

Date : 07.09.2013

THE HINDU

This jaggery is healthy too

Organic jaggery technology park at Mudhol a boost the industry



The Organic Jaggery Technology Park at Mudhol town of Bagalkot district is expected to boost jaggery production in the State.

The setting up of the first-of-its-kind organic jaggery technology park at Mudhol in Bagalkot district is not only expected to boost the jaggery industry, but also help in developing improved varieties of sugarcane.

Built at the cost of Rs. 4.4 crore by the University of Agriculture Sciences-Dharwad under the National Agriculture Development Scheme, the park has the crushing capacity of 40 tonnes a day.

The unit has already got a shot in the arm with WalMart and a Russian businessman placing orders for 40 tonnes of jaggery a day.

Milestone

“This is not less than a milestone in the field of organic jaggery production in the State. The Mudhol park is the only centre that manufactures chemical-free jaggery,” says C.P. Chandrashekar, project leader of the park.

He said only organically cultivated sugarcane was being procured from certified farmers for the production of jaggery.

Mr. Chandrashekar said while Mudhol taluk alone had around 200 certified organic sugarcane farmers, the State had around 1,000 farmers cultivating this cash-rich crop without using chemical fertilizer.

He said owing to extensive use of chemical fertilizer, the fertility of the soil was sharply declining and the yield also had substantially come down.

“The jaggery produced in the State contains high quantity of at least six chemicals with excess sodium content that are harmful for human health in the long run,” Mr. Chandrashekar said.

“The production of organic jaggery requires only three basic ingredients — calcium carbonate, edible oil and wild okra,” he said. The park also produces thick jaggery syrup which could be used as jam for direct consumption as it contained fructose, sucrose and glucose, a powdered form of jaggery besides solid jaggery.

He said anyone could set up a unit with a crushing capacity of 40 tonne a day at the cost of Rs. 1 crore, including land cost, which could earn a profit of at least Rs. 900 a tonne.

Foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2 districts

Livelihood of small cattle farmers might be affected

VACCINATION DRIVE BEGINS EARLY IN 4 DISTRICTS

SCARE IN THE AIR

- ① Non-availability of vaccines might lead to spread of disease **across the State**
- ② Small farmers may not be able to **afford treatment**
- ③ The **air-borne disease** will reduce the animal's intake of food, leading to weakness, adverse impact on milk yield and reproductive organs
- ④ A calf fed by affected mother might **die instantly** of cardiac arrest
- ⑤ Excessive salivation, increase in body temperature, formation of ulcer in gum pads and tongue, lesion in udder, foot and mouth are symptoms



PHOTO: M. SRINATH

Outbreak of foot and mouth disease (FMD) in cattle has been reported in Erode and Kancheepuram districts in the State. The dreaded disease could spread fast and not only reduce the milk yield permanently and affect reproductive organs but also kill the animals.

A visit to a private farm in Sethupattu village near Manimangalam in Kancheepuram district on Thursday revealed that 20 head of cattle at the farm had been affected. Cattle farmers complained that non-availability of vaccines would lead to spread of disease to various parts of the State.

When contacted, Animal Husbandry authorities confirmed that they received reports of FMD from Erode and Kancheepuram districts. However, when blood samples from the cattle were taken for analysis, the results were negative. The department distributed the buffer stock of medicine in Erode, Kancheepuram, Namakkal and Salem, where a vaccination drive has started.

S. Panchapakesan, a researcher in Animal Biotechnology, said since the disease was air-borne it could spread easily. Excessive salivation, increase in body temperature, formation of ulcer in gum pads and tongue, lesion in udder, foot and mouth are some of the symptoms.

The affected cattle would not be able to chew fodder owing to ulcer in tongue. Intake of food would come down drastically, leading to physical weakness. Over a fortnight the health condition would deteriorate drastically.

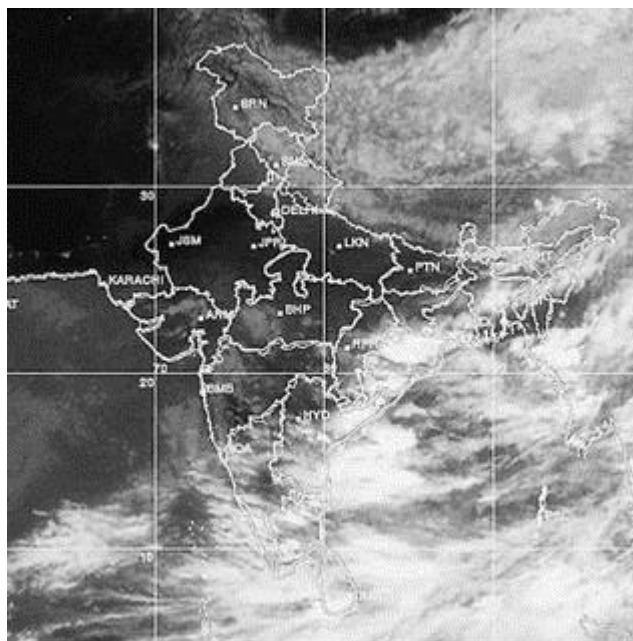
If a calf is fed by its affected mother, chances of the calf dying instantly of cardiac arrest are high.

One of the farm owners pointed out that poor farmer who depends upon one or two animals for survival would struggle to provide treatment.

A Senior Animal Husbandry Department officer said vaccine for FMD is administered twice a year. This year, the department planned to start the second round of vaccination mid-September. The department is getting the required number of vaccines from the Central government, he said.

The first round of ring vaccination for last year was done in April. A total of 99.84 lakh head of cattle were administered the vaccine. In September, the second round covered 86.26 lakh head of cattle.

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on September 6th.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	36	25	0	518
New Delhi (Sfd)	36	25	0	781
Chandigarh	33	22	37	818
Hissar	37	23	0	507
Bhuntar	33	16	0	399
Shimla	23	14	0	780
Jammu	33	21	4	1190
Srinagar	29	15	0	217
Amritsar	35	21	12	759
Patiala	34	23	0	722
Jaipur	37	23	0	661
Udaipur	30	22	0	656
Allahabad	34	25	0	943
Lucknow	35	24	0	707
Varanasi	35	25	0	741
Dehradun	31	21	tr	2705
Agartala	30	25	1	779
Ahmedabad	34	25	0	749
Bangalore	28	20	3	525
Bhubaneshwar	34	26	0	696
Bhopal	31	22	0	1113
Chennai	35	25	0	486

Guwahati	34	25	0	733
Hyderabad	32	22	0	527
Kolkata	35	28	0	1440
Mumbai	32	26	2	2062
Nagpur	34	23	0	1328
Patna	34	26	0	553
Pune	30	20	4	539
Thiruvananthapuram	30	23	8	909
Imphal	25	21	6	837
Shillong	24	15	3	852

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

MAINLY DRY WEATHER

Rain/thundershowers have occurred at a few places over Punjab and at isolated places over Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, west Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Weather was dry over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (2 cm and above) HARYANA: Chandigarh 4, HIMACHAL PRADESH: Baldwara 4 and Paonta 2, PUNJAB: Nawanshahr 6, Malakpur, Samrala and Balachaur, 3 each and Kakewal, Dasuya, Garshankar and Pathankot 2 each, WEST UTTAR PRADESH: Saharanpur 2 and UTTARAKHAND: Dunda 2.

FORECAST FOR REGION VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 08th SEPTEMBER 2013 :Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Weather would be mainly dry over rest of the region.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 08th SEPTEMBER 2013: Mainly clear sky.

Project to boost pepper cultivation

To boost pepper cultivation in Tamil Nadu, the Spices Board has proposed to the State Horticulture Mission a project to increase the area under the crop.

