

Published: July 18, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 18, 2011 04:11 IST COIMBATORE, July 18, 2011

## **Call to scale up 'e-Velanmai' model**

Experts at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University have called for scaling up the information and communication technology (ICT) enabled agricultural extension 'e-Velanmai' model, which has been pilot tested and found successful at the field level, to benefit a large number of farmers in the State.

Inaugurating a planning workshop on "Up-scaling of e-Velanmai in Tamil Nadu" at the university on Thursday, Director of Extension of the university P. Kalaiselvan said there was a need to revamp – with the help of ICT – the existing system of extension, to suit the changing scenario in agriculture.

S. Chellamuthu, Director of Water Technology Centre, TNAU, said the model was a novel one meant for empowering farmers to adopt scientific agriculture.

"The Government of Tamil Nadu is also keen to scale up this model of extension as it is considered to be one of the best methods of extension suiting the needs of the farming community," he said.

Published: July 18, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 18, 2011 04:10 IST ERODE, July 18, 2011

## **Farmers want encroachments on water-carrying channels removed**

Associations say tanneries are discharging untreated effluents into channels

Members of various farmers associations have appealed to the district administration to remove the encroachments on water-carrying channels without any further delay.

A number of tannery units had occupied the water-carrying channels in RN Puthur, Suriyampalayam, BP Agraharam, Naripallam and many other parts in the district and were letting out huge amounts of untreated, toxic effluents in the channels, members said in a resolution passed at a joint meeting held here on Sunday.

The administration should initiate immediate efforts to remove the encroachments and put an end to the discharge of effluents in the water sources, they demanded.

In another resolution, members condemned the State government for transferring the Collector and engineers of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board.

They claimed that the transfer would affect the administration's drive against the polluting industrial units.

They wanted the government to cancel the transfers and allow the administration to sustain its drive.

Members had also decided to conduct a demonstration in Erode on July 27 protesting against the continuous discharge of untreated effluents in the water sources including the Kalingarayan Canal and Cauvery River.

The indiscriminate discharge had affected the crop yield and forced many farmers to leave their profession.

Tamil Nadu Farmers Association District President E.R. Kumarasamy, Kalingarayan Pasana Sabhai president V.M. Velayudham, LBP Turn Irrigation Farmers Federation President Kasiyanna Gounder, representatives of various other farmers associations and welfare organisations attended the meeting.

Published: July 18, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 18, 2011 04:22 IST TIRUNELVELI, July 18, 2011

### **Farmers get exposed to new farming techniques**

Collector takes them on a field day to a Tenkasi farm



Tirunelveli Collector S. Natarajan (third from left) interacting with farmers during a field visit at Kanakkapillaivalasai near Tenkasi.

When Collector S. Natarajan chaired his first farmers' grievance redress day meet on June 17 after assuming office here, he underlined the need for introducing proven techniques in the agriculture industry in the district by exposing the agriculturists to such technologies during field visits so as to make the vocation a profitable venture. Most of the farmers, who were sitting in the hall with good number of questions to be answered by the officials, could not understand then the real meaning behind the Collector's appeal.

Exactly a fortnight later, Mr. Natarajan organised a 'field day' for the agriculturists in the ranch of a progressive farmer at Kanakkupillaivalasai of Tenkasi block to expose them to new profitable agricultural techniques. During the group discussion with farmers at the field, the Collector, like an expert, offered many valuable suggestions to improve agricultural yield. His suggestions covered all important aspects from seed technology, organic farming, plant protection, marketing, women empowerment and cooperation.

### **Many technologies**

The host farmer, G.P.S. Punnaivanam, has adopted many latest technologies such as micro-irrigation, coconut intercropped with cocoa, multi-tier cropping system that includes coconut, banana, cocoa and chilly. He also has expertise in sericulture (mulberry cultivation). Beneficiary farmers from six blocks of the district — Shencottai, Tenkasi, Kadayanallur, Alangulam, Keezhapaavor and Vasudevanallur — participated in the field day.

Demonstrations and exhibitions of the Departments of Agriculture, Horticulture, Sericulture, Agri Business Management, Agricultural Engineering, besides Dharani Sugars and Chemicals and

Jain Irrigations made the field day a highly beneficial attempt since the latest technologies such as System of Rice Intensification, high-density planting, drip and fertigation systems, sustainable sugarcane initiative, coconut micro nutrient tonic, latest trends in sericulture, advanced agricultural machineries and equipment were demonstrated to the farmers.

Mr. Natarajan, enjoying intermittent drizzle in the farm, also had an extensive discussion with farmers in the coconut field intercropped with cocoa.

He raised questions regarding pest and disease attack on coconut and offered remedial measures such as an agriculture expert. Success stories of different farmers were discussed. He also stressed the need for organic farming, use of farm yard manure, avoiding use of plastics in the farm land, root feeding for coconut, use of panchagavya, marketing of farm produce, and participation of women farmers.

The Collector promised more such field visits in the future.

R. Shankar, Project Officer, District Rural Development Agency, S. Devasahayam, Joint Director of Agriculture, Balasubramanian, Personal Assistant (Agriculture) to Collector Alagirisamy, Deputy Director of Agriculture (FTC) Kumarasamy, Deputy Director of Agriculture (Government of India schemes) Rajan Ravichandran, Deputy Director of Horticulture and Agriculture Officer Carol participated.

