tree saplings like tamarind, wild mango, Albizia lebbek, Albizia amara and Syzygium cumini are being planted along the streams and wherever vacant land is there to replace trees which wither away in course of time.

Seedlings at the rate of 100 per hectare were planted on 40 hectares last year.

The number of these squirrels and birds has increased indicating that the sanctuary has become a safe habitat for them. Percolation ponds, check-dams and water holes are being created in the forest to prevent animals from straying into human habitats.

Elephant-proof trenches and solar-powered fences are erected to confine them to their habitats. Villagers living near the forests are given crackers to scare away wild animals. Thus the man-animal conflict is prevented here to a great extent unlike in regions like Coimbatore, Hosur and Udhagamandalam.

Another store to sell organic produce



Nature store will market about 10 to 12 varieties of desi rice that are nutritious.— PHOTO: M.A. SRIRAM

A group of farmers launched the 'Nature Store' on Sunday, to sell organic products in the city. The store, which deals with variety of red rice, millets, fruits and vegetables, is an initiative of Sahaja Samruddha and Kollegal Organic Growers Association. Krishnaprasad, of the Sahaja Samruddha, said the initiative was to help organic farmers promote natural products.

He said these varieties were not only nutritious but also medicinal. Some of the rice varieties available here are 'govinda bhog' reckoned to be ideal for payasam, 'namma anna' a farmer brand being promoted by nature store, 'mixed rice' which is a combination of scented rice, 'raja mudri' and 'bangar kovi', foxtail millet, brown top millet, multi-millet flour ideal for roti, to name a few.

Currently, around 30 groups of farmers from across the State involved in promotion and conservation of indigenous variety of paddy are networked and this store will be a platform for all of them, Mr. Krishnaprasad said.

Ghani Khan, an organic farmer from Kirugavilu in Malavalli taluk of Mandya district, who has conserved more than 560 varieties of rice at his farm and intends to start a rice museum, said the store would give the organic farming movement in Mysore and surrounding regions a major boost.

Location

The store is located at No.1298/1, Dewan's Road, next to Dewan's Lodge, Devaraja Mohalla, Mysore. Call 8904329753 for details.

Growers restive over delay in crushing of oil palm fruit

Factory at Pedavegi is reportedly unable to accept large quantities of FFBs

The reported inability of the State-owned oil factory at Pedavegi in West Godavari district to meet the increasing demand for crushing the oil palm fresh fruit bunches (FFBs) triggered protest among the growers.

The Andhra Pradesh Oil Federation has set up an oil palm processing plant at Pedavegi in the district with a crushing capacity of 16 tons per hour. But the factory is reportedly failing to accept the arrival of FFBs in large quantities for processing in the current peak season lasting till August from May. Fruits arrive from Lingapalem and Pedavegi mandals in West

Godavari district and Eleswaram in East Godavari district to the factory for crushing. It processed 65,000 tons of the fruit last year and the yields in the current year is expected to touch 1 lakh tons.

The factory management is expected to ensure crushing within 24 hours after the arrival of the fruit. "But it takes more than a week this time with the farmers experiencing anxious moments for their turn for crushing," complains Undavelli Venkata Rao, president of the Oil Palm Factory Area Growers Welfare Association. There was no yard even for storage of the produce. The fruit bunches in huge quantities were being dumped in the open on the factory premises.

Exposure to rain results in a drop in oil recovery rate, he lamented.

The farmers were subjected to heavy financial losses with the oil recovery rate at 12.5 per cent being reported at the State-run factory at Pedavegi over 18-22 per cent in private processing units. The demand for enhancement of the crushing capacity is picking up with the growers appealing to the government to upgrade the factory with crushing capacity enhanced up to 40 tons per hour.

A large number of growers staged protest at the factory a few days ago over its inability to process the fruit bunches as and when they arrived from fields. According to information, more than 1,500 tons of the produce was piling up for the last 3-4 days, waiting for acceptance by the factory personnel for crushing.

With no word of acceptance from the factory authorities, the growers are deferring harvesting, resulting in fruit dropping and evaporation losses.

Metla Ramaswamy, a grower from Mudicharla, said the labour cost per ton for harvesting was shooting up by Rs.300 for collecting a large number of fruits scattering around after dropping from the plant.

Productivity of 50,000 acres of sugarcane fields to be improved: official

Encouraged by the success made in rice production under the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) programme that was launched in 2004, the State Government now wants to give a boost to sugarcane cultivation under the Sustainable Sugarcane Initiative (SSI) developed by the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU).

B.J. Pandian, Director of Water Technology Centre of TNAU, told reporters here on Saturday that the SSI was based on the principles of 'more with less' to improve the productivity of water, land and labour, while reducing the overall pressure on water resources involved in sugarcane cultivation. The initiative was introduced to farmers in the State in 2010.

They had been practising it on a trial basis since then. So far, nearly 7,000 acres of sugarcane area belonging to farmers had been brought under the SSI fold.

With the trials yielding good results, the State plans to bring 50,000 acres belonging to 42 sugar mills in the State under the programme in 2013-14.

"The idea is to make the sugar mills in the State adopt SSI gradually so that most of the area under sugarcane cultivation can be covered in the XII Five Year Plan. The yield expectancy using SSI is 175 to 200 tonnes a hectare as against the 102 tonnes a hectare under the conventional method. The initiative is also ideal for intercropping patterns," the Director said.

SSI was significant because of the fact that though Tamil Nadu led the nation in terms of productivity with 105 tonnes a hectare, it still stagnated over the last 30 years.

There was no significant growth or increase. There was an urgent need to address this because of depleting resources such as water and land. In Tamil Nadu, sugarcane is cultivated on 3 lakh hectares with an average productivity of 105 tonnes / hectare. The total production of sugarcane is 357 lakh tonnes and that of sugar is 25 lakh tonnes.

Coconut farmers get a raw deal from Nafed

Procurement price is below the market price

Rural farmers who have waited long to benefit from the coconut procurement drive of the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (Nafed) find themselves in a predicament, for the latest procurement price offered by the federation is below the open market price.

Nafed is offering Rs.14.25 for a kg of de-husked coconut whereas the open market price is between Rs.14.50 and Rs.15.

With the disparity in price, Nafed will not be able to procure the stock and provide relief to the disgruntled coconut farmers, who were expecting a better deal from the authorities.

Since the yield is on the verge of a decline, the farmers have no option but to sell their produce at a better price in the open market.

