

A benefit-sharing model that did not yield desired results

TBGRI working on a bigger project to extend benefits to the Kani tribe



IN A BIND:Kutti Mathen Kani with Arogyapacha collected from his land holding at Chonanpara near Kottoor in Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala. The land is shortly to be converted into a rubber plantation.— Photo:Roy Mathew

As the ongoing Conference of Parties to Convention on Biological Diversity in Hyderabad considers access and benefit-sharing, an early experiment in benefit-sharing is a shambles at Kottoor in Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala.

All that remains of the attempt to share the benefits of traditional tribal knowledge among the Kani tribe in Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam districts are a defunct Trust formed by the Kanis and the ruins of an unfinished computer training centre for their children.

Kutti Mathen Kani was secretary of the Trust and one of the three who passed on their knowledge of a plant, Arogyapacha (*Trichopus zeylanicus travancoricus*), to scientists of the

Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (TBGRI) at Palode near here for validation. He is now afflicted with tuberculosis, and living in an unfinished house.

Miracle herb

The herb used by the Kani tribe to combat fatigue during arduous journeys through forests brought fame to TBGRI scientists and Mr. Mathen Kani, Mallan Kani and Eachan Kani. Mr. Mathen Kani travelled to South Africa with the former TBGRI Director, P. Pushpangadhan, to attend the 2002 Earth Summit in Johannesburg; he was even featured in an international weekly magazine. What he has been left with now are memories, some photographs and a passport that is about to expire.

Their story began in the late 1980s when the three Kanis guided into forests a team of scientists, led by Dr. Pushpangadhan and S. Rajasekharan, who were then working at the Regional Research Laboratory (CSIR) in Jammu. The scientists noticed that the Kanis ate the fruits of a plant to remain energetic during the journey and persuaded them to give information on medicinal plants they used for validation. The research later shifted to the TBGRI when Dr. Pushpangadhan became its Director.

“We had given them several plants. After years of research, they told us that they found medicinal properties in only one — Arogyapacha. They said they could not give the benefits to individuals. So, as directed by them, we formed the Kerala Kani Samudaya Kshema Trust for benefit-sharing,” Mr. Mathen Kani told *TheHindu*. Mr. Mallan Kani became the president.

Health tonic

The TBGRI found rejuvenating qualities in the leaves, fruits and seeds of Arogyapacha (the latest research in the U.S. show that it has antioxidant and DNA-protecting properties). They entered into an agreement with the Arya Vaidya Pharmacy, Coimbatore, for making Jeevani, a health tonic based on Arogyapacha and a few other herbs. The Trust received half of the licence fee of Rs. 10 lakh and half of the royalty of the two per cent. Of that, Mr. Mathen Kani and Mr. Mallan Kani received Rs. 20,000 each in one-time payment. Mr. Eachan Kani got Rs. 10,000. Mr. Mathen Kani and Mr. Mallan Kani also got work for some years at the TBGRI as ‘consultants,’ drawing Rs. 1,500 a month. They lost the job after Dr. Pushpangadhan left the TBGRI.

The tribe got a few lakh rupees by selling Arogyapacha to the Arya Vaidya Pharmacy. Initially, the herb was collected from the forests around the Agastya Peak — and this led to the depletion of plants. Though the plant was cultivated later, several problems came up in the procurement of raw materials. The pharmacy walked out on the deal in 2008. By then, the process patent obtained for Jeevani by the TBGRI had also expired. No patent was obtained for the product when patents were introduced in the country in 2005. In between, the plant was collected illegally in the forests.

The Trust tapped into its fixed deposits to buy a jeep, and then to maintain it. Division broke out in the community as not all got the benefits. A new team took over as president and secretary of the Trust, but they could not carry the work forward. The jeep had to be sold as revenues ceased. Despite the problems, some of the Kanis benefited for a while.

Dr. Rajasekharan notes that this first benefit-sharing model, preceding the Convention on Biological Diversity, had merits and demerits. Capacity-building was a problem. Though the Kanis were imparted training, he said, they could not manage the Trust well and their decision to use the fixed deposits for buying a vehicle was wrong, going as they did against his advice.

Only oral consent was obtained from the Kanis for commercialising their traditional knowledge. This did not amount to the prior informed consent envisaged under the Convention. Now, in a case involving a traditional healer of Karunagapally, the TBGRI has obtained a written consent, he said. The patent was being obtained jointly, and there was also a non-disclosure agreement for protection of the traditional knowledge.

Dr. Rajasekharan said the pre-benefit concept, being perfected by the TBGRI, would help tribal communities that did not have experience in benefiting from commercial products. The TBGRI was now working on a bigger project to tap the potential of Arogyapacha and pass the benefits on to the Kani tribe under Emerging Kerala, a biennial summit held by the State government to bring together business leaders, investors and policy- and opinion-makers. A researcher from the tribe was also involved in the effort. However, cultivation of the herb and ensuring steady supply would be the first challenge.

Rain cheers farmers

It has rekindled farmers' hopes in Ramanathapuram district

: The pre-monsoon rain has rekindled the farmers' hopes in this drought-prone district, holding out prospects of enchasing their efforts by direct broadcast of seeds.

Thanks to the intermittent rains since Sunday night, the paddy crops in an extent of 1.30 lakh hectares and millets, including ragi, maize and pearl millet in 4000hectares have begun to show promising growth. The welcome showers brought cheers to the farmers as they provided the timely wetting for the crops.

“Good harvest possible, if rain continues”

A section of farmers across the district said if the trend continued and the northeast monsoon set in time as forecast, they are confident of reaping a reasonable good harvest this year too.

“We are happy it rains. We hope the Rain God will help us,” K Arumugam, a farmer who came to present a petition to the Collector during the mass contact programme, held at Kuruvadi in Kadaladi Union, said.

“Last year, the rainfall was above normal and this year too, we expect a good monsoon, though the southwest monsoon played traunt,” Ka. Sakthimohan, Joint Director (Agriculture), said.

He told *The Hindu* that last year from January to December, the district received a rainfall of 896 mm, against the normal rainfall of 827 mm.

This year, till October 16, the district has received only 198.3 mm of rainfall, compared to 339.4 mm, received last year, during the same period, he said.

“However, we are hopeful that the northeast monsoon will make good the deficit,” he added. Quoting the weather office, he said the northeast monsoon will set in a couple of days.

S.S. Shaiek Abdullah, Assistant Director (Agriculture), said paddy crops cultivated on 75,000 hectares are rain-fed, while crops on 52,000 hectares are tank-fed and about 3,000 hectares irrigated.

Farmers in Thiruvadana and R S Mangalam regions take up irrigated cultivation, only when the Big Tank received water from the Vaigai reservoir, he said. The district has a share of 1800 mcft from the Vaigai reservoir for, he added.

Farmers in rain-fed areas raise paddy varieties like ADT-43, 45, BPT- 5204 and ADT-36 and 39, which would be ready for harvest in 110 to 120 days, he said.

Giving details of loan mela, Mr. Sakthimohan said during the 11-day long camps, held in various taluks, commercial banks have disbursed provisional loan, amounting to Rs.25 crores to 25,000 farmers.

While farmers, who raise rain-fed crops were given Rs.8,000 each per ha, farmers who cultivate, using irrigation, were given Rs.10,000 each, he added.

He said officials had been instructed to keep a stock of 8,000 tonnes of urea to ensure availability of the fertilizer to the farmers during the season.

Need to export goods of high market value stressed

The twin challenges facing India today are the need to feed the ever-growing population, and to export the agricultural produce to the world market, Helmut Weidlich, professor, Institut Prof. Dr. George Kurz GmbH, Germany, said here on Tuesday.

Speaking on “Agricultural Co-operatives – Way to Feeding the World” at the inauguration of the World Food Day events at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, he said food products that India could export were undervalued and therefore there was a need to export goods of high market value, especially those which were unique to India.

“This is possible through co-operatives, wherein producers, traders, scientists, and quality assurance personnel are brought together. The Netherlands is a good example where as a result of co-operative efforts the vegetables are produced according to required specifications of size, shape and nutrition, and are exported successfully. Though India is a home for Ayurveda and Siddha medicine, we have failed to take them to the world market,” Mr. Weidlich said.

TNAU could contribute a lot in this area by way of providing a world-class food processing technology platform for scientists, farmers and traders to come together. It could also develop suitable marketing strategies for Indian food products.

K. Ramasamy, Vice-Chancellor of TNAU, said that there was a paradigm shift from food security to food assistance.

Though much inputs had been provided for farm mechanisation, there was a need to develop more varieties that were amenable for one time harvest, which would aid rapid mechanisation.

It is reported that by 2050 India would become the diabetes capital of the world and therefore we need to concentrate on developing new millet based food products that had more fibre content.

Coimbatore district pins hopes on NE Monsoon

Recent showers help in improving storage in Siruvani

The exiting South West Monsoon that proved to be a bundle of disappointment has left the district with a lowest ever rainfall of 73.2 mm in the last seven years. This has resulted in the city and district pinning hopes on North East Monsoon which has showed signs of setting in any time.

The Metrological Department sources said that the rainfall on October 9 and 15 were just showers of the exiting South West Monsoon while North East was just setting in.

However, there had been a meagre benefit out of the two recent downpours with reservoirs recording some improvement in storage (see graphics).

