

## S & T » Agriculture

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### **Natural inputs, multicropping advised for Vidharbha region**

M. J. Prabu



GUIDING FORCE: Mahajan showing his simple four-chamber system using brick and mortar to store cowdung. - Photo: Special Arrangement

*Such measures may have prevented a few of the suicides in the region*

The names Vidharbha or Wardha immediately evoke memories of farmers' suicides.

“Several reasons such as growing only one crop, total dependence on monsoon, lack of infrastructure and irrigation facilities, small land holdings, poor marketing, and insensitive government policies towards farmers are attributed to this. Visiting the region drives home one point, that not all of Vidharbha is a graveyard of dead farmers,” says Mr. Praful Bansod, Scientist MSSRF village Resource Centre, Yavatmal.

### **National shame**

“Termed as a national shame due to the gross indifference of the Government, it is true that the region recorded the highest suicide rates among farmers.

“In fact the Prime Minister reacted late by visiting the region but responded immediately on television channels to the share market slump during the period. This only proves how far the government is pro-farmer in its attitude,” he adds.

“But still a sizeable number of ryots continue to farm their lands and are able to overcome the crises by using natural inputs and trying different crops and cultivation techniques,” says Mr. Bansod.

Take the case of the husband and wife farmers in the region.

Popularly referred to as Mahajans, both Mr. Purushottam Jagannath Mahajan and his wife Mrs. Sunita are practising agriculture in this region for a long time and today are a guiding force for many others who wish to build a new life.

“Chemical fertilizers are perennially in short supply in the region. Even if they are available, the cost burns a hole in our pocket.

“We explored other alternatives for using as inputs and learnt to make our own liquid manure from compost. I constructed a simple four chamber system using brick and mortar to store cowdung.”

Water is mixed with the dung in one of the chambers and the slurry is released in the subsequent chambers. After some days the mixture is released along with flowing water into the fields.

### **Black liquid manure**

“Since the slurry is black in colour and helps the crops to grow well, we named it as black liquid manure,” explains Mr. Mahajan.

He also advocates the use of Sanjeevak or Jeevamrut, fermented liquid manures, made from cow dung and urine.

“Amrutpani, a soil tonic can also be used instead of Jeevamrut. About 200 litres of any one of them can be mixed with irrigating water to be applied to the field. A minimum of three applications are necessary,” he says.

First immediately after sowing, a second application after 25-30 days (after first weeding), and the third application at 50-60 days after sowing (after second weeding).

For better crop growth, diluted Jeevamrut can also be sprayed on the crops at an interval of 20 days after sowing.

### **Main reason**

“One of the main reasons for the crop failure and accumulating debts from the farmers' side is going in for monocropping using chemicals.,” explains Mr. Mahajan.

Many farmers cultivated only cotton. Be it two or five acres, the lure of big money in a short time attracted many to grow cotton.

They did not bother to enquire about the crop suitability for their area, whether water is available or not etc.

When the crops died so did many farmers. The main reason being accumulated debts from private moneylenders fleecing them with exorbitant interest rates.

“In fact, several farmers thought that they could get back their money by growing cotton again in the second cycle and again failed. I thought about this and introduced several combinations of multicrops,” says Mr. Mahajan.

### **Different crops**

The farmer grows maize, cowpea or sorghum in one row, red gram in two rows and cotton in four rows in one acre.

The field is mulched using a thick layer of crop residue, immediately after sowing.

The Mahajans also grow different vegetables, pulses, fruits, spices, and medicinal plants.

Though during initial stages they faced many hurdles ultimately it turned out to be a very satisfying and profitable venture for them.

“Today they are a standing example for others on how to become successful farmers in the region,” says Mr. Bansod.

For more information contact Mr. Praful Bansod, Scientist MSSRF, Village Resource Center Yavatmal, email: [prafulbansod@gmail.com](mailto:prafulbansod@gmail.com), mobile: 9420960830 and Mr. Mahajan at Karanji Bhoge, Deoli taluk, Wardha, mobile: 9552955897 and 9922354663.

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## **Collective farming by women in Kerala**

Kerala women's collective farming initiative, billed as the largest livelihood venture of the kind in the country by transforming women labourers into master cultivators, is all set to emerge as a role model for the entire country under the 12th Five Year Plan.

After group farming, another revolutionary initiative by Kudumbashree, an innovative community based women-oriented initiative, Government of Kerala to fight poverty caught the attention of many.

## **Planning commission**

A team of the working group on disadvantaged farmer including women, under the Planning Commission, was in Kerala to get a first-hand experience of it before finalizing its report for the next Plan period.

The team also visited different areas and noted the best practices and successful models to be incorporated in its report to be submitted by September end.

## **First project**

This is the first project sanctioned by the *Mahila Kisan Sasahthikaran Pariyojana* (MKSP) by the Centre and was launched to ensure food security both at household and community levels.

Says Kudumbashree executive director Smt. Sarada Muraleedharan:

“This is basically a livelihood initiative to enhance the quality of life in the society, especially among the weaker sections.

“It could bring about an all-round improvement in the lives of women who were merely workers and now they are successful cultivators,”

## **Different crops**

The women are into cultivation of paddy, tuber crops, food crops, vegetables, spreading a silent revolution in State by earning extra to help themselves and families.

Some of the groups have literally turned barren tracts of lands into highly fertile fields. At Perambra in Kozhikode district, the members cultivated at a place which was fallow land for 30 years.

A canal, infected with snakes and water hyacinths and waste materials was cleaned by 1004 workers including 879 women to irrigate this land where 59 groups cultivated 107 acres for paddy, while four groups went for banana cultivation in five acres.

