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Mobile food processing unit set to add value to lives of farmers

Special Correspondent

The Rs. 21-lakh unit opened at IICPT will be used for making tomato puree

Photo: M.Srinath



ready and waiting: Ashok Sinha, secretary, and Ajit Kumar, left, joint secretary, Ministry of Food Processing Industries at the mobile food processing unit in Thanjavur on Friday. K. Alagusundaram, extreme right, Director, IICPT, is in the picture.

THANJAVUR: A mobile processing unit was inaugurated by Ashok Sinha, secretary, Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries, at Indian Institute of Crop Processing Technology (IICPT), here on Friday.

The Rs. 21-lakh unit has been equipped with modern equipment to process fruits and vegetables. Farmers producing fruits like tomatoes can take the help of the unit to process tomato into pulp and preserve.

Mr. Sinha said during harvest season, due to sudden drop in market price, farmers either throw tomatoes in the streets or crush them in the field. Processing and value addition would fetch the farmers a better income and ensure more tomatoes available for consumption.

The unit set up by the IICPT can be brought to the farms and rented out to farmers for making tomato purees. These purees are in demand among tomato product manufacturing companies. The unit has equipment such as a washer to clean up the tomatoes, blancher for de-activating enzymes, pulper for converting the fruits into pulp, steam kettle and autoclave.

Mr. Sinha said farmers could know what kind of tomatoes could be preserved with the help of the unit.

"We do not want only the multi-national companies to go for value addition. Small farmers too can make use of it. Each village can have a unit of this kind," Mr. Sinha said.

Earlier, he inaugurated a national conference on career and research trends in food processing. He said modern technologies like imaging and nanotechnology should be utilised by the IICPT for research purpose.

The institute should provide leadership in food processing research to the whole country. It should ensure that farmers take to market oriented agriculture. It should have links with all institutes under Indian Council for Agricultural Research. He released a souvenir on the occasion. He also released benchmark of food processing technology manual and CD. Ajit Kumar, Joint Secretary, Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries, received the first copy of the manual and CD.

T. Jayaraj, Director, Tamil Nadu Rice Research Institute (TRRI), Aduthurai; and A. Alagusundaram, Director, IICPT participated in the function.

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Vegetable Initiative to rein in rising prices

Sharath S. Srivatsa

Customers to buy vegetables from farm clusters

— File Photo: Sampath Kumar G.P.



Up, Up and away: Vegetable prices in Bangalore have been rising by 20 to 25 per cent over the last five years.

BANGALORE: The next time you tearfully pay Rs. 60 a kg for beans or Rs. 50 for ladies' finger, you could look at the recently launched Vegetable Initiative.

This aims to rein in rising prices of vegetables in Bangalore by linking the farmers' clusters directly with the consumer, removing middlemen and thereby cutting costs.

Bangalore receives 2,000 tonnes of vegetables from its neighbouring districts daily, of which HOPCOMS, the biggest vegetable retail chain, handles around 100 tonnes. The bulk is sold through retail vendors.

National project

Launched as part of the national project under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojane to assure supply of quality vegetables at an affordable cost, Vegetable Initiative will

address the entire value chain from the pre-production stage to consumption. This national project is expected to address scarcity and price rise.

Bangalore is among the 29 cities that will benefit from this initiative across the country, and cities that have a population of over a million have been selected for the purpose. Silicon City will receive Rs. 17 crore of the Rs. 300 crore earmarked for the purpose.

20 to 25 per cent rise

According to statistics available with HOPCOMS, vegetable prices in Bangalore have been annually increasing by an average 20 to 25 per cent over the last five years, with 2009 as an exception when vegetable prices rose above 25 per cent. In the 1990s, the annual rise in prices of vegetables was between 10 and 15 per cent.

Though some cities are facing problems of scarce supply of vegetables and price fluctuations, Bangalore has not had problems as regards supply. Price fluctuations are a different matter though.

For illustration, vegetable prices in the city rose abnormally in 2009 when onion rates were up and supply of lime was short, apart from the high cost of peas and green leafy vegetables. "The initiative has been launched in the light of recent price fluctuations. This will benefit both consumers and farmers," C.G. Nagaraj, Deputy Director of Horticulture, Bangalore Rural district, told The Hindu.

He said it will be implemented in Bangalore Rural and Urban, Ramanagaram, Kolar and Chickballapur districts, all of which supply vegetables to the city.

"We will form farmers' clusters through which vegetables will be sold directly to customers in the city."

Among others, the formation of clusters would enable farmers to receive financial benefits for greenhouses, organic conversation hybrid production, cold storage, collection centres, market kiosks, farmers' groups and others.

While the baseline survey will be started in a few days across all the district, formation of farmers' groups at the taluk level will commence in a few weeks, Mr. Nagaraj indicated.

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Farmers' forum seeks closure of private mineral water plant

Staff Reporter

They also demand withdrawal of false cases against farmers

-Photo: N. Bashkaran



Rough waters: Members of the Tamilnadu Vivasayigal Sangam staging a demonstration demanding closure of the alleged illegal mineral water plant at Sigaralapalli village near Bargur on Friday.

KRISHNAGIRI: Over 100 members of the CPI(M)-affiliated Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam staged a demonstration in front of the Office of the Block Development Office, Bargur, demanding closure of a private Reverse Osmosis water treatment plant at Sigaralapalli Panchayat, near Bargur, in Krishnagiri district on Friday.

