



## **TNAU announces counselling schedule for UG courses**

Phase 1 of counselling for admission to 13 undergraduate courses of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University for 2013-14 will be held from July 1 to 9.

According to an official release, the rank list and counselling dates along with the time have been put on [www.tnau.ac.in](http://www.tnau.ac.in).

The counselling call letter, State Bank of India challan for payment of counselling and admission fee (non-refundable) have been dispatched to eligible candidates.

Counselling and admission fee of Rs. 2,000 (Rs. 1,000 for SC / SCA / ST) can be paid to the TNAU Power Jyoti account at any branch of the SBI using the printed challan from June 20 . The paid challan should be produced at the time of counselling.

Applicants should be present 30 minutes before the scheduled counselling time.

## **Kisan sabha to stage dharna**

The All India Kisan Sabha, Goa unit, will hold dharnas on Friday outside leading mining companies at Vasco and Mormugao, demanding compensation for the damage to agricultural properties of villagers of Mayem because of the seepage of mining rejects.

Secretary of the sabha Jatin Naik said the demonstrations would be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. outside the head office of Sesa Mining Corporation; from 1 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. outside the head office of Bandekar Mining Company in Dr. Ozlar Forum building at Vasco; and from 3.30 p.m. to 6 p.m. outside the Chawgule Company Pvt. Ltd. at Harbor, Marmagao. He said the dharna would be peaceful.

### **Memorandum**

The sabha will also submit a memorandum to the managements of the mining companies demanding compensation as per the report of the Zonal Agricultural Officer of Bicholim taluk in north Goa, he added.

### **ICRISAT for promoting groundnut in Anantapur district**

*Two groundnut varieties yield 30 p.c. more in perennially dry district*



William D. Dar, Director General of ICRISAT, making a presentation on the institute's initiatives in Andhra Pradesh to the MLAs and MLCs in Hyderabad on Wednesday.

The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) has suggested to the State Government to aggressively

promote two groundnut varieties that are drought tolerant and yield 30 per cent more in perennially dry Anantapur district.

Making a presentation on the ICRISAT's initiatives in Andhra Pradesh to the MLAs and MLCs, William D. Dar, Director General of the Institute said groundnut farmers of Anantapur were still relying on 60- year- old TMV2 variety though the two newer varieties ( ICGV 91114 and ICGV 00350) had immense potential of increasing productivity and profitability. But for some reason these were not catching up with farmers who would have benefitted a lot.

The presentation organised at the initiative of the Assembly Speaker, N. Manohar, however had poor attendance with only about 25 MLAs and MLCs and four Ministers participating in it. The Chief Minister, N. Kiran Kumar Reddy was present. This was despite the House being adjourned to enable the members of legislature to attend and the Central Hall of the Old Assembly building was thrown open for them. Among those who attended, most of the questions were asked by the TRS which was represented in near full strength. Apart from popularising such varieties, the other three suggestions made by Dr. Dar were promoting high-yielding pigeon pea hybrids, increasing sorghum production in rice-fallow system and sustainable agricultural intensification with soil mapping and innovative delivery systems. Sorghum in rice-fallow system currently raised in 50,000 hectares in Guntur district could be extended to 1,50,000 hectares in four years, he said.

## Fruit fest extended



The mango and jackfruit mela at Lalbagh has been extended till June 23, according to a release. Quality fruits brought by farmers directly from their orchards are available at the mela.

## Buy farm produce directly from growers, says Tippareddy



G.H. Tippareddy, MLA, inaugurating one of the shops opened under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana in Chitradurga on Wednesday.

Horticultural produce should be directly purchased from farmers and sold to the public through authorised outlets, and middlemen should be kept out, said G.H. Tippareddy here on Wednesday.

Speaking after inaugurating new shops opened under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) at Madakari Circle, he said 10 such outlets would be opened in the city under the scheme.

The public could buy fresh fruit and vegetables from these outlets at reasonable rates.

The Chitradurga Urban Development Authority had provided land for the construction of these outlets, he added. "These outlets would also provide jobs to the unemployed youth. People should make proper use of the facility," he added. Earlier, there were only two such outlets in the city .

### **Extend relief to all drought-hit farmers, says association**

The Tamilaga Vivasayigal Sangam has appealed to the State government to ensure relief to all drought-hit farmers. This was one of the major resolutions passed at the Perambalur district executive committee meeting of the association held here on Tuesday, according to its State general secretary R.Rajachidambaram, who was in the chair.

The resolution alleged that though Tamil Nadu government had announced in the Assembly that 31 districts except Chennai were drought-hit and all of them would be provided relief, "several affected farmers have not received the relief fully and many more have not received any relief at all."

It pointed out that all those who had raised sugarcane had not received any compensation. Hence, it pleaded that all the farmers who were victims of drought, including those who had cultivated sugarcane, should be provided relief after a review.

With reference to the restructuring of the co-operative loans, it said that the proposal to restructure them as long-term ones with 10 per cent interest should be given up. Instead, they should be allowed to repay the loans without any interest within three years.

Besides, the farmers who had been tilling the temple land on lease and who had also suffered the travails of drought had not been extended any compensation. Hence, even those agriculturists who had taken the land on lease should be given drought relief.

The association urged the State government to extend 12-hour three-phase electricity supply to the farmers outside the delta region too

### **Fodder shortage may dry up milk supply**

*Farmers of parched Perambalur are purchasing straw from Nagapattinam*



A 20-kg paddy straw bundle costs between Rs. 160 and Rs. 200.

Facing serious shortage of fodder for cattle because of drought, dairy farmers of the parched district of Perambalur have started purchasing paddy straw even from districts such as Nagapattinam.

Each bundle weighing around 20 kg and is sold in the range of Rs. 160 to Rs. 200. This has been going on for the past two months.

For this district, which has hardly any industry worth the name, dairying is one of the most important avocations.

Perambalur district has 172 milk producers' cooperative societies with about 24,000 members. About 1.4 litres of milk is procured daily of which more than one lakh litres is transported to the Tamil Nadu Milk Producers' Co-operative Federation in Chennai. Realising the importance of this industry for the district, Chief Minister Jayalalithaa sanctioned 11 chilling centres costing about Rs. 4 crore last year.

The district received only 608 mm rainfall during 2012 as against the normal 908 mm. During the current year, there has been any rain and the total rainfall up to May this year was only around 40 mm.

District collector Darez Ahamed has declared almost 90 per cent of the lands in the district drought-hit.

R. Rajachidambaram, State general secretary of the Tamilaga Vivasayigal Sangam, laments that the dairy farmers were left with no other option but to

buy fodder from outside. “There was a time when we used to ignore maize (sola thattai). But now the same is selling like hot cakes,” he says.

R. Venkatesan, a dairy farmer of Eriyasamudram with 35 years of experience and who has 25 milch animals, says it is only those farmers who had wells with good yield would be able to survive. “Such a situation is unprecedented and that is why many of us have started buying fodder from various sources,” he adds.

He finds fault with the governments at the Centre and in the State, for offering freebies and thus making the farm labourers lazy.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has made these workers sluggish. “Thus we do not get any labour at all to work in the farms, even if some of us have water in our wells,” he alleges.

Although Mr. Rajachidambaram admits that the State government has come out with a number of schemes for improving fodder availability, he wonders how they were going to be effective if there was no water at all.

He is certain that the farmers would have accepted governmental schemes if there is subsidy element. But they are reluctant because of inadequate rainfall. Everything depends upon the monsoon, he adds.

Mr. Venkatesan says shortage of fodder will automatically hit milk production and “time is not far off when milk would have to be sold even for Rs. 50 a litre,” he says



## Concrete lining of canal: farmers stage protest

*Proposal submitted to Centre seeking Rs. 800 crore aid*



Farmers staging a dharna inside the Lower Bhavani canal, near Arachalur, in Erode district on Wednesday. —PHOTO: M. GOVARTHAN

More than 100 farmers resorted to a dharna inside the Lower Bhavani Project (LBP) canal near Arachalur in Erode on Wednesday protesting against the Public Works Department move for concrete lining of the canal.

The department has come up with the plan as it will arrest seepage and ensure adequate water to the farmers in the tail-end areas of the canal. It has submitted a proposal to the Central Government seeking about Rs. 800 crore financial assistance.

### **Water shortage**

Opposing the plan, the agitators said it would affect the groundwater recharge and lead to water shortage in several parts of the district.

Farmers claimed that the seepage from the canal helped recharge the wells in the area, enabling them to get adequate water for their crops when water was not released from the Bhavanisagar Dam.

If the proposal was approved, it would adversely affect the groundwater recharge. It would also lead to the removal of a number of trees on both the bunds of the waterway.

Farmers also feared that the department would reduce the total quantity of water given to the LBP ayacut after the lining.

The canal provides water to more than 2.07 lakh hectares of lands in Erode and neighbouring Karur and Tirupur districts. It runs for about 125 miles, majority in Erode, and terminates in the border of Karur district.

Officials, however, said that the proposal would bring in a number of benefits to the farmers.

The groundwater recharge would not be affected as the water would be let out on the lands of the farmers.

### **Council's petitions panel meets farmers in Bellary**

*The proposed airport is mired in controversy*



Vimala Gowda, chairperson of petitions committee, during her visit to Chaganur and Siriwar in Bellary on Wednesday.

The petitions committee of the Legislative Council on Wednesday visited the land acquired for the proposed airport, near here, and interacted with farmers of Chaganur and Siriwar villages, who are opposed to the project. The committee is headed by Vimala Gowda, Deputy Chairperson of the Council. The committee held a closed-door interaction with farmers.

The new airport was a brain child of G. Janardhan Reddy, who was the Minister for Tourism and Infrastructure Development in the B.S. Yeddyurappa Cabinet. Around 1,200 acres of fertile irrigated land were identified near Chaganur and Siriwar and the process of acquiring it through Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board, was set in motion. The price for the land ranged between Rs. 12 lakh and Rs. 16 lakh.

Eighty per cent of the nearly 600 acres of land owned by farmers have been acquired and compensation has been released. However, a section of farmers, who are not willing to part with their land, which are in patches and are spread across the area, have questioned the need for a second airport as there was an airport around 40 km away.

They launched a series of agitations, including taking out a padayatra to Bangalore, and performing 'urulu seve', and knocked the doors of the judiciary. The Dharwad Circuit Bench of the Karnataka High Court ordered that land acquisition be held afresh after hearing the objections of farmers.

Ms. Gowda told presspersons that the committee held four meetings with officials and farmers in Bangalore. The members would hold another meeting with officials, prepare a report and submit it to the Council.

Veer Kumar Patil, K. Pratapchandra Shetty, Puttanna, Y.A. Narayanswamy, K.B. Shanappa, Marithippe Gowda and Ashwath Narayan are part of the committee.

### **Farmers' registration till July 31**

The last date for registration of farmers has been extended to July 31. An official press note issued here directed farmers to get themselves registered at Krishi Bhavans. As many as 15 lakh farmers have already enrolled in the registration scheme that seeks to create a database containing personal and agricultural details of all the farmers in Kerala. Only registered farmers will be eligible for the benefits, welfare schemes, and pensions implemented by the Department of Agriculture. — Special Correspondent All farmers should get to make 'neera'

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

At a meeting here, the State committee of the association demanded that all farmers be made eligible to make 'neera' from coconut trees.

The association expressed disappointment that only one representative of coconut growers had been given representation in the committee appointed

by the State government to study the issues related to the production of 'neera,' while workers had as many as four representatives.

P.V. Gangadharan, president of the association, and K.T. Prasad, general secretary, in a statement on Monday urged the State government to take 'neera' out of the purview of Abkari Act, instead of making amendments to the Act to facilitate 'neera' production.

### **In other States**

It was pointed out that in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Lakshadweep, 'neera' was not covered by Abkari laws.

The association would send a delegation to submit a memorandum to the Chief Minister and the Excise Minister to request them to issue, without further delay, the order that would facilitate 'neera' production.

Mr. Gangadharan presided over the meeting of the State committee.

### **Efforts on to save Pulikulam cattle breed**

*From 90,000 in the year 1995, the population of the breed in Madurai region has come down to 21,225 in 2012*

Survival of the fittest: The Pulikulam cattle being grazed on a dry tank at Tirupparankundram in Madurai.— Photos: R. Ashok

Pulikulam cattle, an indigenous breed with distinct characteristics and known for its valour in 'jallikattu' (bull-taming sports), is on the verge of extinction.

Only last year, thanks to the persistent efforts of Sustainable Agriculture and Environmental Voluntary Action (SEVA), this breed received recognition from the National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR), Karnal, Haryana, thereby making it the 35th registered indigenous cattle breed in the country.

As per a survey, the population of Pulikulam cattle in and around Madurai has drastically come down from 90,000 in the year 1995 to 45,000 in 2006 to 21,225 in 2012. The number of places where the cattle was reared is also shrinking.

A workshop conducted by the SEVA here on Wednesday gave hope to the preservation of the breed as herders, officials and veterinarians decided to implement an action plan to restore the glory of Pulikulam cattle breed. "Since it is not a milch animal, the attention given to other animals by the Animal Husbandry Department is missing in the case of Pulikulam cattle," says P. Vivekanandan, executive director, SEVA.

The accreditation from NBAGR was obtained after a characterisation study was done by the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University to describe the features of this cattle variety and subsequently SEVA applied for registration of the animal as new breed.