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### **Boost to Karimeen production**



New technology: Basudeb Acharia, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture, inaugurating the distribution of pearl spot larvae at a function organised in Chennai on Friday.

Though the pearl spot (Karimeen) is Kerala's own fish, a helping hand has now come from Tamil Nadu to boost the production of this great delicacy for meeting the table demand. The initiative has come from the Chennai-based Central government establishment Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (CIBA).

CIBA has developed a new technique that enables pearl spots to spawn in artificially created environments. Though the State government had drawn out an elaborate programme to increase the production of pearl spots under the Matsya Kerala scheme and offered attractive subsidies for pearl spot farmers, an acute shortage of the Karimeen larva continues to exist. This is mainly because pearl spots mate for life and build nests to spawn. Nests are built only in congenial natural surroundings. Last week the first batch of pearl spot fries were produced by CIBA. Its distribution was organised as a grand function in Chennai. Basudeb Acharia, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture, inaugurated the distribution by handing over the pearl spot larvae to a team of Fisheries Department officials from Kollam led by Deputy Director of Fisheries K.J. Prasanna Kumar last Friday.

Published: July 18, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 18, 2011 04:18 IST KOZHIKODE, July 18, 2011

### **Farmers' call to combat ill effects of inorganic food**

A district convention of organic farmers, organised by the Kerala Jaiva Karshaka Samiti here on Sunday, called upon the State and Central governments to better equip the Health Department for combating lifestyle diseases caused by the reckless usage of inorganic food products.

The convention also criticised the present strategy of the department “which indulged in improving the health services without addressing the root causes of the diseases.”

Mayor A.K. Premajam, who opened the convention, said the issue had already reached at a stage where no one would be able to find an easy solution.

### **Indirect consumption**

The indirect consumption of pesticides and chemical fertilisers through food could never be reduced until we achieved self-sufficiency in the production of vegetables and other food crops, she said.

Referring to a number of ongoing researches on the evil effect of chemical products in food crops, Ms. Premajam said the country was presently in need of timely action rather than going on with researches after researches.

“What we see in the endosulfan issue is also such a trend where no concrete action is being taken other than launching studies,” she said.

### **Centre criticised**

The Mayor also criticised that the Union government was following a strategy which would directly come in support of internationally spread-out chemical dealers and manufacturers.

Most of the government-level decisions taken at the Centre for controlling the highly toxic pesticides like endosulfan were pro-corporate in nature, she blamed.

According to Ms. Premajam, the mindset of farmers should also change in order to carry out fruitful campaigns against inorganic pesticides and fertilisers.

### **Land as commodity**

“Now there are several farmers who consider land as a real-estate commodity ignoring its agricultural value,” she pointed out.

The programme also marked the release of a book, ‘Haritha Viplavam: Durbhoothangalude Vishakkani’. C.P.A. Rahman, district president of the Jaiva Karshaka Samiti, presided over the function.

State president of the organisation K.V. Dayalu and State committee member K.V. Sivaprasad were present.

Farmers associated with organic farming movements also organised an exhibition of the native brands of vegetable seeds in connection with the convention.

Farmers from neighbouring districts too arrived to take part in the programme.

Published: July 18, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: July 18, 2011 04:17 IST BAPATLA, July 18, 2011

### **Seminar on Industrial Biotechnology conducted**

Delegates at a national seminar on Industrial Biotechnology conducted by Department of Biotechnology, Bapatla College of Engineering, have examined new frontiers in the emerging field. Some of the delegates critically examined the procedures being adapted by companies conducting clinical trails.

The seminar was organised in association with All India Council for Technical Education, New Delhi. Joint Secretary, University Grants Commission, G.Srinivas, inaugurated the seminar and delivered the key note address. G. Murali Krishna from CFTRI-Mysore, Rajarami Reddy, Professor, S.V University, Tirupathi, K.R.S.Sambasiva Rao, Professor, HOD, Centre for Biotechnology, ANU, M.Sai Ram, Biological E Ltd gave presentations.

An abstract book of the conference was released by Dr. Srinivas. N. Sudhakar, Principal, B.Chandra Mohan, Dean Academics, J.S.Rao, organising secretary, Head, Department of Biotechnology and Bapatla Education management were also present.

Dr. Murali Krishna in his presentation explained about "Esterases" like acetic acid Esterase (AAE) and ferulic acid Esterase (FAE), enzymes which modulate the functional properties of cereal arabinoxylans such as viscosity, foam stabilisation and gelling.

Dr. Sai Ram presented a lecture on "Emerging high throughput technologies for application: in production of biopharmaceuticals". Combinatorial chemistry, bio-informatics and high throughput technologies make product development faster and more efficient.

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### **Rythu Sadassu on crop holiday**

Farmers of almost all mandals in Konaseema participated in Rythu Sadassu on Sunday at Gosala here and decided to extend crop holiday to six more mandals which have not

participated in the agitation till now. Farmer association state secretary J. Kumaraswamy, M. Jameel, D. Nageswara Rao, Arigela Nanaji, B. Chinna Babu, Junnuri Babi participated in the meeting. Farmers in nine mandals out of 16 mandals in Konaseema are observing crop holiday from last two months in protest of government decision on minimum support price for paddy. Now six more mandals have joined the agitation.

