

## Are farmers benefiting from soaring onion prices?

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*'Most of the time they are at the mercy of brokers and merchants'*



*Onion prices have been on the rise for the last three months.— File Photo*

Are farmers getting benefitted from the soaring prices of onion?

Onion prices have been on the rise for the last three months. This week (till Thursday), the price of Teligi onion variety and a local variety of onion at the Hubli Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (AMPC) yard ranged from Rs. 500 to Rs. 5,000 a quintal. According to market statistics, the average price of both the varieties ranged from Rs. 1,800 to Rs. 2,000 a quintal.

“Most of the time in such situations, irrespective of the market conditions, it is the brokers, merchants, retail traders, and vendors who make most of the profit,” district secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) B.S. Soppin, who has been involved in several pro-farmer movements, said.

He said as farmers lack the knowledge about grading different types of onion, buyers and brokers form a cartel and deceive them.

“Even good quality onions are sometimes categorised as low-grade onion, and accordingly, a lower price is fixed. But eventually, the crop is sold at a price close to the day’s highest price,” he said.

According to Mr. Soppin, even retailers make a good profit. “Ultimately, the farmer, who toils in the field, makes the least profit while brokers, merchants and retailers walk away with a good margin without much effort,” he said.

In the Bangalore market, the average price of local and other varieties of onion, barring the Bengaluru Sanna variety, this week ranged from Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 4,875 a quintal.

The average price of Bengaluru Sanna ranged from Rs. 2,100 to Rs. 2,500 a quintal.

During the same period, the average retail price of onion ranged from Rs. 60 to Rs. 80 a kg.

For B.M. Hanasi, who took to farming after retiring from government service, the soaring onion prices is nothing short of a conspiracy. “It is good that farmers are getting over Rs. 2,000 a quintal. But they are at the mercy of brokers and merchants who have formed a cartel and have a monopoly. And it is they who make the most, whatever might be the situation,” he said.

According to Mr. Hanasi, the situation could be tackled easily if the administration intervenes. But no one wants to do it, he said. As a result, on the pretext of providing “a fair price” for farmers, others make profit, he said.

Farmers in rain-fed areas are harvesting onion early this year to get a better price. They are sure of the onion prices coming down in November when arrivals would peak at the Hubli market from Bijapur, Bagalkot, Dharwad and other districts where the crop is cultivated in rain-fed areas.

*Most of the time in such situations, irrespective of the market conditions, it is the brokers, merchants, retail traders, and vendors who make most of the profit’*

## JSW launches farmer support pilot project

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The JSW Foundation has launched a project which aims at improving rural livelihood through integrated watershed management and extending technical assistance to farmers to increase their crop productivity, on pilot basis, under the private-public partnership (PPP) mode.

The Internal Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), which has been conducting agricultural research activities in over 50 countries, and the State government are partners in the project.

### **Launch**

The project will be initially launched in Kodalu, Anthapur, Chikkanthpur and Joga village in Sandur taluk. “Based on the outcome, the project will be extended to all villages in the district,” Sajjan Jindal, Managing Director of JSW Steel said at the launch function in Kodalu village on Thursday.

Apart from imparting technical know-how on scientific practices to preserve soil quality and productivity enhancement, the project will focus on women empowerment and overall development of villages, Mr. Jindal said.

### **Tested**

William Dar, director general, ICRISAT, said the participatory watershed management is a tested, sustainable and eco-friendly option to help rain-fed agriculture and growing food demands.

Speaking to media persons, Mr. Dar said the initiative aimed at transforming target villages through capacity building of farmers and science-led interventions. The project will use information and communication technology-based tools and means to provide up-to-date information on soil nutrient status, package of practices, pests and diseases, taluk-wise nutrient recommendations, and crop-related information for the benefit of farmers.

Suhas Wani, principal scientist (Watershed) ICRISAT, said that maintaining the health of the soil by getting it tested, applying micro-nutrients required and adopting scientific farm practices would enable increase in the productivity from 20 to 66 percent.

“Activities such as baseline characterization through participatory rural appraisal (PRA), soil analysis and rain water harvesting interventions, have been included in the first phase of the project,” he said.

Sangita Jindal, chairperson of JSW Foundation presided.

*Project to be launched in Kodalu, Anthapur, Chikkanthpur and Joga villages in Sandur taluk*

## Farmers to form group, raise concerns over reports

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Farmers organisations, unaffiliated to political parties within and outside the State, are planning to form a united front in the face of concerns over the possible impact of the implementation of Gadgil and Kasturirangan reports on the Western Ghats. A meeting in this connection will be held at POC in Palarivattom on October 30 at 10 a.m.

Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, Fr. Sebastian Kochupurakkal, general convener of High Range Samrakshana Samithi, said the promise made by the previous government to return agriculture land notified under the Ecologically Fragile Lands Act was yet to be fulfilled. Chief Minister Oommen Chandy had also promised the same after convening two all party meets on the issue, but in vain.

Fr. Kochupurakkal said the meeting would discuss the issue of title deeds in Idukki and other districts. Applications for 1.18 lakh title deeds have been pending in Idukki for the past many years. The meeting will formulate strong protest measures against this.

Harithasena director Abraham Benhur said evicting farmers in the name of protection of Western Ghats was absolutely unfair.

## Dairy farmers' meet tomorrow

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K.S. Saleekha, MLA, will inaugurate a dairy farmers' meet jointly organised by the Dairy Development Department and dairy cooperative societies, at Chalavara grama panchayat at 8.30 a.m. on Saturday. The programme will be presided over by Ottappalam block panchayat president K.K. Gauri. – Staff Reporter

## Fresh spell of rain rattles cotton farmers

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Cotton farmers in Adilabad are an anxious lot as a fresh spell of rainfall threatens to damage the crop which is at the crucial picking stage.

So far, the district has experienced only cloudy weather, but farmers fear extensive damage if it converts into showers even if for a few hours.

The cotton which lies exposed in the fields will be affected by rainfall, the worst part being there would be no way through which the quality of the produce could be salvaged. The threat of rainfall has come just when pickings began in earnest in the district. Cotton has been cultivated in an area of over 3.5 lakh hectares across Adilabad.

## Hopes of farmers shattered again

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*The floodwaters of the Lakshmipuram lake spread over 656 acres in Chodavaram mandal in Visakhapatnam on Thursday —photos: C.V.SUBRAHMANYAM*

*Overflowing tank brings bitter memories of Cyclone Nilam to ryots of Lakshmipuram in Visakhapatnam district*

For farmers of Laskhmipuram near Chodavaram, the overflowing tank brought back bitter memories of Cyclone Nilam. With incessant rain under the influence of a low pressure area in the Bay of Bengal, the water from the tank overflowed under the long stretch of the bund

and inundated standing crops.

Perhaps the plight of D. Venkataramana is illustrative of their lot for the second successive year.

### **No compensation**

Mr Ramana has lost crop in two-and-a-half acres in Nilam cyclone and so far not received any compensation for it. His understanding is that he would get a total of Rs.10,000. But before he could get any money misfortune struck again. “The rain for three successive days has again washed out our hopes of recovery,” says a crestfallen Ramana. Farmers say not all of them received the compensation for the loss in Nilam.

Others farmers like Malibabu and Kumara Swamy Naidu are equally worried. Paddy is in the stage of forming grain and will be totally lost, says Malibabu. Though there is some consolation that damage to sugarcane will be a mere 25 per cent. He and others have resigned themselves to a recurring loss in the kharif crop. With the tank being full they hope for a good rabi.

But for Ramana, who borrowed from private moneylenders, investing again is a problem. He sounds quite pessimistic narrating the experience of a relative. His uncle had borrowed from bank and it was after him to repay the loan. He felt quite humiliated by the repeated threats and finally sold the half an acre land he had to repay the loan. A week after he sold it, the government announced a loan waiver. Such loan waivers generally won't help the small farmers as they pay up promptly, he points out.

“Our hope that we will get some foodgrains to sustain from the paddy crop is lost for the second time now,” he regrets narrating the fate that would befall people like him in a matter-of-fact, unemotional way with rain pouring all around and walking through the field. Now the only alternative left for people like him is to go to Visakhapatnam or Chennai to work as labourers. Most of them do so as to send money for the elderly to survive.

The tank with 656 acres of extent is the biggest in the district and has any ayacut of 1,200 acres at Lakshmipuram alone.

Three other nearby villages have some ayacut too, says sarpanch Ganapathi Naidu. Last time the bunds were strengthened using sand bags because if it breaches even Anakapalle would be affected, he said.

