

December 1, 2011

## **Break the barriers between researchers and ryots**

*Farmers and agriculture are bartered for the sake of vested interests*



For a farmer, the field is office and a good crop means a rewarding salary.

“If he manages to get a little extra then he considers it as a bonus. In a country, where agriculture is supposed to be thousands of years old, isn’t it an irony that a majority of its farmers are not happy financially,” says Mr. P. Jayaram, a progressive farmer in Bangalore growing grapes, tomato, vegetables and mulberry in 15 acres.

Who is to be blamed for the present crises?

### **Accountability is a must**

“There is no use in passing the buck. Accountability is a must, Of what use are all the financial schemes and bank loans, all claiming to be in the farmers’ interest?”

“Most of these are only on paper. Do you know the difficulty in getting a Rs.10,000 small-crop loan from a bank? Ask a farmer and he will tell you. And today we are able to buy a Rs. 5 lakh car in a few hours over the phone. Is this a healthy economy?” he asks.

“I am not disputing the fact that the facilities and comforts are today a necessity, but in the name of new luxuries, farmers and agriculture should not be bartered,” he contends.

### **Role of media**

India being an agrarian country, it is the duty of journalists to identify and suggest solutions to burning problems of villages, instead of only reporting on deaths and suicides, Mr. Jayaram argues, calling on the media to be proactive in this.

A journalist’s report must be like a platform to record, show, inform the society about farming experiences in villages, and their traditional methods of conserving land, water etc. According to him, though farmers are true scholars in their area, in reality they are not treated so.

“Often the brick compound wall and wire fences erected around agriculture research centres keep them away from approaching these places.

“Being shy and reserved by nature, a farmer naturally gets flabbergasted by the security at the gate and the protocols involved in such centres,” he says.

“Till date I have never heard or seen any instance where a farmer treats his guests anything but cordially. But the same farmer seldom receives the same courtesy in agricultural offices or research centres he visits.”

### **Not be a barrier**

“Such a treatment of the farmers is not acceptable. The high walls of the research centres should be limited to safeguard the privacy of research, and must not become a barrier between the minds of the researchers and the farmers,” explains Mr. Jayaram. In fact it is their knowledge and skills that should be sought after by those in agricultural varsities.

Scientific farming should evolve involving “true scholars” – the farmers, according to him.

The fact to be noted here is that though the famine or flood does not seem to affect a politician a beauraucrat or businessman - it is only the farmer who endures the loss and suffers.

## **Needs money**

“Have you ever heard about a person from any other profession committing suicide due to crop failure,” he asks.

Seeds, fertilizers, insecticides etc. do not come free of cost. Even such a basic profession as farming needs money.

And the farmer needs financial assistance. Drawn by the several advertisements, that endorse these financial institutions, a farmer buys the seeds and sows it with hopes of high yields.

“When he fails to get a good yield the company that supplied the seeds does not take any responsibility, and the agriculture experts keep tight lipped. This is the case prevailing in many villages,” asserts Mr. Jayaram.

## **Indirect support**

By lowering the rate of interests time and again, the government too indirectly encourages them to take such financial assistance, making them lifelong debtors.

The hope of a getting a good yield remains just a dream for a poor farmer.

For more details readers can contact Mr. P. Jayaram, Byrdhenahalli, Devanahalli taluk, Bangalore rural, mobile: 09740963352 and 09591527526.

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## **Aggressive plan mooted for nutritional cactus**

“A more aggressive plan is needed to grow cactus crop in India,” said Dr. S Ayyappan, Director General, ICAR, New Delhi.

While addressing the Inaugural session of two day International Workshop on ‘Cactus crop to improve the rural livelihoods and to adapt to climate change in the arid and semi-arid regions of India’ the Director General said, “The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) will start focusing on this crop with 10,000 ha area in the country to spread and show amazing uses of cactus crop in India with Central Arid Zone Research Institute (CAZRI) as nodal centre.”

## **Joint meet**

The meet was jointly organized by ICAR, International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA), FAO and National Rainfed Area Authority.

He elaborated on the crucial role of cactus in food and nutritional security of the country. While highlighting the characteristics of cactus, he suggested that the wide network of Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) can be employed to spread the cactus in different parts of India.

Dr. Ayyappan offered to organize a national meet on cactus to bring experts from all over the world, farmers and entrepreneurs to deliberate on emerging market of cactus products. Mr. Mukesh Khullar, Joint secretary (crops) and Mission Director, National Food Security Mission, Department of Agriculture and Co-operation stressed the need to promote cactus as an important crop among farmers and its products among consumers.

