

Training for millet farmers from today

The Department of Agriculture is all set to impart intensive training for millet farmers and disburse them critical inputs worth Rs. 64 lakh to increase the yield and thereby generate enhanced demand for nutrients-rich millet food products among the public.

“The training will begin on November 5 and we plan to increase the yield of millets in the district by almost 30 per cent this fiscal vis-à-vis the productivity registered last financial year,” Joint Director of Agriculture Mohammed Kalimullah Sherif said.

A total of 100 farmers spread over the district have been selected for the five-day training covering topics ranging from production techniques to harvest methods. These farmers, in turn, will train their fellow agrarian community in their respective blocks on how to give value-addition to the millet crop. “Our aim is to make the millet use more for human consumption instead of a fodder crop since millet contains more nutrients than wheat and paddy,” Mr. Sherif said.

As part of the yield augmentation, model plots will be set up over 2,000 hectares in the district and the inputs such as seeds, urea, potash and fungicides worth Rs. 3,000 for every hectare using the corpus of Rs. 64 lakh were allocated to the district for millet promotion.

Widespread rain raises hopes for samba



happiness takes root: Farmers transplanting samba nurseries at Madigai village in Thanjavur on Thursday. Photo: B. Velankanni Raj

: With a good northeast monsoon and enthusiastic response from farmers to the samba package announced by the government, a successful samba crop is on the anvil in the upper reach of Thanjavur district. For farmers who raised kuruvai only in pumpset irrigated areas, samba and thaladi may be normal this year with rain helping in a big way.

Cyclone 'Nilam' has brought copious showers and a subsequent let-up, thus facilitating cultivation activities. The prediction of more rainfall towards the end of this week will further help transplantation. According to agriculture department officials, average rainfall during northeast monsoon was 660 mm. "So far we have received 360 mms of rainfall. The rest has to be received before first week of December. Assuming that the rainfall will be normal, we can manage a successful samba crop," officials said. Transplantation can be done till third week of November. Transplantation has been completed so far on 44,000 hectares with a target of 1.2 lakh hectares, and direct sowing has been done in 4,000 hectares. Under the samba package, Rs.11.3 crore has been allotted for the district, of which Rs.6.7 crore worth of benefits and cash have been distributed to 14,000 farmers.

Subsidy is given for seeds, raising community nurseries and for ploughing fields for direct sowing. Farmers with pumpsets have been asked to raise community nurseries with subsidy from the government and seedlings thus raised are supplied to needy farmers for transplantation free of cost. Farmers have raised mostly medium term samba varieties like ADT 39, ADT 38, BPT 5209, Co43 etc. They are of 125 to 130 days duration. They have avoided savithiri which is of 155 to 160 days duration.

"As the rain was not heavy on one day, and as it was spread out with centres recording 35 to 40 mms on an average, there was not much of flooding in the district. Let up in the rain helped in water receding from stagnated fields. With a few more days of rain under the Northeast monsoon, samba can be successful this year in the district, though it has been raised against all odds and taking calculated risk," said agriculture department officials.

Chief Minister promises to clear lift irrigation scheme proposal

It will help provide water to 70,000 acres in Athani taluk



Start:Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar and the former Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa participating in a function organised to mark the inauguration of three lift irrigation schemes at Athani on Sunday.— photo: D.B. PATIL

Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar has promised to clear the long-pending proposal on the Basaveshwar Lift Irrigation Scheme for the benefit of farmers in Athani taluk at the next Cabinet meeting.

The proposed scheme will help provide irrigation to 70,000 acres in the taluk.

At a function organised to mark the inauguration of three lift irrigation schemes under the Hippargi Irrigation project, including the Haliyal scheme in Athani on Sunday, the Chief Minister promised to get approval for funds worth Rs. 600 crore to implement the project soon after obtaining the Cabinet's nod.

In response to a demand, the Chief Minister promised to establish an agricultural college in Athani, and advised Agriculture Minister and district in-charge Umesh V. Katti to submit a proposal in this regard.

The former Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa, who inaugurated Savalgi-Tungala Lift Irrigation Scheme (also under the Hippargi project), said the State government had provided Rs. 1,008 crore towards completion of the Hippargi project for the benefit of growers.

Water Resources Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who inaugurated the Haliyal Scheme, said efforts of the Bharatiya Janata Party government during the last four years had resulted in adding seven lakh acres to the irrigation map of the State.

He said work on several irrigation schemes had remained unfinished for long, but the present government had pumped in adequate funds to complete them. A master plan to take up new irrigation projects in different parts of the State had also been prepared, he said, adding that the survey work on the Basaveshwar Lift Irrigation Scheme had been completed.

Social Welfare minister A. Narayanswamy; Public Works Minister C.M. Udasi; Minister for Minor Irrigation, and Kannada and Culture Govind M. Karjol; and Minister for Major Industries Murgesh Nirani, besides legislators and Members of Parliament from the district, were present.

Grafted pepper vines withstand wilt disease



Quick wilt disease which hit black pepper 15 years ago has wiped out its vines in many plantations in the coastal belt.

According to a farmer near Puttur in Dakshina Kannada, black pepper vines grafted to “hippali” (long pepper) vines of Brazilian origin (*piper colubrinum*) have withstood the blight in his plantation for three years.

S. Annu Poojary, a farmer at Sarve near Puttur in Dakshina Kannada, told *The Hindu* that the grafted pepper vines at his farm started yielding in the second year of planting.

Mr. Poojary says while the disease continues to hit the normal pepper vines (*piper nigrum*) at his farm even now, the grafted ones planted three years ago are free from the blight. Now he has about 50 grafted vines at his farm. Mr. Poojary himself grafted the vines on the suggestion by agriculture scientist N. Yadu Kumar, who retired as Principal Scientist at the National Research Centre for Cashew (NRCC) at Puttur two years ago.

Dr. Kumar told *The Hindu* that the mother plant should be *piper colubrinum* (Brazilian hippali) and not the plant of local “hippali”.

Piper colubrinum has the capacity to resist the quick wilt disease which basically originated at soil.

Hence the grafting of *piper nigrum* to the mother plant should be done at about two feet up from the ground level.

The scientist said that the wilt disease sometimes hit the normal pepper vines of one-year-old depending on the soil condition.

Clusters

To bring back the glory of black pepper in plantations, the Department of Horticulture has selected four villages in Dakshina Kannada to promote them as clusters of pepper under the Integrated Horticulture Development Scheme this year.

The villages are Konaje, Panaje, Bandaru, and Enmoor.

According to Pradeep D’Souza, Assistant Director of Horticulture, Mangalore, pepper cultivation will be promoted on 120 hectares of land, as 30 hectares each, in the four villages. Its cultivation will be promoted through four pepper growers’ societies to which the department has allocated Rs. 2 lakh each.

Each member will be given Rs. 48,200 as establishment charge in the first year.

RAVIPRASAD KAMILA

“Adopt modern agricultural practices”

Production of high quality agriculture produce suitable for export, value addition and mass production with uniform quality will transform the farmers into entrepreneurs. This would help fetch better price for the produce and also tap the highly potential global market. These suggestions were made at a national seminar on banana, which was held here on Saturday.

In his special address, Commissioner for Horticulture Santhosh Babu said that India produced 20 per cent of the total banana produced in the world. Tamil Nadu produced 25 per cent of the country's total production. Quality alone can push the produce in the global market.

Modern agriculture practices including limited fertilizer use should be adopted to produce high quality produce that could be sold in global market. Effective post harvesting measures will scale down production loss, he added.

Collector K. S. Palanisamy said that demand for agriculture produce will go up substantially in the next 10 years. Mass production in small area will improve profit margin. Continuous planning and team efforts were essential for long term and sustainable results.

Such measures will convert Theni into a 'Banana Bowl', he said. In his special address, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Vice-Chancellor S. Ramasamy said farmers should transform themselves into entrepreneurs. Farmers should form consortium and produce in large quantities, he added.

More over, production of quality food was the need of the hour. Present food had deficit of 50 per cent nutrients. Diabetes and heart problems were due to consumption of less nutrient produce.

Farmers should produce nutrient rich food not only to get better price but also ensure the health of consumers. Better fertilizers and pesticide management and modern irrigation method will help maintain better quality and direct marketing, particularly exports will enhance the income manifold, the VC added.

Crop loan for Tiruchi for current fiscal fixed at Rs.1,563 crore



Chief Minister Jayalithaa is committed to bringing about the Second Green Revolution in the State which is why she has sanctioned 75 per cent subsidy for agri-puts, N. R. Sivapathi, Minister for School Education, Youth Welfare, Sports, Law, Courts and Prisons, said here on Saturday.

Speaking at a seminar on food production technology, organised in connection with the pre-season intensive camp, the Minister said “the Chief Minister is giving a lot of priority to agriculture irrespective of the expenditure.”

