



## Good response to red rice mela

### Health benefits of this rice variety highlighted

People thronged the Taralabalu Krishi Vigyana Kendra (TKVK) here on Wednesday to take their pick of the different varieties of rice on sale at the 'Kempakki Santhe' (red rice mela).

Among the rice varieties being sold at the event are 'kari dada budda', 'ganda saale' and 'ratan sagar'.

The TKVK, in association with the Sharana Muddanna Savayuva Krishikara Balaga, Kumbuluru, has organised the event to spread awareness on the various rice varieties available. Apart from different varieties of rice, many eatables and snacks made from red rice were also sold during the event, such as dosa batter made from red rice. Organic produce too was sold at the event.

Those who attended the event were made aware of the health benefits of red rice.

### Overuse

Anjaneya, president of the Krishikara Balaga, told *The Hindu* that farmers used pesticides and chemical fertilizers rampantly to get a high yield. They were unmindful of the harmful affects this had on the soil and on those who consumed the produce thus grown.

There were 15 farmers in Kumbuluru village of Harihar taluk who were engaged in organic farming, even though they got a lower yield than conventional farmers.

He explained that if a farmer could get 40 bags of produce an acre by using chemical fertilizer, their counterparts engaged in organic farming would only get 20 bags, he said.

Mr. Anjaneya said the balaga had stored over 60 varieties of native rice, including 'malgudi sanna' and 'gowri sanna'. "In collaboration with self-help groups, we have started preparing dosa batter and snacks from native varieties of rice," he said.

T.N. Devaraj, programme coordinator, TKVK, told *The Hindu* that organic farmers faced a hard time selling their produce, due to lack of awareness.

This was why he had decided to organise the mela, to sensitise the public on this issue.

He added that there were more than 250 varieties of red rice available in the market.

Mr. Devaraj said that keeping in mind the tremendous response to the mela, he would organise one such event every Saturday under the banner 'shanivara savayuva santhe'.

### **Price of tender coconuts soar**

Those who want to quench their thirst the natural way with a sweet sip of tender coconut water are in for a shock as the price of the most preferred natural drink has doubled from what it was priced during same time last year.

"The price of a small tender coconut is Rs. 30 this year and a little bigger one fetches Rs. 40," says R. Sivanantham (65) of Mohanur Road.

He is among the many morning walkers who prefer to have a tender coconut before going home.

"Last summer the price of a small tender coconut was Rs. 15 while a bigger one cost Rs. 25. Even this was higher than the price during the previous year. This time it has become unaffordable to many," he said. Consumers said that because of this raise in price they have reduced the consumption of tender coconut.

Sellers attribute to the price rise to unavailability of tender coconuts. “We are buying it from farms in Pollachi and pay more for transportation. The high price has badly affected the sales,” sellers say.

Comparatively buttermilk, sugarcane juice, and soft drinks are cheaper.

K. Ashok Kumar, a leading coconut grower who has 1,700 trees in his farm near Metala in Rasipuram taluk, said that local farmers are unable to supply tender coconuts to traders as the trees and coconuts are affected by drought and pest attack.

“About 90 per cent of the coconut trees in Salem and Namakkal are attacked by pests,” he added.

Consumers and traders don't prefer these tender coconuts as they give a sickly appearance and have very less water in it. “Drinking tender coconut water from the affected coconuts will not cause any harm for the consumers,” Mr. Ashok said. He said that the spider attack is more during summer, forcing coconut growers to undergo heavy losses.

### **Two-day national convention of sugarcane growers from May 25**

: A national convention of sugarcane farmers will be held in Bangalore on May 25 and 26 to discuss major issues affecting sugarcane cultivators.

Organised by the Consortium of Indian Farmers Association and the State Sugarcane Cultivators Association, the convention — to be held at Town Hall — will seek Government's intervention for redressing the major problems plaguing the sugarcane growers.

Kurubur Shanthakumar, president of the Sugarcane Cultivators' Association, told *The Hindu* that this was the first such convention being held at the national level and nearly 1,000 farmers from across the country will participate.

## Pressure the government

The profit of the sugar industry is set to increase consequent to the deregulation of sugar and abolition of levy by the Union government and farmers should also benefit from it, said Mr. Shanthakumar. The convention will pass a resolution to this effect and bring pressure on the government to adhere to its demands, he added.

## Overhaul

The convention will also take up issues pertaining to the problems faced by sugarcane farmers in the face of declining profits amidst stagnant support price and increase in input costs. "We will also seek an overhaul of the existing pricing mechanism and constitution of a State Advisory Price (SAP) for sugarcane to streamline the process," he said.

Farmers from Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Haryana and representatives of the Indian Sugar Mills Association will participate in the convention.

## Toddy parlours mooted at tourist destinations

A committee appointed by the government to study the problems faced by the toddy tapping industry and the possibilities of producing and marketing sweet toddy, Neera, has recommended opening of toddy parlours at taluk headquarters, tourist destinations, and other selected centres.

Excise Commissioner Anil Xavier and other committee members, after submitting the report to Excise Minister K. Babu, told presspersons here on Wednesday that the Excise Department should lay down norms for the buildings housing the parlours.

Selected toddy shops also could be converted into parlours. The auction period of toddy shops should be increased from one to three years. The functioning of toddy shops

could be improved by making them more clean and hygienic and also serving indigenous dishes.

The rules for giving licence to draw sweet toddy should be amended. A licence from the Excise Department should be procured for the production of Neera. There are about 18 crore coconut palms in the State. On tapping one per cent of them, it will be of great help to the coconut farmers.

### **Applications for Neera**

An application should be submitted to the department with the details of the coconut palms that could be tapped for the production of Neera. The department should mark the palms and issue permit without levying any fees or tree cess. The entire production and marketing process should be conducted under the supervision of the department. A State-level Toddy-Neera Development Board should be set up for the production of Neera and other value-added products. The funds for constituting the board could be garnered by levying a cess of Rs.1 per litre of IMFL sold.

The committee recommended to ensure due wages and job security to the toddy tappers. The production and marketing of Neera could be entrusted with the toddy workers. Once the ASEAN agreement comes into force on April 1, 2014, the import of Neera from such countries will begin and to overcome the situation, the State cannot afford to ignore the possibilities of local production.

INTUC leader N. Azakesan, in his dissent note to the report, said that Neera production should not end up in the plundering of government assets by those in the guise of coconut farmers. CITU leader K.M. Sudhakaran said that no scientific analysis had been done to find out whether Neera could be produced and marketed profitably. The basic issues facing coconut farmers were the fall in coconut price and disease affecting the palms. This had to be addressed, he said.

### **Mango fete from tomorrow**

Minister for Tourism A.P. Anil Kumar will inaugurate the Mango Festival 2013 at the Cantonment Maidan here on May 17. The eleven-day festival organised by the Mango Growers Society Kollam is aimed at promoting mango consumption and protection of mango trees.

More than 100 mango varieties will be on sale at the festival venue. These will include native varieties, those from neighbouring States and popular hybrid varieties. The mangoes are brought to the show directly by farmers avoiding middlemen. The festival also comprises sale of garments from various States.

### **Farm loan waiver sought**

The Ettayapuram Taluk Farmers Association has demanded waiver of crop loans raised by drought-hit farmers.

V.Krishnamurthy, secretary of the Association, said the farmers had been reeling under severe drought conditions in the wake of monsoon failure in 2012. He also demanded that the officials should expedite disbursement of drought relief to the farmers.

The farmers were also awaiting crop insurance benefits as the standing crops could not yield the expected quantity of grains, he told *The Hindu* here on Wednesday.

He also sought old age pension for farmers above 60 years of age.

### **Punjab to give Rs. 1 lakh subsidy for solar pump set**

The Punjab Government has decided to provide Rs. 1 lakh subsidy on installation of 500 solar irrigation pump sets in the State during 2013-14 fiscal and a special fund of Rs. 5 crore has been earmarked for it.

Punjab Non-Conventional Energy Minister Bikram Singh Majithia said on Wednesday that the decision was aimed at promoting renewable and clean energy and give incentive to farmers opting for diversification.

Farmers opting for diversification will be given priority in issuance of solar irrigation pump connections, he said.

