

Published: July 23, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: July 23, 2012 05:04 IST

## Dip in yield and price leaves a bitter aftertaste

G.Sathyamoorthi

*Fear over use of carbide to ripen mangoes causes worry and fall in demand*



few takers: Mangoes on sale at Mambazhasalai in Srirangam on Tuesday. PHOTO: M.SRINATH

Even as the mango season is set for a close, the growers' woes seem to have no end. We are facing a strange situation which defies ordinary laws of economics, they assert.

Tiruchi district has a total mango area of about 3,000 acres of which 750 acres is irrigated and the rest rain-fed. February to July is the normal mango season in the district.

"While the yield has been far less than that of last year, the price is either equal to that of last year or at times even less than that of last year," laments K.S.Sivaramamurugan, who has about 40 acre horticultural crops in Manikandam area.

M.Singarayar, another mango grower of Karungulam, endorsing his views, however adds that the price of quality varieties like Himampasand and Banganapalli has not declined while that of the local varieties like Kallamani, Rumania, Sendura, and Neelam, have recorded a distinct decrease compared to last year.

According to Mr.Sivaramamurugan, as against the yield of 2,400 to 2,600 kg an acre last year, it has been only 1,400 to 1,600 kg this year. "The yield is almost half that of last year."

Despite such a shortfall in production, price-wise, Banganappalli, which was quoted round Rs.25-30 a kg last year, is now selling around Rs.20-22 a kg. Varieties such as Neelam and Bangalooru, sold for Rs.8 per kg last year, are fetching only Rs.6 now. Himampasand is the only variety which has not been hit much. This variety weighs even a kg per fruit and at times fetches as much as Rs.100 a fruit.” This is an export variety.”

P.Balasundaram, who raises mango in four acres, says the yield of local varieties this year was only 6-6.5 tonnes in total against eight tonnes last year.

However, Mr.Singarayar says prices of quality varieties have not declined even this year. For instance, he could sell Banganapalli for Rs.25 a kg and Himampasand for Rs.55 a kg. “We can preserve Himampasand even for a month while Banganappalli will last about 10 days. Others would perish even within three days.”

The small vendors who buy from the Mamabazhasalai area every day say that the prices were quite good last year despite the good yield. “Unfortunately, despite poor yield this year, the prices have not gone up. There is a substantial difference in the price of varieties like Kallamani, Neelam, Sendura and Rumania compared to last year,” they say.

Official sources, who do not want to be identified, admit that the production this year has been below normal. Even in Andanallur, Lalgudi, and Manikandam regions, the production has been only around 70 per cent of last year.As mango is a cyclical crop, the yield this year is less compared to that of last year is an accepted fact among mango growers. “The climatic conditions this year have been the major reason,” they add. At the same time, they are confident of a far better season in terms of yield next year.A number of reasons are attributed to the current decline in prices.While one section says it is because of the huge arrivals from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, another says that it could be due to low procurement by the pulp units. However, official sources attribute it to the fear psychosis created by the method that many of the vendors choose to ripen the fruits as it has become common knowledge that carbide is used for the process. “People are reluctant to buy these fruits fearing that they might affect the children.”

However, K.P.Thangaraj, president of Gandhi Market Merchants’ Association, differs with the growers asserting that the prices have been more or less steady throughout the season this year.“While it was quite good at the beginning of the season, there was some slump midway through, that too with regard to local varieties. Now once again it has corrected and at present

quality varieties are selling at quite a good rate. While Himampasand is sold around Rs.100-120 a kg, Banganapalli goes for Rs.30-40, both more than that of last year.”

Published: July 23, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: July 23, 2012 05:05 IST

### **100 milch animals distributed**

As many as 100 milch animals were distributed to people below poverty line in Mariyanallur and Madurai villages of Cheyyar block in Tiruvannamalai district on Saturday. Information Technology Minister Mukkur N. Subramanian handed over the animals to each 50 beneficiaries at different functions held in these two villages. He said that cumulative worth of the cattle heads as Rs.30.4 lakh.

### **Appointment orders**

Earlier he gave away appointment orders to two women as village assistants at an event held in Revenue Divisional Office, Cheyyar. Minister also gave orders for social security pensions to 17 persons at the event. Cheyyar Revenue Divisional Officer K. Priya presided over all these functions. Joint Director (Animal Husbandry) N. Rajendran was among the participants.

July 23, 2012

### **Traditional farming**



Fishermen look for a good catch from a water-filled Pokkali paddy field at Kuzhuppilly near Kochi. The pokkali fields are being emptied of water for the Virippu season.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, July 23, 2012

### Munnar to sport strawberry farms

T. NANDAKUMAR

*750 acres to be cultivated under horticulture mission's pilot project*



Kerala State Horticultural Mission has drawn up a project to cultivate strawberry in Munnar.

The verdant hills of Munnar could soon be sporting a new colour as about 3,500 farmers prepare to take up commercial cultivation of strawberry as a high-value crop.

The Kerala State Horticultural Mission (KSHM) has drawn up a pilot project to cultivate strawberry in 750 acres. Minister for Agriculture K.P. Mohanan told *The Hindu* that the project would be taken up under the hi-tech farming scheme announced in the budget. He said farmers were expected to earn better returns by diversifying into the high-value crop.