While the total area under cultivation now is 9,300 acres, the proposal aims at touching 9,900 acres over the next four years.

According to board secretary P. M. Sureshkumar, Tamil Nadu is a potential area (high productivity zone) for pepper cultivation.

The State has the scope for improving production and expanding the area under pepper.

Mixed crop

It is cultivated as a mixed crop in coffee and tea plantations in Gudalur, Valparai, Yercaud, Kolli Hills, lower Palani hills, Bodi west hills, Agamalai, Megamalai, Pechipparai, Maramalai, Asambu

Hills, and Pothigai Hills . Apart from tea and coffee plantations, areas under cardamom, coconut, cloves, orange and areca nut cultivation could be tapped to raise pepper as an intercrop. Though the original project period was for five years from 2010-2011 to 2014-2015, it is now revised to four years (2013-14 to 2016-17).

Concern over increase in cotton yarn price

Alarmed by the steep rise in the costs of raw cotton and cotton yarn due to escalation in exports over the last two months triggered by depreciation in value of Indian rupee against US dollar, the Confederation of Indian Weaving Industries has appealed to the Central Government to step in and safeguard handloom, power loom and hosiery industries from closure. Raw cotton and cotton yarn prices must be brought under the Centre's Price Limitation Act for sustenance and survival of the industries.

The Centre must ban export of raw cotton and regulate export of cotton yarn, Federation president M. S. Mathivanan told mediapersons on Friday. Increase in cost of a bale of raw cotton from Rs. 39,000 to Rs. 55,000 in the last two months reflects a 38 per cent rise.

Farmers' grievances meeting held



Transgenders thronged the farmers' grievances meeting held at the Krishnagiri Collectorate on Friday to press their demand for free house site pattas and houses near Uthangarai.— Photo: N.Bashkaran

Stringent action will be taken against Tangedco officials if complaints were received against them from farmers, warned Collector T.P. Rajesh at the farmers' grievances meeting at the Collectorate on Friday.

Addressing the meeting, Mr. Rajesh assured the farmers of good and speedy services by the Tangedco officials.

On encroachments on water bodies, Mr. Rajesh instructed the Assistant Director (Panchayats) to chalk out a plan of action to remove them within a fortnight with the help of the revenue and police authorities.

The Collector also told the officials to redress the grievances relating to name change in patta, and other issues of farmers before this month end.

To a query by G.R. Logabiram, State secretary, Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam, on postponement of the grievances meeting twice, the Collector said that hereafter the grievances meeting would be held regularly on the third Friday of every month.

Mr. Rajesh asked the nationalised banks not to initiate action against the farmers for default of loans obtained for raising crops.

He gave instructions to the authorities to issue house site pattas to five transgenders near Uthangarai. The district administration would consider building houses on the sites through the existing Government schemes, he added.

Rain in Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri

Moderate rain was recorded in the district headquarters of Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri till 8.30 a.m. on Friday.

According to the Revenue Administration, Disaster Management and Mitigation Department, a maximum

rainfall of 17.2 mm was

recorded in Krishnagiri, Pochampalli received 5.4 mm, Nedungal 2.8 mm and Barur

1.6 mm.

The rainfall recorded in Dharmapuri district in mm

was Dharmapuri 29, Palacode 17, Harur 12.3, Pappireddipatti 9.2, Hogenakkal 4.3, Pennagaram 3 and Marandaalli 2.

Water in Cauvery gives betel vine growers a sense of déjà vu

Quality betel leaves are shipped off from farms along the banks of Cauvery in Karur, Kulithalai and Krishnarayapuram

Copious flow of water down the irrigation channels branching off the Cauvery in various parts of Karur district has brought happiness back to the face of betel vine growers, who had to contend with continued drought for almost a year.

Betel vines are mostly raised along the banks of the Cauvery and several major irrigation channels. Quality betel leaves are shipped from the gardens in Nadayanur, Semangi, Velayuthampalayam, Thavuttupalayam, Nerur, and Vangal in Karur region and Mayanur, Krishnarayapuram, Lalapet, Sithalavai, and Kovakulam villages in the Krishnarayapuram region and some pockets in the Kulithalai belt such as Thanneerpalli.

The produce, usually from the tiny holdings extending to not more than an acre or two, are plucked, sorted based on quality and size before being despatched to regular shandies in designated places such as Velayuthampalayam, Paramathi Velur (in Namakkal district), Lalapet, Kulithalai, and Balasamudram (in Tiruchi district) for being auctioned off and forwarded to numerous destinations through lorries.

Ratoon crop

“Being a ratoon crop and sensitive in nature, betel vine gardens withered in the face of prolonged drought lasting almost a year when no water flowed down the Cauvery and groundwater registered a steep fall to depths not seen in a lifetime for many,” says K. Thirupathysamy of Lalapet, who had been a betel vine grower and trader for many years.

It can be safely said that there was not a single betel vine garden in the Karur district that remained unaffected by the prolonged drought. The drought did not just take away fully grown vines but also ensured that the next season’s ratoon stems never lived to see next month.

Merciless heat during the last summer finished off the remaining plants, another long-time betel vine grower C. Palanisamy Gounder of Velayuthampalayam says. Interestingly, the common refrain of the betel vine growers is that they now have enough water to take up betel vine cultivation with adequate hope to see through the first season.

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- *Betel vines are mostly raised along the banks of Cauvery, channels*
 - *Vines are grown on small holdings extending to not more than an acre or two*
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Egg rate

The National Egg Coordination Committee egg rate was Rs. 3.40 on Friday.

TNAU to offer postal MBA

The Directorate of Open and Distance Learning of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University will introduce rural finance and market-based master of business administration (MBA) course and a certificate course on millet.

Addressing the media here on Friday, P. Santhy, Director of Open and Distance Learning, TNAU, said that a special course in sugarcane technology for 200-odd employees of Sakthi Sugars in Odisha is in the offing. "Faculty members from TNAU will impart the course to the employees with the help of Oriya translators," she said.

The Bachelor of Farm Technology (B.F.Tech) course offered by the directorate has been received well. Details about the course can be had by calling 0422-6611229, 9442111058, and 9442111048.

Farmers to get more subsidised pesticides

The State government has allocated Rs.114 cr. for millet cultivation



S. Damodaran, Minister for Agriculture, distributing oil engines to farmers at Mangudi in Tiruvarur district on Friday, R. Kamaraj (right), Food Minister, and Collector S. Nataraj (left), are seen.

The State government has allocated Rs.124 crore for farm mechanisation, said S.Damodaran, Agriculture Minister, here on Friday.

He distributed crop loans, seeds at 50 per cent subsidy and oil engines with Rs.10,000 subsidy each at Primary Agriculture Co-operative Society at Mangudi near Tiruvarur.

He distributed the benefits estimated at Rs.15.4 lakh to 92 persons. He said the State government had allocated Rs.114 crore for cultivation of millets. Farmers' festivals had been conducted in 16,000 villages to create awareness among farmers about various technologies in the field of agriculture.

Later, interacting with farmers at the collectorate, the Minister said the government planned to increase the distribution of subsidised pesticides. "There is a need for pesticides (bio-pesticides). They will be supplied in adequate quantity with subsidy. The Agriculture Department will conduct awareness camps on direct sowing throughout the State," the Minister said.

S.Ranganathan, Secretary, Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association, said that farmers had taken up direct sowing on a large scale in Tiruvarur district. Efficient water management was the need of the hour and the Public Works Department should ensure this, Mr. Ranganathan said.

P.S.Masilamani, a farmer, said that dredging of irrigation canals should be done periodically.

P.R. Pandiyan, a farmer from Kottur, appealed to the Minister to establish a separate central cooperative bank for Tiruvarur.

The Minister saw direct sown field using machinery at Thirukaravasal and manual direct sown field at another village.

