

Published: July 11, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 11, 2011 04:13 IST ERODE, July 11, 2011

State to provide fresh lease of life to agriculture, says Minister

Also studying problems faced by farmers in marketing their produce



New initiatives: State Agriculture Minister K.A. Sengottaiyan speaking at the annual general body meeting of Erode Precision Farm Products Company at Sivagiri on Sunday.— Photo: Special arrangement

The State Government has taken efforts to give a fresh lease of life to the agriculture sector and make it a model to other states in the country, Agriculture Minister K.A. Sengottaiyan has said.

Participating in the annual general body meeting of Erode Precision Farm Products Company Limited here on Sunday, the Minister said the farming community in the State were experiencing a number of issues and the government was taking concerted efforts to sort out the problems.

The Mettur Reservoir was opened earlier this year, facilitating the farmers in the tail end areas to get adequate water, the Minister pointed out.

He further said that the State government was also studying the problems encountered by the farmers in marketing their produce. Currently, a number of agricultural produce were being passed through the middlemen at several points before reaching the consumer. As a result, farmers were not getting remunerative prices for their produce.

“We are working out strategies to reduce the role of middlemen and enhance the revenue for the farmers,” the Minister said.

He encouraged the farmers to take up suitable modern cultivation methods such as precision farming as there was an urgent need to enhance the food production in the country. The farm lands were also shrinking due to the burgeoning population.

The agricultural productivity had to be increased in order to meet the growing demand for food, he pointed out.

Public Works Minister K.V. Ramalingam, speaking on the occasion, said that the State Government had ensured adequate supply of seeds, fertilizer and pesticides to the farming community.

Book release

Later, Mr. Sengottaiyan released a book titled 'Uzhuthavan Kanakku' and honoured two farmers P.M. Chinnusamy and P. Ramareddy during the function.

The company was established by 100 farmers who had adopted the precision farming method for cultivation of various crops in Sivagiri and neighbouring areas.

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Precision Farming Project Officer E. Vadivel, NABARD Deputy Manager G. Santhanam, Company Chairman M. Senapathy and officials of the company were present.

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Whiff of chilli to keep wild elephants off crops

New experiment uses ropes, coated with chilli powder and engine oil, to rein in the marauding animals



Chilli paste-coated ropes are being tried in Kerala to rein in prowling wild elephants.

Initial results of the experiment, being tried out in the Vazhachal and Ayyampuzha forest areas, have been found to be encouraging, say scientists of the Kerala Forest Research Institute, Peechi.

Moving away from the traditional methods of scaring away elephants by bursting firecrackers and making loud noises, wildlife researchers are trying coir ropes coated with a paste of chilli powder and used engine oil to control the crop-raiding animals. Researches carried out in some parts of Africa using a powder made of capsicum and used engine oil have been found to be effective and the Food and Agricultural Organisation has recommended its use to control elephant herds, says E.A. Jaison, scientists of the institute, who is leading the experiment.

The smell emanating from chilli powder and used engine oil irritates elephants and prevents their entry into cultivated areas. The efficiency of the chilli rope during the monsoon season is being evaluated in the two forest ranges of Athirappilly and Charpa, says Mr. Jaison.

A clever lot

Elephants, one of the most intelligent animal species, get easily accustomed to the traditional techniques used to deter them from farmlands and human habitations, such as noise-making devices, trip-wire activated alarms, and non-lethal electric fencing. They invent ways to overcome such hurdles like destroying the electric fence by pulling trees over them and snapping the safe portions of electric lines. For deterring elephants from human settlements,

continuous practice of any single method is not advisable, but a combination of methods may be practised, says Mr. Jaison.

Coir rope of 120 m length was tied at a height of five feet across the pathway of elephants in trial locations to the cultivation. The paste of used engine oil and chilli powder, mixed in the ratio of 2:1, was applied on the rope.

The result showed that the chilli rope could stop elephants up to 13 days from the day of application even during heavy monsoon, says Mr. Jaison.

During these days, elephants came near the rope around midnight thrice and returned. However, they entered the farmland on the 13th day through the pathway where the rope had lost the paste in rain. The efficacy of the method will be tried during summer also. The rope is expected to last more in deterring the elephants during summer months, he says. Farmers themselves can set up this cost-effective method. Burning of bricks made of cow dung and chilli powder is one method that is commonly tried by farmers. The stench and the irritating sensation created by the remains in the atmosphere act as a deterrent. The man-animal conflict involving elephants has been a matter of concern for the Forest Department. It has so far constructed 482-km-long elephant-proof trenches in various centres and set up 457 km of power fencing to prevent the elephant raids. It has prepared plans for the relocation of people from 14 settlements in the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary with a total outlay of Rs.80 crore. The department has also acquired 155.9073 hectare of private land for the restoration of elephant corridors since 1992. Steps for acquiring another 131.5 hectare in Wayanad are under way.

Published: July 11, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 11, 2011 04:12 IST MANGALORE, July 11, 2011

Farm loans peak as sowing begins

In Dakshina Kannada, 78,000 farmers have taken short-term crop loans amounting up to Rs. 3 lakh at an interest rate of 1 per cent.

The total amount borrowed is Rs. 300 crore till June, said P.R. Palangappa, Deputy Registrar of Cooperative Societies.

The maximum number of short-term crop loans is taken in June, the sowing season, and the process is on, he said. Crop loans are sought for growing paddy, arecanut, cashew, coconut, banana, fruits and pulses. Ninety per cent of the borrowers take short-term loans as it has fewer formalities and doesn't require pledging property.

Recovery rate

Rajendra Kumar, chairman and managing director, South Canara District Central Cooperative Bank Ltd. (SCDCC Bank), said in Dakshina Kannada, loan recovery from farmers was 95 per cent last year. While the SCDCC Bank was not directly giving loans to fishermen, Yashpal S. Suvarna, chairman, South Kanara and Udupi District Cooperative Fish Marketing Federation Ltd., said no fisherman had got the 3 per cent loan as banks insist on security.

The federation is in talks with V.S. Acharya, Udupi district in-charge Minister, to release the funds to the federation.

Published: July 11, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 11, 2011 04:13 IST MOSCOW, July 11, 2011

Indian agrochemical industry reaches out to China

For the first time, Indian pesticide manufacturers, seeking to win a greater foothold in the growing agrochemical market of Russia and other former Soviet States, have joined hands with Chinese businessmen.

The International Crop Science Conference and Exhibition (ICSC-2011), held in Moscow last week also became the first trilateral business initiative on Russian soil. The event was organised by the Pesticides Manufacturers & Formulators Association of India (PMFAI) with the cooperation of the Indian Chemexcil, the China Crop Protection Industry Association (CCPIA), and the Russian Union of Crop Protection & Manufacturers and the Russian Grain Union. The conference brought together 68 Indian and 19 Chinese companies involved in the production of plant protection substances.

The fact that Indian organisers invited Chinese competitors to an export-oriented meet “in one sense reflected the confidence of Indian pesticides and chemicals manufacturers that they had quality products to offer at competitive prices,” said Indian Ambassador to Russia Ajai Malhotra, who inaugurated the event.

The Indian pesticides industry is the second-largest in Asia, after China, and the third-largest in the world, while Russia is the largest and fastest-growing consumer in the \$-1.2 billion market of the former Soviet Union.

Mr. Malhotra felt that Indian agrochemical exports, which amounted to nearly \$40 million, could, with concerted effort, be increased to \$200 million over the next few years. He urged Indian producers to pursue aggressively the agrochemicals registration process in Russia. Some participants had complained that it was rather cumbersome.