Records relating to rainfall reveal that Coimbatore received the following quantum of rainfall in mm during the South West Monsoon since 2005: it was 146.3 in 2005, 136.6 in 2006, 267.3 in 2007 (considered the highest), 138.8 in 2008, 249.7 in 2009 (considered the second highest), 153.8 in 2010, 185.0 in 2011 and the lowest ever rainfall of 73.2 in 2012 (July, August and September).

During 2011, South West Monsoon had contributed only 27.8 mm rainfall, while 25.13 per cent came from summer showers and North East helped with 47 per cent of the total rainfall.

The South West Monsoon resulted in water bodies going dry and reservoirs threatening the drinking water supply to the city and wayside habitations.

However, the recent showers have helped in improving storage in Siruvani. The North East Monsoon is expected to supplement the storage, so that the city could smoothly sail through the ensuing summer.

The North East Monsoon predictions indicated a normal or above normal rainfall and an average of 170 to 180 mm rainfall was expected during October.

North East had always helped Coimbatore with highest rainfall of 518.1 mm in 2005 and the next highest of 479.3 mm in 2011. It was 429.8 mm in 2006, 375.2 mm in 2007, 276.2 mm in 2008, 279.8 mm in 2010 and 465.3 mm in 2011.

An average of this rainfall this year would help Coimbatore sail through till the next summer showers and south west monsoon.

While there was no appreciable rainfall in the last 24-hours that ended at 8.30 a.m. on Tuesday, there had been showers at few places. Rainfall in mm: Siruvani 10, Chicona 10, Chinna Kallar 9, Valparai PAP 30, Valparai Taluk 25, Upper Nirar and Upper Aliyar 9 each, Bhavanisagar 1.6, Mettur 4.2, Amaravathy 24, Aliyar 52.5, Parambikulam and Sholayar 9 each.

However, the city and district witnessed mild showers and the sky remained cloudy on Tuesday.

Maize cob farmers unwrap profits



corn on the cob:Maize cobs being sold at Medical College Road in Thanjavur on Wednesday.

Photo:B.Velankanni Raj

Nutritious and tasty maize cobs are sold like hot cakes in Thanjavur town and surrounding areas.

Zettu is a vendor from Chlapuram. He brings 2,000 maize cobs every day and sell them near the overbridge on Medical College Road. "I sell five to six cobs for Rs. 20. The whole stock will be exhausted by evening. Five other vendors like me have taken on auction two acres of maize cultivated by a farmer at Cholapuram for Rs. 12,000. We harvest the required cobs every day and bring them to the town for sale," Zettu said.

Agriculture department officials said that maize is cultivated on 1,000 hectares in Thanjavur district during summer. The crop matures in 95 to 100 days. But cobs for selling are harvested in 60 days. Otherwise they will become corn and may not be edible. Leafy stalk of the maize produces ears which contain seeds called kernels. When the kernels become fully matured they become corns. They are used as poultry feed.

Many varieties of corns are used as food items. They are floxy corn, pop corn, dent corn, flint corn, waxy corn, pod corn etc. Farmers of Thanjavur also sell maize corns as poultry feed to poultry owners in Namakkal. Farmers get more profit by selling maize as corn than as maize cob.

Tea Board plans to open taluk-level branches

To encourage tea planting community



Motivating tea growers:Executive Director, Tea Board, R.Ambalavanan, addressing small tea growers in Kotagiri on Tuesday.-Photo: Special Arrangement

In a bid to get closer to the tea planting community, particularly the small tea growers, the Tea Board has decided to open more taluk level branches in the Nilgiris, said the Executive Director, Tea Board, R.Ambalavanan, on Tuesday.

He was participating as the chief guest in a seminar on Quality Upgradation organized by the Tea Board in association with the United Planters Association of Southern India-Krishi Vigyan Kendra (UPASI-KVK) and the Nilgiri Adivasis Welfare Association (NAWA) at Kotagiri.

Stating that an office of the Tea Board was already functioning in Gudalur for the benefit of tea growers and manufacturers in Gudalur and Pandhalur, he said that branches would be opened at Kotagiri and Kundah.

If necessary an office would also be opened in Ooty.

Pointing out that the policy of the Tea Board was now decentralization, he said that the implementation of subsidy schemes for promotion of orthodox tea and extension of assistance under the Special Purpose Tea Fund (SPTF) which were hitherto handled by the head office in Kolkata have been shifted to the regional offices.

All the stake holders should get equitable returns. Hence the Tea Board's thrust would be on all-round growth.

In order to ensure that the quality of tea produced is uniformly good, small growers societies should tie up with their nearest factories.

Factories which fail to maintain standards set by the Tea Board would be closed.

Since the Tea Board is now in the process of evolving new schemes, small growers should apply with the necessary records for identification cards.

Conference

The Tea Board and the Small Tea Growers Association of South India will organize a day-long conference on Tea at UPASI in Coonoor on October 29.

The Chairman, Tea Board, G.V.K.Bhanu, will preside. Members, Tea Board, S.Ramu and Koshy Baby, Programme Coordinator, UPASI-KVK P.Kumaravadivelu and Secretary, NAWA, M.Alwas, also spoke.

Call to protect forest resources

Protection of forests in the Nilgiris is of paramount importance, said District Forest Officer, the Nilgiris South Division Sugirtharaj Kovilpillai while inaugurating an orientation programme on conservation of the environment organized by the CPR Environmental Education Centre (CPREEC) at the New Era Matriculation School here on Wednesday.

Stating that not only the Nilgiris but also the plains are dependent on the forests here for water, he urged the people, particularly the students to supplement the efforts of the forest department in conserving green resources.

Category

Pointing out that plants falling under the exotic species category are seriously affecting the ecology, he said that people should help eradicate them.

Environmental activist R.Komahan listed the consequences of global warming. The Field Officer, CPREEC M.Kumaravelu, Managing Trustee Nilgiris Environment and Social Trust V.Sivadass and the School Correspondent A.P.K.Berouz also spoke.

The screening of a short film on 'Plastic and the Environment by the District Coordinator, National Green Corps J.Lakshminarayanan formed part of the programme.

Fifty-five teachers from 35 matriculation schools benefited.

Growers want State to step in to arrest fall in black gram prices

Government urged to procure produce from farmers

The Karnataka Red Gram Growers' Association has demanded that the State government intervene and procure black gram from farmers to check the steep fall in the price of the produce.

In fact, government agencies should evolve a mechanism to buy produce as soon as prices of agricultural commodities fall below the minimum support price (MSP), association president Basavaraj Ingin said.

Speaking to presspersons here on Wednesday, Mr. Ingin said the price of black gram had not crossed the MSP of around Rs. 4,300 fixed by the Centre once fresh arrivals came into the agricultural produce market committee (APMC) yard and wholesale market. So, it was unfortunate that officials of the Agriculture Department and the APMC authorities had not alerted the government about the fall in prices, to enable market intervention immediately.

Loss

Over 50 per cent of black gram harvested this season in Gulbarga and Bidar districts had been sold; government agencies should intervene now to save the remaining farmers from a loss, Mr. Ingin added.

Automatic aid

Calling for automatic intervention, Mr. Ingin said the government should not wait for farmers to bring the issue to their notice. He urged the State to release Rs. 100 crore from the revolving fund to the Red Gram Development Board to enable it to intervene in the market and keep prices above the MSP automatically from December, when fresh red gram stock arrives in the market.

Central team assesses farm loss

Demand to raise height of Pattisai check-dam in Idukki



FARM ISSUES:A Central team on Wednesday collecting details from farmers in Kanthalloor, Idukki district, which was declared drought-hit by the State government.

The Central team on Wednesday visited the drought-hit areas of Kanthalloor and Maryur grama panchayats and collected details from farmers, people's representatives and officials of Krishi Bhavans.

Farmers told the team that cool season vegetables, mainly potato, carrot, cabbage and garlic, were damaged in the drought. Out of the 420 hectares of land under vegetable cultivation, 35 hectares were badly damaged.

In places such as Grahanathapuram, where sugarcane was being cultivated, the average yield per hectare was 15 tonnes. However, farmers could reap only an average of two tonnes due to the drought.

The average expense for a sugarcane farmer per hectare was Rs. 30,000, the farmers claimed. They said there was no facility to store water in Kanthalloor, Marayoor and Vattavada where it rained after six-months of drought.

Members of farmers' organisations said raising the height of the Pattisai check-dam, could resolve water shortage in the area.

Senior farmers suggested that water from the Kudakkad and Kanniyar rivers could be stored in check-dams and used during the summer season.

T.T. Ousepachan, president of the Marayur grama panchayat, told the team that water stored in the Chattamunnar check dam could be used to irrigate sugarcane fields in the grama panchayat. It was estimated that 237 farmers in Kanthalloor suffered financial loss as they could not replant the vegetables in the new fields due to lack of irrigation facilities.

Agriculture officer Murugan informed the members of the team that as per the existing rules, farmers would get compensation for damages only when vegetables neared the maturity period. No compensation was given to farmers so far, Mr. Murugan said.

The team was also told that the remaining amount under the Idukki package would be given to farmers' co-operative societies soon. The members of the team included Central Animal Husbandry Department director A. Nandakumar, Cauvery and Southern Rivers Organisation director T.K. Sivarajan, Tobacco Development joint director K. Manoharan and Central Ministry of Water Resources deputy director Sidil Sasi. They will visit the Idukki dam on Thursday.