He said in order to establish the riparian rights of the farming community in Tamil Nadu she had moved the Apex Court to force Karnataka to release water in the Cauvery.

While all the Ministers of Karnataka are unanimous in telling the Central government that their State should not be instructed to release any more water to Tamil Nadu, even former External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna, who hails from Karnataka, endorsed their views.

“It is under such circumstances, a petition has been moved in Supreme Court to get water for Tamil Nadu,” he added.

He said the crop loan for Tiruchi district had been fixed at Rs.1,563 crore for the current financial year and so far more than Rs.644 crore had been disbursed.

Collector Jayashree Muralidharan said food grains had been raised in 32,000 hectares in the district during the current fiscal. Under the Special Samba promotion scheme, various inputs including zinc sulphate, gypsum and biofertilizers are distributed at 75 per cent subsidy. Utilising this opportunity, ryots should take part in the productivity competition and win the prizes, she urged them.

J. Sekar, Joint Director of Agriculture, welcomed the gathering. Deputy Director K. Ponnusamy proposed a vote of thanks.

National seminar on Micobiology conducted

The Department of Microbiology of Dr. V.S. Krishna Govt. Degree College conducted a two-day National seminar from November 1 on 'Microbial Approaches Towards Sustainable Development' in Visakhapatnam. The seminar was sponsored by the UGC. The seminar was conducted to convey a message to society about the exploitation of microbes for the healthy living of human beings. Microbes play a key role in industries like food, pharma, brewing, tanning industries and also in recycling of waste. A.V. Prasad Rao, Rector of Andhra University was the chief guest at the seminar and P. Keshavanath, Dean College of Fisheries Mangalore University was the guest of honour. Prof. Keshavanath gave the keynote address on Role of natural food in sustaining aquaculture in which he emphasized on various aspects of peri phyton technology which maximizes the yield of shrimp and fish.

P.V.V Prasada Rao from dept. of Environment Sciences, A.U gave a presentation on Microbial approaches towards sustainable development. The seminar dealt with using probiotic technology to increase crop yields, improving the immune system, aquaculture and in developing eco-friendly cleaning solutions.

Presentations

The seminar had called for paper and poster presentations to educate the society through the student community regarding the role and importance of Microbiology. It received 69 presentations in all out of which 17 presentations were from students from cities outside Vizag.

V. Uma Maheshwara Rao, Registrar, Andhra University was the chief guest on the concluding day and delivered the valedictory address. HOD of Microbiology Andhra University B. Hemlatha delivered the valedictory message.

Y.V.K Durga Prasad was the convener of the seminar and J.V.V.S.N the principal of the college presided.

Jaideep Deo BhanJ,

in Visakhapatnam

Delay in modernisation of drain works proves bane to ryots



Vast tracts of cotton crop inundated at Pedakakani mandal in Guntur district on Sunday. —

Photo: T. Vijaya Kumar

Delay in modernisation of Kondaveedu drain has been costing the farmers in Lam, Amaravathi and Tadikonda villages.

As incessant rains pounded the district for the last three days, the Kondaveedu drain was in spate inflicting heavy damage and inundating vast tracts of cotton, chilli and paddy fields. The surging waters flowed dangerously above the low lying causeways snapping road links from Guntur to Amaravathi and Tadikonda.

The State government, on the persistent appeals made by Rural Development Minister Dokka Maikya Varaprasada Rao, had given nod for taking up the modernisation works being taken up

at a cost of Rs. 49.7 crore at Medikonduru mandal. Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy laid the foundation stone for the project in July this year.

For years, the overflowing Kondaveeti Vagu, originating from the Kondaveedu hill range, has created havoc on the cotton fields in Tadikonda and Amaravathi mandals submerging standing crops.

The quiet flowing drain turns into a ferocious stream when heavy rain in catchment area flows into small and medium drains up stream including, Ayanna Vagu, Pottela Vagu, Pala Vagu etc, and causes the drain to surge through the villages.

As the waters flow dangerously above the numerous causeways on the Amaravathi Road, traffic comes to a standstill on the Guntur-Amaravathi Road during heavy rains.

On Sunday, the Minister along with District Collector S. Suresh Kumar inspected the damage caused by the breaching of the Guntur-Amaravathi road. He also reviewed the damage caused due to the floods. MLC Rayapati Srinivas was also present.

The Minister, who has taken a personal initiative to find a permanent solution to the problem of flooding, said modernisation works have been taken up as a minor package in the Krishna Delta Modernisation Works.

The department has drawn plans to construct 23 bridges, designed for both single lane and double lanes replacing the low-level causeways.

Delta farmers seek water till February-end for 'thaladi' crop

Sea-change in rainfall pattern owing to global warming”



A paddy field submerged at Kovilur village.— PHOTO: R.M. RAJARATHINAM

Estimating that a substantial portion of the samba crop might be lost due to recent rain triggered by cyclone Nilam, the Cauvery Delta Farmers' Welfare Association (CDFWA) has urged the State government to release water till the end of February for the late 'thaladi' crop.

Mannargudi S. Ranganathan, general secretary of the association, told *The Hindu* that due to global warming there had been a sea-change in the pattern of rainfall necessitating a change in the agricultural operations as well.

For instance, the southwest monsoon had failed in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu but the northeast monsoon, which normally benefited only Tamil Nadu, had ensured copious showers in Karnataka in the last couple of days. "This is totally unusual and hence a bonus for that State."

In the 24 hours ending 8.30 a.m. Friday, Madikeri, the main rain gauge station for Coorg, had recorded rainfall of 61 mm and the thumb rule of the Tamil Nadu PWD is that every millimetre recorded in Madikeri amounted to 1,000 cusecs inflow into the Cauvery. Besides, the rain had been fairly widespread in Karnataka.

He lamented that as the Mettur dam could not be opened on schedule (June 12) for delta irrigation and water could be released only three months later (September 17), kuruvai, the cash crop of delta, was lost to an extent of more than 75 per cent.

The samba cultivation, which could begin in most of the areas only during October, had been affected by the cyclone. The crops in the coastal tracts of the Cauvery delta had been totally submerged.

"It looks like there is no possibility of the crops being saved. That is why our association has sought a special insurance cover for the coastal farmers," he said. Besides, the samba crop raised late in other areas, especially the low-lying regions, had also severely affected.

Mr. Ranganathan pleaded that the farmers should be helped to raise another crop, some short duration variety suited for late thaladi season.

He pointed out that Tamil Nadu Agricultural University had a number of suitable seeds. If the farmers were to go in for such crops, they would definitely require water till the end of February.

He was confident that the Mettur dam would also have appreciable inflow thanks to the precipitation due to the north-east monsoon and if Karnataka also released some water following the bountiful monsoon.

Egg price cut to clear backlog



Eggs piled up at a godown in Namakkal.— File Photo

The National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC), Namakkal Zone, was left with no other option on Saturday but to reduce the wholesale price of egg in a bid to clear eggs that got piled up in the last five days since Kerala Government imposed a ban on eggs and chicken from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

Kerala is the second biggest consumption market of eggs and chicken from this State by consuming close to 1.2 crore eggs a day. Industry sources said that about six crore eggs got accumulated in Namakkal region since the ban came in to effect on October 30, following the bird flu out break in a turkey farm in Karnataka.

During the previous rate fixation meeting of the NECC (on Thursday) the wholesale price was maintained at Rs. 3.15, the price before the ban came into effect. But traders gave the poultry farmers only about Rs. 2.65 to Rs. 2.55 per egg, Chairman of the NECC P. Selvaraj told *The Hindu*. "Usually we reduce the price of eggs to boost sales in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. But with eggs to Kerala (that consumes a third of the eggs produced in Namakkal), getting piled up we are trying our best to push eggs sales in the other consumption centres ."

No shipment to Oman

Exporters from Namakkal said that eggs and chicken were not sent to Oman as a precautionary measure from October 27 following reports of the day after the Government of India confirmed the outbreak of bird flu. They claimed that they did not send their shipment to that country as a precautionary measure to avoid return of those goods by the Oman Government. “We had similar bad experiences in the past immediately after the OIE declared India as a bird flu affected country”, they added. “Everyday about 20 lakh eggs from Namakkal went to Bangalore. But this has come down by 10 lakh eggs (by 50 per cent) due to some consumer resistance following the bird flu outbreak at Hesaraghatta near Bangalore. This is the season when the price of egg increases steadily and fetches good returns for the farmers but it is not so this year due to the ban imposed by Kerala,” he added.

Pointing out that a good number of eggs continue to be traded to the Northern States, the NECC Chairman said that impact of the price drop – boosting egg consumption – has to be observed for a couple of days before taking other decisions to clear the eggs that got stagnated.

President of the Tamil Nadu Poultry Farmers’ Association R. Nallathambi said that some trucks with eggs are still waiting at the check posts between the Kerala and Tamil Nadu border in the hope of getting the ban lifted soon. “However others who have become tired of waiting have returned”, he lamented.

