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# THE HINDU

## Price of onions on the rise again

After dipping slightly early this month, it is now Rs. 60 per kg in most retail stores in city



*Other vegetables, including carrots and green chillies, too have become costly due to poor yields— File Photo*

The price of onions which dipped slightly early this month has gone through the roof again. The vegetable which comes from Nasik, Maharashtra, is priced at Rs. 55 per kg in the wholesale market and Rs. 60 per kg in most retail stores.

Traders say the Koyambedu wholesale market receives produce from Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. The produce from Maharashtra accounts for 50-60 per cent of the usual 80 lorry loads received daily. At present, the market gets only 45-50 lorries a day, leading to a severe shortage. Traders cite higher exports of onions as a reason for the shortage in the domestic market.

Malamaheswari Saravanan, a homemaker living on M.C. Road in Royapuram said she could purchase onions for Rs. 40 a kg at the nearby market. "But the quality of the onions sold at Rs. 50 a kg, which I buy, seems better," she said.

Other vegetables, including carrots, green chillies and broad beans, too have become costly due to poor yields. In the wholesale market, carrots are priced at Rs. 35 per kg, green chillies Rs. 25 per kg and broad beans Rs. 40 per kg. Ginger is sold for Rs. 100 a kg in the wholesale market.

The vegetables sold in local markets, including those in Saidapet, Royapuram, Royapettah, are slightly cheaper than those in branded retail outlets.

V.R. Soundararajan, a wholesale trader said the prices of most vegetables had increased by Rs. 2 due to a 20 per cent hike in the freight charges. Lorry operators now charge Rs. 15-16 per km, citing the diesel price hike.

The Tamil month of *purattasi*, which commenced on Tuesday, too is pushing prices up. "Many people don't consume non-vegetarian items during this month and so the demand for vegetables is more. Our family does not eat even eggs and so we spend more on vegetables despite the steep prices. However, the price of chicken has come down by Rs. 20 from last week's Rs. 180 per kg," said Pushkala Sounder, a homemaker from Purasawalkam.

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### Australian model to be replicated in paddy fields

#### RCP to be tried out in West Godavari to shore up yields



*John Lacy, consultant of the International Rice Research Institute, interacting with farmers at Achanta in West Godavari district on Wednesday.— Photo: AVG Prasad*

The Regional Agricultural Research Station (RARS) at Maruteru in West Godavari district, an arm of Acharya N.G. Ranga Agriculture University, is preparing ground to replicate the Australian model of rice cultivation named Rice Check Programme (RCP) in the Godavari delta on a pilot basis.

As an initial step, the RARS is currently engaged in a three-day brainstorming session on replication of the model in the local context with John Lacy, the brain behind the RCP and consultant of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), as the key resource person.

The session, which commenced on Tuesday at the RARS and lasts till Thursday, is being attended by scientists from research and extension wings and the Krishi Vignana Kendras (KVKs) from the Godavari zone comprising East and West Godavari districts.

The scientists interacted with a small group of 60 farmers at Achanta on Wednesday.

They are scheduled to take up a similar programme at Yeletipadu under Iragavaram mandal on Thursday as part of cross-checking a set of eight checks (tools or procedures) developed at the technical session with the farmers at the field level for adopting the RCP.

Initially, the model is proposed to be adopted in West Godavari district from the next rabi with a key objective to shore up yields in paddy, says M. Bharatalakshmi, Associate Director of the RARS. The RCP helps in an increase of rice yields by 30 per cent in Australia by achieving nine out of 10 checks or tools such as certified seeds, tillage management, pest and disease management.

Ms. Bharatalakshmi told *The Hindu* that the three-day technical session had made a humble beginning towards developing eight checks relevant to the local conditions for implementing the RCP. The paddy cultivation with cost-effectiveness and yield stabilisation, the twin challenges faced by the growers in the Godavari delta, formed part of the set of eight checks, she added.

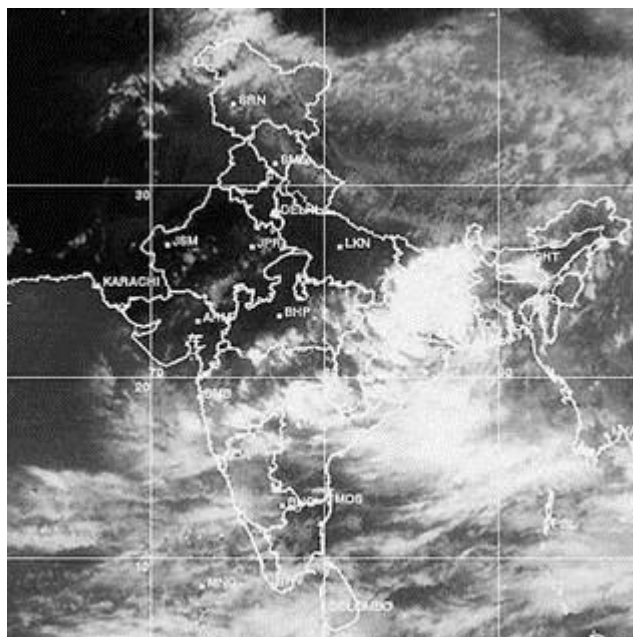
In course of an interaction at Achanta, the farmers favoured selection of seed and variety, land preparation, nursery management, nutrient management and plant protection against pests and diseases to be incorporated in the list of checks. Majority of them felt the nutrient management held the key to the yield potential.

The Australian farmers have been getting 12 tons of yield per hectare over 7.5 tons being received by their counterparts in the Godavari delta. Although yield was not a major worrying factor, the soaring cost of cultivation remained a cause for concern for the local farmers, Ms. Bharatalakshmi said.

***Rice Check Programme to be tried out in West Godavari to shore up yield***

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## Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on September 18th.

|                 | Max | Min | R  | TR   |
|-----------------|-----|-----|----|------|
| New Delhi (Plm) | 37  | 25  | 0  | 518  |
| New Delhi (Sfd) | 36  | 23  | 0  | 787  |
| Chandigarh      | 33  | 21  | 0  | 825  |
| Hissar          | 37  | 21  | 0  | 507  |
| Bhuntar         | 32  | 12  | 0  | 407  |
| Shimla          | 24  | 15  | 0  | 845  |
| Jammu           | 32  | 21  | 0  | 1251 |
| Srinagar        | 26  | 10  | 0  | 249  |
| Amritsar        | 34  | 20  | 0  | 261  |
| Patiala         | 33  | 22  | 0  | 725  |
| Jaipur          | 36  | 25  | 0  | 665  |
| Udaipur         | 35  | 23  | 0  | 656  |
| Allahabad       | 35  | 26  | 0  | 962  |
| Lucknow         | 35  | 23  | 0  | 731  |
| Varanasi        | 33  | 26  | 0  | 747  |
| Dehradun        | 32  | 20  | 0  | 2809 |
| Agartala        | 34  | 26  | 1  | 831  |
| Ahmedabad       | 37  | 25  | 0  | 772  |
| Bangalore       | 28  | 21  | 1  | 685  |
| Bhubaneshwar    | 34  | 24  | 17 | 835  |
| Bhopal          | 34  | 23  | 0  | 1116 |
| Chennai         | 34  | 25  | 2  | 624  |
| Guwahati        | 35  | 26  | 2  | 740  |
| Hyderabad       | 30  | 23  | 1  | 625  |

|                    |    |    |    |      |
|--------------------|----|----|----|------|
| Kolkata            | 33 | 26 | 10 | 1566 |
| Mumbai             | 29 | 25 | 8  | 2169 |
| Nagpur             | 32 | 23 | 1  | 1368 |
| Patna              | 35 | 26 | 0  | 584  |
| Pune               | 31 | 21 | 9  | 679  |
| Thiruvananthapuram | 29 | 23 | 9  | 1050 |
| Imphal             | 28 | 22 | tr | 1038 |
| Shillong           | 24 | 18 | tr | 932  |

*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

The withdrawal line of Southwest Monsoon continues to pass through Sriganaganar, Bikaner and Barmer. The conditions are becoming favorable for further withdrawal of Southwest Monsoon from Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and some more parts of Rajasthan during next 48 hours.

**Rainfall:** Rain/thundershowers have occurred at isolated places over Jammu and Kashmir and Rajasthan. Weather was mainly dry over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm. are: EAST RAJASTHAN: Gogunda 1 and WEST RAJASTHAN: Siwana 3, Jaswantpura, Raniwara, Sayla and Parbatsar 2 each and Pachpadra 1. **FORECAST FOR REGION VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 20th SEPTEMBER 2013 :** Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir during next 24 hours and over east Uttar Pradesh from 19th onwards. Weather would be mainly dry over rest of the region.

**FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 20th SEPTEMBER 2013:** Mainly clear sky.

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### Rain lashes Dharmapuri

A total of 77.5mm rain was recorded in Dharmapuri till 8.30am. Wednesday. A release said that Harur received a maximum of 30.3mm rainfall in the district. Rainfall registered in other places in mm are Pappireddipatti — 21.2, Pennagaram — 15, Hogenakkal — 8 and Dharmapuri — 3.

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### Training in poultry rearing

A sum of Rs. 82.20 lakh had been sanctioned for Karur district this year under the State government's Country Bird Poultry Rearing Scheme. The scheme will benefit 80 farmers, District Collector S.Jayandhi said here on Tuesday. Speaking after inaugurating the training

programme for the farmer beneficiaries at Thottakurichi near here, Ms. Jayandhi said while 50 farmers chose to rear country birds, 30 others opted for rearing broilers under the scheme.

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### Steps on to revive traditional paddy varieties



*Tried and tested: Eco-scientist G. Nammazhwar handing over seedlings to a farmer near Pudukottai on Wednesday.* National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) will popularise traditional paddy varieties among farmers by reintroducing age-old cultivation practices.

So far, NABARD has identified 18 traditional paddy varieties, including *karuthakkar*, *karunkuruvai*, *maapillai samba*, *garudan samba*, *poongar*, *sivapapukarani*, *kuruvai kalanjiyam*, *illupai poo samba*, *kaivirai samba*, *neela samba*, and *sembuli samba*.

The bank has imparted training to 150 farmers in raising some of these varieties in various parts of the district in the last three years.

Working in coordination with non-governmental organisation, NABARD has been motivating farmers to choose one variety from among the 18 species based on soil and irrigational facilities available in their fields.

Inaugurating the transplanting of *garudan samba* at Marudanthalai village near here on Thursday, Somasundaram, district development manager, NABARD, said that it has been planned to motivate about 500 farmers to take up traditional paddy cultivation in the next three years. Evangelist for eco-friendly farming practices G. Nammazhwar, who gave away the nurseries of the variety to farmers, underlined the need for developing agriculture through good practices. Bio-manures and bio-agents can enrich soil and prevent pest attacks, he said.