They also demanded withdrawal of false cases foisted against the farmers who had opposed the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation's move to put up overhead wires in a lane at Sigaralapalli village that posed a threat to the life of people.

The Sangam alleged that the RO plant was supplying treated water to a mineral water company.

It exploited natural resources by sucking ground water as much as possible, depleting the water table in the area, already a drought-prone one.

Dry wells

Since the plant was extracting ground water indiscriminately, locals feared that bore wells would dry soon.

As many as 3,000 people living in Paiyadur, Erikollamedu, Sigaralapalli, Rangasamudhram, Ittiganur, Kuttappanayaganur, Thellapetta and Kollakottai villages have been using the water.

District Secretary of Communist Party of India (Marxist) and State Committee Member of the Sangam D. Ravindran gave special address.

M. Dharman, district president, X. Irudhayaraj, district secretary, R. Sekar, state committee member of the Sangam, G.K. Nanjundan, CPI (M) taluk secretary, were among others who spoke.

It was also alleged that the panchayat president who owns the mineral water factory had disconnected water supply to a village with 350 houses in Santhakarambu and Kothalakuttai koot road since the last week of May. A complaint regarding this had been made to the Block Development Officer.

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Farmers to be taught modern practices

Staff Reporter

DINDIGUL: Modern agriculture practices will be taught to farmers under second green revolution. All efforts would be made to procure copra from coconut growers in the district, assured Collector K. Nagarajan.

He was presiding over agriculturists' grievances meeting at the Collectorate here on Friday.

The State Government had announced second green revolution with an aim of enhancing income of small and tiny farmers in next three years. An Assistant Agriculture Officer will be deputed at taluk-level to train farmers in modern agriculture practices. They will meet farmers directly and advise them to choose the right crop for right season after checking the soil condition and water availability in every farm. Farmers would also be trained in modern and good agriculture practices and innovative and scientific methods in production, harvesting and post-harvesting methods, he added. Top priority will be given for drip irrigation. Small and tiny farmers will get 75 per cent subsidy for installing drip irrigation facility in their farms. Hybrids seeds of Bellari onion, drum stick and tomato will also be given to small and tiny farmers engaging in horticulture crop cultivation at required time.

Water was sufficient in all major dams to meet the irrigation needs. While Palaru-Porundhalaru dam has 31.04 feet of water, Parappalar dam has 71.2 feet of water and Varadhamanadhi dam 15.51 feet of water. Storage level in Kudiraiyaru dam was 47.71 feet, Kudgaganar dam 13.58 feet and Nanganjar dam 19.35 feet.

Expressing disgust over the absence of some officials, the Collector advised all officials to attend the agriculturists' grievances day meeting without fail. They should be present

to answers to the queries raised by farmers. Moreover, they should also understand the importance of their problems and respond to them.

If any official failed to take part in the meeting, severe action would be initiated against them, Mr. Nagarajan cautioned. Farmers demanded cold storage facility in mango production centres like Natham and Ayakudi. Coconut growers wanted a procurement centre for copra. While private parties procured copra at Rs.65 a kg, government procurement centre offered only Rs.41 only. They demanded that the procurement price be revised.

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Farmers seek ambulances for cattle

Staff Reporter

Only one veterinary ambulance in Namakkal Services are charged at Rs. 6 per kilometre

Namakkal: Farmers urged the district administration to mobilise ambulances at subsidised tariff to take their cattle to the veterinary hospitals and clinics.

The suggestion was put forward to the District Collector at the Farmer's Grievance Meet held at the Collectorate here on Friday.

The farmers said that there is only one ambulance for cattle and animals in Namakkal district – with the Veterinary College and Research Institute on Mohanur Road – that charged them Rs. 6 per kilometre.

“This is pretty high for us and we would also like to have more such ambulances as the existing one would not be sufficient to meet the requirements of this district,” they said.

They also urged the district administration to popularise the contact number of the existing ambulance for the benefit of the farmers.

Cranes and lifts

While close to 20 people have to manually carry a cow to put it on board an ambulance, it would be ideal if the ambulance is fitted with miniature cranes and other gadgets to make the lifting easy and comfortable for the cattle.

Collector J. Kumaragurubaran said that their suggestion would be forwarded to the government for approval.

Transportation fine

“While 30 to 40 cows and buffalos are transported in trucks to Kerala, police are charging us a fine for transporting one or two cows or oxen using mini vans from the cow shanty at Pudanchandhai, Metalla or Erode,” the farmers said. The Collector also came down heavily on sanitary inspectors of municipalities for not taking steps to destroy mangoes that were ripened artificially using carbide stones.

This was in response to a statement made by the officials who said that a total of 12 tonne of mangoes have been seized in the three municipalities – Rasipuram, Namakkal and Tiruchengode.

Farmers and social activists present there alleged that the raids were an “eye wash”, as more than 90 per cent of the mangoes in the market were artificially ripened

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Farmers to be honoured at villages

Staff Reporter

Tuticorin: Officials attached to Department of Agriculture should organise a series of input sessions for farmers at villages in all blocks across the district. Farmers could be motivated to enhance agricultural productivity if such programmes were conducted at regular intervals, U. Kaja Mydheen, a farmer of Ettayapuram said.