## **Full assistance**

He assured full assistance and co-operation for knowledge-backed cactus network programme in India. 'Cactus can solve many problems of arid and semi arid areas of India. We can use it as non-conventional food with less calories and more nutritional quality. It can play an important role in food security of the country', he added.

Cactus is getting attention in every continent as vital crop for increasing plant cover, carbon sequestration, livestock feeding, conserving wildlife, medicinal and cosmetic uses. Its estimated cultivation area is 18, 91000 ha, according to the press release from ICAR.

More than 1,600 species are found on the planet and used as soil-water conservator. Nearly 50 products including juice, nectars, candies, frozen pulp, flowers are marketed around the world. National and international experts participated in the workshop.

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## **National Horticulture Board**

Where is the office of the National Horticulture Board (NHB) in Chennai located?

You can contact Mr. Surendra Singh, Senior Asstant .Director, National Horticulture Board, No.37, 2nd floor , SIDCO Ready made Garment Complex, Opposite Balaji Hospital, Guindy, Chennai , website: [www.nhb.gov.in](http://www.nhb.gov.in), Phone. 044-22500956, 22501151. They have a wide range of schemes and subsidies for farmers.

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## **Farmers oppose FDI in retail**

The Tamilaga Vivasayigal Sangham has opposed the move of the Centre to allow 51 per cent of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in retail.

In a statement M.R. Sivasamy, State president of the Sangham said that the FDI in retail will not only affect the merchant community but also the farmers. At present, farmers sell their agricultural produces only through merchants. The multi-national companies that enter the retail trade through FDI will start either procuring the commodities to be sold in sealed packets or will end up setting up own farms.

The argument that allowing FDI into retail trade will bring down the prices of essential commodities was not only illogical but also lacks basis, he said.

Without enhancing fuel generation, dependence on export had led to spiralling prices of petroleum products and even fertilizers, he reminded.

Sangham remains firm in its opposition towards the idea of allowing 51 per cent FDI in retail trade.

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## **Price forecast**

The Domestic and Export Market Intelligence Cell (DEMIC) of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) has advised farmers on sowing Bengal gram, coriander, and cumbu during the Karthigai pattam season.

Based on the Bengal gram prices prevailing in Udumalpet market for the last nine years, the DEMIC has said that price of Bengal gram in February-March will be around Rs. 3,200 to Rs. 3,500 a quintal. Hence, farmers can sow chickpea in November-December to get remunerative price during the harvest period.

According to the study of coriander price for the last 10 years in Virudhunagar Regulated Market, it has been around Rs. 3,100 to Rs. 3,300 a quintal between February-April, which is the harvest season. Based on this, farmers can decide on sowing coriander.

As per the economic analysis done by DEMIC on the last 16 years' price of cumbu at Kovilpatti Market, it has been between Rs. 800 and Rs. 850 a quintal during the harvest of the Karthigai sown crop between February-March.

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### **Sell coconut on harvest**

The Domestic and Export Market Intelligence Cell of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has asked farmers to sell coconut on harvest as the farm gate price is not about to increase till January 2012 end.

According to a release, the present price is between Rs. 7 and Rs. 9 a nut. This is expected to continue.

Coconut prices have been fluctuating from Rs. 4 or Rs. 5 in May 2010 to around Rs. 8.50 or Rs. 9.50 in May 2011. DEMIC came out with the conclusions based on studying the coconut prices that prevailed in Pollachi market.

For details, contact DEMIC over phone 0422-2431405 or Head, Department of Spices and Plantation Crops, TNAU, on 0422-6611284.

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### **NHRC to hear petition on dam safety on Monday**

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), in its full Commission meeting on Monday next, will hear the petition filed by some Kerala MPs seeking its "humanitarian intervention" to save the people of Idukki and adjoining districts, who are likely to be affected if the Mullaperiyar dam bursts as apprehended.

The MPs, including P.T. Thomas (Idukki) and K.P. Dhanapalan (Chalakyudi), both of Congress, and Jose K. Mani (Kottayam), of Kerala Congress-M, in their petition to NHRC member Justice G.P. Mathur here on Wednesday, claimed that the entire Kerala was panic stricken over the possible collapse of the 116-year-old dam constructed with lime and surky.

#### **"4 districts under severe threat"**

"Four districts of Kerala are under severe threat and millions of people will be washed away if the dam collapses in the event of an earthquake of high intensity."

