

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Monday, Sep 10

Max Min

30.3° | 22.9°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 70

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:57

Sunset: 06:13

Barometer: 1007

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Tuesday, Sep 11

Max Min

29° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday Sep 12	Thursday Sep 13	Friday Sep 14	Saturday Sep 15	Sunday Sep 16
31° 26° Rainy	31° 26° Rainy	31° 26° Rainy	31° 26° Rainy	32° 27° Rainy

Samba, or no samba?: a question that crops up

TIRUVARUR, September 10, 2012



: Farmers of Tiruvarur, known as the biggest rice bowl in the State with about six lakh acres, are keeping their fingers crossed regarding the samba crop. Thousands of them, small and marginal, are on tenterhooks – whether to go in for the “risky” samba crop or drop the crop altogether.

It is a mixed bag for the district so far, with those with pumpsets going in for ‘kuruvai’ and about to harvest the same, while more than 60 per cent is not even beginning the preliminary works for samba. This is despite the State government’s announcement that it would release water from the Mettur Dam for delta irrigation on September 17, which is just a week away.

“I would not blame anyone for the current situation (of water shortage). If the Nature itself is against us, what can we do,” R. Murugesan, a graduate farmer of Parutthikottai, who has been into agriculture for the past almost 25 years, observes philosophically.

But he is confident that there could be a substantial coverage of samba crop even if water is released next week. “We should be able to raise short duration varieties”. He is confident.

But N.V. Sundaram, organising secretary of the Tiruvarur Maavatta Vivasayigal Mandram, does not share his optimism. Speaking to TheHindu at Rajappianchavadi, he points out that considering the course of the river flow, Tiruvarur district is in the middle while Nagapattinam district is at the tail-end

“If water is released on September 17, it will take at least 10 days for it to reach the tail-end. Only after that water would be gradually released, using the shutters erected every two or three

kilometres, for the Tiruvarur district beginning with Thiruthuraipoondi and Muthupettai regions. Thus, it will take five more days for the water to be supplied to Tiruvarur district as a whole.”

“So far, there have been hardly any good rains in the district to take up preliminary works. However we should be able to plough as soon as water is released. We can go in for only short-term and, at the most, intermediate varieties at this stage. We are also not sure how the north east monsoon will behave. Though water is a must, it could be very bad if it were to rain very heavily because too much of water will prove disastrous for the crop. While we should have completed planting by this time, we are going to plough only by October,” he says.

Members of the Vivasayigal Mandram point out, that in taluks including Thiruthuraipoondi, hardly anyone has ploughed.

Besides, nobody is prepared to go in for direct sowing immediately, as they are apprehensive of the mice menace, which can wipe out the entire batch of seeds if only a handful were to go in for sowing. At present, at least 1.5 lakh farmers who till their lands are remaining idle, not knowing what to do, observes Mr. Sundaram. However, the farm workers are able to manage because they can rely on the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS), he adds.

However, farm workers whom this correspondent met at Royapuram are in tears that they are unable to get any agricultural work.

Reap good samba harvest with special package: Minister

THANJAVUR, September 10, 2012



green sight:R.Vaithilingam, Minister for Urban Development, at the seminar announced by the government in Thanjavur on Sunday, Collector K.Baskaran, is in the picture.Photo:B.Velankanni Raj

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Search Fastest for 'Farm

Inspect element

Farmers of the district should take advantage of the special package announced by the government and reap a good samba harvest this year overcoming the water crisis, said R.Vaithilingam, Minister for Housing and Urban Development, here on Sunday.

At a seminar organised by the agriculture department to create awareness among farmers of the samba package , the Minister said that the package aimed at promoting direct sowing, community nurseries, and System of Rice Intensification (SRI) method. Karnataka should have released 90 tmcft of water during June, July, and August as per the interim award of the Cauvery River Water Disputes Tribunal.

At least 45 tmcft of water should have been released by Karnataka during years of distress, but instead, it had released only nine tmcft of water. Chief Minister J.Jayalalithaa had written two letters to the Prime Minister demanding convening of Cauvery River Authority (CRA) meeting .

Now, an affidavit asking the apex court to direct Karnataka to release two tmcft of water every day till the opening of Mettur dam on September 17 has been filed by the Tamil Nadu government.

He pointed out that three-phase power was provided for 12 hours for agriculture pump sets during kuruvai season. Because of this, kuruvai has been raised in 1,50,000 acres in the Cauvery delta districts of Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam.

Now power connections would be given to pump sets that are 100 metres away from major canals and 50 metres away from minor canals. Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation had been asked to give no objection certificates to these pump sets.

Water would be released from Mettur dam on September 17 for samba.

It would take 15 days for the water to reach tail-end areas. Farmers have been asked to raise community nurseries so that they could be ready to transplant seedlings once water reached.

Collector K.Baskaran said kkuruvai had been reduced to 21,500 hectares this year in Thanjavur district against the usual 45,000 hectares and plans are afoot to make up for that shortfall during the samba season.

Crisis is not new to the farmers of Thanjavur . They faced drought in 2003, tsunami in 2004, and in 2005 they faced unprecedented floods with Kollidam carrying nearly four lakh cusecs of water. So, this year too, they could reap a good samba harvest if they adopted technology. SRI method is to be followed in 84 villages and plans are on to raise community nurseries on 10,000 hectares.

Clearing of silt will be done in A, B, and C channels under National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, he added.

MLAs M.Rangasamy (Thanjavur), M.Rathnasamy (Thiruvaiyaru), Durai Kannu (Papanasam), K.Thangamuthu former MLA and State farmers wing secretary of AIADMK, S.Suresh Kumar, District Revenue Officer and M.Z.Mohammed Yahiya, Joint Director of Agriculture, spoke.

Agriculture experts gave lectures on direct sowing, varieties to be selected for samba, community nurseries, subsidy schemes of agriculture engineering department, water management, cooperative loans, and loans provided by nationalised banks.

For a better bond with farmers

September 10, 2012



The UAS has made some changes in the Rural Agricultural Work Experience programme. Some students are happy about it, others are not

The University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) has modified the syllabus with the Rural Agricultural Work Experience (RAWE) programme that was offered in the eighth semester being now offered in the seventh semester. The modification is being implemented from 2012-13 and will ensure that students undergo the programme during the kharif season.

The duration of the programme has been extended to three months from one month and the stipend has been raised to Rs. 1,500 a month. The programme is now compulsory not only for B.Sc. Agriculture students but for B.Sc. (Agricultural Marketing and Cooperation) and B.Tech (Agricultural Engineering) students as well. The students will be housed at the Raitha Samparka Kendras in every hobli.

While those who have already undergone the programme feel the new system will benefit both the students and farmers, many first to seventh semester students seem to disagree.

Prabhudeva D.S., B.Sc. Agri, eighth semester

My batch, which is passing out now, is the one that proposed to the university that the RAWE programme should coincide with the kharif season. It was taken up quickly and the change was

brought in. This will definitely help students as they will get to learn more during the cropping season.

Three months, however, is too long. Some students may find it difficult to stay in rural areas and adapt to the conditions. Fourth-year students have to prepare for the Junior Research Fellowship exam and will need the library and other facilities available in college. This will be hard to manage now. The length of the programme does not matter as much as the farmers' responses do. If we manage to get a good response, it will benefit us and the farmers. But I found four weeks sufficient when I did the programme.

Varsha Rani, Ph.D. student, Dept. of Microbiology

RAWE offers a good opportunity for mutual benefit for both farmers and students. Previously, the programme was only for a month. Applying what we have learnt in our theory classes is possible only when we work closely with farmers at the grassroots and understand what programmes would work in agricultural fields. Many programmes that are referred to as 'lab to land programmes' like utilisation of agriculturally important insects and control of pests are involved in RAWE, where we practically apply what we have studied. The process takes a lot of effort and time. Now that the length has been extended, it will certainly be more beneficial.

Lekhashree S.M., M.Sc., first year

When I underwent the RAWE programme, it was only a month-and-a-half long. I felt it was too short a period as the farmers aren't always forthcoming in the beginning and will not immediately adopt what we suggest.

