

Published: November 8, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: November 8, 2011 04:03 IST

Training in fast food preparation at TNAU

Staff Reporter

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University will organise a training in fast food preparation on November 9 and 10 on the university premises.

According to a university release, the training will cover the following aspects: bakery-based fast foods, mushroom-based ready-to-eat fast foods, cauliflower-based ready-to-eat foods, and sweet chutney.

Those interested can attend the training by paying a fee of Rs. 1,000.

For details, contact Head, Post Harvest Technology Centre, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore – 641003.

For registration, contact 0422-6611340 / 6611268 before November 9.

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Two more farmers burn paddy crop

Correspondent

Two more farmers of Miryalaguda mandal on Monday set fire to 14 acres of 'domakadu' virus-infested paddy crop in Lavudi tanda under Tungapadu gram panchayat.

According to Miryalaguda MLA Julakanti Ranga Reddy, tribal farmers — Lavudi Sushila and Lavudi Naga — burnt eight and six acres of paddy crop respectively, as it was found to be useless, even for cattle to graze on.

They gave a representation to the Agriculture and Revenue officials on the damage suffered by them and seeking due compensation. On Sunday, a tribal, Saidulu, of Gopasamudram thanda had burnt four acres of paddy crop.

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Farmers let down by Bengal gram too

Special Correspondent

The Bengal gram crop, which is the mainstay of agriculture in Kurnool district is under severe stress due to lack of moisture. Bengal gram has been sown on more than two lakh hectare in the district this season.

As the early khariff crops such as groundnut and jowar failed, most farmers had shifted to Bengal gram which has been causing concern to cultivators.

According to farmers, if there is no moderate rainfall within a week, the yield will go down by 50 per cent. Plants may survive even though there is no precipitation, but the yield would decline.

Black cotton soils in Aluru, Koilkuntla and Nandikotkur areas are suitable for Bengalgram crop.

Majority farmers have shifted to this crop due to convenience in cultivating this crop. The duration of the crops is three months and majority of the operations right from sowing to harvesting are mechanised.

On the other hand, it could withstand the moisture stress and give some average yields in the worst year too.

Usually, the productivity is around six to eight quintal per acre while the best soils gave yields upto 12 quintals.

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HRS cultivating 'passion fruit'



Passion fruit creeper being grown on an experimental basis at Horticultural Research Station at Aswaraopet in Khammam district. — PHOTO: G. N. RAO

Aswaraopet-based Horticultural Research Station (HRS) has been conducting trials on cultivation aspects of 'Passion fruit' (*Passiflora edulis*), the tropical fruit famous for its aromatic flavour and rich nutritional and medicinal properties.

The HRS, affiliated to Dr. YSR Horticultural University, embarked on a research plan last year to study the whole gamut of cultivation aspects of passion fruit, a native fruit of Brazil, under local climatic conditions. The station has already taken up cultivation of passion fruit on an experimental basis. Two varieties of passion fruit -- *Passiflora edulis* (the yellow type) and Kaveri (the hybrid variety) -- are presently being grown on a trial basis at the HRS, according to sources.

Vibrant potential

The study assumes significance considering the vibrant potential of passion fruit to produce value-added products and generate income for the farmers. The fruit can be grown as an inter-crop during all seasons.

The fruit is well known for its delicious juice, considered to be an instant energy drink, in many parts around the world, particularly in South America, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Above all, the fruit contains vitamins A and C besides the vital antioxidants found to inhibit the growth of cancer cells.

According to sources, the passion fruit cultivation is in vogue for several years on a moderate level in several parts of South and North India. However, it has been taken up on a commercial scale in Northeast India in the last couple of years.

"Passion fruit offers many health and nutritional benefits," according to M. Ravindra Babu, Scientist, HRS, Aswaraopet.

The tropical fruit is famous for its aromatic flavour, rich nutritional and medicinal properties

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Aid for farmers to enhance cow stock

T. Nandakumar

The Animal Husbandry Department has drawn up an extended action plan with Central assistance to enhance the domestic stock of milch cows through a subsidy scheme targeting dairy farmers.

The Special Livestock Breeding Programme (SLBP), formulated by the department to support farmers in rearing female calves, is being supplemented with two Centrally sponsored schemes.

Animal Husbandry Director R. Vijayakumar said the Central assistance under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana and the 13th Finance Commission allotment would supplement the State Plan funds.

State's share

While the State had earmarked Rs.9.3 crore as subsidy for 50,000 calves enrolled in various districts under the SLBP, the yojana was expected to cover an additional 10,000 calves. The 13th Finance Commission support would add another 12,500 animals to the programme.

At a meeting convened by the Chief Secretary in October, the department proposed the extension of the programme to cover all the two lakh female calves born in Kerala every year.

The SLBP seeks to provide extension support, adequate health and insurance coverage, and quality feed at subsidised prices to dairy farmers to rear female calves from the age of four months to first calving at 32 months.

Under the State Plan, the government and the panchayat together share 50 per cent of the cost of feed, with the farmer bearing the rest. However, under the Union government schemes, the farmer gets a 50 per cent subsidy directly from the department.

Cattle feed price

Officials said the decision to tap into Centrally sponsored schemes was mainly driven by the wide fluctuation in the price of cattle feed.

It is estimated that a farmer incurs a cost of up to Rs.30,000 on feed and fodder in bringing up a calf to the reproductive stage. This proves to be a heavy financial burden on small-dairy farmers.

As a result, most of the calves are given away for slaughter. The tender meat is often passed off as mutton by unscrupulous traders.

Dr. Vijayakumar said the calves enrolled under the schemes would be periodically assessed by veterinary doctors. "Good milk yield is not only a genetic character but it also depends on proper health care and maintenance. Our aim is to ensure a new generation of healthy, high-yielding cows by adopting calves from the time they are born," he said.

In addition to cattle feed, the calves would be given mineral and vitamin supplements. The veterinary service includes periodic vaccination and de-worming of the animals. The calves would also be monitored for weight gain, a key indicator of good growth.