Water from Konam reservoir and Kakulagedda also join the tank causing the water levels to rise, farmers pointed out.

All the outlets of the tanks were also opened to let out the water. Malibabu says officials visited to monitor the situation.

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- *Small farmers face problems in investing again for rabi season*
  - *Some of them may go to Visakhapatnam or Chennai to work as labourers*
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## Fear of crop loss grips farmers

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*Water-logging at RTC bus stand and other places adds to woes of people*

*Most of the roads in Machilipatnam town inundated due to continuous rain.—*

*PHOTO: T. APPALA NAIDU*

The district headquarters town was under a sheet of water on Thursday as 7 cm rainfall was recorded and tension gripped the district officials and farmers as a well-marked low pressure area lay over coastal Andhra Pradesh, signalling heavy rain in the next 48 hours.

There was no significant damage to

paddy crop in the fields and other commercial crops across the Krishna district as on Thursday, but farmers are looking at early discharge of rainwater from their agricultural fields to save crops. The agriculture officials are yet to begin enumeration of crop damage. Two rehabilitation centres were kept open in Machilipatnam and a special vigil kept on hilly areas in Vijayawada city, where boulders were likely to fall, Krishna district Collector M. Raghunandan Rao told *The Hindu*.

“The water flow in the canals, ending in Kolleru Lake are below alarming level,” he said. Unprecedented rainfall of 24 cm, including 11 cm reported on Thursday, was recorded in Avanigadda since Tuesday.

The heavy flow of rainwater in the streets of Machilipatnam cut off access to main roads -- J.F. Kennedy Road and Koneru Centre Road -- which remained completely inundated.

A control room was also set up at the Collectorate and the needy could contact the phone numbers 08672-252572 and toll free No. 1077.

“We concentrated on sanitary conditions in the district due to the prevailing weather conditions,” said Mr. Raghunandan Rao.

***Heavy rain predicted in the next 48 hours***

*Two rehabilitation centres are kept open in Machilipatnam  
Rainfall of 7 cm recorded in the district headquarters town on Thursday*

## FMD: Centre to help State farmers buy new cattle

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*Pawar suggests doubling compensation to Rs. 50,000 for a head of cattle*



*Relief: Union Minister for Agriculture Sharad Pawar, Governor H.R. Bhardwaj and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah displaying the souvenir during the inaugural function of the 8th national conference of the Krishi Vigyan Kendras 2013 in Bangalore on Wednesday.—  
Photo: Sampath Kumar G.P.*

The Centre has offered to extend a helping hand to the State in the wake of the foot-and-mouth disease. Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar on Wednesday offered to not only give funds to farmers to purchase new cattle but also suggested that the State double the compensation amount from Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 50,000.

“I think the present compensation is inadequate. It is better to double it. We will be able to give adequate funds even if you double the compensation amount,” he told the State government at the inaugural session of a three-day national conference of the Krishi Vigyana Kendras, being jointly organised here by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the University of Agricultural Sciences-Bangalore.

He said technical norms did not provide for giving compensation towards the disease. Hence the Centre would provide funds for purchase of new cattle.

Stressing the need for revamping the agricultural extension system to address new challenges, Mr. Pawar said a research institute on ‘e-Extension’ was being set up by the Centre to provide research support for strengthening the extension system.

He said efforts were on to put in place the new system, which would encourage a range of service providers through an appropriate mix of public, private and voluntary funding and delivery mechanisms, besides using latest communication technologies.

Mr. Pawar asked the KVKs to help farmers to form associations for taking up collective bargaining to get remunerative prices for their produce.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah urged the KVKs to take up the task of capacity building among farmers in marketing skills.

Earlier, Minister of State for Agriculture Krishna Byre Gowda urged the Centre to come out with a regulatory mechanism for monitoring the quality of bio-pesticides. He alleged that the lack of such a mechanism was being misused by some companies, who were cheating farmers by selling spurious produce. “Thirteen of the 25 bio-pesticide samples, which were tested for quality by the State government, had chemical components,” he told Mr. Pawar.

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- Need for revamping the agricultural extension system stressed*
  - A research institute on ‘e-Extension’ is being set up*
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# Fix MSP for paddy at Rs. 2,000 a quintal: KRRS

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Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS) president Chamarasa Mali Patil has demanded that the minimum support price for paddy be fixed at Rs. 2,000 a quintal. He told presspersons here on Thursday that the government's levy policy had led to a drastic drop in paddy prices in the open market.

"The levy policy has pushed the farmers into a crisis. The government's decision to meet the demand for rice for the Anna Bhagya scheme by increasing the quantity of levy rice to be collected from rice-mill owners is not right. Rather, the government should come forward to purchase paddy directly from farmers at the rate of Rs. 2,000 a quintal so that those in distress get a relief," he said.

Mr. Patil called upon farmers not to sell the paddy at a lower price in the open market.

"Farmers spend at least Rs. 25,000 to grow paddy on an acre. Selling the produce at such a low price will definitely lead to a crisis. Many farmers across the State are on the verge of suicide," he said.

He said farmers should borrow loans from banks and Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees.

Mr. Patil said the KRRS would stage a protest on October 28 at district headquarters demanding a scientific method to formulate minimum support price for agricultural produces.

"We will organise a farmers' rally and conference in Sindhanur on November 13," he said.

***'Levy policy has led to a drastic drop in paddy prices'***

# Congress failed to address problems of farmers: ex-MLA

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***'Rain-hit farmers have not been adequately compensated'***

State president of Bharatiya Janata Party Raitha Morcha and ex-MLA Araga Jnanendra said the Congress government in the State had failed to address the problems faced by farmers. The government had failed to provide fair compensation to farmers who had suffered loss due to rain. The government had also failed to control the foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) that was spreading among the cattle at a rapid pace, he said at a press conference here on Thursday.

The BJP Raitha Morcha will stage protests at all district headquarters in the State on October 28 condemning the negligence of the government towards the farmers. In addition to this, a protest rally will be held in Haveri on October 26, Bagalkot on October 27, Belgaum on October 28 and in Puttur and Doddaballapur on October 29, he said.

The State government had failed to clear the dues of Rs. 1,500 crore that it owed towards cooperative banks for the implementation of the scheme of waiving loan upto Rs. 25,000 borrowed by farmers. Cooperative banks were not issuing fresh loans to farmers due to this.

The crop insurance scheme had not been properly implemented in the State, he said.

As the rain had caused extensive damage to crops this year, the government was urged to pay additional compensation to the farmers who had suffered loss. When Chief Minister

Siddaramaiah visited the affected villages in the district, farmers had requested additional compensation.

It was unfortunate that by neglecting the requests of farmers, government had paid a paltry sum to them under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF), he said.

Regarding the death of cattle due to FMD, he said the delay in vaccinating the cattle had resulted in the spread of the disease.

There were complaints that sub-standard vaccines were supplied to veterinary hospitals in rural areas. The government should conduct a probe into these allegations.

The Department of Animal Husbandry should be strengthened to tackle the disease.

The government should fill the vacant posts in the department and provide basic amenities to veterinary hospitals in rural areas, he said.

Ex-MLA K.G. Kumaraswamy, BJP functionaries Jnaneshwar, B.R. Madhusudan, M. Shankar, and Salekoppa Ramachandra were present.

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- *'The BJP Raitha Morcha will stage protests at all district headquarters'*
  - *'The crop insurance scheme had not been properly implemented in the State'*
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## ICAR seeks to integrate crop and animal products

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The Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR), Goa is aggressively promoting the concepts of Rice Based Farming System (RBFS), Homestead Farming and Integrated Farming System (IFS) to integrate crop and animal components in order to not only meet the demand for vegetables, fruits, and pulses but also for animal products like milk and eggs by integrating poultry component as a backyard enterprise.

ICAR Director N.P. Singh spoke about the various technologies at its "Farmers' Mela" at Aldona village of north Goa early this week. He said the technologies developed by ICAR have been tested on farmer's fields through the transfer of technology project of ICAR i.e. Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK). He wanted to tap the hitherto untapped vast potential of the villages of this coastal State to take up various cropping systems which the Institute had developed through a number of projects for the benefit of farming community.

The KVK-ICAR celebrated a "Field Day" at Aldona on System of Rice Intensification (SRI) by planting 10-12 day-old seedlings of new red kernel rice variety "Makam" and compare its field performance with the traditionally grown "Jyoti". The mela was held to expose the technology to farmers who had not been included in Front Line Demonstration on new variety and technique used over 3.5 ha area in Quitla ward of Aldona village involving 14 stakeholders.

