

Training in beekeeping at TNAU

The Department of Agricultural Entomology of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University will organise a training programme in beekeeping on December 6 at the university premises.

Production techniques

According to a university release, hands-on training will be imparted in identification of bee colonies and their rearing, artificial group rearing of bees, queen bee rearing and production techniques, and identification of natural enemies of bees and their management.

Interested candidates have to reach the Department of Entomology before 9 a.m.

Fee

The fee of Rs. 150 has to be remitted. The training is from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

A certificate will be given at the end of training.

For details

Candidates can call 0422-6611214, or e-mail to entomology@tnau.ac.in for details.

Training in fast food preparation

The Tamil Nadu Agricultural University will organise training in fast food preparation on December 4 and 5 at the university premises.

According to a university release, the training will cover the following aspects: confectionery 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 and details, contact 0422-6611340 / 6611268.

Farmers keep their fingers crossed over samba prospects

Yet to apply fertilizers due to paucity of water, power cuts



Tiller's land:An agricultural labourer adopting SRI technique in Pudukottai district.

With northeast monsoon bringing in poor rainfall , farmers in the district are keeping their fingers crossed over the prospect of samba paddy. Even farmers who had already raised the crop are yet to decide on applying fertilizers, due to paucity of water and unscheduled power .

A cross section of farmers in Viralimalai and surrounding areas who had raised the seedlings, have given up the plan to transplant it. Although agriculture department has made arrangements for supplying fertilizers, the sale has been below normal, some fertilizer dealers said.

M.Sebastian, district secretary of the Communist Party of India-led Tamizhnadu Vivasayigal Sangam, said that about 2,000 acres had been affected in Visalur, Puliur, Kannankudi, and Kulavaipatti. Seedlings raised in Perambur and Suriyur near Viralimalai about a week ago were yet to be transplanted, as farmers do not want to take any risk due to poor rainfall. Mr.Sebastian said that prolonged failure of monsoon would damage the standing crop.

G.S.Dhanapathy, a farmer, says that fertilizer could not be applied due to inadequate water. “We need additional water for applying fertilizers.” Endorsing the view, L.Kailasanathan, president, Aranthangi Fertiliser Dealers Association, said that sale of fertilizer was below normal this season due to failure of monsoon.

Agriculture officials pin their hopes on the weather bulletin for December 4, when the northeast monsoon is likely to stabilise. The hot spell in the post-Deepavali season has resulted in the near-withering of the standing crop. “However, farmers with irrigational facility have been tackling the crisis to some extent,” say sources.

Farmers receive low prices for broiler

The farmgate price (price that farmers receive) for broiler now is nearly 50 per cent less than the retail price.

One of the leading broiler producers here told *The Hindu* that the farmgate price was Rs. 40 to Rs. 45 a kg while the retail price was Rs. 120 to Rs. 140 a kg.

The production cost was Rs. 60 a kg.

During the last two years, the broiler industry has expanded by nearly 40 per cent while consumption has grown by just 25 per cent. So there is excess production now. The demand is usually low during the festival season and picks up in December.

The market is expected to revive soon across the country.

Since the retail market in India is mainly for live birds, if the demand slows down, then the weight of the birds increases and the availability shoots up.

Consumer awareness

The farmgate prices were so low in 2006, the producer said. Consumer awareness should increase on the prices, he pointed out.

Delta farmers on the edge

Amidst the legal and political wrangling between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu over the Cauvery water issue, farmers of delta districts are virtually battling for their livelihood even as the prospect of losing about 10 lakh acres of standing samba crop looms large.

With water being released from the Mettur Dam only to meet the drinking water needs of towns and cities, the survival of the samba crop appears bleak due to non-availability of water.

Agitated over the situation, farmers associations have announced a series of agitations to highlight their plight.

All the farmers associations, both political and apolitical, have called for demonstrations before Central government offices at the taluk headquarters in the Cauvery delta districts on December 7.

The Cauvery Urimai Meetpu Kuzhu has announced a rally and public meeting in Thanjavur on December 8.

However, farmers, though disappointed with the outcome of the talks between the Tamil Nadu and Karnataka Chief Ministers, are hoping that the Supreme Court would come to their aid after assessing the water availability in both States.

"If Karnataka is made to release at least 10 thousand million cubic feet (tmcft) of water, standing crop could be saved. It can be used for two wettings" said S.Ranganathan, secretary, Cauvery Delta Farmers Association.

"Otherwise, the entire samba crop could be lost and it will be the first time ever since the construction of Mettur dam in 1924 that such a calamity occurs," Mr.Ranganathan observed.

Mr.Ranganathan called upon all the farmers associations, irrespective of their political affiliations, to unite for a common cause.

Political parties also should sink their differences and work together on the issue, he added.

While farmers appreciate the samba package announced by the government, they also seek uninterrupted power supply, diesel subsidy for running generators and steps to energise more agricultural connections.

Reduction in milk procurement price criticised

The State unit of the Rashtriya Kissan Sangha has criticised the government's decision to reduce the procurement price for milk in some districts.

Sangha State president P. Rama Reddy told presspersons here on Saturday that while in Kolar, Ramanagaram and Chickballapur districts, the milk procurement price had been reduced by Rs. 1.50 from Rs. 21, in Udupi and Shimoga districts, it had been reduced from Rs. 19 to Rs. 17.50.

Mr. Reddy said farmers had been in distress ever since the two rupee subsidy had been stopped in August.

The sand mafia and brick kiln unit owners had dug up the banks of tanks and taken out soil.

He demanded levelling of all such tanks to store rain water so that it could be utilised for farming.

Mr. Reddy suggested that a distress sharing formula should be evolved to solve the Cauvery water crisis.

'Farmers are in distress since August'

Farmer blends practices to double yield



Reaping benefits:Chitrashekar S. Parashivappagol has turned his land into a virtual goldmine by following improved agricultural practices in the cultivation of traditional crops such as red gram, Bengal gram, jowar and cash crops such as sugarcane, banana, and drumstick.— Photo: Arun Kulkarni

A farmer in Gulbarga district has found a way to double yield and cut down the cost of cultivation by judiciously blending natural and organic farming practices in his plot of 25 acres.

