

Daily Farm News

01.10.2012 A.M

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Mettur level

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 74.22 feet on Sunday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 3,067 cusecs and the discharge 13,010 cusecs.

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Water to reach Biligundulu by Monday afternoon

The water released by Karnataka from K.R. Sagar dam will reach Biligundulu in Krishnagiri district, the entry point of Tamil Nadu, on Monday afternoon.

An official from the Central Water Commission here on Sunday told *The Hindu* that the CWC had received information that the water was released from the K.R. Sagar Dam on Saturday midnight as per the orders of the CRA and the Supreme Court.

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CRA, apex court have put State in a fix

The order of the Prime Minister-led Cauvery River Authority (CRA) to release 9,000 cusecs of water daily to Tamil Nadu and the Supreme Court's direction in this regard has put the State in a difficult situation. For, neither the State can overlook the directions nor does it have enough water to release it to Tamil Nadu," Deputy Chief Minister K.S. Eshwarappa has said.

However, requesting the CRA to review its order, after ascertaining the ground realities prevailing in Karnataka by deputing a team of officials, was an option open to the State government to protect its interests, he said.

Addressing presspersons at the Bellary airport on Sunday, Mr. Eshwarappa said: "We have to and will abide by the directions of the apex court and also that of the Prime Minister. But the ground realities are quite different making it very difficult for the State to implement them. Tamil Nadu has adequate storage of water for its present standing crops and is keen to augment water for the next crop. In turn, Karnataka is facing acute shortage of water in the reservoirs owing to failure of rains. About 31 tmcft is required to meet drinking water needs and 159 tmcft for irrigation. But the availability of water was over 70 tmcft."

Opposition charge

Mr. Eshwarappa, while disagreeing with reported statements of Opposition parties that the State government had failed in presenting its case properly before the Supreme Court and also before the CRA, said that senior counsels like Fali Nariman had effectively presented the State's case. "I don't want to react to the statement of Opposition with an intention of not to politicise the issue", he said adding that the State government would continue to make sincere efforts to convince the CRA about the ground realities.

Mr. Eshwarappa was of the view that leaders of all political parties should unitedly take up the case in the interests of the State and farmers without politicising the issue.

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Documentation of spice biodiversity stressed

Umesh Srivastava, Assistant Director General (Horticulture), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), has said that proper documentation of spice biodiversity to safeguard against bio-piracy of spices germplasm and development of urban horticulture for food and nutritional security are some of the key areas to be addressed in the next Five Year Plan.

He was inaugurating the 23rd national group meeting of the research workers of the All India Coordinated Research Project on Spices (AICRPS) at the Indian Institute of Spices Research (IISR) here on Saturday.

“Development of varieties for different agro-ecological zones of the country is the need of the hour,” Dr. Srivastava said.

IISR Director M. Anandaraj urged the AICRPS scientists to work on developing location-specific technologies with an eye on commercialisation.

V.A. Parthasarathy, former Director of IISR, wanted the spice workers to concentrate on secondary agriculture so as to enhance productivity.

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Organic farming gains momentum

An engineer-turned farmer uses cow dung as the main source of manure



A farmer couple tending a herd of cattle in their farm house at Bapirajugudem in West Godavari district.— Photo: a.v.g. prasad

G. V.S. R. Prasad, a farmer from this upland village in West Godavari, set an example for his fellow-farmers in cutting down cultivation cost by taking to cow-based organic farming. An engineer-turned farmer raised palm oil, coconut, citrus and cashew with cocoa and maize as an

inter-crop in his 25 acres of fields. He has seven cows of Ongole, Sahiwal and Holstein Friesian species. The cow dung and urine generated from his cattle-shed is the main source of manure for his orchards which saved him from the spiralling prices of fertilizers.

The price of a 50 kg bag of potash shot up from Rs. 235 in 2011 to 880 this year. Similarly, the price of the same quantity of DAP increased from Rs. 480 to Rs. 1,260 and Super from Rs. 150 to Rs 370 during the same period in the wake of the government phasing out subsidies on these items in line with its Nutrient Based Subsidies (NBS) policy. Potash, a mined product, is imported from foreign countries, so also phosphatic fertilizers, which account for a major share of the fertilizer consumption by farmers. However, Mr. Prasad remains unaffected by the skyrocketing fertilizers prices, thanks to his cow-based farming.

The concept of cow-based farming is gaining momentum in the district. A meeting with the farmers willing to take up organic farming held here recently. The farmers from 11 mandals took part in the meeting which resolved to promote cow-based farming as an alternative to agriculture based on the cost-intensive chemical fertilizers.

“I stopped application of chemical fertilizers from 2007 itself and thereby saved myself from the increasing cost of cultivation due to spiralling fertilizer costs,” says Mr. Prasad. “I used to get 200kg of cocoa seed by applying chemical fertilizers. Now the yield went up to 250kg, besides the drop in cultivation cost on account of organic farming,” he recalled. He also said the water evaporation levels came down drastically after his shifting from fertilizer-based farming to organic farming. Consequently, consumption of power for water exploitation for his orchards in 25 acres came down to 3 hours from 7 hours a day. Mr. Prasad prepares “Jeevamrutam”, a liquid mixed with cow dung, urine, jaggary and water, feeds the plantations by drip after brewing in tanks for few days. The meeting resolved to seek government support for promotion of mini dairies with native cow breeds and establishment of semen banks in large numbers as part of promoting native cows.