The farmers say the price in the open market will scale up when the supply of coconut decreases owing to seasonal changes and other reasons. A better price and procurement initiative should come from the government at

a time when the yield is good but the price low in the open market, they say.

K. Johnson, leader of a State-level farmers' forum, says that in the current scenario, coconut cultivators will not be satisfied with a procurement price that is below Rs.25 a kg. "Most of them are fed up with the ever-increasing labour costs and poor returns from the trade," he says.

The Nafed procurement drive has been pending in the district since the beginning of the year. Though some grama panchayats have been successful in coordinating the procurement drive with the support of agricultural offices, the project funded by the State government is yet to benefit large-scale farmers.

"As per a Nafed decision, the large-scale procurement drive was expected to begin in the district on Friday. But the disparity in support price kept the farmers disinterested," says a worker at a regional procurement centre in Thiruvambadi.

The process can begin only after the revision of the declared procurement price or a fall in the open market price, he says.

The situation was the same last year when the much-hyped Nafed copra procurement drive failed to benefit a large number of the farmers.

Prolonged delay in identifying some primary agencies had played spoilsport then. Official sources say the tainted image of some of the collection agencies prevented Nafed from completing the identification process in time.

Organic produce fair evokes good response

The bazaar is being organised every Saturday

The 'Shanivara Savayava Sante' has evoked good response here as there is a steady increase in the number of people visiting the Taralabalu Krishi Vigyana Kendra where it was held for the third consecutive Saturday.

Inspired by the huge public response to the 'red rice mela' held last month, the kendra decided to organise the organic produce fair every Saturday to provide farmers with a facility to market their produce grown through organic methods of cultivation. The kendra also wanted to help people buy agricultural and horticultural products at a common place.

Raghava, a farmer from Mallanayakanahalli camp in Harihar taluk, had to ask his brother to bring more quantity of produce as he had sold whatever he had brought in the morning by 2 p.m. on Saturday. Anjaneya from Kumbuluru had a similar experience.

Vinutha, resident of Vidyanagar here, said she bought rice, millet and fruits. Basavarajappa, a lecturer, said that he was aware of chemical fertilizers and pesticides being used in cultivation. He also knew that consumption of such produce was unhealthy. However, he was helpless because organic produce were not available easily. He expressed his happiness over the initiative of the kendra in organising the fair.

Geetha from Anjaneya Badavane, Nirmala from PJ Extension, Renukamma from Vidyanagar and many others expressed happiness over the facility.

T.N. Devaraju, programme coordinator, told *The Hindu* that he wanted to popularise the organic produce fair by inviting farmers engaged in organic farming all over the district. He said that the kendra had decided to make it a permanent practice to hold the fair every Saturday.

Chilling plant may boost milk supply

The project is estimated to cost Rs. 2.99 crore

The new Aavin chilling plant coming up at an estimate of Rs. 2.99 crore at Thirugokarnam in the town will take the Aavin brand to the semi-urban and rural pockets in the district. Pasteurised Aavin milk is not available now in semi-urban areas like Viralimalai, Gandarvakottai, Alangudi, and distant coastal villages such as Kottaipattinam, Meemisal, and Kattumavadi. This has come as an advantage to private milk firms who had been marketing the pasteurised milk to the public.

Although Pudukottai district had been producing an average of 30,000 litres a day, the quantity is immediately despatched to the chilling plants in Tiruchi, Manapparai, or Karaikudi.

“We are unable to store the milk in the absence of the chilling plant. But the new unit being built under the Integrated Dairy Development Programme, will facilitate not only storage and pasteurisation but also expand in terms of production and marketing,” says R. Selvaraj, General Manager, Pudukottai District Milk Producers’ Union, explaining the felt need of the milk producers and consumers across the district.

Supply of Aavin milk to all villages and towns across the district would be assured shortly after the work on the chilling plant is completed. Only 4,100 of the total 24,000 production members attached to 155 milk societies were active now. The chilling plant would not only cover all the members but provide scope for starting new societies in potential pockets.

The union has identified only three marketing routes so far and it would soon be doubled to six, says S. Bhuvaneshwaran, Manager, Milk Production of the union.

He points out that the milk routes would be strengthened from 9 to 15. The civil works of the building has been completed. Machinery at the pre-packing room, chilling plant, storage chamber, boiler room, and effluent treatment plant were being erected.

Focus would be on strengthening the infrastructure for the primary production societies through provision of furniture and other basic needs, for Rs. 50 lakh had been included in the estimate.

An administrative office has been sanctioned at an estimate of Rs. 1.10 crore under the National Agriculture Development Programme. Work on the construction of the building would be taken up in course of time.

KAU initiative is welcome

This is regarding the news report 'Safe-to-eat tag for vegetables' published in *The Hindu*, June 3.

After so many years, Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) has finally woken up. Eureka!

The KAU Vice-Chancellor said the laboratory had detected pesticide residue in fruits and vegetables. People have been consuming pesticide-laced vegetables and fruits for years and those responsible were sleeping. That the initiative has come at last is welcome. Hope the funds meant to equip the laboratory at the College of Agriculture, Vellayani, with more sophisticated instruments are not whittled away.

The need of the hour is a cheap and easy-to-use technique to find out if fruits, vegetables, fish, and meat contain harmful residues or not. Hope, work on this starts at least now. Subhash S

Valiyaveli

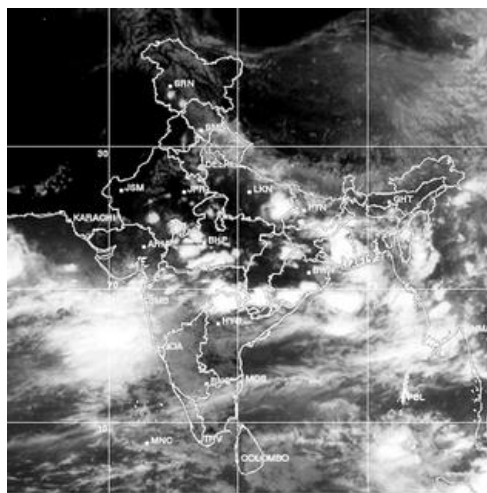
RAINS AND WOES

The people of the city had a tough time with the monsoon setting in. In Thampanoor, East Fort, and Chala, huge volumes of piled-up garbage virtually mixed with rainwater, disrupting the movement of traffic and the people.

The Parvathy Puthanar, the Karamana and the Killi rivers seemed to be contributing heavily to the burden of infectious diseases. People thronged hospitals with dengue, jaundice and rat fever. There were a few deaths too. Road repairs undertaken by the Thiruvananthapuram Road Development Company Ltd. during the school opening contributed to the woes of the people.