A demonstration on utilising panchakavya, a bio manure, and herbal insecticides was conducted. Several farmers interacted with Mr. Nammazhwar and got their doubts clarified.

Later, a number of agricultural labourers sowed *garudan samba* in the fields of Ganesan, a farmer.

A.Athappan, director of Rose, a non-governmental organisation which coordinated the programme, said that a number of farmers in and around Marudanthalai evinced interest in raising traditional varieties.

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### Farmers advised to insure crop

Farmers of Pudukottai district have been advised to insure their samba crop without any delay. Paddy crop is being insured in the district during the samba season through primary agricultural cooperative societies. Insurance is mandatory for those farmers who avail themselves of crop loans and optional for those who do not.

Small and tiny farmers have to pay a premium of Rs.116 an acre, minus subsidy, and others Rs.129 an acre for an assured sum of Rs. 12,944 for one acre of paddy crop. For an additional insurance for Rs. 11,328, small and tiny farmers had to pay an additional premium of Rs. 816 and others Rs. 906 an acre, according to a release from K. V. S. Kumar, Joint Registrar of Cooperative Societies.

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### It's up to farmers to press for special zone: Minister

#### Seminar on value addition in agro, agro-based industries inaugurated



*One-to-one: S.Ranganathan, secretary, Cauvery Delta Farmers Association, interacting with E.M.Sudarsana Natchiappan, Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, centre, in Thanjavur on Wednesday.— Photo: B. Velankanni Raj*

The Food Security Law brought by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government will benefit farmers immensely, said E.M. Sudarsana Natchiappan, Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, here on Wednesday.

Inaugurating a seminar on value addition in agro and agro-based industries in Thanjavur district organised by Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Thanjavur, Southern India Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chennai, and Indian Institute of Crop Processing Technology (IICPT),

Thanjavur, Mr. Natchiappan said an allocation of Rs.1,20,000 crore was envisaged in the Act to provide marketing, minimum support price, irrigation and other support to farmers, to help improve productivity.

The Act was “demand driven” and allocation was made depending on the requirement of farmers instead of taking a top-down approach. It aims at achieving the 2015 millennium development goal set by the U.N. in a “single stroke”, the Minister said.

A sum of Rs. 2,000 crore would be allotted for noon meal scheme to improve the health of children. The Public Distribution System (PDS) will get substantial funding.

The third and fourth schedules of the Act envisages significant improvement in irrigation facility. The Act deals with environment, health, and productivity, the Minister said.

Farmers are expected to produce 68 million tonnes of paddy for which the government will provide the minimum support price. The price will be decided by a non-governmental committee of experts. “Market is provided. Minimum Support Price is given. What else the farmers want,” he asked.

A food storage godown has been constructed in Madurai for farmers to store their produce. A similar godown can be constructed in Thanjavur if land was made available, he said stressing on the need for establishing cold storage chains.

To a question, he said that the ministry would be interested in creating a Special Agricultural Zone in Thanjavur district depending on farmers’ demand. S. Ranganathan, secretary, Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association, Jawahar Vadivelu, president, Southern India Chamber of Commerce and Industry, K.Alagusundaram, director, Indian Institute of Crop Processing Technology, (IICPT), PLA.Chidambaram, chairman of the organising committee, K.Padmanabhan, president, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Thanjavur, and N.T. Balasundaram, secretary of the chamber, spoke.

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### **Mettur level**

The water level at the Mettur Dam stood at 112.37 feet on Wednesday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 7,018 cusecs and the discharge 18,000 cusecs.

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## Unseasonal rain raises water level in Papanasam dam



*A view of the Papanasam dam.— Photo: A. SHAIKMOHIDEEN*

Copious rainfall has raised the water level in the major reservoirs of the district, lifting farmers' spirits.

Uncharacteristic for this time of year, the Papanasam Dam, one of the three major reservoirs of the district that experienced a rainfall of 29 mm during the past 24 hours that ended at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, received 5,851.62 cusecs on Wednesday to take the storage level to 105.95 feet (maximum capacity 143 feet) from yesterday's 100.55 feet. To meet the irrigation and drinking water needs of the district, 1,304.75 cusecs of water are being discharged from the dam.

The storage level in the relatively smaller reservoir, Servalar Dam, has risen from 112 to 121.29 feet. The water level at the Manimuthar Dam, which has been falling, witnessed an increase of three feet on Wednesday as the storage level rose from 59 feet to 63 feet.

Likewise, the Ramanadhi and Gadana Dams also witnessed an increase in the water level to 64.50 feet and 63.50 feet respectively, thanks to rains over the Western Ghats.

"This is really the most refreshing and invigorating news for me this morning," said Collector C. Samayamoorthy, referring to the storage levels. "Though the inflow is relatively good now, it may not last as this is not seasonal rain."

"Even before the present 'kar' season draws to a close by mid-October, the northeast monsoon is expected to boost the present comfortable storage level in the dams. Therefore, we'll be in a position to ensure water supply for both irrigation and drinking purposes," said a senior official of the Public Works Department.

But farmers are worried by the continuing dry spell in the plains.

"If the plains are also blessed with some showers, farming operations can be undertaken in the rain-fed areas too where cultivation of vegetables or grains is possible and that will augment our revenue. Water collected in the rainfed tanks will help in expanding the area under paddy

cultivation during this 'pisanam.' But that remains a mirage," said N. Balavinayagam, a farmer from Palayamkottai.

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### Water level

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Wednesday stood at 105.95 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 5,851.62 cusecs following a rainfall of 29 mm and 1,304.75 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam.

The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 59.50 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 168 cusecs and 25 cusecs was discharged.

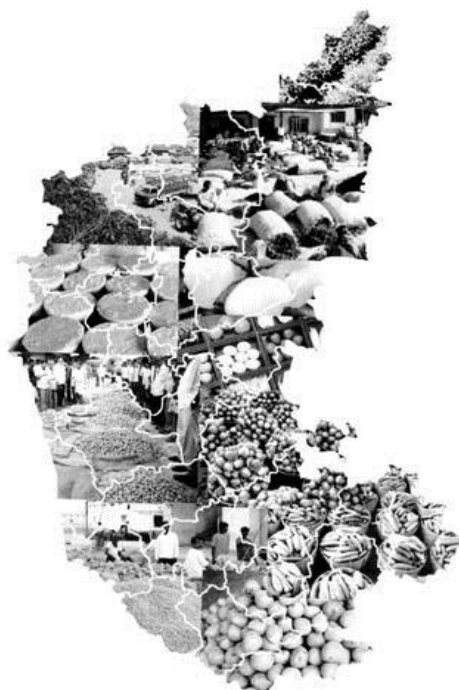
### Kanyakumari

The water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 23 feet, 59.90 feet in Perunchani, 8.85 feet in Chittar I, 8.99 feet in Chittar II and 31.50 feet in Mambazhathuraiyaru dam.

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### New agricultural marketing policy unveiled

**Policy aims to increase competition, develop markets, empower farmers**



The government on Wednesday unveiled the Karnataka Agricultural Marketing Policy 2013 for "bringing in competition, enhancing capacity building, and ushering in an era of single unified licence market" in the State.

The policy will be implemented in this financial year by developing markets and warehouses, said Minister for Horticulture and Agro Marketing Shamanur Shivashankarappa.

### **Simple procedure**

Launching the policy, he said that licensing procedures would be simplified and a single licence would be made applicable for participants.

The policy envisages elimination of barriers to participation in markets to foster competition and ensure efficient determination of price, linking the primary market in the State to the national market for the benefit of all stakeholders in the marketing chain.

A panel, headed by Manoj R., Additional Secretary of the Cooperation Department, submitted the draft policy to the department in May 2013 after holding consultations with Indian Institute of Management Bangalore and University of Agricultural Sciences here.

The policy recommends warehousing-based sales, rationalisation of private markets, market fee waiver for perishable produce, and focus on direct purchase centres. The Minister said that the conditions that restrict participation would be removed to increase competition in the auction of agricultural produce.

It would reduce the role of middlemen and also help arrest unfair trade practices.

The policy aimed at adoption of technology required for setting up a comprehensive electronic auction system by regulated markets operating across the State for transparent price determination.

### **Virtual market**

“A State-wide networked virtual market would be established by linking various regulated markets and warehouses, provided with assaying and grading facilities and other infrastructure,” the Minister said. Farmers and other participants would have the choice to offer and sell in any regulated or private market in the State. An enabling environment would be created to facilitate farmers to avail themselves of pledge loans to avoid distress sale.

Processes would be simplified and farmers would get online timely payment into their bank account.

The policy would enable the farmer to decide when to sell the produce and at what price, with a right to reject the price offered, the Minister said. Mr. Shivashankarappa said that the Karnataka Agricultural Produce Marketing (Regulation and Development) Act 1966 would be reviewed to facilitate the policy objectives and initiatives and to create a distinct, level-playing regulatory environment for transparent and efficient functioning of agricultural markets in the State.

Principal Secretary, Horticulture, M.K. Shankarlinga Gowda said that efforts would be made to give accreditation to 50 warehouses from Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority at the Centre.

Mr. Manoj made a presentation on the policy to the Minister and the media.

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- *Policy to be implemented in this financial year*
  - *'It will help reduce the role of middlemen and arrest unfair trade practices'*
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### Rain puts paid to farmers' hopes of a rich harvest

#### Crops lost in Gulbarga and Chittapur taluks owing to waterlogging of fields



*Lost: Red, green and black gram crops have been destroyed in Gulbarga and Chittapur taluks owing to waterlogging of fields.*

For farmers who have taken up cultivation of green and black gram in Gulbarga district, it has been a case of 'so near, yet so far' this year. Rainfall during the last week of August and in September has put paid to farmers' hopes of reaping a rich harvest.

Official sources said that while around 50 per cent of the farmers had harvested green gram sown in 17,741 hectares, the remaining farmers had cut the crop and kept in the field to dry. However, a portion of the crop was lost owing to heavy rain, while the remaining portion was damaged. Sources added that farmers who had sown black gram in 30,000 hectares had been hoping for a bumper crop before the rain dampened their hopes. Waterlogging in fields had delayed harvesting; any further delay would result in severe reduction of yield.

According to preliminary reports reaching the district headquarters here, green gram sown in 420 hectares in Gulbarga and Chittapur taluks was lost owing to waterlogging of the fields, and

black gram in nearly 500 hectares of land in the two taluks was lost. Red gram sown in 1,275 hectares of land in the two taluks was also lost owing to waterlogging.

### **Statistics**

The district has, so far, recorded 87.84 per cent rainfall of the average rainfall in September. As against the average rainfall of 200.14 mm, the district has recorded rainfall of 174.13 mm.