In a bid to support women entrepreneurs who are part of various Joint Liability Groups (JLG) in the farming sector, the district Kudumbasree mission, with the support of the Local Self-Government Department, will open 10 new Farmers Facilitation Centres (FFC) in the district.

The FFCs, planned under the Mahila Kisan Sashakthikaran Pariyojana (MKSP), will work as a link between farmers and various government agencies in 10 select grama panchayats. The grama panchayats shortlisted for the scheme in the first phase include Kavilumpara, Changaroth, Chemanchery, Payyoli, Balussery, Unnikulam, Mavoor, Chathamangalam, Panangad, and Thiruvambadi. Each CFC in these panchayats will initially get a financial assistance of Rs.75,000 from the Kudumbasree Mission.

The project coordinators said the list of “master farmers,” who would be responsible for steering the regular activities of the facilitation centres, was now ready with the grama panchayats and all the FFCs would start operation within two months. The overall supervision of the FFCs would be done by a district-level technical committee comprising award-winning farmers and senior agriculture officers.

“The project will be an attraction in several ways as it will concentrate on women farmers and the promotion of their joint farming ventures,” N.K. Hareesh, assistant coordinator of district Kudumbasree mission, said.

Besides helping women farmers get financial grants from government departments, these centres would also train them to handle modern farming equipment. They would also be taught to make quality bio-fertilizers.

As per the official figures, over 4,628 women JLGs are engaged in small-scale farming ventures in Kozhikode district alone.

However, the services of the new FFCs will initially be available only to those JLGs located within the boundaries of the 10 select grama panchayats. It will work as a link between farmers and government agencies

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Milk price hike no solace to farmers



Tough times: Jino at his dairy farm in Alappuzha.

The hike in the price of the milk will not be of much help to many dairy farmers. What the sector needs is more support from the government, say some dairy farmers.

Jino G. Maliyakal, an MBA degree holder who turned to dairy farming, feels the need for a regulatory authority for the dairy sector. Such a body could coordinate the activities of the various departments like Animal Husbandry Department, Dairy Development Department and Kerala Livestock Development Board.

“There are no benefits for dairy farmers who sell milk outside Milma. Of the 24 lakh dairy farmers in the State, only 6.5 lakh farmers sell milk to Milma. An elderly woman living near my house who sells milk to other agencies is outside the ambit of the government’s welfare measures. Hence, there is no sense in excluding this large section of farmers from the ambit of welfare measures,” he says.

High production cost

The production cost for dairy farming is on the rise day by day. The production cost of one litre of milk was about Rs.27.5 earlier. “Now it has risen by more than 60 per cent to Rs.45. A cow that gives 20 litres of milk has to be given 30 kg of green fodder and 100 litres of water daily. Electricity and other charges are extra,” says Jino.

Jino notes that the Planning Commission has listed dairy farming as an allied sector of agriculture. This means that dairy farmers availing any loan will have to give 12 per cent interest, compared to 4 per cent for agriculture. “Local bodies also have restrictions on the percentage of their fund to be given to the dairy sector. Nobody sees this as a traditional industry though this has been going on for years in our country,” he says.

The price of cattle feed in the form of pellets has gone up from Rs.850 for a 70 kg sack to Rs.1,300 now. The latest blow came in the form of license for farmers rearing more than five cows. “They will have to get a license after going through a laborious process of obtaining a certificate from the Pollution Control Board as well as getting the signatures of approval from neighbours. They will have to shell out a large amount of money and time for this. This stipulation comes at a time when farmers with two or three cows are gradually withdrawing from the business and only those with more than five cows stay put in the dairy sector,” he said. He said the government’s policies were also destroying the domestic industry. Decisions such as waiving import tax on milk powder will help big MNCs, he says.

G. Krishnakumar, a dairy farmer with 15 cows, says that the subsidies provided by the government do not reach real farmers.

He says he and many like him were not going for expensive cows as most of them will be not suitable for milking after eight months or so. “Nobody goes after cows costing Rs.30,000 to Rs.40,000. The grass alone for a cow that gives 15 litres of milk a day costs Rs.60 to Rs.90 per day. Added to the cost of 8 kg pellets, which is Rs.120, it may come to Rs.200 per day for a cow. But the cost given for one litre of milk from societies is a maximum of Rs.23. That will come to only Rs.345 a day,” he says.

Another problem is that the cows born out of artificial insemination from the semen distributed by the Kerala Livestock Development Board do not give more milk. “It gives the same quantity or even less that of its mother. However, offspring of artificial insemination from semen sourced from private parties in areas like Coimbatore used by farmers in Idukki district give 30 to 40 litres per day,” he said.

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Progress should be for the people: former Speaker

Says Centre implementing policies prescribed by the U.S.



The State needs agriculture development in tune with the changing times to counter the ill-effects of globalisation, M. Vijayakumar, former Assembly Speaker, has said.

He was inaugurating the Venpala Ramachandran commemoration meet and a seminar on Kerala development at the Kuttoor panchayat community hall, near Thiruvalla, on Sunday.

The development should be for the people and the agrarian State of Kerala should choose the path of sustainable socio-economic development.

Montek criticised

Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia had argued for conversion of paddy land across the State in the name of development in the presence of the Chief Minister and his Cabinet colleagues during the Emerging Kerala meet in Kochi. Mr. Ahluwalia's ignorance of Kerala's rich agrarian culture is evident in the speech, Mr. Vijayakumar said.

The Manmohan Singh government at the Centre was implementing the economic policy prescribed by the U.S. Globalisation and liberalisation were against the interests of the country.

