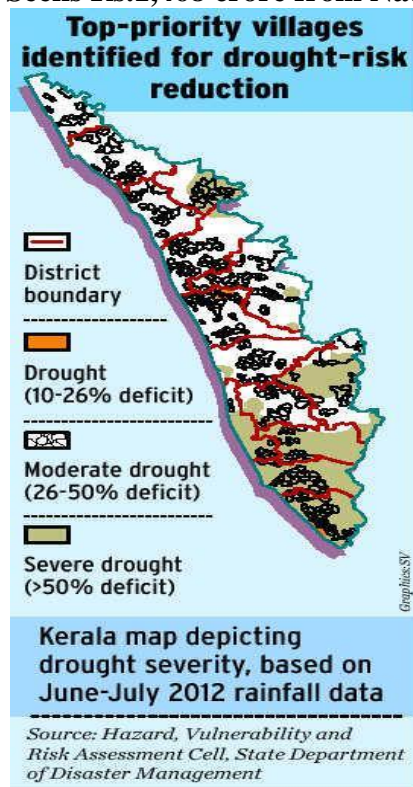


State fears an impending drought disaster

Seeks Rs.1,468 crore from National Disaster Response Fund as support



The drought situation in the State should be classified as an “impending disaster,” the State government has said in a memorandum to the National Disaster Response Fund.

The government has sought an allocation of Rs.1,468 crore from the Fund, as “initial support” for short- and long-term drought-relief measures.

The petition says an “impending disaster” should be declared considering the water-usage characteristics of the State and its dependence on the southwest monsoon for a stable economy and power generation.

Classified villages

The State has classified 492 of its villages as severely drought-affected, as they had recorded a rainfall deficit of over 50 per cent. Another 1,070 villages experience moderate drought with the deficit in the range of 26 per cent and 50 per cent.

The classifications have been made on the basis of India Meteorological Department guidelines.

The State government had already declared Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Idukki, and Wayanad drought-hit districts.

The drought situation has necessitated external aid, particularly from the Union government, it has stated.

A Central team, led by Narendra Bhooshan, an official of the Union Agriculture Ministry, will take stock of the drought situation in the State from Tuesday.

Ban on borewells

The State has intimated the Union government of “rationing orders” on drinking water supply in the State. A ban on digging deep borewells has been enforced.

A major portion of the assistance, if sanctioned, will go towards drought-relief and -response measures, such as the schemes to be undertaken by the Kerala Water Authority. Agriculture, horticulture, and animal husbandry sectors too will get considerable amounts.

Drought impact

Rice production in the State is expected to drop by 40 per cent as the shortage of water has affected the rice-growing districts of Palakkad, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Thrissur, and Malappuram. The scarcity of rain meant less paddy was transplanted, affecting the crop yield. The reduced rain has increased acidity in the paddy fields, and there are apprehensions that Pokkali rice farming will be affected, State authorities said. The overall agriculture production is expected to drop by 40 per cent. The State may forgo the interest on farmers’ loans. More interest-free loans will have to be disbursed, the memorandum said.

People in this village pray for drought

Crops destroyed due to waterlogging; khap panchayat bans paddy cultivation



PROBLEM OF PLENTY: Krishen Kumar showing his ruined crops in Mundahera village in Jhajjar district of Haryana.— Photo: Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar

“Our village is unique: here people do not pray for rains but for a drought,” quipped Krishen Kumar, a farmer of Mundahera village of Jhajjar, as he showed how a rise in the water level in his village and adjoining areas has led to waterlogging and destruction of standing crops in his village.

While after the construction of the Jawaharlal Nehru Canal in the late 70s, the water table in the area had started rising, the problem began when some farmers began sowing paddy to make use of the standing waters.

“That was okay for only about 20 per cent farmers, whose land was on higher ground, but for others it meant submerged fields. The higher fields began experiencing more *nooni* (higher salt levels) which even harmed arhar, jowar and cotton crops that require less water,” said Krishen. Around 10 villages in the region, just about 70 km from Delhi, have badly suffered due to this problem.

Villagers protest

As clamour for corrective action grew, the Jakhar khap panchayat in neighbouring Salhavaas village in May 2011 banned paddy cultivation in 36 villages in the region. “This year no one, barring a few families in the Akeri village close to the canal, has sown paddy. People have protested about it to the Deputy Commissioner and a social boycott of those who did not adhere to the directive is on the cards,” said Krishen.

The villagers see in the khap decision a glimmer of hope. Krishen, who lost his right hand in a thresher accident about five years ago, said the selfish approach of some had led to stagnation of water in his fields and destruction of the standing jowar (sorghum) crop.

Krishen hailed the khap decision to impose a fine of Rs. 5,100 on those growing paddy. In fact, he wanted more stringent action. “Follow-up action in the form of social boycott and expulsion from the caste will have greater impact.”

The former CRPF Inspector, Tek Chand, insisted the Jakhar khap decision was for the larger good. If people actually abide by it, it would help lower the salt content in the soil within the next three to four years. “Right now, about 20 per cent fields in the region remain submerged all through the year. In about 60 per cent, there is deficient production as nothing can be grown till mid-October when they start drying up and crops like mustard are sown.”