PMFAI members alone picked up an additional \$4-million-worth of orders at the ICSC-2011 and got many good business leads. Chemexcil members too obtained good trade orders and enquiries at the event. The organisers decided to make the event an annual feature.

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Madurai agriculturalist tries his hand in Ethiopia

He is a successful farmer in Madurai district. Though not a graduate,

R. Raajan Babu, a third generation agriculturist, loves innovation. He is comfortable with experimenting new techniques in farming, which are adopted in many developed nations.

The drive and motivation in Mr. Babu have steered him towards a new destination — Ethiopia. Yes. He is going to grow cardamom, pepper, ginger, and a few other essential oil-yielding plants in about 2,000 hectares there in a phased manner soon on a long-term lease arrangement. “The officials there have promised to help me set up the venture when I interacted with them at an agricultural trade fair,” Mr. Babu tells L. Srikrishnain in a conversation.

The name Ethiopia may give a different picture to many. But “I decided to take it up after a recent visit with my consultant. Apart from government support and assurance for speedy

clearance of procedures, climatic conditions are encouraging. The average rainfall is 1,000-1,500 mm in the location, where I have identified the land. Power is a problem. Mobile communication is weak...still, there is an attraction as labour is in plenty. The location is at a good altitude. To put it in a nutshell, it is worth trying. It is affordable," he sums up. Further, the government gives tax benefits. "Once my proposal gets through, the Ministry has promised to offer collateral-free fund for the project, provided I offered some kind of a bank guarantee. I don't have lot of money to invest," he says. Mr. Babu, who has agricultural lands at Mangalakudi village near Uthangudi in Madurai district, has also cardamom plantations in Rajapalayam, Virudhunagar district. "Getting skilled labourers for work is a challenge. There is a lot of migration from the village to urban locations. Government schemes such as the 100-day employment guarantee schemes have attracted the workers so much that engaging them is very expensive," he shares his experience. "Shortly," is how he responds when asked when he plans to go to Ethiopia. "I will take some two to three experts from here to study various factors before my actual commencement," he concludes.

Published: July 11, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 11, 2011 04:12 IST KOLLAM, July 11, 2011

Mechanisation vital in farm sector: Minister

Cooperative bodies' role lauded

: Minister for Forests K.B. Ganesh Kumar said here on Sunday that mechanisation was necessary to promote agricultural activities in the State. Inaugurating a district-level cooperative trade fair of Consumerfed, he said he was in favour of total mechanisation in order to revive paddy cultivation in the State.

Mr. Ganesh Kumar said the profit aspect was vital in motivating the younger generation to take to farming.

He said cooperative institutions had played a vital role in holding the price line of essential commodities.

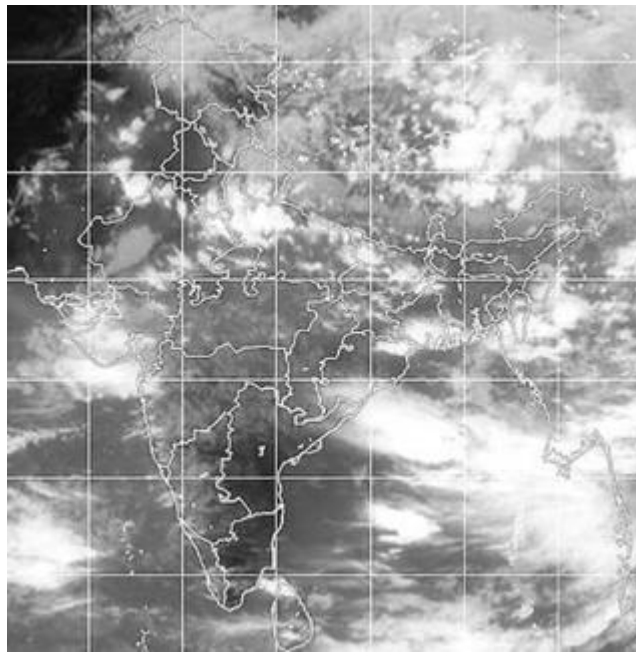
Intervention by cooperative institutions would not in any manner affect the prospects of honest open market traders.

The Minister opined that more transparency in purchases would enable cooperative institutions to sell commodities at even more reduced prices to the consumers.

A.A. Azeez, Eravipuram MLA, presided over the function. Kollam MLA P.K. Gurudasan spoke..

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Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs.Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on July 10.

ANDHRA PRADESH				
Anantapur	35	23	0	122
Arogyavaram	33	23	0	56

Bapatla	38	26	0	68
Calingapatnam	32	27	0	237
Gannavaram	35	26	0	208
Hanamkonda	35	23	0	106
Hyderabad A.P.	34	22	tr	84
Kakinada	36	27	0	173
Kammam	34	24	0	136
Kavali	39	29	0	39
Kurnool	37	25	0	59
Mahabubnagar	33	23	0	100
Machilipatnam	38	27	0	124
Narsapur	36	28	0	257
Nellore	39	29	0	106
Nizamabad	33	24	0	231

Ongole	38	28	0	42
Ramagundam	34	26	tr	177
Tirupathi AP	38	27	0	123
Tuni	36	27	0	147
Vizag AP	35	27	0	238
Vizag	31	27	0	150
KARNATAKA				
Agumbe	26	18	22	2193
Bangalore AP	30	19	7	130
Bangalore	30	20	1	93
Belgaum AP	27	19	tr	187
Bellary	34	23	0	115
Bijapur	31	21	3	81
Chitradurga	31	21	0	65

Chickmagalur	26	16	0	83
Chintamani	32	20	0	67
Gadag	30	20	0	119
Gulbarga	32	23	0	159
Honavar	30	23	11	1436
Karwar	31	23	10	1272
Madikeri	23	17	5	923
Mangalore AP	31	24	12	1301
Mysore	32	19	0	50
Mandya	33	18	0	26
Panambur	31	25	4	1207
Raichur	35	20	0	183
Shirali	31	24	7	1358
KERALA				

Alappuzha	30	24	6	488
Kannur	32	—	—	—
Kochi AP	32	25	0	896
Kozhikode	33	26	tr	1039
Punalur	31	23	0	447
Thiruvanantha				
-puram AP	31	25	tr	306
Thiruvanantha				
-puram City	32	25	tr	306
Vellanikkara	32	25	1	841
TAMIL NADU				
Adiramapattinam	36	25	0	36
Coimbatore AP	33	23	0	65
Coonoor	23	14	tr	140

Cuddalore	37	25	tr	80
Chennai AP	36	27	0	190
Chennai	35	27	0	172
Dharmapuri	36	23	10	31
Kanyakumari	—	—	0	75
Karaikal	36	26	0	46
Kodaikanal	20	12	16	97
Madurai AP	37	22	19	90
Nagapattinam	36	26	0	37
Palayamkottai	39	27	1	18
Pamban	35	27	0	1
Parangipettai	36	25	0	55
Puducherry	37	26	0	65
Salem	35	25	14	94

Tiruchi AP	38	23	11	121
Tiruthani	37	26	0	109
Tondi	37	27	0	42
Tuticorin	35	27	0	6
Ooty	20	11	0	161
Valparai	27	17	14	905
Vedharanyam	36	26	0	23
Vellore	37	26	tr	91
LAKSHADWEEP				
Amini Divi	31	27	tr	208
Minicoy	32	24	14	288
Kavarathi	32	25	2	201
OTHER STATIONS				
Kolkata (Alipore)	34	28	0	461

Mumbai	28	24	25	741
New Delhi	33	27	tr	103

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (trace) and total rainfall in mm since June 01, 2011

Isolated rainfall over A.P.