Keeping in view the falling water levels in the State, it has become imperative to shift the major chunk of cultivable land to alternative crops like sugarcane, cotton, maize, soybean, oilseeds, pulses, fruits and vegetables, he said.

Mr. Majithia said this new initiative will play a significant role in ensuring remunerative returns to farmers for their produce, besides saving ground water.

### **Subsidised price**

Presently, a solar pump costs nearly Rs. 2.50 lakh and the Centre only provides a subsidy of 30 per cent, he said. The minister added that with the new provision of 40 per cent subsidy (Rs. 1 lakh for each pump) by the State government, the pump will now cost Rs. 75,000.

Mr. Majithia said Punjab has taken the lead in installation of solar irrigation pumps.

### **Collector brings about pact between paper mills, peasants**

#### **He makes it clear that bypassing of the AMCs will not be tolerated**



Proactive:Prakasam district Collector G.S.R.K.R.Vijaykumar brings representatives of ryots and paper mills to the negotiating table in Ongole on Wednesday.— photo:  
Kommuri Srinivas

Social forestry planters in Prakasam district, who have been uprooting subabul and eucalyptus, vexed with unfavourable market conditions, have reasons to cheer now, thanks to the intervention of the district Collector G.S.R.K.R.Vijaykumar.

The Collector, at a meeting of farmers and paper mills representatives in the district, ironed out a tripartite agreement on Wednesday after protracted negotiations to put back in place a well-regulated market through the Agriculture Market Committees.

With the increasing demand for raw material, the representatives of the paper mills agreed to enhance the purchase price for Subabul from Rs. 2,950 to Rs. 3,700 per tonne and for eucalyptus from Rs. 3,150 to Rs. 3,900 per tonne. Determined to ensure better price for the ryots, the Collector made it clear that bypassing of the AMCs would not be tolerated.

The farmers need not wait for long for settlement of payment with the representatives of the paper mills, agreeing to make online payment to ryots bank accounts in five days. The Collector, who proposed Rs. 4,000 per tonne for subabul and Rs. 4,200 per tonne for eucalyptus for one year period during negotiations, made it clear the rate would be revised upward depending upon the demand supply situation anytime during the year.

Emerging out of the meeting, Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sangam Prakasam district president N. Ranga Rao urged farmers not to go to middlemen to sell their produce.

Only through collective bargaining and a vibrant AMC, farmers could get justice, Ongole AMC Chairman Aiyabathina Ganasyam said. The drought-prone Prakasam district had been a model for other districts with over 2.50 lakh acres of wasteland brought under subabul, eucalyptus before social forestry plantation lost favour among farmers due to



depressing market condition and non-renewal of the tripartite agreement. Now the plantations exist in only over 50,000 acres.

### **Banks to sanction crop loans without interest**

With district administration failing to set up black gram purchasing centres in the strategic pockets in Krishna district, farmers and political representatives on Wednesday boycotted Bandar region level Rythusadassu, held at Pedana.

Farmers raised slogans demanding to set up additional purchasing centres across the district.

Many farmers did not even turn up for the Sadassu as no high-level officer was present in the divisional level government programme. Unable to address the black gram farmers' woes,

Agriculture Department Joint Director Balu Naik had expressed his helplessness.

### **New godowns**

Farmers were assured of subsidy and support from the government to construct new godowns and credit facility from the banks.

Bank officials said that "Andhra Pradesh Government has released new guidelines (April 2013) to promise crop loans without interest to the farmers. The guidelines will be in force from coming kharif season" said District Lead Manger, Andhra Bank Mr. Narasimha Rao.

The Agriculture Department and allied sectors have also conducted exhibition on seed varieties and latest agriculture machinery in the programme.

### **Farmers told to attend rythu sadassu**

The rythu sadassu being held in every revenue division across the State were aimed at finding solutions to the existing problems of farmers by equipping them with latest technical know how, said in-charge Joint Director of Agriculture Department N.C.H. Balu Naik on Wednesday.

In a statement, Mr. Naik said farmers must attend the sadassu in large number and make them a success. The objective was to equip the farmers with techniques of low investment and high farm yield, he said.

He said that agricultural scientists, experts and officials of departments affiliated to the agriculture department would throw light on modern farm techniques at a workshop scheduled to be held at the Loyola College auditorium on Thursday.

The meeting would educate farmers on the series of welfare programmes launched for their economic progress such as seed production scheme, Polambadi, Srivarisagu, Rythusri, Yantralakshmi and food security programme.

Farmers' problems with regard to securing crop loans and issues related to tenant farmers would be solved in the presences of bank officials, he said.

### **Targets**

Meanwhile MEPMA (Mission for Elimination of Poverty in Municipal Areas) Project Director K. Siva Sankar Rao has asked the officials concerned to meet the given targets for providing jobs to beneficiaries of Rajiv Yuva Kiranalu after completion of their training period.

### **Transparency**

Mr. Sivasankar held a meeting with representatives of organisations that are imparting training to youth groups in various fields as part of Rajiv Yuvakiranalu. He wanted the officials involved in the programme implementation to maintain transparency. "The

purpose of the scheme will be fulfilled only when every trainee finds a suitable job at the end of the training programme,” he said.

### **A slew of strategies to enhance income in Kannur, Kerala**



Marketing: A mall on the campus displays and markets the branded value added food products in their final marketing form, in attractive containers, packets and with labelling.— Photo: Special Arrangement

A majority of the people in Kannur district of northern Kerala are dependent directly or indirectly on agriculture for their livelihood. The main crops grown are coconut, cashew, pepper, paddy, mango, banana, rubber and arecanut.

As elsewhere in Kerala, farmers here are unable to generate sufficient income to support their families by growing crops alone. Enhancing income of farmers through value addition, product diversification, and entrepreneurship development have been the thrust areas of the Krishi Vigyan Kendra(KVK)of Kannur district, Kerala agricultural University.

### **Constraints**

“Very often value addition and product diversification are easier said than done because of numerous constraints in micro scale rural enterprises. The biggest constraint is the mindset of farmers. They lack confidence. Lack of technological know-how, high cost of machinery, insufficient capital, absence of hassle-free credit, taxation rules and food

safety concerns create fear in their minds,” says Dr. Abdul Kareem, Programme Coordinator.

“In 2007 we started grooming seven women into an SHG, named 'Pulari' to produce innovative value-added products utilising the facilities of our Kendra, its food processing unit, and to serve as a constant source of motivation to other similar groups.”

The biggest challenge in the beginning was to ensure an assured income to the SHG to sustain them in the production unit.

This was made possible by offering one third of the income generated based on an MoU between the KVK and the SHG. The expenditure for running the unit was met from the revolving fund of the Kendra, and the income generated was ploughed back into the revolving fund.

### **Tailored to fit**

The available value addition technologies by and large were amenable for either lab scale or for very large scale production. Therefore, wherever necessary, technologies were tailored to fit into the micro-scale environment and refined to result in quality production.

“For instance, in Kerala, virgin coconut oil is prepared traditionally by hot processing, which has lot of flaws.

“We refined the process by making interventions at various stages such as milk extraction, settling, heating and filtration, to suit micro enterprises,” explains Dr. Kareem.

The Kendra also sensitised the entrepreneurs on the importance of branding since it is not the product, but the brand that was being sold.

For instance, the KVK branded white pepper as “Panniyoor White Gold” as the Kendra is located in Panniyoor region and this place is known world-wide for hybrid pepper.

### **Incubation centre**

The incubation centre guides the entrepreneurs to create brands, register them, obtain licences and advertise.

The first cashew apple (otherwise wasted, now gets priced) processing unit in the State, under the brand name “Tomco,” emerged due to the efforts of the Kendra.

It also set up a loan window with a tie-up with State Bank of India, a first of its kind in India in its premises.

“The purpose of this loan window is to make available hassle-free loans to willing entrepreneurs in agriculture and allied sectors.

### **Single outlet**

“This loan window, right in the campus, serves as a single outlet for availing all the three major components for setting up an enterprise, namely, training, credit and assistance like subsidy,” says Dr. Kareem. The KVK offered one of its staff rooms to open the loan window. The first loan through the window was advanced to a women entrepreneur trained by the KVK for opening a banana fibre extraction and handicrafts unit. She also received financial assistance from the District Industries Centre (DIC).

A mall was also set up in the campus to display and market the branded value added food products from its food processing unit in its final marketing form, in attractive containers, packets and with labelling.