While most farmers are able to grow wheat which is sown by mid-November, as by then the fields would have considerably dried up, Tek Chand said the output was normally low due to the degradation of the soil quality.

In Salhavaas village, Rajinder Kumar along with about a dozen other farmers has filed cases against the Irrigation Department to protest the siphoning off of water from the canal by some farmers who have land near it. “This excess water is destroying the livelihood of nearly two lakh people in the region. The government should also act tough in the matter.”

A way out?

Mool Chand, who retired from the Agriculture Department, said there was hope as deep borewells were being sunk at Beri to make the excess water flow to the deeper water tables. “On the other side of the Nehru canal in Dhaniya, Bhakli and Kosli villages, the water table is about 30 to 35 feet below the surface. So, such a move to drain out excess water from here would benefit people in the entire area.”

Farmers worried as prices of commodities crash

Government goes in for market intervention to stop slide



The fall: Tomato prices have crashed and the commodity is being sold at Re. 1 a kg in the Chikmagalur market.— File photo

After severe drought in the kharif season (2012), farmers are a distressed lot as prices of several commodities have crashed in wholesale markets across the State.

Prices of copra, coconut, onion, tomato, black gram and maize fell after the arrival of commodities in wholesale markets in the last few days.

Following the slide in prices, the government has directed the Karnataka Cooperative Marketing Federation and other agencies to procure commodities at minimum support prices fixed by the Centre to prevent distress sale by farmers.

Copra prices were ruling at Rs. 4,700 to Rs. 4,800 per quintal in Tiptur, the major copra market in the State. The minimum support price (MSP) fixed by the Centre for copra is Rs. 5,350 per quintal.

A Cabinet subcommittee, headed by Deputy Chief Minister K.S. Eshwarappa, which chaired a meeting on October 9, has come to the rescue of growers by deciding to grant additional support price of Rs. 700 a quintal of copra above the already existing MSP of Rs. 5,350 per quintal during 2012.

Coconut growers would get additional benefit of Rs. 7 a kg. The State government has released Rs. 5 crore to the Karnataka Cooperative Marketing Federation to procure copra at Rs. 6,050 a quintal. It has been decided to procure 75,000 quintals of copra under the market intervention scheme of the State.

Each coconut farmer can supply only 10 quintals of copra to the procurement agency to get additional support price (Rs. 700), federation officials told *The Hindu* on Friday.

The federation has procured 53,000 quintals of copra at Rs. 5,350 a quintal. It would handover procured copra to the National Agriculture Cooperative Marketing Federation (NAFED).

The price for coconut has been fixed at Rs. 1,400 per quintal. The price crashed to Rs. 1,000 a quintal in Chamarajangar district. A growers' society has been procuring coconuts in the district.

In Chamarajanagar district, coconut plantations are spread over 11,500 hectares and it produces 12.42 lakh coconuts a year. The Deputy Commissioner of Chamarajangar has been instructed to procure coconut at an MSP of Rs. 1,400 a quintal.

The Cabinet sub-committee has fixed the onion price at Rs. 360 a quintal. Onion crop was grown on 22,299 hectares in the State in the 2012 kharif season. Expecting fall in the prices of onion this year also, the government decided to intervene in the market and fixed the price at Rs. 360 a quintal, the officials said.

The price of 'A' grade onion is fixed at Rs. 760 a quintal, 'B' grade at Rs. 560 a quintal and 'C' grade at Rs. 360 a quintal.

The deputy commissioners, who are also heading district task forces, have been told to open procurement centres to purchase the commodity from growers.

Tomato prices have crashed and farmers have been staging protests by throwing their produce on roads in Chikmagalur district. Tomatoes are being sold at Rs. 1 a kg in Chikmagalur market. The committee has fixed the tomato price at Rs. 250 a quintal. Deputy Commissioners have been instructed to procure tomatoes through HOPCOMS.

The falling prices of black gram have left farmers worried in Gulbarga and Bidar districts. The State Federation has been told to procure it at an MSP of Rs. 4,400 a quintal. The grain is selling between Rs. 2,900 and Rs. 3,300 per quintal at the APMC yards in both districts.

Training programme on post-harvest technology

Tamil Nadu State Agricultural Marketing Board conducted a training programme on post-harvest technology for farmers at Regulated Market, Madurai on Wednesday.

Deputy Director of Agriculture (Agri Business), C. Moorthy while inaugurating the training programme explained the activities of agricultural marketing and agri business department highlighting aspects on commodity group formation, marketing infrastructure facilities, district facilitation centre, collection centre, drying yard formation and national mission on Food Processing scheme 2012-13.

Regulated market

Madurai Market Committee secretary Thavasamuthu explained the activities of the regulated market.

Paddy farmers have been asked to avail the pledge loan facility during glut in the market through regulated market to get better price for their produce, the Market Committee secretary said.