“The initiative is being launched in Idukki because the cold climate offers the most conducive environment for the crop. We have plans to extend the project to other parts of the State soon by providing mist irrigation facility.” A few planters in Nelliampathy ha already experimented with strawberry and found it successful.

Director, KSHM, K. Prathapan said the Rs.6-crore project was designed to provide value addition and market linkage for farmers.

Horticorp would procure the strawberry from farmers and Kudumbasree units would take up processing of fresh fruit. KSHM had identified a team of women to be sent to the Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore, for training in fruit processing.

The Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council Keralam (VFPCCK) would organise the farmers into societies.

### **Cold storage revived**

The Minister said the cold storage set up by HortiCorp at Munnar 11 years ago had been revived for the project under a proposal to establish a State-wide cold chain. The unprocessed fruits will be transported to Kochi in refrigerated trucks and sold through shopping malls. Mr. Mohanan said the strawberry would be sold under the 'Safe to Eat' brand.

Planting is expected to commence by the first week of September. Planting materials will be procured from accredited nurseries in north India. KSHM has also prepared another scheme to promote homestead cultivation of low chill fruits such as apple, pear, plum, and peach, which are ideal for farming in mild winter regions.

The project will be taken up in Vattavada, Kanthalloor, and Munnar, under plans to convert Idukki into a fruit belt. As many as 10 saplings will be provided to each household.

HYDERABAD, July 23, 2012

### **'No shortage of fertilizer'**

B. CHANDRASHEKHAR

The farming community in the State, whose hopes of a good kharif season have been rekindled with the revival of monsoon, is hit by short supply of fertilizer, thanks mainly to the sharp rise in the prices of all complex fertilizer except urea, and problems in their distribution.

Long queues of farmers are being seen at fertilizer shops in different parts of the State for the last few days and the death of a farmer standing in a queue in Nizamabad district has come as a sad incident.

### **41.55 lakh tonnes**

"As such, there is no scarcity of fertilizer except the artificial demand being created by farmers due to their misconceptions. About 15 lakh tonnes of fertilizer out of the 41.55-lakh tonnes allotted for kharif have been availed of already," a top official of the Agriculture Department told *The Hindu*. Cultivation of crops has been taken up in over 31 lakh hectares so far, which is

about 40 per cent of the 80.29 lakh hectares extent covered in the kharif season and the quantity of fertilizer availed of has been in proportion to the requirement, notwithstanding the allegations by farmers' organisations, officials contended.

### **Prices doubled**

"Farmers are going for urea instead of complex fertilizer and DAP as the prices of all fertilizer except urea have more than doubled since April last year," officials said.

Urea is not a substitute for DAP or other complex fertilizer, but most of the small and marginal farmers are using it just because its price is less, according to agriculture scientists.

Prices of all complex fertilizer and DAP were decontrolled under the Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) scheme being implemented from April 2010 and only urea is kept out.

"Farmers are lining up at the outlets as soon as the stocks arrive as they can get more than four bags of urea with the amount they spend on one bag of DAP or most of other complex fertilizer," authorities explained.

The authorities are also citing problems in distribution of fertilizer from stock points to sale outlets for the short-supply, though sufficient stocks were available at stock points. Even urea stocks were sufficient for the time being with about 2-lakh tonnes available in stock points and dealers, officials stated.

### ***Government attributes long queues outside fertilizer outlets to distribution problems***

NIZAMABAD, July 23, 2012

#### **Farming gains momentum**

Agriculture activity in the district gained momentum following the incessant moderate rains in the last two three days.

On an average 2.50 cm rainfall recorded enabling farmers to take up paddy transplantation under pump sets.

With the water level in all major reservoirs depleting to dead storage levels and irrigation tanks remaining dry, paddy nurseries were not raised and transplantation was not taken up to normal extent even after 50 days of kharif season.

### **Paddy transplantations**

Nurseries were grown wherever groundwater was available and therefore paddy transplantation was taken up only in 8,345 hectares registering just 0.8 per cent of total paddy growing area in the season.

Crops were sowed in just 61 per cent of normal crop sowing area in the kharif. With the recent rains the paddy transplantation is believed to improve by 50 per cent. The Kalyani reservoir in Yellareddi mandal having a capacity of below one tmcft is full and water is let out by opening three gates. On the other hand, farmers are ready with thoroughly ploughed fields, seed, fertilizer and all necessary inputs and waiting for rains. Frequent interruptions in power supply hampered the activity to a large extent. *Due to inadequate water, paddy nurseries were not raised even after 50 days of kharif season*

RAJAHMUNDRY, July 23, 2012

### **Highlighting the plight of farmers**

B.V.S. BHASKAR



Perfect setting: A still from 'Padamati Gali, Telugu play. — PHOTO: S. RAMBABU

The three-and-half hour stage play in Telugu –'Padamati Gali' which staged 107 and 108th shows in Rajahmundry on Saturday and Sunday evoked pathos and pleasure and gave a social message against encroachment of lands in the name of Special Economic Zones by some capitalists and industrialists.

It also touched the hearts of the audience with sentimental values of farmers and their land holdings, love and affection of sons of soil, artificial boom created by realtors, exploitation and so on.

Patibandla Ananda Rao, writer and director handled the play like a movie and gave all technical inputs, aesthetic values to the story. About 70 artistes played different roles. The State government had sponsored this play at several places and private sponsors also came in support of the interesting theme of the play. All the characters did justice to their roles.

