



**Which is costlier, the chicken or the egg?**

*Rise in prices of non-vegetarian items a blow to residents reeling under high cost of greens*

As if the consistently high prices of vegetables and fuel were not bad enough, the sudden increase in the prices of chicken and eggs has been a blow to customers.

Many residents, who visited meat shops on Monday, were in for a shock as the price of one kg of chicken had increased by Rs. 60 in the last three days.

Some of them said they bought only half of what they usually buy.

“Whenever the vegetable prices go up, I manage with chicken or eggs. But, now even these have become costly and I had to cut down on portions of non-vegetarian items,” said N. Srinivasan, a resident of Choolai.

One kg of dressed chicken is now sold at Rs. 200-Rs.220 depending on the locality. The low poultry productivity in Namakkal belt owing to the heat has been cited as the reason for the escalating cost. The soaring cost of poultry feed is another reason, said traders.

“This has affected sales. Many customers have been buying only half the quantity,” said V.Anandan, a retailer in Anna Nagar.

### **Chicken traders strike**

Wholesale chicken traders went on strike during the weekend at being forced to buy chicken at Rs. 120 per kg. Shabeer Ahamed, president of Chennai Meat Traders Association, said: “We get only 5 lakh hens daily, a decrease of over 10 lakh. But, the demand remains the same,” he added.

However, caterers and hoteliers said they have not increased the price of non-vegetarian dishes or compromised on quantity. “Profits have come down by at least 30 per cent as prices of ingredients including chicken, eggs, tomatoes and ginger have gone up,” he added.

However, he has not cut down on the number of dishes, especially in wedding banquets, owing to fear of losing out to competition.

Eggs, which are a staple at many homes, have also become dearer. Mohan Reddy, the Chennai Zonal Chairman of National Egg Coordination Committee, which fixes the rate for eggs, said that summer had taken a toll on production.

“About 5 -7 per cent of farms reduced the number of birds and have not replaced them. But the major contributor to the increase in prices is the cost of feed. Last year, during the same period, feed was just Rs. 12 a kg but now it is Rs. 21/kg.

### **Drought, drop in maize production**

A severe drought and drop in maize crop production has led to an increase in feed prices. However, though egg prices have gone up in the retail market, the farmers are getting only 20 paise per egg. Last month alone, the industry suffered losses amounting to Rs. 10 – 15 crore. Farmers suffered a loss of Re.1 per egg,” he said.

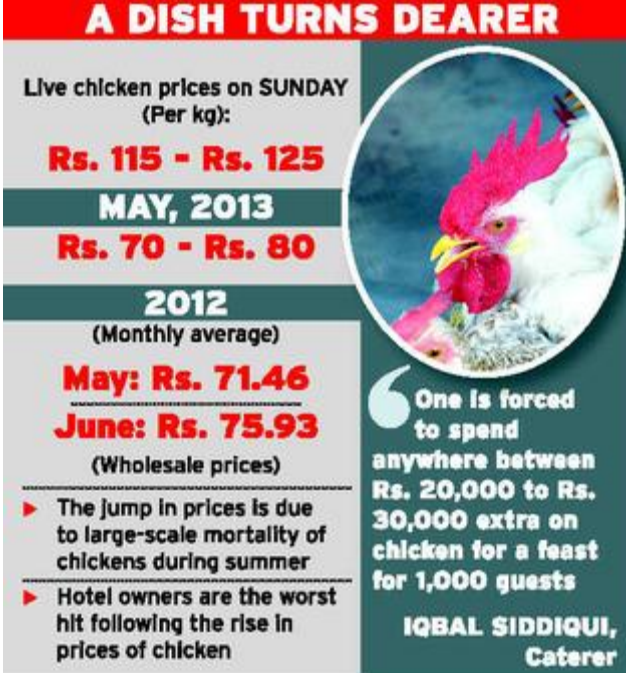
The cost of mutton continues to be static at Rs.440 per kg for the past six months as the meat is being sourced from as far as Maharashtra.

With fish prices being 10 – 15 per cent higher than they were during the 45-day ban on trawling, the hike in prices of eggs and chicken has hit many families badly.

“Fish are being sent to the western coast as the ban is in place there. Also, rains and winds in the sea down south have kept fisherfolk indoors.

Though demand for fish is high, fishing activity is limited to Chennai, Tiruvallur and Kancheepuram districts in the State,” said Nanjil Ravi of the Akila Indiya Meenavar Sangam.

## Chicken prices go through the roof



**A DISH TURNS DEARER**

Live chicken prices on SUNDAY  
(Per kg):

**Rs. 115 - Rs. 125**

**MAY, 2013**

**Rs. 70 - Rs. 80**

**2012**  
(Monthly average)

**May: Rs. 71.46**  
**June: Rs. 75.93**

(Wholesale prices)

- ▶ The jump in prices is due to large-scale mortality of chickens during summer
- ▶ Hotel owners are the worst hit following the rise in prices of chicken

One is forced to spend anywhere between Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 30,000 extra on chicken for a feast for 1,000 guests

**IQBAL SIDDIQUI,**  
Caterer

The soaring prices of chicken are giving people the jitters. Thanks to high demand and low supply, there has been a drastic increase in prices this month. On Sunday, live chicken was priced between Rs. 115 and Rs. 125 a kg, whereas a month ago it hovered between Rs. 70 and Rs. 80.

With scores of weddings lined up this month and the first week of July, the escalating prices of chicken have dealt a body blow to people, forcing them to cut down the menu.

“One is forced to spend anywhere between Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 30,000 extra on chicken for a feast for 1,000 guests,” says Iqbal Siddiqui, a caterer. About 400 kg of chicken is required to prepare a single dish, while about 700 kg is needed for two varieties of dishes to serve 1,000 people, he adds.

The menu consists mostly of two varieties of chicken dishes, apart from mutton biryani and deserts. “I hosted a dinner for 2,000 people, and owing to the rising prices of chicken decided to retain only two varieties of chicken against four. It also brought down the wastage, besides restraining the budget from exceeding,” says Niyamatullah Khan, who hosted the weddings of his two sons.

Hotel owners are the worst hit due to price rise. “Leave alone profits, we are forced to spend excess money in order to retain our customer base,” Mohd. Irfan of Shah Ghouse hotel says.

Poultry farmers attribute the current situation to large-scale mortality of chickens during summer. “There was large-scale death of chickens in many poultry farms due to high temperatures in summer, and also the chickens were of low weight,” says S. Balasubramaniam, general manager of Venkateshwara Hatcheries. The only silver lining is that prices are expected to come down in July.

*With a number of weddings lined up this month and the first week of July, the zooming prices of chicken have dealt a body blow to people, forcing them to cut down the menu*

## Timely monsoon cheers farmers

*For about a decade, farmers have not experienced 'luxury' of things going their way*



A happy lot: Farm operations pick up with timely onset of monsoon in Adilabad district. —PHOTO: S. HARPAL

The monsoon has arrived on time and rainfall is more than adequate to spur agriculture operations. There aren't many hitches in the purchase of different varieties of seeds in the market and a steady supply of fertilizer is expected in the coming weeks.

The smile on the faces of farmers says everything is going in their favour right from the beginning of the season, a condition experienced after a long gap.

## Caught off guard

The quantum of rainfall received in the last 4 days has actually caught many a farmer in the district off guard. Going by past experience, they were lax in making preparations for kharif, which can cost them a delay of a few days.

For about a decade now, farmers have not experienced the 'luxury' of things going their way. Their problems used to begin even as kharif operations would get under way. "Supply of seeds, especially of Bt cotton and soyabean, was never constant in the last 10 years or so. The struggle to purchase seeds seemed an inescapable part of our lives until this season," recalls Pabba Venkati, a cotton farmer from Hashampur in Jainad mandal.

Rainfall during the months of June and July were erratic in the past and were interspersed with long dry spells which resulted in the loss of seeds. "The current rainfall will ensure excellent germination and farmers will be spared the agony of purchasing additional quantity of seeds as a replacement for lost seeds," Mr. Venkati asserts.

In July-August, the middle of the kharif season, farmers used to be a worried lot owing to weeds. This is one aspect which they cannot do away with even this year as good rains aid the growth of unwanted plants also.

The last but most important aspect of agriculture which continuously dogged the farming community for the last few years is the price of the produce, be it cotton or any other crop.

Given the present scenario, farmers hope that the price of cotton, soya bean and food grains will either witness a hike during the course and/or the expected improved yields will take care of any loss on account of unremunerative prices.

### **Extend subsidy to all dairy farmers, says association**

Karnataka State Dairy Association (KSDA) urged the State government to extend the subsidy given to farmers attached to the cooperative sector to those supplying milk to the private sector.

According to a release, a delegation from KSDA, led by R.G. Chandramogan, member of Working Group on Agriculture and Animal Husbandry of Planning Commission; Dinesh Pai, KSDA president, and Harsha Moily, chief executive officer of the Moksha Yug Access, met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in Bangalore recently in this regard.

They apprised the Chief Minister of the current scenario and urged him to extend the subsidy to another 10 lakh dairy farmers in the State as it would in turn mitigate the pressure on the Karnataka Milk Federation. The delegation pointed out to Mr. Siddaramaiah that at present the subsidy scheme only benefited farmers in eight districts of the State.

They told the Chief Minister that the enhanced subsidy, unless extended to farmers supplying milk to the private sector, would prove detrimental to the private milk industry.

They pointed out that while Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh had several private milk power plants, Karnataka had none. The excess milk in



Karnataka is transported outside the State for processing, which is expensive.

## **Ensure prompt supply of seeds, fertilizers, Tippareddy tells officials**

*'Rain has eased drinking water shortage in district'*

Officials of the Agriculture Department should ensure prompt supply of seeds and fertilizers to farmers in the district and keep a strict vigil to prevent the sale of fake seeds and fertilizers, G.H. Tippareddy, MLA, has said.

Speaking after offering 'bagina' to the Gounur tank here on Monday, Mr. Tippareddy said that people in the district, especially farmers, had suffered a lot in the past two years owing to scanty rainfall. Farmers were unable to repay loans taken from banks and other financial institutions.

However, with good spells of rain in the district, the problem of shortage of water had eased. As it had been predicted that the district would receive adequate rainfall in the coming days, officials should arrange to supply seeds and fertilizers to farmers through Raitha Sampark Kendras, he said.