## **Farmers frustrated**

Farmers who rear this cattle are a frustrated lot as grazing has become a luxury. They complain that the Forest Department was not permitting them to take their animals into forest area for grazing. S. Mahalingam (40) of Thenpalanji, whose family has been rearing Pulikulam cattle for the last seven generations, herds over 700 cattle on the dry 'kanmoi' in Tirupparankundram on a hot Wednesday afternoon.

He says, "We are victims of nature, there are no rains and no water for these animals. The drought conditions have made things worse. I don't want my children to suffer like this. I've told them to study well in school so that they could find jobs."

Herders like Mahalingam and P. Krishnan of Manapatti take their Pulikulam cattle where there is grass and water. "Our income is meagre and the maintenance cost has gone up. Sometimes, we sell the calf and make money," says Krishnan, a fifth generation herder in his family.

According to a SEVA report, this breed is concentrated in Thenpalanji, Vadapalanji, Chettikulam, Perumalpatti, Melakkal, Vadipatti, Manapatti, Idayapatti and Nilaiyur.

The cattle herders take their animals to distant places and for several months they will be away from home. Trained for bull taming events, the Pulikulam cattle are fierce and disease resistant and used for ploughing.

## **Grazing rights**

Mr. Vivekanandan appealed to the forest department and district administration to give grazing rights to pastoralists as Madurai has expanded and there was no place for animals to graze.

“With the Pulikulam cattle having been registered at the national level, this distinct breed must be conserved. We have lined up awareness programmes to promote it in a big way,” he added.

Interestingly, Pulikulam village, after which the cattle origin is identified, is situated in Manamadurai taluk of Sivaganga district.

But this cattle breed is identified more with the Madurai region as the community that rears the animal belong to the latter.

A think-tank has been formed to save the cattle breed.

It comprises of B. Muruganandham, Professor and Head, Veterinary University Training and Research Centre, Madurai, Prof. Rajendran of TANUVAS, A. Maheswaran, Assistant Director, Cattle Breeding and Fodder Development, Department of Animal Husbandry, and Jeyasingh Gnanadurai, Joint Director (Agriculture).

## **Experts discuss vision plan**

To develop a vision plan for Tamil Nadu Fisheries University (TNFU), a brainstorming session with fisheries experts was organised at Fisheries



College and Research Institute (FCRI), a constituent college here on Wednesday.

Presiding over the meeting, Vice Chancellor of TNFU Baskaran Manimaran said it was aimed at bridging the gap between ground realities and academic curriculum in the best interest of stakeholders. The entire curriculum concerning research activities and extension programmes should have to be reoriented to suit the demands of the stakeholders.

The university had already organised a series of meets with fish farmers, entrepreneurs and fishermen in different regions across Tamil Nadu and documented their needs to restructure and strengthen teaching, research and extension activities.

G. Sugumar, Dean (in-charge), FCRI, who welcomed the gathering, said a road map would be formed with suitable contents to enhance productivity.

Dr. Sugumar said apart from the newly formed Fisheries University, two more institutions at Ponneri in Chennai and Nagapattinam were offering one year certificate course and short term training courses in fisheries science.

Dr. Sugumar said Ph.D. programmes were being offered in four disciplines, post graduate studies in nine disciplines and one under graduate course at FCRI. K. Rathnakumar, Registrar, TNFU also spoke.

Thirty experts from various institutions including central institutes, directors of ICAR and forty faculty members of FCRI took part in the brainstorming session.

## **'Monsoon fishing ban will be monitored discreetly'**

*Official warns of action against vessels fishing without gill nets*



The fish breeding farm of the Fisheries Department at Keri, Sattari.

Sharmila Monteiro, Director, Fisheries Department, Goa, has stated that the ongoing monsoon fishing ban, which is till July 31, was being monitored by the department and the coastal police discreetly and action would be taken if vessels were found fishing with any other net instead of gill nets.

She was speaking to presspersons at a meet conducted by the Department of Information and Publicity, in association with the Directorate of Fisheries, on Wednesday.

Ms. Monteiro said the Brackish Water Fish Farm in old Goa provided demonstration and training in freshwater fish culture to interested entrepreneurs. The department also gives demonstration for cage-culture of Indian major carps at Kerim. This project at Kerim, which has four

breeding tanks, a nursery tank and a breeding pond, was set up way back in 1991 with Central assistance under Western Ghats schemes, she said. Two more rearing tanks were proposed at a cost of Rs. 10 lakh at Keri, Sattari, to increase the breeding capacity of the project to 5 lakh from the present 3 lakh seeds. The Freshwater Fish Seed Farm caters to freshwater fish seed required by farmers. This centre is responsible for production and procurement of freshwater fish seed and maintenance of brooders and hatchery. It also takes care of stocking various freshwater fish bodies in the State. It also promotes and trains fisher youth and entrepreneurs in freshwater fish culture.

The scheme envisages developing a vast area covered under freshwater bodies for production of fast-growing freshwater fish varieties such as Rohu, Catla, Mrigal and Common carp, said Ragunath Kauthankar, Superintendent of Fisheries, who along with Chandan Shirodkar, junior technician, and fieldmen Harishcandra Gawas and Ulhas Gawde accompanied the touring journalists.

The farm centres organise demonstration-cum-training programme for farmers in shrimp farming, brackish water fish and mussel and oyster farming. It also maintains and runs the Departmental Brackish Water Farm, said Ms. Monteiro.

Mr. Shirodkar explained that with the mining presently at a stand still, some of the mining companies of south Goa had opted for freshwater fish breeding in their abandoned pits

## **Special package for farmers who sustained crop loss**

The State government on Wednesday announced a special package for the farmers who sustained crop loss due to heavy rain and consequent flood in Kalahandi, Koraput, Rayagada, Nabarangpur and other adjoining districts a few days ago.

According to an official release, an ex-gratia assistance at the rate of Rs. 2,000 per hectare shall be provided to the affected farmers who suffered crop loss of more than 50 per cent. This will be over and above the agricultural input subsidy.

### **Subsidy**

The government further said that agricultural input subsidy at the rate of Rs. 3,000 per hectare for rain-fed areas, Rs. 6,000 per hectare for irrigated areas and Rs. 8,000 per hectare for perennial crops shall be provided to the affected farmers.

The minimum assistance to any affected farmer shall not be less than Rs. 2,000 by administering both ex-gratia assistance and agricultural input subsidy, the government said.

The eligible amount will be paid to the actual cultivators who have suffered crop loss to the extent of 50 per cent or more to be assessed jointly by the Agriculture and Revenue personnel.

The government also announced that repayment of the crop loans of the affected farmers shall be deferred for a period of one year without any

change in the rate of interest applicable to the existing crop loan availed by the farmer.

## **Finally, Karaikal region declared drought-hit**

*CM announces Rs. 20,000 per hectare for farmers*

Nearly four months after Tamil Nadu declared neighbouring Delta districts, including Nagapattinam and Thiruvarur as drought-hit, the Karaikal region of the Union Territory of Puducherry has been declared as drought-hit as well.

The announcement is expected to benefit farmers of Karaikal, who are eagerly waiting for the distribution of relief - Rs. 20,000 per hectare announced by Chief Minister N. Rangasamy.

S. Sundaravadivelu, Special Secretary, Revenue, told *The-Hindu*, on Wednesday, that besides enabling the government to distribute cash compensation for crop loss, the drought declaration would benefit Karaikal farmers in various ways, such as the land tax and related items being waived for the respective year.

On the move of seeking the Central government assistance, he said the preparation of the memorandum and detailed report on account of drought loss had been undertaken. All factors, including meteorological, hydrological and agricultural would be taken into account while arriving at a detailed report on the drought situation.

A. Ramamoorthy, Director, Agriculture, said that due to the drought, the Karaikal farmers could not successfully harvest paddy crop on 4311 hectares, and, as compensation, would get Rs. 20,000 per hectare from the Puducherry government.

Similarly, the announcement would pave the way for getting the Centre's relief for crop loss as per the standard pattern.

He added that banks would reschedule the loan obtained by the farmers, providing them with more time for the repayment of short term loan. There was, also, a possibility to seek the Centre's assistance on carrying out drought mitigation programme such as creating community bore wells and others.

Mr. Ramamoorthy added that though the Karaikal district received 1311 mm of rain, as against an average of 1400 mm during the last year, most of it being erratic caused failure of paddy crop.

### **Protest against corporate farming**

Registering their protest against corporate farming, activists of the All India Kisan Mazdoor Sabha (AIKMS) and Communist Party of India (New Democracy) staged a dharna in front of the Collectorate here on Wednesday. Raising slogans against corporate farming and demanding that the agrarian crisis be addressed by the government with immediate effect, the activists resorted to a road blockade.

Addressing the workers, president of the AIKMS district unit N. Raja Rao said that the policies adopted by the Central and the State governments

were throwing agriculture into crisis and the advent of economic reforms turned into a deathtrap for poor farmers. He said that the farmers were forced to commit suicide as they were not getting farm loans, seed, fertilizer and pesticides in time. “The government policies are not at all encouraging to continue agriculture. Instead of increasing subsidies and supporting the peasantry, the government is reducing them day by day,” he said, adding that the situation was the main reason for the increasing number of suicide by farmers.

Leader of the CPI (ML) district unit Ch. Venkateswarlu, district leaders of the AIKMS J. Satti Babu, G. Adinarayana and others were present.

*‘Agrarian crisis should be addressed by the government with immediate effect’*

### **Team from Malawi visits milk societies in Erode**

“The technology used by dairy farmers in India is advanced and available to small scale farmers at a very low cost. This has helped increase milk production in India. We will be taking efforts to implement successful technologies that we have seen here to our country to increase milk production and bring down malnutrition in our country”, said Fanny Chigwa, an animal nutrition specialist, from Malawi.

She was among the seven member faculties from the Lilongute University for Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Malawi (Southeast Africa), who were in Namakkal recently as part of their 30-day tour to study the various aspects of the dairy industry.

She said that a well planned approach to dairy has helped farmers to reap good returns with increase in output (milk) with lesser feed intake.

“The per capita milk consumption per annum is 4.5 litres in Malawi while the total daily milk production of the country is only around 1.2 lakh to 1.3 lakh litres”, she said and added that this very low production was the main reason for the price of milk to remain as high as 150 Malawian kwacha — the currency in that country.

Dr. Fanny said that they have learnt a lot from the successful dairy business model in Tamil Nadu.

Fellow member of her team Timothy Gondwe, who specialises in Animal Breeding and Genetics, lauded the efforts taken by the Government, Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS) and the cooperative milk producers’ federation (such as Aavin) in taking India to the top of the world in milk production.

The team also visited local milk societies, ghee manufacturing units in Rasipuram, Aavin dairy plant in Salem and a milk based products manufacturing industry, in Erode.

### **Fertilizer shops inspected**

U. Umamaheswaramma, joint director, agriculture, inspected Growmore and other fertilizer shops in Jogipet town on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, she said that all steps would be put in place to supply fertilizers to farmers.-Staff Reporter



## Crop yields will not meet 2050 global demand: study



The HinduThe global average yield increase was only 1.6 per cent a year for maize. Photo: M. Govarthan

Yields of four major crops were not rising fast enough to meet projected global demand in 2050, warns a study published today (June 20) in the journal *PLoS ONE*.

Several studies had shown that global crop production needed to double by the middle of this century to meet demands from an increasing human population, more meat and dairy consumption driven by growing affluence and more biofuels use as well to provide food security to millions who were chronically undernourished, observed Deepak K. Ray and his colleagues at the University of Minnesota's Institute on the Environment in the U.S..

Boosting crop yields, rather than clearing more land for agriculture, was the preferred solution to meet this goal, they pointed out.

The researchers used a newly-developed crop yield and area harvested database to examine yield changes across the globe in maize, rice, wheat and soybean, focusing on trends in the recent two decades.

These four crops together produce nearly two-thirds of the global agricultural calories.

Yields of these crops needed to grow at about 2.4 per cent annually to double production by 2050. But the global average yield increase was only 1.6 per cent a year for maize, one per cent for rice, 0.9 per cent for wheat and 1.3 per cent for soybean. At these rates, global production of the four crops would be “far below what is needed to meet projected demands in 2050,” they noted in the paper.

Moreover, the global trends masked significant variations in the rates of yield change among and within countries.

Yields were growing slowly in the top three rice and wheat producing nations. Rice yields had improved in China by only 0.7 per cent a year, in India by one per cent and in Indonesia by 0.4 per cent.

“At these rates, we found that yield driven production growth in India and China could result in nearly unchanged per capita rice harvests, but decline steeply in Indonesia.”

The yearly wheat yield increases in China, India and the U.S. amounted to only 1.7 per cent, 1.1 per cent and 0.8 per cent.

“Clearly, the world faces a looming and growing agricultural crisis,” said Dr. Ray and his colleagues in their paper.

However, they also pointed out that opportunities did exist to increase production through more efficient use of arable land and boost yields by spreading best management practices.

A portion of the production shortfall could be met by expanding croplands, but at a high environmental cost.

Additional strategies, particularly changing to more plant-based diets and reducing food waste, could reduce the large expected demand growth in food, they remarked.

## **Integrated management of sugarcane shoot borer**

Sugarcane shoot borer is a pest of major importance in all the cane growing areas of India.

The caterpillar damages 50 per cent of the shoots by tunnelling downwards into them. The pest occurs during pre monsoon and monsoon seasons. The larvae can migrate and attack many shoots. Wilted shoots can be easily pulled out.

Rotten portion of the shoot emits foul odour. Heavy infestations are favoured by poor irrigation, scanty rain fall, high temperature and low humidity.

