

29 June, 2013

## Vast areas of cultivated land flooded in reclaimed island



The HinduThe Puthenkaayal island, 30 kms from Kochi, in the Vembanad Lake has been flooded and hundreds of acres of crops have been destroyed. Photo: H. Vibhu

Farmers on the 762-acre Puthenkaayal Island falling under Vechoor and Arpookkara panchayats in Kottayam district claim they have suffered losses of up to Rs.5 crore due to heavy rains this month. Hundreds of acres of banana and coconut cultivation, and several fish farms on the island have been submerged.

The island, located about 30 km from Kochi, was reclaimed from the Vembanad Lake along with islands such as Rani and Chithira to grow paddy under the 'Grow More Food' campaign after World War II and in the face of severe food shortage in the country.

President of Kaipuzha-Vechoor Kaayal Karshaka Sahakarana Sangham K.J. Joseph said farmers, most of them small and marginal operators, had lost thousands of banana plants to the floodwaters on the island that lies

below the mean sea level. The island is kept dry by heavy de-watering operations during the monsoon months with the help of a 70 HP pump and six 40 HP pumps.

#### POWER SUPPLY CUT

However, power supply to these pumps was cut off at the end of May after the islanders ran up a bill arrear of around Rs.50 lakh. Mr. Joseph claimed that the islanders were eligible for free power supply for agricultural activities up to two hectares. However, the agriculture department has refused free power supply.

#### APC REPORT

The matter is pending before the High Court of Kerala after the islanders filed a writ petition against a report by the Agricultural Production Commissioner (APC) which stated that the island did not have much of agricultural activities. The report said, "There is no agriculture activity worth mention in the area in question."

The report also said that individual ownership of land could not be ascertained during the field inspection and that between 1997 and 2011, transactions of large extents of land had taken place and land was being bought by corporate entities.

The report was on the basis of a court order asking the APC to ascertain facts and take an appropriate decision. APC Subrata Biswas refused to comment on the issue since it was under the consideration of the court. He said the report was made on the basis of a field visit by a senior official of the department of agriculture. Department of agriculture sources said on Friday that the island might have lost up to 1.5 lakh banana plants, both

bunched and non-bunched. Floodwaters had also inundated around 50,000 coconut trees, 4,000 cocoa trees and 500 nutmeg trees.

P.D. Shaji, a farmer who has an informal arrangement with several land owners on the island to cultivate around 25 acres, said he had lost 20,000 banana plants, most of them bunched. He also lost all his investment in a large fish pond, the stocks from which escaped during the heavy flooding. "I have lost a lifetime of investments," he said. A farmer invests at least Rs.100 per banana plant before he can harvest the bunches, he said.

Joy Mathew, a director board member of the 486-member farmers' collective founded in 1950, said he had lost extensive banana cultivation to the floodwaters.

He said farmers had abandoned paddy for more remunerative crops long ago and recalled how former Union Minister for Agriculture S.S. Barnala, who visited the island, promised Kerala cheap rice and asked the farmers on Puthenkaayal Island to earn foreign exchange from coconut and other crops. Aniyamma Philip, who runs a homestay on the picturesque island, said coconut and banana cultivation and nutmeg trees on her plot had been affected by the floods. Most trees that stood in knee-deep water would wither away, she said.

Thankappan, a daily wage earner who lives on the mainland opposite the island, said people on the mainland south of the island depended on it for fodder and fuel items from coconut trees. The floods have completely cut off the source of fodder for nearly 1,000 heads of cattle, he said

### **Farm suicide trends in 2012 remain dismal**

Farm suicides rose sharply by almost 450 in Maharashtra in 2012 to touch 3,786, the latest National Crime Records Bureau data show. (The State

saw 3,337 suicides in 2011). That is the worst annual increase in seven years. It also brings Maharashtra's total tally since the NCRB began recording farm data in 1995 to a staggering 57,604 farmers' suicides.

Andhra Pradesh also saw an upward surge. It logged 2,572 farm suicides in 2012. That is 366 higher than the previous year's figure of 2,206. Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh reported declines of 225 and 154 respectively.

The last of the 'Big 5' States that account for over two-thirds of all farm suicides, Chhattisgarh, continued to declare a near zero figure. In 2012, it claimed it had just four. Chhattisgarh's three-year average prior to its zero-declaration approach was 1,567. Indeed, the State's own data, prior to that tactic, show it suffered 18,375 farm suicides between 2001-10.

Other States seem inspired by Chhattisgarh's methods. West Bengal sent in no data at all on farm suicides (or some other categories, too) in 2012. But its three-year average for 2009-2011 was 951.

Chhattisgarh's figure of '4' and Bengal's non-filing of data stand out in the all-India total of 13,754 farm suicides in 2012. If three-year averages for both States are included, then the national total would be 16,272. That would be the highest farm suicides figure in three years.

Even accepting the truncated numbers, the Big 5 accounted for over 68.4 per cent of all farm suicides in the country in 2012. That is the highest ever since the recording of such data began.

Among other major States, Kerala saw 1,081 such farm deaths, a steep increase of 251 over its 2011 number of 1,830. Uttar Pradesh saw 745 farm suicides — up by 100 over its 2011 figure. Tamil Nadu reported a decline of 123 to log 499. That's down from 623 the previous year.

The NCRB figures across 18 years for which data exist show that at least 2,84,694 Indian farmers have taken their lives since 1995. (That is, accepting the non-figures of Chhattisgarh and West Bengal). Divide that 18 years into two halves and the trend is dismal. India saw 1,38,321 farm suicides between 1995 and 2003 at an annual average of 15,369.

For 2004-12, the number is 1,46,373, at a much higher annual average of 16,264. The figures in the second half occurred against a steep decline in the numbers of farmers in India and are hence even worse than they appear. (See *The Hindu*. Farmers' suicide rates soar above the rest)

In short, there is no serious decline or reversal of the major trends in farm suicides in the country. 'Zero' declarations, though, are likely to grow by the year as more States feel the need to massage their dismal data or simply not file it.

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### Fertilizer units demand decontrol



The fertilizer industry, on Friday, sought immediate decontrol of the sector.

The industry said the move by the government to double the natural gas prices would lead to rise in the subsidy bill by Rs.11,000 crore annually if urea prices were also not increased proportionately. IFFCO Managing Director U. S. Awasthi, in a statement, suggested that the government should develop a mechanism to provide subsidy or support to the farmers — may be direct cash transfer of subsidy to farmers. “Since the hike in the gas prices has been given to bring investments to increase natural gas production indigenously, the same philosophy should be applied to the fertilizer industry. The fertilizer sector should be freed from the government control, and be treated as part of market-driven economy,” he said.

Criticising the move to hike gas prices, the Fertiliser Association of India (FAI) said if the urea prices were not raised in proportion to the gas price, the extra subsidy burden would be Rs.11,000 crore annually from next year onwards.

The country produces 22 million tonnes of urea, against the requirement of 32 million tonnes. The balance is met through imports.

Meanwhile, hailing the government’s move to hike gas prices, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) said the increase in gas prices would not only encourage upstream companies to invest in more challenging frontiers to augment gas production, but also a good amount of this increased price would flow back to the government in terms of royalty and dividend.

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) said the revision in natural gas price would bring in the much required

technology and risk capital from foreign majors to tap the vast unexplored resources in deep and ultra-deep water frontier basins

### Will the APMC yard survive retail FDI?



Future tense: The State government's decision to allow foreign direct investment in multi-brand retail has caused quite a flutter in the Yeshwantpur APMC yard, though many say it was expected after the new government took over.— File Photo: K. Gopinathan

Twenty-two-year-old Nagaraj N. wakes up around 3 a.m. every day. He boasts he needs no alarm; his body has an inbuilt one. From his small room in Yeshwantpur he walks to the nearby Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) yard, one of the largest and busiest in the city.

Mr. Nagaraj works two seven-hour shifts a day at the yard where he helps load and unload produce brought in by traders from Bangalore's outskirts. He also helps in sales and takes home Rs. 200 on a good day.

For hundreds like him, this APMC yard is their primary source of livelihood. And now, as he puts it, their market and livelihoods are "under threat".



Mr. Nagaraj is referring to the State government's decision to allow foreign direct investment (FDI) in multi-brand retail. The announcement has caused quite a flutter in the market, though many say it was expected after the new government took over.

"This will be the end of the road for people like me," says Mr. Nagaraj, as he unloads a sack of onion from a lorry. He feels that there won't be any place for him in big department stores, and the market, where he earns to support his family, will simply shut down. Life for him, he says, is already a struggle with his daily wage supporting a family of six. His friend Manjanna, who is a head-load worker and salesman, adds that multinational companies (MNCs) won't bring in any jobs as there won't be any place for "uneducated, illiterate" labour. "They will only employ well-qualified salesmen. Where will people like me go?"

Srinivas M.B., owner of a shop in the APMC yard, has some well-informed arguments to present. He says the entry of big retailers such as Walmart destroyed the local trade and markets in Thailand. He adds that at this critical juncture, when the rupee is depreciating and the economy is already in trouble, allowing FDI would be the worst move. "It is going to result in large-scale unemployment."

### **Optimistic**

Shiva Kumar, another trader in the same market, is more optimistic. He believes that those who want fresh produce will never go to a supermarket. "There's a rapport between the customers and us that just doesn't exist in supermarkets. The one who will truly suffer will be the farmer, as he will be at the mercy of these retailers if they end up controlling the entire market."