The city administration has to work in tandem with the government to check the spread of diseases, focussing on mosquitoes. A permanent solution to the garbage issue has to be arrived at, failing which our tourism industry will also be badly hit.

weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on June 08th.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	42	31	0	1
New Delhi (Sfd)	40	30	0	15
Chandigarh	35	30	0	10
Hissar	44	34	0	0
Bhuntar	35	23	0	3
Shimla	25	19	0	31
Jammu	40	31	0	8
Srinagar	33	16	0	13
Amritsar	44	29	0	0
Patiala	36	29	0	1
Jaipur	42	28	0	18
Udaipur	39	26	7	13
Allahabad	41	27	tr	17
Lucknow	37	27	0	50
Varanasi	39	29	0	1
Dehradun	32	27	6	13
Agartala	33	26	1	46
Ahmedabad	39	28	0	12
Bangalore	28	20	0	121
Bhubaneshwar	35	25	0	17
Bhopal	37	24	10	39
Chennai	35	27	0	119
Guwahati	33	25	1	69
Hyderabad	35	24	41	121
Kolkata	33	28	0	tr

Mumbai	31	25	37	121
Nagpur	39	26	0	3
Patna	35	28	0	29
Pune	31	23	0	89
Thiruvananthapuram	27	22	33	95
Imphal	31	23	tr	19
Shillong	23	18	18	115

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

HEAT WAVE

Heat wave conditions are prevailing in some parts of west Rajasthan.

RAINFALL: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at a few places over east Rajasthan, west Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand and at isolated places over Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, west Rajasthan and east Uttar Pradesh. Weather was dry over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: HARYANA: Chhachrauli 1, HIMACHAL PRADESH: Nahan and Paonta 2 each and Mandi 1, EAST RAJASTHAN: (2 cm and above) Arnod 8, Barisadri and Devel 5 each, Amet and Malpura 4 each, Tatgarh, Danpur, Dungerpur, Pratapgarh, Bhim, Mount Abu tehsil and Gogunda 3 each and Ajmer, Mandal, Chittorgarh, Gangdhar, Kota, Ladpura and Mavli 2 each, EAST UTTAR PRADESH: Sitapur 6, WEST UTTAR PRADESH: Moradabad 3, Bareilly and Pawayan 2 each and Sahajahanpur, Jhansi, Orai, Bijnor and Nagina 1 each and **UTTARAKHAND: Uttarkashi 5 and Dunda and Tehri 1 each.**

MAXIMUM TEMPERATURES: The maximum temperatures rose in east Uttar Pradesh, fell in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand and changed little

elsewhere. They were appreciably above normal in Jammu and Kashmir, above normal in west Rajasthan, appreciably below normal in Uttarakhand, below normal in Uttar Pradesh and normal in rest of the region. The highest maximum temperature in the region was 48.1°C recorded at Sriganganagar (Rajasthan).

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 11th June

2013: Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Uttarakhand during next 48 hours and increase thereafter.

Rain/thundershowers would occur at one or two places over Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and south Rajasthan on 10th and increase thereafter.

Dust storm may occur at one or two places over north Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi during next 48 hours and rain/thundershowers thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir on 11th.

WARNING: Thunder storm/Thunder squall would occur at one or two places over Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, east Rajasthan, Punjab, Chandigarh and Delhi during next 24 hours. Heat wave conditions are likely to continue in some parts of west Rajasthan during next 24 hours.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 11th June 2013: Partly cloudy sky. Dust storm/thunderstorm could occur in some areas during next 48 hours.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Tradition of processions to pray for rain fading

The slow start to the monsoon season last week did not trigger any panic. Earlier, long dry spells used to drive farmers to take recourse to prayers and processions.

A few decades ago, agriculture formed the mainstay of the people's sustenance and any dry spell threatening their crops sparked off anxiety among the farmers and people.

The farmers and villagers in some areas would organize a procession, carrying a statue of St Anthony and wend their way through their neighbourhood, visiting houses and finally dipping the saint's feet in the sea or some water body.

When girls didn't find a spouse or when the season was delayed or a long dry spell worried them, St Anthony of Padua or Lisbon, as he is known, was the one they turned to and prayed for grant of a favour.

But changing times, including a decline in agricultural activities, has slowly affected the traditions. Prayers and processions to pray for rain are fading into history. The villagers would prayerfully sing hymns to the saint, which appropriately urged him to dispatch rain clouds by sunset.

The feast of St Anthony is celebrated on June 13 every year and most often the skies open up and there is torrential rain during the day.

Poor sale at mela puts mango growers in distress

Rainy and windy weather for the past two weeks has brought down the sizzling temperature, much to the relief of Bangaloreans. But the climate change has left mango growers a worried lot, prompting them to appeal to

citizens to come to their rescue by buying the king of fruits.

"Pre-monsoon rain has cost us heavily. Mango yield has dipped by at least 70%; the target this time was 6 to 7 lakh tonnes," said Srinivas, president of Karnataka mango growers association.

Public response at the mango mela has been below expectations, Srinivas said. "The growers bring naturally ripened fruits to the mela. People should come forward and buy them and help farmers," he said.

The poor response has resulted in distress sales. "Farmers have sold 3kg of Alphonso mangoes for Rs 100 owing to lack of buyers," he pointed out.

Srinivas felt the authorities haven't ensured wide publicity and proper facilities to preserve fruits brought by farmers, thus compounding the problem.

Pinning hope on better weather conditions and good public response, the association is likely to request the authorities to extend the mela by a week or 10 days.

Good response, claim officials

However, Hopcoms and horticulture department officials say the mela is receiving good response and sales are good.

"On an average, we are selling 10-12 tonnes of the fruit every day at eight special centres, five mobile outlets and 220 outlets across the city," said DL Maheshwar, managing director, Hopcoms.

"In one week, we have sold 292 tonnes in Lalbagh alone, where farmers have put up 80 stalls. We have ensured wide coverage in TV and newspapers. The prices are also good. Only farmers who came late may have recorded low sales," Krishna, deputy director, horticulture department, maintained.

But officials admitted that heavy pre-monsoon showers have affected sales.

The mela is on till June 15. Farmers from Kolar, Ramanagaram, Chikkaballapur, Mysore, Mandya, Chitradurga and Tumkur districts are taking part.