"This time, we will not go to market to buy rice as we have stocked enough for the family for the first time in my life," says Omana, from Idukki district. One of key achievements of the project is to make the families self-sufficient in the case of food crops. For more details visit [www.kudumbashree.org](http://www.kudumbashree.org)

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## **Black turmeric**

**Is there any thing like black turmeric? Where can I get details on the same?**

**Pankaj Mishra**

*Orissa*

Black turmeric is usually grown in the Himalayas and interior ghat regions of Orissa. For more details contact Mr. Rao at Venkatapuram village, Tidigam Panchayat, Kasinagar block, Ganjam district, Orissa, phone: 08946-211026 (res) and mobile: 08895962391. Visitors from as far as Hyderabad visit his farm regularly to gather a few handfuls of this turmeric.

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## **Farm query Black turmeric**

**Is there any thing like black turmeric? Where can I get details on the same?**

**Pankaj Mishra, Orissa**

Black turmeric is usually grown in the Himalayas and interior ghat regions of Orissa. For more details contact Mr. Rao at Venkatapuram village, Tidigam Panchayat, Kasinagar block, Ganjam

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## **Transplanting redgram under rainfed farming**

### *Crops grow and yield well*

Redgram or pigeon pea (*cajanus cajan*) is one of the important pulse crops of Tamil Nadu, the productivity of which is very low. The main reason for this is difficulty in maintaining the plant population.

Transplanting is a new tool by which healthy and vigorous seedlings can be raised in nursery, screened and transplanted in the main field so that optimum plant population could be maintained in rainfed situation which leads to higher productivity.

## **Research efforts**

With the aim of increasing the area under redgram in dryland condition, research efforts were done at Regional Research Station (TNAU), Aruppukottai in which early maturity during pre monsoon pigeonpea cultivars like APK1, Vamban 2, Vamban 3(RG) of 110 days duration were raised in protrays nurseries during pre-monsoon period and 21 days old seedling were transplanted on receipt of soaking rain by augur hole pit method.

In this method seedlings were transplanted and pits were filled with well composted coirpith formed by the augur hole digger. In this technology, main field duration of the crop is reduced to 90 days coupled with land management technique for effective moisture conservation and foliar nutrition during peak flowering stage can sustain the yield in rainfed conditions. The early stage weed competition is avoided by transplanting. Hence, plant growth and yield parameters are favourable for higher assured average yield of 870 kg/ha.

The same technology of transplanting redgram under irrigated condition is in progress at Department of Agronomy, Agricultural College and Research Institute, Madurai in which early maturity variety APK1 of 110 days duration were raised in protrays nursery and 21 old seedling were transplanted in the main field.

The results of the study revealed that transplanting 21 days old seedlings at 45 x 20 cm spacing with split application of recommended dose of fertilizer combined with foliar application 1 per cent polyfed and 1 per cent multi ' K' at peak flowering stage recorded 12 per cent increased grain yield.

**Dr.V.K.Paulpandi,N.Rajesh,& Dr.R.Duraisingh**

***Department of Agronomy,Agricultural College and Research Institute,Madurai,Tamil Nadu***

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### **Collector inspects damaged crop**

Staff Reporter

*Minister P. Senthurpandian visits rain-affected areas in Kadayam union*



Aid: Collector R. Selvaraj (right) inspecting the damaged crop at Ambasamudram on Tuesday.

Collector R. Selvaraj inspected the damaged crop in and around Ambasamudram area on Wednesday evening after the recent rain almost destroyed the standing paddy cultivated on a few hundreds of acres.

After inspecting the damage, the Collector met the farmers to ascertain the quantum of loss suffered by them. They were assured of early and adequate compensation following another round of survey to be conducted by the officials from Departments of Revenue and Agriculture.

Dr. Selvaraj also visited Karuthapillaiyoor Bharathi Colony, which would be normally affected whenever Gadana River swells.

He asked the officials of Public Works Department to take preventive measures immediately so that the flood water will not enter the residential area.

Minister for Khadi and Village Industries P. Senthurpandian visited some of the rain-affected areas of Kadayam union on Wednesday.

The intermittent drizzle that soaked the district for the past few days sporadically stopped completely on Wednesday. Though the sky remained overcast throughout the day and good rainfall was predicted in the coastal districts, no significant rainfall was reported from any part of the district.

Rainfall in the district (in mm): Papanasam Upper Dam – 50, Manimuthar Dam – 42.60, Papanasam Lower Dam – 27, Sankarankovil – 19, Radhapuram – 12, Aayikudi – 6.20, Alangulam – 5.80, Ambasamudram – 5.40, Shencottah, Nanguneri and Palayamkottai – 5, Tenkasi – 4.30, Sivagiri and Cheranmahadevi – 4 and Tirunelveli – 2.

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### **Training for farmers on farm equipment**

Staff Reporter

The Agriculture Engineering Department will conduct one week training on operation of farm equipment for unemployed rural youth in the district.

The age of the aspiring farmer should be between 18 and 40.

The training will cover operation of various farm equipment, including tractors, power tillers, rotovators, harvesters, threshers, cane harvesters, transplanters, weed removers, micro irrigation systems and electrical motors repair. Interested candidates should submit applications along with their personal details like age, address for communication, educational qualification on or before November 15 at the office of the Executive Engineer or the Assistant Executive Engineer, Agricultural Engineering Department, District Collectorate, Dharmapuri.

For further details, contact: Phone: 04342 – 230948

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### **Poultry farmers asked to stay prepared for rainy season**

The special advisory from the Agro Meteorological Advisory Services attached to the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University has advised poultry farmers to take up feed



protective measures to avoid formation of fungus and spread of diseases among hens during this rainy season.

Head of the Department R. Ravi said that this could be possible due to prevailing moist weather with maximum temperature as low as 27 degree Celsius, cloudy skies, high humidity and low wind speed. It is capable of increasing the moisture content of feed ingredients and feed. Hence, feed ingredients should be stored in a well-ventilated area upon wooden planks.

