

Loan waiver for small, tenant farmers sought

A.P. Rythu Sangham has demanded waiver of crop loans of small, marginal and tenant farmers who suffered losses due to drought and cyclones.

The 20th State Convention of Rythu Sangham held at Ongole from June 9 to 11 said that of 86 per cent of farmers cultivating crops in 1.26 crore land holdings were small and marginal farmers.

The Mahasabha passed a resolution that their loans should be waived as they were under distress with the government aid not reaching them and no remunerative prices for their produce. The loan waiver scheme announced by the Centre in 2008 was not extended to those who had taken loan from cooperative banks. The High Court gave a direction to extend the loan waiver scheme to farmers who borrowed from cooperative banks, but it was not implemented. The Mahasabha elected 81 member State Committee and 17 office-bearers with B. Chandra Reddy as president and V. Subbarao as general secretary.

Farmers urged to go in for drip irrigation

production cost and reduce water use substantially but also help farmers achieve better yield, said Collector N. Venkatachalam.

Inaugurating a workshop on drip irrigation here on Friday, he said that drip irrigation could be used for short term and horticulture crops. It could also be used for cash crops like coffee, pepper, cardamom and long term crops like banana, orange, guava, sugarcane, cotton and betel nut.

Describing the various benefits of the system, the Collector said that it scales down requirement of labour and takes care of application of fertilizers. The government has been offering 100 cent per subsidy for drip irrigation in five acres of land, he added.

In his special address, Deputy Director of Horticulture D. Chandrasekar said that soil and water test was necessary before establishing drip irrigation. If the water was saline then the salt particles block the minute holes in the drip system, turning it into a failure.

Area under cultivation could be doubled with introduction of drip irrigation system. "It will reduce 30 per cent labour needs, cut 30 per cent of total fertigation requirements. At the same time, production will go up by 30 to 100 cent per cent depending on agriculture pattern. Quality of crops will also improve", said Deputy Director of Horticulture (Central Schemes) S. Raja Mohammad.

Those interested in setting up drip irrigation, may contact 0451 2460522.

District fertilizer stock meant only for local farmers, says official

With many parts of the southern districts receiving rainfall in the last few days after the onset of southwest monsoon in Kerala, the farmers in the district seem to be hopeful of commencing agricultural activities.

Against this backdrop, Collector Anshul Mishra chaired a meeting with Agriculture Department officials and took stock of the fertiliser availability.

According to Joint Director (Agriculture) Jayasingh Gnanadurai, if the water level in Vaigai reservoir rises steadily, the farmers can start work. The first crop paddy cultivation normally covers 9,000 hectares in the district.

Mr.Gnanadurai said against the fertiliser requirement of 2,900 tonnes of urea for June, the district had a stock of 1,810 tonnes. The DAP stock was 561 tonnes whereas the requirement was 610 tonnes. The district, however, had adequate stock of potash and complex fertiliser, he noted. However, as the prices of potash and complex were high, there was every possibility that the farmers might purchase urea, and as a result its price too might go up this season.

Illegal movement

Some dealers might transport urea to other districts and sell them at higher prices, leading to an artificial shortage in Madurai. The officials had been instructed to keep a strict vigil, and stern action would be initiated against the dealers and transporters who were found guilty, he added.

The Joint Director said preliminary assessments suggested that the district could meet its demands when the irrigation activity picked up.

Steps had been taken to ensure that all the fertiliser companies supplied the district's monthly requirements and the stocks were kept ready at primary agriculture cooperative societies. Farmers' intending to buy in retail outlets should not pay more than MRP rates, Mr.Gnanadurai said, and added that farmers could complain about any shortage of fertilisers at 0452-2531136.

Farmers' grievances day

The monthly farmers' grievances day would be held at the collectorate here on June 21 at 10 a.m. In a release here on Friday, C. Manoharan, Collector, urged the farmers to participate in the meeting and for immediate redressal of their grievances.

Farmers welcome announcement on three-phase power supply

Farmers of Thanjavur and Tiruvarur districts welcomed the announcements made by Chief Minister Jayalalithaa on Friday.

P.R. Pandian, State council member of Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, said: "We welcome the announcement of three-phase power supply for 12 hours for agriculture pumpsets till September. But the same announcement was made last year but it was not properly implemented. This should be properly implemented this year."

Supply of pipes for taking water from canals and rivers is welcome. But quality and suitability of pipes should be ensured. It should be given to really needy people.

Swami Malai Sundara Vimalanathan, district secretary of Thanjavur District Cauvery Farmers Protection Association, said that more agriculture pumpset connections should be given as had been done in 2004 when drought prevailed. Twelve hours three-phase supply promise should be kept up in letter and spirit.

“Getting Cauvery water from Karnataka should be our priority,” said the farmers. The Centre should be urged to form the Cauvery Management Board and Water Regulation Committee quickly and ensure release of water from Karnataka as per the final award of the Cauvery River Water Disputes Tribunal. Supervising committee, temporarily formed now, had no powers and therefore irrelevant. Instead of waging a legal battle alone, the Chief Minister should convene an all-party meeting and take a delegation to New Delhi to pressure Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to take action and resolve the Cauvery issue.

Punjab farmers face labour shortage

As paddy sowing is in full swing in Punjab, farmers of numerous villages here have been hit hard by the shortage of labourers.

According to farmers, a large number of labourers who mostly belong to Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, were away to their respective hometowns and have not returned this time.

They said that fields have been kept ready for sowing paddy, but they could not get labourers for the same.

Ranjit Singh of Tarkhan Majra village said: “My son is a Class XII student and I have to seek his help for readying the fields for sowing as I am not able to find labourers.”

He further said whatever migrant labourers have come this season preferred to go to progressive and big land holding farmers as they are promising them not only meal along with wages, but liquor as well.

Paddy sowing in Punjab has started on June 10.

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For a bumper crop



Heavy rain damages ready-to-harvest crop

The loss has been reported from Koraput and Kalahandi districts

The State government has asked Collectors of interior and southern districts to take steps for assessment of the crop damage caused by heavy rainfall during past 48 hours.