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### **River that never recedes to quench agriculture thirst of delta districts**

Visionary: The statue of King Raja Raja Cholan near the sluice gates of the Grand Anicut in Thanjavur district.

History of irrigation in the Cauvery delta dates back to second century A.D. It was then, Karikal Cholan, built the Grand Anicut, mainly to control floods in Cauvery and provide irrigation to "Chola Nadu," which is the present day Cauvery delta. The Anicut was designed in such a way to divert excess water into Kollidam river at times of floods. Water let into the Cauvery and Vennar from the Anicut was used for irrigation.

Such was the copious flow in the Cauvery then, that an anicut was needed to regulate water. In fact, Cauvery carried water in it, true to the saying "Van Poippinum Than Poyya Cauvery" (Even if the sky betrays (to rain), Cauvery will not betray people).

Cauvery's copious flow helped in food production in the delta and composite Thanjavur district earning it the name "Granary of Tamil Nadu."

Originating from Madikeri in Coorg district in Karnataka in the Western Ghats, Cauvery enters Tamil Nadu at Hogenakkal, falls down the hills, runs into the plains to join Bay of Bengal at Poompuhar. On its way it is joined by important tributaries like Harangi, Hemavathi, Laxmanthirtha and Kabini in Karnataka. The river takes a course towards south after Hogenakkal and enters the Mettur reservoir. Later it enters the plains where more tributaries in Tamil Nadu—Noyyal and Amaravathy join the river.

At Upper Anicut the river splits into two, the northern branch called Kollidam and southern branch called Cauvery. The Upper Anicut was constructed in the year 1886 to facilitate



diversion of the river into Cauvery delta. The two branches Cauvery and Kollidam go around Srirangam an island and again joint to branch out at Grand Anicut.

While the Grand Anicut was built by Karikal Cholan, a bridge was constructed over the anicut in 1830 to 1840. Regulators on the heads of Cauvery and Vennar which branch out from Grand Anicut were constructed in the year 1883-86.

The Cauvery regulator was constructed by Col.Johsted R.E. It has 40 vents of size 3.05 X 2.10 metres. The maximum discharge that can be made into Cauvery river from the head is 15,587 cusecs and normal discharge is 10,691 cusecs. Cauvery irrigates about 4,93,837 acres in the districts of Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam and Karikal region of Puducherry union territory.

Cauvery branches into 21 rivers like Kodamuruti, Thirumalairajan, Arasalar. In 2005, modernisation of Cauvery regulator works was carried out in Grand Anicut under National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) scheme. Regulating arrangements of 40 vents were modified as electrically operated system.

Vennar regulator was also constructed by Col.Johsted R.E. There are 33 vents of size 3.05 X 3.66 mts. The maximum discharge into Vennar river is 11,000 cusecs while normal discharge is 8863 cusecs. It irrigates about 4, 65,307 acres in Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts. It branches into 15 rivers like Vettar, Vadavar, Baminiyar, Koraiyar, Pandavaiyaru, Vellar and Adappar. Here also modernisation was done using NABARD fund in 2005. Regulating arrangements of 33 vents were modified as electrically operated system.

Another significant development related to irrigation that took place in 1929-34 was the excavation of Grand Anicut canal from Grand Anicut under Cauvery Mettur project.

The man made Grand Anicut canal was built by Col.W.M.Ellis. The head has six vents of size 9.10 X 1.62 mts. The maximum discharge is 4500 cusecs and normal discharge is 3501 cusecs. It irrigates 2, 56,133 acres in Thanjavur and Pudukottai districts.

GA canal also branches out into several branch canals like Kalayanavodai branch canal, Rajamadam branch canal, Alivalam branch canal, Pudupattinam branch canal and Vadakadu

branch caanal. Under NABARD's modernisation scheme six vents were made electrically operated systems in 2005.

Though Mettur dam and Grand Anicut regulate the water flow of Cauvery, its umpteen branches which forms the sprawling Cauvery delta reaches water to tail-end areas and fields of farmers. Thus they help in composite Thanjavur district retaining the name Granary of Tamil Nadu.

According to S.Asokan, Superintending Engineer, PWD, Thanjavur circle, total length of rivers and channels in the delta is 26,890 kms. Out of this there are 36 major branch rivers running to a length of 1610 km, 1505 "A" class channels running to a distance of 5505 kms, 28,376 other channels running to a length of 18,395 km. The main river Grand Anicut Canal runs to distance of 148 kms and its 327 branches run to a distance of 1232 km.

Canals irrigate most of the cultivation areas in the three districts of Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam.

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### **Rain brings cheer to farmers**



Nature's gift: A farmer along with his family members begins work in his field near Kagaznagar following rainfall in Adilabad. -PHOTO: S. HARPAL SINGH

“This rain is worth hundreds of crores of rupees for us”, observed a beaming Nainwar Yadav Rao, cotton farmer from Hasnapur in Tamsi mandal while referring to the moderate showers

across Adilabad district on Tuesday. "For starters, it will save seeds from any further destruction by rats", he exhibits relief too as he heads towards his fields for an inspection. Harping on the gravity of losses due to severe rodent attacks since the season began this retired officer in Maharashtra's Agriculture Department says the destruction was unprecedented in scale due to atypical seasonal conditions.

He puts the loss due to destruction of cotton and redgram seeds at a whopping Rs. 50 crore.

