

'Pineapple republic'all set to go global



The 'Pineapple Republic' may find a place on the world map, if the Pineapple Mission being set up by the Kerala government will have its way. The mission, approved by the State Cabinet on Wednesday, is expected to give a big boost to the 'Vazhakulam pineapple', which secured the GI (Geographical Indication) label in 2009. Vazhakulam in Ernakulam district, the pineapple heartland of Kerala, may go global as the mission plans to drastically increase exports.

Farmers and traders in the area hope that their product, known for its special flavour and extra sweetness, can take on Thailand, which is the world leader in pineapples.

"The mission can facilitate a drastic increase in exports and build a global market for the Vazhakulam pineapple, like the Spices Board and Tea Board are doing with their products," says Baby John, president of the Pineapple Farmers Association. Currently, export is limited to a few Gulf countries.

"Creating an international market for the product by building a brand image and strategically using the GI tag is one of our main objectives," K.P. Kuriakose, special officer of the mission, told *The Hindu*. "Our core concern, of course, is coordinating production, processing, marketing and exporting."

The 2012 State Budget had proposed the setting up of the Pineapple Mission and earmarked Rs.1 crore for initial expenses. More than a year later, the Cabinet on Wednesday approved the memorandum of association of the mission.

Vazhakulam, jokingly referred to as the 'Pineapple Republic', has for long been associated with pineapple farming and trading. The landscape is dotted with small and medium farms.

Loan cards for tenant farmers soon

Minister asks officials to complete the process before the onset of kharif

The government has asked the revenue officials to ensure loan eligibility cards to eligible tenant farmers in the State in 15 days to enable the latter to get credit for farm operations for kharif season beginning this June.

Revenue Minister N. Raghuveera Reddy instructed Joint Collectors to facilitate issuing of these cards to the tenants after processing their applications received at MeeSeva centres, as only a fortnight time is available before the onset of the kharif season.

Seeking to get a feedback on the results of the recently conducted Revenue Sadassus from District Collectors and joint collectors through a video conference here on Thursday, the Minister announced that the revenue staff would have to visit villages again in July first week to ascertain from people whether their problems had been solved. If a person in a village complained that his/her grievance had not been redressed, officials would be asked for explanations for non-settlement of the problem.

Mr. Reddy complained that the problems highlighted by people during the Revenue Sadassus last year had not been solved with quality, although a record of sorts was created by handling 99 per cent of the 7 lakh grievances. He sought steps for solving the remaining problems registered during the Revenue Sadassus this year. He wanted the revenue officials, particularly the joint collectors, to identify unused government lands in the districts by May end so that these lands could be distributed to the landless

poor during the seventh and last phase of land distribution programme. Sanjay Jaju, principal secretary, Information Technology, who was present along with I.V.R. Krishna Rao, Chief Commissioner of Land Administration, said his department would set up e-Seva centres in remote and inaccessible habitations using solar energy, as electricity could not be supplied to them as yet.

Preparations for kharif sowing begin

Chitradurga district has so far received 46.2 mm of rainfall

The Department of Agriculture has initiated steps to ensure adequate supply of seeds and fertilizer to help farmers cultivate crops during the kharif season as the district has received good rainfall during the past week. The rain has brought cheer to farmers who have been hit by two successive years of drought.

In order to provide seeds to farmers without delay, the Agriculture Department has stored 500 quintals of groundnut and 250 quintals of sunflower seeds.

The department has targeted cultivation of 3,52,200 hectares of land, and to do that it would require 52,400 tonnes of fertilizer. At present, the department has a stock of 4,537 tonnes and a proposal has been sent to the government seeking immediate supply of the remaining quantity.

Seeds and fertilizer will be distributed to farmers in all the six taluks through 22 raitha samparka kendras, 10 cooperative societies and 10 outlets of the Karnataka State Seeds Corporation.

So far, the district has received 46.2 mm of rainfall as against the normal 101.9 mm.

The Agriculture Department is conducting programmes in all the six taluks to create awareness among farmers about protection of crops during adverse conditions.

Subsidised solar tracking pumps for farmers

Solar tracking pumps

As usage of solar energy is gathering momentum, the State government has decided to distribute 2,000 solar tracking motor pumps to farmers in Tamil Nadu.

Chief Minister Jayalalithaa told the Assembly on Wednesday that five horsepower pumps would be given to farmers with 80 per cent subsidy.

Moreover, the existing micro-irrigation system would be integrated with technology suitable to crops. It will cost Rs. 5 lakh to set up the system and 80 per cent of the money will come from the government as subsidy. Ms. Jayalalithaa added that it would cost the government Rs. 100 crore and that it would make arrangements for loans through cooperative societies to help the farmers pay the remaining 20 per cent.

— Special Correspondent

Drought dominates grievance day meet

'Seek release of 10,000 cusecs of Cauvery water'



District Collector S. Jayandhi chairing the farmers grievances' meeting in Karur on Thursday.

Scarcity of drinking water in Karur district found echo in the farmers grievances day meet held here on Thursday with the participants urging Chief Minister Jayalalithaa to seek release of at least 10,000 cusecs of the Cauvery water from Karnataka.

Raising the issue, working president of the Cauvery Delta Farmers' Welfare Association Mahadanapuram V. Rajaram and Deputy secretary Kavandampatti R. Subramanian said water scarcity in the past several months had resulted in river bed getting bone dry. Even open wells have dried up in the area and water level in the borewells were getting lower by the day. Canals and irrigation channels in the region had remained dry and agriculture affected as never before. More importantly, farmers and their livestock were not getting adequate potable water supply in villages and town along the banks. Keeping in mind the possibly extended summer and the need to maintain regular water availability, the Chief Minister could seek at least 10,000 cusecs of water from Karnataka to meet drinking water requirements in the delta region, they said.

District Collector S. Jayandhi assured farmers to convey their demand to the State government. The administration was seized of the drought issue and was taking steps to meet drinking water requirements in the villages and even in deep rural habitations, she added. Many farmers sought adequate compensation for fields and crops affected because of the continuing drought-like conditions and wanted the State government to expedite assessment and disbursement of compensation.

When some farmers led by M. Rajeswari of Kulithalai and S. Manikka Gounder of Pothuravathanpatti demanded financial assistance to purchase oil motor pump sets, the officials turned down the demand citing lack of any such programme with the line departments. Farmers contended that the drought spell was a never before affair and needed to be dealt with in an extraordinary manner. M. Manoharan of Karungalapalli sought the immediate repair of the damaged culvert across the Parali Kaattu Vaari near Rajendiram in which a tractor overturned while negotiating the edge killing a farmer sometime ago.

The District Collector took to task some officials of the Rural Development Department who had replied that efforts would be taken to get some works done under the MLA Local Area Development Fund, saying apportioning fund for projects was the

prerogative of the concerned MLA and the officials must not mislead or be lax in giving such stock replies.

Gingelly price doubles, but total acreage under cultivation falls

The retail price of sesame oil crossed Rs. 240 a litre



The price of sesame (gingelly) has more than doubled in the recent months and the retail price of sesame oil crossed Rs. 240 a litre. But the total acreage under the crop, which requires very little water, has witnessed a sharp fall in the district.