Organic cultivation can fetch premium price in market through branding and market linkage of "Makam", say KVK researchers on rice. With the help of State Agriculture Department, ICAR researchers have been propagating the benefits of "Makam" as an ideal replacement for the traditional "Jyoti" to local farmers, said V.Y. Gaonkar, Programme Coordinator, KVK. A power reaper was also handed over to Sarpanch Charudatt Panjekar, which would help stakeholders to harvest the crop. The Project In-charge of FLD and leader of the adopted village HR Prabhudesai, SMS [Agronomy] explained the benefits of the new variety.



# Cotton crop bears the brunt

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Heavy rain in the last couple of days left a trail of destruction in the district particularly dealing a severe blow to cotton crop in about 16,000 hectares and paddy to some extent. Preliminary reports put the damage at that but it is set to be much more as the full picture is yet to emerge while more rains are forecast for the next few days. Considerable damage has already been done by rainfall received in the last 72 hours under the influence of the North-East monsoon.

“Prevailing weather is posing a threat of inundation of paddy fields in above 6,400 ha and 1,000 ha of turmeric and maize crops,” Krishna District Collector M. Raghunandana Rao told *The Hindu*.

Teams of revenue and other departments concerned will start enumerating the crop damage once the monsoon becomes weak. Six houses collapsed across the district but no casualty was reported.

Holidays were declared for 17 Government schools located in low-lying areas. Policemen were deployed at four causeways in the district for patrolling. Staff of Primary Health Centres was instructed to work round the clock due to the likelihood of outbreak of water-borne diseases, said Mr. Raghunandana Rao.

Heavy rain disturbed normal life in upland areas of the district. However, there were only a few cases of inundation of agricultural fields as the water levels in a slew of canals including the Ryves canal, stayed well below the respective danger marks as on Thursday.

# Rs. 5,000-cr. worth vegetable, fruit crops lost annually due to nematodes

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*IIHR meet on October 26 to popularise its eco-friendly solution to the problem*

At a time when malnutrition is still high and food prices are fast increasing, the country is losing nearly Rs. 5,000-crore worth of nutritious vegetable and fruit crops every year due to nematode infestation and related diseases associated with soil-borne pathogens.

(Nematodes are harmful microbes in the soil that affect the plant root system.)

This is only a conservative assessment as the losses due to nematode infestation and related diseases can range from 10 to 70 per cent, according to experts. The losses are extensive, particularly in the polyhouse cultivation system.

The crops that get affected severely due to nematodes and related diseases are tomato, capsicum, okra, brinjal, cabbage, cauliflower, chillies, carrot, onion, banana, pomegranate, papaya, grapes, acid lime and citrus besides flower varieties such as tuberose, gerbera, crossandra, carnation and gladiolus.

Ironically, management of nematodes is not only increasing the cost of cultivation, but also affecting the soil health and environment as it involves regular application of high dose of chemicals.

To fight this problem, the Hesaraghatta-based Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR) has developed two eco-friendly technologies involving bio-agents — useful microorganisms available in the soil.

Principal scientist in the IIHR's Division of Entomology and Nematology M. S. Rao, who was involved in the development of both the technologies, said these technologies not only

help control nematode and related problems at one-third of the cost of chemical methods, but also contribute to protecting the environment and health as they were chemical-free. These bio-pesticides also help promote plant growth as well as yield. These technologies have obtained six international patents and an Indian patent.

### **National meet**

IIHR experts say that though the technologies were developed in 2003 and about 250 industries were allowed to mass produce them, there seems to be not much awareness among farmers about the availability of such an eco-friendly solution to the nematode problem.

The IIHR will hold a national-level meet of scientists, extension officials and farmers at on its campus on October 26 to not only popularise these technologies but also evolve a strategy to take them to the fields on a campaign mode so as to reduce crop loss.

Several top-level bureaucrats and policymakers from different States will participate in the meet.

## Water level in reservoirs improves as rain continues

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With rain continuing in several parts of the district, water level in many of the reservoirs under the Parambikulam – Aliyar Project (PAP) has been improving, despite water release for irrigation and drinking water needs.

In the last 24 hours that ended at 8.30 a.m. on Thursday, the district recorded a total rainfall of 53.40 mm and the average rainfall stood at 4.45 mm. Rainfall in other places: Airport Peelamedu 2.40 mm, Cincona 13, Chinnakallar 12, Valparai PAP 12 and Valparai Taluk office 14 mm.

Water level in various reservoirs in ft and Full Reservoir Level in brackets: Sholayar 160.44 (160), Parambikulam 69.95 (72), Thoonakadavu – Peruvuripallam 20.31 (22), Aliyar dam 114.40 (120), Thirumurthi dam 36.21 (60) and Amaravathi dam 44.97 (90).

Siruvani and Pilloor, the major drinking water sources for Coimbatore city and a number of wayside habitations, also witnessed steady inflow into the catchments because of the continuing rain in Kerala and in parts of The Nilgiris. Despite withdrawal for drinking water needs, the storage either remains steady or witnesses a marginal increase, official sources said.

### **Zonal teams**

The Coimbatore Corporation has formed teams in all the five zones to tackle issues related to rain. According to Corporation Commissioner G. Latha, a five-member team in each zone would attend to issues such as inundation, especially at places where the civic body had excavated earth to carry out storm water drain or underground drainage work.

The team members had also identified places prone to inundation in their zones. After rain, they would initiate steps to flush out the water and restore traffic at the earliest.

Ms. Latha said that the Corporation had also asked the workers who cleaned drains to ensure that they were not clogged.

Further, at places where the residents had covered rainwater harvesting structures, the civic body had planned to restore the same and also paint the periphery of the structures with fluorescent paints to caution the public against dumping waste on the structures.

The Corporation had also planned to prevent mosquito breeding, she said and added that the efforts taken in the recent past had borne fruits in that the number of dengue cases had come down.

#### **Flood control rooms**

In a release, the Corporation Commissioner said that to ensure instant flood mitigation, relief and rehabilitation measures, round-the-clock flood control rooms would be functioning at the Corporation Main office and five zonal offices.

The public could call the following numbers in case of inundation and flooding of roads: Corporation Main Office 0422-2302323, East Zone 0422-2572696, West Zone 0422-2551700, North Zone 0422-2243133, South Zone 0422-2252482 and Central Zone 0422-2215618.

## Tapioca will fetch good price in October – November, says TNAU

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The Domestic and Export Market Intelligence Cell of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has said that tapioca will fetch good price in October-November.

According to a release, the price for the harvested tubers would be Rs. 9 or Rs. 10 a kg and farmers are advised to take up their selling decisions accordingly.

#### **Forecast**

The forecast has been made based on the wholesale price of tapioca of the last 10 years in Salem market.

In Tamil Nadu, tapioca is being cultivated under both irrigated (June-July) and rainfed (November-December) conditions, coinciding with the South-West and North-East monsoons, respectively.

Tamil Nadu and Kerala are two major tapioca growing states, which together account for 88.65 per cent of total tapioca growing area in India.

While it is grown as a food crop in Kerala, it is grown for industrial purpose in Tamil Nadu. Here it is grown in an area of over 1.20 lakh hectares covering many districts including Dharmapuri, Namakkal, Salem, Villupuram, and Erode, it said.

For details, contact 0422-2431405 / 6611374.

## Rain-water pit

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A rainwater-harvesting pit with a storage capacity of 60,000 litres has been installed at the Navajeevan Bethany Vidyalaya, Nalanchira. The pit was formally launched by magician Samraj. — Staff Reporter

# Water levels in reservoirs 61 p.c. higher than last year

Reservoir	Full reservoir level	Present level	Storage in tmcft
Jurala	1,045	1,045	11.67
Thungabhadra	1,633	1,631	93.83
Srisailem	885	881	195.66
Nagarjunasagar	590	585	298.01
Singur	1,718	1,715	21.83
Nizamsagar	1,405	1,404	16.30
Sriramsagar	1,091	1,091	90.31
Lower Manair Dam	920	920	24.02
Velugonda	869	56	11.07
Somasila	330	216	50.33
Kandaleru	279	232	18.96
Yeleru	283	268	15.88

(Levels in feet)

Water levels in major reservoirs across the State are 61 per cent higher than last year as on date due to steady rains even after the South-West monsoon withdrew a couple of days ago.