Vast stretches ready-to-harvest crop of late summer variety in different blocks of Koraput district have been extensively damaged by the crop. There is also report of crop damage from Kalahandi district.

Office of Special Relief Commissioner said Collectors were instructed to provide the admissible assistances as per norms of State disaster response fund.

Under influence of well-marked low pressure area over central parts of the State, heavy rain had lashed most parts of Kalahandi, Koraput, Gajapati districts. Thuamul Rampur in Kalahandi District recorded the highest rainfall of 310 mm on Thursday and 356 mm on Friday followed by Jaipatna which received rainfall of 204 mm and 198 mm respectively on these two days.

As per SRC, Kalampur recorded rainfall of 240 mm and 153 mm and Junagarh 215 mm and 142 mm on Thursday and Friday respectively.

According to assessment, the sum of the district average rainfall of Nabarangpur, Koraput and Rayagada accounted for 314.8 mm, 267.2 mm and 197.4 mm respectively.

As a result of heavy rainfall in the catchments of River Hati, the river overtopped the bridge at Junagarh on Thursday and was still flowing 3ft above the bridge by Friday evening disrupting the traffic on NH 201.

River Vanshadhara's water level which had crossed danger level at Kashinagar on Thursday evening started to recede below warning level on Friday. Rainwater has disrupted road communication at many places.

The road from Boriguma in Koraput district to Nabarangpur was cut off for a brief period due to overflowing of water on Thursday.

There were reports of disruption of some more roads in Kalahandi, Koraput and Gajapati districts.

Meanwhile, the opening day of three-day-long Raja festival was affected due to intermittent rain in coastal districts.

At many places, people could not come out of their houses to greet each other.

However, the inclement weather provided a perfect stage for playing cards – which is a major feature of Raja.

Eight held for supply and sale of spurious fertilizer

The Hassan police have so far arrested eight persons in connection with the supply and sale of spurious fertilizer in the district.

Agriculture Department officers have filed four cases in Belur and Sakleshpur taluks in this connection.

B. Shivaraj, Joint Director of Agriculture, at a press conference here on Friday, said four persons were arrested in a case filed after his officers found that spurious muriate of potash (potassium chloride) was being sold at Hanabalu Vyavasaya Seva Sahakara Sangha, three persons were arrested in a similar case at Anughatta in Belur taluk and one person in Vellore district of Tamil Nadu, from where spurious fertilizer was supplied illegally.

The officer said Milan Gowda, a resident of Sakleshpur, and Devaraj of Tamil Nadu were the men behind the supply of spurious fertilizer.

The officers had filed two cases following similar allegations from Norway village in Belur taluk and Changadihalli in Sakleshpur taluk.

Mr. Shivaraj said those who have not yet used the spurious fertilizer could return it to the societies from where it was purchased and procure the quality fertilizer. “The

department is planning to set up a committee of experts to inspect the farmlands where the spurious fertilizer was used and study its impact.”

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Corruption brews in Visakha Agency coffee project: CPI(M)

Party alleges embezzlement of Rs.34 crore as coffee farmers launch an indefinite hunger strike at the Paderu mandal ITDA Project Office

Can a government official remain silent if his/her salary is not paid on the first of the month? They have, however, kept poor coffee farmers waiting for over four years to pay their dues due to alleged misappropriation of funds sanctioned for the coffee project by some unscrupulous officials and others.

The coffee farmers, who have been on a relay hunger strike for the last three days, launched an indefinite hunger strike in front of the office of the ITDA Project Officer here on Friday.

One leader from each of the 11 mandals in the Agency area is participating in the fast.

Addressing the gathering, CPI(M) State Secretariat member Ch. Narasinga Rao demanded that criminal action be taken against the officials, who were involved in misappropriation of Rs.34 crore and immediate payment of arrears to all coffee farmers.

Extending full support to the Girijan Sangham, which was organising the agitation in association with the CPI(M) District Committee, he said the fast would not be called off till justice was done to the tribal people.

The tribal people, who came from different mandals in the Agency, braved intermittent showers to listen to the CPI(M) leaders. Some of them were overheard asking others, and they expressed astonishment when told that Rs.34 crore was embezzled by officials.

Mr. Narasinga Rao said a total of Rs.33.47 crore of the Rs.45.45 crore drawn from the bank was misappropriated for the works done under the coffee project in the 11 Agency mandals.

A survey done by the CPI(M) team had revealed that several beneficiaries were forced to sign for the amounts not given to them, and some were forced to give their fingerprints without payment of any money.

The findings were confirmed by the social audits conducted in two of the mandals while in other mandals the audits were pending.

He said that during the last six months only Rs.28 lakh arrears were paid to coffee farmers in just one mandal.

He alleged that the coffee extension project in the tribal areas was taken up to promote a private foundation but not the welfare of tribal people.

He predicted a shortfall of foodgrains in the tribal areas in future as a vast extent was being converted into coffee plantations without proper planning.

He appealed to the tribal people not to tolerate corruption and called for social boycott of all those who indulged in corruption. He also appealed to all political parties to support the cause of tribal people.

CPI(M) Paderu division secretary M. Suryanarayana said clubbing of the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) with the Coffee Project in 2009 paved the way for large-scale corruption. He alleged a similar scam had also taken place in 'pippalla modi' (minor forest produce) project in Chintapalli mandal in which Rs.36 lakh was misappropriated.

He alleged that the Tribal Welfare Minister was bringing pressure on the district officials not to go ahead with the inquiry in this regard.

Scientists studying genetic traits of Kashmir pomegranates



They intend to find the gene that makes it disease-resistant

Scientists are examining the genetic traits of disease-resistant traditional varieties of pomegranate from the Himalayan and Kashmir region to help find a solution to the problems of the pomegranate farmers in South India where high susceptibility of this fruit to disease is a cause of concern.

The idea is to identify the relevant gene in the natural varieties of pomegranates that have survived for hundreds of years in the Himalayan and Kashmir region without succumbing to disease.