Veggie prices soar

The price of beans has reached the Rs 100 mark per kilogram in the retail market and other vegetables, part of the Indian diet, are soon to follow suit. Attributing the price rise to the successive monsoon failure in the state, wholesalers say that the price of most vegetables has gone up by 50 percent. "This is the first time in recent years prices of all vegetables have skyrocketed," said SF Akbar Althaf, president of Kovai Anaithu Mavatta MGR Motha Kaikari Vyabarigal Sangam.

It is not uncommon for the price of few vegetables to incur a steep rise due

to factors such as production loss, floods and other natural disasters, he said. What is alarming is the increase in prices of most vegetables. Except for a few country vegetables (naattu kaikari) like okra, gourds and pumpkin, most vegetables are transported to Coimbatore from various locations. A kilogram of tomato priced between Rs.30 and Rs 40 in the wholesale market is sold by retailers for as high as Rs 60. "In the wholesale market, carrot is priced at Rs 24 per kg and chillies at Rs 29 per kg," said Mujibur Rahman, a wholesaler at ASP Vegetables.

It may be noted that in the retail market, carrots are priced at Rs 42 per kg, ginger at Rs 170, chillies at Rs 32 and beetroot at Rs 38. Retailers say that the prices of country vegetables have also increased but compared to the so called English vegetables the prices are low. Areas in Coimbatore region known for their tomato and okra produce such as Nachipalayam, Alandurai and Udumalpet have recorded reduced productivity contributing to the price rise. "Vegetables such as carrots, cabbage, cauliflower and potato are transported to Coimbatore from places like Ooty and Munnar," said S J Kathiresan, a retailer.

With the onset of southwest monsoon in Kerala, arrival of English vegetables is expected to increase in the next two months. "This could stabilise the price but there is no immediate reprieve," said Akbar Althaf.

Apart from households that bear the brunt of the steep price rise, restaurants and mess facilities too are affected. "Usually, we provide four vegetable dishes with the meal that is priced at Rs.70 but due to

skyrocketing prices we have to cut one or two vegetable dishes every other day," said a city restaurant owner. According to him, they had just increased the price of a meal a month ago and thus cannot revise the price again. "If we increase the price again we will lose customers and so we have to adopt such cost-cutting measures," he added.

Okra price hike due to government blunder, say farmers

Though wholesalers and retailers blame the poor monsoon for the price rise, okra farmers in the district blame the government. "Short supply of okra in the market and the resultant price rise is due to the blunder committed by the horticulture department," said C Duraisamy, president of Kovai Mavatta Uzhavargal Nala Sangam. According to him, the hybrid seed variety distributed to farmers free of cost has failed to deliver and farmers have incurred huge losses.

This country vegetable is sold by retailers at Rs.34 per kg and according to them the okra crop loss is one of the main reasons. The hybrid seed was distributed to farmers across the district by horticulture officials under Rain Fed Area Development Programme (RADP). Farmers say that the agriculture sector remains highly unorganised and they are hoping the government will take necessary steps to aid farming activities. "Farmlands have shrunk and farmers are dwindling in number. Government officials rarely interact with farmers," the association leader said.

S Keshavan, a tomato farmer in Alandurai said that the government should establish cold storage facilities for the benefit of the farmers. "We suspect that some people are indulging in black-marketing which has contributed to

the price hike. Appropriate steps should be taken to address this issue," he said. Though the agriculture department has taken steps under various state and central government programmes, farmers feel that these schemes should be modified to cater to their needs. "Providing technical expertise, suggesting good varieties of seeds and setting support price are some measures that need to be taken to aid farmers," Duraisamy added.

Noida for green zones along rivers

The Noida Authority has decided to appoint a technical consultant by the end of this month to begin its ambitious Riverfront Development Project. Through this project, the Authority will develop green corridors along the riverbanks of Yamuna and Hindon by massive plantation drives and building recreation zones, among other things. Green corridors will also be developed at the three entry points of Greater Noida adjoining the riverbanks.

The green buffers developed along the riverfronts will help prevent colonization of floodplains, besides improving the environment. The Noida and Greater Noida authorities have allocated Rs 100 crore for the project.

The Authority plans to spread the Riverfront Development Project in Noida across a total area of over 600 acres. Officials said that land for the project will be transferred to Noida Authority from the UP Irrigation Department in phases. In the first phase, around 200 acres would be handed over.

Noida Authority will finalize the technical consultant on June 26. The consultant will have to undertake a detailed survey of the area for

developing the green corridors, besides preparing the basic design of the project. The consultant will also undertake inspection of the project during the construction phase. The project design will be prepared after studying similar projects that have been successfully executed in European nations. The green corridors are also mooted to recharge depleting groundwater tables.

The project had been approved in the last board meeting of the Authority in May. As part of the project, eco-friendly cycling tracks, green belts and parks would be developed in the green corridors. The green corridors would serve as boundaries between Master Plan areas of Noida and Greater Noida and the floodplain zones.



The new Kalahandi

Standing in his paddy field that glistened in the afternoon sun, farmer Gouranga Rana had his worries: What would happen to his bumper harvest? Would he be able to sell it at the minimum support price announced by the state government? But the FCI godown was already full. These are concerns any farmer would have. What makes Rana's problem—and that of others in Bandigaon village in Jaypatna block—a happy one is that his village is part of Kalahandi, once a name that stood for hunger in one of the country's most deprived regions. Now, as the

Union Agriculture Ministry announced last month, Kalahandi ranks among the top 25 rice-producing districts of India.

Till the early 2000s, starvation deaths and distress migration were the norm here, with reports of families in distress selling off their children. One of the cases that made headlines was in 1985, when a 14-year-old tribal girl, Bonita, was sold by her sister-in-law, Phanas Punji, for Rs 40 so that she could feed her two starving children. Shocked, then prime minister Rajiv Gandhi visited the district and announced a development package called the KBK (Kalahandi-Bolangir-Koraput) Development Scheme for the district. Like all government packages, this scheme was forgotten as funds dried up.

The change came in the form of the Upper Indravati Multipurpose Project, first conceived of in 1987-88. Since 2000, water from the project has reached six of the 13 blocks of Kalahandi, leaving in its wake green fields that this district could once only dream of. Of Kalahandi's cultivated area of 1.9 lakh hectares, the project irrigates over 76,400 hectares. There are plans to extend the project to cover an additional 6,000 hectares in Golamunda block.

Kalahandi farmers now have two crop seasons every year. "It's an unbelievable change. Nothing short of a miracle," says Orissa's Director of Agriculture and Food Production R Sant Gopalan who, till a few years ago, was the district magistrate of Kalahandi. "It shows what government irrigation and improved farm input can do to the fortunes of a region despised for its backwardness."

