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THE HINDU

Workshop on terrace gardening



Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Information and Training Centre will conduct a workshop on terrace gardening on September 3

Concept of terrace gardening intends to cultivate fruits and vegetables to meet the everyday requirement of a family. Besides, growing of medicinal and ornamental plants will be taught.

Certificates will be issued. Lunch will be provided. For registration details, contact 044 - 2626 3484. Email ID: chennai@tnau.ac.in

Time: Between 9.30 am and 4.30 p.m.

Australia plans tie-up with TN in food sector

The State government is working towards making farmers stakeholders in the food processing industry in a bid to ensure inclusive growth, said agriculture secretary and agricultural production commissioner, Sandeep Saxena on Friday.

Inaugurating the 10 edition of the Indian Food Processing and Food Technology Fair, 'Foodpro 2013', a three-day event organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), he said: "The government can act as a facilitator between growers and producers."

Australia has a strategic plan for direct collaboration with Tamil Nadu in fishing, aquaculture, dairy farming and horticulture. Australia's expertise in food processing and related technologies

could provide the much-needed impetus in building India's capability in the food processing sector, said Michael Carter, trade commissioner, Australian Trade Commission.

With over 150 exhibitors, Foodpro showcased state-of-the-art machinery and technology in food processing, refrigeration and cold chain equipment, processed and packaged foods and dairy equipment among other things. Besides, a conference on 'Technologies for value-added food product development' was held on Saturday.

The three-day event focused on the current trends in the food processing industry, showcased innovation through modern technology and provided a unique platform to network and explore new business opportunities in food and related sectors.

Water level- Madurai

The water level in Periyar dam stood at 127 feet on Sunday with an inflow of 647 cusecs and a discharge of 1,396 cusecs.

In Vaigai dam, the water level was 56.27 feet with an inflow and a discharge of 1,935 cusecs and 1,060 cusecs respectively.

According to the Public Works Department, rainfall recorded in Thekkadi was 7.4 mm, Kallandhiri 6 mm, Kodaikanal 18.6 mm and Viraganoor 11 mm.

Goats distributed

District Collector V. Dakshinamoorthy said that as many as 11,716 free goats have been distributed to 2,929 beneficiaries of this district under the free cattle scheme during the financial year 2013-14. He made this statement at the free camp to check and treat cattle distributed to beneficiaries under the scheme that was held at Renganayakanpalayam on Friday.

Mettur level

The water level in the Mettur Dam stood at 111.90 feet on Sunday, against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 10,031 cusecs and the discharge 18,000 cusecs.

Water level

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Sunday stood at 108.90 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 451.04 cusecs and 1,404.75 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam.

The water level in Manimuthar dam stood at 61.25 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 160 cusecs and 45 cusecs of water was discharged.

Kanyakumari

The water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 24.10 feet, 60.85 feet in Perunchani, 10.17 feet in Chittar I, 10.27 feet in Chittar II and 30.51 feet in Mambazhathuraiyaru dam.

Vegetable collection centres inaugurated

The Horticulture department on Sunday opened two vegetable collection centres in the district to facilitate collection of vegetables for supply to urban consumers in Coimbatore under a component of Centre-sponsored Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana.

Official sources told *The Hindu* that the centres, started in Palladam and Gudimangalam, would collect harvested vegetables from farmers in the respective areas and then transport the vegetables to Coimbatore through designated supply chain networks identified.

“One main advantage is that the farmers will be paid immediately and get an assured market for their produce,” a horticulture department official pointed out.

Thus, Palladam and Gudimangalam would be acting as peripheral vegetable production hubs for the consumers in Coimbatore city.

Received

On the inaugural day, vegetables like tomato, brinjal, onion, beetroot and lablab were received at the two centres.

“We are expecting collection of six tonnes of vegetables a day during the peak seasons,” horticulture officials said.

The department had constituted seven clusters of farmers to ensure steady supply of vegetables to the collection centres.

To help the farmers transport the produce from the farm to the centres, subsidy assistance was being given to them under government schemes, to procure vans that could move vegetables under refrigerated conditions.

“These vans can hold at least 10 tonnes of vegetables at a time,” officials said.

Minister for Forests M.S. M.Anandan inaugurated the Palladam centre and Deputy Speaker of Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly Pollachi Jayaraman opened the Gudimangalam centre.

Perimetro vegetable programme launched in The Nilgiris

Anikorai, Kil Kauhatty, and Kotagirii among collection centres

Witnessed by a good number of villagers, including many farmers, the Perimetro Vegetable Cluster Development Programme of the State Horticulture Department was set in motion in The Nilgiris on Sunday.

In the auctions organised at Anikorai and Kil-Kauhatty to mark the launch, carrots and potatoes weighing 2,100 kilograms and 5,650 kilograms respectively were picked up. MP K. R. Arjunan urged the farming community to make optimum use of the programme.

At Anikorai, 330 farmers cultivating crops over 120 hectares have formed 22 clusters. In Kil Kauhatty, 1,180 farmers growing crops on 650 hectares have formed 61 clusters.

District Revenue Officer L. Nirmal Raj and Joint Director of Horticulture, Chennai, S. Murugan were present.

Speaking to The Hindu the Joint Director of Horticulture, The Nilgiris, N. Mani, said that with The Nilgiris being one of the four districts chosen in the Coimbatore region, 175 clusters have been formed to meet the vegetable requirements of the metros.

Stating that Anikorai, Kil Kauhatty, Ketti Palada and Kotagiri have been identified as collection centres, he said that infrastructural facilities will be provided soon. Growers will benefit significantly from the concept. They will be assisted in many ways.

Subsidy will be provided for seeds, manure and green houses. They would also be imparted training periodically. Pointing out that fifty five per cent subsidy would be given for purchasing vehicles, Mr. Mani said that loans for the balance amount would also be arranged.

On the opening day, three vehicles were given at Anikorai and three at Kil Kauhatty. It will ensure that the farmers save at least Rs. 100 per bag in transport and also the ten per cent commission charges that they have been paying to the middlemen.

Planter then, picker now — the teapot steams



Heady brew: Foreign tourists try their hand at picking tea on an estate in Munnar.—Photo: Special Arrangement

In the past centuries, they came as planters, denuding hills to plant tea. Now they come as pickers of tea, not labourers but tourists. So do not be astonished if you see foreigners picking tea on estates in Munnar. It is a slow change happening to tourism here.

On an estate at Thalayar, tourists who come to savour the beauty of the landscape are given a chance to pick tea. That most of those who grab this opportunity are from the U.K. is not lost on the local populace. It was the East India Company which started planting tea in the mountains in Idukki.

British-made historical monuments, such as hanging bridges, bungalows, remains of ropeways and a railway system in Munnar, all related to the plantation sector, remain in the district.

On the Thalayar estate, tourists can pick tea leaves in the morning and visit the factory in the evening. An official confirms that it is the British who prefer the package.

The main crop grown on the estate is China tea. History has it that the East India Company brought four Chinese experts to plant Chinese tea in Munnar.

Its specialities are a deep smell and small leaves. Though hybrid varieties were replanted in other areas, the major variety on the Thalayar estate is Chinese tea, the official says.

A guide explains the processing of tea and its grading to the tourists.

Some of the tourists come to collect details of their planter-forefathers and the life led by them here.

In the past, the British came to the High Ranges to plant tea. Now, they come as tourists to pick tea.

Procurement price of coconut hiked

The procurement price of raw coconut, collected through Krishi Bhavans, has been increased to Rs.20 a kg, according to the District Manager of KERAFED. In all, there are 60 procurement centres in the district.

Perennial pond gives vegetable, banana farms a lifeline

Water level never dropped though 25 tanker loads of water was pumped out each day



View of the Malekkal pond in the Kottukkal Farm at Anchal in Kollam district which nurtured the crops of the farm during the drought phase.— Photo: C. Suresh Kumar

Vegetable and banana crops at the Government Agricultural Seed Farm at Kottukkal near Anchal here have survived the recent drought, and are ripe for harvest, courtesy a perennial pond the farm authorities have conserved there.

At a time when ponds are largely seen as something to be reclaimed, the role played by the Malekkal pond inside the farm during the drought phase underscores the importance ponds have in food security.