PERAMBALUR, July 23, 2012

### Farmers told to go in for long staple cotton



informative:Collector Darez Ahmed speaking to farmers in Perambalur district.

Collector Darez Ahmed has urged farmers of the district to go in for long staple cotton which would fetch them excellent profits.

At a conference on the cultivation of long staple cotton and maize at Veppanthattai Cotton Research Centre on Saturday, he pointed out that the country needed 15 lakh bales of long staple cotton whereas our production is only five lakh bales.

“As there is quite a high demand, raising this would fetch you considerable profits,” he told the farmers.

According to an official release, he said that farmers in Perambalur are able to harvest 10-12 quintals of long staple cotton per acre.

Similarly, he said, maize formed an important component of agriculture in the district.



Most of the farmers in the region raise either cotton or maize.

He urged them to utilise the technical advice provided by the experts from Tamil Nadu Agriculture University at the conference and go in for high-yielding new varieties.

PERAMBALUR, July 23, 2012

### **'Declare agricultural prices commission a statutory body'**

Tamilaga Vivasiaygal Sangham has urged the Central government to declare Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices a 'statutory commission with full powers' so that it could announce remunerative prices for farm produce. This was one of the major resolutions passed by the executive committee of Perambalur-Ariyalur district unit of the sangham here on Saturday.

According to R.Rajachidambaram, State secretary of the association, the meeting appealed to the Central government to revert to the previous method of granting fertiliser subsidy.

"We do not want nutrients-based subsidy but the subsidy should be granted according to the production cost of fertilizers as done till recently," it pleaded.

A major grievance of the farmers has been that Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has failed to help the farm front.

The Central government should ensure that this programme is of use to the farming operations, the meeting said.

PUDUKOTTAI, July 23, 2012

### **Food grains target of 133 lakh metric tonnes fixed**

The State government has fixed a food grains production target of 133 lakh metric tonnes in the current year and is implementing various projects for achieving the target, said S. Damodaran, Agriculture Minister. The Chief Minister has accorded priority to achieving self-sufficiency in food grains by doubling its production, which in turn would improve the economic condition of farmers, Mr. Damodaran said while addressing the farmers' festival organised by agriculture department at Vadavalam panchayat on Friday.

Agriculture department has introduced latest technology in the farming operations using machinery. Primary agricultural cooperative societies have been providing farm equipment for hire at reasonable charges. Agriculture department has been conducting farmers' festival in over 16,000 villages in the state. Referring to the recent announcement of the government on the opening of a government agricultural college in the district, Mr. Damodaran said that the college would come up shortly. A mini exhibition was organised in connection with the festival.

Mr. Damodaran declared open the exhibition in which agriculture, horticulture, agriculture marketing, cooperation, krishi vigyan Kendra, seed certification, agricultural engineering, and animal husbandry department had put up stalls. The Minister gave away tractor, quality seeds and hand sprayers, all worth Rs.32 lakh to 298 beneficiaries.

TIRUNELVELI, July 23, 2012

### Agricultural fields give way to housing plots

P. SUDHAKAR

<b>WATER BODIES IN TIRUNELVELI</b>			
<b>Name of the Reservoir</b>	<b>Full Capacity (in feet)</b>	<b>Storage Level (on July 19,2012)</b>	<b>Storage Level Corresponding Period Last Year</b>
Papanasam	143	41	53
Servalar	156	55	66
Manimuthar	118	51	55
Gadana	85	41	55
Ramanadhi	84	53	53
Karuppanadhi	72	30	47
Gundar	36.10	29	36
Adavinainar	142	56	70
Vadakku			
Pachchaiyaar	67	2	2
Kodumudiyaar	57	3	11
Nambiyaar	25	13	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,765 mcft</b>	<b>1,484 mcft (10.78%)</b>	<b>2,192 mcft (15.92 %)</b>



• SIGN OF THE TIMES: A paddy field is being converted into housing plots at Kokkirakulam near the Tirunelveli Collectorate.— Photo: A. SHAIKMOHIDEEN

*Declining rainfall leads to fields becoming housing colonies*

When the farmers' grievance day meeting was going on in the District Development Council Hall with P. Umamaheshwari, District Revenue Officer, in chair, R. Ganesan, a farmer from Kurichi in Palayamkottai, noted in distressing voice: "There may be no need for convening this meeting in near future as the cultivable lands that once yielded quintals of paddy are being rapidly converted into housing plots."

This statement clearly reflects the agony of a helpless farmer, who cannot bear the pain of seeing the fertile lands becoming barren due to gradually declining rainfall and then being sliced into housing plots, like cutting the goose that laid golden eggs.

After monsoons failed successively for the past several years, the district that used to go in for paddy cultivation on over 19,000 hectares during the first crop season every year, witnessed the 'kar' paddy cultivation on just 792 hectares in 2011. This extent has shrunk further this year to 628 hectares — that too cultivation has been taken up only in the areas close to the Papanasam and Manimuthar reservoirs as farmers in other areas are not prepared to bear yet another crop failure due to non-availability of water till the end of the season.

Agriculturists who have planted paddy on 628 hectares are also not sure of getting even a decent yield as storage level in the dams is not sufficient to nourish the crop till September.