Based on the conditions of soil, the farmers should be imparted new cultivation methods of agricultural and horticultural crops.

Programmes not held

He alleged that the officials had scheduled meetings but such programmes were not conducted.

Citing the crop yield competition every year, Mr. Mydheen suggested that farmers should be honoured at their villages instead of the Collectorate. If such practices were followed, other farmers at villages would be motivated to follow suit.

Collector's assurance

Collector R. Selvaraj agreed to hold such programmes to honour farmers, who succeeded in the crop yield competition, at their villages itself.

S. Joseph Karunandhi, Joint Director of Agriculture, said programmes would be organised at villages accordingly to share knowledge and adopt suitable strategies for cultivation.

Such programmes would be organised from July onwards. Farmers had been provided with inputs at regular intervals.

Coconut seedlings given

He also indicated that as many as 250 coconut tall and dwarf seedlings were given to farmers at Ottapidaram in the presence of K. Krishnasamy, MLA of the constituency, on Friday. Dr. Krishnasamy also offered suggestions to use certified seeds and adopt better management practices to attain good agriculture productivity.

He extended bio fertilizers to farmers, who assembled at a programme launched to familiarise agriculture schemes.

Soil testing

The officials carried out soil test in a mobile van of the Agriculture Department. Results were given subsequently.

When contacted, S. Syed Ahmed Miranji, Deputy Director, Department of Horticulture, said the farmers would be taken on a tour of horticultural fields in Dharmapuri district.

Marketing knowledge

They could also gain agriculture marketing knowledge. Since weather conditions were conducive to cultivating both agricultural and horticultural crops, farmers could gain enough knowledge out of it.

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Rs. 109 crore to be given as cooperative loan to farmers

Special Correspondent

Plans to take up kuruvai cultivation in 42,500 hectares in district

—Photo:M.Srinath



Threadbare points: K.Baskaran, Collector, addressing farmers at the grievances day meeting in Thanjavur on Friday

THANJAVUR: Cooperative loans to the tune of Rs. 109 crore has been planned to be disbursed to farmers of the district this year, said Collector K. Baskaran, here on Friday. Speaking at the monthly farmers' grievances day meeting, Mr. Baskaran said that so far loans to the tune of Rs. 11.31 crore has been disbursed to 3,691 farmers. The plan is to raise Kuruvai crop on 42,500 hectares in the district this year. To achieve this, 494 tonnes of certified seeds have been distributed.

Commenting that there is adequate stock of fertilizers for the Kuruvai season this year, the Collector said that there is stock of 12,213 tonnes of urea; 4,413 tonnes of Di Ammonium Phosphate; 2,826 tonnes of potash and 2,762 tonnes of complex. The Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation has opened 364 direct purchase centres for the last Kharif season and had procured 5,37,530 tonnes of paddy.

KURUVAI CULTIVATION IN THANJAVUR DISTRICT

Total area to be covered	42,500 hectares
Seeds to be distributed to the farmers	494 tonnes
Target for cooperative farm credit	Rs. 109 crore
Cooperative loan distributed so far	Rs. 11.31 crore
Number of beneficiaries	3,691

Appealing to famers to use the available water judiciously, Mr.Baskaran urged them to raise a successful Kuruvai crop.

C. Suresh Kumar, District Revenue Officer; Balasubramanian, Joint Director of Agriculture; Antony Swamy Peter, Joint Registrar of Co-operatives; Devadoss, Senior Regional Manager, Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation, attended the meeting.

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Agri Fair to showcase innovations in farming

Special Correspondent

SALEM: The four-day Agri Fair being organised by Salem District Agricultural Graduates Consultancy and Service Society opened at Deiveegam Kalyana Mandapam here on Friday.

Industrialist P. Annamalai presided over the function in which G. Muthappan, DGM, Indian Bank, Salem inaugurated the fair which is showcasing many exhibits that concern agriculture and farmers.

Many including agri scientists, agricultural officers, extension officials and others are taking part.

The fair would explain to all about various stages of plants and crops from seedlings to harvesting.

The innovations of both private and government agencies, its research institutions, new technologies, soil testing, herbal and horticultural farming, nature farming, marketing, refrigeration, farm implements etc. are on show.

Explanations also are being provided by experts. Lively interactions between farmers and technocrats also would be organised every day at the venue, said president N. Jegadeesan.

Salem-based Pallavan Grama Bank, as a part of its Financial Inclusion Plan, also is participating in the Agri Fair to disseminate information on Clean Note Policy, KYC Norms, Loan Products, opening of No Frills Accounts etc.

The bank has put up a stall to highlight the financial literacy and financial inclusion aspects for the benefit of the farming community.

Government of India has also decided to call in from circulation the coins of denomination of 25 paise and less from June 30 this year.

These coins will cease to be legal tender thereafter.

Pallavan Grama Bank is providing an opportunity to the public for exchanging these coins at their counter in the Agri Fair, says G. Rangarajan, its Chairman.

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Rs. 3,800 cr. for irrigation projects

NIZAMABAD: Minister for Major Irrigation P. Sudarshan Reddy has disclosed that

the government, while according utmost importance to early completion of irrigation projects, has allotted Rs.3800 crore this year.

Participating in official programmes in Navipet, Renjal and Bodhan mandals on Friday, he said there was no dearth of funds.