Progressive

Chitrashekar S. Parashivappagol is a progressive farmer who was declared by the State government as 'Krishi Pandit' in 2009–10. He has turned his land into a virtual goldmine by following improved agricultural practices in the cultivation of traditional crops such as red gram, Bengal gram, jowar and cash crops such as sugarcane, banana, and drumstick.

No chemical fertilizer

Mr. Parashivappagol never uses chemical fertilizer, preferring natural compost and vermicompost to enrich the soil.. Speaking to *The Hindu* on his field at Farhatabad village, 18 km from Gulbarga, the progressive farmer said that he had his own vermicompost unit which produced around 60 tonnes of compost every year, of which he uses 40 tonnes. He sells the remainder to his fellow farmers.

He has also adapted the drip irrigation system for cultivation of sugarcane and banana.

At present, he is cultivating a high-yield sugarcane variety in six acres of land.

Mr. Parashivappagol has also been cultivating red gram, and had used an innovative farming practice called 'deep sowing': seeds are sown after digging up the land for about an inch, as opposed to the normal practice where red gram is sown after the land is ploughed.

This new method of cultivation has paid rich dividends, he said. The expected yield from the crop is 12 quintals an acre, as against the normal yield of four quintals.

Mr. Parashivappagol had chosen a local variety of red gram, 'Jod Mukha' (twin faces), which he said would fetch a good price in the market. In the remaining land, the farmer had taken up cultivation of banana, drumsticks and Bengal gram.

Coconut oil prices remain unpredictable

The wide fluctuations in the price of coconut oil in the open market are helping neither the traditional growers nor the consumers, say stakeholders. Coconut growers are a disillusioned lot, being at the mercy of market forces in the absence of a scientific pricing system.

Jose Alapatt, former member of the Coconut Development Board and progressive farmer, who has been in the forefront of the demand for getting remunerative prices for the growers, laments that things have not looked up, though the demand for coconut has gone up and the price has reached dizzy heights.

N. Ananthan, former secretary of the Cochin Oil Merchants' Association, says the price fluctuations are not only wide but also wild. From a record Rs. 10,600 a quintal in May 2011, the price fell within a year to a low of Rs. 5,450 in May 2012. The fluctuations are much higher than in the case of other edible oils. From the analysis of data for the past five years, no particular trend can be identified and the movement of prices is unpredictable.

What is needed is stabilising the prices at a reasonable and optimum level, beneficial to both growers and consumers.

Coconut is grown in an area of around 19 lakh hectares in the country with an estimated annual production of 16 billion nuts. The crop sustains 12 million people in cultivation and processing, mainly in South India. Coconut, though included in the category of oil seeds in 1991, does not appear to earn the same weight in official circles as other oil seeds.

The prices of coconut and copra are fixed on the basis of the price of coconut oil in the wholesale market. The accepted norm is that the price of one quintal of coconut oil is the price of 1,000 nuts.

When coconut products pass through the market channel, they gain price and value upgrade. But the producer is not getting the dividends of the value upgrade to the desired extent. The level at which the price should be stabilised and the price band are points of debate.

Mr. Ananthan says there is a need to evolve a healthy pricing mechanism. For this, a holistic approach is needed. It will require innovation and flexible mindsets based on the changing times. To this, the market makers will have to ensure in-house availability of infrastructure.

Any increase in production without a corresponding increase in demand will affect the prices. Making the price stable at a reasonable level calls for a multipronged effort for marketing the products on a scale far bigger than what has been attempted so far. The authorities lack vision and offer no realistic solutions. Neither the State government nor the Coconut Development Board is ready to debate the basic issues involved in a meaningful manner.

Seminar for botany teachers

A one-day seminar on 'The emerging prospects of biotechnology' will be organised for the higher secondary botany teachers of the district at the Regional Science Centre here on Tuesday.

Eve Syrkin Wurtele, professor and noted biotechnology expert from the Iowa State University, United States, will attend the seminar, which will be held from 10.30 a.m. to 4 p.m., said a press release here on Sunday. A teacher each from all higher secondary schools may participate. For details, contact ph: 0495-2770571.

FDI in multi-brand retail to benefit farmers: Gogoi

Coming out in favour of Centre's decision to allow Foreign Direct Investment in multi-brand retail, Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi on Sunday said entry of big multinational companies would benefit local farmers.

"The big companies will buy directly from local farmers and this will benefit the farm sector. FDI in the sector would also do away with the problem of middlemen," Mr. Gogoi said here while addressing a farmers' meet.

He said the government will make available Rs. 500 crore for boosting irrigation in the State, as per a proposal made by Assam Agriculture Minister Nilamoni Sen Deka.

R, Gogoi said rice production in the State has crossed 50 lakh tonne from around 29 lakh tonne a few years ago due to various schemes and programmes launched for the sector.

“Assam’s economy cannot progress without development of agriculture. Our effort has been to implement programmes to bring about a green revolution in the State,” he said. - PTI

Sugarcane growers to picket Suvarna Soudha

A large number of sugarcane growers from all over the State will descend on Belgaum and picket the Suvarna Soudha on Wednesday when the winter session of the legislature is scheduled to begin.

The protest is to demand the State advisory price (SAP) of Rs. 3,000 for a tonne of sugarcane.

Announcing this here on Sunday, Karnataka Rajya Kabbu Belegarara Sangha president Kurbur Shanthakumar said there were nearly 25 lakh sugarcane growers in the State, including 4 lakh in Belgaum district. A large number of farmers would picket the Suvarna Soudha come what may, he said. The growers would disregard the restrictions imposed by the police on organising demonstrations or staging protests within 1-km radius of the Suvarna Soudha, he said.

The government should solve the problems of farmers instead of adopting such coercive measures, he said.

Mr. Shanthakumar said growers had been agitating for more than two months demanding that the government fix Rs. 3,000 as SAP for a tonne of sugarcane.

Agriculture Minister Umesh V. Katti, who heads a committee on SAP, was misleading growers by giving false assurances to protect the interests of sugar mill owners, he alleged.

