


Call it yummy but not cheap, anymore

THE RISE AND FALL OF TAPIOCA



Year	Area (ha)	Production ('000 tonnes)	<i>Reduction in import duty on cassava starch may have helped depress price in 2012</i>
2006-07	87,130	2,518.99	
2007-08	83,990	2,556.46	
2008-09	87,280	2,712.11	
2009-10	74,860	2,525.38	
2010-11	72,250	2,360.08	

Wholesale and retail prices of tapioca (Rs/kg)*



February 2011	11	14
February 2012	10	13
June 2012	08	12
January 2013	12	16
February 2013	12	16
May 2013	16	22
June 2013	16	22

*Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council Keralam

Tapioca price up at Rs. 25 a kg on poor arrivals

It was probably the uber-cheap source of calories available around for humans, especially Keralites. But not anymore.

The retail price of tapioca has shot up to Rs 25 a kg in the local market after price rallied for more than a fortnight.

And the 'root' cause behind the price surge? Shrinking acreage under cassava cultivation in Kerala. Poor price for the product last year has forced farmers to give up on cassava. Market arrivals have shrunk substantially in June, this being the lean season.

Land under tapioca cultivation had taken a beating from cash crops like rubber, said S. Ramanathan, principal scientist at the Central Tuber Crops Research Institute, Sreekaryam. He said on Monday that tapioca reached its peak in the 1970s when acreage under the crop touched two lakh hectares. Since then it has been downhill for tapioca.

Numbers from the Agricultural Market Intelligence Centre of Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) showed that area under food crops had shrunk continuously between 1980-81 and 2008-09. Acreage ratio (area under a particular crop as percentage of the total cultivated area) of rice and tapioca fell from 27.79 to 8.69 and from 8.49 to 3.24 during the period for rice and tapioca respectively.

Indira Devi, senior scientist at KAU, said area under tapioca fell 40 per cent between 1995-96 and 2010-11. The absolute fall is from 1,13,600 hectares to 72,250 hectares during the period.

But the higher productivity made sure that tapioca reached Keralites' dining tables despite lost acreage. Productivity during the period rose from 22 tonnes to 32.65 tonnes a hectare, she said.

But for the farmers, it had been a raw deal all these while. Figures from Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council Kerala (VFPCCK) showed that tapioca was selling for Rs. 12 a kg in the retail market in June 2012. The wholesale price was Rs. 8 a kg in Kochi, which means farmers got nothing out of their labour.

K.P. Kuriakose, a farmer in Moovattupuzha, said the prices were so low last year that farmers stopped selling tapioca. Farm gate price of tapioca collapsed to less than Rs. 5 a kg in some areas of the State last year.

The poor prices left a bitter aftertaste that farmers in traditional tapioca growing areas gave up farming this year. Tapioca arrivals were now mostly from border areas such as Meenakshipuram, said P.S. John, professor of agronomy at KAU

However, the price rise has brought a windfall to farmers as they are getting between Rs. 14 and 16 a kg in the wholesale market. Kerala State Horticultural Products Development Corporation (Horticorp) procured tapioca for between Rs. 14 and 16 a kg on Monday from farmers in the Moovattupuzha EEC Market.

Last year's low price has been described as a cyclical phenomenon common to food commodity. But Idira Devi feels the price of tapioca may have been affected last year by a reduction in the import duty on cassava starch, which in turn may have fuelled imports and killed the hunger for

local tapioca. However, she said that there were no figures available on starch imports. Dr. Ramanathan said the lack of an industrial base was one of the reasons for the price swings. In Tamil Nadu, he said, farmers gave a twist to tapioca and made value-added products like sago from tapioca starch. Some crisp-makers have set foot in the market lately. However, the current price level will discourage industry-scale operations.

Tapioca farmers in Kerala may have to look up to farmers like K. Koyu in Palakkad, who sells tapioca only after it is boiled and dried the traditional way. He said that he gets between Rs. 32 and 38 a kg this way even when the price of raw tapioca is much lower in the local market.

The COTTON revolution

'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

Seed Farm goes organic



Clean food:Paddy cultivation completely relying on organic farming techniques, in progress on the premises of the Seed Farm at Karanthakad in Kasaragod district.

With Kasaragod having declared an organic district, the State-owned Seed Farm here has decided keep all chemical fertilizers and pesticides away from its 25-acre paddy field at Karanthakad this season.

Hybrid seeds

The Farm cultivates paddy to supply hybrid seeds to farmers. Deviating from its earlier practice, the Farm this year is to adopt organic farming techniques. It is using hybrid 'Aishwarya' seeds for cultivation using traditional organic manure like cow dung and Neem cakes that are known to give higher yield.

The paddy cultivation, which once reflected the dignity of the farming community in the State, has dwindled considerably over the years owing to poor market prices coupled with mounting cost of both labourer, which is in acute shortage, and chemical fertilizers.

However, braving all odds, the Seed Farm is going organic this year, which should inspire the micro landholders in the district blessed with natural resources in abundance

KRRS pushes for drought tax

Representatives of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha and the Hasiru Sene on Monday urged the State government to levy 'drought tax', on the lines of value added tax (VAT), so that it will benefit drought-hit farmers.

Sarvodaya party leader and MLA K.S. Puttannaiah, who participated in a pre-budget meeting chaired by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, demanded

allocation of Rs. 15,000 crore in the State Budget for tackling drought in the State.

A total of 156 taluks were declared drought-hit last year.

Speaking to presspersons, Mr. Puttanaiah, who signed a memorandum submitted to the Chief Minister, said the government should give more thrust to tackle drought in rainfed areas of the State.

He demanded a soft loan up to Rs. 10 lakh to each farmer to improve their land, distribution of foodgrains to poor migrants in cities through mobile vans and revival of Mandya and Pandavapura sugar factories.

'Put a ban'

Consortium of Indian Farmers' Association, Karnataka, chief convener Kurubur Shanthakumar, urged the government to issue an order banning acquisition of farm lands for non-agricultural purposes.

Mr. Kurubur, who is also president of the State Sugarcane Growers' Association, told presspersons that the association has urged the government to forbid the acquisition of farm lands for industries and others purposes.

Unused land

He said the government had given land to even those units which have shut down.

“In Mysore alone, about 5,000 acres of land are attached to various industries which are declared sick,” Mr. Shanthakumar said, and requested to allot it to those who are in need of it.

On the issue of crop loans, he told reporters that the quantum of loans given to farmers should be enhanced from Rs. 12,000 an acre to Rs. 20,000 for paddy and Rs. 30,000 an acres to Rs. 50,000 for sugarcane. The cost in various inputs increased manifold, he said.

Arrears

Noting sugar factories have not yet paid arrears of Rs. 1,400 crore to growers, he told the State government to set up a revolving fund of Rs. 500 crore exclusively for sugarcane growers.

No agriculture budget

Unlike his predecessors, Mr. Siddaramaiah ruled out presentation of a separate budget on agriculture.

Representatives of the Karnataka Prantha Raitha Sangha, Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha and Hasiru Sene and State Sugarcane Association, attended the meeting

MP highlights farmers' plight

M.V. Rajasekharan, MP, said the farming community was a distressed lot as the agricultural sector is facing a number of challenges. It is the responsibility of society and the governments to protect the interests of

farmers, Mr. Rajasekharan said. He was speaking at a function organised by the Karnataka Raithara Jagriti Vedike at T. Chennaiah Rangamandira here on Sunday.

Mr. Rajasekharan expressed concern over possibility of decrease in food production on account of various factors. Horticulture College Dean Nachegowda also spoke. Meritorious students were felicitated at the function. — Staff Correspondent

100 per cent subsidy for drip irrigation

A special camp to compile the data of farmers desirous of adopting drip irrigation system began at the offices of the Assistant Director of Horticulture in various parts of Ariyalur district on Monday.

According to an official release, 100 per cent subsidy would be extended to the small and marginal farmers, while 75 per cent subsidy would be provided to those owning up to 12.5 acres.

By adopting this system, it would be possible to cultivate large tracts with less water and conserve almost 75 per cent of water.

This would result in considerable profit at less expenditure.

The growth of the crops would be sturdy and healthy and they would also mature early.

Fertilizer could be applied at the root of the crops and the expense for weeding would be less.

This system would ensure substantial production and also produce of good quality.

Hence, this camp would be held at the offices of the Assistant Director Horticulture at Ariyalur, Thirumanur, T. Pazhur, Sendurai, Jayankondam and Aandimadam up to June 28 (Friday).

Those interested could register at these offices with their land documents.

Fodder scheme's green shoots give hope to farmers, milk cooperatives

Sorghum fodder to be supplied to Aavin members at half the price



Karur is the first district among the targeted delta districts to successfully harvest the green fodder.— File Photo: L. Balachandar

The State government's bid to overcome fodder shortage for livestock in the drought-hit delta districts has come to fruition with the harvest of the crop raised under the special Drought Mitigation Sorghum Cultivation Scheme in Karur district.

Karur is the first district among the targeted delta districts to successfully harvest the green fodder . The harvested fodder has been distributed at subsidised rates for the benefit of dairy farmers attached to Aavin milk cooperative societies.