"Water was all that Kalahandi needed and once it came, there was no looking back," says Ashok Patnaik of local NGO Karrtabya.

Rana would know. Till about 12 years ago, Rana's father used to get a meagre harvest of 23 quintals of paddy during monsoons on their six-acre land. "It was tough for us to survive then," says Rana. Last year, he harvested around 60 quintals from his land during the rabi season alone despite pest attacks. "Now I have a pucca house. I can afford good education for my children," says Rana, who has studied till class XII. Like several thousand farmers in Kalahandi, he now grapples with a problem of plenty. The three-year average of Kalahandi's rice production ending 2010-11 was 4,68,000 tonnes, compared with the three-year average of 82,000 tonnes for 1998-99. The year 2012-13 saw a new high, with rice production in the kharif season touching 4.89 lakh tonnes, with rabi expected to yield another 1.85 lakh tonnes, making it a total of 6.74 lakh tonnes, a record for Kalahandi so far. The per hectare yield in Kalahandi in 2012-13 has crossed 40 quintals, compared to the modest state average of 34.88 quintals.

With lush paddy fields on either side, a drive along the leafy stretch of National Highway No. 201 as it passes through Junagarh block is a pleasure, even in the searing summer. The picture isn't any different in the blocks of Jaypatna, Koksara and Dharmagarh.

Chaitanya Nayak of Bandigaon village harvested 140 quintals of paddy on his seven acres in the last rabi season, double his produce in the previous kharif season. Ten years ago, he would have probably migrated out in search of a job. Nayak, a matriculate, says, "Earlier, we would often go hungry during the rabi season. Now most of the houses have refrigerators, coolers, dish antenna and motorcycles. In the last 10 years, I don't

remember seeing a dry paddy field in my area," says Nayak, who rides a Hero Passion motorcycle and does aquaculture in a small pond besides his house. With water available in plenty, all the 300-odd families in Bandigaon have taken to farming in a big way.

Kalahandi's transformation into the state's rice-bowl has led to reverse migration, with rich farmers from neighbouring Andhra Pradesh now putting their money in the district's fertile tracts. G Sreenu from East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh owns 20 acres in Dulukibandh village of Kalampur block and last year, reaped 1,100 quintals of paddy. He now has a three-bedroom house on the main road.

There are other visible signs of change. Last year, the first government engineering college came up in Kalahandi, one of only a dozen in the state. District collector Govind Sethi says he has no doubt that the change is for real. "Though we will have to wait for the latest Census results to validate the change, the signs are all there. More children go to school, the district has seen more progress in education. The focus has shifted from hunger to better things," he says.

Farm mechanisation has also taken off in a big way. Kalahandi has more power tillers (2,500) than any other Orissa district. With labourers in short supply, farmers are now renting expensive combined harvesters for Rs 2,300 an hour to harvest paddy.

As Kalahandi's new fame has spread out, traders from Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Kerala are bringing in hundreds of automated paddy threshers to the district. From a handful of rice processing mills 10 years ago, now there are 82 active rice mills in Kalahandi. With so much paddy being produced,

FCI, which had one paddy procurement centre in 1996, now has 50 centres in the district.

Kalahandi's Congress MP Bhakta Charan Das, who is credited with getting water from Indravati to the district's fields, says the success in farm production, coupled with more government spending in the roads and health sectors, have helped Kalahandi turn the corner. It also helped that the state government pitched in with crop loans and supplied quality seeds. "The kind of poverty we had 15 years ago now seems a distant memory. Almost all the villages have good roads under government schemes. Most people have two-wheelers and every other house would have a dish antenna. Starvation is a thing of the past," says Das. Besides, there are 10-12 branches of nationalised and private banks in the blocks. Prosperous blocks like Junagarh and Jaypatna now boast of half-a-dozen automobile showrooms.

Kalahandi's long wait for a railway link with the state capital got over last year with a 30-km track between Lanjigarh and the main headquarter town of Bhawanipatna. Das now hopes the Bhawanipatna-Junagarh link would be through soon, giving farmers in the Junagarh sub-division a chance to take their produce by trains and get a better deal.

Rana, the farmer in Jaypatna block, says people in Kalahandi now have the blessing of "two Indras". "There is Lord Indra during monsoons and then the Indravati project in the winter and summer seasons. We are indeed blessed."

Jayalal Padhi, deputy director of agriculture of Junagarh sub-division, the area which has benefited the most from the project, recounts how his

friends used to tease him as "Kalahandia" (man from Kalahandi) during his college days in neighbouring Bolangir district. "We used to be embarrassed then. Now if someone calls us Kalahandia, it's a matter of pride," he says.

The Indravati project

Though initially estimated at Rs 208 crore in 1987-88, the project which dams the Indravati river and its tributaries to form a massive reservoir atop the mountains in Thuamul-Rampur block of Kalahandi, has now escalated to more than Rs 3,000 crore.

From the reservoir, water is transferred to Hati river in the Mahanadi river basin which then irrigates six of the 13 blocks of Kalahandi through a maze of canals and sub-canals running to hundreds of kilometres. The construction of the 52 km-long main left canal from the project's barrage at Mangalpur ended in December last year while the main right canal with a length of 84 km is expected to end by March 2015.

Green, but how green?

The water gushing into Kalahandi's fields has brought with it problems of a different kind. While earlier, farmers used to grow pulses and millets such as ragi during the rabi season, most of them now grow only paddy throughout the year. "Kalahandi can have 35-40 types of crops a year. But the lack of crop diversification has led to a decline in soil quality and texture. So farmers have to use more fertilisers to retain productivity levels," says Ashok Patnaik of local NGO Karrtabya.

Though more water has led to more productivity, it has also made the crops vulnerable to pest attacks and diseases. "For small farmers like us, it is difficult to survive by spending so much on paddy. Every year we have to

deal with some kind of diseases," says marginal farmer Uddhaba Sahu of Mangalpur village.

With labourers preferring to work under NREGA, farmhands are in short supply. Farmers like Sahu say they can't afford the steep cost of automated farm equipment. Rising paddy production has also meant that farmers are forced to sell their produce below the minimum support price of Rs 1,250 for every quintal of paddy.

Without a planned drainage system, some areas face waterlogging. For the last several years, Indravati project officials had no schedule for water discharge and they continued to release water even when farmers did not need it. But this has been resolved to an extent since last year, with water flowing through canals and sub-canals. With fields hardly left to dry due to the continuous irrigation, the area stinks during the monsoon as people defecate in the open.