Moreover, 'advance kar' paddy cultivation, which would be taken up on 6,100 hectares every year, mostly in Tuticorin district, has also come down from last year's 2,155 hectares to just 1,799 hectares this year.

Though the Department of Agriculture had originally planned to ensure paddy cultivation on 90,000 hectares during 'kar' and 'pisanam' seasons this year, what actually has been realised so far is just 2,947 hectares and no one knows the fate of 'pisanam 2012' (second crop season) with the monsoons playing truant.

### **In banana belt too**

Cultivation in the banana belt between Cheranmahadevi and Thirukkurunkudi has been stopped as none of the irrigation tanks on the foothills of Western Ghats, all getting water from Vadakku Pachchaiyaar and Kodumudiyaar, are now parched.

Anticipating huge loss in the water-intensive paddy and banana, farmers have started going in for fodder and other less water-intensive food grains, which can be saved with the little quantity of water available in their wells.

Since most of the ranches have been left uncultivated for the past three or four years, the realtors have started luring the owners by quoting attractive price for their lands and those who are mesmerized by the sugar-coated words have sold their properties around which barbed wire fences have been erected.

"Within next year, all these farms will be converted into housing plots. If the goose that once laid golden eggs is cut, then for whom we're going to conduct the farmers' grievance day meetings? Mr. Ganesan asks.

The communally sensitive district's 'track record' says that crime rate had increased alarmingly whenever monsoon let the farmers down, as an undesirable side-effect. And this time too, the police are preparing themselves to face any eventuality.

## **65 farmers to get fodder harvest aid in Tirupur**

The Animal Husbandry Department on Friday commenced the distribution of grass cutters to give 65 farmers in the district during the current fiscal at subsidised costs under the Centre-sponsored Accelerated Fodder Development Programme (AFDP).

Regional Joint Director of Animal Husbandry K.M.Sivaprakasam told *The Hindu* that the grass cutters, each costing Rs 13,440, were being given at 50 per cent subsidised price so as to help farmers carry out harvesting in a scientific manner.

### **Manpower**

#### **shortage**

“The state-of-the-art cutter will be of immense help to the farming community which presently faces manpower shortage during the harvesting period,” he said.

Minister for Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment M.S.M. Anandan inaugurated the allocation of the grass cutters to the beneficiary farmers in the presence of Collector M. Mathivanan.

Mr. Anandan also declared open the training conducted for the village-level panels constituted to select the beneficiaries for the free goat and sheep under a government sponsored scheme, on the day.

### **Panchayat presidents**

The committees comprising respective village panchayat presidents and vice-presidents, a senior ward member from adi dravidar community and a panchayat level federation member would be selecting a total of 812 farmers to whom the goats/sheep would be distributed during August and September.

The distribution of identity cards to elected rural civic body representatives commenced on the same day.

### **Identity card**

District Panchayat chairman M. Shanmugam received the first identity card from Mr. Anandan.

A total of 17 district panchayat members (including the chairman), 170 panchayat union ward members, 265 village panchayat presidents and 2,295 village panchayat ward members would get the identity cards in the district.

Published: July 22, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: July 22, 2012 05:07 IST

### **Farmers' club initiatives fruitful**

Staff Reporter

Katcheri Thalavaipuram Farmers Club has stepped up an initiative to promote green revolution after creating white revolution in a village.

One of the under developed villages in Ottapidaram block of Tuticorin district with majority inhabitants of Dalit community, prospects of Kutcheri Thalavaipuram farmers seem to be bright, thanks to efforts of Muniyasamy, secretary of the farmers' club, which executes its task under the aegis of Indian Overseas Bank, Eppodumvendran branch, and support of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

As farming activity did not fetch enough income, the villagers opted for an alternative livelihood. The milk society, which had been functioning, was defunct. Later the village witnessed entry of bankers, agricultural experts and officials from Aavin. With coordinated efforts of the club, the defunct milk society was revived. Five Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) were formed and credit was extended by the IOB. Extension officials of Agricultural Department visited the village several times and created awareness of adopting improved technologies to increase farm productivity.

On entering the second year, the farmers' club took yet another step to create green initiatives through dairy development. The progressive farmers were exposed to new ideas of creating farm yard manure using urine and dung from cows at an orientation programme on Friday. M.R. Natarajan, District Development Manager, NABARD, said that a detailed demonstration on low-cost green initiatives was also made.

Published: July 22, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: July 22, 2012 05:04 IST

### **Palakkad to lose 30,000 hectares of paddy fields**

*Move to legalise reclamation carried out before 2005*

Palakkad, the rice bowl of Kerala, will lose 30,000 hectares of paddy fields immediately if the conversion of paddy land till 2005 is legalised.

As per the latest figures of the State Statistics Department, paddy was cultivated in 87,511 hectares in Palakkad during 2010-11. To the 17,048 hectares of fallow paddy fields, 12,837 hectares was added during 2009-10 and 2010-11.

“If the current trend of decline in paddy cultivation continues and the government succeeds in legalising paddy land converted till 2005, the entire paddy fields in Palakkad will vanish in two decades,” said T.M. Vamana Rao, an agriculture statistics expert and former official of the statistics department.

Paddy cultivation in Palakkad has been shown an alarming decline of over 47 per cent over the years, he said.