The scheme is the result of the State government's serious thought on overcoming drought-induced fodder shortage. With rains failing in the past few months and Cauvery carrying practically no water for several months , dairy farmers and herd owners were feeling the pinch of fodder scarcity along with their cattle and livestock.

The price of green and dry fodder skyrocketed beyond the scope of poor farmers depriving the animals their regular food intake. So much so that many dairy farmers sold their cattle for cheap rates unable to bear the burgeoning fodder cost. It was then that the State government stepped in to stem the tide by launching the scheme to provide green fodder at subsidised rates to the farmers in delta districts. Of the estimated cultivation cost of Rs.13,600 per acre, the State provided a subsidy of Rs. 6,800 per acre to aid farmers raise quality sorghum fodder. About 700 acres in Karur district were planned to be covered under the scheme and a sum of Rs. 49.50 lakh was allotted for the purpose.

Sorghum seeds were procured from the National Seeds Corporation; their germination tested and were disbursed to the target farmers early in April. A team of officials led by District Collector S. Jayandhi regularly monitored the growth of the plants.

Then the fodder coordination committee, with the Collector in the chair, met to fix the price of fodder to be procured during which the farmers who raised crop urged the committee to fix the price on a par with the prevailing market rates.

Finally the committee fixed the price of green fodder at Rs. 4 per kg and that of dry fodder at Rs.20 a kg. It has been decided to distribute the procured fodder to members of the Aavin milk producer cooperative societies at a subsidised rate of Rs.2 per kg for green fodder and Rs.10 per kg for dry fodder.

“In a way the fodder scheme is to the cattle what the popular Amma restaurant scheme is to the people, making available quality food at affordable rates. Dairy farmers stand to gain immensely with the subsidised sorghum distribution scheme that helps us to retain the animals that we were planning to sell at rock bottom prices due to fodder scarcity,” observes S. Manikkam of Nachalur and a member of the cooperative milk producers’ society.

Silted channels worry farmers

Water level crosses 100-feet mark at Papanasam dam



Hurdles all the way:A clogged channel in Tirunelveli.— Photo: A. SHAIKMOHIDEEN

While farmers were joyous over the rise in the water level of the Papanasam dam, one of the three major reservoirs in the district, on Monday, they pointed out that silting of irrigation channels defeated the purpose of releasing dam water.

Water was released from the Papanasam dam into the north and south Kodaimelazhagiyan channels, Nadhiyunni, Kodagan, Kannadiyan, Nellai and Palayam channels on June 20 for paddy cultivation.

Now that the water level had in the Papanasam dam had crossed the 100-foot mark and the influx of water stood at 4,094 cusecs as on Monday, farmers were looking forward to a profitable paddy season. At the same time, farmers express concern over the sluggish pace of desilting operations in the Palayam channel which has delayed the release of water into the 43-km-long channel. “Though the (Palayam) channel originates from Pazhavor to end at Nochchikulam, the desilting has been carried out only in a few areas of Palayamkottai. It has not been done even at Melapalayam and Kurichi. Hence the officials should expedite the desilting work so that we can start the farming operations immediately,” said farmer ‘Kurichi’ R. Ganesan.

Even in places where ‘desilting’ was carried out recently, the sludge had been dumped along the side of the watercourse. It may once again fill the channel when water reaches the channel. However, PWD officials assured

the farmers that desilting operations in all irrigation channels would be completed by this weekend.

Another worry is the dry spell prevailing over the plains as 2,373 of the 2,449 systemised and rain-fed tanks in the district are still dry.

Canara Bank to disburse loans

Chairman and Managing Director of Canara Bank R. K. Dubey will disburse loans worth Rs. 127 crore to 4,300 beneficiaries here on June 25.

According to a release from the bank, it will organise an SME and retail loan expo at the Corporation Kalai Arangam. Mr. Dubey will disburse loans to weavers, farmers, entrepreneurs, self-help group members and students, apart from housing and vehicle loans. The bank will also distribute RUPAY cards, which are similar to credit cards, to 12,000 farmers. It will issue debit cards to about 3,000 students to develop banking habit among school students.

Tirupur farmers allege disparity in disbursal of drought relief

Farmers in the district have alleged disparity in the disbursal of drought relief allocated to offset the crop losses suffered in 2012-13 fiscal due to abominable hot weather conditions.

On Monday, farmers from Kuttapalayam, Palayakottai and Kandiyankoil areas met Collector G. Govindaraj and voiced their grievance that almost 1,000 farmers from the said regions have been either allocated paltry sums

as relief, which was totally disproportional to the actual acreage held by them and the crop loss suffered, or nothing.

K. Kumar (44), a farmer based in Palayakottai, told *The Hindu* that most of the farmers in his area who grew sugarcane, coconut and turmeric registered huge yield losses owing to lack of adequate water for irrigation during the last financial year.

“But the assistance released was a huge disappointment. In the case of a farmer who suffered crop loss in three acres, compensation was given for only 20 cents,” he said.

Mr. Kumar added that the affected farmers in Palayakottai and Kuttapalayam areas had taken a collective decision not to accept any amount till the discrepancies in the earmarking of relief were addressed.

Clarification

Revenue and agriculture department sources clarified to *The Hindu* though there were some disparities in the amount earmarked for disbursement, the entire figures projected as affected were not true.

“It should be noted that some farmers might have a holding of three acres, but they would have cultivated only in a portion owing to the drought last year. Hence, the entire land holding can not be termed as ‘affected’,” officials pointed out

Stop acquiring fertile land for industrial purposes: Manpade

The Karnataka Pranta Raita Sangha (KPRS) has accused the Congress government in the State of pursuing the same “pro-industries policies at the cost of farmers” as the previous BJP government, following the announcement of the third Global Investors Meet in 2014.

Speaking at the inauguration of the 10th district conference of the KPRS here on Monday, president of the KPRS Maruti Manpade, who is also State Secretariat member, Communist Party of India (Marxist), alleged that the government was acquiring fertile land and handing it over to industrialists. Decline in numbers

Mr. Manpade claimed that there had been a sharp decline in the number of farmers in the State. According to the latest Census, the farmer population had gone down by 11 per cent. If the State government continued with its present policy of acquiring farmlands for industrial purposes, landless farmers would start migrating to cities in search of employment, he said.

Mr. Manpade said that many farmers were being forced to abandon agricultural activities and look for other forms of employment. To arrest this trend, the government should change its “anti-farmer policies” and stop the acquisition of fertile land for industrial purposes. It should also increase the minimum support price (MSP) for all agricultural commodities, he said.

Import duty

The government should also impose stiff import duty on agricultural commodities, particularly pulses such as red gram, to arrest the fall in price

in the Indian market. The government should impose import duty of at least 50 per cent on red gram and announce a MSP of Rs. 6,000 a quintal of red gram.

He said that long-pending irrigation projects in the Krishna basin in the district should be completed immediately. Mr. Manpade said that the State government should supply rice at Re 1 a kg to both BPL and APL families.

Earlier, farmers, under the banner of the KPRS, took out a procession from Sardar Vallabhai Patel Chowk to the supermarket where a session was held

Land tax: hill range farmers warn of agitation

The hill ranges farmers action committee has demanded action against Revenue and Forest departments officials who have refused to allow farmers in Koorachundu and Kanthalad villages to remit their land tax.

O.D. Thomas, chairman of the action committee, told presspersons here that they would organise a series of agitations to press its demand. They would organise a convention in Koorachundu on June 29 to formally make a declaration of its decision to launch a stir. It would be followed up with a convention in Kanthalad village on July 6, dharna in front of forest department office at Peruvannamuzhy on July 8, a protest march to Koorachundu village office on July 15, a protest march to Koilandi village office on July 20, and a march to the Collectorate in Kozhikode on July 25.

On July 30, the action committee has called for a hartal in the hilly parts of the district.

Mr. Thomas alleged that the revenue department officials had insulted the entire farmer community by refusing to abide by a decision taken at a meeting held in the presence of Chief Minister Oommen Chandy on their demand.

The government order issued in the light of discussions at the meeting held on January 16, 2013, had made it clear that farmers should be allowed to remit land tax if there was proof of in favour of the farmers in land document or, title-deed or land area register. The action committee's complaint is that the officials concerned had refused to consider data recorded in land area register for accepting land tax.

Farmers sceptical of pond work under job scheme

Quality of work done under MGNREGS suspect for want of monitoring'

While there was a unanimous plea to remove silt from the water bodies, scepticism was obvious at the agriculturists' grievances day here on Friday whether the workers enrolled under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS) would be able to accomplish the task.

A number of speakers, including R. Ulaganathan, District Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam; P. Pichai Pillai of All India Farmers' Association; and Ambedkar of Pazhur panchayat union lamented that silt removal was not done for many years in the district. It was imperative to deepen them and strengthen the bunds of the tanks, they pleaded.

Besides, hyacinth that affected the smooth flow of water should be removed.

Mr. Ambedkar pointed out that Pullambadi canal alone had 24 tanks and one of these tanks had an ayacut of 6,800 acres. Once silt was removed from the water sources, they could store substantial quantum of water and irrigate thousands of acres, he added.

R. Sengamuthu, president of the District Farmers' Association wondered the MNREGS workers would be able to do such works. He alleged that most of the works entrusted to these workers had not been done properly because of poor monitoring.