Will reduce risk

The extended programme is expected to reduce the risk inherent in bringing calves from other States. Officials say calves so brought have been found to harbour blood-borne parasitic diseases that can be transmitted to the animals here.

Several cases of Anaplasmosis, Theileriosis, and Babesiosis were reported from Idukki and Wayanad in recent times, they say.

Kerala started importing cross-bred calves in 2006 to bridge the yawning demand-supply gap in milk. Following the move, the milk production went up from 20 lakh tonnes in 2000 to 26.5 lakh tonnes last year.

The livestock population in Kerala registered a drop from 22 lakh in 2003 to 18.5 lakh in 2007.

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Sliding price of paddy worries Malnad farmers

Veerendra P.M.

The price has fallen from Rs. 1,300 to Rs. 800 a quintal

The slump in the price of paddy and maize had created apprehension among the farmers of the district.

Paddy is grown on 1.09 lakh hectares of land in the district this year and maize is cultivated on 63,000 hectares of land. Joint Director of Agriculture Shivamurthappa has informed that the production of paddy was expected to be 5.5 lakh tonnes in the district this year. Similarly, farmers who had cultivated maize were expecting bumper yield and the production in the district was expected to be 3.5 lakh tonnes, he said.

After Deepavali festival, harvesting of paddy and maize had commenced in the district. The price of fine variety of paddy which was Rs. 1,500 a quintal in the open market last year had slumped to Rs. 950 this year, triggering apprehension among farmers. The price of coarse variety of paddy had crashed from Rs. 1,300 a quintal to Rs. 800 a quintal. Maize had been purchased for Rs. 1,300 a quintal in the open market last year, and the price had come down to Rs. 900 this year.

He told *The Hindu* over telephone that leader of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha H.R. Basavarajappa blamed the decision of the Union Government to ban export of rice as the reason for price crash. The Government had failed to initiate action against middlemen who were manipulating the price, he said.

The cost of agriculture inputs was heading northwards while the price of the agriculture produced had crashed. He said the price of 50 kg bag of DAP fertilizer which was Rs. 450 in April this year had been increased to Rs. 980 now. The price of complex fertilizers, urea and potash had witnessed similar increase, he said.

Sources in the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee had said that only 5 per cent of the paddy and maize produced in the district had arrived to the market. As harvesting had commenced in the command area of the Bhadra reservoir now, the inflow of produce to the market would increase, due to which the price might come down further. The district had witnessed series of protests in the first week of November demanding the Government to begin the process of procuring the paddy and maize at minimum support price (MSP) at the earliest.

Deputy Director of Food and Civil Supplies Sridhar said that a meeting would be held with the Deputy Commissioner on Tuesday to take a decision on the date to commence the procurement process.

Shankarappa, a paddy grower from Holehonnur said that, owing to delay in beginning the process of procuring the agriculture produces at MSP, farmers were forced to sell the produce to the middlemen at lower price to meet the financial obligations.

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Do not acquire fertile land for industries: MP

Senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader K.B. Shanappa, MP, has come out in support of farmers in Andola hobli of Jewargi taluk in Gulbarga district who are opposing the acquisition of agricultural land for a cement factory.

The Government should adhere to its policy of not acquiring fertile land for industries, he told presspersons here on Monday. "I am not opposed to industries coming up in backward districts, but they should be set up on barren and fallow land and not on fertile land," he said.

Farmers in the region said the Government proposes to acquire more than 4,000 acres of land for a cement factory. Mr. Shanappa said that much of the land proposed to be acquired in Andola and Naribol villages was in the command area of the Mudbol branch canal of the Upper Krishna Project. "The other lands that will be acquired are slated to be included in the command areas of future irrigation projects," he added.

He said farmers should resist moves to acquire fertile land. "Fertile land in Sedam and Chitapur taluks has already been acquired by cement companies for their units. If more fertile land is acquired, it will have a serious impact on agriculture in the district". Farmers of Andola hobli, whose land is slated to be acquired for the cement plant, have announced a one-day dharna outside the Deputy Commissioner's office in the city on November 10.

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Sugar baron appeals to farmers for a united struggle

Correspondent

The Chief of Warana Cooperative Sugar Mill and the former Minister of Jan Surajya Party Vinay Kore has appealed to farmers and their organisations to come together, along with all sugar mills, to launch a confrontation with the Maharashtra and the Centre.

Demands

Their demands are to increase the price of sugar in the open market, allow sugar export, and let the mills offer a minimum of Rs. 2,000 as first instalment (without any deduction) per tonne so that farmers would be duly compensated. Mr. Kore told presspersons on Sunday that 30 per cent of sugar in the country was provided to sweet products, 25 per cent to cold drinks, 12 per cent to ice cream manufacturers, which means 67 per cent was used for commercial and industrial purposes, and only 33 per cent was kept for common consumers. Hence increase in

the prices of sugar in open market was necessary, as only 33 per cent will have to pay, he said. The Centre should let sugar export so that farmers get a fair price.

For this, all the farmers under the banner of their organisations and all sugar mills should come together to place these demands to the Union government, he said.

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- *'Increase the price of sugar in the open market'*
 - *Only 33 per cent of sugar is used by common consumers*
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Government intervention sought for turmeric crop

Special Correspondent

Farmers in the region are gearing up to seek Government intervention for the turmeric crop.

Farmers here have announced that they would launch an agitation in case the Government fails to intervene and bail out turmeric farmers by the end of this month. President of the Sugarcane Cultivators' Association Kurubur Shanthakumar told *The Hindu* that the association will spearhead the agitation in view of the escalating crisis and the indifference of the authorities.

“Farmers are reeling due to volatility in the market with prices of turmeric crashing from Rs.17,000 per quintal to Rs.4,000 per quintal. As a result, a majority of the farmers in the region have withheld the produce hoping for a revival in the market price so that they can sell it to recover at least the input cost,” he said. Turmeric is cultivated in most parts of south Karnataka including Mysore, Chamarajanagar, Hunsur, H.D. Kote, Periyapatana, K.R. Nagar, T. Narsipura, Gundlupet, Yellandur and Kollegal.