Till May-end, the district received 167 mm rainfall against the normal of 144 mm. The department had set a cultivation target of 3,52,200 hectares in the district during the kharif season.

He urged the Horticulture Department personnel to guide farmers on how to protect their crops in adverse climatic conditions.

## Drought hit farmers turn to MGNREGS



| TURNOUT IN SALEM   |        |        |                        |
|--|--------|--------|------------------------|
| Average number of persons employed per day under MGNREGS in Salem district |        |        |                        |
| Month  | 2012   | 2013   | Increase In Percentage |
| April  | 41,859 | 59,572 | 42.3                   |
| May  | 61,911 | 74,272 | 19.9                   |
| June   | 68,045 | 72,634 | 6.7                    |

*Notes: June figures up to 11th*

Failure of monsoon, dried borewells and non-availability of water for carrying out agricultural activities has led to more small and marginal workers taking jobs under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in the district in the past few months.

Statistics reveal that there is a 15 to 25 per cent increase in the number of workers taking up various jobs under the scheme in the district in March, April and June when compared to the corresponding months last year. A maximum of 1,15,595 workers were employed on June 6 when compared to 1,08,909 on June 8 last year. In May this year, the maximum number of workers in a day is 1,13,316 when compared to 99,590 last year.

Block Development Officers said that the sharp increase was due to the prevailing drought as farmers who earlier used to employ 20-30 labourers in their fields had now turned as daily wage labourers under the scheme. "The situation is worse that even 800-foot borewells had no water and no cultivation could be carried out in one-acre land.

We have to run our family and feed our children. Hence, we have taken up the desilting work," says a couple in Ayodhiyapattinam block. They are one among the labourers who have taken up water conservation and harvesting

works, desilting and renovation of traditional water bodies apart from involving in flood control works in the district under the scheme.

Officials at the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) said that the minimum wage earned by a worker per day is Rs. 80 per day whereas the maximum is around Rs. 140. "Wage payment depends upon the performance in completing the allotted work," they added.

Additional Collector and DRDA Project Officer Sandeep Nanduri told *The Hindu* that no agricultural activities could be carried out during these months and there was a sharp increase in the number of workers under the scheme. He said that the trend would prevail for another two months as farmers would be back in their fields once the rainy season began.

### **Farmers stage protest**

A group of farmers from '63 Velliraveli' village near Kunnathur staged a sit-in protest on the Collectorate premises on Monday stating that there were irregularities in the drought relief disbursed to the agrarian community in the area with many farmers left out from the list.

They also demanded suspension of the village administrative officer claiming that the official gave wrongly assessed data to the district administration for calculating the relief amount.

They moved away after getting an assurance from Collector G. Govindaraj that the discrepancies, if any, would be sorted out.

## 75 file application, 50 get solar-powered pumpsets

Councillors of Thanjavur District Panchayat Council have stressed the need for providing solar-powered pumpset for agriculture purposes in the district. The councillors wanted to know when the pumpsets would be given to the farmers.

G. Ramadoss, Joint Director of Agriculture (in-charge), said that while the government had sanctioned pumpsets to 50 farmers, at least 75 farmers had submitted application along with a deposit Rs.10,000 each.

Mr. Ramadoss also said that the government had announced a kuruvai package under which 12-hour three-phase power would be provided.

Kuruvai was expected to be raised on 15,000 hectares through pumpset irrigation.

Members also raised the issue of drinking water problem at Ammapettai panchayat union. Amutharani Ravichandran, chairperson, Thanjavur District Panchayat Council, presided.

*Kuruvai expected to be raised on 15,000 hectares through pumpset irrigation*

## Farmers' grievances meet

The monthly farmers' grievances meeting will be held at 10.30 a.m. on June 20, an official press release issued here said.

## **Farmers jubilant as Periyar Dam level rises**

With heavy downpour in the catchment areas and at the dam site, the inflow into Periyar dam has been increasing, bringing cheer to farmers in Cumbum Valley. Farmers are now gearing up to raise the first crop in the double cropping areas.

On Monday, the water level in Periyar dam touched 116.20 feet, registering a three-foot increase in just 48 hours. The inflow shot up to 2,774 cusecs from a mere 250 to 300 cusecs on Saturday. The storage was 1,943 mcft.

The Public Works Department engineers doubled the quantum of withdrawal to cater to the drinking water needs of Theni district and also to improve the storage level in Vaigai dam. As of now, Vaigai dam is receiving just 14 cusecs of water. With its storage being abysmally low, the authorities are forecasting an acute water shortage in Madurai and the southern districts. The water level is just 30.27 feet, which is sufficient to supply drinking water for a mere 20 days. The storage level was only 379 mcft. The discharge was maintained at 60 cusecs to meet the drinking water needs of Madurai city. In Cumbum Valley, the farmers have started preparing the land. The PWD officials, however, have refused to give any guarantee on the release of water from Periyar dam.

The farmers, on the other hand, are annoyed by the seeming negligence of the officials in sending the proposal regarding the release of water. As per the norms, the PWD has to send a proposal to the government 20 days in advance for water release.

## Fear of water crisis looms large in Namakkal district



Farmers of Namakkal district are yet to recover from the heavy losses that they incurred due to the severe drought in the year 2012. Poor summer showers (April and May) received by the district in 2013 that stands at a mere 51 mm is worse than the summer showers in 2012 – the year Namakkal received the lowest rainfall in three decades.

“This is only 64 per cent of the average summer showers recorded in the district in 2012, when 80 mm rainfall was recorded.

Data on average rainfall received by the 15 Blocks in the district shows that 12 mm rainfall was received in April and 39 mm was recorded in May”, Scientific Head and Coordinator of the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Dr. B. Mohan told *The Hindu* .

Data on rainfall recorded in the district in the first three months of this year shows that there were no showers in the months of January and March while only 13 mm rainfall was received in February. With only 64 mm rainfall received over the last five months the fear of a severe water shortage has worsened for the local bodies and for farmers who are clueless on what to do.

“Due to poor summer showers cultivation of rain-fed pulses such as green gram and black gram could not be taken up during the summer this year.

Coupled with the unavailability of water in the open wells and borewells, the situation worsened for farmers for the second year in succession.

Dr. Mohan observed that the increased wind speed in April and May this year aggravated the drought and the sufferings of the farmers as well. “The average wind speed of five to six km an hour has almost doubled to the range of nine to 11 km an hour over the last few days. This has removed the residual soil moisture and increased water requirement for the existing vegetable and cash crops”, he added.

River Cauvery and most open wells and borewells have already gone dry, leaving farmers and people of this dry district to hope for a good southwest monsoon to revive agricultural activities, save the existing long term crops and get drinking water supply at shorter intervals

### **Poultry farmers wait for ban on export to be lifted**

According to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) norms the ban on export of egg and chicken from India to countries that are members of

the organisation should have come to an end on June 9. The ban came into effect on March 9, 2013, after a bird flu outbreak was reported in a farm in Madhubani, Bihar, in February.

A notification in this connection was sent by the Animal Husbandry Department (AHD), Government of India, to OIE in March – after confirming it in the Bhopal based High Security Animal Disease Laboratory – following which members of the organisation had imposed the ban on poultry products from India.

“The ban is usually imposed by countries for a period of 90 days after the AHD confirms a bird flu outbreak. But the ban that is now in effect been for more than seven months as the ban that was imposed on October 28 following an outbreak in a government-run turkey farm at Hesaraghatta, Karanataka, continued,” P.V. Senthil, secretary of the Livestock and Agriculture Farm Traders Association, said.

He said that the earlier ban should have been lifted on January 26, 2013, but it got delayed due to the delay by the AHD in notifying the OIE that the country was free from bird flu. “AHD authorities sent the notification to OIE on February 14, about three weeks later, after poultry bodies made repeated representations to authorities concerned in the State and Union Governments,” he added.

Poultry farmers were hopeful of getting the ban lifted and suffered another major blow when the outbreak was reported in Bihar. “Due to the delay in making a representation to the OIE and continuance of the ban, annual egg



export from Namakkal (biggest export zone in India) was at its worst in the financial year 2012-13 in over a decade,” NECC sources said.

Over the years the industry has witnessed a heavy drop in egg consumption during summer. This drop in consumption resulted in a dip in egg rates compared to the rest of the year. But this dip made eggs from India cheaper than other major egg exporting countries, resulting in an increase in demand for eggs from Namakkal in the international market.

“This is the 13<sup>th</sup> time a ban was imposed on export of poultry products from India in six years, citing outbreak of bird flu as the reason. Every time a ban is imposed exporters and farmers have been having a tough time to lift it by making repeated representations to the AHD officials,” members of farmers’ associations said.

### **36 per cent of the targeted sowing area covered in Dharwad**

The district achieved 36 per cent sowing as of June 17, said zilla panchayat Chief Executive Officer P.A. Meghannavar.

Addressing presspersons here on Monday, Mr. Meghannavar said the district received 187 mm of rainfall till June 19, which is 12 mm lower compared to the rainfall received last year during the same period. Sowing activities have been taken up on 75,899 hectares in the district.

### **Target**

A target of producing 2,36,525 tonnes of foodgrains has been set for the district, he said. For this, Dharwad needs 21,965 quintals of seeds.

The district administration has 16,507 quintals in stock, of which 8,345 quintals have been distributed among farmers.

Farmers with small tracts of land have been provided seeds at subsidised prices. The government has fixed per kilogram prices of Rs. 80 for sunflower and Rs. 35 for maize, he said.

### Fertilizer

The district had so far received 42,174 tonnes of fertilizer, against the total demand of 63,400 tonnes. Nearly 12,138 tonnes were distributed and there was a buffer stock of 30,036 tonnes.

S.M. Gadad, Joint Director of Agriculture, said his department had formed vigilance squads to check the sale of fake fertilizers in all taluks. Some cases were detected, and notices issued, he added.

### Crop insurance

About the crop insurance scheme in the district, Mr. Gadad said the State government had introduced the Rashtriya Krishi Vima Yojna (RKVY) in 14 hoblis in Dharwad. The last date to apply for RKVY is August 31.

The government has also introduced a weather-based crop insurance scheme in the district. As many as 13 crops will be covered under the insurance scheme, and the last date to apply is July 31, Mr. Gadad said.