Coconut farming can be lucrative'

Coconut cultivation can yield remunerative results through effective mechanisation, plant protection, and value addition, suggested a recently conducted seminar-cum-training programme on coconut cultivation and modern technologies, organised jointly under the aegis of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Sikkal, and Coconut Research Station, Veppakulam, here in Vedaranyam.

Briefly touching upon the constraints faced by Cauvery Delta farmers, Dr. K. Ramasamy, Vice-Chancellor, TNAU, Coimbatore, in his keynote address spoke of technology-based diversification of cultivation. He stressed the need for selecting exclusive high-yielding coconut varieties for tender coconut, and copra production with high oil content and value addition.

Farmers were urged to form the coconut producers' organisation with the support extended by NABARD. In a move to diversification, the VC urged farmers to venture into production of value-added products from coconut through "secondary agriculture approach"

VEGGIES' DELIGHT

Prices of vegetable prices come down in Krishna district



Pick your choice: The prices of vegetables have come down due to rain in Machilpatnam and Vijayawada.– Photo V. Raju

The prices of vegetables, that relentlessly soared up till a week ago, seem to be coming down with steady increase in arrivals of vegetables like brinjal, ladies fingers and Ivy gourd. The rythu bazaars in the district are flooded with these varieties and prices have come down by 50 per cent.

The prices of most varieties of vegetables, which were significantly very high till mid-June, have registered a fall this week across the district.

The Ivy Gourd is available at Rs. 6 a kg while Bottle Gourd is available at Rs. 4 to Rs.5. The Ladies finger costs Rs.8 and Brinjal is sold at Rs.6 to

Rs.8. The other vegetables in commoner's kitchen like potato and onions continue to be sold at Rs.17 and Rs.20 a kg respectively. tomato, which is imported from Chittoor, is still commanding a price between Rs.37 to Rs.38 a kg.

Coriander, which used to be sold at Rs.20 a bundle, is now available at Rs.12 to Rs.15. The leafy vegetables are sold at Rs.2 a piece. The prices of cluster beans have come down slightly and sold at Rs. 24 a kg. Cucumber costs Rs. 14 and there is a drop of Rs. 3 in prices of green chillies, sold at Rs. 28 a kg; cabbage is sold between Rs. 17 to Rs. 18. Beans, which were sold at Rs.100 a week ago, still eludes the commoner and is sold at Rs. 75 a kg, while carrot is being sold at Rs. 45 a kg.

The Estate Officers explain that Ladies Finger and Brinjal arrivals will go up as production increases significantly after showers. The farmers are bringing these varieties in significant quantities.

The prices of English vegetables at Rythu Bazaars in Vijayawada are slightly cheaper compared to Machilipatnam. The prices of other vegetables are likely to come down further as the arrivals are slowly increasing, they said. "Change in climate is said to have somewhat helped to registered growth in vegetable production in Krishna district. Few showers also helped to go for harvesting of many vegetable varieties," said Machilipatnam Rythu Bazaar Estate Officer.

Change in climate has somewhat helped in increasing growth in production of vegetables in Krishna district

A.Y.B. Parthasaradhi

Estate Officer, Machilipatnam Rythu Bazaar

Store your produce in a scientific way, farmers told

Agriculture Minister Kanna Lakshminarayana said the 'normal loss' of horticultural produce before it is taken to the market ranges from a staggering 40 to 60 per cent, and 10 to 20 per cent of other crops are lost before reaching the points of sale. This is because the crops are not stored properly and sizable quantities of them are damaged in handling and transportation.

To avoid these significant losses, farmers have to store their produce in a scientific manner in private cold storages wherever possible and facilities provided by agencies like the Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC).

Addressing an awareness programme organised by the CWC for farmers here on Monday, Mr. Lakshminarayana said farmers should avail of technical assistance extended by the government departments concerned in keeping the vegetables and fruits intact before they reach the markets.

The quantities of agricultural produce that reach the processing stage are negligible.

The country could not afford this wastage and farmers obviously play a crucial role in curbing that.

They have to store their produce in a scientific manner using the facilities provided by the Government and its agencies.

Mr. Lakshminarayana said while acquainting themselves with the scientific methods of storing agricultural produce, farmers should know about the weather-based insurance scheme for crops to mitigate losses inflicted by adverse weather.

Officials of the Agriculture and other departments concerned should spread awareness about the steps taken for smooth supply of seeds and fertilizers which are available in adequate quantities but for small lapses in distribution.

Joint Director of Agriculture V. Sridhar, CWC Senior Manager P.E. Prasad and others were present

Farmers demand proper irrigation channels

A section of farmers have urged the district administration to take action for proper maintenance, particularly for lifting the silt in irrigation channels and minor tanks in the district before October to ensure prompt utilisation of rainwater during the North East monsoon.

G.S. Dhanapathy, district chairman of Farmers Forum of India, underlined the importance of minor tanks under the maintenance of panchayat unions. He said the district administration should take action for harvesting rainwater and its prompt utilisation for irrigation. He said steps should be taken to curb the monkey menace in several parts of the district.

Appavu Balandar, another farmer, said the current dry season was ideal for clearing the silt and deepening the irrigation and supply channels. A comprehensive plan should be evolved and implemented on a war-footing, he said.

Failure of monsoon

Rama Theerthan, a progressive farmer, pleaded for a comprehensive plan for resolving the drinking water crisis in rural parts of the district. C. Manoharan, District Collector, who presided over the meeting, advised the Revenue and Agriculture department officials to ensure coordinated action for assessing relief to farmers who lost their crop because of failure of monsoon. He advised farmers to submit their petitions at the taluk offices.

On the monkey menace, the Collector said the Agriculture Department would identify the menace-prone areas. The Forest Department would set up cages to be made by the TANSI. Priority had been attached to resolving the drinking water crisis in Keeranur.

Under the Mahatama Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, farm ponds would be set up at 704 places. Work had been taken up at 160 sites.

Release 10 tmcft of water, Congress farmers' wing pleads with Siddaramaiah

The Tamil Nadu Kisan-Khet Mazdoor Congress, a wing of the Congress, has appealed to Karnataka to release 10 tmcft. of water in the Cauvery for the drinking water needs of Tamil Nadu.

Puliyur A. Nagarajan, State vice-president of the unit, in a memorandum to Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, said the South West Monsoon had started showering its bounty on Kerala and Karnataka resulting in copious inflows into the reservoirs like the Kabini, Krishnaraja Sagar, Harangi, and Hemavathi.

At the same time, Tamil Nadu had been quenching the thirst of almost 50 per cent of its population by sinking giant borewells along the banks of the Cauvery at 45 locations. Hence, 10 tmcft of water was required for these drinking water projects alone. However, the Mettur dam could not be opened for more than three months even for drinking water needs because of inadequate storage. This had resulted in serious drinking water shortage in Salem, Erode, Namakkal, and Karur districts apart from lower delta regions.

The major reason for such a scenario was the borewells sunk for the sake of drinking water. Hence, Karnataka Chief Minister should release water in the Cauvery as a 'gesture of good will' considering the fact that the water level in Mettur dam had slumped to almost 16 ft and the storage to just three tmcft , an unprecedented situation in the annals of the reservoir.

Mr. Nagarajan also requested Mr. Siddaramiah to comply with the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal Award by releasing 10 tmcft during June, 30 tmcft during July, 50 tmcft during August and 44 tmcft during September for Tamil Nadu, well before the onset of the North East Monsoon. The stand of Karnataka that it would not release water till its reservoirs were filled to the brim was in violation of the Supreme Court order, he contended. Karnataka

by denying water to Tamil Nadu during 2012-13 season has affected agriculture in as many as 14.75 lakh acres in the delta districts and another 2.5 lakh acres in districts of Tiruchi, Karur, Namakkal, Salem, and Erode.

Besides, annual crops such as banana, coconut, and sugarcane had been seriously hurt resulting in a loss of Rs 10,000 crore. Hence, Karnataka should release 192 tmcft to Tamil Nadu as stipulated by the tribunal. He appealed to Mr. Siddaramaiah to adopt a “humanitarian approach” considering the pathetic plight of the people of Tamil Nadu and release water immediately.

Water going waste due to delay in modernisation work

Farmers pinned their hopes on inflows from the tributaries downstream the Nagarjunasagar Project



rare sight: Tourists enjoying the flow of water from Prakasam Barrage in Vijayawada on Monday.— Photo. Ch. Vijaya Bhaskar

With the canals remaining partially closed for the Krishna Delta Modernisation works which are still in progress, the Vijayawada Irrigation Circle authorities were forced to release water from the Prakasam Barrage into the river on Monday. With the monsoon still inactive over the Krishna delta farmers pinned their hopes on inflows received from the tributaries of Krishna downstream the Nagarjuna Sagar Project.

Though the farmers need water for raising seed beds the Irrigation department is unable to provide them any because of the works in progress.

As per the regular practise water should be released on June 15. But the release was postponed by a month primarily because of the “long closure” works in progress in some sections. The second reason for the postponement is the lack of water in the reservoirs on Krishna river. Ironically, Godavari river is already in spate and hundreds of tmcft of water are bound to be released into the Bay of Bengal.

The Vijayawada Irrigation Circle has sent a memo to all executive engineers to prepare the irrigation network including the drains for release of water in July.

Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Rythanga Samakya and former Drainage Board member Yerneni Nagendranath said there was enough water in the Nagarjuna Sagar Project for raising of seed beds even today. Releasing water into the river at a crucial time was “criminal waste”, but there was no alternative because of the works in progress. The government had to take a decision in principal to release water as per the requirement of the

farmers. The High Court stay on the release of water from Srisaillam and NSP had already been vacated. The court ordered the formation of a committee to advice the department on when to release water, Mr. Nagendranath said.

Swaminathan award for William Dar



William D. Dar, director general of International Crop Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics, has been selected for the M.S. Swaminathan award for leadership in agriculture for 2013.

Named after eminent agriculture scientist M.S. Swaminathan, the award is considered the country's version of the "world food prize". Dr. Dar had been selected by the Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAS) for

his multi-dimensional and distinguished contributions as an educationist and scientist.

Planning Commission member (science) K. Kasturirangan conferred the award on Dr. Dar at a function in New Delhi on Monday. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Kasturirangan said Dr. Dar had joined the select group of extraordinary minds that had influenced agriculture and thereby, global food security.

The earlier awardees, he said, were on the list of the who's who of the top researchers who helped the country in meeting the challenges in realising self-sufficiency in food production, he added.

Soil erosion causes misery to villagers

Farm land being washed away regularly by surging sea waves at Chinna Gollapalem



Nature's WAYS:Coconut trees uprooted due to soil erosion on the coast at Chinna Gollapalem in Krishna district.—PHOTO: CH.VIJAYA BHASKAR

“Every year the sea is taking away our land. Many families have lost their livelihood due to the nature's fury. If there is a major cyclone or calamity,

the loss will be severe. We are living under constant fear,” said villagers of Chinna Gollapalem.

The island village, also known as Pallepalem, is the border village for Krishna and West Godavari districts and is the last hamlet along the coast in Kruthivenu mandal in Krishna district.

Soil erosion damaged cashew, casuarinas, pulses and other commercial crops in some thousands of acres. In just one year, about 10 acres of patta land got washed away into sea.

Everyday along the seashore a part of the land slides down due to high tides creating panic among locals.

“Chinna Gollapalem is the largest village, stretched nine km along sea in Pedana Assembly Constituency with about 14,000 population. The main occupation of people is agriculture and fishing. The village is surrounded by Yanamaduru drain, Upputeru canal and the Bay of Bengal”, said village panchayat president Koppineedi Hanumantha Rao.

“Ten years ago the ayacut in the village was 5,000 acres. Now the cultivable area has come down to 3,000 acres causing concern to villagers. Casuarinas and coconut plantations in some hundreds of acres were damaged along the coastline,” said Ramulu, a fisherman.

The government had taken up dredging thrice, but there was no use.

“We request the government to find a permanent solution to the problem and save the village by constructing high-tide breakers,” Mr. Hanumantha Rao said.

Cultivable area has come down from 5,000 acres to 3,000 acres causing concern to villagers.

Ramulu

fisherman

Tirupur farmers allege disparity in disbursal of drought relief

Farmers in the district have alleged disparity in the disbursal of drought relief allocated to offset the crop losses suffered in 2012-13 fiscal due to abominable hot weather conditions.

On Monday, farmers from Kuttapalayam, Palayakottai and Kandiyankoil areas met Collector G. Govindaraj and voiced their grievance that almost 1,000 farmers from the said regions have been either allocated paltry sums as relief, which was totally disproportional to the actual acreage held by them and the crop loss suffered, or nothing.

K. Kumar (44), a farmer based in Palayakottai, told *The Hindu* that most of the farmers in his area who grew sugarcane, coconut and turmeric registered huge yield losses owing to lack of adequate water for irrigation during the last financial year.

“But the assistance released was a huge disappointment. In the case of a farmer who suffered crop loss in three acres, compensation was given for only 20 cents,” he said.

Mr. Kumar added that the affected farmers in Palayakottai and Kuttapalayam areas had taken a collective decision not to accept any amount till the discrepancies in the earmarking of relief were addressed.

Clarification

Revenue and agriculture department sources clarified to *The Hindu* though there were some disparities in the amount earmarked for disbursal, the entire figures projected as affected were not true.

“It should be noted that some farmers might have a holding of three acres, but they would have cultivated only in a portion owing to the drought last year. Hence, the entire land holding can not be termed as ‘affected’,” officials pointed out

Annamalai varsity counselling to begin on June 28

The counselling session for admission of differently-abled persons in the professional courses of Annamalai University would begin on June 28.

According to a statement from the university, the counselling session for admission of special category candidates in MBBS, BDS, BPT, B. Pharm and B.Sc. Nursing would be held on June 28; for B.E on July 3, and for B.Sc. (Agriculture) and B.Sc. (Horticulture) on July 6.

The counselling session would begin at 9 a.m. on all these days.

The details of eligibility criteria could be collected from the prospectus which could be obtained from the website www.annamalaiuniversity.ac.in.

Rank and marks could also be downloaded from the website, the release said.

More details on rank and marks can be downloaded from the website www.annamalaiuniversity.ac.in

The sessions will begin at 9 a.m. on all counselling dates

Pay our wages, workers demand



Frustrated: Agricultural labourers from villages in Farhatabad Gram Panchayat limits staging a protest in Gulbarga on Monday.

At least 100 landless agricultural labourers, mostly women, from villages in Farhatabad Gram Panchayat limits, staged a protest outside the taluk panchayat (TP) office here on Monday. They were demanding payment of their wages, pending for the past three months, for schemes taken up under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.

The workers who came in a procession, under the banner of the Karnataka Pranta Raita Sangha and Communist Party of India (Marxist), to the TP office informed the officials of their plight. The officials told them that they would look into the matter and ensure that their wages were paid at the earliest.

Farmers demand proper irrigation channels

A section of farmers have urged the district administration to take action for proper maintenance, particularly for lifting the silt in irrigation channels and minor tanks in the district before October to ensure prompt utilisation of rainwater during the North East monsoon.

G.S. Dhanapathy, district chairman of Farmers Forum of India, underlined the importance of minor tanks under the maintenance of panchayat unions. He said the district administration should take action for harvesting rainwater and its prompt utilisation for irrigation. He said steps should be taken to curb the monkey menace in several parts of the district.

Appavu Balandar, another farmer, said the current dry season was ideal for clearing the silt and deepening the irrigation and supply channels. A comprehensive plan should be evolved and implemented on a war-footing, he said.

Failure of monsoon

Rama Theerthan, a progressive farmer, pleaded for a comprehensive plan for resolving the drinking water crisis in rural parts of the district. C.

Manoharan, District Collector, who presided over the meeting, advised the

Revenue and Agriculture department officials to ensure coordinated action for assessing relief to farmers who lost their crop because of failure of monsoon. He advised farmers to submit their petitions at the taluk offices.

On the monkey menace, the Collector said the Agriculture Department would identify the menace-prone areas. The Forest Department would set up cages to be made by the TANSI. Priority had been attached to resolving the drinking water crisis in Keeranur.

Under the Mahatama Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, farm ponds would be set up at 704 places. Work had been taken up at 160 sites.

Climate change threatens to hurt profitability of tea cos



Climate change is threatening to impact the bottomline of the organised tea industry in India, with unprecedented high temperatures in Assam and excessive rainfall in Darjeeling impacting the prized crop.

Addressing the media here on Monday, A N Singh, Chairman of the Indian Tea Association, said that due to erratic weather conditions in Assam, there would be lesser availability of quality teas. Certain tea-growing regions in

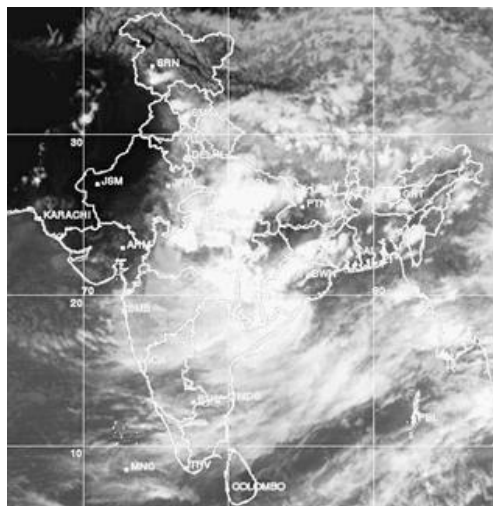
Assam, which produces 50 per cent of the Indian tea crop, had seen temperatures of 40 degrees Celsius. Although crop was on track till April, in May, crop loss of 21 per cent was reported from certain regions. “There is complete cessation of growth,” he said.

In Darjeeling, quality concerns have emerged amid reports of excessive rains in early June and lack of adequate sunshine.

The May – June period is crucial for tea production.