The area under cultivation is around 50,000 hectares, said Mr. Shanthakumar.

“After sericulture and sugarcane cultivators, it is turmeric farmers in the Mysore-Mandya-Chamarajanagar belt who are now feeling the pinch of market uncertainty,” he said.

He said the cost of production of turmeric was Rs.10, 000 per quintal but the market price had collapsed to Rs. 4,000 per quintal, and hence, the farmers saw no point in selling it at this juncture.

Mr. Shanthakumar said the input cost had skyrocketed due to the escalation of price of fertilizer and pesticides.

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Sugarcane farmers in Baramati to protest till demands are met

Staff Reporter

Sanghatna leader Raju Shetty threatens to go on an indefinite fast

The crisis over sugarcane prices after the agitation by farmers at Baramati worsened further after Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatna leader Raju Shetty threatened to go on an indefinite fast. Mr. Shetty, who led a six-day padayatra from Pandharpur reached Baramati, the hometown of Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar, on Monday and announced that he would not leave the place until the demands of farmers were met.

Sugarcane farmers are demanding a first instalment of Rs. 2,350 (per tonne) and a final rate of Rs. 2,700 for their produce, a demand the government has rejected despite several deliberations between the two parties. Mr. Shetty, while addressing a rally of farmers in Baramati, asked Mr. Pawar to immediately intervene and resolve the issue. "Mr. Pawar, till you don't take a final decision on our demands, I am not going to eat anything, and will not leave this place," Mr. Shetty said.

Mr. Shetty expressed his confidence in Mr. Pawar, while targeting his nephew Ajit Pawar for his adamant attitude of not heeding the agitators' demands.

He reiterated the farmers' grouse that the input costs had been wrongly calculated by the Government.

"The cost of labour has been cited as Rs. 73 a day whereas the farmer has to pay at least Rs. 126, according to the Minimum Wages Act," he said.

The cost of chemical fertilizers, water, and electricity have escalated since last year, Mr. Shetty said.

This year, the first advance fixed as Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP), as declared by the State Government, is Rs. 1,450 (per tonne) which is lower than the final rate of Rs. 2,000 that the farmers got last year.

Meanwhile, reacting to farmers' agitation, Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan said here that only demands based on pragmatism could be considered.

“The problem cannot be solved if the demands are illogical,” he said while stating that the government was open to deliberations. According to Mr. Chavan, the Department of Cooperation along with the sugar federation was in discussion with the agitators to resolve the issue.

Mr. Chavan said farmers could be paid more only if sugar prices increased. “I have demanded from the Centre that the ban on sugar export be lifted. Export of 20 lakh tonnes of sugar should be allowed,” Mr. Chavan said.

Farmers on November 2 began their padayatra from Pandharpur.

The sugarcane crushing season, which started earlier last month, has still not picked up momentum because of the agitation.

In an attempt to resolve the issues, Minister for Cooperation Harshavardhan Patil had declared that the onus of payment to farmers was on sugar factories.

The 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, he had said.

• *'Sharad Pawar should immediately intervene and resolve the issue'*

• *Higher price possible only if sugar prices increase: Chavan*

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Distribution of tulasi saplings

City-based Bhogi Ganapathi Peetham has decided to distribute one lakh saplings of 'Tulasi' to the people. Chairman of the peetham D. Ramana Raju, in a statement here on Monday, said the distribution would be a continuous process and one sapling each would be presented to those who visit the Bhogi Ganapathi temple at Suryaraopeta.

Fix sugarcane price at Rs. 3,000: farm leaders

Special Correspondent

A day ahead of Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy's visit to his native Chittoor district on Tuesday, leaders of the Chittoor district sugarcane farmers had a meeting here today seeking to draw the attention of the Chief Minister to their plight with regards to the managements of the six sugar factories in the district, including two State-owned units.

They allege that these factories do not implement the district Collector's orders that fixed the cane price per ton at Rs.2,100 and do not release the arrears for six months after the orders had been issued.

Grievances discussed

The cane growers who met under the banner of the YSR Congress Farmers' Cell discussed in detail their grievances in the wake of the mounting arrears coupled with other problems like steep hike in the prices of farm inputs, erratic power supply and delay in the onset of monsoon.

The leaders have in their signed statement appealed to the Chief Minister to fix the sugar cane price at Rs.3,000 per ton at 8.5 per cent recovery rate as per recommendations of M. S. Swaminathan Commission and the subsequent Mohan Kanda committee reports.

They further wanted that the managements too must be asked to ensure free cutting and transportation of the cane stock from their fields to the plants, as an additional relief to off-set what they termed as a 'near 1,000 per cent' hike in the cost of all farm inputs between last and present crushing seasons.

Leaders T. Adikesavulu Reddy, K. Adimulam, S. Manohar Naidu have in their statement appealed to the cane growers of the district to be prepared for an agitation to resist the alleged apathetic attitude of the Central and State governments to the genuine grievances of the farmers.

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Heavy rain washes away homes, farm lands in Erode

Staff Reporter

Kodiveri Anaicut registers maximum rainfall of 200 mm, many houses in the district had at least three feet water inside



Heavy rain pounded Erode district again on Sunday night, triggering flash floods that wreaked havoc in many parts as raging water flooded residential localities, collapsed walls, damaged crops, and inundated roads, affecting vehicular movement.

In the last 24-hour period ended at 8.30 a.m. on Monday, Kodiveri Anaicut registered the maximum rainfall of 200 mm followed by Chennimalai - 108 mm, Arachalur - 95 mm, Erode - 84 mm, Sathyamangalam - 78 mm and Gobichettipalayam - 72 mm.

Several residential areas in Erode Town, Kaspapet, Avalpoondurai, Unjapalayam, Ezhumathur, Cholipalayam, Poondurai Semur, Vilakkethi, Sivagiri, Kagam, Thalaiyanallur, Ceylon Colony and Savadipalayam were flooded. Many houses in these areas had at least three feet water inside.