Against a storage of 469.93 tmcft last year, the levels today were 755.86 tmcft in these projects.

There was, however, not much inflow into the reservoirs except in Somasila whose catchment areas in Nellore and the adjoining Chittoor district have received heavy rainfall due to depression, according to a report of the irrigation

department.

The rains have damaged the harvested crop of kharif in several parts as the produce made its way to the market yards. But, they have also brought cheer to farmers to prepare their land for rabi.

Agriculture officers said raising of paddy and tobacco nurseries was in progress under wells and bore wells as the total cropped area had touched 2.12 lakh hectares against the normal of 39.2 lakh hectares.

The sowing was mostly in Maha bubnagar (80,500 hectares), Anantapur (62,300 hectares) and Kurnool (47,000 hectares).

Incidentally, Mahabubnagar alone accounted for 80,000 out of 86,000 hectares of cropped area under groundnut.

The bengal gram was raised in over 62,000 hectares in Anantapur and 45,000 hectares in Kurnool.

Agriculture officials said barring bengal gram and groundnut, none of the major crops were sown in rabi so far.

The sown area on date was only 56,000 hectares last year.

—Special Correspondent

## Water level

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Thursday stood at 79.85 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 430.34 cusecs and 603.50 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam.

The water level in Manimuthar dam stood at 51.29 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 10 cusecs and 25 cusec of water was discharged.

**Nagercoil**

The level in the Pechipparai dam stood at 19.90 feet, while it was 58.95 feet in Perunchani, 8.20 feet in Chittar 1, 8.30 feet in Chittar 11 and 35.60 feet in the Mamabazathuraiyaru dam.

## Rich harvest of custard apples in Salem

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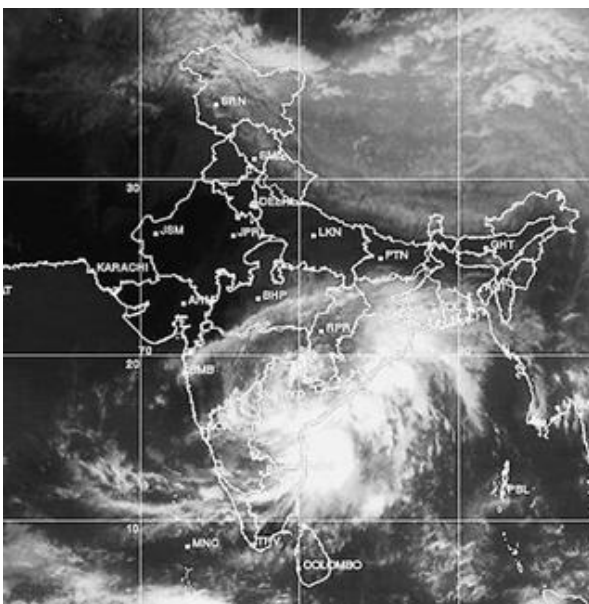
*A woman plucking custard apples in Salem district of Tamil Nadu.— PHOTO: E. LAKSHMI NARAYANAN*

Custard apples have come as a ‘Deepavali bonus’ for hundreds of farmers who have planted this as a border crop in Mecheri Union, Salem district of Tamil Nadu. Recent showers have helped them reap a good harvest, this season. Every year the fruit is harvested for two months, from the middle of October to the middle of December. “Number of fruits collected for the first two weeks of the harvest is less but it fetches a very good price. It steadily picks up during the third week. The collection is steady for the next four weeks – when the price drops – before the harvest comes to an end”, says M. Alavusamy (50) a farmer of Iyanankatuvalasu village in the district.

Custard apple trees are planted on borders of agricultural lands surrounding the fields where farmers grow tomatoes, groundnuts and other seasonal vegetables.

## Weather

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

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	32	20	0	52
New Delhi (Sfd)	32	18	0	72
Chandigarh	31	19	0	29
Hissar	33	17	0	4
Bhuntar	29	11	0	5
Shimla	21	10	0	66
Jammu	30	18	0	122
Srinagar	25	6	0	15
Amritsar	31	19	0	77
Patiala	31	18	0	9
Jaipur	35	20	0	2
Udaipur	32	16	0	55
Allahabad	31	23	0	300
Lucknow	31	19	0	42
Varanasi	31	21	0	141
Dehradun	29	16	0	34
Agartala	28	21	tr	168
Ahmedabad	34	21	0	63
Bangalore	26	20	1	41
Bhubaneshwar	26	23	77	521
Bhopal	32	18	0	26
Chennai	31	25	2	156
Guwahati	32	21	0	213
Hyderabad	27	22	43	179
Kolkata	28	25	0	346
Mumbai	33	25	0	66
Nagpur	30	23	0	167
Patna	32	22	0	194
Pune	31	19	0	22
Thiruvananthapuram	31	24	6	211
Imphal	28	15	0	53
Shillong	21	14	3	67

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

#### MAINLY DRY WEATHER

**Rainfall:** Weather was dry over the region.

**MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE:** The maximum temperature fell in west Rajasthan and changed little elsewhere. They were above normal in Jammu and Kashmir and normal in rest of the region. The highest maximum temperature in the region was 37.5°C recorded at Phalodi (Rajasthan).

**MINIMUM TEMPERATURE:** The minimum temperature changed little over the region. They were appreciably above normal in Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and east Uttar Pradesh, above normal in Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, west Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand and normal in rest of the region. The lowest minimum temperature in the plains was 14.6°C recorded at Erinpura Road (Rajasthan).

**FORECAST FOR REGION VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 26th OCTOBER 2013:** Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over north Jammu and Kashmir

during next 24 hours and mainly dry weather thereafter. Weather would be mainly dry over rest of the region.

**FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 26th OCTOBER 2013:** Mainly Clear sky. Mist/Haze in the morning.

**hindustantimes**

## Weather

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Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Rain: 0

Humidity: 84

Wind: normal

**Friday, Oct 25**

Max Min

32° | 26°

Sunrise: 06:00

Sunset: 05:45

Barometer: 1007

Tomorrow's Forecast



Overcast

**Saturday, Oct 26**

Max Min

29° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday  
**Oct 27**



29° | 26°

Overcast

Monday  
**Oct 28**



28° | 26°

Overcast

Tuesday  
**Oct 29**



31° | 27°

Overcast

Wednesday  
**Oct 30**



28° | 26°

Overcast

Thursday  
**Oct 31**



31° | 27°

Overcast

## Will help ease onion prices in Delhi: Prithviraj Chavan

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Maharashtra CM Prithviraj Chavan on Thursday promised to supply onions to Delhi in the wake of the soaring prices of onions in the city. According to media reports, onions were selling at Rs 90 to Rs 100 per Kg on Wednesday. Chavan said that supply of the vegetable would be sent from Nashik.

## Centre gives Maharashtra Rs 921.98 crore to compensate loss of onion farmers

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*Centre has given Maharashtra Rs 922 crore to compensate the loss of onion farmers in the state.*

NEW DELHI: With the spotlight on the steep rise in the price of onion, the Centre on Thursday decided to release Rs 921.98 crore to Maharashtra for damage to onion crop due to excess rain this monsoon.

The money will be given to the farmers who suffered loss in the state. It will also be used

to strengthen the existing distribution network from farms to 'mandis' to ensure smooth supply in coming months.

Though the farmers had been demanding such assistance for over a month, the sudden price rise of onion has helped them get the Centre's attention at the time when five states are on assembly poll-mode.

It is expected that the government may come out with similar package for other onion producing states where farmers had suffered due to excess rain.

The decision to release money for his home state was announced by the [Union agriculture minister Sharad Pawar](#) on Thursday — minutes before he had to discuss the [onion price](#) rise issue with the consumer affairs minister K V Thomas here.

Reacting on the current crisis, Pawar told the media that the government didn't control or sell onions.

"It is the market which decides the price", he said and appealed to the state governments to take strict action against rise in onion price.

Though he said price rise was just a temporary phase, he stuck to his previous assessment saying it will take two-three weeks for prices to come down.

"Next two to three weeks will be tough ... Ultimately we have to find a solution," Pawar had said on Wednesday.



Sensing the crisis, he had asked chief ministers of all states to invoke the Essential Commodities Act (ECA) against hoarders as it is suspected that the wholesale traders across the country would take advantage of the situation where supply chain was disrupted due to rain and decrease in production.

The ECA allows states to regulate distribution, quality and movement of commodities. It empowers the central government to monitor the action taken by the state to implement the Act.