While consumers may face a price pressure while buying quality teas (auction prices have already begun moving north), tea companies fear that the benefits of higher prices will not get reflected on the bottomline of their company’s balance sheets as it would get cancelled out by lesser volumes. The organised industry’s fears over lesser earnings come amidst the incidence of increased costs. “Costs have increased by seven per cent this year,” Mr Singh said

weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on June 24th.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	41	31	0	154
New Delhi (Sfd)	40	30	0	113
Chandigarh	37	30	0	185
Hissar	42	28	0	101
Bhuntar	34	22	0	115
Shimla	25	17	11	177
Jammu	40	29	3	31
Srinagar	33	21	0	32
Amritsar	40	29	0	131
Patiala	38	29	0	117
Jaipur	40	31	0	86
Udaipur	35	27	0	84
Allahabad	39	29	0	76
Lucknow	37	26	0	164
Varanasi	38	28	0	53
Dehradun	31	25	30	711
Agartala	35	25	165	334
Ahmedabad	37	27	0	103
Bangalore	29	21	4	138
Bhubaneshwar	33	25	3	259
Bhopal	30	25	4	165
Chennai	37	29	0	123

Guwahati	34	26	1	196
Hyderabad	30	23	11	172
Kolkata	33	28	7	275
Mumbai	31	26	6	831
Nagpur	30	24	23	194
Patna	37	29	0	42
Pune	30	23	0	262
Thiruvananthapuram	27	23	21	372
Imphal	33	23	0	79
Shillong	25	18	17	271

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

ACTIVE MONSOON

Southwest Monsoon has been active in Himachal Pradesh. The axis of Monsoon trough at MSL passes through Ferozepur, Meerut, Kanpur, Allahabad, Daltanganj and thence southeast wards.

RAINFALL: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at many places over Himachal Pradesh, at a few places over Uttarakhand and at isolated places over Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, east Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Weather was mainly dry over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (2 cm and above) HIMACHAL PRADESH: Gohar 13, Jogindernagar 9, Baijnath 8, Palampur 7, Sundernagar, Bhoranj, Sujanpurtira, Karsog and Pandoh 5 each, Nagrotasurian 4, Dharamshala, Nadaan and Guler 3 each and Hamirpur and Dehragopipur 2 each,

PUNJAB: Madhopur and Phangota 2 each, EAST RAJASTHAN: Sangod 3, EAST UTTAR PRADESH: Fatehgarh 7, Gorakhpur 5 and Banda 2, WEST UTTAR PRADESH: Sahajahanpur 7 and UTTARAKHAND: Jakholi 13, Karanprayag 4, Dehradun , Pantnagar, Chamoli and Munsiyari 3 each.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 26th June

2013: Rain/thundershowers would occur at many places over Uttarakhand and west Uttar Pradesh. Rain/thundershowers would occur at a few places over Himachal Pradesh. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over rest of the region during next 24 hours and increase thereafter.

HEAVY RAINFALL WARNING: Heavy rainfall would occur at a few places over Uttarakhand during next 48 hours. Heavy rainfall may occur and at one or two places over west Uttar Pradesh during subsequent 24 hours.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 26th June 2013: Generally cloudy sky.

Rain/thundershowers may occur in some areas.

Rain havoc a man-made disaster: Green activist

Eminent water conservationist Rajendra Singh on Monday said the calamity in Uttarakhand is a man-made disaster brought on by rapid concretization and tree-felling in the Himalayan region. He blamed excessive human interference in the region for rapid soil erosion, which led to the disaster.

Speaking to TOI on the sidelines of a seminar organized by NGO Jal Biradri on the role of citizens in the rejuvenation of water bodies at Symbiosis college of arts and commerce, Singh, who is widely known as "waterman", said, "In a bid to boost their economies, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh governments have converted pilgrimage into tourism, which has contributed substantially to the ecological degradation of the Himalayas."

"Construction of dams on Himalayan rivers, excessive land blasting, concretization, rapid deforestation and encroachment of river land in the name of development has weakened the mountains making them susceptible to erosion and landslides. To prevent such disasters, the Himalayas need to be helped as much as the tourists," he said.

Also man-made is the drought in Maharashtra, said Singh. He blamed

mismanagement and large-scale wastage for water scarcity in the state and said that incorrect crop pattern in Maharashtra is a major reason for drought. "Since Independence, the agriculture ministry has spent 40% of its money on irrigation in Maharashtra. Yet, the state faces drought every year as there is no link between the agricultural patterns and rainfall. Cultivating a water-intensive crop like sugarcane is a major reason for water scarcity in Vidarbha and Marathwada regions. We are trying to talk to farmers and the agricultural department to work out a more logical crop pattern," he said.

Stressing on the need to inculcate a sense of responsibility among citizens towards water bodies in the state, Singh urged the government to popularize water conservation techniques like rainwater harvesting for tackling water shortage.

"With rapid urbanization and expansion, Pune is emerging as the epicenter of large-scale encroachment on common property and river land. Rivers are drying up because of groundwater extraction and exploitation. This needs to be stopped," he added

Darjeeling tests its hands at apple farming

The directorate of cinchona plantation and other medicinal plants has launched a pilot project to cultivate apples at Mungpo in the Kurseong subdivision of the Hills. If the experiment bears fruit, it could help boost the local economy.

"We have chosen Sepi, located at 9000 feet, for the first phase as it has the requisite weather conditions to grow apples. It is similar to that of Himachal

Pradesh from where we have brought the saplings," said Gyan Chandra Subba, the cinchona plantation director. A total of 4000 free apple tree saplings have been provided to 50-odd farmers for the experiment.

In what could be a path breaking experiment that is expected to provide the much needed boost to the local economy of the region, the directorate of Cinchona Plantation and Other Medicinal Plants has started a pilot project of planting apples at Mungpo, in the Kurseong sub-division of Darjeeling.

Still in its infant stage, the directorate though is optimistic and hopes that the experimental project would be taken up in other places of the Hillshaving the required atmosphere. In the initial stage fifty farmers have been provided with free apple saplings to plant in their land.

"It is encouraging to see that the people have liked the idea of growing apples. Though this is only an experimental project but we hope to take this up aggressively in the days to come if it becomes a success," Gyan Chandra Subba, the cinchona plantation director.

For the first phase the area of Sepi in Rimbick in Kalimpong has been chosen to plant the apple saplings as the weather there is conducive to growing the fruit. "We have chosen Sepi to pilot the project as it has the requisite weather conditions to grow apples. It is similar to that of Himachal Pradesh from where we have brought the fruits," said Subba.

"The climate and topography of Himachal Pradesh and Kashmir which are

famous for its apples are similar to that of Darjeeling Hills. Sepi located at around 9000 feet with cold weather condition is ideal we thought," he added. According to the director, the cinchona plantation has provided about 4000 free apple tree saplings to the 50 odd farmers.

"We have given fifty farmers five varieties of apples that we brought from Himachal Pradesh. In one acre of private land 115 apple saplings have been planted. The project though was started back in 2011 and is in continuation process," Subba said. "However we are waiting for the tree to bear fruits which will most probably start from 2015," he said adding, that presently looking at the growth of the trees, the results seemed to be positive.

Completely on a social service basis without any profits to the cinchona plantation, the farmers though will have to do their own marketing and selling of the apples once it is fully grown. "Like I said earlier, this is completely an experimental project and so the farmers will have to do their own marketing and selling in the local market. But one this is definite that we will take it up in a large scale once in future," said Subba.

The cinchona plantation will indentify other locations in the Hills where such project could be started to ensure a sustainable supply of the fruit. "We are in the process of identifying other places in the Hills where similar project could be started. Let us see what happens," said Subba. In fact, the Cinchona Plantation as part of its other such programs has also started cultivating mushroom, saffron, ginseng, rubber and cardamom in 26000

hectares of plantation land in Latpanchar in Kurseong and Rongo and Mungsong in the Kalimpong sub-divisions.

Guar gum exports halve on low demand by oil companies

Guar gum, which set the futures market on fire a year ago, faces headwinds in the international market. Shipments of India's top agri-export commodity halved in the April-May period this year from a year ago as demand from oil and gas exploration companies has slowed down, say companies. Futures prices have remained lacklustre, worrying farmers and traders.

The July guar gum contract on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) was down 2.14% at 21,460 a quintal with an open interest of 2,801 lots at 3:45 pm on Monday. Guar seed for the July contract edged down by 1.72% to Rs 7,440 per quintal, with an open interest of Rs 7,358 lots on the exchange.

According to the provisional figures of the Directorate general of Foreign Trade (DGFT), guar gum exports fell 56.22% in value terms in April-May of 2013 compared to April-May of 2012.

"Guar gum exports have fallen by 20-30% in terms of volume in the past few months. Current high prices are not attracting buyers in the export market," said Sudhir Merchant, former chairman, Shellac and Forests Products Export Promotion Council (Shefexil), a nodal agency which promotes guar gum exports. He said demand by major US companies such

as Halliburton, Economy Polymers and Chemicals and Chemplex was expected only if guar gum prices were in the range of Rs 16,000- Rs 20,000 a quintal

Tomato farmers rake it in as prices stay high

Tomato growers of Kolar district, who have often dumped truckloads of tomatoes on roads, are now preserving each and every little red fruit, thanks to the boom in the procurement price of the vegetable. Kolar district is known for its tomato crop, and it's been a practice with the farmers to dump all they've grown, once they fail to secure a remunerative price.

This time around, thanks to failure of rain, tomato prices have shot up, with a box of 15kg selling at Rs 500. The rate has been constant throughout June, APMC sources told TOI.

Kolar APMC secretary G Narayana Raju said on a daily average, 800-900 tonne of tomatoes would arrive at the APMC yard, Kolar. However, this time, the arrival stands at 250-300 tonne per day.