Erode is one of the major producers of gingelly. Farmers in Kodumudi, Bhavani, Arachalur, Modakurichi, Gobichettipalayam and TN Palayam block account for 90 per cent of the sesame production in the district and many oil companies make a direct procurement from these blocks.

Farmers have covered more than 7,500 hectares under the crop in the 2011-12 financial year. But the coverage went down to a mere 1,600 hectares in the fiscal that ended on March 31.

The cultivation of the crop is being taken two times a year, during December – January and July-August. “Farmers in the district, who used cover about 6,000 hectares under the crop in the December season, had taken up the crop in less than 200 hectares. The shortage of water and power crisis are the primary reasons for the fall in the acreage,” a senior official in the agriculture department said. “Though it is a short term crop and requires less water, many farmers did not take the risk of cultivating it following the monsoon failure,” the official added.

“We feared that we could not water the crop adequately. The yield would be poor if we failed to water the crop at least once a week,” K. Rajendran, a farmer in Kodumudi said.

Meanwhile, the price of sesame, which stood at Rs. 40 a kg, went up to Rs. 90 a kg. This led to a sharp rise in the prices of sesame oil in the market. “The price of the sesame oil stood at Rs. 150 a litre in May last year. It crossed Rs. 240 in January this year and had come down a little this month. The price now stands at Rs. 190. The shortage in the supply of sesame is the reason for the rise in the prices,” a leading sesame oil producer said.

Officials in the department, however, expressed confidence that the cultivation of gingelly will pick this year. “The government has come up with a number of programmes to encourage the farmers to take up the cultivation of oil seeds including gingelly. So we expect a significant increase in the total area of cultivation this year,” an official said.

Steps to encourage fodder production in Tirupur district

To encourage fodder production in the district amid the prevailing dry weather conditions, the Department of Animal Husbandry is all set to extend an emergency assistance of Rs 74.8 lakh to farmers so as to immediately bring 1,100 acre under cultivation.

“This exigency package and corresponding acreage will be apart from the usual assistances and normal production that expects to start with the sowing in June-July period,” Joint Director of Animal Husbandry K. M. Sivaprakasam told *The Hindu*.

The amount of Rs 74.8 lakh allocated for the district will be utilised to subsidise the cost of raising fodder to the tune of 50 per cent of the unit cost.

Assistance

“The unit cost of cultivation has been pegged at Rs. 13,600 per acre which means that the beneficiary farmers will get assistance both in the form of inputs and cash worth a total of Rs 6,800 to offset the capital costs to an extent,” Dr. Sivaprakasam said.

For an acre, 16 kg of fodder cholam seeds and 48 kg of chemical fertilizers (ie 24 kg of urea, 8 kg of potash and 16 kg of phosphorus) will be given away.

“High quality seeds to be used are procured from National Seeds Corporation,” Dr. Sivaprakasam said.

Apart from these inputs, the remaining assistance will be given as cash to subsidise the labour charges incurred during sowing, plough, de-weeding and harvesting activities.

“We have disseminated the salient features of the emergency package to the prospective growers of fodder,” Dr. Sivaprakasam said.

Drought relief to be disbursed to farmers

Farmers in the district whose livelihood was severely affected due to the drought during 2012-13 fiscal can heave a sigh of relief as a sum of Rs 76.45 crore has come for the district for disbursement to offset the losses suffered.

Official sources told *The Hindu* that following a detailed evaluation carried out in the district, a total of 1,53,103 farmers who lost more than 50 per cent of their raised crops because of lack of availability of adequate water for irrigation would be given the indemnity.

Area-wise, a total of 2, 26,045.57 acres of farm area under agriculture crops in the district were affected by the drought during last fiscal.

“The amount will be disbursed through the co-operative credit institutions and credited directly into the accounts of the respective farmers shortly,” agriculture department sources said.

Of the total farmers eligible for compensation, 73,766 persons were involved in the cultivation of millets, 35,562 persons in the raising of pulses, 798 were cotton growers, 3,042 were cultivating sugarcane, 179 raising paddy, 30,103 in coconut cultivation and the remaining were involved in the production of oilseeds.

Amount-wise, Rs. 25.88 crore would be disbursed to affected-coconut farmers, Rs. 12.4 lakh to paddy farmers, and the remaining to the affected-millet, sugarcane, cotton, oilseeds and millets farmers (both under rain-fed and irrigated conditions).

Compensation to Karaikal farmers delayed further

Cash will be disbursed only after budget is passed in July

The distribution of much-awaited cash compensation to the farmers of Karaikal, who lost the samba crop of paddy due to failure of south west monsoon and non-arrival of the Cauvery water, is likely to be delayed further due to financial crunch. During the Assembly session in March, Chief Minister N. Rangasamy announced that the farmers of Karaikal would be given Rs. 20,000 per hectare for the loss of paddy crop. It was estimated that the total financial assistance would be around Rs. 9.5 crore benefitting about 4,600 farmers. Faced with immense pressure from Karaikal farmers and MLAs, he had again reiterated recently that the distribution would begin shortly. However, highly placed government sources indicate that the current financial situation might not allow the distribution of cash at this juncture.

“The distribution of compensation could be taken up only after the presentation of territorial budget for the year 2013-14 which is likely in July,” said a senior official.

Prior to that, the Chief Minister will have to make a visit to New Delhi to meet the Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission to finalise the annual plan size for Puducherry which could happen in the next few weeks, sources say.

Going by the present financial health and related factors, the sources affirm that the distribution was likely by the end of July or early August when the farmers would start

preparing for this year's samba crop. Asked about the delay over the distribution of cash compensation to the farmers, Vivek Pande, Secretary, Agriculture, told *The Hindu* that it was a committed liability of the government.

It would definitely disburse the compensation as soon as possible. It could not be taken up immediately as only Vote on Account has been passed.

The government was very much aware of the problems and expectation of farmers, Mr. Pande said adding that he had personally visited Karaikal and promised them that they would be duly compensated as per the announcement made by the Chief Minister.

Pineapple Mission may take Vazhakulam places

The 'Pineapple Republic' may find a place on the world map, if the Pineapple Mission being set up by the Kerala Government will have its way.

The mission, approved by the State Cabinet on Wednesday, is expected to give a big boost to the 'Vazhakulam pineapple,' which secured the GI (Geographical Indication) label in 2009. Vazhakulam in Ernakulam district, the pineapple heartland of Kerala, may go global as the mission plans to drastically increase exports.

Farmers and traders in the area hope that their product, known for its special flavour and extra sweetness, can take on Thailand, which is the world leader in pineapples. "The mission can facilitate a drastic increase in exports and build a global market for the Vazhakulam pineapple, like the Spices Board and Tea Board are doing to their products," says Baby John, president of the Pineapple Farmers Association. Currently, export is limited to a few Gulf countries.

"Creating an international market for the product by building a brand image and strategically using the GI tag is one of our main objectives," K.P. Kuriakose, special officer of the mission, told *The Hindu*. "Our core concern, of course, is coordinating production, processing, marketing and exporting."