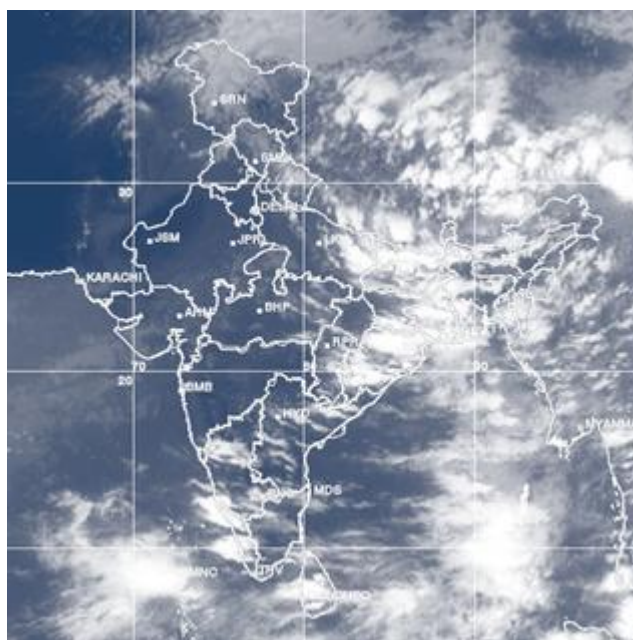
Kottukkal farm's main source of irrigation is a tributary of the Ithikara river which passes through the area. But in this year's drought phase, that tributary had dried up and the farm's crops stood threatened. It was then that the farm authorities turned to the Malekkal pond for succour.

They were not sure whether the pond could sustain the vegetable and banana crops standing on a good portion of the 254-hectare farm which needs to be irrigated daily. The farm had not faced such a drought earlier and the pond was used only to meet minor requirements.

But the farm labourers were confident. The farm had its own water tanker and using a diesel pump the tanker was filled and water transported to all over the farm. The level of the pond never dropped though about 25 tanker loads were pumped each day.

The authorities said that the pond had been erected at a point, around 20 years ago, where there was abundant water seepage. That kept the pond, and the crops, alive, they said.

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on September 1st.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	34	27	0	518
New Delhi (Sfd)	34	27	0	781
Chandigarh	34	25	12	780
Hissar	35	25	0	507
Bhuntar	31	19	0	399
Shimla	22	16	12	778
Jammu	33	24	3	1183
Srinagar	30	19	0	216
Amritsar	35	25	0	747
Patiala	35	26	0	690
Jaipur	34	25	0	661
Udaipur	32	23	0	656
Allahabad	30	26	0	943
Lucknow	31	24	2	702
Varanasi	32	26	56	727

Dehradun	29	21	36	2645
Agartala	33	27	0	701
Ahmedabad	34	25	0	749
Bangalore	30	19	23	424
Bhubaneshwar	34	26	0	669
Bhopal	31	22	0	1113
Chennai	34	27	0	470
Guwahati	31	26	4	699
Hyderabad	30	23	0	525
Kolkata	33	28	0	1431
Mumbai	31	25	0	2060
Nagpur	34	23	0	1328
Patna	34	27	1	332
Pune	31	18	0	535
Thiruvananthapuram	33	24	0	874
Imphal	31	23	0	810
Shillong	23	19	9	814

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

RAINFALL

RAINFALL: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at many places over Uttarakhand, at a few places over Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh and at isolated places over Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and east Rajasthan. Weather was dry over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (3 cm and above) HARYANA: Jagadhari and Sadhaura 4 each and Raipur Rani and Mustfabad 3 each, HIMACHAL PRADESH: Dharamsala 5 and Jubbal 3, JAMMU AND KASHMIR: Katra 3, PUNJAB: Madhopur 5, EAST UTTAR PRADESH: Sidhauri, Sitapur and Varanasi city 7 each, Varanasi 6, Ayodhya, Gazipur, Jaunpur tehsil and Kunda 5 each, Turtipar and Malihabad 4 each and Kheri Lakhimpur 3, WEST UTTAR PRADESH: Aligarh 6, Agra, Mathura and Meerut tehsil 4 each and Khair 3 and UTTARAKHAND: Nanital 6, Rudraprayag 5, Dehradun and Haldwani 4 each and Barkot and Purola 3 each. FORECAST FOR REGION VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 3rd SEPTEMBER 2013 : Rain/thundershowers may occur at many places over east Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand during next 48 hours and decrease thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places over Himachal Pradesh and at one or two places over rest of the region outside west Rajasthan where it would be mainly dry.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 3rd SEPTEMBER 2013: Partly cloudy sky. Very light rain/thundershowers could occur in some areas.

Dropping rupee value boosts egg export

Exporters have shipped close to 100 containers in August

Depreciating rupee value against the U.S. dollar has brought cheers to poultry farmers and egg exporters here as they are realising better price for the white protein. Industry sources said that buyers too are benefited as they are able buy eggs at a lesser price, since Indian exporters are quoting lesser than their competitors in other countries.

Monthly egg export slumped to its record low in 15 years in June 2013, when a mere nine containers were exported. It recovered to 30 containers in July after the Sultanate of Oman started importing eggs from India after a gap of eight months. Exporters here said that they have shipped close to 100 containers in August due to dropping value of rupees against the dollar.

“This month export has increased steadily as we are able to quote a better price in dollar compared to our competitors. Despite a lesser price we are able to reap good profits as the average value of rupees is 64 this month compared to Rs. 60 in July”, says R. Kannan, General Manager of a firm that accounts for more than 50 per cent of the egg export from India.

Though depreciation of rupee value has come as a boon it also has disadvantages as the transportation cost (which is quoted in US \$) also climbs the ladder. “The cost of shipping a container to Oman is 2,800 US \$. This cost Rs. 1.68 lakh per container in July but is Rs. 1.90 lakh now”, an exporter said on condition of anonymity. He added that due to this reason they are sending more shipments to Afghanistan. “It costs 2,000 US \$ to ship a container Afghanistan – to Karachi port from where it is taken to that country on road. This helps us save 800 US \$ compared to a shipment to Oman, helping us save Rs. 50,000 more per container”, he said and added that exports to Oman and Africa has been reduced though there is good demand for Indian eggs in those regions.

Sources in the National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC), Namakkal Zone, said that increasing export has helped farmers realise better price for their eggs while their counterparts in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Central India are getting a lesser price over the last few days due to ‘Shravan’ month – when many consumers turn vegetarians.

“Every year the price of eggs in Namakkal used to be reduced during the month of ‘Shravan’ but we are able to maintain its wholesale price at Rs. 3.33 (with Rs. 3.08 reaching farmers) as the demand for eggs and the supply have matched with increasing exports – from 42 lakh eggs in June 2013 – thereby avoiding stagnation of eggs”, poultry farmers said.

Sow the wind, reap a storm

Those opposing GM crops ignore scientific evidence of their harmlessness and are depriving the nation of the wider benefits of agri-biotechnology

It is unfortunate that the technical group appointed by the Supreme Court has chosen to stick with its recommendation for an indefinite moratorium on GM crop trials. There is fierce opposition from activists even to the introduction of the Biotechnology Regulatory Authority Bill (BRAI) in Parliament, meant to evolve a scientific basis for the regulatory process.

With all this negative propaganda, science has become a casualty. In our country, agricultural biotechnology has been reduced to Bt (*Bacillus thuringensis* toxin)-crops and further restricted to Bt cotton and Bt brinjal. Transgenic (or genetic modification) technology, which includes Bt crops, by itself occupies a large canvas to combat abiotic stresses and improve nutritive quality of the grain. In turn, transgenic technology is only one component of agri-biotech, which includes non-GM options such as marker-assisted selection breeding (MAS), reverse breeding, grafting non-GM scion onto GM-root stocks etc. In addition, there is a gamut of strategies to alter specific genes (e.g. zinc finger nuclease, SiRNA etc) to generate desirable variants in a given crop.