Ravi Prakash, a market regular, chuckles when asked if he thinks FDI will affect his choice of market. “Why would I buy my vegetables wrapped in plastic when I can get them straight from the farm here?” As he pays Mr. Nagaraj for his purchase, the latter smiles, despite the fact that the amount is much lower than what he had asked for.

Now, that is something you won't see at a supermarket, will you?

### **Water released from Amaravathi Dam**



Water was released from Amaravathi Dam in Tirupur for irrigation on Friday.

Providing a big relief to farmers in Udumalpet and Madathukulam blocks, the Public Works Department has released water from Amaravathi Dam through eight channels on Friday.

The farmers in the said blocks have been looking for a good harvest in the current kharif season after suffering losses in 2012-13 fiscal due to severe drought.

Official sources told *The Hindu* that the water would be released at the rate of 300 cusecs for a total of 135 days in spells.

“The first spell of release will be for 21 days followed by a break of five days. Subsequently, water will be released in spells of 10 days with five days break in between,” a senior official of PWD (Water Resources Organisation) said.

The PWD officials had estimated release of 2,462.4 million cubic feet of water in the 135 days period.

The water level in the dam stood at 47.97 feet against the maximum of 90 feet at 4 p.m. on Friday.

The water was being released through the eight channels namely Kallapuram channel, Ramakulam channel, Kumaralingam channel, Sarkar Kannadipuram old channel, Solammadevi old channel, Kadathur old channel, Kaniyur channel and Karatholvu channel was expected to irrigate 7,520 acres (6,070 acres in Madathukulam block and 1,450 acres in Udumalpet block), sources said. "Mainly, the water can be used for raising paddy and also to wet the coconut already under cultivation," Joint Director of Agriculture Mohammed Kalimullah Sherif said.

Minister for Forest M.S.M. Anandan, Collector G. Govindaraj and District Panchayat chairman M. Shanmugam, were present to supervise the release of water.

### **Farmers delighted at heavy inflow into Mettur reservoir**



BACK ON FIELD: Farmers busy transplanting paddy for Kuruvai crop season at Periya Parruthikottai village near Thanjavur on Friday.—

PHOTO: B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Increase in the inflow of water to Mettur dam on Friday brought cheers to farmers of the delta region. The inflow rose to 19,892 cusecs by 4 p.m. on Friday as against 5,881 cusecs on Thursday. The water level increased to 21.42 ft on Friday as against 17.45 ft on Thursday.

Farmers of the delta districts of Thanjavur and Tiruvarur, who are closely watching the storage at Mettur dam, are happy over the increasing water level. The Public Works Department engineers here said there would be further increase in inflow as 30,000 cusecs of water had been released from Kabini in Karnataka which is likely to reach the dam by Saturday.

There would be a quantum jump in the inflow to the dam in the next couple of days, engineers said.

Improvement in storage at Mettur dam can help long-term samba crop and Kuruvai has to be restricted only to pumpset irrigated areas in the two districts.

Plans are afoot to raise Kuruvai on one lakh acres of land in Thanjavur district under pumpset irrigated areas. Officials are involved in implementing the special package for Kuruvai announced by the government. Tangedco has prepared a schedule of supplying three-phase power to pumpsets and is implementing the schedule. Power supply is given in two schedules of six hours each during day and night. Beneficiaries are being selected for providing pipes for taking water from rivers and ponds to the paddy fields.

The pipes will be supplied free of cost.

Kuruvai transplantation has been completed on 11,900 acres in pumpset irrigated areas in Thanjavur district so far.

Agriculture department officials said around 160 tonnes of ADT 43, ADT 36 and ADT 45 seeds and 4,258 tonnes of Urea, 2975 tonnes of Di-Ammonium Phosphate, 1,618 tonnes of Potash and 1,859 tonnes of Complex fertilisers are available in the district.

### **'Plan to develop precision farming on the anvil'**

The Agriculture and Horticulture departments will implement a plan to popularise precision farming technique among farmers through subsidy-based programme, said T. Munusamy, District Collector, in Nagapattinam on Friday. Speaking at the inaugural of a day-long seminar on "precision farming", Mr. Munusamy said that farmers were not fully aware of the advantages of precision farming technique. The technique was ideally suited for herbal and horticultural crops, including coconut, sugarcane, paddy, gingili besides promoting floriculture.

### **Farm loans rescheduled and not waived, says Collector**

*Farmers demand that all crop loans be written off*



note this point:A farmer speaking at the monthly farmers grievances' meeting in Tiruchi on Friday.— PHOTO: R.M. RAJARATHINAM

Owing to the hardship the farming community faced because of drought, loans obtained by them last year from both the nationalised and co-

operative banks are only “rescheduled” and “not waived”, District Collector Jayashree Muralidharan categorically told the agriculturists here on Friday. Presiding over the monthly agriculturists’ grievances’ meeting, she was responding to the threat held out by a number of farmer leaders that they might have to resort to a dharna if the banks failed to withdraw their decision to initiate action against the defaulters. They alleged that the bankers had threatened to publish the names of the defaulters with their photographs on news dailies. Besides, they charged the bankers for seizing their tractors against defaulting in repayments. They demanded that all the crop loans of farmers, irrespective of the banks, should be written off as the drought that they had faced was unprecedented and their plight was pathetic. The Collector first of all asked the bankers to respond.

### **Banks response**

Lead District Manager T. Ramadas said it had been decided at the State-level bankers’ meet to reschedule the term loan and the crop loan obtained by farmers last year. Those who could afford could even seek “one-time settlement” under which they would be able to get some interest concession. “The bankers are willing to accept such settlements.” The issue of notices to farmers with regard to their default in payment had been stopped, he added.

Abu Kalam, Deputy General Manager, State Bank of India, said the bank had deferred the collection drive in case of loans which were only one or two years old. “If the loans were as old as 10 years, there would have been action definitely,” he said. He made it clear that the bank was ready to extend whatever concession was announced by the government. For that,

it was imperative on the part of farmers to give a relevant application to banks.

Farmers raised the question as to what is being defined as “old loans”, because most of the loans had been waived in 2008, the bankers explained that it was only the small and marginal farmers who were given the full waiver in 2008. But those holding more than five acres were told then that they could get a concession of 25 per cent if they were to repay 75 per cent of the loan.”

However, many farmers were unwilling to accept this and continued to default and these were called old loans,” the bankers said. The Collector said: “Waiver is a policy decision and this can’t be taken by us.” She said she had requested the bankers to avoid any harsh measures. “But we should realise that bankers also have rules and the local officials cannot take any decision on their own,” she said. At the same time, she promised farmers that she would convey their sentiments to the government.

### **Red gram growers sore over decision on MSP**

The Karnataka Red Gram Growers’ Association has come down on the decision of the Cabinet Committee on Economic affairs (CCEA) to effect a minor increase in the minimum support price (MSP) for red gram. The association said CCEA had failing to respond to its demand for the MSP to be fixed at Rs. 5,000 a quintal.

Association president Basavaraj Ingin, in a statement here on Friday, said the CCEA’s decision came as a shock to farmers, who felt the Union government would adopt scientific approach in fixing MSP at least this year.

Mr. Ingin pointed out that it was surprising that MSP for green gram was Rs. 4,500 a quintal, while the MSP for red gram, which is more expensive to grow, was Rs. 4,300.

The MSP for black gram was Rs. 4,300 a quintal. CCEA also did not increase the MSP for jowar, another important crop in the region. It retained the MSP for jowar at Rs. 1,500 a quintal, Mr. Ingin observed.

The MSP fixed this year (Rs. 4,300) for red gram was also lower than what was announced last year by the State government. Keeping in mind the increase in the input cost for this crop, the government should fix the MSP at Rs. 5,000 a quintal.

Mr. Ingin also wanted CCEA to increase the MSP of jowar from Rs. 1,500 a quintal to Rs. 2,000.

The Hyderabad Karnataka Chamber of Commerce and Industry has also called for the MSP of red gram to be fixed at Rs. 5,000 a quintal.

### **Scientific advisory panel meeting**

The Scientific Advisory Committee meeting of the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Pappalapatti in Dharmapuri district was held recently to chalk out the course of future activities, according to a press release issued here. K. A. Ponnusamy, Director of Extension Education, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore, chaired the meeting. He explained the aims of the committee and lauded farmers V. Samikannu and K. Kadirvel for their inclusion in the 'State Level Successful Farmers' list. He also praised two young farmers who switched over from software to agriculture. N. Tamilselvan, Professor and Head, KVK presented a report on the action taken by the Kendra on previous recommendations. Farmers put forth their



problems and requirements. This was followed by suggestions from officials. KVK Newsletter was released. P. S. Shanmugam, Assistant Professor proposed a vote of thanks.

### **Call to save mango pulp industries from closure**

*They have been badly hit by shortage of water*

Out of the 74 mango pulp industries in the district, nine industries operated only with 30 per cent of their production capacity and fifteen industries extracted juice only from 100 to 500 tonnes to keep alive their Food Product Order Certification.

The rest of the industries had become idle because of reduction in mango production due to shortage of water for irrigation.

The industries which were functioning with three shifts a day for three months for extracting pulp every year could not maintain the tempo during the current year, said K.M. Rama Goundar, General Secretary, Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam here on Friday.