The 2012 State Budget had proposed the setting up of the Pineapple Mission and earmarked Rs. 1 crore for initial expenses. More than a year later, the Cabinet on Wednesday approved the memorandum of association of the mission. The Pineapple Farmers Association had in 2006 mooted the idea to the M.S. Swaminathan Committee on Farmers as such an agency could promote both production and exports. The Horticulture Mission, which catered to the needs of several crops, was thought to be less effective.

The GI advantage

Vazhakulam, jokingly referred to as the Pineapple Republic, has for long been associated with pineapple farming and trading. Of late, several neighbouring panchayats have jumped on the pineapple bandwagon.

The landscape is dotted with small and medium farms. And, Vazhakulam hosts the largest pineapple market in the country with scores of trucks from other States parked on the roads any time of the day waiting to be loaded. After the landmark GI tag, the fruit produced anywhere in Kerala is loosely referred to as 'Vazhakulam'—though, technically, only those in 156 panchayats in Ernakulam, Idukki, Pathanamthitta and Kottayam, can claim to be 'Vazhakulam.'

Mr. Kuriakose, who is a farm scientist specialising in pineapple, points out that less than one third of Kerala's potential is currently used. "As long as there is rubber cultivation in Kerala, there will be pineapple cultivation too," he said, referring to the fact that in most areas pineapple is raised as an inter-crop of rubber.

It was harvested year-round. He noted that the Vallarpadam container transshipment terminal had given high hopes of pineapple exports. Increasing the shelf life of the fruit, finding a range of use, edging the farmers to go in for processing and world-class marketing techniques were the main challenges for exploiting the huge market potential.

Mr. John said last financial year Kerala produced Rs. 500 crore worth of the fruit. Currently, the farmer gets more than Rs. 37 a kg. The website www.vazhakulampineapple.org informs the farmers about the prices on a daily basis.

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Usage of banned Oxytocin drug rampant in dairying

Buffaloes subjected to cruelty in Krishna district

Indiscriminate usage of banned Oxytocin drug on cattle is still rampant in Krishna district, where animals are subjected to deliberate cruelty.

India banned the schedule H drug, Oxytocin, under Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and section 12 of Food and Drug Adulteration Prevention Act, 1960.

Dairy farmers in Krishna district now have access to the drug, which is available in general stores in the villages, apart from medical shops without need of prescription from the veterinarians.

A Machilipatnam-based farmer, who stores a packet of one hundred vials of Oxytocin told *The Hindu*, "I inject the drug twice a day five minutes before milking for high pressure release of milk into the udder of the buffalo."

An alternative

He added that the packet was available at below Rs.100 in the market. Farmers everywhere in the district inject it on the cattle for a minimum of three-months on regular basis.

This low-priced method has become an alternative to the natural system, in which cattle release milk into the udder soon after its calf sucks the milk.

Sold to butchers

Above 93 per cent of total district's milk production is buffalo milk. Most of the new born male buffalo calves are being sold to butchers.

In many cases, a calf is left to die of starvation as the farmer is no more relying on the calf for natural process of milking the buffalo.

Worrying scenario

"The drug will directly disturb the reproductive system of the cattle and reduces its life expectancy. The practice reflects the inhuman face of dairying," said Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University's Buffalo Research Station Senior Scientist K. Ananda Rao.

Health hazard

"Consumption of oxytocin-injected milk would certainly result in hormone imbalances in humans. The health hazard is different from person to person," said Andhra Medical College Visakhapatnam Principal Kalpana Subramanyam.

Inhuman practice

Around 35 butchers in the district headquarters daily bought at least two buffalos from the farmers, who make money out of the survived male calves.

"Agri scientists will attend farmers' meets"

The primary goal of the conducting Rythu Chaitanya Sadassulu and Yatralu (farmer awareness meetings and rallies) was to help farmers to make agriculture profitable, Minister for secondary Education K.Parthasarathy has said.

The Minister inaugurated the Vijayawada Division Rythu Sadassu held in the Andhra Loyola Collage here on Thursday. He said a decision had been taken to bring agricultural scientists and department officers to this meeting to help resolve the

problem of farmers and give them suggestions. He said as 65 per cent of the farmers were leasing out land for cultivation, the State government was giving loans directly to the tenant farmers.

The Minister released posters on interest-free loans to farmers published by the Information and Public Relations Department at the farmers meeting.

Vijayawada West MLA Vellampalli Srinivas, MLC Ilapuram Venkaiah, were present.

Solar-powered irrigation pumpset has its limitations, say farmers

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Although Chief Minister Jayalalithaa's announcement on extending 80 per cent subsidy for 2,000 solar-powered pumpsets has elicited hearty approbation from a number of farmers, they have a lurking fear on its efficacy as well.

Mahadhanapuram V. Rajaram, working president of the Cauvery Delta Farmers' Welfare Association, is sceptical whether such pumpsets would be able to draw water beyond a depth of 50-60 ft (20 metres at the most). Besides, the quantum of water required for irrigation may not be pumped.

This would be quite useful between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. and the quantum being pumped would gradually decline thereafter. And only if this water were to be stored and used, it would be good for irrigation. "Though the State government would bear 80 per cent (Rs. 4 lakh) of the cost of Rs. 5 lakh, even the rest — Rs. 1 lakh — would be possible only for big farmers. "Hence, it will be ideal if the government first grants this subsidy to big farmers on a trial basis and, if it were to succeed, extend it to the small farmers next year," he said.

Big farmers would be able to use this for drip irrigation or use PVC pipes to let the water into their farm ponds.

At the same time, he was happy to point out that in Karur district alone 64 farmers handed over drafts to the authorities on Thursday for this scheme and “50 more are ready. However, Agriculture Department officials are reluctant to accept them as it would not be possible to accommodate so many,” he said.

V. Duraimanickam, general secretary, Tamil Nadu unit of the All India Kisan Sabha, while welcoming the scheme, wanted this to be extended to more farmers.

Conceding that it would help big farmers more, he appealed to the Chief Minister to enhance the subsidy amount further so that small farmers could avail its benefits. This would protect farmers from frequent and unscheduled power cuts.

“Our association has been for increasing the use of solar power not only in agriculture but also in various domestic uses,” he added.

Rajachidambaram, State general secretary, Tamilaga Vivasayigal Sangam, described the scheme as a “boon” for farmers of delta while it may not be of much use in traditionally water-starved districts such as Perambalur and Ariyalur. “Only those farmers who are confident of the availability of water in their wells or borewells would opt for the scheme,” he added.

He commended the Chief Minister for designing it in such a way that a number of farmers in the delta region would definitely go in for it because the availability of groundwater in the delta region was better than most other areas in the State. “Hence, even if Mettur dam were to be opened for irrigation only couple of months later than the scheduled date — June 12 — farmers would still be able to commence agricultural operations depending on the groundwater.” He is confident that this could prove extremely beneficial even if there are a couple of spells of rain as the water table in most of the areas would go up.