Three meetings

Even after holding three meetings, the government was yet to consider farmers' demand, he said. Mr. Katti reportedly made statement that a meeting was convened on November 29, but it was not held, Mr. Shanthakumar said.

Mr. Shanthakumar quoted the 'Revenue sharing mechanism' and 'Cane price analysis per tonne of sugarcane' for north Karnataka region for 2012-13 worked out by the Agriculture Ministry, which project a revenue of Rs. 3,777 for a tonne of sugarcane at 11 per cent recovery.

Also, with sugarcane production declining to around 225 lakh tonnes this year due to rainfall deficit and drought conditions from 330 lakh tonnes last year, the price of sugar was poised to increase in the next few months. Yet, the government was unwilling to direct sugar mills to pay Rs. 3,000 for a tonne of sugarcane, he said.

Mr. Shanthakumar criticised Mr. Katti and Belgaum Deputy Commissioner for not taking note of the 'fast unto death' undertaken by farmers in support of their demand on the Deputy Commissioner's office premises here since Saturday.

He urged the State government to suggest changes to the recommendations of the C. Rangarajan Committee on Regulation of Sugar Sector in India, which has called for free trade in the sector but has imposed restrictions on sugarcane area reservation — keeping a minimum distance of 25 km between two sugar mills. He also urged the government to demand 80 per cent share in sugar value to growers against 68.76 per cent suggested by the committee.

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Knowing your onions in New York



“My onions are big, aren’t they?” Chris Pawelski asked our group of visitors at his farm 60 miles from New York City. “Any idea why?”

Because of consumer demand, we wondered? Perhaps bigger bulbs caught the customer’s eye better? “Nope,” said Pawelski, a fourth-generation farmer whose family arrived from Poland in 1903 and has worked this land for over a century. “The size is set by the retail chain stores. They dictate almost everything.”

That “almost everything” includes prices. While the Walmarts, Shop Rites and other chain stores sell his kind of onions for \$1.49 to \$1.89 a pound, Pawelski himself gets no more than 17 cents. And that’s an improvement. Between 1983 and 2010, the average price he got stayed around 12 cents a pound.

“All our input costs rose,” he points out. “Fertiliser, pesticide, just about everything went up. Except the price we got.” Which was about \$6 a 50-pound bag. Retail prices though, soared in the same period. Distances are not the cause. The same chains sell cheap imports from Peru and China, driving down prices. And have branches not far from this farm in Goshen, Orange County, New York state.

“Anyone does any cooking?” he asked. A few hesitant hands went up. Pawelski held up the onion. “They want this size because they know you won’t use more than half of one of these in cooking a meal. And you’ll throw away the other half. The more you waste, the more you’ll buy.” The stores know this. So wastage is a strategy, not a by-product.

“For yellow onions,” says Pawelski, “we either grade on a 2 inch or 2 1/2 inch standard. There are exceptions, but those are the norms. The re-packers dictate to us the sizes, which are in turn dictated to them by the chains. S*** rolls downhill, as it were Three decades ago our size standard was 1 1/2 inch.” Small farmers don’t get to bargain with Walmart. A huge pile of rotting onions — those that didn’t meet chain store norms — sits besides his fields.

Qualifying as one

Pawelski’s qualifies as a “small farm.” Which, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) tells us, is one with a “gross cash farm income (GCFI) of less than \$250,000” a year. Which makes 91 per cent of U.S. farms “small.” About 60 per cent have a GCFI of less than \$10,000. Pawelski, his father and brother jointly plant about a hundred acres. Of these, they own 60 and rent 40.

It’s not just the chain stores, however, that work against this exuberant and proud small farmer. Floods, hail and Hurricane Irene, have all claimed a toll. In 2009, he suffered crop losses of \$1,15,000 but received just \$6,000 from crop insurance. Far less than the \$10,000 he had shelled out as premium. The losses drove the farm, which rests on some of the most fertile “muck soil” in the country, into debt.

Issue of labour

The whole agrarian structure and policy — transformed in these past decades — works against small family farms. The Pawelskis lived well for years off the fine farm they built. Chris himself went to college and has a Master’s in Communication Studies. His great-grandfather arrived in the United States with five dollars in his pocket. The great grandson is over \$320,000 in debt. The entire edifice of U.S. agriculture is geared towards serving the corporate sector, not small family farms.

His wife being an assistant librarian in the school system helps. “She works to support my farming habit.” His brother, too, lives off non-farm income. His parents collect social security. Last year, he spent \$1,60,000 and earned \$2,00,000 on his 50 acres in the farm. “On that \$40,000, I pay taxes.” The leaves him little to re-invest. The farm is pocked with old barns, aging tractors and trucks flogged off by the army.

Normally, he has four seasonal farm workers. “Three have left this year and I’m down to one guy.” The lack of labour hits harder as small farms take on more land on rent hoping to achieve economies of scale.

It’s an all-immigrant labour force now. “In the 1950s, it was mostly African-Americans,” says Pawelski. “In the 1970s it was Puerto Ricans. Now it’s mostly Guatemalans.” Some of them could be illegal. Checking that out is not within the farmer’s purview, though. “We follow all the laws we have to.”

Pawelski is a battler who has taken his cause to Capitol Hill. “I go maybe three times a year,” he says. And he’s met maybe “20-30 Congressmen and 10-12 Senators,” building up some selling skills in the process. Perhaps the Master’s in Communication helped. But he’s hopelessly outgunned. Large corporations spend hundreds of millions of dollars on lobbying to ensure agriculture remains their captive. A lot of that gets spent when the “Farm Bill” comes up every five years.

AP investigation

An Associated Press (AP) investigation in 2001 showed where the (public) money goes. Even if structured differently since then, the grip of the corporate world and the very rich remains firm. As AP’s scrutiny of over 22 million USDA cheques showed: “63 per cent of the money went to the top 10 per cent of recipients...”

Among those struggling farmsteads receiving huge sums of money were “at least 20 Fortune 500 companies.” Also billionaires like David Rockefeller (with a farm in the same Hudson Valley where Pawelski lives). Others getting farm subsidies that year included media mogul Ted Turner and basketball star Scottie Pippen. And prison farms got a cut, too.