### **Maximum damage**

Maximum damage is caused when the crop is one to three months old. Adult moth is pale brown coloured. Female lays about 400 scale-like flat eggs in different clusters on the undersides of leaves.

Eggs hatch in five days. The larva cuts a hole in the stem above ground level and bores into the central shoot and feeds from inside. It appears pale yellowish in colour with five violet stripes of mottling brown marks.

Larval period lasts for 15 days. It pupates in the stem itself for 10 days. Total life cycle takes place in six weeks. Five generations are completed in a year. Maize and pearl millets are alternate host plants other than sugarcane.

## Management

Adopt early planting during main season. Use tolerant sugarcane varieties such as CO 421, CO 661, CO 917 and CO 853.

Ensure adequate moisture to bring down the soil temperature and to increase humidity.

Remove and destroy dead shoots. Provide trash mulching up to 10–15 cm thickness three days after planting.

Earth up the crop to a height of 15-22 cm by two months after planting.

Raise intercrops like green gram, black gram and daincha with sugarcane. Sequentially release tachinid fly parasitoid, *Sturmiopsis inferens* at 125 gravid females /ha from 30 to 50 days after planting .

Soil application of carbofuran at 33 kg/ ha or phorate 10G at 25kg/ha during planting is beneficial.

Two rounds of spraying of chlorpyrifos 20EC at 1000ml or monocrotophos 36WSC or lindane 20EC at 500ml /ha or Neem Seed Kernel Extract 5 per cent during 60-90 days after planting should be done.

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## **Community agriculture practice comes for praise in UN report**

The practice of Community Managed Sustainable Agriculture (CMSA) being followed by thousands of farmers in the State has found a place in a report by the United Nations.

The report was prepared about a year back for a presentation at Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. The technical workshop was on assessment of alternatives to endosulfan.

“CMSA was developed in Andhra Pradesh to address issues of low profitability in agriculture resulting from the high cost of external inputs of fertilizer and pesticides, with subsequent indebtedness, land mortgages, suicides, and decline in the area being farmed. CMSA replaces pesticides with a combination of physical and biological measures and compliments it with biological and agronomic soil fertility measures leading to reduced use of chemical fertilizers,” the report said.

Referring it as ‘Non-Pesticidal Management (NPM)’, the report states that CMSA is based on understanding the crop ecosystem, adopting suitable cropping systems and practices, understanding insect biology and behaviour and adopting suitable preventative measures, building farmers’ knowledge and skills in making best use of local resources, natural processes and community activities.

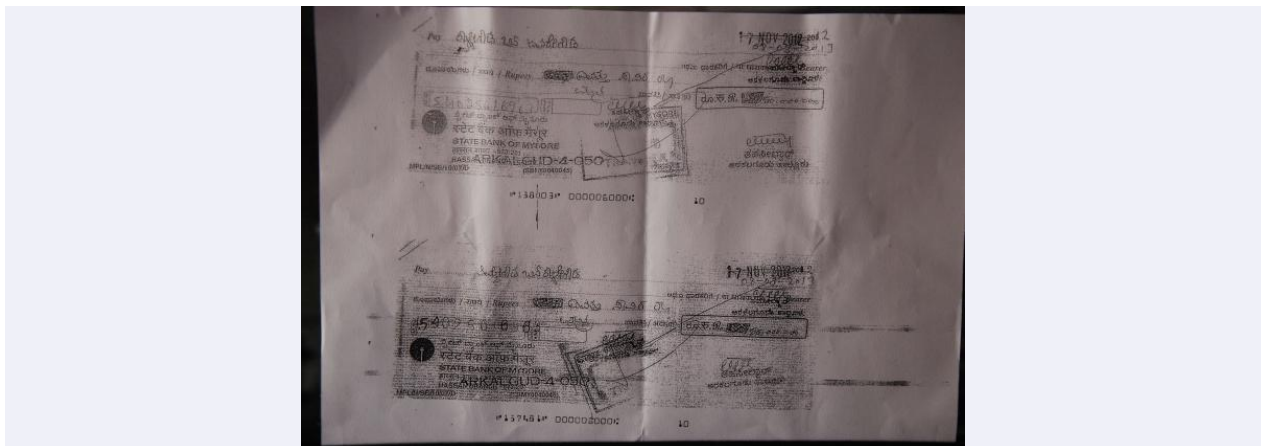
“The aim is to manage pest populations, not try to eliminate them, and to focus on balancing predator and pest populations. It involves using good quality seed, building healthy soils, reducing abiotic stress, using mixed

cropping systems, intercropping, crop rotation, planting trap and border crops, spraying botanical extracts and natural preparations, if preventative steps have not worked sufficiently,” the report said adding that CMSA practices are generally compatible with organic certification.

The report stated: “CMSA has significantly reduced the costs of cultivation without significantly reducing productivity, resulting in a net increase in farmers’ income and significant health and ecological benefits. By 2009, over 300,000 farmers on 550,000 hectares of farmland in Andhra Pradesh had adopted CMSA in four years. In 2011, those figures were reported to have grown to over 10 million farmers on over 10 million hectares.”

Referring to the report, an official in the NPM wing said that practicing of CMSA by farmers in the State was recognised by the UN and this would offer alternative to the use of endosulfan.

### **Fraudsters encash cheques meant for drought-hit farmers**



Cheques issued by the Revenue Department were tampered with to alter the amount and cash was drawn from the State Bank of Mysore branch in Arkalgud. Photo: Prakash Hassan

A sum of Rs. 10 lakh, meant for relief to drought-hit small and medium farmers in Arkalgud taluk, has allegedly been drawn by tampering with cheques and forging the signature of the tahsildar.

The fraud came to light after tahsildar K.P. Eshwarappa filed a complaint with the police on Tuesday seeking a probe. The money was withdrawn from the Revenue Department's official savings account at the Arkalgud branch of the State Bank of Mysore. The signature of M.R. Jagadeesh, the previous tahsildar, was forged and figures on cheques were altered. The complaint has mentioned the numbers of 26 cheques valued at Rs. 10 lakh. While 14 cheques were of the face value of Rs. 50,000 each, the remaining were of Rs. 25,000 each.

The State government announced relief for farmers in Arkalgud, one among 123 drought-hit taluks, in 2011-12. The maximum relief for a farmer was Rs. 1,000. Cheques for Rs. 250, Rs. 500 and Rs. 1,000, were altered to Rs. 25,000 and Rs. 50,000.

Such a fraud could not have been possible without the involvement of bank officials and the Revenue Department staff.

*The Hindu has photocopies of two such cheques on which the face value has been altered in figures and words.*



*The police said a case had been booked under the IPC for cheating and forgery*

## **Gujarat farmers up in arms against proposed auto hub**

Amid widespread allegations that the Gujarat government is increasingly siphoning off farm lands to pursue its big-industry friendly policies, hundreds of farmers from 44 villages on the Mandal-Becharaji corridor, close to the twin power centres of Ahmedabad and State capital Gandhinagar, are up in arms against the government.

The farmers are opposing the setting up of a proposed auto hub along this belt that has been christened by the government as a Special Investment Region (SIR). They point out that this would usurp them of their precious fertile land.

The government has already allotted land to Maruti Suzuki in Hansalpur and there is a plan to acquire more land for setting up the Special Investment Region. Farm leaders have met a ministerial committee and have made up their mind not to part with their land. They don't wish anything short of a cancellation of the government's plan to declare the region as an auto hub.

## Fertile land

The farm leaders say that the proposed SIR area comprises a whopping 63,000 hectares of fertile agricultural land and threatens to affect the livelihoods of over 2,000 farmers.

“Farmers met the Revenue Minister [Anandiben Patel] yesterday [Tuesday] and she accepted their memorandum. But we are not hopeful that there would be any change in the stand of the government,” said Sagar Rabari, convener of the Jameen Adhikar Andolan (land rights agitation) Gujarat.

Among several protests, this is the second-largest agitation against the State government after the one led by the former BJP MLA, Kanu Kalsaria, that prevented Gujarat’s home-grown corporate giant Nirma from setting up shop in Saurashtra.

About the present SIR area, Mr. Kalsaria, who fought the last Assembly election as an Independent, said: “The land of this region is very fertile and in some places yields three crops a year. And then, here 50 per cent of the land will be acquired by the government without adequate compensation.”

On May 30, some 10,000 farmers converged at Gandhinagar and Ahmedabad and later held a huge public meeting at Vasna village, which

was attended by eminent Gandhian Chunibhai Vaidya, the former Gujarat Finance Minister, Sanat Mehta, and several other social activists.

What also explains the government's increasing policy slant away from the farm sector is the fact, as revealed by the latest 2011 census data, that the number of farmers during the last decade has come down by 3.55 lakh in the State. As against this, the number of farm labourers — which also includes landless labourers — has risen by 17 lakh.

According to the Census figures, therefore, there are over 54 lakh farmers in the State as against 68 lakh agricultural labourers. The numbers point to the fact that while an estimated two per cent of people sway away from agriculture in a decade, the percentage is five per cent in Gujarat.

## **The COTTON revolution**

*INITIATIVE 'Paruthi', an organic cotton brand, aims to promote rain-fed cotton grown in Madurai in the Indian fashion scenario, writes A.*

*SHRIKUMAR*

In 13 villages around Arasapatti near Tirumangalam in Madurai district, cotton is more than just a crop. It's a symbol of life and livelihood for farmers in the black-soil belt, who have silently engaged themselves in a revolution to change the environment for the better. Nearly 400 farmers in the region have adopted organic cotton farming, saying a strict no to the usage of pesticides in their fields. From here the organic cotton cultivation

extends into Mahalingam hills and the Western Ghats in Rajapalayam in Virudhunagar district and parts of Sivaganga and Ramnad districts.

“The farmers follow rain-fed cotton farming that involves multiple-cropping technique. It’s a short-staple cotton variety coming from indigenous seeds,” explains N. Muthuvelayutham, Secretary, Covenant Centre for Development (CCD) – an NGO working with cotton farmers around Madurai since 2006 to inculcate organic practices. “Organic cotton farming is labour-intensive and not lucrative. The farmers have to be encouraged to continue with the age-old techniques.”

### **Market strength**

This is where ‘Kapas’, a campaign by Upasana Design Studio at Auroville in Pondicherry helps the farmers. Started in 2007, the project promotes indigenous cotton varieties, organic farming techniques and aims to position short staple cotton as the market strength. “This will empower the fragile rain-fed cotton farmers of Tamil Nadu,” vouches Uma, the founder of Upasana. “Indian domestic market doesn’t recognize organic cotton,” she rues, “99 per cent of our cotton is genetically modified.” “Adoption of organic cotton is the answer to reduce carbon prints,” she asserts.

Uma launched ‘Paruthi’ as an organic cotton brand to promote the produce in the Indian fashion scenario. “Though organic cotton is expensive, large scale adoption of it in the prêt line will contain the synthetic cotton’s invasion of the market,” explains Uma, adding, “Long-staple cotton yarn can also be done in organic method but not many are aware of it.”

Paruthi's cotton is purchased directly from the farmers around Madurai and they are paid a premium price as an encouragement to remain organic.

Muthu says most fall prey to genetically modified BT cotton seeds in order to achieve greater yields. But that spoils the soil and the environment as it involves usage of harmful pesticides. "In organic farming, a range of cash crops, fodder and firewood crops that are natural pest-repellents are grown along with cotton. While the indigenous cotton seeds can be reused, the BT variety has to be bought afresh every sowing season."

However, organic farming can only be done in rain-fed areas and not in irrigated-farmlands and that is what dissuades a farmer from growing short-staple organic cotton. "It hardly fetches profit for the investments he makes in irrigation facilities," says Muthu.

A documentary shot by the Kapas team shows the ill effects of the pesticides and BT cotton seeds on the environment, soil and the health of farmers. Most times the pesticides fail to kill pests but the farmer ends up buying the expensive ones and lands in debts. The video also explains the causes for farmers' suicides in the black-soil region in Vidharbha, Maharashtra. "Minor changes in farming technique can increase the yield and quality of organic cotton. In line sowing method, just 10 Kg of seeds is enough to give 200 Kg of cotton per acre," says Muthu.

"The quality of cotton depends on picking. Cotton picked in jute gunny bags get spoilt as the fabric fibres get frizzed and contaminated." The CCD has formed a group 'Sevaipatti Organic Farmers Federation' and assists the farmers with clean cotton bags for picking the fibre.

Today, 400-odd farmers spin their own yarns and weave them in handlooms at G. Kallupatti, provided by an NGO – ‘Reaching the Unreached of Indian Villages’ which has been working in the sector for 36 years. “The hoarse varieties are exported to Japanese companies that make kitchen wears like aprons, hand-cloves and napkins,” says Muthu. “And the finer cotton is sent to Upasana’s Kapas project under which it is designed and developed into clothes. Paruthi positions itself as a designer label yet aims to reach the masses. Currently Paruthi cotton is being marketed through 20 retail outlets in 11 cities across the country. “We conduct events, auditions and promotions for the brand. We will soon be launching a line of organic-cotton-made clothing with medicinal properties,” informs Uma.

So, the next time you purchase a cotton garment try to get an organic piece that’ll remind you of the need to change!

*Though organic cotton is expensive, large scale adoption of it in the prêt line will contain the synthetic cotton’s invasion of the market*

**Three hectare dryland continues to generate constant income**



Different varieties: The trees provide protection to crops from strong winds, among other benefits.- Photo: Special arrangement

Planning is crucial in generating continuous income from farming.