The team was accompanied by Devikulam MLA S. Rajendran, sub-collector S. Venkitesapathi, Principal Agriculture Officer V.M. Sasikumar and Kanthalloor grama panchayat president S. Madhavan.

Prospects grim for coconut, tapioca growers

Reduction in area under cultivation

The prospects of the two crops in the State, tapioca and coconut, are not all rosy, to go by the figures.

The area under tapioca cultivation is dwindling every year, says a study by the Agriculture Market Intelligence Centre (AMIC) of the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU).

In the last decade, many farmers have switched to other crops due to high labour and manure costs. Also, farmers say they do not get even half the market price for their produce. The fortunes of those who can afford to sell it directly or do value addition, such as making chips, are slightly better, farmers say.

The AMIC study lists tapioca as a low-profile item. In contrast, rubber prices have gone up, a good reason for many to think of switching to growing rubber, says K.Satheesh Babu, Scientist, AMIC. Rubber is one commodity which has immensely benefited from the increase in price levels. It is only natural that farmers of other crops tend to take up rubber cultivation, he says. Excess production and a dip in demand results in lower price for tapioca, says Kishore Kumar, a farmer and entrepreneur.

Tapioca was priced at Rs.15 a kg a year ago, but this year, it is being sold at half the price. The price is non-remunerative, but the government is not doing anything to help the farmers. There

are immense value-addition possibilities. But necessary guidance and help should be channelled to the farming community, he says.

A decline in demand in Tamil Nadu has dealt a blow to tapioca farming in Kerala, says M.M. Abbas of Organic Kerala Charitable Trust, an organisation working in the farm and allied sectors.

Companies manufacturing starch from tapioca had lowered their production due to power shortage in Tamil Nadu, which in turn affected the intake of the commodity from Kerala, he says. Finding market for all value-added products outside the State is crucial in ensuring sustainable prices, Mr. Abbas says.

Coconut sector

A large number of coconut farmers too have migrated to rubber and other crops due to a variety of reasons. In the sector, coconut oil is the main value-added commodity marketed in the State. Export of edible oil is restricted to ensure enough supply in the domestic market. But, coconut growers say the policy is adversely affecting them. Export is allowed only from the Kochi port. The demand for coconut oil as an edible oil is limited to Kerala, a few districts of Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka, says Coconut Development Board (CDB) Chairman T.K. Jose.

The CDB has sought the removal of restrictions on exports to overcome the glut in the local market. The Union government is yet to take any action, sources say.

Assistance for coconut farmers

A sum of Rs.2.5 crore has been allocated to farmers in Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam under the coconut rejuvenation and replanting scheme of the Coconut Development Board.

The beneficiaries should contact the respective banks.

The assistance to farmers who have not furnished details of banks accounts will be distributed by means of cheques through Krishi Bhavans.

The scheme is being implemented in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, and Thrissur districts.

Alien-invasive plant species pose threat to biodiversity



Losing worth: The wild kashe budda, an important medicinal plant, is on the verge of extinction in Adilabad.— PHOTO: BY ARRANGEMENT

Much of Adilabad district's fabled greenery belongs to the rapidly spreading species of alien-invasive plants or weeds like *Senna uniflora*, *Parthenium hysterophorus*, *Hyptis suaveolens* and *Lantana camara*, the deadliest of them all.

It is these plants that are causing the destruction of many local wild species which are important constituents of biodiversity here.

While the kashe budda (*Solanum nigrum*), of great medicinal value, is almost extinct, the morri (*Buchanania latifolia*), chedu dosakaya, tendu fruit and other species are under grave danger by the invasive varieties that do not allow germination of seeds of native species through release of allelochemicals.

Severe decline

Over the last few years, there has been a severe decline in the collection of non-timber forest produce by tribal people who are also moving away from traditional medicine owing to the scarcity of plants like kashe budda, a plant that was accidentally found in a deserted place in Adilabad.

"The black colour kashe budda pandlu (fruit) resembles small berries which was used as traditional medicine in tribal areas for hundreds of years. The extract of these fruits was used to

cure dysentery, stomach complaints and fever," says Botanist Dr. E. Narasimha Murthy of Department of Plant Sciences, University of Hyderabad.

Medicinal plants like the *Solanum nigrum* assume more importance in places like the agency tracts in this backward district where these diseases usually occur.

Local medicine men used to cure these ailments in the village itself until a few years back.

Medicinal plants

"The plant was also in great demand in urban centres like Adilabad where traditional medicine was practiced. The juice of the plant was used on ulcers and other skin diseases while the fruits were consumed as a tonic, laxative, appetite stimulant and treating asthma etc," says Parameshwar, son of late Koneru, a famous Ayurvedic doctor in Adilabad.

"Loss of biodiversity caused by invasive species in Adilabad will soon surpass the loss caused by destruction and fragmentation of habitats. The most damning thing about the issue is the difficulty in eradication of these weeds," rues Dr. Murthy who has studied the phenomenon in Kawal Wildlife Sanctuary in this district, now popular as a tiger reserve.

Role of plants in human sustenance stressed

A guest lecture on 'biodiversity of medicinal plants' was delivered at Vignan University on Wednesday by K. Madhava Chetty of Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati. He introduced the topic by highlighting the importance of plants in human sustenance.

The enrichment of oxygen in the atmosphere, recycling of carbon dioxide, upsurge in biomass and ethnic importance of endemic plants of Chittoor district have been elucidated by the speaker.

Prof. Madhava Chetty vividly explained about angiosperms plants and correlated their involvement in therapeutics of a variety of ailments including psoriasis, poor memory, jaundice, and digestive disorders.

India second largest producer of tobacco'

Board educating farmers on requirements customers in the world

India has emerged as the second largest producer and third largest exporter of tobacco in the world and tobacco continues to occupy a prime place in Indian economy on account of its considerable contribution to agricultural, industrial and exports.

FCV tobacco exports during August 2012 stood at 16,475 tonnes at Rs 306.25 crore compared to 6,438 tonnes valued at Rs. 101.66 crore exported in August 2011. Total exports of FCV tobacco for the period April-August 2012 were 74,497 tonnes valued at Rs 1,223.69 crore as against 57,857 tonnes valued at Rs 911.29 crore exported during the corresponding period last year registering an increase of 22 per cent in quantity and 34 per cent in value terms. India has also emerged as a reliable supplier of various types of tobacco grown in the world.

Tobacco produced in India has lowest levels of pesticide residues.

The Tobacco Board, through its network of extension staff, is educating FCV farmers to produce tobacco on scientific lines for achieving higher yields and suit the requirements of customers in the world, a press release from the Board stated.

Meanwhile, the Tobacco Board has warned that the licences of farmers collecting money from fellow farmers purportedly for shifting barns would be cancelled. It came to the notice of the Board that some farmers posed themselves as representatives of other farmers and claiming to shift barns to the desired locations.

Penal action would be taken against such persons as per the provisions of Tobacco Board Act.

Seed distribution in Kadapa on October 26, 29

District Collector V. Anil Kumar directed agriculture officials on Wednesday to distribute subsidy seed to farmers in two phases on October 26 and 29 by setting up counters in mandal headquarters.

Presiding over an awareness camp in the Collectorate Sabha Bhavan on seed distribution, he wanted groundnut, black gram, chick pea, maize, mustard and sunflower seed distributed to ryots in the rabi season.

Four employees each of agriculture and revenue departments should be posted in each counter.

He told officials to ensure that substandard quality seed was not distributed.

Kadapa district was allotted 61,006 quintals of seed for rabi this year, Mr. Anil Kumar said.

Counters should be set up in mandals after considering the crop cultivation by farmers, he suggested.

The Collector advised agriculture and revenue officials to make field visits, hold gram sabhas and compute the crop losses in kharif season. The Collector said he would supervise the process of computing crop losses in Rayachoti constituency, Joint Collector K. Nirmla in mandals in erstwhile Lakkireddipalle segment, Additional JC G. Joshi Babu in Pulivendula, Kadapa RDO V. Veerabrahmam in Kamalapuram, Jammalamadugu RDO M. Venkataramana Reddy in Yerraguntla mandal.

'Destruction of mangroves a cause for concern'



V. Venkaiah

The destruction of mangroves along the coast will affect some hundreds of species in water and the fishermen in coastal villages, said Krishna University Vice-Chancellor Vunnam Venkaiah.

Speaking at a programme on 'Conservation of Mangroves', on the university campus here on Tuesday, Mr. Venkaiah said the tropical trees are the natural barriers, which have economical value and protect the ecosystem.

But, the mangroves and shrubs are being destroyed on the pretext of setting up industries, firewood, fodder and other purposes by some industrialists and the locals, he said and stressed the need to enlighten the fishermen on the need to conserve mangrove forests.

“Researches revealed that mangrove forests have decreased, which is a dangerous sign. There are instances where the mangroves protected the habitations in coastal villages from hurricanes, typhoons and other natural calamities”, said the Vice-Chancellor. A Biotech student, P. Sudhir Paul said mangroves have a special quality to absorb salinity in atmosphere and some hundreds of animals, birds, fish, tortoises, snakes and other reptiles are living in tropical forests. But, due to release of effluents into the sea waters and cutting of mangrove forests, many aquatic organisms and plants are dying. About 5,000 hectares of mangrove forests were destroyed in Krishna Godavari Delta in the last few years, said Mr. Paul.