Most important reason for Chief Minister's decision, according to him, is that she wanted to protect the foodgrain production in the delta region as otherwise the public distribution system would suffer.

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Flower show begins today

All arrangements in place, say officials



Workers making arrangements for the flower show at the Government Botanical Garden in Udthagamandalam on Thursday.— Photo: M. Sathyamoorthy

With the three-day 117th Annual Floral Carnival (AFC) scheduled to commence at the Government Botanical Garden here on Friday the venue was a beehive of activity on Thursday.

Adverse weather notwithstanding the garden is presenting a colourful look and show arrangements are nearing completion. The invitation for the event distributed by the Department of Horticulture is distinctly different from the previous years and more attractive.

Stating that everything will be in place by Friday morning, the Joint Director of Horticulture G. Mohan told The Hindu that here on Thursday that on the opening day focus will be on showcasing different aspects of the culture of The Nilgiris.

In keeping with this there will be a performance by the famed band of the Wellington based Madras Regimental Centre. There will also be a display of kalaripayattu by the jawans of the MRC.

The show would be inaugurated by the State Agriculture Minister S. Damodaran. Municipal Engineer B. Ramoorthy said that the civic administration has improved basic amenities like drinking water and public conveniences at the venue.

Since there is likely to be a considerable increase in the inflow of tourists from Friday those in the hospitality sector and other stake holders have geared up for a sharp rise in their business.

NABARD gets new office

The chairperson of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, Prakash Bakshi, inaugurated the new premises of NABARD Regional Office on Kempe Gowda Road here on Wednesday. S.N.A. Jinnah, chief general manager , NABARD, Karnataka Regional Office, and Kaushik Mukherjee, Additional Chief Secretary, spoke. — Special Correspondent

Training classes for PACS presidents

The DCCB is organising training classes for the newly-elected presidents of Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies on its premises in Guntur on May 22, according to a press release by the bank CEO B. Viswanadham. Minister for Cooperation Kasu Venkata Krishna Reddy will inaugurate the programme. DCCB Chairman M. Venkata Subbaiah and others will participate.

Separate ministry for fisheries sought

The Federation of Indian Fishery Industries (FIFI) has asked the Union Government to set up a separate ministry for fisheries.

Stating that the industry was suffering a lot as it had been made part of the Ministry of Agriculture, in separate memoranda to the officials, FIFI delegation led by its president Y.G.K. Murthi called on newly appointed Secretary, Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries Department Gokul Chandra Pati recently in Delhi seeking a separate ministry.

The delegation later met Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Sushma Swaraj to seek her support for carving out a separate ministry and put pressure on the government to concede their just demands.

FIFI delegation sought extension of fishing conservation period to ensure better catch and supply of duty-free diesel to all the fishing boats by de-linking it from the condition that it would be given to only fishermen having BPL cards.

During their interaction with Mr. Pati, the delegation stated that increase in fishing ban period from 47 to 62 days uniformly in both east coast and west coast.

“The fish catches have drastically come down in both the coasts. The catches of some of the species are drastically affected, due to pollution, excess fishing and increased fishing effort and destruction of the critical habitat by the destructive fishing methods such as bottom trawling,” Dr. Murthi said.

He said the Bombay Duck and pomfret catches had come down by 55 per cent in the west coast, due to indiscriminate and excess fishing. Similarly the catches of hilsa, popular among Bengalis had come down by 35 per cent, prawn by 40 and silver pomfret by 80 per cent the east coast, he said.

He also asked the government to call for a joint meeting of all the stakeholders from the nine maritime States and four Union Territories along with their respective commissioners of fisheries and also the Coast Guard, before arriving at a final decision, on the extension of the fishing ban period.



Guar gum farmers upbeat with resumption of future trading

As the future trading in guar gum resumes from Tuesday, farmers in Rajasthan are upbeat of getting high returns of their produce this season. Lured by high margins, the total area under the plantation is also likely to increase in the areas of Sriganganagar and Hanumangarh districts.

After a ban of 13 months, the forward market commission allowed the trading of guar gum and its seed from Tuesday. Just after its listing at National Commodity and Derivatives exchange Ltd ([NCDEX](#)) the guar gum traded at Rs 28,150 after hitting high of Rs 30,700 for June delivery. The average traded price for guar gum seed stood at Rs 9,581.

"The lifting of ban will certainly help the framers from Rajasthan. They will now be able to fetch better price," said Dharmendra Singh Rathore, chairman, Rajasthan state seeds corporation limited.

India accounts for the 80% of the global production of guar gum. Rajasthan where it is predominantly grown accounts for 80% India's production. Farmers across the board prefer to grow guar gum as it is less labour intensive crop and requires very small amount of water.

Riding on the intense demand from oil and gas industry, the commodity emerged as country's top farm export. Latest government data indicated that guar gum exports have shot up nearly 139% on a year-on-year basis between April and January with shipments of about Rs. 26,842 cr.

Ahead of the possibility of increase in guarseed acreage the state government is making efforts to stock seeds in sufficient quantity. "There will be no direct impact on the government because of trading of guar gum in commodity market. Last time with sudden spurt in prices we faced some difficulty in making seeds available to all the farmers. However this year situation remains under control so far," said DB Gupta, principal secretary, agriculture.

Meanwhile, farmers are all set to increase their plantation areas for the guar gum crop. "We have seen how the particular guar gum has brought the prosperity in the region.

Those who could not afford to have two times meal few years back, today owns tractors and cars. We are happy that trading has one again resumed," said Krishan Saharan, of Choturam Kisan Samiti. "But same time we have to be cautious too as last time just like surge in prices it dropped drastically too. This lead to severe losses to some of the farmers" he added.

73 retailers in market yard served notice

Authorities in the city flexed muscles against the LBT strike on Thursday, with the [agriculture produce market committee](#) (APMC) serving notices to 73 retailers in [market yard](#) under the APMC Act, asking them to open their shops within 24 hours after the notices were served. The labour commissioner office in the city served around 966 notices to all kinds of shops in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad under the Bombay Shops and Establishment Act, 1948, giving them eight days to open shutters or else lose their registration.

Sanjeev Khadke, APMC administrator and secretary, who joined last Friday, told TOI that 73 retailers in market yard were served notices on Thursday, directing them to open their shops with in 24-hours or else have their licenses suspended. "All wholesalers and retailers are given licenses to do business under the APMC Act. The act says that authorities can use powers mentioned in the act in situations such as this by cancelling licenses of traders. We thus served them notices on Thursday, giving them an ultimatum to open shops within 24 hours or else have their licenses suspended. They have time till Friday to resume business," said Khadke.

There are around 73 retailers in market yard and more than 400 wholesalers. "We have first served notices to retailers as their strike has directly affected the consumers. Moreover, we are also having a constant dialogue with the retailers and wholesalers here. We have asked them to open their shops for the sake of citizens," said Khadke.