CHENNAI: Rainfall occurred at many places over coastal Karnataka and at a few places over Kerala. Isolated rainfall occurred over Tamil Nadu, Lakshadweep, Andhra Pradesh and interior Karnataka.

Ulundurpet (Villupuram dt.) recorded a heavy rainfall of 9 centimetres.

The other chief amounts of rainfall recorded in centimetres are:

Perungalur (Pudukottai dt.) and Tirumangalam (Madurai dt.) 6 each, Tirukoilur (Villupuram dt.) 4, Sankarapuram (Villupuram dt.), Nannilam (Tiruvarur dt.), Keeranur (Pudukottai dt.) and Yercaud 3 each, Agumbe, Thrissur, Thodupuzha (Idukki dt.), Kallakurichi (Villupuram dt.), Gandarvakottai (Pudukottai dt.), Papireddipatti (Dharmapuri dt.), Barur (Krishnagiri dt.), Madurai Airport and Kodaikanal 2 each .

FORECAST (valid until Tuesday morning): Rain or thundershowers would occur at many places over coastal Karnataka and at a few places over Kerala, interior Karnataka and Lakshadweep.

Isolated rain or thundershower may occur over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Andhra Pradesh.

Published: July 11, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 11, 2011 04:13 IST RAJAHMUNDRY, July 11, 2011

Loan scheme for tenant farmers launched

'Sagu Rythu Rakshana Hastam' to benefit 26 lakh tenant farmers



'With you, always': Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy presenting the tenant farmers lending card to a beneficiary in Rajahmundry on Sunday.— Photo: S. Rambabu

A unique scheme, 'Sagu Rythu Rakshana Hastam', making tenant farmers eligible for loans and other benefits in the State was launched by Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy here on Sunday.

Distributing the cards, Mr. Reddy said it was a loan eligibility and multi-purpose card and would benefit 26 lakh tenant farmers in the State. However, six to seven lakh farmers would be covered this year. This was the first time in the country that such a novel scheme was being implemented for which an ordinance was already promulgated, he said.

Addressing hundreds of tenant farmers at Arts College grounds here, he appealed to the farmers of East, West Godavari districts to withdraw crop holiday immediately and cautioned them against falling into the trap of some political parties which were instigating them. He asked the opposition parties not to play politics with farmers and instigate them against the government. Crop holiday would affect the production of paddy in the State.

Referring to the demand for increasing Minimum Support Price (MSP), he said that between 1999 and 2004 the MSP was increased from Rs.520 to Rs.590 and between 2004 to 2011 the MSP went up from Rs.590 to Rs.1,110, which was 88 per cent. Despite this increase, he had also requested the Centre to give Rs.120 additional bonus for Paddy.

The Chief Minister said that he sought the permission of the Centre to export at least 25 lakh metric tonnes of non-basmati rice. The State was getting Rs.10,500 crores of subsidies on fertilizer alone from the Central government.

Revenue Minister N. Raghuvveera Reddy explained the highlights of the scheme and claimed that no Communist government in the country has dared to introduce tenant farmer's protection scheme. He assured that the government was ready to clarify doubts about the newly launched scheme and ready to make changes. Ministers -- Anam Ramnarayna Reddy, Thota Narasimham, P. Viswaroop and Union Minister of State for Defence M.M. Pallam Raju, MPs Vundavalli Arun Kumar, G.V. Harsha Kumar MLA, R. Suryaprakash Rao spoke.

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APCLC bats for use of organic manures

The adverse impact of chemical fertilizers on soil, water, environment and atmosphere were discussed in detail at a workshop conducted at Chandragiri near here on Sunday by the Chittoor district unit of the A.P. Civil Liberties Committee.

Eco-friendly

The objective behind the meet, according to a press note released by the APCLC, was not only to drive it home to the farmers to shed the usage of complex and chemical fertilizers but also to motivate them to switch over to the usage of organic manure, which its leaders asserted were more 'friendly' from the point of view of both the farmers and environment.

N. Kumar the district convener of the APCLC, delivered a talk on the 'imperialistic farming' and pointed out as how while 86 countries have banned Endosulfan due to its environmental impact, India was still dragging its feet on its ban. So also in the case of the Bt Brinjal, he said.

Published: July 11, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 11, 2011 04:11 IST BHUBANESWAR, July 11, 2011

Training for dairy farmers

A group of 26 dairy farmers from all 10 blocks of Nabarangpur district was imparted five-day training on scientific dairy farming at the National Dairy Research Institute at Karnal in Hariyana.

Addressing the valedictory, Dalip K. Gosain, programme coordinator of the Krishi Vigyan Kendra, has said that many farm families are in villages of Nabarangpur. He has observed that farmers are having shortage of the straws required for feeding the dairy animals.

Published: July 10, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 10, 2011 07:50 IST NEW DELHI, July 10, 2011

Agriculture blooming on initiatives galore

India registered a good 8.5 percent GDP growth in 2010-11 staving off the global impact of recession mainly due to the major recovery in the agriculture sector. The recorded foodgrain production in 2010-11 was the outcome of the initiatives of the state governments, the union government has now acknowledged.

It was an innovation's galore to say the least if one takes into consideration the efforts of the 10 states that went on to bag the inaugural Krishi Karman awards for 2010-11. The states to receive the awards on August 16 include Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Assam, Orissa, Tripura, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Karnataka.

The performance of some of these states, within a span of just one year, has been phenomenal as the farm sector recovered from a negative (-0.1) percent growth rate in 2008-09, managed a low 0.4 percent growth in 2009-10 to clock a good 5.4 percent growth rate in 2010-11.

If agriculture is blooming due to these initiatives, the credit goes mostly to the states, irrespective of the centre's role.

Uttar Pradesh recorded an increase of 11.4 percent in its total production of 475.52 lakh tonnes of foodgrain during 2010-11 over the 431.95 lakh tonnes the previous year by concentrating on the low productivity of the eastern region, promoting efficient water management practices in the drought prone Bundelkhand region and resorting to line-sowing of wheat in these regions.

The state's efforts at mechanisation of tilling seed drills for agriculture operations, use of hybrid seeds for rice and massive intercropping of pulses especially urad with sugarcane, jowar and bajra, helped increase rice output by 11.4 percent, wheat by 9.6 percent and pulses by 18.6

percent. Punjab's record output of 278.9 lakh tonnes was the result of the conservation of irrigation water through laser land levelling and zero tillage and through legislation. This ensured timely transplantation of paddy and the use of community underground pipeline systems.

Assam performed stupendously by increasing its foodgrain output by a whopping 45 percent over a period of five years from 36.78 lakh tonnes in 2005-06 to 52.31 lakh tonnes in 2010-11 and increased its productivity by a phenomenal 200 percent from 659 kg per hectare to 1, 868 kg per hectare.

Assam not only increased its crop area over this five year period, but also its cropping intensity from 137 percent to 154 percent during these five years, owing to the creation of assured irrigation to additional 2.2 lakh hectares and acidic soil health management.

Another north eastern state, Tripura, too increased its farm output by a good 25 percent from 5.13 lakh tonnes in 2001-02 to 6.40 lakh tonnes in 2009-10 through area expansion, installation of shallow tube wells with motors or with submersible pumps and popularisation of short duration high yielding varieties of rice suitable to different agro-climatic situations.

If you thought Chhattisgarh is all about Naxalite-police encounters and rural discord, consider these astounding facts. It increased its foodgrain output by almost 45 percent within a year's time from 49.03 lakh tonnes to 70.96 lakh tonnes in 2010-11 and rice production by almost 50 percent from 41.10 lakh tonnes to 61.59 lakh tonnes in 2010-11.