In Sivagiri, a major breach occurred in the Kolathupalayam Tank and the water from the tank brought crops in more than 700 acres under deep water. The road links to Kagam and Kolathupalayam villages were cut off due to the floods.

In Savadipalayam, crops were submerged five-feet deep in water. Paddy, turmeric and sugarcane crops cultivated in many parts of Sivagiri and other nearby blocks were destroyed in the floods. Fast-moving flood waters washed away several huts in the district. Walls of many houses were also collapsed. Crops in hundreds of acres in Gobichettipalayam block also got

submerged under flood waters, as the Kodiveri Anaicut witnessed heavy showers. The road link to several villages in the district was cut as many stretches went deep under flood waters. The traffic on the Ezhumathur – Sellathampalayam road and Karur Main road remained affected for several hours. Bus services to a number of villages were suspended.

In Erode Town, rainwater entered more than 100 houses in Periyasemur and the Government Middle School in the area. A number of residential localities including Vettukattu Valasu, MGR Nagar, Muthu Manickam Nagar and SSP Nagar were also inundated. People were seen wading through knee-deep water, collecting their belongings and leaving for safe places.

The district administration evacuated people from flood-affected parts to safe places. Schools and marriage halls were opened to accommodate them. Efforts were being taken to provide food and clothing to the affected people. The Bhavanisagar Dam witnessed an inflow of 21,389 cusecs at 3 p.m. on Monday. The water level stood at 85.89, while the storage was 19.015 tmcft. The rainfall recorded in other parts of the district is as follows (in mm): Olapalayam – 56, Bhavani – 55, Pungampadi – 54, Modakurichi – 50, Perundurai – 49, Bhavanisagar – 45, Elanthakuttaimedu – 43 and Kavunthapadi – 29.

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Water discharge from reservoirs cut

K.Lakshmi

Chembarampakkam reservoir gets more inflow

: The quantum of surplus water being let out from the city reservoirs has been reduced as rains have abated in the past two days.

According to officials of the Water Resources Department, the flow into the waterbodies in Red Hills, Poondi and Chembarampakkam has decreased. On Monday, about 500 cubic feet per second (cusecs) received from the catchment areas of Red Hills reservoir was released. The discharge on Sunday was twice this.

On the inundation in areas along the surplus channel, officials said temporary restoration work is under progress at the vulnerable points of the channel, including at Vadaperumbakkam and Vadakarai.

Though the flow into the Chembarampakkam reservoir declined to 240 cusecs on Monday, the department is letting out 1,000 cusecs into the Adyar river to bring down the level to 20.5 ft. At present, the level is 20.81 feet. The reservoir continues to receive water from the catchment areas in Sriperumbudur. "We do not want to reduce further as another bout of rainfall would bring in heavy inflow," said an official.

However, discharge from Poondi reservoir into Kosasthalaiyar river has been stepped up to 1,000 cusecs to fill up Tamaraipakkam and Vallur anicuts located downstream of the reservoir and facilitate groundwater recharge in the neighbouring areas.

The surplus water from Poondi reservoir is also being used to clean 30-km stretch of Cooum river for the past three days. The water diverted near Korattur anicut upstream of Chembarampakkam reservoir has reached Padikuppam near Anna Nagar, officials said.

The department has suspended release of water to the Cholavaram reservoir from Poondi as the storage in the former is nearing the maximum level.

The storage level at Cholavaram is 864 million cubic feet as against the capacity of 881 mcft.

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Reuters

New Delhi, November 03, 2011

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Food inflation at 12.21 pct y/y on Oct 22

Food price index rose 12.21%, its highest in 9 months, and the fuel price index climbed 14.50% in the year to Oct. 22, government data on Thursday showed.

In the previous week, annual food and fuel inflation stood at 11.43% and 14.70%, respectively.

The primary articles price index was up 12.08%, compared with an annual rise of 11.75% a week earlier.

The RBI raised interest rates last month for the 13th and possibly final time in a tightening cycle that began in early 2010, on expectations that persistently high inflation will finally begin to ease starting in December.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/764313.aspx>

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India's coffee exports up 42% : ICO

Agencies Posted online: Sun Nov 06 2011, 15:28 hrs

New Delhi : India's coffee exports rose by 42 per cent to 3,60,540 tonnes in the 2010-11 coffee year ended September this year, according to a report by the International Coffee Organisation (ICO).

Shipments of the brew from the country stood at 2,53,895 tonnes on the 2009-10 coffee year (October-September), ICO data said.

According to the government-owned Coffee Board of India, the country's exports of the brew rose by 31 per cent to 3,60,540 tonnes in the last coffee year against 2,71,859 tonnes in the 2009-10 coffee year.

However, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has put coffee exports from India much lower than that of the Coffee Board and the ICO.

According to USDA, the country's coffee exports rose by 30 per cent to 3,30,000 tonnes in 2010-11 coffee year against 2,53,740 tonnes in the year-ago period.

India largely exports coffee to Italy, Germany, Russia, Belgium and Spain.

The global body on coffee has put the production in 2010-11 coffee year at about 3,03,600 tonnes, while Coffee Board has put the output at 3,02,000 tonnes.

According to USDA, India had produced 3,02,040 tonnes of coffee in the 2010-11 coffee year.



Holland varsity to impart tech, scientific support in agro sector

TUESDAY, 08 NOVEMBER 2011 00:50

STAFF REPORTER | BHOPAL

To increase the State's agriculture products and production in Madhya Pradesh, Agriculture University of Holland (Netherlands) has agreed to impart technical and scientific support to the State and an understanding was reached in this regard between the State Agriculture Department and Holland Agriculture University at a meeting held in New Delhi on Monday.

The meeting held between MJ Croff, vice-president and Rector of Wageningen Agriculture University, JN Frogens Coordinator for Asia and Wan Wikel chairman Quality Management and Director Research HS Yadav of Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia Agriculture University and PK Dash, Managing Director of MP Trifed and Prof RS Sharma of Agriculture University.