“Right from selecting the crops to be planted to making use of rainwater effectively for irrigation every thing is crucial to help a farmer get good returns. It is the job of agriculture experts to correctly guide the farmer and ensure that there is no communication gap in the lab-to-land transfer of technologies,” says Dr. Shalander Kumar, Head, Central Arid zone Research Institute (CAZRI), Jodhpur.

## **Challenge**

“In a country where more than 80 per cent of farmers own less than a hectare of land, many areas may be unfit for cultivation, due to low soil fertility or inaccessible water source for irrigation. These pose a great challenge to us and the real success comes in effectively overcoming them with active involvement from the farmer’s side to make it remunerative,” he says.

Nearly 30 years back a small farmer in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, Mr. Nand Kishore Jaisalmeria did not even dream that he would be able to get constant revenue all through the year from his less-than-three-hectare land that was considered barren and dry.

In the early 1980’s a team of scientists from CAZRI happened to visit his land and advised him to plant ber (Gola, Seb, Umran) varieties developed by the institute along with a recommended package of practices.

Fencing of the farm was done by growing different drought tolerant tree varieties like neem. The trees not only provided protection to crops from strong winds but also helped the farmer get some income through the sale of dried twigs, wood and green fodder. The dried leaves falling on the land acted as effective cover in preventing moisture evaporation and as effective manure for the trees themselves as they decomposed.

### **Moisture conservation**

A continuous trench was dug along the live fencing to stop unwanted stray animals from entering into the farm. During rains, the trench got filled with water and served as moisture conservation for the bio fence trees grown all along the boundary. For the first 20 years the farm was totally rainfed.

Later the farmer was advised to take up integrated farming like rearing honey bees and some goats.

In the first year of planting the ber the farmer bought tanker water from the city to irrigate the crops. From the second year the orchard was able to survive. Later a bore-well was dug.

### **Nursery**

With the objective of starting a rural nursery, Mr. Jaisalmeria and few rural youths were trained on ber budding technique to increase the number of seedlings in the farm. In the initial 15 years he was able to sell lakhs of plants every year to farmers, NGOs, and Government departments from different states.



Today the major revenue for the farm comes from sale of Ber fruit, rental charges for hiring honey bee boxes to other farmers, selling the goats, dried wood and twigs as firewood. Each ber plant produces about 30-40 kg fruits per annum.

“Three varieties have been planted so as to get fruits regularly from December to March. Harvesting of Gola variety is done during mid December to sometime near mid February, Sev variety comes to harvest during third week of January and lasts till last week of February. Umran starts yielding from first week of February to mid March. I sell the fruits at the local market and am able to get an annual net income of about Rs 1,25,000 from my three hectares,” says the farmer.

### **From one hectare**

“From one hectare the farmer is able to earn Rs.41,000 a year, which is much higher when compared to traditional annual crops in the region. It is nearly 35 years since the ber orchard was created and even now it is well maintained and is a source of sustainable income,” says Dr. Shalander.

For more information interested readers can get in touch with Mr. Nand Kishore Jaisalmeria, House No. 5, Jaisalmeria ki gali, Nawchokia, Jodhpur, Phone: 0291-2622185, mobile: 07597248866 and Dr. Shalander Kumar, Head, Central Arid zone Research Institute (CAZRI), Jodhpur – 342 003, mobile: 07568326823, Phone: 0291-2786632.

## Soyabean catches fancy of tribal farmers



New hope:A tribal farmer ploughs land for sowing soyabean at Manikguda in Asifabad mandal on Wednesday— Photo: S. Harpal Singh

The craving for soyabean seed is comparatively less in the agency areas of Adilabad but the shift from cotton is perhaps higher in terms of number of farmers opting for the crop in the hilly tribal parts of the district. In some other mandals, tribal farmers are also reverting to traditional food crops at the cost of Bt cotton.

“Soyabean has now turned a more remunerative commercial crop than cotton,” says C. Narsingu, a retired Assistant Director of Agriculture, providing the main reason for heavy expansion of area under soyabean. “The crop is also suitable for increasing cropping intensity,” he adds as he talks of its benefits.

Kodapa Sone Rao, a Gond farmer from Jainoor mandal, who stood in a queue since early morning at an outlet to purchase the subsidised soybean seed says the periodicity of the crop leaves scope for cultivating bengalgram and sesame in Rabi and beyond. “Harvesting of cotton

continues well into the Rabi season while soyabean is harvested latest by December,” he explains.

The cumulative soyabean area in the tribal mandals of Indervelli, Utnoor, Jainoor, Sirpur (U) and Narnoor is likely to increase from 15,000 hectares last season to about 35,000 hectares in this instance. This is slightly higher than the estimated percentage of shift from cotton to soyabean in the plain areas in this district.

“In Kerameri, Wankidi and Asifabad a good number of farmers have reverted to traditional crops like jowar, redgram, greengram and blackgram. The areas close to the Komram Bheem project will however, be covered with soyabean,” says Vasudevana Sailesh Kumar, a seed dealer from Asifabad.

“Our lands are not suitable for soyabean cultivation,” says Madavi Jaitu, a Gond farmer from Bheemangondi hamlet of Goyagaon gram panchayat in Kerameri mandal. “At least 1,000 acres of cotton area will come under greengram and blackgram this season.”

Atram Anand Rao, another farmer from the same village, says more number of farmers would have cultivated traditional crops had the government implemented the National Food Security Mission programme effectively. It is learnt that Rs. 50 lakh of the Centrally funded programme was spent in the district but there was no increase in area under food crops.

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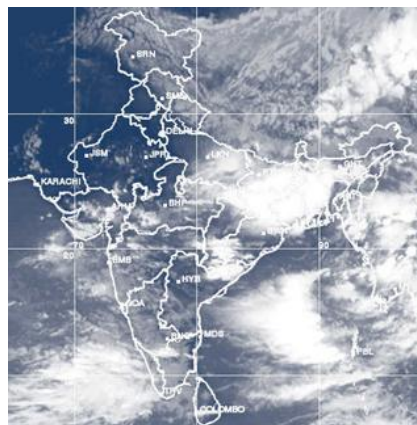
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**weather**



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on June 19th.

|                 | Max | Min | R  | TR  |
|-----------------|-----|-----|----|-----|
| New Delhi (Plm) | 32  | 25  | 0  | 154 |
| New Delhi (Sfd) | 32  | 25  | 0  | 108 |
| Chandigarh      | 33  | 26  | 0  | 185 |
| Hissar          | 35  | 25  | 0  | 101 |
| Bhuntar         | 31  | 15  | 0  | 115 |
| Shimla          | 23  | 13  | 13 | 166 |
| Jammu           | 34  | 26  | 0  | 28  |
| Srinagar        | 25  | 13  | 0  | 32  |
| Amritsar        | 37  | 24  | 0  | 131 |
| Patiala         | 39  | 27  | 0  | 117 |
| Jaipur          | 33  | 24  | 3  | 85  |
| Udaipur         | 28  | 21  | 30 | 84  |
| Allahabad       | 36  | 26  | 15 | 66  |
| Lucknow         | 30  | 23  | tr | 164 |
| Varanasi        | 33  | 26  | 14 | 46  |
| Dehradun        | 29  | 22  | 0  | 635 |
| Agartala        | 37  | 28  | 0  | 91  |
| Ahmedabad       | 33  | 26  | 0  | 103 |
| Bangalore       | 28  | 20  | 0  | 123 |
| Bhubaneshwar    | 37  | 25  | 0  | 105 |
| Bhopal          | 30  | 23  | 4  | 144 |
| Chennai         | 38  | 29  | 0  | 123 |
| Guwahati        | 35  | 25  | 0  | 69  |

|                    |    |    |    |     |
|--------------------|----|----|----|-----|
| Hyderabad          | 33 | 24 | 0  | 153 |
| Kolkata            | 35 | 28 | 2  | 144 |
| Mumbai             | 28 | 25 | 24 | 812 |
| Nagpur             | 33 | 25 | 0  | 171 |
| Patna              | 32 | 27 | 0  | 42  |
| Pune               | 27 | 21 | 18 | 226 |
| Thiruvananthapuram | 28 | 23 | 2  | 257 |
| Imphal             | 33 | 22 | 0  | 29  |
| Shillong           | 27 | 18 | 17 | 143 |

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

Southwest Monsoon has been Vigorous in east Uttar Pradesh. The axis of Monsoon trough on SLC passes through Bikaner, Sikar, Gwalior and Allahabad and thence east wards.

**RAINFALL:** Rain/thundershowers have occurred at many places over east Uttar Pradesh, at a few places over east Rajasthan and at isolated places over Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, west Rajasthan and Uttarakhand.

Weather was mainly over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: HARYANA: Naraingarh 1, HIMACHAL PRADESH: Shimla 1, EAST RAJASTHAN: (5 cm and above) Mangrol 17, Chhotisadri 9, Jagpura 7, Banswara, Ghatol, Nimbahera and Abu Road 6 each and Vijaynagar, Bhungra and Kesarpura 5 each, EAST UTTAR PRADESH: (5 cm and above) Fatehpur 29, Dhaurahara, Pratapgarh and Dalmau 11 each, Salon,

Musafirkhana, Balrampur and Sultanpur 8 each, Maharajganj, Palliakalan and Fursatganj 6 each and Kunda, Kakrahi, Birdghat and Bansi 5 each,  
WEST UTTAR PRADESH: (5 cm and above) Mohaba 6 and  
UTTARAKHAND: Joshimath and Rudraprayag 1 each.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 21st June**

**2013:** Rain/thundershowers may occur at isolated places over Uttarakhand. Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places over east Uttar Pradesh and decrease thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Uttarakhand, west Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana. Weather would be mainly dry over rest of the region.

**FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 21st June 2013:** Partly cloudy sky





# THE TIMES OF INDIA

Farmers refuse to give land for power transmission towers  
State-run transmission utilityMahatransco has landed in trouble with farmers in the district refusing to part with their land for laying transmission towers. Transco wants to lay a 220 KV transmission line from Koradi toKhaparkheda and Butibori.

The company had served notices to farmers through whose land the towers were to be erected. Transco offered to pay them a meagre compensation, but they refused the offer. The company then filed a case with the district collector under section 16(1) of the Telegraph Act, to enforce their right of way for the transmission lines.

The farmers, however, made it clear to the collector on June 13 that they would bitterly oppose any forcible acquisition of their land without compensation. Realizing the gravity of the situation, the district collector directed Transco to meet the affected farmers and discuss three issues: compensation for erecting a tower, possibility of shifting the towers to boundary of the farms and feasibility of laying transmission line on government and barren land to the maximum extent possible.

Vidarbha Environmental Action Group (VEAG) took up the case of the farmers at a meeting held on Tuesday. Sudhir Paliwal of VEAG told TOI that the basic demand of farmers was that Transco should acquire land at market price since most of the towers are in metro region, where price of

land is over Rs 1 crore per acre. "The price of land reduces sharply if a transmission line passes through the land," he pointed out.

Paliwal said that farmers at the meeting were informed that compensation can be given as per government of Maharashtra's GR of 2010. "However, they rejected these rates as they are meagre and were applicable only to transmission line foundations, and not the entire land affected by the lines. The government just refuses to accept that agricultural productivity is affected if high voltage transmission lines are laid across the field," he said.

Paliwal also said that farmers were angry that Transco did not give any firm assurance that towers will be shifted to barren land or to the boundary of the farms. "We were not told about any firm plan to reroute the lines. Many farmers complained that Transco contractors did not bother to lay lines as per the survey. Rather, they wanted to erect towers at convenient locations which may not be part of the approved plan," he told TOI.

Nagpur gets insurance scheme for orange, mousambi Finally, the efforts of orange growers from Vidarbha region towards getting insurance for their two major fruit crops, orange and mousambi (sweet orange), have borne fruit. Though a 'weather based' insurance scheme was available in western Maharashtra since 2011, the state government was extending this to other parts of the state in phases. Last year, only orange crop had been brought under insurance for Nagpur district very late in the season, benefiting very few farmers and leaving mousambi growers high and dry.

For mousambi, only farmers from Amravati district were covered due to

apparently lesser area under the crop in Nagpur district. However, this year, pressure from regional orange growers associations and progressive farmers has led to extension of the scheme to mousambi in Nagpur district too. The last date for applying for the insurance is Thursday, June 20.

Joint director of agriculture (JDA), Nagpur division, Vijay Dhawate told TOI that the 2013 scheme covers only the mrig bahar orange and mousambi. For orange, the scheme is applicable to 12 talukas; Nagpur, Kamptee, Hingna, Ramtek, Parseoni, Katol, Narkhed and Saoner, while for mousambi the scheme applies to only five talukas of Nagpur, Katol, Narkhed, Saoner and Kalmeshwar. Interested farmers can avail the scheme through the district superintending agriculture officer.

Secretary of the Nagpuri Santra Utpadak Sangh in Katol, Manoj Jawanjal, says the insurance scheme is a much better and rewarding option than compensation, though it does have many riders. The farmer has to maintain detailed and correct record of change in temperature and period of less rain.

The premium amount in the insurance scheme to be implemented by Agriculture Insurance Company of India Limited, Mumbai, has been fixed at Rs 6,300 per hectare. However, farmers will have to pay only 50% premium while the remaining 50% would be paid by the government. For farmers availing agriculture loan, the scheme is mandatory while for others it is voluntary. But the farmers who have loan don't have to pay the premium. It will be deducted from their loan amount.