People of the area were not leading a normal and peaceful life and some of them had even started looking for relocation.

Even students were reluctant to go to school. “For millions of innocent people, it is nothing but a tussle between the life and the death,” they said.

The MPs, joined by some from the Congress and the Left parties in Kerala, staged a dharna near the Gandhi statue in the Parliament complex on the issue.

Meanwhile, Union Minister of State for Home Mullapally Ramachandran has written a separate letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to take urgent steps to find an amicable solution to this Kerala-Tamil Nadu dispute.

He told *The Hindu* that the PM had promised to look into the issue and resolve it as it involved the interests of the people of both the States. “Water for Tamil Nadu and safety for Kerala’ is the slogan and I hope everything will end in a peaceful manner,” he said.

Meanwhile, CPI MP from Tamil Nadu (Tenkasi) P. Lingam dismissed as “mere media hype and false propaganda” the reports of fear expressed in Kerala about the safety of the dam. That State had even flouted the Supreme Court direction on increasing the water level up to 142 feet.

What was the guarantee that Tamil Nadu would continue to get water if the new dam was allowed to be constructed, he asked.

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### **Mettur level**

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 106.08 feet on Wednesday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 13,103 cusecs and the discharge, 1,000 cusecs.

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### **Plan to double farmers' income**

#### *Agriculture Department readies plan*

Department of Agriculture has come out with an action plan to kick-start a ‘green revolution’ in the district by doubling the income of small and marginal farmers and increasing the production as well as yield by 50 per cent, all within the next three years.

For the preparation of the plan document, the department took out a comprehensive census of farm families in the district with focus on generating a separate data of small and marginal farmers from among them.

#### **Farm families**

According to the data generated, the total number of farm families in the district stands at 1,68,938 in which as much as 1,35,151 families are falling under the category of ‘small and marginal farmer families.’ “We came out with the exact count of small and marginal farmers as

they are the predominant group in the farming sector and hence, any development project towards the achievement of 'green revolution' should start from them," Joint Director of Agriculture S. Muthusamy told *The Hindu*.

To achieve the objectives envisaged under the 'green revolution,' the department plans to increase the area under cultivation from fallow land by about 10 per cent, speedy distribution of inputs like seeds and fertilizers to small and marginal farmers at subsidized rates and improve overall soil fertility.

"Steps will also be taken to enhance the irrigation intensity by 30 per cent and cropping intensity by 10 per cent so that the targets set for the three years could be attained with ease," Mr. Muthusamy said.

The action plan document has given a vivid description of how the department will try to improve the soil fertility/health, which plays a pivotal role in the enhancement of yield.

### **Soil samples**

"Soil samples will be randomly collected from the holdings of 46,000 farm families to analyse the nutrient levels in it and then give technical support to the farmers accordingly," Mr. Muthusamy said.

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### **Rain raises hope of high yield among farmers**

*Rain in November is close to annual average in Tuticorin*

With Tuticorin district receiving good rainfall, farmers are expecting a considerable yield.

The average annual rainfall of the district is 662 mm and 583.15 mm rainfall has already been recorded as on November 28, according to D. Ranjith Singh Dhanraj, Joint Director, Department of Agriculture (in charge), Tuticorin.

Of the rainfall recorded so far, 501 mm of rainfall occurred during the North East monsoon in 2011.

It was just 429.4 mm during the same period last year.

Paddy and pulses are being cultivated on large tracts of land across the district.

During the previous year, paddy was cultivated on 19, 000 hectares and this year also the officials are hopeful of achieving the same volume of cultivation.

As for pulses, cultivation was taken up on 72, 000 hectares last year and 66, 000 hectares of land had been covered this year.



## **Cotton**

Many farmers had also opted for Bt cotton cultivation since it was highly remunerative.

Cotton cultivation was expected to be taken up on more than 4,000 hectares.

Likewise, maize cultivation was also being taken up as it was sought after for cattle feed and also for poultry feed.

Sowing of maize had been done on 16, 800 hectares, so far. Totally, cultivation of millets would be undertaken on more than 25, 000 hectares this time.

Adequate stocks of fertilizer was available and the farmers were being guided to enhance agriculture productivity in a time bound manner.

## **Kovilpatti**

With a considerable amount of rainfall received in Kovilpatti, farmers were keeping their fingers crossed for a better yield of the rainfed crop.

Rainfall was exceedingly good with a record of 755 mm against the average annual rainfall of 730 mm, D. Jawahar, Professor and Head, Agriculture Research Station, Kovilpatti, said.