It was agreed at the meeting that students of State Agriculture University will go to Agriculture University of Holland for technical knowhow regarding agriculture, horticulture, floriculture, food processing etc. Along with the students of Agriculture University, professors, teaching staff will also visit Holland for study and research work to increase agriculture production in the State.

Holland Agriculture University will select students and professor and give them scholarship for higher studies and research. Short-term and long-term training will be organised to give them necessary training in the required field. Apart from Agriculture Holland also has the expertise in the field of Horticulture, Floriculture and Food Processing etc.

Director Research Yadav of Rajmata Scindia Agriculture University informed that about 300 students have graduated, 192 post-graduate and 36 students are enrolled for their PhD. A team from Agriculture University will be visiting Holland next year in Feb to meet with the Agri Scientist to discuss the future plans with regards to study exchange programme. Exam will be organised for selection of students going to Holland Agriculture University.

A high-level delegation from Madhya Pradesh had visited Holland from November 1 to 5. The delegation included Industries Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya and officials of the State Agriculture Department.

3 soyabean farmers committed suicide in State last month

TUESDAY, 08 NOVEMBER 2011 00:44

STAFF REPORTER | BHOPAL

As many as three debt-ridden farmers have committed suicide in Hoshangabad district in the month of October, owing to damage of soybean crops due to rust, and yellow mosaic virus and no substantial help from the insurance companies to bear the loss.

These facts were revealed in a detailed report prepared by Sunil, an activist working in the district, which was released in the State capital on Sunday.

Sunil, citing the report further informed that Central Government with the help of State Government started Mausam Beema Yojna in the district but it was implemented in the district without consent of farmers. He further said that most of the farmers are not even aware of the insurance schemes.

Notably, Madhya Pradesh is the largest producer of Soybean in India and the State records highest deaths of farmers after Maharashtra.

“Till now no farmers suicide had occurred owing to the loss in soybean crops and these deaths have proved that an important cash crop is now causing deaths in the State,” Sunil said.

Commenting over the ineffective insurance scheme initiated for the soybean farmers, he said, “The insurance scheme was started by IFFCI-Tokya and ICICI Lombard. These companies collected Rs 22.20 crore as premium, from the farmers but have paid only 17 crore against the claims.

The farmers have been cheated in the name of insurance policy.” Claiming that the total estimated loss of the farmers is about 20,000 crore, Sunil further informed that these domestic and foreign insurance companies have benefited from the scheme and earned a profit of Rs 5 crore from the district. Even the collector and his subordinates had no idea about the Mausam Beema Yojna and yet they implemented the scheme in the district. He further demanded that State Government should take cognizance over the issue and provide relief to the farmers.

Business Standard

Tuesday, Nov 08, 2011

Cardamom futures up on seasonal demand

Press Trust of India / New Delhi November 08, 2011, 11:05 IST

Cardamom futures prices rose further by Rs 3 to Rs 695.50 per kg today, mostly in tandem with a firm spot demand for the marriage season.

Tight stocks in the physical market on account of the reduced arrivals from the growing belts.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, cardamom for December contract rose by Rs 3, or 0.43%, to Rs 695.50 per kg, with a trading volume of 110 lots.

The January contract traded higher by Rs 2.40, or 0.33%, at Rs 729.50 per kg, with a business volume of 25 lots, while November contract also moved up by Rs 2.30, or 0.35%, to Rs 652.90 per kg, with a business turnover of 248 lots.

Traders said rising demand in spot market on account of marriage and seasonal demand against restricted arrivals from southern producing regions mainly pushed up cardamom prices at futures market.

India cautious as its mills seek big sugar exports

Reuters / Mumbai/London November 6, 2011, 0:38 IST



Sugar market heavyweight India is likely to delay half of this year's expected one million tonnes of unrestricted exports until early 2012 due to output delays, a decision that would protect Indian consumers and limit the country's impact on world prices.

India, the world's top sugar consumer and biggest producer after Brazil, can cause big gyrations in international sugar futures prices because of its clout as either an exporter or an importer, depending on the progress of its crop.

After a favourable monsoon season, European sugar traders have said they expected Indian authorities to approve 500,000 tonnes of unrestricted or so-called "Open General Licence" exports in November, and possibly another 500,000 tonnes in December depending on progress of the crush.

However, some Indian industry officials said crushing was a little late in the top two producing states of Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, possibly delaying exports of the second tranche into next year.

"This year we have higher carry forward stocks and we know for sure that the sugar cane area has risen," said a senior official at the Maharashtra State Cooperative Sugar Factories Federation, who asked not to be identified.

"That will allow the government to clear a first tranche this month, but I don't think it will allow a second tranche before February."

Indian authorities, concerned over double-digit food price inflation, are wary of permitting large exports.

By contrast, many sugar producers are keen to export quickly, to benefit before high global prices slip any further, and say supply is ample.

“We have substantial stocks and we should not miss the bus,” said Vinay Kumar, managing director of the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories, which groups 250 sugar mills.

He acknowledged reports of delays in crushing in areas around Kolhapur in Maharashtra.

“But the issue is likely to be resolved soon,” said Kumar, who argued that India could very safely export 3 million tonnes of sugar in the new season that began in October, compared with 1.5 million tonnes of unrestricted sugar exports in 2010-11.

“Mills have already started crushing in western Uttar Pradesh and we expect most mills to start functioning across the country between November 10 and November 15.”

FOOD SECURITY

The industry officials said the government would need a clear view on output before allowing exports. India’s food inflation accelerated to a nine-month high in late October, driven mainly by protein items.

“The authorities don’t like to open the floodgates for sugar exports,” said Sergey Gudoshnikov, a senior economist with the London-based International Sugar Organisation (ISO).

“The government is being very cautious. Ensuring access to food for over one billion people is the major priority of the Indian government.”

Views among traders and analysts on Indian sugar stocks vary greatly, but all agree they are at a comfortable level and that mills want to take advantage of high sugar prices.

On October 1, when the current 2011-12 season began, carryover stocks were at 6 million tonnes, up from 5.0 million tonnes in the previous year, according to the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories.