Missed opportunities

While there is a huge effort to make regulatory protocols complex and time-consuming for GM-crops, many of the strategies leading to creation of mutants are outside the purview of such regulations. Even in conservative Europe, the following analysis is an eye opener: “Twenty five years of risk research on GM crops have established [that Biotechnology is not *per se* riskier than conventional breeding technologies] beyond reasonable doubt. We need to highlight the opportunities missed by not accepting GM crops. These include lost revenues for farmers, breeding companies and consumers, brain drain and lost technology innovations, reduced agricultural productivity and sustainability, foregone health benefits, especially reducing malnutrition, and many more realized or expected virtues of GM crops”(*EMBO reports*, vol. 13, 493-497, 2012).

Ingo Potrykus, who developed the Golden rice, laments “unjustified and impractical legal requirements are stopping genetically engineered crops from saving millions from starvation and malnutrition” (*Nature* 466, 561, 2010). In India, the embargo on Bt brinjal has demoralised researchers in the field. We need a huge work force to handle all the strategies mentioned.

China is going full steam with almost 6,000 PhDs in agri-biotech alone (Chinese Academy of Sciences), whereas India has 8,900 PhDs in all sciences put together!

GM is not a stand-alone technology. It can blend with conventional technologies, including organic farming. In fact, it is ideal to have a Bt crop as central to organic farming, since the overall objective is to decrease use of chemical pesticides. A leading organic farmer told me that his products are 60-per-cent organic! Biopesticides also work through chemicals and not by magic! MAS can be applied if appropriate germplasms are available and accessible in nature. Thus, drought-tolerant maize and quality protein maize have been developed using MAS. Golden rice has been developed using the GM approach with two genes, one from daffodil and another from a soil bacterium.

If India has become a cotton-exporting country from a cotton-importing one, Bt cotton has played an important role in this change. The sustainability of Bt cotton would require both gene pyramiding along with IPM, NPM strategies, including crop rotation. A huge volume of peer-reviewed literature exists on the environmental and health safety of Bt crops. But activists tend to use anecdotes and negative activist-supported publications to oppose the technology.

All this negative propaganda does not sound convincing in the light of the fact that millions of people and cattle in the globe have been eating Bt corn for over 15 years without any authenticated report of health or environmental problems. People have also been eating corn or soya-based foods, such as oil and breakfast cereal. Livestock fed on Bt corn are the main source of meat products, imported even by Europe. One needs to worry about water availability, loss of soil fertility and hostile weather conditions. Scientists are already looking for a cold shock protein to overcome drought stress, or a nitrate reductase gene that lets the organism grow with 100 times less nitrogen than normal. It is another matter that the patent on cold shock gene has been rejected in India for the wrong reasons. It is indeed surprising that a single gene can protect against so many different stresses. Genes from plants with deep roots that can use water and nutrients very efficiently are of great interest. These areas of research are extremely important but is getting lost in all the hypothetical risks while millions of children suffer from under- and malnutrition.

The main concern appears to be that MNCs would ultimately decide on the agriculture of this country. The fact remains that they are the ones who have made the scientific discoveries and also had the muscle power to make the lab-to-land transition. This must also be the main reason to encourage agri-biotech research in Indian research institutions all the way, beyond glass houses. If MNCs are only interested in Bt and HT genes to make profits, let our institutions

concentrate on abiotic stresses and nutrition quality. Our scientists should concentrate on developing Bt cotton varieties instead of hybrids.

Aid the scientists

The greatest challenge is to develop a single cereal, say rice, which is nutritionally adequate and can withstand biotic and abiotic stresses. A real indigenous success story will dispel the fear of the unknown in public minds. I am aware that scientists in India have very good leads languishing in the laboratories. Without field trials no claim can be really substantiated. One should talk to these scientists to understand their frustration. The hurdles are so many: funding, activists, loss of trial crops, no publications, no product, no career.

Give the scientists all the facilities and freedom and if they do not deliver, haul them up. How does China deal with MNCs and also allow indigenous efforts to develop Bt rice? Why are we afraid of collaborations on an equal footing? Are we afraid of MNCs or the technology? With all the information on safety available over decades, it is time to deregulate the deployment of the main Bt genes in use. GM labelling of such a crop is not warranted. In any case, given the level of awareness in the country, both among the literate and the illiterate, GM labelling is unlikely to succeed. There is no GM labelling in the U.S. and people are quite healthy! If drought-resistant cereal is obtained by MAS as well as GM technology, would we label both as genetically modified? India needs to have an agriculture technology policy. Expert groups need to decide year after year as to which crop, which trait and which strategy has to be used. Agriculture needs to be treated as a knowledge-driven industry and not just as a traditional vocation. The farmer needs technical help on a day-to-day basis and not left to fend for himself. We cannot let Bt brinjal embargo seal the fate of this country. If there are contentious issues in the BRAI Bill, these can be debated only if the Bill is introduced. One can only hope and pray that the Supreme Court would not be misled by the recommendations of the Technical Expert Committee.

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Farmers switch to commercial crops in Yadgir

This year farmers have preferred cultivation of commercial crops to food grains in Yadgir district. Most of the farmers have already sowed crops such as cotton, chilli and sugarcane instead of paddy, green gram or groundnut.

Almost 92 per cent cultivation in the district has been completed. According to the Agriculture Department sources, the target set for cotton sowing this season was 49,500 hectares, but as on August 30 the cotton was sown in 57,676 hectares. Earlier, most of the farmers used to grow paddy as two rivers as Krishna and Bhima flow in the district.

Although the cultivation of paddy was banned in the Krishna command area, several migrated farmers from Andhra Pradesh cultivate paddy violating the government order. Excessive use of water in the upper parts of the canal leading to deprivation of water to the farmers in the tail-end areas had prompted the government to ban the paddy cultivation in the Krishna command area. However, various reasons seem to have worked together in making local farmers drift away from paddy cultivation in the district in the recent years. Due to insufficient water release into the Narayanpur reservoir, most of the farmers could get only one crop due to shortage of water in the canals.

Moreover, this year too, the paddy sowing was delayed and second crop would be difficult, the farmers explained.

The price fall of paddy, tur, and green gram during the harvesting season has also influenced farmers to shift to commercial crops. During 2010, commercial crops were grown only in 28,180 hectares.

However the cultivation area of commercial crops shot up to 54,330 hectares in 2012. This year it could cross 70,000 hectare, the official sources said.

The statistics available with Agriculture Department clearly indicated a paradigm shift from food grains cultivation to the commercial crop cultivation in the district in the past couple of years.

Apart from key factors like availability of water, yield and profit, shortage of agriculture labourers could be another key reason for the shift in the district. But even now the farmers have to transport the cotton they grow to Raichur market for selling.

Cotton has been fetching good price, but the farmers of the district have to spend much on transportation.

The textile park proposed to be set up in the district may lessen the burden of cotton transportation for the farmers in the coming years.

Fisheries project to be extended



Fisheries Minister K Babu arriving to inaugurate the 'Malsya Samrudhi', state-level subsidy distribution and seminar at Ashir Bhavan in Kochi on Saturday | Mithun Vinod

The project for creating an artificial ecosystem which will help fish to grow in large numbers will be extended to other districts too.

The project, was launched on a pilot basis in Poovar, Thiruvananthapuram, and following its success, the government is considering the option of extending it to other places, Minister for Excise, Ports and Fisheries K Babu said here on Saturday. He was speaking after the state-level subsidy distribution to the farmers under the Matsya Samrudhi project.

“The plan is to extend the project to other districts on a phase to phase basis. Initially, the project will be extended to Kasargode, Malappuram and Kollam districts”, the minister said.

The major aim of Matsya Samrudhi project implemented by the Fisheries department with the support of local bodies was to increase the annual inland fish production of the state from 1.5 lakh tonne to 2.5 lakh tonne.

Though the actual plan was to implement the project in 750 panchayats of the state, 950 local bodies including three corporations, came forward for implementing the project.

“Nearly 60,000 farmers got the benefit of this project. The targeted production was 27,450 tonne and we were able to achieve 92 per cent of it”, added Babu.


The government had also appointed 767 aquaculture co-ordinators for helping the farmers. As per the plans of the Fisheries department, the project was expected to be expanded to 9,100 hectares. “But we were able to expand it to 9,100 hectares in the first phase itself”, the minister added. Kochi mayor Tony Chammany, Hibi Eden MLA, Charles Dias MP and Fisheries director Mini Antony were also present.