BR Deshmukh, assistant labour commissioner, told TOI that 966 notices were served to

shops in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad on Thursday as per a proviso under section 9 of the Bombay Shops and Establishment Act, 1948. The section says that the closing of an establishment has to be communicated to the inspector. "The proviso (condition) says that if the inspector does not receive information on closing of an establishment, but he is otherwise satisfied that the establishment has been closed, he may remove such establishment from the register and cancel such certificate. All shops that have a registration certificate under this act but have been striking will be given notices in the next eight days," he said.

Deshmukh added that the authorities will wait for an explanation from those who have been served notices. "If they do not open their shops in eight days, they will be de-registered," he said. Around 27 inspectors were sent from the labour department to find and issue notices to shops closed due to the strike in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad. Similar steps will be taken in the next eight days to follow, said Deshmukh.

Monsoon likely to enter state by June 25: Met dept

Here is some good news for farmers planning to sow Kharif crops. The south-west monsoon is likely to enter the in the last week of June from Kota, Jhalawar and Baran. The [Indian Meteorological Department](#) (IMD), Delhi in its forecast about the onset of monsoon in the country has said that it will enter Kerala on June, 3. With this date the Jaipur [met office](#) said that monsoon is likely to enter the state by June 25.

Officials of the met office though maintained that due to the factors like upper air cyclonic circulation and western disturbances, the south-west monsoon normally gets delayed by a week.

The met office on Thursday said that for timely arrival of monsoon disturbing factors like western disturbances and upper air cyclonic circulation are not going to be frequent in

the state.

The sowing of [Kharif crops](#) like rice, pulses and oilseeds starts with the arrival of the first showers.

The IMD Delhi has already forecasted a normal monsoon in the state. Last year even average rainfall fetched good Kharif crops as at least 26 districts of the state received good rainfall.

"The prediction of IMD for the state is a good sign for Kharif crops. Likewise, the district administration should also work on cleaning the sewerage lines and other choked pipelines to avoid flood-like situation that was witnessed last year," said Anwar Ali, a native of Ramganj area where normal life was affected last year due to torrential rains.

With the prediction on the arrival of monsoon in Kerala by June 3 the officials of the [agriculture department](#) will soon discuss the strategy to increase per hectare sowing of Kharif this season as monsoon would be normal in the state.

"We start sowing for Kharif by the second week of June. If the prediction of the met department is right we will certainly increase the sowing area this year," said Richpal Yadav, a farmer of Ajitgarh village in Sikar district.

India begins exporting basmati & non-basmati blend to Iran

India has started exporting a blend of [basmati](#) and non-basmati rice to Iran. The Asian nation, which is still facing Western sanctions, is lifting aromatic non-basmati rice and pusa-1121 basmati variety from India and blending the two for its domestic market.

Iranian importers have been forced to take this route as their government has said the price of imported rice should not exceed \$1,150 per tonne.

The non-basmati variety, which [Iran](#) is buying from India, costs around \$750 per tonne, while the basmati variety costs around \$1,600 per tonne. "The blending is being done in India under the supervision of Iranian buyers' representatives. Iran's new strategy has cheered non-basmati farmers and sales of non-basmati seeds have doubled in Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh regions," said Vijay Setia, partner of Chamanlal Setia Exports, a 300-crore rice exporting firm.

The non-basmati variety being preferred by Iranians have an aroma and the grains are 6.6-6.8-mm long. In the local market, the variety is referred to as PR114 or PR14.

MP Jindal, president of [All India Rice Exporters Association](#), denied such a move although most of the exporters and traders that ET spoke to confirmed the new trend. "The PR grain is small and the basmati grain is big. The question of mixing does not arise at all," he said, adding that some small-time exporters might be doing the blending.

In recent times, India's direct rice exports to Iran have bounced back, thanks to shippers being paid upfront in rupees from a huge pool of oil money owed to Iran by Indian refiners. This has helped them to do business in a much easier way than doing business in any other currency. Iran generally imports 3.2 million tonnes of rice from India.

Traders acknowledged that the blending is happening over the past few months. "Exporters are blending 10-30% of the PR variety with Pusa 1121 and buyers know it well. So it is a transparent trade mechanism," said Anil Kumar Mittal, chairman and managing director, [KRBLBSE -0.60 %](#), which sells premium basmati under the India Gate brand. "Iranian buyers are not interested to pay \$1,600 a tonne for basmati rice this year. Prices have almost doubled," said Mittal.

Currently, parboiled 1121 rice is being quoted at \$1,400 a tonne, 1121 white rice at \$1,600 a tonne, Pusa brown variety at \$1,150-1,175 a tonne. The traditional basmati brown rice costs \$1,300 a tonne and the traditional white basmati rice is fetching \$1,500-1,700 a tonne.

A section of the traders feels that the blending is eroding the image of pure basmati rice in the world market. "It is a big concern that certain players are blending some inferior quality rice with 1121 so that they can offer a competitive price to Iranian buyers. This is not a good practice and is likely to affect basmati's reputation in the world market," said [Anil Monga](#), managing director, Emmsons International.



Farmer commits suicide for 'crop failure'

A 30-year-old farmer from Olpad taluka of Surat district committed suicide in his farm apparently after the crop failure, police said on Wednesday.

The farmer, identified as Bharat Patel, had hung himself with a rope in his farm in Sarol village on Tuesday. The body was spotted by a farm labourer who later informed to the villagers about the incident.

Olpad police took statements of the family members and started an investigation.

Victim's father Mohan Patel in his statements before police said his son had taken loan from a local cooperative society for farming and was growing paddy crops. Due to the breakage in the Kakrapar division water canal, the irrigation water was not supplied to the agricultural field as a result of which there was crop failure. He was under tension since the last few days and also stopped talking to family members too.

"My request to the government is to give a compensation amount to us, so that we can repay the loan amount. I also request to the farmers not to take such a drastic step like my son did," he further said.

- See more at: <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/farmer-commits-suicide-for-crop-failure/1116456/#sthash.MtROBXmS.dpuf>

PAU student selected for Youth Award

AN MSc (Botany) student of the Punjab Agricultural University, Khushmeet K Bains, has been selected for the prestigious "National Youth Award 2011-12" in recognition of her illustrious service in the field of education and for helping the poor slum children. - See more at: <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/pau-student-selected-for-youth-award/1116751/#sthash.VVS0VL31.dpuf>



Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Friday, May 17

Max Min

34° | 28°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:43

Humidity: 66

Sunset: 06:27

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1006

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Saturday, May 18

Max Min

37° | 28°

Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday

May 19



Monday

May 20



Tuesday

May 21



Wednesday

May 22




Thursday

May 23



36° 28°	35° 27°	36° 28°	36° 28°	38° 28°
Partly Cloudy	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast

Airport Weather	Rain: 0	Sunrise: 05:43	
Chennai	Humidity: 66	Sunset: 06:27	
	Wind: normal	Barometer: 1006	

Stir makes foodgrains dearer; prices could fluctuate further

The prices of essential commodities at the Agriculture Produce Market Complex (APMC), from where the city gets its supply, have increased following the indefinite strike declared by wholesale traders.

On Wednesday, while the grains market, which had earlier participated in the strike, opened for business, the spices market stayed shut.