As against the average rainfall of 648.92 mm during the kharif season (June to September), the district has, so far, recorded rainfall of 577.71 mm.

The Revenue and Agriculture departments have taken up a joint survey of crop loss.

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### **Rise in water level in Idukki dam**

The water level in the Idukki reservoir rose steadily on Wednesday, by 1 ft over the previous day to reach 2,399.30 ft. The full reservoir level (FRL) is 2,403 ft.

On Tuesday, the increase in level was .5 ft and if the inflow continued at the same level through the main tributary, Periyar, the dam would be opened within a week. The increased level of water drawn by Tamil Nadu from the Mullaperiyar dam was a key factor in keeping the level in Idukki dam almost static till it rained heavily in the catchment areas in the past four days. Power generation at the Moolamattom power house was also raised to the maximum level to keep the water level under control. However, with the increased production level, there was high inflow of water causing a sudden spurt in the reservoir level.

The district administration has made preparations to open the dam shutters in case the water level rises above the FRL. Directions have been given to the village officers to take up evacuation on the downstream of the dam if the water level rose, District Collector Ajit Patil told The Hindu on Wednesday. He said there was no chance of a sudden water discharge as the water level in the Mullaperiyar dam was at a low. The water level there was 123 ft on Wednesday, also registering nearly .5 ft increase over the previous day's water level.

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## Onion prices rise again



*Onion stocks that arrived from Kurnool being unloaded at the Mahaboobgunj market in the city. - Photo: P.V. Sivakumar*

After a brief and nominal let up, prices of onions have begun to show signs of skyrocketing again. In the last two days, onions have put on some more weight in terms of its price, costing about Rs.7 to Rs.15 more per kilogram.

Visitors to the Rythu Bazaars in the city had some disappointment in store as the essential commodity was being sold at Rs.37 per kg.

“Till Saturday, the subsidised onions at Kothapet Rythu Bazaar were being sold at about Rs.30 per kilo. On Monday, the price was suddenly increased to Rs.37 per kg. Private vendors outside the market, who were selling at Rs.40 per kilo till recently, were quoting Rs.50 all of a sudden,” informed Prasad, a consumer from Kothapet.

However, the subsidised onions at Rythu Bazaars are of much lesser quality than those in the open market, he says. In supermarkets and other stores, the price has apparently gone up to Rs.55 per kilogram. Less than a month ago, consumers were reeling under the impact of unprecedented price hike of onions which hovered at about Rs.65 per kg. It was then hoped that arrivals from Karnataka and Maharashtra would improve the situation in a month’s time.

With a few measures such as sale of subsidised onions at city’s Rythu Bazaars, the government was able to bring the prices down a little.

One more reason being cited is the increased exports and fallen imports, due to the devalued rupee. The usual imports from Pakistan, Iran, China and Egypt failed this time, while the domestic crop is delayed.

However, according to the latest data from the department of Agriculture's website as on September 11, area sown under onion has improved to a great extent in one month, from about 13,000 hectares in August, to about 27,000 hectares now which is 7,000 hectares more than the previous year on the same day. In Kurnool district, the leading producer of onions, the area sown has increased to 22,523 hectares this year, as against 14,348 hectares last year.

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### Vidarbha farmers abandon costly cotton for easy soya

In Amravati division alone, area under cotton has almost halved, from 15 lakh hectares to 8.15 lakh hectares



*A PIONEER: Vinod Khade, Sarpanch of Wadgaon Ghatge village in Yavatmal district, who has shifted to soyabean from cotton.*

Vinod Khade and his five brothers are among the big landowners in Vidarbha's Yavatmal district.

They own 225 acres, which they used to plant with cotton. But this year, they have grown soyabean. Mr. Khade, who is also Sarpanch of Wadgaon Ghatge village, started growing

soyabean a decade ago. “The rising cost of cotton cultivation, the poor price for cotton and labour problems made us think about another crop,” he says.

Mr. Khade’s family is not the only one that has switched from cotton to soyabean. Nearly 90 per cent of the villagers have followed their Sarpanch suit. Across Vidarbha, a region infamous for suicide by cotton farmers, many families are turning to soyabean. In the Amravati division — which includes the districts of Amravati, Washim, Akola, Buldhana and Yavatmal — the area under cotton has almost halved over the past five years, from 15 lakh hectares to 8.15 lakh hectares.

“In the same period, the area under soyabean has increased from 8 lakh hectares to 15.6 lakh hectares in the division,” says Ashok Lokhande, Amravati’s Joint Director of Agriculture.

In Yavatmal, which accounts for the highest number of suicides among farmers in Vidarbha, cotton has been replaced by soyabean on 88,000 hectares in the past one year. “In 2013, the area under cotton and soyabean is almost equal,” District Agriculture Officer D.I. Patil says.

Farmers say they cannot afford to grow cotton any more. “Cotton is not profitable even if the government gives [us] Rs.10,000 in minimum support price, because the production cost of Bt. cotton is very high. With soyabean, you can be sure of recovering at least production cost,” says Prem Rathod, a farmer of Ghatumba in Yavatmal.

Officials say soyabean takes less time to harvest than cotton, so farmers can think of growing a second crop in the same year.

***Soyabean takes less time to harvest than cotton, so farmers can think of growing a second crop***



## Integrated fish farming cuts wastage, boosts income



*Trendsetter: Mr. Ram Chaudhary's farm is a role model for integrated fish farming in the State.-Photo: Special Arrangement*

Dwindling farm land resources and its direct impact on crop productivity makes many farmers explore other options.

Knowledgeable farmers grow more than one crop along with fishes and some livestock to provide subsidiary income.

“One important reason is that the animal wastes can be effectively recycled as manure for their crops, and also as feed for fishes, thereby reducing huge expenses for purchase of inputs. In an integrated component nothing goes waste.

Steady increase

“One becomes food or input for another, all intrinsically woven together. In Bihar the number of farmers taking up integrated fish farming has seen a steady increase over the last 5-6 years,” says Dr. Tun Tun Singh, Junior Fisheries Research officer, Mithapur, Patna.

Mr. Ram Shakra Chaudhary owner of R.N. fish farm in Barri Behta village in Sitamarhi district, Bihar, is a good example of a successful integrated fish farmer in the state.

Several farmers are visiting his farm to learn how effectively the farmer has integrated all the components —fish, livestock and crops — and is able to generate several lakh rupees a year as income.

“I was attracted to the fish farming business as several farmers in my State are into fish cultivation, which generates good income,” says Mr. Chaudhary. The farmer initially invested about Rs. 6.25 lakhs (own funding of Rs. 1.25 lakh and Rs. 5 lakhs from bank loan) to construct four ponds in a total area of 11 acres.

### **Additional activities**

Through a common friend he got acquainted with Dr. Tun Tun Singh, who advised him to establish additional activities like fish seed hatchery unit, vermicompost unit, dairy farming, bio gas unit and horticulture unit, without stopping with growing fishes alone.

Bihar has bountiful natural aquatic resources in the form of ponds, tanks, bow lakes and reservoirs. Fisheries are an important, most promising and fast growing area in the state.

“The total fish and fish seed production of the state is 4.01 lakh metric tonnes and 450 million fish seed fry respectively during 2012-13,” says Dr. Tun Tun.

Last year alone Mr. Chaudhary earned more than Rs.9 lakh from the sale of fish and milk and realised a net profit of about Rs. 4 lakhs.

### **Selling**

The fish and the milk from his eight cows are being sold at the farm gate itself. “I sell the fishes for Rs.100 a kg and the milk at Rs. 20 a litre.

“In the last one year I have sold about 700 kg of fish and 12,000 litres of milk. In addition I have also been able to sell 120 lakh numbers of fish fries (young ones) to several farmers in the state. The income has improved my economic status. Both my children are IT professionals,” says the farmer with a sense of pride. The Government supports and encourages fish growers in the State which is the primary reason why several farmers are entering this line.

### **Role model**

“Several schemes with 40 to 90 per cent subsidy assistance are available for entrepreneurs to develop new farms for increasing fish production and to provide employment opportunities for rural youth. Mr. Ram’s farm is a role model of integrated fish farming in the State,” says Mr. Nishat Ahmad, Director, fisheries.

Increasing feed costs for fishes and fertilizers are creating a growing awareness among several fish growers to efficiently use the waste from their animals for growing their crops.

### **Reduces input cost**

It is generally estimated that 60 per cent of operational cost is spent on feed and fertilizer in fish farming.

This type of model is more important for farmers having small land holding as it reduces operational costs, according to Dr. Tun Tun.

For more information readers can contact Mr. Ram Shakha Chaudhary, Mobiles: .09973306675 and 09430082811 and Dr. Tun Tun Singh, email :ttsingh2002@gmail.com, mobiles: 09473191559 and 09431086114.

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### Mutation breeding of oil seeds, pulses and cereals



*The focus: Since we import 40 per cent oilseeds and 20 per cent pulses, BARC focused its attention primarily on these crops.— photo: K.K. Mustafah*

Do you know that when we eat a dosa or idli from anywhere in Maharashtra, there is 90 per cent chance that the urad dal in them came from mutation breeding, a promising technology developed by the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Trombay.

Since we import 40 per cent oilseeds and 20 per cent pulses, BARC focused its attention primarily on these crops. Heritable mutations of genes occur spontaneously in all living beings; but their rates are extremely low — of the order of one in a million. Isolating living organisms with beneficial characteristics from nature and multiplying them by selective breeding is a very slow process.

Scientists speed up the mutation rate a thousand fold by exposing seeds or in some instances parts of the plant to ionising radiation. Breeders produce plants from these irradiated seeds. They combine plants with different desirable characteristics to develop high yielding, early maturing and disease resistant plants.

Pigeon pea and mung bean suffer viral attacks; soya beans are hit by bacteria; drought and salinity affect pulses and oil seeds; some plants are sensitive to temperature.

Pre-harvest sprouting and in situ germination are other worrying conditions. Scientists have overcome most of these adversities by genetic manipulation.

### **Improved quality**

They can improve the quality and nutritional content of oil seeds and the bread making quality of wheat.

Wheat plant can be made heat tolerant and resistant to stem rust. They have developed many varieties of rice. Some are early harvestable ; others salt tolerant; a few are disease resistant. Reduced height Basmati is another notable contribution.

The development of better crop plants takes time. Scientists test the improved crops at least for three years in BARC fields before they are entered for evaluation trials conducted by the agricultural universities etc. Promising new varieties are further evaluated in adaptive, district and mini-kit trials on the farmers' fields.

BARC scientists set up linkages with farmers to produce quality breeder seeds and participate actively in Kisan Melas held in farmers' fields to popularize the technology.

They developed 41 new crop varieties (Trombay varieties) by radiation induced mutation and cross-breeding; these have been released and officially notified by the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India for commercial cultivation.