The ISO puts India’s residual sugar stocks, held by industry and households, at around 10 million tonnes, raw value, as of October 1.

The National Federation’s Kumar said the government must permit overseas sales as soon

as possible.

He said Indian mills were expected to produce about 26 million tonnes in 2011-12, while domestic consumption was about 22 million tonnes.

Biotech Bill expected in winter session

BS Reporter / Mumbai November 08, 2011, 0:56 IST

The central government has planned a push for cotton farmers on regulatory concerns. It also has financial help in mind.

It is to introduce the Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India Bill in Parliament's winter session. Vilasrao Deshmukh, minister for science and technology, told the World Cotton Research Conference the performance of genetically modified (Bt) cotton in the past decade in yield, reduction of pesticide usage and increase in farm income were promising.

"However, the current regulatory system and its capacity to handle future challenges of safety assessment is limited. Therefore, the Government of India has taken a pro-active step, based on recommendations of various experts committees, to establish an independent and autonomous regulatory authority which is inclusive and transparent," he said.

Adding: "Besides, streamlining regulations on GM crops, there is a need to institutionalise a communication mechanism for improving public understanding and perception of biotechnologies. Our overall goal should be to enhance production from the current 30 million bales (a bale is 176 kg) to 100 million bales in a sustainable manner over the next two decades.

In his inaugural address, agriculture minister Sharad Pawar, an ardent advocate of Bt cotton, asked Indian scientists to focus on indigenous cotton varieties, to give options for low-cost production and high yields of short-staple cotton. "The government will provide financial support to the sector and farmers for the development and usage of indigenous cotton varieties," he said.

The new Bt technologies for cotton were exciting, he said, but there were issues in harnessing benefits for the longest possible time and develop strategies to delay resistance development. He wanted scientists to learn from success stories across the globe, especially at how Brazil

and China had increased their cotton yields. "We must learn from their science to ensure we develop technologies more specifically for the rain-fed regions of India, so that we join the ranks of Brazil (cotton yield of 1,500-2,000 kg per hectare), Australia, USA and China (1,000-1,500 kg per ha)," he said. By comparison, India's average yield is less than 550 kg a ha.

THE HINDU Business Line

Boosting dairy industry



The Finance Minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, with a farmer, and Chairman of Dwarka Milk, Mr Devprakash H. Rajput (right), flagging off the Cattle Finance Scheme for Marginal Dairy Farmers by Dwarka Milk, a private sector milk brand, at a function in Vashi, Navi Mumbai on Monday. – Paul Noronha

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 8, 2011)

Cotton Board to review crop status

M.R. Subramani

Mumbai, Nov. 7:

The Cotton Advisory Board (CAB) will meet here on November 15 to review the status of the cotton crop for the current season that began on October 1.

"We will be meeting on November 15 to take stock of the cotton crop situation. We have received reports on both crop loss and higher output from various places," said the Union Textiles Commissioner, Mr A.B. Joshi.

He was responding to a query on the crop loss that has been reported from Andhra Pradesh. Erratic weather and disruption in power supply due to the Telangana agitation have taken a toll on the crop. As a result, the yield is likely to be lower this year.

“While there are reports of crop loss from Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat, we have got reports of record output from Punjab,” said Mr Joshi on the sidelines of the World Cotton Research Conference here.

The Cotton Advisory Board, comprising representatives from the industry, trade, exporters, growers and Government, had at its meeting in August projected a record output of 355 lakh bales (of 170 kg each) against 325 lakh bales last year.

Meanwhile, cotton textile exports are likely to increase 12-15 per cent this year, according to Mr Siddhartha Rajagopal, Executive Director of the Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council.

“Last year, cotton prices were high touching Rs 60,000 a candy (356 kg). This year, they are around Rs 38,000. The industry will try and adjust itself to the evolving scenario,” he said.

However, the hope for improving exports comes from China's raw material problems.

“China will produce lesser cotton this year and will have to import,” he said. “Cotton garment, apparels and even knitwear exports will improve,” Mr Rajagopal said.

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Coconut oil may rule steady till January

C. J. Punnathara

Kochi, Nov. 7:

With global coconut oil availability remaining depressed as couple of recurrent typhoons lashed the coast of Philippines and beetle infestation and drought in the coconut plantations of Thailand has reduced coconut production from couple of the biggest producers in the world, prices are likely to remain firm globally.

Barring Indonesia, coconut production has been reeling among the big coconut producers this year.

In the Indian subcontinent, the area under coconut cultivation has been drastically declining in the biggest producing State of Kerala due to a host of factors like unsteady prices, high wages,

shortage of labour, high incidence of pests and diseases, declining crop productivity and low profitability compared to other commercial crops like rubber.

Global shortage

It is in this backdrop of global shortage of coconut oil along with a host of other pull and push factors that the Market Intelligence Centre of the Kerala Agricultural University has concluded that coconut oil prices in the country are likely to remain firm till January 2012.

A recent study conducted by Dr K Satheesh Babu, Ms K Jayasree and Ms P Resmi has pointed out that the supply shortfall from the State has been widely met with heavy arrivals from Tamil Nadu. However the advancing north-east monsoon along the coconut growing regions of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka is likely to hamper the harvest operations.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 8, 2011)

Govt to export rice via diplomatic channels

M.R. Subramani

Shipments to Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka soon



The Union Agriculture Minister, Mr Sharad Pawar, with the Union Minister for Science and Technology, Mr Vilasrao Deshmukh, at the inauguration of the World Cotton Research Conference in Mumbai. — M.R. Subramani

Mumbai, Nov. 7:

The Centre will export rice through diplomatic channels to Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, the Union Agriculture and Food Processing Industries Minister, Mr Sharad Pawar, said on Monday.

However, Indonesia, which had sought a similar arrangement, will have to buy the food grain for its needs from private traders, he told reporters on the sidelines of the World Cotton Research Conference here.

India has already begun exporting three lakh tonnes of rice to Bangladesh on government-to-government account at Rs 20,000 a tonne from September.