"The hot and humid conditions above the ground seem to have prevented snakes from crawling out of the holes even for breeding. This resulted in unchecked multiplication of mice population", he provides a reason for the unusual phenomenon. "The rats will not be able to locate the seeds that will get properly embedded in the soil thanks to the rain. The population will also be controlled because the rat holes crumble due to the extra moisture absorbed by the soil thereby burying the litters", Yadav Rao points out.

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### **Trying to rein in food inflation: Pranab**

Holding low production of foodgrain responsible for rising prices, Union finance minister Pranab Mukherjee on Sunday said the central government is trying to rein in the food inflation.

"Prices of foodgrain increased due to low level of production. We need a total of 19 million tonnes of foodgrain, but our total production is 14 million tonnes. This time, the production of pulses has increased," Mukherjee told reporters in Kolkata.

He said high procurement prices of foodgrain was also contributing to the inflation.

"Earlier, procurement price of one quintal of paddy was Rs.600, now it is Rs.1,100. The central government collects one third of the total foodgrain production. The procurement prices are determining the benchmark of market prices," he said.

"We are trying to reduce food price inflation," he added.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/722302.aspx>

## Weather

Chennai - INDIA

### Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

**Monday, Jul 18**

Max Min  
36.8° | 25.4°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 66%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 5:50

Sunset: 18:39

Barometer: 1001

### Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

**Tuesday, Jul 19**

Max Min  
36° | 26°

### Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday  
Jul 20



34° | 27°

Rainy

Thursday  
Jul 21



33° | 28°

Rainy

Friday  
Jul 22



33° | 28°

Rainy

Saturday  
Jul 23



32° | 28°

Rainy

Sunday  
Jul 24



32° | 27°

Rainy

## **Research keeps farm striving for better breeds**

Spending a day at the farm might sound like a delightfully rustic idea. And it is without a doubt. Though the Livestock Research Station at Kattupakkam, about 35 km from Chennai on the way to Chengalpet is commonly referred to as a 'farm', do not be misled. Behind that singularly unpretentious euphemism lies one of India's most regarded and highly sophisticated livestock research facilities in existence today.

The 'farm' tag actually has some history attached to it, as the facility's head, Dr P Kumaraswamy explains. "This place was originally started as sheep farm in 1957, and that is probably how the name has come to stick." Subsequently, the farm was upgraded into a Livestock Research Station in 1969, under the aegis of the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University. Spread over a vast 620-acre property, the farm is among those that draw the attention of rail commuters as it is adjacent to the track.

"At the very basis of it all, the research we do, however advanced it may seem, is directed to make our livestock extremely saleable and also increase its productivity," says Dr D Thyagarajan, director, Centre for Animal Production Studies, who oversees the working of the facility. He recalls how research work conducted at the station has yielded several incentives for livestock breeders and the industry in general. "Sheep, cattle, pigs, fish...whatever species of livestock is available commercially, chances are it is a variety that has been genetically studied and provided for its optimum quality, taken by the breeders from here," he adds.

However, the research does not stop with meat varieties that are currently being consumed in the State. "When we find that a particular variety of animal is being consumed internationally, we check to see if it is nutritious, viable to be reared in India and see if it is cost effective before investing in the import of the animal for initial research." That explains how non-native poultry like the ostrich and emu were brought to the station.

"Some markets take off initially and then fizzle out, like the demand for rabbits," adds Thyagrajan. "But we strive to make disease-resistant cross breeds." When the demand rises, they will have the best breeds raring to go.

"Everyone here is a vet, professor and researcher rolled into one," explains Kumaraswamy.

They also have an agri-section that researches the best fodder crops grown to suit every species of livestock. Not to mention the fact that it provides an in-house food supply for the animals.

"Most people are unaware that almost every high produce yielding livestock is a cross between an imported and local breed," claims Thyagarajan. In other words, the piece of meat on your plate could be the result of years of sophisticated research at the farm. Raise a toast to that.

*17 Jul 2011 06:53:25 PM IST*

### **Trying to rein in food inflation: Pranab**

KOLKATA: Holding low production of foodgrain responsible for rising prices, Union Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee Sunday said the central government is trying to rein in the food inflation.

"Prices of foodgrain increased due to low level of production. We need a total of 19 million tonnes of foodgrain, but our total production is 14 million tonnes. This time, the production of pulses has increased," Mukherjee told reporters here.

He said high procurement prices of foodgrain was also contributing to the inflation.

"Earlier, procurement price of one quintal of paddy was Rs.600, now it is Rs.1,100. The central government collects one third of the total foodgrain production. The procurement prices are determining the benchmark of market prices," he said.

"We are trying to reduce food price inflation," he added.

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## Rice exporters now look at Kakinada as key sourcing belt



The decision to allow up to 10 lakh tonnes of rice for exports is expected to give a fillip to rice shipments from Kakinada.

Price competitive against those offered by Vietnam, Pakistan, Thailand

New Delhi, July 17:

Rice traders are looking at the Kakinada belt of Andhra Pradesh as the main sourcing point to ship out non-basmati grain, following the Empowered Group of Ministers' (EGoM) decision to allow up to 10 lakh tonnes (lt) of export.

According to trade sources, double-polished parboiled rice with five per cent broken content is available within 100 km of Kakinada port today at about Rs 17,000 a tonne.