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Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Saturday, Jun 25

Max Min
38.5° | 26.2°

Rain: 2.0 mm in 24hrs Sunrise: 5:44
Humidity: 63% Sunset: 18:38
Wind: Normal Barometer: 1001

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Sunday, Jun 26

Max Min
38° | 28°

Extended Forecast for a week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Jun 27	Jun 28	Jun 29	Jun 30	Jul 1



36° | 29°

Rainy



36° | 29°

Rainy



35° | 29°

Rainy



35° | 28°

Rainy



34° | 28°

Rainy

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Sat, Jun 25, 2011 | Updated 10.32AM IST

25 Jun, 2011, 04.13AM IST, Reuters

Palm Oil hits new seven-month low as inventories grow

KUALA LUMPUR/JAKARTA: Malaysian palm oil dropped to a seven-month low on Friday as expectations that a higher output cycle will lift stocks offset broad gains in agriculture markets.

Palm oil is on course for a drop of more than 8% in June, its worst monthly performance since February on sluggish commodity markets as well as high stocks outpacing export demand.

"We are looking for better export data next week to give some support but it will not be much," said a trader with a foreign commodities brokerage.

"However, the market has factored in all these bearish factors and has fallen 300 ringgit over the past two weeks. There should be some retracement."

The benchmark September crude palm oil contract on the Bursa Malaysia Derivatives Exchange ended 0.6% lower at 3,117 Malaysian ringgit (\$1,028) a tonne after going as low as 3,103 ringgit - matching a level last hit on November 23.

September contact traded volumes stood at 17,790 lots of 25 tonne each, versus 13,659 lots on Thursday.

Palm oil production is likely to easily push Malaysian stocks to 2 million tonne this month, traders say. "For stock levels, we all know it will be high, especially in the second half," said an Indonesian analyst. "Prices will go down again in the second half."

He added that policy changes to biodiesel subsidies in the US are also weighing on palm oil prices.

Indonesia raising its export tax for next month has spurred some palm oil firms to rush out their cargoes before the end of June to Malaysia, potentially swelling stocks, refiners say.

Falling prices could lure in buyers from Muslim countries from Pakistan to Iran who are looking to stock up ahead of the Ramadan fasting observance in August.

Exports have been reflecting this trend but may not be enough to slow Malaysia's stock growth. Cargo surveyors will report June 1-25 palm oil exports from Malaysia over the weekend and on Monday. A deep sell-off in oil paused on Friday as the impact of a surprise announcement of an emergency stocks release faded.

24 Jun, 2011, 03.31PM IST, Madhvi Sally,ET Bureau

Export order and domestic demand keeps groundnut prices bullish

AHMEDABAD: Groundnut prices are high at Rs 980 for 10 kg an increase of over 10% in a month period. With a bumper production this year, traders say the scenario is owing to demand of the premium oil by the affluent class and also increase in export orders.

"The export of groundnut is expected to be 3.75 lakh tonne compared to 2.50 lakh in the previous year owing to demand from Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia and some European countries," said Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA), former president, Govindbhai Patel.

He added the demand was also coming from the ready to eat market. "With an increase in liquor consumption by 20% in the country, the demand for groundnut has simultaneously increased which is eaten as tit-bits. Groundnut for

oil consumption account to a mere 3.25% of the 155 lakh tonne edible oil consumption in the country,"said Mr Patel

In the irrigated belt of Gujarat and Rajasthan sowing has been completed with farmers in the non-irrigated belt in a dilemma over going for cotton sowing or groundnut sowing due to fall in cotton prices in the past few days. In Gujarat area under groundnut is expected to be at 16.91 lakh hectare. In Andhra Pradesh sowing has started with the state government targeting an acreage of 15 lakh hectares in the state. In Tamil Nadu sowing on over 6 lakh hectares will begin in the second week of July.

On Wednesday the groundnut oil declined by Rs 10 to Rs 960 per 10 kg from the previous day closing and refined palmolein declined by Rs 3 to Rs 548 per 10 kg owing to palm oil prices tumbling to seven-month low internationally after soybean fell to a five-week low on signs of good crop in the US and Europe due to good rainfall.

Business Standard

Saturday, Jun 25, 2011

Food ministry in favour of small quantities of wheat, rice exports

Sanjeeb Mukherjee / New Delhi June 25, 2011, 0:56 IST

In view of bulging grain stocks, the food ministry is now believed to be in favour of allowing export in small quantities.

Officials said a formal proposal for opening exports would have to come from the commerce ministry, but this time the food ministry wouldn't object .

"We feel that almost 2 million tonnes of wheat and an equal quantity of rice could be easily exported," the official said. If allowed, this would be first time since 2007 that grain would be exported from India without any obstruction. India had imported almost 7.3 million tonnes of wheat in 2006 and 2007, as local procurement fell short of requirement.

Till now, the food ministry was against any export of grain before the proposed Food Security Bill gets into final shape. This was necessary as its grain requirement under the Bill would have been clear only after the proposals take final shape.

“The situation has changed and in view of increased arrival of grain in mandis and bulging inventories, we feel some quantity could be easily exported,” the food ministry official said, adding a mechanism to ensure exports don’t lead to any unusual flaring in prices or a shortage is also being thought of.