Vertical stacking of feed bags should not exceed four or five bags and they should not touch the walls as they are also normally very cool and may transfer the moisture to the feed in the bags, he added. Vehicles transporting feed should be covered properly so that it was not spoilt during transport, he said.

All the sides of the sheds should be covered with gunny or HDPE sheets for a height of 3 feet to 3.5 feet from the platform as it helps to avoid rain water from entering the feeder and also keeps the birds warm.

The Krishi Vigyan Kendra has advised farmers to go for cultivation of fodder crops like Cumbu Napier fodder grass (Co-4 variety) at 16,000 slips per acre, multi-cut Fodder Sorghum (CoFS-29) at 2 kg of seeds/acre, high protein Hedge Lucerne at 8 kg/acre, and tree fodders like Agathi, Subabul and Gliricidia- all along the borders of the land.

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### **Efforts on to promote animal husbandry**

Staff Reporter

Emphasising the importance of animal husbandry to the government, Agriculture Minister M. Chandrakasu, who also holds the animal husbandry portfolio, said Puducherry is doing its best to promote animal husbandry.

Addressing delegates at the second quarterly nodal officer's review meeting of the Southern Regional Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (SRDDL), Bangalore, held here on Wednesday, Mr. Chandrakasu said animal husbandry is a department which the government holds in high regard, as it closely affects the life of a large number of people.

Secretary to the Government (Animal Husbandry and Animal Welfare) Cholleti Prabakar said animal husbandry had evolved in the past decade, especially with new technology that allowed

cross breeding, enhancing indigenous breeds. Vice-Chancellor of Karnataka Veterinary Animal and Fisheries Science University Suresh .S. Honnappagol said fewer suicides are recorded amongst farmers who rear animals than those who concentrate purely on agriculture, he said.

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### **Training for youth on farm mechanisation from November 14**

Special Correspondent

The Agricultural Engineering Department will conduct a one-week training programme on farm mechanisation for rural unemployed youth below 40 years of age from November 14, a release said. The training would be conducted in two batches of 20 candidates each at the office of the Assistant Executive Engineer, Agricultural Engineering Department at Aranthangi. It would cover the applications of farm equipment in paddy cultivation, micro irrigation, water management. Candidates from Viralimalai, Annavasal, Kunandarkovil, Pudukottai, Thiruvarankulam, Gandharvakottai and Karambakudi can register at office of Assistant Engineer of the department in Pudukottai and the others at Aranthangi office.

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### **Minister: no scarcity of fertilizers**

Special Correspondent

Sellur K. Raju, Minister for Cooperation, said that there would be no scarcity of fertilizers in the State during the current paddy season.

He told reporters here on Wednesday that out of a total requirement of fertilizers 50 per cent would be sold through cooperative outlets. Private dealers would sell the remaining requirement.

It would ensure level playing field for all those involved in the trade. He said sufficient quantity of fertilizers including urea and DAP had been kept at cooperative outlets in the State.

According to a preliminary figure, one lakh tonne of fertilizers was kept for sale through cooperative societies.

Mr. Raju said around Rs.3000 crore had been earmarked for distribution of crop loan this year.

There was no limit for crop loan. Enough stock was being maintained for distribution of rice and other commodities through fair price shops. There were reports that overall off take had increased in various districts.

Steps would be taken to recruit adequate staff for fair price shops.

Vacancy positions for cooperative department run fair price shops in Ramanathapuram district would be filled soon.

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### **Farmers demand procurement of paddy with up to 24 % moisture**

G.Srinivasan

*Intermittent rain in delta poses difficulty in drying paddy*



Sticky issue: A farmer drying paddy at Surakottai in Thanjavur on Wednesday. Photo:

B.Velankanni Raj

With intermittent showers continuing in the delta districts of Thanjavur and Tiruvarur, moisture content in kuruvai paddy remains a major problem for farmers, who are trying to sell it at the Direct Purchase Centres of the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation in the two districts.

Moisture content in paddy stocks available with farmers and in the yet to be harvested crop in some places have gone up. In some places paddy had sprouted and farmers drying paddy on roads has become a common sight. Though the TNCSC has relaxed the norms and is accepting paddy with up to 20 per cent moisture content in the DPCs, farmers demand that moisture content of up to 24 per cent should be accepted.

"Previously they procured paddy with moisture content of up to 17 per cent. Now it has been increased to 20 per cent. It will be better if the government enhances it to 24 per cent.

Of course they can do it with some grade cut in price" said S.Ranganathan, secretary, Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association.

T.Thiagarajan, Senior Regional Manager, TNCSC, Tiruvarur, however said that any further relaxation in moisture content norms could be decided only by the Central government as TNCSC is just acting as the procurement agent for Food Corporation of India.

In Tiruvarur district 304 DPCs are functioning. From October 1 to 31, a total of 1,07,000 tonnes of paddy had been procured.

Arrivals per day are in the order of 2000 to 3000 tonnes. Price paid at the DPCs is Rs.1180 for fine variety per quintal and Rs.1130 for common variety.

There are 17 cap storage centres in Tiruvarur district and 71,000 tonnes of paddy is being stored in them. In Thanjavur district 244 DPCs are functioning and from October 1 to 31, 80,000 tonnes of paddy had been procured.

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## **Ministers release water for irrigation**

Staff Reporter

*60 cusecs of water has been released through old channel, 40 cusecs through new channel*



Bright prospects: Finance Minister O. Pannerselvam, right, and Minister for Power R. Viswanathan, second from left, releasing water from Manjalar dam in Theni district on Wednesday. PHOTO: G. KARTHIKEYAN.

Minister for Finance O. Paneerselvam and Minister for Power R. Viswanathan released water from Manjalar dam in the presence of farmers and officials here on Wednesday.