## All farmers should be allowed to make Neera'

The United Farmers Association - South India has objected to the move to restrict licence for making 'neera' (sweet toddy) to societies and their federations that are registered with the Coconut Development Board.

The association on Monday demanded that all farmers be made eligible for making 'neera'. It wanted the government to take 'neera' out of the purview of the Abkari Act.

## Soyabean seed shortage persists in Adilabad district



Arduous wait: Farmers queuing up for soyabean seed at Jainad in Adilabad district on Monday.

The shortage of soyabean seed continued in Adilabad district on Monday with farmers forming long queues to purchase the subsidised seeds being supplied by the State government.

At Jainad, farmers staged a dharna for about 30 minutes after failing to get the seed even after a four day wait for it. Though officials deny news of a shortage, the scale of shortfall can be gauged from the fact that only 500 bags of soyabean seed arrives every day at Jainad against a demand for 2,800 bags of 30 kg each. This is the situation even while the supply of seeds has been limited to three bags per farmer irrespective of the extent of land he cultivates.

“The officials have even switched off their phones. We are at a loss to understand as to when the seed will arrive,” complains farmer Gangula Sanjay from Gimma in Jainad mandal. The Agriculture department grossly underestimated the demand for the seed as it could not foresee the expansion of area under the crop this season.

### **Shift to soyabean**

The normally paddy growing areas, many farmers in Sarangapur, Nirmal, Laxmanchanda and Mamda mandals have shifted to soyabean crop this year which has added to the woes of the Agriculture department.

## Sewage flowing into organic farm unchecked for years

*Despite repeated representations, panchayat can't complete work*



Drainage water flowing through an incomplete channel in front of the SOLAI farm in Vandranthangal village near Katpadi. The point up to which the channel has been constructed and left incomplete can be seen at the top left of the picture —Photo: C. Venkatachalapathy

Discharge of sewage water from the sewage channel that has been left incomplete by the Vandranthangal village panchayat into the farm developed by the SOLAI (Social Life Animation India) , a non-governmental organisation in Vandranthangal village near Katpadi for the purpose of

organic farming, continues for years despite representations to all levels of the administration, including the collector.

A visit to the farm revealed that the drainage channel, work on which was commenced in 2007, has been left incomplete after the construction of reinforced cement concrete channel for a certain length. The sewage water which flows through the constructed portion of the channel also meanders through the unconstructed portion for some length and enters the 5.5-acre farm developed by SOLAI for the purpose of organic farming.

“While SOLAI was able get certification from the Indian Society for Certification of Organic Products (ISCOP), Coimbatore, for its 5-acre farm on the eastern end, it did not apply for certification for the polluted 5.5-acre farm on the western side owing to the pollution caused by the sewage water”, said R.T. Rajan, Director of SOLAI, an NGO which has been engaged in many effective initiatives in the field of rural development for the past three decades.

Mr. Rajan said that about 180 mango and amla trees planted by SOLAI on the 5.5-acre farm with the saplings provided by the Department of Horticulture under the National Horticulture Mission before the construction of the drainage channel have withered in the last eight years.

A major portion of the farm has been polluted and the crops grown there half submerged in knee-deep sewage water, with the result the farm workers could not enter the field to harvest the paddy that was grown there, according to G. Mary, Programme Director (Women Farmers), SOLAI.

## Repeated representations

The matter was first taken to the attention of the government authorities when Ms. Mary submitted a petition in this regard at the Grama Sabha held in Vandranthangal village on the Republic Day on January 26, 2012.

In March 2012, Mr. Rajan wrote to the Collector, requesting him to visit the farm and take steps to prevent further damage by the sewage effluents.

He followed it up with another letter on May 1, 2012, and a reminder on August 4, 2012.

When the matter was brought to the notice of *The-Hindu*, this newspaper carried a report in its edition dated August 18, 2012.

Subsequently, SOLAI director met the collector on October 10, 2012 and handed over to him another letter requesting him to take immediate action to solve the problem and facilitate the NGO to continue its work under the National Horticulture Mission.

Mr. Rajan said that on the instructions of the collector, the Assistant Director of Village Panchayats did visit the farm within 10 days of his submission of the letter and asked the village panchayat to take action to complete the work on the drainage channel and prevent the entry of effluents into the SOLAI farm.

“Till date, no action has been taken to solve the problem,” Dr. Rajan said. “We are now at our wits' end and do not know what more to do in the matter”, he lamented

## Early rains to boost kharif crops planting: Govt



Early onset of monsoon will boost kharif crops like paddy and oilseeds and help increase agriculture productivity at a time when economy is facing downturn, the government said on Monday. File photo

Early onset of monsoon will boost kharif crops like paddy and oilseeds and help increase agriculture productivity at a time when economy is facing downturn, the government said on Monday.

Monsoon rains has covered almost the entire country a month in advance. The country has so far received 28 per cent more rainfall than normal that would lead to timely sowing and improve prospects of agriculture sector, which contributes 15 per cent to the country's GDP.

More than 60 per cent of population depends on agriculture and rains are crucial as only 45 per cent of cultivable area is irrigated.



“The current rains will improve sowing of all kharif crops. If monsoon forecast of the Met Department comes true, total agriculture production will exceed the previous records,” Agriculture Commissioner J.S. Sandhu told PTI.

Rains will improve soil moisture in drought-hit states like Maharashtra, while it will also reduce energy cost of irrigation, it added.

“Normally, farmers in Punjab and Haryana use irrigation for land preparation. Early rains will help farmers in saving this energy cost for pumping irrigation water,” Mr. Sandhu said.

Planting of paddy and other kharif crops will be in full swing in the next two week, he said.

As of now, area sown to paddy is marginally down at 7.94 lakh hectare. But the acreage will increase in the coming days as paddy transplanting has begun in most states, while Punjab and Haryana have just begun, he said.

Noting that it was the right time for normal sowing, Mr. Sandhu said pulses being rain fed crops, the early rains will benefit sowing of pigeon peas (tur), moong and urad.

The efforts are to increase area under tur and the government is advocating farmers to sow tur on rice-bands inter-cropped with soyabean, groundnut, sesamum and black gram especially in rainfed areas, he said.

### **Banned pesticide residues found in vegetable samples**



The HinduIn public interest: The findings are being made public not to make the people panic but to look to safer alternatives

The Kerala Agricultural University has found “dangerous levels” of pesticide residue in key vegetables like cabbage, cauliflower, vegetable cowpea (*achinga*), amaranthus red, small red onions, tomatoes, green chillies and curry leaves, among others.

The residue includes that of the banned Profenofos, which falls into the yellow category (second level of pesticides in the toxicity classification) and which has translaminar action (the toxin entering the plant system primarily by roots, and transported to locations throughout the plant, where it can affect those who consume the vegetables).

It has been banned in Kerala for nearly three years now. The pesticide is allowed in India only in cotton and tea and in other parts of the world, it is used only in cotton.

The results came from tests carried out by the Pesticide Residue Research and Analytical Laboratory, Vellayani near Thiruvananthapuram. The findings have been put up on the Kerala Agricultural University's website [http://www.kerala agriculture.gov.in](http://www.keralaagriculture.gov.in)

The banned pesticide residue was found mostly in gooseberries, green chilli, okra (*bhindi*), curry leaves, mint leaves and coriander leaves, said Thomas Biju Mathew, principal investigator for the project.

“Production and Marketing of Safe-to-Eat Vegetables for Sale through Government Outlets”.

He said that the results were being made public not to make the people panic but to look to safer alternatives. One of the highlights of the findings was that most of the pesticides belonged to the surface contact category and were not systemic.

The results are for 40 types of vegetables, samples of which were drawn from the Thiruvananthapuram markets between January 1 and March 1, 2013.

The KAU website also suggests methods to get rid of the residue. For example, one suggestion is to separate cauliflower leaves and keep the separated flowers dipped in salt or vinegar solution for 10 minutes and to pass them through repeated washing. The vinegar solution can be made of 20 ml of vinegar in a litre of water or 20 grams of salt in a litre of water.

Vegetables have been placed in three categories according to the level of pesticide residue in them. The most dangerous category has been detected in vegetables like bhindi, drumsticks, little gourd, red and yellow capsicum, gooseberries and coriander leaves.

The less dangerous category of pesticides has been found in beetroot, brinjal, carrot and garlic.

The farm produce that has been found not to carry pesticide residue comprises tapioca, mangoes, cucumber, colocasia, beans, ginger, big onion, capsicum (green), nendran bananas, ash gourd, pumpkins, pineapples, and green peas.

The website does not specify the level of pesticide residue in the individual items but the director of the laboratory, which is under KAU, S. Nazeema Beevi, said that the samples had been drawn over the first quarter of the year and the situation may not remain the same for the next quarter.

She said that the vegetables had been categorised as having dangerous levels of pesticide because they exceeded the maximum residue limit fixed by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.

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According to a release, a delegation from KSDA, led by R.G. Chandramogan, member of Working Group on Agriculture and Animal Husbandry of Planning Commission; Dinesh Pai, KSDA president, and Harsha Moily, chief executive officer of the Moksha Yug Access, met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in Bangalore recently in this regard.

They apprised the Chief Minister of the current scenario and urged him to extend the subsidy to another 10 lakh dairy farmers in the State as it would in turn mitigate the pressure on the Karnataka Milk Federation. The delegation pointed out to Mr. Siddaramaiah that at present the subsidy scheme only benefited farmers in eight districts of the State.

They told the Chief Minister that the enhanced subsidy, unless extended to farmers supplying milk to the private sector, would prove detrimental to the private milk industry.

They pointed out that while Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh had several private milk power plants, Karnataka had none. The excess milk in

Karnataka is transported outside the State for processing, which is expensive.

## **Ensure prompt supply of seeds, fertilizers, Tippareddy tells officials**

*Rain has eased drinking water shortage in district'*

Officials of the Agriculture Department should ensure prompt supply of seeds and fertilizers to farmers in the district and keep a strict vigil to prevent the sale of fake seeds and fertilizers, G.H. Tippareddy, MLA, has said.

Speaking after offering 'bagina' to the Gounur tank here on Monday, Mr. Tippareddy said that people in the district, especially farmers, had suffered a lot in the past two years owing to scanty rainfall. Farmers were unable to repay loans taken from banks and other financial institutions.

However, with good spells of rain in the district, the problem of shortage of water had eased. As it had been predicted that the district would receive adequate rainfall in the coming days, officials should arrange to supply seeds and fertilizers to farmers through Raitha Sampark Kendras, he said.