He further said that the regulated market does not collect any interest on the loan amount for the first fifteen days and the rate of interest for up to 180 days is 5 per cent.

Better market price

Assistant Director of Agriculture (publicity and propaganda) PL.Arunachalam said that the farmers could wait till they get better market price for their produce.

He also explained to the farmers about the value addition grading, storage of agricultural produce and post harvest technologies for paddy, millets, pulses, groundnut, gingelly, cotton and chillies.

Change in weather likely to result in fluctuating egg production, say experts

Egg-laying birds may have normal feed intake but their output may vary

The weather advisory from the Agrometeorological Advisory Services (AAS) attached to the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University states that the prevailing weather conditions could hit production of eggs.

According to the report the sky will be generally cloudy till Tuesday, while there are chances for mild precipitation at a few places.

Temperature

Maximum day temperature is expected to be in the range of 33 degrees Celsius to 34 degrees Celsius, while the minimum night temperature could be around 25 degrees Celsius. Maximum and minimum relative humidity could be in the range of 78 to 85 percent and 56 to 64 percent respectively, according to the scientists at the University.

With the above weather conditions the egg laying birds will have normal feed intake, but there will be fluctuation in egg production, the report further states.

Head of the AAS Dr. A. Natarajan said that change in day and night temperature, rise in humidity and rainfall will favour occurrence of mycotoxin in the feed and feed ingredients.

He suggested proper storage, utilization of stored ingredients on first-cum-first-served basis and use of properly-dried feed ingredients as suitable measures to be followed during this weather condition in order to protect the health of the birds and prevent needless fatalities.

Post-mortem observations in birds brought to the Veterinary College and Research Institute reveals that the death of birds was caused by Upper Respiratory Tract Infection and E. coli Infection.

Farmers

Poultry farmers are advised to follow proper bio-security measures by testing drinking water for presence of E.coli and by using appropriate sanitizers.

The Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) has advised farmers to make use of the present rainfall – before the onset of Northeast Monsoon – to cultivate samba paddy through the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) method with low seed rate of three kg per acre.

Persons who are interested in planting mango trees in their fields or other suitable locations should make pits with dimension of 3 x 3 x 3 feet, fill them with 10 kg compost and 100 grams neem cake and plant with a space of eight metre between the saplings, according to the advise given by the Krishi Vigyan Kendra.

“While doing grafted plant cultivation, the graft union should be above the ground level,” scientists in the Krishi Vigyan Kendra said.

Day-long training on red gram cultivation

A day-long training on red gram cultivation will be held at Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Vamban, near here on October 16. In a press release, C.Manoharan, Collector, said farmers would be exposed to latest techniques in red gram cultivation, with focus on pest control measures and high-yielding cultivation practices.

Medicinal plant conservation area proposed at Pachamalai

Forest department to designate 'Kannimaar Shola' as MPCA



allure of nature:A view of scenic Pachamalai hills from Murugankoilfile photo

Rich in natural vegetation and comprising a large number of endemic, endangered and vulnerable plant species, the vast patch of 'Kannimar Shola' in the scenic Pachamalai hills has been identified as a zone of significant floral diversity by the State forest department.

The department has proposed to accord a special status to the nearly 200-hectare 'Kannimaar Shola' area and designate it as a Medicinal Plant Conservation Area (MPCA) for in situ conservation of medicinal plant species and other plant species in natural habitats by involving the local community in the hills.

The 'Kannimar Shola' area is a unique wet evergreen forest type in the eastern ghats with medicinal plants diversity, and other rare and endangered plant species.

The thick vegetation acts a central habitat for many birds and different species of butterflies.

Having identified the vast patch as a biodiversity hot spot and as an MPCA, the department will soon forward a detailed project to the National Medicinal Plants Board, a statutory body, seeking funds for in situ conservation of natural vegetation most of which were being used by the tribals for making traditional medicines.

The conservation strategy would be devised with active involvement of the local community by constituting joint forest management committees and protect the area from biotic factors of degradation such as illicit felling of trees, grazing, fire and destructive methods of collection of medicinal plants, says District Forest Officer I. Anwardeen.

The department has also proposed to carry out a floristic survey of the area to determine the species composition and identify rare, endangered and threatened listed plant species besides monitoring their regeneration status. Complete documentation of the species is also proposed to be done once the funds are sanctioned.

There are 11 MPCAs in different places in Tamil Nadu including in Kodaikanal, Kolli hills in Salem, Top Slip near Pollachi, Alagarkoil in Dindigul, Pechiparai in Kanyakumari, and Thenmalai in Tiruppur. Mr. Anwardeen said MPCAs are reserve forest sites of high biodiversity value and known for their medicinal plant diversity.

Poor irrigation hits sunflower yield



shrivelled future:A farmer displaying a withered sunflower at Tiruthalaiyur village near Musiri.PHOTO: M.SRINATH

The yield of sunflower seeds has registered a drastic slump in and around Musiri following shortage of water for irrigation due to erratic power supply. Sunflower cultivators of several villages in and around Tiruthalaiyur complain that the harvest this time was far less than the usual yield.