Progressive farmer and president of Maha-orange, Shridhar Thakre, welcomed the state government's initiative, saying that since this scheme gives farmers a maximum insurance payout of Rs 30,000 per hectare, the actual figure of benefit works out to be reasonably good, as most farmers have at least 2-3 hectares under orange or mousambi. "Best thing that happened for horticulture farmers in Vidarbha is that even mousambi has been brought in the scheme. The number of farmers taking mousambi is gradually increasing and it is a good sign," said Thakre.

Both Jawanjali and Thakre, along with former MLA Sunil Shinde were in the committee that negotiated the scheme for Nagpur district, especially bringing mousambi into the scheme in the district.

### **The fine print**

Conditions for claiming insurance include deficient rain, break in monsoon or rain, variation in temperature and relative humidity

Insurance premium is Rs 7,200 per hectare; but farmer pays only 50% premium (Rs 3,600)

Claims in first phase (June 21 to July 20): Farmer would get 75% compensation of Rs 22,500 for less rain (125 to 150mm). For less than 125mm rain in this period, the compensation is 100%, which will be Rs 30,000

Claims in second phase (July 21 to August 21): Farmer would get Rs 15,000 if there is break in rain for 14-15 days. For a break of 16-17 days, this amount will be Rs 25,000. For breaks of over 18 days, payout will be Rs 30,000

Farmers can get the benefit in only one of the two phases

Vidarbha has had three times the normal rains so far. Despite its quiet entry this year, monsoon may have had its best start in a decade. At least, so far. While the country as a whole has had 58% excess rainfall for this time of the year, Vidarbha's excess stood at a whopping 219% with the region having received 228.7 mm rains against normal of 71.6 by Wednesday. Rains that eluded the city for a couple of days at the start of monsoon will remain away for a few more days, say the weathermen.

Washim district has been the wettest so far with 273.5% more rains than normal. Even Gondia, which is at the bottom, has received 67% more than normal rainfall. Nagpur district has received 125% surplus. The city recorded 189.9 mm rainfall till Wednesday and it could well have the wettest June in around a decade this year. All this rain was received in a matter of four days from Friday to Monday.

An official of the regional met department said, "The system that developed in the past couple of days means that there would be no rains for the next few days. Showers will be received in the city only around June 24 or 25." Over the last two days, it has rained only in Akola, Chandrapur, Washim

and Buldhana with the other places remaining dry.

Though June 10 is earmarked by the weathermen as the day monsoon hits the city, the south-west monsoon winds have not kept their date with the city in a couple of decades. They did so this year, however, exactly on the designated day, albeit without any showers announcing their arrival. During the last decade, the latest that the season arrived in the city was on June 26 in 2009. Between 2005 and 2007, monsoon arrived on June 25. The last time it reached the city bang on time was in 2002. Incidentally, that is the year which saw the most amount of rains at 342.7mm in June while the lowest has been 2006's 100.6mm.

Last year, not only did the rains arrive late but also the June rainfall stood at 126.2 mm, even as the mean total rainfall for the month is 165.9 mm. The case has been the same since 2009 with the rainfall for the consecutive years in month of June thinning out gradually. The rainfall this year has already surpassed the entire month's worth of showers for the past few years, with ten more days for the month to end.

### **Rainfall in Nagpur**

Year - Rainfall (in mm)

2002 - 342.7

2003 - 275.1

2004 - 135.1

2005 - 231.0

2006 - 100.6

2007 - 226.4

2008 - 205.4

2009 - 158.8

2010 - 134.7

2011 - 139.5

2012 - 126.2

### **Extremes for June in Nagpur**

Highest maximum temperature: 47.7°C on June 4, 2003

Lowest minimum temperature: 20.0°C on June 18, 1919

Highest monthly rainfall: 500.6 mms in 1881

## **Heaviest rainfall in 24 hours: 315.0 mms on June 12, 1911**

For rain-dependent farmers of Vidarbha, it is imperative that monsoon keeps its date for the kharif crop season to begin on a cheerful note. This year, not only have the rains arrived around the appointed date of June first week, but they have been widespread, unlike last year, when Buldhana district was left high and dry.

With good rains all over the region, sowing operations have taken off. While official sources indicated that 30% sowing has been completed in six districts of Nagpur division, the progress has been less in western Vidarbha's Amravati division, where less than 10% was covered in first week.

"In several areas of Amravati division, rainfall has been continuous and excessive, not even allowing time for sowing operations. But in last couple of days there has been respite with dry days, which are required for sowing work," explained Ashok Lokhande, joint divisional director of agriculture of Amravati division.

According to Lokhande, heavy rains have damaged land at several places and for the last few days his department was busy in carrying out damage assessment. "In the first week, sowing could be done only in 5% of the cultivable area. But this week it could have picked up well because of dry days," he said.



Nagpur division's joint director of agriculture Vijay Ghawate said paddy nurseries have been prepared, and with good rains, saplings could be transplanted three weeks later. Cotton sowing has also begun, and soyabean, with its shorter crop cycle, would be taken up now.

In Amravati division, where there is large scale shift from cotton to soya this year, there are reports of shortage and blackmarketing of soya seeds. According to Vidarbha Jan Andolan Samiti president Kishore Tiwari, a packet of soya seeds with MRP of Rs 1,750 is being sold at a premium of Rs 100 or more. "The state government has done little to provide quality seeds in time. In stark contrast, in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, the government is supplying soya seeds at subsidized rate of Rs 950 a packet," said Tiwari.

"Some days ago, farmers from Yavatmal district crossed over the border to get the subsidized seeds, but saw that the AP government has posted police at the border check posts to stop seed smuggling," said Tiwari.

Meanwhile, widespread rains have started adding to water stocks in main dams of the state. According to official figures, the water level, which had gone down to 14% in June first week, went up by 3% as on June 17. In 2,475 reservoirs of all irrigation dams in the state, water storage of 6,272 million cubic metre was recorded on June 17 as against 5,307 MCM a week earlier. Uttarakhnad floods may increase vegetable prices. The prices of vegetables and fruits are likely to go up in Delhi as supplies from

Uttarakhand and neighbouring areas have been affected due to the recent floods. The Yamuna flood plain — a major source of vegetables and fruits in the capital — has been washed away completely.

"We get 7-8 tempos of watermelons, cauliflower, spinach and bottle gourds from farmers in the Yamuna belt daily. However, there has been little or no supply over the last two days," said Surinder Kohli, the president of vegetable traders association at the Chaudhary Hira Singh Fruit and Vegetable Market, commonly known as Azadpur Mandi. He also added that the bulk of supplies come from states like Uttar Pradesh and Haryana which have not been affected by the floods.

On Wednesday, the price of tomato ranged between Rs 14-Rs 15 per kg, beans Rs 20-22 per kg, lady's finger Rs 15-20 per kg, and cauliflower Rs 15-16 per kg at Azadpur Mandi. But at the retail level, the prices were more than double of wholesale prices. "The prices have increased due to lack of supply from Uttarakhand. It will increase further in the coming days," said a vegetable seller at Kailash Colony market.

But Joginder Singh, secretary of the Fruit Merchant's Association at Azadpur Mandi said, "In truth, the prices of fruits and vegetables should not increase significantly so soon. While the supply from Uttarakhand remains limited, other supplying states like Haryana and UP have not been affected as badly. Onions come from Maharashtra mainly," he said.

The buyers, on the other hand, feel helpless. "In the last 3 days, vegetable

prices have increased four-fold. It can go up further unless the government intervenes," said Shanti Sheokand, a resident of Vasant Vihar.

Govt gets notice over drought relief to farmers The Gujarat Human Rights Commission has issued a notice to the state relief commissioner after a petition demanded transparency regarding action taken by the state to compensate farmers in villages affected by natural calamities like drought and flooding.

The Navsarjan Trust listed 13 issues on its petition, including the demand that the state government declare the number of farmer suicides that were registered with various police stations in the state in the year 2012-13 due to crop failure and financial distress because of the drought conditions. The petition also demanded details on the compensation given to such families who were drought affected.

The petition claimed that the state government should make public the contingency plan, the compensation for bovine animal deaths, fodder compensation, and the number of water tankers supplied to villages to ensure clean drinking water to families.

The petition also stipulated that details of the special compensation packages for farmers be declared. The petitioners inquired whether special administrative cells had been made to ensure that benefits also reached scheduled caste and tribe farmers. "The flood contingency plan should be a transparent process as people have the right to know whether benefits are reaching farmers at the earliest during natural calamities. In the petition we

have asked for details of compensation given to farmers who committed suicide during these distress months," says Kirit Rathod of Navsarjan

### **Five lakh nochi saplings to be planted by Chennai Corporation**

The Chennai Corporation will soon plant five lakh saplings that are believed to keep away mosquitoes.

While presenting the corporation budget in March, the mayor said the civic body had decided to buy 10 lakh nochi saplings and distribute it across the 15 zones. It was decided that the plants would be bought in two phases. This batch of five lakh saplings is part of the first phase.

Three lakh saplings, which are about 3ft tall, will be planted along water bodies over the next six months. The rest will be distributed to households across the 15 zones. "Households would be identified based on the space and facilities available to nurture the saplings," said a corporation official.

The nochi plant's leaves are supposed to have medicinal properties that release more oxygen into the surrounding atmosphere, said the corporation press release. According to the siddha scriptures, the leaves also have a smell that drives away mosquitoes and flies, keeping vector control operations eco-friendly. The plant roots are known to be rich in oxygen content, which enriches the soil.

The corporation opted for an open tender to acquire nochi plants without

any pre-bid qualifications, so even small time farmers and horticulture students growing nochi plants could participate.

### **Hyderabad techies smell scent of money in sandalwood farming**

It's a new crop of farmers that's seen making an entry into AP's agro industry now.

Far removed from the traditional sickle-carrying uneducated bunch, these laptop-totting modern agriculturalists are mostly suave techies with a plush job in the hi-tech hub of Hyderabad. And what they seem to be putting their money on to further 'cultivate' their wealth is not just another seasonal vegetable or fruit, but the much profitable sandalwood.

Rough estimates suggest that well over 1,000 acres of land spread across areas such as Alair, Vikarabad and Zaheerabad, all located within 100 km from the city, have been brought under this new-age plantation activity that until a few years ago was restricted to dedicated zones within Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

The low cost of land in these pockets — industry experts claim that the prices are as low as Rs 20 lakh per acre — coupled with a recession-hit real estate market and the surge in interest among young professionals to go back to the 'fields', has given the lucrative business that extra boost.

So much so that M M Rao, after spending a good 14 years in the BPO sector, is now mulling giving up his present career and don the role of a

full-time farmer. "I have bought half acre in Alair for this purpose with an initial investment of Rs 4 lakh. The value of this property has already shot up to Rs 6 lakh and post cultivation, it is only expected to rise further," Rao said.

"Also, considering I am growing vegetables and mangoes here (sandalwood needs `host' plants) in the intervening period, I expect to earn anywhere between Rs 20,000 and Rs 25,000 annually from the sale of the fruit till the sandalwood plants are ready for yield," he added.

On an average, it takes around 15-20 years for a sandalwood tree to be rich in its oil content.

Apart from himself, the techie has also managed to persuade some of his friends to take to this 'new profession' as he is highly optimistic of impressive returns in the future.

To cash in on this swelling enthusiasm for sandalwood among novice farmers, corporate groups from the city have come up with special profit-sharing 'packages' to encourage more and more people to take to agriculture, especially organic farming.

"We work on a 50-50 revenue sharing model wherein the land owner gives us the property and we take care of everything - right from setting up infrastructure to cultivation to harvest. This spares the owner the trouble of not just the initial plantation but also securing the plot till the trees grow,"

said K Srinivas Rao, director, Village Organics Pvt Ltd, the company that presently has over 500 acres of land (for sandalwood farming) under its belt. It also has on board specialized wood and horticulture scientists to assist with the project.

"Contrary to popular conception, the Rayalaseema-Telangana region is well suited for this cultivation as they are not waterlogged areas," Rao, who is also the president of the Sandalwood Growers Association of India, said.

Among the many hi-tech Hyderabadis who have signed up with his firm is Sheik Rasheed Basha, an IT professional, working with the railways at present. "I was looking at an investment option and this sounded interesting. The real estate market is anyway down so I thought of putting my money here," Basha said. Only two months ago, he bought 1,200 sq yards (approx) in Vikarabad. "I have invested about Rs 3.5 lakh, which I am sure, will grow by at least three times soon," he added.

But while this fresh group of farmers is sure of good returns, city environmentalists do sound a word of caution. They fear that such long-term business models might fizzle out before the buyers make any money. Rise in global temperatures may impact monsoon, farm yields: Report

An expected 2°C rise in the world's average temperatures in the next decades will make India's monsoon highly unpredictable and by 2040, the country will witness a sharp reduction in crop yields due to extreme heat, a

report commissioned by the World Bank cautioned on Wednesday.

It said shifting rain patterns will leave some areas under water and others without enough water for power generation, irrigation or, in some cases, even drinking.

The report titled 'Turn Down the Heat: Climate Extremes, Regional Impacts and the Case for Resilience', examines the likely impacts of 2°C and 4°C warming on farm production, water resources, coastal ecosystems and cities across South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia.

The new report warned that by the 2040s, reduced water availability due to changes in precipitation levels and falling groundwater tables are likely to aggravate the situation in India, where groundwater resources are already at a critical level and about 15% of the country's groundwater tables are overexploited.

The report cited Kolkata and Mumbai along with Bangladesh as "potential impact hotspots" threatened by "extreme river floods, more intense tropical cyclones, rising sea levels and very high temperatures". With South Asia close to the equator, the sub-continent would see much higher rises in sea levels than higher latitudes, with the Maldives confronting the biggest increases of between 100-115 cm.