Till May-end, the district received 167 mm rainfall against the normal of 144 mm. The department had set a cultivation target of 3,52,200 hectares in the district during the kharif season.

He urged the Horticulture Department personnel to guide farmers on how to protect their crops in adverse climatic conditions.

## **Stress on importance of agro products**

Rallies and seminars were part of the awareness programmes conducted by the Department of Agriculture to project the importance and value of tender coconut, soap nut, cotton and traditional agro products in the district recently.

Officials said that since the traditional products have lost their place in the present way of life and the younger generation were not keen in knowing the medicinal properties of these products that have positive effects on health, the government has instructed the department to conduct rallies in each block and seminars at block level and district level. Products like tender coconut, rich in vitamin and minerals, enhance digestion and also increase resistance to diseases. Due to dominance of western culture and artificial cosmetic products, no one uses soapnut (shikakai), a natural hair conditioner. In order to reintroduce these traditional products into use by the public at large, awareness programmes were conducted recently in coordination with the Department of Horticulture, Forestry, Agricultural Marketing, Cooptex, Khadi and Village Industries and Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, officials added.

*The traditional products have lost their place in the present way of life*

## **TNAU inks MoU for enriching its digital library**

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) has inked a memorandum of understanding with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), as

part of the National Agricultural Innovation Project, for carrying out a project for strengthening its digital library and information management.

According to the Vice-Chancellor of TNAU, K. Ramasamy, the university will develop a group catalogue to share library resources on the digital platform, create an institutional repository and implement the advanced library management system.

### **Agricat Libraries**

Effective search and retrieval facilities can be accessed on [www.egranth.ac.in](http://www.egranth.ac.in) or [www.agricat.worldcat.org](http://www.agricat.worldcat.org). The search is available at three levels – global search, group search, and individual library search.

Agricat Libraries (group search), is a virtual experience of physically visiting the library, searching through the catalogue, taking the desired book and browsing through it before deciding to borrow it.

The ICAR is a repository of knowledge in agriculture and allied sciences and is available in the conventional print form in the libraries of research institutions and State Agricultural Universities. Digitisation of these books allows online access to researchers, teachers and students.

The project also facilitates implementation of 'Koha', an open source advanced library management software.

R. Vijayaraghavan, Special Officer (Publications and Public Relations), TNAU, is the consortium Principal Investigator of the project, and N.S. Vannamuthu, Librarian, is the Co-Principal Investigator.



## State government to focus more on green drive

*Avenue plantation to be taken up in a big way*



GREEN AGENDA: Participants at a seminar organised to mark the 'World Day to Combat Desertification and Draught' in Bhubaneswar on Monday.—

PHOTO: LINGARAJ PANDA

The State government has announced to step up avenue plantation drive as part of its strategy to combat desertification.

Addressing the State-level celebration of 'World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought-2013', Forest and Environment Minister Bijoyshree Routray said the government was trying to increase green cover by taking up avenue plantation and city plantation in a big way.

"We have a large agriculture base which is water dependent. Desertification has a big impact on livelihood of people. Reduction in agricultural produce would lead to forced migration and hunger and poverty. Given the serious nature of the impact, everybody has a role to play in preserving nature," said Mr. Routray. Effort should be made to develop technology so that people's dependence on water in agriculture

and other activities comes down, he said. P.N. Padhi, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, said at present the department was studying the availability of land alongside major roads of the State and thereafter tree species would be selected to carry out massive avenue plantation.

### **Survival rate**

“This time, focus will not be on planting only, executing agencies will be asked to improve survival rate of the trees,” Mr. Padhi said.

Forest and Environment Secretary R. K. Sharma said the other way of combating desertification was to reduce carbon footprint. The State government was trying to address the challenge of desertification with a narrow approach, alleged Ranjan Panda, an environmentalist, adding that plantation was not the only answer to such a vast problem.

“The government must give priority to preserving ecosystem in its every developmental plan. It is a double-speak on part of the government that it promotes greenery and in the same breath it allows hundreds of agricultural and forested land to be acquired for industrial purpose,” Mr. Panda said. The government must do ecological cost-benefit analysis of every project, he advised

## Prison locks out plantain crop



Prison authorities have decided that the Central Prison at Poojappura will no longer accommodate a plantain plantation.

Considering the modus operandi of the prisoners who escaped from the jail on June 10, it is not surprising that the extensive agricultural activities on the prison campus will exclude plantains from now.

'Ripper' Jayanandan and 'Oopa' Prakash used a very inconspicuous item found in the farms here to make good their escape. The crude mechanism

that helped them clamber over the 7-metre walls was a 'ladder' assembled using the wooden poles that support the top-heavy banana plants.

"It was decided that we will not cultivate anything inside the prison walls that require these props. Once the plantains yield fruit, we will transplant the 150 trees grown within the premises outside," Director-General of Police, Prisons, Alexander Jacob told *The Hindu* .

He said the total harvest would hardly be affected, as the Prison Department cultivated over 20,000 trees, taking into account the agricultural activities undertaken in its other institutions such as the open jail or women's jail.

There were three particularly large plantains that were being supported by the poles, before the two convicts decided to make other use of them.

The cluster of plantains here will be replaced by a carpet of less-problematic crops, including amaranthus ( *cheera* ), yam, and other tubers.

The prison farms have been a success so far, with inmates tending to an array of plants, including paddy, and keeping flower beds. Reforms initiated over the past few of years have led to a transformation of the campuses, with material and knowledge support of HortiCorp and Kerala Agricultural University.

## Elephants destroy banana crops near Mettupalayam

*Cost of damage estimated to be more than Rs. 5 lakh*



The remains: Banana crops that were destroyed in a farm near Mettupalayam by elephants on Saturday night. —Photo: Special Arrangement

A herd of elephants on Saturday night destroyed over 1,800 banana trees in a farm near Mettupalayam. According to the farm owner K. Boominathan, the herd comprising five elephants and a calf, entered the farm around 9 p.m. on the day. They feasted on the trees that had bananas that would be ripe in a month.

The workers at the farm near Nellithurai, near the Vanabhadrakaliamman Koil, attempted to chase away the elephants using fireworks but the elephants kept marching on into the farm. They stayed at the farm for hours and destroyed the ready-to-harvest trees.

Mr. Boominathan said that he would have harvested the fruits in a month. The banana trees were spread over eight acres.



|                 | Max | Min | R   | TR  |
|-----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| New Delhi (Plm) | 34  | 24  | 123 | 131 |
| New Delhi (Sfd) | 31  | 23  | 59  | 91  |
| Chandigarh      | 28  | 20  | 41  | 185 |
| Hissar          | 31  | 24  | 0   | 101 |
| Bhuntar         | 26  | 17  | 2   | 107 |
| Shimla          | 21  | 12  | 4   | 146 |
| Jammu           | 32  | 24  | 0   | 27  |
| Srinagar        | 20  | 12  | 0   | 27  |
| Amritsar        | 31  | 23  | 0   | 121 |
| Patiala         | 29  | 23  | 4   | 117 |
| Jaipur          | 34  | 26  | 0   | 61  |
| Udaipur         | 35  | 25  | 3   | 42  |
| Allahabad       | 35  | 26  | tr  | 46  |
| Lucknow         | 33  | 23  | 50  | 110 |
| Varanasi        | 36  | 27  | 1   | 17  |
| Dehradun        | 20  | 18  | 375 | 623 |
| Agartala        | 36  | 28  | 0   | 91  |
| Ahmedabad       | 38  | 24  | 61  | 102 |
| Bangalore       | 29  | 21  | 0   | 123 |
| Bhubaneswar     | 35  | 24  | 0   | 105 |
| Bhopal          | 29  | 24  | 18  | 119 |
| Chennai         | 39  | 29  | 0   | 123 |
| Guwahati        | 37  | 26  | 0   | 69  |
| Hyderabad       | 32  | 24  | 0   | 153 |
| Kolkata         | 34  | 27  | 7   | 142 |

|                    |    |    |     |     |
|--------------------|----|----|-----|-----|
| Mumbai             | 28 | 24 | 208 | 749 |
| Nagpur             | 31 | 25 | 1   | 165 |
| Patna              | 33 | 29 | 2   | 40  |
| Pune               | 26 | 22 | 31  | 206 |
| Thiruvananthapuram | 27 | 23 | 22  | 236 |
| Imphal             | 34 | 24 | 0   | 29  |
| Shillong           | 26 | 18 | tr  | 126 |

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

The Southwest monsoon has further advanced into remaining parts of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and Punjab. Thus it covered the entire country today.

**RAINFALL:** Rain/thundershowers have occurred at most places over Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, at many places over Himachal Pradesh, at a few places over Haryana east Rajasthan and at isolated places over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (5 cm and above)

**HARYANA:** Yamunanagar and Chhachhrauli 27 each, New Delhi (Palam) 12, Ayanagar 9, Nilokheri 8, Naraingarh and Faridabad 7 each, New Delhi Safdarjung, Gurgaon, Sohana and Sadhaura 6 each and Chandigarh A.P, Ballabgarh and Indri 5 each, **HIMACHAL PRADESH:** Paonta 41, Renuka 15, Nahan 10, Jubbal 7, Arki 6 and Kotkhai 5, **EAST RAJASTHAN:** Kethumer 8, Dhariabad 6 and Govindgarh, Shahabad, Nagar and Mandrayal 5 each, **WEST RAJASTHAN:** Raniwara 9 and Jalore 5, **EAST**



UTTAR PRADESH: Kheri Lakhimpur 11, Dhaurahara 10, Palliakalan 9, Kakardherighat, Balrampur and Basti 7 each, Regoli 6 and Ayoadhya, Nighasan, Lucknow and Sultanpur 5 each, WEST UTTAR PRADESH: Narora and Hapur 16 each, nakur 15, Anoopshahar 14, Meerut 11, Mawana 10, Aligarh 9 Deoband 8, Budhana 7 and Bharathana, Agra and Muzaffarnagar 5 each and UTTARAKHAND: (10 cm and above) Dehradun 37, Mukteshwar 24. Kosani and Uttarkashi 21 each, Haldwani 20, Nanital 18, Tharali and Tehri 17 each, Bageshwar and Devprayag 16 each, Mussoorie and Roorkee 15 each, Joshimath 11 and Keertinagar 10.