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## **Agri-business summit from today**

With 'Bounteous Karnataka' as the slogan, the State's maiden Global Agri-business and Food Processing Summit begins here on Thursday with the State expecting to attract investments of over Rs. 51,000 crore in various sub-sectors of the agrarian economy.

At least 50 memorandums of understanding could be inked during the two-day meet, which will showcase the potential the State in various sectors. As many as eight companies involved in agriculture and allied sectors have come forward to invest more than Rs. 500 crore.

Sources in the Agriculture Department told *The Hindu* on Wednesday that B.V.G. India, Pune; Natural Commodities, Bangalore; Welspun, Mumbai; Akashaykalpa, Tiptur; Marg Group, Chennai; Srei Infra, Kolkata; are expected to sign MoUs for investing Rs. 500 crore and above at the venue, Bangalore International Exhibition Centre, here.

Over 400 investors from India and abroad and several multinational companies from France, Australia, the Netherlands and Israel are expected to participate in the meet that will be inaugurated by Union Minister for Agriculture Sharad Pawar.

Major areas likely to invite investment are agri-infrastructure–post-harvesting, agri-engineering, agro-based industry, agri-innovation hubs, agri-tourism hubs, food processing industries, agri-logistics, food processing clusters, food parks and markets, dairy and fisheries.



*In the offing: The food processing sector is expected to grab the lion's share of investments at the meet. — File Photo: Sampath Kumar G.P.*

## **Production**

Agricultural production in the State is spread over three seasons — kharif, rabi and summer — and normal coverage during these seasons is 71.34 lakh hectares, 33.92 lakh hectares and 6.35 lakh hectares, respectively. The primary sector contribution to the State's Gross Domestic Product is 16.22 per cent in 2010-11 (2004-5 constant prices) while the secondary and tertiary sectors contribute 28.61 per cent and 55.17 per cent, respectively.

In spite of several scandals that have brought disrepute to the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Government is confident of attracting the investment, with the food processing sector taking the lion's share of around Rs. 36,000 crore.

Chief Minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda said 40,000 acres of land is needed to set up projects from the expected investments.

The Government has in its possession about 10,000 acres and would look for barren land to meet the requirement.

For providing various facilities to investors, the Government has brought out the Karnataka State Agricultural Policy 2006, Integrated Agri-business Development Policy 2011, Karnataka State Policy on Organic Farming, 2004; Karnataka State Livestock Policy, 2010; Karnataka State Fisheries Policy, 2010; Karnataka State Infrastructure Policy, 2007; and Karnataka State Industrial Policy, 2009-14.

The Bangalore Chamber of Industry and Commerce and Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry said the summit is a good initiative which would encourage and enhance growth in the agri and food processing industry.

### **Parallel meet**

Meanwhile, opposing the meet, a farmers' organisation has said it would hold a parallel meeting to protest against the two-day event, alleging that it is designed to pledge thousands of acres of arable land to multinationals. Leaders of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha, Karnataka Prantha Raitha Sangha and the Karnataka Prantha Krishi Koolikarara Sangha would organise the meet to educate farmers about looming dangers in agriculture.

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### **Poultry training**

State Poultry Production and Training Centre, Hesarghatta, will organise a 10-day training in poultry from December 8 on its premises. Call 080-28466093. — Staff Reporter

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### **Agriculture is his religion**

“For me, *bhoomi thayi* [Mother Earth] is the ultimate god. She gives everything to the human race, she does not fail anybody and she feeds every living thing on earth,” says the ‘Raitha Swami’.

A simple man, the 64-year-old Siddarama Shivacharyaru heads the Sri Mahanteshwara Math at Chinamgera in Afzalpur taluk of Gulbarga district. He is a ‘green swami’ who spends more than 12 hours a day in the fields and very little time in the math.

“My religion is agriculture. The farmer's life is the best example of ‘work is worship’ as professed in Veerashaivism,” he says.

The swami studiously avoids political influence and has devoted much of his life to agriculture.

When a devotee visits him, the first question he asks is about the condition of the crops in his (devotee's) field. He gives free advice on healthy agricultural practices and the kind of crops to be grown.



*Leading by example: Siddarama Shivacharyaru, the 'Raitha Swami', in a red gram field at Chinamgera. — Photo: Arun Kulkarni*

### **Large tracts of land**

The swami took charge of the math at the age of 18. At that time, the math owned 60 acres of land. This has now grown to 350 acres, including a horticultural farm with 6,000 banana plants. Another 100 acres of rain-fed land will be irrigated soon, with the laying of the pipeline from the Bhima.