More than 2.8 tonnes of value-added products worth Rs 36 lakh have been marketed through the mall in the last 10 months (December 2011-September 2012).

After paying the wages for the sales persons, entrepreneurs could earn Rs. 3 lakh as the value of their products.

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### **Citrus greening : a deadly fruit disease**

Citrus greening disease is an important disease of citrus which greatly affects the production of the fruits in several parts of India.

Characteristic symptoms include yellowing of leaf veins and adjacent tissues, followed by premature defoliation, dieback of twigs, decay of feeder rootlets and lateral roots.

Infected fruits are small, lopsided with bitter taste. Such fruits may fall prematurely; while those that remain on the tree do not colour properly, remaining green on the shaded side.

### **Management**

Routinely scout citrus for signs of greening so that infected trees can be removed. Scouting should be done at least four times a year, or more in areas known to have infected trees. October through March is the best time for scouting, but symptoms can be present at other times of the year.

For effective management remove infected trees. This is the only way to ensure that they won't remain a source of infection for other trees. Pruning symptomatic limbs is often ineffective since other parts of the tree may be infected, but do not show symptoms.

Before removing, the tree should be sprayed with a foliar insecticide to kill any psyllids in order to keep them from moving on once the tree is removed.

Focus Integrated Pest Management (IPM) efforts on using disease-free nursery trees, reducing infection sources (inoculum) by frequent surveys and diseased tree removal, and suppressing Asian citrus psyllid through area-wide management

### **Foliar spray**

Spray foliar insecticide prior to tree removal. Increase frequency of scouting in areas where infected trees have been removed

The complex of natural enemies attacking ACP around the world usually includes various species of ladybeetles, syrphid flies, lacewings, spiders.

Use soil-applied systemic insecticides on young trees. Foliar sprays of fenprothrin (Danitol 2.4 EC), chlorpyrifos (Lorsban 4EC), petroleum oil (2 per cent rate).

(Utpal Dey, Ph.D. scholar, Department of Plant Pathology and Dr A.P. Suryawanshi, Head in charge, Department of Plant Pathology, Marathwada Agricultural University, Parbhani, Maharashtra, India, email: utpaldey86@gmail.com, mobile: Mob : 8275824103.)

### **IFAD programme from today**

The annual meeting of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) grants programme on 'Sustainable Management of Crop-based Production Systems for Raising Agricultural Productivity in Rainfed Asia' would be held at Vientiane, Laos PDR from May 16 to 18.

The programme led by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) aims to improve the well-being of poor rural people engaged in rainfed agriculture in India, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal and Vietnam through sustainable, enhanced productivity and diversified income-generating opportunities.

According to a release here on Wednesday by the ICRISAT, the annual meeting seeks to bring together partners from the participating countries to discuss and deliberate on how new technologies, improved crops and innovative management practices can help rainfed agricultural communities achieve food security and improved livelihoods.

### **Growers elated over hike in minimum import price for areca**

#### **Delegation from Campco met official and placed the demand**



The import of low-priced arecanut is said to be the reason for the slump in the price of locally grown arecanut.— file photo

The Union government's decision to increase the minimum import price for arecanut from Rs. 75 to Rs. 110 a kg has been welcomed in Malnad and coastal Karnataka.

#### **From Bangladesh**

Growers here were worried at the sudden increase in the import of arecanut from Bangladesh. The total value of the arecanut imported from Bangladesh surged from Rs. 18 crore in 2009–10 to Rs. 321 crore by the end of the third quarter of 2012–2013.

Fearing that large-scale imports might trigger a slump in the price of arecanut in the local market, a delegation from the Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and



Processing Cooperative (Campco) met Director-General of Foreign Trade Anup Pujari in February and requested him to increase the minimum import price for arecanut.

President of Campco Kankodi Padmanabha told *The Hindu* that “areca growers are elated that the Union government has acted swiftly on their demands. The smuggling of arecanut from Nepal and Bangladesh is also a problem that needs to be addressed immediately. Along with resulting in loss of revenue for the government in the form of import duty, the price of arecanut grown locally had come down owing to this illegal trade.”

### **Ban sought**

T.N. Prakash Kammaradi, agricultural economist, also voiced a similar opinion. Chewing of inferior quality arecanut that comes into the Indian market from neighbouring countries was injurious to health. In the interests of the public, the import of inferior arecanut should be banned, he said.

According to research conducted by agricultural experts in 2010, the minimum cost incurred by growers to produce a kg of chali (white) arecanut was Rs. 114 and kempu (red) variety of arecanut Rs. 148. The minimum production cost should be assessed periodically and the minimum import price should be fixed above this cost to protect the interests of local arecanut growers, he said.

### **'Matter will be raised'**

Ayanur Manjunath, MP, said that the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) agreement between countries that are members of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) had come in the way of imposing additional import duty on arecanut. The matter would be raised in Parliament and the Union government would be urged to take appropriate action in this regard, he said.

B.A. Ramesh Hegde, president of the Shimoga District Areca Growers' Association and an arecanut grower, said that import of low-priced arecanut, which was of inferior

quality, was the reason for the slump in the price of locally grown arecanut. Owing to the government's decision now, the price of locally grown arecanut would surely go up, he said.

The recommendations of the Gorakh Singh Committee to the Union government to extend financial assistance to arecanut growers who had incurred losses owing to pest and fungal infection should be implemented at the earliest, he added.

### **IFAD to focus on rain-fed farming**

With focus on increasing productivity of rain-fed agriculture, which still supplies 60 per cent of the world's food, the three-day annual meeting of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) grant programme is being held at Vientiane, Laos from May 16.

The programme led by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) aims to improve the well-being of poor rural women and men engaged in rain-fed agriculture in India, the Lao's People's Democratic Republic, Nepal and Vietnam through sustainable, enhanced productivity and diversified income-generating opportunities, according to an ICRISAT press release here. The meeting seeks to deliberate on how new technologies, improved crops and innovative management practices could help rain-fed agricultural communities achieve food security and improved livelihoods.

### **Jackfruit Festival-2013 to begin in Wayanad tomorrow**

Jackfruit Festival-2013, a three-day fair being organised jointly by the State Horticulture Mission; Uravu Bamboo Village, an indigenous science and technology study centre at Thrikkaipetta in Wayanad district; and the Regional Agriculture Research Station (RARS) at Ambalavayal in the district, will be held on the Thrikkaipetta school premises near Muttill from Friday to Sunday. District panchayat president K.V. Sasi will

inaugurate the festival at 10 a.m. on Friday. The programme is aimed at sensitising the public to the commercial potential of the simple fruit, the organisers said.



## THE TIMES OF INDIA

### **Mushrooms restore soil fertility, enhance income: PAU**

PAU microbiologists recommended mushroom cultivation to tackle diverse problems ranging from [soil fertility](#) to per capita income. "Mushroom cultivation helps alleviate protein energy malnutrition, improve the economic standard of people, impart diversification and address problems of quality food, health and environment related issues," the experts said.

According to the experts, mushroom production in the country stands at nearly 1,20,000 tonnes. Of this, Punjab contributes about 45% to 50%, mainly through 400 odd seasonal growers and a few industrial units growing mushrooms under controlled temperature and humidity. They said mushroom growers could cultivate mushrooms around the year by following PAU recommendations for winter and summer seasons.

Highlighting the importance of mushroom cultivation, P K Khanna, a microbiology expert, said mushrooms are a good source of protein and are also rich in vitamins and minerals. Underlining the rapid rise in the demand for mushrooms, he said they are capable of utilizing agro-waste and avoid pollution. Besides, their cultivation is [labour intensive](#). All this, Khanna said, makes mushroom cultivation a promising venture which enhances farmers' income and generates employment opportunities.

## Farmers flocking to GM crops

After scientists, farmers in India, China and the Philippines have given the thumbs up to Bt cotton and Bt corn. A study by Templeton Foundation of USA has shown that 93% cotton in India and China is of the Bt variety, while 59% of the corn in Philippines is also of Bt variety, despite opposition from anti-GM activists and NGOs.

These results were presented at a two-day international conference on 'Adoption of biotech crops in developing world: case studies of farmers from China, India and Philippines'. The conference was organized by International Service for the Adoption of [Agri-Biotech Applications](#) (ISAAA) at Manila.