E.Gnanasekaran (55) a farmer of Tiruthalaiyur village says that he had incurred an expenditure Rs.4, 000 for raising the 'Lakshmi' variety in his fields of about 48 cents. The 90-day crop, raised in the Tamil month of 'Avani', was being harvested now. Normally, he used to harvest the seeds and sell it to the traders for Rs.10, 000 thereby registering a profit by about Rs.6,000.

But, this season, he had to incur extra expenditure for his irrigation . The farmer says that he 'purchased' water from an adjoining field by shelling out Rs.50 per hour for 15 15 hours for running the motor . Despite all these efforts, he could not register the usual harvest .

On Sunday, he was seen harvesting the field along with his family members. "My wife and daughter assist me in harvesting the fields, as I could not afford to pay for agricultural labourers," he says.

Against the usual 400 seeds that could be harvested from a single flower he could harvest only 200-odd seeds. This season, he expects to register a meagre profit of Rs.2,000.

Farmers in a number of villages in and around Thuraiyur and Musiri take to sunflower at different seasons in the year.

Reaping profits from minor forest produce

Apart from creating a market for minor forest produces such as jackfruit, honey, cinnamon, gooseberry, and kokam, Kadamba Marketing Souharda Sahakari Cooperative Ltd., a cooperative society formed by a group of farmers from Sirsi in Uttara Kannada district, has also been creating awareness among people on biodiversity conservation.

The society was established in 2005 for marketing forest produces.

Earlier, farmers were forced to sell cinnamon and soap nut to middlemen at throwaway prices owing to the absence of an organised market.

'Kadamba'

It collects minor forest produce from local people at competitive prices. Processing, value addition and packaging is done by the society, which sells the products under the brand name 'Kadamba.'

The society sells juices prepared from kokam, gooseberry, artocarpus lakoocha, and camboja garcena fruits.

Biodiversity

Vishweshwar Bhat, manager of Kadamba Society, told *The Hindu* that local people who were making a profit out of the minor forest produces had realised the importance of conserving biodiversity. Saplings of cinnamon, jackfruit, and kokam were provided by the society for free to

farmers, who planted them on unused land, because of which the green cover had also enhanced, he said.

These products have a good market in Karnataka, Goa and Kerala.

More outlets

The society is planning to set up a sales outlet in Bangalore. Also, it has set up a honey processing unit at Yellapur at a cost of Rs. 16 lakh. The credit of popularising food products prepared from jackfruit, another minor forest produce, must go to the society.

It has been organising jackfruit melas every summer since its inception in Sirsi, in which, food products prepared by local women from jackfruit are sold.

Many women from poor families in and around Sirsi have been making a living by preparing chips and 'paapad' made of jackfruit.

Training programmes on preparation and packaging jackfruit chips and papaad are being organised by the society in nearby villages regularly.

The society provides necessary equipment to beneficiaries. The food products are purchased by the society from local residents.

The society recently organised a training programme on preparing jackfruit products for members of Kunubi tribe in Manchikeri village. It has planned to organise a similar training programme for members of Sidhi tribe in Yallapur and Ankola taluks as well.

Farmers at the mercy of middlemen to get harvesters

Lack of machines driving farmers to private agents

Farmers in the Kuttanad area of the district are at the mercy of agents or middlemen to get combine harvester machines for the second round of paddy cultivation known as 'virippu.'

The Kerala Agro Industries Corporation (KAIC), a joint venture of Central and Kerala governments, had bought 150 combine harvesters for Alappuzha, Pathanamthitta and Kottayam districts under the Kuttanad package.

However, with nearly 70 to 80 machines now harvesting the 'virippu' in these districts, the machines are not available to farmers in Kuttanad.

Thankachan Varghese, a paddy farmer from Champakulam, says the KAIC's machines are available only to paddy polder samithis, a collective of farmers in an area, but they have to pay a deposit of Rs.20,000 and a fee of Rs.750 per hour.

“Some paddy polder samithis are finding it difficult to pay the deposit. The KAIC has only a few operators. The responsibility of finding an operator and maintaining the combine harvester machine lies with the paddy polder samithi office-bearers who hire the machine.

This situation lands the samithis and farmers in the hands of agents who hire private machines, supply drivers and charge Rs.1,500 per hour,” he said.

A KAIC official told *The Hindu* that around 25 machines were deployed for harvesting in the district from the Ambalapuzha office of the KAIC.

“There are enough operators and we have trained a batch of 250 operators of which around 75 operators can operate very well. We charge only Rs.750 per hour including the charges of an operator,” he said.

The KAIC provides machines only to those paddy polder samithis that have documents certified by respective agricultural officers.

“We also enter into an agreement with the paddy polder samithi specifying the process of hiring of the machines, as a machine costs around Rs.20 lakh,” the official said.

The agents or middleman mainly source machines from Salem in Tamil Nadu and from local private parties. Despite the high charge of machines source through middlemen, the difficulty in obtaining the machines from KAIC is forcing many farmers and paddy polder samithis to go in for private machines.