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Traditional varieties can tolerate drought: scientist

The samba crops raised in the delta region now would not be facing the current predicament had they been traditional varieties, according to G. Nammalwar, organic farming scientist.

A former scientist of the Tamil Nadu Rice Research Station, Aduthurai, he told *The Hindu* that what was happening now was a repeat of 1983 when all the dwarf varieties had been submerged because of the phenomenal rains. After all, agriculture was a location-specific. And

the delta region was one where water did not drain easily, the dwarf varieties would get submerged.

The very characteristic of the dwarf varieties was that they would not be able to withstand water stagnation. That was why farmers used to raise “madu muzhungi” variety (one that is capable of growing above the water level). They used to harvest by going in a coracle, he recalled

The traditional varieties like “kattudai onan,” “mappillai samba,” “samba mosanam,” “kattai samba” and “muthu samba” could tolerate both drought and water stagnation. They could grow even up to a level of seven feet. These varieties used to grow even as the water level went up, he added. The difference between the traditional and the other varieties was infinite, he said. The traditional varieties were not only tasty but also contained medicinal properties, he added.

Mr. Nammalwar contended that the dependence on the chemical fertilizers had resulted in the microbial population getting reduced. The Tamil Nadu Agricultural University had found that the traditional varieties had better protein content than the other varieties. For the traditional varieties, there was no necessity to sink deep borewells and this ultimately reduced power consumption also, he pointed out.

Water release ordered for samba

Chief Minister Jayalithaa on Sunday ordered release of water for samba cultivation from the Amaravathi, Vaigai and Peiyar dams following request from farmers.

A government press release said water from Amaravathi dam in Tirupur district would be released on November 5 and it would benefit 29,387 acres in Tirupur and Karur districts.

Vaigai dam will be opened on November 9 for the agricultural lands irrigated by Periyar main canal and Tirumangalam main canal. A total of 1,50,043 acres will get water.

Vaigai dam will also be opened on November 9. It will benefit 5,146 acres in Theni and Uthamapalayam taluks.

ICAR should prepare question papers in Tamil also: Ramadoss

Pattali Makkal Katchi leader S. Ramadoss called upon the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) to prepare in Tamil also question papers for annual entrance examinations for various courses in April next year.

While many higher educational institutions of the Centre prepared question papers in nine languages, the ICAR's argument of the possibility of question paper leak in the event of the papers being made available in Tamil was not acceptable.

Against the State's quota of seats, 98, in educational institutions run by the ICAR, only one student could clear the examination.

District Food Processing Mission established in district

District Food Processing Mission has been established in the district.

According to a release from Jayashree Muralidharan, Collector, the State government and Ministry of Food Processing Industries have launched a centrally-sponsored scheme – National Mission on Food Processing (NMFP) – during the 12th Plan to be implemented by States.

The objective of this mission is decentralisation of implementation of the ministry's schemes, which will lead to substantial participation of State governments.

The proposed NMFP contemplates establishment of a national mission as well as a corresponding mission at the State and district level.

This scheme is to be implemented with financial assistance in the ratio of 75:25 by the Central and the State government.

Outlining the objectives, the release said it is to emphasise the significance of food processing for enhancing farm productivity and farmers' income, to assist the State in creating requisite synergy between their agricultural plans and development of food processing sector, and to assist the State government in addressing both institutional and infrastructural gap along the value chains and thus create efficient supply chain for farm produce.

It would also promote initiatives for skill development, training and entrepreneurship which would meet the needs of post-harvest management and food processing industry and assist the

food processing industry to meet the requisite standards in terms of food safety laws and market demand, both domestic and international.

The schemes to be covered under the programme include: technology upgradation, modernisation\expansion of food processing industries, supporting cold chain facilities and reefer vehicles for other than horticultural products, human resource development, creation of infrastructure facilities for running degree\diploma\certificate courses in food processing technology, entrepreneurship development programme, food processing training centre, and scheme for promotional activities.

Besides, organising seminars and workshops, conducting studies and surveys, support to exhibitions and fairs and advertisement and publicity would be covered.

The financial assistance for these schemes would vary from Rs.50 lakh to Rs.10 crore.

Those seeking financial assistance for these schemes may submit their new applications to the State Mission Director through the District Food Processing Mission Committee, headed by Collector, Tiruchirappalli. For details see www.mofpi.nic.in or contact Deputy Director (Agri Business), Tiruchirappalli district.

Rain causes damage to crops

Paddy crop in 21,830 hectares in Ganjam district has been affected



CLOUD BUILD-UP: The sky is overcast in Bhubaneswar before a spell of rain on Sunday.—

PHOTO: ASHOKE CHAKTRABARTY

Continuous rain under the influence of the cyclonic storm 'Nilam' damaged crops in several areas of south Odisha, particularly in Ganjam district.

In Ganjam district, the Bhanjanagar sub-division was worst affected. The rain also caused death of a person and serious injuries to three women in the district. According to an official, Mahendra Panda, a person named Ugrasen Mallik of Tinkapalli of Sorada block, was washed away in Ghantikala Nala, while he was trying to cross the overflowing stream with his goat. His body was later located nearby. In another incident a wall of a house collapsed in ward number 3 of Aska. Three women were injured. They were admitted to MKCG medical college of the city. Around 10,000 persons were affected by the rain in Ganjam district. At least three villages in Ganjam district were water-logged. They were Baunsalundi, Balisahi, and Mandarada. In Balisahi, water entered several houses. A free kitchen was opened at Balisahi village to provide food to the affected families.

The rain damaged standing paddy crop in several areas of Ganjam and Rayagada districts. Paddy in these areas matured and is almost at the stage of harvesting.

According to the initial data provided by the Irrigation Department, paddy cultivation in 21,830 hectares and non-paddy cultivation in 3,680 hectares of land in Ganjam district was affected due to the rain.

The worst affected was Belaguntha block where around 4,000 hectares of paddy crop was affected by the rain. Other blocks where more than 1,000 acres of paddy crop was affected by the rain were Hinjli, Ganjam, Purishottanpur, Aska, Shergarh, Dharakote, and Bhanjanagar.

The district administration ordered all tehsildars to make a field survey and file a detailed report regarding the loss caused by this cyclonic rain. Reports regarding damages to bridges and breaches to canal streams and rivers have also been sought.

Average rainfall

On Saturday Ganjam district received an average rainfall of 150.73 mm. But no river in the district was flowing near danger level in the district on Sunday. Rain subsided on Sunday providing some relief to the affected persons. On Sunday no place in Ganjam district received more than 100 mm rainfall.

In adjoining Gajapati district also the cyclonic rain damaged crops. However, the Bansadhara river is still flowing below the danger level, according to official sources.

Standing crops badly hit in Khammam

Heavy rains since Thursday caused damage to standing cotton crop in 92,000 hectares in the district. According to preliminary estimates by the Agriculture Department, paddy crop in 27,000 hectares and chilli crop in 178 hectares had been partially damaged due to heavy rains in the last four days.

Official sources said four persons were killed in rain-related incidents. A total of 165 houses were damaged under the impact of incessant rains triggered by cyclone 'Nilam'. As many as 59 irrigation tanks developed breaches and 116 electricity poles were damaged.

Meanwhile, Deputy Speaker Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka visited the rain-affected villages in Madhira and Yerrupalem mandals on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, he said cotton, chilli, and paddy crops were damaged in 30,000 hectares in Madhira constituency. He said he would immediately apprise Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy of the situation and ensure adequate compensation to farmers.

TDP MLAs T. Nageswara Rao and S. Venkata Veeraiah toured the rain-hit areas in Sattupalli constituency. They interacted with farmers and made an on-the-spot assessment of the crop damage. They demanded that the government come to the rescue of the farmers and extend compensation for crop loss.

Bus services were fully restored from and to various destination in the rain-ravaged Prakasam district, even as the woes of people living in various colonies continued on Sunday.

Bus services to Hyderabad were restored to run on the Medermetla-Addanki-Narkedpalli highway, as floodwaters, which submerged the highway near Addanki, fully receded. All bus services to various destination, including Chirala and Kothapatnam in the district, were fully restored, APSRTC officials said.

CPI(M) city secretary G.V. Konda Reddy, after visiting some of the affected colonies, including Moturu Udayam Colony, urged the government to declare the district flood-affected and secure liberal Central assistance.

Rainwater had not fully receded from colonies such as Netajinagar, Moturu Udayam Colony, Gandhinagar, Gudarala Colony, and Mother Terasa Colony, he said.

With the rain abating, the district administration closed down the 13 relief camps it had opened.

DLSA official's visit

Meanwhile, Prakasam District Legal Services Authority secretary G. Ramagopal visited 10 flooded colonies on the city outskirts as part of the authority's mandate to reach out to people in distress at times of natural calamities.

