

Farming on Gazan rooftops

Lettuce, peppers and celery are fertilised by waste from fish



Green rooftops Plant beds fed by a system that produces food by linking fish tanks of tilapia with gravel-filled containers. Photo: AFP

Abu Ahmed is part of a United Nations agency project to introduce cutting-edge urban agriculture to Gaza City. He teaches Palestinians to farm without soil in the space available to them in one of the world's most densely populated places.

Most of his rooftop is given over to an aquaponic system, which produces food by linking fish tanks of tilapia with gravel-filled planters.

The integrated system feeds the water from the fish tanks into the plant beds, where Abu Ahmed's crops – lettuce, peppers, broccoli, celery and herbs – are fertilised by waste produced by the tilapia.

As the water trickles through the gravel, the plants absorb nutrients from the fish waste, cleaning the water, which then replenishes the tanks.

Helping the poor

"The idea really was to help the poorest people in Gaza be able to grow some of their own food, and healthy food, grown without pesticides," explains Mohammed El Shatali, the project's deputy manager.

For Abu Ahmed, the project has been a major success.

"I had a bit of experience with agriculture and farming before, but nothing like this," he says, examining the leaves of a celery plant.

Thanks to the project, the 51-year-old has been able to feed his 13-member family fresh vegetables and fish throughout the summer.

"The fish taste great, although I'm trying not to eat too many of them because I'm breeding new ones so I won't have to buy more."

There have also been other benefits from the system, he says, explaining that it cools the apartments below by providing shade.

"It's great for the children. Nowadays they don't see farming, they barely see trees or plants. It's great for them to see this because it gets them interested in growing and planting things."

Packed city

Gaza's 1.6 million residents live on just 360 square kilometres (140 square miles) of land, and much of that is off limits because Israel maintains a 300-metre (yard) deep exclusion zone along the length of the border fence.

The project has faced setbacks, including the Gaza-specific challenge of power cuts of up to 12 hours a day, which shut down the pumps that transfer water between the fish tanks and plant beds.

"Electricity has been one of the most difficult challenges," says Chris Somerville, an urban agriculture consultant with the FAO,

"At 30 degrees centigrade (86 Fahrenheit), the capacity of the water to hold oxygen reduces, and during the summer many of the beneficiaries had fish die."

New participants will receive a battery-powered pump, and the FAO is experimenting with fibres that could be used in hydroponic systems to retain moisture when power cuts stop the water flow.

"To be able to take this Gaza model and bring it to other countries would really be a massive achievement," Somerville says.AFP

Eco-friendly activity

Aquaponics is a sustainable food production system that combines a traditional aquaculture (raising aquatic animals such as snails, fish or prawns in tanks) with hydroponics (cultivating plants in water). Perhaps you could try something similar on your terrace?

Sheep walking to defend grazing rights

Shepherds led 2,000 sheep through upscale streets of Madrid in protest of urban sprawl eating into pastures



Ovine dissent Sheep being mustered through the centre of Madrid, Spain. Photo: AFP

Spanish shepherds led a flock of more than 2,000 sheep through central Madrid on Sunday in defense of ancient grazing, migration and droving rights threatened by urban sprawl and modern agricultural practices.

Many tourists and residents were surprised to see traffic cut to allow the ovine parade to bleat its way across some of Madrid's most upscale urban streets.

The right to use droving routes that wind across land that was open fields and woodland before Madrid grew from a rural hamlet to the great metropolis it is today has existed since at least 1273.

Every year, a handful of shepherds defend the right and, following an age-old tradition, on Sunday paid 25 maravedis coins first minted in the 11th century to city hall to use the crossing.

Shepherds have a right to use 78,000 miles (125,000 kilometres) of paths for seasonal livestock migrations from cool highland pastures in summer to warmer and more protected lowland grazing in winter.

The movement is called transhumance and in Spain up until recently involved close to a million animals a year, mostly sheep and cattle.

Modern farming practices are however increasingly confining animals to barns, because shepherding is costly, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, which has been promoting the colourful annual Transhumance Fiesta in Madrid since 1994.

Spaniards are proud of their centuries-old sheep rearing traditions and hold the native Merino breed of sheep in particular esteem. Merinos have gone on to form the backbone of important wool industries in places such as Australia and South America.AP

Panel to meet on November 2 to fix sugarcane price

No decision could be arrived at in the previous two meetings



Dim scenario: Cultivation of sugarcane has come down owing to drought and low prices.— File photo: M.A. Sriram

The high-powered committee, headed by Minister for Agriculture, Umesh Katti, will meet in Bangalore on November 2 to fix the price of sugarcane this year.

The previous two meetings failed to take a decision on the advance price. Though the State government announced Rs. 2,200 as the advance price, it was cancelled after growers staged protests calling it “unscientific”.

Kurubur Shantakumar, president of the Karnataka State Sugarcane Growers’ Association, told *The Hindu* that the government fixed an advance price of Rs. 2,400 a tonne for the State-run Mysugar Mills in Mandya, though the mill churned out only 85 kg of sugar from a tonne of sugarcane.

Other mills in Mandya and Mysore districts produced 100 kg to 110 kg of sugar from a tonne of sugarcane but were offered only Rs. 2,200. He cited an example of Ganadev Sugar Mills in Gujarat which got a yield of 110 kg a tonne and the farmers were paid Rs. 3,446 a tonne.

He said sugar factories paid an advance payment of Rs. 2,000 a tonne for sugarcane when the price of sugar was around Rs. 2,600 a quintal last year. This year, the price was around Rs. 3,600 a quintal and growers must be paid an advance of Rs. 3,000, he said.

Sugar mills sold last year’s stock for Rs. 3,200 a quintal recently and they must pay up another Rs. 500 as the second instalment for growers who supplied sugarcane. Crushing had started and the government should not delay the announcement of the advance price, he said.

“Why is the government dithering on fixing a price for sugarcane? Cultivation has come down by more than 30 per cent in the State this year owing to low prices and drought. When the high-powered panel was set up in September, Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar had said that it would submit its report within a month. But that has not happened yet,” he said.

The S.A. Patil committee had said in its report that Karnataka should follow the State Advisory Price that was in vogue in other States, but the government was yet to address the issue.

Over 3 lakh hectares were under sugarcane cultivation in Karnataka and there were more than 10,000 growers, a majority of them small. As much as 16 lakh tonnes were crushed in Mysore district last year and it could be around 12 lakh tonnes this year, he added.

GM crops: interim report welcomed

The Southern Action on Genetic Engineering (SAGE), a coalition of farmers’ unions, scientific bodies, consumer organisations and environmentalists in southern States and Odisha, has welcomed the interim report of the technical experts committee of the Supreme Court which was set up to assess the impact of genetically modified crops on agriculture and the propriety of conducting field trials.

Conditions laid

The committee laid down a number of conditions that were supposed to be met before any GM field trial was conducted in the country and recommended a ten-year moratorium on the trials, a press release of SAGE said.