The exports will be from the 30 lakh tonnes of non-basmati rice permitted by the Centre on the heels of record production in wheat and bulging buffer stocks.

buffer stocks

Food grain stocks with the Centre as on October 1 were 51.78 million tonnes (mt) with rice making up 20.3 mt and wheat the rest.

Indonesia had last month, through a delegation that met the Union Minister of State for Food and Consumer Affairs, Prof K.V. Thomas, sought five lakh tonnes of rice.

The plea comes at a time when the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, is scheduled to visit Indonesia during November 17-20.

Mr Pawar said the Centre had allowed food grain exports of 30 lakh tonnes, each of non-basmati rice and wheat and the shipments would not be made from the stocks with the Food Corporation of India.

To a question on allowing further sugar exports, he said it was for the Food Ministry to decide.

Asked about demand to reduce the minimum export price (MEP) of \$475 a tonne for onion, Mr Pawar said his Ministry would be writing to the Commerce Ministry on the issue this week.

Minimum export price

“We have taken stock of the situation. We will be writing to the Commerce Ministry on reducing the MEP this week,” he said.

While allowing foodgrain exports, the Centre had banned onion exports on September 7.

The ban was lifted a fortnight later after farmers and traders boycotted trading but a MEP of \$475 was fixed. Then, the Government had said that the MEP would be reviewed every fortnight.

Of late, traders and exporters have been demanding review of the MEP as onion prices have tended to drop in the domestic market.

Though prices had gained last week, they are still lower than what the growers claim as production costs.

Mr Pawar said that the Government was not worried over the crop holiday declared by paddy growers in East and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh. "The area (where crop holiday is being observed) is small," he said.

Beyond Bt

Earlier, inaugurating the fifth World Cotton Research Conference, Mr Pawar said Indian cotton growers should go beyond Bt cotton and address new challenges.

He called for focus on short staple cotton varieties as they had a wider usage.

He also expressed concern over Bt-I cotton being affected in Maharashtra.

"Results of Bt-II cotton are encouraging but Bt-I cotton seems to have been affected going by feedback from farmers," he said.

The Union Minister for Science and Technology, Mr Vilasrao Deshmukh, said that the Government had finalised the Biotechnology Regulatory Authority. "A bill to set up the authority will be introduced in the winter session of Parliament," he said

The Union Textiles Commissioner, Mr A.B. Joshi, said that the Technology Mission on Cotton had helped to modernise the industry and improve productivity. But the country was still lagging behind in production compared with other countries such as Brazil and China. He called for research to meet the demand for organic, suvin and extra long staple cotton.

The Indian Council for Agricultural Research, Dr S. Ayyappan, called for efforts to tackle emerging minor pests in cotton.

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Milk production has slowed down in last two years, says Pranab



Mumbai, Nov. 7:

India is the largest producer of liquid milk, but there is a demand-supply mismatch as production has slowed down in the last two years, the Union Finance Minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, has said.

Inaugurating the Mumbai office of Dwarka Milk, a private sector milk procuring and processing company on Monday, Mr Mukherjee said that over the last decade, global milk production has gone up by 2.1 per cent to about 710 million tonnes in 2010. The year-on-year increase has been in the range of 0.9 per cent to 2.9 per cent. However, there has been a decrease in the growth rate since 2006.

In the last two years, the production in India increased by 3 to 4.5 million tonnes a year, against the steady increase of 6 million tonnes a year in the earlier years.

“If we can bridge this gap, perhaps we can meet the gap as it exists today. But we shall have to go increasing the production because the demand will increase with the growth in population and incomes,” he said. “There is no other alternative but to produce, preserve, process and distribute.”

The Finance Minister also inaugurated a cattle finance scheme for marginal dairy farmers by Dwarka Milk. Under the scheme, Dwarka Milk will arrange for farmers for buying milch cattle by standing guarantee.

Farmers can also buy cattle feed from the company on easy credit. The company will also provide insurance for the cattle for which the premium will be adjusted against the farmers' coupons, said Mr Kapil Rajput, Managing Director, Dwarka Milk.

Going ahead, the company plans to diversify into production of other milk products such as cheese, butter etc.

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Nearly 33% tea unsold at Coonoor sale

P.S. SUNDAR

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Coonoor, Nov. 6:

The post-Diwali auction of Coonoor Tea Trade Association caused concern among producers at Sale No: 44, as 33 per cent of the 14-week high offer of 16.45 lakh kg remained unsold despite shedding Rs 3 a kg. In all, there were no takers for 5.38 lakh kg worth about Rs 3.43 crore.

“Orthodox leaf market eased Rs 2-3 a kg. Better liquoring CTC leaf lost Rs 2-5, mediums up to Rs 4 and some plainers could not be sold even after shedding Rs 2-5. Orthodox dust eased Rs 2-4. High priced CTC dusts lost Rs 1-4, mediums up to Rs 4 and some plainers found no takers despite shedding Rs 2-3,” an auctioneer told.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 7, 2011)

Bearish sentiments drag pepper market

G.K. Nair

Kochi, Nov. 6:

Pepper market was in the bearish hands last week with all the contracts on the futures market falling sharply.

The difference in the prices between November and December created a good “*badla*” resulting in liquidation and switching over and that also led to bearish sentiments. Cued by the declining

trend in the futures market here the Vietnam prices also showed a downward trend. But, the materials offered cheaper by Vietnam were of FAQ 500 GL and 550 GL black pepper.

Since the European markets are facing some problems due to the Euro-crisis were looking for cheap Vietnam pepper and the sellers were said to be finding it beneficial to dispose of the stocks left with them.

Certain overseas operators, who were reportedly used to buy from Vietnam the cheap FAQ material, were also allegedly behind the bearish market in India. They were said to be interested either to buy at lower rates from here or to influence the Vietnam market to drop by bringing down the prices in India.

Anyway the material available now in India is mainly on the exchange platform and that is said to be of validity expired and farm grade pepper.

On the spot there were no sellers at the current rates as the materials are held in strong farmers' hands who could afford to hold for long. Similarly, primary market dealers were also not interested to sell.