R. Kamaraj, Food Minister; Sandeep Saxena, Secretary, Agriculture; and M. Rajendran, Director of Agriculture S. Natarajan, Collector, accompanied the Minister during his visit.

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- *Rs. 124 crore allocated for farm mechanisation*
 - *Farmers seek central cooperative bank for Tiruvarur*
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Rs. 5.31 crore subsidy for paddy cultivators

A subsidy of Rs. 5.31 crore has been earmarked for paddy cultivators who had raised samba in 2012 using pumpset in Tiruvarur district.

In a release here on Thursday, S. Natarajan, Collector, said farmers had resorted to the use of diesel operated pumpsets for raising samba. The State government had sanctioned Rs. 5.31 crore. In the first phase, Rs. 28.26 lakh had been released to 1,139 farmers of Tiruvarur, Nannilam and Kodavasal areas.

The subsidy will be credited to farmers bank accounts through the agricultural cooperative banks, the Collector said. The subsidy for farmers in other areas will be released in course of time.

He gave the subsidy cheque to K. Dravida Selvan, assistant general manager, Kumbakonam Central Cooperative Bank.

Rain revives in plains

Rain seems to have revived after a brief lull but this time the showers seem to benefit the plains. Coimbatore district recorded a total rainfall of 29.90 mm in the last 24 hours that ended at 8.30 a.m. on Friday and the average rainfall stood at 2.49 mm.

Annur recorded the highest of 23.90 mm, Airport 1 mm, Periyanaickenpalayam 2, TNAU 2, and Coimbatore South 1.

Western Ghats in general and the catchments of Parambikulam Aliyar Project recorded nil rainfall.

Storage in the reservoirs under PAP in ft and full reservoir level in brackets:

Sholayar 160.28 (160), Parambikulam 71.90 (72), Thoonakadavu – Peruvaripallam 20.72 (22), Aliyar dam 119.70 (120), Thirumurthi dam 35.47 (60), and Amaravathi dam 85.78 (90).

Keep the pause button on GM pressed



Questioning a technology, especially of the kind that has serious unknowns and lacks clear social benefits, is not an attack on science

Jairam Ramesh, former Environment Minister for India, made the brave decision in 2010 to tell his then apex regulator of genetically modified organisms (GEAC) that it had failed to properly use available science to determine the safety — to human health and the environment — of Bt brinjal, created using genetic modification (GM). His decision followed careful evaluation of the science.

I was involved in Ramesh's review. I read first hand the scientific evidence in my area of expertise provided to the GEAC and its responses. I was heartened to see that his decision was validated by the esteemed scientists that made up the Supreme Court Technical Expert Committee who have advised the Court on the need for better research and better process before continuing to release GM crops into the environment or using them as food.

Creating confusion

G. Padmanaban ("Sow the wind, reap a storm," *The Hindu*, September 2) believes that the events surrounding the evaluation of Bt brinjal and now extending to other kinds of GM plants is

an assault on science. He confuses science with technology. Science is the process of knowledge creation (or discovery) whereas technology is the means of knowledge application. This confusion causes some scientists to defend technologies that are questioned because they perceive questions on the technology as an attack on science. It is not.

There is much knowledge discovered or to be discovered that cannot be applied wisely — at least not now. GM plants are among the technologies that have both serious scientific unknowns and lack a clear social benefit — at least for now.

For over 30 years, GM has been promised to produce plants that will resist the stresses of drought, heavy metals and salt, that will increase yield, reduce the use of toxic pesticides and even fix their own nitrogen. To be fair, some GM crops have reduced the use of some toxic insecticides for a brief period. To be precise, though, none of these promises has been sustainably delivered to farmers.

Why not? Well, it isn't complex regulation holding them back. By the year 2005, over 1,000 applications were approved to field trial stress-tolerant GM plants in the United States alone. None ever progressed out of the testing phase. The explanation for this is likely because stress tolerance is not a solution to the causes of stress. No matter how tolerant you make the plant to drought, using it in soil low in organic matter and unable to hold water will eventually further deplete the soil of moisture and the plant will struggle or die. GM is an attempt to use genetics to overcome the environment. This never works for long. That is why some call GM a distraction from investing in real solutions to the problems faced by real farmers.

A symptom

Herbicide use is increasing in the U.S. since it adopted GM maize (corn), soybeans and cotton. Insecticide use is down by a small bit, but extremely high compared to countries such as France which do not use GM crops. Western Europe's maize yields match or exceed the U.S.' yields using less pesticide. The yields in wheat and oilseed rape are increasing at an even faster rate in Western Europe than in the U.S. and Canada. This indicates a dangerous trend: those countries choosing to innovate in agriculture using GM are demonstrating lower productivity increases and greater dependence on chemical inputs in all crops compared to economically and environmentally comparable countries choosing to not use GM crops.

What is it about investing in GM products that seems to undermine other technologies in agriculture? GM products attract the strictest intellectual property (IP) rights instruments possible in agriculture (e.g., process patents). The use of those instruments concentrates investment and drives out simple but even more effective technologies.

Now every government research centre and public university seeks to compensate for the fall in direct public investment through licensing royalties from IP and the creation of partnerships with the private sector. This necessarily changes the kinds of questions they favour being asked by their researchers, the kind that will be supported by institutional resources or rewarded with promotion. With these policies in place we shouldn't be surprised that every problem looks like it has a GM solution even to researchers who claim to have no entrepreneurial motivations.

Prof. Padmanaban's ambition for a crop that provides all nutritional needs and grows everywhere demonstrates the poverty of the GM approach to hunger and malnourishment. Such a crop would quickly become obsolete as it would also serve as a wonderful meal for every conceivable form of pest. Meanwhile, it would undermine both biological and agricultural diversity as it became a weed in its own right.

Instead of that approach, supporting communities with education on nutrition and farmers with technologies that build up their soils, manage pests with little or no application of pesticide and manufactured fertilizers gives them the means and independence to grow a variety of crops and livestock to meet their dietary needs and sell their surplus in local markets.

This investment in agriculture is not as good at making intellectual property, but better for growing food. To properly support India's mainly small holder farming requires removing the penalties and incentives on the public scientist to develop primarily technologies that bring direct revenue to their institutions. Instead, invest in them with public money and measure their success by the yields of farmers, the reduction of pesticides and fertilizer they use, and the increase in their wealth and health.

No missed opportunities

India is not missing out on the benefits of GM. So far, there haven't been any proven to exist, or proven to be sustainable. GM crops are not designed to increase intrinsic yield and the largest scale and longest term studies bear out that they don't yield more. Meanwhile, the cost of GM seeds is the fastest growing expense for U.S. farmers who are simultaneously suffering from weeds resistant to the herbicides excessively used on GM crops and pests resistant to the insecticides over-used in Bt crops. That likely would be India's experience had it commercialised Bt brinjal which was developed with the least effective form of Bt for the target pest.

In addition, the safety issue still lingers over these products. It shouldn't. The science needed to establish their safety exists and is affordable but it must be applied dispassionately and transparently. That is all Jairam Ramesh asked.

Claiming that GM crops are demonstrated safe by the absence of specific health claims from Americans is glib. There are no validated health surveillance programmes in the U.S. which could both detect and diagnose the cause of the most likely manifestations of harm if they do exist.

Meanwhile, more research studies accumulate with evidence of adverse effects, some quite serious. These studies require replication, but they run into roadblocks or fail to find new funding. Most often these studies report low level health effects using animal feeding studies, so it is not clear whether the effect would be the same, more or less in humans and more or less likely to be caused using GM plants cooked and processed, as humans eat them, rather than raw or processed the way they are provided to test animals.