#### **FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 19th June**

**2013:** Rain/thundershowers may occur at many places over Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and east Rajasthan during next 48 hours and decrease thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at few places over rest of the region during next 48 hours and decrease thereafter.

**WARNING:** Heavy to very Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places over Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh during next 48 hours. Heavy rainfall may also occur at one or two places over Punjab, Haryana Uttar Pradesh and east Rajasthan during next 48 hours.

#### **FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE**

**MORNING OF 19th June 2013:** Generally cloudy sky. Rain/thundershower with heavy at one or two places.



# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## **Poultry prices up on reduced output, higher feed costs**

A cut in production combined with a rebound in demand and rising feed prices have taken poultry and egg prices to a new high.

Over a month ago, the poultry industry was reeling under excess supply and low demand, leading to a crash in prices. But a harsh summer has resulted in an increase in chicken mortality across north India and Andhra Pradesh while farmers in other regions slowed production to bring down loss.

Poultry prices have now zoomed to Rs 140-200 per kg in Kerala, which is predominantly dependent on supplies from neighbouring states. In May, prices were in the range of Rs 70-80 per kg.

"There is a demand-supply gap now as production has come down. An increase in the cost of production due to high feed prices has also contributed to the rise in prices," said VK Mohan, general manager, Suguna Poultry Farms.

In Tamil Nadu, prices have nearly doubled to Rs 110 per kg in the space of two months. With the arrival of the monsoon, demand has risen in western states. Trawling has been banned in Kerala and Karnataka, which has led to a decline in fish catch. This has led an increase in chicken consumption.

In north India, which is still in the grip of summer, chicken shortage and rising feed cost have pushed up the prices. Prices have moved up from Rs 60 per kg in the first week of May to around Rs 85 per kg now.

"Soya prices have doubled to Rs 36-40 per kg in two years while maize prices continue to remain around Rs 13-14 per kg blowing up the cost of production. Production has also fallen by around 30%," said Ramesh Chander Khatri, secretary of Poultry Federation of India. The decline in the rupee's value has inflated the prices of medicines given to chicken.

"Almost 90% of such medicines are imported," said Ram Reddy, president of Andhra Pradesh Poultry Breeders Association. Egg prices are now inching towards Rs 4 apiece after a 20% cut in production when prices slid below Rs 3 last month.

With egg prices ruling below the production cost of Rs 3.20 for most of the time last year, the sector has suffered heavy loss. The loss in Namakkal in Tamil Nadu, the hub of egg production, would come to around Rs 240 crore, according to Dr P V Senthil, secretary of Livestock and Agri Farmers Trade Association.

"Retail prices are around Rs 3.80 per egg while the farm gate price is Rs 3.45, which means farmers are making a profit now. But this has to be sustained for a long time for farmers to recover from last year's loss," he said. Meanwhile, the government has failed to get Oman lift the ban on

Indian egg imports. The two consecutive bans were imposed after incidences of bird flu in Karnataka and Bihar from last October.

Vegetable, fruit prices heat up as supplies take a hit on excessive rainfall

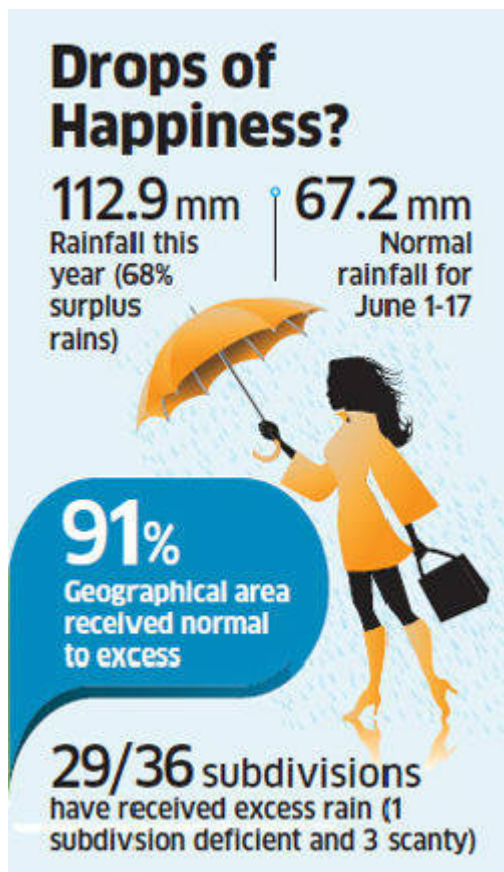
Heavy rains continued to lash north India on Monday, disrupting life in Delhi and wreaking havoc in hill towns, but the weather department said there will be respite by Tuesday.

Vegetable and fruit vendors in Delhi raised prices by up to 10% as supplies from nearby farms and neighbouring states slowed down. "Prices are expected to rise in the short term as there have been crop damages due to the sudden rains," said Pradipta Sahoo, head of horticulture at Mother Dairy, a co-operative retailer.

Heavy rains in the past 24 hours across the Delhi-NCR region have led to slow arrival of vegetables from nearby villages and also from Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, said Rajinder Sharma, chairman of Azadpur Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee, the largest wholesale market for vegetables and fruit in Asia. "Vendors have been quick to cite this as reason to raise prices temporarily."

Traders said it was a temporary phase when farmers were unable to harvest the produce and bring it to mandis. "Good road infrastructure across the region has, however, ensured daily arrival of 700-800 trucks (each carrying 15-20 tonne) at Azadpur," said Sharma. Of this, mangoes accounted for more than a quarter.

On Monday, the price of potato at Azadpur mandi ranged between 6.50 a kg and 12 per kg, onion 7.50-14 per kg and tomato 10-15 a kg. "At the mandis, vegetable prices may increase by 50 paise to 2 a kg, but at the retail level sellers increase prices by up to four times, hurting consumers," said Surinder Kohli, a leading vegetable trader from Azadpur. He said only a slight increase of 1-2 a kg has taken place in the prices of vegetables such as ladyfinger ( 16), bitter gourd ( 8) and bottle gourd ( 7).



### States want Centre to Assess Damage

As per the India Meteorological Department, the Delhi-NCR region has received 91.2 mm rainfall so far, which is 332% above normal for the month of June. In the past 24 hours alone, the region has received 58.50 mm of rains. "There is no need to worry about the excessive rains. In the next 24 hours, we will see the withdrawal of rains from the north-west region," said DP Yadav, the head of National Weather Forecasting Centre at IMD-New Delhi.

The combined effect of western disturbances and a low pressure zone across Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh till Chhattisgarh resulted in heavy-to-very heavy rainfall over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, northern

Haryana and Chandigarh. Yadav said weather conditions across north India would improve over the next 24 hours.

Early monsoon brightens prospect of a better kharif paddy this year

With the southwest monsoon arriving on time, eastern states are hoping for a better kharif paddy crop this year. In West Bengal, the leading rice producer in eastern India, chief minister Mamata Banerjee has taken the initiative of sending paddy seeds to farmers well in advance keeping in mind the panchayat elections round the corner.

Dr Trilochan Mohapatra, director, Central Rice Research Institute (CRRRI), told ET: "As of now, the monsoon situation looks good and this has raised the expectation of a better kharif paddy this year. Farmers are preparing nurseries.

However, rains should continue till July as well when transplanting takes place. That is the most crucial thing for kharif paddy." Seven eastern states that come under the 'Bringing Green Revolution to Eastern India (BGREI)' programme are Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, eastern Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

After the launch of the BGREI programme, rice production in eastern India has gone up by about 30% in the last three years as part of the government's goal to shift rice production from water-starved northern states to water-surplus eastern states.

The seven states produced an average of 42.6 million tonne of rice before the launch of BGREI but now they contribute 55.62 million tonne or over half of the rice produced in the country.

The country produces 105 million tonne of rice annually. The production in the seven states has increased to 46.97 million tonne in 2010-11, 55.27 million tonne in 2011-12, and 55.62 million tonne in 2012-13. Rice is produced on nearly 25 million hectares in eastern India.

Dr Mohapatra said this year's kharif rice production may top last year's. He said the average productivity in eastern India is likely to cross 2 tonne rice per hectare.

Dr Mukund Wariar, officer in charge of Central Rain-fed Upland Rice Research Station, said nearly 50% of farmers in Odisha are preparing nurseries. "In Jharkhand, there were rains in early June. But farmers could not take advantage of it because they were not prepared. But in the last two days, there has been a substantial movement among farmers to prepare nurseries," Dr Wariar added.

West Bengal director (agriculture) Paritosh Bhattacharya said: "We took a conscious decision last year that farmers should be provided seeds well in advance so that they can start preparing nurseries once the monsoon hits the state

## **More rain ahead, says Met**

The drops of relief drenched the industrial city and gave respite to denizens after two months of scorching heat. The city received 40.8 mm rainfall on Monday which thereby leading to a dip in temperature.

The maximum temperature recorded on Monday was 29.8 degree Celsius. The minimum temperature dipped to 22.4 degrees. The humidity recorded for the day was 92% and 98%. The rainfall received on Sunday and Monday collectively registered as 47.6 mm. The city received 6.8 mm rain on Sunday.

According to the weather scientists of Chandra Shekhar Azad Agriculture University, the south-easterlies which had been causing erratic and isolated rain till Monday afternoon is now replaced with monsoon winds. The city may receive heavy rainfall in the next 48 hours while drizzle will continue lashing the region in the days to come.

Anirudh Dubey, meteorologist of CSA, said, "The monsoon coming from Kerela arrived early in UP otherwise the expected date for monsoon arrival in this part of the country was June 21."

He also said that the locals must be prepared for heavy rainfall in a day or two. Talking about the intensity of pre-monsoon showers in past two days, the weather experts claimed it to be a sign of good rainfall ahead. The Met experts also added that rainfall in 2013 may break the records of past few years.



n 2004, the city received 56 mm of pre-monsoon showers on June 16 and 17. The monsoon had arrived in the city on June 22 in 2004. From 2005 to 2007, the monsoon made a delayed arrival in the city. Again in 2008, the city received heavy pre-monsoon rains for five continuous days before the onset of monsoons on June 24. The city received continuous rains from June 12 to 18 which was collectively reported as 163.3 mm.