In 1970-71, paddy was cultivated in 1,82,621 hectares, with production of 3,18,925 tonnes. In 1980-81, 1,83,634 hectares produced 3,81,561 tonnes.

In 1990-91, acreage under paddy recorded an alarming decline with 1,45,687 hectares producing 3,24,907 tonnes. By 2000-01, the acreage had shrunk by 1,18,701 hectares and production, 2,62,173 tonnes.

Mr. Rao said there had been a decline of 47.3 per cent in the total area of paddy cultivation and 26 per cent in production in the district. Production did not decline in proportion to the decline in area of cultivation due to increased productivity, he said.

A leading farmer and former Chittur MLA K. Krishnankutty said, “The new law to legalise paddy field conversion till 2005 will result in losing of the entire paddy fields in the State in a decade or two”.

“If the law is implemented, Palakkad will lose nearly half of its existing 87,000 hectares of paddy in no time,” he said.

Mr. Krishnankutty said this would affect food security of the State, considering the alarming decline in paddy cultivation in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, which supply rice to Kerala.

Muthalamthode Mani, general secretary of the Deesheeya Karshaka Samajam, said, “It is not the farmers who are converting paddy land but the real estate lobby which buys paddy fields from farmers at a cheap rate and converts them as house plots to sell at fancy prices. The

farmers are forced to sell the fields due to the loss in paddy cultivation. So the government should take steps to make paddy cultivation profitable so that no farmer will sell his paddy field”.

- 
- *Over 47% fall in cultivation over the years*
  - *'Fields in district will vanish in two decades'*
- 

ADILABAD, July 22, 2012

### Cotton brings doom to tribal farmers

S. HARPAL SINGH



Unviable: A Gond farmer tills a piece of rocky land on Talamadugu hills in Adilabad district.—

PHOTO: S. HARPAL SINGH

Desperation seems to have caught up with the normally imperturbable tribal farmers of Adilabad which is evident from the abnormally large number of suicides by them since 2011. As many as 27 of them, all cotton farmers including a woman, from the aboriginal Gond, Naikpod, Mannepu and the Lambada plains tribe, figure in the list of 101 cotton farmers who have committed suicide since January 2011.

Giving up life, for whatever reason, was hitherto an unknown phenomenon in the primitive tribal communities which, paradoxically, have deprivation for a way of life. The gamut of Bt cotton, however, has dislocated their way of dealing with failures and like the trend in other communities, tribals are increasingly preferring the 'easy way' out.



In 2010, only one Gond cotton farmer had committed suicide owing to debts. There was a drastic increase in the extent of land under cotton cultivation and the incidence of suicides in the agency in the following year.

Statistics reveal that all the tribal farmers who have committed suicide, actually tilled their own lands. Only Butti Posham, a Mannepu from Nennel, had cultivated cotton in 20 acres of leased land while Pendur Suresh of Neredigonda had tilled five acres of illegally occupied forest land. Though the Gonds and other tribal people have been cultivating forest and hilly land since time immemorial, the change in crop seems to have brought doom to their door step. They cultivate cotton in every available piece of land without bothering about the compatibility of the crop with the soil. "Not all soils will aid better yields of cotton. Hilly areas are not at all suited to this crop," opines B. Muralidhar, Assistant Agriculture Officer, Adilabad, as he seeks to explain the cause for lower yields. "Cotton requires enormous investment which is recoverable only if the yield is good. The productivity of the lands in question cannot be increased up to desired level even if maximum quantity of artificial fertilisers are used," he explains. The scale of bank finance for cotton being on the higher side, many tribal farmers have drawn larger amounts as crop loans. Like their counterparts in other areas, these farmers are also ending up in the debt trap.

KAKINADA, July 22, 2012

### **Small farmers cultivating flowers as allied activity**

K.N. MURALI SANKAR

*They are able to make a mark in the local market*



A farmer engaged in cultivating flowers abutting canal bund at Madhavapatnam near Kakinada.— Photo: K.N. Murali Sankar

Making better use of the available cultivable space, small and marginal farmers around the city are cultivating flowers. Though the produce is not large, these farmers are able to make a mark in the local market by taking a 20 per cent share. This allied activity is providing them financial support too.

Over 100 farmers from Samalkot, Pithapuram, Peddapuram and nearby villages are into flower cultivation. Besides jasmine, they are also into the cultivation of jaji (Spanish jasmine) and kanakambaram (Crossandra/firecracker flower). The Sarpavaram flower market that registers a daily sale of 1,000 kg to 5,000 kg a day basing on the season, is mainly depending on the famous flower gardens of Kadiyam.

“The flower from the local farmer is fresh as compared to that of Kadiyam nursery. For jasmine and jaji, many of our customers prefer the local flower,” says D. Nooka Raju, a flower vendor from Sarpavaram. Summer is the lone season for jasmine, whereas July to January is the peak period for jaji and kanakambaram. “The price for kanakambaram is Rs. 3 for 100 flowers during the slack season. When it comes to the peak, it may go up to Rs. 8. Since the auspicious Sravanamasam begins, we are expecting the price to go up,” says Penke Satti Babu, a kanakambaram farmer from Madhavapatnam, who cultivates the flower in 10 cents of land, abutting irrigation canal.

“The expenditure is nominal for flower cultivation. But, we have to be attentive every day. In addition to agriculture works, we work in the garden during morning and evening time and the income is depending on the price,” explains Mr. Satti Babu.