Hunger, pestilence, and economic failure are the images of fear increasingly being used to drive acceptance of GM crops. Ignorance, anti-science, ideology and hypocrisy are the insults used to counter questions about the safety of GM crops coming from scientists and the public. What is right for India's agriculture is too important a question to leave to fear and insult to decide. I think that both Ramesh and the scientists of the Technical Expert Committee knew this when they asked India to pause on the use of GM products. Pause so that all voices can be heard. Reflect on what the problems are and whether technologies solve them or mask them for a time, or even make them worse later.

(Professor Jack A. Heinemann is Director, Centre for Integrated Research in Biosafety, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand)

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

Crop condition normal despite deficient rain

Even as eight districts have received deficient rainfall, the overall crop condition in the State is reported to be normal. Jagatsinghpur district, which had received nearly 43 per cent less rainfall than the normal till the end of August, has reported more than 95 per cent crop achievement.

According to the crop weather watch report, the coastal district has been placed under severe deficient category receiving 492 mm rainfall against normal rainfall of 858 mm. However, the current spell of sporadic rain due to the low pressure over Bay of Bengal in the first three days of the week improved the crop condition in highland. Claiming that the crop condition in the district is comparatively better, District Agriculture Officer (DAO) of Jagatsinghpur Nilamani Das told this paper that crop damage may not be ruled out if there will be a prolonged dry spell.

The district has kharif crop coverage in over 1.04 lakh hectares while 80 per cent area is under assured irrigation. Three blocks of Nuagaon, Balikuda and Ersama are susceptible to crop damage in case of a dry spell, he said. Das, however, said transplantation of paddy crop is almost over in the district.

According to Agriculture Department, the situation is grim in Cuttack district which received 30 per cent less than normal rainfall. The district has received 596 mm rainfall as against normal 857 mm by the end of August.

Sources in the Cuttack district agriculture office said transplantation of paddy crop was considerably delayed in nine blocks due to less rainfall in August. The district recorded 70 per cent deficient rainfall in August with only 100 mm as against normal rainfall of 340 mm.

The other districts which have received deficient rainfall (-19% to -39%) include Bargarh, Bhadrak, Boudh, Jajpur, Jharsuguda and Sambalpur.

The crop weather watch report said six blocks have received scanty rainfall (more than -59%). Two blocks of Cuttack district, one each in Balasore, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara and Puri are under scanty rainfall category.

While 14 districts of the State have received normal rainfall, eight districts have reported excess rainfall. As per the agriculture parameter, less or excess rainfall of 19 per cent is considered to be normal.

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Rain: 0
Humidity: 84
Wind: normal

Saturday, Sep 7

Max | Min
34° | 25°

Sunrise: 05:57
Sunset: 06:16
Barometer: 1007.0

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Sunday, Sep 8

Max | Min
34° | 25°

Extended Forecast for a week

Monday Sep 9	Tuesday Sep 10	Wednesday Sep 11	Thursday Sep 12	Friday Sep 13
34° 25° Cloudy	34° 24° Overcast	34° 25° Overcast	34° 25° Overcast	33° 26° Overcast

Airport Weather

 Chennai

Rain: 0 Sunrise: 05:57
Humidity: 84 Sunset: 06:16
Wind: normal Barometer: 1007.0



THE ECONOMIC TIMES

After cheering all, monsoon begins retreat



The retreat of the monsoon is almost on schedule, unlike many years in the past when it started withdrawing only in the last week of September.

NEW DELHI|PUNE: Monsoon clouds are poised to start retreating from northern India after cheering farmers with heavy and evenly spread showers that have set the stage for bumper harvests and kindled hopes for consumer goods and automobiles companies which see rural wealth as the only catalyst for sales growth.

Heavy rainfall has also filled up reservoirs, many to the brim or unprecedented levels, setting the stage for a good crop in the next season also and ruling out water scarcity in most parts of the country later in the year.

While southern India will continue to be soaked by the monsoon, which has so far delivered 8% more rainfall than normal, Rajasthan and adjoining areas are seeing conditions that signal the retreat of the southwest monsoon from next week, the India Meteorological department said.

"From September 9 onwards, we see the withdrawal of monsoon," said Laxman Singh Rathore, director general, India Meteorological Department.

Last Year, the monsoon started withdrawing from Rajasthan, parts of Punjab, Haryana and Gujarat from September 24th. Weather scientists said the June-September season is likely to

end with normal rainfall throughout the country, barring northeastern India, which is agriculturally not very significant. Indian farmers have expanded the area under cultivation by 6% this year, and they expect better yields and bumper harvests, setting the stage for higher rural spending in the festive season.

The retreat of the monsoon is almost on schedule, unlike many years in the past when it started withdrawing only in the last week of September. In the past seven years, it has lingered on in northern India until as late as September 29th in 2008, rather than on the normal period of September 1.

"It is fine and normal if monsoon withdraw early. By September 15, the monsoon will totally withdraw from Saurashtra, Bhuj, large parts of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan," said Rathore. Adding that he perceived it well within the normal time. The southwest monsoon of 2013 started its journey on June 1 and occupied the country one month early by June 15.

However, Rathore said that the withdrawal has come earlier than what they expected. "It is not a cause of worry, but yes that of concern. For early sown crop, it should not be a problem, but for late sown crop it might impact the grain size," he said.

Of the three conditions that mark the beginning of the withdrawal process, two have been established, namely no rainfall activity for 5 continuous days in western Rajasthan and no moisture in the air. The weather scientists are waiting for clear establishment of the third condition, that of setting of anti-cyclonic circulation over western Rajasthan in low troposphere (1.5 km). The complete withdrawal of the monsoon from the country takes place after October 1.

Monsoon rains to start withdrawal from September 9



Monsoon is likely to start withdrawing from the north-western states from Sept. 9, slightly ahead of the normal schedule, after delivering above-average rains.

NEW DELHI: Monsoon is likely to start withdrawing from the north-western states from Sept. 9, slightly ahead of the normal schedule, after delivering above-average rains, two weather department officials said on Friday.

Monsoon rains usually start retreating from the country's west by mid-September. Summer crops do not need heavy rain at this stage of growth, but just sporadic downpours to aid the maturing process.

"We are expecting the withdrawal of monsoon rains to start from Rajasthan and adjoining north-west India around early next week," said B.P. Yadav, director at India Meteorological Department.

The country has so far received 8 percent more rainfall than average since the beginning of the four-month season on June 1, allowing farmers to increase acreage.

The monsoon, crucial for the 55 percent of farmland that does not have irrigation, brought the heaviest rains in nearly two decades during its first half this year, fanning hopes for bumper harvests.

Sugar co-operatives may not get bank loans for cane crushing



September is crucial for cane's growth as weather conditions in this month will decide the final tonnage when cane is crushed.

PUNE: The number of sugar co-operatives participating in the 2013-14 crushing season in Maharashtra, the top sugar producer, is likely to decline due to financial difficulties.

A considerable number of mills may find it tough to get bank loans due to their negative net worth caused by low offtake and subdued sugar prices for most part of 2012-13. In a meeting on Tuesday, the state government decided to begin crushing operations from November 1.

The sugar year is from October 1 to September 30. September is crucial for cane's growth as weather conditions in this month will decide the final tonnage when cane is crushed.

The state has estimated that sugar mills in the state will crush 640 lakh tonne cane and produce 73 lakh tonne sugar. Vijaysinha Mohite Patil, chairman, Maharashtra State Co-operative Sugar Factories Federation, said the Federation has requested the government to stand guarantee for bank loans given to sugar co-ops.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Boost to farmers: Chhattisgarh govt launches organic mission

RAIPUR: In a bid to boost organic farming in state, Chhattisgarh government, on Friday, launched an 'organic farming mission' in districts of Bastar, Bilaspur and Ambikapur. Under the mission, the government would provide infrastructure, certification and knowledge to farmers, who opt for organic farming.