Disclosing this to presspersons during his visit to the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research in Bangalore on Friday, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) Deputy Director-General N.K. Krishna Kumar said the ICAR had taken up the above project in association with several agricultural universities in the country and the National Research Centre on Pomegranate at Sholapur.

He said scientists were trying to find out if any of the pomegranate varieties from Himalayan and Kashmir region were resistance to diseases prevalent in southern States.

Referring to the huge losses being suffered by the pomegranate farmers due to high susceptibility of this fruit to disease, Mr. Kumar said the problem was basically due to

the fact that pomegranate was an arid crop. “Districts like Bijapur and Gulbarga were not irrigated when this fruit was introduced there for cultivation. However, a large part of this belt has now been irrigated with the implementation of the Upper Krishna Project. So the arid crop, which has come from Afghanistan where the weather is very cold and dry, has been brought to a place that has high humidity. This has brought several associated problems like susceptibility to diseases,” he said.

He expressed confidence that it would be possible to tackle the problem by following “good agricultural practices”.

Antioxidant tomatoes

The Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR) has developed and also patented a technology to for producing a tomato variety with high antioxidant properties which will cater to the needs of the pharmaceutical industry, said Mr. Krishna Kumar. He added that it could be developed by infusing genes from flowering plants.

“However, at present we will not use this technology and its future use would depend on the policy to be adopted by the government on related issues,” the Deputy Director-General of ICAR said, and made it clear that the new patented technology would not be made public at present.

ANGRAU to increase seats in B.Sc agriculture

Acharya N.G. Ranga Agricultural University (ANGRAU) Vice-Chancellor A. Padmaraju has said that the number of seats in B.Sc. Agricultural Science in all its eight colleges in Andhra Pradesh will be increased in the 2013-14 academic year.

As many as 725 seats were offered in the last academic year. Professor Padmaraju on Friday visited Agricultural Station, Machilipatnam and inspected the seed processing unit, which was recently set up to provide quality seeds to the farmers in Krishna District.

He said that final decision on the exact number of new seats in Agricultural B.Sc. was yet to be taken as it was recently tabled in the University Academic Council.

“Government of India has sanctioned a Nano Technology research project to develop efficient herbicides and pesticides and largely aiming minimising the use of fertilizers and pesticides to grow crops,” Mr. Padma Raju told *The Hindu*.

“The IIT-Chennai wants to collaborate with the ANGRAU to complete the nano technology project at the Regional Agricultural Station, Tirupati,” added Mr. Padmaraju accompanied by Lam Research Station Associate Director R. Veeraraghavayya.

“Applications have been invited for admission into these courses from students who have completed M.P.C or Bi.P.C Intermediate and they do not require an EAMCET rank.

Bengal gram growers to go on warpath

They demand market intervention by Centre and State



WORRIED LOT:Hopes of Bengal gram growers in Prakasam district for handsome returns are shattered.— Photo: Kommuri Srinivas

With no takers for hybrid varieties of Bengal gram, growers in Prakasam district on Friday decided to organise stirs seeking market intervention by the Union and State governments.

"The growers are in deep trouble as the premier pulse crop grown in the drought-prone district traded weak in the National Commodities exchange thanks to imports from Australia and other countries and no export orders from west Asian countries for the hybrid varieties including KAK2 and Mexican bold variety", said CPI (M)-led Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sangam State Vice-President N.Ranga Rao after a preparatory meeting

with farmers here. "In the first phase, we will picket the MRO offices in the 15 mandals of the district, where the crop is grown extensively, on June 18", said APRS District Vice-President K.Ramakoteswara Rao.

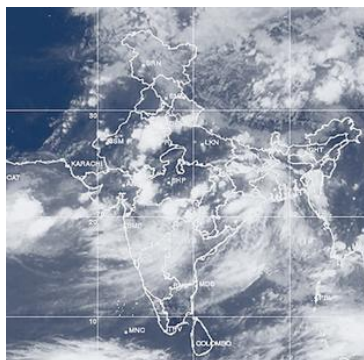
The growers decided to go in a delegation to Hyderabad later this month to impress upon Chief Minister N.Kiran Kumar Reddy to direct the Markfed to intervene and create buoyancy in the market, said APRS District Secretary D.Gopinath said.

"Four months after harvest there are no takers for our produce. We are saddled with 20 lakh quintals of hybrid varieties during this season, besides carry-over stock of four lakh quintals lying in the cold storage", lamented APRS Bengal gram growers committee secretary Paritala Venkata Chowdhary. Farmers should be prepared for militant struggles to get a positive response from the Government, said CPI-led APRS District President K.V.V.Prasad.

"If the Centre is not in a position to stop imports, it should lift the stocks with us providing Rs. 6,000 per quintal for KAK2 and Rs. 7000 per quintal for Mexican bold variety", added yet another farmer Ch.Sriram Murthy.

"We are in dire straits as there are no buyers even at Rs. 3,000 per quintal at a time when the cost of cultivation has gone up by over 20 per cent this year," a ryot Chinam Ayyavarulu said.

weather



New Delhi (Sfd)	33	28	0	15
Chandigarh	29	25	92	107
Hissar	33	25	41	41
Bhuntar	22	18	12	62
Shimla	19	14	41	97
Jammu	33	27	0	13
Srinagar	30	18	1	17
Amritsar	30	25	0	78
Patiala	27	25	56	66
Jaipur	37	27	0	52
Udaipur	35	26	3	39
Allahabad	40	30	0	23
Lucknow	38	27	0	56
Varanasi	40	30	0	1
Dehradun	29	21	93	172
Agartala	35	26	23	84
Ahmedabad	36	27	0	17
Bangalore	28	21	0	122
Bhubaneshwar	30	24	27	90
Bhopal	33	24	3	71
Chennai	34	27	0	123
Guwahati	38	26	0	69
Hyderabad	27	22	2	152
Kolkata	32	24	73	128
Mumbai	31	25	11	359
Nagpur	33	25	19	57
Patna	37	28	0	29
Pune	29	22	0	99
Thiruvananthapuram	27	24	7	160
Imphal	33	23	0	27