According to the Food Corporation of India (FCI), stocks of grain in central warehouses totalled almost 65 million tonnes, while the total storage capacity available is around 62 million tonnes. “Of this, covered storage capacity is around 57 million tonnes, which means almost 800,000 tonnes of grains don’t have proper cover,” officials said. This could become a big problem as rain in northern India, where much of the grains are stored, is expected to arrive in full swing in the next few weeks.

The issue of export of grains from the central pool was raised during the meeting of the empowered group of ministers (EGoM) held yesterday, but was not discussed as agriculture minister Sharad Pawar was not present. Officials said the food ministry just presented the factual position on storage, arrival, price of grain and requirement.

“It could come up in the EGoM meeting on food soon,” officials said. Agriculture minister Sharad Pawar has been in favour of grain exports in view of falling prices in most parts of the country. The chief minister of Andhra Pradesh had also requested the food ministry to press for allowing rice exports, as open market prices in the state have dropped below the minimum support price (MSP).

Agriculture ministry officials said that in many places, farmers are being forced to sell their wheat at dirt-cheap rates, as government procurement has stopped because of overflowing granaries, while traders are not purchasing because they have limited avenues to sell.

“It is for them that the government should allow exports, as it would give a floor to the falling prices,” a senior agriculture ministry official said.

He said in Gujarat, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, the price of wheat has dropped by 15 per cent from the government announced MSP of Rs 1,120 a quintal.

“In Andhra Pradesh, farmers are forced to sell their paddy at Rs 800-850 a quintal as there are virtually no takers, while the MSP is around Rs 1,080 a quintal,” the official said.

India’s wheat production in the 2011-2012 crop marketing year is estimated at 94.11 million tonnes, up 5.6 per cent from last year, while rice production is estimated to be around 80.38 million tonnes, up 5.87 per cent from last year, the government’s third advanced foodgrain estimate showed.

Haryana looks to boost sugar output

Komal Amit Gera / New Delhi/ Chandigarh June 25, 2011, 0:19 IST

The Haryana Federation of Cooperative Sugar Mills is reaching out to the farmers to popularise Single Bud Vertical Plantation (SVP) techniques among the cane-growing farmers as it gives double yield and consumes 75 per cent less water and seed.

The Haryana Federation of Cooperative Sugar Mills aims to increase the crushing capacity and sugar production to 37.5 million quintal sugarcane and 3.6 million quintal sugar. At present, the Haryana cooperative Sugar Mills have a crushing capacity of 2.37 crore quintal sugarcane daily and crush upto four crore quintal cane per season. The ten cooperative sugar mills crushed 22.8 million quintal sugarcane this year and 1.9 million quintal sugar was produced. The total turnover of the ten co-operative sugar mills was Rs 760 crore. The sugarcane growing farmers were provided the best cane price in the country, which was Rs 220, Rs 215 and Rs 210 per quintal for early, mid and late varieties, respectively.

According to sources, sugarcane production per unit area can be increased by using new sugarcane sowing technique like SVP and space transplanting. The SVP technique is revolutionary as its seed and irrigation requirements are only 25 per cent of the conventional technique, but the normal yield is almost double ie minimum 550 quintal per acre as against the current normal yield of 275 quintals.

Annual return maximises with one full-fledged additional crop through inter-cropping in the three feet wide empty plane bed between the two rows. The technique will double the profit of farmers and also overcome the problem of insufficient availability of sugarcane because returns through this technique would be much more than any other crop combination, officers informed.

The government has motivated the farmers to use the SVP technique and it has been used by different progressive farmers in their 500 acres of land.

It was informed that out of total six lakh farming families in the state, 70,000 farmers were sugarcane growers. The sugar federation is providing employment to 7500 workers and engineers directly and 25,000 people indirectly.

It was informed that the sugar federation was taking a number of measures to improve the income of the mills like modernizing the plants, fuel efficiency, more power co-generation and ensuring sufficient availability of sugarcane.

Kharif sowing likely to be affected adversely in Guj

BS Reporter / Mumbai/ Ahmedabad June 25, 2011, 0:08 IST

Kharif sowing in Gujarat is seen under a threat as monsoon gets delayed by more than a week from the earlier forecast of June 15 by the met department. Groundnut and cotton sowing is feared to fall considering a delay in the monsoon, informed the state government officials.

According to officials from the directorate of agriculture, the sowing may fall if it fails to rain in next one week. "There are fears of a fall in the sowing area of kharif crops including groundnut and cotton in case of further delay in

monsoon. If it does not rain in next one week in the key growing areas, there could be a trouble for kharif sowing," informed a senior officer at the directorate of agriculture.

The kharif season has started in April-May and the sowing for major kharif crops. While sowing for groundnut and cotton has started in parts of the state, cereals and pulses would be sowing as the monsoon approaches in the key growing regions.

As per the government statistics, kharif crops are cultivated on about 8 million hectares in Gujarat. So far in the current season, the sowing has been taken up on nearly 600,000 hectares.

The met department has also admitted the delay in monsoon. "The monsoon system which was expected to bring rains in parts of Gujarat has failed. Now, we expect a new monsoon system to get formed in next week. The depression seems to have weakened in Gujarat and has moved upwards to Rajasthan. But the monsoon current has already spread across the state indicating the onset of monsoon," said Kamaljit Ray, director, India Meteorological Department (IMD) - Ahmedabad.