The release added that the members of the committee were highly reputed scientists who did not have any inherent opposition to biotechnology and hence took a considered view of the impact of GM on Indian agriculture from their respective scientific positions.

SAGE took exception to the opposition to the committee’s report by some farmers’ organisations and ridiculed their claim that Bt had helped increase cotton production.

Workshop focuses on opportunities in aquaculture

Efforts are on to bring the fisheries trade into the fold of the chamber of commerce as the export of fish and prawns from the district is gaining momentum, according to Dantu Surya Rao, chairman of the Cocanada Chamber of Commerce. He was the chief guest at the one-day training programme on 'new opportunities in aquaculture' conducted by the city-based Society for Promotion of Integrated Coastal Areas Management (SPICAM) in association with the Central Institute of fisheries Education (CIFE) on the CIFE campus here on Monday.

Mr. Surya Rao felt that there was a strong need for finding new avenues of fish and prawn culture, as the demand for the produce in the international market was increasing steadily.

Referring to the challenges in marine produce exports, Mr. Rao said that the Federation of Indian Exports Organisation was planning to conduct a workshop soon to discuss the issue in detail.

'No clear guidelines'

Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) Project Director K. Sitarama Raju observed that aqua farmers were getting confused with the guidelines prescribed by the Coastal Aqua Authority and the Marine Products Exports Development Authority (MPEDA). He said that both the firms were asking farmers to get registered with their agency and it was not an easy task for farmers to get dual registration.

Stressing the need for clarity on the guidelines pertaining to farmers' registration, he said that ATMA launched funding schemes for the aqua farmers and wanted them to make use of the schemes.

Initiatives

CIFE officer in-charge S.S.H. Razvi explained the initiatives taken by the CIFE to develop L. Vannamei variety, which was now being cultivated by more and more farmers in the region.

SPICAM president T. Rajya Lakshmi said the workshop was a platform for farmers, scientists, traders and the funding agencies to discuss the opportunities in aquaculture.

Sampath Kumar of the MPEDA, M.Surya Prakesh of the NFDB, Hyderabad, Maheswarudu, principal scientist from the CMFRI, Visakhapatnam, and others were present.

Farm mechanisation scheme launched

Vizianagaram district is the first among 11 districts in the state to adopt farm mechanisation scheme, claimed Botcha Jhansi Lakshmi, Lok Sabha member. Modern farming equipment valued at Rs.17crore was the target for supply to farmers; of which Rs.8.84 crore is the subsidy. Of the Rs.8.84 crore sanctioned for the district, farm equipment worth Rs.1.02 crore was distributed among farmers.

Dr. Jhansi Lakshmi, who inaugurated the newly built Agros building at Thotapalem here on Monday, said the government's objective was to find a solution to labour problem that farmers had been facing for long. There was need to create awareness among farmers on farm mechanisation for bountiful yield at low inputs. She appealed to bankers to extend 50 per cent of the equipment cost as loan to ryots. An exhibition of farm mechanisation tools was put up at the office.

Collector M. Veerabrahmaiah asked progressive farmers and agriculture officials to create awareness among farmers on the use of modern farm equipment. He said that banks had extended Rs. 600crore as crop loans during kharif-2012 against the target of Rs. 550crore, supplied 40,000 tonnes of urea and kept the needed pesticide ready. Managing Director (AGROS) L. Sasidhar, and Regional Manager M.L. Raja Mohan were present.

Horticulture show

Later, Dr. Jhansi Lakshmi inaugurated the horticulture and flower show at M.R. Government Music and Dance College. At the exhibition, Micro Irrigation, Animal Husbandry, ICDS, ITDA, Sericulture, Fisheries, GCC, Horticulture departments opened stalls. On the occasion, the MP revealed that she wrote to the state government to recognise 'Sirimanotsavam' of Sri Pydithalli Ammavaru as state festival. Mr. Veerabrahmaiah said that the show was put up at a cost of Rs. 7.74lakhs for the benefit of devotees participating in the 'Sirimanotsavam'. Joint collector P.A. Sobha and others were present.

NABARD to support innovative technologies

National Agriculture Bank for Rural Development (NABARD) is supporting rural artisans and technocrats, who invent innovative rural technologies relating to dry land and rain fed farming,

innovative rainwater harvesting for rural dwellings, energy from biomass, agriculture wastes, techniques for increasing the value of crop residues and non-crop biomass. Besides community regulation of distribution and use of water and energy, storage devices for agriculture and rural products, innovative methods of managing common property resources, materials and designs for rural roads, sanitation and waste disposal etc are some of the subjects for rural innovation. Those inventing or advocating new technologies will be supported by the Rural Innovation Fund (RIF) of the NABARD.

All innovations and related farm activities, rural non-farm and micro-finance sectors can have access to RIF assistance and especially those which provide technology and skill up-gradation, inputs supply and market support leading to promotion of viable enterprises, sustainable employment, infrastructure development, and improved flow and access of credit to rural entrepreneurs.

RIF is designed to support unconventional experiments in farm, non-farm and micro-finance sectors that would have the potential to promote livelihood opportunities and employment in rural areas. NABARD is encouraging innovative proposals aimed at increasing productivity and profitability of operations of the farmers, artisans, and projects that help in reducing drudgery, improving access to market, better sanitation, health and hygienic conditions and environment in rural areas.

NABARD Assistant General Manager Prasada Rao said the low cost technologies in rural housing, skill development of artisans, habitat development, rural service sector and rural entrepreneurship was being encouraged by assisting those who come up with innovative technologies and for their commercial exploitation by entrepreneurs. All innovations should benefit the rural communities by and large and be helpful to the rural poor. Engineering students engaged in invention of rural innovative technologies can also apply for the RIF. Other Central government institutions such as National Institute for Rural Development also have funds for rural innovation to encourage young technological scientists.

Kisan mela organised to improve farming practices

A kisan mela was jointly organised in Adilabad on Monday by Project SHARE, a sustainable agriculture initiative by Monsanto and the NGO, Indian Society of Agribusiness Professionals (ISAP).

About 500 farmers besides agriculture scientists and officials attended the mela and the field visit at Gourapur village in Indervelli mandal.

Addressing the farmers, the ISAP Director, Dr. S. Chandra, said that Project SHARE envisages and promotes the use of better seeds and inputs, improved farming practices and market linkages especially in cotton farming. Improved farm practices have led to the improvement in cotton yield by more than 40 per cent, he claimed.

Shankar, a farmer from Shankarguda village, who received training in best farming practices from Project SHARE, revealed that the training had finally brought him more income. "This has enabled me to send my kids for higher education," he said.

Among those who participated in the kisan mela and field visit were Director, Public Affairs, Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility, Christopher Samuel, and scientist from Adilabad Agriculture Research Centre, Dr. Satish Chandra.