People from different colonies, including Pragathi Colony, Balaram Colony, Kesavarajkunta, Jaiprakash Colony, and N.T.R. Colony poured out their woes.

They sought his intervention for running relief centres for a few more days as their dwelling units were submerged under a sheet of water. He promised them to take up their woes with the district administration.

Cotton price: all parties to represent problems to Kiran

All political parties in Adilabad on Sunday opposed imposition of regulations related to moisture content in cotton while deciding the price of the produce in private sector. The parties wanted that cotton be purchased in the private sector as was being done in the preceding years.

At a meeting of representatives of political parties it was decided to bring the matter to the notice of Chief Minister Kiran Kumar Reddy and Chief Secretary Minnie Mathew. The representation would first be submitted in the form of a petition at Monday's grievance session in the Collectorate before faxing the same to the Chief Minister and the Chief Secretary.

Moisture meters

Farmers from Adilabad, Talamadugu, Tamsi, Jainad and Bela were having a standoff with the district administration which insisted on the use of moisture meters by private purchasers to decide the price of cotton.

The farmers said they would stand to lose heavily for no fault of theirs as cotton picked in the early stages of the harvest period comes with a very high moisture content, naturally.

Representatives of the Congress party Communist Party of India, CPI (Marxist), Bharatiya Janata Party, YSR Congress, Telugu Desam Party and the Telangana Rashtra Samiti besides representatives of farmer held at a meeting during the day. The issue was discussed threadbare to arrive at a consensus

Move to acquire paddy field flayed

The Thiruvaranmula Paithruka Grama Karma Samiti (TPGKS) has decried the reported move of the Aranmula grama panchayat to acquire paddy fields near the Aranmula Aykara junction and convert it to set up pilgrim facilities.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, action council conveners Vasanth Neervilakom and V.R. Sajikumar said the panchayat's move was to protect the interests of the Chennai-based land lobby under the pretext of pilgrims' welfare.

The panchayat had served land acquisition notice on 14 paddy field owners. The Congress-controlled panchayat committee was trying to convert paddy fields in the name of pilgrim amenity schemes, consciously sidelining the availability of three acres of Revenue land near the Sree Parthasarathy temple which was sufficient enough to implementing the said projects, they said. The panchayat committee had initiated land acquisition procedures even before preparing a project report or detailed action plan for the projects said to be under consideration, they said. The land-owners had decided to take legal action against the anti-people and anti-nature decision of the panchayat, they said.

The action council would take out a march to the panchayat office from the Kozhippalam junction, near Aranmula, on Tuesday in protest against the local body decision, the statement said.

Plans

Staff Reporter writes from Alappuzha: Chengannur Municipality will spend Rs.15 lakh to set up facilities for the Sabarimala pilgrims at Chengannur, one of the base camps of the pilgrims, as the Mandalam-Makaravilakku season starts by the middle of this month.

Municipal chairperson Suja John told *The Hindu* the money would also be used to set up temporary toilets for pilgrims if the Travancore Devaswom Board provided the land.

The works include the cleaning drains, maintenance of roads and providing drinking water.

The decision was taken in a meeting attended by people's representatives held in Chengannur recently. The municipality has requested the government to employ an additional 20 persons for cleaning drains.

An information counter will set up by the municipality at the Chengannur railway station to provide information in the languages of the States from where pilgrims are expected.

A special OP counter and casualty services will be opened at the Government Hospital at Chengannur. Special medical aid posts will be set up at railway station and Chengannur Mahadevar Temple. Ambulance services will also be operated during the season.

A special team will be constituted to inspect hotels to ensure quality of food items served and to control the hike in the prices of these items.

The police has decided to widen its security cover in view of the season. The service of swimming experts will be sought for the Mahadevar Temple pond, where a large number of pilgrims take bath.

Fragile situation for egg traders

Scarcity of eggs will be acute in the coming days if the ban on the commodity is not lifted by the State government. The ban was imposed by the State on the eggs and poultry coming from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka a few days ago.

E. John, a wholesaler in Kochi, said he had temporarily shut down his shop in view of non-arrival of the commodity. The situation resulted in immense loss to the industry in Kerala, he said. Kerala was getting about 60 loads of eggs from Tamil Nadu. Each load has 1.5 lakh eggs. He said the eggs and poultry being brought from Tamil Nadu were certified by veterinary doctors. Only broiler chicken and eggs for incubation purpose were brought from Karnataka, according to him. Pointing out that bird flu was reported in a farm in Karnataka a week ago and the authorities there had taken steps to destroy the affected product, he said the ban on eggs from Tamil Nadu would make little sense.

The poultry industry in Tamil Nadu is also incurring huge losses on account of the development.

About 120 loads of eggs are awaiting clearance at the check-posts and there is every chance for a considerable portion of the commodity perishing. The price of eggs is bound to shoot up due to the ban, said P.M. Sankaran, president of the Bakers Association Kerala. Bird flu was detected in a farm in Karnataka and eggs had not been banned either in Karnataka or Tamil Nadu, he said.

The ban has posed problems for the bakery sector as the egg is an important ingredient for many items in the sector. Any increase in the prices of eggs due to the ongoing ban will have an adverse impact on the sector which is getting ready for the Christmas season, he said.

Cane farmers to push for higher price

They plan 'rasta roko' tomorrow, picket Chief Minister's house on Friday



standing firm: Panchappa Kalburgi, president of the Bhima Nadi Neeru Rakshana Samiti, addressing presspersons in Bijapur on Sunday.— Photo: Rajendra Singh Hajeri

To push for their demand for a higher price for sugarcane (Rs. 3,000 a tonne), farmers have decided to hold a Statewide 'rasta roko' on November 6 and picket the house of Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar on November 9.

The announcement was made at a press conference convened by various farmers' organisations, including the Karnataka Pranta Raitha Sangha, Rashtriya Kisan Sangha and Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha, here on Sunday.

Presiding over the conference, Panchappa Kalburgi, president of the Bhima Nadi Neeru Rakshana Samiti, accused the government of taking a unilateral decision on sugarcane price.

He accused Agriculture Minister Umesh Katti of buckling under pressure from sugar factory owners while deciding the price for sugarcane, and taking into account the interests of only a few sugar factory owners, and not farmers. The high-level committee — constituted by the government to study the problems of sugarcane growers and factory owners so as to arrive on a remunerative price on the produce and provide a share in byproducts — had failed to meet its objective, Mr. Kalburgi said.

He said the committee was headed by Mr. Katti and consisted of 10 farmers' leaders, four principal secretaries, eight top executives from sugar factors and two Ministers.

"The committee convened a meeting three times to discuss the matter.

During the first meeting, Mr. Katti spoke to us and we demanded Rs. 3,000 a tonne for sugarcane. Without speaking to factory owners, the next day, the government took a unilateral decision and announced Rs. 2,200 for a tonne of sugarcane," he said.

Mr. Kalburgi said the Minister, during the next meeting, agreed the price was low and promised to get it revised from the Chief Minister.

Third meeting

“However, in the third meeting, he shocked everyone by saying that the committee had no right to announce the price, and refused to increase the price of cane. This goes to show that the Minister had been acting in favour of factory owners, even though a few factories, such as Nandi Sugars, during the same meeting offered Rs. 2,400 per tonne as first instalment and remaining sum in two instalments. We wonder why, when some factories themselves are ready to pay a higher price, the government can’t do the same,” he said.

Focus on producing high quality foodgrains

The main focus of the research should be in improving quality of foodgrains and enriching its nutrient levels to make people healthy. Research should restore taste and quality of fruits produced by farmers five decades ago, said Minister for Finance O. Paneerselvam.

He was laying foundation stone for the second floor of administrative block at the Horticultural College and Research Institute near here on Sunday.

Nowadays, immunity level of young generation, particularly children, was very low. Children cannot even stand fever. Consumption of poor nutrient food is prime reason for such low immunity level in the body. Originality of food was lost owing to excess application of fertilizers and pesticide, he said.

Horticulture students have the responsibility to change such scenario and guide farmers in producing high quality foodgrains using the required fertilizers and minimum pesticide, he advised.

Reacting to an appeal made by the Tamil Nadu Agriculture University Vice-Chancellor, the Minister said that all efforts would be taken to provide better infrastructure and other facilities to the college. The government had allotted heavy funds for school and higher education and offered all necessary things to students to make all children literates and prevent school dropouts.

In his special address, Minister for Agriculture S. Dhamodharan said that the life of farmers was in the hands of agriculture and horticulture students only. Research activities should be intensified to meet growing demands of farmers. Unity and cooperation at all levels were essential for massive food production. Continuous and thorough learning was necessary to

know the subject well and guide farmers in future. Such measure would help students achieve their goal, he advised. In his special address, Collector K.S. Palanisamy said that the gap between lab to farm should be filled.

All technological developments and outcome of research should reach farmers quickly. Modern techniques were necessary for farmers to improve productivity.