Cardamom sector crisis hits workers' wages

Protests planned for early auctions



The crisis in the cardamom sector following a boycott of auction centres by traders from September 25 is likely to affect the labour sector too, as the planters are unable to clear the weekly wages (workers are paid on Saturday) owing to stockpiling of produce.

Mathew George, a medium-level planter, told *The Hindu* on Sunday that though prices had not fallen in the open market, there was no way of knowing the exact prices in the absence of auctions.

Farmers were either forced to sell the produce at a price decided by the agents of the traders or hold back the stock. The first fallout of this was a cut in labour costs and other expenses.

M.B. Surendran Pillai, general secretary of the Udumbanchola Estate Workers Union, said the stockpiling of the produce would have an impact on the labour sector. So far, no major labour cuts or delayed payments had been noticed, but if the strike continued for an indefinite period, the situation would undergo a change.

Hike in bidding rate

He said a union meeting had decided to launch a stir from October 22 to press for a solution to the crisis caused a circular issued by the Spices Board to the traders raising the bidding rate from 50 paise to Rs.5 and reducing the payment period from 21 days to 12 days.

Meanwhile, the Kerala Karshaka Sanghom and the Centre of Indian Trade Unions have decided to stage a five-day dharna in front of the Spices Park at Puttady from Monday. Kerala Karshaka Sanghom State executive member M.M. Mani and CITU district unit secretary K.S. Mohanan said the strike would be intensified if a solution to the crisis was not found soon.

Mr. Mani said thousands of workers from Tamil Nadu worked in the cardamom plantations on daily wages. Their livelihood would be affected in addition to that of the permanent workers on the estates.

KC(M) rally

The Kerala Congress (M) will take out a rally to the Spices Park at Puttady on Wednesday demanding immediate steps to restart the auction process, a release here said.

Meanwhile, the Spices Board has convened separate meetings of cardamom growers, traders, and representatives of workers on Monday to find a solution to the crisis. Cardamom Growers Association president K.S. Mathew said he hoped for an amicable solution that protected the interests of the farmers.

New milk price takes effect

The revised prices for milk from Milma came into effect in the State on Sunday. The revisions are in tune with the decision of the Kerala Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation on October 10 to hike the prices by Rs.5.

Taken in view of the cost escalation in milk production, the revision will have the double-toned milk that comes in yellow covers priced at Rs.32 a litre; toned milk in blue covers priced at Rs.33 a litre; homogenised toned milk that comes in pink covers priced at Rs.35; and homogenised Jersey milk priced at Rs.35. Jersey milk (non-homogenised) costs Rs.35 now while Rich Plus milk costs Rs.37. Standardised milk will be sold at Rs.36 a litre while the revised price of skimmed milk curd for a 500 gm packet will be Rs.20.

Financial aid for timber production

The Forest Department will provide financial assistance to land owners for production of timber. Seedlings of various trees would be supplied by the social forestry wing of the department in bulk for prices ranging from Rs.30 to Rs.50, depending on the number of seedlings ordered. It would also give Rs.16,000 as promotional assistance. — Special Correspondent

Horticulture scheme to benefit one lakh tribal families

It is aimed at making them economically self-sufficient

The Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Tribes Cooperative Finance Corporation (TRICOR) in cooperation with the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) is in the process of formulating action plan and identifying beneficiaries under a horticulture scheme aimed at reaching out to 1 lakh tribal families and making them economically self-sufficient.

The programme launched under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) in 2012-13 had targeted 1 lakh tribal families within a 2 year time frame. Depending on the necessity the programme implementation will be stretched to 2015-16 year to realise the target of covering one lakh families. Of the total 2 lakh tribal families 1 lakh families are already raising horticulture plantations in their own lands. Under the programme the tribal farmers should take up plantation in 1 hectare of land among the four plants proposed including coffee, cashew, mango and silver oak. TRICOR is extending financial assistance of Rs.20,000 per acre and the Department of Tribal Welfare will pass on 100 per cent subsidy on the loan component.

The beneficiaries of the scheme can develop their own farm lands using the NREGS component of wages for farm labour for three years. Under the scheme the beneficiaries are eligible for payment of 3-year maintenance costs. The beneficiaries are supplied plant materiel, grafts and organic manure making the total scheme 100 per cent financed by the government.

In the first year a maintenance of Rs.20,000 will be given followed by Rs 7,000 and Rs.8000 for the subsequent two years. Horticulture Officer Ramanjaneyulu told *The Hindu* that during 2012-13 cashew will be planted in 1,500 acres, coffee in 7,000 acres, and silver oak in 20,000 acres. This apart the farmers will also go in for inter crops, including vegetables, turmeric, and pepper, for earning regular income as the above mentioned plantations have a gestation period running into 3-4 years. The target fixed up to 2015-16 year based on feasibility studies include coffee plantation in 27,209 acres benefiting 25,357 farmers, silver oak in 34,124 acres benefiting 35,455 farmers, mango in 23,758 acres benefiting 22,948 farmers, cashew in 4,289 acres benefiting 4,846 farmers, and other horticulture crops in 4,117 acres benefiting 4,846 farmers.