“All I want to do is make a living,” Pawelski testified before Congress during one of his forays there. “I’m not trying to be an Elmer Fudd-type millionaire (the grumpy character in the *Looney Tunes/Bugs Bunny* comics).” He’s in no danger of being Elmer Fudd, for sure. And his free spirit is much closer to that of Bugs. The question is whether the next generation on this century-old farm can make a living off it. You don’t want to know the answer.

Ryots electrocuted

Two farmers – Darla Konda (44) and Anangi Guravaiah (31) – were electrocuted in the fields at Kowtavari Agraharam village in the district on Sunday. A power cable fell on the metal fence and at around 10 a.m. when the ryots went to water the crop, they were electrocuted. Villagers along with the kin of the victims staged a dharna before the Transco office at Jaggaiahpet. The AP Transco officials announced Rs.2.5 lakh compensation each to the bereaved family members.

Direct Karnataka to release 30 tmcft to save samba crop, Tamil Nadu asks court

Tamil Nadu on Saturday filed a brief note in the Supreme Court, pleading for a direction to Karnataka to release 30 tmcft of water to save the samba crop. It said it had lost the ‘kuruvai’ crop due to the “recalcitrant” attitude of the Karnataka government in not releasing the required quantities of water.

Tamil Nadu filed the brief note with supporting documents as per a direction by the court on Friday.

Karnataka also filed supporting documents.

Tamil Nadu said:

“Notwithstanding the deficit rainfall, Karnataka has not suffered any distress. Karnataka has sown 12.75 lakh acres. It has already drawn more than 102 tmcft of water (up to 30th November) as against about 102 tmcft, which is the average drawal in the 4 major reservoirs up to the end of November.

“Thus, it has not suffered any reduction either in the irrigated area, or in the quantity of water. Karnataka cannot claim and seek to retain any water for the rabi crop when Tamil Nadu could not have even one crop. Moreover, right from July/August, their claim is only for the standing crops viz. kharif.

“Karnataka’s contention that the ‘season’ ends only on December 31/t January 31 and it is only thereafter that the distress should be determined clearly means that Tamil Nadu will lose the standing crops and in the mean time Karnataka can conveniently deplete the water to the detriment of the lower riparian States. This is only a device to deprive the rights of Tamil Nadu.”

Tamil Nadu said the rainy season and the agricultural season were so well known. It was rather strange for the CMC to suggest that there was any doubt or ambiguity that required clarification, and which the CMC was purportedly unable to decide. It was apparently an excuse for the CMC in not taking a decision regarding release of water to Tamil Nadu in respect of the shortfall during the southwest monsoon as per the orders of the Supreme Court.

“The magnitude of the human problem is unimaginable and so devastating that some farmers have already started committing suicide. If the approach adopted by the CMC is not interfered with, Tamil Nadu will have no water to protect its standing crops. This would mean not only suffering and huge financial loss to the farmers of Tamil Nadu, but a national loss, since the food security requirements of the country in respect of rice production will be jeopardised.”

It said: “Karnataka’s claim to retain waters in the reservoirs and refusal to let down to Tamil Nadu, when they have already overdrawn in deficit year means effectively according to Karnataka, the distress is to be borne only by Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, while Karnataka will use all available waters for raising the crop as if it is a normal year for the same area or more using the same extent of water or more.

“This is merely a reassertion of Harmon theory or assertion of its ownership of the waters, which has been adversely commented by the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in 1993.

“The water requirements claimed by Karnataka for the standing crop as 78 TMC ft., is highly inflated. The kharif crop period is already over and hence there cannot be any water requirement for that crop. Unless it has gone for the second Rabi crop, there cannot be any crop water demand. “While Tamil Nadu is suffering to salvage even a single “Samba crop, the claim

made by Karnataka either for the second Rabi crop or for the crops in new areas is wholly unjustified.

“Further, the claim of 23 tmcft made by Karnataka for drinking water supply, including the requirement of Bangalore City from December to May, is highly exaggerated and not realistic as the actual requirement is only 4.4 tmcft. Hence Tamil Nadu prayed for a direction to Karnataka to release 30 tmcft of water to save the standing samba crop.”

'Need for eco-friendly farming practices'

There is a need for environment-friendly sustainable farming practices and there is a need for concerned effort along universities, research institutions and scientists, said N.K. Krishna Kumar, Director General, Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR).

Speaking at an international conference on 'Plant Health Management for Food Security', organised by The Plant Protection Association of India (PPAI), Mr. Kumar said that private organisations and industries working in the agriculture sector should involve the local universities if positive results have to be gained. The conference addressed the concerns of climate change, loss of crop biodiversity and policy issues related to plant health management through unconventional methods. Emerging trends in biotechnology and GM crops were also discussed. The conference provided a common platform to exchange ideas.

INDIAN CITIES

INTERNATIONAL CITIES

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Monday, Dec 3

Max Min

30.4° | 22.4°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 94

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:16

Sunset: 05:40

Barometer: 1012

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Tuesday, Dec 4

Max Min

31° | 23°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday Dec 5	Thursday Dec 6	Friday Dec 7	Saturday Dec 8	Sunday Dec 9
30° 23° Cloudy	27° 26° Overcast	27° 25° Overcast	27° 23° Overcast	26° 23° Overcast

Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Humidity: 55

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:58

Sunset: 05:24

Barometer: 1020



THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

02.12.2012 P.M

03.12.2012 A.M

02nd dec 2012 P.M

Chhattisgarh to cover more areas under irrigation project

The Chhattisgarh Government is considering covering more villages under the Asian Development Bank-funded irrigation development project in the second phase.

The State Government is implementing the Chhattisgarh Irrigation Development Project (CIDP) in 600 villages to improve the productivity of irrigated agriculture. The project is expected to complete by March 2013.

Chhattisgarh Principal Secretary, Water Resources, N. K. Aswal said, "Looking into the benefits of this project, the State Government is considering to take up a second phase of ADB project. We are currently analysing that.

"Now we are trying to replicate the benefits of the project in other areas of the state as well."