“The prices of foodgrains have increased by 5% to 10% because of reduced supplies in the past few days, which is a result of the strike,” said Kishore Satra, a wholesaler at APMC.

“There is a lot of confusion as there is no clarity about when the agitation will end and when the market will function fully. The prices could fluctuate further. Retail prices have gone up too,” he added.

PG Jirapure, deputy secretary of foodgrains at APMC, confirmed that the price of foodgrains has shot up. “The prices of commodities such as tur dal, urad dal, moong daal, chana, sugar, wheat and rice have increased by Rs. 10 to Rs. 20 per kg.”

Shashi Patil, a retailer in Vashi, said: "The supplies from the wholesale market have reduced so prices have gone up."

THE HINDU Business Line

Global black tea output up 19% in Q1

Global black tea production in the first quarter of current calendar increased by 18.18 per cent compared with the same period a year ago, reveals an analysis of the latest data available with Tea Board and traders' organisations.

"According to our compilation, global black tea production totalled 314.85 million kg (mkg) between January and March 2013 against 264.85 mkg in the same months of 2012," Rajesh Gupta, publisher of annual Global Tea Digest, told *Business Line*.

This increase of 50 mkg marks a growth of 18.88 per cent.

In the first quarter, Kenya topped the production table at 117.26 mkg earning the highest gain of 44.78 mkg over 2012.

Sri Lanka was the second with 80.18 mkg – up 6.89 mkg over last year.

India was third in the table with 79.24 mkg (up 4.93 mkg) as North Indian plantations were closed for winter.

North Indian production totalled 32.70 mkg (up 2.71 mkg) and South Indian output was 46.54 mkg (up 2.22 mkg).

All countries except Malawi and Indonesia have posted an increase in output.

Malawi's production has fallen by 3.60 mkg to dip to 17.70 mkg while Indonesia's by 2 mkg to lower to 13.70 mkg.

Nutmeg, mace crash on over supply



Nutmeg and mace prices have crashed as supply is outstripping demand in the domestic and international markets.

Nutmeg without shell is being sold at Rs 450-500 a kg, while with shell at Rs 200-300.

Mace price also crashed and medium variety was sold at Rs 600 while with red flower fetched Rs 700.

The overall production of the commodity has increased this year bringing down the prices, market sources here told *Business Line*.

They said that in terms of quality, Indonesian nutmeg and mace is superior and yet they were being offered cheaper.

Therefore, offtake is mainly from there, they said.

Production in India and Grenada is also on the higher side this year.

Some of the growers in Chirakkadavu area and in Kozhencherry, Eraviperoor area of Kottayam and Pathanamthitta districts said that the crop was good and prices offered ranged Rs 200-300 for nutmeg with shell. The two main producers of this commodity are India and Indonesia. Others producers are Sri Lanka and Grenada that produce a small quantity.

Grenada that was not in the market last year has re-entered the market with good quantity of the material.

The principal importers are the European Community, the US, Japan and India. Singapore and the Netherlands are the major re-exporters, they said. Also, one of the major markets is the Gulf, they said.

During peak demand, prices shoot up to \$16,000-21,000 a tonne in the international market, they said.

Indian exports of nutmeg and mace in April 2012 doubled to 140 tonnes valued at Rs 10.15 crore at a unit value of Rs 725 from 70 tonnes valued at Rs 4.56 crore at the unit value of Rs 650.90 in the corresponding month last fiscal.

The Union Commerce Ministry has set an export target of 3,500 tonnes valued at Rs 210 crore, according to the Spices Board sources.

Total export figures for the last fiscal are yet to be released. Over all output in 2013 is likely to be above the normal world production, they claimed.

Grenada which had produced around 500 tonnes last year is estimated to produce about 3,000 tonnes this year, they said.

The demand supply mismatch earlier on decline in output had pushed up the prices of mace (superior grade - yellow) in the domestic market to Rs 1,350 while red was being sold at Rs 1,250, trade sources here said.

Farm grade nutmeg with shell price was ruling at Rs 400-450 while that of export grade was at Rs 500. Without shell it was sold at Rs 800-815 and that of export quality at Rs 875-885, they said.

The flower of red colour fetched Rs 1,700 while that of yellow was sold at Rs 1,600. Indian output of nutmeg with shell is estimated at over 12,000 tonnes and when the shells are removed it would come to about 8,000 tonnes.

Meanwhile, the demand for nutmeg is 13,000-15,000 tonnes (without shell), given the growing use of it in indigenous medicines/drugs, cosmetics and in various food products.

The demand includes exports of 1,500-3,000 tonnes, they said.

The area under the crop increased to 16,400 hectares in 2008-09 from 11,270 hectares in 2005-06, but the output has not kept pace with the growing demand, they said.

The annual growth in demand for nutmeg and mace, therefore, is estimated at 5-10 per cent, trade sources said.

According to a 2006-07 statistics, the crop was grown Karnataka on 136 ha and the production was 1,997 tonnes, followed by Andaman and Nicobar Islands (79 ha/4 tonnes).

The US is the biggest individual market for whole nutmegs. US importers prefer the East Indian type of deep brown, aromatic nutmeg and orange-red mace in their whole form.

Foundation stone laid for mint park in Rae Bareli

Union Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi has laid the foundation stone for the Mint Spices Park in Rae Bareli.

The park to be set up at an investment of Rs 19 crore by the Spices Board will promote the production and cultivation of mint (*Mentha Arvensis*) and mint products for farmers of Uttar Pradesh and nearby States.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said the approach of the Spices Board to have regional crop-specific spices park would bring in an integrated, centralised system for all the processes of farming, modern processing facilities. It would also empower farmers

with better infrastructure facilities that would help them fetch better price for their produce.

The storage facilities would help them to preserve their produce for a longer period, generate employment and improve the output exported to the global marketplace, he said.

According to Jayathilak, Chairman Spices Board, the menthol market has been growing steadily at 5-7 per cent and been providing good returns to the farmer.

The park will also have the ability of increasing Arvensis Oil production by a conservative estimate of 5,000 tonnes, an increase of Rs 600 crore to the farmers of the region.

It will also provide processing facility to develop value-added products and ingredients.

Spot rubber subdued

Rubber prices remained subdued on Thursday. Another weak closing in the domestic and international trend setters and the absence of follow-up buyers kept the local market under pressure. The trend was partially mixed as ISNR 20 and latex finished flat amidst scattered transactions. The overall sentiments were slightly bearish.

Sheet rubber weakened to Rs 170 (Rs 171) a kg, according to traders. The grade slipped to Rs 170.50 (171) both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to the Rubber Board.

The June futures slipped to Rs 167.20 (Rs 168.96), July to Rs 166.16 (Rs 167.96) and August to Rs 164.80 (Rs 167.35) while the September and October futures remained inactive on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) dropped to Rs 164.54 (Rs 165.64) at Bangkok. The May futures moved down to ¥270.1 (Rs 144.32) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange

Spot rubber rates Rs/kg were: RSS-4: 170 (171); RSS-5: 167 (168); Ungraded: 160 (161); ISNR 20: 162 (162) and Latex 60%: 110 (110).