The State had been witnessing immense development in the field of healthcare and education. Education was democratised in the State and the State achieved 100 per cent literacy in the 1990s and the Left Democratic Front played a creative role in it. The United Nations had appreciated the State's achievements in the education sector, he said.

Dedicated Communist

Mr. Vijayakumar said Venpala Ramachandran was a Communist who had dedicated his life to the welfare of society.

P. Prasad, Communist Party of India district secretary, said development centred on man and nature was needed for the State.

Mathew T. Thomas, Raju Abraham, both MLAs; K.C. Thomas, grama panchayat president; Victor T. Thomas, Kerala Congress (M) district president; K.R. Prathapachandra Varma, Bharatiya Janata Party State secretary; S. Rajeevan, Socialist Unity Centre of India district secretary; V.S. Madhavan Nair, RSP leader; Abraham Kunnukandathil, Congress Assembly mandalam committee president; K.I. Kocheppan Mapilai, CPI(M) area committee secretary; and Sudheesh Venpala, organising committee general convener, also spoke.

K. Ananthagopan, CPI(M) district secretary, presided over the meeting.

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Conversion of paddy land: action sought

Report seeks steps against 10 persons



Illegal conversion of paddy land (puncha) into rubber plantations has become a major issue in the Ezhamkulam grama panchayat in Adoor taluk.

Louis Mathew, Agriculture Officer at the Parakode Krishi Bhavan, told *The Hindu* that many paddy cultivators had switched over to alternative crops such as banana, betel, and tapioca owing to shortage of workers for paddy farming in the area.

However, many farmers and the Ezhamkulam grama panchayat authorities took strong exception to the illegal conversion of paddy land into rubber plantations at Valyamkulam in ward-IV of the grama panchayat.

Viju Radhakrishnan, panchayat member, said paddy was a thriving crop in the Valyamkulam fields until 2009. However, as much as 3.5 acres of paddy fields had been converted into rubber plantations at Valyamkulam in gross violation of the Kerala Paddy Land and Wetland Conservation Act, 2008.

Resolution passed

The panchayat committee that took serious note of the issue passed a resolution against the illegal conversion.

Mr. Mathew conducted a site inspection following a complaint received from Mr. Radhakrishnan. He submitted a report to the Revenue Divisional Officer, Adoor, stating that 10 persons had converted as much as 3.5 acres of paddy land into rubber plantations in the Valyamkulam area and recommended action against them.

He also recommended the removal of all the rubber plants and restoring the land to its original condition, thus reviving paddy cultivation.

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Gracious at work... from farming to writing his 123rd book



Half the books in the wooden shelf at Gracious Benjamin's house are authored by him. The 48-year-old farmer-turned-writer has penned 122 books on subjects ranging from farming to science to history. Now, he is working on a book on general studies for Civil Service aspirants. Gracious stands out because he is a Class-X pass.

"I used to pass on farming tips to many agriculturists. They found them useful and asked me if I could write a book on organic farming. I interviewed many farmers and Vidyarthi Mithram Publishers brought out the first book — a 200-page one on guidelines for farming called 'Karshika Guide'— in 1999. The book was well received and that gave me the confidence to explore more topics," says Gracious, who hails from Kattachalkuzhi near Vizhinjam here.

Net savvy

As his range widened, Gracious had to depend on the Internet more and more. This meant he had to enter the alien world of computers and more importantly, master English language. "Patience and willingness to learn can pay off," says Gracious. Slowly, steadily, he learnt the new technology, and came up with his first book in English 'Easy English.'

'Charitra Vijnjana Kosham,' Science Master series, rank files of competitive examinations, and 'Krishi Vijnjana Kosham' are among the books penned by him. He has written 450-odd articles in leading newspapers, has scripted for a few agriculture-based programmes for All India Radio, and has won the Karshaka Bharati Award (2002) for the best farm journalist.

Gracious admits that his latest endeavour, of preparing a guide for one of the toughest competitive examinations, is a bit daunting. "A lot of work has to be done. I dedicate all my time to writing," adds the writer who finds joy even in collecting the empty refills of the many pens he used.

His profile may not change but with his passion for writing, he will most definitely have to find a bigger shelf.

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Fertilizer traders warned

The district administration will initiate stern action against traders who are found selling fertilizers at rates more than the maximum retail price printed on the package. The agriculture department, in a statement, asked the farmers to demand a receipt from the traders while purchasing fertilizers.

The farmers should always look at the price printed on the package and demand an explanation from the traders, if fertilizers were sold at a higher price.

Farmers could contact the agriculture department if they found any irregularities in the trade, the statement said.

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Deficit monsoon hits tractor sales as farm operations see a decline



Deficit rain during monsoon this year has brought down paddy acreage during the kharif season. But the shortfall in rains has hit one segment of the industry very hard.

The sale of tractors, used extensively in the agriculture operations, has shown a steep dip during the current year. Automotive major Mahindra & Mahindra has witnessed a significant de-growth in the overall tractor sales in the State that, in turn, had its echo on the company's overall performance in the segment.

Mahindra & Mahindra president automotive and farm equipment sectors Pawan Goenka said the company enjoys over 50 per cent market share in the tractor sales in Andhra Pradesh where the total annual sale is pegged around 40,000 units. "But, we are unlikely to touch sales in excess of 20,000 units as was witnessed in the previous fiscal," he told *The Hindu*.

The acreage is down by about 3 lakh hectares, compared to 26 lakh hectares normal, in the State and farmers have switched over to other crops like cotton, pulses and maize on account of shortfall in the kharif plantation during the early phase of monsoon. The State, according to figures released by the Centre, faced the worst water crunch, with a 52 per cent deficiency in the reservoir levels.