Weather

Chennai
▼

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Monday, Sep 2

Max | Min


33° | 27°

Clear

Rain: 0
Humidity: 79
Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:57
Sunset: 06:19
Barometer: 1009

Tomorrow's Forecast








Tuesday, Sep 3

Max | Min

33° | 26°

Sunny


Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday Sep 4	Thursday Sep 5	Friday Sep 6	Saturday Sep 7	Sunday Sep 8
				
34° 25°	34° 25°	34° 26°	35° 25°	35° 26°
Cloudy	Cloudy	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast

Airport Weather

Chennai
▼
Chennai

Rain: 0 Sunrise: 05:57
Humidity: 79 Sunset: 06:19
Wind: normal Barometer: 1009



Spices Board contests US's impurity claim

The Spices Board of India has denied the charge of a section of the US media that Indian spices are a major source of a variety of bacteria that causes typhoid and other stomach diseases.

The board said India had given priority to quality and met all food-safety standards and did the mandatory checks before shipment, and 98.5% of all varieties, especially black pepper, were found to be without salmonella (as alleged), and that was above the international standards.

“Most of the claims are misleading and they would damage the credentials of one of the largest spice-producing countries like India,” said board marketing director KC Babu.

A report in the New York Times had said the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), a US agency, found around 7% of India's shipment contaminated with salmonella.

Around 15% of the supply of coriander, 12% of oregano (a variety of mint) and 4% of black pepper were found contaminated, the report said.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

India incurs Rs 2 trillion/year post harvest loss of fruits, veggies



India incurs Rs 2 trillion/year post harvest loss of fruits, veggies

NEW DELHI: The country is incurring post harvest losses of fruits and vegetable worth Rs 2 lakh crore per year, due to lack of storage and processing facilities, according to a study.

"India incurs post-harvest fruits and vegetable losses worth over Rs 2 lakh crore each year largely owing to the absence of food processing units, modern cold storage facilities and a callous attitude towards tackling the grave issue of post-harvest losses,"Assocham said in a study.

The study titled 'Horticulture Sector in India: State Level Experience' also highlighted that about 22 per cent of fruits and vegetables produced in India reach the wholesale market.

Among the states, post harvest losses are maximum in West Bengal worth over Rs 13,657 crore followed by Gujarat (Rs 11,400 crore), Bihar (Rs 10,700 crore) and Uttar Pradesh (Rs 10,300 crore).

"Developing wholesale markets together with enhancing the cold storage capacities in local and regional markets are key for reducing post-harvest fruits and vegetable losses and enhancing their market arrival," the study added.

However, the study has pegged the total production of fruits and vegetables in the country is likely to cross 377 million tonnes by 2021 from the present level of 227 MT.

"Currently, over 77 MT fruits and about 150 MT vegetables are produced in India and their production is growing at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) ranging between 5-6 per cent, respectively," the study said.

The study has projected that demand for fruits and vegetables in India would grow exponentially as the economy and agriculture sector is likely to grow at over eight per cent and about four per cent, respectively as estimated by the 12th Five Year Plan.

Banana, mango, citrus, papaya and guava account for major share in total fruit production across India. Potato, tomato, onion, brinjal and tapioca account for maximum share in vegetable production in the country.

Monsoon rain likely average in September: India Meteorological Department



Rainfall in September is expected to be average in absence of the El Nino phenomenon, the weather department's last update said.

NEW DELHI: Rainfall in September, the last month of the monsoon season, is expected to be average in absence of the El Nino phenomenon, the state-run weather department's last update said on Sunday.

El Nino, associated with warmer sea surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean, often causes droughts in Australia and South Asia including India.

"The current El Nino neutral condition is expected to continue until early next year," D.S. Pai, the lead forecaster of the Indian weather office, told Reuters.

Rains between 90 per cent and 110 per cent of a 50-year average of about 17 cm for the last month of the four month monsoon season is considered average, according to the specification of the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

IMD also retained its average forecast for the June-September monsoon season in absence of the El Nino weather pattern.

The monsoon, vital for the 55 per cent of Indian farmland that does not have irrigation, has already brought the heaviest rains in nearly two decades in the first half of the season, giving rise to an expectation of bumper harvests.

In April, IMD had forecast an overall normal monsoon in 2013 with a rainfall estimate of 98 per cent of the long-term average.

For the entire season, rains between 96 per cent and 104 per cent of a 50-year average of 89 cm are considered normal.

During June 1 to Aug. 31, the monsoon rains were 10 per cent above average. So far, the rains have been evenly distributed over major crop growing regions of the south Asian country which is one of the world's biggest producers and consumers of farm commodities such as rice, sugar and cash crops like cotton.

Ample rains raised prospects for bumper harvests and higher rural incomes in the world's

second most populous country, which could improve retail sales and help rural growth.

Most of the summer planted crops, except rice in some pockets of eastern parts, have already entered their growing stage and now need moderate rains to ensure better yields.

The four-month long rainy season usually starts retreating from western Rajasthan state by mid-September.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Two veggie cluster centres launched in Ooty

Udhagamandalam: In a first, 'Peri-metro Vegetable Cluster Programme' was launched by the horticulture department in two Nilgiris villages on Sunday. While one vegetable cluster centre was launched at Kilkowhatty village, another was launched at Anikorai village near Ooty.

Inaugurating the two centres, Rajya Sabha MP KR Arjunan urged farmers to utilize the newly launched programme to boost business. "Vegetable sellers can directly participate in auctions to be conducted daily at the centres to procure vegetables. The programme facilitates farmers as well as vegetable outlet owners to carry out the vegetable trade without middlemen," Arjunan said. L Nirmalraj, district revenue officer and N Mani, joint director, horticulture department, were present during the launch.

About 22 farmer groups comprising over 330 farmers from in and around Anikorai Village have registered to be members of the newly formed centre at Anikorai village. The 330 farmers cultivate vegetables across 120 hectares. In Kilkowhatty village area, about 61 farmer groups, comprising 1180 farmers, have registered with the cluster center launched in their village. The 1180 farmers cultivate vegetables including carrot, potato, cabbage and beans across 650 hectares.

On the inaugural day at Kilkowhatti, about 5.65 metric tonnes of potato and carrot were brought in for auction by registered farmers. With subsidy of 55 percent by the horticulture department, six trucks with capacity of two metric tonnes each was handed over to the cluster centers for vegetable collection from farms.

The newly launched cluster centers are in addition to vegetable procurement, already in practice from a few months ago, by the cooperative department at the farmer's field itself. The cooperative department procures farm fresh vegetables directly from farmers as per the indent received from the 'Farm Fresh' outlets in Chennai. Based on the requirement of the indent by

the Chennai outlets, cooperative department officials identify the farms and approach the farmers at their fields for procurement.

There are around 20,000 farmers cultivating vegetables such as carrot, beetroot, cabbage, potato and beans in 7,000 hectares of farm land in the Nilgiris, according to Mani. Most farmers hold a minimum of at least an acre while 3000 farmers hold more than 5 acres.

Subsidy schemes for fishermen turning stale

PANAJI: The marine products export development authority (MPEDA) Goa's central subsidy schemes for installing insulated fish hold and ice making machines for trawlers have been gathering dust for the past eight years, with very few takers. This year the authority approached fishermen corporative societies and have gained a good response.

Deputy director of MPEDA Goa, S. Asok Kumar says, "All these schemes were introduced in 2005, but very few fishermen have come forward to receive the benefits. We give 30 % subsidy for installation of insulated fish hold for marine fishing boat owners as of 2013, but only 48 vessels have availed of the scheme".

There are two other schemes providing 30% subsidy- one for installation of a refrigerated sea water system and the other for setting up an ice making machine on board mechanized deep sea fishing vessels- that have not been claimed by any fisherman.

Kumar says that these three schemes were introduced to encourage fish vessel owners to go to sea for many days at a stretch. He adds, "The ice making machine scheme was introduced so that the fishermen could go deep into the sea for days and an onboard ice making machine would serve them to refrigerate their catch for longer time".

"Its capacity varies from 250 kg to about five tons and can produce 200 to 300 kg of ice. It might be a high investment but it's a lifelong one," Kumar informed.