Another student, B. Pruthvi Lal said mangrove trees are the roosting place for many birds. The winged visitors will breed in the tropical forests and improve their population. As some locals were destroying the forests many birds have disappeared.

The government should organise more community awareness programmes, especially in sea bed villages, and explained the need to protect mangroves which plays a crucial role in protecting the habitations during cyclones, hurricanes and tsunamis and prevent soil erosion. Many fishermen migrated to other areas due to drop in marine produce due to industrialisation and urbanisation in coastal areas. The educational institutions should focus more on research activity on mangrove forests, Mr. Pruthvi Lal opined.

'Biological diversity, foundation for agriculture research'

International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) Director General William Dar said that biological diversity has been and continues to be the foundation for agricultural research for food security and poverty reduction across the world.

Fight against poverty

In the backdrop of the 11th Conference of Parties (CoP-11) of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Mr. Dar, in a release here on Wednesday, explained the use and value of agrobiodiversity in the fight against hunger and poverty.

He also explained its impact on the livelihood of millions of smallholder farmers particularly in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

'Benefit the poor'

He said that a major part of ICRISAT's 40 years of research-for-development work was based on agro-biodiversity benefitting the poor.

The ICRISAT Genebank is considered a treasure trove of genetically-diverse types of its five focus crops (pearl millet, sorghum, chickpea, pigeonpea and groundnut) that can be used in plant breeding to improve crop productivity and crop tolerance/ resistance to diseases, insects and environmental stress, Mr. Dar added.

Crop benefits

Mr. Dar explained the benefits of the downy mildew resistant variety, resistance to grain mould in sorghum, high-yielding Caudatum varieties of sorghum, early-maturing groundnut and chickpeas and their impact on improving revenues of farmers.

A major part of ICRISAT's 40 years of research-for-development work is based on agro-biodiversity benefitting the poor

Tea Board, ETC join hands to protect Darjeeling tea



A joint communiqué has been signed between the Tea Board of India and the European Tea Committee (ETC), supporting the Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) registration granted to Darjeeling tea within the European Union (EU). It also involves evolving a joint working relationship to implement the PGI registration for Darjeeling in letter and spirit.

The Tea Board was represented by M. G. V. K. Bhanu, Chairman, while the Hamburg-based European Tea Committee was represented by William Gorman, President.

The ETC and the Tea Board have agreed that they would co-operate and work together in disseminating information about the PGI registration and its implications in the local language in Germany and other tea-consuming countries within the EU.

ETC is the Central European Federation of national associations involved in tea. Its activities focus on quality control and food laws mainly.

Darjeeling tea from India received the PGI protection in October 2011. It is said that more 'Darjeeling' tea is sold in the international markets than is produced in Darjeeling as very often only a small portion of the authentic product is put in a packet of tea-blends from other regions. Following the registration, the teas sold in EU would have to be 100 per cent Darjeeling tea.

Two labour-saving farm mechanisation innovations

So far 25-30 compost aerators have been sold in North India



Tractor mountable: Gurmail Singh beside the compost aerator he has designed.— photo: special arrangement

Compared to human labour, using machines is always an easier option for agricultural activities. But the problem arises when farmers are not able to locate or source the right machine on time.

Even if they are available their price is either too costly or if on hire, one needs to wait to use them.

A fabricator cum mechanic, Mr. Gurmail Singh Dhonsi from Rajasthan, has developed two agricultural machineries which he claims are easy to use and light on the pocket.

The first machine is a tree pruner that can be mounted on a tractor. The machine can be used for orchard owners like mango growers who need to prune their trees every year.

Compost aerator

Another machine which he has devised is called compost aerator. "I got the idea to develop this machine by closely observing the earthworms that keep turning the soil," says Mr. Gurmail Singh. "The aerator is also tractor- mountable and consists of a rotating shaft on which several steel blades are fitted to mix the bio wastes thoroughly."

The machine can be attached to any make and model of tractor of size 50 hp or above. The rotor, which is 16 inches in diameter, is nine feet long.

"The nine-inch blades break and chop the bio wastes into very small particles. A hydraulic jack is provided to facilitate the up and down movement of the main rotor. There is provision for attaching a 1,500 litre capacity water tank to the tractor. This water is used to moisten the compost while the rotor blades turn the heap of biowastes.

"A weight box has been provided next to the water tank to maintain balance during movement," explains Mr. Gurmail Singh.

While the rotor rotates and the blades cut the biowaste, water is automatically added to the mixture from the tank to moisten it. The tractor is slowly made to run from one end of the heap to the other.

Fuel consumption

“This operation needs to be repeated four to five times for five days during summer and seven days during winter. As a result the total time for converting biomass into manure reduces to 25-40 days, as against 120-150 days using manual methods.

“For the operation the machine consumes 3.5-4.0 litre of diesel per hour,” he says. According to Dr. Nitin Maurya, National Innovation Foundation, Ahmedabad, the technologies for thoroughly mixing compost for rapid composting are available in many foreign countries although no such domestic product is available.

Patent filing

Moreover, the provision of providing moisture while turning biomass is rare and accordingly NIF has filed a patent for this machine in the name of Mr. Gurmail Singh.

The compost made by the aerator has been tested by soil testing laboratory at the Agriculture Research Station (ARS) Durgapura, Jaipur.

The percentages of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potash (K) were found to be 1.87, 1.79, 2.26 respectively as compared to 0.4-1.5, 0.3-0.9, 0.3-1.9 per cent in the conventional farm yard manure.

This compost was found to be even better than vermicompost. Similar results have also been reported by a private fertilizer company which studied the aerated compost.

Option

A few buyers have mentioned that the aerator has provided them the option to add sugarcane waste, which was not possible in the traditional method.

Priced over Rs. 3,00,000 Mr. Gurmail Singh who developed the machine was supported under the micro venture innovation fund scheme of NIF.

He has sold about 25-30 pieces in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana. Of these, five machines have been sold after the institute mobilized the support.

For more information readers can contact Mr. Gurmail Singh Dhonshi, Dhoshi Mechanizations, Padampur Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan: 335041, Mobile: 09414631570.

Control of sigatoka disease of banana

Sigatoka leaf spot is a serious disease of banana that destroys large areas of plantations resulting in severe reduction in fruit yield.

The commercial cultivars nendran and robusta are highly susceptible to this infestation whereas in rasthali and palayankodan varieties the disease severity is less.

This infestation is caused by a fungus and was first recorded in the Sigatoka valley of Fiji. Economic losses of 50-100 per cent have been incurred due to the incidence of this disease.

Dark brown spots

Symptoms of Sigatoka disease first appear as small dark brown spots or lines on the underside of third or fourth opened leaf. The spots become sunken surrounded by a yellow halo. Eventually these spots or streaks expand and become brown or black and make a characteristic black patch on the leaves.

The infection gives a scorched appearance to the foliage. Infection on younger leaves is more severe causing them to dry up more quickly. Appreciable fruit loss occurs as there is drastic reduction of leaf surface area for photosynthesis.

Infected banana plants produce fruits of inferior quality as the banana fingers produced do not develop properly and remain small and thin.

Monsoon season

Spores of the fungal pathogen form in abundance during tropical and sub tropical summers along with intermittent rainfall especially if there is a film of water on the leaves.

The principal means of spread is through rain but later with the progressive development, spores are also discharged through air currents.

Spotting of leaves starts to increase during June, July, peaks in October-November and remains at a high level through December.

Management mainly involves chemical control using fungicides like copper oxychloride, mancozeb, chlorothalonil or carbendazim at the prescribed dosage.

Fungicide spraying on the foliage and pseudostem should be commenced with the initial appearance and repeated at two weeks' interval. Use of the different fungicides in rotation will reduce the risk of resistance development in the pathogen to the systemic chemicals.

(Dattatray L. Shinde, PG students plant pathology and Prof. Kamala Nayar, College of Agriculture, Vellayani, email: ifvellayani@kau.in, phone: 0471- 2383573)

Bee behaviour evolved due to genetic 'remix'



Worker bees have become a highly skilled work force because the genes that determine their behaviour are shuffled frequently, helping natural selection to build a better bee, says a York University study.

Reducing cold-induced sweetening in potato



Preventing activity of a key enzyme which causes changes in potato sugars at low temperatures could boost quality by putting an end to cold-induced sweetening, say U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists.

Viral alliances overcoming plant defences

Researchers have found that viruses will join forces to overcome a plant's defences and cause more severe infections.

Efficient way to turn waste into resource

BARC's Nisargruna biogas technology can produce 25-30 kg of methane and 50-60 kg of organic manure from onetonne of biowaste



A staggering amount of waste is generated every day in every town and city, and the local bodies are grappling with logistics for its disposal. The problem arises as the government and individuals fail to see waste as a potential source of energy and agricultural input in the form of manure.

The Bangalore Corporation, which recently made waste segregation mandatory at the household level, is showing the way for the rest of India. It is setting up 12 Nisargruna biogas plants across the city to convert biodegradable waste into methane and organic manure.