The first few days are spent in developing a rapport with them. Only later do they provide us with basic information that we need, and share with us the difficulties they face while growing crops. It takes time to understand the problems and to help the farmers with our knowledge. Now that the programme has been extended to three months, it will prove useful for the students as they will have more fieldwork experience.

Nithin Shekhar N.C., B.Sc. Agri, seventh semester

The RAWE programme is where we practically implement what we study in three years. It is our best opportunity to help and take help from farmers. But it isn't always in our hands.

What we learn depends on how forthcoming the farmers are in the hobli that we are placed in.

Although three months might help in buying us time to get along with the farmers, it is too long a period. Students are given accommodation in Raitha Samparka Kendras that are present in every hobli. There is no saying how difficult adjusting to the conditions will be. It will even take a toll on our health.

Anand Kumar T.M., B.Tech (Ag.Engg), eighth semester

It was a good decision to shift the RAWE programme to the seventh semester as it will coincide with the monsoon. The students will have a great deal to learn in this period from the farmers and from first-hand experience. Earlier, the programme would commence during summer and students would miss the cropping season. They would have little or no experience.

Although RAWE may not benefit B.Tech (Ag.Engg) students, rural work experience will be helpful for B.Sc (Ag.MaCo) students. When they learn from farmers what the difficulties involved in marketing are, they will be in a better position to help them.

Shwetha G., B.Tech (Ag.Engg), seventh semester

I'm a bit confused about what to expect in the programme. B.Sc. students will have a basic knowledge of agricultural science. But from the engineering point of view, we can only inform and guide farmers about agricultural implements.

When we took up the course and were introduced to the syllabus, RAWE was not a part of it. The sudden decision to include it for B.Tech (Ag.Engg) and B.Sc (MaCo) students caught us off guard.

The B.Tech students appealed to the Dean to take back the order but as the order was passed by the Central Government, we had to accept it. The lecturers have been telling us that the programme will benefit us as well as farmers. It will also increase job opportunities. So I can say it is a good decision.

The man who revolutionised white

“What do you know about pasteurisation,” an interviewer asked the young man who had applied for a Government of India fellowship for a Masters in Engineering abroad. “Something to do with milk?” was the uncertain reply. The year was 1946. In his biography *From Anand: The story of Verghese Kurien*, M.V. Kamath recounts the story of how the youngster was selected to do a Masters in dairy engineering by a government committee that was impervious to his pleas that he be allowed to specialise in metallurgy instead.

As it turned out, Michigan State University did not have dairy engineering, and Verghese Kurien was able to do metallurgy and Physics. But when he came back to India in 1948, it was to a small and unknown village in Gujarat called Anand that he was sent, to work out his two-year bond at the Government creamery on a salary of Rs.600 per month. Hating his job, he waited impatiently for his fetters to loosen. That did not happen. What it did was that V. Kurien, by the conjunction of politics, nationalism and professional challenge, decided to stay on. He would transform rural India.

Verghese Kurien, who became a legend in his lifetime for building a cooperative movement that transformed the lives of poor farmers while making India self-reliant in milk production, died on Sunday in Nadiad at the age of 90. He was in hospital, suffering from a series of problems associated with old age.

Born on November 26, 1921 in Kozhikode, Kerala, Verghese Kurien studied at Madras University for a Bachelor of Science in 1940, a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering (Honours)

from Madras University (1943), and was a graduate of the Tata Iron and Steel Company Technical Institute, Jamshedpur (1946). He took a Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering (Distinction) from Michigan State University (1948) and then went for specialised training in dairying at the National Dairy Research Institute, Bangalore. He had 17 honorary doctorates from universities in India and abroad. At the time of his death he was Chancellor, University of Allahabad (since April 17, 2006), Member, Board of Trustees, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Memorial Trust, New Delhi (since 1986), and Member, Advisory Committee, South Asian Network on Fermented Foods — SAN FOODS (since 2004).

He was Founder Chairman of the National Dairy Development Board (1965-1998), the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd, Anand (1983-2006), the National Cooperative Dairy Federation of India Limited (1986-1993), (1995-2000), and (2003-2006), and the Board of Governors, Institute of Rural Management, Anand (1979-2006), amongst several other posts he held in his working life.

Bitter critic

He was the recipient of several distinguished Indian and international awards. To give a short selection of them: nationally, the Padmashri (1965); Padmabhushan (1966); Krishi Ratna (1986); and the Padma Vibhushan (1999). Outside India, it was the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership (1963); the “Wateler Peace Prize” Award of the Carnegie Foundation for the year 1986; the World Food Prize award for the year 1989; the “International Person of the year” by the World Dairy Expo, Wisconsin, U.S. (1993), the “Ordre du Merite Agricole” by the Government of France (in March 1997); and the Regional Award 2000 from the Asian Productivity Organization, Japan.

Till his death, he was a bitter critic of the policies of liberalisation in India, which he believed opened India to unfair competition from multinational companies. He laid out his objections to liberalisation as early as 1995 in a detailed and wide-ranging interview he gave this correspondent for *Frontline* .

“With liberalisation and globalisation, it seems to me, India's national boundaries have ceased to exist,” he told *Frontline* . “I am sorry, I do not think it is a good thing, because if you have opened up this market under such terms, what it implies is that other countries can put their products into our markets. Are you aware that all those advanced countries subsidise their exports? Subsidies are as high as 65 per cent. Now if you have globalised, and the others are subsidising their exports, to what position have you exposed the Indian dairy industry? You have declared dairy products under OGL (Open General Licence). You have in fact created a situation where our dairy industry can be killed. This is unfair competition.”

Speaking about Amul, the successful cooperative he founded, he explained the rationale behind Operation Flood – the strategy that made India self-reliant in milk production — and why it succeeded. He summarised it as follows: “Over the last 20 years India’s milk production has tripled; it has increased from 20 million tonnes per annum to 60 million tonnes per annum. What is the value of one tonne of milk? At Rs.6 a litre, the value of the increased production of milk is Rs.2,400 crore. An additional Rs.2,400 crore goes yearly into the villages and this has been

achieved in 20 years, thanks to Operation Flood I, II and III. The total investment was Rs.2,000 crore, and that was not from the state exchequer. The input-output ratio is staggering. The money also goes to those who own one or two buffaloes — the small farmer, the marginal farmer, the landless labourer. Dairying has become the largest rural employment scheme in this country. And the government has had very little to do with it, even though we are a government institution.”

When presented with the criticism that the cooperative movement could not replicate the successes of the Anand model in other parts of India, Mr. Kurien agreed but was unfazed by it, contesting it soundly. “Is the democratic form of government successful in all parts of India? But the solution to the problems of democracy is more democracy. There can be no democracy in India unless you erect a plurality of democratic structures to underpin democracy, like the village cooperative which is a people’s institution.”

If in 2012, India is the largest producer of milk in the world, contributing six per cent to the national GDP and 26 per cent to the agricultural GDP, it is Verghese Kurien, with his socialist vision and technology-led approach, who made it possible.

He is survived by his wife Molly Kurien, his daughter Nirmala, and grandson, Siddharth.

Milkman of India’ is no more

Verghese Kurien, father of the “White Revolution” and founder of the cooperative dairy movement in the country, died in a hospital at Nadiad early on Sunday, aged 90. He breathed his last around 1.15 a.m. He is survived by wife Molly Kurien and daughter Nirmala.

Dr. Kurien’s body was brought to Anand, the small town in central Gujarat that was his home for the last six decades and which he made famous as “the milk capital of India.” It was kept at the Sardar hall of the Amul dairy, where thousands, indebted to him for their economic freedom, paid him their last respects.

He was cremated at ‘Kailash Bhumi,’ Anand’s ultra-modern crematorium, in the presence of hundreds of his admirers and staff of the milk cooperatives.

Dr. Kurien was admitted to the Muljibhai Patel Urological Hospital last week for kidney ailments.

Born in Kozhikode, Kerala, on November 26, 1921, Dr. Kurien, a mechanical engineer with dairy engineering as a minor subject, came to Anand in 1949 at the behest of the then Union Home Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, to solve some problems of the local farmers. The problems were resolved, but Dr. Kurien could not leave Anand.