Therefore, no selling pressure was seen in the spot market. Continuous decline in recent weeks has driven away the buyers also.

In fact, the fall in the futures market has made the Asta grade Malabar Garbled 1 pepper the most competitive in the world market at \$7,200-\$7,250 a tonne (c&f) for Europe and \$7,500-7,550 a tonne (c&f) for the US. Some origin specific selective buyers were, however, showing interest to cover from India.

Prices of Indonesia and Brazil were not influenced much by the downward trend in the Indian futures market as in the case of Vietnam, market sources told *Business Line*.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 7, 2011)

High taxes by States raise foodgrain procurement costs

M.R. Subramani, *Private traders' buying falls in Punjab, Haryana*

Mandi charges*					
State	Purchase tax Trade tax/VAT	Market Fee	Arthia Commission	Other Charges	Total
Bihar	1.0 + 3.0	-	2.0	-	6.0
Gujarat	-	1.0	2.0	-	3.0
Haryana	4.0	2.0	2.5	2.0**	10.5
M.P.	4.0	2.0	2.0	0.2#	8.2
Punjab	5.0	2.0	2.5	5.0##	14.5
Rajasthan	-	1.6	2.0	-	3.6
U.P.	4.0	2.5	2.0	-	8.5
Uttarkhand	4.0	2.5	-	-	6.5

*As percentage of MSP; **Rural Development cess; #Nirashrit shulk (A cess to help shelterless); ## Rural Development cess + 3% ID fee
Source: FCI

Chennai, Nov. 6:

Imposition of higher local and market (mandi) taxes by various States is threatening the sustainability of the Centre's scheme to procure foodgrains from farmers for buffer stocks.

According to the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, high taxes in Punjab and Haryana, which contribute 39.1 per cent and 29.4 per cent of wheat respectively to the buffer stocks, are increasing procurement costs of the Food Corporation of India.

(Procuring foodgrains for buffer stocks is known as MSP (minimum support price) operation since the procurement is made at the prices fixed by the Centre before sowing begins.)

This year, FCI's liability towards tax alone is Rs 1,761.72 crore in Punjab, while in Haryana it is Rs 798.27 crore for the MSP operation.

In its note on MSP for rabi crops being planted now, the CACP said that the possibility of other States following suit cannot be ruled out and this could make the whole system of procurement expensive and unsustainable.

This year, the Centre procured a record 28.05 million tonnes of wheat out of the total arrivals of 32.16 million tonnes registered at various markets. This means, just 12.78 per cent of wheat that came to markets has gone into the hands of private trade.

Pointing out that the high taxes are driving out private traders from markets, the CACP said that purchases by private trades accounted for just 1.2 per cent in Punjab. and 0.06 per cent in Haryana.

Such taxes have made Punjab wheat uncompetitive in the global market. Had the Centre allowed wheat exports in April, shipments would have been possible only from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat. It would have not been possible from Punjab and Haryana due to higher local taxes and from Madhya Pradesh due to additional State bonus.

The CACP feels that the Centre needs to immediately initiate discussions with the States, mainly Punjab and Haryana besides Andhra Pradesh for rice, so that “natural process of market evolution is not disturbed.”

In fact, the CACP had recommended a MSP of Rs 1,350 a quintal, including all acquisition costs such as taxes, commissions and market cess. It had said that it would result in a net MSP of Rs 1,285 being passed on to farmers.

The CACP comments is significant since the procurement next year is expected to be higher at around 30 million tonnes, giving the projection of a wheat crop of over 86 million tonnes.

The CACP has also expressed concern over lack of proper storage facilities with the FCI and other State procurement agencies. Though covered and plinth storage facility is being used widely, the commission is skeptical of the strength of these structures given the risk of damage posed by rodents, insects, rain and pilferage.

The CACP has also called for timely payment to farmers since they were complaining of a delay ranging from one week to three weeks. The delay was forcing farmers to avail loans from private lenders at interests as high as 50-60 per cent a year.

The commission, however, has suggested that payments could be directly deposited to farmers' bank account as is being done in Madhya Pradesh. At the same time, it has cautioned against the additional State bonus of Rs 100 a quintal in the central State. It resulted in procurement of 4.9 million tonnes of the 7.1 million tonnes produced there.

Innovation in procurement

- *Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee yardin Madhya Pradesh's Harda district has introduced mobile registration this year.*
- *Farmers have to registerat the start of the season and they would be given a number.*

- *When their turn comes, farmers are informed through SMS of the date they should bring their produce.*
 - *Twin purposes: One, farmers do not have to wait for a long time and incur extra expenditure on lodging and food.*
 - *Two, any law and order problem or exploitation of farmers by intermediaries is eliminated.*
-

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Oilseeds convention urges adoption of technology to raise soya bean yield

Our Correspondent

Indore, Nov. 6:

The annual All India Convention on Oilseeds, Oil Trade & Industry, which concluded here on Sunday, underlined the need for increasing soya bean yield in the country from its current level through technological upgradation and reduce dependence on imported oil. Addressing the convention, the State Agriculture Minister, Dr Ramkrishna Kusmaria, said the Madhya Pradesh Government has taken several initiatives on its part but much was to be done to match soya production at the world-level. Chairman of Soya bean Processors Association of India (SOPA) chairman, Mr Rameshchandra Agrawal, said the demand for edible oil, which is currently around 12.8 kg per person per year will jump to 13.5 kg in 2011-12. With an estimated availability of 76 lakh tonnes during 2011-12, we need to import nearly 90 lakh tonnes of edible oils to meet our domestic demand, but this would be possible only if we enhance the yield and productivity.

In this regard, the government has recently signed an MoU with Japan to increase yield and improve quality of soya bean seeds. The collaboration will have its headquarter in Indore and carry out research and development works on soya bean crop, Dr Kusmaria said, adding that besides growing soya bean and other oilseeds in abundance, the State is home to a large clusters of medicinal plants, which if honed properly by industry bodies, can bring much needed foreign exchange for the State.

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