Adding various expenses of around Rs 3,500 — towards packing, transportation, clearing and forwarding, bank and insurance charges, port labour, etc — would take the total cost to Rs 20,500 or \$461 a tonne.

“Inclusive of \$14-15 margin, five per cent broken parboiled rice from India is exportable at \$475 a tonne, free on board,” the sources said.

That makes it competitive against five per cent parboiled Sortex rice from Thailand and Pakistan, currently being offered at \$515-545 a tonne. Five per cent broken white rice is quoting lower, at \$480-495 from Vietnam, \$510 from Pakistan and \$510-540 from Thailand.

Indian exporters may also be able to ship out white rice with 25 per cent brokens sourced from near Kakinada at Rs 16,000 a tonne.

This rice would be exportable at \$450 a tonne, which is below \$460-500 price of Thai and Pakistan origin and around the \$425-455 range from Vietnam.

“Indian rice is quite competitive if you can source it from near the ports. There is no rice today being offered at less than \$425 a tonne and even that would be for 100 per cent brokens from Vietnam,” the sources added.

### **Diversion, a concern**

But the biggest worry for the Government — one reason why it has been hesitant to open up shipments — is the possibility of rice meant for the public distribution system (PDS) or the Food-for-Work programme being diverted for exports.

“If the rice, instead of being bought from the market at Rs 16,000-17,000, can be sourced from the PDS at Rs 10,000 or below, there is a huge killing to be made from exports at the current world prices,” the sources pointed out.

To prevent this, the EGoM has proposed fixing a minimum export price (MEP) of \$400 a tonne for non-basmati rice other than the premium ‘Sona Masuri’, ‘Ponni Samba’ and ‘Matta’ varieties. For the latter, the MEP has been pegged at \$850 a tonne.

The proposed \$400 MEP — which the EGoM has left to Commerce Ministry's discretion to notify — is expected to curb the ‘temptation’ for traders to source PDS rice that can then be exported at super-competitive prices.

Besides the MEP, the EGoM has proposed allocation of a maximum quota of 12,500 tonnes for each exporter within the overall 10 lt to be allowed. The quota would be only against irrevocable, confirmed letters of credit, with the exporter also required to furnish bank guarantee for 10 per cent of the shipment value.



If the \$400-a-tonne MEP is implemented, there will be three floor prices applicable on rice exports — \$900 for basmati, \$850 for premium non-basmati and \$400 for ordinary non-basmati. That, in turn, is testimony to the sheer range of rice varieties from India and the prices they command globally.

Even within basmati, the price range starts with \$900 a tonne for parboiled Pusa Basmati-1 to \$1,020-1,040 for parboiled traditional, \$1,080-1,100 for parboiled Pusa-1121 and white Pusa Basmati-1, \$1,150 for white traditional and \$1,300 for white Pusa-1121. It goes all the way to \$1,800 for two-year aged branded white Pusa-1121 rice packed in 10 kg polypropylene bags.

### **Basmati exports to Iraq seen rising 30%**



Chandigarh, July 17:

With Iraq turning out to be an emerging market for basmati rice, the country's exporters are eyeing an over 30 per cent jump in overseas aromatic rice shipments to 3 million tonnes in the current fiscal.

"Iraq is proving to be an emerging market for basmati rice export and if the demand continues to rise from this country, our total export may touch the figure of 3 mt this season," the All-India Rice Exporters Association President, Mr Vijay Setia, told PTI today.

India last year exported 2.2 mt of basmati rice, of which over 80 per cent was shipped to Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait and Yemen.

According to exporters, Iraq annually imports 1.5 mt of the premium variety of rice.

“Exporters from here shipped over 1 lakh tonnes of basmati rice, mainly PUSA 1121, to Iraq via Jordan and Dubai last year and this market is improving... We think we can export 0.7 mt of crop this year,” he said.

The growing demand from traditional markets like Iran and Saudi Arabia will also help rice exporters increase shipments to the targeted level.

To deal with the growing cases of delayed payment by importers, especially from Iran, Mr Setia said he had proposed to the Centre for permitting only one-third of total rice exports on a credit basis, while the rest should be done against cash payment or a Letter of Credit.

“There is a need to rationalise the payment system, especially with Iran buyers, so that payment to rice exporters should not get delayed,” he said.

Exporters rued that the time lag in receiving payment, particularly from Iran, has reached 90 days to 120 days.

To further promote Indian basmati exports in global markets, exporters — with the assistance of the Commerce Ministry — would install 35 slides at the Delhi International airport at an outlay of Rs 2.10 crore.

“These slides will be used for promotion of basmati varieties to woo foreigners,” he said.

The increase in demand for exports, coupled with expectations of better returns, is likely to result in the area under basmati varieties of rice in Punjab and Haryana going up by 15 per cent in the ongoing kharif sowing season.

Punjab and Haryana together account for 75 per cent of total basmati rice production in the country.

“As per preliminary reports coming from fields in Punjab and Haryana, we think the area under basmati variety, particularly PUSA 1121, PUSA 6 and PUSA 1, will increase by 15 per cent,” Mr Setia said.

However, plantations under traditional basmati varieties like HBC 19 are likely to drop by 40 per cent. “Farmers are keen to grow PUSA 1121 and other PUSA varieties because of higher yield, remunerative returns and less consumption of water,” he said.