Tomatoes are graded according to their quality. While the best quality 'A' grade tomatoes are transported to various places in North India, including Nashik, Mumbai and New Delhi, 'B' grade tomatoes move towards places in and around the state. The low-quality 'C' grade tomatoes are meant for the local market, and some are also sent to the Bangalore market, said Byalahalli M Govinda Gowda, former president of the district cooperative union and a progressive farmer.

He said he brings in about 10 tonne of tomatoes twice a week to the APMC yard, and his 'A' grade crop fetches between Rs 500 and Rs 550 per box of 15kg, he said. Despite fetching a low rate, 'C' grade tomatoes are sold for Rs 45-50 per kg in the local market.

The rate is expected to come down once more tomatoes arrive in the APMC yard, though Govinda Gowda said rates are not likely to fall in the next couple of weeks.

ICAR seeks funds to set up rice mill for Goa tribal farmers

Goa's tribal farmers may be able to double their profits from rice cultivation by doing away with the traditional way of paddy processing with the help of India's premier agriculture research institute.

Indian Council for Agricultural Research's (ICAR) Goa Chapter has sought funds from its Delhi headquarters to install a rice mill at Canacona taluka in South Goa, where 60 per cent of the local population is tribal.

"The rice mill will spare us from boiling the paddy before being taken to rice hullers that removes the chaff (the outer husks) of rice grains," Dhillion Velip, a local youth said.

Velip said the farmers had to go through a rigmarole before the rice was carried to the hullers.

"If rice mill becomes a reality, then the paddy can be directly processed to

get rice grains," he said.

The farmers currently fetch a price of Rs 17 per kg of rice, but they can earn around Rs 35 per kg once rice mill is installed, Velip explained.

ICAR's proposed mill, costing Rs 16 lakh, can process 50 kg of rice per hour.

The project will benefit around 500 farmers in this tribal belt, ICAR scientist Dr M Karunakaran said.

The ICAR's initiative is a part of their tribal sub-plan, which includes helping the tribal farmers in various agricultural and dairy practices.

The rice mill would be run by tribal people, he said, adding that they can even promote it as an economical activity by allowing non-tribal farmers to process their paddy in it.

The tribals will have to form a self-help group or cooperative society, before owning the mill.

Goa has 47,237 hectare of its land under rice production, as per 2011-12 data, and it produces 1,82,945 tonnes of rice. The average yield is 3,872 kgs per hectare.

Farmers up ante against banks, seek waiver of loans

Farmers in Trichy district are up in arms against the central lending banks as the latter had sent out notices threatening to attach their tractors, lands and other agricultural equipment of debtor farmers for non-payments of instalments. A number of farmers on Monday petitioned the district collector Jayashree Muralidharan that she should recommend the waiver of the loans.

The farmers, who were led by deputy state president of TNCC's agricultural wing Puliur Nagarajan were particularly infuriated because the notices warned that "if you do not pay up within one week, your photographs along with your residential addresses would be published in the newspapers." One such notice was sent to A Saraswathi Ammal (at Puliur post, Srirangam tauk) who is the mother of Puliur Nagarajan. He said since the 10 acre land was in the name of his mother, the loan amount of Rs 2 lakh was sanctioned in her name. Nagarajan claimed that such notices had been issued to more than a few thousand farmers in the district.

The last Central government waiver on agricultural loans was implemented in 2008 and at that time those who had more than five acres of land were given exemption only to the extent of 25 percent. Nagarajan's mother owned 10 acres of land and after the 25% waiver, she was still left with an outstanding of Rs 2 lakh and the bank had charged an interest of Rs 99,016 in a notice served on her on June 10.

According to the letter, the bank had reminded the farmers through personal visits of bank managers, letters and phone calls, but the debtors

never replied positively. Since the debtors had already given the banks an undertaking in writing that their properties could be attached in the event of non-payment of loan amount, the bank was now determined to act to recover the loans.

"The latest measure of the banks is an attempt to push the farmers to the brink of committing suicide and hence the chief minister and the Union finance minister must initiate steps to protect the interests of the farmers," he said in a letter addressed to the collector.

Meanwhile, the Bhartiya Kisan Sangh today served a notice on the collector that it would hold a demonstration on June 27 in front of the Head Post Office for demanding the waiver of loans, and it would be attended by large number of farmers in the district

South west monsoon active once again

Sudden depression in bay of Bengal coupled with intensified south west monsoon has brought cheers on the farmers and water resource officials as the region failed to receive much rain last week. On Monday suddenly the skies opened up and rain started pouring .

Meanwhile, Kodagu district administration has declared holiday for the schools and colleges on Tuesday in the wake of heavy rain being witnessed by the region. Even Mysore district received rain on Monday.

Along with the farmers , the engineers of the water resource department who were worried about the dwindled inflow into the dams are a relieved lot

with the inflow into all the four dams in the Cauvery delta increasing considerably.

Especially the inflow into KRS dam which slumped down to less than 3500 cusecs after a week of inflow ranging between 10000 and 15000 . This is expected to increase by tomorrow morning following heavy rain in Kodagu district , the core area of the Cauvery catchment . An engineer of the water resource department said the inflow into KRS dam was 3223 cusecs on Monday evening against an outflow of 1195 with the dam's level standing at 79.96 ft against the maximum height 124.80 ft.

However inflow is anticipated to rise considerably by tomorrow afternoon with the rain lashing the Cauvery catchment area , the engineer added.. According to director state meteorology department Puttanna though the Kodagu is yet to record heavy rainfall, district is expected to receive more rain in the coming days. "Today, the rain is more due to low pressure in bay of Bengal and from tomorrow onwards the monsoon rain will continue to occur" he added .

Last year average rainfall in Kodagu in June was 375.6 mm, but this year it has recorded 498.4mm rainfall and this has raised hopes of region receiving good rain this year . Even inflow into Kabini dam increased suddenly on Monday evening with inflow reaching 11968 cusecs with the water crossing 2275.50 ft mark against the dam's maximum height of 2284. A dam engineer told TOI that the inflow may increase and cross 16000 cusecs by Tuesday morning due to reports of Kerala's Waynad district receiving heavy rain in the last 12 hours. Even the water level in the

Harangi dam is slowly inching towards its maximum height of 2859 ft with the level on Monday evening standing at 2831 .45 ft . with an inflow of 1095 cusecs . " Water level in Kabini dam may reach its maximum level in next four five days if the inflow continues to remain at 16000 cusecs" the engineer added.

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Tuesday, Jun 25

Max Min

35° | 29°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:44

Humidity: 58

Sunset: 06:38

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1004

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Wednesday, Jun 26

Max Min

37° | 29°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday

Jun 27



36° | 28°

Cloudy

Friday

Jun 28



36° | 28°

Overcast

Saturday

Jun 29



37° | 29°

Overcast

Sunday

Jun 30



37° | 29°

Overcast

Monday

Jul 1



36° | 28°

Overcast

Airport Weather

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:44

Humidity: 58

Sunset: 06:38

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1004

KMC's bosses study scope for real plantation

Every year, the Kolkata Municipal Corporation plants saplings in different parts of the city in a bid to expand Kolkata's dwindling green cover. But for the first time since these green drives began, the civic authorities have opted for a detailed survey defining the scope of plantation this monsoon. The botanists who conducted the survey were asked to give a ward and borough wise analysis of the core city area.

"It is more scientific and logical to go for a survey to determine how many saplings need to be planted than to blindly opt for forced plantation in the city," Debashis Kumar, member, mayor-in-council (parks and squares), said. The survey conducted in each of the hundred wards in the core city area in May had come up with a requirement to plant 35,000 saplings this monsoon.

The ten botanists, who had undertaken the rigorous job of surveying and locating possible areas for plantation this monsoon, have already submitted a detailed list of the scope of plantation in every ward. A road wise-map has also been sketched. However, municipal commissioner Khalil Ahmed is aiming for a much higher target than just 35,000 saplings — he hopes to plant at least one lakh this monsoon.

Dismissing Ahmed's rather ambitious target, a civic technocrat associated with the plantation programme said, "At the most we can manage to plant 50,000 to 60,000 saplings this year. However, if you consider the roadside and medium size shrubs in your count, then it would be more than a lakh."

Chinese fishing off Sri Lanka hits Indian fishworkers



Troubled waters: China is the largest tuna consumer in the world and is a leading market for high-end fish. The permission for Chinese vessels is likely to derail the economies of India and Lakshadweep.

Fishworkers in Kerala and Lakshadweep are alarmed by the recent move of the Sri Lankan Government giving permission to a Chinese fishing company to use Dikkowita harbour – north of Colombo – to fish in the island's international waters.

These vessels also have permission to fly the Sri Lankan flag while engaged in the fishing operations.

Fishworkers' unions fear that the Chinese fishing vessels, equipped with modern satellite-based instruments to track fish shoals, will sweep the Indian Ocean clean.

This would impact the availability of catch for fishermen in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Lakshadweep as well as in the Maldives, says Charles George, President of the Kerala Matsya Thozhilali Aikyavedi (the united front of Kerala fishworkers). George told *Business Line* that Chinese vessels had been fishing illegally off the Lankan coast for years, but the Rajapaksha Government had given legal cover to this now.