Keeping this in mind, the district administration should come forward to bail out pulp industries which are unable to sell their last year's production.

Besides this, loan accounts of many pulp industries were categorised as Non Performing Assets.

### **Loans**

Because of this, they were unable to obtain loan to continue their manufacturing during the current year.

In view of the hardship faced by the pulp industries, the association appealed to the Union Government to waive the interest on loans which

were categorised as Non Performing Assets (NPA) and extend Rs. 5 crore as subsidy to implement mechanisation in pulp production.

He also pleaded that the Union Government to waive tax to augment export of mango pulp and also extend uninterrupted power supply on a par with agriculture.

Mr. Rama Goundar also demanded that the government ensure that farmers get Rs. 25,000 per tonne for mango and extend crop loss compensation for loss due to heavy wind and thunder showers.

He sought compensation of Rs. 5,000 per tree that had withered during the current season.

### **Drop FDI decision or face protests, BJP tells government**

*Livelihood of 6 to 7 lakh people will be hit: Joshi*

Displeased over the delay in announcing reservation for the president and vice-president posts in urban local bodies, confusion over levy rice and the State government's decision to allow foreign direct investment (FDI) in the retail sector, Bharatiya Janata Party State unit president Pralhad Joshi has served an ultimatum on the government to sort these issues immediately.

Addressing presspersons here on Friday, Mr. Joshi said that the new government had already created confusion through contradictory statements from its Ministers, including the Chief Minister, and said if Siddaramaiah failed to set things right, the BJP would launch a Statewide agitation.

On the State government's proposed move to procure more rice for the Re. 1 per kg rice scheme, Mr. Joshi said that increased procurement under the

levy system would lead to escalation of the price of rice, which would benefit blackmarketeers.

Levy rice is procured by the State government for making it available to those who are dependant on the public distribution system (PDS), thus ensuring the availability of foodgrains at a subsidised rate. Mr. Joshi said that the proposed move was unscientific and against farmers' interests. "If the Chief Minister doesn't drop the move then we will launch an agitation with the support of farmers", he said.

Mr. Joshi said that BJP had opposed the move at the Central level and had not allowed it while the party was in power in Karnataka. "There are approximately 1,20,000 retail shops in the State, of which nearly 70 per cent are in urban areas. The decision to allow FDI will affect the livelihood of nearly six to seven lakh people," he said. Mr. Joshi said that the party would appeal to retail sector workers to launch an agitation. "They have to come out of the false impression that FDI will bring in more jobs and launch an agitation. We will support them," he said.

He said the government's announcement that PDS rice would not be supplied for above poverty line (APL) card holders had resulted in a mad rush for the below poverty line (BPL) cards.

While the Minister for Food and Civil Supplies had been issuing statements on issuing BPL cards to those residing in RCC houses and owning television sets and motorcycles, there was no official circular to the department officials on the same, he said. Mr. Joshi said the BJP was protesting against the confusion created by the Chief Minister.

MLA Aravind Bellad, former MLA Virabhadrapa Halaharavi and Hubli-Dharwad unit president Mahesh Tenginakai were present.

## **KAU to codify high-tech farm protocols**

Protocols for protected cultivation are being codified by the Kerala Agricultural University, P. Rajendran, KAU Vice-Chancellor, has said.

He was addressing a meeting here on Friday to inaugurate a two-day State-level workshop on 'Hi-tech agriculture' organised by the KAU's Communication Centre.

He said promotion of high-tech agriculture was important as climatic extremes were affecting normal cultivation.

"Hi-tech farming will help overcome the difficulties posed by climate change. The initial scepticism towards the method has been replaced by trust. If the cost of irrigation implements and building greenhouses is brought down, more people will take up protected farming. The KAU intends to develop easy-to-use agricultural implements, and cheaper, lighter alternatives to components being used now," he said.

## **Goals**

Presiding over the function, P.V. Balachandran, KAU Director of Extension, stressed the need for increasing production of vegetables and fruits, and having better facilities for storing, processing them.

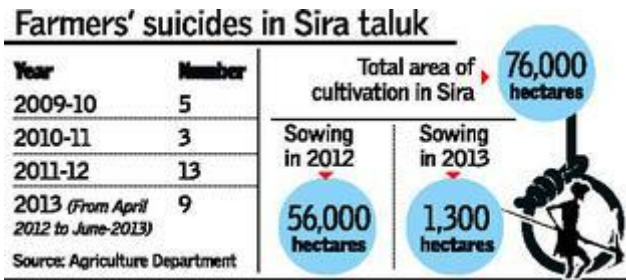
He reminded the audience, which included agriculturists and farm officials, of the bad experience of farmers who achieved record production without having an assured market.

## **Book released**

A book on guidelines to hi-tech farming was released by the Vice-Chancellor. A.M. Ranjith, professor and head, Communication Centre, Jim Thomas, Associate Director of Research, and scientist P. Suseela spoke.

## Post-suicide, farmers' families stare at debt burden in drought-hit Karnataka

*Even those who meet eligibility criteria for compensation are not getting their dues*



“I lost everything, including my son, to drought,” says 70-year-old Muddakka, whose son Nagendrappa committed suicide in January this year.

He had taken loans from a moneylender to sink a borewell in Bevinahalli in Sira taluk, which has been reeling under drought for three years. Like many other borewells in the area, his too did not yield water, pushing him into a debt trap.

### From private lenders

The family has not received compensation because he had borrowed from private moneylenders. Only families of farmers who have borrowed from nationalised banks or cooperative societies get compensation.

Nagendrappa grew horse gram and toor dal in his two acres and raised a loan of Rs. 80,000 to dig a borewell as there had been no rain. Even after drilling more than 700 ft, he didn't hit water.

The wife of the deceased, N.R. Sumithra, and Ms. Muddakka work as daily wage workers, earning Rs. 50 each a day. Ms. Sumithra has four daughters aged between one and 10.

## **Nine kill themselves**

According to the Agriculture Department, nine farmers have committed suicide in Sira taluk from April 2012 till June 24, 2013. The number of suicides was five in 2009-10, three in 2010-11 and 12 in 2011-12.

Of the sowing area of 76,000 hectares in the taluk, cultivation was done in 56,000 hectares last year, which shrunk to 1,300 hectares this year. In 2011-12, the estimated crop loss was 45 per cent; in 2012-13 it was more than 50 per cent.

Even those who meet the eligibility criteria to receive compensation are not getting their dues.

The family of Eranna, who committed suicide on February 11, 2012, at M. Dasarahalli, is yet to get compensation because the Agriculture Department says there are no funds.

## **Pressure from creditors**

His daughter Shruthi told *The Hindu*: “My mother works as a labourer and private moneylenders come to our house and ask us to clear the debt.” He had borrowed from both institutional and non-institutional sources.

Minister for Law and district-in-charge Minister T.B. Jayachandra told *The Hindu* that funds will be released by July 6 and compensation to the farmers’ families will be given immediately.

## **Recent case**

The Minister was in the taluk to visit the family of Jayarama Reddy, who committed suicide on June 21 this year, at Melkunte Gollahalli in Sira taluk. The 44-year-old marginal farmer had raised a total loan of Rs. 1.5 lakh from institutional sources and private lenders to sink a borewell that failed.

Mr. Reddy's wife Sannathyamma, who has three daughters, told *The Hindu* that she was worried about the future of her daughters.

The Minister said the only long-term solution is to recharge the groundwater table by filling the Madalur tank with water.

State Secretary of Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sanga Devaraj B.S. demanded the government to increase the compensation from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 5 lakh to provide self-employment to members of the deceased farmers' families.

### **Plea to release Krishna water for kharif**

The Andhra Pradesh Rytanga Samakhya has urged the government to take steps for release of Krishna water for kharif operations under the Krishna-Eluru canal ayacut. Adopting a resolution in this regard at its meeting here, the Samakhya expressed its anguish over the kharif operations getting hampered by the alleged dilly-dallying by the government in release of the Krishna water from the Nagarjunasagar.

Even as the water level in the Nagarjunasagar was maintained at 520 ft, the government was not willing to let water flow into the Srisailem reservoir and the Prakasam barrage downstream allegedly under pressure from the Telangana people. Consequently, the fate of the Krishna delta spread in Guntur, Krishna and partly in West Godavari and Prakasam districts has come under a question. The farmers are not preparing to raise seedbeds yet for want of water, said Mr. Maganti Sitarama Swamy, president of the Samakhya. He recalled that the farmers in the Krishna delta had foregone two rabi crops successively due to water crisis. The meeting has resolved to stage a dharna at the Collectorate on July 1 for release of the Krishna

water at the earliest. An extent of 54,000 acres is under the K-E canal ayacut in West Godavari district.

### **Ensure purchase of Bengal gram'**

With no takers for hybrid varieties of Bengal gram, Prakasam district Collector G.S.R.K.R.Vijaykumar on Friday urged State Chief Secretary P K Mohanty to come to the rescue of farmers by ensuring market intervention by the Central and the State government agencies.

The farmers in the drought-prone district cultivated hybrid varieties of Bengal gram like KAK-2 and Mexican bold variety in over one lakh hectares and produce 20 lakh quintals of the premier pulse crop every year, he pointed out in a letter to the Chief Secretary.