In his address, Tamil Nadu Agriculture University Vice-Chancellor K. Ramasamy said that the Horticultural College and Research Institute still needed proper roads, lighting facilities and more infrastructure. Government should extend help, he appealed.

Grape research station planned at cost of Rs. 8 cr.

Advanced Grape Research Station will be established in Uthamapalayam on 25 acres of land at an estimated cost of Rs.8 crore to do research on different varieties of grapes. A vegetable processing centre will be set up in Dindigul and five model horticulture villages will be set up in 40 to 100 hectares in the State, said Minister for Agriculture S. Dhamodharan.

He was delivering special address at the valedictory of a national seminar on banana held here on Sunday.

The government has sanctioned Rs.8 crore for the research station. To begin with, Rs.25 lakh had been sanctioned. This station would do research on various varieties of grapes suitable for export. A total of 6,000 acres in the Cumbum valley are under grape cultivation. Researchers would also guide farmers to boost production and develop high-yielding varieties. The aim is to help farmers to produce export-quality grapes to tap the highly-potential global grape market, Mr. Dhamodharan said.

The vegetable processing centre would be set up in Dindigul at an estimated cost of Rs.14.5 crore under Indo-Israel programme. A global expo on exports would be held in Chennai at a cost of Rs.50 lakh, he added.

Food was being supplied even to developed countries such as the U.S. by third world countries. Quality food is the need of the hour as junk food threatened health of people, Mr. Dhamodharan said.

At present, banana cultivation in the State is under 1.07 lakh and total production, 47.8 lakh tonnes.

In Theni, area under banana cultivation shot up to 6,000 hectares from 4,000 hectares, and productivity rose to 80 tonnes from 54 tonnes. Tissue culture technique is the prime reason, he said.

Minister for Finance O. Paneereselvam said that horticulture production rose to 840 million tonnes and export earning touched Rs.14,000 crore.

Banana is produced in large scale owing to ideal climate. Value addition of banana would improve income of farmers. Commissioner for Horticulture Santhosh Babu said Theni district had achieved productivity and production, but is lacking in certain infrastructure. Supply chain management should be improved and facilities improved.

Farmers should become entrepreneurs and take care of marketing also, he said.

Water release ordered for samba

Chief Minister Jayalalithaa on Sunday ordered release of water for samba cultivation from the Amaravathi, Vaigai and Peiyar dams following request from farmers.

A government press release said water from Amaravathi dam in Tirupur district would be released on November 5 and it would benefit 29,387 acres in Tirupur and Karur districts.

Vaigai dam will be opened on November 9 for the agricultural lands irrigated by Periyar main canal and Tirumangalam main canal. A total of 1,50,043 acres will get water.

Vaigai dam will also be opened on November 9. It will benefit 5,146 acres in Theni and Uthamapalayam taluks.

Applications from farmers for assistance invited

Under the special drive to help small and marginal farmers and those dependent on agriculture enrolled under Farmers' Protection Programme, applications for assistance would be received by respective village administrative officers (VAOs) from November 5 to 9. Farmers in the age

group of 18-65, holding not more than 2.5 acres of wet land or five acres of dry land, are eligible to be enrolled under the scheme. Those dependent on these farmers are also eligible for assistance. The assistance includes scholarship, marriage assistance, old age pension, assistance for death in accident and for normal causes, and pension for those affected by diseases like tuberculosis, cancer and AIDS. All these applications would be scrutinised to disburse the assistance by the end of this month.

A green route off the grid

Timeout Rainforest Retreat offers an eco-friendly way to switch off



No telly, no network Just peace and quiet! Photo by Author

The road from Mysore twists up the hills that define Coorg. A palette of colours flit across, be it the red robes of Tibetan monks at Bylakuppe, the rusty brown Mangalore tiles that lend a roof to homes or the greenery split by streams that gurgle down the mountains.

And then there is this extreme shade of green that greets you once you drive past Madikeri town. Take a right turn, climb higher into the Western Ghats and after trundling into the Rainforest Retreat, all you can do is marvel at nature's bounty and listen to the symphony of a million cicadas.

Rainforest Retreat is part of the Mojo Plantation that was launched in 1994 thanks to the efforts of Anurag and Sujata Goel. Their objectives were twin-fold – escape the rat-race and practice what they preach: be it organic farming or supervising an environment-friendly tourism initiative.

The property spread over undulating terrain, has two guesthouses, a plantation cottage, independent rooms and tents.

Solar power runs the basic appliances here and go-bar gas is the preferred ally for cooking.

For those who sigh on seeing clips of the Amazon on National Geographic, this place offers a soothing alternative. The place gives a different meaning to off the grid with neither telly nor mobile signals.

Windows that open to damp air and dense foliage might goad the city-stressed tourist to curl up with a book but for those with the itch to explore, there are varied treks.

Be it the plantation trail with Archana Shetty, who manages the resort with a smile and a kind word, or the walks through the adjoining jungle, there is enough to see and savour.

The place teems with various species of birds, animals and insects, including the world's largest moth – the Atlas moth. Also be prepared for the occasional leech. There is no need to panic though and Ravi's family staying inside the leafy zone, assurance comes in a variety of languages – Kannada, Tulu, Kodava, Tamil, Hindi and English. Ravi, with roots leading all the way to Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu, Jeff, who is doing an internship as part of his eco-tourism management studies in the United States, and Antonin, a French farmer, do yeomen service at the resort.

Meanwhile the affable Goels voice their concerns about a globe that is increasingly losing its green cover and their efforts to conserve nature, is truly inspiring. The Indian food can be bland at times, tailored as it is for the largely foreign clientele but the hospitality and the lessons of nature that you get to imbibe, is something that will stay with you forever.

Rooms cost between Rs. 1,500 and Rs. 4,000. For information log on to www.rainforestours.com, mail: rainforestours@gmail.com or call 8272265638/6 and 201428.

Hindustan Times

TODAY FARM NEWS

05.11.2012 A.M

Weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Monday, Nov 5

Max Min

33.1° | 24.8°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 94

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:04

Sunset: 05:40

Barometer: 1009

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Tuesday, Nov 6

Max Min

34° | 25°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday

Nov 7



33° | 24°

Partly Cloudy

Thursday

Nov 8



33° | 25°

Overcast

Friday

Nov 9



32° | 25°

Overcast

Saturday

Nov 10



32° | 25°

Overcast

Sunday

Nov 11



32° | 25°

Overcast

Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Humidity: 94

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:36

Sunset: 05:32

Barometer: 1012



THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

04.11.2012 P.M

05.11.2012 A.M

Gold may recover; cotton set to bloom on higher support price



A rising dollar is likely to help gold recover in the domestic market on Monday as the yellow metal pared its losses marginally in early trade.

A strong dollar against the rupee will make imports costlier, while the precious metal had dropped to a two-month low during the weekend on a strong show by the US on the employment front. The better jobs data mean that the US Fed may not think of easing its monetary policy further.

In early trade, spot gold was up at \$1,681.25 an ounce against Friday's close of \$1,675.20. On Friday, the yellow metal slid \$40. US gold gained 0.4 per cent at \$1,681.60.

On Saturday in Mumbay, gold for jewellery (99.5 purity) slumped 10 per cent to Rs 30,380. Pure gold (99.9 purity) tumbled to Rs 30,500.

Early on Monday morning, the dollar was up at its highest since September first week against major currencies. Investors are switching over to the US greenback in view of the rising dollar and uncertainty over the presidential elections in the US slated for tomorrow.

With the Centre announcing a higher minimum support price for cotton and market intervention operations by buying 90 lakh bales (Of 170 kg each), cotton prices in spot and futures market are set to gain.

A rising dollar and higher closing on ICE U.S. will also be handy in the counter rising. Cotton for delivery in December on ICE U.S. closed up at 70.35 cents a pound.

The oils and oilseeds market could gain on higher closing of soyabean on the Chicago Board of Trade and a strong dollar. Reports of demand from China could also play a part in the rally. On Friday, soyabean for delivery in January was up for the second consecutive day at \$15.60 a bushel.

Malaysian palm oil, however, closed lower at 2,496 ringgit (\$818) a tonne. Festival demand is also likely to aid a rise in prices.

Wheat is seen gaining as Indian government agencies are likely to finalise export tenders. Concerns over global weather have also aided the uptrend. During the weekend, wheat on CBOT for delivery in December ended higher at \$8.68 a bushel.

Corn (industrial maize) is likely to face pressure on technical correction and reports of ethanol plants downing shutters in the US. On CBOT, corn for delivery in December slid to \$7.53 a bushel.

Sugar could gain on demand for festivals and the usual buying at the start of the month. A weaker rupee will make exports competitive and this could also help the counter gain. Raw sugar futures on ICE U.S. for March ended higher at 19.41 cents a pound, but white sugar in London slid to \$535.50 a tonne.