Farmers in virtually every State benefited from the technology. It started in 1973 with Trombay Groundnut (TG-1) cultivated mainly in Gujarat and Maharashtra. Maturing in about 130-135 days, with large seeds, the crop gave a modest increase in yield of 15 to 20 per cent.

Besides high yield, early maturity and early water use efficiency, some of the Trombay groundnut varieties have fresh seed dormancy of 20-30 days thus preventing in-situ germination, a nightmare for farmers due to end of season rains when the crop is ready for harvest.

Scientists from the University of Agricultural Science and BARC produced a large seed variety of groundnut. Hundreds of farmers are producing even up to 7 tonnes/ha of some varieties of groundnuts in some States.

A drought tolerant early maturing variety and an early maturing large seed variety of groundnuts are being cultivated in large desert areas in Rajasthan.

**Export-worthy**

BARC has also developed early maturing, confectionary grade, large seed groundnut seed varieties (100 seeds more than 60 grams) suitable for export.

As early as 2002-2003, the breeder seed indent for Trombay Groundnut varieties by the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, stood at 932 out of 3,137 quintal (29.7 per cent) of national indent.

In an address at the Indian Nuclear Society Technical Seminar, Dr S.F. D'Souza, Associate Director listed the mutant varieties of crop plants developed at Trombay and lucidly described their socio-economic impact

The breeder seed indent for Trombay Urad bean (black gram) then stood at 93.4 quintal out of 222.05 quintal (42.06 per cent) of national indent. Farmers grew them on 5.10 lakh hectares out of 5.49 lakh hectares (about 93 per cent) in Maharashtra. Maharashtra State Seed Corporation, Akola has distributed 21,000 metric tonnes of a certified variety of black gram seeds to the farmers.

BARC developed many varieties of high yielding, disease resistant moong beans. One of them a disease-resistant, early maturing ( 55-59 days) variety for summer season made available an additional area for moong bean cultivation under crop diversity programme. Jawaharlal Nehru Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, N G Ranga Agricultural University and Indira Gandhi Krishividyalaya collaborated with BARC in some of the programmes. Currently farmers cultivate Trombay moong bean varieties over 300,000 hectares in India.

**India leads**

In developing and applying mutation breeding using ionising radiation, India has a leading role among all nations.

Many varieties of mutant crops cultivated on tens of thousands of hectares enhance income in rural areas, contribute to environmentally sustainable food security and improve human nutrition in India.

**K.S. PARTHASARATHY**

Former Secretary, Atomic Energy Regulatory Board

( *ksparth@yahoo.co.uk* )

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## Controlling yellow stem borer in rice

Yellow stem borer is a serious pest of rice throughout India and South East Asia. Stem borer occurs both in kharif and rabi seasons.

Moderate to severe incidence is noticed in nursery, planting to mid-tillering and panicle initiation stages. Heavy infestation results in 40-60 per cent yield loss.

Though considered predominantly as a monophagous pest, it has also been reported from wild rice types, and other monocot weed plants present in the rice ecosystem.

### Damage symptoms

Symptoms of damage include presence of brown colored egg masses near leaf tip in nursery and early transplanted plants. The egg masses are laid in oval patches of 80-150 eggs near the tip of leaf blade and they are covered with buff coloured hairs. Tiny pale yellow larvae hatch out from the eggs in 5 to 8 days, enter the leaf sheath, feed for 2-3 days and then bore into the stem near the node. Usually only one larva is found inside the stem. The larva grows for a period of 40 days and pupates inside the stem in a white silken cocoon for 7-11 days. The entire life cycle lasts for 35-50 days depending upon the environment. The adults do not feed and live for 4-10 days.

### Management measures

Use less susceptible varieties and adjust the dates of planting to evade the incidence of the pest. Clip off the tip of the seedlings before transplanting and collect and destroyed stem borer egg masses present on the transplanted young rice plants. Soak the roots of the seedlings in 0.02 per cent chlorpyrifos for 12-14 hrs before transplanting to give protection from the attack of stem borer up to 30 days. Avoid close planting and continuous water stagnation and pull out and destroy the affected dead heart tillers. Set up light traps to attract and kill the moths. Use TNAU YSB pheromone lures and traps from 15 days after transplantation with lure replacement on 25, 46 and 57 DAT traps to monitor and manage stem borer males.

Harvest the crop up to the ground level and disturb the stubbles to destroy the diapausing larvae and pupae.

(J. Jayaraj is Professor and N. Muthukrishnan is Professor and Head, Department of Entomology, Agricultural College and Research Institute, Madurai 625 104, Phone :0452-2422956, email: agentomac@tnau.ac.in)

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# THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

## Urban vegetable market proposed



*The city will soon sport a modern vegetable market complex to be constructed in Machabollarum falling in Alwal circle of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC).*

The city will soon sport a modern vegetable market complex to be constructed in Machabollarum falling in Alwal circle of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC).

The proposal for the project, which will be taken up at a cost of `4.75 crore, has already been approved by the GHMC Standing Committee and the same will be submitted to the General Body for approval. The council will meet on September 23 to discuss the issue and give their approval.

The building will consist of a cellar, ground plus two floors and terrace spread over three blocks. The cellar will be utilised for parking purpose while the ground floor will accommodate as many as 144 shops. The first and second floor may accommodate offices, banks and so on. Presently, the condition of the market is in bad shape and is functioning like a typical village market, making it unsuitable for the present urban scenario.

The GHMC officials said that the market needs improvements to properly utilise the available space and it can be constructed with appropriate parking in the cellar. The consultant for the project Ms Form Arch Consultants have prepared the estimates for cellar, ground, first and second floors to the tune of `4.75 crore and have submitted the same to the corporation.

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### 150 mobile vans to sell onions at cheaper rates across Delhi

In a bid to check the crisis caused by spiralling onion prices, the Delhi government has decided to sell onions at a flat rate of Rs. 60 per kg. A total of 150 mobile vans will be supplying the vegetable across the city.

In a meeting chaired by food and supplies minister, Haroon Yusuf and development minister, Raj Kumar Chauhan, it was decided that onions will now be sold in Delhi at Rs. 60 per kg to provide relief from the escalating prices. This is the second time that the government is stepping in to tackle the crisis in the last one month.

“We have been keeping a very close watch on the prices of onions on a day-to-day basis. We are attempting to keep a check on the spiralling retail prices because of which we will sell onions through mobile vans,” said Yusuf.

Officials attributed the rise in prices to a meagre supply of onions in the wholesale market caused by a lower harvest in the southern states.

“This is a very temporary phase. The harvest from the southern states had been damaged because of which there is a supply gap. Since Delhi does not grow onions, we are dependent heavily on produce from other states such as Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat,” said Raj Kumar Chauhan.

The government has received several complaints of hoarding in the supply chain. Officials claimed that they would soon come down heavily on hoarders.

“We have received complaints of hoarding. We are taking cognisance of these complaints and will take strict action against those found guilty of hoarding onions and causing this artificial drop in supply,” Yusuf said.

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## Weather

▼

Chennai - INDIA

**Today's Weather**

**Thursday, Sep 19**

Max    Min

35° | 26°

Rain: 0                      Sunrise: 05:57  
 Humidity: 75              Sunset: 06:07  
 Wind: normal              Barometer: 1004

**Tomorrow's Forecast**

**Friday, Sep 20**

Max    Min

34° | 26°

**Extended Forecast for a week**

| Saturday<br>Sep 21  | Sunday<br>Sep 22           | Monday<br>Sep 23      | Tuesday<br>Sep 24     | Wednesday<br>Sep 25   |
|---------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|                     |                            |                       |                       |                       |
| 33°   26°<br>Cloudy | 35°   25°<br>Partly Cloudy | 35°   26°<br>Overcast | 35°   25°<br>Overcast | 35°   25°<br>Overcast |

**Airport Weather**

▼
Chennai

Rain: 0                      Sunrise: 05:57  
 Humidity: 75              Sunset: 06:07  
 Wind: normal              Barometer: 1004

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## THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Prices of vegetables like brinjal, bottle gourd and cabbage retreat as the clouds clear



*Prices of brinjal, bottle gourd and cabbage have already fallen up to 15% in the past one month although onions and potatoes have risen*

NEW DELHI: Vegetable prices, which have doubled in the past six months, have started retreating in recent weeks but it will take another three to four weeks before the seasonal drop of 20-30%, retailers and traders said.

Prices of brinjal, bottle gourd and cabbage have already fallen up to 15% in the past one month although onions and potatoes have risen. Vegetable prices normally dip in the beginning of October but adverse weather has delayed the planting of green leafy vegetables, which are harvested in a month. The new crop will include cauliflower, capsicum, radish and cabbage.

The monsoon has been 4% above normal so far this year, but the distribution has been uneven. In the east and northeast, it is 27% below normal but in the south it is 22% above normal. Heavy rainfall in the south has delayed harvesting of onions, which are selling three and a half times last year's level. Food inflation has contributed to the rise in overall inflation level in August.

Onion prices in key wholesale markets of Azadpur and Malegaon ranged from Rs 45- Rs 60 a kg. Retail prices were Rs 60-80 a kg. This was the highest price at which retailers like Mother Dairy were buying and selling in the Delhi NCR market. Arrival of fresh onion crop will begin from Alwar, Kotputli, Khairchal belt of Rajasthan which caters to the north Indian market in a

month's time, said Surinder Kohli a leading vegetable trader from Azadpur. Further, a clear sky will ensure pick up of harvest across Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, said Shriram Gadhave president of the vegetable growers association at Narayangaon, in Pune district. "With the arrival of the new onion and other vegetable crop, a 20% correction will take place in 15-20 days," said Gadhave.

Increased arrival of vegetables from local markets has also helped. "Tori (ridge gourd) price has fallen to Rs 7 a kg today from Rs 25 a kg a week ago. Ghiya (bottle gourd) price has also come to Rs 13-15 a kg from Rs 20-25 a kg a week ago," said Kohli who added that the crop was coming from Moradabad, Sambal and Delhi NCR.

With green leafy vegetables from spinach and fenugreek to amaranthus and coriander accounting for 30% of the total vegetable basket, its arrival is expected to ensure a steady fall in prices said Pradipta Sahoo, business head, horticulture, Mother Dairy Fruit & Vegetable Private Limited. "We are confident that post navratri the prices will remains stable," he said. Compared to the previous year the delay in price correction is by 15 days he added.

According to Sahoo a 30% price correction in October was a seasonal thing. "We are just hoping that intermittent rains don't take place as they will disrupt the schedule and flow of crop to mandis," he said.

But south would continue to get rains, according to the agricultural meteorological division of the India Metrological Department, while a dry spell will continue across northern India.