NAFED and MARKFED should be pressed into service to bail out the farmers who were saddled with 30 per cent of last year crop in cold storage besides this year's yield, he felt. Imports from Australia and Canada were adding to the woes of farmers, he added. These varieties were mostly consumed in North India and abroad. The pulse crop traded weak in the NCDEX at Rs. 3,210 per quintal. The Collector's letter came in the wake of agitation by farmers' organisations for a reasonable price for superior varieties of Bengal gram, which were fetching farmers over 7,500 per quintal last year. A delegation of farmers had also met Union Commerce Minister Anand Sharma last month to press for putting curbs on imports.



## **Promote jackfruit as a vegetable for food security'**

*The fruit is pesticide free and is gaining popularity as a dummy meat, says agricultural journalist*

Shree Padre, senior agricultural journalist and Executive Editor of Adike Pathrike, a Kannada farm magazine, said here on Friday that the need of the hour is to promote jackfruit as a vegetable.

Delivering the key note address at the fourth Annual Jackfruit Festival, organised by the Krishi Vignana Kendra, Mr. Padre said that 70 per cent of jackfruit produced in the country was underused and wasted. He said that jackfruit was pesticide free, had rich dietary fibre content and vitamins and was gaining popularity as a “dummy meat” in some countries.

“Jackfruit cultivation should be promoted for local food security, food safety and small farmer security,” he said, and suggested that the government should “review your priority of promoting value-added products of jackfruit.

## **Jack of all snacks**

*Jam, juice, squash, chips, pappad, bulbs in brine all make it to Halasina Mela*



Visitors getting a taste of different varieties of jackfruit at a 'jackfruit mela' in Mangalore on Friday. The fair will end today.— PHOTO: H.S. MANJUNATH

Bhagyashri of Manki Stand here had a doubt after purchasing a sapling of 'red rudrakshi' variety of jackfruit from a stall at the two-day jackfruit mela which began on the premises Krishi Vignana Kendra at Yekkur here on Friday.

She returned to the stall of Toobagere Jackfruit Growers' Association (under Bangalore rural district) and asked: "Will it grow here?"

"Sure. But there may be slight change in the taste and colour of bulbs depending on the weather and soil condition here," replied a farmer member of the association. Ms. Bhagyashri who had paid Rs. 150 for the sapling was convinced. She told *The Hindu* that she was attracted towards the small size of 'red rudrakshi' variety of jackfruit and purchased it. "I fell in love with this fruit as this variety is not available here," she said.

Secretary of the association M.G. Ravi Kumar said that 'red rudrakshi' variety was best suited for cultivation by urbanites. It grew up to a maximum of 20 ft. in height and its canopy spreads up to 10 ft. wide. It started yielding by fifth or sixth year of planting. The saplings sold at the stall were a year old. A tree usually bore between 150 and 300 fruits a year. Jackfruit lovers in cities having more than five cents of land could plant at least a sapling of this variety. Many people in Bangalore market preferred to purchase this variety as it was easy to carry it due to its small size.

This stall was the cynosure of all eyes at the 'halasina mela' (jackfruit festival) as its farmer member were selling bulbs of 'red rudrakshi' and

'chandra halasu', another variety, and as well as the whole fruit. There was more demand for bulbs as they were ready to eat. If the bulbs of 'red rudrakshi' were small in size the other variety had large bulbs. By noon, this stall had emptied all the stocks of 'chandra halasu' fruits and a few fruits of 'red rudrakshi' were remaining. The bulbs were being sold at Rs. 30 per a dozen.

Vijayalakshmi, who bought 'sarvada' variety of jackfruit sapling from a stall of Varanashi Research Foundation, said she wanted to plant it at her place at Shirva in Udupi. She said she had heard about this all season fruit bearing variety for the first time.

Varanashi Krishnamurthy, founder of the foundation, said it had collected the saplings of 70 varieties.

Renuka Vijayan has displayed jackfruit jam, juice and squash. Sunita R Shenoy has displayed jackfruit pickle, pappad and jam. She said that buns, dosa, podi, ambade could be made from jackfruit.

Desi Uthana Associates has displayed 12 varieties of raw rice. According to Ramakrishna K M, its managing director, cooked Rajamudi variety of rice could be kept for two days. It would not spoil, he said.

Other stalls have jackfruit chips and other products like tender jackfruit bulbs in brine for sale. One can see long jackfruit called 'meter jackfruit' and local 'rudrakshi' small size variety of jackfruit of Vagga in Bantwal taluk at the mela.

### **Crop loss: farmers seek compensation**

The All India Kisan Sabha has urged the government to assess the crop loss caused by the monsoon rains and release adequate compensation for

farmers. A press release issued by the sabha here called on the State government to release the assistance without waiting for Central aid. —  
Special Correspondent

### **Biju S. Balan fellowship presented**

The Biju S. Balan fellowship, instituted by Keraleeyam, was presented to Sheena Prasad at a function here on Friday.

Addressing the gathering, Devinder Sharma, food and agricultural policy analyst, said the media were not paying attention to the agrarian crisis in the country.

“We are going through hard times. Food insecurity is staring us in the face. But the crisis do not find enough space in the media,” he said.

A major problem in the farm sector was the search for solutions from the West.

“We have discarded our indigenous knowledge and gone after solutions offered by the West.

Traditional breeds of Indian cattle are reared by farmers of Brazil.

Their milk yield is high. But the breeds are not promoted in India,” he said. Scientist S. Shankar and Robin Keraleeyam also spoke.

### **Foundation Day of TNAU**

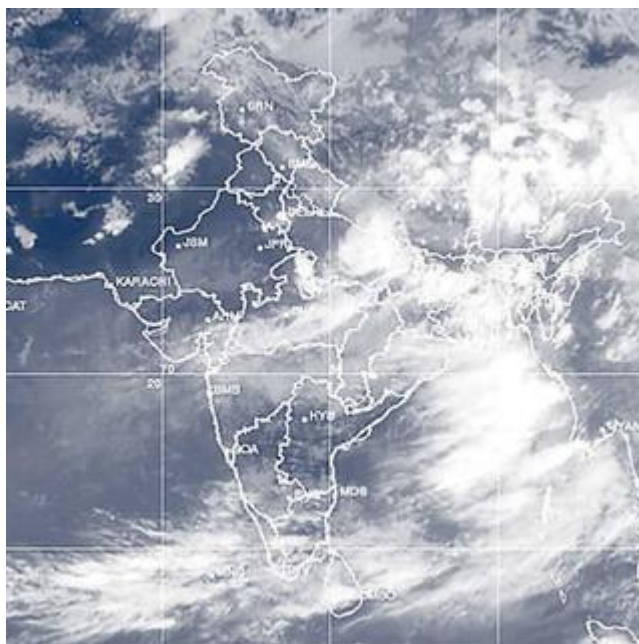
The 43rd Foundation Day of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University will be held here on July1.

Minister of Agriculture S. Damodaran will be the chief guest and distribute awards and certificates of merit to the TNAU staff, according to a release.

Swapan Kumar Datta, Deputy Director General of Crop Science, Indian Council for Agricultural Research, will deliver the Foundation Day address. Other experts will be present for the event.

K. Ramasamy, Vice-Chancellor, TNAU, will preside over the event

### weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on June 28th.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	38	26	0	154
New Delhi (Sfd)	37	26	2	115
Chandigarh	33	25	15	211
Hissar	41	28	0	101
Bhuntar	26	19	4	143
Shimla	22	17	11	291
Jammu	33	22	24	100

Srinagar	23	19	7	48
Amritsar	33	23	1	137
Patiala	34	25	20	143
Jaipur	38	27	0	163
Udaipur	34	27	0	93
Allahabad	30	25	126	242
Lucknow	29	23	62	233
Varanasi	30	26	16	95
Dehradun	29	23	24	86
Agartala	30	26	tr	361
Ahmedabad	36	26	0	103
Bangalore	29	20	7	161
Bhubaneswar	35	25	0	292
Bhopal	25	23	17	459
Chennai	38	24	23	146
Guwahati	31	26	1	290
Hyderabad	33	23	0	203
Kolkata	33	28	0	315
Mumbai	30	27	4	941
Nagpur	29	25	1	457
Patna	34	26	26	90
Pune	28	23	3	293
Thiruvananthapuram	32	24	0	399
Imphal	31	24	tr	104
Shillong	21	19	9	365

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 Punjab and east Uttar Pradesh and active in Himachal Pradesh and west Uttar Pradesh. The axis of Monsoon trough at MSL passes through Sriganaganagar, Delhi, Lucknow and centre of low pressure area and thence southeast wards.

**RAINFALL:** Rain/thundershowers have occurred at most places over Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and east Uttar Pradesh, at many places over Punjab and west Uttar Pradesh, at a few places over Haryana and Uttarakhand and at isolated places over east Rajasthan. Weather was mainly dry over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (5 cm and above) HARYANA: Rohtak 6 and Gharaunda 5, HIMACHAL PRADESH: Nahan 10, Kandaghat 9, Mehre Barsar 8, Jhandutta 7, Berthin and Dharampur 6 each and Una and Kasauli 5 each, PUNJAB : Kapurthala 10 and Phillaur 7, EAST RAJASTHAN: Mandrayal 6 and Rupbas and Karauli 5 each, EAST UTTAR PRADESH: (6 cm and above) Chhatnag and Chanderghat 20 each, Tarabganj and Karwi 19 each, Ayoadhya and Palliakalan 16 each, Attarra, Beberu and Bara 15 each, Allahabad, Kanpur, Basti and Dalmau 13 each, Domeriaganj 12, Fursatganj, Salon, Rae Bareilly and Utarala 11 each, Manakapur and Handia 10 each, Mau and Safipur 9 each, Fatehpur and Unnao 8 each, Sultanpur 7 and Lucknow 6, WEST UTTAR PRADESH: Chillaghat 12, Hamirpur and Auraiya 6 each and Anoopshahar, Hapur, Narora and Jasrana 5 each and UTTARAKHAND: Nanital 5.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 30th June 2013:** Rain/thundershowers may occur at many places over Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places over rest of the region outside west Rajasthan where it will be one or two places.

**FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 30th June 2013:** Generally cloudy sky. Rain/thundershowers may occur in some areas.





# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## **Do not change Mandi Act: Farmers to Akhilesh Yadav**

A delegation of farmers led by Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait met UP chief minister Akhilesh Yadav with a set of demands on Friday.

The delegation demanded non-application of contract farming and continuance of ban on use of genetically modified seeds in agricultural practices. The farmers also demanded the CM not to change the Mandi Act.

To this, the CM assured the farmers that the state government would not bring into effect contract farming and would continue to impose a ban on use of genetically engineered seeds. Akhilesh also said that the state government will also consider opening of gene bank and seed bank where indigenous seeds will be preserved.

On the issue of payment towards the cane farmers, the CM said that the farmers will be paid their dues at the latest by next month. He said that the state government will take strict action against the erring sugar mills.

The farmers also demanded the CM to keep the farmers away from the ambit of revised power tariff. To this, the chief minister is reportedly told the farmers that the state government will be providing adequate subsidy to keep the farmers away from the impact of power tariff hike.

## **ECR joins 100m tonne freight club**

East Central Railway (ECR), set up about 11 years ago with divisions in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand, has for the first time joined the club of railway zones carrying 100 million tonnes of freight during 2012-13.

Together with passenger ticket sale proceeds, the railway zone's total revenue inched close to Rs 10,000 crore during the last fiscal year.

"ECR has crossed the psychological barrier of carrying over 100 million tonnes of freight annually. Its joining the 'club 100 million tonne' gives to ECR its moment of joy," said ECR chief general manager (CGM)

Madhuresh Kumar here on Friday. During 2012-13, it carried 102 million tonnes of freight - an increase of more than 8% over the 2011-12 mark.

The freight revenue was a record Rs 8,273 crore in 2012-13, an increase of 30% over the 2011-12 figure of Rs 6,352 crore.

According to Kumar, the number of train passengers in ECR was 27.81 crore during 2012-13, yielding a record revenue of Rs 1,634 crore. "The earnings from freight and passenger tickets have shown an increasing trend during the first quarter of the current fiscal year," he said.

Kumar said the ECR took innovative steps in freight carriage, as 11 maize loading terminals were established in the maize producing areas of Bihar to help farmers export their maize. The terminals were established at Barauni, Khagaria, Mansi, Naugachhia, Kursela, Semapur, Hasanpur Road, Salauna, Sonbarsa, Saharsa and Madhepura railway stations.

During the first quarter of 2012-13, as much as 7.5 lakh tonnes of maize, valued at around Rs 950 crore, was transported through 215 rail rakes.

"ECR is helping maize farmers in a big way in Bihar. Around 290 rakes of maize is expected to be transported during the first quarter of the current fiscal year," Kumar said.

He said ECR was in consultation with the representatives of Bihar Industries Association and Bihar Chamber of Commerce and Industries as well as Bihar government officials concerned to encourage private

entrepreneurs to make use of the opportunities offered by the railways in the construction of "dry ports" under its private freight terminal policy. Such dry ports would be constructed at Bihta in Patna district and Mansi in Khagaria district, Kumar said.

He said the upcoming 4.92-km-long rail-cum-road bridge across the Ganga between Patna and Pahleja ghat would be completed by March 2015.

"Earlier, it was to be only a rail bridge, but later in 2006-07 it was decided to make it a rail-cum-road bridge. It is the longest such bridge in the country. Everything from cost to designing had to be changed. It caused the delay," Kumar said, adding the completion target date for the Munger rail bridge is December next year.

### **Prawn farmers want benefits on par with agriculture sector**

Over 3,500 farmers in the coastal districts are pinning their hopes on the new government to notify prawn farming as a form of agriculture.

The assurance given by the state government in this regard about 18 years ago in April 6, 1995 has not fulfilled yet. With prawn farming not notified as a form of agriculture, farmers will not get the benefits like subsidized diesel, electricity at concessional rates and support price for the yield.

Prawn farming is done in about 4,925 hectares in the Karnataka coast and experts say that 8,000 hectares in the coastal districts is fit for it. In Kundapur taluk alone, there are 200 aquafarming ponds. However, farmers are wary of taking up prawn farming as it is not considered as a form of agriculture.

## **Breeding centres inactive**

Government-initiated fingerlings breeding centres in the region are inactive and the farmers are buying fingerlings from Chennai which is expensive.

The cost of preparing a pond for aquaculture in one acre will be Rs 8-10 lakh, and the farmers will also have to spend an additional Rs 5 lakh on electricity, fencing, labour charges and to install CCTV cameras.

Karnataka coastal prawns farmers' union general secretary Sridhar

Hegde told TOI that prawn farmers are hopeful that

the Congress government will take steps to notify prawn farming as a form of agriculture and will give them all benefits that farmers in the state are entitled.

"We want the government to provide us free electricity to run pump sets up to 20 horse power. Farmer's licences should be given through online mechanism to simplify the procedures. We also request the government to give bank loans with less interest and provide diesel, machineries and medicines at subsidized rates. Cold chain facilities should be made available to store our produce yield," he added.

## Farm Fresh

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During all of Karen Anand's travels abroad, her sightseeing itinerary was little different from the normal tourist spots. In London, her favourite haunt was the BADA market; in Paris, there were corner markets; and in Verona, the Piazza delle Erbe or the local herbs market. For the culinary expert, there was, of course, the charm of finding fresh produce directly from the local farms.

But what really appealed to her was the festival-like spirit that surrounded these markets. "The market in London has music playing, there are restaurants and food demonstrations, samplings and other events," she says.

"What I really wanted to bring back from my travels are the markets they have there. I want it to be a complete day out. In Verona, the Piazza delle Erbe is a lovely little market of herbs but apart from food, there were also souvenirs and other things. And around the market, there were several cafes so that you could finish your shopping with a cup of coffee," she recalls. So when Anand began organising the Pune Farmers' Market, she had the same vision of a festive marketplace in her mind. This Sunday, the Farmers Market returns at The Westin, Koregaon Park.

The edition will not only have stalls that sell fresh produce and kitchen equipment, but will also offer wines, cosmetics and baked items. Most of the products have been sourced from local farms.

Apart from the stalls, the market will have two additions this time: a theatre for food discussions and demonstrations, as well as six pop-up restaurants from across the city. The restaurants will offer a variety of cuisine, ranging from Lebanese to Mediterranean to South Indian.

At the theatre, there will be wine and coffee appreciation talks, a kebab-making demonstration by celebrity chef Ajay Chopra, and sushi and vegan demonstrations. There will also be a makeover session where Bharti Malani will explain how natural cosmetics can help to achieve the perfect glow. "There will be tables where home cooks or amateurs can try and see whether their recipes work," she says.

## Weather-Chennai

### Today's Weather



**Saturday, Jun 29**

Partly Cloudy

Max Min

37° | 26°

Rain: 2.2

Sunrise: 05:26

Humidity: 89

Sunset: 07:22

Wind: normal

Barometer: 999

### Tomorrow's Forecast



**Sunday, Jun 30**

Cloudy

Max Min

34° | 27°

### Extended Forecast for a week

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

Jul 1

Jul 2

Jul 3

Jul 4

Jul 5



33° | 26°

33° | 27°

31° | 27°

32° | 26°

31° | 27°

Cloudy

Overcast

Overcast

Sunny

Partly Cloudy

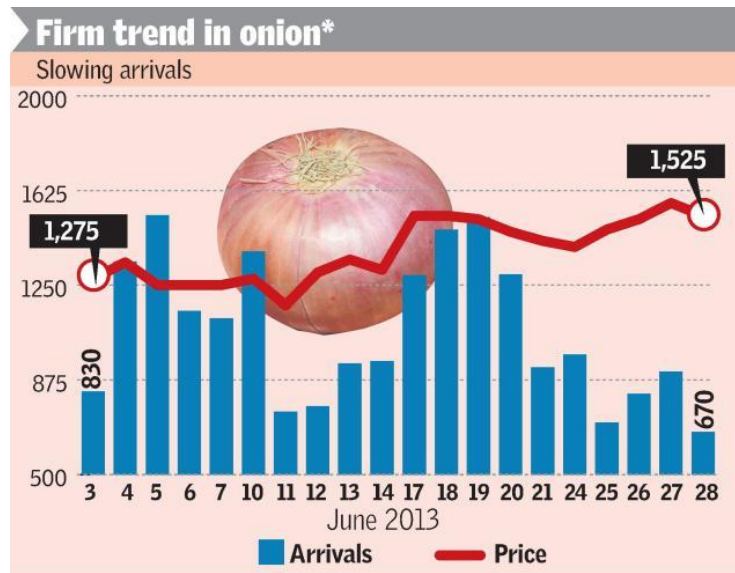
### Airport weather

Rain: 2.2 Sunrise: 05:26

Humidity: 89 Sunset: 07:22

Wind: normal Barometer: 999

**Onion surges as farmers hold on to stocks**



\*Arrivals in tonnes, modal price in Rs/quintal at Lasalgaon APMC in Maharashtra

Onion prices rose above Rs 1,500 a quintal this week as farmers are releasing their produce slowly in the market. “Farmers are bringing only limited quantity to the market. But the kharif crop could be higher,” said R.P. Gupta, Director of National Horticulture Research and Development Foundation. “Prices are up because the crop this year is at least 40 per cent lower compared with last year. This is due to drought in key growing states of Maharashtra and Karnataka,” said C.B. Holkar, Vice-President of the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation. Onion prices have increased Rs 300 a quintal this month. On Friday, the modal price or the rate at which most trades took place was Rs 1,525 at Lasalgaon Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee yard. Arrivals were a meagre 670 tonnes against around 1,5,00 tonnes early last week. “In view of a lower crop, the stocks with farmers are also low,” said Holkar. A trading