Theni Collector K.S. Palanisamy, who accompanied the ministers, said that 100 cusecs of water would be released continuously for the next 90 days.

Sixty cusecs of water has been released through the old channel and 40 cusecs through the new channel.

A total of 5,259 acres of land, including 3,386 acres under the old ayacut and 1,873 acres under the new ayacut would be irrigated.

On the whole, 3,148 acres in Theni and 2,111 acres in Dindigul districts would be benefited.

Mr. Palanisamy appealed to the farmers to use water judiciously and raise short term crops.

### **Power surplus**

Later, talking to press persons, Mr. Viswanathan said that the Ministry of Power has been striving hard to make the State a power surplus one.

At present, mini hydel projects were being expedited with an aim of completing the same by 2012 so as to increase power production.

Public Works Department Executive Engineer A. James Lurdusamy, Assistant Executive Engineer G. Kasipandian, Assistant Engineers M. Senram and V. Sounder Sekar accompanied the ministers and officials.

Inflow in many dams is on the rise owing to heavy rain in the catchment areas.

Flow in all major rivers and forests streams has been heavy in the district.

At present, water level at Manjalar dam stood at 53.6 feet and inflow into the dam was 220 cusecs.

### **Water level**

Water level crossed 126 feet in Periyar dam and Vaigai level too crossed 66 feet mark.

Sothuparai dam has 98 feet of water.

Rainfall recorded at various places at 8 a.m. on Wednesday (in mm): Periyar 76, Thekkadi 94, Vaigai dam 3, Veerapandi 3, Shanmuga River dam 23 and Goodalur 9.

### **Storage level**

Storage level in major dams in the district has been increasing steadily thanks to heavy flow in rivers and streams.

Storage level in Sothuparai Dam was 98.4 feet, inflow was 91 cusecs and discharge three cusecs.

Storage level reached its full capacity in Shanmuga River Dam and excess water has been released in Shanmuga river.

Flow in the Vaigai, the Periyar and the Kottakudi has been heavy.

Though Thekkadi recorded 99 mm of rainfall, the district recorded a moderate to poor rainfall in various other parts. Total rainfall in the district was 188.8 mm and average rainfall has been put at 15.73 mm only.

Periakulam recorded 5 mm rain, Vaigai Dam 3, Manjalar 15, Andipatti 14.8, Aranamanaipudhur 7.4, Bodinayakanur 1, Uthamapalayam 8 and Sothuparai 6 mm.

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### **Farm exhibition likely to have international stalls**

Correspondent

The agricultural exhibition to start in Karad from November 25 is likely to showcase research findings of international organisations in the farm sector. The exhibition will also have a number of stalls from national and local researchers. Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan has thrown his weight behind the event by backing the local organisers. Karad in Satara district is the home constituency of Mr. Chavan. He recently visited Karad to review the preparations being made . He said the exhibition would coincide with the death anniversary of the former Chief Minister Y.B. Chavan and the Centre and the State government would put up their stalls showcasing various farm schemes being implemented by them. He said that efforts were on to invite some international organisations.

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### **Deadlock between sugarcane farmers and government continues**

More than 5,000 sugarcane farmers started a six-day padayatra on Wednesday from Pandharpur to Baramati, protesting against the low first advance offered by the State government. Baramati is the hometown of Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar, who, the protesters believe, is responsible for the low advance.

The farmers, under the leadership of Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatna MP Raju Shetty, are demanding a higher first advance than Rs. 1,450 (per tonne) fixed as fair and remunerative price (FRP), as declared by the State government. The sugarcane crushing season, which started last month, has still not picked up momentum because of the ongoing agitation.

The deadlock between farmers and the State government continued in spite of the government's efforts to quell the ongoing agitation. Minister for Cooperatives Harshavardhan Patil sought to lay the onus of payment on the sugar factories as he declared that farmers would be given first advance according to the FRP, and the second advance would be paid according to the affordability of the sugar factories.

“The decision has been taken after consultations with Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan. The sugar factories can send a proposal to the State Government stating their price for the second advance,” he said. He appealed to farmers to withdraw the agitation and start work at the sugar factories.

Mr. Shetty remained unconvinced and said he would continue the agitation. “The government has shirked off its responsibility. This is the loot of farmers,” he said.

Mr. Shetty's main contention was that the FRP being offered is less than that of last year's advance, which was close to Rs. 2,000. “All the input costs have escalated since last year. There is no reason why farmers should get less money now,” he said.

According to Mr. Shetty, the input costs have been wrongly calculated by the government. “The cost for labour has been cited as Rs. 73 a day, whereas the farmer has to pay the labourer at least Rs. 126 according to the Minimum Wages Act,” he said. The costs of chemical fertilizers, water, and electricity have escalated since last year, Mr. Shetty said.

“There have been at least three meetings with the State government, one with the Chief Minister too, but there has been no solution so far. We want action, and not just assurances,” Mr. Shetty said. Till now, of the 168 sugar factories in the State, only 29 have started crushing sugarcane.

“I openly challenge the government to start work in the sugar factories. It will not happen unless the farmers are paid their dues,” he said.

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## **Kole farmers seek rollback of fertiliser prices**

Staff Reporter

*'Food Security Bill should address the problems of farmers'*



**PROTEST:** Senior Congress leader V.M. Sudheeran addressing a dharna staged by kole farmers in front of Thrissur collectorate on Wednesday. — Photo: Special Arrangement

The kole farmers of the district on Wednesday took out a protest march to the District Collectorate pressing their demands including rollback of fertiliser prices and increase in support price for paddy. Under the banner of the Thrissur Jilla Kole Karshaka Sangam, hundreds of farmers took part in the march that began from the West Fort junction. They staged a dharna in front of the Collectorate.