After completing his morning chores and performing puja, the swami leaves on foot or on a bullock cart to his field. During the sowing season, it is common to see him ploughing the field and tending the cattle.

“I do not know anything but agriculture. I want to set an example to other agriculturists that if we work in the field, we will be richly rewarded.”

### **Self-sufficient**

The math is now self-sufficient in foodgrains needed to maintain the 'anna dasoha' (free meal to those who visit the math).

The math has a wide following both in Gulbarga district and in Maharashtra. Devotees throng the region during the annual jatra in June.

The swami also runs an educational institution providing free residential education to students from poor background.

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### **Farmers seek more time to complete tank projects**

Farmers in Kolar district have sought an extension of the deadline for completion of a World Bank-funded community-based tank management project.

The project is being implemented by the Jala Samvardhana Yojana Sangha (JSYS) in Karnataka since 2002 and the bank has set a deadline for completing all ongoing work under the second phase by January 2012.

According to JSYS district programme coordinator K.H. Naik, 521 tank works were taken up in the first phase in Kolar district and 177 in the second phase.

Of the estimated cost of Rs. 4,428.82 lakh for the first phase, Rs. 3,449.72 lakh was spent. A sum of Rs. 3,243.47 lakh was earmarked for the second phase, of which Rs. 967.53 lakh had been spent till date, Mr. Naik told *The Hindu*.



*On the ground: A team from the World Bank interacting with beneficiaries of community-based tank management projects in Kolar district.*

## **No promises made**

A team from the bank led by senior vice-president and general counsel Anne Marie Leroy visited several places in the district where the project is under way.

The members expressed satisfaction at the works executed so far, but did not give a concrete assurance about the time extension.

Ms. Leroy said the team was concerned with the legal aspects. They had no objection to the extension. "But, the final decision rests with senior authorities of the bank," she said during an interaction with farmers who requested the extension.

As the community-based tank management project was a time-bound scheme in Karnataka, the World Bank was reportedly insisting that the Government complete all the works in the given time.

But the Government and JSYS had submitted a proposal to the bank to extend the time as similar requests had poured in from many parts of the State, sources said.

## **Inspection**

The World Bank team visited Kurki in Kolar taluk, and Nallur and Bevahalli in Mulbagal taluk, where they inspected tank development works and other income generating activities of the tank users' societies. They were happy with the development of the tank bund at Kurki.

## **Paddy farming praised**

They praised the adaption of 'Sri-paddhati' in paddy cultivation in the entire 97-acre catchment area of the tank at Nallur.

As farmers reaped profit from this system, they suggested that it be extended to neighbouring villages also.

"The idea of involving the community in development work has reaped fruit. It has helped the farmers as well as other village residents," Ramakrishnappa, president of Bevahalli Kere Abhivridhi Sangha, said.

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## **State unprepared for dam disasters**

### *No dam-break analysis or inundation study to survive the cataclysm*

Recurring earthquakes in Idukki district and the spillway-level waters of the 116-year-old Mullaperiyar dam have opened the floodgates of a mass movement in Kerala. But the State's preparedness to meet the catastrophe of a dam failure remains far from adequate. So far, it has not done a dam-break analysis or an inundation study keeping the possibility of failures of the Mullaperiyar and the Idukki dams in view.

Belatedly, the State has now decided to commission a study by the Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, and an agreement for this was signed in New Delhi on Wednesday. Such a study report would have come in handy for the State in arguing its case before the Supreme Court if it had been done in time.

The court, while allowing Tamil Nadu's plea to raise the water level of the Mullaperiyar reservoir, had observed that the water from the Mullaperiyar reservoir would be contained in the Idukki reservoir if the former failed. While this is factually incorrect for all situations, Kerala had failed to point out that there were around 75,000 people living in the area between the two dams. In fact, even today the government does not have a correct estimate of the area that would be inundated in case of a failure of the dam, the population in the area, distances, and the response time that each locality would get.

### **No answers**

There is no idea about the safer places to which these people could be effectively moved within the response time. In many countries such studies have become mandatory. When questions about this were raised at a recent press conference of Water Resources Minister P.J. Joseph, the answer from a scientist of the Centre for Earth Science Studies was that they had not completed their study on this. It could take the waters from Mullaperiyar four to six hours to reach the Idukki dam "according to some authoritative sources," he said giving the impression that he himself was not sure of that.