The Nisargruna biogas plant is based on technology developed by the Mumbai-based Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC).

Such plants are being constructed at local levels too. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is planning to construct 4 tonnes a day capacity biodegradable waste conversion plant at its sprawling centre at Siruseri IT Park near Chennai. It already has similar plants operating at other locations. IIT Madras has already cleared a project for a plant with 1 tonne per day capacity. The Chennai Corporation recently initiated preliminary discussion with BARC.

These are not the first plants coming up in the country. "Such plants have already been installed at 146 locations," says Dr. S. P. Kale, Head of Technology Transfer & Collaboration Division at BARC. "We have transferred the technology to 100 private entrepreneurs."

In a broad sense, the principle is similar to that of gobar gas plants, but all comparisons end there — the technology is much more advanced and more methane is produced.

Better bet

"Conventional gobar gas plants have a single digester and produce biogas containing 55-65 per cent of methane and 45-35 per cent of carbon dioxide. But the Nisargruna plants are biphasic (aerobic followed by anaerobic phase) and produce biogas containing 70-80 per cent of methane and only 30-20 per cent of carbon dioxide," he says.

More the methane produced, the better is the fuel value. One tonne of biodegradable waste contains only 22-24 per cent of solid matter; the rest is water. And 30 per cent of municipal waste is biodegradable waste. So with one tonne of biodegradable waste (containing 220-240 kg of solid material) it will be possible to produce 25-30 kg of methane, about 150 kg of carbon dioxide and 50-60 kg of organic manure.

The methane enriched biogas can be used directly for heating (instead of LPG) or for generating electricity. Dr. Kale underlines the higher levels of efficiency when it is used directly for heating and strongly recommends it.

Best usage

“One metre cube of biogas has 3,500 kilo calories of heat. When this is used directly, and the efficiency of the heater is 70 per cent, about 2,400 Kcal are effectively used. But one metre cube of biogas can produce only 1.5 to 1.8 units of electricity, accounting only for 1,200 to 1,400 Kcal,” he says. “It is two times more efficient to use methane for heating than for generating electricity. It may be used for electricity generation only where thermal use is not possible.”

Constructing a one tonne waste plant will cost Rs.15 lakh and it can be installed in two months. “If a plant runs at full efficiency and if you claim carbon credit, the payback period is two years,” Dr. Kale explains.

Hazardous waste

The best part of the technology is its ability to generate resource even from hazardous biological sludge. Waste from textile, food and chemical plants contain harmful chemicals. When the waste is treated, the biological sludge too turns hazardous as organisms absorb harmful chemicals.

“The volume of hazardous solids can be reduced by 90 per cent,” he stresses. “There are seven such plants already in operation.” The first to come up was in 2010 in Baddi in Himachal Pradesh at Auro Textiles belonging to the Vardhman Group.

He rattles off the details of one plant after another, and it becomes difficult to understand why this technology has not been adopted in a much bigger way across the country. “The concept of processing biodegradable waste is more talked about but urban local bodies are not keen to do it. Nisargruna technology offers a decentralized way of reducing the waste reaching dumping yards,” he says. “The citizens on their part must segregate the waste resources and urban local bodies must make provision to collect these waste resources in a segregated manner. It needs a huge change in perception by the society.”

So what makes Nisargruna biogas plants so very efficient? To start with, unlike a gobar gas plant, the Nisargruna plant has two digesters — aerobic and anaerobic. Aerobic digester has nine species of Bacillus required for breaking down waste resources.

The waste is first pulverised in a mixer before it enters the aerobic digester, where it remains for 3 to 4 days. “The smaller clumps tend to aggregate to form lumps [despite pulverisation]. These lumps of waste are attacked by aerobic bacteria. Air and hot water (using solar panels) at 70 degree C are added. “Hot water is added to accelerate the digestion process,” Dr. Kale notes.

Though the temperature of the waste after adding hot water is 32 degree C to 35 degree C in winter and 42 degree C to 44 degree C in summer, the bacteria survive as they are thermophilic. “They can function in mesophilic condition as well,” he clarifies.

The pulverised water-mixed waste is passed through many compartments so that the bacteria have a better chance to degrade it. What flows out of the aerobic digester to anaerobic digester is almost liquefied homogenous slurry with a reduced pH of 5-5.5. The solid content in the slurry has been reduced from 23 per cent to 10 per cent. “The solid is converted into organic acids and carbon dioxide,” Dr. Kale explains.

Methane bacteria are predominant in the anaerobic digester. As a rule, methane bacteria are slow in their actions, and hence it takes about 15 days for the waste to be degraded in the anaerobic digester.

“But it has been reduced from 40 days [in the case of gobar gas] to 19 days,” he points out. “This is due to the initial aerobic phase.”

All that is left of the waste is methane, carbon dioxide and manure — a rich resource extracted from it.

HindustanTimes

TODAY FARM NEWS

18.10.2012 A.M

Weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Rainy

Thursday, Oct 18

Max Min

32.0° | 23.6°

Rain: 1.9

Humidity: 94

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:59

Sunset: 05:48

Barometer: 1011

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Friday, Oct 19

Max Min

29° | 25°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday Oct 20	Sunday Oct 21	Monday Oct 22	Tuesday Oct 23	Wednesday Oct 24
29° 25° Cloudy	28° 26° Rainy	32° 25° Overcast	30° 26° Cloudy	28° 26° Cloudy

Airport Weather

Delhi

Rain: 0

Humidity: 83

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:24

Sunset: 05:48

Barometer: 1015



THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

17.10.2012 P.M

18.10.2012 A.M

17th oct 2012 P.M

Barley edges lower on heavy arrivals



Barley prices dropped marginally on heavy arrivals in the spot markets. Besides, it took cues from the overseas markets that were down on higher productivity and poor export demand.

On the NCDEX, barley October contracts slid by 0.08 per cent at Rs 1,188 a quintal, while the November and December series were down by 0.4 per cent at Rs 1,237 and Rs 1,281 respectively.

The total coarse cereal production is expected at 26.33 million tonnes this kharif season (2012-13) against 32.26 mt in 2011-12 kharif. This could mean that prices could remain low as the new crop arrives, but would go up as the crop is down by close to 6 mt.

Mandis across Rajasthan, the top grower of the bold cereal, witnessed an arrival of 120 tonnes and in the Jaipur spot market, barley was quoting Rs 1,219 a quintal.

On the global front, prices in the US on CBOT continue to decline even as the new crop arrived. There is also an indication that productivity is slightly higher than anticipated and this could be one of the factors keeping prices more or less stable. Prices for the benchmark CBOT December contract have dropped 4.3 per cent during the three-session losing streak, their biggest three-day decline in two months. CBOT December wheat was at \$8.47-3/4 a bushel.

Pepper futures bounce back

Pepper market gained on buying interest from a bull cartel on Wednesday.

The cartel is said to have pumped in an estimated Rs 80 crore so far in October for taking delivery of 1,997 tonnes of pepper marked for delivery under staggered delivery system.

This is in addition to the 3,000 tonnes cornered by the cartel in earlier months. Thus, a total of an estimated Rs 200 crore has already been pumped in so far, market sources told *Business Line*.

“They are not only speaking of bullish trends but also pumping in huge money,” they said. This phenomenon has aided prices to move up and remain at higher levels much above that of other origins.

Activities were limited as was evident from the drop in turnover. Open interest has moved up marginally.

Domestic demand has started trickling in as the buyers started covering in a small way for the Navaratri. The demand is expected to pick up in coming days for the Diwali and the winter season, they said.

On the spot, 30 tonnes of farm grade pepper arrived and of this, 15 tonnes were reportedly traded.

October contract on the NCDEX increased by Rs 205 a quintal to the last traded price of Rs 43,125 a quintal while November moved up by Rs 65 to the LTP of Rs 42,850 a quintal. December dropped by Rs 95 to the LTP of Rs 42,350 a quintal.

Turnover

Total turnover decreased by 824 tonnes to close at 1,714 tonnes. Total open interest increased by 51 tonnes to close at 8,318 tonnes.

October open interest fell by 167 tonnes to close at 1,198 tonnes while that of November and December went up by 89 tonnes and 91 tonnes respectively to close at 5,036 tonnes and 1,560 tonnes.

Spot prices remained unchanged at previous levels on limited activities of Rs 40,100 (ungarbled) and Rs41,600 (garbled) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market today was at \$8,450 a tonne (c&f) Europe and \$8,750 a tonne (c&f) for the US and remained totally out priced.

Local masala firms lend colour to turmeric



Spot turmeric inched up today after local masala makers evinced some interest in the yellow spice. “We have received some meagre local orders from masala firms who bought medium quality turmeric quoting a slightly increased price. But still no exporter has received fresh orders”, said local traders.

They said about 15 bags of Salem Hybrid variety which arrived for sale has been procured by some traders due to its quality. They quoted increased price of Rs 150 a quintal.

Further the medium quality turmeric is selling at low price in other Turmeric markets in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. So some merchants in North India have placed orders there and purchased the same for the Durga Pooja, said the traders.

In Erode, about 1,300 bags of turmeric arrived for sales. Only 60 per cent stocks were sold, of this the stockists have procured 80 per cent .

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,034-5,609 a quintal, the root variety Rs 4,019-5,051.