Speaking on the occasion, state agriculture minister, Chandrashekhar Sahu, said the mission would benefit farmers, who diversify to fertilizer-free farming.

He said since the demand of organic food was increasing in markets outside the state, the department would provide required certification to enable farmers to get the best price for their produce.

Agriculture university vice-chancellor Dr SK Patil, said, besides the farmers, the mission would promote organic farming, which in turn would benefit even the consumers. "It would also lessen pressures on land, and water resources and ecology," he said.

"Organic farming is a default practice in many districts of the state, due to low usage of fertilizers and pesticides by farmers, because of favourable agro-climatic conditions and availability of rich natural resources," said society for education and other welfare activities, CEO, Pradeep Sharma adding that now they will aware about the parameters of organic farming and will be provided with infrastructure for it. He said organic farming increases productivity by more than 50%.

On this occasion, a book on Chhattisgarh state organic farming mission, titled 'Naye Yug k liye Naya Kadam' written by minister Chandrashekhar Sahu was also released.

DECCAN Chronicle

Greenpeace announces global innovation challenge for sustainable irrigation solution for rural India



A traditional diesel powered irrigation pump. Diesel is expensive and it pollutes the environment.

Calling on people across the world to develop a sustainable solution for irrigation in rural India, Greenpeace announces its innovation challenge “A Watershed Moment in India” (<http://greenpeacechallenge.org/>).

The challenge went live September 3rd, 2013. This challenge series is an open platform to design an innovative renewable energy pump kit which will meet the needs of millions of small farmers, cutting down irrigation costs and also encouraging the uptake of micro-irrigation methods.

In the absence of grid connected electricity millions of small farmers depend on dieselpowered irrigation pumps to water their crops. Diesel is a dirty fuel and with rising prices it is becoming

uneconomical for the farmers. Thus it has become essential to switch to renewable energy powered irrigation pumps.

But such pumps have remained marginal. There is currently no pump available on the market that is tailored specifically to the needs of the small farmer which can be adopted widely, with an unsubsidized price low enough to compete with the diesel pumps.

Manish Ram, Energy Campaigner with Greenpeace India said, “Through this challenge we aim to develop a renewable energy irrigation solution which is not only sustainable but also economically viable. The challenge being global will give an opportunity to the participants to share their ideas and discuss them with people across the world.”



Greenpeace is mobilizing passionate, innovative people to focus their energy on solving a tightly targeted problem. The challenge brief is simple: design a renewably powered pump that fits into the lifestyle and budget of India’s small-scale farmers.

Ingo Boltz, Manager, Greenpeace Innovation Lab said, “This competition isn’t just about winning. The entire process is transparent. As soon as a design is submitted it’s open to the public and other entrants to review. Participants get feedback from experts in the field and the opportunity to iterate on their design in a real-world scenario, a valuable experience in addition to the prize money and a chance to work with Greenpeace and its partners to prototype their concept in farmer’s fields in India.”

The challenge will run for 10 weeks in total starting September 3rd and focus on water irrigation in India. Participants will get an amazing opportunity to work with innovators across the world and also a chance to win the prize money.

The submissions will be reviewed by the jury which comprises of experts from the development and renewable energy sector. The last date for submission is November 15th, 2013.

Post this the community and the expert jury will vote for the winning submission. The total prize money for various categories is 30,000 Euros or 26 lakh Indian rupees*.

The prize money will help the winners to transform their idea into a business reality.

THE HINDU Business Line

Falling prices



Higher arrivals: A trader arranging apples at Delhi's Keshopur Mandi on Friday. Prices of Himachal apples have crashed by over 20 per cent on higher arrivals in the State. Himachal is witnessing a good harvest with production estimated at 3.5 crore boxes of 20 kg each. With fresh arrivals expected from Kashmir, the prices are expected to come under pressure in the days ahead. — Kamal Narang

Vietnam woos Indian industry with surplus rubber

Vietnam has invited investments from the Indian rubber industry and benefit from the vibrant sector in that country.

Currently, Vietnam consumes only 15 per cent of the over 9,00,000 tonnes produced in the country.

A delegation of Vietnam Rubber Association led by its Chairman Tran Ngoc Thuan visited the country recently and held talks with members of the All-India Rubber Industries Association.

India is one of the largest importers of Vietnam rubber. In fact, Vietnam has emerged as the second largest exporter of rubber to India after Indonesia.

Vietnam's rubber imports to India increased to 51,273.13 tonnes in 2012-13 from 28,113.95 tonnes in 2011 -12, up 82.38 per cent.

Vietnam is fast emerging as a leading producer of natural rubber. The productivity in Vietnam at 1,707 kg/hectare is only second to India's top ranking productivity of 1,823 kg/ha and is much higher than average of 1,442 kg/ha average in ANRPC countries.

According to Niraj Thakkar, President of AIRIA, Vietnam has planned a major fillip to its domestic rubber manufacturing and targeted to produce 1.2 million tonnes and increase domestic consumption from the current 15 per cent to 40 per cent.

Vietnam has asked for strengthening business ties with the Indian rubber industry and help scale up rubber manufacturing, he said.

The Vietnam Rubber Group has developed many industrial parks and the Chairman invited Indian rubber products manufacturers to Vietnam for closer ties in setting up rubber manufacturing industry and benefit from the ample natural rubber production.

“We are working out the feasibility of a delegation to Vietnam soon,” Thakkar said.

According to the Government, in view of rising Indian private sector investments and growing trade, bilateral trade between India and Vietnam has grown to \$6.1 billion in 2012-13 and is likely to cross the target of \$7 billion by 2015.

Coonoor tea turnover down 12%

The turnover of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auction ending on Friday dropped by 11.85 per cent over the previous week, reveals our analysis of the market reports. This has happened because of a lower volume sold when prices rose. On an average, each kg fetched Rs 87.02 this week against Rs 86.72 last week. With asking prices rising, the purchasers showed hesitation in bids. Only 77.68 per cent of the offer was sold this week against 88.65 per cent last week. In all, 9.40 lakh kg was sold against 10.70 lakh kg last week. Consequently, the turnover dropped to Rs 8.18 crore from Rs 9.28 crore. This shows a decline of Rs 1.10 crore or 11.85 per cent in just one week.

Mixed trend in spot rubber

Physical rubber prices were mixed on Friday. The market continued to lack quantity buyers or sellers in the local trading houses despite a firm closing on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

Major counters were neutral, while the remaining grades fluctuated within a narrow range amidst scattered transactions. Overall volumes were dull.

Sheet rubber finished unchanged at Rs 186 a kg for the sixth consecutive day, according to traders. The grade firmed up at Rs 186.50 (Rs 186) at Kottayam and Kochi, as reported by the Rubber Board.

September futures improved to Rs 187.30 (Rs 186.48), October to Rs 186.62 (Rs 185.90) and November to Rs 187.69 (Rs 187.05) while the December futures slipped to Rs 189.13 (Rs 189.21) on the NMCE.

RSS 3 (spot) declined to Rs 178.19 (Rs 178.78) at Bangkok. September futures closed at ¥ 270.5 (Rs 177.31) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates (Rs/kg) were: RSS-4: 186 (186); RSS-5: 182.50 (182.50); Ungraded: 175 (176); ISNR 20: 170 (169) and Latex 60%: 135.50 (138).

Food Bill effect: Dutch firms eye India for post-harvest solutions

The Netherlands is eyeing the Indian market for post-harvest technology and distribution solutions as the country gets ready to implement the Food Security legislation that promises cheap food to the poor.

Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, Netherlands, Lilianne Ploumen, who was in India this week leading a delegation of representatives from 39 Dutch companies, said her country is looking at “everything” connected with the Food Bill. “I think Dutch entrepreneurs can play a significant role in making sure that the post harvest process can be improved and wastage is minimised,” the Minister told *Business Line*.