"Farmers across the western and south peninsular India where excessive rains had taken place are being advised to postpone irrigation and adopt plant protection measures on standing crops," said K K Singh, director, Agromet Services IMD.

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## 'Foodgrain warehousing demand to grow up to 6% in next 5 yrs'



*The demand for foodgrain warehousing is expected to grow by 5-6 per cent annually in the next five years, according to a report by Rabobank.*

MUMBAI: The demand for foodgrain warehousing is expected to grow by 5-6 per cent annually in the next five years, according to a report by Rabobank.

The growth will be driven by a range of factors, including the government focus on food security, current storage space shortage and the recently announced National Food Security Bill, Rabobank analyst Vaishali Chopra said.

"The country must see improvements to its existing storage system as well as the creation of additional storage capacity to meet the demand of increased food production," she added.

"Currently, the majority of storage facilities are government-owned and increased participation from the private sector will be needed to make up the difference," she added.

The report said storage construction required significant investment, which is better suited for large corporate players.

These large private sector players, participating in agri-related and infrastructure projects, will look for a conducive investment environment, triggered by the increasing cost of land, labour shortage and focus on food security, it said.

Storage capacity, price fluctuations, excessive government controls, acquisition of land for large-scale projects and long gestation periods collectively play their part in curtailing private sector investment, it said.

"Once the sector is relatively free of government control, these companies are expected to bring their knowhow and experience to India's grain warehousing industry in the long term," the report said.

Silo storage, unlike traditional go-downs, significantly reduces grain losses due to bad weather, pest infestation and pilferages, while also reducing grain maintenance and storage costs in the long term, it said.

In addition, the report said, requirements for labour, handling and packaging are significantly reduced in silo storage.

Collateral management agencies will be instrumental in pushing investment in storage capacity through the development of modern silos, it added.

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### Centre mulls onion MEP hike; asks states to check speculation



*The Centre has directed states to take action against traders who create an artificial shortage of onions and is considering curbs on overseas sales.*

NEW DELHI: The Centre has directed states to take action against traders who create an artificial shortage of onions and is considering curbs on overseas sales by increasing the minimum export price to USD 900 a tonne.

"All states and Union Territories have been asked to take action against traders/speculators creating artificial price increase of onions, taking advantage of seasonal shortage," a senior Consumer Affairs Ministry official told PTI.

Wholesale and retail onion prices in most parts of the country have increased sharply since July. In the national capital, retail onion prices are ruling as high as Rs 80/kg compared with Rs 22/kg a year earlier.

Maharashtra, where the maximum quantity of onions is stored, has been asked to ensure steady supplies of the staple vegetable in consuming states, the official said.

The state government has been directed to intimate the Centre if there are any bottlenecks in the supply chain as they can cause prices to rise, the official added.

The Centre also explored other ways to improve supplies and control the price rise. A committee of officials from the commerce, agriculture, consumer affairs and finance ministries held a meeting to discuss onion prices.

The committee considered a proposal of the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd ( Nafed) to increase the minimum export price of onions to USD 900 a tonne from the current level of USD 650 a tonne to restrict outbound shipments, sources said.

The final call on export prices will be taken by the Commerce Minister, the sources said. Some committee members favoured an increase in the minimum export price even if it would have no impact on the quantity of overseas shipments.

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## FCI to create additional 5.4 lakh tonnes of food grain storage capacity in NE



*Food Corporation of India (FCI) will create an additional 5.4 lakh tonnes of food grain storage capacity in the North Eastern States, including Sikkim, with a total allocation of Rs 568 Crores.*

GUWAHATI: Food Corporation of India (FCI) will create an additional 5.4 lakh tonnes of food grain storage capacity in the North Eastern States, including Sikkim, with a total allocation of Rs 568 Crores.

Chairman & Managing Director C. Viswanath who was in Guwahati on Wednesday said that considering the strategic importance of the North-East region, the FCI has prepared a special package plan exclusively for the North East. "Out of Rs 568.17 Crore around Rs. 458.56 Crores is earmarked to be spent during 12th Five Year Plan for storage construction.

Viswanath said, "For FCI, the augmentation of storage capacity has been a continuous process and has been primarily financed by planned resources. Now there is good progress. Out of 49 projects, 19 projects of 100,060 tonne-capacities (4 in Assam, 9 in Arunachal Pradesh, 2 in Manipur, 1 each in Meghalaya and Tripura and 2 in Nagaland) are currently under construction. One project of Hailakandi, Assam and two projects in Manipur at Jiribam and Senapati have already been completed and made storage worthy".

He added, "Land has been acquired further for 6 projects of 128,500 tonne-capacities. Efforts have been made to get land notified in five more projects. It is expected that land acquisition phase will be over and construction will be underway for rest of the projects."

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## Muzaffarnagar clashes sour its famed jaggery business



*The flourishing business of jaggery (gurh) in the region is already on the verge of a shutdown as workers have fled after the clashes.*

NEW DELHI: Communal violence in Muzaffarnagar has soured the mood of sugarcane farmers on the eve of the crushing season. The flourishing business of jaggery (gurh) in the region, which calls itself India's sugar bowl, is already on the verge of a shutdown as workers have fled after the clashes.

Muzaffarnagar is home to India's biggest jaggery market. It accounts for an estimated 20% of India's output of the rustic sweetener, regarded auspicious by many. Some traders in the area said that the rift between the two communities especially in Shamli region adjacent Muzaffarnagar continues to rattle people, encouraging labourers, mostly Muslims, to flee. "We don't know how things would shape now. There is a big question of trust and safety lurking over us and the gur unit operators," said Arun Khandelwal, president of the Gurh Traders Association.

The region has 11 sugar mills and about 4,000 small units that produce jaggery in a process that actively involves both communities. "Around 85% of the labour involved in the production of gurh, running of the factory and even transportation are Muslims. They have refused to work under Hindu factory owners.



The Gurh processing units owned by Muslims are shut because they are not ready to do trade with Hindu traders," said one of the biggest Gur traders in the Muzaffarnagar mandi.

Currently, 80,000 tonne of gurh is lying idle, waiting to be sold, said a trader. "This year, we will see a carry over stock of around 80,000 tonne in the upcoming season starting from October," said Arun Khandelwal, president, Gur Traders Association. Khandelwal said that most producers have shifted their base to Pune, which an emerging hub for the sweetener. Apart from UP, major processing units are based in Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh.

"Most of our business was already shifting to these areas because there are no sugar mills to compete for cane availability there. Now, with the district under threat, labours are contemplating to move to these states," said a trader, "a major labour crunch is looming over the gurh units here."

Two of the biggest gurh traders also fear the quality of gurh produced going down. "The Muslim labour are the major force behind the gurh production and our quality stands out. Labour force, both Muslim and lower caste Hindus, especially from Shamli are now difficult to trace and convince to work for the units," said a trader requesting anonymity.

Gur cottage industry in the district has been in a soup for long. In the past three years, high cane price and competition from other states led to the Muzaffarnagar market face a loss of Rs 400 per quintal per day. The current price of gur is Rs 1,150 per 40 kg. "Earlier around 1 lakh bags of 40 kg each would come for trading weekly. It has dropped to 80,000 bags per week and we fear that it might go down even more post the riots," said Khandelwal. October to May is the gur production season and India produces 90 lakh tonne of gur every year. Out of this the share of UP is 55 lakh tonne, to which Muzaffarnagar contributes 20 lakh tonne of gur.

About 35% of the cane harvest is used by jaggery units. With the gur industry facing a slowdown, even this cane would get diverted to sugar mills. "These units also produce spurious alcohol but the demand for it has also gone down due to stringent curbs over its sale and consumption lately," said Khandelwal.

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# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## Onions from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka save the day

CHENNAI: Finally, onions won't make you cry. The arrival of new kharif harvest from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka has brought relief to people across the state. On Tuesday, more than 40 trucks each carrying 17 tonnes of onions arrived at the Koyambedu wholesale market complex and prices ranged between 22 a kg and 50 per kg. The prices in the retail markets are expected to be 8-10 higher.

The prices of onions vary because of the shelf life. While onions selling at 22 a kg have a shelf life of three-four days, those priced above 40 last a week. For household purposes, new onions are used but restaurants and the food-packaging industry require onions with a long shelf life, said B Raghunath, a wholesale dealer at Koyambedu.

But what helped bring down the prices? H P Sharma, deputy director (statistics) of the National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation ( NHRDF) in Nashik, said the supply deficit which had resulted in the price rise was counteracted by the new kharif crop and a robust supply from Lasalgaon and Pimpalgaon in Maharashtra. From the beginning of September, the centres in Maharashtra had been supplying an average of 400-600 tonnes of onions a day across the country and after the arrival of the kharif crop, the southern centres had been receiving bountiful supplies.

On Monday, Bangalore and Hubli, two of the key centres in Karnataka that supply onions to Tamil Nadu, saw a record supply of 12,323.3 and 945.6 tonnes respectively. Compared to the figures in August, this meant an increase of 582% and 782%, according to NHRDC data. At other major centres like Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh, the supply increased by more than 220 tonnes a day.

Experts believe the prices will even out in the northern regions by October. "Prices of onions across Northern India are expected to stabilise within a fortnight," said Sharma. The demand and supply gap was being bridged because of the steady supply from Maharashtra together with

foreign imports. While around 400 tonnes of onions had been imported from Egypt, China exported more than 1,000 tonnes. Also, since last week, around seven trucks from Pakistan and Afghanistan, each carrying 20 tonnes of onions, were arriving at Delhi and Amritsar daily, he said.

He also pointed out that a fresh kharif crop was expected by the end of September in the northern parts of the country. "These regions are still using old stocks. Once the new crop hits the market, the scarcity will be met," he said.

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### Onions turn Rs 100 per kg in Panchkula

CHANDIGARH: Onions touched the Rs 100 per kg mark in Panchkula on Wednesday, setting a record of sorts, even as the bulbous produce was sold for Rs 80 per kg in Chandigarh and Mohali markets.

According to traders and locals, the rates of onions never went as high as this in the recent years.

Traders said the supply to Panchkula markets was poorest in the Tricity and hence the unprecedented price.

"Onions come from Nasik, Indore and Rajasthan. We have not got them from Rajasthan this season and the supply from Nasik and Maharashtra has reduced, resulting in this steep price rise. The fresh harvest will arrive by October-mid, till then the price would remain high," said Ajay Hooda, agro business manager, Panchkula Marketing Committee. Hooda added that in the absence of a wholesale market in Panchkula, vendors buy onions and other vegetables mostly from Chandigarh's Sector 26 market and this was why the rates were higher. He said a market was under-construction in Sector 20 but it would take time to become functional.

"Probably, it is for the first time that the prices of onions have reached so high. There was a rise some 10 years back also, but this looks unprecedented," said Hooda.