Asked whether these actions would bring down the price of onion in the next two to three weeks, Pawar had on Wednesday said: "No, no. I am not an astrologer. But I know something about crops. On my own assessment, this situation will continue for the next two to three weeks."

On sidelines of a Conference on Krishi Vigyan Kendra in Bangalore, he had said, "Excessive rainfall has hit supply. We have to import as early as possible...Fortunately, there is ample onion (stock) available in China, Egypt and neighbouring countries. The prices in these countries are cheaper compared to India."

He has, meanwhile, called a meeting of agriculture secretaries of five major onion producing states- Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Karnataka - on Friday to review the production and marketing of the crop.

## Output much higher, so why are onions on fire?

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*A report by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) on India's onion market, released earlier this year, has pointed at the domination of traders and 'commission agents' right from the primary mandis onwards, squeezing both the farmers at one end and the consumers at the other.*

It's virtually impossible to tell why onion prices have gone through the roof. In the past 10 years, between 2002-03 and 2012-13, onion production has jumped from about 42 lakh [metric](#) tons (LMT) to 163 LMT. That's an increase of nearly 300%. In the same period, India's population has grown by about 1.7% each year. So, unless the whole country has suddenly become onion junkies, where is all this onion going?

It's not that there's been a sudden slump in onion production. This year (2013-14) the production is expected to be 10-15% higher than last year, based on kharif crop estimates, says H R Sharma, deputy director at the Nasik based National Horticultural Research & Development Foundation, which is under the Union agriculture ministry.

Exports or use by the processing industry are also not the reasons behind shortfall in supply, says Jaigopal, director of the Directorate of [Onion and Garlic Research](#), another agriculture ministry organization, based at Rajgurunagar, midway between Nasik and Pune. "Exports have remained about 10% of total production for many years and another 10% is consumed in the processing industry," he estimates.

So, where is all [the onion](#) going? Apart from some very immediate causes of a dip in supply because of a rainy spell in September causing transport problems, the real reason appears to be the way the supply chain of onions works in India.

A report by the [Competition Commission of India](#) (CCI) on India's onion market, released earlier this year, has pointed at the domination of traders and 'commission agents' right from the primary mandis onwards, squeezing both the farmers at one end and the consumers at the other.

"We found that established big traders, through a complex system of oral and informal linkages, dominated the primary mandis, discouraging others, often pre-concluding negotiations on prices, stopping auctions and determining higher prices," explain Geeta Gouri, member of CCI.

The report prepared by the Institute for Social & Economic Change, Bangalore, included a field study of farmers, wholesale traders, commission agents, retailers and consumers connected with 11 mandis in the onion belt of Maharashtra and Karnataka.

"A few big traders having well connected networks with market intermediaries in other markets seem to play a major role in hoarding for expected high prices," the report emphasized.

The average plot under onion was less than 1.3 acres per farmer, and most of them had no independent information about its prices. They paid what the commission agents or traders told them. The report highlighted a case in Ahmednagar where a fixed auction was witnessed between two traders. [Onion price](#) was bid up to Rs 405 and then the bidding was stopped and the onions divided up between the two bidders. In a free and impartial process, bids may have gone much higher.

The CCI report found that farmers were getting about Rs 5 per kg for their onions. By the time the produce reached the urban consumer in, say Pune or Bangalore, the price had increased to Rs 20 or more, at the time of the survey.

"Since agriculture is a state subject, we have sent the report to state governments. We are trying to persuade them to act on it," Gouri said.

Experts believe that opening new mandis, allowing farmers to sell produce directly and strong action to break hoarding at all levels are necessary if the recurring price spikes are to be checked.

# 200 foundries in Kolhapur set to reduce greenhouse gas emission

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KOLHAPUR: As many as 200 foundries in the region have completed their basic-level energy consumption audit and are set to implement energy-efficient technology at their respective units to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emission.

This was revealed by Manish Soni, a senior consultant of [PricewaterhouseCoopers Pvt Ltd](#) that has been appointed for conducting efficiency audit of the foundries.

The transition is a part of World Bank's Global Environmental Programme, under which the foundry sector is expected to adopt modern technologies, good practices for efficient use of energy and reduction of gases affecting environment. The foundries would receive various grants in the form of subsidy for the next few years from the [World Bank](#) if they follow the norms.

Surjitsing Pawar, the chairman of the Institute of Indian Foundrymen (Kolhapur chapter), said, "The expert committee and various visits by experts recommended by the BEE have suggested some changes in the current functioning of the foundries in the Kolhapur region. Among the suggestions are use of induction furnace, which runs on electricity instead of the traditional furnace where coal was used as fuel. This has not only reduced green house gas emission but has also saved energy up to 20% in some foundries that have implemented the recommendations. We are expecting all the foundries in the region to shift to modern technology that will save our input cost. It is going to be useful in the current competitive world."

The Kolhapur chapter of the association is expecting to complete the shift to the modern technology by December 2014. The efficiency and energy savings will be assessed again and then these units will receive the grants from the Union government. "The amount will vary from unit to unit as it is dependent on capacity of the foundry and gravity of technology adoption and its outcome," Pawar said.

The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) has designed the Micro, small and medium scale enterprises (MSME) Energy Efficiency (EE) project as a part of the GEF Programmatic Framework project for Energy Efficiency in India. The objective of this project is to increase demand for energy efficiency investments in target micro, small, and medium enterprise clusters and to build their capacity to access commercial finance. This project is to be co-implemented by Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), both set up by Union government.

The cluster profile report prepared by SIDBI stated that there are approximately 300 foundry units located in the Kolhapur and Sangli districts of the region. While units in Sangli are located mainly in the Miraj and Palus industrial areas, foundries in the Kolhapur district are spread across eight major industrial estates. The cluster primarily manufactures ferrous (iron) castings covering both SG iron and grey-iron castings. The total production of the Kolhapur foundry cluster is estimated to be 600,000 tonnes per annum.

## Crop loan target revised to Rs 3,500 crore

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The State Government on Wednesday revised the crop loan target from `2,500 crore to `3,500 crore for the ensuing rabi season to meet the increasing credit needs of the farmers after the devastating cyclone and floods.

Announcing this, State Agriculture Minister Debi Prasad Mishra said the State Government has also decided to take up rabi cultivation in over 33.68 lakh hectares. The crop loan will be provided through the cooperative credit lending institutions of the State.

According to an official estimate, crops on 6.71 lakh hectares of farm land have been affected by the cyclone and the consequent flash floods triggered by it.

While kharif crop loss has been estimated at `2,000 crore, sources in the Agriculture department said the loss level will be higher.

The low pressure-induced rains, that is currently lashing the State, will cause more damage to the standing crops.

Projecting the requirement of funds for input subsidy to the affected farmers at `385.5 crore, the State Government has sought an assistance of equal amount from the Centre.

The Minister said efforts are being made by the Water Resources department to irrigate 7.20 lakh hectares of farm land during the rabi season. While 4.40 lakh hectares will be irrigated through minor, small, medium and large irrigation projects, the remaining 2.80 lakh hectares will be covered under lift irrigation.

The Government announced a special package for farmers on Monday, including agriculture input subsidy of `4,500 per hectare for rain-fed areas and `9,000 per hectare in assured irrigated areas.

Crop loans during rabi season would be made available for the affected farmers at the rate of 5 per cent interest with the same to be reduced to 2 per cent in case of timely repayment.

Farmers will not be treated as defaulters for non-repayment of existing loans and short-term crop loans advanced during kharif season would be converted to the medium-term loans repayable over a three-year period.

## Soaring prices continue to pinch common man

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On a consolidated basis, the prices of essential commodities have increased by 50 per cent over a period of one year. Express

Tilting the family budget, the prices of essential commodities are moving upwards. At a time when all are crying over the price hike of onion, other commodities like tomato, shallots, coconut oil, chicken and carrot are also showing an upward trend in prices. On a consolidated basis, the prices of essential commodities have increased by 50 per cent over a period of one



year. The total per kilogram cost of essential commodities was around `600 last year. Now one has to shell out Rs 300 more to get the same quantity of the items.

Market sources said that the price of the majority of the essential commodities will be moving on the north direction in the near future. Though milk prices (Rs 32 per litre) is stable for the past one year, farm egg (Rs 64 per kg) and white leghorn (Rs 44 per kg) has witnessed

an increase of Rs 8 and Rs 3 respectively during the past one year.