"Yantra Lakshmi" scheme launched for mechanised farming

The JD (Agriculture), K. Dharma Naik, has appealed to farmers to come forward to avail of the schemes introduced by the State government in association with the Centre for the Mechanisation of Agriculture.

Under the scheme named "Yantra Lakshmi", farmers, if they wanted to purchase farm equipment as an individual or in groups, would be given 50 per cent subsidy and the rest of the amount would be arranged as loan from the nationalized banks, he said, while addressing an awareness camp of farmers on farm mechanization, here on Monday.

Funds sanctioned

For the purpose, the government sanctioned Rs.14.89 crore to the district in the kharif season, of which Rs.3 crore was already spent, he said, giving details of the equipment available under the scheme.

It includes transplanters, rotators, power weeders, tractors, mini tractors and so on. Each mega transplanting unit comprising two tractors and other equipment, costs about Rs.70 lakh, of which the government would bear Rs.35 lakh as subsidy.

Farmers, if they formed a group with five to six members, would be sanctioned the equipment, said Mr. Naik.

Farm mechanisation has become very crucial over a period of time particularly with the advent of the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) as farmers were not getting the services of agriculture coolies. Farmers would be in dire need of seedling transplanting machines in the season, he said.

The Assistant Director (Agriculture) and mandal Special Officer A. Surender Reddy also spoke.

“Put a stop to GM crop field trials for 10 years”

Highlighting the possible disastrous consequences of field trials of Genetically Modified (GM) crops, an expert committee has recommended to the Centre to implement a 10-year moratorium on such trials on Bt. Transgenics in all food crops.

In its interim report submitted to the Supreme Court, the Technical Expert Committee (TEC) said: “Based on current overall status of food safety evaluation of Bt. Transgenics, including the data on Bt. Cotton and Bt. Brinjal examined by the TEC, and in accordance with the precautionary principle, the TEC recommends a 10 year moratorium on field trials of Bt. Transgenics in all food crops. Another factor is the possibility of contamination of non-GM food by GM food.”

A Bench of Justices Swatanter Kumar and S.J. Mukhopadaya posted the matter for further hearing on November 9 and in the meanwhile asked the parties concerned to file their response to the interim report. The Bench was hearing a petition filed by Aruna Rodrigues for a direction to ban such field trials. The TEC was constituted by the court to give its recommendations to the government.

The report says: “In India, given the small plot size and relative lack of control in harvesting, storage, transport, it is likely that such contamination would be high. Organic farmers whose products need to be certified as being free of chemicals/pesticides and non-GMO would be particularly strongly affected.”

The report illustrates one possible hazard posed by such trials, saying that “in 2011-12, India was the largest exporter of rice in the world. If the rice is contaminated with GM rice, then essentially India stands to lose the entire European market. The total value of rice export from India worldwide is about Rs. 14000 crore. If the value is small and much less than projected benefits, that is one thing, but if it is high then it could do grave damage. To the best of TEC’s knowledge this possibility has not been considered by regulatory bodies when allowing development of transgenic rice in India, which is presently in full swing and there are several applications before Genetic Engineering Approval Committee .”

The Committee pointed out that there was no mechanism for the payment of compensation to the farmers whose product could be affected and that there was no statutory method in place to address these issues. It further said: “The TEC is of the view that the policy of delegating responsibility by leaving the choice of site selection [for field trials] to the applicant and also allowing the work to be sub contracted is contrary to the basic safety requirements, and is most likely to lead to violation of the conditions of safety.” Additional toxicity tests comprising long term and intergenerational studies should be added to the existing requirement that needs to be met before field trials can commence, said the Committee. It noted that the existing requirement stops at sub-chronic studies.

Farmers advised to be prepared for rains

Strengthening of the low pressure is expected to result in increased rainfall in the interior districts of Tamil Nadu.

Namakkal and surrounding areas are likely to have heavy rainfall during the next two days and the Agrometeorological Advisory Services – attached to the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University and Krishi Vigyan Kendra have asked farmers to be prepared to protect the crops and cattle.

Farmers growing crops like groundnut that are in the harvesting stage should make drainage facilities in the field to avoid rainwater from stagnating on the fields, thereby prevent spoilage of seeds due to germination. Harvested onion and fodder like sorghum should be covered with polythene sheets to protect them from getting damaged by the rain.

Cattle, sheep, goat and backyard poultry should be protected from heavy rains and should be kept in places water does not log.

Poultry farmers are advised to make drainage facility on both the sides of the raised poultry houses to prevent mixing of rainwater with the litter that is collected below the sheds.

This measure will prevent litter from getting washed away by the rain and also reduce ammonia and housefly problems in the long run.

Reforms in agriculture, marketing wings soon

The two-day convention of the Agriculture and Marketing Ministers from as many as 12 States and two Union Territories got off to a busy start here on Monday with the Minister for Marketing and Warehousing M. Mukhesh Goud in the chair.

The chief objective behind the meet is to discuss the different rules and regulations currently in force in the States in the two core departments and try to formulate necessary reforms in the policies, tax regimes etc so that not only an uniformity is brought about but they are made farmer and consumer-friendly. Besides, the concerned Ministers from the States, Secretaries and Commissioners of Agriculture and Marketing Departments also are taking part in the convention which is expected to have a crucial session on Tuesday. Besides Andhra Pradesh, the Ministers and the bureaucrats attending the convention are from Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, M.P, Orissa, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand and the UTs of Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep.

The group has already held similar conventions in seven different States and the present one is said to be the eighth in the series. The ninth and the final session is expected to be held in Maharashtra and a comprehensive report prepared and submitted to the Central government by November end.

According to Mr. Mukhesh Goud, the GoMs and officials are keen on completing their mission before the start of the winter session of the Parliament, due in December so that their report could be tabled and taken up for discussion.

Meanwhile, Mr. Goud visited the Rythu Bazaar here and interacted with the farmers and consumers.

Farmers seek Krishna water for rabi

Farmers under the banner of the CPI-led Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sangam staged a demonstration in front of the Prakasam Bhavan to press for immediate release of water from Nagarjunasagar to the ryots in the district to take up rabi cultivation.

Leading the protest, its district president K.V.V.Prasad said it was unfortunate that the state Government was silent on release of water at least to take up irrigated dry crop at a time when the level in the Nagarjunasagar was 530 ft.

Expressing solidarity with APRS activists, N.G.Ranga Kisan Samatha General Secretary Ch.Seshaiah said the Government should come out with release of water schedule.

Joining the protest, Telugu Rythu District President K.Venkaiah pressed for immediate release of input subsidy to the tune of Rs 48.60 crore to farmers who had suffered crop loss due to natural calamities.

They submitted a memorandum to District Collector Anita Rajendra.

Crash in prices, low production hits farming community



: Low production and a sharp decline in the price of tender areca nut have affected the prospects of the farming community in Wayanad.

The spot price of tender areca nut in the regional market on Monday was Rs.39 to Rs.40 a kg as against Rs.47 to Rs.48 a kg during the corresponding period last year. A few days ago, it had fallen to rock bottom price of Rs.36 a kg.