The state assured irrigation to additional 80, 000 hectares, protective irrigation to additional 1.7 lakh hectares and ground water recharging through micro tanks and check dams.

To encourage consolidation of land, the government did away with stamp duty, provided crop loan at 3 percent per annum through cooperatives and extended land banks to nearly eight lakh farmers and exempted VAT on agricultural implements.

Rajasthan increased pulse output by as much as 150 percent in just one year . It also increased the productivity of gram and moong by 34 percent and 126 percent over the past five years through a series of initiatives optimising water utilisation through construction of tanks and doggies, use of solar based pump sets for irrigation and execution of Golden Rays in Tribal, Saharia and Mada area on PPP mode.

Published: July 10, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 10, 2011 07:49 IST COIMBATORE, July 10, 2011

Sale of coconut seedlings

Seedlings of the drought-tolerant coconut variety – West Coast Tall, released by Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), are available for sale.

According to a release, the coconut variety has many special features. It is well suited for all agro-climatic conditions of the State and comes to bearing within six years.

The cost of a seedling is Rs. 15. The seedlings can be collected from the Coconut Nursery Unit from 9 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Those interested can contact Head, Department of Spices and Plantation Crops, TNAU, Coimbatore, or on 0422-2432484 / 6611284.

Published: July 10, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 10, 2011 07:55 IST TIRUCHI, July 10, 2011

Agricultural societies rake in profits

The Kallakudi Primary Agricultural Co-operative Society (PACS) in Tiruchi district has achieved a net profit of Rs.26.18 lakh for the year 2009-2010, said A.Renukadevi, special officer of the society, at the 43rd annual meeting of the society, on Thursday.

The special officer said that the society had been functioning with 3,450 members with a share capital of Rs.22.78 lakh and a deposit of Rs.4.43 crore and pointed out that the society had been serving the farming community for the past 43 years. She said that the society had advanced Rs.8.75 crore as jewel loan during 2009-2010. The society has declared a dividend of 14 per cent and paid Rs.2.15 lakh to its members.

Similarly, the Thuraiyur Agricultural Producers Co-operative Marketing Society has achieved a net profit of Rs.8.43 lakh for the year 2009-2010. This was disclosed at the 51st annual meeting of the society by Manivannan, special officer of the society. He said that the society was functioning very well with 3,621 members with their share capital of Rs.19.84 lakh. The

society procured Rs.10.12 crore worth of agricultural produce and sold it for Rs.10.48 crore. The society has also declared a dividend of 14 per cent to its members.

The Koogur Primary Agricultural Co-operative Society in Lalgudi taluk has earned a net profit of Rs.1.04 lakh for the year 2009-2010, said Krishnasamy, special officer of the society on Thursday. He said that the society had been working for the welfare of the farming community and was functioning with 753 members who had paid a total share capital of Rs.10.06 lakh. The society has also advanced Rs.64.87 lakh as crop loan to the farmers. A dividend of five per cent has been paid to its members, he said.

Published: July 10, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 10, 2011 07:55 IST KOCHI, July 10, 2011

Focus on fisheries, animal husbandry: Minister

The country should focus on fisheries and animal husbandry sectors, and should make progress in the sectors as in the agriculture sector. A separate department for fisheries and animal husbandry at the Centre is a long-standing demand, Union Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution K.V. Thomas has said.

He was delivering the valedictory address at the national consultative workshop for the preparation of a vision document and strategic plan for the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS) here on Saturday.

“Both the sectors hold immense potential for generating job opportunities. The research and academic works done at the university should benefit the industry. Now, we do not have enough facilities to preserve and tap our fisheries resources, neither do we have proper technology for ocean and harbour engineering. The new university should be able to address issues like these,” said Mr. Thomas. KUFOS was established as the first fisheries university in the country on November 20, 2010, and started functioning from the campus of the College of Fisheries, Panangad, on April 1, 2011.

Published: July 10, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 10, 2011 07:56 IST GUNTUR, July 10, 2011

Loan eligibility cards to be givento 40,398 farmers in district

Collector asks officials to expedite the process

District Collector V.N. Vishnu has instructed the officers of the Department of Agriculture and bankers to expedite the issuing of loan eligibility cards to licensed cultivators in the district.

Speaking at a review meeting, the Collector said out of 2 lakh eligible licensed cultivators, 40,938 farmers have been selected as eligible beneficiaries.

The cards would be issued at the divisional-level meetings to be held between July 11 and July 15.

The meetings would be held at Narsaraopet on July 11, at Tenali on July 13, and at Guntur on July 15.

He asked the Department of Agriculture to ensure the presence of a minimum of five farmers at every meeting to receive the cards.

Crop loans

Bankers would also be present at the meeting and they would give away crop loans. He said public representatives were expected to take part in the meeting and asked the officers to make the necessary arrangements.

Compensation

The Collector also announced that the State government has recently released Rs. 132 crore as part of compensation to be paid to farmers, who have suffered losses in previous seasons due to untimely rains.

The Collector expressed dissatisfaction that only Rs.33 crore had been given away to the farmers so far and set a deadline of July 11 to complete the process of disbursement of loans.He also said a sum of Rs.21.71 lakh has been released to the eligible horticultural farmers.Joint Collector A. Sharath, I/C Joint Director of Agriculture Venugopal, PD, DRDA, G. Gangadhar Goud, AGM, Nabard, Nageswara Rao and Lead Bank Manager, Rami Reddy were present.

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Clear

Monday, Jul 11

Max Min

27.4° | 26.5°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 53%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 5:48

Sunset: 18:39

Barometer: 1003

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Tuesday, Jul 12

Max Min

37° | 27°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday

Jul 13



34° | 29°

Rainy

Thursday

Jul 14



33° | 28°

Rainy

Friday

Jul 15



32° | 27°

Rainy

Saturday

Jul 16



31° | 27°

Rainy

Sunday

Jul 17



30° | 26°

Rainy

11 Jul, 2011, 05.58AM IST, Jayashree Bhosale,ET Bureau

Revived rains bring down pulses' prices

PUNE: Ex-mill dal prices have dropped following the revival of monsoon in Maharashtra , Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, the key pulse-growing states. Moong and urad prices have fallen by Rs 300/quintal while tur dal is cheaper by Rs 200/quintal. "Ex-mill prices of moong dal and urad dal had gone up by Rs 200/quintal due to delayed monsoon in the pulse-growing regions in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The prices of whole urad imported from Burma have declined by \$15/ tonne in last two days to \$870/tonne," said Pramod Kongta, director of north Maharashtra-based Kongta Import and Export.

With the initial forecast of a normal monsoon last month, farmers had brought their tur dal stocks to market because they needed money for kharif sowing. As a result, tur dal prices had dropped to Rs 52/kg for about a month from May 15. When there were no rains on time, prices rose to Rs 58/ kg. "Since the revival of monsoon in the last two days, tur dal prices have now come down to Rs 55-56 /kg again. Prices will come down by Rs 100/quintal further and stabilise at that level," said Nitin Kalantri, chief executive officer, Kalantri Foods, the Maharashtra-based manufacturer of pulses.

Output from mills is less during the rainy season as the drying of pulses becomes difficult due to the moisture in atmosphere. Farmers are busy with field operations and do not bring their stocks to the market. As the monsoon has now covered most parts of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, sowing of pulses and other rain-dependent crops such as maize, sorghum, pearl millet, ground nut, cotton and soyabean has started again.

"After the revival of the rainfall activity in Telangana, Rayalseema in Andhra Pradesh and the entire state of Maharashtra, sowing operations are now in full swing," said B Venkatswarlu, director, Centre for Research in Dryland Agriculture. Sowing was far behind the schedule in the last two-three weeks. In Maharashtra, only 21% sowing had been done against 60% during the same period last year.