"On June 12, 2008 city received 27.5 mm rains while on June 13 the rain recorded here were 22.2 mm. On June 14 and 15 the city received 32.4 and 55 mm of rains respectively. On June 16 rains held 1.5 mm while on June 17 it rains 24.8 mm in Kanpur," informed CB Singh, met expert of CSA. He added that after a gap of five years, the monsoons have made an early arrival in the city in 2013. The rains will be good this year compared to past few years.

Monsoon shows a positive sign for agriculture yields

Monsoons have just set in and the state has already recorded a rainfall of 159.2mm- a positive sign as the figure is over 222% more than the month's average rainfall. The news is both good and bad for state residents. While Bastar area is flooded by incessant rains, elsewhere the heavy downpour has raised hopes of a bumper paddy crop this year.

Politically, a good monsoon can spell wonders for the ruling party and with the assembly elections around the corner, chief minister Raman Singhs could not have wished for anything better. A bumper paddy crop with

a hefty bonus of Rs 270, already announced by the chief min in his year's budget, would surely bring smiles on the faces of farmers in the state. Agriculture experts are already upbeat about the weather and are hopeful that if the current trend- rains with brief spells of sunshine- continue, paddy yield could witness a 10 to 15% increase on the last year's production of 6.5 million tones. The timely onset of monsoon and weathermen's prediction of a normal to good rainfall literally translates into a bumper crop.

In the first 15 days of June, Bastar recorded the highest downpour of 285.9mm rainfall followed by Durg- 178.9mm rainfall and Raipur at 172.1mm. According to officials of the agriculture department, 135mm rainfall was recorded in the corresponding period last year in the state. Talking to TOI, Pratap Kridutt, director, Chhattisgarh agriculture department said the monsoon pattern seems encouraging and much will depend on how it remains in the next few weeks. "If the rain continues the way they are and not follow the Bastar pattern, where the downpour has been incessant, a good yield can be expected," he said. A S R A S Shastri, professor in the department of Agrometerology, Indira Gandhi Agriculture University, said that all monsoon predictions, including global forecast, indicate good rains in India. "A timely monsoon provides ideal sowing conditions and if the predictions turnout to be correct, farmers from the state could look forward to happier times," he said. Agreeing with Shastri, Dr Sanket Thakur, agriculture scientist and director of Agricon Agro Producer company, said, "It has been a good start and if the rainfall remains fairly distributed across the state, the crop yield would be good."

Rice production in the state was around 6.5 million tonnes last year as against 6.36 million tonnes in 2011. In 2010, the state had produced 6.1 million tonnes of rice.

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## Farmers plan big tractor rally today against SIR at Mandal-Becharaji

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Stepping up their agitation against the proposed Mandal-Becharaji Special Investment Region (SIR), around 5,000 people from 44 villages to be affected by the project have vowed to take out a massive rally on 500 tractors from the region to the seat of the state government in Gandhinagar on Tuesday.

Anticipating trouble, the district administration in Gandhinagar has banned the entry of all private vehicles on roads leading to the secretariat and Chief Minister's Office from 8 am to 6 pm on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, in a bid to pacify the agitators, a committee comprising four cabinet ministers - Nitin Patel, Anandi Patel, Saurabh Patel and Bhupendrasinh Chudasama - held a two-hour long meeting with the farmers of the region on Monday.

However, some of the farmers who attended the meeting said the exercise was an eye-wash and that most of those present in the meeting were not the affected farmers but either land brokers or workers of the ruling BJP. Some of them were not even from the villages likely to be affected by the SIR.

Sukhdev Rathvi from Eswada village, whose 50 bighas of land is proposed to be acquired for the SIR, attended the meeting convened by the four ministers.

"We were called in to Gandhinagar to meet the ministers to resolve the issue. They told us the SIR would bring development to the region. However, when I opposed their views and tried to put my opinion, I was not allowed to speak," Rathvi said.

"Only those who supported the SIR project were allowed by the four ministers to speak. In fact, only 15-20 farmers were present from the villages that are going to be affected by the SIR," he added.

Pravin Sagar, also from Erwada village, attended the meeting too. He said the meeting ended just when they were thinking of walking out.

### **Elevated food prices putting pressure on inflation in India, says RBI**

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Expressing concerns over price situation, the RBI today said expensive food items like cereals and vegetables has continued to put pressure on overall inflation rate.

"Still elevated food inflation, particularly in respect of cereals and vegetables, sustained upside pressures on overall inflation," RBI Governor D Subbarao said in mid-quarter review of the monetary policy.

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# hindustantimes

## Weather

Chennai - INDIA

### Today's Weather



Sunny

Tuesday, Jun 18

Max Min

37° | 28°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:42

Humidity: 49

Sunset: 06:36

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1004

### Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Wednesday, Jun 19

Max Min

37° | 28°

### Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Monday

Jun 20

Jun 21

Jun 22

Jun 23

Jun 24



37° | 28°

37° | 29°

37° | 29°

38° | 29°

37° | 28°

Cloudy

Overcast

Overcast

Overcast

Overcast

### Airport Weather

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:42

Humidity: 49

Sunset: 06:36

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1004



## **Inundated**



Monsoon effect: Heavy rain resulted in water logging in agriculture fields at many places in Adilabad district of Andhra Pradesh. With monsoon progressing well in advance, kharif sowing has gathered pace. — S. Harpal Singh

## **Fertiliser firms turn upbeat on sales as monsoon advances**

Fertiliser makers such as Iffco and Coromandel International expect kharif sales to be higher than last year on the rapidly advancing monsoon across the country.

“The timely rains have set a good base for higher offtake this year,” said Kapil Mehan, Managing Director, Coromandel International Ltd. Sales from



dealer shelves have been quite good as planting of kharif crops progresses in States such as Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, Mehan said.

### **Monsoon progress**

The monsoon has progressed rapidly, covering the entire country almost a fortnight ahead of time. Total rainfall in the first fortnight is 48 per cent excess than normal of the four-month season that began on June 1.

Twenty-nine of the 36 metrological sub-divisions have received excess rains, while three divisions have reported normal rainfall. One sub-division received deficient rainfall, while the remaining three report scanty rains.

The good progress in monsoon has raised hopes of the fertiliser industry that is currently saddled with stocks of about eight million tonnes of non-urea complexes.

### **inventories**

This build-up in stocks is due to poor offtake last year on account of erratic monsoon coupled with the rise in prices of complexes such as di-ammonium phosphate and muriate of potash. A significant increase in prices of the non-urea complexes had forced farmers to switch over to cheaper urea last year.

Industry sources estimate DAP stocks at around five million tonnes, while the other complexes containing different ratios of nitrogen, phosphorous, potash and sulphur account for the rest.

“There is a very minor movement and the offtake this year should be slightly better. However, everything depends on the rains and it is too early to comment on sales growth at this point in time,” said U.S. Awasthi, Managing Director, Iffco.

### **Sales pick up**

Total sales of complexes, so far, across the country are estimated at around five lakh tonnes.

DAP sales pick up during sowing as the complex is normally applied for basal application. “Sales will be better than last year as the offtake is higher this year,” said Satish Chander, Director-General, Fertiliser Association of India.

Meanwhile, the Government has asked fertiliser companies to publicise the reduction in prices of phosphatic and potassic fertilisers. Following the decline in global prices, the Government had recently announced a 14 to 22 per cent cut in subsidy rates for fiscal 2013-14 on complexes such as DAP and MoP. The fertiliser makers were expected to reduce prices of DAP by Rs 1,500 a tonne and MoP by Rs 1,000 . Last rabi season, DAP was sold at Rs 24,000 , while MoP was priced at Rs 17,000 a tonne.

### **Thai disease could negate US duty effect on shrimp exports**

The 5.91 per cent countervailing duty imposed by the US Government on shrimps from India is unlikely to hit the volume of exports to the US, which is India’s largest shrimp market.

The duty, announced by the US Department of Commerce on May 29, is sure to raise exporters' costs. Together with the existing 3.5 per cent anti-dumping duty, exporters now have to pay nearly 9 per cent of the value of their shipments to the US Custom and Border Patrol upfront at the port of entry. This is an additional cost that most likely will be passed on to shrimp producers.

Ravi Reddy, President of Seafood Exporters Association of India, said that the duty was an 'unfortunate' extra burden on the exporters. There would also be a lot of administrative expenses, associated with the duty, too. "It is not going to be smooth for us," he told *Business Line*.

He said there was nothing the exporters or the Centre could do about the duty that was imposed on a complaint by the Coalition of Gulf Shrimp Industry that Indian exporters received government aid and incentives. This, according to COGSI, constituted an 'unfair trade practice' that handicapped shrimp producers in the US coastal States from competing with the foreign exporters. The US Commerce Department had found the claim valid on shrimp imports from India, China, Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand.

Ravi Reddy, however, said the duty was unlikely to discourage exports to the US which was a 'good market.' He said that though the US has already started charging the 5.91 per cent duty, a final decision was yet to come. And, when the final decision comes in July-August, there is a remote possibility that the current 3.5 per cent anti-dumping duty could be adjusted against the duty, he said.

Inspectors from the US International Trade Commission are already at work at Devi Fisheries and Devi Seafood in Visakhapatnam that were chosen as two respondents from India. Their report will influence the final decision on the duty rates.

Sources in Kochi, a major seafood exporting centre, said that the confidence that the duty would not hit exports was based on the situation in the shrimp sector in Thailand, the largest exporter (1.70 lakh tonnes in 2011) to the US. The Early Mortality Syndrome had devastated Thai aquaculture, leading to a sharp fall in exports to the US.

India, the fourth largest shrimp supplier (48,000 tonnes in 2011) to the US, could take advantage of this situation. Also, there were four other countries that were also slapped with the duty at various rates. Only Indonesia and Ecuador were in a position to cash in on the duty slapped on these five countries.

### **Scrap import duty on tea, says Wagh Bakri chief**

Wagh Bakri Group Chairman and Managing Director Piyush Desai has urged the Centre to abolish or substantially reduce import duty on tea from Indonesia and other countries to make the beverage available at competitive prices in the country.

It will help meet the challenge posed by the rise in coffee consumption.

Currently, Indian tea producers are being protected by a 100 per cent duty on imported tea. It needs to be reduced to ensure smooth supply of

premium variety of tea to compete with coffee. He also urged the Centre to allow blending of Indian tea with Kenyan and Sri Lankan varieties.