“The recent price hike of essential commodities can be mainly attributed to short supply. Being a major consumer state, problems in the agriculture and farm sectors will have a direct impact here. As the festival season is all set to begin, the prices are likely to remain in the high trajectory for some time,” said K A Nazeer, who runs a shop in Ernakulam market. Rama, a homemaker in the city, said that she had reduced the consumption of vegetables due to the increase in prices.

“Once the prices are hiked, they hardly come down and the family budget is hit badly by it,” she said.

Compared to last month, the prices of tomato, shallots, carrot, onion, coconut oil and chicken have increased in the city. The price of fish varieties is also moving up. “Last week, the the chicken price has increased to `105 per kg. Now the price has cooled off. Favourite fishes like mackerel ( `140 per kg) and sardine ( `100 per kg) are also sold at a high rates,” said T D Joy, who runs a cold storage at Ernakulam market said.



## INFLATION DOUBLE WHAMMY!

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**For the inflation-hit common man, Tuesday brought more bad news: Prices of onion touched Rs 100 per kg in several parts of the country and milk got costlier by Rs 2 per litre. Even in Delhi onion prices shot up to Rs 90 per kg and in all likelihood is headed towards the three-figure mark.**

A week after one of largest milk supplier Amul hiked the price of all milk variants by Rs 2 per kg, on Tuesday Mother Dairy too joined the league by increasing their milk price by Rs 2.

Belying repeated claims by the Government that onion prices will sober down soon, onion sold at Rs 100 per kg in Patna, Srinagar and Bhopal. The upward trend continued in other parts of the country as well. In most cities onion prices ranged between Rs 70 and Rs 80 per

kg. However, in Chandigarh and other places of Punjab the prices have come down to Rs 30-Rs 50 per kg.

A panicky Government announced in the afternoon that it was going to ban the export of the onions. By evening it was also talking about importing the bulbous roots. Later, the Centre put the blame on States for not cracking down on hoarders and black-marketeers.

The BJP, on the other hand, blamed the astounding rise in the price to forward trading and mischievous short selling in the commodities market.

Nashik-based National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation (NHRDF) director RP Gupta said that, "The kharif crop has been affected due to untimely rains in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka." NHRDF is a Government-run research body. Currently, onion supplies are less than 50 per cent of the country's monthly estimated total demand of 9-10 lakh tonnes. India produced 16.3 million tonnes of onion last year.

Consumption is 88 per cent of the total onion production and 10 per cent is exported.

"Onion prices have gone up sharply. We are considering banning exports as there is not much scope to raise minimum export price (MEP)," a senior Government official said. Currently, MEP stands at USD 900 per tonne.

At the same time, Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma said Centre may import onion to stabilise prices that have soared to Rs 90 per kg in the National Capital.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of an event here, Sharma blamed hoarders for the recent spike in prices. "We will import onion if there are proposals and requirements so that we can stabilise the prices," he said. However, the Minister emphasised that there was enough stock of onion in the country. "We have enough onion stock in the country and the State Governments must act firmly against the hoarders who are hoarding the onions which has led to the artificial scarcity and sharp escalation of prices," Sharma said.

He also expressed hope that the prices would stabilise with the arrival of fresh domestic products by December-end.

Meanwhile BJP leader Subramanian Swamy said the steep price rise of onion was mainly due to mischievous short-selling activity in commodities and currency markets. He said the use of black money in the wholesale onion market and forward trading in the essential commodities were the other reasons for such huge price hike.

Meanwhile, reports in Delhi retail market suggested that onion price is likely to touch Rs 100 per kg mark in the coming days. Defying Delhi Government's promise of a dip in its price during Navratra season, the rates of onions has hovered around Rs 60 a kg. However, as the fasting festival is over, onion prices have skyrocketed once again.

The prices of not just onions but several other vegetables including potatoes, tomatoes, carrots, beans, lady finger, Brinjal, spinach, have soared. Not just vegetables but the price of milk has gone up too.

In some posh localities of South Delhi, people claimed that vendors have been selling onions at Rs 100 per kilo. "I visited the market yesterday and the retailer told me that onions small in size were available at Rs 90 per kg while the bigger ones were for Rs 100 per kg. It was shocking. We have decided to restrict its consumption till the prices come down to normal level," said Lata Singh, a resident of Greater Kailash II.

Residents of the city who have been reeling under spiraling price for months slammed the Government for its failure to control the prices of essential commodities. The rate of vegetables in last 10 days has almost doubled affecting the monthly budget of household. Potato which was available for Rs 25 till the second week of October is now being sold at Rs 50 per kg. Similarly, prices of Peas (Rs 120-160 per kg), Cauliflower (80 per kg), Cabbage (Rs 70 per kg), Spinach (Rs 60 per Kg), Brinjal (Rs 60 per kg), Carrot (Rs 80 per kg) have also gone up.

# Business Standard

## Long-term market strategies must to ease prices: CACP

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**Onion prices have risen fourfold in the past six months**



With [onion prices](#) showing no signs of easing, the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices ([CACP](#)) has urged the Centre to draw a long-term market intervention plan to control prices of the [essential commodity](#).

Talking on the sidelines of AgriCorp 2013, a two-day conference organised by the Bombay Chamber of Commerce and Industry, [Ashok Gulati](#), chairman of the CACP, said, “There are two ways in which the government can intervene and bring prices under control of any commodity.”

According to Gulati, the government should first build buffer stocks, depending on onion production and storage capacity. For long shelf-life, the onion should be hydrogenated. During the lean season, it can be sold at a lower price. This has been found effective in the case of commodities like sugar, as the presence of buffer stocks discourage traders from hoarding.

Second, the government must import onion and sell it at a subsidised rate. This will bring down onion prices substantially in the open market and the hoarders will have no option but to sell it at the market rate.

When asked why the government should suffer losses in this exercise, Gulati told *Business Standard*, “Nothing comes without a price. The government will have to bear this if it wants onion prices to remain within certain limits.”

Anil Jain, managing director of Jain Irrigation Systems Ltd, said, “The wholesale price of onion had been in the range of Rs 2 to Rs 4 a kg for 25 years between 1971 and 1996. After that, the price started marginally moving up. In the last few years, the market price has reached up to Rs 100 a kg.”

Despite such high prices, farmers were forced to sell their produce at rock-bottom prices during the peak harvesting season, making cultivation unremunerative.

Currently, hydrogenated onion is being sold at Rs 15 a kg in certain markets as against the prevailing market price of Rs 100 a kg. Meanwhile, wholesale onion price in Delhi touched Rs 51.75 a kg on Thursday — a rise of Rs 1 a kg from the previous day.

Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar, on Thursday, reiterated that heavy rainfall

restricted the supplies in Karnataka and Maharashtra, resulting in spiralling of prices.

Onion prices have risen fourfold in six months. Data compiled by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs showed the retail onion price at Rs 60 a kg on Thursday in Chennai, Rs 66 a kg in Mumbai and Rs 60 a kg in Kolkata.

The government has asked National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd to import onions from Pakistan and other countries. Of late, the focus of the government has been to raise cereal output to meet the food security Bill requirement. Experts said it should also focus on improving the production of fruits and vegetables.

## Rice procurement unaffected by delayed rains

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**According to FCI estimates, about 8.1 million tonnes of paddy has been procured in the initial phase**



[Rice procurement](#) in Haryana and Punjab is in full swing, belying apprehensions of weak procurement due to [delayed rains](#).

Haryana and Punjab begin harvesting rice before other states. This season, half the procurement in Punjab has already been completed.

Despite adverse weather conditions in certain parts of the country, rice procurement hasn't been hit, at least in the initial phase. Though procurement was delayed by two-three weeks in states in east and south India, owing to delayed rains, the yield wasn't affected.

For this financial year, the Centre has pegged paddy procurement at 51.3 million tonnes (mt). According to Food Corporation of India ([FCI](#)) estimates, about 8.1 mt of paddy has been procured in the initial phase.

An FCI source said floods in Odisha might affect procurement of the crop in that state. He added the estimates provided by state food secretaries were conservative ones and procurement in states that saw normal weather conditions might exceed these estimates.

Sources in the Central Rice Research Institute said long-duration varieties of the crop would recover from the floods, adding significant damage to the crop was unlikely.

On Thursday, a central team assessed the discoloration and damage to the crop in Punjab, owing to the delayed rains. The team would give its report in three-four days, FCI sources said.