The \$66.6 million CIDP project that started in June 2006 is partly funded by the State and the multi-lateral lending agency ADB. Of the total project cost,

ADB has funded \$46.1 million, the State Government \$19.9 million and the beneficiaries have \$0.6 million.

"The objective of the project is to improve the productivity of irrigated agriculture through improved irrigation service delivery, enhanced agricultural practices, and strengthened water resources management so as to enhance rural livelihoods and reduce rural poverty," CIDP Project Director B. D. Vaishnav said.

The project has also taken up rehabilitation and upgradation of about 200-250 minor and medium irrigation systems in the state.

The CIDP project also has an Information, Education and Communication (IEC) programme for farmers which include distributing news letters, brochures and year planners to the farmers.

Chhattisgarh has about 56 lakh hectare cultivable land of which 52 lakh is under cultivation.

However, land with irrigation facility is about 18 lakh hectare.

The state is mostly dependent on monsoon rains to irrigate its crop.

Pepper declines on hopes prices will crash after new crop arrivals

Pepper market continued to witness the tug of war between bull and bear operators last week with the latter taking control of the market. Consequently, there has been a significant fall in the prices of Malabar in the domestic and international markets.

Activities were limited in the market as the buyers were buying only hand to mouth hoping that the prices would drop further upon arrivals of new crop expected by mid-Dec. While buyers were waiting for the new arrivals, sellers moved away from the current declining market. Spot pepper was not available in Kerala and Karnataka at present, trade sources said.

Non-arrival of farm grade pepper resulted in no trading activities in the ready market.

green pepper

However, green pepper is being harvested in Pathanamthitta, Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram districts of Kerala so as to cater to the demand from the industry which manufactures dehydrated green pepper and green pepper in brine. The immature green pepper is reportedly being sold at Rs 115-120 a kg.

Similarly, in Pattiveeran Patti area in Tamil Nadu also green pepper is being plucked and sold. The growers there said if the north east monsoon rains arrived without fail they could have a second crop of green pepper. Growers in these areas believe that if the pepper is harvested before maturity as green pepper, it would be good for the health of vines and that in turn would make the next crop much better.

As there hasn't been any arrival from the primary markets for about a fortnight now, some of the investors who were holding farm grade pepper bought back their Dec sales and liquidated physical pepper in the spot market. They sold the material of 500 - 525 GL bulk density at Rs 5 below the Dec delivery price. Domestic buyers from Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Delhi were covering, market sources told *Business Line*.

All the active contracts decreased last week. Dec, Feb and Mar contracts decreased by Rs 525, Rs 695 and Rs 695 respectively to Rs 37,830, Rs 34,395 and Rs 33,790 a quintal.

Total turn over last week fell by 7,157 tonnes to close at 23,819 tonnes. Total open interest declined by 70 tonnes to 7,865 tonnes.

spot slips

Spot prices last week dropped by Rs 500 a quintal to close at Rs 37,100 (ungarbled) and Rs 38,600 (MG 1).

Meanwhile, the bear operators were actively trying to pull the market down. Bull operators who had cornered around 6,000 tonnes of pepper and the validity of which is expected to expire on Jan 5, are said to be finding it difficult to hold on and hence has allegedly resorted to all kinds of tricks to get rid of the stocks as it has become a heavy financial burden on them.

Caught in between the activities of both the operators are the genuine hedgers who are said to be in the process of getting crushed, they alleged.

Hedging is a scientific tool for price risk management in futures trading'

Hedging' is a scientific tool for price risk management and helps in reassuring both sellers and buyers of the profit margins but not the speculative profits, said G. Chandrashekar of *The Hindu Business Line*.

He was delivering a talk on 'Commodities as critical driver of India's economic growth' at the 'Hedgers & Prospective Hedgers Awareness and Education Seminar on Agribusiness and Commodities Price Risk Management.'

Global perspective

Chandrashekhar portrayed the fast-changing economic scenario, explicitly indicating a bright future for food market and how national economies were gradually integrating with global market, necessitating the stakeholders to develop a global perspective about the dynamics of international market.

He stressed that hedging as a scientific instrument helped in price risk management and insured against adverse price movement and locked-in profit margin.

The seminar was organised by *The Hindu Business Line* jointly with Forward Markets Commission (FMC), the commodity futures market regulator under the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, and the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), an agri-commodities futures exchange.

Awareness drive

Interestingly, although commodity futures market existed for over a hundred years now, it is for the first time that an effort is being made to create awareness and educate the stakeholders on how commodities as a critical driver of economic growth through hedging could be enhanced and sustained vis-a-vis emerging opportunities in the global commodity market.

While indicating further boost in foreign trade from the present 10-12 per cent following the opening of the gates for two-way FDI, which also indicated growing competitiveness of Indian corporates going for capital investments outside the country.

Chandrashekhar drew attention to the challenges of managing a burgeoning Indian population growing at the rate of 20 million every year (equivalent to the population of Australia) and achieving a sustainable economic growth rate, he said the country is gifted with rich natural resources – 900 mm rainfall, 8,000 km of coastal line, 270 sunshine days, hundreds of rivers, plains, extraordinary biodiversity and varying agro-climatic zones.

“We can grow anything here, but a gap exists in our efforts to make India an agri-powerhouse,” Chandrashekhar said.

Food demand

He said the demand for 'food' was growing rapidly and food sector would never suffer recession as witnessed in other sectors.

As the current emerging scenario wherein internal and external trade reforms had created free-trade-environment resulting in integration of national economies with global market, the stakeholders need to adopt hedging, which was the only proven scientific way in risk mitigation and to protect profits vis-à-vis volatile prices of commodities.

Speaking on 'Benefits of commodity future trading and exchange perspective & Price risk Management', Davey Cherimulla, Assistant Manager, NCDEX, explained how the NCDEX was helping stakeholders in commodity future trading as against spot trading.

He also highlighted services and benefits of trading through NCDEX, which was engaged in online price dissemination through five national and 21 regional centres, 42,000 terminals at more than 700 centres linked to a network of 800 accredited warehouses across the country.