The results reflect the pivotal role of private sector, like technology developers and seed companies, the farm demonstrations by them as well as the word of mouth publicity among farmers, in the widespread adoption of the two genetically modified (GM) crops, and not the public sector. It is only in recent past that government agencies like universities in India and Philippines have chipped in to support GM crops.

The regulations in all three countries have still kept farmers away from taking up GM food crops. The GM [Bt corn](#) in Philippines is not grown for human consumption. It is mainly grown as feed for animals, and so the corn indirectly makes up the basic food for people there.

Associate professor Xiaobing Wang and Cheng Xiang, a researcher from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, have projected that China now grows 70% indigenously developed [Bt cotton](#) while remaining 30% is the Monsanto variety. This helped China control the seed prices. But since India and Philippines have used the insect resistant

gene (cry gene) developed by Monsanto, seed price couldn't be regulated by government.

The Indian part of the study comprised 2,400 farmers from Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab. It showed that though Bt cotton adoption rate here too is 93%, the scene in India is little different. The study was conducted by CD Mayee, president of Indian Society for Cotton Improvement and former chairman of Agriculture Scientist Recruitment Board of government of India, with support from Central Institute for Cotton Research, Nagpur, and Ashok Dhawan of Punjab Agriculture University.

The per hectare cultivation cost is quite high in India (about Rs56,000) due to high seed prices, and almost 50% labour expenses. In the other two countries, labour costs are less due to mechanization.

Cleofe S Torres, professor of development communication at University of Philippines, and Delson Sonza said Philippines is already working on golden rice and Bt brinjal, both at advanced stage of regulatory approval process. Statistical data by Randy Hautea, global coordinator of south East Asia Centre director of Philippines ISAAA, says that besides Bt cotton and Bt corn, GM technology is set to change the face of many food, vegetables and fruit crops in the future.

China has already developed its own Bt rice, petunia, and phytase maize, and issued biosafety certificate for rice and maize, which are nearing commercialization.

However, India has apprehensions on regulations, despite having [GM crops](#) like 'Golden rice', Bt rice, maize and mustard in near commercialization stage. Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) has not been very effective and hence NGOs

are demanding animal and toxicology testing by independent labs to lay all apprehensions at rest.

BOX

BIO-TAKE AWAY

Biotech cultivation fastest adopted crop technology in world in 17 years

100 fold increase in area under GM cultivation from 1.7 million ha in 1996 to 170.3 million ha in 2012

Double digit growth in past 12 years, growth rate of 6% from 2011 to 2102

17.3 million farmers in 28 countries cultivated 170.3 million hectares (420 million acres) biotech crops in 2012

58% of global biotech area is in developing countries, 48% is industrial countries

Steady rise in accumulated global area of biotech crop from 500 Mha to 1.5 billion ha from 2005 to 2012

Of 28 countries growing biotech crops, 8 are developed or industrial and 20 developing countries

Growth rate of developing countries much higher than developed (11% or 8.7 Mha versus 3% or 1.6 Mha of industrial or developed countries)

Gain in productivity by 49% (328 million tonnes) from 1996-2011, and gain of 78% (50.2 million tonnes) in just 2011 from cotton, soyabean, maize and corn crops.

51% reduction in cost of production (from 1996-2011) and 22% in just 2011, in the form of ploughing cost, fewer pesticides and less labour

Economic benefits of \$98.2 billion (1996-2011) and \$19.75 billion in 2011

In 2012, 7.2 million farmers each in China and India took biotech crops on 15 million hectares

Philippines has 3.7 lakh small farmers growing 7.5 lakh hectares of biotech/GM corn

85% of small scale farmers planting biotech crops throughout the world belong to China, India and Philippines

### **He's the pioneer of Bt cotton in India**

Every morning, Vijay Atmaram Ingle thanks his stars for having agreed to conduct the first Bt cotton trials in India in 1997-98. The success landed him and his village, Chitalwadi in Akola district, on the Bt cotton map of world.

Today, Ingle, a school dropout, has educated all his three children in professional college. His son Vivek is into agri-biotechnology, and wants to take up agriculture as a profession, like his father, while also dreaming of his own biotech company.

Ingle credits all this to the substantial income from Bt cotton, as well as availability of water and traditional agricultural wisdom. When Ingle started at 16, cotton productivity ranged from 2.5 to 8 quintal per acre in 1978. But bollworm and sucking pest attack in 1983-84 brought productivity down to 5 quintal. Now, with drip irrigation and proper farming practices, Bt cotton yield is 27 quintal per acre. Unlike other farmers, who take up any brand, Ingle has stuck to [Dr Brent MRC 7347 BG II](#) and [Neena MRC 7301 BG II](#) varieties of Mahyco, and produced 700 quintals from 14 acres, earning Rs12.6 lakh this year.

Ingle was the sole farmer representative from India at the recently held two-day conference on adoption and uptake of biotech crops by farmers in developing world, at Manila in the Philippines. He shared his experience with scientists and experts from 19 countries. Beginning with 2 acres in 2001, Ingle today grows cotton on 14 acre, which is 30% of his land. He grows papaya, pigeon pea and banana on the rest.

After initial support by seed company, dealers and irrigation companies, universities and government departments too are now providing information. "When I first cultivated Bt cotton, people made fun due to ignorance and misinformation. Now, as much as 2,000 acre is under Bt cotton in my village and surrounding areas," he said.

"After trials over three seasons, when Dr MS Swaminathan asked us in 2001 whether the technology was worth it, we had unanimously said yes. Today, Bt cotton has increased my family's (including three brothers) land holding from 14 acres to 88 acres. We constructed two pucca houses and use drip irrigation for all the land. My Chitalwadi



farm is a model for farmers," says Ingle proudly.



### **Most markets face shortage of vegetables**

Margao/Mapusa/Vasco/Ponda/Bicholim: Most markets in various towns and cities in the state had very low stocks of vegetables due to the ongoing transporters strike. The stock of vegetables in Margao's main markets - [Gandhi market](#) and SGPDA market - dwindled sharply on Wednesday, as the trucks engaged in supplying vegetables to Goa from Belgaum failed to enter the state in response to the strike call by the transporters' unions to protest against the entry tax on vehicles imposed by the state government.

Sources said only those vehicles transporting goods to the vegetable outlets of the state's horticulture department carried out the business as usual. But, the vegetables went off the shelves within minutes, as even other retailers preferred to buy their requirements from the horticulture stalls. Sources said that even hoteliers purchased their stock of vegetables from the horticulture outlets on Wednesday, forcing the common man to make do without his staple dish of a vegetable from his frugal meal.

Consequently, the price of vegetables saw a steep hike in the markets. Rajendra Azgaonkar, a leader of the Gandhi market traders association, confirmed that vegetables were sold at much higher rates in the market. "Not a single truck carrying vegetables arrived in Margao today," he said.

In Mapusa market although there is a shortage of most vegetables, the supply of potatoes and onions has not been affected. The scarcity of vegetables is due to the

transporters strike.

Since potatoes and onions are not highly perishable there was enough stock available in the market till Wednesday. Sources informed that the prices of these two vegetables has also not gone up and remains the same at 20 and 25 respectively. Sources also informed that if the supply is not restored within two days there will be a shortage of these two vegetables also.

There was some respite to the consumers as locally grown vegetables like lady fingers, raddish, brinjals were available in the market but in very limited quantity.

"Chillies which were available at 30 per kg are now sold for 50 per kg. So far there has been no much impact on restaurants, however if the supply is not resumed soon, the restaurant and tea shops are also likely to be affected," said Dhakuli Shirodkar a restaurant owner from Mapusa.

Vegetable trucks have not reached the Vasco markets for the last two days. Prashant Naik, a vegetable vendor said, "The trucks had last come on Monday, but somehow we have managed to keep prices the same."

Though no vegetables came to the market for the last two days, the vendors didn't close down their shops. With very little stock of vegetable and much of it not very fresh, the business was kept running. Another vendor said, "only the rate of beans have gone up to 120 per kg which are otherwise 60 per kg."

Sulakshni Chalwadi, a vendor said, "They informed us that the truck will come on Thursday, but if it doesn't come the market will be completely empty. Yet we have not

faced the shortage. But as this is a wedding season our business can be affected as we have received orders for supply in advance."