Panchkula residents said they never thought onions would get so costly. "Onion is a part of our

staple diet so the vendors know that we will buy them at inflated prices too. But now buying onion at such a high cost doesn't makes sense to me," said Kanta Mehta, a resident of Sector 16 Panchkula.

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### Soon, onions at subsidized prices in Goa

PANAJI: With onion prices spiraling out of control across the country, the Goa State Horticulture Corporation (GSHC) has come to the rescue of state's aam admi. While the price of onions ranges from 60 to 62 a kg in the open market, the horticulture corporation will make it available at its kiosks at just 42 to 45 a kg from Friday.

The corporation was selling onions at its outlets at 53 to 58 a kg until now and the new relief will mean a saving of over 10 for Goa's housewives. "Within the next two days, the regular quality of onions will be available at the new subsidized rates at the horticulture corporation outlets across the state," GSHC chairperson Kiran Kandolkar said on Wednesday.

The corporation will also be introducing a new variety of onions in the Goa market, he said, to deal with complaints from buyers that the current quality of onions available in the state is not good enough.

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### Onions being sold in Nagpur at cheaper rate than Nashik

NAGPUR: Onion prices are ruling at Rs 60 a kg in the bulk markets at producing centres like Lasalgaon, near Nashik. However, 600 kms away in Nagpur, onions are cheaper than Nashik. On Wednesday, the best grade of the same Nashik onions were sold at an average rate of Rs 50 to Rs 55 a kg in Kalamna, which is claimed to be the largest agriculture produce market yard in Asia.

Traders call it an aberration as normally the rates in a consumption centre are higher than that in a production hub which is Nashik here.

Kalamna is also flooded with fresh supply from Kurnool and Hyderabad where the crop has just been harvested. The southern variety is available at further lower rates of Rs 35 to Rs 45 a kg, in the bulk market. Vegetable vendors, however, continue to sell onions at 60 a kg with the

white ones being priced at Rs 70. The rates are same for the southern onions too which are available at a peak rate of Rs 45 at Kalamana. In the normal course, the retailers would charge a mark up of not more than Rs 10.

A section of businessmen here do not rule out a cartel by their counterpart at Nashik to be the reason for onion prices ruling at a level of 60 a kg there.

Ilahi Baksh of Saurashtra Kanda Bhandar at Kalamna said "it is a common practice by the traders to buy the stocks at the farms itself. So even if the onions are stored at the farmers' premises, the stock in fact belongs to the trader, who can always wash his hands off as there is no formal agreement between them. The Nashik traders are now making a killing out of the situation, as the season is ending."

The low demand and arrivals from south have reduced the rates for the Nashik variety at Kalamna where traders are selling at a loss, said Baksh

Mohammed Afzal of Afzal Trading said at Pune - the nearest major market from Nashik - the supply has come down by almost 80% suddenly. This hints of an artificial shortage being created by the Nashik lobby.

Others, however, refute this theory saying that there is no point in hoarding the stock as fresh arrivals from Dhule would begin soon, bringing the prices down.

Jaiprakash Wasani of M/s Pankaj Traders, said there is a substantial supply from centres like Kurnool and Hubli in Karnataka as well as parts of Andhra Pradesh. This variety perishes fast and the crop has been damaged due to rains as well. So it is a distress sale from these centres. Nagpur being closer, a large quantity has reached here.

However, this variety is smaller in size and inferior to the Nashik onions.

The inferior grade is dumped in Nagpur considering that the population here prefers a cheaper stock, he said. In Delhi the bulk rates are ruling between Rs 60 to Rs 62 at kg, it is Rs 58 to Rs 60 in Amritsar and Jalandhar. In Kolkata, it is Rs60 a kg.

Some farmers from Chalisgaon who had come down to Nagpur for selling their stock were left disappointed. "We had hoped to get better rate here," said Punjabrao Patil from Chalisgaon.

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### Onions selling at 80 per kg in Purnia division

PURNIA: The prices of onion, which has hit the roof, has literally brought tears to the eyes of consumers across Purnia division.

The onion, which was selling at Rs 50 per kg only a couple of days back, is at present pegged at Rs 80 per kg. "It has virtually disappeared from the plates of poor and middle class people," says Mita Sharat, a housewife in Purnia.

It is not only the price of onion which has sky-rocketed, prices of vegetables of all kinds have soared sky high. Parwal (pointed gourd) too has gone beyond Rs 35 per kg while bitter gourd sells at Rs 40. Even raddish and lady's finger pinch pocket and sells at Rs 35 to Rs 40 per kg.

"There is absolutely no market mechanism and any kind of administrative control on the prices," tells Renu Gami in Katihar. "How many things you give a miss," quips a college lecturer Meena Kumari in Kishanganj. Only potatoes are cheap and sells at Rs 10 per kg.

Milk, which was selling at Rs 30 per kg a few months ago, is available at Rs 35 per kg now. Along with vegetables, simple fruits like apple now sells at Rs 60 to Rs 70 per kg in the markets across Purnia division. "Every morning, before we arrange our vend at the vegetable mart, we get in touch with our suppliers at different places like Delhi and Siliguri (West bengal), and then decide on the prices of vegetables in the local market," candidly admits vegetable seller Mohammad Kalam at Kishanganj.

As the festive season knocks at the door, vegetables will be the mainstay of daily diet.

Many will only be skipping non-vegetarian dishes like mutton and chicken. Mutton prices are hovering at Rs 340 to Rs 400 per kg, chicken too is pocket pincher at Rs 220 or more per kg. Fishes rule at anything between Rs 180 to Rs 400 per kg depending on its delicacy.

"The household expenses have made a quantum jump and prices of all items of daily use only get on our nerves," tells a retired school teacher Siyawar Singh.

" We are simply managing two square meals a day even as our daily expenditure has made a jump. But, spiraling prices make our lives extremely painful," said an autorickshaw driver Hamid in Purnia.

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# DECCAN Chronicle

## Dams release water after heavy rains



**Hyderabad:** AP projects built across the Krishna river are once again getting copious inflows due to heavy rains in the catchment areas, resulting in Srisaillam and Nagarjunasagar releasing flood waters downstream.

The Tungabhadra dam, Jurala, Srisaillam and Nagarjunasagar reached their full reservoir levels and have been releasing surplus waters since Tuesday.

On Wednesday, authorities lifted 18 out of 26 flood gates of Nagarjunasagar to release 2.15 lakh cusecs of water downstream, after meeting the requirements of various canals under it and the power houses.

“We benefitted by 30 TMC ft of water due to the latest floods both at Srisaillam and Nagarjunasagar; we had to release the surplus waters downstream as we could store only that much,” said Srisaillam chief engineer M. Krishna Rao.



Meanwhile, heavy rains in Kurnool, Anantapur and Kadapa districts are helping Somasila dam, built across Penna river in Nellore district, to receive heavy inflows of 50,000 cusecs a day, steadily increasing the reservoir storage levels.

Several rivulets like Nippulavagu, Kundu, Bahuda, and Sagileru, which join the Penna river in Kadapa district, are in spate benefitting the Somasila dam.

During the current water year (from June 1 onwards), 4,660 TMC ft of water have gone to waste into the sea from Godavari anicut near Rajahmundry.

### Family budget hit by veggie prices



**Bengaluru:** Households in the city will now have to re-look their monthly budget as the prices of onion and other vegetables have registered a sharp increase once more.

Prices have gone up from Rs 60 per kg last week, to Rs 76 per kg on Wednesday. This is the price at Horticultural Producers' Cooperative Marketing and Processing Society Ltd (HOPCOMS) outlets. Onions in local markets are priced at above Rs 80 per kilo.

This isn't the case with onions alone, for prices of other vegetables have risen too. About a week ago beans cost Rs 20 per kg at HOPCOMS outlets, but prices now stand Rs 35 per kg. Even tomatoes, which were available at Rs 14 per kg are now priced at Rs 25. The local variety of peas has also shot up from Rs 100 to Rs 130 per kilo.

Severe shortages in supply is the major reason behind the increase in prices. “We have been sourcing onions to Bengaluru mainly from neighbouring States like Maharashtra and other districts like Chitradurga and North Karnataka.

Due to heavy rainfall in these regions, the supplies have dropped, which has led to an increase in prices of onions and other vegetables in city,” said Nagini Chandrashekhar, Director, HOPCOMS.

### **Onion prices to drop by October: Horticulture Secretary**

**Prathima Nandakumar | DC**

**Bengaluru:** Are onions making you cry, as you shell out almost Rs 80 a kilo? Relax. Onions will grow cheaper in October, when locally grown varieties will flood the market, assured Horticulture secretary M.K. Shankarlinge Gowda, adding that the Kharif crops hitting the markets next month will make onions affordable. Besides the arrival of local variety of onion, the supply from Maharashtra would continue unchanged, so prices will stabilise, he added.

Ironically, Karnataka is the second largest onion growing state, with an annual production of 2.39 lakh metric tonnes. However, the state continues to depend on its neighbour, Maharashtra, for its onion supplies during the lean period from July-September. Reason? At least 85 per cent of the total production in Karnataka takes place in the kharif season (June-October), resulting in the homegrown varieties hitting the market only in October. On the other hand, Maharashtra grows high yielding varieties in the Rabi season and that produce dominates the market between May and August. Unlike Karnataka, Maharashtra also grows newer varieties that are high yielding and can be stored for longer durations. To overcome the challenge, the state government has mooted the ‘Onion Mission’ to encourage the staggered cultivation of onions in the state with technological intervention and Central funding for both production and post harvest handling of onions. “The Centre had carried out assessment of onion crops grown in key states – Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. We have urged the Centre to come up with an Integrated Onion Production and Post Harvest Mission to bring about dramatic change in yield and ensure supplies throughout the year,” said Dr D.L. Maheshwar, director of Horticulture.

“The Mission will encourage staggered cultivation of onions to help grow onions in lean season, shifting to high yielding new varieties that can be stored for longer duration (45-60 days), help make onions as main crop and not as an intercrop with cotton or chillies, adopt line, furrow or ridge sowing to maximise production and provide market intelligence to help tide over crisis,” explained Maheshwar.

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# THE HINDU Business Line

## Costly buy



Supplies hit: A housewife looking at onions at the Paharganj Delhi Main Bazaar in the Capital on Wednesday. Prices of onions in retail outlets have shot up to Rs 70-90 a kg, depending on the quality. Poor supplies from Maharashtra and Karnataka led to a surge in prices in the Capital and elsewhere on Wednesday. — Kamal Narang

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## 'Upasi tea research body developing plants for mechanical harvest'



The Upasi (United Planters' Association of Southern India) Tea Research Foundation is gearing up to address the issue of scarce planting material.