Interestingly, none of these small and marginal farmers are taking any help from the Horticulture Department and most of them do not know of its existence.

“Initially, we bought seed from the outside market. Now we are able to make seed on our own. We can cultivate flowers round the year, as there are numerous varieties and there is no dearth of demand in the market,” says Seeram Nagaraju of Samalkot.

KARUR, July 22, 2012

### **Fodder cultivation pays rich dividends**

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, and Aavin have joined hands to empower rural women by providing dairy farming techniques and tips on cultivation of quality fodder under a special programme that provide technology and economic support besides doing the handholding to help poor women proposer in society.

Around 240 rural poor, especially women beneficiaries, were chosen under the project 'Economic empowerment of rural poor women through technology-based dairy farming and community fodder development', and were imparted capacity building training on scientific management of dairy animals and hygienic milk production.

The beneficiaries were from Karur, Thanthoni and Krishnarayapuram block of the district, and 165 of them were divided into 25 joint liability groups after the project took off in right earnest much later its launch in July last.

While NABARD pitched in with its 'Farmers' Technology Transfer Fund, Veterinary University Training and Research Centre of TANUVAS at Panduthakaranpudur on the Karur-Namakkal Highway provided the technical and scientific support even as Aavin extended its marketing arm to the beneficiaries.

Indian Overseas Bank, Indian Bank, and Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies affiliated to Tiruchi District Central Cooperative Bank provided the credit link to the groups for acquisition of milch animals with subsidy grant from the Central government.

The efforts have resulted in 320 high yielding crossbreds in the hands of the beneficiaries and they are on an average giving at least 10 litre milk over and above their normal yield.

NABARD sources say that following the success of the project, there was enough scope for replicating the programme involving goats and sheep in Karur district.

COIMBATORE, July 22, 2012

## Sardar Patel Award for TANUVAS

*For outstanding performance*



Recognition for excellence: Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University R. Prabakaran (left) receiving the Sardar Patel Outstanding ICAR Institution Award from Union Minister of Agriculture Sharad Pawar in New Delhi recently. -Photo: Special Arrangement

The Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS) has been conferred the 'Sardar Patel Outstanding ICAR Institution' award 2011 in recognition of its performance in education, research and extension in agricultural sciences, including veterinary, animal, and fisheries sciences.

The award was given away at the 84<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day of the ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research) held in New Delhi.

TANUVAS is the first veterinary university in the country to bag this award, according to a press release.

Vice-Chancellor of TANUVAS R. Prabakaran received the award from Union Minister for Agriculture Sharad Pawar in the presence of Union Ministers of State for Agriculture Harish Rawat and Charan Das Mahant, and Director General of ICAR S. Ayyappan.

The award is to appreciate the university for developing eight improved sheep, pig and avian varieties, 27 vaccines and diagnostic kits for prevalent, emerging and re-emerging

economically-important diseases affecting livestock, poultry and fisheries, 21 post-production technologies and more than 100 livestock, poultry and fish farm management technologies.

TANUVAS also has the unique distinction of developing e-courses for two undergraduate degree programmes, the first of its kind in the country.

The award carries a purse of Rs. 10 lakh and a citation.

---



Mon, 23 Jul 2012

weather

### Chennai - INDIA

#### Today's Weather



Sunny

Monday, Jul 23

Max Min

36.1° | 25.6°

Rain: 0.1 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 62%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 5:45

Sunset: 18:39

Barometer: 993

#### Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Tuesday, Jul 24

Max Min

34° | 28°

#### Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday Jul 25	Thursday Jul 26	Friday Jul 27	Saturday Jul 28	Sunday Jul 29
34°   28°	34°   28°	33°   28°	35°   27°	35°   27°
Rainy	Rainy	Cloudy	Rainy	Rainy

---

## Palamau may face ill-effects of scanty rainfall soon

SUNDAY, 22 JULY 2012 23:44

PNS | DALTONGANJ

Ill effects of scanty rains in Palamau can only resurface after 80 to 90 days when poor will not be able to afford food for themselves. July, August & September are the months when marginal farmers and daily field labourers struggle and survive but after these months survival/food eating becomes very difficult.

Sources said the gnawing hunger strikes the poor most in first week of October or so as then their entire storage of raw food gets exhausted.

Makka is the staple food here in Palamu. It keeps belly tight for six months. The poor eat it most, sell it most. And this season the cultivation of makka is very low. Daltonganj town's Sadik Manzil chowk is the favourite market of makka. But this time so far the farmers are not selling it in any bulk fashion.

Three weeks of July have passed and agro fields have not even ankle deep water yet. Mohan Singh a farmer said the rain scene of this July resembled the year 2009 when days and weeks of July too were rainless.

Asked if it rains lately but sufficiently even now can the loss of agriculture be contained this farmer sounded most optimistic and added recovery could be made if farmers are really mentally prepared. A sense of pessimism has started gripping the farmers here in Palamu these days he agreed.

Long spell of dry will see withering of green grass which in turn pose problem to livestock. At this moment greenery is in plenty. The farmers and the labourers working in the fields are the most affected ones.