Agriculture experts maintained that the pre-monsoon showers witnessed on the coastal regions earlier this month had damaged cotton sowing. "Replanting had to be taken up for cotton in the coastal region of the state due to pre-monsoon showers. However, the area for replanting is less than 10 per cent of the total cotton acreage in the state. Now, there is a potential threat to the groundnut sowing also if it does not rain in next 10-15 days," informed Biren Vakil, a commodity expert based in Ahmedabad. "The signals are not good. Situation may turnout to be disastrous for the allocation of resources if monsoon gets delayed further," added Vakil.

The analysts have remained calm over the delay of the monsoon. "Even though there is a threat for cotton and groundnut sowing if rain gets delayed further, but a week's delay should not create panic. The agriculture is quite strong in the state, hence there won't be much trouble if the rains get delayed by a week or so," said Jagdeep Garewal, research analyst at Kunverji Commodities.

Groundnut and cotton growing regions in the state include districts like Junagadh, Jamnagar, Rajkot, Bhavnagar, Amreli and Surendranagar. Even as these districts had witnessed pre-monsoon showers earlier this month, large part of the northern and central Gujarat awaited for monsoon. Oilseeds and pulses are mainly grown in the parts of central and northern Gujarat.

Guar acreage may rise on overseas demand

Vikas Sharma / New Delhi/ Chandigarh June 25, 2011, 0:01 IST

Guar acreage is likely to rise this year as farmers received high remunerative prices for the crop last season and rising demand abroad for guar derivatives, though farm officials project conservative figures.

The sowing will commence from the first week of July with onset of monsoon in the northern parts of country. Rajasthan and Haryana together account for 80 per cent of guar production and 70 per cent of total acreage. Farm

officials in Rajasthan are targeting 2.7 million hectares this year under guar, while in Haryana, the target area is 300,000 hectares.

G C Mathur, joint director (input), Rajasthan agriculture department, said the targets set for kharif crops was based on anticipation of a normal monsoon.

P K Hissaria, president, Indian Guar Gum Manufacturing Association said, "We expect the area under guar in Haryana and Rajasthan to increase compared to the previous year."

Rajesh Kedia, director, Jai Bharat and Chemical Ltd, which exports guar derivatives, said farmers in Haryana were getting Rs 3,200-3,500 a quintal as against the normal price of Rs 2,000-2,200 a quintal.

Traders believe higher prices of guar would encourage more farmers to join the trend, thereby increasing the acreage. The higher prices for guar crop are attributed to a rise in demand for guar derivatives from exporting countries.

India is the biggest exporter of these derivatives. Kedia maintained there had been a rise in demand for guar derivatives in export markets this year. The demand is 40-50 per cent more compared to previous year.

THE HINDU
Business Line

Meet on Urban Farming/Terrace Gardening

Hubli, June 24:

Deshpande Foundation, Garden City Farmers and AME Foundation to hold state level seminar on 'Urban Farming/Terrace Gardening' at Deshpande Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, BVB College of Engineering and technology, Hubli on July 8 and 9.

According to the foundation release, the meet is to encourage garden enthusiasts to grow vegetables and fruits in their backyards and on terraces. Last day for registration is June 27. Contact: Ravindranath Reddy 9008347567.

Ginners want separate quota to export cotton



Workers rest at a cotton ginning mill in Rajkot. (File photo)

Prices drop below Rs 40,000 a candy

Chennai, June 24:

Shankar-6 cotton was quoted at Rs 41,000 for a candy of 356 kg a fortnight ago when the Centre decided to allow additional exports of cotton.

Prices for the natural fibre then increased to Rs 45,000 a candy on hopes of fresh demand. However, things have turned out to be different. Within a week after the export quota was announced, prices dropped back to Rs 41,000.

This week, the fall in price has continued. On Thursday, Shankar-6 was quoted at Rs 37,000, a fall of 10 per cent since the beginning of the week. However, on Friday, it increased to Rs 38,500.

The sharp drop in price has led to voices among the industry seeking more exports.

In particular, ginners, led by those in Saurashtra, are seeking additional exports but with a rider. "Ginners should be provided a quota for exports," said Mr Anand Poppat, Vice-President of Saurashtra Ginners Association.

Earlier this week, the Centre began registering applications for additional exports of 10 lakh bales (170 kg each). Registration ends this weekend and applications will be scrutinised until July 5. Quotas will be announced on July 6 and those allowed to export must have their shipments cleared by September 15.

The Centre on July 9 decided to allow 10 lakh bales in addition to the 55 lakh bales that were allowed earlier in the season that began in October. That allocation got over by January on demand from China, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Pakistan.

"Exporters had bought ample stocks. They will be exporting from those stocks only. That's why there is no demand for cotton in the market," said Mr Poppat.

"Mills are not buying because they are left with huge inventories of yarn. Since there is no demand for cotton in the country, some more exports should be allowed," he said.

The Saurashtra Ginners Association had gone on strike last month demanding that the Centre allow export of 25 lakh bales of cotton.

“Due to lack of domestic demand, we could have an additional carryover stock of 50 lakh bales. This could spell trouble, particularly for farmers, when the new crop arrives in October,” Mr Poppat said.

“If ginneries are given a special quota, we can ensure better price for growers, demand for cotton will increase,” he claimed.

Domestic demand for cotton has dropped after spinning mills decided to cut production by 30 per cent. Apart from huge inventories, they are also irked by the Centre not providing duty drawback facilities for exports.