From one milk project to a larger one, the “Milkman of India” saw India emerge from a milk-deficient country into the largest milk producer in the world, overtaking even the once milk-abundant Netherlands.

It is because of Dr. Kurien that India today contributes about 17 per cent of the total milk production in the world. Amul, with a turnover of over Rs. 13,000 crore, is Asia’s top milk-producing brand and is counted, with one of the best recall values, among the world’s leading brands in any sector.

Srisaillam water level rises to 863.5 ft

KURNOOL, September 10, 2012

The water level in Srisaillam reservoir rose to 863.50 ft (885 ft FRL) on Sunday. The water stocked so far was estimated at 161.69 tmcft (FRL 263 tmcft). Around 100 tmcft was needed to take the reservoir to full level.

A moderate flood was flowing into the reservoir from Jurala and Tungabhadra rivers. The total inflow was estimated at 1,27,504 cusecs. The contribution from Tungabhadra was 25,798 cusecs and Jurala 1,01,716 cusecs.

According to irrigation officials, despite the rains no major flood occurred to Srisaillam reservoir so far. If the same trend continues, the reservoir would be able to reach the full level in a week to 10 days. The dam authorities released 1,000 cusecs to Srisaillam Right Main canal at Pothireddy padu. The KC canal was drawing only 2012 cusecs as against its designed capacity of 3,000 cusecs.

For next crop

September 10, 2012



BUSY DAYS:Workers engaged in planting of paddy saplings at Mannady, near Adoor,on Sunday. Farming operations have gathered momentum across Pathanamthitta district with the monsoon gaining strength.— Photo: Leju Kamal

No end to Suranahalli farmers' troubles

HASSAN, September 10, 2012

Farmers of Suranahalli in Holenarsipur taluk are up in arms against the Government Order declaring that their land is in possession of the Holenarsipur Town Municipal Council (TMC). They alleged that Principal Secretary to the Revenue Department had declared the status of possession of the land without hearing their arguments, despite the Karnataka High Court's order to hear them.

In its order dated November 25, 2010, the High Court directed the State government to hold an inquiry into the status of land ownership by consulting all parties, including farmers.

The order

Principal Secretary Ashok Kumar Manoli, in his order dated August 7, 2012, declared that land measuring over 84.21 acres in Suranahalli was in possession of Chief Officer, Holenarsipur TMC .

Interestingly, the Revenue Department issued an 'unofficial note' to farmers to appear before Mr. Manoli with all relevant records on August 7, 2012.

However, the order was ready even before the farmers could reach his office at the scheduled time.

“We were shocked as we came to know that the order was ready even before the official heard us out. As we entered his office, we were given copies of the order,” S.H. Mohan Kumar, advocate and resident of Suranahalli, told *The Hindu* .

Further, he pointed out the note issued to the farmers was also against norms. “The note was titled ‘anadhikruta tippani’ (unofficial note). How can the government issue an unofficial note asking farmers to appear for a hearing,” he asked.

Compensation

The farmers claimed that except for three, none of the 95 farmers had taken the compensation amount of Rs. 59,000 per acre awarded by the government.

The farmers have been cultivating the land. When *The Hindu* visited the village on Friday, paddy was being grown in a majority of the fields, besides coconut and ginger farms. Advocate Mohan Kumar, referring to the Supreme Court’s verdict (November 23, 2011) in the Raghbir Singh Sehrawat vs. State of Haryana and others case, said the judgment with respect to land acquisition stated that “actual physical possession has to be taken; paper possession is not sufficient for land to vest in state”.

But the Principal Secretary issued the order, only considering the paper notification and changes in the RTC, he said.

Farmers see conspiracy

The issue has been raging for over 15 years.

The farmers allege that they being targeted by powerful politicians of Holenarsipur because they (farmers) support a rival party.

“The land in Suranahalli has been notified because voters have been supporting Congress for many years. JD(S) leader H.D. Revanna, who represents Holenarsipur in the Assembly, wants to take revenge against them,” the former Minister B. Shivaram alleged.

In 1997

During the Janata Dal rule in the State in 1997, the government issued a notification for acquisition of 88 acres and 27 guntas of land in Suranahallifor an Ashraya housing complex, despite opposition by landowners. The farmers moved the court on the grounds that the notified land was fertile and wetland.

Their demand was fulfilled after the Congress government stopped the acquisition process by a notification dated July 22, 2000 on the basis of a resolution adopted by Holenarsipur TMC. The TMC had adopted the view that the wetland was not necessary for the project.

A few residents of Holenarsipur challenged the decision in court, and then it went to the Supreme Court.

The JD(S)-BJP coalition government withdrew the denotification order in 2007. The farmers again moved the court.

Meanwhile, the State government filed two contradictory statements in court with respect to taking possession of the land.

The High Court directed the State government to hold an inquiry and decide the matter considering the actual status of the possession of land.

The court also directed the government to identify which of the versions filed by the government was true. However, the Principal Secretary has not addressed this in his order.

Stone for veterinary sub-centre laid

NAGERCOIL, September 10, 2012

Forest Minister K.T.Pachaimal inspected the non-operational poultry extension centre at Kottaram near Kanyakumari on Sunday.

According to Veterinary Department sources, a poultry extension centre was functioning in the sprawling area of 2.60 acres of land near Perumalpuram Sri Lankan Tamil refugee camp near Kottaram till a few years back. Bushes and shrubs have grown up in the area so that necessary steps would be taken to give a new lease of life to the centre for the benefit of people living in and around Kanyakumari and surrounding areas.

After laying a foundation stone for construction of a veterinary sub-centre at Erumpucadu, the Minister said that it had been decided to set up veterinary sub centres at Boothapandi, Monday Market, Killiyur, Kuzuthurai and Nallur _ each at an estimated cost of Rs. 26.66 lakhs. The construction work had been started at Kuzuthurai and Monday Market. Steps for construction of veterinary sub-centre were under way at Killiyur and Boothapandi, he added.

The Executive Engineer of Public Works Department, Asai Thampi, Assistant Executive Engineer, Dharmaraj, Joint Director of Veterinary Department, Mohammed Sabi, attended the function.

MSP for tea sought

September 10, 2012

The demand of the small tea growers of the Nilgiris for minimum support price, which became strident about 13 years ago, shows no signs of waning.

JAIPUR, September 10, 2012

Poultry farming a boon for Rajasthan village



New vistas: Poultry farming is breeding economic prosperity in Bharatpur's Kanchanpura village, formerly hit by poverty and unemployment. Photo: Rohit Jain Paras

The high income yielding occupation of poultry farming, confined mostly to big cities so far, has reached a small and nondescript village, Kanchanpura, in Bharatpur district of Rajasthan for the benefit of poor Dalit families who have adopted it in a big way as a viable livelihood option and raised their standard of living.

Situated in the dusty and backward environs of Kumher panchayat samiti, Kanchanpura was the sight of unemployed youths, loss-making agriculture, high cost of living and dejected villagers unable to find any profitable avenues till about five years ago. Increasing cost of agricultural inputs has created similar conditions in most villages in the region.

Poultry farming as a profitable livelihood opportunity was identified by a public service institution, Lupin Human Welfare & Research Foundation, five years ago after studying the geographical location of the village and demand in the market. On the Foundation's invitation, half-a-dozen young men went to Ajmer to learn the techniques of poultry farming and received training for becoming self-sufficient in the job.

Lupin Foundation's initiative to introduce poultry farming in Kanchanpura formed part of its initiative for bringing all-round development and prosperity to the villages in Bharatpur district, where it has been working for the past several decades. The Foundation functions as the social responsibility wing of pharmaceutical major Lupin.

Lupin Foundation executive director Sita Ram Gupta said here on Sunday that the Dalit-dominated village with a population of 2,000 took full advantage of the hand-holding support extended to it. Loans were arranged from the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) for 10 youths who constructed sheds and started the work under expert guidance.