Both the ice making machine and the insulated fish hold could cost around 4 lakh each,

depending upon the capacity. This steep capital investment may be the reason for a poor response, says Kumar.

Out of the eight societies the authority contacted, only the Xapora Boat Owners Fisheries Cooperative Society Limited, from Chapora, responded positively with applications, with around 30 boat owners from the society applying for the scheme.

Though there is a demand for tuna fishing, fishermen feel that the subsidies are not attractive in the real sense.

MPEDA implements two schemes but there are no takers for both.

One scheme encourages the harvesting of tuna in deep sea urging fish vessel owners to convert their existing vessels to tuna long liners.

Kumar says, "Most of our fishermen don't go for deep sea fishing. This scheme provides 50% subsidy on the cost of conversion, but in the last five years no trawler owner from Goa has shown any interest in this scheme".

Another scheme which promotes the construction of new tuna long liners is also awaiting takers.

Chairman of Mandovi fisheries cooperative society Menino Alphonso said that fishermen are aware of the schemes but it's then high end investment that restricts them. We would like to go in for tuna fishing.

'Seasonal factors impact quality of tea leaves'

GUWAHATI: With the Tea Board (TB) coming up with dos and don'ts for maintaining the quality of green tea leaves, the North Eastern Tea Association (NETA) said that the "minimum quality standard" parameters should also include factors like variation of seasons which have a bearing on maintaining the same standard throughout the year.

Last month, the Jorhat-based zonal office of the TB, in its circular, pointed out that to maintain

the quality standards of green leaves procured from small tea growers, tea manufacturing units should ensure that of the total weight of the leaves, 65 per cent comprises "fine shoots with two to three leaves and a bud and very soft banjis (single leaves)." Soft 'banjis' should not be more than 30 per cent and coarse leaves should not be more than five percent of the total weight.

NETA recently wrote to the TB saying that the earmarked 65 per cent cannot be maintained throughout the year because of seasonal factors. "We welcome the definition of the minimum quality standard of green leaves. But, at the same time, we need to understand that it is practically not possible to stick to the mentioned proportions throughout the year. Therefore the parameters specified should provide appropriate allowance for unavoidable seasonal variations and ground realities," NETA wrote.

NETA chairman Bidyananda Barkakoty said, "Along with factories, the onus of improving the quality of green leaves should also be shared by the green leaf growers and Tea Board."

The association suggested that to improve the quality of green leaves, all agents and suppliers should be "immediately" registered under the TB and should be given proper training. Barkakoty said "The quality parameters should not only be confined to green leaf buyers; they should also be applicable to the estate factories manufacturing tea from their own leaves."

Milk price to remain unchanged until September-end, claims sellers

INDORE: In a relief, which has been provided to the consumers of loose milk, the Indore Milk Sellers Association, has decided that there will be no revision in the milk price for the time being. Hence, the consumers will continue to get the loose milk at its usual price, which comes to Rs 34 per litre.

Normally, the price of loose milk is revised since September 1 every year. Producers are demanding for the price hike. Still, the sellers have decided that there will be no hike in price of milk as of now.

Currently, the loose milk sellers are buying milk at the rate of Rs 4.90 per fat and selling the

same at a cost of Rs 5.70 per fat. However, the milk producing farmers have raised a demand for increasing their price of milk per fat to Rs 6.

Indore Milk Sellers Association, Bharat Mathurawala, said, "At present, we are getting milk at the rate of Rs 31 per litre and charging Rs 34 per litre from our customers. Still, the milk producers are able to get more milk during rainy season, when compared to lesser milk they are able to produce during summer days due to the severe hit."

Industrialists learn ways to reduce cost of textile industry

INDORE: The textile industrialists were explained the ways on how they can reduce the cost of production through adoption of innovative technologies during the concluding day of the National Textile Summit here on Saturday.

Giving the details about the second day of the summit, president of MP unit of The Textile Association (India), NS Nirban, said, "Sessions were held on topics like small-scale industries, power conservation and cost cutting on the day".

One can reduce power consumption by installation of power conservation-related instrument at one's plant, he said. Also, he made a presentation in connection with reduction of power consumption by textile industries on the occasion.

The participating students took the occasion to hone their skills on power looms and also they were told how clothes were weaved during past days by the professors of Vaishnav Engineering College, where the event was held.

Prior to it, while unveiling the seminar on Day 1, the Union minister of textile, Dr KS Rao, had announced that a textile park would come up in Indore, for which a sum amounting to Rs 40 crore would come from the centre. One such park is already being developed in Chhindwara.

Govt to help rain-affected farmers: Patangrao Kadam

AURANGABAD: Maharashtra relief and rehabilitation minister Patangrao Kadam on Saturday said the state government would extend all possible assistance to the farmers who lost their crops due to excessive rainfall in the region.

Speaking at the review meeting of Marathwada region held in the city, Kadam said the government was trying to allocate funds to the affected farmers. "The government is aware of the heavy loss of crops in Nanded and Hingoli districts and it is making attempts to give quick relief to the farmers," he said.

District collector Vikram Kumar, additional divisional commissioner Gokul Maware, chief executive officer of Aurangabad zilla parishad Sukhdev Bankar and other senior officials were present on the occasion.

Kadam directed the district administration to continue water supply through tankers in villages which received scanty rainfall. Besides, the issue of rehabilitation of project affected people (PAP) was also discussed in the meeting.

He expressed satisfaction over the massive tree plantation drive undertaken by the local joint forest management committees.

Cashew growers seek minimum support price

BHUBANEWSAR: Farmers have demanded that the minimum support price (MSP) of cashew be fixed at Rs 100 a kg. While the fruit is sold at Rs 32 a kg, the processed cashewnuts fetches Rs 450 a kg, they alleged.

Though the state government fixes the prices of paddy and jute every year, there is no MSP for cashew. The traders instead walk away with the lion's share, rued the farmers.

"There are more than 10 lakh cashew farmers in the state and the crop is grown in 15 districts, including Nayagarh, Khurda, Koraput, Ganjam and Dhenkanal. But neither there is any MSP for

cashew nor a mandi, where the farmers can sell their produce," said former MLA and adviser, Odisha state cashew farmers' protection organization, Bikram Keshari Burma.

In the absence of direct control of the government over the crop, traders engaged in processing, packing and distribution of cashew make huge profits. There are around 500 privately owned processing units in the state, sources said.

"The government has a big role to play in promoting cashew cultivation in the state. Besides encouraging the farmers, the government should also establish mandis and processing units. Traders and middlemen should not be allowed to exploit the farmers," Burma added.

"We also need better irrigation facilities, training, technical assistance and bank loans at low interest rates. We should be provided insecticides, pesticides and fertilizers at subsidized rates," said Eeshwar Pradhan, a famer.

Business Standard

Cotton exports may remain flat at 10 mn bales in 2013-14

Cotton Advisory Board, under Textiles Ministry, has not come out with its review on cotton for the current year or for next year



India's cotton exports are likely to remain flat at about 10 million bales (170 kg per bale) in the 2013-14 season, due to lesser demand from China, according to a government official.

China is the biggest importer of the Indian natural fibre. Cotton season runs between October and September.

"In the 2013-14 cotton season, the natural fibre exports are expected to remain flat at 10 million bales owing to lesser demand from China as it is already sitting on a huge inventory of cotton," the official said. According to the recent estimates of the Cotton Association of India (CAI), production is estimated to be higher at about 37.2 million bales in the 2013-14 season against 35.5 million bales in the current year.

"The natural fibre output is expected to be higher this time on account of good and timely rains, particularly in cotton growing states, which would result in higher yields," the official said.

The Cotton Advisory Board (CAB), which is under the Textiles Ministry, has not produced a review report on cotton for the current year or the next year.

CAB, which usually meets every quarter to estimate cotton output, consumption, exports and imports has not provided any review since April, this year.

There won't be much of a change in cotton acreage and it may remain at the same level of about 11.5 million hectares, the official said. Gujarat, the highest yielding state in India, has seen an increase of more than 10 per cent in acreage on the back of a good monsoon, he said.