Rising mechanisation has also led to a sharp drop in livestock population. With depleting livestock, farmers are dumping the straw into the irrigation canals, choking them.

The Land Ceiling Act has not stopped rich farmers from Andhra Pradesh from coming to Kalahandi and buying up lands of small and marginal farmers whom the irrigation project was meant to benefit. With farm input costs going up, many fear that small-time farmers would end up selling their land to the land sharks.

Officials say Kalahandi can be among India's top-10 rice producing districts and yet not lose its soil quality if farmers are open to newer methods of cultivation. "One modern system of rice-growing is the System of Rice Intensification. Under SRI, farmers sow a small number of seeds and then

transplant them into fields one by one, while controlling the water input. Through SRI, the productivity can go up by 30-40 per cent," says Orissa's Director of Agriculture and Food Production R Sant Gopalan.

Monsoon earlier than expected: IMD

Relentless downpour Sunday brought with it not only cheer, but also the same old problems the city faces every year. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), this year, rains arrived earlier than they did in 2012.

"Monsoon reached here on June 7, earlier than its expected date of June 10. So far, the city has seen good rainfall — approximately 56.3 mm more than average," said meteorologist Ajay Kumar of the IMD.

He added that the south-west monsoon has advanced covered the Konkan region, Telangana, parts of south Saurashtra and Gujarat.

By Sunday evening, the western suburbs received maximum rainfall (71mm). The eastern suburbs recorded 67 mm and the island city received 17 mm. "Heavy to moderate showers are predicted for June 10 and 11. There should be light showers and clear skies later in the week," said Kumar.

Since Saturday, 44.9 mm rainfall has been recorded in Santacruz and 36.8 mm in Colaba. The minimum temperature on Sunday was 25.4°C, with the mercury expected to drop further on June 10 and 11.

According to the civic disaster management control room, 17 cases of waterlogging were reported by Sunday evening. Usual spots such as Milan Subway, Hindmata Junction, Andheri Subway, Khar Subway, Vile Parle, Motilal Nagar, Cama Industrial Estate, S V Road, Dahisar Chowk, Thakur

Complex, Nehru Nagar, LBS Marg, Gavanpada, and Central Railway subway were inundated.

Though BMC claimed to have trimmed over 18,000 trees in its pre-monsoon exercise, around 50 cases of trees falling were reported on Sunday.

Trains on the CR line were running 45 minutes behind schedule on account of signal problems at Kalyan, Thane, Kanjurmarg and Vidyavihar. By Sunday evening, 21 services were cancelled and eight special trains were run.

Public relations office of WR said all trains on the line were running smoothly.

hindustantimes

Chennai – INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Monday, Jun 10

Max Min

37° | 28°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:41

Humidity: 52

Sunset: 06:34

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1006

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Tuesday, Jun 11

Max Min

37° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday

Jun 12



37° | 27°

Cloudy

Thursday

Jun 13



34° | 27°

Overcast

Friday

Jun 14



36° | 27°

Overcast

Saturday

Jun 15



37° | 27°

Overcast

Sunday

Jun 16



35° | 27°

Overcast

Airport Weather

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:41

Humidity: 52

Sunset: 06:34

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1006



Bengal potato prices fall by Rs 50 on improved supplies

Potato prices in West Bengal dipped by nearly Rs 50 a quintal in the last one month on the back of improved supplies.

Wholesale price of the tuber (Jyoti variety) was ruling around Rs 800 a quintal in the first week of June, down from Rs 850 a quintal in mid-May.

According to Patit Paban De, member, West Bengal Cold Storage Association, nearly 12 per cent of the potatoes kept in cold storages have found their way into the market so far.

Close to 59 lakh tonnes of potatoes have been stored in the 425 odd cold storages in the State this year. "Usually, close to 15 per cent of the stock from cold storages are released into the market around this time of the year. But ,this year, the release has been lower as the process of unloading started a bit late," De told *Business Line*. The prices could have come down a tad lower had the release been at par with previous year, said Sukumar Samanta, General Secretary, Singur Ratanpur Aloo Byabasi Samiti. Close to 54 lakh tonnes of potatoes are usually kept in cold storages across the State. However, this year, the storage has been higher on account of a higher production. There has been a 12 per cent rise in potato production in the State to nearly 98 lakh tonnes this year.

Demand

The demand for Bengal potatoes continues to be steady and this would keep the prices firm at current levels, De said.

West Bengal consumes around 50-55 lakh tonnes of potatoes produced; while nearly 40 per cent find its way into other States.

“So far, the demand has been good and Bengal potatoes are being transported to other states. “However, if for some reason, the movement of potatoes to other States is affected, then it can lead to a price crash as the production is also higher this year,” he said.

Gutkha ban: Off-season helps prevent major upheavals in areca



It is almost a week since the Karnataka Government imposed a ban on the sale of gutkha.

There is no major upheaval in the white and red varieties of arecanut market since then, as the ban coincided with the off-season for sale. (Red variety of arecanut is prominently used in the manufacture of gutkha, whereas white variety is used in paan beeda preparation.)

The old stocks of white arecanut have seen a price decline of around Rs 6-8 a kg in the major growing centres last week.

Similar trend was seen in major red arecanut growing centres.

Suresh Bhandary, Managing Director of the Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Cooperative (Campco) Ltd, told *Business Line* that a clear picture on price would emerge when the season begins from August.

Ramesh Kaintaje, a grower from Bantwal taluk in Dakshina Kannada district, said that nearly 85 per cent of the growers do not release the

stocks to the market during June-July period. K. Padmanabha, President of Campco, said that the cooperative is not against the ban on gutkha.

Stating that chemical ingredients and tobacco in gutkha are the carcinogenic agents, he said arecanut is being victimised in the name of gutkha.

Ravish Hegde, Managing Director of the Sirsi-based Totagars' Cooperative Sale Society (which is involved in arecanut trade), felt that the ban on gutkha would help stabilise the price in the market.

In spite of the recent ban in Karnataka, the price of red variety arecanut was ruling at around Rs 160-170 a kg in the first week of June, he said.

This year, there was no stock in the pipeline with gutkha manufacturers, as they did not keep stock fearing the ban.

Farmers, who have the stocks now, would play a major role in deciding the market when the season begins, he said.

Tomatoes firm on low arrivals, frantic buying



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

Low arrivals in the market coupled with frantic buying by the traders pushed tomato prices up by Rs 100-500 a quintal on Sunday.