Weather, diseases

Sources said the volume of areca nut production had fallen sharply due to vagaries of weather and crop diseases, especially the yellow leaf disease. Production had dipped to 65 per cent this year owing to the scanty rainfall, they added.

This is normally the season to start the second phase of areca nut harvest, but many farmers were yet to take up the first phase harvest owing to low prices in the market. “Usually, during the season we procure nearly 10 to 15 tonnes of tender areca nut a day, but we could not procure even 3 tonnes a day this year so far, said A. Binoj, a trader at Meenangadi. Trading sources said the ban on pan masala products in Kerala, Gujarat and Maharashtra had led to the decline in the price of the produce.

Tender areca nut had been procured for the red areca nut processing centres functioning in Chamaraj Nagar, Sireah, Tumkur and Pavhada in Karnataka.

However, the demand was very low this season following reports of a move by the Union government to enforce a ban on sale of pan masala products in the country. Red areca nut is the major ingredient in pan masalas.

Sources said farmers in the district preferred to harvest areca nut in its tender stage as the quality of the ripened areca nut was poor owing to geographical reasons.

Data with the Agriculture Department revealed that 12,730 hectares of land had been utilised for areca nut cultivation in the district. It said nearly 65 per cent of the cultivated areas had been affected by yellow leaf disease, a major threat to areca nut farmers.

Bountiful northeast monsoon gives respite to delta farmers

Availability of water till January end remains a question



light at the end of the tunnel: Farmers planting samba paddy in a field in Mannargudi taluk.—

Photo: B.Velankanni Raj.

The euphoria among the farmers even in tail-end areas of delta is palpable.

With vast stretches on either side of the Mannargudi-Muthupet-Thiruthuraipoondi Road looking lush green, a diametrically opposite picture obtained about a month ago, it looks like the farmers of this region have surmounted the water crisis for the time being.

The normal bounty of northeast monsoon (October-December) to Tirurvarur district is 731 mm. In just a week (October 15 – 21), the district recorded 221 mm.

S. Vasudevan, a mechanical engineer who is looking after the family property of 188 acres in a single block at Perugavazhndan, admits that the farmers were in tears till the onset of monsoon.

“After September 23, there was no rain at all. And the Mettur water reached this area only by October 3. We took a calculated risk by resorting to direct-sowing and spent more than Rs.4 lakh. But it was the timely rains after October 15 that proved crucial. A team with a German technical expert which visited the farm recently is confident that the yield would be extremely impressive,” he added.

The joyous feeling is echoed by G.Ravi of Mannukkamundan, Mannargudi taluk, and J. Krishnan, who has lands in Manankathankottam and Peruvaidaimarudur. They hope that they would get adequate water during the next few weeks thanks to monsoon. But with the Mettur Dam having hardly 30 tmcft of water and Karnataka remaining unmoved regarding release of water to Tamil Nadu, despite the contempt of court case filed by Tamil Nadu, they don't know whether to rejoice.

S.Santhanakrishnan, another farmer, articulates their lurking fear - whether there will be enough water to complete the cultivation because water is absolutely essential up to the end of January.

Mr. Ravi explains their apprehension. “Now we require water for 100 days. First worry is that the rains should not be too heavy as that would totally ruin the standing crops. But rains would not continue beyond December. As the harvest is going to be only by February 15 for the 150-day variety like Savithri, how are we going to manage the entire January with the pittance of storage in Mettur Dam?”

“If we can’t get water during January, situation will become a repeat of 2003 when we did not even bother to harvest.”

Alleging that the prices of fertilizers have further shot up in the past couple of weeks, he pleads that the government to check the same immediately.

Mr.Krishnan, who is looking after 40 acres , says this is the right time for the government to help the farmers out as they have taken enormous risk by raising crops.

“A large number of farmers have started insuring their crop and they can insure up to the end of December. Without insurance, crop coverage would plummet. Besides, both the Central and the State governments should release their contribution simultaneously to help the ryots.”

Price of soya cake drops

Much to the relief of poultry farmers, price of soya cake has come down to Rs. 21,000 a tonne from nearly Rs. 52,000 a tonne some three months ago. Soya cake is the most important protein ingredient of poultry feed. Price of soya cake started rising eight months ago and resulted in increased cost of production of egg. It climbed to Rs. 26,000 a tonne about seven months ago and doubled to Rs. 52,000 a tonne, three months ago. Last week it came down to Rs. 32,000.

Founder and Chairman of the Tamil Nadu Poultry Farm Raw Materials Association’s Advisory Committee A.K.P. Palanivel told *The Hindu* that the broiler industry and the egg (layer) industry grew by about 30 per cent and 20 per cent respectively and thereby increasing the consumption of soya cakes. A few months ago dried fish – an alternative protein ingredient in chicken feed –

became unavailable and this too contributed to the rise in price of soya cake. Poultry farmers, however, say that the price may stabilise around Rs. 28,000 a tonne till April. And then it may steadily increase. The decrease in cultivation of groundnuts and sunflower – other key supplementary protein ingredients – too will contribute to the rise in price of soya cakes, said Mr. Palanivel.

Keep watch over water sources as monsoon intensifies, PWD told



well prepared:K. Gopal, monitoring officer, Tiruvarur, chairing a meet with officials on Monday. Collector S.Natarajan is in the picture.

: With the district experiencing widespread rainfall, K. Gopal, monitoring officer, Tiruvarur district, held discussion with officials on the preparedness to face any eventuality.

Dr. Gopal urged officials to be alert as the northeast monsoon has intensified. PWD officials should monitor water sources round the clock and should keep sand banks for closing breaches ready.

TWAD Board officials should take steps for draining of rain water in municipal and town panchayat limits with the help of motor pumps. The supply of protected drinking water should be monitored and bleaching powder should be stored in adequate quantity for keeping the surrounding environment neat and tidy.

The veterinary department should ensure that cattle are disease free and affected animals should be treated with immediately. The TANGEDCO should initiate steps for preventing accidents due to severing of live electric wire and replace damaged lamp posts. Personnel of the fire and rescue services should be available in adequate number in the flood prone areas with life jackets, and inflatable rafts.

Steps should be taken to ensure supply of essential commodities through the public distribution system and adequate stock should be moved to fair price shops. The health department should keep the 108 ambulance service vehicles ready with adequate stock of life saving medicines.

Dr. Gopal said revenue officials should monitor the situation and provide information on inclement weather instantly to flood control room, so that relief measures could be launched without delay.

S. Natarajan, Collector, explained the preparedness of the district administration in the wake of northeast monsoon intensifying. J. Jeevakani, District Revenue Officer, Samuel Inbadurai, project director, District Rural Development Agency, were present at the meeting.