## Rising fertilizer prices anger farmers

SUNDAY, 22 JULY 2012 22:23

MONIKA MALIK | CHANDIGARH

**Rising fertilizer prices has resulted in growth of resentment not only among the farming communities but also among political parties across the country.**

Taking up the cause of the farmers, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday declare a war against the rising fertilizer prices by holding a series of dharnas and rallies starting from August 8.

Opposing the Congress-led UPA government's "anti-farmer" policies, the party's Kisan Morcha has decided to launch a nationwide protest on August 8 and a rally on August 21 at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi.

The decision was taken on the concluding day of the two-day national executive meet of the Morcha in the presence of the party's senior national leader, and former Union Agriculture Minister Rajnath Singh.

"The wrong policies of the UPA government have led to increase in prices of fertilizers from `100 to `300 per bag after 2010. It is shameful that instead of using fertilizers manufactured in India, country is seeking fertilizers from foreign shores which is the main reason behind rising prices of fertilizers," said Rajnath Singh, former party national president.

"In all these years, the prices have increased and the subsidy, which the Centre is giving earlier, remained the same resulting in a loss of the agriculturists. Government is not increasing the subsidy as per the increasing prices – which should be the policy," he added.

Calling upon the party workers to gear up for bearing lathi blows, and even court arrests for raising their voices against the Centre's "wrong policies" that is taking the agriculture and the farming community to doom, Rajnath Singh maintained that only BJP can bail out the farmers from this crisis.

He said that the party's Kisan Morcha will stage a dharna on August 21 at Jantar Mantar where the party workers from all states will represent. Morcha's national chief Dhankar has, in fact, set the targets for the state's heads to draw together at least the specific number of people for the dharna as the party is aiming the assembly of 25,000.

Besides, the district-level protest dharnas would also be held on August 8 throughout the country. "After conducting the protest from 10 am to 4 pm in all districts across the country, we will hand over the memorandum to the district heads and also to the Prime Minister."

Former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister also demanded that the Centre should announce compensation for per acre of land keeping in view the deficit monsoon. He also asked that drought be declared national calamity, and immediate initiatives should be made to bring agriculture out of the crisis it is reeling under.

"When the BJP-led Government will come to power at the Centre, the recommendations of Swaminathan committee would be implemented completely and the crop income insurance scheme, which has been stopped for the last seven years, will be revived," he announced while addressing the farmers.

---

## THE HINDU Business Line

### Maharashtra plans chilli park in Nandurbar district

#### MUMBAI, JULY 23:

The Maharashtra Government plans to create a 200-acre food processing park for chilli in the Nandurbar district.

The park is likely to be developed on a public-private partnership basis.

The agro-climatic conditions in the district, makes it most conducive for growing chilli. Chilli farms are spread over almost 4,300

hectares and every year new areas come under cultivation.

The task of identifying land for the park is under way. A team of State Government officials has already visited Guntur in Andhra Pradesh

for studying market conditions and processing facilities, which have been set up there.

Guntur is a major chilli producing area of the country.



## Wheat exporters fail to cash in on sudden spike in global prices

VISHWANATH KULKARNI



Traders do not stock up expecting prices to fall owing to record harvest

### **NEW DELHI, JULY 22:**

Private wheat traders are rueing a missed opportunity on exports as global prices continue to soar on tight supplies. So far, the Government has procured about 96 per cent of this year's market arrivals in Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, leaving only Uttar Pradesh for the trade to source grain from.

Till about June-end, the Government was virtually the lone buyer in the market, with private traders unable to match the minimum support price of Rs 1,285 a quintal offered by the Food Corporation of India and the state agencies. Nor did the trade see any point in buying, especially in the context of a record 93.9 million tonne harvest that provided little reason for stocking up in anticipation of prices firming up in the months ahead.

But the market has, indeed, turned around — and for completely unanticipated reasons. The trigger has come from drought in the US' Midwest grain bowl that has sent global wheat futures prices at the Chicago Board of Trade soaring from \$6 a bushel (27.215 kg) in May to as high as

on \$9.4 a bushel (Rs 19,150 a tonne) on Friday. Coupled with the weak rupee, Indian wheat has all of a sudden become competitive in the international market. Exports from the western ports of Kandla and Mundra are being contracted at around \$275 a tonne free-on-board.

“Prices have improved by Rs 150-200 a quintal across various *mandis* in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Punjab. As a result, buying has slowed down a bit,” said Mr Adi Narayan Gupta, President, Roller Flour Millers Federation of India.

The Government agencies have so far procured 38.08 million tonnes of the 40.39 million tonnes that arrived in the markets.

“There is no physical wheat in the system. Only exporters are buying at the moment from UP,” said Mr S. Pramod Kumar, Executive Director of Bangalore-based Sunil Agro Foods Ltd. Mr Kumar, who buys wheat from Shahajanpur and Hardoi in UP, said millers had not fully covered their positions, anticipating a fall in prices on record harvest.

“Nobody has stocked this year,” said Mr Raj Sud, a trader from Khanna in Punjab, Such a trend reflects in numbers, as Government agencies have procured 12.83 mt of the 12.93 mt that arrived in Punjab markets. “The sudden export demand that has cropped up in recent weeks has come as a surprise,” Mr Sud said, regretting that traders had no stocks to cash in on this. Exporters such as ITC and Emmsons International are active in the market, procuring from Uttar Pradesh, where the arrivals are still trickling in markets such as Shajahanpur and Hardoi. But some exporters, such the Adani Group, said they would prefer to wait and watch, anticipating a further rise in global prices.