The global consumption of tea is 3,800 million kg (mkg) annually. China produces 1,700 mkg, India 1,100 mkg, Kenya 370 mkg, Sri Lanka 325 mkg and Indonesia 55 mkg. Due to prevention of deforestation, big tea garden owners are unable to increase their cultivation.

On the other hand, small tea garden owners have the capacity to increase their production with consumption rising by 3 to 5 per cent every year.

Desai said Tea Board Chairman M.V.G.K. Bhanu has deputed district wise officers and started training programme for these small tea growers to make them focus on good production practices, including use of fertilisers and pesticides.

Unlike big estates, small tea growers are not compelled to provide education and residential facilities to their workers. So they can sell their tea at least 15 to 20 per cent lower than big tea gardens.

Due to competition, tea exports have dropped from 200 mkg in 2000 to less than 180 mkg in 2012. India needs to increase domestic consumption by promoting indigenous tea blended with the imported one.

Desai also emphasised the need to resume two-week credit facility for auction buyers who buy from the seven auction centres across the country.

This facility was discontinued five years ago and buyers were asked to pay in cash.

## 90% tea sold at Coonoor sale

Tea prices dropped by nearly Rs 1.50 a kg at sale number 24 at the Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions last week. About 90 per cent of the year's second highest offer of 16.67 lakh kg was sold.

Crosshill Estate continued to top the CTC market. "Our Red Dust topped at Rs 166 a kg. In all, our five marks have got Rs 155 and more," Crosshill Operations Head Dinesh Raju told *Business Line*.

This week, Homedale Estate tea, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, also topped the CTC market at Rs 166 a kg. Hittakkal Estate got Rs 164 and Vigneshwar Estate Rs 162. In all, 66 CTC marks got Rs 125 and more.

Among orthodox teas, Havukal and Kairbetta got Rs 175 each, Corsely Rs 165, Prammas Rs 162 and Highfield Estate Rs 160. In all, 27 marks got Rs 125 and more.

"Whole-leaf orthodox was irregular at Rs 5-10 a kg while others lost Rs 2-3. Prices of better medium CTC leaf oscillated up and down Rs 2-4, while plainers gained Re 1-Rs 2. Primary orthodox dusts eased Rs 2-4 while others up to Rs 2. Better liquoring CTC dusts lost up to Rs 5 and mediums Re 1-Rs 2 but plainers gained up to Rs 2," an auctioneer said.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 70-75 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 110-150 for brighter liquoring sorts. They ranged Rs 78-86 for plain dusts and Rs 120-160 for brighter liquoring dusts.

## Declining arrivals lend flavour to cardamom

Cardamom prices gained last week on the back of declining arrivals at the auctions.

Export buying slowed down as the material arrived was not of exportable quality, market sources told *Business Line*. They said “about 10 to 15 tonnes of export purchase was there.” They said exporters bought good volume of capsules in the past few months and thus created enough stocks for the Ramzan which is to begin on August 9.

Upcountry dealers actively bought last week, probably looking at the fall in arrivals. Of the arrivals on Sunday, one-third was of the new crop.

However, the first round of picking would commence in full swing from the end of the month. But, superior quality bold capsules would start coming only in the second round of picking that could begin from mid-August, they said.

According to the trade, the slow down in arrivals has aided the price rise. The new crop is said to be comparatively better than that of the previous season as the plants are seem to be healthy.

The average auction price moved up to above Rs 600 a kg and vacillated between Rs 600 and Rs 650.

Total arrivals at the Sunday auction held by KCPMC decreased to 54 tonnes from 69 tonnes on the previous Sunday and the entire quantity was sold out, P.C. Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC, told *Business Line*.

The maximum price was Rs 876 and the minimum Rs 442. The auction average price increased to Rs 647 from Rs 564.73 at the previous Sunday's auction, he said.

Total arrivals and sales during the current season from August 1, 2012 to June 16 were 14,426 tonnes and 13,813 tonnes respectively. Total arrivals and sales during the corresponding period last year were at 19,014 tonnes and 18,227 tonnes respectively.

The weighted average price as on June 16 stood at Rs 705.78 a kg (Rs 634.61).

**Prices of graded varieties (Rs/kg): AGEB 800-810; AGB 610-620; AGS 600-610 and AGS -1: 580-590 .**

### **Supply woes lift rubber**

Spot rubber prices improved on Monday. According to market circles, the prices firmed up as the inflow of the raw material hit the bottom line following the widespread rains all over the plantation areas. Sheet rubber increased to Rs 175.50 (175) a kg, according to traders and the Rubber Board. The trend was partially mixed.



The July futures improved to Rs 174.10 (172.18), August to Rs 171.60 (169.39), September to Rs 168.12 (166.21), October to Rs 165 (164.81) and November to Rs 163.42 (160.17) a kg on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) closed marginally higher at Rs 162.94 (162.09) a kg at Bangkok. The June futures slid to ¥ 234 (Rs 142.56) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

**Spot rates (Rs/kg):** RSS-4: 175.50 (175); RSS-5: 170.50 (170); Ungraded: 160.50 (160); ISNR 20: 162 (162) and Latex 60 per cent: 115 (113.50).

### **FCI to invite bids for building 2 mt silos**

The Food Corporation of India (FCI) expects to invite bids over next two months for building silos with a capacity of 2 million tonnes (mt) under public-private-partnership (PPP) mode to store foodgrains.

The proposed silos are expected to come up at 42 locations in about ten States including Bihar, Haryana, Maharashtra, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam, Kerala and Gujarat. About 38 of these silos will be under the BOO (build, own and operate) variant of the public-private partnership, while the rest will be under the viability gap funding based BOT (build, operate and transfer) model.

The electronic bidding for building the 42 silos is expected to be launched within two months. A pre-bidding stakeholders meet was recently organised

by FCI in collaboration with its strategic partner, the International Finance Corporation in this regard.

FCI Chairman and Managing Director C. Viswanath said that under the BOO variant of PPP, entrepreneurs would have to bring in land and set up silo complexes and railway sidings for movement besides carrying out operations. The current silo capacity is estimated at 5.5 lakh tonnes and this capacity augmentation would help the Government to ensure effective distribution under the proposed food security law.

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### **Cotton likely to fall further this week**

After gaining last week, cotton prices declined on Monday due to weak demand at the upper level.

Good progress of the monsoon is also pushing prices down as it is seen helping higher production in the next season starting October.

According to traders, prices may decline further this week as global market is also negative. Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton decreased by Rs 500 to Rs 40,000-40,500 for a candy of 356 kg.

Kalyan cotton A grade was offered at Rs 29,700-30,000 a candy. About 6,000 bales cotton arrived in Gujarat and 20,000-22,000 bales arrived in India. Kapas or raw cotton was traded at Rs 970-1,015 for 20 kg, while mill delivery kapas price was stood at Rs 1,010-1,040 for 20 kg. Cotton traded easy during Monday as demand weakened at higher levels. Sharp fall in

ICE cotton futures during electronic trading also weighed on the sentiment. Traders said that buyers were reluctant to purchase at higher levels. However, overall outlook remained firm on tight supply position in near-term.

Cotton yarn export registrations stood at 90.152 million kg in May 2013, down 22.25 per cent from April but 21.08 per cent up from same period a year ago.

Traders said that yarn exports slowed down due to weak demand from China.

### **Groundnut oil drops below Rs 1,000/10 kg**

Sentiment in edible oils ruled slightly firm on Monday taking cues from higher Malaysian palm oil futures. Palmolein rose by Re 1. The progress of monsoon across the country is giving a fillip to sowing of kharif crops, including oilseeds, capping price rise.

Groundnut oil in main producing centres of Saurashtra, Rajkot and in Mumbai dropped below Rs 1,000 as sowing gathers pace.

In Mumbai, groundnut oil lost Rs 20 and rapeseed refined oil declined by Re 1. Soyabean, sunflower and cotton refined oils ruled unchanged.

Analyst said that the jump in Malaysia exports of palm oil products is significant because the numbers for first 15 days are the highest for the past six months.

. Latest kharif sowing data suggest that cultivation of oilseeds was flat at 1.5 lakh hectares while for cotton it is higher by 0.63 per cent at 15.80 lakh hectares. Above average rainfall till now has resulted in early planting of crops such as oilseeds and cotton. There has been plenty of rainfall in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and other southern states. During the day, about 250 -300 tonnes palmolein were traded in resale at Rs 524-525. Liberty sold about 200-250 tonnes super palmolein at Rs 575 and Ruchi sold about 150-200 tonnes soyabean refined oil at Rs 670.

Soyabean arrivals were 60,000-65,000 bags including 35,000 bags from Madhya Pradesh and its prices were Rs 3,800 ex-mandi and Rs 3,925 for plant delivery. Mustard seeds arrivals were 1.70 lakh bags-1.75 lakh bags including 95,000 bags from Rajasthan at Rs 3,175-3,600.

At the end of the day, Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 538, super palmolein Rs 575 and super deluxe Rs 600. Ruchi quoted palmolein Rs 540, soyabean refined oil Rs 670 and sunflower refined oil Rs 790. Gokul's rates for palmolein were Rs 530 for June and Rs 533 for July. In Rajkot, groundnut oil declined by Rs 35 to Rs 1,525 (Rs 1,560) for *telia* tin and by Rs 20 to Rs 990 (Rs 1,010) for loose 10 kg on higher selling.

**On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange,** soyabean refined oil July futures closed higher at Rs 700.40 (Rs 697.50), August Rs 690.20 (Rs 689.80) and September closed lower by Rs 1.50 to Rs 680.50 (Rs 682.00).

**Malaysia BMD crude palm oil** July contracts settled higher at MYR 2,459 (MYR 2,435), August at MYR 2,467 (MYR 2,439) and September at MYR 2,462 (MYR 2,436) a tonne.

**The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were:** Groundnut oil 1,000 (1,020), soya refined oil 670 (670), sunflower exp. ref. 730 (725), sunflower ref. 790 (790), rapeseed ref. oil 695 (696), rapeseed expeller ref. 665 (666), cottonseed ref. oil 665 (665) and palmolein 526 (525).

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

### **Rice seen range-bound as bulk buyers keep off**

Rice is likely to be range-bound in the coming days with bulk buyers staying away, according to trade experts.

After witnessing a continuous fall, aromatic and Sharbati varieties recovered marginally, while PR varieties failed to gain due to lack of buying on Monday.