Vikas Sachdeva, a trade expert, told *Business Line* that after witnessing a continuous fall in recent past, tomato prices moved up on low stocks and good domestic buying.

Arrivals from the Rawar belt are coming to an end while the arrivals of new crop from Indri-ladwa belt have started with small consignments and that was the prime reason behind the fall in arrivals, he added.

Around 800 crates (a crate is 25 kg) of different varieties of tomato arrived at the Karnal vegetable market and were quoted at Rs 800-2,400.

Around 1,500 crates of varieties such as Anoop, Himsona and Trishul arrived at the markets of Karnal district.

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

Prices of superior quality increased by Rs 500 and quoted at Rs 2,300-2,400.

The prices of medium quality went up by Rs 300 and quoted at 1,300-1,500 while low quality was up Rs 100 at Rs 800-1,100.

According to the market experts, tomato prices may continue to rule around current levels with marginal fluctuation in the next few days and then it may witness a fall.

Domestic demand is also expected to remain steady in the coming weeks, said trade sources.

Commodity market awaits US Fed decision on tapering asset purchases



Precious: Platinum ended the week at \$1,505/oz.

Are market concerns of Fed tapering premature?

Global commodity markets are at the crossroads of high liquidity and slow demand growth even as data available so far for the second quarter of this year suggest that global GDP continues to expand moderately.

The engine of global growth, the US, shows positive signs of economic activity and gradual, even if painfully slow, fall in jobless claims.

The critical question is how soon a decision on tapering asset purchase will be taken. This question arises simply because anticipation of Fed tapering is the key driver of financial markets at present. Questions are also being raised whether some commodity markets have over-reacted to the imminent scale back of quantitative easing (QE3, the timing of which is as yet uncertain) and thus overshot to the downside at present.

The release of May non-farm payrolls on Friday showed that the US economic recovery remains weak, although it also helped reduce fears of an abrupt slowdown.

Commodity market participants believe that the Fed may exercise the last option at some stage simply because of the risks associated with a larger balance sheet.

It is under these highly uncertain conditions that many are conjecturing about the timing of asset purchase tapering. No wonder, in the commodity market, fundamentals are coming to the fore. Prices are being increasingly driven by market balances.

Last week was mixed for precious metals and base metals.

While platinum was the top performer with 3.2 per cent price gain, palladium was up 1.3 per cent. Silver was nearly unchanged over the week even as gold slipped 0.6 per cent.

Among base metals, lead performed badly with a fall of 2.4 per cent followed by copper and zinc while aluminium (1.4 per cent), nickel (1.5 per cent) and tin prices gained week on week. Oil WTI was up 3.5 per cent.

Gold: The market is torn between fear of Fed tapering and resultant decline in investor interest and ETP outflows on the one hand and healthy physical demand conditions after the April price correction on the other. Prices have hovered around the \$1,400 an ounce mark with the market focus is buffeted by macro and trade data as well as dollar dynamics and import duty hikes. In London on Friday, gold PM Fix was \$1,386/oz, down from the previous day's \$1,400/oz. Silver edged marginally lower with Friday AM Fix at \$22.60/oz versus previous day's \$22.62/oz. Platinum ended the week at \$1,505/oz and palladium \$754/oz.

The question is whether gold price fall has run out of momentum. While ETP outflows continue, they have slowed. Speculative positioning in the yellow metal is also rather pessimistic with CFTC gross short positions at an all-time high and smallest net long position since 2007. This makes a mild recovery in prices possible in the weeks ahead although timing of Fed tapering will be decisive.

At the same time, one cannot overlook the fact that ETP outflows since April have reached 135 tonnes and the period of seasonally weaker demand has kicked in. The slowdown in physical demand is likely to be greater than the slowdown in investor demand with resultant effect on prices.

While on this, with a view to curbing gold imports, the Government of India has hiked customs duty on gold imports to eight per cent from six and imposed a substantial restriction on consignment imports.

Banks have been advised not to aggressively promote sale of gold coins. To what extent these measures will help arrest gold imports remains to be seen.

Meanwhile, the Indian rupee has depreciated, pushing the landed cost of the metal higher, and denying consumers the full benefit of the fall in gold price in dollar terms.

Base metals: The market seems to be going through a period of introspection and appears less-supported. While Fed tapering looms, lack of growth impulses and demand is a concern.

Going by macro data, Chinese economy is less supportive than it used to be. No wonder, prices are under pressure. On Friday, LME cash aluminium was \$1,903/t, copper \$7,198/t and zinc \$1,869/t.

The copper market is projected to move into surplus on improved supplies in H2 this year. So, selling rallies in copper is advisable. Moves above \$7,500/t provide opportunity to short copper on a likely slowing in Chinese consumption over the summer months.

In the case of aluminium, as short covering seems to have driven prices above fair value, fundamentals along with producer selling will drive a correction lower.

According to technical analysis, copper momentum is bearish. Resistance is seen at \$7,500 and \$7,300 while support is seen at \$7,200 and \$7,100. Bearish risks are increasing for zinc and aluminium.

Crude: Last week, crude oil markets largely retraced the losses from the previous week and prices are likely to gradually recover towards the end of the month with rising summer demand.

Speculative positioning in the US oil market remains heavily on the long side, although investor interest in other commodities is low. Technically, in the near-term, a choppy 99-105 range continues to dominate Brent prices and the chop is likely to continue through August.

Pepper buoyant on strong demand amid tight supply



The present tight supply situation has turned pepper futures and spot hot, last week.

The domestic dealers have started covering and consequently, there was a visible upsurge in demand.

Domestic demand has turned out to be strong as interstate dealers were directly covering on cash-and-carry basis from primary markets/farmers in Idukki and Wayanad, Kerala. Leading exporters said to have bought

Rajkumari (Idukki) pepper at Rs 350 a kg while high range pepper was bought at Rs 347.

Tight availability coupled with good buying support pushed the market up on the spot. Small and medium masala manufacturers in north India were covering briskly following the onset of monsoon, they said.

In April, the country reportedly imported 1,500 tonnes from Vietnam which is said to have shipped 12,000 tonnes in May .

Pepper from Battery and Pulpally in Wayanad was offered at Rs 340.

Karnataka pepper was quoted at Rs 335 and sellers were asking Rs 331 for lower grade pepper.

Arrivals continued to fall because of the rains in many of the growing areas in Kerala. Dispatches from Karnataka have also declined, market sources said.

Due to the summer showers in the pepper growing regions of Kerala, the pepper has high moisture content up to 13.5 per cent, the trade claimed.