PUSA varieties constitute over 70 to 80 per cent of the total basmati area under cultivation.

The area under basmati varieties in Punjab jumped from 3.5 lakh hectares in 2008-09 to 5.5 lakh hectares in 2010-11. Similarly, in Haryana, the area under basmati went up from 5 lakh hectares to 7 lakh hectares last season.

### **Punjab to promote sunflower cultivation**

Chandigarh, July 17:

Punjab Government said it would lay thrust on increasing cultivation of sunflower crop in the State by offering subsidies. State Agriculture Minister, Mr Sucha Singh Langah said the government would provide subsidy on agri-implements and weedicides used in cultivation of sunflower.

The Government has decided to set up 80 exhibition plots measuring five hectares each throughout the state and the farmers would be provided subsidy of Rs 2,500 a hectare and Rs 12,500 for each exhibition plot of 5 hectares, he said

### **Centre allows 40,000 tonnes rubber imports at 7.5% concessional duty**



- High prices for inferior rubber have made production unviable for small scale industries
- Move seen to help small manufacturers get access to quality rubber

Growers disappointed as they fear move may suppress domestic prices

New Delhi, July 17:

The Centre has allowed imports of 40,000 tonnes of natural rubber at a concessional duty of 7.5 per cent for the current fiscal. This is similar to the one allowed last fiscal.

Since April 1 this year, the Customs duty on natural rubber has been fixed at 20 per cent or Rs 20 a kg, whichever is lower.

The move to allow imports at a lower duty follows demand from the user industry, particularly tyre manufacturers, to allow import of two lakh tonnes duty-free. Sources said that the Commerce Ministry had recommended allowing imports of one lakh tonnes duty-free. But the Finance Ministry, which has a final say, has treaded a cautious path in arriving at the final decision. Growers, on the other hand, are totally opposed to imports.

“The decision to allow import of only 40,000 tonnes that too at 7.5 per cent against a demand to permit two lakh tonnes is disappointing,” said an industry source, who did not wish to be identified. “It is also too little and too late,” the source said.

Last fiscal, the import duty regime was put in place in December for a similar quantity of 40,000 tonnes. This year, though, imports are allowed from this month itself.

The import will meet consumers' need for just 15 days, going by the consumption of 80,500 tonnes in June.

“The decision to allow imports at concessional duty is oppressive. It has come at the most inopportune moment as peak production season is lurking,” said Mr J.K. Thomas, former President of the United Planters' Association of Southern India. “It could suppress domestic prices,” he said.

“The decision is good though it will meet only 15 days demand. It will improve supply in the domestic market. On Saturday, rubber was not available locally. Last week, I scouted for 20 tonnes of rubber and was hardly able to get two tonnes. Rubber is not available locally despite the Rubber Board statistics saying that the carryover stocks at the end of June were 2.47 lakh tonnes,” said Mr N. Radhakrishnan, advisor to the Cochin Rubber Merchants Association.

According to traders, inferior quality sheet rubber is available at Rs 208-201 a kg. The high price for inferior quality rubber makes production unviable for small manufacturers.

“If tyre manufacturers import, then quality rubber will be available for small industries which are suffering,” said Mr Radhakrishnan.

“There is no way other than imports to improve supply,” he said.

“It is an agreed position that imports could be allowed when domestic prices are higher than global rates. That was seen only in two years.

Now, domestic and global prices are at par,” said Mr Thomas.

On Saturday, RSS-4 (ribbed smoked sheet) rubber was quoted at Rs 216 a kg. During the weekend, in the global market RSS-3, the equivalent to India's RSS-4, closed at Rs 210 a kg in Bangkok.

In the first quarter this fiscal, rubber imports almost doubled to 38,233 tonnes compared with 19,118 tonnes during the same period a year ago.

Production in the first quarter was 1, 75,700 tonnes, up 5.4 per cent over the same period last year. In comparison, consumption was 2.44 lakh tonnes, up nearly four per cent year-on-year.

Shares of domestic tyre companies shot up in the last week of June on rumours that the Centre would exempt natural rubber imports from customs duty for a specified quantity under a tariff rate quota regime.

### **Pepper exports to suffer on price fluctuation**

Kochi, July 16:

The Indian pepper futures market continued to witness the tug of war between the bull and bear operators who are running it at their “whims and fancies” by pulling it down and pushing it up almost everyday. As a result, there remains an uncertainty about the price, which used to refrain exporters from making commitments while buyers overseas resort to wait and watch hoping the

prices might drop or move up suddenly as it happens almost daily, market sources told Business Line.

In fact, Indian parity is somewhat in line with other origins which were reported firm due to limited availability of the material.

Indian parity in the international market was at around \$6,600 a tonne (c&f) and remained very much in line with other origins which have also gone up on short supply. Reported crop failure in Sri Lanka has pushed up the prices of pepper there and especially for immature berries having high oil content to around \$8,000 a tonne. This variety pepper could be grown in Kerala for the extraction industry if the government authorities and the industry initiated steps to promote its cultivation, they said.