Amit Chandna, proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company, told *Business Line* that the market has been ruling in a tight range since last week.

Any major alteration in the market is unlikely at present as bulk buyers are still keeping themselves out of the market, he added. Traders expect the market to continue ruling around current levels with marginal fluctuations.

In the physical market, Pusa-1121 (steam) recovered by Rs 100 to Rs 7,800-7,830 a quintal, while Pusa-1121 (sela) quoted at Rs 7,200, up Rs 50 from the previous level. Pure basmati (raw) improved by Rs 70 to Rs 8,870. Duplicate basmati (steam) went up by Rs 50 to Rs 6,830.

For the brokens of Pusa-1121, Dubar quoted at Rs 4,000, Tibar sold at Rs 4,500 while Mongra was at Rs 3,000.

In the non-basmati section, Sharbati varieties recovered marginally by Rs 20-30, while PR varieties remained unchanged due to lack of buying.

Sharbati (Steam) sold at Rs 4,880-4,900 while Sharbati (Sela) quoted at Rs 4,500.

Permal (raw) sold at Rs 2,250 while Permal (sela) went for Rs 2,350. PR-11 (sela) sold at Rs 3,100-3,150 while PR-11 (raw) quoted at Rs 2,780. PR14 (steam) sold at Rs 3,350.

## **Paddy Sowing**

Paddy sowing has started at various places from June 15 and the activity is expected to gather pace in the coming days.

## **Soya rules flat despite global cues**

Soya oil and soya seeds ruled flat on subdued demand and buying support despite strong global cues.

Even as crude palm oil on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives Exchange closed higher, soya oil ruled at Rs 675-80 for 10 kg on slack and scattered buying support, though majority of buying in soya refined was seen at Rs 675-77.

Soya solvent also traded marginally lower at Rs 646-47 (Rs 645-50) on slack demand.

However, compared to last week, soya oil is ruling Rs 5 higher. Demand in soya oil continues to be slack for the past sometime on weak demand strong buying support in cotton oil which is reasonably cheap compared to soya oil.

Soya oil on the other hand traded higher on rise in buying support and strong global cues with its June and July contracts on the NCEDX closing at Rs 715 and Rs 700.40 respectively.

Soyabean prices also ruled firm at Rs 3,750-3,850 a quintal amid arrival of 35,000 bags in mandis across Madhya Pradesh. Compared to last week, soyabean is ruling Rs 25-50 higher amid weak arrival and strong global cues.

Plant deliveries in soyabean ruled at Rs 3,850-3,950 (up Rs 50 from last week).

In futures, soyabean traded higher on strong buying support and global cues.

On the NCDEX, soyabean June and July contracts closed at Rs 3,911 (Rs 3,790 last week) and Rs 3,890 (Rs 3,790 a quintal last week).

Rise in dollar and improved buying support in the export market have perked up soya DOC prices in the past one week by almost Rs 3,000 to Rs 36,200, while in the domestic market, it ruled at Rs 34,200-700.

### **Sugar futures up on hopes States will buy for PDS**

Sugar prices in the futures market gained on hopes that States will soon float a tender to buy the commodity for supply through ration shops. However, mill tender rates remained unchanged despite sentiments improving in the market.

In the physical market, S-grade improved by Rs 7 a quintal at the lower end and declined by Rs 4 at the higher end. M-grade lost Rs 20 at the lower end, while upper side gained by Rs 5.

Naka rates improved by Rs 10-20 on higher demand and lower sales of the bold-fine variety. Sources said that despite a positive outlook, mill tender rates were unchanged as local demand eased.

Talk in the futures market that prices were higher by Rs 15 till noon, taking the rise to Rs 35 a quintal in the last two sessions. Sources said that the physical volume was lower compared with Saturday due to heavy rain in Mumbai.

Local retail demand remained need based and routine but continuous supply from producers in the absence of neighbouring States buying keep the price under check. In the Vashi market, arrivals were 64-65 truckloads (each 100 bags) and local despatches were 60-62 loads. On Saturday, only



8-10 mills offered tenders and sold about 28,000-30,000 bags 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 were up by Rs 15 to Rs 3,115 (Rs 3,100), August was higher by Rs 17 to Rs 3,165 (Rs 3,148) and September increased by Rs 15 to Rs 3,204 (Rs 3,189) till noon.

**The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were:** S-grade Rs 3,069-3,131 (Rs 3,062-3,135) and M-grade Rs 3,172-3,336 (Rs 3,192-3,331). **Naka delivery rates were:** S-grade Rs 3,020-3,080 (Rs 3,020-3,070) and M-grade Rs 3,140-3,220 (Rs 3,130-3,200).

### **Pepper continues to head North on tight supply**

Pepper futures and spot markets headed north on good demand amid tight supply and all active contracts on the IPSTA platform ended above the previous day closing.

Farmers are said to be holding back their produce and, hence, the arrivals continued to remain thin. There are more buyers than the sellers.

In Kerala, the primary market dealers were not getting back-to-back coverage from the growers and, hence, they were also not selling. There were buyers for Rajkumari (Idukki) pepper at Rs 355 a kg but even at that rate, no sellers were forthcoming. Some quantity of High range pepper was

traded at Rs 353. On the spot, 17 tonnes fresh pepper arrived and 15 tonnes were traded, they said.

Incessant rains in the rural areas of Kerala is attributed to the sharp fall in arrivals, of late.

On the IPSTA, July contract increased by Rs 201 to close at Rs 36,201 a quintal. Aug and Sep were up by Rs 29 respectively to close at Rs 36,139 and Rs 36,140.

Spot prices moved up by Rs 100 at Rs 34,300 (ungarbled) and Rs 35,800 (MG 1) on good demand amid limited supply.

Indian parity in the international market was at \$6,425 a tonne (c&f) and remained in line with other origins.

Vietnam farmers were reportedly decided to hold back their produce hoping the prices would move up again. Following this, the markets moved up by \$50-75 a tonne.

# Business Standard

## Naveen to distribute 5,000 free mobiles to farmers

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will distribute free mobile handsets to 5,000 farmers on Tuesday keeping in line with the announcement made in the Budget for 2013-14.

The Budget had set aside Rs 2 crore for providing free mobile phones to 20,000 farmers. The scheme was the highlight of a separate agriculture budget, present along with the general budget, in February, this year.

"The chief minister will provide free mobile phones to 5,000 farmers as per commitment made in the Budget. The farmers having Kisan Credit cards will be eligible to get these instruments. They are selected by a committee at the district level chaired by the respective collector. The farmers are being selected from all districts. We will be offering them standard Nokia handsets. The government is negotiating with BSNL which will enable free SMS alerts and voice calls to farmers on vital market information relating to seed availability, prices and weather," said Bikram Arukh, minister for cooperation and rural development.

The distribution of free mobile phones is viewed by political observers as a pre-poll dole by the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) along with similar schemes like free laptops for meritorious students having passed the +2 level and the Rs 1 per kg rice programme, aimed at wooing targeted voter groups.

## Early rains to boost kharif crops planting: Govt

The country has so far received 28% more rainfall than normal

Early onset of monsoon will boost kharif crops like paddy and oilseeds and help increase agriculture productivity at a time when economy is facing downturn, the government said today.

Monsoon rains has covered almost the entire country a month in advance. The country has so far received 28% more rainfall than normal, that would lead to timely sowing and improve prospects of agriculture sector, which contributes 15% to the country's GDP.

More than 60% of population depends on agriculture and rains are crucial as only 45% of cultivable area is irrigated.

"The current rains will improve sowing of all kharif crops. If monsoon forecast of the Met Department comes true, total agriculture production will exceed the previous records," Agriculture Commissioner J S Sandhu told PTI.

Rains will improve soil moisture in drought-hit states like Maharashtra, while it will also reduce energy cost of irrigation, it added.

"Normally, farmers in Punjab and Haryana use irrigation for land preparation. Early rains will help farmers in saving this energy cost for pumping irrigation water," Sandhu said.

Planting of paddy and other kharif crops will be in full swing in the next two week, he said.

As of now, area sown to paddy is marginally down at 7.94 lakh hectare. But the acreage will increase in the coming days as paddy transplanting has begun in most states, while Punjab and Haryana have just begun, he said.

Noting that it was the right time for normal sowing, Sandhu said pulses being rainfed crops, the early rains will benefit sowing of pigeon peas (tur), moong and urad.

The efforts are to increase area under tur and the government is advocating farmers to sow tur on rice-bands inter-cropped with soyabean, groundnut, sesamum and black gram especially in rainfed areas, he said.

### **Monsoon covers India by mid-June, earliest ever**

### **The farm sector accounts for about 15% of India's near \$2-trillion economy**

Monsoon rains have covered the entire country a month ahead of schedule, brightening the prospects for a bumper output of summer-sown crops such as rice, oilseeds and cotton in one of the world's leading producers.

The rains usually cover all of India by mid-July, but this year it happened on June 16, the earliest such occurrence on record, a senior official at the India Meteorological Department said.

A strong start to the monsoon aids farm output as about 55% of the south Asian nation's arable land is rain-fed. It can also help hold down inflation, a critical concern for India's coalition government, which is preparing for national elections in 2014.

The farm sector accounts for about 15% of India's near \$2-trillion economy, Asia's third-biggest.

"We expected an early coverage, but not so fast," said the Meteorological Department official, who did not want to be named as he was not authorised to speak to the media.

"A very strong pulse over the northwest region helped the monsoon to cover the entire country last night," said another weather official.

Analysts said the early rains should help boost output of summer crops by giving them more time to mature.

"An early sowing of summer crops like rice, cane, soybean, corn and cotton will give them more time to mature and lead to higher yields," said Praseon Mathur, senior analyst at Delhi-based brokerage Religare Commodities.

Heavy showers would also help soften soils in drought-hit areas, including the major cane-growing state Maharashtra, Mathur added.

Maharashtra was hit by drought last year and needs plentiful and timely rain to assist a recovery.

Farmers expect to see power costs fall as early monsoons reduce the need for irrigation, said Sudhir Panwar, president of farmers' group Kishan Jagriti Manch.

The current strong phase in the four-month long rainy season is expected to last through this week, and could then slow early next week, the first official said.

But overall rainfall during the first month of the monsoon is seen as remaining above average.

Last week, the weather office retained its forecast for an average monsoon for this year, riding on a timely start to the season on June 1.