In India, wastage is largely connected with storage, lack of infrastructure and lack of facilities, the minister said.

“We can provide both technological expertise as well as our expertise in terms of how to organise distribution. I do think that there is a lot we can offer to India,” she said. Specialised companies in fields such as harvest optimisation, preservation, cold storage and transportation and optimal food processing were part of the minister’s delegation. “We have niche companies here that have made their mark in Netherlands. We have had a lot of fruitful meeting with Indian companies,” the Minister said. Ploumen, who met Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma during her visit, said both the countries saw many opportunities for growth in bilateral trade and have agreed to come up with a more formal framework of bilateral relations. “We have decided to come up with a Government to Government committee to deal with economic issues and to see how to expand the agenda for the meeting,” the Minister said.

India's exports to the Netherlands in 2012-13 grew at 15.44 per cent to \$10.56 billion whereas imports fell 8.16 per cent to \$2.45 billion. The country is the sixth largest investor in terms of FDI inflows into India.

Dutch companies dealing with food security consultancy that were part of the delegation include ATS Koudetechniek, Ecorys, Kadaster and Schouten Europe. The delegation also had a host of companies dealing with transportation and infrastructure such as cold storage and irrigation such as Bosman, Broekman Logistics and Deltares - Soil and Groundwater Systems.

After showering its bounty, monsoon set to withdraw from next week

The South-West Monsoon, which brought excess rain in most parts of the country, is expected to withdraw, starting from west Rajasthan next week.

"The conditions are becoming favourable for commencement of withdrawal of the South-West monsoon from west Rajasthan and adjoining areas of North-West India around September 9," the India Meteorological Department said. The cumulative rainfall since the onset of monsoon till September 4 was about eight per cent more across the country. Of the 36 meteorological sub-divisions, the rainfall has been in excess over 11 and normal over 19 sub-divisions. Six sub-divisions – mainly in the eastern and north eastern parts of the country — have received deficient rains for the season so far. However, in the past week, 22 per cent excess rainfall have made up for the shortfall in the eastern and north eastern parts. Excess rains this year have helped improve the storage position in reservoirs across the country. The live storage levels in 85 important reservoirs for the week ended September 5 was 127.90 billion cubic meters or 83 per cent of the storage capacity at full reservoir levels. The current year's storage is nearly 129 per cent of last year's storage and 126 per cent of the average of last 10 years.

Meanwhile, kharif sowing is about 96 per cent the normal kharif area of 1,068.10 lakh ha.

Transplanting of rice still continues in Orissa and Bihar. It is expected to continue for a couple of more weeks.

Planting of pulses, oilseeds, cotton and coarse cereals is almost complete. In fact, the total acreage under oilseeds has exceeded the normal area and stood at an all-time high of 191.64 ha. This was mainly on account of a record area under soyabean, while the acreage in groundnut and sunflower has exceeded last year's levels. Similarly, coarse cereals, such as maize and pulses, mainly arhar or tur, have registered a record coverage of 80.74 lakh ha and 38.59 lakh ha, respectively.

Govt to set up panel to hunt for head of NDDB

After 15 years, the Government will start looking for a person to head the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB). Incumbent chairperson Amrita Patel's term will end in November this year.

Official sources said the 70-year-old Patel, who is currently in her third stint at the helm of the apex dairy policy-making body, has expressed her willingness not to continue for another term.

Patel was first appointed as Chairperson of NDDB in 1998 at the age of 55 by her erstwhile mentor and predecessor, Verghese Kurien, the "Milk Man of India".

She was subsequently re-nominated in 2003 and 2008 to the top slot of NDDB.

Officials said the Government was in the process of forming a search committee under Cabinet Secretary Ajit Kumar Seth to short-list names for the post.

The Department of Personnel and Training is expected to issue an order on the formation of the search committee, official sources said. Other members in the panel include Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries Secretary Anup Kumar Thakur and Agriculture Secretary Ashish Bahuguna.

Among the potential contenders for NDDB's top slot are 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 Co-operative Milk Producers' Union (Amul) in other parts of the country.

National dairy plan

Currently, NDDB is implementing the Government's National Dairy Plan in 14 States.

The World Bank-funded dairy plan seeks to augment milk production in the country by improving productivity of milch animals and provide rural milk producers greater access to the organised milk processing sector.

Such a move is expected to help plug the projected shortfall in milk production by 2020.

The demand for milk is projected to rise seven per cent by 2020, while production is growing at four per cent, resulting in an estimated shortfall of three per cent.

Milk demand is set to touch 200 million tonnes by 2020, up from 133 million tonnes in 2012-13.

New crop arrivals could pound moong

Pulse seeds and pulses ruled sluggish in Indore mandis on weak offtake. Slack demand has dragged masoor prices in the past few days by Rs 250 with prices of masoor (bold) in Indore mandis on Friday being quoted at Rs 4,250-4,300 a quintal. Similarly, masoor (medium) in the past one week has declined by Rs 100 to Rs 4,000-4,100.

Besides weak demand, strengthening of rupee has also added to the bearish sentiment in masoor. Masoor dal (medium) was at Rs 5,100-5,200, while masoor dal (bold) ruled at Rs 5,300-5,600.

Rise in demand lifted moong by Rs 100 with moong (bold) being quoted at Rs 4,500-4,700, while moong (medium) ruled at Rs 4,000.

As arrival of new crop is set to rise in the coming days, the future for moong appears bearish, said a trader.

Moong dal (medium) was being quoted at Rs 5,400 , moong dal (bold) ruled at Rs 5,600-5,700, while moong mongar ruled at Rs 6,400-6,500.

Urad and its dal ruled firm on weak arrival and subdued demand. On Friday, urad (bold) ruled at Rs 3,650-3,700 , while urad (medium) ruled at Rs 3,000-3,100. Urad dal has also declined by Rs 200-300 on sluggish demand with urad dal (medium) being quoted at Rs 4,200-4,300, urad dal (bold) at Rs 4,400-4,600, while urad mongar ruled at Rs 4,800-5,200 respectively.

Urad (bold) was at Rs 3,850-3,900, while urad (medium) ruled at Rs 3,200-3,300. Urad dal (average) was being quoted at Rs 4,400-4,700 , urad dal (bold) at Rs 4,800-4,900, while urad mongar ruled at Rs 5,200-5,400 a quintal respectively.

Sugar mills keen to ease inventory burden

Sugar prices ruled steady on Friday as producers continued selling surplus stocks amid routine demand. The Vashi market is carrying ample stocks forcing stockists to keep away from taking bulk buying risk.

Prices in spot, naka and mill level were unchanged with minor changes. The futures market also showed thin volatility. Sources said that the market was range-bound at Vashi, while in the futures market, prices settled lower. Prices have dropped by Rs 20 a quintal over the last three days.

As the new crushing season is only a month away, producers are keen to ease their inventory burden. Demand from eastern States has got diverted to Karnataka forcing Maharashtra's mills to depend on local markets.

Arrivals in the Vashi market were 62-63 truckloads (100 bags each) while local dispatches were 61-62 loads. On Thursday, 15-16 mills offered tenders and sold about 38,000-40,000 bags at Rs 2,880-2,960 (Rs 2,880-2,960) for S-grade and Rs 2,990-3,060 (Rs 2,990-3,060) for M-grade.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were:

S-grade Rs 3,026-3,141 (Rs 3,026-3,140) and M-grade Rs 3,162-3,302 (Rs 3,132-3,312). Naka delivery rates were: S-grade Rs 2,965-3,040 (Rs 2,965-3,040) and M-grade Rs 3,090-3,220 (Rs 3,090-3,220).