The [Ponda vegetable market](#) wore a deserted look on Wednesday as no vegetable truck had entered the market. But, the vegetable supplies were normal at the Goa Bagayatdar Sahakari Kharedi Vikri Society (Bagayatdar society) and horticulture kiosks.

Such a situation was noticed in Ponda in February 2011.

Shankar Naik, chairman of Budhwarpeth Vyapari Sanghatana (Budhwarpeth traders' association), revealed that the vegetable agents at Belgaum had informed them that they would supply vegetables only if the truckers agreed to travel to Goa.

"On Wednesday no truck arrived with vegetables in Ponda market. The vegetable suppliers were ready to supply, but the truckers were not ready to transport them to Goa. This has led to artificial scarcity of vegetables in Ponda market," Naik said.

Naik also informed that two retailers managed to bring the vegetables from Belgaum personally.

Narendra Sawaikar, chairman of Bagayatdar society, said that they had a regular supply and their society would not face any problem even if they would not get stocks for a week. The society supplies all essential commodities at competitive prices through their outlets across the state.

"We had our supply as usual and our customers did not face any scarcity of vegetables. Besides this, we will not bend to such tactics and if such a condition arises, we are

ready to make alternative arrangements," Sawaikar said.

Admitting that he had his usual supply of vegetables, William Aguiar, a horticulture kiosk operator at Khadapabandh-Ponda, said that he had to limit the sale to a kg of vegetables per person as he had less stocks and more customers on Wednesday.

"I had stocks as per our daily need. But most of the customers had approached me as there was no vegetable shop open in Budhwarpeth (Old Bazaar) in Ponda. So I sold only a kg to each customer," Aguiar said.

The [transporters strike](#) has severely affected the Bicholim market as there was scarcity of vegetables in the market. The scarcity of vegetables in the market has led to the rise in prices of vegetables. Wednesday being the market day at Bicholim, people from rural areas like Ona-Maulingem, Kudchirem, Mulgao, Nanora, Kasarpal, Pilgao, Mayem, Sarvan-karapur and surrounding areas come to Bicholim for purchase of essential commodities. But, due to scarcity of vegetables the villagers from faraway places had to go home empty handed. Only items like potatoes, tomatoes, onions and very few vegetables were available in the market that too in smaller quantities. Green vegetables were not available at all. "The strike of transporters has severely affected our day-to-day living as we cannot afford to purchase the vegetables at higher rates in these days of inflation," said Revati Gaonkar from Kudchirem Bicholim who comes to Bicholim market once in a week to make purchases.

One of the vegetable vendors Mehboob Shah said, "Though the new stock of vegetables is not available, we have not increased the prices of the existing vegetables as we feel that poor people should not become the target of the transporters strike."

One more villager from Bicholim and a teacher by profession Deelip Dhargalkar has requested the state government to come out with an amicable settlement to the problem. He has also requested the transporters to co-operate with the government in this matter.

It is also understood that caterers in Bicholim were badly affected as they faced great difficulties to fulfill orders of the people.

It is also understood that the wholesale vegetable vendors in Belgaum raised objections to load the vegetables in the trucks which were supposed to transport the same to Goa due to which the vegetables could not reach Goa. It is also understood that some of the retail businessmen managed to bring the vegetables to Bicholim with the help of [ST buses](#).

### **Fertiliser companies seek priority in natural gas allocations**

The fertiliser industry has cautioned that the reported move to change priorities in the allocation of natural gas would result in higher imports, price spikes and ultimately lead to shortage of key farm inputs. A change in priorities of allocation of natural gas is being proposed in the next meeting of Empowered Group of Ministers ( [EGOM](#)), according to reports.

"This would obviously deprive the fertiliser sector of its allocated gas and force the industry to either reduce production or use more and more of imported LNG," said Satish Chander, Director General, [Fertiliser Association of India](#) (FAI). The industry wants first priority for fertilisers in the allocation of natural gas to continue.

Out of the total domestic production of [urea](#) of 22 million tonnes, 14 million tonnes is being produced using domestic gas with the balance being made out of imported LNG

and naphtha.

"Reduction of domestic production of urea significantly and substituting it with imports is not an option," Chander said. "Reduction in production means most urea plants will have to run at partial load. Those plants which are more dependent on KG-D 6 gas will have to shut down," he cautioned.

Moreover, international suppliers form informal cartels to exploit the large dependence of India on imports to meet its requirement, FAI said

### **Summer brings along threat of adulterated milk**

It seems that milk crisis is synonymous with the onset of [summers](#) which in turn gives rise to sale of synthetic as well as [adulterated milk](#). The lure of earning fast bucks is enough for perpetrators of such practice to risk lives of consumers. It is a well known practice that milkmen from adjoining milk belt in trans-Ganga areas use water in milk to cope up with the shortage during the summers.

The crisis has been aggravated by the ongoing marriage season as bulk of supplies is consumed by hotels and restaurants along with marriage houses to cater to the needs of their clients. Taking advantage of the high demand and the fall in supply caused by hot conditions, synthetic milk producers move in make a kill. They offer their product at reduced rate to people willing to be a partner in crime, said a food inspector.

He added that synthetic milk is primarily prepared by mixing detergents, refined oil with milk to give the original texture. It is quite difficult to differentiate between original and spurious milk without a proper laboratory test. In some cases skimmed milk or milk powder is also used, the only difference being that essential nutrients like Vitamin A and

D are missing in the absence of proper facilities. However, this milk is not as hazardous as synthetic milk, added the official.

Consumers are well aware of milkmen's practice of mixing water in milk. Though adulterated, consumers prefer to use it believing it to be at least pure though a bit diluted, said a house-help, Panu.

"My milkman has openly expressed helplessness to match the quality of milk that he supplies in the remaining part of the year. He keeps on harping on shortage of milk. On my part, I prefer to keep mum as at least he is not indulging in any unethical practices like synthetic milk", he added.

Talking to TOI, a milkman from Newa village, on condition of anonymity said "Sahib Ganga maiya ki kasam ham garmi mein paani jyada milawat hain par kabhaun koi aur galat kaam nai kiye (I swear in the name of holy Ganga that quantity of water I mix in milk is increased during summers but never indulge in unethical practice)." Although some of the suppliers of milk do indulge in preparing artificial milk which is very hazardous for the health.

Synthetic milk causes irreparable damage to body organs. It is of course a health hazard but if you are suffering from heart and kidney ailments, it will acerbate your problem, said Dr Manisha Dwivedi, head of department of gastroenterology at [MLN Medical College](#). Urea is particularly harmful for kidneys and caustic soda is a slow poison for people suffering from hypertension and heart ailments, she added.

"I have asked my milkman to start giving milk only during monsoon as he has assured

me of pure milk since then. Till then we have shifted to packaged milk," said Dr Sachi, another doctor of the college, packet milk which is more reliable."

# hindustantimes

Chennai - INDIA

## Today's Weather



Sunny

Thursday, May 16

Max Min

38° | 28°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:43

Humidity: 35

Sunset: 06:27

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1004

## Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Friday, May 17

Max Min

37° | 28°

## Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

May 18

May 19

May 20

May 21

May 22



36° | 28°

35° | 27°

34° | 27°

35° | 27°

35° | 27°

Cloudy

Partly Cloudy

Overcast

Overcast

Overcast

Airport Weather

Chennai

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:43

Humidity: 35 Sunset: 06:27

Wind: normal Barometer: 1004





## **State set to seek more funds from Centre for infra, irrigation projects**

The state government will seek additional funds from the Centre for drought mitigation even as it seeks policy changes to boost infrastructure at the meeting with the Planning Commission in Delhi on Thursday.

A delegation led by chief minister Prithviraj Chavan will meet the Commission to get approval for the state's annual plan, fixed at Rs. 46,938 crore for 2013-14. The annual plan is the total development outlay for the year. The hike in the annual plan has been very modest, just 5% more than last year, especially given the state's poor finances. The state is hoping that the Commission allows it to increase the annual plan by another Rs. 1,000 crore.

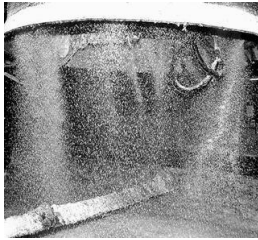
"In the discussion on the state's overall performance and finances, we will also be seeking additional funds for drought mitigation to complete irrigation projects and for water conservation measures," said a senior bureaucrat, on condition of anonymity.