Wheat arrivals point to lower than estimated output

Procurement declines 18%; farmers hold back produce

Lower wheat procurement* (In lakh tonnes)
Slow arrivals compound things

	2013-14		2012-13	
	Arrivals	Procured	Arrivals	Procured
Punjab	109.86	107.82	124.64	123.79
Haryana	58.62	58.53	84.43	84.43
Uttar Pradesh	13.47	5.85	23.97	18.38
Madhya Pradesh	7.74	59.35	66.19	56.02
Rajasthan	13.54	10.66	14.05	11.72
Total (incl. of other States)	273.53	242.37	316.47	296.66

*As on May 15 Source: Food Ministry

The country's wheat crop is expected to be much lower than 93.6 million tonnes (mt) forecast by the Agriculture Ministry in its third advanced estimates for 2012-13.

Reasons

This is seen to be borne out by the current market arrivals and official procurement trends, which are significantly lower than their corresponding last year levels.

Trade sources expect the crop to be in the range of 80-84 mt as market arrivals have thinned down across mandis in northern States – mainly due to a lower crop and possibly due to farmers holding back their produce anticipating better prices.

“The wheat crop could be lower by about 15-20 per cent over last year's 94.88 mt,” said Adi Narayan Gupta, President of Roller Flour Millers' Federation of India.

coldwave conditions

He attributed the decline in crop to the extended cold wave conditions and erratic rains in the key growing regions of Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh

during February and March. The prolonged cold wave conditions triggered by Western disturbance had also affected the quality and the yields, Gupta said stating that the trade was finding it hard to purchase from mandis to cover their requirements as arrivals had shrunk.

Indu Sharma, Director at the Karnal-based Directorate of Wheat Research, said erratic rain during March had affected the output in parts of Haryana and Punjab.

Water logging

Water-logging in the wheat fields in parts of Haryana is expected to have shrunk output to around 124 lakh tonnes from last year's 130 lakh tonnes.

However, Sharma expects that higher output in Madhya Pradesh and parts of Eastern UP and Bihar can possibly offset the losses in Punjab and Haryana, stating that production and procurement figures are awaited.

"We expect there could be 3-5 per cent loss in total production, but the overall crop size may cross 90 mt," Sharma said.

Anil Monga, Chairman and Managing Director of Emmsons International Ltd, expects this year's crop to be at 2011-12 levels of a little over 84 mt.

"There will be a 5-7 per cent decline in output this year as prolonged cold wave and sudden rise in temperatures during the grain formation have affected the yields," he added.

Government agencies had seen a 15 per cent increase in procurement last year at 38.14 mt and were hoping to purchase 44.12 mt in the current rabi marketing season 2013-14 on expectation of a higher crop.

However, till May 15, the procurement was down 18 per cent, while the arrivals were lower by 14 per cent over corresponding last year.

Mahasen' home and dry in double quick time

Cyclone Mahasen sped through the last mile in quick time and crossed the Bangladesh coast on Thursday afternoon much earlier than anticipated.

Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre, Delhi, said in an update that the storm moved laterally across Northeast Bay of Bengal at an estimated 50 km/hr.

SPEED OF MOVEMENT

This is considered 'super fast' for cyclones, whose speed for movement (as distinct from wind speeds) falls within the 15-20 km/hr, according to statistics.

Average speed for a tropical cyclone is 15-20 km/hr, and it covers 360-480 km a day.

Direction change

It may change direction of movement, as Mahasen did when it turned north-east and away from the Indian coast.

During this changeover, the speed of movement of the cyclone could reduce to 10 km/hr or even less.

When it is down to 10-14 km/hr, it is called a slow moving cyclone.

A cyclone with moderate speed moves at 20-25 km/hr. If the speed is more than 25 km/hr, it is called a fast moving cyclone.

FRESH SYSTEMS?

The Delhi monitoring centre said that Mahasen crossed coast at 1.30 p.m. IST on Thursday and lay centred south-west of Aizal (Mizoram) and 85 km south-east of Agartala (Tripura).

It has since weakened into a deep depression but associated clouds spread across not just over Bangladesh but also adjoining North-East India, the North Arakan coast and adjoining Myanmar.

Meanwhile, European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts sees the possibility of another low-pressure area materialising over north-west Bay of Bengal during next week.

US National Centres for Environmental Prediction said that a counterpart 'low' could pop up over Arabian Sea around the same time and intensify later.

Both the seas are being closely watched for likely impact on dynamics associated with the onset of South-West monsoon over mainland India.

WEATHER ALERT

On Thursday evening, erstwhile cyclone Mahasen had massed up convective (rain-bearing) clouds over North Bay, Gangetic West Bengal, Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Assam and West Arunachal Pradesh.

A weather warning from India Met Department said that fishermen along and off coastal areas of Odisha and West Bengal coasts should exercise caution while venturing into the sea on Friday.

Thunder squall could break out at one or two places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura during next two days.

Heavy rain is likely at one or two places over south Assam, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura during this period.

Jeera pins hopes on export demand



Jeera prices may witness an uptrend on the back of export enquiries. Export demand is likely to improve in the coming weeks because of lack of supplies from Syria and Turkey.

As such, prices are expected to increase.

Jeera futures were increased as demand was slightly higher than arrivals in the spot market.

However, spot jeera was remained unchanged.

On the NCDEX, jeera June contract gained Rs 165 to Rs 13,347.50 a quintal with an open interest of 13,218 lots. NCDEX July series was up Rs 137.50 to Rs 13,512.50 with an open interest of 4,971 lots.

Arrivals stood at 12,000-13,000 bags, while trade reported of 14,000 bags (of 55 kg each) in Gujarat. Rough jeera was quoted at Rs 2,095-2,195 for 20 kg, NCDEX quality quoted at Rs 2,315-2,415 in Unjha market.

Meanwhile, jeera arrival in Nagaur market stood at 300 bags and rough quality was offered at Rs 2,230.

Daily supplies have fallen to 8,000-10,000 bags against 18,000-20,000 bags last week.

Moreover, poor quality of the spice in Rajasthan mandis might also encourage the strong demand for Gujarat quality in local mandis. This has also led to the rise in futures.

Mixed trend in edible oils



Edible oils witnessed a mixed trend on Thursday despite extended gain in futures markets. Palmolein rose by Re 1 and cotton refined oil increased by Rs 3. Rapeseed oil declined by Rs 2.

Groundnut, soyabean and sunflower oil ruled unchanged. Slack demand kept the volume arrested.

In Mumbai, slack middle month demand keep volume limited to ready trade. Liberty sold about 550-600 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 506 ex-JNPT.

Reduced arrivals of cotton in producing centres pushed up cotton refined oil but there were no fresh commitments. Soyabean and rapeseed / mustard seeds arrivals also declined in producing centres.

Soyabean arrivals in Madhya Pradesh were 40,000 bags and its prices were Rs 4,000-4,010 ex mandi and Rs 4,090-4,100 plant delivery. Mustard seed arrivals were 2.60 lakh bags national level and the prices were Rs 3,125-3,625.