Though sowing has picked up pace, there could still be a yield loss of 15%-20% in pulses. Millers and traders think that moong may suffer more as compared to urad as the moong area is likely to be diverted to jowar and maize. Meanwhile, the Maharashtra agricultural department has released its contingency plan to cover the losses caused by delayed monsoon.



MP Govt looks to weather stormy Monsoon Session

July 11, 2011 12:30:10 AM

Staff Reporter | Bhopal

With an above average rainfall being already recorded in the State, the Monsoon Session of Madhya Pradesh Assembly is likely to be a stormy one and the most significant to be faced by the Bharatiya Janata Party in its seven-year rule in the State.

The balls were set in motion as both main parties, the ruling BJP and the main Opposition Congress, prepared to take each other on making claims and counter-claims, thus warming up the political waters.

Observers believe the session starting Monday would be a test for the new Leader of Opposition, Ajay Singh, who has said that a no-confidence motion would not be brought against the Government during the session. However, there are several issues on which the main Opposition Congress would target the Government. These include deteriorating law and order,

all-round corruption and a wheat purchase scam. A meeting of the Congress Legislature Party was held a few days ago.

For the ruling BJP, buoyed by a hat-trick of victories over the Congress in Tendukheda, Sonkatch and Kukshi and its comprehensive win in the Jabera by-poll, there is a silver lining. The current session would also witness the splinter outfit Bharatiya Jan Shakti merge into it, taking its strength in the State Assembly to 152.

All in all, the Opposition in the State Assembly would depend on its “different attitude”, backed by a new man at the helm of affairs in the State Congress.

“I do not think the BJP Government knows in which direction it is moving and it also does not know the direction in which it wants to take the people,” Singh said. He said the “problem” has become much graver as the Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, appears “unable to exercise control over his own Government”.

“I also feel very strongly that the BJP has an entirely different attitude to corruption and, because of this, it is growing all over the State at all levels,” he said.

The Congress leader said that before the 2008 elections, the BJP had promised a loan waiver of up to `50,000 to farmers, but after coming to power, the promise was not acted upon. The BJP is now denying that such a promise was ever made. The law and order situation in the state was deteriorating, as was evident from incidents in big cities such as Bhopal and Indore, the Leader of the Opposition said, referring to the murder of a lawyer in Indore and another murder in the court premises in Bhopal.

The BJP, on the other hand, is geared up to face the challenge and held a meeting of its legislature party to firm up its strategy. The ruling party would go all out to nail the Opposition Congress on issues of price rise and corruption and would like to decimate all hopes of the Congress coming back to power in the Assembly elections in 2013.

Technology ends wait for 'winter veggies'

July 10, 2011 11:51:41 PM

The technology has changed life beyond imagination. Take the example of vegetables like

radish, fenugreek, peas, cauliflower, cabbage, carrot etc to savour which you had to wait for winter. But now you needn't do so as these would be available round the year, thanks to Poly House technique for making it happen to the delight of vegetable lovers.

A number of districts are growing these vegetables throughout the year applying this technique. They are also giving a good account in floriculture by growing costly decorative flowers like dutch rose, Jarwera and Carniecin.

Moiz Khan, a progressive farmer of village Patoli in Shajapur district has made the best possible use of this technique. In his three Poly Houses measuring one thousand square metre each he grows colour capsicum. This is a very good variety of Shimla Chili used in salad and Chinese food at reputed hotels including five star ones all over the country and abroad.

In a conversation, Moiz Khan proudly informed that he exports colour capsicum even to Arabian countries. The annual output from each of the Poly House is more than 25 tonne. He said that any farmer could earn `15,000 to `20,000 every month from a Poly House admeasuring one thousand square metre. He himself earns about Rs two lakh profit from each Poly House.

A well-informed Moiz Bhai said that this technique is quite popular in Israel and Holland. The Green Houses are of two kinds - naturally ventilated and fan pad. In India the former is catching on as it needs no electricity. In Israel and Holland this technique is applied for floriculture but Indians have added vegetables to this.

Gajraj Singh, a small farmer of village Amrod in Sehore district, who has adopted this technique is also very happy. At present fenugreek is growing in his one thousand square metre Poly House. He said that normally fenugreek arrives in the market around December, but he would make it available during the current month itself or in August. He hopes to earn about `15,000 to `20,000 monthly from his Poly House.

The Poly House technique is used under Protected Farming. In this, off-season farming is done in a particular area by controlling the climate. In the controlled conditions drip irrigation system is used to control the temperature and humidity. It may also be called artificial farming in which you can grow anything in any season. The shelf-life of the vegetables from the Poly House is

longer. For example, tomato grown under Poly House does not go bad even for eleven months whereas the tomato grown in open farms has only three to four month shelf-life.

Under National Horticulture Mission, unit cost at the rate of Rs 934 per square metre is provided. Under the mission, 50 per cent grant is given to the farmers irrespective of their caste and category. At present about 50 thousand kilometre area is covered under Poly House technique in Sehore, Bhopal, Indore, Khargone, Chhatarpur, Vidisha, Raisen, Ujjain and Shajapur in the State.

Mobile sapling nursery inaugurated

July 11, 2011 12:25:19 AM

Staff Reporter | Bhopal

Forest Minister Sartaj Singh flagged off a mobile sapling nursery at Khandwa under Hariyali Mahotsav and inaugurated a plantation programme with public participation in Burhanpur.

Under Hariyali Mahotsav Sartaj Singh undertook plantation in Khandwa on Sunday. On this occasion, the Forest Minister also flagged off a mobile sapling nursery. Plants for sale have been loaded on this vehicle. After plantation, the Forest Minister took a review meeting of the Forest Department at CCF office.

Singh planted saplings of neem, barh and peepal simultaneously at Phophnar village in Burhanpur district.

The three species are being planted simultaneously in 1008 pits by Gayatri Parivar while plantation in the nearby villages is being undertaken with public participation.

School Education Minister Archana Chitnis, Zila Panchayat president Gorabai Darbar were also present on the occasion. While undertaking plantation, the Forest Minister said that we can protect environment only through public participation. The Forest Minister inaugurated Paryavaran Vaniki Yojna in historical city Burhanpur.

Eleven thousand saplings will be planted in Burhanpur city under the scheme. Chitnis expressed gratitude towards the Forest Minister for sanctioning Rs 30 lakh on behalf of the Forest Department for plantation in the city. She said that watershed area of historic Kundi Bhandare will be revived by undertaking plantation in Satpuda hills.

Farmers to get subsidy for purchase of farm equipment

July 10, 2011 10:56:15 PM

PNS | Chandigarh

The Punjab Government has decided to offer 25 to 30 per cent subsidy to farmers for purchasing modern agriculture equipments and machinery during this year. Disclosing this here on Sunday, Agriculture Minister, Sucha Singh Langah, said the State Government had earmarked `3 crore for the purpose of subsidies to the farmers.

He said the farmers could purchase the modified versions of agriculture machinery under the Government's program "Micro Management Work Plan Promotion of Agriculture Mechanisation" aimed to motivate farmers towards modern agriculture techniques. Langah said the agriculture department would give special training to the farmers for proper usage of modern agriculture machinery. Special camps would be held in every district, he said.

He said under the program of facilitating farmers with subsidies the state government had provided a subsidy of `75,000 to every farmer on the purchase of paddy planters besides setting up of riding type paddy planters in 10 districts for exhibition purposes. During the current paddy season Government had planted 600 exhibition plants for paddy plantation, which had given a big relief from the scarcity of labour, the Minister added.