Addressing the dharna, Senior Congress leader V.M. Sudheeran said that the proposed Food Security Bill should primarily address the problems of farmers.

He urged the Union government to reconsider the revision of fertilizer prices. The country was facing an agrarian crisis, Mr. Sudheeran said. “Most of the farmers want to quit farming. Youth are shying away from agriculture.”

The increasing production cost, shortage of labour and poor support price had made farming unviable, he said. Urgent mitigation policies were needed to make agriculture attractive, he added.

Mr. Sudheeran said the pressure on land was increasing and the average size of land holding was dwindling. The area under paddy cultivation in the State had declined from eight lakh



hectares to two and a half lakh hectares. "We need to improve productivity and profitability," he said. The farmers were not even getting the power subsidy that has been given to the small industries, he said. He urged the Chief Minister to convene an urgent meeting to discuss the issue of the Kole farmers.

Major demands of the farmers included comprehensive development package for kole fields, increase in pumping subsidy (Rs. 187.50 that was fixed in 1986 has not been revised yet), increase in production bonus, reducing the deposit for power connection and allotting fund for Kole Development Agency.

Kole Karshaka Sangam president K.K. Kochumohammed, general secretary N. K. Subramanian and former MLA Murali Perunnally and others attended the function.

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### **Flood-management arrangements discussed**

Special Correspondent

Ministers are camping in Cuddalore and Villupuram districts to oversee precautionary measures to be taken to ameliorate the problems of people during the north-east monsoon.

Special Programme Implementation Minister M.C. Sampath and Social Welfare Minister Selvi Ramajayam, along with Collector V. Amuthavalli, are coordinating with the departments in Cuddalore district.

School Education Minister C.Ve. Shanmugham is assuming the responsibility, along with Collector C.T.Manimekalai, in Villupuram district. At the review meetings held in both the districts on Wednesday, the Ministers said funds would not be a constraint in providing relief to flood-hit families.

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### **Encroachment of cultivable land by cotton promoter alleged**

Staff Reporter

*Activities of the AP-based firm destroying the environment, say activists*

BT cotton promoters from Andhra Pradesh have begun to encroach upon cultivable land and destroy environment in Ganjam district, allege environmental activists here.

Environmental activists and State president of Lokshakti Abhiyan Prafulla Samantra visited “one such” area on Tuesday. The area near Balipata village under Digaphandi tehsil where the BT cotton-promoting company had allegedly encroached upon government land exists in the Assembly constituency of State Revenue Minister Surya Narayan Patra, said Mr Samantra. He demanded that the owner of the BT cotton-promoting company who had ‘illegally’ occupied around 400 acres of government land be arrested and action be initiated against government officials who had assisted this company from Andhra Pradesh at the cost of local peasants.

It was alleged that the Andhra-based company had encroached upon government land around Balipata village, constituting funeral ground, grazing field and unused land as per government records. Some landless families of the village also used to cultivate this land. In recent past the company had bought some land from local peasants and then it had begun to occupy the 400 acres of government land which was earlier used by the landless of the area to cultivate pulses, said Mr Samantra.

Activists of the Lokshakti Abhiyan alleged that activities of the company had been detrimental to the local agrarian environment. They alleged that the company had cut down thousands of trees in the area and had also tried to change the course of natural streams flowing to the area for its own benefit. At some points natural streams had been totally blocked.

Digging of around 20 lift irrigation points near the village by the company had also affected ground water level of the area, they said. Mr Samantra said the company was using a large quantity of chemical pesticide and had used deceit to convince the local tribals that it had acquired the land for its BT cotton cultivation through legal process.

“Due to protest of local tribals revenue officials had investigated and marked out government land in the area by putting up flags. But the persons attached to the company have removed the flags,” Mr Samantra said.

**Alarm bells on inflation: Thomas meets Pawar**

THURSDAY, 03 NOVEMBER 2011 00:41

PNS | NEW DELHI

As fruit, vegetable and milk prices continue to soar, pushing food inflation up, Food Minister KV Thomas met Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar on Monday to discuss the matter. This follows his meeting with UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi on Saturday. The food index is up over 12 per cent since the beginning of this fiscal year, with vegetables up 68 per cent and milk 13 per cent.

Thomas told The Pioneer, "There is negligible inflation in grain. The problem is with fruit, vegetables, milk and poultry products. There is a change in consumption pattern, leading to demand and supply gap in these particular items. I discussed this with the Agriculture Minister and we agreed that there is an urgent need to increase production of these items. We will work in co-ordination to find the right measures in this direction."

Thomas further said that wastage in food and vegetable is very high and the country needs to enhance its storage capacity for perishable produce fast to control the inflation. At present, the country has storage facilities and technology only for some vegetables like potato, onion and to some extent tomato.

There is negligible inflation in items like wheat, rice and sugar after 2009-10. But yet food inflation refuses to budge downwards. It reached 11.43 per cent, highest in the last six months. Food inflation was 7.5 per cent in 2006-07 and had increased to 14 per cent in 2010-11.

**Private paddy buying surges in Punjab**

WEDNESDAY, 02 NOVEMBER 2011 23:46

PNS | CHANDIGARH

Incentives to non-basmati rice export by the Punjab Government has led to heavy paddy buying by private millers in current buying season, with their crop purchase touching more than double of what they bought in last season.

Purchase by private millers so far has reached 3.63 lakh tonne in kharif marketing season 2011-12 against 1.91 lakh tonne lifted in the entire season last year, as per FCI data. Total paddy procurement in Punjab so far stood at 103.35 lakh tonne, with Government agencies buying 96.5 per cent of total arrival, official said here. Traders attributed sudden jump in private purchase of paddy to sops given by Punjab Government last month to boost non-basmati rice export from Punjab.