On the other hand, the garment industry has been affected by woes faced by units in Tiruppur. Garment units in Tiruppur have been affected after dyeing units in the town were ordered shut by the Madras High Court for polluting the Noyyal river water.

Meanwhile, the Punjab Government, too, has joined the chorus demanding additional exports.

Chana gains on higher demand, cues from futures

.,mIndore, June 24:

Rise in futures and demand perked up chana by Rs 50 with prices in the spot being quoted at Rs 2,700 a quintal. On Thursday, chana had declined to Rs 2,625-2,650 a quintal on tremendous selling pressure. Going by price fluctuation in chana in the past 3-4 days, it appears that speculators who are already in control of the futures market, also monopolised chana prices in the spot.

It is solely because of the speculators that chana in the spot showed an erratic price behaviour with periodic rise and fall in its prices, said Mr Bimal Jain, a trader. This is

evident from the fact that chana prices which ruled at Rs 2,550-2,575 a quintal on June 21, surged to Rs 2,725 a quintal on June 22. However, on June 23, it again witnessed a correction and slipped to Rs 2,625-50 a quintal on increased selling pressure. Rise in chana also perked up desi chana with its price in the spot being quoted at Rs 2,650 a quintal.

Chana dal also gained with chana dal (bold) in the spot ruling at Rs 3,375-Rs 3,400 a quintal, up Rs 25. Similarly, chana dal (medium) quoted at Rs 3,275-Rs 3,300 and chana dal (average) at Rs 3,150-3,175 a quintal, respectively.

Increased demand at lower rate also perked up masoor and it was quoted at Rs 2,900 a quintal, while masoor (medium) ruled at Rs 2,550. Long-term bullish trend in chana, according to traders, seems unlikely keeping in view the large stock of imported pulse seeds. Support to masoor also perked up masoor dal, with masoor dal (bold) being quoted Rs 25 up at Rs 3,450-3,475, masoor dal (medium) at Rs 3,325-3,350 and masoor dal (average) at Rs 3,200-Rs 3,225 a quintal.

Tur, moong and urad ruled firm on subdued demand. Tur (Maharashtra) ruled at Rs 3,000, while tur (Nimari) at Rs 2,300-Rs 2,600 a quintal. Similarly, tur dal ruled firm with tur marka being quoted at Rs 5,900, tur dal (full) at Rs 5,300-Rs 5,400 and tur dal (sawa no.) at Rs 4,450-Rs 4,500.

Moong also ruled firm at Rs 4,100-Rs 4,500 a quintal, so its dal with moong mongar being quoted at Rs 5,600-Rs 5,700, moong dal (bold) – Rs 5,400-Rs 5,450 and moong dal (chilka) being quoted at Rs 5,050-Rs 5,100. Urad also ruled firm at Rs 4,000-Rs 4,100, while urad (medium) at Rs 3,660-Rs 3,800 a quintal. Similarly, urad mongar ruled at Rs 6,400-Rs 6,700, urad dal (medium) at Rs 5,600 and urad dal (average) at Rs 4,700-Rs 4,750 a quintal.

'Paddy support price has not factored higher cultivation costs'



Hyderabad, June 24:

The Consortium of Indian Farmers Associations (CIFA) has criticised the hike in minimum support price (MSP) announced by the Union Government for paddy, saying that it fails to factor in the sharp raise in cost of cultivation.

In a letter to Dr Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister, on Thursday, Mr P Chengal Reddy, Secretary General of CIFA, said that the cumulative increase in cost of cultivation of paddy was in the range of Rs 7,500-8,000 an acre. The MSP increase would result in an increase of Rs 1,600-2,000. This would do no help to the farmers.

There was a sharp increase in labour costs after the implementation of the job guarantee scheme. Input costs too went up significantly. There was no way farmers could recover their investments, he said.

He reminded that thousands of paddy farmers in Andhra Pradesh had declared crop holiday this kharif season as a mark of protest.

“Except in Punjab and Haryana, the Food Corporation of India is not procuring rice directly from farmers,” he said.

Area under major kharif crops down in 2011-12

New Delhi, June 24:

Area under major kharif crops like rice, oilseeds, cotton and pulses have declined in the current kharif season so far, according to the government data. However, crop area under sugarcane and jute/mesta has risen in the same period.

Area under rice, a major kharif crop, has gone down by almost 8 per cent to 19.09 lakh hectares in 2011-12 kharif season so far compared to 20.72 lakh hectares in the year-ago period. Less area is reported mainly in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa, according to the data.

However, in sugarcane - another major kharif crop - sowing area has increased by about five per cent to 50.94 lakh hectares in the current season as against 48.71 lakh hectares in the same period of the previous year.

In sugarcane, higher area was reported from Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Gujarat and less area was reported in Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh.

Sowing area under pulses have registered a fall of about 8 per cent to 3.77 lakh hectares in 2011-12 kharif season compared to 4.09 lakh hectares in the year-ago period.

Similarly, area under oilseeds cultivation has declined by 36 per cent to 7.43 lakh hectares so far in the current season against 11.69 hectares in the same period last year.

Likewise, cotton sowing area has been down by almost five per cent to 26.22 lakh hectares as against 27.53 lakh hectares in the period under review.

Area under jute/mesta in the 2011-12 period so far has also increased to 8.62 lakh hectares, an increase of nine per cent, compared to 7.88 lakh hectares in the year-ago period.