“In the first year itself, each youth started earning Rs.30,000 to Rs.40,000. They subsequently increased the number of chicks to about 3,000, which gave them bigger profits,” said Mr. Gupta, adding that an intelligent planning for the business has attracted the brokers, agents and businessmen from the nearby Bharatpur, Agra and Mathura towns. The business being run in the village with about 40,000 chicks has left good impression on them.

The below poverty line families among Dalits also wanted to start the business in view of high profits, but they lacked sufficient land for construction of sheds. For these families the Lupin Foundation made arrangements for “backyard poultry” with the supply of chicks at 75 per cent subsidy.

Starting from Shyam Kishore, Kamal Singh, Lal Singh, Ganga Ram and Sher Singh, young men who were taken to Ajmer for training in poultry farming, the Dalit families in Kanchapura are today earning huge profits through the sale of eggs and fowls produced in as many as 14 units. There is good consumption of these non-vegetarian commodities in the region and the demand is high throughout the year.

Mr. Gupta pointed out that this initiative was accompanied by an additional support in the shape of assistance provided to the villagers for bee-keeping, dairy operations and *dona* and *pattal* manufacturing as well as training for security guards under the Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana.

Kanchanpura comprises a total of 190 households, 81 of which are listed in the BPL category. Forty of these families receive benefit from the Chief Minister’s BPL Housing Scheme, while others will be provided with financial assistance for construction of houses by the Lupin Foundation this year.

Mr. Gupta said several other initiatives such as establishment of women’s self help groups, training to women in ‘tulsi mala’ fabrication, steps for rain water harvesting and removal of social

evils such as child marriage, liquor consumption and death feasts had led to the emergence of Kanchanpura as a model village in Bharatpur district.

“We are confident that this small village will march ahead and scale new heights of development in near future,” said Mr. Gupta, while affirming the commitment of civil society groups for supporting the villages in its efforts to attain self-sufficiency.

SANGAREDDY, September 10, 2012

Agriculture Engineering College to come up in Kandi

The Agriculture Engineering College is all set to set up its campus in Kandi village of Sangareddy mandal in Medak district in the next couple of years.

The district administration has acquired 24.21 acres of land from 10 beneficiaries and paid a compensation of Rs. 56 lakh. The amount was released by the N.G. Ranga Agriculture University. Recently, Chief Whip T. Jayaprakash Reddy and Collector A. Dinakar Babu handed over the cheques to all the beneficiaries, except one due to a dispute.

The Agriculture University is planning to construct two hostel buildings -- one for girls and another for boys separately -- in addition to an administrative block. While the estimated cost of hostels was Rs. 1.5 crore, the administrative block is expected to be constructed with about Rs. 2.5 crore in the first phase.

Approval needed

“We are anticipating commencing work by November 2012. Before that, we have to obtain the formal approval from the Central government authorities for the construction activity though the

amount was already released,” Dr. B. John Wesley informed *The Hindu* , adding that they are anticipating a release another Rs. 3 crore to Rs. 4 crore in the second phase.

He said that the first phase of construction would be completed in about 18 months. Asked about the faculty members, on which the students had recently launched an agitation, Mr. Wesley said that the college has the required strength. “We have six regular faculty members, in addition to seven part-time faculty. Students need not worry whether a regular faculty member or part-time faculty is teaching them and instead focus on learning,” he said.

DHARMAPURI, September 10, 2012

Rain in Dharmapuri

The Dharmapuri town received a rainfall of 48 mm on Friday night. Rainwater got stagnated in many low-level areas in the town and in some areas, the rainwater got mixed with drainage and affected free flow of traffic. Many places in the district received moderate rain for the last two days. Palacode received 26 mm rainfall. The rainfall registered in catchment areas of important water bodies are (in mm): Pambar 7.6, Vaniyar 11.6, Thoppaiyar 13, Nagavathy 5 and Thumbalaalli Dam 11. Similarly, many areas in Krishnagiri district also received moderate rain in the last two days. Catchment area of the KRP dam received 11 mm, the sources said.

ERODE, September 10, 2012

Rain in Erode

The moderate to heavy showers on Sunday turned the weather pleasant for people in Erode district. The showers brought the temperature a few notches down. The sky remained overcast the whole day and the maximum temperature fell below 27 degree Celsius in the evening. The rains lasted for more than 30 minutes in the town, leaving a few low-lying areas waterlogged. Officials in the meteorological department say the weather will remain partly cloudy with chances of more rain for the next two days. Water level in Bhavanisagar dam stood at 48.67 ft. at 6 p.m. on Sunday. The storage was 4.129 tmcft. The inflow, which stood around 800 cusecs on Saturday, increased to 2,494 cusecs on Sunday evening as the catchments of the dam witnessed good rainfall. The dam is the primary source of water for thousands of acres of land in the district.

TIRUCHI, September 10, 2012

Farmers want 14-hour uninterrupted power



First on agenda:P.Viswanathan, State president of Tamil Nadu lake and river water irrigation farmers association speaking at the farmers' meeting in Tiruchi .PHOTO: M.SRINATH

Tamilaga Eri Matrum Aatrupasana Vivasayigal Sangham has urged the State government to provide power connections to two lakh farmers waiting for the same for the past 10 years and ensure uninterrupted power supply for agriculture for 14 hours a day.

This was one of the major resolutions passed at a seminar organised by the association, P. Viswanathan, its State president, told presspersons here on Saturday.

The meeting, while appealing to the State government to get 205 thousand million cubic feet of water from Karnataka for delta irrigation, pleaded that the government should ensure samba cultivation at any cost.

Besides, it sought Rs.1,750 as the procurement price for a quintal of paddy, Rs.3,000 a tonne of sugarcane, and Rs.75 a kilogram of cotton.

As kuruvai crop could not be raised, a large number of farmers have suffered heavy losses.

Hence, the government should see to it that loans obtained by farmers from nationalised banks and cooperative banks were written off.

With specific reference to Tiruchi district, Mr. Viswanathan said all the encroachments in the channels and tanks should be removed and all water sources should be cleared of silt and their bunds strengthened. For this the Collector should initiate appropriate steps.

The association wanted the government to prevent water from Kollidam going waste and sought a barrage across the river.

This would help improve groundwater in the region and prove immensely beneficial to the farming community.

Pointing out that more than 3,000 acres at Palinganatham, Channavur, Korathakudi and Anganur village in Thirumanur panchayat union of Ariyalur district could not be brought under cultivation because of non-availability of water, it pleaded for forming a left bank canal under the Pullampadi Canal Project to benefit these lands.

Besides, if Pudukottai farmers' long-felt demand of the Cauvery-Gundaru link project were to be implemented, it could benefit as much as 30,000 acres of paddy, banana, and sugarcane. Also the Gundaru should be cleared of silt and its bunds strengthened.

Mr. Viswanathan said whenever there are floods water flowing into Periya Visvakudi Eri gets wasted. The proposed Visvakudi reservoir scheme gets delayed whenever there is change in government.

If the reservoir project were to be completed, it could benefit at least 3,000 acres in that region.

TUTICORIN, September 10, 2012

566 farmers get financial assistance from IOB

Farm implements, crop loan and dairy loan were distributed



Helping hand: M. Narendra, Chairman and Managing Director, Indian Overseas Bank, extending a benefit to a farmer in Tuticorin on Sunday. Photo: N. Rajesh

Indian Overseas Bank extended financial support to the tune of Rs.18 crore to 566 farmers here on Sunday.

M. Narendra, Chairman and Managing Director, IOB, who presided, extended farm implements, crop loan and dairy loan to the beneficiaries as a part of kisan month celebration.

A total of 436 farmers, 21 students, 61 fisherwomen received assistance, among others.

Loans to the tune of Rs.1, 500 crore would be extended to eligible beneficiaries across India, he said while addressing a press conference. Loans to the tune of Rs. 22 crore had been extended to beneficiaries in Tuticorin region comprising Tuticorin and Ramanathapuram districts so far.

In the current fiscal, IOB, Tuticorin region, issued 3500 kisan credit cards, 10,500 smartcards to farmers and credit to the tune of Rs. 15 crore.

Total business grew from Rs.2,70,320 crore to Rs. 3,33,248 crore as on June 30, 2012.