Aiming to export 10 lakh tonne of non-basmati rice, Punjab Government allowed levy free private buying of non-basmati paddy to boost rice export. Private traders are required to give 75 per cent of rice, they make from paddy after buying from markets, to the central pool as levy rice. In another initiative, State Government decided to refund 3 per cent infrastructure cess on rice export. "The decision of Punjab Government allowing levy free private buying of non-basmati paddy encouraged private players to increase crop buying from the State," Punjab Arthiya Association RS Cheema said on Wednesday. The Centre lifted ban on export of non-basmati rice in September.

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## Business Standard

Thursday, Nov 03, 2011

### India plans rice diplomacy with Indonesia

Sanjeeb Mukherjee / New Delhi November 03, 2011, 0:48 IST

Rice seems to have emerged as a favourite diplomatic tool for India to build strong ties with its east- and south-Asian neighbours.

The commodity is the staple diet for most people in countries like Indonesia, Thailand and also neighbouring country Bangladesh.

Months after India okayed export of 300,000 tonnes of rice to Bangladesh at a standard price of Rs 20,000 per tonne on a diplomatic basis, the government has once again showed its keenness to export rice under the same channel, this time to Indonesia.

A delegation from Indonesia called on the food minister on Wednesday to press for exports of rice to meet its domestic shortage.

Just like the previous time, this time too, the consent to export rice has come days before Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visits Bali to participate in the East Asia and the India-ASEAN summit. The Prime Minister will be embarking on Indonesia-Singapore trip from November 17 to 20.

“India at the moment has enough foodgrain stock and may consider request of Indonesia,” Food Minister K V Thomas said in a statement.

In July this year, an empowered Group of Ministers (eGoM) had okayed export of rice to Bangladesh through diplomatic channels just days before the Prime Minister was to visit that country.

The trigger for this largesse is simple. Rice stocks in the country are overflowing because of record production and procurement.

Though, the exports of non-basmati rice has been allowed under the open general license, albeit with an unofficial cap of around 2 million tonnes, but that is being done by private traders.

Official data showed that as on October 1, the country’s foodgrain stocks in central pool stood at a whopping 51.78 million tonnes, of which rice stocks were around 20.3 million tonnes and wheat around 31.42 million tonnes.

The stocks were more than double the amount under the buffer and strategic reserve requirement on the same date. Procurement for 2011-2012 crop marketing season is also underway, which could further pressure the stock position.

The Indonesian delegation was led by chairman of its National Logistics Agency, Sutarto Alimoeso.

Officials said the grains could be either directly purchased by Indonesia or exported on a government-to-government basis at cost.

For the later, consent from external affairs and commerce is needed as it will be through diplomatic channels. However, no quantity was discussed during the meeting.

The minister also raised the issue of high export tariff on edible oils in Indonesia and its negative fallout on India, as the country is one of the largest buyer of edible oils from Indonesia.

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## THE HINDU Business Line

### **Agri commodities sparkle in first half**

**Hyderabad, Nov. 2:**

Agriculture commodities continue to soar on commodities markets. That the cumulative value of all agriculture commodities shot up by 55.45 per cent in the first six months of this financial year shows the increased interest among investors. The total value jumped to Rs 9,32,792 crore (Rs 6,00,064 crore) in the first half of 2011-12.

Soya oil topped the list with a total trade volume of 325 lakh tonnes with a value tag of Rs 2,08,881 crore during the period.

According to Forward Markets Commission, the total value of trade in all commodities Rs 92,61,052 crore (Rs 51,72,550 crore) in the first six months, showing a growth of 79 per cent.

“Spices are expected to trade with negative bias, as suffering from dearth in export demand and expecting fresh arrivals, especially in chilli, jeera and pepper. Harvesting will soon pave the way for the prices to move downside,” Mr D K Aggarwal, Chairman and Managing Director of SMC Investments and Advisors Limited, commented.

Heavy arrivals of soyabean coming into the domestic market as well as on international markets would continue to keep the upside capped. Export enquiries have fallen on a host to negative influences of European debt crisis, creating a cautious end user buying.

“In the first half of this year metals have shown very good bullish momentum as gold along with silver tested life time high in MCX. Decline in dollar and safe haven buying due to euro zone debt crises led to safe haven buying,” he said.

## **Bullion**

Bullion too witnessed significant growth of 153 per cent during the first half. The value of trade went up to Rs 56,83,822 crore (Rs 22,40,396 crore).

Silver had outperformed all other major asset classes in the first-half as demand for the metal had increased on the back of rising inflation. “It looked more attractive than gold because it has similar characteristics of the yellow metal and is yet a cheaper option,” Mr Naveen Mathur, Associate Director (Commodities and Currencies), of Angel Broking, said.

“The (October-December) quarter began on a negative note. We expect economic uncertainty to continue, leading to rise in risk aversion in the global markets. Gold has taken a beating despite its appeal as a safe-haven investment and the yellow metal is expected to consolidate around levels of \$1800/oz,” he said.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 3, 2011)

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## **Spot rubber turns weak on global cues**

OUR CORRESPONDENT

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### **Kottayam, Nov. 2:**

Physical rubber prices turned weak on Wednesday. There has been no visible selling pressure from dealers or growers and the market lost ground on buyer resistance. Even though the fall in the prices were limited on supply concerns due to widespread north east monsoon rains, sentiments remained under pressure owing to declining international markets, slowing auto sales and rising interest rates. The transactions were dull. Meanwhile the recent dip in natural rubber prices is expected to be a major issue in the ANRPC's annual conference in China.

Sheet rubber moved down to Rs 210 (212) a kg according to traders. The grade dropped to Rs 209.50 (211.50) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi as per Rubber Board.