Global rice output set to touch 476 mt: FAO

New Delhi, June 24:

Global rice production is expected to touch 476 million tonnes in 2011 on the back of improved weather conditions, as the influence of La Nina is expected to neutralise by June.

Production reached a new record in 2010 at 464 mt (696 mt paddy), up 1.8 per cent from the previous season, the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organisation said.

"Although very preliminary, world paddy production in 2011 is forecast to expand by 2.5 per cent to 713 mt (about 476 mt, milled basis), reflecting expectations of improved weather conditions, as the influence of La Nina is expected to fade away by June," it said.

In Asia, the output is expected to grow by 2.5 per cent to 645 mt (430 mt, milled basis), with major increases expected in China and India and a recovery in Pakistan, it added.

According to the third advance estimate of the Agriculture Ministry, rice production in India in the 2010-11 season is pegged at 94.11 mt.

However, the outlook has not been healthy for Sri Lanka that has been affected by a consecutive round of floods, and Japan, where the catastrophic earthquake in March and ensuing tsunami and the Fukushima nuclear plant radioactive leakage will affect the output, the FAO pointed out.

The event particularly affected the Tohoku district that accounts for a quarter of Japan's rice output, it added.

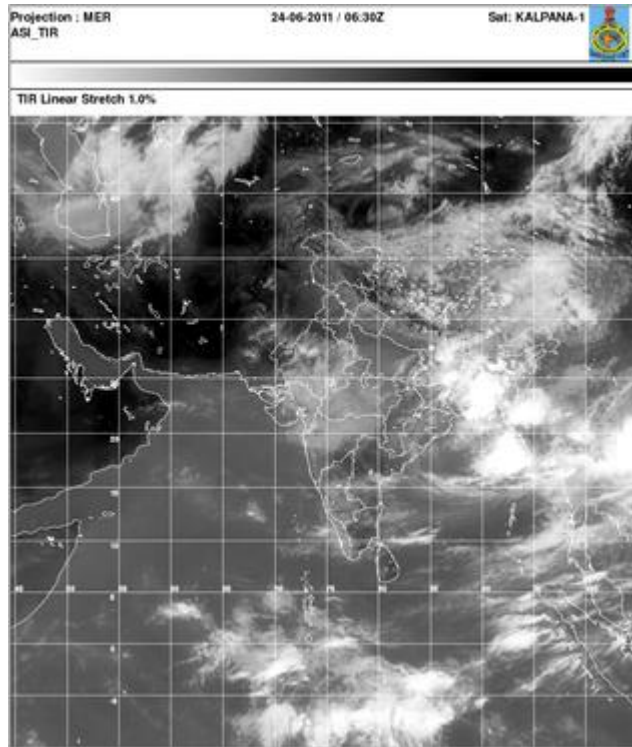
"FAO estimates that the disaster will result in a 43,000 hectares cut in area cultivated to rice in 2011, equivalent to about 3,00,000 tonnes of paddy production. If confirmed, it would bring Japan's paddy production down by 3 per cent to 10.3 mt," it added.

In Africa, rice production in 2011 is expected to remain close to the 2010 level, with some increases in Western Africa compensating for the reductions in Egypt and Madagascar.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, paddy production is expected to recover in 2011, after last year's reduced crop.

Output in 2011 is helped by a strong recovery in the southern part of the continent, especially in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Uruguay and Venezuela, where harvesting of the 2011 main paddy crops is virtually completed, it added.

Well-marked 'low' weakens, wet times for east



Thiruvananthapuram, June 24:

The well-marked low-pressure area weakened another round to be reduced to a conventional low-pressure area last (Thursday) night itself and moved slightly northwest to southwest Uttar Pradesh and adjoining northwest Madhya Pradesh this morning.

Not just has age (more than week old now) caught up with the system but two rival storms in faraway Pacific too have hastened its weakening by spiriting away moisture feed from the Bay of Bengal.

Some of the outgoing moisture feed originating from upstream Arabian Sea will cut across the west coast forcing it to wring out some as rain along the west coast.

The rest will cruise along lower latitude to cross over into the Bay and further east into South China Sea/northwest Pacific.

The latter could even pop up a cyclonic circulation on impacting the rugged land features of northeast India and trigger a wet session over east and northeast India.

Some of these rains could propagate into east-central and adjoining central India as monsoon easterlies blow inland along the land-based monsoon trough.

A short-term forecast issued by India Meteorological Department (IMD) this morning said that fairly widespread rain or thundershowers would occur over West Bengal, Sikkim, the Northeastern States and the west coast until Monday.

Scattered rain or thundershowers may occur over northwest, central and the rest of east India today and increase thereafter. Isolated rain or thundershowers would occur over rest of the country.

Meanwhile, global forecasts are indicating rains along the west coast through the weekend, gaining in intensity as the Pacific storms peaks over. No gains are indicated in the interior since there is no help to look forward to from either the seas or the atmosphere.

An India Meteorological Department (IMD) update early on Friday morning said that satellite pictures show convective (rain-bearing) clouds over parts of west Rajasthan, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh left out to be covered by the monsoon as of now.

These clouds were also present over Goa, east and northeast India, north coastal Tamil Nadu, east-central and northeast Bay of Bengal and north Andaman Sea.

A weather warning for today said that isolated thunder squalls may roll out across Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan and west Uttar Pradesh.