Shillong

26 18 4 121

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

RAINFALL: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at most places over Himachal Pradesh, at many places over Haryana, Punjab and Uttarakhand, at few places over Jammu and Kashmir and Rajasthan and at isolated places over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (3 cm and above) HARYANA: Chandigarh, Narwana and Kalayat 9 each, Kaithal 8, Uchana 7, Naraingarh and Morni 5 each, Tohana, Hissar and Kalka 4 each and Ambala, Jind and Panchkula 3 each, HIMACHAL PRADESH: (5 cm and above) Nagrota Surian and Renuka 9 each, Nahan and Rajgarh 8 each, Kahu, Palampur, Shimla, Dharampur and Kasauli 7 each and Berthin, Jhandutta and Solan 5 each, JAMMU AND KASHMIR: Kathua and Awantipur 3 each, PUNJAB: Ludhiana, Ropar and Derabassi 9 each, Balachaur and Sangrur 8 each, Patiala and Anandpur Sahib 6 each, Phillaur, Nabha, Rajpura and Nangal 5 each and Dasuya and Samrala 3 each, EAST RAJASTHAN: Baseri 5 and Swaimadhopur 4, WEST RAJASTHAN: Pali 6, Pilibanga, Nohar and Luni 5 each, Sardanagar 4 and Ahore, Bagoda and Rohat 3 each and UTTARAKHAND: Dehradun 9, Kosani 4 and Dunda and Jakhali 3 each.

TEMPERATURES: The maximum temperatures rose appreciably in Jammu and Kashmir and east Rajasthan, rose in west Rajasthan, fell largely in Punjab, fell markedly in Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, fell appreciably in Uttarakhand and changed little elsewhere. They were above normal in west Rajasthan, largely below normal in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, appreciably below normal in east Rajasthan, west Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand and normal in rest of the region. The highest maximum temperature in the region was 41.0°C recorded at Sikar (Rajasthan).

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 16th June 2013: Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Uttarakhand and Punjab during next 24 hours and increase thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over rest of the region.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF
16th June 2013: Partly cloudy sky. Light rain may occur in some areas.

THE HINDU Business Line

Near record crop



Boost to exporters: Roasted California Almonds on display in Hyderabad on Thursday, showcased by the Almond Board of California, representing the almond growers and processors in California. The industry represents about 80 per cent of the world's supply of almonds exported to around 90 nations. The US Government has projected a near-record almond crop this year and the crop size is estimated to be up six per cent at 2,000,700,000 pounds. — P. V. Sivakumar

Mixed trend at Kolkata tea sale

Prices showed a mixed trend while volumes were higher at this week's Kolkata tea auction.

The average price of the Orthodox variety was at Rs 218.99 a kg – higher than last week's Rs 210.36 and that of CTC at Rs 142.37 – lower than last week's Rs 144.40, according to J Thomas & Company Pvt Ltd, the tea auctioneers.

An estimated 94.18 per cent (92.06 per cent) of the Orthodox and 62.41 per cent (76.95 per cent) of CTC volumes offered were sold.

This week, the total offerings (packages) at three North Indian tea auction centres at Kolkata, Guwahati and Siliguri were 2,66,831 compared with 2,43,843 in the corresponding sale (No. 24) of last year. The offerings at Kolkata comprise CTC/Dust 90,661 (91,821), Orthodox 25,535 (13,461) and Darjeeling 4,988 (6378). The offerings at two other centres were: Guwahati 77,965 (77,868) and Siliguri 67,682 (54,315).

Improved Assam CTC teas sold well while the remaining Assams were easier. Good Dooars sold irregularly around last levels. Tata Global operated selectively on the liquoring sorts. Hindustan Unilever operated less forcefully on the mediums. Western India operated actively for the liquoring teas. There were good enquiries from other internal and local sections. Exporters operated on the larger broken.

Orthodox whole leaf and broken grades met with strong demand and sold at firm to dearer rates. Fannings sold at irregularly lower rates. CIS and West Asia shippers operated actively. North India buyers were active for the bolder whole leaf grades. There was fair interest from local dealers on the liquoring fannings and secondaries.

Darjeeling whole leaf varieties witnessed useful enquiry and sold well with competition. Tata Global and traditional exporters were active. Broken met with export and local enquiry and sold at firm to dearer rates.

Spot rubber unchanged

Spot rubber finished almost unchanged on Friday.

The absence of follow up buying from the tyre sector and a weak closing in domestic futures kept the commodity under pressure during the day. But it managed to sustain at the prevailing levels on supply concerns.

Meanwhile, ISNR 20 and latex made moderate gains on better demand amidst low supplies.

Sheet rubber closed steady at Rs 175 a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to traders and the Rubber Board. The trend was mixed.

June futures weakened to Rs 175.70 (Rs 176.86), July to Rs 171.81 (Rs 173.39), August to Rs 168.99 (Rs 170.34), September to Rs 166 (Rs 167.23), October to Rs 164 (Rs 164.96) and November to Rs 159.24 (Rs 163.52) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) slid to Rs 162.09 (Rs 162.76) at Bangkok. June futures improved to ₹231.9 (Rs 140.68) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 175 (175); RSS-5: 170 (170); Ungraded: 160 (160); ISNR 20: 162 (161); and Latex 60 per cent: 113.50 (111).

Sliding rupee brings cheer to seafood exporters; vannamei farmers may gain

The rupee's slide against the dollar has brought cheer to seafood exporters and shrimp farmers as exports now fetch higher value in rupee terms.

However, how much the industry stands to gain depends on a lot of factors – mainly how long the rupee slide will continue or at what level it will stabilise.

“Exporters are naturally happy about the rupee situation,” said Nobert Karikassery, Treasurer of Seafood Exporters Association of India, who is also the President of the Kerala Seafood Exporters Association.

“Those who have booked forward are happier as they gain more.”