The November series closed at Rs 211.50 (210.05), December at Rs 209.85 (209.84), January at Rs 210.70 (210.77), February at Rs 210.90 (211.15) , March at Rs 212.89 (212.50) and April at Rs 215.30 (215.50) a kg on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) declined sharply to Rs 186.92 (194.82) a kg at Bangkok. The November futures weakened to ₹285.4 (Rs 180.15) from ₹291.4 a kg during the day session but then recovered partially to ₹287 (Rs 181.17) a kg in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 210 (212); RSS-5: 208 (210); ungraded: 200 (202); ISNR 20: 198 (200) and latex 60 per cent: 128 (128.50).

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 3, 2011)

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### **Sugar mills body wants immediate nod for 1 million tonne export**

Our Bureau

*Move will help factories take advantage of global prices*



New Delhi, Nov. 2:

The National Federation of Co-operative Sugar Factories Ltd (NFCSF) has demanded that the Government allow exports of one million tonne sugar immediately. In addition it also wants that exports of one million tonnes a month be allowed till March 2012.

Such a move would help the sugar factories take advantage of global prices that are seen to be softening and make timely payment to farmers in the new crushing season which started last month, Mr Vinay Kumar, Managing Director, NFCSF told reporters on Wednesday.

Sugarcane crushing for the current year has started with several mills in Western Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra starting their operations in the past couple of weeks, Mr Kumar said.



Improved cash flow during the crushing season between November and March could help sugar millers avert cane arrears.

### **international prices**

The international sugar prices have started declining, Mr Kumar said. Prices of refined sugar in London have softened a bit in the past week to \$690 a tonne from \$706. "We will miss the bus if the Government does not allow exports immediately," Mr Kumar said.

The Federation estimates that India would be left with a surplus of four million tonnes by the end of current sugar year in September 2012. Sugar production is estimated in the range of 25-26 million tonnes in the current year, up from 24.3 million tonnes in the previous year. Consumption for the year is estimated to be around 22 million tonnes. The opening stocks were about 5.8 million tonnes at the beginning of the current year, according to industry estimates.

"Allowing exports of one million tonne a month would not hamper both domestic and global prices," Mr Vinay Kumar said adding that exporters get a premium of Rs 5 a kg in the international market. Retail prices of sugar are currently ruling at Rs 32-33 a kg in the domestic market.

For sugar year 2011-12, the Government is yet to announce the quantum for exports. In 2010-11, the Government had allowed exports of 2.6 million tonnes that included 1.5 million tonnes in three equal tranches under the Open General Licence (OGL). The remaining 1.1 million tonnes was pending export obligation on part of the mills under the Advance License Scheme.

Further, Mr Kumar demanded that the Government announce pricing for ethanol, which is used for blending with petrol. The National Policy on Bio-fuels has targeted for a 20 per cent ethanol blending by 2017. At present, petrol is blended with five per cent ethanol.

The sugar industry supplies ethanol at Rs 27 a litre and is demanding a price of at least Rs 35-36 a litre. In the current year, the demand for ethanol by oil marketing companies stands at 101.66 crore litres whereas the industry has offered to supply 60.49 crore litres. "A pricing policy of ethanol would ensure that more ethanol makers to come forward for supply of more quantities," Mr Kumar said.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 3, 2011)

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## Poor industrial offtake crushes castor

OUR CORRESPONDENT

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### Rajkot, Nov. 2:

Weak local industrial demand and exports pulled down castor in spot and futures markets. Similar trend was seen in future market also.

Castorseed December contract declined by Rs 18 to Rs 4,023 a quintal on Rajkot Commodity Exchange. It was down Rs 37.50 to Rs 4,162.50 a quintal in the spot market on the exchange.

Castorseed December contract dropped by Rs 35.50 to Rs 4,093.50 a quintal with an open interest of 8,710 lots on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange. The November contract gained Rs 10 at Rs 4,378.50 with an open interest of 18,160 lots on the exchange.

While the 8,000-9,000 bags of castor that arrived in Gujarat fetched Rs 830-850 for 20 kg, 500-600 bags arrived in Saurashtra and sold at Rs 780-830 for 20 kg. The country expects a bumper castor crop in 2012. The acreage of the crop has increased by 3.9 lakh hectares to about 12.7 lakh hectares in 2011 from 8.82 lakh hectares last year. Industries expect production to be between 17 and 18 lakh tonnes. According to market sources, castor acreage in Gujarat has jumped by about 30 per cent at 14-16 lakh tonnes in 2012 and yields are likely to improve compared to last year.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 3, 2011)

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## Weak buying, futures drag spot chana

Our Correspondent



Indore, Nov. 2:

Chana continued to slide on weak futures and slack demand for pulses in the physical market.

Chana (kanta) on Wednesday was quoted at Rs 3,400 a quintal, down Rs 50. Chana (desi) declined by Rs 50 at Rs 3,350 a quintal. Taking cues from the decline in spot chana, chana dal also dropped, with chana dal (average) being quoted at Rs 4,275-4,300 (Rs 4,300-4,325), chana dal (medium) at Rs 4,375-4,400 (Rs 4,400-4,425) and chana dal (bold) at Rs 4,500-4,525 (Rs 4,525-4,550).

Dollar chana or chickpea ruled flat on weak buying support. In local mandis, dollar chana quoted at Rs 7,300-7,600 a quintal amid arrival of 1,200-1,400 bags. Slack demand also dragged down masoor and its dal. In the spot market, masoor (bold) declined to Rs 2,875-2,900 against Rs 2,950 and masoor (medium) to Rs 2,625.