He said commodity future market was an ideal platform to manage against spot price fluctuations and helped in price discovery of the underlying commodity.

The commodity market, despite ban was growing at faster pace and was larger than the stock market in the global context. The NCDEX was beneficial to exporters and importers and facilitated hedging and forward price fixation, and scheduling hassle-free prices for commodities.

Role of banks

Later, N V L Ratan, Deputy General Manager (Agriculture), State Bank of Mysore, Bangalore, highlighted what he described as dichotomy of sorts wherein 50 per cent of the population in agriculture contributing less than 15 per cent to GDP.

He also highlighted the salient features of banks' role in agriculture, besides various loan schemes and subsidies available under it.

Earlier, BCCI President Satish Tendolkar inaugurated the seminar and thanked its organisers for conducting such an informative and educative programme for the benefit of traders and other stakeholders in the region.

Notification on FDI needs nod of only one House: Kamal Nath

The FEMA notification dealing with FDI in retail has to be passed by only one House of Parliament, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kamal Nath has claimed. This belies the Opposition stand that the decision cannot be implemented if it falls in Rajya Sabha, where UPA lacks majority.

“If one House has passed it, it passes. It does not need both Houses to pass it. That’s what is prescribed in the rules,” he told Karan Thapar on *Devil’s Advocate*.

CPI (M) leader Sitaram Yechury had said that according to rules, FEMA notification on allowing 51 per cent FDI in multi-brand retail has to be laid and passed in both Houses of Parliament. Failure to do so will be challenged in court, he had said last week.

Next Session?

Nath did not agree with this contention of the Opposition. “Anything can go to court. If it goes we will deal with it,” he said. The minister insisted that the rules are separate for Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

Nath, however, accepted that FEMA notification — which can be passed in the budget session as well, since the Government has 30 working days of Parliament to get the nod — may drag into the next session which is three months away.

He said he has got no assurance from SP and BSP on the FDI issue which will be debated and voted upon in this week in both Houses but expressed confidence they will support UPA.

“I have good reason to believe that they (SP and BSP) will vote with the Government because they are a responsible party and that they will understand the politics of it... They are not going to vote for the politics of the BJP,” Nath said.

Wheat exports may help check rising global prices



After rice, it is now the turn of Indian wheat to possibly stabilise rising global prices.

India's recent move to continue with additional wheat exports could help keep rising global prices under check, analysts said. In July, the Government had allowed exports of 2 million tonnes (mt) and last week, the Cabinet approved additional exports of up to 2.5 mt.

Global supply tight

India, which resumed wheat exports in September 2011, has emerged as one of the major wheat exporter this year, after supplies from multiple origins including Black Sea, Australia and the European Union dwindled on drought slashing the output in these regions.

The International Grains Council expects the global output to decline to 654 mt in 2012-13, down from 695 mt the previous year.

Prices soar

The tight supplies have led to a rise in global wheat prices by up to 40 per cent in recent months. Wheat futures at the Chicago Board of Trade, which ruled at \$6/bushel in May, touched a high of \$9.4 in July for September delivery before declining marginally.

The near-month December contract was hovering around \$8.44 .

“India’s additional wheat exports will cool off the global prices,” said Tejinder Narang, a commodity analyst. But for additional supplies from India, global wheat prices could have touched \$425-450 a tonne, as drought had hit production in Russia and Ukraine, Narang said.

The Government is currently the biggest stockholder of wheat, with stockpiles exceeding 40.5 mt, as on November 1, more than twice the prescribed buffer and strategic reserve of 14 mt.

Tender Rush

The Cabinet move to allow more wheat exports from Government stocks has led to public sector entities (PSEs), such as PEC, STC and MMTC, coming out with a series of tenders. STC floated three tenders for 2.2 lakh tonnes on Friday. Similarly, PEC came out with three tenders for 1.9 lakh tonnes, while MMTC floated a tender for 1.1 lakh tonnes on Friday.

Interestingly, the bidding deadline for all these seven export tenders floated on Friday for shipment of 5.2 lakh tonnes ends on December 21. Such a trend could have an impact on pricing. Between December 18 and 21, the bidding deadline will end for these nine tenders for export of 7.45 lakh tonnes.

“Price discovery would be elusive,” said Narang, suggesting that tenders had to be staggered to optimise better realisation. The highest bid fetched by any of the PSE so far stood at \$328 a tonne by PEC last week.

PSEs have so far tendered around 2.2 million tonnes and actual shipments are around 0.8 million tonnes. India has exported over 3 million tonnes of wheat since September last year, when the Government allowed exports of foodgrains, including rice. Bulk of the Indian wheat exports so far have been destined to the Far Eastern nations such as Korea, Taiwan and neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Yemen, among others.

Russian tea exporters cautious on snowfall

Tea exporters to Russia remained cautious at Sale No: 48 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions as news of transport blockade due to unprecedented snowfall came.

“Russia is currently passing through massive snowfall unheard of during the last 50 years and in many places including Moscow snow stands up to 12 cm high. Waterways are frozen.

Transportation has been suspended. Even flights have been diverted. Some areas suffer disruption in power supply which will hit storage facility. Some importers are reporting of adverse business condition. Collectively, we prefer to wait and watch rather than invest on stocks now”, an exporter told *Business Line*.

Some selective purchases were made for the CIS at Rs 86-93 a kg.

Pakistan bought for Rs 83-101 and some European ports for Rs 87-98. Internal purchases were strong.

“Orthodox leaf market was dearer by Rs 2-4 a kg. Mixed trend was seen for high-priced CTC leaf. Better mediums gained Rs 2-3 while plainers lost Re 1-2.

Primary orthodox dusts eased Rs 2-5. High-priced CTC dusts were dearer by Rs 3-5, mediums Re 1-2 and plainers Rs 2-3”, an auctioneer said.

In all, 93 per cent of the 26-week low offer of 10.94 lakh kg was sold.

Hittakkal Estate, Vigneshwar Estate and Shanthy Supreme topped CTC market at Rs 146 a kg each.

Deepika Supreme got Rs 143, Blue Monte Speciality Rs 142 and Homedale Estate Rs 141.