Scientists decode potato genome for first time

London, July 10:

An international team of scientists has decoded the full DNA sequence of the potato for the first time, a breakthrough that holds out the promise of boosting harvests of one of the world's most important staple crops.

Researchers at the James Hutton Institute in Dundee in Scotland say it should soon be possible to develop improved varieties of potato much more quickly.

The genome of an organism is a map of how all of its genes are put together. Each gene controls different aspects of how the organism grows and develops.

Professor Iain Gordon, chief executive of the James Hutton Institute, said decoding the potato genome should enable breeders to create varieties which are more nutritious, as well as resistant to pests and diseases. He hopes it will help meet the challenge of feeding the world's soaring population.

The research is far from complete. Analysing the genetic sequence of the plant will take several more years, BBC reported. Currently, it can take more than 10 years to breed an improved variety. By locating the genes that control traits like yield, colour, starchiness and flavour, the research should make it possible to develop better spuds much more quickly.

Potatoes provide the world's fourth-largest crop, with an annual, global yield of 330 million tonnes.

Jordan-India Fertiliser Co gets \$10 m loan from Canada's Cordiant Capital

Dubai, July 11:

Cordiant Capital, a Montreal-based fund manager that specialises in loans to private borrowers in emerging markets, has committed a \$10 million loan to Jordan-India Fertiliser Company 'JIFCO'

The loan will finance the construction of a new \$186 million plant in Jordan using phosphate rocks from local mines to produce phosphoric acid, a fertiliser, for the Indian market, a statement released here said.

“With the recent dramatic rise in the cost of basic foodstuff in India, demand for fertilisers is increasing rapidly across the country. Demand for phosphoric acid is likely to keep rising in the longer term as the growth of the Indian middle class and their demand for higher protein content food put more pressure on food supply,” said the statement.

In the last 10 years, Cordiant funds have provided loans to several agri-businesses in emerging markets, including a sugar producer in India, a crusher and exporter of soyabean and ancillary products in Argentina, a banana exporter in Ecuador and a leading farm operator and agri-business group in South America that produces a diversified combination of grain crops such as soy, corn, wheat and barley.

The plant’s strategic location near the Eshidiya phosphate mines and its proximity to Jordan’s only seaport will keep production and transport costs to a minimum, making the JIFCO fertiliser project very competitive.

The quantity of fertiliser used per hectare in India is only a quarter of that applied in developed economies, making Indian agriculture far less productive.

JIFCO’s fertiliser output will be exported to thousands of Indian farmers, improving the productivity of agricultural production and helping ease India’s food shortage.

According to the statement, the project will also have a substantial developmental impact on the Jordanian economy as the construction and operation of the plant is expected to directly generate 600 to 1,000 new jobs in South Jordan, where the average income is much lower than in the rest of the country.

The Jordan-India Fertiliser Company project will receive a \$125 million loan arranged by the International Financial Corporation (IFC), which includes a \$90.1 million IFC B Loan raised from a syndicate of commercial banks and Cordiant Capital. The European Investment Bank (EIB) is also providing a parallel loan of 81 million euros.

The project is sponsored by the India Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO), which sources and distributes fertilisers on behalf of 40,000 farmers' cooperatives across India, and Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC), which owns and operates a large number of phosphate mines in Jordan.

States' approval mandatory for field trials of GM crops

Genetic Engineering Approval Committee to ask Karnataka to send report on Bt maize trial

Hyderabad, July 10:

With some States putting up strong resistance to allow field trials of GM (genetically modified) crops, the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) has decided to issue approval letter for field trials only after receiving 'no objection certificate' (NOC) from the State Governments concerned.

In its meeting held on July 6, the GEAC said the idea was to promote their involvement in activities related to GM crop field trials and factor in their views in this regard.

Non-governmental organisations have welcomed this development.

"It upholds States' right to have a say in activities related to agriculture which is a State subject. It allows greater monitoring by States. All these years, the Centre has been overriding on this right, particularly in allowing field trials," Ms Kavitha Kuruganti, Convenor of Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture (ASHA), told *Business Line*.

Monsanto trials

With regard to alleged violations of bio-safety norms by Monsanto in its biotech maize trials in Karnataka, the GEAC has decided to ask the State Government to inspect the site and send a report urgently.

It would initiate action, if need be, after studying the report, the panel said in a statement.

Conflict of interest

Keeping in view the criticism of conflict of interests in the GEAC, the committee has adopted new set of norms to address the issue.

It would not allow its members to take part in discussions that scrutinise applications for trials if those members had some role in development of such transgenic plants.

It would also invoke the 'conflict of interest' clause when a member's spouse or children are involved in the development of such plants.

To begin with, it barred Dr Swapan Datta from the discussion on application to allow event selection trials on transgenic rice by the Department of Botany of Kolkata University.

Environmental activists cried foul as Dr Datta and his wife were involved in the project. The committee, however, stood by its earlier decision to allow the trials at the universities Rice Research Station at Chinsurah.

Fertiliser firms get back freedom to set MRP of 'decontrolled' nutrients



Hardening global prices may force fresh rate increases

New Delhi, July 10:

The Centre has quietly restored pricing freedom for manufacturers/importers of di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) and other non-urea fertilisers.

This comes just two months after it had sought to set limits on the extent of price increases in these “decontrolled” fertilisers.

On May 5, the Department of Fertilisers had issued a notification stating that “companies have the freedom (sic) to increase the MRP (maximum retail price) of DAP by Rs 600/tonne in addition to the MRP prevailing at present (Rs 10,750/tonne).”

Even for complex fertilisers – containing varying proportions of nitrogen, phosphorous, potash and sulphur – only “proportionate increase in MRPs (corresponding to that in DAP)...would be admissible.”

The notification would have resulted in an “admissible” MRP of around Rs 11,470 a tonne for DAP (Rs 11,350 plus the 1.03 per cent excise-cum-education cess imposed in the 2011-12 Budget, which is “recoverable” from farmers).

But now, through a fresh notification dated July 8, the Department has withdrawn the paragraph prescribing how much companies can raise MRPs.

It has, instead, inserted a revised paragraph simply stating that the market price of non-urea fertilisers “will be open.” Companies would only be required to fix these “at reasonable level,” though there is no definition of what “reasonable level” might amount to.

According to sources, the decision to rescind the May 5 notification was actually taken by the Union Cabinet at its meeting on June 30. “For obvious reasons, the Government felt it was not worth publicising and the safest way would be to notify it through the Department of Fertilisers,” they pointed out.

But the May 5 notification was, in any case, hardly being adhered to on the ground, with most companies charging an MRP of Rs 12,000 a tonne for DAP, net of State-level levies. Inclusive of value added tax (VAT), farmers have been effectively paying Rs 12,500 to Rs 12,600.

“Moreover, these rates are based on landed prices of \$615 a tonne for DAP and the \$980-a-tonne rate negotiated for phosphoric acid (the key input in DAP) during the April-June quarter,” the sources noted.

Another price hike?

Currently, imported DAP is ruling at \$650 a tonne (cost and freight, Indian ports). While Indian companies have not so far contracted any phosphoric acid imports for this quarter, the indicative quotes being received are for upwards of \$ 1,050 (against \$ 980, \$ 840 and \$ 780 a tonne for the preceding three quarters).

“At \$650-a-tonne for DAP and \$1,050 for phosphoric acid, the corresponding MRP for DAP, inclusive of VAT, works out to roughly Rs 14,300 a tonne. We will have a call whether to raise prices in the ongoing kharif season or wait till the next rabi plantings,” said a leading manufacturer.