He added that Chavan would also reiterate the need to launch the second phase of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) scheme and a separate funding line for mega cities like Mumbai.

The state government has identified 105 pending irrigation projects, largely in drought prone areas, which can mitigate water scarcity in these areas. The state will seek additional grants to the tune of Rs. 11,000 crore over the next three years to complete these projects. The delegation will also seek funds for water conservation projects like building cement check dams, farm ponds, as well as drip irrigation.

Chavan will seek branding of certain projects as national projects to seek 90% funding for them, like the Navi Mumbai International airport. The state will also seek environmental relaxations for coastal road projects and argue against the implementation of the Western Ghats report, which suggests restrictions on construction activity in the eco-sensitive region.

## Sugar millers plan to tap futures platform



After getting the freedom to sell sugar, millers are now keen to learn the futures game. Further, they also plan to strengthen their marketing teams and chase long-term deals with bulk consumers, such as beverage and confectionery makers.

Till recently, sugar sale was controlled by the Government through the release order mechanism, under which it decided the quantity of sugar to be sold by mills during specific periods.

Now, sugar industry bodies, the Indian Sugar Mills Association and the National Federation of Sugar Co-operative Factories, are exploring options to organise training for their members on the futures platform.

“There is a need for the co-operatives to participate in the futures market for better price discovery. We are planning to encourage mills to participate in the futures trade by organising some training in the days to come,” said Vinay Kumar, Managing Director, NFCSF.

The apex State co-operative body plans to hold consultation with the various State federations in this regard.

M. Srinivaasan, Chairman, ISMA, said: "At present, not many of our member companies have the skills to trade in futures. We are in discussions to organise programmes to get our members trained in the futures trade."

Currently, sugar is traded on the NCDEX and MCX, but the volumes are yet to pick up on these exchanges.

Kumar said that operating in a controlled environment needed no marketing, "but now, sugar mills need marketing skills."

He said his federation would develop a marketing strategy over the next two months to help the co-operatives adapt to the changed environment.

Even companies in the private sector are seen responding to the change in environment. "Having a marketing team is the need of the day," said Mukesh Kumar, Executive Director of Belgaum-based Vishwaraj Sugar Industries Ltd, stating that his company proposed to put together a small team of less than 10 people.

Besides, Vishwaraj is eyeing long-term deals with bulk consumers, such as the beverage and confectionery makers among others.

Currently, only a few large sugar companies are in long-term contracts with the bulk buyers such as Pepsi, Coca-Cola, Britannia and Cadbury among others.

"We are planning give a thrust to our institutional sales by strengthening our tie-ups with bulk buyers such as Coke and Pepsi," said B.B. Mehta, Director and Chief Executive Officer of Dalmia Bharat Sugar. The company is also in talks with other major consumers such as Dabur.

Dalmia, which currently sells about 30 per cent produce to large consumers, aims to increase its bulk sales to about 40 per cent of its sales over next year. Mehta said Dalmia was also looking to leverage the NCDEX futures trading platform and was strengthening its commodity team for effective hedging and delivery.

The over 300-odd co-operatives, which account for close to half of the sugar produced in the country, mainly sell their produce through the tendering process.

“We plan to actively participate in the tenders that the States are expected to float for their public distribution system (PDS) procurement,” Kumar added.

The Centre, which scrapped the levy mechanism, has told the States to procure directly from the mills for supplies through the PDS.

### **Range-bound trade in sugar futures**

Sugar market will remain bullish on demand hopes and peaking mercury level across the country.

Sugar prices ruled steady at upper level on Wednesday while in futures market it remained range-bound with thin volatility.

On expectation of higher physical demand due to summer season, the undercurrent of the market will remain positive, said sources.

The Vashi wholesale sugar market's traders continued their strike against local body tax, hence, there were no activities. Meanwhile in Uttar Pradesh sugar season 2012-2013 ended with seven per cent higher sugar output of 74.70 lakh tonnes compared to 70 lakh tonnes last year.

Sugar industry initially has estimated 80 lakh tonnes production but less than expected recovery resulted in lower output.

On Tuesday evening, 13-14 mills offered tenders and sold 30,000-35,000 bags at Rs 2,960-3,040 (Rs 2,960-3,040) for S-grade and Rs 3,040-3,100 (Rs 3,040-3,100) for M-grade.

On the NCDEX, sugar June futures were up by Rs 2 to Rs 3,041, July by Rs 3 to Rs 3,070 and August declined by Rs 12 to Rs 3,115 till noon.

## **Coonoor tea auction volume slides**

A volume of 14.84 lakh kg will be offered for Sale No: 20 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auction to take place on Thursday and Friday, reveals an analysis of the brokers' listings.

It is some 56,000 kg less than last week's offer but as much as 6.14 lakh kg more than the offer this time last year.

Of the 14.84 lakh kg on offer, 10.76 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades; 4.08 lakh kg to the dust grades; 13.95 lakh kg CTC variety and 0.89 lakh kg orthodox variety.

The proportion of orthodox teas continues to be low in both the leaf and dust grades. In the leaf counter, 0.47 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 10.29 lakh kg, CTC. Among the dusts, only 0.42 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 3.66 lakh kg, CTC.

Of the 14.84 lakh kg coming up for sale, fresh tea accounts for 12.90 lakh kg. About 1.94 lakh kg comprises teas which had remained unsold in previous auctions.

Crosshill Estate topped CTC market last week. "Our broken pekoe topped leaf market each fetching Rs 173 a kg and red dust at Rs 172. In all, our seven marks fetched Rs 118 and more", Crosshill Operations Head, Dinesh Raju told *Business Line*.

In the leaf auction, Hindustan Unilever Ltd bought brighter liquoring and medium varieties while Duncans Tea was fairly active on medium broken.

## **Monsoon set to lash Kerala coast from June 3**

The South-West Monsoon is likely to hit the Kerala coast on June 3 this year, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Wednesday. The onset forecast has an error margin of four days, IMD said in a statement.

The normal onset of monsoon over the Kerala coast is around June 1. However, last year, monsoon rains had hit the Kerala coast four days after June 1 onset forecast.

IMD said monsoon normally advances over the Andaman Sea around May 20, with a standard deviation of about one week.

However, this year, under the influence of tropical cyclone Mahasen, currently located over the central Bay of Bengal, monsoon may advance over the Andaman Sea slightly earlier than the normal date.

However, the onset over Andaman has little bearing on the date of onset over Kerala or on the seasonal monsoon rainfall over the country, it added.

### **Likely to be normal**

For the year ahead, IMD has predicted that monsoon is most likely to be normal. Quantitatively, the average rainfall is expected to be 98 per cent of the normal long period average (LPA) of 89 cm during the four-month season starting June 1 to September 30.

LPA is the average of seasonal rainfall over the country as a whole from 1951 to 2000.

In fact, last year, monsoon was below normal at 92 per cent of LPA at 81.9 cm, though the forecast was 99 per cent.

A good monsoon is crucial for the agriculture sector, which accounts for around 15 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), as 70 per cent of the farm lands are rain dependent.

It also should help contribute to the overall economic growth while easing concerns on food inflation, which has reversed the trend recently.

The IMD is expected to gather data till May-end before making the region-wise prediction some time in early June.

The South Asia Climate Outlook Forum (Sascof) at its recent summit in Kathmandu had observed that most of the mainland India will see normal rains this year.

## **Deficient rain**

However, the Sascof forecast had also pointed out that areas in South India, including entire Kerala, most of Tamil Nadu and South Interior Karnataka would witness deficient rains this monsoon.

Already, large parts of Peninsular India are under a dry spell, where the water levels in many reservoirs have reached record low levels, affecting the summer planting of rice and sugar cane.

On Wednesday, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council Chairman C. Rangarajan said the agriculture and allied sectors could achieve a growth of 3.4 per cent this fiscal, if the country receives normal monsoon.

## **agri-sector growth**

The agri-sector grew by a mere 1.8 per cent in 2012-13 as drought in parts of the country had affected the crop output.