Salem Hybrid Crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,909-6,316, the root variety Rs 5,029-5,409. Of the 530 bags arrived, 55 bags were sold. At the Regulated Marketing Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,619-5,569 and the root variety Rs 4,279-5,189. Of the 281 bags, 259 were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 5,210-6,060 and the root variety Rs 4,480-5,419. All the 153 bags found takers. At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, finger variety was sold at Rs 4,589-5,986 and the root variety Rs 4,289-5,351. Of the 311 bags arrived, 303 were sold.

Sugar mills told to exhaust sale quota on time



Sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale market declined by Rs 10 a quintal on Wednesday as demand eased and the Government's assurance on regular and ample supply of non-levy sugar during October – November. Naka rates declined by Rs 10, while mill tender rates dropped by Rs 10-20 .

Sources said that the sentiment turned slightly weak in physical and futures markets on improved selling after the Government's instructions. Though demand – supply was routine as celebration of Navaratri is on and Dasara falls next week. Producers expect a steady rise in demand the next few days for Diwali. The Vashi market currently carries sufficient inventory of more than 100 truckloads hence local supply is ample.

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution has asked sugar mills to ensure release of the entire quota for the festival season. According to a press release issued by the Ministry, an impression has been created in some circles that the non-levy quota of 40 lakh tonnes released for sale in the months of October and November would get extended. Such views were a misconception and any unutilised quota could be converted into levy stock, it said.

In Vashi market, arrivals were about 68-70 truckloads (each of 100 bags of quintal each) and local dispatches were about 64-65 loads. On Tuesday evening, about 19-20 mills offered tenders and sold nearly one lakh bags (each of 100 kg) to the local traders in the range of Rs 3,390-3,450 (Rs 3,400-3,460) for S-grade and Rs 3,470 - 3,560 (Rs 3,480 - 3,580) for M-grade.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs 3,526 – Rs 3,582 (Rs 3,561 – Rs 3,591) and M-grade Rs 3,611- 3,701 (Rs 3,582- 3,711).

Naka delivery rates: S-grade Rs 3,500 -3,540 (Rs 3,510 -3,550) and M-grade Rs 3,550-3,660 (Rs 3,560-3,670).

Falling soyameal drags poultry feed



Despite too much fluctuation in prices of its key ingredients, prices of poultry feed went marginally down by Rs 30-40 for a 30-kg and 50-kg bag.

A fall in soyameal mainly led feed prices down, said Aditya Mishra, a market expert. After witnessing some recovery last week, soyameal eased by Rs 380 and quoted at Rs 2,870 a quintal on Wednesday. Arrivals of new crop and stocks offloaded by stockists in the market pulled soyameal prices down, he said. The industry is likely to witness some good buying in the near future, he said.

Bajra eased further by Rs 15 and sold at Rs 1,135; maize ruled at Rs 1,425, Rs 105 up from previous level. DCP went up by Re 1 and went for Rs 35 a kg, while fish oil increased by Rs 10 and quoted at Rs 82 a litre. Some good demand pushed maize, DCP and fish oil upwards, said market sources.

Feed Prices: After ruling flat for almost 10 days, prices of poultry feed products decreased by Rs 30-40 for a 30-kg and 50-kg bag.

Prices of broiler concentrate feed and broiler starter mash went down by Rs 40 each and quoted at Rs 1,860 and Rs 1,440 for a 50-kg bag, respectively. "Broiler pre-starter concentrate 30 per cent" eased by Rs 40 and sold at Rs 1,600 for a 30-kg bag while layer concentrate quoted at Rs 1,400 for a 50-kg bag, Rs 30 down from previous level. Prices of Pre-lay mash and broiler finisher decreased by Rs 40 each and quoted at Rs 980 and Rs 1,380 for a 50-kg bag, respectively.

Poultry Products: Meanwhile, reduced offtake pulled egg and broiler down, on Wednesday. Egg went down by 16 paise at Rs 3.06 while broiler eased by Rs 10 and quoted at Rs 64-65 a kg; chick improved by Rs 3 to Rs 20-21.

Spot rubber gains

Spot rubber ruled firm on Wednesday. A partial recovery in domestic futures kept the local prices firm during closing hours.

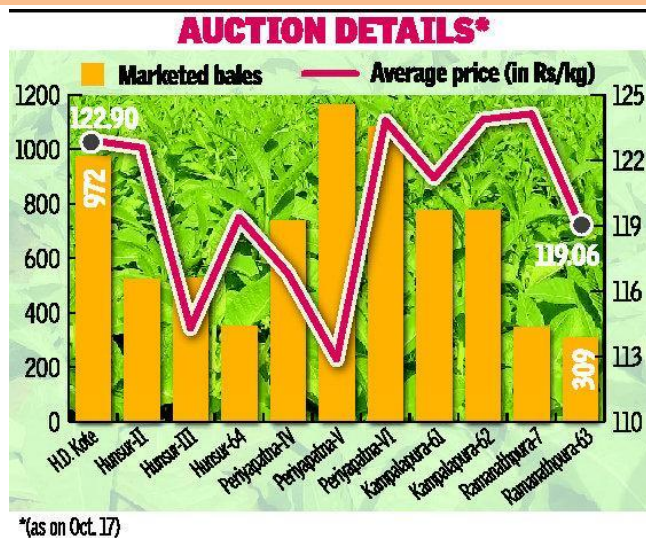
Sheet rubber improved to Rs 184.00 (Rs 183.00) a kg, according to traders and the Rubber Board. The trend was mixed.

In the futures market, November contracts increased to Rs 184.79 (Rs 182.38), December to Rs 185.60 (Rs 183.58), January to Rs 187.00 (Rs 184.98), February to Rs 188.24 (Rs 185.86) and March at Rs 188.70 (Rs 188.56) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) weakened to Rs 168.81 (Rs 170.32) at Bangkok. The October futures increased from ¥250.9 to ¥252.6 (Rs 169.82) in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot prices (Rs/kg) were: RSS-4: 184 (183); RSS-5: 176 (175); Ungraded: 169 (167); ISNR 20: 163 (163) and Latex 60%: 119 (119).

Lower crop, quality boost Karnataka tobacco prices



Tobacco prices for bright grade are holding around Rs 140 a kg at majority of the auction platforms in Karnataka.

“As the auction enters the 15th day in the State, prices are steady and ruling high due to improvement in quality of the crop this year,” K.N. Vishakantiah, Tobacco Board Regional Manager, told *Business Line*. Prices are ruling 15 per cent higher than last year and about 30 buyers/platform are active. So far, the Tobacco Board has marketed 7,564 bales at an average price of 120.53 a kg.

According to B.V. Javare Gowda, President, Karnataka Tobacco Growers Association, prices are better than last year due to lower crop. But growers’ expectation is not matching the current market price as all farm inputs have become dearer.

The Tobacco Board is planning to conduct mock e-auction in few platforms in Karnataka on October 19. The Board Chairman is visiting the tobacco-growing region in the State during October 18-19 to interact with the growers and to participate in the mock drill.

Coonor tea sale volume hits 4-week low

A volume of 12.69 lakh kg has been catalogued for Sale No: 42 of Coonor Tea Trade Association auctions to be held on Thursday and Friday, reveals an analysis of brokers' listing.

This is the lowest offer of the last one month. It is as much as 1.59 lakh kg less than last week's offer and about 64,000 kg less than the offer this time last year.

Of the 12.69 lakh kg on offer, 9.52 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 3.17 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades.

As much as 12.02 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 0.67 lakh kg, orthodox variety.

The proportion of orthodox teas continues to be low in both the leaf and dust grades. In the leaf counter, only 0.39 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 9.13 lakh kg, CTC. Among the dusts, only 0.28 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 2.89 lakh kg, CTC.

Fresh teas accounts for 11.14 lakh kg. As much as 1.55 lakh kg comprises teas which had remained unsold in previous auctions. Last week, in the leaf tea auction, Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) bought good medium varieties.

Tata Global Beverages Ltd was selective. Duncans Tea Ltd showed interest for medium brokens. Export-demand was less.

In the dust tea auction, HUL and Tata Global bought good medium varieties. Godfrey Philips and Duncans Tea did not operate. Indcoserve showed interest on medium smaller grades. Exporters preferred plainer varieties.

Setting up of directorate for small tea growers delayed



The small tea growers' directorate under the Tea Board was to become operational from September. That did not happen. In a chain of events that led to the delay, our national carrier is being held responsible.

The recruitment of development offices and others to be employed by the proposed directorate could not be completed in time. The reason: the written test and interviews for the candidates could not be held in time due to the delay in the processing of applications. There being no in-house facility, Tea Board entrusted the job of processing to a Delhi-based agency which lost all the applications, about 1,700 or so, in transit. The agency lays the blame squarely at the doors of our national carrier which, it is alleged, lost the application packets while ferrying them between Kolkata and Delhi. The packets could not be traced ultimately. The Tea Board, therefore, had to do everything afresh and, in the process, precious time was lost.

As the situation stands now, the written test is over and the interviews will be held shortly and the appointment letters issued most probably in December. Then there will be training for those recruited. April 1, 2013 is the new deadline. In other words, the commissioning of the directorate will be delayed by more than six months.