"Melting glaciers and loss of snow also pose a significant risk to stable and reliable water resources. Major rivers such as the Ganges, Indus and



Brahmaputra depend significantly on snow and glacial melt water, which makes them susceptible to climate change-induced glacier melt and reductions in snowfall," the report said. It projected a rapid increase in the frequency of low snow years in the future, well before 2°C warming takes place and said this could increase the risk of flooding, threatening agriculture.

In India, more than 60% of the crop area is rain-fed, making it highly vulnerable to climate-induced changes in precipitation patterns. It is estimated that by the 2050s, with a temperature increase of 2°C-2.5°C compared to pre-industrial levels, water for agricultural production in the river basins of the Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra will reduce further and may impact food adequacy for some 63 million people.

The report, prepared for the World Bank by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and Climate Analytics and peer reviewed by 25 scientists worldwide, said the consequences for South Asia of a warming climate were even worse if global temperatures increased by an average of 4°C by 2090.

"In this scenario, seen as likely unless action is taken now to limit carbon emissions, South Asia would suffer more extreme droughts and floods, rising sea levels, melting glaciers, and declines in food production," the report said.

"In India, for example, an extreme wet monsoon that currently has a

chance of occurring only once in 100 years is projected to occur every 10 years by the end of the century," it added.

The report also said many of the worst climate impacts could still be avoided by holding warming below 2°C, but the window for action was narrowing rapidly.

"Urgent action is needed to build resilience through climate-smart agriculture, flood defences, drought and heat resistant crops, improved groundwater management, better coastal infrastructure, and human health," the report said.

### **Monsoon pushes up vegetable prices by 80%**

The arrival of monsoon in the region may have given relief to Aurangabad citizens reeling under water scarcity, but it has negatively affected the arrival of vegetables in the Jadhavwadi wholesale market. Usuf Choudhary, president of Marathwada Fruit and Vegetable Association, said that the huge gap between demand and supply has pushed up prices. He said that most of the vegetables have registered a hike of 50 to 80% in the last 10 to 15 days.

"The quantity of green vegetables arriving in the city has almost come down to about one-third of the normal rate," he said on Tuesday.

Choudhary said that against the average demand of 200 quintal of ladies finger, only 50 quintal crop arrived in the wholesale market on Tuesday.

"The average requirement of cluster beans is around 100 quintal, but only

50-60 quintal crop arrived. Other green vegetables too are falling short of actual requirement," he said.

However, Choudhary said that the prices would settle down in the next 30 to 40 days with the arrival of new crop from nearby places. At present vegetables from places like Nashik, Pune, Hyderabad, Indore and Nagpur are arriving in Aurangabad, triggering a price rise.

N A Adhane, secretary of Aurangabad Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee, also confirmed that only one-third of the total requirement of green vegetable was arriving in the wholesale market. "More buyers and less availability are inflating the prices. On Tuesday, about 100 quintal tomato was brought in, where the requirement stood at more than 300 quintal," he explained.

A wholesale vegetable dealer in the market, Bhabubahi Khan, said, "There is fierce competition in the market and hence the prices are hitting a new high everyday. Vegetables are sold the moment they are brought in. The wholesale selling is over by 8 am, where as earlier it used to continue till 10 am."

Meanwhile Shivaji Adhav, a local retail vegetable vender in Gulmandi Sabji Market, said he was selling ladies fingers at Rs 60 per kg against Rs 40 per kg fifteen days back. "Capsicum was available at Rs 35 per kg but today it has gone up to Rs 80 per kg; brinjal jumped from Rs 30 per kg to Rs 50 per kg; cabbage jumped from Rs 15 per kg to Rs 25 per kg in the last fifteen

days; cauliflower climbed from Rs 40 per kg to Rs 80 per kg; green chilli went from Rs 40 per kg to Rs 60 per kg and pumpkin climbed from Rs 20 per kg to Rs 30 per kg," he said.

Similarly, greens such as coriander, spinach and fenugreek which is sold in bunches have also witnessed a steep price rise. Prices of these green vegetables have increased by 70 to 80%. Onion prices have also gone up from Rs 15 per kg to Rs 20 per kg.

### **Rains spur vendors to jack up veggie prices**

Seeing red over the greens? Blame the monsoon. That's what vendors at the bustling Sector 26 vegetable market, popularly known as sabzi mandi, are doing, but gleefully. Holding the recent rains responsible for ruining their stock, they have hiked the price of vegetables by almost 100% to 200%, leaving customers sulking and seething.

Since the last three days, veggies are almost costing a fortune. Sample this: Lady finger and capsicum are being sold for Rs 40 per kg from Rs 20 per kg. Price of pumpkin has shot up from Rs 5 per kg to Rs 15 per kg, while beans are costing Rs 50 per kg from the earlier Rs 30 per kg.

But why such massive hike? "The sabzi mandi was full of water and we could not sell our vegetables. I had to suffer a great loss and now to make up for it, the prices have gone up," says Moti Ram, a vendor. Another explains the pitfalls of his trade. "I am not able to sell pumpkin after the rainfall as it has become stale and turned black in colour. We can't buy

more vegetables until the previous stock has been sold," says Raju Kumar, another vendor.

But people are far from impressed with these explanations. In fact, a few have even cut down on their veggie intake to save money. Kiran Bharti, a customer, says, "It is becoming difficult to buy a sufficient number of vegetables at such high prices. Therefore, we have switched to cereals for the time being."

### **'Bonus' lures away farmers from wheat purchase centres**

Despite a bumper harvest, wheat purchase drive is yet to gain momentum in Kanpur Dehat. The district is one of the major wheat producers in the state. Usually farmers start arriving at wheat purchase centres in the last week of March or first week of April. The centres became operation on April 1 and would function till June 30. However, so far the centres in Dehat have purchased merely 5% of the fixed wheat purchase target.

Activities at these centres have been a dull affair so far, said one of the officer. "Only 2,681 MT of wheat has arrived at nearly 70 wheat purchase centres of the district. It is quite low in comparison to last year's figure. Last year, we had procured nearly 19410 MT of wheat by this time," said district wheat procurement officer Ghanshyam.

"The government has set a target of 52,000 MT of wheat purchase in the ongoing season. However, the target is still far off. The state government has fixed Rs 1,350 per quintal as minimum support price. Last year it was

Rs 1,280," he added.

A senior officer, on condition of anonymity, said that government had failed to woo farmers of the region. As a result, farmers are selling their produce in open market. Many have sold their produce in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan for better rates, he added.

His fear is not unfounded as Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan have announced a bonus of Rs 150 per quintal on wheat procurement for 2013-14 to woo farmers. The bonus is over and above the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of Rs 1,350. Thus a farmer selling his produce in the two neighbouring states is receiving Rs 1,500 for every quintal of wheat.

Besides, the authorities have also failed to curb distress sale by farmers. Owing to poor arrangements and cumbersome procedure of selling produce at wheat purchase centres, most farmers sell wheat to middlemen at a rate lower than the minimum support price (MSP).

"Although the government has sanctioned funds for smooth procurement, district authorities have failed to make proper arrangements. For the last one week, I have been running to get my payment," said a farmer Sukh Sagar.

Farmers skipping the purchase centres would have a negative impact on the supply of wheat in the Public Distribution System.

Sources said that the Food Corporation of India has already placed orders with other states. Nearly three lakh MT wheat would be sent to the state every month to meet the requirement of PDS.

FCI purchases wheat from the state government, which is then redistributed for various PDS schemes in the state. This wheat is supplied at Rs 2 per kg to Antyodaya card holders, Rs 4.65 per kg to BPL card holders and Rs 6.60 per kg to APL card holders. The annual requirement of wheat for PDS is nearly 48 lakh MT in the state.

### **Sugarcane production may decline by 20%**

Sugarcane production is going to decline this year as the state will produce 20% less sugarcane compared to last crop year. In the last crop year, Karnataka had produced 3.20 crore tons of sugarcane, and it is expected to touch 2.6 crore tons this year.

According to State Sugarcane Growers' Association, farmers are abandoning sugarcane cultivation due to increased cost of cultivation and decrease in profits. Experts contend that the shortfall is due to severe dry conditions last year, and the same is said to have taken a toll on the current year crop.

In the recent years, Mandya district is losing its sobriquet -- 'the sugar bowl of Karnataka' - to Belgaum, which is overtaking it in sugarcane and sugar production. Mandya has only five sugar factories now, while Belgaum has 20 of them. It is followed by Bagalkot district, with nine factories.

Karnataka is home to 58 factories. According to sources, the state will lose revenue of over Rs 5,000 crore, which comes to it from products sugar, molasses and spirit produced by these factories.

Association president Kurbur Shantakumar said the decline in sugarcane production is due to various factors. According to him, sugarcane is no more a profitable crop with increased inputs, and a drop in rainfall. Above all, the government's failure to address the problems of cane growers, he adds.

"The government and sugar factories owe hundreds of crores. Farmers hardly get Rs 1,800-2,000 per ton for their harvest, that too after months and years of supplying the same," he said, disclosing how majority of the sugar factories, owned by politicians, have failed to pay the farmers.

But experts in the field say that sugarcane is still a highly profitable crop. According to them, decline in its production is due to drought, and farmers' failure to follow correct practises of cultivation. "Sugarcane needs at least 12-15 months to mature and hold more sugar. But some farmers harvest the immature crop - that is after 7-8 months - which yields less sugar," says R B Kendagavi, sugarcane scientist at Visvesvaraya Farm in Mandya. "The profits have nothing to do with the decline in sugarcane production. Sugarcane is indeed a profitable crop," he added.



## **Mahuva farmer stuns all with mangoes weighing 3 kg**

With the thumping start of monsoon, mangoes have started gradually disappearing from the market. But towards the fag end of the season, a farmer of Mahuvataluka in Surat has come up with a mango as big as a watermelon. A tribal farmer Champak Patel is the proud owner of a mango tree which has produced 15 mangoes weighing more than 3kg.

The biggest mango is 3.7kg in weight, 12-inch-long and 7-inch-thick. It has become the centre of attraction for villagers in Mahuva taluka. Patel has surprised many in the region by developing the huge mango as the normal mangoes weigh just 250 gram to 300 gram.

Patel, a resident of Bilakhadi village, owns a farm of 40 mango trees. "I thought of carrying out an experiment in mango farming and planted kanariyo species on a tree of desi mango. It developed gradually and these are the first fruits on the tree," he said.

Just one mango is enough to satiate the hunger of his entire family. However, horticulture experts have advised not to develop trees with big fruit since they have no commercial value.

"It is indeed a huge fruit that can be used for personal consumption, but it has no value in the market. Growing such a huge mango is not common. However, there are a few south Indian varieties in which mangoes weigh up to 2kg," president of Gujarat Bagayat Vikas Parishad in Anand and former head of department of horticulture at Anand Agricultural University K

P Kikani said.

"The commercial value of big fruits is not much. Out of a 10kg consignment if one fruit is rotten, it is a major loss for both the farmer and the trader," Kikani added.

"It is a unique thing and I went all the way to Bilkhadi to witness the mango. It is a huge fruit and I have never seen such a big mango," a resident of Mahuva Tushar Chaudhary said.

Field trials cleared for genetically modified rice, wheat, maize, castor and cotton

### **It's the future of food**

The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee, under the environment ministry, has given clearances to a few companies and research institutes to conduct field trials for genetically modified rice, wheat, maize, castor and cotton. This is a welcome development after a dreary period during which the ministry announced a moratorium on the commercial release of Bt brinjal after it had been cleared via extensive evaluations by around 200 scientists and experts from over 15 public and private sector institutions. Note that the latest move doesn't open Indian doors to GM crops indiscriminately, but only recognises that our stagnating agriculture sector cannot afford to shut out the most promising scientific opportunities of today.

Unfortunately the matter has become quite politicised, with opposing parties calling GM crops the latest version of the way East India Company colonised India, and demanding low-cost, toxin-free ecological farming practices as an alternative. Such Rousseau-esque demands can be quite dangerous. Under their spell, India's first Green Revolution would never have taken off, because it was accompanied by problems like groundwater exhaustion and pesticide abuse. All technologies need proper monitoring and regulation. This cannot be a pretext for stalling the road to the future. GM technology has already transformed India into the world's second-largest producer of cotton, via pest-resistant modifications. It hasn't been able to substitute for water availability, topsoil quality, etc. Yet. But tolerance to drought and salt are being promised by future species.

Developing countries are now growing more hectares of GM crops than rich countries, where early adopters like the US have been consuming them for over a decade without turning into Frankensteins. Conservative blocks like the EU have also begun to relax their disapproval under pressure from supply shortages and increased prices. It makes no sense for India to forfeit the gains that the whole world is chasing.

## **COUNTERVIEW**

**Don't give in to Frankenfood**

**Murali Ramachandran**

The clearance given by the environment ministry for field trials of

genetically modified rice, wheat, maize and castor oil is flawed and needs to be revoked. This is because a case challenging the suitability of the existing regulatory mechanism for GM crops is under the consideration of the Supreme Court. In fact, a technical committee constituted by the court has recommended a 10-year moratorium on all trials of food crops used for human consumption.

There are serious apprehensions about the current regulatory framework for an unproven and potentially harmful technology such as GM crops. A major grouse is that in the current set-up, the promoter (director of biotechnology) has a major say and is bound to pitch in favour of GM crops. Questions have been raised about many current practices including efficiency of outsourcing or subcontracting of field trials and the conflict of interest of researchers. And the states, which have major reservations on large-scale introduction of GM crops, have so far only permitted field trials of transgenic cotton, corn and mustard from the 20 crops approved for trials by the government.