## **Cyclone Mahasen may trigger heavy rainfall over N-E**

The India Met Department has reduced the watch for onset of South-West monsoon over the Andaman Sea to the next two days.

Negotiating the home stretch to making a landfall, cyclone Mahasen generated an expansive weather alert over most States in the North-East and Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the South-East.

## **MAY INTENSIFY**

Many places in India's east and north-east fall within an aerial distance of 300-350 km from Chittagong in Bangladesh, likely landfall point.

On Wednesday afternoon, it lay centred about 850 km north-west of Port Blair; 600 km south-south-west of Kolkata; 380 km south-east of Paradip and 750 km south-west of Chittagong.

Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre, Delhi, said that Mahasen would intensify a round before crossing Bangladesh coast between Khepupara and Teknaff, close to Chittagong, on Thursday night.

Heavy rain would lash many places of Andaman and Nicobar Islands on Thursday. Isolated heavy falls would occur over Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura on both Thursday and Friday.

### **SQUALLY WINDS**

Squally winds speed reaching 40-50 km/hr gusting to 60 km/hr would prevail along Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Sea condition will be rough to very rough along and off the islands during this period.

Strong winds reaching 30-40 km/hr would prevail along and off north Andhra Pradesh coast until Thursday afternoon; off Odisha coast for the whole day; and West Bengal coast into Friday morning.

Wind speeds would ratchet up to 40-50 km/hr gusting to 60 km/hr along and off West Bengal coast right from Thursday morning.

Violent weather has been forecast for north-east India as well, with wind speeds expected to clock 50-60 km/hr gusting to 70 km/hr over Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura from Thursday evening.

### **EXTENDED FORECAST**



Fishermen of Andaman Islands have been directed not to venture into the sea during next two days. Those along and off Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal coasts would do well to exercise caution.

Convective clouds over parts of south Odisha, south Chhattisgarh, north coastal Andhra Pradesh, west-central and north-west Bay of Bengal and north Andaman Sea.

An extended forecast valid until Wednesday next said that rain or thundershowers would continue to occur at many places over the north eastern States and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Thundershowers have been forecast at one or two places over south Peninsular India too.

### **Profit booking crushes castor**



Castor futures declined on Wednesday on the back of profit booking by traders.

However, spot castor inched up on slow arrivals and export demand.

### **futures**

On the Rajkot Commodity Exchange (RCX) castor June contract declined Rs 33 to Rs 3,570 a quintal. RCX spot castor gained Rs 15 to Rs 3,410.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange June contract was down Rs 38 to Rs 3,445 with an open interest of 1,57,380 lots.

Similarly, NCDEX castor July moved up by Rs 41 to Rs 3,550 with an open interest of 48680 lots.

### **arrivals**

About 55,000-60,000 bags of castor arrived in Gujarat and price stood at Rs 672-680 for 20 kg.

In Saurashtra region about 4,700-4,800 bags arrived and the price was Rs 655-680.

Castor oil was up Rs 5 to Rs 705 for 10 kg.

### **demand**

A castor broker said that since the last 4-5 days castor price gained on export demand.

Futures prices also were on the uptrend for the past few days and hence on Wednesday market players booked the profit. Demand and decreasing arrival support the spot castor prices.

### **Imported edible oils fall further**



Edible oil prices, especially imported palmolein and soyabean refined oil, extended loss further by Rs 2 each and cotton refined oil dropped by Rs 3 for 10 kg on Wednesday tracking weak local demand and bearish Malaysian palm oil futures. Groundnut, rapeseed and sunflower oil ruled unchanged in line with steady to weak trend in producing centres.

Sources said that slack middle month demand kept volumes thin and isolated in Mumbai market. Stockists preferred to fulfil old commitments. About 200-250 tonnes of palmolein were traded in resale at Rs 504-505 for ready delivery. Lower arrivals of soyabean and rapeseed in producing centres kept sentiment positive. In Indore soyabean prices were Rs 4,050-60 ex-mandi and Rs 4,100-20 plant delivery. Mustard seed arrivals were 2.70 lakh bags national level and the prices were Rs 3,100-3,610.

Towards the day's close, Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 510-514, super palmolein Rs 545 and sunflower refined oil Rs 780. Ruchi was quoting palmolein at Rs 514 for Patalganga and Rs 508 for JNPT, soyabean refined oil Rs 660 and sunflower refined oil at Rs 755. Allana's rates for palmolein were Rs 545. In Saurashtra – Rajkot, groundnut oil dropped by Rs 10 to Rs 1,770 for *tellia* tin and Rs 1,150 (Rs 1,160) for loose (10 kg).

**Malaysian BMD crude palm oil's** June contracts settled at MYR 2,295 (MYR 2,292), July at MYR 2,297 (MYR 2,302) and August at MYR 2,297 (MYR 2,301) a tonne.

**The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg):** groundnut oil 1,140 (1,140), soya refined oil 660 (662), sunflower exp. ref. 675 (675), sunflower ref. 755 (760), rapeseed ref. oil 690 (690), rapeseed expeller ref. 660 (660) cottonseed ref. oil 645 (648) and palmolein 505 (507).

**Vikram Global Commodities, Chennai** quoted Malaysian super palmolein at Rs 553 ex-Chennai.

**Soyameal holds key to dip in poultry feed**



If soyameal drops from the current levels, concentrate feed products may fall further, according to trade experts.

Lower input cost pulled concentrate feed products down by Rs 20 for a 50-kg bag on Wednesday.

Continuous falls in cost of production dragged concentrate feed prices, said Aditya Mishra, a commodity expert. The situation was anticipated in the market and it may rule around current levels before falling further in coming days, he said.

After witnessing some recovery last weekend, soyameal remained unchanged and sold at Rs 36,140 a tonne.

Bajra dropped by Rs 15 to Rs 1,470 a quintal, DCP was at 35 a kg, after witnessing a continuous fall, MBM improved by Rs 2 and quoted at Rs 40 a kg while maize dropped by Rs 30 and quoted at Rs 1,320 a quintal.

Mustard de-oiled cake went up by Rs 100 and sold at Rs 14,700 a tonne, DRB sold at Rs 9,000 a tonne while rice bran oil ruled at 49 a kg, Rs 2 down from previous levels.

### **Feed products**

After ruling flat for more than a month, concentrate feed products moved down, while after witnessing a fall last weekend, layer feed products managed to maintain their previous levels.

Prices of all concentrate feed products dropped by Rs 20 for a 50-kg bag. Layer concentrate 25 per cent was sold at Rs 1,445 while layer concentrate 35 per cent went

for Rs 1,130. Broiler concentrate quoted at Rs 1,980 while Broiler Starter Mash was at Rs 1,500. Pre-lay mash sold at Rs 1,020, while layer grower mash quoted at Rs 960.

### **Poultry Products**

Meanwhile, a mixed trend was seen in poultry products. Broiler improved on buying interest while egg dropped down on reduced offtake on Wednesday.

Egg went down by 15 paise and sold at Rs 2.20. Broiler improved by Rs 15 and quoted at Rs 82-83 a kg, while chick went for Rs 16-18, remained unchanged.

### **Turnover points to waning interest in pepper**



Pepper prices continued to decline on Wednesday on bearish sentiments as the contract is nearing maturity.

The market continued to be volatile but activities were limited.

The net open interest showed a decline. But turnover showed a slight increase giving the impression that the people are losing interest, trade sources said.

Buyers were quoting lower rates. Those who wanted to get out of the market were liquidating.

Those looking for farther out positions were finding it difficult to get the rates after the maturity of the May contract (on 20th of this month), as the June/July/Aug contracts have not been listed on the exchange.

May contract on the NCDEX decreased by Rs 360 to Rs 35,805 a quintal.

Total turnover moved up by 2 tonnes to 22 tonnes.

Total open interest dropped by 23 tonnes to 166 tonnes.

Spot prices fell in tandem with the futures market and on limited activities by Rs 100 to Rs 34,000 (ungarbled) and Rs 35,500 (garbled) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market was at around \$6,700-6,725 a tonne (c&f) for May and June shipments, market said.

### **Rising rabi arrivals seen pounding moong**



Moong is likely to come under pressure on huge arrivals of rabi crop despite demand improving. Arrival of new moong is set to pick up in local mandis in the next few days, said a trader. Currently local mandis are witnessing arrival of about 250-300 bags daily from parts of Madhya Pradesh.