Total deposits increased to Rs.1,84,882 crore from Rs.1,51,173 crore.

During 2011-12, the bank expanded its reach with a launch of 447 branches, the highest ever in the banking sector, mostly in rural and semi urban centres. Banking was brought to the reach of unbanked villages spanning over 21 states and two Union Territories in India under financial inclusion programme. Business correspondents numbering 1,311 were being engaged to serve adopted villages.

Moreover, Financial Literacy and Credit Counselling Centres were set up in 13 lead districts of the bank.

K.M. Thirunavukarasu, Deputy General Manager, IOB, Central Office, Chennai, S. Rajendiran, Senior Regional Manager, Tuticorin Region, K.S. Swaminathan, Chief Regional Manager, Madurai, C. Srinivasan, Chief Regional Manager, Tirunelveli, A.V. Padmaragam, Senior Regional Manager, Nagercoil, and other officials attended the programme

UDHAGAMANDALAM, September 10, 2012

Demand for floor price for tea continues

A long-standing demand of the small tea growers of the Nilgiris which became strident when an unprecedented crisis gripped the tea industry about 13 years ago is showing no signs of waning.

The minimum support price sought at the time of the crisis was Rs. 12 per kg of raw tea leaves. It went up to Rs. 15 and now stands at Rs. 20.

However, whether or not it will become a reality, continues to be a matter of conjecture with different sections of the industry expressing divergent views.

While welcoming the efforts of the Tea Board to provide biometric identity cards to the small growers and also form a separate directorate for them, B. Bellukutty, a progressive grower of Kundah Thuneri opines that unless a floor price is announced, it is impracticable to expect good quality tea from the small growers.

H. Thiagarajan, president of the Nilgiris Small Tea Growers Association, says that the only way the government can concede the demand is putting in place a mechanism by which it can procure the produce of the small growers.

Pointing out that international conditions play a big role in determining the rates at which raw tea leaves are picked up, Ramesh Bhojarajan, president, Nilgiris District Bought Leaf Tea Manufacturers Association, said that the produce of the bought leaf sector should be used in the manufacture of the Ooty Tea brand, which was introduced by the government.

Stating that in the absence of a floor price, the Tea Board is resorting to various measures to ensure that the small growers get remunerative rates, the Executive Director, Tea Board, R. Ambalavanan, said that in a liberalised economy only such assistance can be extended now.

Pointing out that the number of small growers has now gone up to about 80,000 in the Nilgiris, S. Ramu, Member, Tea Board, said that it was on account of fragmentation of tea gardens.

In the present scenario, a floor price can be assured only if the government comes forward with a subsidy scheme.

BANGALORE, September 10, 2012

Government sets up panel to fix sugarcane price

The State government has constituted a 30-member committee headed Minister for Agriculture Umesh Katti to fix the price for sugarcane and share income generated from byproducts among sugar factories and cane growers.

Besides officials, the committee comprises representatives of sugarcane growers and government-owned, cooperative and private sugar factories. A meeting presided by Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar on August 31 decided to set up the committee to fix prices for sugarcane, said an order issued by the Government on September 7.

The Horticulture and Sugar Minister and Minor Irrigation Minister are also members of the committee. The Commissioner of Sugarcane Directorate is secretary of the panel.

Puttanaiah, Kodihalli Chandrashekar, Kurubur Shantakumar, Govindaraju, Mohan Sha, B R Patil, Tejaswi Patel, K.T. Patil, Panchappa Kalburgi, H.R. Basavarajappa and Narasimhappa are members of the committee representing sugarcane growers of the State.

The Centre has fixed the price at Rs. 1,700 per tonne of cane for 2012-13 for 9.5 per cent sugar recovery.

In 2011-12, sugarcane was grown on 4.30 lakh hectares in the State and State ranked third in sugar production in the country. The crop was grown in 16 districts.

The State sought a report from a committee headed by C. Rangarajan, Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister, to fix prices for sugarcane and protect the interest of the sugar factories, the order said.

September 10, 2012

A season without hope for farmers



Bleak prospects: A drought-hit vegetable farm in Kanthalloor village of Idukki district.— Photo: Giji K. Raman

“I have never seen a drought like this in my life. All the crops have been affected,” says Ramakrishna, a young farmer, as he and his wife Mallika remove stunted garlic from the harvest in his farm at Puthur.

The Kanthalloor grama panchayat that lies on the border with Tamil Nadu is a vegetable cultivating village, like Vattavada, where almost all vegetables are grown. No major rain has occurred so far in this village, lying in a rain-shadow area, after the seeds were sown in the cool season.

The worst affected crops are carrot and garlic.

Ramakrishna said that garlic was cultivated on a large scale this season as the prices were good last season. Farmers who sold garlic at a price of nearly Rs.100 per kg last season are forced to sell it at Rs.14 or less due to poor quality and small shape of the bulbs harvested, a major portion of it being abandoned as of 'very low quality.'

It is officially estimated that 40 percent of the crops have been lost this season due to drought. In the case of garlic and carrot, however, the loss is nearly 90 per cent.

After the Onam season, the prices of vegetables fell sharply as the Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council, Keralam (VFPC) and HortiCorp stopped procuring vegetables from here. One reason, Mr. Ramakrishnan said, for the fall in prices was that farmers were forced to sell vegetables to businessmen from Tamil Nadu who decide the prices on the spot. Elder members of the farming community say that a drought as severe as this season's has not been witnessed for the past 30 years. There are farms with dried crops completely abandoned by the farmers. Dried bean vines have been uprooted and stashed on the corner of some farms.

"I can't get a price equal to the amount spent on purchasing the seeds, let alone the cost of labour and fertilizers," according to P.R. Iswaran, another farmer.

Potato is selling at Rs.7 per kg at Kanthalloor, whereas cabbage costs Rs.4 per kg, carrot Rs.10, and beans varieties including butter beans around Rs.18 per kg.

The farmers are unable to repay the loans they took during the sowing season, either from individuals or from co-operative banks. N.M. Nagaraj said that the main harvesting season was ending and they would find it tough to purchase seeds for sowing in the coming season. If there is an agency to procure vegetables throughout the harvesting season and the farmers given a remunerative price, the exploitation could be countered, said Mr. Nagaraj. The vegetables from

Kanthalloor are known for their high quality as less chemical pesticides and fertilizers are applied due to the traditional manual style of cultivation.

P.K. Njanam, another farmer, said that at least the farmers who lost the complete harvest in the drought should be compensated. Immediate government intervention is needed to arrest the price fall and to compensate the loss of harvest, he said.

Kanthalloor grama panchayat president S. Madhavan said that fields of nearly 300 acres had dried up, in addition to the vegetable loss.

The cultivation depends entirely on the weather, say the elders of the farming community as they search the skies for the elusive rain clouds.

KOLLAM, September 10, 2012

Egg price goes north

Demand goes up while supply from Tamil Nadu falls



Precious Commodity:A wholesale egg dealer in Kollam with his meagre stock on Sunday.–

Photo C. Suresh Kumar

The price of egg has soared to an all-time high to touch Rs.4 in the retail markets here.

Wholesale egg dealers in Kollam said a fall in production and an increase in demand were among the factors that had led to the rise in price. The recent increase in the price of feed had also contributed to the price hike.

A. Salafuddin, wholesaler here, said the price of egg went up by 20 paise each post-Onam, and demand too climbed. At the same time, production in the Namakkal poultry belt in Tamil Nadu, the prime source of egg for Kerala markets, fell owing to various reasons, he said. The Namakkal wholesale rate on Sunday stood at Rs.3.54 paise per egg.

On Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., eggs were not available in the wholesale markets of Kollam. More than 1,500 retailers had demanded eggs during the period. Mr. Salafuddin said the arrival of a truckload of eggs from Namakkal shortly after 6 p.m. brought some relief.

On Sunday too, there was a shortage in the market. Supply had been short since the past one week. Only half the orders placed by the wholesalers were being supplied. The paradox was that while there was hardly anyone to purchase eggs at the rate of 50 paise each during the bird flu threat in 2004, today when demand was high and the price was touching Rs.4 each, eggs were hardly available in the market, he said.