All the active contracts last week on the IPSTA platform showed a substantial rise. June, July and August contracts increased by Rs 569, Rs 451 and Rs 612 respectively to close at Rs 35,969, Rs 35,950 and Rs 36,302 a quintal on Saturday.

Total turnover decreased by 156 tonnes to close at 303 tonnes. Total open interest declined by one tonne to 28 tonnes.

Spot prices rose by Rs 200 a quintal to close at Rs 339 (ungarbled) and Rs 35,400 (MG 1) a quintal on good buying support. Indian parity in the international market was at \$6,450 a tonne (c&f) for June shipments for Europe and \$6,650 a tonne (c&f) for the US. Malabar prices are in line with that of Vietnam now, export sources said.

The Indian parity has declined despite increase in futures prices due to weakening of the rupee against the dollar, they said.

Downtrend continues at Kochi tea sale

Declining trend continues to witness the Kochi tea auction with prices for almost all varieties quoting lower.

In sale No: 23, the quantity on offer in the dust grades was 11,95,500 kg. Though the upcountry demand was low, there was a fair demand from exporters.

The market opened Rs 3-5 lower.

As the sale progressed, the drop was more to the tune of Rs 5-10 following quality.

The drop in price was less for bottom of the market.

The quantity on offer in the orthodox dust grades was 7,500 kg and the market was easier by Rs 2-3.

In the best CTC dusts, PD varieties quoted Rs 103-125, RD grades fetched Rs 105-124, SRD ruled at Rs 110-136 while SFD stood at Rs 110-150.

The quantity on offer in the orthodox leaf category was 1,57,500 kg.

The market for all Nilgiri varieties was irregular and lower following quality.

Well made clean black medium bolder broken, tippy grades barely remained steady.

Others were irregular and lower.

Corresponding whole leaf witnessed strong feature and moved up in value.

Secondary broken firm to dearer.

Fannings from the same origin steady to firm and sometimes dearer.

The quantity on offer in CTC leaf grades was 83,500 kg.

The market for good liquoring broken and fannings were fully firm.

Others were irregular and lower.

In the dust category, Monica SFD quoted at Rs 152 followed by Kallyar SFD at Rs 149.

In the leaf grades, Chamraj FOP-S Green Tea fetched Rs 315 followed by Grahamsland Pekoe at Rs 226.

Monsoon to hold strong in central India, north-west for 10 more days

South-West monsoon is forecast to hold strong variously over West Coast, central and adjoining east India and north-west India for another 10-12 days.

Parts of North-East India; south-east Peninsula (interiors of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and entire Tamil Nadu) could be sole exceptions, according to forecasts by the US agencies.

BLOW-UPS SEEN

South Gujarat; Mumbai-Konkan; Coastal Karnataka and adjoining North Kerala are expected to witness heavy to very heavy showers during this period.

Also joining them would be Uttarakhand; Madhya Pradesh; Chhattisgarh; Odisha and adjoining north coastal Andhra Pradesh during June 8-14.

This would be followed by rain blow-ups over east Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi during June 15-21 as the monsoon enters north-west India ahead of the schedule.

In this region, extreme west Rajasthan; north of Jammu and Kashmir; and parts of north eastern States might witness below just normal to below normal rainfall.

ABOVE NORMAL

The monsoon would mostly be above normal until June 20; it could relent a bit later, and trend towards the historical normal closer to July, US agencies indicated.

On Sunday, the India Met Department said that the monsoon had further advanced into Konkan; Marathawada; Telangana; southern parts of Saurashtra, East Gujarat and Vidarbha; most of Madhya Maharashtra and some more parts of South Chhattisgarh.

The northern limit of monsoon passed through Veraval, Surat, Jalgoan, Amraoti, Chandrapur, Jagdalpur, Puri, Kolkata, Jalpaiguri and Gangtok.

TROUGH HOLDS

It would advance into Gujarat; Chhattisgarh and Odisha; remaining Madhya Maharashtra, Vidarbha, West Bengal and Sikkim; and parts of South Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar during the next three days.

The offshore trough, an elongated area of low pressure along the West Coast, rolled out along the full length from Gujarat coast to Kerala coast indicating monsoon strength.

Along the plains of north-west India, the crucial land-based trough from west Rajasthan to Bay of Bengal was in the process of evolving.

On Sunday, it ran down from north Rajasthan to east Assam and merely needed to reorient itself so that the eastern end dipped into the Bay.

This would set up path for monsoon easterlies from the Bay to flow in and fill east and north-west India to bring rains into the farming heartland.

Business Standard

Monsoon reaches Chhattisgarh, Odisha early

In Chhattisgarh, the monsoon entered the Bastar region on Saturday and is likely to reach the state capital in the next one or two days

The Southwest monsoon has arrived in the states of Chhattisgarh and Odisha well ahead of schedule, bringing joy to farmers and authorities alike.

In Chhattisgarh, the monsoon entered the Bastar region on Saturday and is likely to reach the state capital in the next one or two days.

Usually, the monsoon arrives in the state between June 10 and 15. Instead, it arrived on June 8 this time. The state has an average rainfall of about 1,373 millimetres (mm).

In Odisha, the met office confirmed the onset of the monsoon late Saturday evening in southern parts of the state, ahead of its scheduled arrival in the third week of June.

The met department has predicted an increase in rainfall in the next two to three days.

“Light to moderate rain or thundershowers may occur at a few places over the districts of Odisha. The outlook for the next two days would be increase in rainfall,” the local weather office said on its website. In both states, the

ahead-of-schedule arrival of the monsoon has elated farmers and authorities.

In Chhattisgarh, the state government has set a target to produce 7 million tonnes (MT) of paddy in the kharif season 2013. Officials now say that with the monsoon arriving early, the target would be achieved easily.

In Odisha, the agromet advisory service of the India Meteorological Department has already asked the farmers to begin sowing to take the advantage of the normal monsoon.

Last week, the state agriculture and food production department had set a food grain production target of 10.1 MT in the kharif season of 2013.

The tentative production target includes 8.73 MT of rice, 0.675 MT of maize, 0.162 MT of ragi, 0.141 MT of arhar, 0.14 MT of moong and 0.152 MT of urad.

For optimum utilisation of surface and ground water resources, the government plans to set up 37,009 private irrigation projects across the state.

The Agriculture Department also is also targetting to disburse crop loans of Rs 6,000 crore to farmers through cooperative societies during 2013-14 at two per cent interest rate.