Moong also gained Rs 50 on improved demand with moong (best quality) being quoted at Rs 5,400-50 while moong (medium) ruled at Rs 4,700-4,800. Moong had also been witnessing a sluggish trend on weak demand and rise in arrival of summer moong in local mandis. Two weeks ago, moong (bold) had been ruled at Rs 5,500-5,700 a quintal, while moong (medium) quoted at Rs 5,000-5,300 a quintal.

Moong dal (medium) ruled at Rs 6,600-6,700, moong (bold) at Rs 6,800-6,900, while moong mongar ruled at Rs 7,200-7,400.

Pulses and pulse seeds saw renewed buying support and demand on Wednesday. Tur prices gained Rs 50 with tur (Maharashtra) rising to Rs 4,600 a quintal on revival of fresh demand. Similarly, tur (Madhya Pradesh) also rose to Rs 4,000-4,200 (up Rs 100 from last week) on renewed demand.

Notwithstanding lower domestic crop output, tur prices had been seen ruling stable for quiet sometime on poor demand and buying support in pulses from the millers. Added to this, arrival of imported tur in mandis had also reined in its prices.

Tur dal remained stable with tur dall (full) being quoted at Rs 6,300-6,400 , tur dal (sawa no.) at Rs 5,800-5,900, while tur marka ruled at Rs 7,000. Urad and its dal ruled stable on slack demand with urad (bold) at Rs 3,450-3,500, while urad (medium) ruled at Rs 3,000-3,200. Urad dal (medium) was quoted at Rs 3,900-4,000, urad dal (bold) at Rs 4,500-4,600, while urad mongar ruled at Rs 5,600-5,700 a quintal respectively.

#### **Poor demand continues in turmeric**



Turmeric sales are on the decline due to poor demand and no orders from North India.

“Though the arrival of turmeric was only 4,195 bags on Wednesday, the sale was below 45 per cent. This is due to the poor demand from North India. Upcountry traders have also stopped purchase from other turmeric centres. But a few traders in Erode are still buying one or two lorry loads of turmeric from Nizamabad at a lower price and after polishing them again, keep the stock with them,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

On Wednesday, prices of finger and root varieties fell by Rs 200 a quintal at all four sales centres in Erode. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,019-6,999; the root variety Rs 4,009-6,009 a quintal.

**Salem Hybrid Crop:** The finger variety was sold at Rs 6,169-7,879; the root variety Rs 5,889-6,289. Of the 885 bags that arrived, 25 per cent of the stocks was sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety fetched Rs 6,369-7,559; the root variety Rs 5,339-6,516. All the 308 bags found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,610-7,264; the root variety Rs 5,610-6,296. Of the 512 bags put up for sale, 459 got sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,740-7,427; the root variety Rs 5,667-6,500. All the 164 bags were traded.



### **Govt raises arecanut import floor price, to protect growers**

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) under the Union ministry of commerce has notified a rise in the cost, insurance and freight (CIF) value of imported arecanut at Rs 110 a kg (now the minimum import price), a rise of 46 per cent over the previous Rs 75 a kg.

India imports arecanut mainly from Bangladesh and Nepal. The move came after the prices of locally grown varieties declined 26 per cent to around Rs 130 a kg early this year, with imported nuts costing much less than the domestic produce. Members of



Parliament from arecanut growing states in the south and east had put pressure on the agriculture and commerce ministries last month to increase the price for imported nuts.

Accordingly, growers are happy. Arecanut is grown on around 400,000 hectares and production is estimated at 477,000 tonnes for 2012-13. The Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Cooperative (Campco, a multi-state cooperative between Karnataka and Kerala, has hailed the DGFT decision. "With this increase in import price, we hope the price of the commodity will not go below Rs 100 a kg in the domestic market, giving much needed relief to growers," said Konkodi Padmanabha, president of Campco. The notification was issued on Monday. It applies to the import of whole, split, ground and other varieties, Padmanabha told Business Standard." This will not only give a major boost to arecanut growers but also go a long way in stabilising the market as a whole in the near future," he said.

He said he also wanted action from the central government on illegal import through Nepal and Bangladesh. There has been a sharp increase in the import from these two nations since 2008-09, he said.

The central government should authorise the health ministry to test the quality imported from these nations and, thereby, prevent entry of inferior quality arecanut into India, he said.

MPs from growing states had also urged the agriculture and commerce ministries to ensure arecanut import was canalised through a government-recognised agency. And, for nominating one major port as a single point of entry, to curb illegal import.

### **Wheat procurement likely to fall to 26-28 mt**

Wheat procurement in the 2013-14 crop marketing year that started on April 1 is expected to culminate at 26-28 million tonnes (mt), a good 10-12 mt less than last year and almost 60 per cent less than the initial estimate of 44 mt.

Officials from the Food Corporation of India (FCI) say arrivals in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh in the next 10 days hold the key to meet this estimate as supplies from Punjab and Haryana are virtually over. Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh are the major wheat-producing states in the country. Till date, FCI has procured around 24 mt of wheat from farmers, which is almost 17 per cent less than the corresponding period last year. According to officials, the sharp fall in procurement is mainly because of the overall low wheat production, heightened purchases by private traders and increased holding by farmers in anticipation of further rise in prices.

“Wheat procurement in Punjab and Haryana has virtually stopped and the arrival in mandis has trickled down to 8,000-10,000 tonnes, so the only place from where you can get some wheat are Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, where, too, the chances are dim as the arrivals are going down at a fast clip,” said an FCI official, after undertaking a mid-month review of procurement operations.

Madhya Pradesh had fixed a target of purchasing nine mt of wheat this year, of which till Wednesday, it has managed to purchase around 5.87 mt. “Assuming that arrivals improve rapidly, which is not very likely, the state can at best procure another 1.4 mt of wheat. Therefore, we feel wheat procurement this year could end at 26-28 mt, with a strong chance of it going further down,” the official added.

The average daily wheat arrival in all mandis across the country last year till mid-May was around 890,000 tonnes, while this year, it has fallen to almost 230,000 tonnes. Meanwhile, such a sharp drop in procurement and slowing arrivals in mandis have already prompted experts and analysts to question the official production data.

According to some officials from multinational trading companies, India’s wheat production in the crop year ended on March 31, 2013 is expected to be 86-87 mt, much less than the third advance estimate of 93.6 mt.

However, agriculture secretary Ashish Bahuguna told Business Standard that as of now, the department was sticking to its third advance estimate, which had pegged the wheat production in 2012-13 at 93.6 mt. Added a noted agriculture economist: “Our estimate is that production of wheat will be around 88-90 mt.”

State	Arrival	Procurement
Punjab	10.96	10.76
Haryana	5.85	5.84
Uttar Pradesh	1.31	0.56
Madhya Pradesh	7.66	5.87
Rajasthan	1.32	1.04
2013-14 (Total)	27.18	24.1
2012-13 (Total)	31.23	29.29

**Note:** The total might not match as all states have not been included. The wheat crop marketing season runs from April to March and wheat produced in one season is marketed in the next season

**Source:** Food Corporation of India (FCI)

## Potato down more than 1% on subdued demand

### Increased supplies in the physical market also affected the trade

Potato prices fell by Rs 11.50 to Rs 879.80 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators offloaded their positions driven by subdued demand in the spot market.

Increased supplies in the physical market from producing regions against lower demand led to the fall in potato prices.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the July contract fell by Rs 11.50, or 1.29%, to Rs 879.80 per quintal in 28 lots.

The June contract slipped by Rs 10.10, or 1.07%, to Rs 932.50 per quintal in 41 lots.

Marketmen said fall in potato prices was mostly due to offloading of positions by speculators, driven by subdued demand in the spot market.

### **Coriander down more than 1% on weak demand**

#### **Adequate stocks availability also affected the trade**

Coriander prices fell by Rs 78 to Rs 6,770 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators reduced their positions on sluggish spot demand.

The sentiment also weakened following adequate stocks availability in the physical market.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the June contract fell by Rs 78, or 1.13%, to Rs 6,770 per quintal in 27,980 lots.

The May contract declined by Rs 50, or 0.73% to Rs 6,766 per quintal in 1,250 lots.

Market analysts said sluggish demand against adequate supply into the spot market led to the fall in coriander futures prices.