source said that prices were rising since traders were also cashing in on the lower arrivals. "Farmers also seem to be holding back their produce," the sources said. "Farmers need liquidity. They will begin selling soon," said Holkar. "Prices could begin tapering from August-end since kharif arrivals will begin, at least in Karnataka," said Gupta. "Prices have not really gone up due to lower crop because Madhya Pradesh is now meeting the demand from North India. Maharashtra onion is meeting the demand of the South," said Holkar. With monsoon being bountiful, kharif onion production could be higher in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka, said Gupta. "Onion growing regions in Karnataka have got good rains," said Holkar. "Arrivals could increase as we head towards kharif arrivals," said Gupta. Export demand, on the other hand, is subdued. "Our prices are current levels are not competitive in the global market where countries such as Pakistan can give at lower prices," said Gupta. "Export is happening but in a small way," said Holkar. Prices are likely to rule firm until arrivals pick up, according to traders.

## Sugar futures drop on glut scenario



Sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale market dropped by Rs 3-5 a quintal on Friday as some stockists sold the commodity at lower rates. Bold M-grade variety sold Rs 10 higher. Naka and mill tender rates were unchanged as producers continued selling, while the demand was hand-to-mouth due to month end. In futures market, July and August contracts dropped by over Rs 30 a quintal or one per cent, the lowest since May 9 on subdued demand amidst surplus supply.

Sources said that prices in the Vashi spot market ruled weak on slack local month-end demand. Limited activities kept Naka and mill's trades routine. . Meanwhile, the Federation of Associations of Maharashtra (FAM) has decided in the meeting of June 19 that the entire trade (wholesalers, retailers and transporters) will observe total bandh on July 15 and 16 to protest against the LBT in Maharashtra, said sources. Arrivals in the Vashi market, outstripped demand since the beginning of the month. About 64-65 truckloads (each 100 bags) arrived in the market while local despatches were limited to 58-60 loads. Inventory stocks increased to 125-130 loads now.

On Thursday, 18-20 mills offered tenders and sold about 78,000-80,000 bags at Rs 2,920-2,980 for S-grade and Rs 3,000-3,090 for M-grade. On

the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, sugar July futures dropped by Rs 33 to Rs 2,987 (Rs 3,020), August lost by Rs 26 to Rs 3,047 (Rs 3,073) and September dipped by Rs 32 to Rs 3,095 (Rs 3,127) till noon. The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S-grade Rs 3,062-3,126 (Rs 3,062-3,126) and M-grade Rs 3,184-3,301 (Rs 3,162-3,301). 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).

### **Carryover stocks likely to cap cotton's fall**



Cotton prices took a breather after surging to Rs 42,000 in the earlier part of the week. Kapas or raw cotton moved down marginally on Friday. According to market sources, demand has declined in the last couple of sessions. Gujarat Sankar-6 traded at Rs 41,200-41,400 for a candy of 356 kg (for medium quality) and the best quality ruled at Rs 41,500-41,800.

The variety traded at Rs 40,900-41,500 in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. Kapas moved down by Rs 10 to Rs 1,070-1,100 for a maund of 20 kg in Saurashtra and Kadi delivery kapas quoted at Rs 1,100-1,125. About 5,000-6,000 bales of cotton arrived in Gujarat and 15,000-17,000 bales arrived in India. The Cotton Corporation of India has sold

36,300 bales of cotton at Rs 41,600-43,200 for a candy on Thursday. Cotton brokers and traders said that prices may decline further next week but it will be limited as carryover stocks are low and demand will continue in the coming days.

### **Imported vegetable oils slip as rupee rebounds**

Imported vegetable oils, palmolein and soyabean oil, dropped on the edible oils market on Friday as selling pressure increased, the futures market turned bearish and the rupee rebounded against the dollar. Sunflower oil increased by Rs 5, while rapeseed oil was flat. Local demand was need-based. On Friday, hardly 200-250 tonnes of palmolein were sold at Rs 524. Resellers offloaded about 80-100 tonnes. Soyabean arrivals were about 1.20 lakh-1.25 lakh bags including 60,000-65,000 bags in Madhya Pradesh and prices were Rs 3,550-3,570 ex-mandi and Rs 3,650-3,670 for plant delivery. Mustard seeds arrivals were 1.35 lakh-1.40 lakh bags, including 80,000 bags in Rajasthan and prices were Rs 3,025-3,500. Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 545, super palmolein Rs 580 and super deluxe Rs 600. Ruchi quoted palmolein Rs 548, soyabean refined oil Rs 660-663 and sunflower refined oil Rs 810. In Rajkot, groundnut oil declined by Rs 10 to Rs 1,400 (Rs 1,410) for *telia* tin and Rs 900 (Rs 910) for loose 10 kg.

**On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange**, soyabean refined oil's July futures dropped further by Rs 7.45 to Rs 671.90 (Rs 679.35), August down by Rs 7.95 to Rs 663.55 (Rs 671.50) and September declined by Rs 5.85 to Rs 658.50 (Rs 664.35).

**Malaysia BMD crude palm oil's** July contracts settled lower at MYR 2,337 (MYR 2,348), August at MYR 2,345 (MYR 2,359) and September at MYR 2,344 (MYR 2,355) a tonne.

**The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were:** Groundnut oil 935 (930), soya refined oil 665 (669), sunflower exp. ref. 740 (735), sunflower ref. 805 (800), rapeseed ref. oil 695 (695), rapeseed expeller ref. 665 (665) cottonseed ref. oil 658 (661) and palmolein 528 (530).

### **Turmeric may gain more next week**

Turmeric prices gained on arrival of quality produce and demand from upcountry. "Exporters and traders have received some orders. So, they quoted higher prices. Further, prices were higher at Nizamabad, Warangal and Sangli too. Of the 3,500 bags that arrived, 60 per cent was sold. The traders are expecting further hike in prices next week," said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

Due to rain in North India, local traders and exporters have received only limited orders. Everyone expects more orders from the last week of July. Farmers said about 3,000 bags will arrive every day from next week in the markets. Prices increased by Rs 200 a quintal for the finger variety and by Rs 150 for the root variety in almost in all markets. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,199-7,009, the root variety Rs 4,036-6,189.

**Salem hybrid crop:** The finger variety was sold at Rs 6,089-8,019, the root variety Rs 5,811-6,689. Of 678 bags that arrived, 301 were sold. At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 6,009-7,046, the root variety Rs 5,400-6,234. Of 494 bags on offer, 395 were picked up. At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety

was sold at Rs 6,199-7,010, the root variety Rs 5,289-6,299. At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,369-6,912, the root variety Rs 4,760-6,212. All the 27 bags were sold.

### **Rupee's recovery may cap uptrend in masoor**

Bullish trend in masoor continuing for the past few days has halted with the strengthening of the rupee against the dollar in the international market. On Friday, masoor (bold) declined to Rs 4,450 a quintal, and masoor (medium) Rs 4,000. Masoor prices on the ship were quoted at Rs 4,175-4,200, while in the container, it ruled at Rs 4,325.

With depletion of domestic stock, dependency on imported tur has increased. Rise in spot masoor also lifted dal by about Rs 100 with masoor dal (average) quoted at Rs 5,050-75, masoor dal (medium) at Rs 5,125-50, masoor dal (bold) to Rs 5,252-50. Sluggish demand and buying support have also dragged moong and urad with moong (best) declining to Rs 4,800-5,000, while moong (medium) at Rs 4,400-4,600.

Moong dal remained unchanged with moong dal (medium) quoted at Rs 6,100-6,200, moong dal (bold) at Rs 5,750-5,800, while moong mongar ruled at Rs 7,000. Urad also declined on weak demand with urad (bold) being quoted at Rs 3,400-3,450, while urad (medium) ruled at Rs 3,000-3,200. Urad dal on the other hand remained unchanged with urad dal (medium) quoted at Rs 4,100-4,200, urad dal (bold) at Rs 4,700-4,800, while urad mongar ruled at Rs 5,600-5,900.

## **Wheat futures likely to turn weak**

A weak movement is likely to be witnessed in the coming days in futures market, while a steady trend is expected in the physical market in the coming days on account of comfortable stocks.