A survey had been conducted in the Paderu agency area at the mandal level in all the 11 Agency mandals by the agriculture and horticulture officers to identify the beneficiaries and their socio-economic conditions.

Ground Ziro

It's all about land for the Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh, who are believed to have migrated from beyond the Khru and Kime rivers in the north. Their methods of agriculture have drawn worldwide attention.



Tucked in the lower ranges of the eastern Himalayas is the bowl-shaped Ziro Valley, the home of the Apatanis who practise a unique agriculture system in which no farm animals, machines and modern methods are used. Their wet rice cultivation system is extensive when compared to the surrounding tribal regions, where terrace and shifting cultivation are practised. Every inch of arable land is used, and in spite of limited water resources — one small river waters the entire expanse — the Apatanis' dedication to their occupation has earned Ziro Valley the “World Heritage Site” tag from UNESCO.

In the labour-intensive wet rice cultivation system, water is allowed to stay on the fields, and once the paddy seedlings are transplanted, three cycles of weeding are done to ensure a healthy crop.

Paddy-cum-fish culture is popular with the Apatanis. While paddy is being cultivated, fish is also reared on the fields. Domestic waste is used to enrich the soil thereby enhancing ecological sustainability.

The Apatanis' love for land is evident from their fencing techniques for land demarcation. Tall fences stand guard around every plot. The house of the Apatanis has its own architectural style. Primarily made of timber and bamboo, it is raised four feet from the ground. Houses are closely constructed and situated near the fields so that water from the river is judiciously used.

The spectacular Ziro Valley is also the headquarters of Lower Subansiri district, situated at a height of 1,500 metres above sea level. It is surrounded by blue rolling hills and is topographically cut off from the rest of the populated areas of Arunachal Pradesh. The tattooing and stuffing of large nose plugs (yaping hullo), once popular among the women, has gradually declined in recent years. According to legend, there was a time the Apatani tribe was subjected to frequent invasions by other tribes. The invaders not only looted them but also stole their pretty women. The Apatani men, therefore, came up with the idea of nose plugs and tattoos to make their women look less attractive to the invaders. The men, however, tie their hair in a knot just above the forehead (piiding) using a brass rod (piiding khotu).

The staple food of the Apatanis includes rice, fish and pork. One of their delicacies is cooked rice stuffed in a hollow bamboo stem, which is then baked on fire. At nights, villagers sit together and enjoy home-brewed rice beer.



Sena for more ginger extraction plants

Arunachal Pradesh agriculture minister [Setong Sena](#) has called for setting up of more ginger oleoresin extraction plants in ginger-producing areas of the state to create a viable market for ginger farmers.

Sena visited the ginger oleoresin extraction plant, Kryptokroma, at Chandan Nagar industrial estate near here on Saturday.

The minister assured that the state government would provide all possible support in creating a link between farmers and traders in this regard as such initiatives would help realize chief minister Nabam Tuki's vision of creating employment for youths in agriculture and allied sectors. tnn

Kryptokroma is an export-oriented unit for producing ginger oleoresins, and the first of its kind in the northeast region, informed [Kiran Mehta](#), the firm's representative.

Oleoresin represents the complete flavour profile of ginger and is widely used in soups, sauces, chutneys, dressings, dairy products, baked foods, confectionery, snacks, beverages and pharmaceutical products, Mehta said.

HindustanTimes

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Monday, Oct 15

Max 33.5° | Min 25.4°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 70

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:59

Sunset: 05:49

Barometer: 1012

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Tuesday, Oct 16

Max 30° | Min 25°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday
Oct 17



31° | 24°

Thursday
Oct 18



30° | 25°

Friday
Oct 19



29° | 25°

Saturday
Oct 20



29° | 25°

Sunday
Oct 21



28° | 26°

Rainy

Rainy

Rainy

Cloudy

Rainy

Airport Weather

Rain: 0 Sunrise: 06:22

Humidity: 45 Sunset: 05:51

Delhi

Wind: normal Barometer: 1015



Peas prices rise on local demand

Peas prices rose by Rs 20 per quintal on the wholesale pulses market today on local demand.

However, other pulses moved in a narrow range in scattered deals and settled around previous levels.

Traders said some local demand mainly helped peas prices to trade higher.

In the national capital, peas white and green rose by Rs 20 each to Rs 2,820-2,870 and Rs 2,970-3,020 per quintal.

The following are today's pulses rates per quintal:

Urad 3,800-4,100, Urad Chilka (local) 4,500-4,800, best 5,000-5,500, Dhoya 5,400- 5,500, Moong 4,850-5,350, Dal Moong Chilka local 5,300-5,700, Moong Dhoya local 5,850-5,950 and best quality 6,550-6,650.

Masoor small 3,600-3,800, bold 3,750-3,950, Dal Masoor local 4,300-4,400, best quality 4,400-4,500, Malka local 4,100-4,200, best 4,300-4,400, Moth 4,200-4,500, Arhar 4,200-4,500, Dal Arhar Dara 5,800-6,000.