Siva Moorthy, one of the Namakkal-based egg suppliers to Kerala, said the State needed more than one crore eggs a day but supply had dropped to a little over 50 lakh eggs. Talking to *The Hindu* over telephone, Mr. Siva Moorthy said egg production in the Namakkal poultry belt, which yielded close to 3.5 crore eggs a day, had fallen sharply.

He said consumption of eggs in the northern parts of the country after the conclusion of the festival season had risen, leading to an increase in price in those areas, and this had had its effect in the Namakkal belt. A seasoned egg supplier, he felt that the egg price would continue to go north. A downward trend could be expected only by November.

Monsoon revival unlikely to boost food production; food prices likely to go up

NEW DELHI: A late revival of monsoon may have narrowed the rain deficit to single digit (9%) but it is unlikely to help boost food grains production. "There would be a decline in the overall food grains production.

There would be some drop in the production of pulses and coarse cereals," said Agriculture Secretary [Ashish Bahuguna](#). He said the indication will start coming after the first advance estimates of the kharif season. "Just wait for a few weeks, we will get an idea after the first advance estimate figures come out," he said.

The decline in output is likely to stoke [food inflation](#), which has fallen slightly to 10.06% in July after moving up sharply to 10.81% in June.

According to a study by Assocham, an industry body, retail prices of essential commodities like sugar, edible oil and pulses may jump 15% in the coming festive season due to rising demand and lower output.

"Demand for commodities increases during the festive season. This year, production is also expected to be lower due to weak rains," [Assocham](#) secretary general DS Rawat said.

Defying all the forecasts of El Nino-strike, the monsoon was at its peak during the week ended September 5 with the country receiving the heaviest rainfall of the season - 31% above normal.

Rains have reached the parched areas of Gujarat and Saurashtra — the regions which were staring at a rain deficiency of more than 50%.

"This has helped the standing groundnut and cotton crops. It will have a positive impact on the yield. However, it's a little late for most other crops," said RS Sharma, senior scientist at Agricultural Policy Research Institute.

The monsoon, aided by raindriving westerly disturbances, is set for a delayed withdrawal, bringing more rains to most parts of the country to its tailend. The weak El Nino current in the Pacific may not be able to thwart rain-bearing clouds. "If El Nino remains weak and westerly disturbances remain active on both the coasts, monsoon may turn normal by weather office's definition.

Agri share in GDP witnessing drop

Share of agriculture in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has dropped by nearly 5 per cent in the last eight years to 14 per cent, due to higher growth in other sectors.

Agriculture & Allied sectors which used to contribute 19 per cent of GDP in 2004-05 has come down to 14 per cent in 2011-12 at 2004-05 prices, according to government data.

The percentage has been declining gradually with the passing of years.

From 19 per cent in 2004-05, the percentage share of agriculture & allied sectors in GDP dropped to 18.3 per cent in 2005-06 and then to 17.4 per cent in 2006-07.

It further dropped to 16.8 per cent in 2007-08 and 15.8 per cent in 2008-09 before reaching 14 per cent in 2011-12, the data showed.

The decline is on account of comparatively higher growth in GDP of non-agriculture sectors, official sources said. But, capital investment in the sector has shown improvement.

As per official figures, Gross Capital Formation (GCF) investment in agriculture sector (at 2004-05 prices) has increased from Rs 69,148 crore in 2004-05 to Rs 1,30,907 crore in 2010-11.

Besides, the agriculture sector has shown an average growth rate of 3.3 per cent annually in the Eleventh Five Year Plan period ending March 31, 2012 as compared to 2.4 per cent per annum during the Tenth Plan.

Foodgrain production has also shown an increase from 217.28 million tonnes in 2006-07 to 257.44 million tonnes in 2011-12, it said.

As per UN's body Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), India accounted for 2.3 per cent share in world's total land area and 17.5 per cent of world's population.



Soyameal export earnings hit record in 2011-12

India's export earnings from the overseas shipments of soyameal rose by 8 per cent to an all time high of Rs 7,735.82 crore in the first 11 months of the current oil year, according to industry data.

The country had exported soyameal, which is mainly used as cattle and poultry feed, worth Rs 7,170.47 crore in the October-August period of the 2010-11 oil year, according to data provided by Indore-based Soyabean Processors Association

of India (SOPA) .

Soyameal oil year runs from October to September. The earnings so far from export of soyameal in current oil year have surpassed the record achieved in the 2010-11 oil year of Rs 7,582.83 crore. Before this, India had earned forex worth Rs 7,332 crore in the 2007-08 oil year, the data showed.

High prices and buoyant demand for soyameal in the domestic market has led to a decline in export volumes.

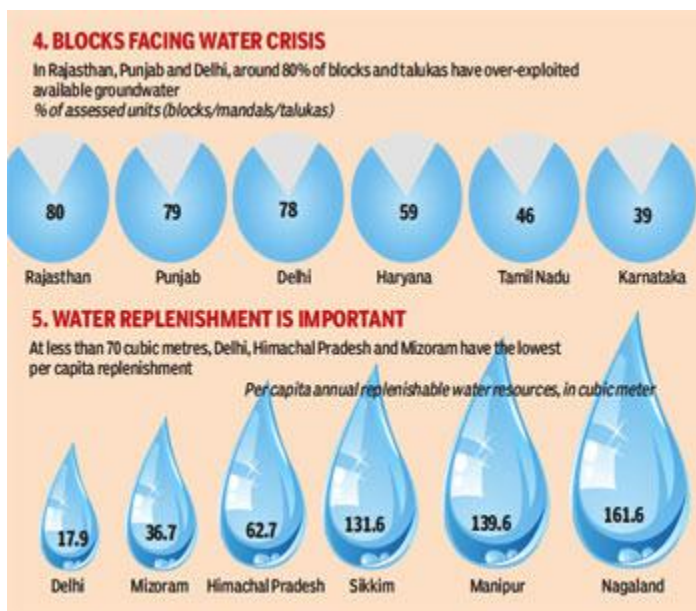
In the first 11 months of the 2011-12 oil year, the exports were down by 7 per cent to 36,20,045 tonnes compared to 39,00,777 tonnes in the October-August period of 2010-11 oil year.

"The exports have shrunk on account of low crushing and arrival of soyabean in the market. Besides, the prices of soyameal in the domestic market in August was high and the demand has been increasing," SOPA spokesperson Rajesh Agrawal said. The volume of shipments last month nosedived by 94 per cent to just 10,006 tonnes as against 1,65,408 tonnes in the same month of 2011.

The looming water crisis

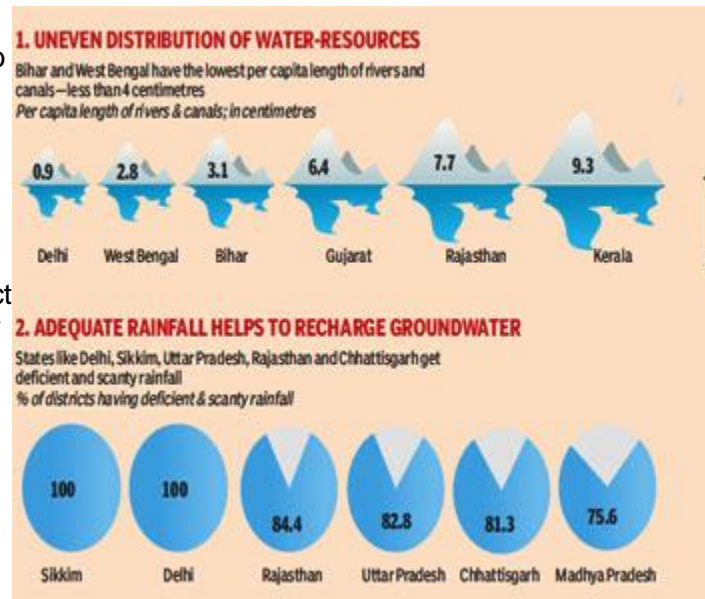
Oceans cover three-fourths of the total geographical area of Earth and the total volume of water on Earth is estimated to be around 1.4 billion square kilometers. But the unfortunate part is that ground water, which can be used by people, constitutes only 0.8% of total water volume while the rest lies in the form of oceans and snow on mountains and glaciers. A growing population combined with huge demand of water for development purposes has put excessive stress on available water resources.