Nannilam received the maximum rainfall of 100.30 feet in the last 24 hours that ended at 8.30 a.m. on Monday. The following is the record of rainfall in the district during the same period (in m.m.):

Tiruvarur 67; Pandavaiyar head 52.8; Mannargudi and Tiruthuraipoondi 44 each; Kodavasal 40.4; Nidamangalam 32; Valangaiman 28.4; Muthupettai 26.4.

Due to the inclement weather, the Collector has ordered closure of all schools in the district on Tuesday.

Milk producers seek separate union

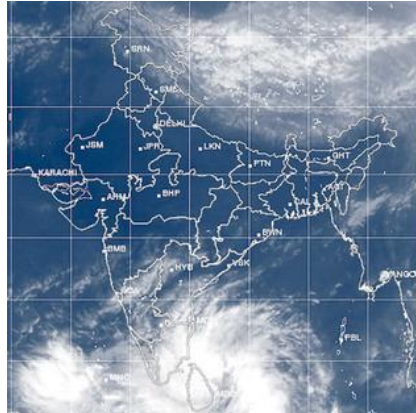
Milk producers have appealed to the government to set up a separate co-operative milk union to benefit the district. At present the district functions under the jurisdiction of Tiruchirappalli District Milk Producers' Co-operative Union.

Perambalur district has 173 co-operative milk societies with 17,000 members supplying over 1.06 lakh litres a day to the Tiruchirappalli union.

A chilling centre with a capacity of one lakh litres is functioning at Thuraimangalam in the district.

Besides, coolers with a capacity of 5,000 litres each are going to be established at Udumbiam, Pasumpalur, Noothappur, Siruvayalur, Periammapalayam, Thungapuram, Vayalappadi, Ammapalayam, Nattarmangalam, Namayur and Ezhumur.

Weather



The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (trace) and total rainfall in mm since October 01, 2012.

Monsoon active over T.N.

CHENNAI: Northeast monsoon has been active over coastal Tamil Nadu. Rainfall occurred at many places over coastal Tamil Nadu and at a few places over Kerala.

Isolated rainfall occurred over interior Tamil Nadu and coastal Andhra Pradesh. Mainly dry weather prevailed over Lakshadweep and dry weather prevailed over Telangana, Rayalaseema and Karnataka.

FORECAST (valid till Wednesday morning): Rain or thundershower would occur at most places over coastal Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, at many places over interior Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Lakshadweep and at a few places over coastal and South interior Karnataka, Rayalaseema and south coastal Andhra Pradesh.

Isolated rain or thundershowers may occur over north coastal Andhra Pradesh, north interior Karnataka and Telangana.

Heavy rainfall warning: Isolated heavy to very heavy rain would occur over coastal Tamil Nadu and Puducherry during the next 48 hours.

Isolated heavy rain would also occur over Interior Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Lakshadweep during the same period.

Hindustan Times

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Weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Rainy

Tuesday, Oct 30

Max Min

30.9° | 23.0°

Rain: 11.7

Humidity: 94

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:02

Sunset: 05:42

Barometer: 1011

Tomorrow's Forecast



Overcast

Wednesday, Oct 31

Max Min

32° | 25°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday

Nov 1



32° | 25°

Overcast

Friday

Nov 2



32° | 25°

Overcast

Saturday

Nov 3



33° | 25°

Overcast

Sunday

Nov 4



32° | 25°

Overcast

Monday

Nov 5



32° | 25°

Overcast

Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 06:32

Humidity: 69

Sunset: 05:37

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1015.8



THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

29.10.2012 P.M

30.10.2012 A.M

29th oct 2012 P.M

Export orders still elude Erode turmeric growers



Turmeric prices were down by Rs 200 a quintal on low sales and lack of export orders from North India.

“The price of turmeric decreased even after closure of market for four days. The farmers expected prices to go up at least by Rs 500 a quintal. This is mainly due to the non-receipt of fresh orders from North India by the exporters and traders. Even for Diwali they have not received orders”, said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said turmeric is available at cheaper prices of Rs 5,500 at Nizamabad and Sangli sales centres.

Further the merchants in North India have already purchased huge stock from these two centres

So they are not placing any fresh orders.

Ravishankar said the turmeric farmers those who are having huge stock with them, bring very limited turmeric bags for sale.

Only half of their stocks brought the markets were sold.

“We are expecting orders from North India within couple of days”.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,800-5,111 a quintal; the root variety Rs 3,509-4,111.

Salem Hybrid Crop: The finger variety fetched Rs 4,929-5,829 and the root variety Rs 4,829-5,519.

Of the 402 bags arrived, only 67 bags were sold.

At the Regulated Marketing Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,210-5,309; the root variety Rs 4,175-5,109.

Of the 399 bags, 313 found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,489-5,729 and the root variety Rs 3,479-4,969.

Of the 367 bags, 361 bags were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Marketing Society, the finger variety was traded at Rs 4,586-5,691; the root variety Rs 3,817-5,108.

All the 125 bags were sold.

Slack offtake, rising inflow hold cotton steady



Cotton prices remained unchanged on weak demand and increasing arrivals on Monday.

Trading activity was slow in Saurashtra area as there was a one-day strike.

New cotton was offered at Rs 33,500-33,900 a candy of 356 kg in Gujarat. A-grade S-6 cotton ruled at Rs 33,500-34,000 and B-grade cotton at Rs 33,300-33,500 .

Prices of V-797 were at Rs 27,500-28,000.

About 12,000-13,000 bales (of 170 kg) of cotton arrived in Gujarat and 52,000-53,000 bales arrived in India.

In Maharashtra, new crop fetched Rs 33,500-34,000.

A-grade low micronaire quoted at Rs 33,200-33,500 and A grade high micronaire cotton 29+ MM quoted at 33,500-33,800.

A Rajkot-based cotton broker said, "Export demand was weak and mills also buy only need-based. Moreover, arrivals are increasing. Farmers sell cotton for money as Diwali festival is fast approaching. However, prices may not decline as quality of new cotton is still not up to the mark."

Recently, Saurashtra Ginners Association estimated about 7.5-8 million bales cotton production in Gujarat against last year's 12 million bales.

Saurashtra's cotton production may decline by 55 per cent to 3-3.5 million bales this year.

On the ICE US, the fibre was traded at 72.51 cents/lb.

Rice rules range-bound on thin arrivals



Paddy arrivals almost halved to around 1 lakh bags on Monday from the last weekend levels.

The major fall was seen in the arrivals of PR varieties as a big share of total produce has already arrived, said Tara Chand Sharma, proprietor of Tara Chand and Sons.

Arrivals are likely to remain sluggish and the arrivals of pure basmati paddy are likely to start by the end of this week, he added.

In the physical market, the market is moving range-bound within a negative territory and may witness some alteration later this week, her said.

Pusa-1121 (steam) sold at Rs 5,500 a quintal while Pusa-1121 (sela) sold at Rs 4,400.

Pure basmati (raw) quoted at Rs 5,475-5,500 while pure basmati (sela) sold at Rs 4,600.