The Chinese vessels would be major threat to India's rich tuna resources, estimated at 2.5 lakh tonnes, he said, adding that Lakshadweep's economy relied heavily on tuna. The Chinese trawlers would derail it.

'FISHY' APPETITE

China is the largest tuna consumer in the world and is a leading market for high-end fish.

The *Financial Times*, quoting the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), recently reported that China's increasing consumption of fish, from tuna to oysters, had contributed to driving up global fish prices.

The Sri Lankan media recently reported that the authorities had allowed a Chinese company to berth its fishing vessels at Dikkowita and use all the facilities there.

The company is slated to start its operations next week with four 150-foot vessels equipped with sophisticated instruments.

Sixteen more vessels would join the fleet soon. An agreement between Sri Lanka's Board of Investment and the Chinese company permits the

company to keep 90 per cent of the catch; the remaining 10 per cent would be sold to the Fisheries Corporation at a low price.

Dikkowita harbour is said to be the largest fishing harbour in South Asia. Built with Dutch financial aid, it opened in January this year. It can handle 150 tonnes of fish landing, and offers processing and other facilities.

Apart from allowing the Chinese company to use Dikkowita, the Sri Lankan Government has also allowed Chinese vessels to fly the Sri Lankan flag while fishing in waters “beyond the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the country”.

The Sri Lankan media, quoting Deputy Fisheries Minister Sarath Kumaara Gunaratne, have reported that the Chinese had been permitted to fish “only within the international sea boundaries”.

They had been asked not to fish within the “Sri Lankan sea boundary”.

However, local fishing unions claim that the Chinese are already fishing in the EEZ area.

Monsoon boost



Sowing gathers pace: Migrant farm labourers from Bihar transplanting paddy near Karnal in Haryana. With the monsoon covering the entire country much ahead of schedule, kharif plantings are on in full swing. —
Kamal Narang

Board spells out norms on tea tourism projects

Tea tourism and construction of houses under Indira Awas Yojana are the two non-tea activities to be permitted by the Tea Board only on that area within a tea estate where viable tea plantation will not be possible.

However, prior to undertaking such non-tea activities, the gardens concerned have to obtain a 'no objection certificate' (NOC) from the Board which will issue the certificate subject to certain conditions.

One condition is that no uprooting of tea bushes will be allowed to facilitate non-tea activities.

Next, the Tea Research Association or Upasi must certify that the areas to be used for tea tourism and IAY housing are not viable for taking up new plantation.

Third, the proposed activities must not affect the existing plantation within the garden.

Finally, no land will be used for commercial housing project, except for creating accommodation for tourists and guests for temporary stay or for IAY housing.

An undertaking on this has to be furnished by the estate owner himself or his authorised representatives.

Also, NOC will be issued subject to fulfilment of relevant rules, regulations and directions by the State and Central Governments from time to time, according to tea industry sources.

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Tobacco prices improve at auctions in Andhra Pradesh



A quantity of 109.37 million kg (mkg) of tobacco has been sold till now on the 19 auction floors of Andhra Pradesh at an average price of Rs 122.25 against Rs 98.67 a kg realised during the last season at the same time, according to the Tobacco Board sources here.

The highest prices were as usual realised on the five auction floors in the northern light soils of West Godavari – two floors in Jangareddi gudem, Koyalagudem, Gopalapuram and Devarapalli.

A quantity of 36.22 mkg of tobacco has been sold so far at an average price of Rs 148.65 (Rs 115.25).

Tobacco grown on the five floors is always in demand and the farmers get the best prices in the State on a regular basis.

Latex tops Rs 120/kg

Spot rubber continued to rule unchanged on Monday.

Supply concerns due to sustained heavy rains and the absence of genuine buyers and sellers kept the commodity neutral in the local market.

Sheet rubber finished unchanged at Rs 175.50 a kg consecutively for the sixth day both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to traders and the Rubber Board.

The trend was partially mixed as latex made further gains on better demand amidst low supply.

July futures concluded at Rs 173.34 (Rs 173.30), August at Rs 168.71 (Rs 169.19), September at Rs 165.24 (Rs 165.68), October at Rs 162.28 (Rs 163.03) and November at Rs 166.38 (Rs 162.35) for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) declined to Rs 163.83 (Rs 165.83) at Bangkok. June futures expired at ¥ 232 (Rs 141.59). July futures weakened to ¥ 231 (Rs 141.02) 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: 123 (121.50).

However, the farmers in East Godavari district (Torredu auction floor near Rajahmundry) are an unhappily lot, as only 1.72 mkg has been sold so far at an average price of Rs 98.41 (Rs 83.34).

The farmers on the floor complained they are unable to recoup the cost of cultivation at the present prices.

On the remaining floors in the southern light soils and southern black soils, the prices are decent.

In the southern black soils, 36.56 mkg has been sold at an average price of Rs 109.58 (Rs 85.16) and in the southern light soils 34.87 mkg has been sold at an average price of Rs 109.30 (Rs 92.36).

Electronic auctions have been introduced this season in Andhra Pradesh and the Board officials claim that it has helped in securing better prices for the farmer.

The actual production in the State is estimated at 167 mkg against the crop size of 170 mkg fixed by the Board.

There is no excess production in the State and that has also helped the prices on the floors, it is said.

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Tea producers' margin may be hit by limited availability of 2nd flush

The Indian Tea Association said on Monday that reduced availability of quality second flush tea, affecting prices, may impact the profitability of tea producers.

Produced during May-July, second flush is considered as the best period for availability of quality teas. Naturally it has a bearing on the profitability of tea companies.

“Production of quality leaves has been impacted because of weather changes. Right now the monsoon has set in and we hope there will be delayed supply of quality tea leaves,” Arun N. Singh, Chairman, ITA, said.

According to Singh, reduced availability of quality leaves and truncated pricing “might impact the bottomline” of organised players.

Tea production in North India has seen a 3.7 per cent increase to 57 million kg between January to May this year compared with the same period last year. While 41 million kg was produced in the Assam region – Assam Valley, Cachar & Tripura – between January to May; another 16 million kg were produced in West Bengal.

Small Growers

Another concern, Singh said, was increased production from small growers. Absence of quality tea leaves, from such small growers, was also pulling down the overall market sentiments thereby impacting sale price.

Between June 16 and June 22, Kolkata tea auction saw the average price of CTC at Rs 146.98. During the same period last year, CTC leaves were priced at Rs 161.26. At the Guwahati auction, CTC sold at Rs 141.65 (Rs 153.87) and at Rs 138.01 (Rs 142.48) at the Siliguri auction.

“Some standardisation needs to be done. Increased supplies from small growers and absence of quality leaves have been pulling down market sentiments thereby impacting organised sector,” he added. Small growers account for over 30 per cent of the total tea production in the country.

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Weak cues, arrivals pound soyabean

Weak global cues and huge arrivals pounded soyabean prices in Indore mandis on Monday by Rs 100 to Rs 3,650-3,750 a quintal.

In futures market also, soyabean prices declined on weak buying support and global cues with its July and October contracts closing at Rs 3,742 (down Rs 77) and Rs 3,218 (down Rs 18). Plant deliveries in soyabean also declined by Rs 100 to Rs 3,775-3,850.

Arrival in Madhya Pradesh on Monday rose to 1.75 lakh bags against 35,000 bags last week.

Indore mandis witnessed an arrival of 8,000 bags, while it was 12,000 in Ujjain. Slack demand in physical market and weak global cues also dragged soya oil prices with soya refined in Indore quoted at Rs 668-72 for 10 kg (Rs 670-75).

Similarly, soya solvent also declined to Rs 632-37 for 10 kg (Rs 630-40) on weak buying support and global cues. In futures also, soya oil traded lower with its July and August contracts on the NCDEX closing at Rs 690.75 for (down Rs 2.95) and Rs 684.65 (down Rs 4.25).

Soyameal is ruling stable with its prices on the port at Rs 36,200, while in the domestic market, it ruled at Rs 34,200-300 a quintal.

Seafood exports scale new high, topping 9 lakh tonnes

Vannamei and black-tiger shrimps helped push up India's seafood exports to 9.28 lakh tonnes (lt) in 2012-13 fiscal, up 7.68 per cent over the previous year's 8.62 lt.

This was despite the recessionary conditions in Europe, depreciation of the rupee against major international currencies and trade barriers put up by some of the importing countries, Leena Nair, Chairperson of the Marine Products Exports Development Authority, told a news conference here on Monday.

She said the value of the exports was Rs 18,856 crore, though in dollar terms the increase was negligible (from \$3.50 billion to \$3.51 billion).

In terms of quantity, exports were at a record high.

output rises "The increased production of Vannamei shrimp, better productivity of black-tiger shrimp and larger export of chilled products helped to achieve higher exports," she said.

She noted that there was a sharp rise in the production of vannamei shrimp as aquaculture expanded to more areas in eastern coastal States and productivity rose.

The export of vannamei shrimp to the US increased by 141 per cent in quantity and 100 per cent in value in dollars.

One-fourth of the total maritime exports consisted of frozen shrimp; but in terms of value it earned 51.35 per cent of the total marine export dollars.

There was a 21 per cent increase in the quantity of shrimp exported, but because of the steep fall in the prices, it could add only 3.56 per cent to the export value in dollars.