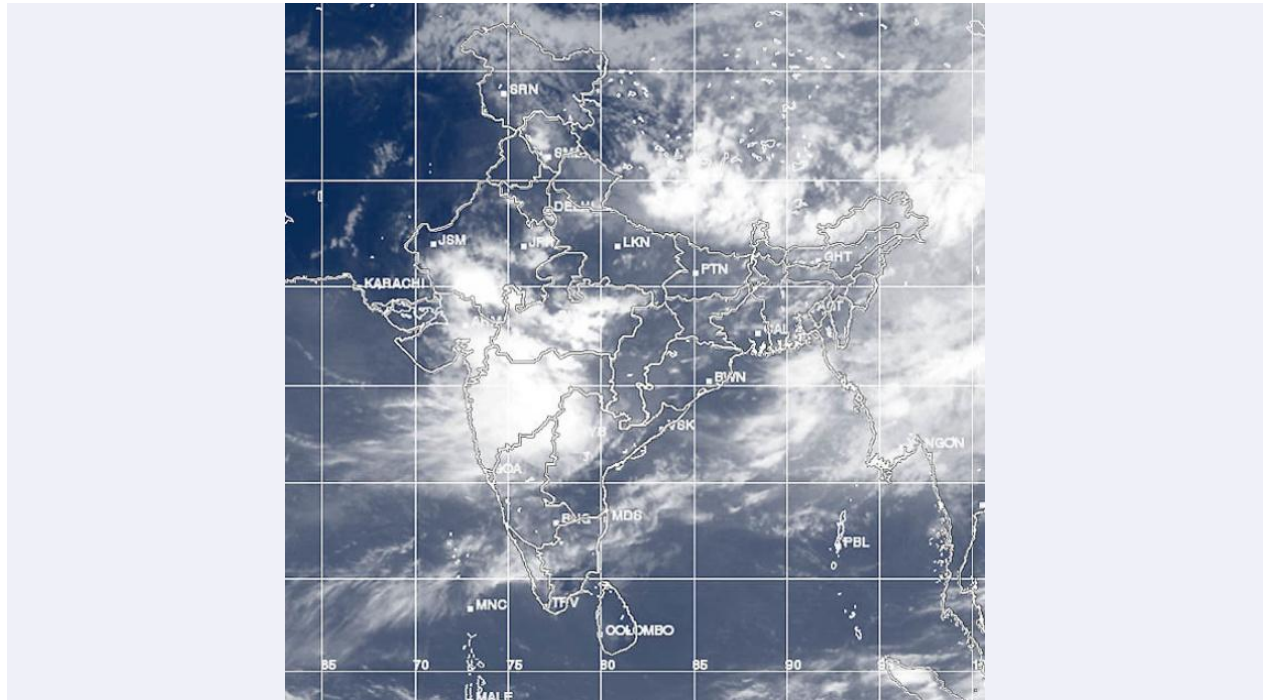
“We will become active once the Government tenders are opened. There’s too much volatility in prices. We are waiting to see how things pan out,” said Mr Atul Chaturvedi, CEO of agribusiness division at the Adani Group.

The Government has invited tenders for export of 2.4 lakh tonnes from its stocks. The price discovered by the three state-run agencies — STC, MMTC and PEC Ltd — from the tenders on August 3 would set the trend, exporters said.

*vishwa@thehindu.co.in*

## Rain deficit may extend into warmer winter this time

VINSON KURIAN



### THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JULY 22:

The likely weak southwest monsoon could well be followed by an equally disappointing northeast monsoon (reverse monsoon) for India this year.

Initial forecasts by a leading European agency have warned that winter rains during October-November-December may fail to bring major gains.

### DIFFICULT TIMES

This could signal difficult times for the southern peninsula, which may have been hoping to make good the rain deficit during the latter part of the year.

For northwest India, which is forecast to pile on the deficit during August-September, lack of winter rain would create moisture stress for the rabi crop.

The warning came on Sunday in the latest monthly seasonal updates from the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts.

Earlier, the Australian Bureau of Meteorology had stated that it did not see any near-term scope for a major recovery of the northern hemisphere monsoon.

#### WARMER WINTER?

Tokyo-based Regional Institute for Global Change has said that India could be heading for a warmer winter this year.

It agreed with the European agency that the winter rain could be largely below normal.

But unlike the European counterpart, it saw September-October-November rain being normal for the southern peninsula.

Meanwhile, the ongoing monsoon spell over central India and adjoining north peninsula held together on Sunday, though weakened a bit relative to the previous day.

Parts of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra made most of the gains on the second day of the revived monsoon activity.

#### ONGOING SPELL

India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast heavy rainfall over east Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Vidarbha and Telangana on Monday. A heavy rainfall warning is also valid for madhya Maharashtra, Marathwada, coastal Karnataka, Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh during the next two days.

The rains would keep moving west and lash west Madhya Pradesh, east Gujarat, Konkan and Goa until Tuesday, the IMD said.

Northwest India and interior southern peninsula would likely be left scanning the skies for the next rain wave, which may or may not oblige them just yet.

The sole exception is the west coast, including Konkan and Mumbai, which may continue to gain from occasional monsoon pulses during the short to medium term.