The uneven distribution of water-resources, artificial modification of natural flow of rivers and human abuse are the main reasons for the looming water crisis in India. Bihar and West Bengal have the lowest per capita length of rivers and canals—less than 4 centimetres—one of the primary reasons for the non-availability of water for irrigation purposes and the falling agriculture sector in these states. Nearly all the states except



Karnataka have been found to be suffering from the problem of deficient and scanty rainfall in their region. The worst affected among the states are Delhi, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan & Chhattisgarh.

The stage of ground water development reflects the usage of water with respect to availability of water resources in the region. The situation of ground water is critical in Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. It becomes more evident from that fact that more than 50% of the assessed units in these states are found to be critical or over-exploited with respect to the availability-usage situation of water resources. These states need urgent attention from the government and the implementation of proper water management techniques to prevent severe water crises.



Business Line

The man who empowered through milk

There was nobody more unsuitable to have earned the sobriquet 'Milkman from Anand'.

Vergheese Kurien — who passed away in the early hours of Sunday aged 90 — was a Syrian Christian from Kerala, who, before landing for the first time in Anand on an early May morning of 1949, knew it just as a place "somewhere near Bombay".

That Anand was almost 500 km away from Mumbai was something he discovered only after reaching there as a 27-year-old, to work as superintendent of a run-down government creamery on a monthly salary of Rs 275.

Moreover, the man who endeared himself to Gujarat's farmers and created a brand called 'Amul' for the milk they produced, never spoke Gujarati (though he once told me that he fully understood the language; not speaking it was a deliberate strategy he employed to know what others were saying without their realising it).

Also, as someone who was a self-proclaimed atheist, a meat-eater and not particularly averse to alcohol, there couldn't have been anybody more removed from the puritan Vaishnav-Jain traditions of Gujarat.

Milky contrasts

And the biggest incongruity of them all was the fact that milk was never Kurien's favourite food; he actually quite disliked it.

Nor did he choose dairying as a profession; it was dairying that chose him and made him the greatest CEO India has seen, and will possibly ever see.

Kurien was originally a mechanical engineer from Chennai's Guindy College of Engineering, who in the early 1940s worked with Tata Steel or TISCO as it used to be.

He left the job only because TISCO was being headed by a maternal granduncle, John Mathai, who later also became India's Finance Minister.

Being known as the grand-nephew of TISCO's top boss was rather stifling for a young, independent-minded man.

So, when he got a government scholarship to study in the US, Kurien chucked the job. It did not matter that the scholarship was only to do a masters in dairy engineering and not his first choice of metallurgical engineering.

On returning from Michigan State University in 1948, Kurien had a Rs 1,000-per-month job offer from Union Carbide in Kolkata, which he could, however, not take up because of a two-year government employment bond that was part of the scholarship deal.

And the creamery in the boondocks of Gujarat's Kheda/Charotar region was where Kurien got posted.

The Tribhuvandas effect

It was in Anand that Kurien encountered the man who changed his life: Tribhuvandas Kishibhai Patel.

The latter had, in late 1946, organised a cooperative for marketing the milk of farmers in Kheda district, who were being fleeced by the lone Polson Dairy promoted by a Parsi businessman, Pestonji Edulji Dalal.

It was a struggling cooperative without any proper processing facilities to prevent the milk from curdling by the time it reached Mumbai. Patel had, however, managed to lease a part of the government creamery, where Kurien was bidding his time, for the cooperative's use.

But it had completely worn-out machinery prone to frequent break-downs, which Kurien, in his spare time, would offer to fix.

During one of such interactions, Kurien suggested investment in a plate pasteuriser as the only practical long-term solution, although it might cost some Rs 60,000.

To his surprise, Patel offered to raise the money — provided Kurien would help in the initial installing and running of the equipment.

By then, Kurien had served his term and was all set to leave Anand. But Patel's persuasive powers and demonstrable commitment to a cause were enough to get him to remain in Anand, which became his *karmabhoomi*. The rest, as they say, is history.

The Kheda cooperative, which was collecting 5,000-odd litres per day of milk from 430 farmers in end-1948, eventually became a pan-Gujarat organisation that now procures over 100 lakh litres daily from 30 lakh producers in 16,000 village-level societies.

Cooperative capitalism

What Patel and Kurien ended up creating was a unique entity, whose sole purpose was to procure, process and market the milk of Gujarat's farmers with a view to maximise their share of the consumer rupee.

The unions affiliated to the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation today pay their farmers an average rate of Rs 470 for every kg of milk fat.

That, for full-cream milk containing 6 per cent fat, works out to Rs 29 a litre or three-fourths of what consumers in Ahmedabad or Delhi shell out.

Not a small achievement, made possible only because of Kurien's vision that saw farmers not only owning processing facilities for their milk, but even having control over marketing. Central to this was selling under their own brand — in this case, Amul.

“Without a brand, you will just be a contract supplier doing all the hard work of collecting and processing the milk from lakhs of farmers. The cream is not there. It lies in marketing, which is where actual value realisation takes place. The benefits of it should accrue to the producers”.

This is how the legendary dairyman summed up his philosophy in an interview he gave me sometime in 2004.

Unfortunately, the above vision has been junked by the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) that Kurien had originally set up to replicate the Anand model in other States.

The NDDB, in recent times, has converted its subsidiary, Mother Dairy, into a company sourcing much of its milk from private dairies and contractors, when not importing powder and butter.

Simultaneously, it has presided over the decline of dairy cooperatives in virtually all States, barring Gujarat and Karnataka that have remained faithful to Kurien's philosophy, which has fundamentally been about empowering small rural producers.

“I am in the business of empowerment. Milk is just a tool in that”. He couldn't have expressed it better.



Verghese Kurien — November 26, 1921-September 9, 2012

Mother Dairy's move to hike milk prices surprises many

New Delhi, Sept 9:

Mother Dairy's move to hike milk prices by four per cent has caught everyone by surprise.

The hike comes at a time when skimmed milk powder (SMP) prices have crashed and the monsoon deficit has shrunk.

More importantly, it is just ahead of the 'flush' season when production shoots up.

"It looks they are saddled with huge stocks of skimmed milk powder (SMP), which they are unable to dispose of.

"They seem to have increased liquid milk prices just to cover these losses," an industry source told *Business Line*.

Mother Dairy, which sells more than 30 lakh litres of milk in the National Capital Region accounts for more than half of the packaged milk sales.

SMP stocks

Sources said that Mother Dairy currently holds SMP stocks of some 40,000 tonnes, valued at about Rs 600 crore at Rs 150 a kg.

However, S. Nagarajan, Managing Director, Mother Dairy, disputed this figure and estimated the company's SMP stocks at 22,000-24,000 tonnes.

Nagarajan attributed the hike in prices to the rise in logistics, packaging, power and procurement costs.

Milk procurement

Mother Dairy procures milk from as far as Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat, besides Uttar Pradesh and Punjab.

Stating that the company has held on to the prices over the past one year, Nagarajan said: "Mother Dairy has caught up with Amul, after almost six months in terms of increasing prices." Amul had made a price hike in April this year.

"There is no basis for hiking the prices, as prices of both powder and milk have come down compared with a year ago.

"The hike is inflationary and anti-consumer," said Kuldeep Saluja, Managing Director of Sterling Agro Ltd, a skimmed milk powder supplier to Mother Dairy.

SMP itself is today available at Rs 140-150 a kg against Rs 185-190 a year ago.

Milk price

Dairies in North paid up to Rs 31 a litre to farmers during the peak season, which has now fallen to Rs 26 in case of full cream milk containing six per cent fat.

Mother Dairy retails full cream milk now at Rs 39 a litre.

Production shoots up

"We are going to enter the flush season, when the animals will start yielding more milk, which would push prices still lower," sources said.