Frozen fish, which made up 37 per cent of the total maritime exports, was the leading maritime export item.

South-East Asia is India's largest seafood market, followed by European Union, the US, Japan and China, in that order.

Demand, export enquiries lift cotton to Rs 42,000/candy



Cotton prices touched Rs 42,000 for a candy of 356 kg on Monday following strong domestic demand and overseas enquiries. Moreover, supply was slow.

Overall, the sentiment turned bullish and according to market sources, cotton price may rise to Rs 43,000.

Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton traded higher by Rs 500-700 at Rs 41,000-42,000.

V 797 cotton A grade was offered at Rs 29,800-30,000.

About 5,000-6,000 bales cotton arrived in Gujarat and 15,000-17,000 bales arrived across the country.

Kapas or raw cotton price increased by Rs 20-25 to Rs 1,050-1,075 for a *maund* of 20 kg, while gin delivery *kapas* was traded at Rs 1,080-1,135.

Cotton ready delivery was quoted at Rs 4,380-4,470 a quintal in Punjab; Rs 4,325-4,355 in Haryana and Rs 4,370-4,380 in Rajasthan.

Cotton 29 MM (3.8+ micronaire) traded at Rs 40,500-41,000 for a candy, 29 MM (3.6 micronaire) cotton at Rs 39,500-40,200 in Maharashtra. According to a Rajkot based broker, cotton increased on Monday on constant demand from spinners and exporters and on restricted selling.

Ginners were expecting further gains in prices due to limited supply.

Spinners and exporters were active in the markets to cover their position.

Traders said that buyers were worried over near term supply which may tighten further due to surge in export demand in recent weeks.

A weak rupee has made exports attractive.

The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) offered to sell 46,800 bales through e-auction today.

Edible oils market awaits palm oil export data



Good progress of monsoon rain in producing centres and bearish futures markets amid slack demand pulled down edible oil prices on Monday. Palm oil export data on Tuesday could provide further cues for the market, said an observer.

Soyabean arrivals were about 1.25 lakh-1.30 lakh bags including 75,000-80,000 from Madhya Pradesh and its prices were Rs 3,850-3,860 ex mandi and Rs 3,900-3,925 plant delivery.

Mustard seeds arrivals were 1.55 lakh-1.60 lakh bags and the prices were at Rs 3.175-3,575. Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 548, super palmolein Rs 583 and super deluxe Rs 603.

Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 548 ex-Shapur, soyabean refined oil Rs 678 for June-July and Rs 681 for August; sunflower refined oil Rs 800. Gokul's rates for palmolein were Rs 538 for June.

In Rajkot, groundnut oil declined by Rs 20 to Rs 1,450 (Rs 1,470) for *telia* tin and by Rs 15 to Rs 935 (Rs 950) for loose 10 kg.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, soyabean refined oil July futures dropped by Rs 3.15 to Rs 690.55 (Rs 693.70); August down by Rs 4.50 to Rs 684.40 (Rs 688.90) and September by Rs 6.20 to Rs 677.00 (Rs 683.20).

Malaysia BMD crude palm oil July contracts closed lower at MYR 2,394 (MYR 2,431), August ended at MYR 2,409 (MYR 2,446) and September closed at MYR 2,404 (MYR 2,439) a tonne.

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were: Groundnut oil 970 (980), soya refined oil 675 (675), sunflower exp. ref. 745 (745), sunflower ref. 805 (805), rapeseed ref. oil 698 (702), rapeseed expeller ref. 668 (672) cottonseed ref. oil 672 (675) and palmolein 530 (532).

Vikram Global Commodities, Chennai, has quoted for Malaysian super palmolein at Rs 585 ex-Chennai for delivery in 15 days.

Rice supply seen improving from July



The rice market may see only need-based buying and prices may rule with marginal fluctuation in the coming days, according to trade sources.

Despite restricted trading, the rice market witnessed a steady trend with prices of aromatic and non-basmati rice ruling unchanged from the previous levels, on Monday.

There is no bulk buying currently, as traders have adopted a wait-and-watch policy following the fear of drop in prices in the coming weeks, said Amit Chandna, proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company.

Traders expect that supply will improve in July and prices may decrease further then, he said. Only need-based buying is taking place and it is unlikely to see any major alteration this week, he said.

In the physical market, after witnessing a fall last weekend, Pusa-1121 (steam) sold at Rs 7,700-7,730 a quintal, while Pusa-1121 (sela) quoted at Rs 7,150.

Pure basmati (raw) quoted at Rs 8,800-8,820. Duplicate basmati (steam) was at Rs 6,780.

For the brokens of Pusa-1121, Dubar quoted at Rs 3,900, Tibar sold at Rs 4,400 while Mongra was at Rs 3,050.

In the non-basmati section, Sharbati (Steam) sold at Rs 4,850-4,870 while Sharbati (Sela) quoted at Rs 4,450.

Permal (raw) sold at Rs 2,230 while Permal (sela) went for Rs 2,310 .

PR-11 (sela) sold at Rs 3,100-3,120 while PR-11 (Raw) quoted at Rs 2,750.

PR14 (steam) sold at Rs 3,320.

Paddy Sowing

According to the reports, sowing has completed in around 1.64 million hectares till last weekend, down about 14 per cent from around 1.87 million hectares covered during this time last year.

Festivals likely to lighten up sugar



Sugar prices declined by Rs 5-10 a quintal for S-grade and Rs 10-20 for M-grade on the Vashi wholesale terminal market on Monday. The drop followed routine demand and higher supply.

Continuous selling by mills in the absence of upcountry buying put pressure on the local market. Naka rates were steady.

Mill tender rates dropped by Rs 5-10. Volume remained normal but the sentiment was weak, said sources.

A trading source said: "From next month, sentiment may turn positive due to Ramadan and *Ashadhi Ekadashi* festivals.

Due to higher production this year, sugar prices are under pressure in the last 7-8 months.

“Since January, sugar prices have declined by Rs 200-220 a quintal for S-grade and by Rs 160-170 for M-grade as buyers were aware of the fact of ample supply and have stalling their bulk purchases,” he said.

Arrivals in the Vashi market were 64-65 truckloads (each 100 bags) and local dispatches were about 60-61 loads.

On Saturday, 11-12 mills offered tenders and sold about 28,000-30,000 bags to local traders at Rs 2,925-2,990 (Rs 2,930-3,000) for S-grade and Rs 3,000-3,090 (Rs 3,010-3,100) for M-grade.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, July futures were Rs 3,009 (Rs 3,011), August Rs 3,058 (Rs 3,060) and September was Rs 3,110 (Rs 3,110) till noon.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association’s spot rates were: S-grade Rs 3,062-3,131 (Rs 3,062-3,131) and M-grade Rs 3,172-3,311 (Rs 3,186-3,331).

Naka delivery rates were: S-grade Rs 3,010-3,060 (Rs 3,010-3,060) and M-grade Rs 3,100-3,180 (Rs 3,100-3,180).

Growers hold back turmeric stocks



Turmeric growers are holding back their produce resulting in just 2,700 bags arriving at the three markets in Erode. After a five-day trade holiday, all the three markets sprung back to action on Monday with quality hybrid variety fetching higher prices.

“ There was no improvement of arrival or sale on Monday. Only 2,700 bags arrived and sales were just half of it. Despite closure, there was no improvement in arrivals or sales,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said that usually in June and July, sales will be very low. Only in mid-July, sales will improve. But during this period, daily arrivals will be around 10,000 bags. This shows that farmers are holding back stocks, expecting a good price in the next 3-4 months.

Ravishankar also said that no trader has received fresh upcountry orders and if they get good order, sales will improve as also the price.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,029-6,399 a quintal, the root variety Rs 3,799-5,571.

Salem hybrid crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,899-7,917 a quintal, root variety Rs 5,209-6,571. Of the 385 bags that arrived, 109 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,154-6,399, the root variety Rs 5,399-5,634. Of 274 bags on offer, 205 found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,075-6,412, the root variety Rs 4,499-5,799. All the 462 bags were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,681-6,766, the root variety Rs 5,367-5,781. All the 291 bags were sold.

Spot pepper market halts on lack of arrivals



Pepper prices on futures and spot markets continued to witness an uptrend on rise in demand amid tight availability.

Consequently, all the active contracts ended above the previous day closing.

According to some traders, the market is being pushed up artificially by bull operators, who were creating a feeling in the market that there were more buyers than sellers.

Some traders, however, alleged that prices are being raised artificially by some operators.

On the spot, there were no arrivals and no trading activities took place, said market sources. Bull operators were active in Karnataka and Kerala, they said.

All the active contracts July, August and September on the NMCE increased by Rs 108, Rs 126 and Rs 421 respectively to Rs 38,925, Rs 39,020 and Rs 39,160 a quintal respectively.

Total open interest moved up by six tonnes to 104 tonnes.

Total turnover decreased by 13 tonnes to 34 tonnes.

Spot prices soared by Rs 300 to Rs 36,000 (ungarbled) and Rs 37,500 (garbled) on strong demand.

Indian parity in the international market was at \$6,600 a tonne (c&) for Europe and \$6,750 a tonne (c&f) for the US and remained nearly at par with the other origins.

Indian parity would have been much higher but for the weakening of the rupee against the dollar, they said.