Towards the day's close, Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 506 ex-JNPT and Rs 513-514, super palmolein Rs 545 and sunflower refined oil Rs 780.

Ruchi was quoting palmolein at Rs 515 for Patalganga for May-June. Soyabean refined oil was Rs 660 for May, June, July and sunflower refined oil Rs 755 for May-June.

In Saurashtra – Rajkot, groundnut oil improved by Rs 10 to Rs 1,780 for *telia* tin and Rs 1,160 for loose (10 kg).

Malaysian BMD crude palm oil's June contracts settled higher at MYR 2,320 (MYR 2,295), July at MYR 2,324 (MYR 2,297) and August at MYR 2,314 (MYR 2,297) a tonne.

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg): groundnut oil 1,140 (1,140), soya refined oil 660 (660), sunflower exp. ref. 675 (675), sunflower ref. 755 (760), rapeseed ref. oil 688 (690), rapeseed expeller ref. 658 (660) cottonseed ref. oil 648 (645) and palmolein 506 (505).

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

Pepper continues to slide on selling pressure



Pepper prices continued their downward trend on Thursday on selling pressure believed to be because of the opening of the colleges/schools after annual vacation.

The net open interest declined while open interest moved up marginally, trade sources said. Buyers were quoting lower rates. New depositors from Karnataka and expert

processors from Kerala were said to be depositing in the warehouses and an estimated 30 tonnes of pepper have been reportedly deposited.

On the spot, 78 tonnes of fresh pepper arrived from Kerala and Karnataka and they were all traded afloat at an average price of Rs 338 a kg. Pepper from Karnataka and the plains of Kerala were traded at Rs 333 while that from Pulpally and Battery and the High ranges of Kerala was sold at Rs 338 and Rs 343 respectively. Sellers were seen ready to discount their price because of high moisture content caused by the recent summer rains in the growing areas of Kerala, market sources told *Business Line*.

May contract on the NCDEX decreased by Rs 530 to close at Rs 35,495 a quintal. Total turnover moved up by 28 tonnes to close at 50 tonnes. Total open interest dropped by 37 tonnes to 129 tonnes.

Spot prices fell on selling pressure by Rs 200 to close at Rs 33,800 (ungarbled) and Rs 35,300 (garbled) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market was at \$6,675 (c&f) for prompt shipments while some were selling at \$6,550 a tonne (c&f).

Overseas prices (in \$/tonne): B Asta 6,375; Sri Lanka 500 GL FAQ 6,100(fob) Colombo.

Turmeric likely to get N. India orders by mid-June



Turmeric traders are hopeful of getting upcountry orders from the middle of June and prices may rise after that.²¹

Traders did not make any purchase on Thursday as they have not received fresh orders from North India.

“For the past one month, we traders have purchased very limited stock due to non-receipt of upcountry orders. For the past couple of days we are not buying as we have ample stock with us. The buyers, mainly the stockists, quoted lower prices and purchased 1,100 bags against the arrival of 3,421 bags,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,029-6,944 and the root variety Rs 4,009-6,009 a quintal.

Salem Hybrid Crop: The finger variety fetched Rs 6,099-7,699; the root variety Rs 5,863-6,266. Of the arrival of 725 bags, only 30 per cent were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 6,379-7,666; the root variety Rs 5,419-6,939. Of the 629 bags arrived, 531 found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety quoted Rs 5,899-7,211; the root variety Rs 5,412-6,389. Of the arrival of 459 bags, 328 were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 5,870-7,027; the root variety Rs 5,109-6,542. All the 109 bags were traded.

Declining arrivals heat up mustard oil



Decline in soyabean arrivals has lifted demand for mustard seeds and oil in mandis across Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat for the past few days.

Mustard oil in Indore mandis on Thursday ruled at Rs 641 for 10 kg, while it was Rs 635 each in Moreena and Neemuch.

In Rajasthan, mustard oil ruled at Rs 655 in Jaipur, while it was Rs 640 each in Kota and Ganga Nagar.

Similarly in Gujarat also, mustard oil ruled at Rs 635.

Weak arrival both in soya and mustard seeds has also lifted price of mustard in Indore mandis to Rs 4,300-4,350 a quintal (Rs 4,150-4,200). Similarly, raida rose to Rs 3,200-50 (Rs 3,100-3,150).

In the past one week, mustard seeds in Indore mandis have almost gone up by Rs 300 , while raida gained Rs 200-250 a quintal.

On the NCDEX also, mustard seeds continued to trade higher on improved buying support with its May and June contracts closing at Rs 3,508 (up Rs 32) and Rs 3,541 (up Rs 34).

Plant deliveries of mustard seeds for Jaipur line were quoted at Rs 3,520-25 (up Rs 100 a quintal from last week) on renewed buying support from crushers.

Inflow

Arrival of mustard seeds in the country on Thursday declined to 2.60 lakh bags.

Rajasthan led the arrival with 1.50 lakh bags, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh with 25,000 bags each, Punjab/Haryana with 20,000 lakh each, Gujarat - 20,000 bags, while remaining 20,000 bags were offloaded in other mandis of the country.

Rice market hit by uncertainty



It is hard to anticipate the rice market future currently and it is unlikely to see any major alteration in the next few days. The market may continue to rule around current levels with marginal fluctuations, said traders.

A mixed trend was seen in the rice market, an unexpected rally pushed a few aromatic varieties up by Rs 100-400 a quintal, while Sharbati rice dropped further on Thursday. All the other non-basmati varieties remained unchanged on moderate buying.

Amit Chandna, proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company, told *Business Line* that a marginal uptrend in the Pusa-1121 variety was anticipated but a rally at this time was not expected. Market has already seen some unjustified levels this season and any major uptrend from here is unlikely, he added.

Though, sentiments are largely positive at present, the market's future is uncertain, said market sources.

Exports

Meanwhile, on the exports front, according to the reports, India's rice exports may witness a fall following higher supplies from the rival exporters such as Pakistan, Vietnam and Myanmar in the international market.

In the physical market, Pusa-1121 (steam) went up by Rs 150 and sold at Rs 8,250 a quintal while Pusa-1121 (sela) was at Rs 7,500 – Rs 400 up from previous levels.

Pure basmati (raw) remained unchanged at Rs 9,000. Duplicate basmati (steam) traded Rs 100 up and sold at Rs 7,200.

For the brokens of Pusa-1121, Dubar quoted at Rs 4,100, Tibar sold at Rs 4,950 while Mongra was at Rs 3,100 a quintal.

In the non-basmati section, Sharbati went further down on slack demand while all other non-basmati varieties managed to maintain their previous levels.

Sharbati (steam) moved down by Rs 100 and quoted at Rs 5,100-5,150, while Sharbati (sela) was at Rs 4,850 a quintal, Rs 50 down.

PR14 (steam) sold at Rs 3,400-3,450. Permal (raw) sold at Rs 2,600 while Permal (sela) went for Rs 2,470. PR-11 (sela) sold at Rs 3,400-3,450 while PR-11 (raw) quoted at Rs 3,100-3,150 a quintal.