Tractors, according to Mahindra and Mahindra, are extensively used in the canal irrigation where they serve as multi-utility vehicles. Thanks to the steep drop in release of water to canal irrigated areas, the usage had come down significantly.

Mahindra and Mahindra, accordingly, forecast the tractor growth rate during the year to half to around 6 per cent from the earlier projected 12 per cent. "Tractor growth rate is expected to be around 6 per cent during the year with first quarter showing some de-growth and second quarter expected to be even," he said. The company, however, sounded optimistic in claiming that sales are expected to pick up by November when the Rabi operations start. "The second half is expected to ensure growth of around 6 per cent," Mr. Goenka said. The company has registered sale of 13,000 units in the period between April and August, but was unlikely to touch the last year's figure in excess of 20,000 units.

Agriculture Department secretary V. Nagi Reddy admitted that the monsoon had not been upto the expected levels and this was sure to bring down the crop production. Though the State had witnessed normal rainfall, the deficit in water availability could be attributed to the shortage in the catchment areas in Karnataka and Maharashtra that reduced inflows into reservoirs.

According to him, there was over 10 per cent drop in the total cultivated area because of the deficit rains. "Fall in production is, however, unlikely to be proportionate with the dip in the total

acreage as the shortfall is likely to be made up by higher production of other crops,” Mr. Nagi Reddy said.

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Deficit rainfall, power cuts have hit farming

Agriculture and drinking water supply are severely affected and farmers were in doldrums due to crops withering away due to acute rainfall deficiency and steep power cuts in Kadapa district, Minister for Endowments C. Ramachandraiah said on Sunday.

Addressing a review meeting on agriculture, power, irrigation and rural water supply in Kadapa Collectorate Sabha Bhavan, Mr. Ramachandraiah said he would apprise Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy and strive to secure adequate funds for improving the situation. People were suffering due to nature’s vagaries and officials were unable to supply power in a planned manner, he remarked.

Even officials were in the dark on the power cut timings, he said. Drought conditions prevailed in 35 mandals in the district and rainfall deficiency was 69 per cent in three mandals, the Minister said. Cropping area in kharif season was very less and those cultivating crops suffered losses. The district administration would supply seed and fertilizers for rabi crops, he said.

Crop insurance

Referring to pending release of crop insurance of Rs. 83 crores for sunflower crop of 2010-11, the Minister said it was likely to be released in 10 days. Proposals were sent for sanction of Rs. 21 crores for soft loans and Rs. 5.60 crores for crop losses. He assured to discuss with the Chief Minister on variation of subsidy between different crops. The district administration urged the Government to sanction Rs. 5 crores for mitigating drinking water shortage by deepening borewells and transportation of water, Mr. Ramachandraiah said. Crop loss was total in rainfed areas and crops were drying up in areas having irrigation facility owing to haphazard power supply, Joint Director of Agriculture Jonathan said. District Collector V. Anil Kumar said he inspected dried up crops in Ramapuram and Lakkireddipalle areas.

He pulled up Transco SE Santosh Rao for failing to properly furnish power supply data stating that they were helpless due to power cuts made from the head office. Irrigation SE Sudhakar Reddy said water was not released to Mylavaram reservoir and 0.8 tmc. was released to Chitravathi balancing reservoir.

The Government sanctioned Rs. 2.25 crore for irrigation works as against requisition for Rs. 7 crore, the SE said. Joint Collector K. Nirmla, Rural Water Supply SE Vinay Kumar and other officials participated.

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Punjab and Haryana to begin procurement of paddy from today

Even as the governments of Punjab and Haryana have announced their preparations to begin procurement of paddy crop from Monday, there may be storage issues awaiting the arrival of the new crop. While both States expect at least 150 lakh metric tonnes to arrive in this kharif, an identical stock of the previous rabi seasons still awaits to be evacuated from the storage facilities.

Punjab has announced setting up of 1,770 purchase centres across the State, after the Reserve bank of India sanctioned a cash-credit limit of Rs. 16,674 crore for October. The State had sent a request for a Rs. 22,509.90-crore cash limit as it expects to procure 135 lakh MT.

However, at a recent meeting of the Food and Civil Supplies department, which was chaired by the Minister-in-charge, Adesh Pratap Singh Kairon, officials said current logistical arrangements could handle a 150 lakh MT.

According to figures provided by the Agriculture department, despite the failure of the monsoon during the sowing season, Punjab was expected to produce 163.68 lakh MT from an area of 28.10 lakh hectares under crop, which is a shade above the target of 27.80 lakh hectares. On the other hand, Haryana, which witnessed a reduction of 1.73 lakh hectares under the crop, expects the arrivals to slide down to around 26 lakh MT as compared to last season's procurement of 30 lakh MT of paddy.

The government agencies in both States would purchase paddy at the minimum support price of Rs. 1,250 and Rs. 1,280 per quintal of the Common and grade 'A' varieties.

The payments for the current season is expected to continue along the traditional means, which include routing through commission agents, as the Union government has yet to issue any instructions or guidelines regarding direct payments into the farmers' accounts.

A statement quoting the Punjab government's official spokesman said instructions had been issued to ensure that farmers received payments within 48 hours of the lifting of their stocks. Dispute-redressal committees would become operational at every purchase centre, as the Food department established a 24-hour control room at the headquarters as well as at the district offices to monitor the progress of the procurement as well as check any malpractice of short or extra measurement. The State government would ensure the lifting of paddy within 72 hours of the purchase.