P. Mohan Kumar, Director, Upasi TRF told *Business Line* that the research foundation was gearing up to produce 50,000 plants of the TRF-4 variety by 2014.

“We need to develop more plantings of TRF 4 and TRF 5,” he said.

TRF 4, which was released in December 2011, is a high yielding variety with superior quality characters. It can be harvested with a mechanical harvester, he said, adding “we need to go for cent per cent mechanisation to tackle the issue of paucity of farm labour.”

“Mechanisation is the need of the hour, not only in the field but in the nursery as well. We have to be careful though, for the mechanical harvester can cut the leaf,” Mohan Kumar said. The Foundation has developed a foliar package for maintaining the health of the bushes, particularly for people using the harvester. “We are in the process of developing new machines after fine-tuning the technique,” he said.

The Research Foundation is collecting and conserving a large number of natural variants from the old seedling population.

To a query on replanting, he said: “There is dire need for replanting the old bushes with new ones, but there is no question of horizontal expansion. Tea gardens will have to look at replacing the existing old bushes with high yielding clones. Around 30 to 40 per cent of the existing bushes contribute to 75 per cent of the yield,” he said.

While stating that a couple of tea accessions with specific characteristics were in the pipeline and expected to be released for commercial utilisation in the near future, the UPASI TRF Director said that the thrust would be on various clones and various type of seedlings.

“There are measures like tissue culture, but it is rather expensive. Clones are grown in nursery, multiplied and released to planters,” he said.

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### **Spot rubber improves**

Physical rubber prices finished almost unchanged on Wednesday.

Market activities were at an extremely low key, following another holiday in the State.

Meanwhile RSS 4, the only gainer of the day firmed up marginally amidst scattered transactions.

Volumes continued to be meagre.

Sheet rubber improved to Rs 186 (Rs 185.50) a kg, according to traders.

The grade closed firm at Rs 186.50 (Rs 186) at Kottayam and Kochi, as reported by the Rubber Board.

October futures weakened to Rs 183.34 (Rs 183.83), November to Rs 182.85 (Rs 183.51) and December to Rs 185 (Rs 185.29) for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) improved to Rs 165.24 (Rs 163.62) at Bangkok.

September futures closed at ¥260.80 (Rs 166.74) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange. **Spot rubber rates Rs/kg were:** RSS-4: 186 (185.50); RSS-5: 182 (182); Ungraded: 176 (176); ISNR 20: 172 (172) and Latex 60%: 134 (134).

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### Poultry feed prices may drop Rs 400 a tone



Following a downtrend in the prices of key ingredients over the last few days, poultry feed products are all set to turn cheaper by the end of this week.

Aditya Mishra, a trade expert, told *Business Line* that following a continuous fall in the cost of production, feed prices are set to turn cheaper within a couple of days.

Feed prices may decrease by Rs 400-600 a tonne, he added.

Prices of almost all the key ingredients have come down this week, said Aditya Mishra.

#### **soyameal, bajra**

In the physical market, soyameal dropped by Rs 1,500 and sold at Rs 32,200 a tonne.

Bajra dropped by Rs 140 at Rs 1,200-1,260 a quintal while Di-calcium phosphate sold at Rs 34.70 a kg.

MBM moved down by 40 paise and sold at Rs 32.60 while maize eased by Rs 90 to Rs 1,450 a quintal.

DRB sold at Rs 11,400 while rice bran oil ruled at Rs 59. Mustard de-oiled cake eased by Rs 400 to Rs 14,600 a tonne.

#### **Feed products**

Broiler concentrate feed quoted at Rs 2,020 for a 50-kg bag while broiler starter mash sold at Rs 1,530 for a 50 kg bag.

Pre-lay mash sold at Rs 1,040. "Layer concentrate 25 per cent" sold at Rs 1,490 while "Layer concentrate 35 per cent" was at Rs 1,175

### Poultry Products

Meanwhile, an uptrend was witnessed in the poultry products market on account of an increase in demand, on Wednesday. Broiler improved by Rs 8 and quoted at Rs 82-84 a kg; egg went up by 5 paise at Rs 3.11, while chick went up by Rs 2 to Rs 22-24.

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### Rally in tur unlikely to extend



Improved buying support over the last one week has lifted tur prices in Indore mandis by Rs 50-100 a quintal.

Though local mandis remained closed on Wednesday on account of 'Anant Chaturdashi', in private trading, tur (Maharashtra) ruled firm at Rs 4,450-4,500, while tur (Madhya Pradesh) ruled at Rs 3,800-4,100.

For the past couple of days, tur prices have been range-bound fluctuating between Rs 4,400-4,600, depending upon its demand and supply.

Given better crop prospects and rise in sowing area in tur this year, the long rally may not last, said a trader to *Business Line*.

Tur dal, on the other hand, ruled stable amid subdued demand with tur dal (full) being quoted at Rs 6,000-6,400, tur dal (sawa no.) at Rs 5,600-5,900, while tur marka ruled at Rs 6,700-7,000.

Notwithstanding scattered arrival of new urad in mandis, urad is ruling higher with urad (best quality) currently being quoted at Rs 3,850-3,900, while urad (medium) is ruling at Rs 3,300-3,500.

In the wake of arrival of poor quality new urad with high moisture, buying support on old urad has gone up leading to steep rise in its prices.

Urad dal, however, remained unchanged on subdued demand with urad dal (medium) being quoted at Rs 4,100-4,200, urad dal (bold) is ruling at Rs 4,200-4,400, while urad mongar is being quoted at Rs 5,200-5,300.

Weak buying support at higher rate on the other hand, has dragged moong with moong (best quality) in local mandis being quoted at Rs 5,000-5,200, while moong (medium) is ruling at Rs 4,500-4,800.

Moong dal on the other hand remained uncharged with moong dal (medium) currently ruling at Rs 6,000-6,200, moong dal (bold) at Rs 6,300-6,400, while moong mongar ruled at Rs 6,600-6,800.

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### 60% turmeric goes unsold at Erode



Despite turmeric arrivals continuing to be lower in Erode markets, sales failed to pick up on Wednesday. As a result, only 40 per cent of the 3,500 bags that arrived was sold with farmers taking back the rest.

“ Buyers quoted lower prices. Traders have not yet received bulk orders from North India and were unwilling to offer higher price”, said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

Of the total arrivals, stockists procured just 350 bags; the rest 1,000-odd bags was procured by the traders.

Prices of all varieties decreased by Rs 100-150 a quintal.

At Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,699-5,691, the root variety at Rs 3,396-5,160.

**Salem hybrid crop:** The finger variety fetched Rs 4,669-6,260, the root variety Rs 4,300-5,400.

Of the 760 bags that arrived, 305 were sold.

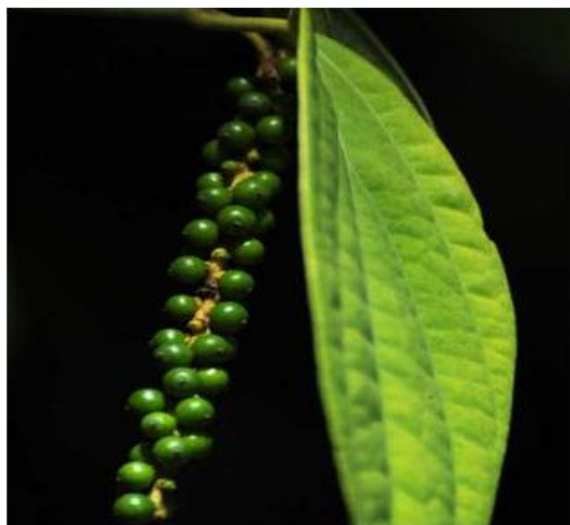
At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,059-5,930, the root variety Rs 4,614-5,149.

Of the 502 bags on offer, 472 were traded.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,859-5,960; the root variety was sold at Rs 4,629-5,179. All the 783 bags put on sale found takers.

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### Pepper falls on talk tainted stock will be released



Pepper futures fell on bearish sentiments on Wednesday on talk that some 6,000 tonnes of pepper kept in the NCDEX warehouses would be released.



Speculation was rife that the pepper stocks, which had courted controversy following allegations that they were tainted, would be released since a case filed in the Madhya Pradesh High Court against the NCDEX on the issue was withdrawn.

But traders claimed that it would be released only after being cleared by the Food Security and Standards Authority of India authorities, who have to draw samples from each lot and get them tested at designated labs.

Added to this, another rumour is also around that there is reportedly a stay order from a court stopping destruction of the pepper found to be adulterated by the designated labs and the Food security authorities.

This also led to the fall in the price, market sources said.

On the spot, 18 tonnes of farm grade pepper arrived and 20 tonnes were traded at Rs 406-408 a kg.

On the NMCE, October, November and December contracts decreased by Rs 901, Rs 110 and Rs 100 a quintal respectively to Rs 43,100, Rs 43,950 and Rs 44,070.

Total open interest dropped by two tonnes to 39 tonnes. Total turnover increased by eight tonnes to 48 tonnes.

Spot prices dropped by Rs 100 to close at Rs 40,600 (ungarbled) and Rs 42,600 (garbled).

Indian parity in the international market was at \$7,100 a tonne (c&f) Europe and \$7,350 a tonne (c&f) for the US.

Exporters are said to be reluctant to make any offers because of uncertainty over the availability of pepper on the one hand and the volatility in the currency rates on the other, they added.

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# Business Standard

## No non-agri trade on Saturdays

Trading in agri commodities on Saturdays to be reviewed later; more changes likely in the coming months to align with global pattern

To improve the operation of commodity exchanges and enable better reflection of actual prices, the Forward Markets Commission(FMC) has told all of them to not allow trade in non-agricultural commodities on Saturdays.

Agri commodities are exempt for now.

The commodity derivatives markets regulator said on Wednesday the move had been decided on feedback from exchanges, their members and physical markets' participants.

Until now, trading was allowed in both agri and non-agri commodities on Saturdays for a half-day, from 10 am to 2 pm. Around two per cent of the total monthly volume was generated on Saturdays. The six comexes — MCX, NCDEX, NMCE, ICEX, ACE and UCX — clock an cumulative monthly turnover of Rs 20,000 crore on Saturdays, as against around Rs 900,000 crore generated through the month.

FMC says comexes will, instead, on Saturday attend to maintenance of records, housekeeping, compliance matters and the like. As for agri commodities futures, the position here would be reviewed after three months. FMC has told the comexes to send a compliance report in four days.