Masoor dal (average) quoted at Rs 3,325-3,350 (Rs 3,375-3,400), masoor dal (medium) at Rs 3,425-3,450 (Rs 3,475-3,500) and masoor dal (bold) at Rs 3,500-3,525 (Rs 3,600-3,625). Tur remained unchanged despite subdued demand, with tur (Maharashtra) being quoted at Rs 3,350 and tur (Nimari) at Rs 2,300-2,500. Tur dal, on the other hand, declined on weak buying support, with tur dal (full) being quoted at Rs 5,500-5,550, tur dal ( *sawa* no.) at Rs 4,700-4,750 and tur (marka) at Rs 6,200-6,250 (Rs 6,300).

Urad gained marginally on improved buying support. Urad (bold) in local mandis sold at Rs 3,400-3,600, while urad (medium) sold at Rs 2,800-3,200. Arrival of urad in local mandis declined to 1,500 bags against 2,000 bags on Tuesday. Urad dal remained unchanged, with

urad dal (average) at Rs 4,300-4,350, urad dal (bold) at Rs 5,000 and urad (mongar) at Rs 6,200-6,400. Moong and its dal remained unchanged despite subdued demand. Moong (best quality) remained firm at Rs 4,200-4,300, while moong (medium) sold at Rs 3,600-3,800. Three to four hundred bags of moong arrived in local mandis. Moong dal ruled flat, with moong dal (average) being quoted at Rs 5,100-5,150, moong dal (bold) at Rs 5,500-5,550 and moong (mongar) at Rs 5,700-5,800.

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### **Edible oils weaken on lack of demand**



**Mumbai, Nov. 2:**

Edible oils weakened in the absence of demand on Wednesday.

In the physical market, except for soya oil which remained unchanged, all other oils extended losses by Rs 3-5. Groundnut oil declined by Rs 10 while palmolein lost Re 1.

Improvement in palm oil and soya oils futures arrested price decline at domestic level. After Diwali, the dull market is keeping traders and speculators away from taking long positions.

Resellers sold 80-100 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 531-532. Liberty's rate for palmolein was Rs 535-536, for super palmolein Rs 570 and for soya refined oil Rs 622.

Ruchi was quoting palmolein at Rs 530 and soya refined oil at Rs 617. Cotton (wash) was ruling lower at Rs 605-608.

**November contracts of crude palm oil on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives Exchange** settled at MYR2,965 (MYR2,925), December at MYR2,962 (MYR 2,925), January at MYR2,958 (MYR2,923) and February at MYR2,960 (MYR2,920) a tonne. Soya oil for November delivery was at Rs 621.50 (Rs 617.50) while for December was at Rs 615.70 (Rs 614) on National Board of Trade in Indore.

**Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg):** groundnut oil — 850 (860); soya refined oil — 620 (620); sunflower exp. ref. — 640 (645); sunflower ref. 695 — (700); rapeseed ref. oil 703 — (707); rapeseed expeller ref. 673 — (677), cotton ref oil 625 — (628) and palmolein — 532 (533).

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### **Sugar steady as mills await policy changes**

Our Correspondent



Mumbai, Nov. 2:

Sugar prices remained unchanged on Wednesday as demand matched supplies.

After Diwali, local demand has fallen drastically. Some mills are offering tenders since then on the expectation that there will be favourable policy changes in the near future. In the physical market, S-grade fine quality sugar declined by Rs 5 while M-grade fair quality increased by Rs 10.

Naka rates remained unchanged despite selling pressure. Markets in other producing centres also remained unchanged on sufficient supply from mills.

In the current marketing year, India is expected to produce more than 250 lakh tonnes, according to traders. With the sufficient free sale quota of 17.01 lakh tonnes for November, domestic sugar market will see steady to bearish trend as in the second fortnight millers may witness pressure to sell to complete the quota in time.

With routine demand, Vashi market witnessed arrivals at 43-44 truckloads while local dispatches were at 38-40 truckloads. On Tuesday evening 6-7 mills offered tenders and sold 35,000-40,000 bags to local traders at Rs 2,680-2,760 (Rs 2,680-2,760) for S-grade and at Rs 2,800-2,900 (Rs 2,800-2,900) for M-grade.

**Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates** for S-grade were Rs 2,821-2,900 (Rs 2,821-2,905) and for M-grade were Rs 2,921-3,061 (Rs 2,906-3,061).

**Naka delivery rates:** S-grade — Rs 2,760-2,830 (Rs 2,760-2,830) and M-grade — Rs 2,870-3,010 (Rs 2,870-3,010).

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 3, 2011)

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## **Turmeric pales as rains hit sales**

Our Correspondent



Erode, Nov. 2:

Poor sales brought down spot turmeric by Rs 200 a quintal on Wednesday.

Incessant rains in rural parts here prevented farmers from coming to markets and traders, despite having orders, avoided purchases as rains will make it difficult to clean, pack and send the produce to North Indian traders, said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association. Only 30 to 35 per cent of the goods was sold, he said.

Prices may fall next week onwards as farmers who have more than ten lakh bags will offload, traders said. Besides, turmeric futures have remained unchanged for the past couple of days, making price rise even more unlikely, they added. However, farmers expect current prices to prevail.

On Wednesday, poor quality pulled down hybrid variety by Rs 320 a quintal here and by Rs 200 a quintal at the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society. In the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,209-5,329 a quintal and the root variety at Rs 3,199-5,036 a quintal.

**Salem Crop:** The finger variety fetched Rs 4,668-5,489 a quintal and the root variety Rs 4,311-5,151 a quintal. Only 556 of the 2,537 bags that arrived were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,460-5,249 a quintal and the root variety at Rs 3,760-4,940 a quintal. All the 217 bags that arrived were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,269-5,149 a quintal and the root variety at Rs 4,069-4,939 a quintal. Out of the 448 bags that arrived, 431 were sold.

At the Regulated Marketing Committee, the finger variety fetched Rs 4,789-5,234 a quintal and the root variety Rs 4,739-5,099 a quintal. Out of the 1,436 bags that arrived, 1,316 were sold.

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