Meanwhile, officials across different departments and government-run corporations in Punjab are mulling over the issue of storage, its facilities already holding about 145 lakh tonnes of wheat and paddy and some stocks languishing since 2008.

With hardly any new storage facilities added in recent times, about 70 per cent has been stocked "unscientifically" in open spaces. Recently, around 0.50 lakh tonnes of wheat had to be disposed of as cattlefeed as it was rendered unfit for human consumption.

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SALT of Banswara's earth



Welthungerhilfe representative and German expert Bernard Hooper interacting with farmers at Ratapan village in Banswara district of Rajasthan.— Photo: Rohit Jain Paras

An ambitious project connecting an integrated farming system (IFS) with animal husbandry in the semi-arid region of Banswara district in southern Rajasthan has improved the standard of living of hundreds of tribal farmers in its second year, enhanced land productivity and crop yield, reduced farm input costs and led to a significant increase in the farmers' incomes.

The project is supported by German aid agency Welthungerhilfe with emphasis mainly on sloppy agriculture land technology (SALT) and "Jeevamrit", a natural pesticide and fertiliser. These low-cost technologies are combined with poultry and goat rearing to provide sustainable livelihood to the farmers.

The project's achievements were highlighted at a farmers' meet at Ratapan village in Anandpuri block of Banswara district over the weekend in the presence of State Rural Development Minister Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya, Banswara zila pramukh Resham Malviya and German expert Bernard Hooper, who represented Welthungerhilfe.

Banswara-based voluntary group Vaagdhara, dedicated to the cause of food security for poor tribal families, is collaborating with Welthungerhilfe for the project's implementation. Vaagdhara secretary Jayesh Joshi said 70 per cent of the families in Udaipur Bara panchayat, where the project is operative, have adopted low-cost techniques depicting a remarkable difference in productivity.

Mr. Joshi pointed out that the project's activities had been converged with the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme to ensure that its benefits reach a large number of farmers in the region.

Banswara zila pramukh called upon the farmers to adopt useful technologies like SALT to improve productivity on their sloping lands.

"I am glad to note that farmers do not have to do anything new. The only thing they need to do is to reconstruct things in a better way," Mr. Resham Malviya said, while releasing a booklet titled "Community Practices for Food Security" on the occasion.

The State Rural Development Minister said the farmers should sow seeds of improved varieties that are supplied by the State government and adopt new farm technologies to grow cash crops which give a better yield in a small area. Growing population, the expanding network of roads and unchecked construction has limited the size of agricultural fields, Mr. Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya pointed out.

Mr. Hooper, who also met the project's beneficiaries separately, said its efficacy had been proved not just on paper but also at the grassroots, where the target families had benefited immensely. The poor, small and marginal tribal farmers, who do not have access to modern technology, had taken advantage of IFS along with their enhanced capacity to take up animal husbandry, he said.

The principal components of IFS connecting it with animal husbandry system are organic manure development, growing of multipurpose trees on wasteland and live fencing, mixed cropping of cereals, pulses, oilseeds, vegetables and cash crops, fodder saving mechanism and installation of lined or piped watercourses. Animal husbandry activities include the supply of improved varieties of poultry chicks and support for goat rearing.

Mr. Joshi said the farmers' income in the IFS component, expansion of tree-based fodder agro-forestry and utilisation of organic manure were constantly being monitored.

The six villages of Udaipur Bada panchayat in Anandpur block where the project is operative are Udaipur Bada, Ratapan, Bada Talab, Thapda, Jalampura and Pithapura. The intended beneficiaries are indigenous tribals and other underprivileged people mainly dependent on agriculture and labour for subsistence.

The project has used mixed cropping approach to maintain soil fertility. Farmers who were earlier sowing pigeon pea, black gram and maize in different fields as kharif crops are now sowing different combinations of these crops in a single field. With the application of SALT, soil erosion is checked in both the wasteland and the cultivable land, and the bunds developed through trenches are sown with seeds of drumstick, babool and lal arandi.

In an effort to promote community-based institutions, 86 farmers have been brought together in seven self-help groups and all of them have been linked with banks by opening their accounts.

Mr. Joshi said Vaagdhara has also organised training programmes on IFS to fulfil the objectives of sustainable livelihood and development.

Other activities include development of low-cost water harvesting structures, distribution of drip irrigation system, distribution of seeds and vegetable kits and development of organic manure through vermi-composting. Mr. Joshi affirmed that the project had succeeded in motivating the tribal farmers and will achieve all of its targets when it is wound up in July next year.

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Applications invited for MS programmes

The Kerala Veterinary and Animal Science University, Pookode, Wayanad, has invited applications for admission to MS programmes in the following disciplines.

Wildlife studies: graduates in Botany, Zoology, Veterinary Science, Forestry and so on may apply.

Quality Systems in Dairy Processing: graduates in Dairy and Food Technology, Microbiology, Food Science, Biology and Chemistry may apply.

Applied Microbiology: graduates in Microbiology, Zoology, Botany, Biotechnology, chemistry, Veterinary Science and Agriculture may apply.

Applied Biochemistry: graduates in Biochemistry, Biology, Chemistry, Zoology, Botany, Biotechnology, Life Science and Dairy Science may apply.

Biostatistics: Graduates in Statistics, Mathematics, Engineering, Technology and so on may apply.

Website

Details at www.kvasu.ac.in.

The application fee is Rs. 1,000 (Rs. 500 for those belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes). Download application form and details from the website.