Availability in Vietnam of black pepper is reportedly limited contrary to the expectations/ estimates made earlier. It has exported 68,619 tonnes in the first six of 2011. Besides, its exports to China was at 15,000 tonnes; loss ratio of white pepper processing was at 2,500 tonnes; domestic consumption at 3,500 tonnes and stocks held in factories were at 4,000 tonnes. Thus, out of the total 1.2 lakh tonnes the balance available now for the next seven months is estimated at 26,381 tonnes. This report is appears to have pushed up the prices in all the origins, trade sources claimed.

Price indications on Friday were 500GL : at \$5,600 a tonne (fob) HCMC; 550GL : \$5,950 a tonne and V Asta 570GL: \$6,350 a tonne and white pepper double washed was quoted at \$8,250 - \$8,300a tonne.

Availability this year is estimated to be lower because of the decline in output in some of the growing countries, trade sources said.

After moving up sharply on Thursday hitting the second ceiling, the market dropped on Saturday. However, the increase has been so substantial on Friday that all the contracts showed a rise at the weekend. July, August and September contracts were up by Rs673, Rs929 and Rs992 respectively to close at Rs27,606, Rs28,385 and Rs28,814 a quintal. Buying interest shown by operators who had invested already an estimated Rs200 crore and bought around 4,300 tonnes of pepper was pointed out as the reason for the sharp rise in the prices on Friday.

However, the bear operators managed to pull it down by spreading bearish sentiments, the next day.

Total open interest during the week declined by 76 tonnes to 13,215 tonnes. Total open interest moved up by 5,556 tonnes to close at 40,399 tonnes.

Spot prices increased by Rs600 a quintal to close at Rs26,900 (ungarbled) and Rs27,900 (MG 1) a quintal.

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.

Expert processors were buying high range pepper from Idukki's Rajkumari areas at Rs 275 – Rs 279 a kg.

Those who cannot afford to pay three per cent delivery margin introduced on July which is maturing on July 20, were liquidating or switching over.

The domestic demand has been met almost fully by Karnataka which has been offering at lower cost delivered anywhere in India. However, as the prices have headed for north they are said to have slowed down their sales.

### **Karnataka eyes low-cost farm technology to boost output**



A farmer looks at his capsicum crops at Madbol village in Gulbarga. Karnataka is holding a meet to look for innovative low-cost farm technologies.

'Agri-business Investors Meet 2011' to be held in October

Bangalore, July 17:

Karnataka will scout for innovative low-cost farm technologies at the 'Agri-business Investors Meet 2011' to be held in Bangalore in October.

### **Road show held**

Speaking at a road show in Gulbarga for the promotion of the 'Agri-business Investors Meet 2011,' Dr Vasanth Kumar, Additional Secretary, Karnataka Agriculture Department, said, "The Government is giving emphasis to boost farm output by adopting new technologies and we are looking for the same at the investors meet."

"The investment opportunities in Karnataka for agri-business are plenty and has been increasing as farmers are getting progressive," he added.

He also requested the representatives of the trade and industry in the State to actively participate in the forthcoming agri-investors meet.

He also said progressive farmers of North Karnataka should grow crops according to the market demand.

The State Government is planning to hold a special session with a special reference to the potential for the development of agri-business in Gulbarga, Raichur, Yadgir, Bidar, Bellary, Bijapur, and Koppal districts.

A preparatory meet in Gulbarga was jointly held by the Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce & Industries (FKCCI) and Hyderabad Karnataka Chambers of Commerce & Industry.

Mr J. R. Bangera, President, FKCCI, highlighted the importance of the 'Integrated Agri-business Development Policy 2011.'

He also explained that this policy is evolved with an objective of ensuring sustainable development in the agriculture sector.



## Main focus

He further added that the main focus of food processing include the development of infrastructure, technological upgradation, development of backward and forward linkages, enforcement of quality standards and expanding domestic and export markets for processed food.

He mentioned that agriculture technology will be the revolution in India, in the near future, after information technology and biotech. Mr Sharanabasappa Darshnapur, MLA, representing Shahpur, said Karnataka is making all efforts to increase food production.

## Constraints

He mentioned that there are constraints in giving subsidies to below poverty level people which needs to be worked out. Dr D. Prassanna, Manager, Agri-Business, Mahindra Consulting Engineers, shared his companie's experience with farmers and Mr Gopalkrishna V. Raghoji, President, Hyderabad Karnataka Chambers of Commerce & Industry, welcome the gathering.

## 'Issues affecting Kerala's coir sector to be discussed with Centre'



Lady workers engaged in the manufacture of coir products in Alappuzha.

Govt studying problems of the export-oriented industry: Minister

Kochi, July 17:

The State Government will hold a detailed discussion with the concerned Union Ministers and officials in Delhi on the urgent steps to be taken to alleviate the problems afflicting the State's traditional coir sector , the State Minister for Coir and Health, Mr Adoor Prakash, has said.

Speaking after releasing the survey report funded by the Small Industries Bank of India (SIDBI) on 'Coir Fibre Scenario-2011,' he said the Government is studying the problems of the export-oriented industry and as part of it, he has had discussions with the Coir Board Chairman, exporters and others.

He was also planning to visit Delhi on July 31 to meet the Union Commerce and MSME Ministers to seek the Centre's support .

### **Low wages**

Concurring with the survey report on the growing raw material shortage and migration of labour to other areas of activity due to the prevailing low wage structure in the coir sector, Mr Prakash said these were the main issues that need to be tackled urgently to sustain the momentum of growth in coir exports which crossed Rs 807 crore last year.