Around 900 bags of wheat arrived and were directly offloaded at the mills. Moderate buying kept wheat and flour prices unaltered on Friday. Radhey Shyam, a commodity expert, told *Business Line* that since the demand matched supply, prices were unchanged. In the absence of any major market moving factors, dara and flour prices are ruling firm and may continue to rule around current levels for the next few days, too, he added. Inconsistent rainfall has also disturbed the trade. In the physical market, after witnessing a fall earlier this week, dara wheat remained unchanged and sold at Rs 1,530-1,535 a quintal. Mill delivery was at Rs 1,530 while delivery at the chakki was at Rs 1,535.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, a negative tone was witnessed at the futures market. Wheat for July contracts eased by Rs 3 and traded at 1,568 with an open interest of 13,870 lots. The grain had touched a high at Rs 1,571 earlier in the day. August contracts went down by Rs 2 and traded at Rs 1,583. While, wheat spot prices on the exchange traded at Rs 1,470. Following a steady trend in wheat, flour too ruled flat and quoted at Rs 1,800 . Similarly, Chokar witnessed a steady trend and sold at Rs 1,225-1,250 .

## Pepper continues to head North on strong demand



Pepper prices continued to head north on strong demand amid tight availability following non-arrival of the material from the primary markets, market sources said. Consequently, all the active contracts on the national exchange and the IPSTA and on the spot shot up on Friday. Movement from the growing areas has been disrupted because of rains and landslides, primary market dealers in Kumily said today.

There were no arrivals at the terminal market and, hence, no trading has been reported. There were in fact no sellers, while buyers were many, they said. The closing prices on the NMCE were for July, and Sep were up by Rs 581 and Rs 791 respectively to close at Rs 40,810 and Rs 40,600 a quintal while Aug dropped by Rs 122 to close at Rs 41,000. Total open interest decreased by 11 tonnes to 142 tonnes. Total turnover dropped by 36 tonnes to 67 tonnes. On the IPSTA, July, Aug and Sep prices moved up by Rs 500, Rs 440 and Rs 440 respectively to close at Rs 39,935, Rs 39,813 and Rs 39,814. Spot prices soared by Rs 1,000 to close at Rs 38,500 (ungarbled) and Rs 40,000 (garbled) a quintal on strong demand. Indian parity in the international market moved up to \$7,050 a tonne (c&)



for Europe and around \$7,200 a tonne (c&f) for the US at July prices as the rupee gained against the dollar coupled with the rise in prices here.

### **Copra prices improve; coconut oil decreases**

Copra prices increased but coconut oil prices decreased on Friday at the Avalpoondurai Regulated Market Committee here. Copra prices increased by Rs 100 a quintal. Sellers from Erode, Gobichettipalayam and Pollachi area brought 1,000 quintal (2,000 bags) of copra for sale. Buyers were from various coconut oil crushing belts in Tamil Nadu.

The fine variety copra quoted at Rs 4,410-4,845 and second variety at Rs 3,735-4,575. Both varieties increased by Rs 100, said the farmers. At the Perundurai Cooperative Marketing society, copra fetched Rs 4,675-4,875, the second grade was sold at Rs 3,360-4,615; all the 590 quintals were sold. Coconut oil price decreased by Rs 20 for 15-kg loose pack at Rs 980 against Rs 1,000 last week. He said that the copra price was weak for the past two months and now it started picking up. All copra farmers are also having adequate stock. He said that the present price is not feasible for the farmers.

### **Exporters to contribute to cotton price stabilisation fund**

Cotton exporters may have to soon contribute a pinch of their profits as cess towards a proposed new fund, price stabilisation fund, which would be managed by the Cotton Corporation of India. The Union Textile Ministry has put forward a proposal to create this new fund to be used at times when cotton prices undergo drastic fluctuations. Money from the fund would be used to build up a suitable inventory to bring about stabilisation in

cotton prices and ensure that neither the exporters nor the farmers became a victim of a price slide.

“We will be putting forward this proposal to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce for discussion. Once approved, it will be mandatory for exporters to contribute to the fund,” Union Minister of Textiles K. Sambasiva Rao told media persons here today. Although the Textile Ministry has not yet finalised the amount of cess that exporters would have to pay, the Minister indicated that it could be around Rs 1,000 to Rs 2000 per candy (356 kg) of cotton.

Exporters are currently getting about Rs 40,000 to Rs 45,000 a candy. With the weakening rupee, cotton exporters have been getting a better price, with exports estimated to touch 10 million bales this year, as against the Cotton Advisory Board’s earlier estimates of 8.5 million bales (a bale is 170 kg). The Minister also made it clear that cotton exports would be allowed only to the extent of surplus material available after meeting the domestic demand.

He said the Textile Ministry had written to the Finance Ministry for reimbursement of the losses incurred by Cotton Corporation of India when it intervened recently and sold cotton below the minimum support price in order to stabilise prices. “The corporation has incurred a loss of about Rs 719 crore. It will however continue to intervene in the market when needed (irrespective of the reimbursement)”, he said.

## Marked rise in kharif acreage of oilseeds, pulses

Total area jumps by 85% to 251 lakh hectares



*Gaining traction: With the monsoon covering the entire country much ahead of schedule, kharif plantings are on in full swing. This farmer near Ladwa in Haryana's Kurukshetra district is preparing his field for transplanting a basmati crop. — Kamal Narang*

Kharif acreage has taken a big leap on brisk sowing of key crops such as oilseeds and pulses as the South-West monsoon, which covered the country a fortnight ahead of schedule, continues to make good progress. Rice, oilseeds, coarse cereals, pulses and cotton have registered huge growth in acreages in the kharif season so far compared with the corresponding period last year. Total area increased by 85 per cent to 250.99 lakh hectares so far.

The country has received 37 per cent more rains in the current year with 26 sub-divisions receiving excess rains, six receiving normal rains and deficient rains in four sub-divisions.

The surge in oilseeds planting is primarily led by soyabean and groundnut. Madhya Pradesh has registered an over ten-fold increase in soyabean acreage so far at 29.74 lakh hectares (lh) area compared with last year's 2.75 lh.

In Maharashtra, soyabean acreage was up at 8.26 lh against last year's 2.58 lh. The high market prices ahead of the planting season and relatively higher returns, compared with competitive crops such as cotton, could have prompted farmers to plant more soyabean. The processing industry expects the total acreage to go up by 5-7 per cent. Groundnut acreage in Gujarat has seen a major increase at 10.55 lh against last year's 1.67 lh, while in Andhra Pradesh it has doubled to 1.13 lh over last year's 65,000 hectares.

### **Rice acreage**

The rice area has seen an increase of close to a million hectares driven by higher plantings in Punjab, Haryana, Odisha and Chhattisgarh. Total acreage stood at 39.12 lh as on June 27 over last year's 29.66 lh. The early arrival of monsoon in Punjab and Haryana has given a fillip to rice acreage, as planting has begun well ahead of the normal season.

Maize planting, too, has taken a quantum leap with Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra reporting higher acreages. The total maize area stood at 17.79 lh over corresponding last year's 4.55 lh. In Karnataka, the maize area stood at 5.6 lh (36,000 lh), while in Maharashtra it was 2.94 lh (200 hectares).

### **millet**

Total kharif millet area under jowar, bajra, ragi and small millets stood at 11.52 lh (1.03 lh). Cotton acreage has seen a significant jump over last year in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, while the planting is over in the Northern States of Punjab and Haryana. In Gujarat, cotton acreage stood at 11.26 lh (3.83 lh), while in Maharashtra, it stood at 16.51

lh (5.46 lh). In Andhra Pradesh, cotton acreage stood at 7.72 lh (6.53 lh) and Karnataka at 2.26 lh (1.06 lh).

### Dakshina Kannada to set up jackfruit clusters

Steps will be taken to set up jackfruit development clusters in rural Dakshina Kannada, according to an official. Inaugurating a jackfruit festival, organised by the Krishi Vijnan Kendra in Mangalore on Friday, K.N. Vijayaprakash, Chief Executive Officer of Dakshina Kannada Zilla Panchayat, said that jackfruit is grown on 838 hectares of land in Dakshina Kannada district.

As of now, farmers have taken up the cultivation of jackfruits on six hectares of land at Adyanadka in the district under the jackfruit cluster scheme of the Government. Stressing the need for developing more jackfruit clusters in rural areas, he said the Government is planning to set up around 10 jackfruit clusters in the district during 2013-14. Added to this, the Dakshina Kannada Zilla Panchayat will ask all the schools and hostels in the district to plant jackfruit saplings on their premises, he said.

### Support price hiked for pulses, oilseeds; no raise in jowar rate

Kharif Support Prices		(in Rs/quintal)				
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	
Paddy (Common)	1,000	1,000	1,080	1,250	1,310	
Paddy (Grade A)	1,030	1,030	1,110	1,280	1,345	
Jowar Hybrid	840	880	980	1,500	1,500	
Jowar Maldandi	860	900	1,000	1,520	1,520	
Bajra	840	880	980	1,175	1,250	
Ragi	915	965	1,050	1,500	1,500	
Maize	840	880	980	1,175	1,310	
Tur (Arhar)	2,300	3,000	3,200	3,850	4,300	
Moong	2,760	3,170	3,500	4,400	4,500	
Urad	2,520	2,900	3,300	4,300	4,300	
Groundnut	2,100	2,300	2,700	3,700	4,000	
Sunflower seed	2,215	2,350	2,800	3,700	3,700	
Soyabean (black)	1,350	1,400	1,650	2,200	2,500	
Soyabean (Yellow)	1,390	1,440	1,690	2,240	2,560	
Sesamum	2,850	2,900	3,400	4,200	4,500	
Nigerseed	2,405	2,450	2,900	3,500	3,500	
Cotton (medium staple)	2,500	2,500	2,800	3,600	3,700	
Cotton (long staple)	3,000	3,000	3,300	3,900	4,000	

The Government has announced an increase in minimum support prices (MSP) for a host of kharif crops, such as paddy, pulses and oilseeds. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved a Rs 60 hike in support price of paddy to Rs 1,310 a quintal, the Finance Minister, P. Chidambaram, said on Friday. For Grade A paddy, the MSP increase is Rs 65 at Rs 1,345.