Uttar Pradesh rates were Lakhimpur Rs 3,300 and Muzzafarnagar Rs 3,300.

No export deals for pepper as rupee gains

Pepper futures moved up on buying interest, while the spot slipped on selling pressure.

More people, mainly from the plains of Kerala, were found to be liquidating as prices crossed Rs 405-a-kg-mark, on the one hand, and the ensuing Onam festival, on the other hand. To meet the expenses for the Onam many resorted to sell, market sources told *Business Line*.

Pepper from the plains was being sold at Rs 410-412 while that from the Wayanad at Rs 415 and from the high ranges at Rs 417- 418. High bulk density Rajkumari pepper was offered at Rs 420 .

Buyers from West Asia, mainly from Dubai and Muscat which have become hubs for pepper trade, of late, were covering from all the origins which were found to be competitive. Indian exporters having facilities in West Asia were buying from Karnataka and Kerala, mainly from the plains.

West Asian dealers are shipping the material to those markets in Africa and other regions which are not catered to by Indian exporters directly due to currency issues, market sources told *Business Line*.

Exporters who had earlier commitments to other overseas markets appeared to have covered and hence, they were not seen active today, they said.

On the spot, 42 tonnes of farm grade pepper arrived and 45 tonnes of the material were traded. Strengthening of the rupee has raised the Indian parity and hence no fresh orders were forthcoming from overseas markets, they said.

On the NMCE, September and October contracts increased by Rs 169 and Rs 272 respectively to Rs 44,700 and Rs 45,101 a quintal.

Total open interest moved up by two tonnes to 50 tonnes. Total turn over decreased by 18 tonnes to 15 tonnes.

Spot prices declined by Rs 100 a kg on good selling pressure to Rs 40,900 (ungarbled) and Rs 42,900 (garbled) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market rose to \$6,900 (c&f) Europe and \$7,150 a tonne (c&f) for the US and are found to be competitive. Prices of other origins (\$/tonne): Vietnam Asta at 7,100-7,150 (fob); 550 GL FAQ at 6,800 (fob). Brazil Asta was at 6,700 (fob) Oct/Nov shipments while B1 was at 6,650 (f.o.b) and B2 at 6,400(fob). Lampong 550 GL was quoted at 7,150 (f.o.b) and Faq 500 GL at 6,600 (f.o.b) both Sep shipment.

Turmeric trade clueless on lack of N. India orders

The turmeric trade is in a tizzy, unable to fathom the reason for not receiving the much-expected orders from North India. Lack of orders kept prices flat on Friday.

“We are confused over the dormancy of turmeric price for over a month. This is the first time no change in price is being experienced by traders. Usually, during this period prices will go up, but this year it is flat at Rs 5,800-6,000 a quintal. This is also the first time that very low offer is received by the traders from merchants of North India,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

During the corresponding period last year, the spice was sold at Rs 6,600-6,900 and the hybrid variety at Rs 7,000. Daily about 6,000 bags of turmeric arrived for sale and 60 per cent were sold. This year, prices are low and also arrivals are 3,500 bags with only 50 per cent being sold. This is due to poor demand received from North India. At Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety sold at Rs 3,836-5,811, the root variety at Rs 3,721-5,211.

Salem Hybrid Crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,711-6,516 and the root variety Rs 4,806-5,604. Of the 851 bags that arrived, 332 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety fetched Rs 5,011-5,955 and the root variety Rs 4,793-5,564. Of the 346 bags on offer, 242 were traded.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,789-5,899 and the root variety Rs 4,679-5,496. Of the 743 bags put up for sale, 636 found takers.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,069-5,959, the root variety Rs 4,400-5,389. All the 157 bags were sold.

Range-bound trading likely in wheat futures

A range-bound to weak movement is likely in wheat futures, while dura wheat in the physical market may continue to rule flat in the coming days, according to market experts.

A positive trend was witnessed on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange on Friday. Wheat for September delivery improved by Rs 5 to 1,580 a quintal with an open interest of 9,530 lots. October contracts went up by Rs 4 and traded at Rs 1,599.

In the spot market, wheat spot prices on the exchange traded at Rs 1,550.

In the physical market, dura wheat continued to rule flat and quoted at Rs 1,450-1,455. Around 1,000 bags of wheat arrived and stocks were directly offloaded at the mills. Mill delivery was at Rs 1,450 while delivery at the chakki was at Rs 1,455.

Radhey Shyam, a commodity expert, told *Business Line* that since demand matched supply, prices were unchanged.

In the absence of any major market moving factors, prices have been ruling steady since last weekend and may continue to rule around current levels for the next few days, too, he said.

Flour Prices

Following steady domestic demand, flour continued to rule flat and quoted at Rs 1,710-20. Similarly, Chokar ruled flat and sold at Rs 1,150-1,200.

Business Standard

MPs concerned over plight of farmers in flood-hit areas

Harsimrat Kaur (SAD), who had given a request for an Adjournment Motion to discuss the floods in Punjab, said the Centre should give compensation to farmers whose crops have been destroyed

Concern was voiced in Lok Sabha over plight of farmers in flood-hit areas of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab and other states, and members demanded compensation from the Centre for loss of crops.

Harsimrat Kaur (SAD), who had given a request for an Adjournment Motion to discuss the floods in Punjab, said the Centre should give compensation to farmers whose crops have been destroyed.

"I regret to say that the government is running the House just to get Bills passed. It only makes a pretence of being concerned about farmers. Domestic animals have perished and crops destroyed. People are fighting hunger and deprivation," Kaur said, adding the compensation given by the Centre is meagre.

SAD members walked into the Well and raised slogans. Kaur later walked up to Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar and was seen discussing the matter with him.

Neeraj Shekhar (SP) said floods in Eastern UP and Bihar have reached the homes and fields of farmers. "I request the Centre to join the state government in giving compensation to farmers. More than one lakh hectare have been affected," he said.

Speaker Meira Kumar said the House is saddened by the plight of farmers and there will be a discussion in the House.

Raising other issues related to farmers, Saidul Haque (CPI-M) said some Sikh families were given barren land in Kutch area of Gujarat after Independence to settle down. However, today when the area has become fertile the Gujarat government is trying to sell it to corporate houses. BJP members were on their feet in protest.

Nripendra Nath Roy (FIPB) said jute farmers are getting only Rs 80 per quintal and the government is behaving as if it is giving alms to farmers.

Billionaire acres

Once the preferred residence of maharajas and the British elite, Alipore today is the leafy abode of Kolkata's biggest business families. The author walks through the city's "royal" estate

The Agri Horticulture Society of India (AHSI), commonly known as Horticulture Garden, is home to some rare trees - Buddha's coconut, White Bottle Brush, Tree of Heaven, to name a few. Yet, the most picturesque part of the block is in the south western fringes. There a stepped hillock and a waterfall watch over the daily rituals of the elite, for AHSI in South Kolkata's Alipore locality is the preferred jogging venue for several of the city's industrialists.

AHSI, of course, is also infamous for crime. In 1999, S B Ganguly, chairman of Exide, was abducted during his morning walk near AHSI. In 2011, SK Birla, chairman emeritus of the SK Birla Group, was chased by a group of bikers during his morning routine. "I don't know if I was really chased or it was my imagination, but I was scared," recalls Birla. Today, the wealthy denizens run with a clutch of security guards for fear of stalkers and kidnapers. To people with ulterior motives, the conglomeration of palatial abodes that fence the Alipore neighbourhood must be an attraction, for here live people like Sanjiv Goenka (chairman, R P Sanjiv Goenka group), H M Bangur (managing director, Shree Cement), M K Jalan (chairman, Keventer and MKJ Groups), Hemant Kanoria (chairman & managing director, SREI Infrastructure Finance), Karan Paul (chairman, Apeejay Surrendra Group), Vishambhar Saran (chairman, Visa Steel), Jagmohan Dalmiya (interim BCCI president) and Gaurav Swarup (managing director, Paharpur Cooling Towers). Steel baron L N Mittal spent his childhood in one of the bungalows here.