The Coir Board Secretary, Mr M. Kumararaja, received the first copy of the report from the Minister at the function organised by the Alappuzha BDS, the coir cluster-based service project, also funded by SIDBI.

The Minister also launched a new mini coir spinning machine, brought out by a Bangalore-based company that is capable of enhancing production of quality yarn required for the coir tufting industry.

He said the Government would consider supplying such machines free of cost to coir workers in the BPL category, if its performance is found satisfactory.

## **Project activities**

Mr Jagat Shah, Project Director, Alapuzha BDS and Chief Mentor, Cluster Pulse, the implementing agency of the project, explained the four years of the project activities undertaken within the Alapuzha Coir Cluster.

## **Raw material bank**

The Project Manager, Mr Pankaj Ahair, said setting up of a raw material bank for the coir industry was one of the major recommendations of the two year-long SIDBI funded survey carried out in the coir sector in both Kerala and Tamil Nadu, which has become a major source of raw material for the Kerala industry.

## **28% Coonoor tea unsold**

Coonoor, July 17:

The declining trend in the sale percentage witnessed in the last three weeks continued in sale No: 28 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions when teas worth Rs 2.80 crore remained unsold as there were no takers for 27.5 per cent of the year's highest offer of 17.17 lakh kg despite shedding prices by Rs 3 a kg.

“Less demand prevailed for orthodox leaf with market easing Rs 2-5 a kg. Better liquoring CTC leaf lost Rs 1-3, mediums Rs 2-3 and plainers suffered withdrawal even after shedding Rs 2-4. Orthodox dust suffered withdrawal even after shedding Rs 2-3.

Better liquoring CTC dusts eased Rs 2-3, mediums Rs 1-3 and plainers suffered withdrawal even after shedding up to Rs 3,” 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, Shanthi Supreme Rs 137, Hittakkal Estate Rs 136, Blue Monte Speciality Rs 133 and Sree Tea Supreme Rs 131. In all, 73 marks got Rs 100 and more.

## **Orthodox teas**

Among orthodox teas from corporate sector, Chamraj got Rs 191, Curzon Rs 160, Kairbetta Rs 155, Havukal Rs 152, Glendale Rs 145 and Katary Rs 140. In all, 26 marks got Rs 100 and more.

Among green tea, Wood Bridge Estate's 'Hyson' grade, auctioned by Paramount Tea Marketing, fetched Rs 210 and 'fine' grade Rs 190.

## **Exports**

On the export front, Pakistan bought in wide range – Rs 38-74 a kg, the CIS Rs 42-54 and European markets Rs 44-58.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 36-40 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 80-140 for brighter liquoring sorts. They ranged Rs 42-47 for plain dusts and Rs 85-140 for brighter liquoring dusts.

## **Now, TN farmers urged to declare crop holiday**

Chennai, July 17:

The Consortium of Indian Farmers Association has urged farmers in Tamil Nadu to declare a 10 per cent crop holiday for Kharif 2011.

The objective is to cut back on production as a measure of market intervention to ensure higher prices for agriculture commodities.

CIFA wants Tamil Nadu farmers to emulate their counterparts in Andhra Pradesh where a similar effort is on, said Mr Chengal Reddy, Secretary General, CIFA, and Mr R.V. Giri, State General Secretary, in a press release.

While calling for increased focus on agriculture development and farmers' welfare, CIFA is demanding separate budget announcements for the primary sector at the Centre and State level, doing away with Essential Commodities Act and free exports of agriculture commodities to enable better prices for farm produce.

On the crop holiday, the farmers' association has said that 10 per cent of the farm lands should be left fallow to bring down production and increase prices. With a food grain production of about 225 million tonnes, prices have dropped to a level not remunerative for farmers. The Government should take immediate steps to export food grains and hike support prices. Between 2010 and 2011, input costs doubled for major crops such as paddy and sugarcane. Paddy fetches about Rs 1,030 a quintal and sugarcane about Rs 2,000 a tonne. Farmers will have to be paid three times the price for paddy and double for sugarcane to make these crops remunerative, according to CIFA.

The organised sector wages, including those in government employment, public sector enterprises and industry, have been able to get higher wages because of their unionised demands. Farmers should cooperate to enforce their demands, CIFA said in a press release.

### **Plan panel clears Rs 9,428 cr for Godavari irrigation project**

Hyderabad, July 17:

The Planning Commission has approved the revised investment clearance of Rs 9,428 crore for the JCR Godavari Lift Irrigation Scheme, the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr N. Kiran Kumar Reddy, has said.

According to a statement from the Chief Minister's Office, the J Chokka Rao Godavari Lift Irrigation Scheme has been designed to irrigate 6.2 lakh acres with water utilisation of 50 TMC from Godavari. Out of 50 TMC, 38.16 TMC of water is proposed to be lifted from Godavari with intake at Gangaram, Warangal District. This project is being taken up in three phases.

The Chief Minister said that the investment clearance for project with price level of 2004-05 was accorded by the Planning Commission at Rs 6,016 crore.

The revised cost of the project — Rs 9,428 crore — was cleared by the Central Water Commission in September 2010 with price level of 2009-10. This project is included in the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme with a sharing ratio of 75:25 between the Centre and State Government, the Chief Minister added.

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