The filled applications, along with documents, should be sent to the Registrar, Kerala Veterinary and Animals Science University, Pookode, Lakkidi (PO), Wayanad – 673 576 so as to reach there on or before October 15.

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Congress seeks Rs.2,000 as paddy procurement price

The Agriculturists Wing of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee has demanded Rs.2,000 as the procurement price for a quintal of paddy.

In a statement here, its vice president Puliur R. Nagarajan submitted that the procurement price of Rs.1,350 for fine quality and Rs.1,300 for ordinary varieties of paddy announced by Chief Minister Jayalithaa is “totally inadequate” considering the escalation in the price of fertilizers and labour cost. Besides, he said Karnataka should be held responsible if Tamil Nadu farmers were to lose samba crop because of its “intransigent” attitude. It would result in a loss of Rs.one lakh crore for the ryots of Tamil Nadu, he added.

While appealing to the Central government to find an amicable and permanent solution to the Cauvery imbroglio, he wanted the international convention regarding the riparian rights of the lower riparian state ensured in the inter-State river waters disputes.

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Water release

Farmers of Thanjavur district have welcomed the release of 9,000 cusecs of Cauvery water by Karnataka on Sunday as per the Supreme Court order.

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Cardamom exports hit

With no traders taking part in cardamom e-auction in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, a large quantity of cardamom is stagnating at the centres

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Delta farmers welcome water release



AIADMK farmers wing members distributing sweets to celebrate release of Cauvery water by Karnataka government, at Thanjavur railway junction on Sunday.— Photo: B. Velankanni Raj

Farmers of Thanjavur district have welcomed the release of 9000 cusecs of Cauvery water by Karnataka on Sunday as per the Supreme Court order.

Secretary of the Cauvery Delta Farmers' Welfare Association S. Ranganathan described the water release as a good gesture.

He expressed the hope that north east monsoon would be good this year and with water from Karnataka, farmers of Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam might be able to reap a good samba harvest. V. Jeevakumar, a farmer of Budalur, said it was a welcome feature that Karnataka released the water respecting the court order and this would strengthen the federal set-up in the country.

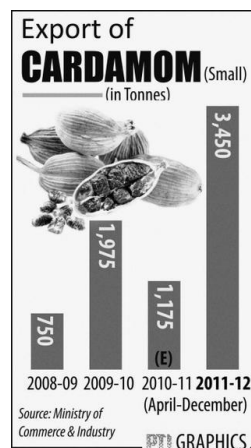
Sami Nadarajan, secretary of the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, affiliated to the CPI (M), said Karnataka should release the water continuously. Tamil Nadu government took the right decision by approaching the Supreme Court. "We, the farmers of Thanjavur district, thank the Tamil Nadu government," he said. Members of the AIADMK farmers' wing distributed sweets and burst crackers. K. Thangamuthu, secretary of the wing, said the rights of Tamil Nadu on

Cauvery water had been established by the Supreme Court order. Chief Minister Jayalalithaa took all the steps to get water from Karnataka and it yielded result.

In the history of the Cauvery issue, this is the first time that Karnataka released water obeying a court order. For this, the farmers of Thanjavur district should thank the Chief Minister.”

01.10.2012 Sep

Board to revisit cardamom sales rules



Frequent disruption of auctions hits small and marginal farmers hard

The Spices Board will revisit the 25-year-old rules governing the sale of cardamom in the country to help small and marginal farmers out of the vortex of frequent disruption in auctions and open up multiple channels of marketing.

The board's move has been prompted by a week-long disruption in auctions following a boycott by traders, who are protesting against the increase in minimum bid price from 50 paise to Rs. 5 a kg.

Freedom curtailed

At present, cardamom farmers can sell their produce only to traders licensed by the Spices Board through the auction system, says the Cardamom (Licensing and Marketing) Rules 1987. This curtails the freedom of the farmer to explore the market as only a few farmers with large holdings are able to get the best price, Spices Board sources told *The Hindu* on Sunday.

With the present set of rules, farmers are at the mercy of traders at the auctions. Any disruption in the process shuts down the only window of sales and small and marginal farmers are the hardest hit by the system.

The circumstances under which the current cardamom marketing rules came into existence had changed drastically over the past 25 years and the market could be opened up for farmers, the sources said.

They said the board had never stopped the auctions though incidents like the current one had been frequent. Cardamom auctions were disrupted for more than a month towards the end of last year when there were cross-border problems affecting the movement of cardamom to Tamil Nadu. The disruption was caused by the stand-off between Kerala and Tamil Nadu over the Mullaperiyar dam.

Electronic auctions at Puttady and Bodinayakanur have got halted since last Tuesday. The last of the auctions was on September 24 by the Cardamom Planters' Association, Bodinayakanur.

The Spices Board has set a target of 3,000 tonnes and Rs.225 crore earnings for the current financial year. However, disruptions in auctions may derail exports.

Though cardamom export touched a record 4,650 tonnes valued at Rs.363 crore during the last financial year, there had been a decline in export during the April-July period this year.

Tax concession

Meanwhile, the board is learnt to have written to Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, requesting him to consider removing the tax disparity between Kerala and Tamil Nadu so that cardamom business flourished in the State.

Cardamom buyers who intended to sell their stock in Kerala have to pay five per cent State sales tax whereas the consignments headed for Tamil Nadu attract only two per cent Central Sales Tax. This disparity in tax had driven cardamom processing away from Kerala, they feel.