Duplicate basmati traded at Rs 4,600-75.

PR-11 (sela) sold for Rs 2,450-2,500 while PR-11 (Raw) quoted at Rs 2,400-2,500 a quintal.

Permal (raw) sold at Rs 2,075 while Permal (sela) went for Rs 2,050-2,100.

Sharbati (steam) quoted at Rs 3,500 while Sharbati (sela) quoted at Rs 3,280-3,300 a quintal.

Paddy Arrivals

About 70,000 bags of PR variety arrived and went for Rs 1,250-1,280 a quintal, Sharbati arrived with a stock of around 5,000 bags and quoted at Rs 1,650-1,750 while just around 5,000 bags of Sugandha 999 variety arrived and sold at Rs 1,700-1,800.

Around 10,000 bags of PR14 arrived and sold for Rs 1,280-1,300 .

About 10,000 bags of Pusa-1121 arrived and quoted at around 2,200-2,380 a quintal.

Subdued demand, weak global cues crush soyabean, oil



Sluggish trend prevailed in soya oil and soyabean on weak global cues and buying support in physical market.

Soya refined ruled at Rs 680-85 for 10 kg (down Rs 3) on weak foreign and slack buying support.

Similarly, soya solvent declined to Rs 640-43 (down Rs 5) on scattered buying support. In futures also, soya oil traded lower on weak buying support, CBOT projections .

On the NBOT, soya refined November contract closed lower at Rs 703.20 for 10 kg after opening at Rs 705.50 in the morning. Similarly, soya oil futures with its November and December contracts on the NCDEX closed at Rs 700 (down Rs 3.30) and Rs 691 (down Rs 3.70).

According to Mukesh Purohit, a trader, given rise in demand in the coming days, bearish sentiment in soya oil appears unlikely.

Soya seeds ruled firm even as arrival of soyabean in Madhya Pradesh declined to 1 lakh bags due to closure of a large number of mandis on account of 'Valmiki Jayanti'. In Madhya Pradesh, soyabean was at Rs 3,150-3,200 a quintal which is almost same as compared to its prices last week.

Similarly, plant deliveries also ruled firm at Rs 3,275-3,300 on subdued demand. In Indore mandis, soyabean ruled at Rs 3,080-3,150 amid arrival of 14,000 bags.

The November and December contracts of soyabean on the NCDEX were at Rs 3,311 (down Rs 33.50) and Rs 3,350 (down Rs 31) respectively.

Soy DOC also ruled steady at Rs 27,800-28,000 on weak domestic demand.

Pepper slips on fear psychosis

Pepper market slipped on fear psychosis despite an increase in the open interest and turnover on Monday. Consequently, the first two active contracts declined marginally while the third one moved up slightly.

However, "long position holding cartel" is trying its level best to keep the market up and firm. It is spreading rumours that those having short position in November, but do not have goods against that may come out for covering back and thus, a fear psychosis is being created in the market. This in turn has pushed the market down, market sources told *Business Line*.

In fact, of late, more and more pepper is coming out from the primary markets, they said.

On Saturday, an estimated 110 tonnes of pepper was reportedly deposited in recognised warehouses. Even some of them are reportedly full, which the trade alleged, is a tactic aimed at discouraging sellers from transporting to distant places incurring additional transportation charges.

On the spot, 59 tonnes of farm grade pepper arrived today and 60 tonnes were sold at Rs 406 and 408 a kg for 500 GL; Rs 410 - 412 a kg for 550 GL and high range pepper at Rs 415 and 417 a kg while pepper from Rajakumari in Idukki was quoted at Rs 419 a kg but there were neither any seller nor any buyer, they said.

November contract on the NCDEX decreased by Rs 205 a quintal to the last traded price (LTP) of Rs 43,815 a quintal while December was down by Rs 35 a quintal to the LTP of Rs 43,350. February was up by Rs 90 a quintal to the LTP of Rs 38,950 a quintal.

Turnover

Total turnover increased by 263 tonnes to 923 tonnes. Total open interest also went up by 132 tonnes to 8,899 tonnes.

November open interest moved up by 59 tonnes to 5,660 tonnes while that of December and February increased by 70 tonnes and two tonnes to close at 2,589 tonnes and 569 tonnes.

Spot prices declined by Rs100 in tandem with the futures market trend and increased arrivals to close at Rs 40,600 (ungarbled) and Rs 42,100 (garbled) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market was at \$8,400 a tonne (c&f) for the Europe and \$8,700 a tonne (c&f) for the US. Weakening of the rupee has also contributed to the slight decline in the prices.

Indonesia is the cheapest at present being offered at nearly \$2,000 a tonne below the Indian parity. In fact, multinational companies with multi-origin operations having processing facilities in Vietnam are reportedly importing pepper from Indonesia for meeting their export commitments of LBV pepper, they said.

Profit-taking pulls chana futures down



Chana futures on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange Ltd (NCDEX) opened lower at Rs 4,749 a quintal on Monday against the previous close of Rs 4,769. It was trading at Rs 4,750 at 1.15 pm.

Most traders preferred to book profit after the sharp run-up in prices last week.

Spot prices were quoted at Rs 4,750 a quintal in Delhi on Saturday.

The far-month contracts continue to trade lower on expectations of lower demand after the festival season and better output in the rabi season.

Sowing of chana for rabi season has already started in most states and reported to be good in Andhra Pradesh. Chana futures may remain under pressure with profit-booking at frequent intervals.

Science not clear yet on GM crops, says Jaipal Reddy

The newly appointed Science and Technology Minister, S Jaipal Reddy today said science was not clear yet on the issue of GM crops and it should not be treated as an ideological issue.

“I think the problem of GM crops is under discussion at the global level. Scientific consensus has not finally emerged. Debate is on at a global level. Science is not clear yet,” he said here.

He said a panel of experts appointed by the Supreme Court had submitted an interim report on GM crops to the apex court recently.

“I don’t think it should be treated as an ideological issue but as a scientific issue...The ministry requires more time to study the interim report,” Reddy said, adding that he was not in a position to give a final view on an interim report.

His remarks come in the wake of a statement earlier this month by the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Prime Minister, headed by eminent scientist C N R Rao, favouring introduction of GM crops.

The science panel had argued that technology had potential to transform Indian agriculture.

The SAC0-PM had underscored the need to improve the regulatory structure on genetically modified farm produce.

Reddy said Indian science was at an advanced stage to engage and participate in the global debate on the issue.

A raging debate is on within and outside the Supreme Court on the safety and efficacy of GM crops with scientists pitted in favour and against transgenic food.

Anti-GM crops activists have launched a shrill campaign to push for a ban on genetically modified crops and the issue is before the Supreme Court.

Irked by bidding rate, many traders keep off cardamom sale



Even though cardamom auction has resumed last Wednesday, the volume was much less as only one-third of the traders reportedly participated at the auctions.