The total value of seafood exports this financial year would definitely go up, he told *Business Line*.

East coast may gain

Karikassery, however, said exporters on the East Coast would harvest better value than those on the West , as the latter relied more on sea catch while the former focused on aquaculture.

The aquaculture sector on the East Coast is expected to reap a windfall as this year there was record production of vannamei shrimps.

“This is the best year for vannamei shrimp industry in terms of production, productivity and prices.”

The farmers had recorded a productivity level of 24 tonnes a hectare.

The West Coast exporters would not gain much from the rupee depreciation as the 47-day monsoon trawl ban, which drastically cuts fish landings, has just begun.

By the time the fishing holiday ends, the rupee might recover.

Also, demand from Europe, one of the main markets for Indian seafood, was not very strong though the season has begun.

Advantage shrimp

One major factor in favour of Indian shrimp exporters was the drastic fall in shrimp production in Thailand, the main supplier to the US market.

Karikassery pointed out that there was 24 per cent fall in Thai production which equalled India's total shrimp exports to the US.

The vannamei shrimp farmers and exporters could take advantage of this.

Coupled with the rupee depreciation and high production, it would be a boom time for the vannamei sector, he said.

Supply squeeze lifts pepper

Pepper futures moved up on good demand amid tight supply on Friday.

High range pepper was traded at Rs 351 a kg while Karnataka pepper was bought under 'H' form at Rs 340 delivered at Kochi, market sources said.

They said sellers were offering Rajkumari (Idukki) pepper at Rs 355 while the buyers quoted Rs 352-353. They said the supply continues to remain tight.

On the spot, 10 tonnes of fresh pepper arrived and all were traded afloat. Incessant rains in the rural areas of Kerala is pointed out as the reason for stoppage of arrivals, they said.

On the IPSTA, July contract increased by Rs 195 to close at Rs 36,000 a quintal. Aug and Sep were up by Rs 104 and Rs 77 respectively to close at Rs 36,110 and Rs 36,111.

Spot prices remained unchanged at Rs 34,200 (ungarbled) and Rs 35,700 (MG 1) on limited activities due to thin arrivals, they said.

Indian parity in the international market moved up further as the rupee gained against the dollar today to \$6,400 a tonne (f.o.b.) for June shipments for Europe and about \$6,550 (f.o.b.) for the US.

Kharif planting picks up as monsoon advances

With the monsoon covering two-thirds of the country by mid-June ahead of schedule, planting of key kharif crops such as rice, oilseeds and cotton has picked up.

The sowing may get a further boost as the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday maintained that the South-West monsoon will be normal for July and August – the two key months for planting and growth of kharif crops.

Rainfall for the country as a whole is likely to be 98 per cent of the long period average of 89 cm for the June to September period.

Total acreage

However, the total kharif acreage so far is lower than last year, largely on account of shortfall in sugarcane acreage, as drought in parts of Maharashtra and Karnataka had led to poor planting.

rice acreage

Meanwhile, transplanting of rice has picked up in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, while it is sluggish in Odisha and Assam among others compared with last year.

Total rice acreage, so far, is lower by about 10,000 hectare area (ha) over the last year.

oilseeds

The area under oilseeds is marginally higher than last year, as planting of groundnut and soyabean has commenced in the key growing States of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh.

Karnataka has seen a higher planting of oilseeds such as groundnut, sunflower, soyabean and sesame, accounting for close to two-thirds of the planted area so far.

more rains

The timely arrival of monsoon and good rainfall distribution has resulted in 28 per cent more rains so far since June 1.

Of the 36 meteorological sub-divisions, 27 have received excess rains, while four have received normal and two are deficient so far.

The latest forecast by the weather department of normal monsoon for July and August should augur well for kharif crops.

Cotton area rises

So far, cotton acreage has also seen a marginal increase over last year as farmers in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka are planting more area under the fibre crop.

Andhra has reported a higher area of 1.13 lakh ha under cotton, while in Karnataka the acreage is up by about half a lakh hectares over the last year at 1.26 lakh ha.

In North India, planting is almost complete and the key States – Punjab and Haryana – have reported a marginally lower acreage.

In Punjab, cotton acreage is lower by 13,000 ha over last year at 5.03 lakh ha, while Haryana has seen a shortfall of 29,000 ha at 4.86 lakh ha.

Other Northern States – Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh – have also seen a marginal shortfall over last year.

In Gujarat, cotton planting is yet to gain momentum and the acreage so far is lower by about 50,000 ha, while Maharashtra is yet to report the numbers.

Cotton firm on export, domestic demand

Cotton prices continued to rise on the back of strong domestic mills and export demand.

Weak rupee and tight supply supported the prices to go up.

According to traders, cotton may gain further in the next week.

Gujarat Sankar-6 was moved up by Rs 300-400 to Rs 40,500-40,700 for a candy of 356 kg.

B grade cotton traded at Rs 39,800-40,200 in Gujarat.

Kalyan cotton A grade was offered at Rs 28,500-29,000.

Cotton ready delivery quoted at Rs 4,260-4,340 a quintal in Punjab, Rs 4,185-4,215 in Haryana and Rs 4,210-4,220 in Rajasthan.

About 8,000 bales arrived in Gujarat and 25,000 bales arrived in India.

Kapas was also quoted higher by Rs 10-15 to Rs 1,010-1,040 for 20 kg.

Tight supply in local markets also supported the prices. Traders said prices may gain further in coming days due to concern over immediate supply.

ICE cotton for July delivery traded at 92.31 cents a lb up 0.59 cent during the electronic trading.

According to market sources, China and Bangladesh are importing; orders have also started from Pakistan, Vietnam and Thailand.

Traders expect exports to rise to around 10 million bales (a bale is 170 kg) this year against last year's 12 million.

Edible oils rule weak as stockists keep off

Spot edible oils prices ruled weak on Friday as local refineries have reduced their rates for palm oil and soya oil by Rs 5-10 amid bearish start of Malaysian palm oil futures which bounced back from lower level at the close of the day.