Crude oil is seen range-bound with rise in the dollar being offset by doubts being cast over demand growth. On Friday, Brent oil, the benchmark for oil prices, ended up at \$108.19, while NYMEX crude slipped to \$86.00 a barrel

4th nov 2012 P.M

Wheat exports from Govt stocks pick up on rising demand



Wheat exports from Government stocks have picked up even as shipments by private trade have slowed down on rise in prices and thin market arrivals.

Total shipments have crossed three million tonnes since the Government allowed wheat exports in September last year.

Bulk of the shipments has been done by the private trade, so far.

The Government agencies such as PEC Ltd and STC Ltd have issued tenders for about one million tonnes for exports and have shipped over five lakh tonnes, so far.

“We expect the tendering process for two million tonnes to be complete by December on rise in demand,” senior official at PEC said.

In July, the Government had approved exports of two million tonnes from the Central stocks. The PEC official is hopeful that exports will cross two million tonnes on rising global demand for Indian wheat.

A shortfall in output on drought in the US, Russia, Ukraine and Australia has triggered global interest in the Indian wheat this year.

India had produced an all-time high 93.9 mt wheat in the 2011-12 season and the Government agencies are currently holding stocks of over 40 mt.

As of October 1, the Central pool stocks stood at 43.15 mt more than three times the buffer and strategic reserve requirement of 14 mt.

The private trade, which has seen a slowdown in exports in recent weeks on decline in market arrivals, has been demanding access to the Government stocks to encash the rising demand.

Such a move would help the Government to get rid of the old stocks.

Moreover, the late revival in monsoons has brightened the rabi prospects.

Bulk of the Indian 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.

Countries such as Iran and Malaysia are also looking to import the Indian wheat on long-term basis.

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Global output projections pull down pepper prices



Pepper futures last week witnessed a sharp fall at the weekend on reports of an increased output in 2012 raising the availability of the commodity for the remaining months of the current year.

Cued by this report, based on the projections made at the International Pepper Community (IPC) session held in Colombo, the Indian futures prices fell sharply.

Consequently, domestic buyers and sellers stayed away from the declining market.

As the difference between Nov and Dec contracts narrowed down, there was switching over from November.

As wet conditions prevailed from midweek onwards last week there was a squeeze in arrivals.

On the spot, the buyers and sellers stayed away from the declining market. The primary market dealers/farmers said to have sold good quantities when the prices were ruling high, market sources told *Business Line*.

As the prices were shooting up, more and more sellers were seen appearing earlier in the week in the primary markets and releasing old stocks of pepper. But, the situation changed at the weekend.

All the active contracts last week decreased sharply on the bearish reports from overseas.

Nov, Dec and Feb contracts fell by Rs 1,370, Rs 935 and Rs1,260 respectively a quintal to the last traded price (LTP) of Rs 42,650, Rs 42,450 and Rs 37,600.

Total turn over increased by 6,341 tonnes to close at 12,479 tonnes at the weekend close. Total open interest moved up by 171 tonnes to 8,938 tonnes.

Spot prices, in tandem with the futures market trend, fell by Rs 700 to close at Rs 40,000 (ungarbled) and Rs 41,500 (garbled) on Saturday. Meanwhile, Indian imports of pepper have shown a substantial increase during Jan–Sep, from the corresponding period, last year. In the first nine months, imports have gone up by 21.56 cent to 11,732 tonnes (from 9,651 tonnes the previous year).

Where as, the exports increased only by 5.27 per cent to 13,992 tonnes (13,291 tonnes), according to export sources.

Much of the shipments were of material imported for value addition and re-export, they claimed.

IPC OUTPUT PROJECTIONS

According to the IPC projections in Colombo,, the total global production would be at 3,27,090 tonnes with an exportable surplus of 3,36,780 tonnes.

Where as, the production and exportable surplus in 2013 is forecast at 3,16,832 tonnes and 3,19,098 tonnes respectively.

The Indian total output has been given as 43,000 tonnes in 2012. A carry forward stock of 15,816 tonnes and import of 16,250 tonnes have been shown. Domestic consumption in 2012 has been put at 42,500 tonnes while the exports have been estimated at 17,500 tonnes.

As against these, the production in 2013 has been projected as 55,000 tonnes and a carry forward stock of 15,000 tonnes. The domestic consumption and exports in 2013 has been shown as 43,000 tonnes and 25,000 tonnes respectively.

In the international scenario, multinational companies with multi-origin operations having processing facilities in Vietnam were reportedly importing pepper from Indonesia for meeting their export commitments of LBV pepper, market sources said.

Meanwhile, the trade here found it difficult to swallow the production figures of Indonesia for 2012 as 63,000 tonnes with an exportable surplus of 62,614 tonnes.

Where as, the production in 2013 has been projected as 47,000 tonnes with an exportable surplus of 43,614 tonnes.

In 2011 Indonesia produced 45,000 tonnes of pepper and exported 36,487 tonnes.

Pollachi trade team visits Coconut Board

A business delegation from the Pollachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry visited Coconut Development Board here. The 28-member delegation was here to explore the potential of product diversification and value-addition in coconut.

Briefing the activities of the Board, T.K. Jose, chairman, called upon the farmers to work in unison enabling Pollachi to be made the Town of Excellence in exports during the 12th Plan period.

The Board has already represented the Tamil Nadu Government to provide 25 per cent capital subsidy to coconut processing units over and above the 25 per cent subsidy provided by the Coconut Development Board under the Technology Mission on coconut, he said.

Bio-parks mooted

The Chairman also suggested having coconut bio-parks in at least six districts in Tamil Nadu which are having 20,000 hectares or above area under coconut cultivation.

Emphasising the need for value-addition, he pointed out that there is much scope for production of value-added products such as packaged tender coconut water, virgin coconut oil, coconut milk, coconut cream, coconut milk powder, desiccated coconut, coconut shell powder, activated carbon and shell charcoal.

Since tender coconut water has high demand, more farmers must come forward to take up projects on packed tender coconut water, he added.

Plucking coconut, arecanut made easy



Innovative gadget: Farmers looking at the arecanut plucking machine developed by the Kozhikode-based Prakashan Tattari at the agri machinery fair in Puttur of Dakshina Kannada district. — A.J. Vinayak

Labour shortage over the years has made the task of plucking coconut and arecanut difficult for farmers.

However, a retired sales tax official from Kerala has manufactured an instrument that can climb the tree and pluck individual nut of your choice or remove the coconut bunch itself, if you want.

Prakashan Tattari from Kozhikode in Kerala demonstrated the equipment, what he calls 'Wonder Climber', to pluck coconut and arecanut from trees.

He was one of the innovative farmers whose stall was a highlight in the agri machinery fair in Puttur of Dakshina Kannada district recently. The fair was jointly organised by Campco, Arecanut Research and Development Foundation, and Vivekananda College of Engineering and Technology, Puttur.

For plucking coconut from trees, he has developed remote-controlled and manually-controlled versions. While the manually operated version costs Rs 5,000 a piece, the remote control version costs around Rs 25,000, he said.

H.S. Srinivas, convenor of the agri machinery fair, said there were more than 150 stalls at the fair. Of them, 39 belong to innovators and 22 to students, he said.

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Goa to host 3-day India International Tea Convention

The Consultative Committee of Plantation Associations (CCPA) – the apex body of tea producer associations in the country – along with the Tea Board of India is organising the India International Tea Convention (IITC) 2012.

The three-day convention, beginning November 7 onwards, will be organised at Goa.

“Focus of the conference will be on the front-end and on issues relating to the marketing and branding of Indian tea,” Arun K. Singh, Vice-Chairman, Indian Tea Association (ITA), said.

The IITC will take up issues relating to production and marketing of tea, branding initiatives and the new avenues available to tea producers that include sale through supermarkets.

Currently, sale of through supermarkets in India constitute three per cent, compared to 95 per cent in the UK.

A special tea drinking session – consisting of 13 unique teas from different parts of India - has also been organised.

Participation

The conference will have participation of delegates from other tea producing nations that include Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Tanzania as well as non-tea producing countries such as the US, Canada, Germany, Austria, Spain, Russia, Kazakhstan, the UAE, Iran, Egypt and Tanzania among others.

Nearly 350 delegates are expected to attend the conference.

Awareness seminar on commodity, agri markets

An awareness and education seminar on agribusiness and commodity markets will be held on November 7 at 6 p.m. at the Shanthala Spherocast Auditorium, Shimoga District Chamber of Commerce and Industry, K. T. Shamaiah Gowda Road, Behind City Club, Shimoga.

The event is part of an ongoing initiative by *The Hindu Business Line* jointly with the Forward Markets Commission (FMC), the commodity futures market regulator under the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, and the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), India’s largest agribusiness futures trading portal.

Producers, processors, traders, importers and exporters face price risks in the volatile commodity markets. The event will create awareness among hedgers and potential hedgers about the need to follow a price risk management policy.