A major scientific worry is the impact of GM crops on biodiversity. Release of transgenic varieties leads to monoculture and elimination of traditional varieties. The claim that biodiversity can be protected by setting up gene banks is a proposition that is yet to be tested. Moreover, the current institutional framework has no mechanisms to ensure that GM promoters compensate for any loss to farmers or to the environment. So large-scale adoption of GM crops, whose safety and sustainability remain unproven, is

a major risk that a poor country like India cannot afford. The sudden decline of the initial euphoria over Bt cotton is a warning that should not be ignored.

## PMC on green citizen search for tree-mapping project

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As per the directions of the High Court, the city's civic body has now sought public participation for its ambitious tree-mapping project, a first-of-its-kind in the country, that would not only include a tree census, but would also geo-tag each tree to provide information on its location, size and species along with a photograph of the tree.

"We have designed an easy-to-use application that would be made available to PMC for free," said Jitendra Shah, who has been appointed by the court to oversee the setup and implementation of the pilot tree census through public participation.

The only thing required to make the project successful is to be able to get the Geographic Information System (GIS) basemap and data about the property ownership, he said. "The project will not move forward without the availability of technical inputs."

This census will be GIS-based and each tree will be geo-tagged with all relevant information, Shah said. This census, if successful through community participation, will pave way for a similar census across India, he added.

PMC Garden Superintendent Ashok Ghorpade said the demand has been submitted to the city engineering department, but is yet to get any response. "We are pursuing it further as the GIS base map of city is

necessary for electronic tree mapping," he said, adding the PMC has made an appeal to citizens for their participation in the project.

To start with, PMC, in association with Bluewiss, has taken up a pilot project for Viman Nagar. "In 2010, Bluewiss had mapped the bio-diversity of Viman Nagar and presented this data to the citizens of Viman Nagar during its annual Sundara Vasundhara festival. Thus, the exercise would be very useful for the pilot project," said Niranjana Upasani of Bluewiss.

He said PMC has been directed by the High Court to conduct a pilot tree census through community participation.

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# hindustantimes

## Weather

Chennai - INDIA

### Today's Weather



Sunny

Thursday, Jun 20

Max Min

37° | 29°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:43

Humidity: 52

Sunset: 06:37

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1004

### Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Friday, Jun 21

Max Min

37° | 27°

### Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Jun 22

Jun 23

Jun 24

Jun 25

Jun 26



37° | 27°

Cloudy



37° | 28°

Overcast



36° | 28°

Overcast



35° | 28°

Overcast



36° | 27°

Overcast

### Airport Weather

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:23

Humidity: 59

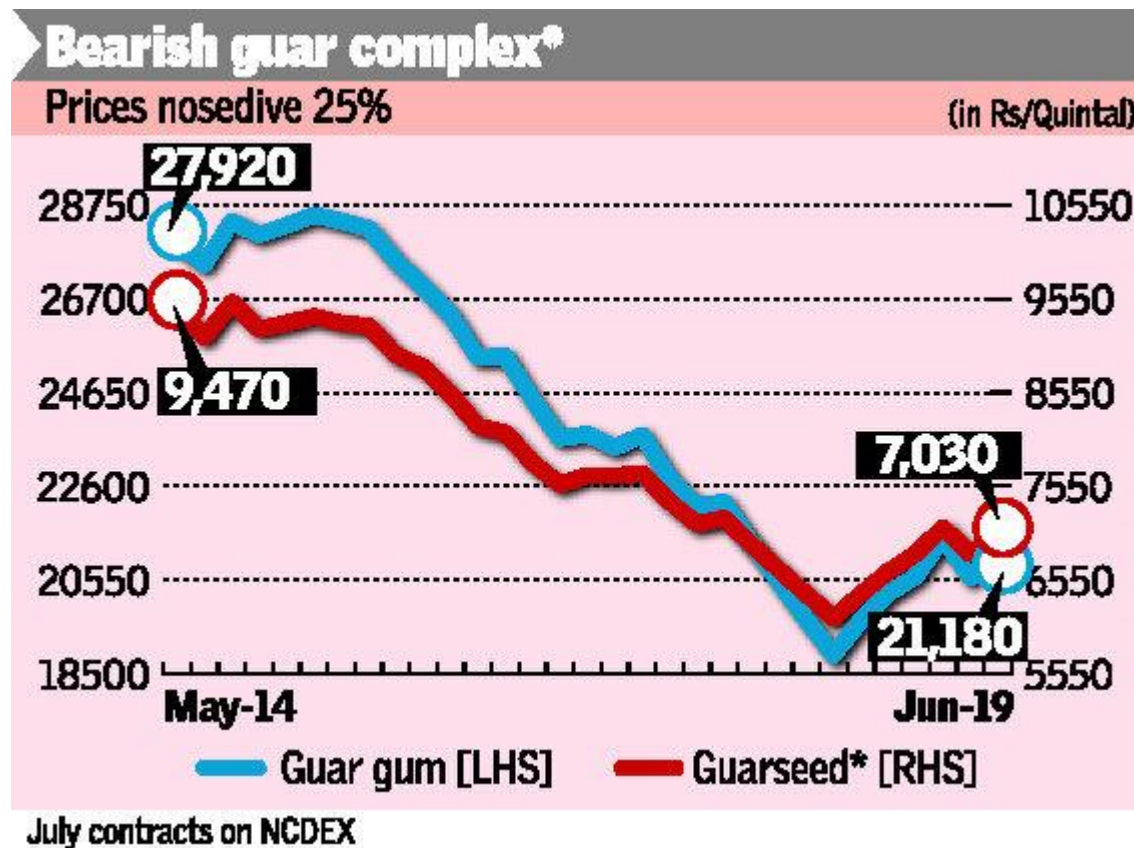
Sunset: 07:21

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1002



Guar seed, gum may slip further on higher acreage



Prices of guarseed and guar gum that have plunged by over 25 per cent since the start of futures trading on May 14 are likely to drop further.

The rates are seen slipping more due to higher acreage under guar this year and resistance from overseas buyers who feel guar gum is priced too high.

“The downtrend in prices is likely to continue and we can expect the prices of guarseed to dip to Rs 4,800 a quintal or below in the coming months,” said Hanish Kumar Sinha, Head - Trade and Commodity Intelligence Group, National Collateral Management Services Limited.

When futures trading began in guarseed and guar gum, they were quoted at Rs 9,470 and Rs 27,920 a quintal, respectively on May 14. On Wednesday, guarseed ended at Rs 7,030 and guar gum at Rs 20,860.

In the spot market, guarseed has dropped from Rs 9,200 to Rs 7,462.50 a quintal at Jodhpur, while guar gum has dipped to Rs 21,151 from Rs 27,115.

### **acreage**

“The area under guar could go up more than 25 per cent this year since its prices are better than other crops,” said Purushottam Hissaria, President, Guar Gum Manufacturers Association.

According to Sinha, the acreage could rise to 33.48 lakh hectares this year as farmers across the country are showing interest in growing guar.

“Farmers in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, in good numbers, have taken up guar cultivation,” he said.

Hissaria said that even in Tamil Nadu, farmers were showing interest.

“Besides, more area will come under guar in traditional growing regions of Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat,” he said.

“Since the last couple of years, farmers have reaped fortunes in guar production and this time they have prepared well in advance,” said Sinha.

Guar or cluster beans, a leguminous crop, is primarily grown in Rajasthan, besides Haryana, Punjab, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. Rajasthan accounts for over 70 per cent of the total crop in the country. Guarseed is a raw material for producing guar gum. Guar gum is used as a thickening agent and additive in food products such as instant soups, sauces, processed meat products, baked goods, milk and cheese products, yoghurt and ice-creams. It has industrial applications in the paper and textile sectors, ore flotation, explosives manufacture and fracturing of oil and gas formations.

Currently, guar gum is in great demand for fracking of shale gas, particularly in the US that accounts for 25 per cent of the world trade.

India is the major producer of guarseed and gum, accounting for 80-85 per cent of the total global supply.

### **Export prospects**

According to Angel Commodities, the US holds huge inventory of guar gum that could affect shipments from India. On the other hand, guar gum export slipped last fiscal to a little under five lakh tonnes against 7.07 lakh tonnes the previous year.

“More than the inventories, there is resistance from buyers abroad at current prices,” said Hissaria. “The volatility in the commodity is also hurting exports,” he said.

Sinha said that the recent surge in prices of guar gum has forced major importing nations to look at new synthetic products as alternatives.

According to Nalini Rao, analyst with India Infoline, even if prices drop below Rs 5,000 a quintal, “farmers will be unwilling to sell below Rs 5,000 since their input costs have gone up. If prices go below that, it won’t stay there for long,” she said.

According to her, data on April exports of guar gum also hold the key.

Angel Commodities said that the guar complex was in the grip of bears with monsoon advancing on time and covering the entire country. “The supply side fundamentals are also strong,” it said, justifying its bearish outlook.

### **Year’s second highest offer at Coonoor tea auction**

A volume of 18.23 lakh kg would be offered at Sale No: 25 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auction to take place on Thursday and Friday, reveals our analysis of the brokers’ listings.

It is the second highest offer so far this year after 19 lakh kg offered on January 10.

It is as much as 1.56 lakh kg more than last week’s offer but about 1.80 lakh kg less than the offer this time last year.

Of the 18.23 lakh kg on offer, 12.72 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 5.51 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades. As much as 17.27 lakh kg belongs

to CTC variety and only 0.96 lakh kg, orthodox variety. In the leaf counter, only 0.44 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 12.28 lakh kg, CTC. Among the dusts, only 0.52 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 4.99 lakh kg, CTC.

Of the 18.23 lakh kg coming up for sale, fresh tea accounts for 17 lakh kg. As much as 1.23 lakh kg comprises teas which had remained unsold in previous auctions. In the Leaf auction last week, Hindustan Unilever Ltd operated on better medium varieties while Duncans Tea Ltd., was fairly active on good medium teas. Tata Global Beverages Ltd was selective.

In the Dust auction, HUL and Duncans were selective. Tata Global showed interest on good medium varieties. Indcoserve was selective. Exporters chose medium and plainer varieties. There was high demand for brighter liquoring teas from upcountry buyers.

### **Board cautions rubber growers about US law**

All exporters in the rubber industry should be careful about the anti-piracy law which has recently come up in the US, cautioned Sheela Thomas, Chairman, Rubber Board.

According to the new Unfair Competition Act (UCA) passed in the US recently, the US buyers / importers are prevented from buying any product manufactured from pirated versions of software or hardware used anywhere in its systems.

This has resulted in an obvious shift in preferences of the US buyers for buying only from the IT-compliant firms, she said.

Capturing the share of almost 11.8 per cent of the total rubber goods export from India and growing at five per cent, the US has been one of the most important traditional export markets for India.

She further told the exporters that the law requires IT compliance throughout the global value chain.

Therefore, even if the member may not be supplying directly to the US but to any other global market, the UCA still applies since these countries may be importing from India only to re-export it to the US.

Finally one may or may not be an exporter but their IT compliance will decide the stake of the final Indian exporter supplying to the US market and therefore, any loss in the business at any stage in the value chain would impact all the concerned players.

Therefore, she cautioned the exporters and traders against using any pirated versions themselves and also against procuring from any foreign/domestic market without confirming the IT compliance.

### **Spot rubber rules steady**

Spot rubber finished almost steady on Wednesday.

The market lost its direction on buyer resistance as the domestic futures failed to regain strength after Tuesday's losses on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

Sheet rubber ended flat at Rs 175.50 a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to traders and the Rubber Board.

The trend was mixed as latex continued to improve on sustained demand amidst weak supplies.

July futures dropped to Rs 172.97 (Rs 173), August to Rs 169.50 (Rs 169.87), September to Rs 166.79 (Rs 166.83), and October to Rs 164 (Rs 164.40) on the NMCE.

RSS 3 (spot) increased to Rs 164.87 (Rs 161.51) at Bangkok. June futures dropped to ¥ 231.2 (Rs 142.63) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

**Spot rubber rates Rs/kg** :RSS-4: 175.50 (175.50); RSS-5: 170.50 (170.50); Ungraded: 160.50 (160.50); ISNR 20: 162 (162); and Latex 60 per cent: 119 (117).

### **Govt delay in hiking import duty on rubber irks farmers**

More than 100 days after the Union Commerce Ministry's recommendation, the Finance Ministry is yet to issue the notification raising the import duty on natural rubber, drawing flaks from farmers' organisations.

The proposed duty hike, aimed to lift the domestic prices and thus protect the interests of farmers, was recommended by the Union Commerce Ministry just ahead of the Union Budget. Commerce Minister Anand Sharma had, at a top-level meeting of officials and UDF MPs from Kerala on February 26, decided to raise the import duty.

The meeting decided to raise the import duty on natural rubber to reach a cap of Rs 34 a kg from the current Rs 20 and communicated the decision to the Finance Ministry. The duty hike was expected to discourage tyre-makers and other rubber-goods manufacturers from importing as the international prices would not be attractive compared with the domestic prices.

Rubber Board sources told *Business Line* that the Central Government might have soft-pedalled on raising the duty because of the fact that currently the domestic prices are higher than international prices, by Rs 10-15. (While the current domestic rubber price is Rs 176/kg, for RSS-4 quality, the international price is Rs 162.)