Today Farm News

01.10.2012 A.M

01.10.2012 Sep

Weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Monday, Oct 1

Max Min

32.5° | 23.1°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 79

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:58

Sunset: 05:58

Barometer: 1008

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Tuesday, Oct 2

Max Min

31° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday Oct 3	Thursday Oct 4	Friday Oct 5	Saturday Oct 6	Sunday Oct 7
30° 26° Rainy	30° 26° Rainy	32° 27° Rainy	30° 26° Rainy	33° 24° Sunny

Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Humidity: 58

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:14

Sunset: 06:06

Barometer: 1012



Today Farm News

30.09.2012 P.M

30.09.2012 Sep

Oil demand to grow 5.2% on poor rains, power shortages:
CMIE

The ongoing issues in the power sector, which is badly hit by coal and gas shortages, coupled with poor monsoon in some states, will increase the demand for oil products, which is set to increase to 5.2 per cent this fiscal from 4.4 per cent a year ago, says the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE).

“The total consumption of petroleum products is expected to grow by 5.2 per cent this fiscal compared to 4.4 per cent growth logged in last fiscal, driven primarily by a spike in diesel demand, which has already more than doubled in the first quarter and will see further fillip following the poor monsoon in some States,” the agency said in the monthly monitor.

However, it is silent on the impact of the sharp 12 per cent diesel price hike earlier this month on demand, as the report was prepared before the hike.

The report further notes that the ongoing economic crisis in Europe and the US and the soft landing of China will, however, weaken global demand for oil.

Diesel consumption increased 10.9 per cent during April-July against 5 per cent rise in the corresponding period last year, it notes.

“The demand for diesel is expected to rise on account of power shortages and deficiency in rainfall. Deficient rains will lead to higher use of pump sets for irrigation resulting in an increase for diesel,” CMIE said.

The sharp reduction in rainfall over the North and Central regions caused the overall rainfall deficiency to 7 per cent during the week ending September 26, from 5 percent in the previous, according to the Met department data.

The power and agriculture sectors account for nearly 20 per cent of the total diesel consumption, the report said and noted that diesel that accounts for 40 per cent of petroleum products consumption is expected to go up further this fiscal.

The report notes that the expected pick up in the auto sector will also augur well for diesel demand.

“Sales of commercial vehicles are likely to pick up in the remaining months of the year, which will support the growth in demand for diesel. As diesel is cheaper by around Rs 25 per litre as compared to petrol, we expect demand to shift in preference of diesel powered passenger cars.

Diesel is also expected to replace CNG on account of diminishing price gap between the two fuels. This is expected to push up the demand for diesel,” it said.

30.09.2012 Sep

Farmers pin hopes on Icrisat initiative to boost millet yield



Hyderabad, Sept 30:

Several farmers of Aagolai village in western Rajasthan have found a new means to skip lunch and work in their farms till the evening. All they have for breakfast is sogra, flat bread of pearl millet, which is enough to keep them going till evening without lunch.

Pearl millet

Pearl millet is today not only producing greater yields and income for farmers across north-western India, but has improved the productivity of the cultivators. For, packed with healthy nutrients, the cereal can, indeed, sustain hunger for hours longer than other foods.

This is largely an upshot of a programme called Harnessing Opportunities for Productivity Enhancement (HOPE), unveiled by the International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (Icrisat) and its partners across India and sub-Saharan Africa.

Headquartered in Hyderabad with two regional hubs and five country offices in sub-Saharan Africa, the institute is a non-profit organisation that conducts agricultural research for development in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. The institute celebrated 40 years of existence here recently.

Icrisat technology

Icrisat's hybrid technology has been greatly instrumental in increasing production of pearl millet from 3.5 million tonnes in the 1950s to 9.5 mt today without a significant increase in land area.

"The average national yield of this millet is about one tonne a hectare. Just four states — Gujarat, Haryana, Maharashtra and Rajasthan — today account for more than 90 per cent of the pearl millet area of nine million hectares in India," a senior scientist with Icrisat pointed out.

Under the HOPE programme, during the last three years, about 13,000 farmer households were provided with 20 tonnes of seeds of 17 improved pearl millet hybrids.

Higher yield

"The improved technology resulted in a yield increase of 30-150 per cent over local crop management practices. Now this is not only a staple food for rural households in these states, but also used as cattle and poultry feed," the scientist said.

30.09.2012 Sep

Coonor tea turnover slips to 19-week low

The turnover at the auctions of Coonor Tea Trade Association hit a 19-week low at this week's auction which concluded on Friday, says a market report. Although the volume sold marginally rose over last week, on an average, every kg lost about Rs 2. This week, 8.35 lakh kg tea was sold against 8.31 lakh kg last week. However, even this could be sold only by dropping the average price to Rs 87.60 a kg from Rs 89.08. The turnover also dropped to Rs 7.31 crore from Rs 7.40 crore, 1.22 per cent loss in one week. Both the domestic and export demand were inadequate to absorb the teas at higher prices. "Unfavourable trading conditions prevail in Pakistan, Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Iraq and Libya", an exporter said. With upcountry buyers preferring Assam tea, domestic demand suffered here. This week, only 62.19 per cent of the offer was sold against 67.08 per cent last week.

30.09.2012 Sep

IGC cuts global wheat output estimates to 657 mt

The International Grains Council (IGC) has further trimmed its global wheat production forecast for 2012-13 to 657 million tonnes (mt) due to decline in output in Russia, Australia and Europe.

Last month, the London-based organisation had forecast the output at 662 mt for 2012-13, lower than the record output of 696 mt last year.