Gram 4,650-5,750, Gram Dal (local) 5,800-5,900, best quality 6,000-6,100, Besan (35 kg) Shakti bhog 2,110, Rajdhani 2,110, Rajmah Chitra 7,500-9,800, Kabli Gram small 5,000-8,500, dabra 2,700-2,800, imported 4,700-5,100; Lobia 3,900-4,400, Peas white 2,820-2,870 and green 2,970-3,020.

AP to probe sucking pest attack on Bt cotton



The Andhra Pradesh Government will probe the reported attack of sucking pests on Bt cotton in some parts of the State.

The Agriculture Minister Kanna Lakshminarayana has directed the officials to initiate a probe by the scientists of Acharya N.G. Ranga Agriculture University (ANGRAU) on the reported damage of Bt cotton crop due to the nagging sucking pests.

Reviewing the arrangements for the upcoming rabi season here on Friday evening, he said about 2.75 lakh quintals of groundnut seed would be distributed for the season.

The Agriculture Minister will hold a meeting with the Major Irrigation Minister P. Sudarshan Reddy on October 26 on the issue of releasing water for the standing kharif crops in the K C Canal and Krishna Delta areas. The farmers in these areas are demanding immediate release of water to rescue the crop in the absence of rains.

The Government would hold a 13-day campaign through out the State to popularise the Centrally-sponsored schemes and mechanisation in agriculture.

At the review meeting, the Minister had expressed his unhappiness over the poor mechanisation and on the slow progress in implementation of certain Central schemes.

Post-harvest supply chain, poor warehousing woes of agri sector'

Agricultural produce to the tune of Rs 50,000-60,000 crore is lost due to poor post-harvest infrastructure and insufficient supply chain management, according to a report on Indian Agribusiness.

Most warehouses and logistics providers lack adequate scientific and technical facilities to store and transport perishable commodities such as seafood, fruits, vegetables, the report "Indian Agribusiness cultivating future opportunities" by Boston Consulting Group said.

About 30-40 per cent of horticulture produce is wasted annually due to inadequate storage and transportation facilities, it said, pointing out that the shortfall for warehouse capacity is likely to touch 70 million tonnes (mt) to 80 mt by 2015.

"The country currently requires 130-140 mt of dry storage for a production of approximately 220 mt of foodgrain, 27 mt of oilseeds, and 35 mt of other cash crops such as cotton, jute," the report said.

The post-harvest supply chain is one of the critical levers that can resolve some of the key issues plaguing agriculture in the country. On the other hand, it provides a huge opportunity for the private sector to look at a profitable business.

Warehousing woes

The warehouse sector is currently highly fragmented with its presence being confined primarily to local players. The key challenge in the industry is to tackle the domination by unorganised players with low capacities and poor handling, stacking and monitoring facilities.

Intense competition from small truckers to non-registered business entities that offer a smaller space for storing goods is another challenge to overcome. The problem in the sector was that a majority of the warehouses are about 5,000 sq ft in space against an average size of approximately 50,000 sq ft in developed countries.

Smaller sizes limit the ability of warehouse owners to invest in high-quality construction, technology, and modern material handling equipment, the report said.

Other problems facing the sector were uneven distribution of warehousing facilities with most of the sector concentrated in Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Harayana and lack of supporting infrastructure such as power and specialised transport.

Though the Centre has come up with various measures such as the Warehousing Development Act and allowing 100 per cent FDI investment, the traditional business model of the sector is not economically viable, the report said.

Stating that several global players have built successful business, it said that the sector in the country is still at a nascent stage.

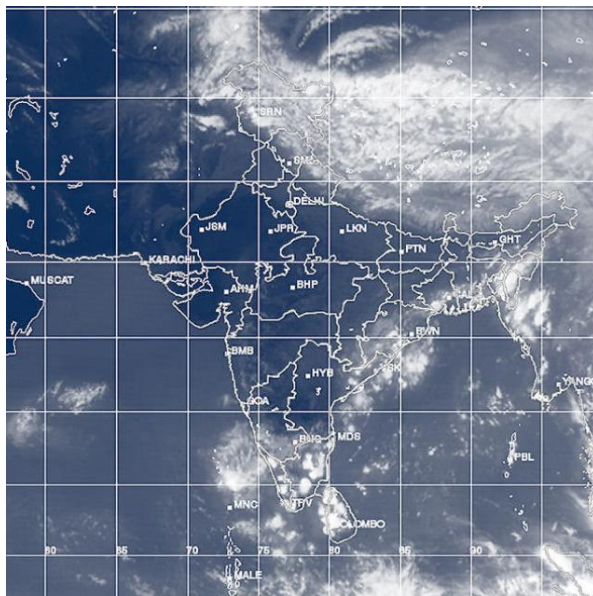
Based on cost-benefit analysis, the report said the recommended approach for an entrepreneur in the sector was to build strong presence in a select geography, expand offerings, become a strong pan-India player and look for multi-revenue streams.