## Costlier soya oil heats up mustard, oil

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### **Indore, Oct. 24:**

Strong buying support from grocery merchants and slack arrivals have lifted mustard in Indore mandis in the past one week by almost Rs 350 a quintal. With demand outstripping arrivals, mustard seeds on Thursday further rose to Rs 4,600-4,800 (Rs 4,400-4,600). Similarly, raida also rose to Rs 3,200-3,300 (Rs 100 up from last week). Despite adequate carryover stock in mustard, the rally in both soya oil and mustard oil have added to the bullish trend in mustard seeds, said a trader. Plant deliveries of mustard seeds for

Jaipur line on Thursday also ruled higher at Rs 3,780-90 (Rs 3,722-30) on improved demand from the crushers.

Arrival of mustard seeds across the mandis in country on Thursday was 1.10 lakh bags (one lakh bags last week).

Mustard oil also witnessed uptrend on rise in soya oil with its price in Indore mandis on Thursday being quoted at Rs 686 (up Rs 10).

Despite slack demand and buying support, rise in mustard oil has mainly been attributed to bullish trend in soya oil in local mandis.

## Sheet rubber drops below Rs 160 a kg

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### **Kottayam, Oct.24:**

The rubber market ended weak on Thursday.

The absence of genuine buyers and positive factors to stimulate the sentiments continued to overshadow the market.

A close below Rs 160 level, in futures, is expected to induce further pressure, on the commodity technically, though the weekend covering purchases at lower levels might trigger, a short-term recovery in the days ahead.

Sheet rubber weakened to Rs 159.50 (Rs 160) a kg, according to traders.

The grade was quoted steady at Rs 160 both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to the Rubber Board. The trend was mixed.

November futures declined to Rs 159.79 (Rs 160.71), December to Rs 161.90 (Rs 162.68) and January to Rs 164.82 (Rs 164.93) while the February and March futures remained

inactive on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) dropped to Rs 156.87 (Rs 157.80) at Bangkok. October futures closed at ¥ 244.0 (Rs 153.92) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

**Spot rubber rates Rs/kg were: RSS-4: 159.50 (160); RSS-5: 151 (151); Ungraded: 146 (147); ISNR 20: 152 (152) and Latex 60%: 118 (120).**

## Kolkata tea prices drop with quality

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### **Kolkata, Oct 24:**

The average price of orthodox tea dropped at this week's sale (No. 43) compared with the previous sale (No. 41), while the average price of CTC remained virtually unchanged.

The Sale 42 due last week was dropped on account of the Durga Puja.

### **prices**

According to J. Thomas & Company Pvt Ltd, the auctioneers, the average orthodox price was lower at Rs 147.50 a kg compared with Rs 205.95 at Sale 41.

The corresponding figures for CTC were Rs 147.01 (Rs 147.10).

### **quality**

The tea industry sources would attribute the lower average orthodox price to the drop in quality – larger arrivals of post second flush varieties.

The quality second flush have all been sold, sources said.

The CTC price too will go the same way once the share of bought leaf factories (BLFs) in the total offerings starts rising, they said.

Sources concede that there are BLFs producing good quality teas.

### **green leaves**

But the major problem facing them is the indifferent quality of green leaves produced by many small growers.

Referring to the complaint of low price for green leaves – much lower than the Tea Board stipulated prices –being offered by many BLFs to small growers, sources express doubt if the system of announcing leaf prices for small growers on month-to-month basis is really a rational approach.

“Besides, the small growers are rarely happy, even after extracting a plethora of benefits from the government”.

This week at Kolkata auction, an estimated 79.7 per cent (84.78 per cent) of orthodox and 77.08 per cent (73.51 per cent) of CTC offerings was sold.

## NDDB chief likely to get extension

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### **New Delhi Oct. 24:**

National Dairy Development Board (NDDDB) Chairperson Amrita Patel may get an extension once her term ends next month.

Official sources said the extension could be for three months or till such time a new chairman takes over, for which the search is likely to begin soon.

The approval of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet is being sought for extending Patel's tenure.

The search committee formed under Cabinet Secretary Ajit Kumar Seth and consisting of Secretaries of Department of Agriculture, Department of Animal Husbandry and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research is expected to meet on October 30 to discuss the likely norms for NDDB chairman's appointment.

In fact, the Government will be looking out for a person to head NDDB, after almost 15 years. The 70-year-old Patel is currently in her third stint at the helm of the apex dairy policy-making body and has expressed her willingness not to continue for another term.

Patel was appointed first as Chairman of NDDB in 1998 at the age of 55 by her erstwhile mentor and predecessor Verghese Kurien, the Milk Man of India. Patel was subsequently re-nominated in 2003 and 2008 to the top slot of NDDB.

Potential contenders for the NDDB's top slot include Vipul Chaudhary, Chairman, Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation, Deepak Tikku, Managing Director of NDDB Services, Dilip Rath, Managing Director of NDDB and B.M. Vyas, former Managing Director, GCMMF.

NDDB was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1965 mainly to replicate the success of the Kaira Cooperative Milk Producers' Union (Amul) in other parts of the country. Currently, NDDB is implementing the Government's National Dairy Plan (NDP) in 14 States.

## Onion prices may stabilise in 2-3 weeks, says Pawar

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Poll-bound Delhi seeks supplies from Maharashtra



*Trying to stabilise: Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit and Food Minister K.V. Thomas addressing mediapersons after meeting Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar on the onion issue in New Delhi on Thursday. — Ramesh Sharma*

### **New Delhi, Oct 24:**

As onion becomes a political hot potato ahead of Assembly polls, the Delhi Government is making frantic bid to secure supplies from Maharashtra.

Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar, on the other hand, reiterated that the shortage was temporary and prices would come down in the next 2-3 weeks.

“The situation is serious and we are trying to stabilise prices,” said Delhi Chief Minister, Sheila Dikshit, after meeting Pawar and Food Minister K.V. Thomas on Thursday. Delhi has sent a team of officials to Maharashtra to negotiate prices and secure supplies.

Dikshit said onion arrivals in Delhi on Thursday stood at 800 tonnes and that should help ease prices a bit. The modal price or rate at which most trades took place in wholesale markets stood at Rs 5,175 a quintal in the National Capital, while at retail outlets, it ranged at Rs 70-90 a kg. According to data from the National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation, the average wholesale prices moved up marginally by over Rs 100 a quintal in

key markets such as Delhi, Bangalore, Indore, Pimpalgaon and Pune, among others, on Thursday. Further, Dikshit said that she would soon write to the Election Commission seeking permission to re-commence the sale of onions at subsidised rates in Delhi. “Traders and hoarders are taking advantage of the situation. Nafed has been asked to improve supplies on a no-profit, no-loss basis,” Dikshit said.

Pawar said onion production was unlikely to drop despite rains affecting the crop in Maharashtra and Karnataka and that the acreage was higher than last year. Onion prices are expected to drop in the next 2-3 weeks with increase in arrivals from Maharashtra, Karnataka and Rajasthan, he said.

Meanwhile, Commerce Minister Anand Sharma also said that there was no scarcity of onions and prices were expected to stabilise in the coming few weeks. He also said that States should check hoarding.

## More Rajasthan, Gujarat growers may sow jeera

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### **Rajkot, Oct. 24:**

Jeera prices declined on expectations that the sowing of the crop, done during rabi, will be higher.

Moreover, higher supplies also exerted pressure on jeera price.

Jeera's acreage is likely to increase by 10-12 per cent in this year as more farmers in Gujarat and Rajasthan are likely to opt for the spice crop.

Slow domestic and export demand coupled with ample carry forward stocks

may keep prices under pressure.

On the NCDEX, jeera contracts for delivery in November decreased by Rs 27.50 to Rs 12,600 with an open interest of 9,825 lots.

NCDEX jeera for December dropped by Rs 37.50 to Rs 12,815 with an open interest of 3,348 lots. Sowing of jeera has started in some areas and will gain pace from next week. Jeera is a winter crop sown from October and farmers mainly depend on the rains to improve soil moisture before sowing.

On the spot, jeera price declined by Rs 10-15 for 20 kg. Daily supplies at Unjha were 7,000-8,000 bags of 60 kg each, higher than the expected 3,000-4,000 bags.

In Unjha market, jeera traded at Rs 2,400-2,600, while in Rajkot the spice fetched Rs 2,150-2,313 for 20 kg.

According to traders, sowing activities will gain pace after Diwali.

# Sugar mills, stockists wrangle over price

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## **Mumbai, Oct. 24:**

Sugar prices ruled steady at all levels on Thursday on need-based wholesale demand due to ample inventories in the market.