"World production for 2012-13 is cut by a further five million tonnes to 657 MT, a six per cent year-on-year decline... It is mainly due to downward revision for Russian and Australian wheat, together with EU wheat," IGC said in its latest grains report.

China and India are the top two wheat producing countries in the world. The crop year varies from country to country. In India, wheat sowing for 2012-13 will start from next month and the harvesting will be undertaken from middle of April 2013.

The global wheat consumption is expected to decline to 679 mt this year from 691 mt in 2011-12 as high prices are expected to reduce feed demand, it said.

World trade is placed a little lower at 132 mt for this year, against 145 mt in the year ago following reduced trade in feed wheat, it added.

According to IGC, the carry over stock is estimated to be lower at 175 mt as compared to 197 mt in the review period because major exporters are becoming increasingly tight.

On global wheat prices, it said they have outperformed due to concerns over Black Sea exports and dry conditions in Australia.

Today Farm News

01.10.2012 A.M

01.10.2012 Sep

Dalits see smallest rise in wages

NEW DELHI: Dalits have once again lost out, this time on wages in rural areas. A first-of-its-kind data released by the [Reserve Bank of India](#) (RBI) has revealed that during the last eight years - between April, 2004 and March, 2012 - the daily wages of cobblers in rural areas rose by 95%, the worst show among the 17 categories listed by the government's [Labour Bureau](#). The all-India data compiled recently is, however, limited to wages paid to male workers.

Similarly, sweepers, who are also dalits, saw wages rise 109% to Rs 106 a day last March compared to a tad less than Rs 51 when the UPA came to power in mid-2004.

When it comes to actual wages, they remained the second worst paid after herdsmen, who were the only category earning less than Rs 100 a day till March. In terms of growth, sweepers managed to marginally pip blacksmith, whose wages jumped 108% and saw the second slowest rise.

Where the wages have really boomed is in farm-related activities with winnowing and picking topping the charts with a growth of 169% and 158%, respectively. Unlike cobblers or sweepers, in rural areas wages for unskilled workers also shot up 153% to Rs 151 a day.

What may come as a surprise to many is that the wage increase in the top three segments —

winnowing, picking and unskilled labour — was more rapid than the rise in per capita income during this period.

According to [Central Statistics Office](#), per capita income at current prices was estimated at Rs 24,143 in 2004-05, which went up 151% to Rs 60,603 in 2011-12. In terms of daily income, the rise was Rs 66 in 2004-05 to Rs 166.

"There is a faster growth in farm wages in recent years, especially from 2007-08 because agricultural prices have gone up and the benefit has also been passed on. In addition, because of NREGA farm labour has a better bargaining power," said Ashok Gulati, chairman of the commission on agricultural costs and prices.

01.10.2012 Sep

Punjab govt to start paddy procurement from today

CHANDIGARH: Even as there are concerns about storage space for new paddy crop, Punjab government is all set to begin procurement of record 150 lakh MT of paddy in 1,770 notified mandis across the state on Monday against expected arrival of 135 lakh MT paddy during the current kharif season.

Following a request from the state government, the Reserve Bank of India has sanctioned a cash credit limit of Rs 16,674 crore for the month of October even as total of Rs 22,509.90 crore will be spent for procurement of 135 lakh MT of paddy by the state procurement agencies.

Though wheat from the previous season has not been lifted from mandis, the state government is promising that paddy would be lifted within 72 hours of purchase. Punjab Mandi Board and food and civil supplies department have constituted teams for raids and farmers could directly approach food and civil supplies department inspectors to check malpractices and short or extra measurement. Dispute redressal committees have been set up in every mandi, besides a 24-hour control room where farmers could contact in case of an emergency.

The procurement agencies would purchase paddy at a minimum support price of Rs 1,250 per quintal for common and Rs 1,280 per quintal for grade 'A' during the current kharif season against Rs 1,080 and Rs 1,110 per quintal for these varieties during 2011-12. According to the state [agriculture department](#), 163.68 lakh MT of paddy production is expected from an area of 28.10 lakh hectares.

Daily Farm News

01.10.2012 A.M

01.10.2012 Sep

Karnataka begins releasing Cauvery river water to Tamil Nadu

Falling in line with the Supreme Court directive, Karnataka today began releasing Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu, setting off a wave of protests against it in the river basin districts.

After repeatedly maintaining that the state itself was in a distress situation, the Karnataka government released water from Krishna Raja Sagar and Kabini dams early today to ensure flow of 9,000 cusecs of water to the neighbouring state.

"It is inevitable for government to release water to comply with the Supreme Court order. With due respect to the Supreme Court we are releasing water. However, we are committed to protect the interests of farmers", Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar told reporters.

As the decision led to intensified protests, Shettar urged agitators to maintain peace and said government would file a petition before the Supreme Court, seeking a review of its order asking the state to honour the Cauvery River Authority directive to release 9,000 cusecs to Tamil Nadu till Oct 15.

Protests in parts of Mandya, Mysore, Chamarajanagar and Bangalore led to disruption of vehicular movement in the Bangalore-Mysore sector, even as opposition Congress demanded resignation of the BJP government for its "failure" to protect farmers' interests.

Karnataka has already appealed to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, also the CRA Chairman, to review its September 19 order and keep it in abeyance till the decision was reviewed.

Water Resources Minister Basavaraj Bommai termed the CRA order as "arbitrary" and said it was passed without assessing the ground realities in the state.

Farmers' outfits and Kannada protagonist organisations defied prohibitory orders and attempted to lay seige to KRS reservoir, which police foiled by taking into custody more than 300 people, including JDS MLA from Melukote C S Puttaraju.