In all, 149 marks got Rs 100 and more.

Among orthodox teas from corporate sector, Highfield Estate got Rs 231, Chamraj Rs 200, Corsley Rs 186, Kairbetta and Havukal Rs 170 each.

In all, 37 marks got Rs 100 and more.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 81-84 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 105-130 for brighter liquoring sorts.

They ranged Rs 84-87 for plain dusts and Rs 105-145 for brighter liquoring dusts.

Tea prices gain on demand at Kochi sale

A good demand perked up the prices of almost all varieties of tea at the Kochi Tea auction. In Cochin Sale No 48, the quantity on offer in the CTC dust category was 11,09,000 kg.

The market was fully firm to dearer by Rs 1-2 and sometimes more, especially popular marks and other good liquoring grainier varieties.

Of the quantity of 20,000 kg in the orthodox dust category, all varieties were fully firm to dearer by Rs 1-2 and sometimes more. Bulk of the offerings was absorbed by exporters. Upcountry buying was less, according to auctioneers Forbes, Ewart and Figgis (P) Ltd.

In the best CTC dusts, PD varieties quoted prices at Rs 95/107, RD grades fetched Rs 102/112, SRD stood at Rs 103/111 and SFD at Rs 104/122.

In the leaf category of Cochin Sale No.48, the quantity on offer in the orthodox grades was 202,500 kg. The market for good liquoring Nilgiri brokens, whole leaf was fully firm to dearer by lower margins of Rs 5-10 and sometimes more.

Others were irregular and sometimes lower. Corresponding Fannings tended to ease. Medium bolder brokens, whole leaf and Fannings witnessed strong feature and continued to sell at dearer levels. Smaller brokens barely remained steady and sometimes appreciated in value.

Of the quantity of 75,000 kg on offer in the CTC grades, the market opened on a steady note. As the sale progressed, it was higher by Rs 2-5 and sometimes more.

In the dust category, Injipara (Prm) SRD fetched the best prices of Rs 128. In the leaf varieties, P's Woodlands Hyson Green Tea quoted the best prices of Rs 330.

Crop production may fall by 2.8% in FY13: CMIE

Production of major crops is likely to fall by 2.8 per cent in 2012-13 due to lower acreage, economic think tank CMIE has said.

“Production of major crops is projected to fall by 2.8 per cent in 2012-13. We have revised our production projections downwards from our earlier estimate of 2.3 per cent decline,” Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy said in monthly report.

As the kharif sowing came to an end by October, acreage turned out to be lower than expectations. Production of rice is projected to fall by 3.4 per cent in FY13 as its acreage declined by 4.1 per cent to 375 lakh hectares as on November 2.

“As sowing failed to pick pace, we now expect rice production to be limited to 100.8 million tonne in 2012-13,” it said.

Wheat output is expected to fall by 0.1 per cent to 93.8 million tonne, it said adding that rabi sowing of the foodgrain was yet to be initiated by November 2.

Coarse cereals production is projected to fall for the second consecutive fiscal and is expected to decline by 9.8 per cent to 37.6 million tonne.

Of this, bajra may record steepest dip of 28.4 per cent as irregular monsoon in Rajasthan, the major producing state of the coarse cereal, witnessed irregular rainfall during June-August affecting the cultivation.

Kharif sowing of bajra was undertaken on 60.8 lakh hectares as on October 19, lower by 24.8 per cent.

“We expect bajra production to fall to 7.2 million tonne in 2012-13 from 10.1 million tonne last year,” it said.

Production of pulses is expected to fall by 1.5 per cent to 16.9 million tonne in FY13.

The production of green gram, horse gram and miscellaneous pulses is likely to impact the overall output, CMIE pointed out.

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TODAY FARM NEWS

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Govt confident of numbers on FDI vote in Parliament: Nath

The debate in the Lok Sabha under a rule that entails voting is expected to take place on December 4-5 and later in the Rajya Sabha

Press Trust of India / New Delhi December 02, 2012, 19:30 IST

Government today said it was confident of its "numbers" to win the crucial vote on FDI in multi-brand retail in both Houses of Parliament that will follow a debate on the contentious issue this week.

As UPA's outside supporters Samajwadi Party(SP) and BSP kept their cards close to their chest, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kamal Nath said he has got no assurance from the two parties but expressed confidence they will support the ruling alliance.

Nath also claimed that the FEMA notification dealing with FDI in retail has to be passed by only one House of Parliament, contesting the Opposition stand that the decision cannot be implemented if it falls in Rajya Sabha, where UPA lacks majority.

The debate in the Lok Sabha under a rule that entails voting is expected to take place on December 4-5 and later in the Rajya Sabha.

"We are in talks with them (political parties)... We are confident that we will be able to carry it through in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha... I am confident of my numbers," he told Karan Thapar on Devil's Advocate.

He denied that the government is trying to manipulate the members from abstaining or coming to vote on FDI.

"I have good reason to believe that they (SP and BSP) will vote with the government because they are a responsible party and that they will understand the politics of it... They are not going to vote for the politics of the BJP," Nath said.

"At this moment I have no assurance from any political party. All I know is I believe that I will be able to prevail upon political parties to make them understand what is behind this vote," Nath said.

The minister stated that he is in talks with everybody.

On the issue of Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) notification, Nath said, "If one House has passed it, it passes. It does not need both Houses to pass it. That's what is prescribed in the rules."

CPI-M leader Sitaram Yechury had said that as per rules, FEMA notification on allowing 51 per cent FDI in multi-brand retail has to be laid and passed in both Houses of Parliament. Failure to do so will be challenged in court, he had said last week.

FDI in multi-brand retail to benefit farmers: Gogoi

Coming out in favour of Centre's decision to allow Foreign Direct Investment in multi-brand retail, Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi today said entry of big multinational companies would benefit local farmers.

"The big companies will buy directly from local farmers and this will benefit the farm sector. FDI in the sector would also do away with the problem of middlemen," Gogoi said here while addressing a farmers' meet.

He said the government will make available Rs 500 crore for boosting irrigation in the state's farm sector, as per a proposal made by Assam Agriculture Minister Nilamoni Sen Deka.