Speakers will make presentations on commodities as the key driver of Indian economy, how to hedge price risks through a commodity futures exchange and regulators' perspective . Role of banks in commodity financing will also be covered.

State Bank of Mysore is the banking partner for the event, while Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Bangalore; Shimoga District Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Shimoga; and Kanara Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mangalore, will provide support.

A similar event will also be held on November 8 at 6 p.m. at the Senate Hall, II floor, Hotel Deepa Comforts, M.G. Road, Mangalore.

To participate, prior registration is solicited. To register, please contact K. Eshwar for the Shimoga seminar on 94481 60126 and Aldrin Vaz on 94481 89030 for the Mangalore event.

Kerala Govt to procure coconut from next February: Minister

The State Government has taken steps to procure raw coconuts directly from farmers from February next year, State Agriculture Minister K.P. Mohanan has said.

This has been necessitated in the wake of the severe crisis in coconut sector due to fall in prices, he said while inaugurating the Coconut Investors Meet here.

Neera tapping

The government has also given in-principle approval for 'neera' tapping. He hoped that the coconut bio-parks will be the stepping stone in the way forward of the coconut sector.

The Minister said that as farmer security will ensure food security, the government was ready to formulate novel schemes for the benefit of the coconut farming community.

Coconut bio-parks

Agriculture Production Commissioner Subarto Biswas promised government support to committed coconut entrepreneurs. He emphasised the need for value-addition in coconut and hoped that a handful of entrepreneurs would come up through the coconut bio-parks.

T.K. Jose, chairman of Coconut Development Board, pointed out that lack of focussed attention is making the sector a laggard. The farmers are not getting the right value for the crop. There should be a coconut bio-park in each of the ten districts that have more than 25,000 hectares under coconut cultivation.

He requested the State Government to supply coconut oil through Public Distribution System and also to introduce coconut oil in mid-day meal programme of schools.

Jose called upon farmers and entrepreneurs to work together to make India the global leader in coconut production, productivity, value-addition and export.

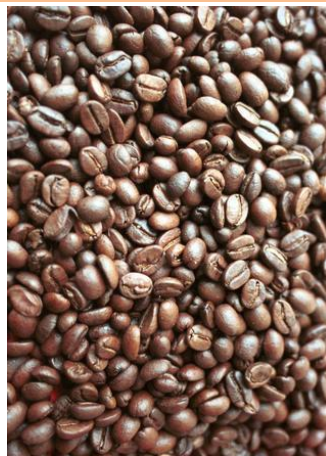
Investor meet

The investor meet in coconut processing sector on the theme 'Product Diversification, Value Addition and Processing in Coconut – Future Outlook' was jointly organised by the Coconut Development Board, KSIDC and Department of Agriculture.

Representatives of various banks spoke on the available schemes and had interactions with the entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs from the coconut processing sector presented their success stories. More than 250 entrepreneurs attended the meeting.

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World coffee exports up 3% at 107.8 mn bags



Global coffee exports rose by 3 per cent to 107.8 million bags in the last coffee year, which ended in September, on the back of increased shipments from Vietnam, Indonesia, Mexico among others, ICO said.

Worldwide shipments of the brew stood at 104.7 million bags (of 60 kg each) in 2010-11 crop year (October-September).

Exports in the 2011-12 coffee year registered an upward trend in Vietnam, Indonesia, Mexico, Cote D' Ivoire, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, etc, International Coffee Organisation (ICO) data said.

However, the shipments of the brew declined in major exporting countries of Brazil, Columbia, Ethiopia and India, it added.

In coffee year 2011-12, exports of Arabica totalled 66 million bags compared to 67.8 million bags last year, whereas robusta exports amounted to 41.8 million bags compared to 36.9 million bags in 2010-11.

World coffee exports rose by 3 per cent to 7.94 million bags in September 2012 compared with 7.71 million in September 2011.

The global coffee production has been estimated flat at 134.3 million bags in the 2011-12 crop year against the year-ago period as the shortfall in output in Brazil was compensated by Vietnam, Peru and Honduras.

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TODAY FARM NEWS

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MP Stock Exchange to have pan India presence by 2013

Indore based Madhya Pradesh Stock Exchange is expected to make pan India presence by organizing roadshows and awareness programmes. The stock exchange has augmented its membership by another 100 during the last few months.

After joining hands with National Stock Exchange (NSE) last year and with the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) February this year, MPSE has become the only regional stock exchange in India to provide independent trading platform for its members.

The MPSE made an alliance with NSE and BSE under Section 13 of the Security Contract Regulation Act , 1956, which permits stock exchange members to do contracts and options in securities in state or regional stock exchanges.

Established in 1919 in Indore, Madhya Pradesh Stock Exchange (MPSE) has 315 listed companies (non-compliant) and 260 members but the trading was in a hibernation mode.

“We have added new 100 members during the last few months. We have now presence across 16 states and we are expecting to add members from across the nation by March 2013,” said Ashish Goyal , a shareholder in MPSE, and added, “After the tie-up with NSE and BSE, scrip listed at MPSE will be traded in “permitted category”.

MPSE has added its members in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana. It has organized roadshows and awareness programmes to educate those potential retail investors who shy away from share market. “We have not only added new members but we expect trade volume to touch Rs 500 crore by March 2013 from existing Rs 80-100 crore.”

Obtaining a membership at MPSE is easier and cheaper than BSE and NSE. The fee is Rs

200,000 against few lakhs charged by BSE and NSE and stringent compliance norms.

MPSE is the first regional exchange to enter into agreement with both the stock exchanges and first in India to get Sebi 's approval when it allowed regional exchanges to come out of hibernation. Prior to this trading at the MPSE was allowed through its subsidiary. "Now MPSE members can issue contract notes in their names and can even appoint sub-brokers like those issued by BSE and NSE members," Goyal said.

Falling milk price hits farmers

SHIMOGA: Milk producers in Shimoga and Davanagere districts are facing a problem of plenty. They thought they could earn some relief from the drought by upping the milk production but it has landed them in grief as the purchase price is Rs 1.75 less than the price set by the milk federation.

The [Shimoga Milk Federation](#), a KMF unit, has over 1,000 milk producing cooperative societies in two districts. It gets 3.4 lakh litres of raw milk daily from its members. While 1.75 lakh litres are sold to consumers daily, the rest is converted into milk powder.

SMF president KL Jagadish told TOI the unit has unsold stock of powder and ghee worth of Rs 20 crore. About 11 litres of liquid milk produces 1 kg of dry powder and the cost of conversion is Rs 180 per kg. But the tenders are quoted at Rs 100 to Rs 120 per kg. "We're unable to sell the huge stock and are facing huge losses and this has forced the federation to reduce the purchase price," he said.

Experts said milk powder can be stored for six months. In several milk units across the state, excess powder has been stocked for the past four months. If KMF uses it immediately, it would help farmers by providing benefits accruing from the sale.

Poor farmers have a painful story. Bugged down by drought and loss of traditional farm output, the sudden hike in cost of cattle-feed in the open market clubbed with the sudden lowering of procurement price have made their life miserable, said BT Sridhar, a farmer of Bhadravati, and [Haleshappa](#) of [Shikaripur](#). Farmers have appealed to the government to make good the losses immediately.

With a view to utilizing excess liquid milk and milk powder, the government announced a few

months ago that 200 gms of milk would be given to every child daily with the midday meal. KMF was ready to provide it if it can recover the working cost.

Sources said that even after three months, the file is still awaiting clearance. The main reason is the financial crunch faced by the department of social welfare and education in implementing the scheme. Farmers have urged the government to take a decision quickly before the stocked milk powder goes bad.

Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation to meet farmers over land acquisition

NASHIK: The [Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation](#) (MIDC) will start negotiations with farmers for the proposed land acquisition for a 32km railway line from Eklahare to special economic zone (SEZ) in Sinnar this week.

[Indiabulls Realtech Ltd](#) (IRL), a subsidiary of [Indiabulls Power Ltd](#), and MIDC are jointly setting up a thermal power station at Sinnar with 1,350 MW capacity. A railway line about 32 km is to be laid between Eklahare and Sinnar for the transportation of coal. Around 173 hectare land across 12 villages is to be acquired by the MIDC.

The MIDC issued a notification on October 29, 2010 for the acquisition of the land for the Eklahare-Sinnar railway line project. Though MIDC has already completed taking measurements in some villages, it could not be done at others because farmers protested.

Sources told TOI that Rs 30 lakh per acre for arable land and Rs 15 lakh per acre for non-arable land has already been announced for the farmers.

The district collector, who is a head of the [District Land Acquisition Committee](#), and the MIDC will hold talks with the farmers on Wednesday, Nov 7, to convince them.