They said Mother Dairy miscalculated the extent of rebound in milk production in 2011-12, following a squeeze in supplies the previous year forcing dairies to effect huge increases in procurement prices.

import spree

National Dairy Development Board, through which SMPs are channelised, went on a huge import spree last year, contracting up to 50,000 tonnes at an average landed cost of Rs 185 a kg.

But as domestic milk production staged a spectacular recovery, dairies got saddled with huge unsold inventories, forcing the Government to lift the ban on exports of both casein and SMP recently.

Last week, the Government told Parliament that demand for milk powder in 2012-13 is estimated at 88,000 tonnes against current availability of 1.12 lakh tonnes.

In a written reply, the Minister of State for Agriculture, Charan Das Mahant, told the Lok Sabha that the current stock of milk powder with federations, Mother Dairy (Delhi) and NDDB is around 1.11 lakh tonnes.

Rise in procurement

Ahead of the flush season, which typically starts in October, dairies mainly in areas hit by dry spell in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka have witnessed a 10-25 per cent rise in procurement.

This is mainly because farmers prefer to sell more milk in a drought-like situation since it becomes their only source of income.



Business line

Uttar Pradesh works on sugar investment policy

The government in the biggest sugarcane producing state, Uttar Pradesh, is working on a new Sugar Investment Policy. The aim is to provide incentives for investments in the eastern part of the state, in sugar, ethanol and bagasse-based power.

UP is the country's second biggest sugar-producing state, after Maharashtra, while being first in cane. Top industry players such as Bajaj Hindusthan, Balrampur Chini and Triveni Engineering have operations in UP.

As the industry in UP is concentrated in the western and central regions, the new policy is to offer incentives for investments in the eastern region, said an official. "New investment in the eastern region with distillery and co-generation facilities will be eligible for various fiscal incentives under this policy," he added.

SWEET BAIT

The biggest sugarcane producing state is planning an investment policy

- Sugar, ethanol and bagasse-based power projects to get policy advantage
- Aimed at attracting investments in eastern part of state
- West and central UP already has industry
- State for removal of levy obligation and controls
- A similar policy in 2004 brought in Rs 10,000 crore
- Policy scrapped by successor government

An industry official said the new policy could attract investment if the sector saw reforms such as removal of the levy sugar obligation and other controls as recently suggested by the Rangarajan committee.

The 2004 Sugar Investment Policy announced by the then state government under Mulayam Singh Yadav had attracted investments of close to Rs 10,000 crore, in both expansion and new capacity.

The 2004 Policy had provided incentives such as exemption from entry tax, trade tax on molasses, stamp duty and registration charges on purchase of land, purchase tax on cane, society commission on cane and administrative charges on molasses. It also offered subsidy on transport of sugar and cane and a capital subsidy of 10 per cent on investment. All these were to be given for five years if a company/group invested a minimum of Rs 350 crore and for 10 years if the investments were at least Rs 500 crore. However, the policy was scrapped by the Mayawati government immediately after it came to power in May 2007, and some companies could not avail of the benefits on the investments made.

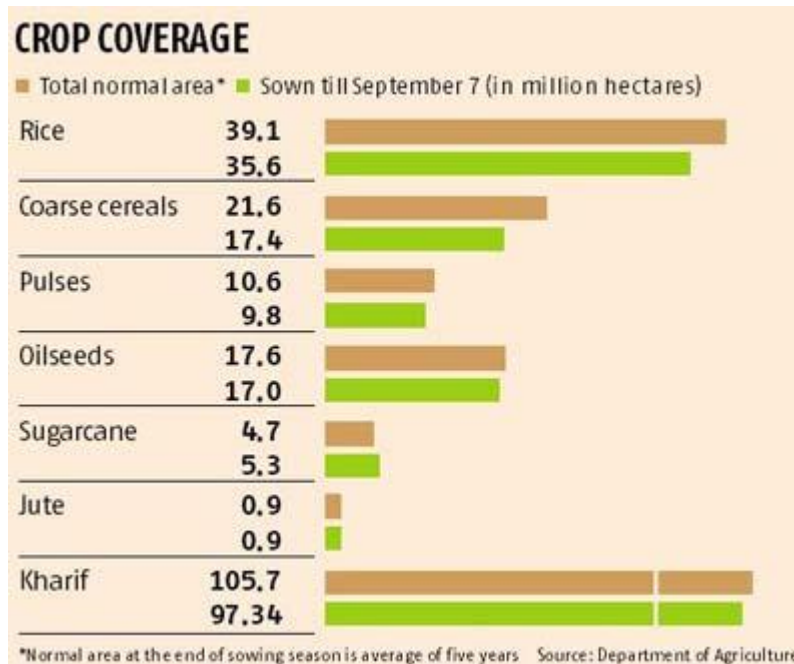
The state official said the government was evaluating options to give the earlier-promised incentives due to various companies under the 2004 Policy.

Late rains push kharif crop sowing

As the southwest monsoon prepares to withdraw from India after completing its four-month journey, the sowing of kharif crops is also nearing its end.

In sum, the rains have by now been close to normal in most areas, barring parts of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, and Northwest India.

According to the agriculture ministry, barring paddy, pulses and oilseeds, the week-on-week rate of increase in sowing among other crops such as coarse cereals and cotton is slowing, signalling that farmers are now getting prepared for the next crop season rather than focusing their energies on the current one.



Around 105.7 million hectares is sown during the kharif season, of which it had been completed on 97.3 mha till Friday. Officials said 500,000-600,000 ha could remain unsown of the normal average by the end of this season. “The unsown area here does not mean that farmers would let it remain fallow. Instead, they would start planting early rabi crops, as late rains have been good,” a senior official said.

In many places, he said, the kharif sowing overlaps with early rabi. Hence, it is difficult to exactly assess till what time a crop hasn’t been sown on a particular piece of land. Nevertheless, the late resurgence in the monsoon has definitely helped in improving the coverage and narrowed the difference between the normal (average of the past five years) and actual sowing.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the southwest monsoon is now expected to be near-normal, after making a slow start. “In our last forecast, we had said that rain in 2012 would be around 96 per cent of the Long Period Average and till date we have received rains which are around 90 per cent of the same, which means by the time the monsoon starts withdrawing, actual rainfall this year would be very close to our forecast,” said D S Pai, director of IMD’s Long Range Forecast division.

He said the southwest monsoon should start withdrawing from September 15-20 from the western parts of Rajasthan.

Overall, the area under paddy this year is around 1.13 mha more than the normal. In oilseeds, sugarcane, cotton and jute, it is either more than the normal or just marginally down, as of last week.

“The big problem lies in coarse cereals and pulses. These two crops could see a drop in output. Although there is still time to sow, the chances are that it might not see a quantum jump in acreage from here onwards,” another official said.

Paddy, he said, was never a problem as grain stocks in the central pool were more than double the required quantity.

However, a drop in production of pulses and coarse cereals would pull up prices of both commodities in the retail market. It might increase the import dependence, mainly in the case of pulses. Already, analysts from some commodity research firms are expecting pulses' import to climb to around four million tonnes this year from last year's 2.5-3 mt, because of low output. "Unless pulses production rises significantly during the early rabi and later rabi seasons, prices would be firm," an analyst said.

Similarly, in the case of coarse cereals, a drop in output could push up fodder prices and, subsequently, of milk. "The problem is less in the case of coarse cereals, as its shortage can be made up with grain but pulses and, to some extent, oilseeds, are a definite cause of worry," said Ashok Gulati, chairman of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices.

As for edible oils, those in the sector expect total import to rise to 9.5-10 mt in 2012-2013 (November-October), as against 9.3-9.5 mt this year. They said the biggest drop had been in groundnut and this could push up overall import.

Nevertheless, the loss could have been much bigger had the rains not revived from August. From a deficiency of almost 20 per cent, the southwest monsoon is now just nine per cent deficient.

The strong revival not only aided planting but also filled reservoirs, their levels rising from a low of around 16 per cent of the Full Reservoir Level in July to the current 65 per cent of storage capacity at this level. The government also got into the act and reconstituted an Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM) on drought, which announced a Rs 2,000-crore relief package for drought-hit areas and also announced a subsidy on diesel.