As per the CAI projections, the domestic consumption may also remain flat at around 260 lakh bales in the upcoming season. "There has hardly been fresh investments in textiles sector. Thus, the demand is expected to remain stagnant," the official said. The price of a cotton candy (356 kg) is about Rs 45,000 now.

[South India tea output set for fifth straight dip](#)

Adverse climatic conditions like drought in first quarter and heavy rains in the second quarter have affected the tea output



Tea production is set to decline in the growing regions of South India for a record fifth year in a row, owing to adverse climatic conditions. During the first six months of this year (January-June), tea production in South India declined 1.7 per cent to 115.4 million kgs from 117.4 million kgs in the same period last year.

At the same time, the states in North India reported 6.7 per cent increase in tea production at 280.1 million kgs from 262.5 million kgs in the same period a year ago.

"Going by the trend till now, it appears that we will have lower tea crop for fifth consecutive year

in South India due to adverse climatic conditions,” said R Sanjith, spokesperson, United Planters’ Association of Southern India (Upasi).

As a result of better show by the states in North India, the overall tea production of the country has increased 4.1 per cent to 395.5 million kgs during the first six months of the year compared to 379.9 million kgs in the year ago period. For 2012, tea production in South India remained stagnant at 239.4 million kgs compared to 240.2 million kgs in 2011.

Southern states comprising of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka account for 21 per cent of the country’s annual output. The total output during the year was 1.12 billion kgs, a growth of 1 per cent over the previous year.

“In South India, during the first three months of this calendar year, we have seen drought and heavy rains accompanied by overcast conditions in the second quarter, which is not conducive for the crop. The yields were also lower this year as many planters have gone for replanting of their estates. The yield levels might improve in the next couple of years,” Sanjith told Business Standard on the eve of the 120th annual conference of Upasi atop the hill town Coonoor.

In South India, the crop in the second half of the calendar year (July to December 2013) is also anticipated to be lower on account of the heavy showers and overcast conditions that prevailed during June and July, he said. Despite higher tea output on all India basis, the prices have moved up at the Indian auction centres continuing their upward movement that started in 2012. During the January-June period this year, the prices have jumped 13.2 per cent to Rs 128.86 per kg at the national level. While in South India, the prices have recorded a robust jump of 23 per cent to Rs 102.65 per kg for all teas put together.

“The year 2013 started with supply and demand reasonably balanced and therefore market fundamentals suggest that the market will neither be particularly bullish nor bearish in outlook. The markets may move in a narrow price band close to current levels,” Sanjith noted. The price hike despite higher production and lower exports indicates a robust growth in domestic consumption. Coupled with higher supply in the world market, the price increase suggest a healthy trend in the sector, absent for many years he added.

Spices from India under US scanner

FDA has put nearly 200 India-based firms on its 'red list' due to presence of Salmonella bacteria in the spices and other food products



Many spices from India, the largest exporter of these cooking ingredients to the US, have come under scanner of the health watchdog FDA for being susceptible to Salmonella bacteriacontamination.

Salmonella germs are said to have been behind many food poisoning outbreaks in the US, while the food products that can get such contaminations include spices, fish, beef, poultry, milk, eggs and vegetables. The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) has put nearly 200 India-based firms on its 'red list' due to presence of Salmonella bacteria in the spices and other food products exported by them to the US between 2009 and 2013. The products being brought into the US by the companies on the FDA's red-list can face "detention without physical examination".

According to the FDA red-list import alert, the contaminated spices include capsicum, cumin, ground coriander, turmeric, celery, basil and pepper. Amid growing concerns about Salmonella, the FDA initiated a research to characterise the prevalence of Salmonella in imported spices.

The study, whose findings are yet to be made public in full, focussed on over 20,000 food shipments that arrived in the US between 2007 and 2009 and found that around 7 per cent of spices were contaminated with salmonella.

Spices from India were found to be the second-most contaminated after Mexico in this study,

based on which the FDA is likely to soon initiate the necessary remedial and precautionary actions.

According to available results of the study, a larger proportion of shipments of spices derived from fruit/seeds or leaves of plants were contaminated than those derived from the bark/flower of spice plants. Besides, Salmonella prevalence was larger for shipments of ground cracked capsicum and coriander than for shipments of their whole spice counterparts.

Over 1 million people annually in the US are affected by salmonella, a common cause of food-borne sickness.

Most persons infected with Salmonella develop diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps 12 to 72 hours after infection. India exported nearly 700,000 tonnes of spices and spice products valued at over Rs 11,100 crore in FY'13 against 575,000 tonnes valued at over Rs 9,700 crore in FY'12.

However the share of the US in total exports could not be ascertained.

Maize prices in India show mixed trends: USGC

Overall, on pan India average basis maize prices last week were at Rs 13,312 per tonne



Maize prices in India are showing a mixed trend and the average rate last week was Rs 13,312 per tonne, higher than last year by five%, according to US Grains Council (USGC).

"Prices in India were mixed. Last one week seems to be good for maize crop or for that matter all the standing crops as it did not rain much. Whatever damage, it was being seen limited for

the corn crop. Overall, on pan India average basis maize prices last week were at Rs 13,312 per tonne, higher than last year by 5%," USGC India Representative Amit Sachdev said in a report.

Prices in some of the key markets were up. In Andhra Pradesh it was up by 3.37% at Rs 12,948 per tonnes, Karnataka 5.46% at Rs 14,400 per tonnes and Maharashtra 5.82% at Rs 15,358 per tonnes.

Markets where prices were down include, Gujarat, down by 3.64% at Rs 14,003 per tonne, Rajasthan 1% at Rs 14,037 per tonne, Tamil Nadu 0.56% at Rs 14,781 per tonne and Uttar Pradesh 0.5% at Rs 14,070 per tonne.

The average maize price was higher by 7.39% in August at Rs 13,324 per tonne compared to the same month last year.

However, in the futures market the prices were trading higher due to anticipated damage to the crop due to heavy monsoon and the depreciating rupee.

The September contract was up 2.82% at Rs 13,810 per tonne, October up 3.49% at Rs 13,020 per tonne and November up 3.93% at Rs 12,950 per tonne.

Spot markets showed mixed trends, in Nizamabad and Karimnagar at Andhra Pradesh it was up 2.78% and 0.33% to Rs 15,329 per tonne and Rs 14,900 per per tonne, respectively.

DECCAN Chronicle

Ooty traders get flowers ready for Onam



Ooty: With Onam festival celebrations around the corner and neighboring Kerala gearing up for this popular festival of flowers, colours and culture, florists in the hills here, which is known for its varieties of colourful flowers, are looking forward to busy flower trade in the coming weeks to meet the demand for the hill-grown flowers to lend fragrance to Onam-related events.

It is a well-known fact that colourful flowers and their fragrance and attraction play a major role during the Onam festival as the flowers are used in large numbers to make flower rangolis, popularly called pookalam, as this charming art of flowers is the main part of Onam celebrations almost at every home in Kerala and Keralites living in other parts of the nation and the world.

While the flower trade is looking up in the backdrop of Onam celebrations, K. Mani, a flower trader in this hill centre, said florists in the hills were looking forward to productive trade in the coming days.

“Usually, Keralites use chrysanthemum and roses which are grown locally in Kerala in good quantities for the pookalam decorations during the Onam festival. However, with the present generation, the dynamics of floral art has been witnessing a change in recent times as they show great interest in buying hill-grown flowers like gerbera and carnation in huge quantities as the attractive petals of these flowers add more colour and charm to the flower art and other decorations.

It is natural that the flower traders in the hills are geared up to meet the demands of these flowers for Onam. The price of these hill-grown flowers would soar in the coming days,” he predicted.