A total of 41 development officers are being recruited – 13 for South Indian gardens, seven for West Bengal, one each for Tripura and Himachal Pradesh and the balance 19 for Assam. The general principle is: one development officer for each location having three to five thousand small growers. In South India, one officer for 5,000 growers and in other places 3,000.

The headquarters of the directorate will be located in Dibrugarh in Assam. The premises have been acquired and the work is on to make it ready at the earliest. There is a proposal for holding a high profile inauguration ceremony of the directorate headquarter in November. “But we’re not sure as much will depend on the convenience of the VVIPs due to grace the occasion,” observe Tea Board sources.

Govt monitoring sugar sales in open market



To check the rise in sugar prices during the festival season, the Government today said it is keeping a close watch on sugar sales by millers in the open market and warned against failure to sell the entire quota allocated to them for the October-November period.

Sugar sector is controlled by the Government right from the production to distribution. The Food Ministry fixes the quantity of sugar that mills would sell every month in the open market.

For October-November period, the Ministry has allocated 40 lakh tonnes of sugar (known as non-levy) to 380 odd millers for sale in the open market.

In an official release, the Food Ministry said it would keep a close watch on the sale and delivery of sugar meant for open market.

“Any action on the part of the sugar mills which is contrary to the spirit of the release order would be dealt with swiftly and strongly,” it said.

The warning comes in the backdrop of “an impression created by some circles that sugar released by the government for sale in the open market for October and November would get extended suo motu”.

“Sugar mills are advised to not to act on presumptions and are forewarned that any action on the part of sugar mills to curtail the sale and delivery of non-levy sugar released for sale in the market during October-November, may lead to immediate conversion of unsold and undelivered quantity of non-levy stock into levy stock,” the release said.

Sugar production in the country was 26 million tonnes in the 2011-12 marketing year (October-September), higher than the annual demand of 22 mt.

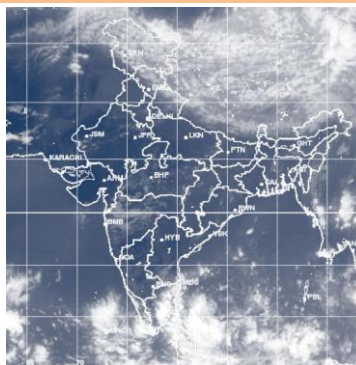
Haryana sets up sugarcane control board

The Haryana Government has constituted the Sugarcane Control Board for the state, an official spokesman said here today.

Ex-officio members of the Board included Cooperation Minister, Secretaries of Finance, Cooperation and Agriculture Departments, and Registrar, Cooperative Societies, Haryana, the spokesman said.

The Cane Commissioner, Haryana, Panchkula would be the Member-Secretary, he said.

More rains likely from next week



Global models suggested that northeast monsoon will get sufficient boost from upper atmosphere next week onwards.

This would likely result in enhancement of rain activity over the Indian Ocean, of which Bay of Bengal is a part, from October 24 (Wednesday).

A positive (wet) phase of the periodical Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) wave is forecast to pass over the Indian Ocean during this period. An MJO wave passes from west to east, and has a bearing on weather at ground level depending on whether it is a positive (wet) or a negative (dry) phase.

Climate Prediction Centre of the US National Weather Services said that above-average rainfall is in this manner forecast to shift to west Indian Ocean next week.

Meanwhile, India Meteorological Department (IMD) said that the South-West monsoon would exit the country in the next two days. Simultaneously, North-East monsoon rains are likely to commence over Tamil Nadu, Kerala and adjoining Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

Satellite images on Wednesday revealed convective (rain-bearing) clouds standing tall over parts of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, South Andaman Sea and South Bay of Bengal.

Extended forecast valid for the next seven days said that rain or thundershowers may break out at many places over extreme south peninsular India.

HEAVY FALLS

Heavy falls have been indicated at one or two places over coastal Tamil Nadu. This phase coincides with the expected arrival of the MJO wave into Indian Ocean.

Seasonal forecast by the Tokyo-based Regional Institute for Global Change (RIGC) pointed towards a 'reasonably good' northeast monsoon for peninsular India.

RIGC is an affiliate of Jamstec (Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology). Normal to slightly above normal rain has been indicated for peninsular India during both November and December.

Business Standard

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Madhya Pradesh may see record soy production

If the projection comes true, the country will have a record high of 13.2 million tonnes (mt)



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Timely input supply, spread of the innovative ridge and furrow method of farming, a long spell of rain and availability of seeds have prompted the Madhya Pradesh government to project a new high in soy production this year, triggering fears of a price crash again.

If the projection comes true, the country will have a record high of 13.2 million tonnes (mt). The state agriculture department had earlier projected a 6.5-mt crop. Now, they estimate seven mt. The earlier record was 6.4 mt, in 2009. MP is known as the country's soy bowl and produces more than half of the country's eight to nine mt average.

"Our estimate for output was 6.5 mt but the arrivals in mandis show a different scene," said D N Sharma, director, department of farmers welfare and development.

However, the Soybean Processors Association of India (Sopa) is not ready to buy this estimate. Sopa has put the all-India figure at 12.7 mt this year and 6.7 mt in MP. "It is true the yield has gone up but seven mt (for MP) is a little (too) big," said Rajesh Agrawal, spoke-spersion for Sopa.

Stock arrivals have been less so far, says the Mandi Board. "We will see another spell of arrivals since the Shradh Paksha (inauspicious period for trading) is over now. Though productivity across the state has gone up, it (the total) might not cross 6.5 mt," said A P S Solanki, additional director of the Board.

This year, said Sopa, productivity was 1,076 kg a hectare in MP and 1,127 kg across India; in Rajasthan, it was a record 1,393 kg a ha.

Sesame seed production may fall 27%

According to trader sources, India's kharif sesame seed production would not be more than 220,000 tonnes

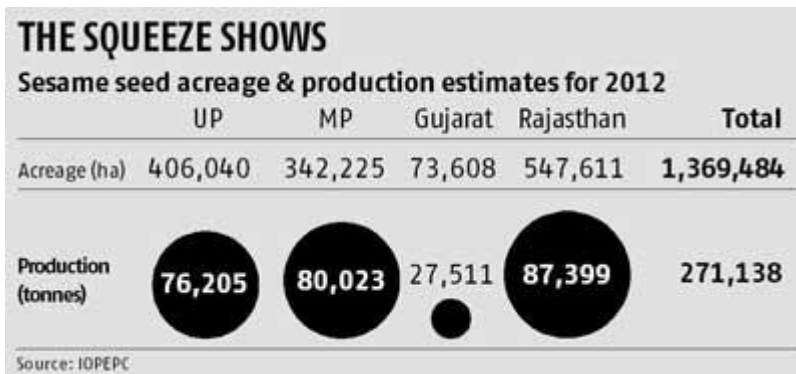


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The Indian Oilseed and Produce Export Promotion Council (IOPEPC) has estimated about 27 per cent lower sesame seed production in India for the kharif season. According to the council, sesame seed production is likely to be around 271,000 tonnes, as against 369,000 tonnes in the country this year.

However, traders maintained a negative view on the production estimate. According to trader sources, India's kharif sesame seed production would not be more than 220,000 tonnes.

The estimates are the outcome of a survey conducted by the council in key sesame growing states including Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. It was seen that about 1.4 million hectares of area was covered under sesame this year. Poor monsoon in sesame producing states and drought conditions in parts of Gujarat, have hampered sesame seed production prospects. These have led to a decline in sesame seed production to the tune of around 27 per cent this year.



“The rain in September has damaged the crop and quality of sesame seed in Gujarat,” the survey noted. According to IOPEPC estimates, Rajasthan will see the highest sesame production at around 87,000 tonnes followed by Madhya Pradesh at 80,030 tonnes, Uttar Pradesh at 76,205 tonnes and Gujarat at about 27,511 tonnes this year.

Meanwhile, traders noted that sesame seed production in Gujarat would not be more than 22,000-25,000 tonnes as most of the crop has been damaged during the month of August and the late rains did not help sesame seeds to survive. On the export prospects this year, Amreli-based Manoj Sonpal of Sonpal Agri Export Limited, said, “This year India is likely to export around 150,000 tonnes sesame seed as against 250,000 tonnes.”

“Since the monsoon has remained weak this kharif season, it is feared that summer sesame sowing will also decline. Most of the farmers in Saurashtra region lack water facility, while a proper irrigation system has not reached remote areas in the region,” he said.

According to traders’ estimates, summer sesame seed production will not exceed 10,000 tonnes in Gujarat. Last year, it was 40,000 tonnes. In the past four days, sesame seed prices have gained by Rs 1,000 per quintal as South Korea announced a tender for 6,000

tonnes of sesame. Most such tenders are awarded to India. Sesame seed prices have reached Rs 11,000-11,100 per quintal in the last four days and is expected to increase further.

“This year, sesame seed price will see an upward trend as the crop size is small and farmers may hold the stock to get better returns,” Sonpal added.

Lac farming in Banka to help bangle business

PATNA: Bangles are the integral part of Indian women's 'shringar' (make-up) and lac bangles are what Bihari women fancy for. They are more expensive than ordinary glass bangles even though they are made at Muzaffarpur, Samastipur, Madhubani, Sitamarhi and Mahua (Vaishali). Although Muzaffarpur is the biggest producer of these bangles, the lac for making the bangles are brought mainly from Jharkhand. So, the transportation cost is added to the price of these bangles.