Considering lower prices compared with the cost of production, producers are hesitant to sell. On the other hand, they

seem to be asking for a price at which stockists are not willing to buy.

A Vashi-based wholesaler told *Business Line*, “As sufficient stocks are lying in the Vashi wholesale market due to routine demand ahead of Diwali, stockists are keeping away from building up inventories. Producers are continuously selling due to higher carryover stocks from last year and expecting better prospects this season.

“Freight rates are also now stable at Rs 100 a bag. In the absence of neighbouring States’ buying in Maharashtra due to price disparity mills are forced to offload their produce in local markets and hence supply is ample here.”

Arrivals in Vashi market were 61-62 truckloads (of 100 bags each) while local dispatches were 60-61 loads.

On Wednesday, only 9-10 mills came forward with tenders and sold about 24,000-25,000 bags at Rs 2,700-2,840 (Rs 2,700-2,840) for S-grade and Rs 2,880-3,000 (Rs 2,880-3,000) for M-grade.

**Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were:** S-grade Rs 2,892-3,035 (Rs 2,892-3,042) and M-grade Rs 3,002-3,251 (Rs 3,002-3,251). **Naka delivery rates were:** S-grade Rs 2,830-2,920 (Rs 2,830-2,920) and M-grade Rs 2,950-3,120 (Rs 2,950-3,120). **Uttar Pradesh rates were:** Lakhimpur Rs 3,320 and Muzzafarnagar Rs 3,230.

# Spot pepper hits record Rs 470 a kg

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## **Kochi, Oct. 24:**

Spot pepper continued its uptrend and topped the Rs 470-a-kg level, a record high on strong demand amid tight supply. Similarly, on the futures also prices continued to shoot up. Strong domestic demand was visible from all the major north Indian centres. Besides, following mopping up of the stocks, which were available with the consumer markets by the masala manufacturing industry based in Maharashtra, the consumer market demand was also surging ahead, they

said.

Local brokers, on behalf of big consumers, were also seen running around looking for pepper. Meanwhile, it is reported that Karnataka stocks have dried up. Those who were postponing hoping the market would crash when the 6,800 tonnes of would be released after they were cleared by the food safety authorities have no other alternative but to cover what ever available at the prevailing prices, market sources told *Business Line*. All these factors were pushing up the market, they said.

On the spot, 45 tonnes of farm grade pepper arrived of which 42 tonnes were traded at Rs 452-455 a kg. On the NMCE, Nov and Dec contracts increased by Rs 323 and Rs 314 respectively to Rs 46,650 and Rs 46,900 a quintal. On the IPSTA also, Nov and Dec contracts rose to Rs 47,703 and Rs 47,500, both up by Rs 1,000 a quintal.

Spot prices shot up further by Rs 700 on strong demand to Rs 45,200 (ungarbled) and Rs 47,200 (garbled) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market was at around \$8,300 (c&f) Europe and \$8,600 (c&f) for the US and remained totally out priced, they said. Lampong was reportedly not giving any quote. However, the trade claimed that Indonesia and Vietnam were quoting at around \$8,000 a tonne.

## Correction likely in edible oils market

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### **Mumbai, Oct. 24:**

Edible oils – both spot and futures – witnessed a firm trend on Thursday. However, the surge in the spot market was marginal on slack demand and in the futures, the volatility was higher due to aggressive buying.

In physical market, prices for palmolein, soya oil, cotton and groundnut oil rose by Rs 5-10 each for 10 kg, tracking extended gain in soya oil futures. Local market may see some correction as Malaysian palm oil futures dropped on Thursday, snapping

four straight days of gains.

Sources said that high volatility in the futures market kept stockists away from making fresh purchases.

Local refineries kept their rates unchanged but some traders booked profits by reselling at lower rates. Very small quantity of palmolein was resold in the range of Rs 577-583.

Market may see some correction but the under current will remain positive until arrivals of domestic seeds does not improve.”

Towards the day’s close, Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 585, super palmolein Rs 625 and super deluxe Rs 645, soyabean refined oil Rs 710 and sunflower refined oil Rs 820.

Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 579 ex-JNPT and Rs 582, super palmolein Rs 617, soyabean refined oil Rs 705 and sunflower refined oil Rs 771. Allana was quoting palmolein at Rs 579-582, super palmolein Rs 613 and sunflower refined oil Rs 820.

In Rajkot, groundnut oil extended gains by Rs 60 to Rs 1,330 for *telia* tin and loose (10 kg) higher by Rs 30 to Rs 850.

Malaysia BMD crude palm oil's November futures settled lower at MYR 2,472 (MYR 2,488), December at MYR 2,462 (MYR 2,481) and January at MYR 2,464 (MYR 2,482). The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were: groundnut oil 860 (840), soya refined oil 702 (695), sunflower exp. ref. 735 (735), sunflower ref. 785 (785), rapeseed ref. oil 741 (740), rapeseed expeller ref. 711 (710) cottonseed ref. oil 705 (700) and palmolein 580 (575).

Vikram Global Commodities (P) Ltd quoted Rs 646/10 kg for Malaysia super palmolein November delivery.

## Surprise rally lifts aromatic, Sharbati rice

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### **Karnal, Oct. 24:**

An unexpected rally in the market pushed up aromatic and Sharbati rice prices by Rs 150-500 a quintal on Thursday, while PR varieties ruled firm on moderate buying. A rally at this time of the year is not expected, said Tara Chand Sharma, proprietor of Tara Chand and Sons. High demand and sudden increase in paddy prices is the prime reason behind the price rise, he said.

Prices for the Pusa-1121 paddy were up by Rs 600 at Rs 3,900 a quintal on Thursday against the levels of Rs 3,250-3,300 quoted earlier this week.

In the physical market, New Pusa-1121 (steam) improved by Rs 500 and sold at Rs 7,900-8,000, while new Pusa-1121 (sela) went up by Rs 400 and quoted at Rs 7,500 .

Pusa-1509 (sela) quoted at Rs 6,050-6,250 , Rs 250 up.

Pure Basmati (Raw) quoted at Rs 11,000 . Duplicate basmati (steam) moved up by Rs 400 to Rs 6,400 .

For the brokens of Pusa-1121, Dubar quoted at Rs 3,600, Tibar sold at Rs 4,200 while Mongra was at Rs 3,100 .

In the non-basmati section, Sharbati (Steam) went up by Rs 150 and sold at Rs 4,580-4,600 while Sharbati (Sela) increased by 200 to Rs 4,400 .

On the other hand, PR varieties remained unchanged on moderate buying. Permal (raw) sold at Rs 2,250-75 while Permal (sela) went for Rs 2,300 . PR-11 (sela) sold at Rs 2,700 while PR-11 (Raw) quoted at Rs 2,700-2,725. PR14 (steam) sold at Rs 2,700.

### **Paddy arrivals**

About 50,000 bags of PR paddy arrived and quoted at Rs 1,400-50, around 15,000 bags of Pusa-1121 arrived and sold at Rs 3,900, 10,000 bags of Sugandha at Rs 2,550, while 10,000 bags of Sharbati arrived and sold at Rs 2,400. Around 15,000 bags of Duplicate Basmati arrived and went for Rs 3,800 a quintal.

# Local demand lends colour to turmeric

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## **Erode, Oct. 24:**

Spot turmeric prices increased as some local orders flowed along with a few from upcountry. Arrivals, on the other hand, doubled.

“Following local demand and a few upcountry orders, turmeric sale increased with traders quoting higher price. On Thursday, 5,700 bags arrived for sale and 70 per cent was sold at a higher price. Traders brought more on Thursday and benefited as sales and prices were higher.

Local traders have received local orders for Diwali from powder units and also from masala firms,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said that the exporters have received some upcountry orders and are buying quality produce.

Traders said that they have stocks for supply to the local powder units and hereafter, will buy only quality produce.

Some stockists also purchased on Thursday .

Traders said that due to arrival of quality turmeric they have quoted higher price and purchased for immediate sale.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,319-6,399 a quintal; the root variety Rs 3,899-5,089.

**Salem Hybrid Crop:** The finger variety fetched Rs 5,399-6,616 and the root variety Rs 4,411-5,389.

Of the 1,362 bags that arrived, only 512 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,369-6,269; the root variety Rs 4,369-5,269.

Of the 831 bags put up for sale, 795 found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety quoted Rs 5,490-6,260 and the root variety Rs 4,739-5,259.

All the 1,086 bags were traded.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 5,004-6,252; the root variety Rs 4,172-5,272.

All the 54 bags were sold.

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