The Centre, on its part, has granted – or rather, restored – to companies the freedom to pass on their increased costs to farmers. “The Government had choice really: The alternative would have been to either risk shortages or fork out a higher subsidy bill,” the manufacturer added.

Tenant farmers in AP get loan eligibility cards



Helping farmers prosper: Apart from making them eligible for loans, the cards will help tenant farmers get access to input subsidies and insurance claims which generally go to landowners.

Banks will not seek security for loans up to Rs 50,000

Hyderabad, July 10:

With banks and financial institutions shying away from lending to tenant farmers, the Andhra Pradesh Government has begun a drive to identify eligible farmers and share the list with banks in the vicinity. To begin with, it plans to issue a four-page loan eligibility card to about 5.55 lakh 'Licensed Cultivators' in the next few days. The banks will not seek any security or guarantee for loans up to Rs 50,000.

With five high security features (such as watermarks which can be seen only under ultra violet light), these cards would be valid for one year and would assign no right on land to tenant farmers. "After one year, they will have to renew it or get a new one," Mr N. Raghuvveera Reddy, Minister for Revenue, said.

No reason to worry

Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, he asserted that land owners would have no reason to worry.

"The ordinance has made it clear that it is an arrangement to facilitate banks to give loans to tenant farmers. Interests of land owners will be protected," he said.

Apart from making them eligible for loans, these cards would help tenant farmers get access to input subsidies and insurance claims which generally go to landowners.

But the Opposition parties have a different view point on this. They have argued that the ordinance did more harm than help, as it created a fear psychosis among land owners that the Government was bestowing some rights on land to farmers by giving eligibility cards. As a result, they were not willing to give land on rent in some instances.

Mr N. Kiran Kumar Reddy, Chief Minister, gave away the first of these cards to about 66,000 farmers in East Godavari district on Sunday. "We will cover the remaining districts by July 16, 2011," he said.

Admitting that the number was very small, the Minister said the Government would begin the enrolment drive during April-May to cover the maximum number of tenant farmers.

The Government, however, would take no responsibility in recoveries. "It is the responsibility of banks and farmers," he said.

No buyers for 33% of stock at Coonoor tea sale



Coonoor, July 10:

Downtrend in sales percentage witnessed in last fortnight continued in Sale No: 27 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions when teas worth Rs 3.30 crore remained unsold as there were no takers for 33 per cent of the year's highest offer of 16.83 lakh kg despite shedding prices by Rs 3 a kg.

"Better liquoring CTC leaf lost Rs 1-3 and mediums and plainers Rs 3-4 with withdrawal. Orthodox leaf struggled to remain steady. Better liquoring CTC dusts eased Rs 2-3, mediums Rs 2-4 and plainers suffered withdrawal even after shedding up to Rs 4. Orthodox dusts lost Rs 2-4," an auctioneer told *Business Line*.

Homedale Estate teas, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped CTC market at Rs 148 a kg. Vigneshwar Estate got Rs 145, Deepika Supreme Rs 140, Shanthi Supreme Rs 137, Hittakkal Estate Rs 133 and Sree Tea Supreme Rs 132. In all, 89 marks got Rs 100 and more.

Among orthodox teas from corporate sector, Chamraj got Rs 191, Havukal Rs 154, Kairbetta Rs 153, Curzon and Quinshola clonal Rs 152 each. In all, 21 marks got Rs 100 and more.

Among green tea, Wood Bridge Estate's "Hyson" grade, auctioned by Paramount Tea Marketing, fetched Rs 210.

On the export front, Pakistan bought in wide range – Rs 40-70 a kg, the CIS Rs 43-65 and European markets Rs 43-58.

Tea offerings at N. Indian auctions rise

Kolkata, July 10:

At last week's Sale (no:27), total offerings (packages) at North India tea auction centres in Kolkata, Guwahati and Siliguri were 351,534 compared with 344,363 in the corresponding sale of last year, according to J Thomas & Company Pvt Ltd.

Of these, the share of Kolkata was 177,049 (152,754) comprising CTC/Dust 128,359 (103,600), Orthodox 43,720 (43,328) and Darjeeling 4,970 (5,826).

The corresponding figures for Guwahati and Siliguri were 92,619 (109,570) and 81,866 (82,039).

Selected best liquoring Assam CTC teas were irregular around last levels while the remainder were easier. Better Dooars were firm while the remainder tended irregularly lower. There was fair support from Tata Global while Hindustan Unilever was selective. Western India dealers were active for the improved sorts. There was good support from local and other internal sections. Exporters operated on bolder brokens and grainy fannings.

Selected well made tippy Orthodox varieties sold at irregular rates. The remaining grades were easier except the fannings and secondary brokens which were fully firm. West Asia shippers were active. Continental buyers operated on the tippy sorts. Local dealers operated on the fannings and smaller brokens. North India operated on the bolder whole leaf. Hindustan Unilever was quiet.

Darjeeling offerings with improved quality met with interest from traditional exporters from the Continent and Japan and sold well with competition. Similar brokens and fannings were readily absorbed by exporters and sold at levels higher than last year. Local dealers operated for cheaper varieties. Tata Global was the mainstay for medium whole leaf varieties.

Positive trend in pepper market



A file picture of black pepper.

Kochi, July 9:

The Indian pepper market showed a positive trend at the weekend with prices marginally moving up but within competitive levels, so as to attract business from overseas.

The usual tug of war continued to exist in the futures market pushing up and pulling down prices keeping the market volatile all the time.

Availability of pepper is only on the exchange platform now and that is validity expired stocks. Primary market dealers and growers are reluctant to part with their produce at the current levels. Karnataka is catering to the domestic demand at Rs 265-267 a kg delivered anywhere in India. Some quantity of this material is said to be available on the exchange platform also.

The investors are said to have exhausted their stocks. Currently, there appears to be a supply squeeze and those having commitments had to cover from the exchange.

Meanwhile, the Vietnamese Government has introduced quality checking measures such as registration and granting of approval to the countries for exporting foodstuffs of plant origin to the Asean nation. This is said to have put several Indian companies, which have made Vietnam their processing hub, of late by setting up sterilisation plants because of the cheap labour available there, in a dilemma as their pepper shipments are at various stages of transportation including already in the vessels bound for Vietnam.

The Asean nation's decision after entering into free trade agreement with India might negatively affect the trade, trade sources here told *Business Line*.

The market showed a mixed trend at the weekend. July and August contract declined while September was marginally up.

July and August dropped by Rs 364 and Rs 160 respectively a quintal during the week to close at Rs 26,933 and Rs 27,456 a quintal. September moved up by Rs 69 to close at Rs 27,898 a quintal.

Total turnover fell by 12,860 tonnes to close at 34,843 tonnes indicating a decline in activities during the week. Total open interest increased by 839 tonnes to 13,291 tonnes showing good additional buying.

Spot prices on limited activities remained unchanged and closed at the previous weekend levels of Rs 26,300 (ungarbled) and Rs 27,300 (MG 1) a quintal.

Overseas trend

According to the International Pepper Community (IPC) except for Vietnam, local prices of black pepper in other major producing countries viz. India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Sri Lanka increased during the week. In India and Indonesia (Lampung) pepper prices had gone up by 1 per cent.

Harvesting of pepper in Lampung has started and there was indication that the crop will be lower this year when compared to the last year. In Sarawak, Malaysia, prices increased by 3 per cent. From Sri Lanka, it was reported that due to the heavy rains prevailed during latter part of last year and early part of this year, pepper flowering was very poor. The report also said that

the pepper export from Sri Lanka would be much lower than the previous year. This may be the reason that the local prices in Sri Lanka during the week has jumped by 5 per cent when compared to last week's average. Futures prices at NCDEX for July shipment increased by 2 per cent and 1 per cent for Aug-Dec shipment

White pepper

In Bangka (Indonesia) local prices of white pepper declined by 1 per cent and in Vietnam prices also saw marginal decrease. In Sarawak (Malaysia) local prices registered an increase by 1 per cent.