Also, the global economy was not doing well, leading to slackening of demand and hence global price. Moreover, the value of the rupee had slipped against the dollar. Again, because of the monsoon rains in Kerala, there was domestic supply shortage, particularly of block rubber. However, farmers in Kerala who produce more than four-fifth of India's natural rubber supplies, feel let-down. T.H. Musthaffa, President of Kerala State Cooperative Rubber Marketing Federation Limited (RubberMark), at a news conference here recently alleged that the Government had backed down from the decision under pressure from the 'tyre lobby.'



## **Spot castorseed gains on export enquiries**

Export enquiries and demand for stockists drove castorseed spot prices on Wednesday. The change in trend comes after continuous downfall. The lower prices are encouraging exporters and stockists to build inventories.

However, castor futures declined as market participants booked profit.

According to market sources, the overall trend is not supportive as arrival is high and it could cap any increase in prices.

Moreover, monsoon's progress restricted the gains as it could lead to a better crop this year.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), castor July contract declined by Rs 63 to Rs 3,478 a quintal with an open interest of 1,62,730 lots.

August castor moved down by Rs 60 to Rs 3,478 with an open interest of 91,050 lots.

On the Rajkot Commodity Exchange, castor September contracts decreased Rs 56 to Rs 3,721 while spot price improved by Rs 57.50 to Rs 3,402.50 for 100 kg.

About 65,000-70,000 bags of castor arrived from Gujarat and was quoted at Rs 670-685 for 20 kg.

Around 3,200-3,300 bags arrived from Saurashtra at Rs 650-675.

Castor oil dropped by Rs 10 to Rs 705 10 kg.

A Rajkot-based castor broker said that some export inquiries has started to come and stockists demand also there in the market but overall trend is not so bullish as arrivals are high.

### **Hopes of higher oilseeds output may cool edible oils**

Barring soya refined oil which rose by Rs 3 and groundnut oil that declined by Rs 20, other edible oils ruled steady on Wednesday tracking steady Malaysian palm oil futures. Investors awaited clarity on whether the US Federal Reserve will trim its stimulus programme, after a two-day meeting.

Sources said, that due to rain and after sufficient covering in the last few days, activities remained subdued this week.

About 200-250 tonnes palmolein were trade in resale at Rs 528-530. Ruchi sold about 150-200 tonnes soyabean refined oil at Rs 677 for delivery up to July. Good progress of monsoon across the country and hope of higher oilseeds production this year have put pressure on indigenous edible oils such as groundnut, cotton and sunflower oil.

In Saurashtra, groundnut oil fell by Rs 50 for 10 kg.

Soyabean arrivals were 85,000-88,000 bags and its prices were Rs 3,950 ex-mandi and Rs 4,000 for plant delivery.

Mustard seeds arrivals were 1.50 lakh-1.55 lakh bags at Rs 3,100-3,600.

At the end of the day, Liberty quoted palmolein Rs 550, super palmolein Rs 585 and super deluxe Rs 605. Ruchi quoted palmolein Rs 550; soyabean refined oil Rs 677 for June-July and Rs 680 for August; sunflower refined oil Rs 795.

Gokul's rates for palmolein were Rs 535 for June and Rs 540 for July 1-15. In Rajkot, groundnut oil declined by Rs 70 to Rs 1,480 (Rs 1,550) for *telia* tin and by Rs 50 to Rs 950 (Rs 1,000) for loose 10 kg.

**On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange**, soyabean refined oil July futures were Rs 702 (Rs 702.95); August Rs 695.70 (Rs 695.70) and September was Rs 685.15 (Rs 685.15).

**Malaysia BMD crude palm oil** July contracts settled at MYR 2,466 (MYR 2,465); August ended at MYR 2,481 (MYR 2,473) and September at MYR 2,472 (MYR 2,468) a tonne.

**The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were:** Groundnut oil 980 (1,000), soya refined oil 675 (672), sunflower exp. ref. 735 (735), sunflower ref. 790 (795), rapeseed ref. oil 695 (695), rapeseed expeller ref. 665 (665) cottonseed ref. oil 667 (667) and palmolein 532 (532).

**Vikram Global Commodities, Chennai**, quoted Malaysian super palmolein at Rs 575 ex-Chennai for delivery in 15 days.

## Soyameal holds key to poultry feed rates

If soyameal moves up from the current levels, feed products may turn dearer in the coming days, according to trade experts.

Aditya Mishra, a commodity expert, told *Business Line*, soyameal is playing a key role at present and if it moves further up, prices of poultry feed will increase.

Heavy fluctuations in prices of key ingredients are keeping the production cost steady.

Soyameal prices have increased by Rs 1,700 a tonne over the last three weeks. While there has been too much volatility in the prices of mustard de-oiled cake that touched Rs 15,800 a quintal last week, it is now in a correction mode.

In the physical market, soyameal went up by Rs 400 to Rs 37,000 a tonne.

Bajra improved further by Rs 10 to Rs 1,520 a quintal, DCP was at 35 a kg, MBM improved by Rs 300 a quintal to 35,300 while maize recovered by Rs 330 to Rs 15,100.

Mustard de-oiled cake dropped further by Rs 400 to Rs 15,300 a tonne, DRB improved by Rs 100 to Rs 9,400 while rice bran oil ruled at Rs 49 a kg.

## **Feed products**

Pre-lay mash sold at Rs 1,020 for a 50-kg bag, while layer grower mash quoted at Rs 960.

Layer concentrate 25 per cent sold at Rs 1,445 while layer concentrate 35 per cent went for Rs 1,130.

Broiler concentrate quoted at Rs 1,980 while broiler starter mash was at Rs 1,500.

## **Poultry Products**

Meanwhile, after witnessing an uptrend last weekend, chick and broiler prices dropped while egg improved marginally, on Wednesday.

Egg improved to Rs 3.09 a piece.

Broiler dropped by Rs 10 to Rs 80 a kg, while chick went Rs 3 down from the previous levels for Rs 15.

According to the market experts, it is unlikely to see any major alteration in the poultry products market this week.

## **Poor arrivals, sales continue in turmeric**

Turmeric prices showed an improvement in the regulated market on Wednesday, though arrivals and sales continued to be slack.

“Though the Turmeric Merchants Association in Erode declared closure of the local markets for five days from Monday, the Regulated Market Committee, run by the Government, did not participate in the closure and continued its operations. But on Tuesday, only 119 bags arrived for sale.

A farmer said that the finger variety price increased by Rs 1,000 a quintal. A few farmers brought 212 bags for sale on Wednesday. Only 58 bags were sold for the increased price.

Traders said that some exporters who are in need of some quality turmeric have purchased 58 bags.

The price increased by Rs 1,180 compared with last week .

The Regulated Market Committee authorities say that are expecting more than 500 bags will arrive on Thursday when the price and sale may increase further.

At the Regulated Market Committee on Tuesday, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,899-7,364, the root variety Rs 5,399-6,090. Of the 119 bags that arrived, only 24 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee on Wednesday, the finger variety fetched Rs 6,306-7,599, the root variety Rs 4,807-5,676. Only 58 bags were sold against 212 bags that arrived.

## Tur could turn bullish; imports on cards

Sluggish trend continued in pulses and pulse seeds on poor demand and weak buying support.

Tur (Maharashtra) ruled at Rs 4,500-4,550 a quintal, while tur (Madhya Pradesh) ruled at Rs 4,000-4,100.

Notwithstanding the lower domestic crop output, tur prices have been sluggish for quiet sometime on poor demand and buying support in pulses.

However, in the coming days, tur may see bullish trend on higher imports that could be costly in view of the rupee plunging against the dollar.

Decline in demand has dragged its dal with tur dal (full) in local mandis was quoted at Rs 6,200-6,300, tur dal (sawa no.) at Rs 5,800-5,900, while tur marka ruled at Rs 7,000-7,100.

Moong and urad also ruled stable on subdued demand.

On the spot, moong (bold) ruled at Rs 4,800-5,000, while moong (medium) ruled at Rs 4,500-4,700.

Moong dal ruled stable at Rs 6,100-6,200, while moong dal (bold) ruled at Rs 6,700-6,800 and moong mongar ruled at Rs 7,000-7,100.

Similarly urad and its dal ruled steady even as demand in pulses remained slack.

Urad (bold) ruled at Rs 3,500-3,600, while urad (medium) ruled at Rs 3,000-3,200.

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

### **Sugar firm on hopes of surge in festival demand**

Sugar prices ruled steady on Wednesday as ample supply from mills continued and offtake by retailers was routine.

Barring bold variety, M-grade sold Rs 10-20 higher in spot prices, naka and mill level remained unchanged in the absence of any firm-supportive cues.

In the futures market, bearish trend continued for the second day with prices falling more than Rs 40 till noon on Wednesday.

Sources said the moral was steady on expectation of surge in demand from next month.

Festival season will start from July-August and will end in November - December.

New crushing season is four months away, hence, sentiment will remain positive in the market.

But with higher production this year and huge carryover stocks prices were under control.



Producers are still continuously selling the commodity to ease the inventory burden.

The Vashi wholesale market currently carries more than 110-115 truckloads of inventories, sources said.

Arrivals were 63-64 truck-loads (each of 100 bags) and local dispatches were about 60-61 loads.

On Tuesday, 9-10 mills offered tenders and sold about 24,000-25,000 bags to local traders at Rs 2,950-3,010 (Rs 2,950-3,010) for S-grade and Rs 3,020-3,120 (Rs 3,020-3,120) for M-grade.

**On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange**, sugar July futures extended lose further by Rs 41 to Rs 3,064 (Rs 3,105), August down by Rs 37 to Rs 3,120 (Rs 3,157) and September dropped by Rs 34 to Rs 3,165 (Rs 3,199) till noon.

**The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were:** S-grade Rs 3,080-3,141 (Rs 3,080-3,141) and M-grade Rs 3,191-3,341 (Rs 3,172-3,331).

**Naka delivery rates were:** S-grade Rs 3,020-3,080 (Rs 3,020-3,080) and M-grade Rs 3,140-3,220 (Rs 3,140-3,220).

# Business Standard

## Odisha announces packages for flood affected farmers

**Incessant rainfall in four districts is reported to have destroyed about 17,000 hectare farm land**

The state government today announced a series of packages for flood affected farmers in four districts of south Odisha, which received excess rainfall last week after the southwest monsoon arrived ahead of schedule.

Incessant rainfall in Kalahandi, Nabarangpur, Rayagda and Koraput is reported to have destroyed about 17,000 hectare (ha) farm land growing mainly paddy and corn.

The government today announced to pay an ex-gratia amount of Rs 2,000 per ha to farmers who have suffered more than 50 per cent crop loss. The minimum assistance has been fixed at Rs 2,000 per affected farmer.

Besides, agricultural input subsidy of Rs 3,000 per ha in rain-fed areas and Rs 6,000 per ha in irrigated areas will be provided. Farmers growing perennial crops such as coffee, sunflower and other plantation crops will be provided assistance of Rs 8,000 per ha.

The packages will be provided after joint verification by the officials of agriculture and revenue departments, said a release from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO).

After discussion with the collectors of the affected districts last week, the state government has formulated a package to help the farmers to rebuild their houses. The collectors have been advised to provide cloths, utensils and other necessary items to flood affected families within a week. Those, whose houses have been completely destroyed, will be provided assistance under Mo Kudia or Indira Awas Yojna, Patnaik said.

As per the latest decisions, the farmers affected in the current flood will be provided with Kharif crop loan even if they have defaulted in repayment of existing loans. The repayment schedule of kharif crop loan will be deferred by one year without any change in interest rate, the chief minister said. The state government last month had announced payment of crop loan at 2 per cent interest rate.

Patnaik has directed the state Civil Supply Corporation to take steps to buy available paddy in the market yards through a special drive with payment of minimum support price to farmers. The cooperation department has been asked to prepare threshing floors and shed in the affected areas for storage of crops. The state government has also written to the central government to relax paddy procurement quality norms. The agriculture department will provide paddy seeds free of cost to affected farmers as per the package.

## **Tenders for Rs 100 crore farmers' health insurance scheme soon**

**All health insurance providers, having approved licences of IRDA, are eligible for participating in the tender**

The state directorate for agriculture and food production, which has been appointed as the nodal agency for implementing the farmers' insurance scheme under the Biju Krushak Kalyan Yojna, will float a tender by the end of this month to select the service provider for the scheme, estimated to cost the exchequer about Rs 100 crore.

"The modalities for the tender are already ready. The department will complete preparation of the tender papers by end of this week. After getting the government approval, we will be able to float the tender by the end of June," said R S Gopalan, director with the agriculture and food production department.

All health insurance providers, having approved licences of Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA), are eligible for participating in the tender, he said. The scheme, for which the government sanctioned Rs 100 crore in a specially designed Agriculture Budget 2013-14, recently got approval of the finance department for release of the fund. The state-sponsored scheme, launched on Akshya Tiritiya day (May 14), would cover about 2.5 crore people.

The department of Agriculture and Food Production has been assigned the task to prepare the list of all eligible farmers, irrespective of their financial

status such as Below Poverty Line (BPL) or Above Poverty Line (APL).

As per the scheme, five members per family will be provided insurance cover of Rs 1 lakh. Once the tender process is completed, the farmers will be issued smart cards, which can be used at hospitals to avail health care benefits.

For the treatment of minor diseases and surgeries, the insurance benefits will be provided in line with the packages prescribed in Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY). For major surgeries, with cost estimates of more than Rs one lakh, the insurance coverage will be decided later, sources added.