Mr. Joseph said that in case of failure of the Idukki dam, the people of Ernakulam district would have nowhere to go. There was little point in planning for disaster management for such an eventuality. And this eventuality will be real in the case of failure of the Mullaperiyar dam if the Idukki dam is nearly full.

The Mullaperiyar dam currently has more than 11 tmcft of water while the Idukki dam is short of only 10 tmcft to reach its full reservoir level. It is obvious that the waters from Mullaperiyar would not be contained in Idukki under the present situation.

The spillways on the Cheruthoni dam of the Idukki reservoir would not be able to handle the flow if the water level is higher.

More than that, there is the possibility of large quantities of earth and debris landing in the Idukki reservoir leading to overtopping of the dam.

### **Clogged spillways**

Floating trees could damage and clog the spillways. Even if the dams of the Idukki reservoir survive, the reservoir would be rendered practically useless by silt. Inadequacy of spillway capacity has been one of the major reasons for failure of dams the world over.

The spillway capacity of the Idukki reservoir is not considered adequate to meet the combined probable maximum flood in the catchments of the Mullaperiyar and Idukki dams.

The government came alive to the need to clear the blocks and debris behind the spillways of Mullaperiyar only after water reached the spillway level overnight this week.

With water flowing over the spillways, the work became difficult.

In fact, experts had recommended long back that a certain slope should be ensured along the flat area behind the spillways for efficient discharge of water. (The spillways of Mullaperiyar are a separate structure and a flat stretch of land separates it from the water in the reservoir until the level reaches 136 feet). This is yet to be carried out.

### **Thrust areas**

In case of failure of Mullaperiyar, opening of the spillways, emptying of water, and measures to protect the Idukki dam will assume paramount importance.

Effective reduction of water is to be achieved in a few hours.

However, even communication and quick response systems are absent both at Mullaperiyar and Cheruthoni except for some interim arrangement made by the District Collector a few days ago. Many of the instrumentations for measuring parameters such as stress and strain on the dam are either absent or defective at both locations.

The government had asked A.V. George, head of the Department of Geology and Environmental Sciences of Christ College, Iringalakuda, in 2007 to undertake a study on disaster management, in case of failure of the dams. However, it did not make much progress because of the lethargy of the Irrigation Department and objections from the Finance Department.



## **Proposal**

A proposal to establish a network of digital seismometers met with a similar fate. Now, the Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) takes hours to determine epicentres of tremors, especially when it happens at night as graphs are to be fetched manually from the seismic stations.

Information about epicentres of quakes and their magnitude is important information for those overseeing rescue and relief operations in the event of earthquakes.

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## **Farmer ends life**

Uppala Praveen Reddy, a 35-year-old cotton farmer from Pyaramur village in Sarangapur mandal, committed suicide on Wednesday by consuming poison in his field. Failure of crop had caused him distress that forced him to take the extreme step.

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## **Vegetable cultivation gets a fillip**

The State government, through the Department of Horticulture, is encouraging vegetable plantation in a big way along with other horticulture crops in the district. More and more farmers are switching to vegetable cultivation in view of the guaranteed income and the 50 per cent subsidy component.

The government is extending a subsidy of Rs.3000 per hectare for growing vegetables including tomato, brinjal, lady fingers, and leafy vegetables.

Vegetable cultivation has already been taken up in 43 mandals of the district covering an area of 10,280 hectares. Every year 500 hectares are being added to total area as part of the action plans of the State Horticulture Mission.

Small farmers, having land holdings of two to three hectares, are growing vegetables and earning handsome income utilising the government subsidy on seed, fertilizers, and pesticides and also 100 per cent subsidy on drip irrigation.

Appala Naidu, a small farmer in Munchingputtu village in the Agency mandal, is getting good income by cultivating tomato, brinjal, and leafy vegetables. He is earning an assured profit of Rs.5,000 per hectare every month, says the farmer.

Assistant Director of Horticulture S. Ram Mohan said crops such as cashew, mango, coconut, vegetables, oil palm, and banana plantations spread over an area of 75,000 hectares in the district. Crop monopoly of certain vegetables can be tackled by spreading their cultivation to more areas, he says.

Presently cashew is grown in 31,000 hectares, mango (15,000 hectares), coconut plantations (7,500 hectares), oil palm (4000 hectares) and banana (1500 hectares).

### **Subsidy**

The subsidy for mango crop is Rs.12,000 per hectare, cashew Rs.7,500, coconut Rs.7,800, papaya Rs. 22,500, and banana Rs.31,125.