But in time to come, Bihar will be self-sufficient in the production of lac, thanks to Women's Development Corporation (WDC) which, in collaboration with the Society for Welfare Operational Research and Development ([SWORD](#)) has initiated lac plantation at village Chandan in [Banka](#) district. The [WDC](#) has, in fact, succeeded in turning the once barren land of this village, covered with lush green 'simiyalata' plants.

The cultivation has been done on three sites of the village - Parhi, Jhingajhal, Durguniya - with the help of 20 self-help groups (SHG) comprising 300 members assisting to more than 100 households of the village through this project.

"Initially, the people were apprehensive about this project, as this type of cultivation was new to them and was away from the traditional ways of agriculture," said Radheyshyam Ram. An Australian species of lac plants, 'Fleminzia simiyalata', which grows rapidly, has been used for inoculation of lac on these plants.

The SHGs' women have not only become economically self-sufficient but also developed confidence as they had been sent for exposure to Indian Institute of Natural Resins and Gums (INNRG), Ranchi, to learn the techniques. The INNRG had also provided them the required technical assistance for this project. Dr R N Ram, senior scientist, also visited the field and

provided training to these women farmers.

Radheyshyam told TOI that [Krishi Vigyan Kendra](#), Banka, had adopted the area for lac production and there are also plans to scale up the project in Jamui and Lakhisarai districts.

The project is highly profitable as the investment is very less. "Each plant bears around 10 branches and yields one kg of lac worth Rs 500. Thus, the output of one plant would be Rs 5,000," said a WDC official.

Vidya, one of the members of 'Prerna', an SHG at the village, said a few simiyalata plants were destroyed by ants the first crop yielded Rs 25,000 to her SHG, which was quite satisfying. "We sold the lac to a bangle factory at Deoghar (Jharkhand), but from the second season, we will sell it either at Muzaffarpur or Samastipur. Ab Bihar ki cheez Bihar me hi rahegi," she said.

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University study predicts normal North-east monsoons

COIMBATORE: After a dismal spell of the South West (SW) Monsoon this year, Tamil Nadu is expected to receive a steady spell of North East Monsoon. According to a study conducted by the Agro Climate Research Centre of [Tamil Nadu Agricultural University](#) (TNAU), the state will receive normal rains from the month of October to December.

"The probability based study says that the state may receive rains as usual in all the 32 districts. At the same time, this may not be enough to compensate the loss of the earlier SW monsoons," said V Geethalakshmi, the head of the centre. Chennai could receive the highest rainfall in the state with 825 millimetres and the Nilgiris, the lowest with 280 millimetres. Coimbatore is expected to record an average rainfall of 385 millimeters in these three months. At the same time, the NE monsoons will not lead to floods or any other calamity in the state, said experts.

"Usually the SW monsoons effectively cover only five districts, Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Salem, Kanyakumari and Nilgiris, while the NE Monsoon covers the whole of Tamil Nadu," said Enayath Shah a professor at the centre. Around 48 percent of the state's rains are from the NE, while 32 percent is from SW, 16 percent from summer and the rest from winter.

The NE rains are yet to start. T N Balasubramanian, a retired professor at the department of the [Agro-Climate Research Institute](#) said the rains will start in the next few days. "The present rains are the transitional rains due to the shift from the SW monsoon to the NE monsoon. The NE monsoons may start in three to four days and continue to the first or second week of December," he said. However, as the region is part of the equatorial region there are possibilities of turbulence and change in the prediction, he said.

Farmers could expect some good news. There are a series of crops which can be grown during this period. Dry land crops like cotton, maize, and even the irrigated crops including sugarcane and rice among others would benefit from the upcoming showers, he indicated.

Punjab to unveil its food and agro processing policy

CHANDIGARH : Punjab would soon unveil its [Food and Agro Processing Policy](#) to give a big push to value addition of perishable crops and to encourage farmers to go for cash crops coming out of vicious Wheat-Paddy cycle.

Inaugurating the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of PAU Sukhbir Singh Badal said that this University was catalytic in realising the dream of self-sufficiency on Food Security Front and was now required to become instrumental to give a big push to diversification of crops.

Badal said that it was matter of great concern that while ensuring the food security of the country, the Punjabi farmers has drained out nutrients from the fertile soil of Punjab with ground water level depleting to dangerous point of black holes. He said that the enterprising farmers in mad race to surpass last year's production target have depleted the Punjab's natural strength that has not been recognised by the [Union Government](#).

He said that despite our intensive efforts, the farmers of Punjab were not getting remunerative prices for their agriculture produce and with every successive crop, the [farmer](#) was pushing himself deeper in the debt trap. Giving a call to come out of vicious Wheat-Paddy cycle Badal said that time has come that farmers should focus on profitability alone. He said that the opening of Wagha Border offers an opportunity to give a big push to vegetable cultivation as [Pakistan](#) has expressed desire to import total vegetable produced by Punjab farmers.

Now, Mettur farmers pin their hope on north-east monsoon

COIMBATORE: [Ayee Gounder](#), a farmer from Singapettai in Erode district couldn't care less about the ongoing row over the release of Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu.

After losing out on the opportunity to cash in on the samba crop cycle, Gounder is now trying to sow some millet on a portion of his 20 acre and protect his standing crop of sugarcane.

The farmers along the west bank of the Mettur canal in Erode district have already come to terms with the fact that they may not get Cauvery water, as the prospect of releasing water to both the west and east canals of the Mettur dam is bleak.

Their top priority now is to save their sugarcane, plantain, coconut trees and millet with the available water. They are also hoping for a good spell during the [north-east monsoon](#) this year.

"The paddy fields in this stretch are barren. The sugarcane fields are also dry. It is unlikely farmers in this region will be able to reap the benefits of Cauvery water," said Gounder. Earlier, he had been planning to cultivate paddy on 12 acres but decided against it due to the weak monsoons and frequent power outages. Water from Mettur dam was also not released on time.

About 15,000 farmers who depend on cultivating 45,000 acres on the eastern and western banks of the Mettur canal were dealt with a severe blow when they were forced to delay the sowing of paddy till October for the samba cycle. More than 20,000 acres is primarily used for paddy cultivation and the remaining for sugarcane, coconut trees and other crops.

"Now there is absolutely no hope. The sowing should have been done during the last week of September or at least the first week of October. Farmers in this region will be crippled this year. As of now only 700 cusecs of water is being released for drinking purposes through Mettur canal," said A Mohan, president, Mettur East and West Bank Canal Association of farmers in the region.

The normal cycle is 130 days when the paddy becomes ready for harvest. However, the prospect of maintaining the water level in Mettur dam after releasing Cauvery water to the delta districts, so that water could be released to the western districts of Namakkal, Erode and Salem, looks very bleak.

K Krishnamurthy, joint director, [agriculture department](#), Erode district also expressed doubt over whether the farmers in these western districts will be able to reap any benefit out of the Cauvery water even for the late Samba season.

According to C Nallasamy, president of Lower Bhavani Farmers Association, even if farmers try to opt for direct sowing as instructed by the state government, the risk involved is too high as it will depend on the rains during the north-east monsoon.

Despite rain, delta farmers await Cauvery water

TRICHY: Pre-monsoon showers have arrived in the delta districts, but farmers' aren't sure if it is sufficient to help Samba crop. As far as the delta districts are concerned, the level of rain in Trichy district was slightly higher compared to Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts. The representatives of farmers' associations in the districts feel that samba cultivation would not be boosted with this rainwater without sufficient water from [Cauvery](#) river.

P Viswanathan, state president of the Tamilaga pond and river water irrigation farmers association said, "Rainwater will not be a substitute for Cauvery water to carry on with samba cultivation. The groundwater level will increase because of the rain. Moreover, the rain may boost dry crop cultivation. Had the rains started in the first week of September, farmers could have planned the paddy cultivation."

Some of the farmers associations expressed unhappiness with the government for not constructing check dams across Cauvery and Kollidam rivers to store water.

P Ayyakannu, the state vice-president of Bharathiya Kisan Sangam said, "Though there will be heavy rains, we have no system to store the water. Despite farmer associations making several representations to the government to build check dams at every five km across Cauvery and Kollidam, the government turned a deaf ear to our demand. If it was done, we could have stored 50 tmc of water that would have helped in samba cultivation."

He further said, "As of now, there is only one check dam in Vaathalai. Hence, we cannot make use of the rainwater. The government should consider providing power supply for farmers to use borewell water. The thermal power generation would also go up because of the rains. Hence, the government should take our plight into consideration and provide power supply. Moreover,

the [Karnataka government](#) is diverting water from four major dams to lakes and ponds to announce that they have insufficient water to release to Tamil Nadu. The samba cultivation will be at stake due to this." He also claimed that while all the victims get compensation from the state government, the farmers who suffer a lot are never considered for the same.

Another farmers association blamed the government for failing to maintain the lakes in Thanjavur district so that they could not store the rainwater. R Sugumaran, the Thanjavur district president of [Tamilaga Vivasayigal Sangam](#) said, "In Orathanaadu area in our district, there are 48 lakes sprawling around 100 acres each, not eligible to store the rainwater. Nothing was done to strengthen and deepen the lakes in the area. So, this rainy season would not help us."