Shailesh Kataria of Riddhi Broker said, stockists kept away from fresh bet as they had already covered enough in advance at lower prices.

During the day, 250-300 tonnes of palmolein were resale traded at Rs 523-525.

Soyabean arrivals were 80,000-85,000 bags including 50,000 from Madhya Pradesh and its prices were Rs 3,800-3,825 ex-mandi and Rs 3,900-3,925 for plant delivery.

Mustard seeds arrivals continued at 1.80 lakh bags-1.85 lakh bags including 95,000 from Rajasthan at Rs 3,150-3,600.

At the end of the day, Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 545, super palmolein Rs 582 and super deluxe Rs 602. Ruchi quoted palmolein Rs 545 for June, soyabean refined oil Rs 670 for June and sunflower refined oil Rs 790 for June-July.

Gokul's rates for palmolein were Rs 527-532 for ready/weekly and Rs 535-540 for June-July.

In Rajkot, groundnut oil declined by Rs 40 to Rs 1,590 (Rs 1,630) for *telia* tin and by Rs 20 to Rs 1,030 (Rs 1,050) for loose 10 kg on higher selling.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, soyabean refined oil July futures were Rs 693.50 (Rs 693.45), August declined by Rs 1.50 to Rs 686.25 (Rs 687.75) and September was lower by Rs 1.55 to Rs 679.45 (Rs 681.00).

Malaysia BMD crude palm oil July contracts closed higher at MYR 2,440 (MYR 2,418), August at MYR 2,441 (MYR 2,424) and September at MYR 2,437 (MYR 2,424) a tonne.

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were: Groundnut oil 1,040 (1,060), soya refined oil 670 (670), sunflower exp. ref. 740 (730), sunflower ref. 790 (790), rapeseed ref. oil 700 (705), rapeseed expeller ref. 670 (675), cottonseed ref. oil 665 (665) and palmolein 525 (530).

Vikram Global Commodities, Chennai, quoted Rs 580 ex-Chennai - delivery 15 days for Malaysian super palmolein.

Pulses on the rise with dollar

Pulses and pulse seeds ruled steady despite subdued demand. Masoor (bold) ruled at Rs 4,450-4,500 a quintal, while masoor (medium) at Rs 4,000-4,100.

Rise in the dollar value has lifted masoor prices in Indore mandis in the past one week by Rs 150-200. According to trade experts, bullish trend in masoor will likely to continue in the coming days on higher imports.

Masoor dal ruled stable with masoor dal (average) at Rs 4,850-75, masoor dal (medium) at Rs 4,950-75, while masoor dal (bold) ruled at Rs 5,059-75.

Compared to its prices 2-3 days back, masoor dal is down Rs 50. Moong also ruled stable on subdued demand with moong (best) in local mandis on Friday being quoted at Rs 4,800-5,000, while moong (medium) ruled at Rs 4,500-4,700.

Moong dal also ruled steady with moong dal (medium) being quoted at Rs 6,000-6,100, moong dal (bold) at Rs 6,500-6,600, while moong mongar ruled at Rs 7,000-7,100.

Urad and its dal also ruled stable on slack demand. Urad (bold) was quoted at Rs 3,500-3,600, while urad (medium) ruled at Rs 3,000-3,200.

Similarly urad dal also ruled stable with urad dal (medium) being quoted at Rs 4,100-4,200, urad dal (bold) at Rs 4,700-4,800, while urad mongar ruled at Rs 5,600-5,900.

Sugar sentiment positive on festival demand

Physical sugar prices were mixed and stable in the Vashi wholesale sugar market but on futures market, the commodity lost more than Rs 20 on Friday.

In the last three days, sugar futures lost more than Rs 40 a quintal.

The under current was steady.. A Vashi-based wholesaler said "At producing level, continuous off take kept sentiment positive as millers are expecting good consumer bulk buying ahead of festivals which will start with Ramadan next month.

The State Government may also have started procuring sugar for public distribution systems (PDS) from the open markets. Producers are not very keen to sell at lower rates as current prices are below the cost of production".

“Surplus supplies kept sugar prices depressed for the last few months but now all are expecting lower production in 2013-14 in Maharashtra and Karnataka due to drought. This should support prices”, an analyst said.

“Sugar output in Maharashtra is likely to fall by 25 per cent year-on-year to 6.5 mt- 6.8 million tonnes in 2013-14 as drought reduced the acreage under the crop.

“India is likely to produce 22.5 mt-23 mt sugar in 2013-14 against an annual demand of about 23 mt,” he said.

In the Vashi market, arrivals were 64-65 truck loads (each of 100 bags) and local despatches were about 61-62 truck loads.

On Thursday, about 14-15 mills offered tenders and sold about 43,000-45,000 bags to local traders at Rs 2,950-3,010 (Rs 2,950-3,010) for S-grade and Rs 3,020- 3,120 (Rs 3,020- 3,120) for M-grade.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, sugar July futures dropped further by Rs 20 to Rs 3,089 (Rs 3,109), August was down by Rs 26 to Rs 3,136 (Rs 3,162) and September was lower by Rs35 to Rs 3,178 (Rs 3,213) till noon.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association’s spot rates were: S-grade Rs 3,062-3,135 (Rs 3,062-3,135) and M-grade Rs 3,172-3,331 (Rs 3,172-3,331).

Naka delivery rates were: S-grade Rs 3,020-3,080 (Rs 3,020-3,080) and M-grade Rs 3,130-3,200 (Rs 3,130-3,200).

Turmeric falls further with trade yet to receive N. India orders

Spot turmeric prices fell some more on Friday.

The prices decreased Rs 150-250 a quintal, on arrival of medium and poor quality turmeric. But the arrival has increased to 2,506 bags.

The local traders procured 201 bags; the stockists purchased more than 800 bags.

Even the hybrid variety decreased by Rs 200.

“The price is in downward trend in all the markets in India”, said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said the traders and exporters have not yet received any upcountry orders. The farmers are having more than 25 lakh bags with them.