Logistics

Third-party logistics is emerging as key concept in the country and this involved a single logistics provider managing end-to-end logistics for a firm.

While it will take time for focussed agri-based logistics business model to evolve, the key to third-party logistics will be building scale, optimising logistics, ability to provide value-added services and access to quality sub-contractors.

Heavy rain outlook maintained for Kerala, Tamil Nadu



Heavy rain has been forecast over Kerala and Tamil Nadu during next two days ahead of the arrival of North-East monsoon or ‘monsoon in reverse.’

An extended forecast for the next seven days said that rain or thundershowers would lash many places over extreme south peninsular India.

HEAVIER IN TN

One or two places over coastal Tamil Nadu are expected to witness heavy rains, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. Meanwhile, global forecasts said easterly winds have brought North-East monsoon over South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand, just to the east of Andaman Sea.

Vestiges of predecessor South-West monsoon prevail over Andaman Sea, but should soon give way for easterlies blowing in from the Gulf of Thailand.

Andaman Sea is the gateway for North-East monsoon. An 'easterly wave' will help reverse the flows here to being easterly winds over the next few days.

Over peninsular east coast, a trough (elongated area of low pressure) lay extended in readiness from Odisha to south Kerala.

INITIALLY WEAK

It featured a cyclonic circulation over south Kerala and adjoining Tamil Nadu, which has been triggering brief wet spells on Friday. The Climate Prediction Centre of US National Weather Services suggests seasonal rains (North-East monsoon) may not drive up to full strength over peninsular India and south-east Bay of Bengal at least until October 23.

As had been forecast, the withdrawal of predecessor South-West monsoon all on a sudden gathered pace on Friday.

It signed off from Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, north Arabian Sea, Bihar, Vidarbha, parts of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Marathwada, madhya Maharashtra, Konkan, Goa and central Arabian Sea.

EXIT PHASE

The withdrawal line passed through Forbesganj, Hazaribagh, Champa, Bramhapuri, Nanded, Pune and Alibagh.

Conditions are favourable for further withdrawal from Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, parts of West Bengal, Sikkim, the north eastern States, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and central Arabian Sea during next three days.

Soyabean output pegged at 11.1 mt in 2012-13



Soyabean production in India is expected to rise marginally to 11.1 million tonnes (mt) in the current marketing year, which commenced this month, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has said.

The estimate of the US agency for the 2012-13 marketing year (MY) (October-September) is below the output estimates of the government and industry body Soyabean Processors Association of India (SOPA).

“Based on preliminary field assessments, 2012-13 soyabean production is forecast at 11.1 million tonnes, marginally higher than last year, but down 0.4 million tonnes from the previous estimate,” USDA said in its latest report.

USDA had pegged India’s soyabean output in MY 2010-11 at 11 million tonnes. SOPA expects soyabean production at 12.68 million tonnes in the MY 2012-13, whereas, the first advance estimate of the Agriculture Ministry has pegged the output of the important cash crop at 12.62 million tonnes.

As per government data, the country produced 12.28 million tonnes in the last season.

Soyabean area in 2012-13 marketing year has reached an all time high of 10.7 million hectares, up 3,67,000 hectares from last year, USDA said.

“Late arrival of monsoon rains over major soybean growing regions recouped the much needed soil moisture and encouraged late planting, extending at some places till the end of July,” USDA said.

Low average yield due to late planting will be partially offset by the gain in planted area, it added.

“Strong domestic prices (50 per cent higher than corresponding period last year) of soyabeans were an additional incentive for expanding area to soyabeans,” USDA noted.

According to industry data, the prices of soyabean seed in the market were in the range of Rs 30,000 per tonne in the second week of this month as against an average price of Rs 20,239 a tonne in October, 2011.

84% offerings sold at Coonoor tea auction

About 84 per cent of the 10-week high offer of 14.28 lakh kg at Sale No: 41 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions was sold.

Homedale Estate tea, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped the CTC market when Belmont Tea and Produce Co bought it for Rs 151 a kg. Vigneshwar Estate and Deepika Supreme got Rs 138 each, Blue Monte Speciality Rs 137 and Hittakkal Estate Rs 135.

In all, 81 marks got Rs 100 and more.

Among orthodox teas from corporate sector, Chamraj got Rs 201, Highfield Estate Rs 180, Kairbetta Rs 167, Havukal Rs 166, Corsley and Prammas Rs 150 each.

In all, 30 marks got Rs 100 and more.

“Orthodox leaf market eased Rs 2-4 a kg. High-priced and medium CTC leaf lost Rs 1-2 and plainers, Rs 2-4. Orthodox dusts fetched Rs 2-5 more. High-priced CTC dusts eased Rs 2-4 and others, Rs 1-2”, an auctioneer told *Business Line*.

exports

Export demand was weak with only skeletal purchase for Pakistan for Rs 80-87 a kg, the CIS Rs 73-87, African ports Rs 80-86 and European ports Rs 91-120.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 70-72 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 95-130 for brighter liquoring sorts.

They ranged Rs 76-82 for plain dusts and Rs 100-135 for brighter liquoring dusts.