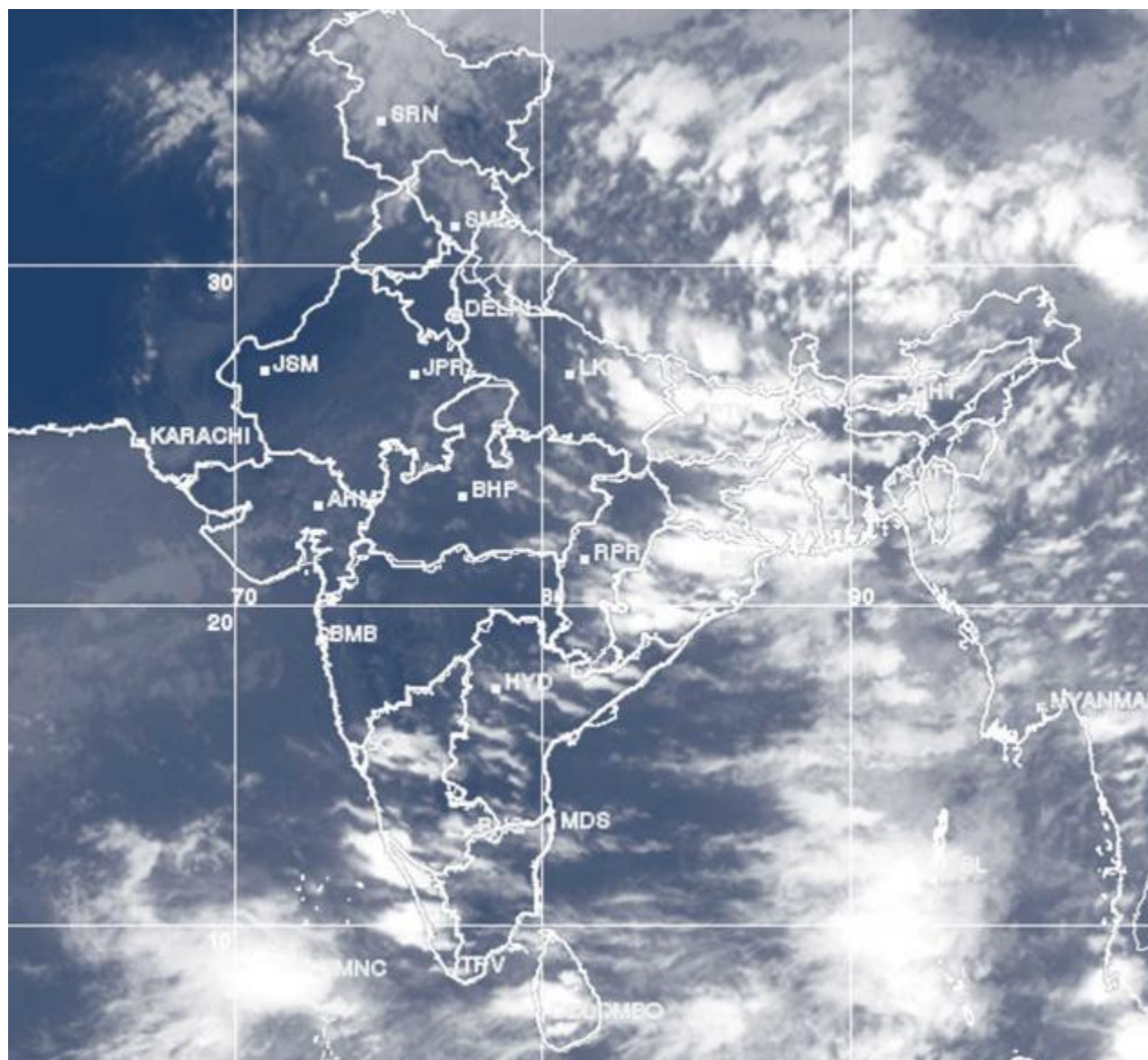
M. Pragasam, assistant director of horticulture, said along with carnation and gerbera flowers, there was good demand for hill-grown alstromaria flowers during the Onam season as these attractive flowers in many colours add charm to the flower art.

States:

[Tamil Nadu](#)

THE HINDU Business Line

Weather



India Meteorological dept picture at 16-00 hrs

6.68 lakh kg CTC dust tea offered at Kochi sale

Kochi, Sept 1:

A better demand was witnessed for small quantities offered at the Kochi tea auctions.

In sale no 35, the quantity on offer in CTC dust grades was 6,68,000 kg.

The quantity on offer for orthodox grades was 6,000 kg. Exporters and internal buyers absorbed small quantity of orthodox dust.

In the best CTC dusts, PD varieties quoted Rs 113-131, RD grades fetched Rs 130-154, SRD ruled at Rs 134-165 and SFD stood at Rs 139-176.

The leaf sale also witnessed a mixed trend and the quantity on offer in the orthodox grades was 71,000 kg. Others were irregular and sometimes lower. Well medium, tippy grades and bolder brokens appreciated in value. Fannings from the same origin moved up in value.

The quantity on offer in CTC leaf grades was 58,500 kg. Good liquoring teas were steady to dearer by Rs 1-2. Others were irregular and lower and witnessed heavy withdrawals especially the plainer teas.

In the dust category, both Monica SFD and Manjolai SFD quoted the best prices of Rs 176 each followed by Kallyar SFD at Rs 174. In the leaf grades, P's Woodlands Hyson Green Tea fetched the best prices of Rs 303 followed by Goldsland Select BPS at Rs 264.

Mechanism for certifying GM crops' safety most stringent in India: NAAS

Dissenting view not included in final report, it says

New Delhi, Sept 1:

The mechanism for certifying the safety of transgenic crops and genetically modified (GM) food in India are most stringent and dynamic, the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS), consisting of over farm scientists, said here.

At a press conference, R.B. Singh, President of NAAS, in response to the recent report by the Supreme Court-appointed Technical Experts Committee (TEC), said he was "highly disappointed" that the TEC was unable to submit a single, integrated report on the issue of field trials of GM crops.

He said the final report should have included the dissenting views of one member.

Singh said a crucial member's views had not been included in the final report, referring to R.S Paroda, former Director General, ICAR, who had been included because of his expertise.

The TEC's recent report was no different from the earlier one that had recommended a 10-year moratorium on Bt gene-based technology in all food crops, a ban on GM crops, he added.

"The five members of TEC have chosen to isolate Paroda in their final report and did not seek his views on the final report or include his inputs in their recommendations," Singh said, adding that Paroda had to submit a separate report, with a request to the Supreme Court to consider his report, too.

NAAS pleaded that Paroda's report, which stresses the need for exploring all scientific interventions, including transgenics, to ensure food and nutritional security, be made available to all parties concerned.

The case in Supreme Court has been filed by anti-GM activists and NGOs, seeking proper safety norms before for GM trials are undertaken.

Farmers in Dakshina Kannada experiment with non-traditional fruits



Mangalore, Sept. 1:

Some progressive farmers in Dakshina Kannada district are making efforts to grow non-traditional fruits in the region.

After L.C. Soans of Soans Farm in Moodbidri in the district started the cultivation of rambutan four decades ago, now most of the farmers have rambutan plants in small numbers in their plantations.

Rambutan is a fruit of Malaysian origin.

L.C. Soans told *Business Line* that now rambutan is developed as a fruit crop in the district.

Most of the retail outlets in the district sell rambutan at around Rs 300 a kg, he said.

He used to distribute it among his close circle free-of-cost a decade ago.

Edward Takode, a farmer with small holding in Moodbidri, said that recently one of the buyers in the region had asked him to supply two quintals of rambutan fruit. Varanashi Krishnamoorthy, a farmer from Adyanadka village in Bantwal taluk of Dakshina Kannada district, said that he first tasted rambutan at Soans Farm two decades ago.

Soans asked him to prepare plants out of the seeds of the fruits he tasted. As a result of this, he also planted them in his farm, Krishnamoorthy said.

Asked about the reason for the popularity of non-traditional fruits, he said as the income level of people goes up, they look for different exotic fruits.

On the potential for other exotic fruits, Soans said he has got the yield of jabuticaba and abiu fruits.

Though he did not market them, he distributed them among his friends. The feedback is good, he said.

In fact, Soans recently supplied 1,000 saplings of these fruits to a farmer in Kerala.

Jabuticaba is a fruit of Brazilian origin, and tastes like grape.

Abiu is a fruit of South American origin, and tastes like sapota.

Krishnamoorthy said he has been growing 'milk fruit' in his farm. This fruit is sweet in taste.

Asked if he tried to market this fruit, he said he is preparing saplings of that as he finds potential in that crop.

He said that most farmers have been cultivating the non-traditional fruits on experiment basis, and not on commercial scale.