“This was our demand since long, which the FMC has met now. Nothing unusual is likely to be seen on overall turnover,” said a senior official with a leading exchange. In contrast, Priti Gupta, executive director at financial services firm Anand Rathi, believes: “This volume generated on the exchange platforms on Saturdays will be completely lost. Most of the non-agri trades are coming from day traders. Anyway, comexes have been losing volumes consistently. This will be another reason for the fall.” Comexes' cumulative turnover fell 17.4 per cent in the first five

months of the current financial year to Rs 59 lakh crore, as compared to Rs 71.4 lakh crore in the corresponding period last year.

| <b>SATURDAY VOLUMES</b>                  |         |          |         |
|--|---------|----------|---------|
| Exchange-wise commodity turnover in ₹ cr |         |          |         |
| Date                                     | Agri    | Non-agri | Total   |
| NCDEX                                    | 2,388.6 | 0.37     | 2,389   |
| MCX                                      | 331.1   | 2,015.6  | 2,346.7 |
| NMCE                                     | 746.6   | 20.5     | 767.1   |
| ICEX                                     | 67.7    | 22.4     | 90.1    |
| ACE                                      | 67.5    | Nil      | 67.51   |

Average turnover on Saturdays since July 2013  
Source: Exchanges      Compiled by BS Research Bureau

Sources close to the development said FMC had decided to align domestic comexes with global ones. Since global markets remain closed on Saturday, the benchmark reference price in globally traded commodities would be unavailable. "As a consequence, futures trading in non-agri commodities was a big risk for domestic traders," said Gupta.

On agri trades, some of the exchanges had told FMC it should be allowed to continue, as "the domestic physical markets for agricultural commodities usually remain open on Saturdays". Sources say FMC is likely to also suspend trading in agri commodities on Saturdays after three months.

Also, say sources, the trading time in agri commodities is to be enhanced by three hours, to 8 pm, from January 1 on working days as compared to 5 pm at present.

"Since the spot mandis across the country remain open up to 8 pm, futures trading should be made available up to this time, so that traders would be able to hedge their parallel risk in both markets together," said an official.

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## Tea exporters losing out to Kenyan rivals

### **Exports drop 15-20% in the first half of current financial year; stricter quality norms for Indian tea also to blame**



Bumper Kenyan tea production, coupled with the quality issues faced by Indian tea, have hampered exports. According to trade estimates, tea exports from India during the first half of the current financial year dropped 15-20 per cent as compared to the same period last year.

Exporters have expressed concern over losing market share to Kenyan tea, while traders maintain that stricter compliance norms set by the Indian government for tea exports are also a factor. “Kenya is encroaching on India’s export market. It is time to boost our exports to fight competition from Kenya,” said Chetan Patel, secretary of the Federation of All India Tea Traders Association (FAITTA).

However, with exports slowing, domestic tea prices have started showing signs of softening. “Prices may start falling as more tea will be available in the second half of the year,” said Patel. Experts see a silver lining as demand from overseas markets will help exports gain momentum in the second half. “The business is driven by demand-supply economics. We see more demand coming up over the next few months, so we are hopeful of exports rising,” said Azam Monem, director, McLeod Russel India Ltd.

India exports 210-215 million kg every year. In 2011-12, the country exported 214.35 million kg, while in 2012-13 the figure was six million kg more at 220.5 million kg.

Traders and exporters have raised the issue of strict quality compliance for exports. “It is difficult for some of the finest tea gardens to pass all the 20 criteria set by the government. This has

adversely affected exports, and it is visible from the data,” said a tea exporter from Mumbai. “Many companies are failing to meet the required quality norms. The 20-point quality compliance schedule is tough to meet,” said a member of the FAITTA.

Tea exporters find the exercise unnecessary as many countries are ready to accept Indian tea consignments without having been certified under the new norms. However, experts note that strict compliance is in the interest of the industry as it will ensure better quality.

According to Monem Indian tea’s image was suffering due to poor quality. “There are some cases of rejection. But that is in the interest of the industry as a whole,” he said.

| <b>OVERALL TEA SCENARIO</b> |      |        |        |        |
|-----------------------------|------|--------|--------|--------|
| (Jan-Dec)                   | 2009 | 2010   | 2011   | 2012   |
| Production                  | 979  | 966    | 1,116  | 1,126  |
| Imports                     | 25   | 20     | 21     | 20     |
| Exports                     | 198  | 222    | 215    | 201    |
| Consumption                 | 850  | 865    | 880    | 895    |
| Total auction price (₹/kg)  | 107  | 106.32 | 104.06 | 121.82 |

Source: Indian Tea Association Figures in million kg

### Maize prices slightly up by 0.8% at Rs 13,524 per ton: USGC



Maize prices during last week moved up marginally on pan-India average by 0.8% to Rs 13,524 per tonne as the supply is limited and the demand remains strong, the US Grains Council said.

"Corn prices moved up slightly during last week on pan- India average by 0.8% to Rs 13,524 per tonne and higher than last year by 8.3%," USGC India representative Amit Sachdev said.

This higher price trend prevails as it is the fag end of the market season 2012-13 and hence the market is somewhat higher as the supply is limited and the demand remains strong, he pointed out.

End-users, he said, are waiting for the new crop to arrive, which is somewhat delayed due to late rains in key production centres.

Prices were reported higher in Andhra Pradesh by 2.38% at Rs 13,266 per tonne, Gujarat by 4.6% at Rs 14,847 per tonne, Karnataka by 2.73% at Rs 14,196 per tonne and Tamil Nadu by 1.09% at Rs 15,008 per tonne.

In some of the centres prices were down, specially in Madhya Pradesh where it declined by 4.57% to Rs 13,616 per tonne, Maharashtra by 2.7% to Rs 15,106 per tonne, Rajasthan by 3.46% to Rs 13,967 and Uttar Pradesh by 1.78% to Rs 13,389 per tonne.

Globally, market in the US was very volatile and the old crop prices closed lower.

Meanwhile, in other coarse cereals, pearl millet prices were down 3.6% to Rs 12,809 per tonne, higher than last year by 3.2%.

Sorghum prices were up by 9.5% to Rs 16,065 per tonne and down 4.7% against last year prices at the same time.

Barley prices moved up by 1.2% to Rs 11,966 per tonne at the market yard, higher than last year by 7.8%.

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#### **Centre asks states to check artificial price rise in onion**



The Centre has directed all state governments including Maharashtra to take action against traders and speculators keeping onion prices artificially high by taking advantage of the seasonal

shortage.

Onion prices both in wholesale and retail markets in most parts of the country have seen a sharp increase since July. In the national capital, retail prices of onion are ruling as high as 80 per kg on short supply from key growing states.

"All states and Union Territories have been asked to take action against traders/speculators creating artificial price increase of onion taking advantage of seasonal shortage," a senior Consumer Affairs Ministry official told PTI.

Maharashtra, where maximum onion is stored for use in lean season, has been asked to ensure steady supply of the staple vegetable in the consuming markets, the official said.

The state government has been directed to intimate the Centre if there is any blockage in supply chain as that can cause price rise, the official added.

Onion prices are under pressure even in the current month as 90% of stored onions of last year's crop are exhausted and there is only 3-4 lakh tonnes available for consumption, the Ministry said in the status report on onion.

Around 27.5 lakh tonnes of onion were stored in the country for consumption in 2013. Of this, 15.50 lakh tonnes were kept in godowns in Maharashtra, 1-2 lakh tonnes each in Gujarat, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, it said.

Normally, stored onions are consumed during lead period of June-August. The prices continue to rule high as supply of fresh crops from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh has not been in full swing yet due to delayed harvesting in the wake of rains.

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### Potato down by 0.4% on increased supply

**Market analysts said supplies from producing regions against sluggish demand in the spot market mainly kept pressure on potato prices**



Potato prices weakened by 0.42% to Rs 802.50 per quintal in futures trade today on increased supplies from producing region against sluggish demand.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, potato for delivery in March fell by Rs 3.40 or 0.42% to Rs 802.50 per quintal in business turnover of 7 lots.

Market analysts said supplies from producing regions against sluggish demand in the spot market mainly kept pressure on potato prices at futures trade.

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### Chana down 0.5% on sluggish spot demand

**The commodity for delivery in September declined by 0.39%**



Chana prices moved down by 0.54% to Rs 3,141 per quintal in futures market today as speculators reduced holdings amid sluggish demand in the spot market against adequate supplies.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, chana for delivery in October fell by Rs 17, or 0.54% to Rs 3,141 per quintal with an open interest of 1,58,340 lots.



Likewise, the commodity for delivery in September declined by Rs 12 or 0.39% to Rs 3,056 per quintal in 2,970 lots.

Market analysts said the fall in chana prices at futures trade was mostly attributed to cutting of positions by speculators, triggered by sluggish demand in spot market against adequate supplies from producing regions.

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### Cardamom up 0.3% on rising demand

#### **The spice for delivery in October edged up by 0.05%**



Amid rising demand and restricted arrivals from producing regions, Cardamom prices rose for the second day by adding 0.30% to Rs 813.40 per kg in futures trade today as speculators enlarged their positions.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, cardamom for delivery in November gained Rs 2.40, or 0.30% to Rs 813.40 per kg in business turnover of 4 lots. Similarly, cardamom for delivery in October edged up by 40 paise, or 0.05% to Rs 775.30 per kg in 238 lots.

Market analysts said besides rising demand in the spot market, restricted arrivals from producing regions mainly kept cardamom prices higher for the second straight day at futures trade.

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### Refined soya down 0.8% on profit-booking

#### **Adequate stocks position in the physical market on increased arrivals from producing regions put pressure on refined soya oil prices**



Refined soya oil prices moved down by 0.86% to Rs 657.25 per 10 kg in futures trading today as speculators booked profits at prevailing higher levels amid subdued demand in the spot market. Adequate stocks position in the physical market on increased arrivals from producing regions also put pressure on refined soya oil prices.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, refined soya oil for delivery in October declined by Rs 5.70, or 0.86% to Rs 657.25 per kg with an open interest of 68,310 lots. Similarly, the oil for delivery in September traded lower by Rs 2, or 0.29% to Rs 678 per 10 kg in 37,540 lots. Analysts said besides profit-bookings by speculators at prevailing higher levels, sluggish demand in the spot market against adequate stocks position pulled down refined soya oil prices at futures trade.

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### Crude palm oil falls 0.7% on profit-booking

#### **Emergence of profit-booking by speculators amid subdued spot demand against adequate stocks position affected prices**



Crude palm oil prices softened by 0.69% to Rs 515.70 per 10 kg in futures market today on the emergence of profit-booking by speculators amid subdued spot demand against adequate stocks position.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude palm oil for delivery in October softened by Rs 3.60 or 0.69% to Rs 515.70 per 10 kg in business turnover of 18 lots.

Similarly, oil for delivery in September weakened by Rs 3, or 0.57% to Rs 525.20 per 10 kg in 23 lots.

Market analysts said besides profit-taking by speculators, subdued demand in the spot market against adequate stocks position mainly influenced crude palm oil prices at futures trade.

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