The support price of arhar dal has been increased by Rs 450 to Rs 4,300 a quintal, while that of groundnut and sesame has been hiked by Rs 300 each to Rs 4,000 and Rs 4,500 respectively. The price of moong dal, too, has been hiked by Rs 100 to Rs 4,500 while for urad it has been retained at last year's level. "Except for bajra and arhar, the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACCP) have largely been accepted," Chidambaram said.

The Agriculture Ministry has favoured a higher MSP for arhar and bajra to boost domestic output. The MSP for bajra has been raised by Rs 75 at Rs 1,250 , while for maize, the support price has been raised by Rs 135 to Rs 1,310 . For soyabean black, the MSP has been increased by Rs 300 at Rs 2,500, while for soyabean yellow, it has been hiked by Rs 320 a quintal over last year at Rs 2,560 .

### **Delayed announcement**

This year, the MSP declaration has been delayed by about a fortnight, even as the monsoon has advanced and covered the entire country about a month ahead than normal. As a result, sowing of key kharif crops such as rice, pulses and oilseeds has picked up across the country.

The MSP for sunflower seed, niger seed has been retained at last year's levels of Rs 3,700 and Rs 3,500 a quintal. The price for cotton medium

staple and cotton long staple has been raised by Rs 100 a quintal each over the last year at Rs 3,700 and Rs 4,000, respectively.

### **Drop in green leaf prices hits small tea growers**



A large number of small tea growers in Dooars and Terai regions of West Bengal have been hit hard by the sudden drop in the price of their produce, namely, the green leaves. The bought leaf factories, the stand-alone tea processing units who are the major buyers of green leaves from small tea growers, are now paying at the rate of Rs 6/7 a kg of green leaves compared to Rs 20/22 even some 10 days ago citing oversupply, according to tea industry sources. While the small growers are not buying the oversupply theory, there is little they can do about it.

“We’ve kept posted the Siliguri office of Tea Board about the latest development on the price front hoping that something will be done to help us,” said a spokesman of Confederation of Small Tea Growers Associations (CISTA). The small tea-growers in Dooars and Terai regions produce green leaves enough for production of an estimated 130 million kg of made tea annually and 80 per cent of it is supplied to 105 bought leaf factories located in the regions, with the balance 20 per cent going to meet the requirements of some big gardens having their own processing facilities. An estimated 4.65 kg of green leaves are required to produce one kg of made tea. With bought leaf factories reducing the price of green

leaves they buy, the big tea estates too are offering lower rates than before. The bought leaf factories generally quote lower prices for green leaves around the Durga Puja time when the tea season gradually slows down.

“What is causing concern to us is that this year this is being done at the beginning of the season,” observes the CISTA spokesman. “May be they are upset at Tea Board’s decision to introduce mandatory sale of 70 per cent of their production through public auctions”. When contacted, a spokesman for Tea Board said the problem was temporary and would be over soon.



# Business Standard

Growers to now sell coffee online



The Coffee Board of India, an autonomous body under the commerce ministry, has signed an agreement with the National Spot Exchange Ltd (NSEL) to launch a warehouse receipt-based electronic spot market for coffee beans. This is a first-of-its-kind initiative by the Board to provide an opportunity for better price realisation and educate growers about quality assessment. Currently, Rs 2,000 crore worth of is traded in physical form at the farm gate. Agents of exporters collect the beans at estates and transport it for curing (drying and de-husking of coffee beans). Earlier, ABN Amroand ITC had tried to provide online trading platforms for coffee, which did not work well, said growers. According to the agreement, NSEL will conduct online trading beans for both raw and cleaned coffee. It has tied up with companies for curing after the online transaction. NSEL has set up two warehouses at Kushalnagar in Kodagu district and Chikmagalur in Chikmagalur district for storing coffee on behalf of the growers. "The aim of this partnership is to ensure that small and medium coffee growers get an opportunity to sell their coffee online. We will provide them quality assessment and grading facilities at their farm gate with the help of the Coffee Board. The growers are free to fix their own prices. There will be

no fee for the growers for online trading. We will charge the buyers a small commission," said an NSEL official. The partnership between the Board and NSEL is also aimed at providing market linkages and relevant back-end infrastructure, education, training and technical advice to growers. The Coffee Board will carry a mobile laboratory to conduct the grading of coffee beans at the farm gate. The price will be discovered based on transparent electronic bidding. After the online trading is carried out, NSEL will deliver the beans at the doorstep of buyers or curing works through its transport network, the official added. The NSEL is also in the process of providing finance. Federal Bank, Standard Chartered and ICICI Bank, among others, have approached NSEL for providing finance on the warehouse receipts.

Ramesh Rajah, president of Coffee Exporters' Association of India, said: "It is an excellent idea. The seller will know how much price he will get for his coffee. However, there are many glitches involved in online trading." He said issues such as Rule 7B, VAT and transaction costs will have to be sorted. As the sale of cured coffee attracts taxation, growers will not come forward to sell through online platform. NSEL and the Board will have to sort out these issues, said Rajah.

**Early rains boost kharif sowing by 85% so far**

**Advancement in monsoon rains encouraged even pulses farmers, who have cultivated the crop in 10.52 lakh hectares as of now**

Early monsoon has bolstered kharif sowing with total area under all major crops like paddy increasing by 85% to 250.99 lakh hectares so far, the Agriculture Ministry said today.

Sowing of kharif (summer) crops begins with the onset of southwest monsoon from June. So far, the monsoon rainfall has been 37% excess in the country.

According to the data released by the Agriculture Ministry, "Sowing of kharif crops has picked up in the last week. The total sown area as on June 28, as per reports received from states, stands at 250.99 lakh hectares as compared to 135.87 lakh hectares at this time last year."

Area under paddy, main kharif crop, has risen by 32% to 39.12 lakh hectares so far as farmers in rainfed areas received good rains especially in Punjab and Haryana as they prepared fields for planting paddy saplings. The advancement in monsoon rains encouraged even pulses farmers, who have cultivated the crop in 10.52 lakh hectares as of now. In the same period last year, pulses was not sown.

Oilseeds farmers also took up sowing in a big way taking advantage of rains as the acreage improved more than four-fold to 60.69 lakh hectares so far compared to 11.82 lakh hectares in the same period last year.

Similarly, area sown for coarse cereals increased to 29.33 lakh hectares from 5.59 lakh hectares in the review period.

Among cash crops, cotton sowing picked up and its area increased to 55.76 lakh hectares so far this season compared to 31.38 lakh hectares in the year-ago period.

However, sugarcane planting declined to 47.43 lakh hectares mainly in Maharashtra and Karnataka, as against 49.35 lakh hectares in the same period last year.

Area under jute and mesta marginally increased to 8.15 lakh hectares from 8.07 lakh hectares in the corresponding period last year

**Coffee Board ties up with NSEL for electronic spot market for coffee beans  
This is the first initiative taken by the Board to provide an opportunity for better price realisation**

Coffee Board of India, an autonomous body under the ministry of commerce, has signed a memorandum of understanding with National Spot Exchange (NSEL) to launch a warehouse receipt based electronic spot market for coffee beans. This is the first of its kind initiative taken by the Board to provide an opportunity for better price realization and educate them about quality assessment.

Currently, over Rs 2,000 crore worth of coffee is traded in physical form at the farm gate level. Agents of exporters collect the beans at the estates and transport it for curing. Earlier, ABN AMRO and ITC had tried to provide online trading platforms for coffee, which did not work well, the coffee growers said.

As per the MoU, the NSEL will conduct online trading of coffee beans for both raw and cleaned coffee. It has tied up with coffee curing companies for curing of coffee post the online transaction. NSEL has set up two warehouses at Kushalnagar in Kodagu district and Chikmagalur in Chikmagalur district for storing coffee on behalf of the growers.

“The aim of this partnership is to ensure that small and medium coffee growers get an opportunity to sell their coffee online. We will provide them quality assessment and grading facilities at their farm gate with the help of Coffee Board. The growers are free to fix their own prices. There will be no

fee to the growers for online trading. We will charge the buyers a small commission,” an official of NSEL said.

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Ramesh Rajah, president, Coffee Exporters' Association of India said, “It is an excellent idea. The seller will know how much price he will get for his coffee. However, there are many glitches involved in online trading.”

He said issues like Rule 7B, VAT and transaction costs would have to be sorted out properly. As the sale of cured coffee attracts taxation, the growers will not come forward to sell through online platform. The NSEL and Coffee Board will have to sort out these issues, he said.

NSEL has till now added 54 commodities on its online spot-trading platform.