[bl02_agri_gnana](#)

GOLD FUTURES MAY GO UP

Comex gold futures ended lower on Friday dropping for a second straight session after a five-day rally.

The metal is still on track to record its second monthly gain, helped largely by short-covering and technical buying.

Earlier this week, gold hit its highest level since May on safe-haven buying as geopolitical tensions in Syria mounted.

Oil prices retreated sharply on Thursday as a possible strike on Syria remained uncertain, while signs of strong US economic growth sent the dollar to a three-week peak.

US gross domestic product grew at a 2.5 per cent annual rate in the April-June period, more than double the pace clocked in the prior three months.

Economic data from US continues to be strong leading to expectations that Federal Reserve could soon taper its monetary stimulus.

However, any escalation in the Syrian crisis could dent the dollar and increase gold's appeal as a safe-haven.

Comex gold futures are higher in line with our expectations.

As mentioned in the previous update, push above \$1,380 has opened the possibility of further recovery towards \$1,420-1,425 levels being a falling trend line resistance point.

Prices rallied till \$1,432 and then retreated lower on profit-booking and overbought conditions.

Supports are now at \$1,380 followed by \$1,340-45 levels being a rising trendline support point.

Favoured view expects that prices could stay below \$1,405-1,410 area and decline towards \$1,380 or more ideally towards \$1,355-1350 area.

Unexpected rise above \$1,410 would cause doubts about this bearish expectation.

The wave counts need to be reviewed once again. A failed fifth wave move at \$1,800 resulted in a corrective decline to \$1,181 in the form of wave "A".

A possible wave "B" is in progress with targets near \$1,420 or even higher to \$1,485.

This means a wave "C" is expected to follow through which could target \$1,150 or even lower.

Alternatively, from the peak of \$1,920 a corrective decline in the form of "A-B-C" is already over at \$1,181 and a new impulse has begun.

Confirmation of such an impulse will be seen at \$1,535.

RSI is in the neutral zone now indicating that it is neither oversold nor overbought. The averages in MACD have gone above the zero line of the indicator hinting at a possible bullish reversal.

Therefore, look for gold futures to test the supports and then move up again.

Supports are at \$1,380, \$1,355 and 1,325 and resistances are at \$1,410, \$1,435 and \$1,475.

Tomato arrivals may improve



Karnal, Sept 1:

Easy availability of stocks coupled with low quality pulled tomato prices down by Rs 100-500 a quintal.

Around 650 crates (of 25 kg each) of different varieties of tomatoes arrived at the Karnal vegetable market and were quoted at Rs 2,000-3,700.

Around 1,000 crates of varieties such as Himsona and Hybrid were received in the Karnal district.

Vikas Sachdeva, a trade expert, told Business Line that the quality of the arrived crop was not good and that was the prime reason behind the fall in tomato prices.

Superior quality witnessed the major fall as the quality was not satisfactory, he added.

Arrivals are mainly from Kullu, Nashik and Solan, said Vikas Sachdeva.

Out of total arrivals, about five per cent stock was of low quality; around 65 per cent medium quality while about 30 per cent superior quality.

Prices of superior quality dropped by Rs 500 and quoted at Rs 3,500-3,700.

The prices of medium quality produce went down by Rs 200 and quoted at 2,800-3,200 while low quality produce was at Rs 2,000-2,200, Rs 100 down from the previous levels.

According to the market experts, arrivals are likely to improve while the quality may still remain a matter of concern in the coming days.

Traders expect that the market may continue to rule around current levels with marginal fluctuation for the next few days.

Deals to export 5 lakh tonnes soyameal from new crop signed



Chennai, Sept. 1:

Deals to export at least five lakh tonnes of soyameal from the new soyabean crop have been signed so far with expectations of production matching last year's record 115 lakh tonnes boosting hopes.

"We expect to sign soyameal export deals close to 10 lakh tonnes by the middle of September," said Davish Jain, Managing Director of Prestige Group and former President of Central Organisation for Oil Industry and Trade.

According to Rajesh Agrawal, spokesman of Soyabean Processors Association of India, Iran has signed deals to buy at least one lakh tonnes.

Japan has reported signed to buy a similar amount of soyameal, while the rest is head to the Far-East.

Most of the deals have been done at \$515 a tonne f.o.b. This is lower than the average \$571 a tonne realised for soyameal exports in July and \$619 in June.

During April-July period of the current fiscal, 5.16 lakh tonnes of soyameal have been exported against 8.05 lakh tonnes during the same period a year ago.

Last fiscal, 34.39 lakh tonnes of soyameal were exported against 38.29 lakh tonnes during 2011-12.

Oilmeal exports

According to the Solvent Extractors Association of India, exports of oilmeals dropped to 48.46 lakh tonnes last fiscal from 55.99 lakh tonnes the previous year.

During the current fiscal, oilmeals are lower on slower economic growth world-wide.

In the case of soyameal, prices above \$600 a tonne have also proved a dampener.

"We can touch 50 lakh tonnes soyameal exports this year," said Jain.

Demand

“Demand for soyameal is good this year. The price trend is in line with the one prevailing in the global market,” said Agrawal.

“On the Chicago Board of Trade, soyameal for delivery this month was quoted at \$516.10 a tonne.

“India has two advantages in exporting soyameal to the Far-East and West Asia.

“One, freight charges are lower from India due to the shorter distance.

“Two, India can ship in smaller lots compared with the US or other South American origins which insist on bulk exports.

“The current trend is bullish for soyameal going by reports from the US and South America,” said Jain.

Late plantings of soyabean in the US could result in lower yield.

Also, the prevailing hot weather in the US could affect production despite mild showers over the next couple of days offering a little respite.

There is also a threat of frost to soyabean, thus keeping the oilseeds complex firm.

“There may not be additional shipments coming out of the US,” said a trader, pointing to weather forecasts for US Midwest.

“Normally, November-March is a period that supports our oilmeals exports to the maximum.

“The rupee’s fall will offer additional advantage,” said B.V. Mehta, Executive Director of Solvent Extractors Association of India.

The bright prospect for oilmeal exports has driven up soyabean prices to Rs 3,650 a tonne current from Rs 3,425 a month ago.

They are, however, lower than the average price of Rs 4,381 in August last year when prices surged on dry weather in the US affecting the crop.

About 89% Coonoor tea sold

Coonoor, Sept 1:

About 89 per cent of the 12.33 lakh kg offered for Sale No: 35 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions was sold with prices gaining a rupee a kg.

Among CTC teas, Jaykay Enterprises bought it for Rs 177 a kg. Vigneshwar Estate got Rs 173, Hittakkal Estate and Shanthi Supreme Rs 172 each, Crosshill Estate Rs 168 and Deepika Supreme Rs 167. In all, 86 marks got Rs 125.

Chamraj topped the orthodox market at Rs 240. Kodanad got Rs 235, Highfield Estate Rs 222, Havukal and Kairbetta Rs 189 each, Mailoor Estate premium and Kata ry Rs 188 each. Exporters to Pakistan paid Rs 70-97 and to the CIS, Rs 64-94.

Uptrend continues in pepper



Kochi, Sept 1:

Upward trend continued last week also in pepper the futures and the spot, on good demand amid tight availability.

Availability of physical pepper continued to remain tight as sellers were not forthcoming at the current levels.

Processors who had sold to exporters were seen running around to buy but they were said to be not finding sellers, the trade claimed. Last weekend buyers were ready to buy low bulk density pepper at Rs 405-407 a kg and Wayanad (Pulpally and Bathery) pepper at Rs 410 and high range pepper with less moisture content at Rs 415.

spot pepper

Upcountry buyers were also showing interest to cover spot pepper, they said.

On the national exchange, the running contract increased by Rs 400 a quintal to the last traded price of Rs 44,600 while Oct declined marginally by Rs 55 to Rs 44,845.

Total turn over went up by Rs 8 to close at Rs 137.

Total openinterest moved up by 12 tonnes to 58 tonnes last week.

On the spot pepper prices rose by Rs 500 a quintal to close at Rs 40,500 (ungarbled) and Rs 42,500 (garbled) a quintal on good demand amid tight availability.