Matsyaraju, a small farmer in Peddabayalu, says farmers like him are able to make both ends meet through vegetable cultivation.

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## **Business Standard**

Thursday, Dec 01, 2011

### **Jeera output may rise 40% on high acreage, better weather conditions**

Higher acreage, coupled with healthy crop condition across all major growing regions, are likely to fetch 40 per cent additional jeera output this year.

This year, production of the commodity is estimated to be 3.5-3.8 million bags (1 bag = 55 kg) as compared to 2.5 million bags last year. Data compiled by the Gujarat agricultural department show that overall sowing area has jumped 56 per cent to 113,100 hectares (ha) so far this year, as compared to 49,764 ha last year.

“Farmers’ realisation from this spice jumped 13 per cent in the last crop growing period between October 2010-October 2011, which prompted farmers to bring more area under jeera,” said a leading city-based trader.

The price of jeera at the National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) surged to Rs 15,274 a quintal on October 1, 2010, from Rs 13,518 a quintal on the same day last year.

Analysts believe farmers were enthusiastic with the returns fetched last year. Hence, they sowed more.

Sowing of jeera begins in early October and continues until the first week of December for harvesting in February-March. Gujarat is the largest producer, consisting of 70 per cent of overall output. Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh are other large producers of this spice.

“In 2005, farmers got Rs 60 for a kg of jeera, and now get Rs 120 for a kg. Obviously, they will grow what gives them better returns,” said Bhaskar Shah, a Mumbai-based jeera trader.

Since 2009, prices have surged 34.6 per cent on the back of good export demand in the last two years. Also, good rain in crop growing areas has caused acreage to increase under the spice. Jeera requires sufficient moisture in the soil during October and November and the weather conditions have been favourable.

Arrivals in the spot market of Unjha, Gujarat, are steady and stood at 3,000-4,000 bags.

Last year, the crop was destroyed in India’s two biggest export competitors, Syria and Turkey, causing substantial increase in offtake from foreign buyers. This year, in contrast, exports have not been good so far. The shipment is expected to pick up once the fresh crop hits the market in February.

Jeera exports from April till September are 15 per cent lower than last year. During this period, 16,000 tonnes have been exported, compared to 18,800 tonnes during the same time last year.

“Fresh arrivals will hit the market only by mid-February, but the initial arrivals will have heavy moisture content. Arrivals that will come into the market in March will be of good quality, as the moisture content will be lower,” said a jeera trader.

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### **Palmolein import tax unlikely to be raised**

India, the world’s second-biggest user of cooking oil, will resist calls from local processors to increase tax on refined palmolein imports, as a plunge in the rupee makes overseas purchases abroad more expensive, according to two government officials.

The government will keep \$484 a tonne as the base price for taxing imports at 7.5 per cent at least the next three months, said the officials, who have direct knowledge of the matter. An

increase in the base rate would have raised the prices of imported oil, fuelling inflation, they said. The rate may be raised in the annual budget in February, they said.

India's rupee fell to a record 52.73 per dollar on November 22, on concern Europe's debt crisis would hurt demand for emerging market assets. The 14.6 per cent slump in the currency this year threatens to boost import costs, fueling inflation. The food price index has stayed above nine per cent for the last 16 weeks.

"If the current base price continues, refined oil imports will likely increase and hurt domestic refiners," said BV Mehta, executive director of the Solvent Extractors' Association of India, a grouping of processors. "Unfortunately, the government is more concerned about the food inflation."

The processors in September asked the government to increase the base price and import duty on refined palmolein after Indonesia, India's biggest supplier, cut export tax on refined palm oil and raised export duty on crude palm oil.

Food minister K V Thomas declined to comment. India set the base price for various cooking oils more than five years ago, while the actual cost of imported fats have surged, according to processors' group. Refined palmolein is imported at about \$1,080 a tonne, while buyers need to pay tax only at \$484 a tonne, it said. The benchmark prices, introduced to prevent traders from paying lower import duties by understating edible oil prices, are revised in line with international edible oil prices.

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**THE TIMES OF INDIA**

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### **[Oil price above \\$100 on international banking plan](#)**

NEW YORK: The price of oil on Wednesday finished trading above \$100 for the first time in two weeks, as the U.S. and other countries made it easier for banks to lend money and keep the global economy growing.

The Federal Reserve said it will team up with the [European Central Bank](#), the [Bank of England](#) and the central banks of Canada, Japan and Switzerland to increase the flow of dollars around the world. The coordinated move should be a shot in the arm for Europe, where a

festering credit crisis has slowed the eurozone economy and threatened a recession.