Alipore is steeped in residential history. In 1772, when Warren Hastings proclaimed Calcutta as the capital of British India, Marwaris, the affluent trading community from Rajasthan, migrated to the city in large numbers, sensing business opportunities. The community acquired large tracts of land by the Ganga river to set up mills. "The Marwaris who came to Kolkata in the 19th century lived in north Kolkata localities like Burabazar, Central Avenue and Shyambazar," says octogenarian B D Sureka, chairman, Sureka Group, whose forefathers came to the city around 1900. "By the beginning of the 1900s, these areas had become very congested and the Marwaris began to move south to Ballygunge and Alipore. And once the Goenkas purchased land in Alipore, others followed suit."

Before the Marwaris and the British elite, Alipore was home to aristocratic Bengali families like those of the maharajas of Cooch Behar, Burdwan and Santosh. The present generation of Burdwan royalty still owns substantial properties in Alipore. The British came next. Alipore was lined with bungalows that served as residences of tea and jute estate managers. Belvedere Estate, 250 years old and now the National Library, was once the residence of Warren Hastings and of later lieutenant governors of Bengal. It is believed that the manor was given to Hastings by Mir Jafar, the last Nawab of Bengal, in the 1760s. A short distance from Belvedere Road is Bangur Mansion on New Road, owned by Shree Cement's Bangur. The house, spread across 50,000 square feet, was purchased by Bangur for around Rs 15 crore from one Saxena family, who in turn had bought it from some Khemkas, who had purchased it from the maharaja of Burdwan. The house has nine bedrooms, seven living rooms, a home theatre, gymnasium and a temple with a silver door, with a century-year-old idol of Lord Venkatesh. "Two years ago, a Britisher and his wife came to see how my house has changed. He seemed to have spent his childhood here," says Bangur. Half a kilometre away from Bangur Mansion is the grander mansion of S K Birla, son of L N Birla. The house, purchased by the Birlas in 1943, once served as a base camp for American soldiers who were supporting the Chinese against the Japanese during World War II in an operation called Flying the Hump. "Our house was requisitioned by the Americans, and when they handed it back to us in 1946, it was not in a good shape. Maps and plans for Flying the Hump were scrawled on the walls," recalls Birla. Another well-known address is Shriram Gardens on Belvedere Road. The penthouse in the high-rise belongs to Jalan, chairman of Keventer and MKJ Groups. Its rooftop garden is one of the first in Kolkata, claims Jalan. Neighbours of Jalan include the Goenkas and Bajorias. The imposing walls and the trees that camouflage the façade of Goenka Niwas give a faint but definite impression of the grandeur within.

With such VIP residents, land does not come cheap in Alipore. One square foot of developed land sells for Rs 15,000-20,000. In comparison, a square foot in Rajarhat, the IT hub of Kolkata, is yours for Rs 4,000-6,000. Property websites often feature 4-5 bedroom flats in Alipore for between Rs 2 crore and Rs 5 crore. "Vacant plots in Alipore are rare and commercially not viable due to skyrocketing prices. Land prices have gone up from Rs 15-20 crore an acre about seven years back to about Rs 120 crore now," says Pradeep Sureka, managing director of Sureka Group and co-developer of the South City residential project. Security is a big concern. The recently-formed Alipore Citizens' Forum (ACF) has installed 160

hi-tech cameras at strategic locations at a cost of Rs 5 crore. Jalan, a founding members of ACF, says the security system is based on Los Angeles' city surveillance model.

Chana falls by 0.1% on weak cues

Speculators reduced their positions on the back of sluggish demand in spot market against adequate supplies

Chana prices softened marginally by Rs 2 to Rs 3,211 per quintal in futures trading today on weak cues from spot markets.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, chana for delivery in October softened by Rs 2, or 0.06% to Rs 3211 per quintal with an open interest of 126770 lots.

Likewise, the commodity for delivery in September traded lower by Re 1, or 0.03% to Rs 3096 per quintal in 76680 lots.

Market analysts said speculators reduced their positions on the back of sluggish demand in spot market against adequate supplies from producing regions mainly helped chana prices to trade marginally lower at futures trade.

Refined soya down 0.6% on adequate supply, subdued demand

Oil for delivery in September weakened by 0.28%

Refined soya oil prices fell by by Rs 4.25 to Rs 677.50 per 10 kg in futures market today owing to slackened demand in spot market.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, refined soya oil for delivery in October fell by Rs 4.25, or 0.62%, to Rs 677.50 per 10 kg with an open interest of 78,230 lots. Similarly, the oil for delivery in September weakened by Rs 1.95, or 0.28% to Rs 695.30 per 10 kg in 53,630 lots.

Analysts said slackened demand in spot market against adequate supplies from producing region mainly kept pressure on refined soya oil prices at futures trade.

Crude palm oil down 0.3% for third day on weak demand

Oil for delivery in October fell by 0.24%

Crude palm oil prices slid for the third day today losing 0.33% to Rs 546 per 10 kg in futures trade on weak demand in spot markets.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude palm oil for delivery in September fell further by Rs 1.80, or 0.33% to Rs 547 per 10 kg in business turnover of 449 lots. Similarly, the oil for delivery in October fell by Rs 1.30, or 0.24% to Rs 541.10 per 10 kg in 116 lots.

Analysts said speculators trimmed their positions on the back of weak demand in the spot market against adequate stocks positions mainly kept pressure on crude palm oil prices at futures trade

Potato up by 0.3% on rising demand

Lower supplies from producing regions led to upward trend in potato prices

Potato prices continue to rise for the fifth straight day today gaining 0.29% to Rs 790 per quintal in futures trade driven by rising demand in spot markets.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, potato for delivery in September added Rs 2.30, or 0.29% to Rs 790 per quintal in business turnover of 6 lots.

Analysts said speculators enlarged their positions driven by rising demand in spot market.

Lower supplies from producing regions led to upward trend in potato prices at spot markets.

Cardamom up by 2% on rising demand

Tight supplies in the physical market on restricted arrivals from producing regions also supported the uptrend

Cardamom prices moved up by 2.04% to Rs 771.30 per kg in futures trade today as speculators enlarged their positions, tracking a firm trend at spot market.

Tight supplies in the physical market on restricted arrivals from producing regions also supported the uptrend.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, cardamom for delivery in September month moved up by Rs 15.40, or 2.04% to Rs 771.30 per kg in business turnover of 77 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in October gained Rs 4.30, or 0.54% to Rs 807 per kg in 541 lots.

Analysts said firm trend at spot market on rising demand against restricted arrivals from producing region mainly led to rise in cardamom prices at futures trade.

Mentha oil gains by 0.6% on increased demand

Speculators enlarged their positions due to increased demand amid lower arrivals

Mentha oil prices gained 0.62% to Rs 937 per kg in futures trading today as speculators enlarged their positions on increased demand from consuming industries in the spot market.

Tight stocks position in the physical market following less arrivals from Chandausi in Uttar Pradesh further fuelled the uptrend.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, mentha oil for delivery in September gained Rs 5.80, or 0.62% to Rs 937 per kg in business turnover of 437 lots.

Similarly, the oil for delivery in October traded higher by Rs 5.80, or 0.61% to Rs 952.20 per kg in 90 lots.

Market analysts said speculators enlarged their positions due to increased demand from consuming industries in the spot market amid lower arrivals from Chandausi in Uttar Pradesh mainly influenced mentha oil prices at futures trade.