Gogoi said rice production in the state has crossed 50 lakh tonne from around 29 lakh tonne a few years ago due to various schemes and programmes launched for the sector.

"Assam's economy cannot progress without development of agriculture. Our effort has been to

implement programmes to bring about a Green Revolution in the state," he said.

Mustard acreage surpasses 2011 as winter sets in north India

Mustard seed is the biggest oilseed grown in Indian during the rabi season

Sanjeeb Mukherjee / New Delhi December 02, 2012, 14:58 IST

He added that from this month the state government has put in place arrangements for purchase of paddy from farmers at minimum support price.

As the winter gradually sets in over most parts of north and central India, sowing of rabi oilseeds, particularly mustard has surpassed last year's acreage.

According to the latest government data, mustard has been sown in around 5.71 million hectares of land till Thursday, marginally more than 5.64 million hectares sown during the corresponding period last year.

Mustard seed is the biggest oilseed grown in Indian during the rabi season and its production is critical to determine the extent of edible oils import that India needs every year. It has the maximum oil content among all oilseeds planted in the country.

In 2011-12, India produced 6.7 million tonnes of mustard seed, official statement showed. The government has fixed a target of producing 8.19 million tonnes of oilseeds in 2012-13 season.

Mustard acreage in

Rajasthan, the biggest producer, was 2.58 million hectares till Thursday, up 2.8 per cent from last year, the data showed.

Among other crops, the data showed that wheat, the biggest foodgrain grown during the rabi season, has been planted in around 15.78 million hectares till November 29, 2.9 per cent less than corresponding period of last year. A week before, acreage under wheat was 4.6 per cent less than the same period of 2011.

"Wheat and mustard sowing has gathered momentum as winters have progressed in north and

central India, it will further pick up in the coming weeks,” a senior official said.

The official data also showed that sowing of wheat has been sluggish in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. Of the, three, Madhya Pradesh has emerged as premier wheat growing state in the last few years. The government has fixed a target of producing 86 million tonnes of wheat in 2012-13. In 2011-12, India produced a record 93.90 million tonnes of wheat.

Sowing of pulses continues to lag behind despite late withdrawal of southwest monsoon. The data showed that pulses have been planted in around 10.24 million hectares till Thursday, 6.45 per cent less than the same period in 2011-2012.

Planting of pulses has been particularly bad in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan where the crop has been planted in around 1.34 and 1.13 million hectares till Thursday respectively, almost 26.5 per cent and 18.3 per cent less than the same period last year.

The rabi sowing season accounts for almost 60 per cent of total pulses grown. Farm production grew at an 11-quarter low of 1.2 per cent in the second quarter of this financial year, the latest GDP data showed.

Madurai farmers get fertilizer bonanza

MADURAI: Union fertilisers and chemicals minister, M K Alagiri has said that the pilot project on distributing subsidies on fertilisers, to farmers directly will be carried out in Madurai district on a pilot basis. He said that he had already suggested this proposal to his ministry officials.

Addressing media persons here on Sunday, he said that 51 districts in the country have been selected for the pilot study of this direct distribution. He had asked his ministry officials to implement the pilot project in Madurai as well, though it was not clear which were the districts in [Tamil Nadu](#) that were chosen for the pilot project. "The project will be tested on a pilot basis and all the problems arising in implementation will be communicated to the ministry through text message. Once the issues are resolved, the scheme will be implemented to benefit all the farmers in the country," Alagiri said.

Flaying the state government for its inefficiency in handling dengue in Madurai district, he said that he had spoken on the issue many times earlier, but to no avail. When the DMK decided to stage a demonstration in Melur to seek the government's attention on dengue control, state health minister sensed it earlier and paid a visit participating in awareness drives. But he did not take any solid measures in controlling the disease, he charged.

Alagiri also criticised that the state government's refusal in cooperating with the Centre in sanctioning the petroleum chemicals and petro-chemicals investment region in Cuddalore, which could have created nearly seven lakh job opportunities in the region.

System of Root Intensification method now inspiring farmers abroad: Nalanda DM

BIHARSHARIF: [Nalanda DM](#) Sanjay Kumar Agarwal on the occasion of harvesting at village Kasimpur, on Saturday said, "Farmers of Nalanda are getting more return on their investments as they have engineered a 35-40% growth in paddy production by using [System of Root Intensification](#) (SRI) and their success stories have prompted scientists and farmers of the other countries, who are turning towards the district to learn the technique the local farmers have adopted."

The DM said the system of root intensification was introduced in the district in 2009 and a handful of farmers switched over to the new technique. After their success stories more and more farmers started sowing crops on the new system. A farmer Sumant Kumar from village Darveshpura in the district had beaten the world record last season by producing 224 quintals paddy per hectare against the previous record of 190 quintals of yield held by a Chinese. This year too, the farmers have a bumper crop and the highest known yield so far is 137 quintal per hectare, highest in the state, and the figure may improve as harvesting in various parts of the district will take place in the next few days.

District agriculture officer (DAO) Sudama Mahto, who was also present on the occasion, said a handful of farmers experimented the new technique of system of root intensification in 2009 and only 10 hectare of 1.27 lakh hectare of paddy field was covered under the SRI. And when Maya Devi, a woman from Andy panchayat under Asthawan block in the district got an yield of 94 quintal per hectare yield, which was almost the double of what she got using traditional method, opened the eyes of farmers. Now several hundred farmers have adopted the new technique with 36,000 hectares of the total paddy field covered under SRI this year and within three years the paddy yield was enhanced to 600 MT from 400 MT.

The DM said farmers need not worry about the market of their produce as the district administration will start procurement of paddy from December 6, through Primary Agriculture

Credit Society (PACS) and an advance of Rs 10 lakh will be given to each one of them to make on the spot payment to the farmers. He said the administration has also made arrangements for safe storage of grains as it has taken several godowns on rent.

Besides paddy, wheat production is also on the rise as farmers of the district due to application of system of root intensification and the district has not only become self-reliant but has surplus stock for the PDS shops of neighbouring districts as well.