During January-April 2011, US has imported 19,377 tonnes, registering a marginal fall of 1 per cent, compared with imports of 19,568 tonnes in the same period last year.

Import of whole black and white pepper increased by 2 per cent and 24 per cent respectively, while ground pepper decreased by 22 per cent. During January-April 2011, Indonesia was the top supplier with 8,560 tonnes of black (58 per cent) and 1,017 tonnes of white pepper (63 per cent), followed by Brazil and India for black and Vietnam for white pepper.

Major share of ground pepper was supplied by India and Vietnam. Mean total import of pepper to the US a year is around 65,000 tonnes. Thus, the US would need 45,000 tonnes in remaining months of 2011 (May-Dec), an IPC report said. "This week, the market has been very flat, quiet and inactive," another overseas report claimed. Vietnam pepper continues to be the cheapest available, and some minor business has been concluded at \$2.90 CFNY for ASTA quality. Other Vietnam exporters are asking \$2.92/\$2.98 CFNY for Aug/Sept shipment, it said. Vietnam's harvest is over and there should be around 60,000 tonnes remaining, but in the strong hands and they will parcel out the stocks in the next eight months.

Lamong is still not harvesting their crop and they do not expect the harvest to be in full swing for another month. In the meantime, they are offering limited quantities at \$3.05 CFNY for July/August shipment. Brazil ASTA has been offered at around \$6200/6250 FOBC 1.5 Belem, but only nearby shipments and only a few containers for new crop September shipment, the report said.

Subsidy on farm equipment

Chandigarh, July 10:

The Punjab government has decided to provide 25 to 30 per cent subsidy to farmers for purchasing modern agriculture equipment and machinery this year. Disclosing this here today, the Agriculture Minister, Mr Sucha Singh Langah, said the State government had earmarked Rs 3 crore for the purpose.

He said the Agriculture Department will give special training to farmers for proper use of the modern machinery. Special camps in this connection would be held in every district, the Minister said.

Bihar turns major milk producer

Patna, July 10:

Bihar, which until recently was dependent on milk supply from Punjab and Andhra Pradesh to meet its domestic consumption, is turning out to be a frontline state in milk production.

From a low average milk procurement of 281.81 thousand litres a day in 1999-2000, the State is now obtaining nearly 14 lakh litres daily from farmers, the general manager of COMFED (Bihar State Cooperative Milk Producer's Federation), Mr Ashok Java, told PTI.

Bihar is among first 10 leading milk producing States of the country today, he said.

Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Haryana are the other leading milk producing States.

Bihar is targeting to increase its milk procurement to about 32 lakh litres a day by 2021-22, he added.

Incentives to farmers

The State Agriculture Minister, Mr Narendra Singh, attributed the success story to the progressive approach of the Nitish Kumar government, which is according top priority to the farm sector, including dairy.

The State government is providing various incentives to the farmers, including subsidised feed and fodder and 30 per cent subsidy on purchase of animals among other things, to promote milk output in the State, he added.

The managing director of COMFED, which is the implementing agency of operation flood programme of dairy development in the state on the pattern of Anand in Gujarat, said several steps were being taken to enhance milk production in the State.

These include technical inputs like providing breeding facility, animal health cover, food and fodder for keeping good health of livestock and upgrading technology.

Bihar is fast emerging as “milk feeding bowl” for eastern States and also supplying the nutritious drink to neighbouring countries such as Nepal and Bangladesh, Mr Java added.

Give up crop holiday, AP CM urges farmers

Rajahmundry, July 10:

The Chief Minister, Mr N. Kirankumar Reddy, on Sunday appealed to farmers in some mandals of East Godavari district to give up crop holiday, assuring them that the State Government would take all steps to address their grievances.

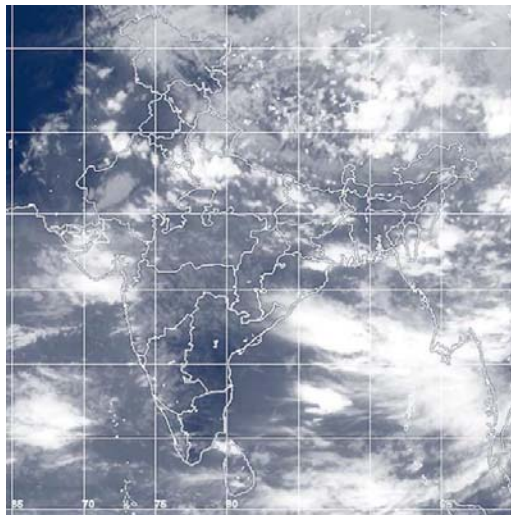
He made the appeal at a public meeting at the Arts College grounds here on Sunday, after distributing loan eligibility cards to tenant farmers. He said farmers should not be misled by some politicians and resort to such moves as crop holiday, which would be inimical to their interests, as well those of the State and the country. There may have been some problems in paddy (rice) procurement, but the State Government had taken up the issue with the FCI and the millers and is doing its best to secure the best possible price.

The minimum support price had gone up from Rs 590 a quintal in 2004 to Rs 1,110/quintal of paddy, but even that may not be sufficient in view of the hike in input costs. Therefore, he said, he has requested the Union Government to offer a bonus of Rs 120/quintal of paddy.

The Chief Minister also appealed to the Opposition parties not to instigate farmers. They should rise above political considerations in dealing with such issues. Later, at a press meet, he told reporters that the State Government was firm on implementing the mega Polavaram project on the Godavari and all efforts were being made to secure national project status for Polavaram. The farmers of the Godavari districts need not worry about the project, he said.

On the question of Telangana, he said the Union Government would take the right decision at the appropriate time.

Monsoon run complete amid 'La Nina rebound' cues



Thiruvananthapuram, July 10:

India Meteorological Department (IMD) has declared that the southwest monsoon managed to cover the entire country by Saturday, at least a week ahead of schedule.

In a fortuitous coincidence, latest update from the Climate Prediction Centre (CPC) of the US National Weather Services seemed to suggest the re-emergence of a monsoon-friendly La Nina in the east equatorial Pacific later this year.

Over the last couple of weeks, forecasts created by the Climate Forecast System of the National Centres for Environmental Prediction have begun to indicate the re-emergence of La Nina during northern hemisphere autumn, the CPC said.

Combined with the recent weakening of the positive ocean anomalies and the lingering La Niña state of the atmosphere, the possibility of a return to La Nina has increased over the past month.

However, it added the caveat that most other models and all multi-model forecasts have been predicting 'neutral' (conditions), suggesting neither La Nina nor El Nino, during the season ahead.

Out of more than 20 such forecasts monitored by the International Research Institute for Climate and Society at Columbia University, only six plumped for the 'La Nina' option, it said.

Back home, the monsoon ran ahead of time to cover the entire mass after a 'pulse' from the Bay of Bengal ended the 'break monsoon' phase that had manifested during the first week of July.

Break monsoon is the term referred to the inevitable pause that the monsoon allows itself after a hectic run that, in the instant case, lasted almost the whole of June.

This pulse had also triggered the formation of a low-pressure area over land in east India. It travelled west for a day, before losing most of the sting over northwest Madhya Pradesh.

But it had also helped consolidate the easterly monsoon flows by coercing the all-important land-based monsoon trough across northwest-to-southeast India to revert to its normal position to sustain the flows.