They expect that in August the price may increase.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,749-6,181, the root variety Rs 4,063-5,691.

Salem hybrid crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 6,089-6,891, the root variety Rs 5,011-6,091. Of 598 bags, only 109 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,339-6,479, the root variety Rs 4,909-5,590. Of the arrival of 419 bags, 308 bags sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, finger variety was sold at Rs 5,391-6,780, the root variety Rs 4,965-6,099. Of the 509 bags, 489 were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,789-6,901, the root variety Rs 5,169-6,069. Of the arrival of 226 bags, 216 were sold.

Wheat surges on domestic demand, low availability

A steady movement is likely to be witnessed in the wheat physical and futures market in the coming days, said trade experts.

Around 1,200 bags of wheat arrived on Friday and procurement was done by the private traders.

Dara wheat and flour continued to surge on domestic demand and restricted availability of stocks.

In the physical market, after witnessing an uptrend earlier this week, dara wheat went further up by Rs 10 and sold at Rs 1,535-1,540 a quintal.

Mill delivery was at Rs 1,535 while delivery at the chakki was at Rs 1,540.

Desi wheat variety sold at Rs 2,300.

Radhey Sham, a trade expert, told *Business Line* that low availability of stocks coupled with good domestic demand is the prime reason behind the uptrend in dara wheat and flour prices.

Dara wheat prices have increased by Rs 140 over the last few weeks while flour surged by Rs 100.

Traders expect that market may hold its position for the next few days and then it may witness some correction, he added.

In Delhi's Lawrence road market, a benchmark for the country, wheat mill quality traded at Rs 1,580-1,620.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat for June contracts decreased by Rs 7 and traded at 1,597 with an open interest of 2,550 lots.

The grain had made a low at Rs 1,591 earlier in the day.

July contracts went down by Rs 9 and traded at Rs 1,610.

While, after witnessing a good uptrend earlier this week, wheat spot prices on the exchange went down by Rs 10 and traded at Rs 1,507.5.

Flour Prices

With an uptrend in wheat, flour too went up by Rs 30 and quoted at Rs 1,800 .

On the other hand, Chokar continued to rule flat and sold at Rs 1,250-1,275.

India soybean acreage may go up 5-7% this kharif season



Soybean acreage in India may go up by 5-7% this year, said industry experts. Last year (Kharif 2012), total area under soybean cultivation in India was 10.75 million hectare, according to Soybean Processors Association of India (SPAI).

Soybean is a rain-fed kharif crop and it is sown in June-July every year. We feel in Maharashtra some area under cotton cultivation may shift to soybean and Madhya Pradesh may also see at least 0.2 million hectare increase this year, said Rajesh Agrawal, spokesman and coordinator, SPAI. Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra are number one and number two soybean producers in India respectively.

Last year, total area under soybean in Madhya Pradesh was 5.813 million hectare and Maharashtra was 3.212 million, according to SOPA data. Experts feel better price realisation compared with other crops is another reason for soybean as a preference.

At present, soybean prices in Madhya Pradesh mandi auctions are at Rs 3,700-3,800 per 100 kg. Plant delivery prices are in Rs 3,800-3,925 per 100 kg range.

In Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, farmers have prepared their fields and are eagerly awaiting another spell of rains. Due to good pre-monsoon activity, soybean sowing is likely to start early in growing states, industry sources said. Some traders in physical markets feel sowing has already started in small pockets in some Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra districts, they added.

Guar price trends concern traders

The high volatility in [guar](#) prices ahead of the peak [sowing season](#) have caused worry over the relaunch of its futures trading on commodity exchanges.

With the onset of rain ahead of the actual monsoon season, guar seed sowing has intensified. Experts believe 15-20 per cent has been completed.

But, falling prices in the spot and futures market have worried farmers and traders. Guar seed prices for the near-month contract hit Rs 5,700 a quintal early this month, before closing with the upper circuit at Rs 7,010 a qtl today.

The price fall below Rs 5,500 a qtl would lead to farmers diversifying to other more remunerative crops, including edible oils, pulses and cotton. Vikas WSP, the only listed and organised entity in the segment, had earlier contracted with farmers to grow the seed extensively, promising to buy at Rs 10,000 a qtl. The falling prices, due to lower export demand of its derivative, guar gum, has forced it to do a rethink. Repeated efforts to reach B D Agarwal, managing director, were unsuccessful. Traders, however, say the company is no longer a buyer of guar seed, resulting in over half of last years output still remaining with farmers and stockists.

Also, the [pre-monsoon](#) showers have raised this years output prospects. Additionally,

increased seed arrivals due to a bumper summer harvest in Gujarat have led to a 16 per cent fall in guar prices in the past three weeks.

Guar gum Indias biggest agricultural export item for a second year

For a second year, [guar gum](#) has emerged as Indias largest item of [agricultural export](#). And, responsible for pushing the countrys overall farm exports to Rs 120,000 crore in 2012-13, show data from the Director General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics ([DGCIS](#)).

Guar gum, has seen rising demand from big Western oil companies on its use as a controlling agent in oil wells for facilitating easy drilling and preventing fluid loss. Between 2010-11 and 2012-13, it has registered 624 per cent rise in exports in value terms.

India is the worlds largest producer of the gum. On average, the country produces 1-1.5 million tonnes of guar annually.

Almost 40 per cent of guar gum produced in the country is used for industrial purposes. In 2012, guar prices in the world markets rose a massive 800-1,000 per cent, chiefly due to large-scale stocking by multinational oil companies over fears of short supplies, following drought in India.

Of Indias total agricultural exports of Rs 120,000 crore in 2012-13, guar gum accounted for 18 per cent, DGCIS figures show. In 2010-11, guar gums total share in Indias overall export of agricultural items was just seven per cent.

May wholesale inflation drops to 43-month low

Ahead of Monday's monetary policy review by the Reserve Bank of India, Wholesale Price Index (WPI)-based inflation fell to a 43-month low of 4.7 per cent in May from 4.89 per cent in the previous month, official data showed on Friday.