Majority of the traders boycotted the auction in protest against the minimum bidding rate of Rs 2.

However, some auctioneers are optimistic about participation of more traders in the coming days. They are pinning hopes on upcountry buyers who might not be able to afford to wait for long for supply of the commodity.

However, from Tuesday onwards, 50 per cent of them are expected to participate, market sources in Bodi told *Business Line*. The auctioneers were not pooling the material.

At the CPA auction on Monday at Bodinayakannur, the arrivals stood at seven tonnes and the entire quantity was sold out. The average price stood at Rs 721.93 a kg.

The arrivals on Sunday consisted of good quality capsules of 6.5mm and above.

Exporters were active and they said to have bought around 20 tonnes of cardamom last week. Diwali buying is expected to pick up in the coming days, they said. The average price at the Sunday auction conducted by the KCPMC was Rs 765.03. Total arrivals stood at 23 tonnes and of which 21 tonnes were sold. Maximum price stood at Rs 860 and the minimum Rs 520, Mr P.C. Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC, said.

This year, the weather so far has been erratic with deficient rains and, hence, the crop is estimated to be much less than what it was in the previous season. Last season, there was a bumper crop estimated at over 25,000 tonnes.

According to the trade 1,77,835 acres of land are, at present, under cardamom and at the rate of a productivity of 175 kg an acre, the total output would be 31,000 tonnes.

Total arrivals and sales during the current season from August to October 28 were at 2,822 (5,500) tonnes and 2,639 (5,345) tonnes respectively.

The weighted average price as on Oct 28 stood at Rs 741.99 a kg as against 597.14 a kg on the same date last year.

Prices of graded varieties in Rs/kg on Monday: AGEB: 895-905; AGB: 680-690; AGS: 645-655 and AGS-1: 620-630.

Deficiency in the rains would have a negative impact on the crops, growers in Kumuly said.

Downtrend continues in spot rubber prices

Physical rubber prices were better on Monday. The market opened steady and improved further tracking higher rates on the National Multi Commodity Exchange but failed to react in tune with its late declines on supply concerns.

Sheet rubber improved to Rs 179.00 at Kottayam and Kochi from Rs 177.00 and Rs 178.00 a kg respectively according to traders and the Rubber Board.

In futures, the November contracts weakened to Rs 177.70 (180.95), December to Rs 179.00 (181.91), January to Rs 181.31 (184.22) and February to Rs 183.75 (185.12), for RSS 4 on NMCE.

Spot rubber rates Rs/kg: RSS-4: 179.00 (177.00); RSS-5: 174.00 (173.00); Ungraded: 167.00 (166.00); ISNR 20: 163.00 (161.00) and Latex 60%: 120.00 (120.00).

Wheat prices rise on thin supplies, global cues



Even as Food Corporation of India's godowns are overflowing with 43.15 million tonnes of wheat – more than three times the buffer and strategic reserve requirement of 14 mt now – open market wheat prices are on the rise.

Loose wheat is currently trading at Rs 1,575 a quintal in Delhi, a gain of 20 per cent since April this year, when it was trading at around Rs 1,250-1,300 levels.

On Monday, contracts for November 2012 delivery on the NCDEX ended three per cent higher at Rs 1,585.

The futures contracts for December delivery rose 2.64 per cent to close at Rs 1,594.

Traders and millers attribute the rising trend in prices to thin supplies in the open market, where private stocks have almost depleted.

Trade sources said the Government had been slow in releasing wheat under the open market sale scheme (OMSS).

The Government has hinted at releasing seven million tonnes from the OMSS scheme to meet the demand for the next six months.

However, such a proposal was yet to be approved by the Union Cabinet, sources said.

Rising wheat prices was one of the key reasons for higher food inflation in September 2012. Wheat prices, which rose by 18.63 per cent, had resulted in higher food inflation of 7.81 per cent in September this year.

The bullish price trend in the domestic market ahead of the festive season was also aided by global cues.

The talk that Indian wheat may witness demand in the global market as Ukraine has banned exports from November 15, is aiding the futures price.

Exporters see a potential rise in demand for Indian wheat shipments in the months ahead of the Ukraine ban.

Ukraine is one of the top 10 global wheat exporters, which saw its harvest fall by a third due to drought this year.

On Wednesday last, Ukraine decided to stop wheat exports from November 15, a move that saw global prices firm up.

Wheat exports from India have crossed three million tonnes, bulk of which is from private trade.

The Government agencies have contracted about eight lakh tonnes for exports and have actually shipped about four lakh tonnes so far.

Bulk of the Indian exports so far have been to the Far Eastern nations such as Korea, Taiwan and neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Yemen among others.

Scanty monsoon likely to drag groundnut output in Gujarat



The delayed and deficient monsoon rains in Gujarat has hit its groundnut production, which is expected to decline by 61 per cent to 6.95 lakh tonnes this year, a survey by industry body, SEA said today.

Gujarat, which is a major groundnut growing state of the country, had produced 17.75 lakh tonnes of the important cash crop in 2011, the Solvent Extractors Association of India (SEA) said in a statement.

“The overall crop is reduced to nearly one-third at 6.95 lakh tonnes compared to 17.75 lakh tonnes in 2011-12,” the SEA said.

The Gujarat government has reported that 12.24 lakh hectares is under groundnut crop sown during kharif season. However, the harvested area was down by nearly 25 per cent at 9.16 lakh hectares, due to rain deficit, wrong reporting and also uprooting area after sowing, it added.

“Due to failure of monsoon and most of the districts received very less rain, the crop as well as the quality is seriously affected,” the SEA said.

The average yield per hectare has reduced to 760 kg per hectare in 2012 against 1,238 kg per hectare last year, it added.

Rubber conference begins

The annual meeting of the International Rubber Research and Development Board (IRRDB) and 10th international rubber conference was flagged off by Chairman of the Rubber Board

Sheela Thomas at Kovalam in the presence of delegates from 20 countries, rubber growers, rubber dealers, nursery owners and other stake holders.

The international forums play a predominant role in the all round growth of the natural rubber sector, she said.

Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

30.10.2012 A.M

Farmers seek 20% raise in cane prices

Import of raw sugar for refining and selling unviable at current prices

Dilip Kumar Jha /

Mumbai October 30, 2012, 0:35 IST



In a setback for sugar mills, farmers in major growing states are demanding a rise of about 20 per cent in cane prices, owing to the rising costs of diesel, manure and labour, and the fact that mills recorded profits in the last quarter of the sugar year (October-September).

Ahead of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav's announcement of a state advised price (SAP) for sugar, the Kisan Jagriti Manch (KJM), an organisation of farmers in Uttar Pradesh, has urged him to fix the cane price at Rs 300 a quintal. In the last season, the government, under then chief minister Mayawati, had raised the SAP a staggering 42 per cent to Rs 240-250 a quintal, depending on the recovery from cane. After a meeting of the cane commissioner with representatives of all stakeholders, KJM president Sudhir Panwar had written to the chief minister in this regard.