The land is to be acquired from the 13 villages, which include Panchak, Samangaon, Eklahare,

Hinganwedhe and Jakhori in Nashik tehsils, Jogaltembi, Naygaon, Deshvandi, Patpimpri, Baragaon, Gulvanch and Musalgaon in Sinnar tehsil and Pimpalgaon Nipani in Niphad tehsil.

"Our priority is to complete acquisition of land for the railway line for the proposed Thermal Power plant at Sinnar. We hope to convince the farmers and complete the land acquisition at the earliest," a senior official from MIDC said.

Sugar coops came a cropper due to political rivalry

NAGPUR: Vidarbha once had 22 [sugar](#) factories running on cooperative basis but eventually they shut down as sick units. Now only four remain including three run by the Purti Group in East Vidarbha and one by Vasantnao Naik Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana near Yavatmal which covers cultivators in the west.

Those who ran these cooperatives cite lack of raw material as the primary reason for the failure. Veteran Congressman [Ranjit Deshmukh](#) who headed the Ram Ganesh Gadkari Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana said that lack of irrigation affected sugarcane cultivation in Vidarbha. "Poor realization and heavy debt in the initial years itself led to losses and eventual shutting down," he said.

Dr [Sanotsh Kumar Korpe](#), whose father Annasaheb Korpe who also headed a sugar factory in Akola, cited a similar reason. "The factories were started on the basis of the region's potential to grow sugarcane. The actual supply was not up to expectations," he said.

However, according to sources in the political circles, there were other reasons for the cooperatives' downfall too. "Leaders in Vidarbha wanted to copy their counterparts in western Maharashtra and build a sugar lobby here. Finances were raised recklessly from the [Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank](#) (MSCB) only to end up in defaults. Even figures were fudged to secure loans. However, there was a great mismatch between the capacities of all the factories clubbed and sugarcane grown in the region," said a source in the BJP.

It is easy to start a sugar cooperative as loan to the tune of nine times of the capital can be secured from the MSCB. The cooperatives were also used as political turfs. For example if a factory was headed by a person whose rival was at the helm in the district cooperative bank, the

latter would deliberately delay funds for working capital requirements. This led to defaults in liabilities towards the cultivators. The cooperatives also lacked professional management, said a source in this industry.

RLD asks state government to release 50 thousand to farmers

LUCKNOW: The [Rashtriya Lok Dal](#) on Sunday asked the state government to release Rs 50,000 for each debt-ridden farmer as promised in the election manifesto of Samajwadi Party.

The party, in a statement, alleged that the state government is mounting pressure on banks to recover the dues from the farmers, and demanded a firm agriculture policy to boost the agricultural activities in the state.

"There is a grave resentment amongst the farmers. And this will show up in the [Lok Sabha](#) elections," said newly appointed Rashtriya Lok Dal state president, [Munna Singh Chauhan](#). Chauhan will officially take charge on Tuesday.

The party alleged that while the previous BSP government spent public funds on construction of memorials, the present [Samajwadi Party](#) government is not adhering to its poll promises, and accused the SP of being responsible for the recent cases of communal violence.

The party said that it will be taking all the issues to the grass roots during party's restructuring drive that is expected to begin within a fortnight.

Farming comes alive in Netravalli

NETRAVALLI: November 7, 2003: Supreme Court ordered closure of mining leases in all wildlife sanctuaries based on recommendations of its central empowered committee (CEC). Over a 1,000 kilometers away, the future suddenly appeared dark and grim to the tribals of Verle, [Todou](#) and Saljini in [Netravalli](#) wildlife sanctuary, engaged mainly as labourers in the close to 40 big and small manganese mines operating in their ancestral land.

The over 2,000 villagers—traditionally farmers whose fields lay impotent with mining silt and dust—filled the narrow and congested streets of the state capital 110 km away from their homes to register their protest against being robbed of their 'livelihood.'

November 1, 2012: Tribals snuggle together in the drizzle and chill of the cloudy afternoon in the wilderness of Verle in Netravalli as they take shelter in the local deity's temple, where they host a group of officials from the state agriculture department.

The officials narrate a new-age method of paddy cultivation that will make optimum use of the fertile brown-black Netravalli soil. Deep green forest trees and ashy harvested paddy fields stand in silence with the villagers, listening intently.

Among the attentive, interested farmers is Uttam Verlekar—instrumental in organizing the 2003 protest in Panaji.

Nine years later, Verlekar's time is occupied with taking care of and milking his five cows and his storage space at home is spilling over with paddy, the excess of which is being readied to be sold in the Curchorem market 8km away after the family's requirement is kept aside.

Verlekar remembers the time he was furious at the government and environmentalists who called for the closure of mines in Netravalli.

"I worked as a supervisor in the mines for 30 years. For two generations when 40 mines became operational in Netravalli, we did not know any other way to earn a living but work in the mines. We were worried where the money would come from to buy our groceries when the mines closed. Today, we have fresh village stream water, rice and vegetables grown in our own fields. We need money only to buy clothes. We go to market as sellers not buyers," Verlekar said.

While mining dust had affected paddy and vegetable production, many cashew trees were rooted out to make way for the mines. An hour later, officials of the agriculture department move lower into a valley in the sanctuary to the village of Todou.

Among those in the target audience in Todou is [Chamtu Velip](#), who was employed as a labourer in the mines for as little as 9 a day for a 10 to 12 hours shift.

"We would get payment once every fifteen days. Barely any money would be left to spend on our children's schooling after buying our basic necessities. It seems ridiculous now to think we felt we would not have employment if mines were shut. I need five workers per day only to pluck cashews during the season," Velip said.

His neighbour Tamdo Gaonkar saves between 1-1.50 lakh annually from the profits earned from his cashew plantations. Gaonkar has invested 8 lakh in an agricultural plot in Netravalli village to expand his [farming](#) activities—unimaginable nine year ago amidst mining dust and with the extraction activity taking place in dangerous proximity of the source of the village springs at Satladongor.

"We still cannot renovate or extend our houses. We are called to the police station the very next day. The mine owners claim ownership of the land we live on. Our ancestors were illiterate and did not have any documentation to prove their ownership of the land," Gaonkar said.

Not only the land the villagers live on, but the sacred groves worshipped by the villagers are also part of mining leases.

The villagers have been stung once by mining and seem to have decided to shy away from it for life. "Today, we will protest if mining resumes in the village," Gaonkar's brother Vittal said, determinedly. Tnn

Wheat, urea mixed up at Nadiad station

Nadiad: At the railway stock yard in Nadiad lies a deadly concoction of wheat and urea strewn over. And, authorities are turning a complete blind eye.

Many damaged wheat and urea bags have spilled their contents in the yard and will have to be disposed off - a public waste. The bags have been lying at the yard since Friday.

There are approximately 42,000 wheat gunny bags and 4,880 bags of urea that belongs to the Food Corporation of India's Nadiad godown. "This is the wheat that will get distributed among poor families. This is how we value human life allowing urea and wheat to mix," says Jayendra Shukla a regular commuter from Nadiad town.

Some wheat bags are lying on soiled railway tracks frequented by passenger trains, while some are lying along with cattle fodder. "If you see this sight you would never buy wheat from PDS system," says Shukla.

FCI officials were unaware of [the situation](#) and squarely blamed the contractor for the folly.

L K Rathod, junior superintendent, FCI says, "We have not received any complaints from the yard. Our clerical supervisor is to ensure the safe [transport of](#) the food grains and contractors have to safely load them in the goods trains."

When asked what are the side effects of consuming wheat laced with urea, NJ Gandhi, officer, food and drug department (Nadiad) said, "It will be dangerous. If large quantity of urea enters our system, it may cause organ damage."

Solution in sight to ONGC-farmers' tussle over oil leak

Trichy: A solution to the longstanding problem of providing compensation to the Keezhvelur farmers in Nagapattinam district as per an agreement reached between them and [ONGC](#) last year for the crude-sullied fields seems to be in sight.

According to ONGC's Karaikkal-based spokesman, Kunjiraman, a meeting had been called between the revenue officials headed by RDO Manikandan and ONGC representatives at 10 am on Monday to arrive at a solution. Kunjiraman said the company would come out with a clarification after the meeting on Monday to fix compensation once and for all.

The oil that leaked over the years from the ruptured underground pipes had time and again played havoc with farmlands. Though the 20-year-old pipelines had been replaced with newer lines this September, the spilled oil that had accumulated beneath the ground intermittently

surfaced onto the fields during rains. On Saturday, a 100-acre stretch of directly sown samba fields in Keezhvelur taluk wore a bronzed look after the fields caught fire in the scorching sun. Locals said poor people who were in the habit of easing themselves along the fields might have dropped a few matchsticks and might have triggered the fire.

Meanwhile, the Cauvery Farmers' Protection Association head Dhanapalan was still on the war path on Sunday evening. He said he had not been intimidated about the proposed meeting, and even if he was called to attend the meeting on Monday, he would not.