Separately, China reduced the level of cash its banks are required to keep on hand in an effort to boost lending and keep the world's second-largest economy going strong.

Benchmark crude rose 57 cents to finish at \$100.36 per barrel in New York. At one point it was as high as \$101.75 a barrel. Brent crude, used to price many foreign kinds of oil, rose 12 cents to end at \$109.98 per barrel in London.

Wednesday's price increases indicate that many oil traders think the global economy will eventually benefit — and oil demand will grow — as more money flows through the banking system. The Fed added more encouraging news in its Beige Book survey released Wednesday. It showed the U.S. economy expanding at a slow but steady pace in most parts of the country.

For now, however, oil and gas demand remains weak. The Energy Information Administration reported Wednesday that U.S. wholesale gasoline demand fell in November to the lowest monthly average since January 2004.

“That was rather disappointing, given that last week included a holiday weekend,” independent analyst and trader Stephen Schork said.

American motorists have been driving less with retail prices well above seasonal record levels.

The government reported Wednesday that oil and gasoline supplies grew last week, as imports rose and refineries slowed down because of weak demand. The weak supply and demand numbers kept [oil prices](#) from rising further.

In other energy trading, heating oil was virtually unchanged to end at \$3.0214 per gallon, and gasoline futures rose 1.86 cents to finish at \$2.5677 per gallon. Natural gas lost 8.3 cents to end at \$3.550 per 1,000 cubic feet.

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### **Commodity gains limited as growth slows: Morgan Stanley**

SINGAPORE: Commodities show limited potential for gains in 2012 as the global economy slows and risk aversion boosts the dollar, according to Morgan Stanley. A comprehensive solution to Europe's debt crisis remains elusive, while economic indicators signal a slowdown

and deleveraging and fiscal austerity should impair growth, providing a "myriad of headwinds" for expansion, said analysts led by Hussein Allidina in a report.

Commodities had their worst quarter since 2008 in the three months to September 30 on concern that Europe's debt crisis was spreading, while 18 of 24 commodities tracked by the Standard & Poor's GSCI Index dropped in November. [JPMorgan Chase](#), the biggest US bank by assets, cut its recommendation on commodities to "underweight" on November 22, while [Goldman Sachs](#) trimmed its forecast for gains in the next 12 months to 15% from 20% in a report on November 14.

"Upside for commodities as an asset class is likely limited given the fragile state of the OECD," said Allidina, referring to the 34 economies in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. "The non-OECD should continue to support global growth, but the pace is slowing."

[Morgan Stanley](#) reiterated its call for gold as a top pick as investors seek a store of value and haven against debt risk and a slowing economy in Europe and the US. The bank expects bullion to average \$2,200 an ounce next year. Spot gold, which rallied to an all-time high of \$1,921.15 on September 6 and traded at \$1,707.69 at 5:38 pm in Singapore, is heading for an 11th annual gain. The bank also backed corn, soybeans and cattle as supplies may lag behind demand.

While Goldman pared its 12-month forecast for returns on the S&P GSCI Enhanced Commodity Index this month, it kept a "neutral" call on commodities in three to six months, and an "overweight" recommendation over 12 months, as "global growth will provide enough support to demand to drive key commodity prices higher," said analysts led by Jeffrey Currie. Commodities are beating equities for a fifth consecutive year.

While the MSCI All-Country World Index of equities has dropped 13% this year and yields on Treasuries fell to near-record lows, the S&P GSCI index rose 3.1%. Raw materials are heading for a second monthly increase as crude oil in New York had a "nonfundamental adjustment," Societe Generale's commodity strategist Jeremy Friesen said in an interview on Tuesday.

"Fundamentally, you can't get really optimistic or really bullish about the commodity markets with current state of the world," he said. West Texas Intermediate futures rose 6.3% this month after plans were announced to reverse the direction of a pipeline to start shipping oil from the

contract's delivery point, easing a bottleneck that weighed on prices. Expectations for a stronger dollar may provide an "additional headwind" for commodities, said Allidina.

Dollar- denominated commodities tend to move inversely to the currency. The Standard & Poor's GSCI Total Return Index lost 12% in the three months to September 30, the biggest drop since 2008, as the dollar rallied 5.7% against a sixcurrency basket including the euro. "Historically, we have seen periods where both the US dollar and commodities have rallied, owing to strength in the US economy," wrote Allidina.

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