For this season, farmers in Maharashtra are demanding at least Rs 300 a quintal for cane. In the last season, linked with the fair and remunerative price (FRP), payment stood at Rs 88-250 a quintal in Maharashtra, depending on the quality and the delivery to mills.

High input cost haunt Madhya Pradesh farmers

In an attempt to achieve 20 per cent return on farming activities, farmers in Madhya Pradesh are planning to chalk out a self-regulatory mechanism. A marathon meeting in this regards is planned in November, in which ways to reduce farm input cost will be discussed.

According to the Bhartiya Kisan Sangh (BKS), for the factors which adversely affect farming, the Sangh would go to the state government.

According to BKS sources and farmers, inflation has put pressure on farm business in the state. As a result, input for soya crop cost has gone up to Rs 7,000 a quintal against its market price of Rs 3,200 a quintal.

Similarly, wheat input cost has gone up to Rs 6,400 a quintal in the Bundelkhand region against its market price of Rs 1,500 a quintal.

BKS plans to demand a hike in the support price from the state government and an immediate review to the land acquisition policy.

“Agriculture is now costlier business owing to frequent power cuts and irrigation problems. We want the minimum support price on soya to be hiked by Rs 500 a quintal. We will look at reducing input cost by self-discipline. Our aim is to take at least 20 per cent return from farming. The November meeting will focus on these things,” said Rambharos Basotia, BKS president, MP Chapter.

“Farm land acquisition is another issue. We want the non-farm land, which is 48 per cent of the total area, to be acquired for non-farm use,” Basotia added.

BKS will motivate its 600,000 members and other non-members to adopt manage-it-yourself mechanism, since power and irrigation keep haunting farmers. “We will involve more members of the family to join farming, use locally made bio-fertilisers and home-grown seeds to reduce input cost. However, to demand regular power and water supply we have to launch a movement. Dates for that will be decided later,” said Gopal Patel, another BKS official.

As most farmers are engaged in rented land, farm input cost in Madhya Pradesh is higher than other states.

According to BKS, land rent at present is Rs 10,000-18,000 an acre. According to BKS, farm yield has remain stagnant at 7-9 quintal an acre for soya and 8-12 acre for wheat this year.

GM crops trial case adjourned

The Supreme Court on Monday adjourned the hearing of a public-interest suit seeking a ban on open-field trials of genetically modified crops. Meanwhile, newly-appointed Science and Technology Minister S Jaipal Reddy said science was not clear yet on the issue of GM crops and it should not be treated as an ideological issue.



TODAY FARM NEWS

30.10.2012 A.M

Compensation sought for Kuttanad farmers

ALAPPUZHA: Kuttanad Vikasana Samithy executive director Fr [Thomas Peelianickal](#) said the state should pay compensation to the farmers, who suffered loss due to the bund breach in Kuttanad.

Speaking to reporters here on Monday, Peelianickal said that government had announced compensation for the farmers when bunds collapsed in C Block, D Block and Manikyamangalam paddy fields within two years. But the government has not given any amount to the farmers.

"According to the Kuttanad Package the [Union government](#) should allot Rs 50 crore under Kuttanad Package for giving compensation to the farmers when they face loss due to natural calamities. However, the state government is not showing any interest to get this amount from the Centre. M S Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai had designed the package," Peelianickal said.

"If the government did not take any steps immediately for giving compensation to the farmers, we will soon start agitation programmes in the district. We have already submitted memorandums to chief minister, agriculture minister and district collector demanding the immediate distribution of compensation to the farmers," he added.

Nitin Gadkari to address cane farmers' rally in UP

LUCKNOW: Attack of team Kejriwal and media reports alleging his company of wrongdoing notwithstanding and his second stint as national [Bharatiya Janata Party](#) chief in a limbo, [Nitin Gadkari](#) along with his predecessor former chief minister [Rajnath Singh](#) will be addressing a BJP-sponsored ganna kisan mahapanchayat on November 5.

Aimed at raking up the issue of sugarcane dues at most places in the state, BJP's UP unit has decided to hold the ganna kisan panchayat a few kilometres (six, to be precise) away from the former Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) chief late Mahendra Singh Tikait's village, Sisauli, in Muzaffarnagar.

Though the party leaders are making tall claims of gathering over 30,000 sugarcane farmers mainly from west UP, insiders believe it would not be possible near Tikait's citadel without convincing his son and present BKU chief [Rakesh Singh](#) Tikait.

A section of [BJP](#) leaders, however, confirmed that Tikait has agreed to support the BJP rally keeping in mind the cause of the sugarcane farmers, which has long been ignored by successive state governments.

Another section of BJP leaders and workers, however, is still skeptical about the success of the rally in the wake of controversy surrounding party chief Gadkari. In fact, they really are not sure if Gadkari would at all turn up to address the ganna kisan mahapanchayat.

A senior BJP leader rubbished the fear of a section of the party leaders and said when the national BJP chief could attend an election rally at Una in Himachal Pradesh on Monday, "I don't see any reason why he cannot address the kisan mahapanchayat."

Addressing the rally at Una, Gadkari had said he would be filing a defamation suit against those who have tried to bring bad name to him. Reply to all allegations leveled against him would given at the right opportunity, Gadkari had added.

Another leader said till the time Gadkari is BJP chief, there is no doubt over his attending the kisan rally. State BJP chief Laxmikant Bajpayi also confirmed to TOI that the mahapanchayat is very much on and will be addressed by Gadkari and Rajnath Singh. It will be a huge rally, claimed Bajpayi.

Insects are a nightmare to farmers in Mandya

MANDYA: After facing the vagaries of monsoon, the farmers in rain-fed areas, mainly in Nagamangala taluk, are facing the threat of insect infestations. The major victims of these bugs are crops like finger millets, jower and sesame.

According to the irrigation department officials, around 90 per cent of finger millet crop grown on 15,480 hectares of land got infected with insects in Nagamanagala taluk. This rain-fed taluk received only 309.2 mm rain from April to October 26.

An average 1,546.4 mm rainfall is needed for normal crops output. "Utilizing meagre amount of water, farmers had grown various types of crops in 28,975 hectares of land. While they are expecting good yields, insects are swarming the large posse of agriculture land and around 90 per cent of crops got infested," said an official.

Insects are feeding on tender leaves and destroying the crops. Farmers said the pest population is being increased day by day despite sprinkling chemical insecticide in large quantity. "We have never seen such an amount of pest population earlier. When I applied pesticides, the numbers of worm came down, but within a few days, they surfaced. I have already lost finger millet,

sesame and jower crops due this," said Suresh, a [farmer](#) in Devalapura village.

Insects are not only posing a threat to crops, they are entering the houses situated near agriculture fields too.

" I don't know what should I do for protecting my crops. This hellish worms have shattered my hopes of getting at least fodder cattle," rued Srikanth, a young farmer in [Konasale](#) village.