Wholesale inflation has declined for a fourth month in a row and stayed within RBI's comfort zone — four to five per cent — for a second month, fuelling buying in stock markets on hopes of a rate cut.

The BSE benchmark Sensex, which rose for the first time in four days on Friday, gained 350.77 points to close at 19,117. The rupee appreciated to close at 57.53 on Friday, against yesterday's 57.99.

The rate of inflation was 7.55 per cent in May 2012. The level of rise was previously lower than May 2013's level only in October 2009, when the rate was 1.79 per cent. **(RBI's DATA DILEMMA)**

Food inflation rose to 8.25 per cent in May from 6.08 per cent as rice, onions and non-vegetarian items continued to see price pressure.

Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation had remained elevated at 9.31 per cent in May. This, coupled with the rupee depreciation, presents a difficult choice to RBI on whether to cut the policy rate to spur lacklustre economic growth.

But authorities were optimistic the central bank would take cognizance of the declining rate of wholesale inflation. "They (RBI) should certainly consider it because it is very clear that the underlying inflationary pressure is softening," Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia told reporters.

Finance ministry officials said they would want lower interest rates and monetary policy transmission. Business lobbies, too, asked RBI to cut the policy rate to perk economic growth. Industrial growth had remained muted at 2.3 per cent in April, and the larger economic growth had fallen to a decadal-low of five per cent in 2012-13.

Some independent economists said the central bank would not cut the policy rate. “The sharper-than-expected uptick in food inflation would moderate the optimism following the encouraging progress of the monsoon. Moreover, the considerable rupee depreciation is expected to boost prices of imported products in the near term, posing a concern for RBI,” Icra senior economist Aditi Nayar said. There were pressures from the size and financing of the current account deficit in the first quarter of 2013-14, from rising gold imports and from withdrawal of money from foreign institutional investors, she added.

Barclays said it would be a close call for RBI. “We think today’s low [WPI inflation](#) print adds to the case for monetary easing but significant weakness in the rupee remains an impediment for RBI to ease rates.”

Among food items, vegetable inflation rose to 4.85 per cent in May against the fall in prices by 9.05 per cent in April. However, a significant easing of manufactured and core (manufactured items sans food articles) inflation might give some relief to RBI. [Core inflation](#) fell to a 41-month low of 2.43 per cent in May against 2.8 per cent in April. Inflation in manufactured items declined to 3.11 per cent against 3.41 per cent over the period.

Also, WPI inflation for March was revised downwards to 5.65 per cent from the 5.96 per

cent estimated earlier. As such, inflation numbers are now being revised downwards.

Inflation in the fuel and power category was lower at 7.32 per cent in May against 8.84 per cent in April 2013. Petrol prices fell 4.43 per cent in May year-on-year against a rise of 3.04 per cent in April. RBI had cut the repo rate in January, March and May by 25 basis points to boost investment in an economy.

Agriculture Produce Market Committee plans to change market timing

PUNE: The administration of the [Agriculture Produce Market Committee](#) (APMC) has decided to change timings for loading-unloading of farm goods at the [Gultekdi Market Yard](#). Officials said that change in timings will benefit farmers, besides it will streamline daily workings at the market.

"The market will open for farmers at 4 am, about one hour prior to existing timing of 5 am. This will give an additional one hour for farmers and wholesalers to unload the vegetables, fruits, flowers and other farm produce. Farmers will not have to wait for long at the market. Early opening of market will avoid chaos and traffic jam", said an APMC official.

The APMC recently held meeting of farmers, transporters, wholesalers to discuss various issues relating to loading and unloading. It was also decided to stop loading and unloading of goods in the evening between 5 pm and 9 pm.

The APMC has also introduced one-way traffic plan for vehicles at the wholesale market located near the vegetable market. The parking of vehicles has been restricted on some roads to avoid traffic jams. The APMC has provided open spaces for parking slots at two places, said an official. More than 1000 vehicles including trucks and tempos visit the Market Yard every day.

Weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Saturday, Jun 15

Max Min

36° | 27°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 44

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:42

Sunset: 06:36

Barometer: 1001

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Sunday, Jun 16

Max Min

35° | 28°

Extended Forecast for a week

Monday Jun 17	Tuesday Jun 18	Wednesday Jun 19	Thursday Jun 20	Friday Jun 21
35° 28° Cloudy	36° 29° Overcast	36° 29° Overcast	34° 28° Overcast	36° 29° Overcast

Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0 Sunrise: 05:22

Humidity: 50 Sunset: 07:20

Wind: normal Barometer: 1000



Inflation drops to 4.7% in May

The WPI-based inflation fell to 4.7% in May, driven mainly by declining prices of manufactured items, even as prices of food articles inched up.

Inflation based on the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) stood at 4.89% in April. In May, 2012, it was 7.55%. As per official data released on Friday, WPI inflation in the manufactured items category declined to 3.11% in May from 3.41% in April.

The non-food articles category, which include fibre, oil seeds and minerals, saw sharp decline in inflation to 4.88%, from 7.59% in April.

However, inflation in food articles category, which has a 14.34% share in the WPI basket, rose to 8.25% in May. Inflation in this category was at 6.08% in April.

The rise in food inflation was on account of increase in prices of onions, vegetables, cereals and protein-based items.

Inflation in vegetables stood at 4.85% in May, against (-)9.05% in the previous month.

The rate of price rise in onion was high at 97.40% for the month, as against inflation rate of 91.69% in April.

Inflation for March was revised downwards to 5.65% from 5.96% as per provisional estimates.

The inflation data will be closely watched by the Reserve Bank while formulating its mid-quarter policy which is scheduled on Monday.

There have been demands for a lower interest rate in the backdrop of declining inflation.

Finance ministry sources, commenting on inflation numbers, said they would want lower interest rates and monetary policy transmission.

While the Reserve Bank has lowered interest rates by 1.30% since January 2012, the banks have cut lending rates by only 0.30%.