

Today Farm News

18.09.2012 A.M

18.09.2012 Sep

Water to be released from Grand Anicut on Sept. 21

Water will be released from Grand Anicut for samba cultivation in delta districts of Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagpattinam on September 21.

Water which was released on Monday from Mettur dam is likely to reach Grand Anicut on the night of September 20. It will be released between 9 a.m. and 10.30 a.m. on September 21 into Cauvery, Vennar and Grand Anicut canal systems, said N.Manoharan, Superintending Engineer, PWD, Thanjavur circle, here on Monday.

From Mettur dam, 15,000 cusecs will be released from Tuesday morning. Quantum of water to be released into Cauvery, Vennar and Grand Anicut canal systems will be decided on the realisation of water at Grand Anicut on September 20.

PWD is planning to release water continuously at first so that water may reach tail-end areas. Later it will introduce turn system. Agriculture department has geared up to help farmers to raise samba on nearly 1.2 lakh hectares in the district. Mohammed Yahiya, Joint Director of Agriculture said that already farmers have raised samba under direct sowing on 5,500 hectares in the district. In direct sowing method, seeds will be sown in the ploughed fields and allowed to grow in rain.

In Thanjavur district it is planned to raise community nurseries on 2,500 acres. Seedlings will be supplied to needy farmers from these community nurseries. Direct sowing may be done on nearly 10,000 hectares in the district, said Mr.Yahiya. Under System of Rice Intensification method (SRI), samba will be raised on nearly 20,000 hectares in 84 villages.

18.09.2012 Sep

Mettur dam opens, after a delay of 3 months



To keep the farmers' hopes on samba crop alive, sluices of the Stanley reservoir were opened for irrigation on Monday, to benefit 4.7 lakh hectares in the Delta region. The dam was opened after three months' delay as it was customary to release water for irrigation on June 12 every year.

State Minister for Public Works K.V. Ramalingam who opened the sluices said the water would reach Grand Anicut on September 20 and appealed to the farmers to use it economically.

"Adequate fertilizers, seeds, gadgets were in place for the samba paddy crops along with the package announced by the Chief Minister Jayalithaa," he added.

Officials added that power generation could also increase in the coming days from the Mettur Hydro Electric Station. About 0.96 lakh hectare in Karur and Tiruchi, 3.74 hectares in Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Pudukottai, 1.16 lakh hectares in Cauvery delta region, about 2.58 lakh hectares in irrigation areas under Vennaru and Kallanai and about 0.23 lakh hectares in Cuddalore district would benefit.

Karnataka's refusal to release water and poor rain in catchment areas had delayed the opening of the dam.

The dam was opened 11 times including this irrigation year after June 12, 15 times before June 12 and 53 times on June 12. Last year the dam was opened on June 6, prior to the customary date of opening. The dam released water for Delta for the first time on June 12, 1934, after it was commissioned. The dam received maximum inflow of 4.56 lakh cusecs in 1934, while the maximum outflow was 2.84 lakh cusecs in 1961.

MP S. Semmalai, Minister for Highways and Minor Ports Edappadi K. Palanisamy, Minister for Industries K. Thangamani, Collector K. Maharabushanam, Revenue Divisional Officer Surya Prakash, Mettur Municipal Chairman S. Lalitha Saravanan, Chief Engineer, Public Works Department, Tiruchi Region Ganesha Marachan, Upper Cauvery Circle Superintendent Engineer Sivanandam, Executive Engineer, Mettur Dam P. Kandasamy, Assistant Executive Engineer R. Kovalan and other officials were present.

18.09.2012 Sep

Keeping the wheels of farming in motion

There is a good future for the nation only when youngsters take up farming and adopt new technologies, said a farmer, Vasanth Velusamy, who is on a 10,000 km cycle expedition along with his friend, Vidya Shekar, a B.Tech graduate.

By using latest technologies, farmers can earn more than Rs.2 lakh per month, he said.

The duo reached the city as part of their tour 'Bharath Parikrama' to promote farming. They have covered 2,300 km starting from Udumalpet and passing through Puducherry, Chennai, Cochin, Kollam, Thiruvananthapuram, Kanyakumari, Rameswaram, Nellore, Ongole, Guntur, Vijayawada, Eluru, Rajahmundry, Anakapalli and Visakhapatnam.

Elaborating on the trip, Mr. Velusamy, an MBA graduate said, "Our expedition involves focusing on three groups - youngsters, elderly people basically from villages settled in cities, and women who are reluctant to marry farmers. We visit schools and colleges, encourage youngsters to take up farming as a career. We request the elderly who possess immense knowledge of

farming to return to their villages and guide existing farmers. Finally, we are trying to convince women to come forward to marry farmers.”

18.09.2012 Sep

Ryots told to take up dairy farming

Farmers should take up dairy farming along with agriculture for their economic betterment, Sunlight Youth Association president S. Jilani Basha said in a free veterinary camp held by the association in Venkatareddigaripalle in Chintakommadinne mandal. -Special Correspondent

18.09.2012 Sep

Farmers' awareness programmes

Awareness programmes for agriculturists on National Agriculture Development Programme (Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana) were held in three villages in Perambalur district recently. Organised by the Directorate of Field Publicity, GOI , Tiruchi, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Perambalur, and INDO Trust, Perambalur, the programmes were held at Nocchiam, Valikandapuram, and Aranarai villages. P.Vijayalakshmi from the Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Perambalur, explained about various agricultural schemes including the National Agriculture Development Programme and Kisan Credit Card, a press release here said.

18.09.2012 Sep

Kuruvai harvest in pumpset-irrigated areas begins

Area of cultivation shrinks from 45,000 ha to 21,500



hope abounds:Kuruvai paddy harvest in progress at Madigai in Thanjavur.Photo:B.Velankanni Raj

Kuruvai harvest in pumpset irrigated areas has begun in Thanjavur district. Kuruvai was raised only in pumpset irrigated fields in the district this year as Mettur dam could not be opened on the traditional date – June 12.

Because of this, kuruvai cultivation has reduced to 21,500 hectares from the usual 45,000 hectares.

Of the cultivated area, harvest has been completed in 4,000 hectares so far in the district.

"Those who raised kuruvai early are now harvesting. Yield is good with 6 to 6.5 tonnes per hectare," said Mohammed Yahiya, Joint Director of Agriculture, Thanjavur district.

Harvest has commenced in Thiruppanandal, Kumbakonam, and Thiruvudaimaruthur areas and in parts of Orathanadu and Thanjavur blocks.

Though Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation (TNCSC) is yet to open direct purchase centres, farmers are getting a good price for their crop in the open market.

As there is considerable demand for rice in the State, private parties are purchasing paddy directly from the field.

Farmers are pinning their hopes on the samba crop as the government has announced that water will be released for samba on Monday.

With inflow at 11,287 cusecs and discharge at 2,000 cusecs water level in Mettur dam stood at 83.66 ft on Sunday.

As per the samba package announced by the government, farmers have been advised to go in for direct sowing in some areas, raising of community nurseries in fields with borewells for supplying to needy farmers, and raising paddy under System of Rice Intensification (SRI) method.

It has been planned to raise samba crop under the SRI technique in 24,000 hectares in 84 villages. Community nurseries will be raised in 2,500 acres.

Farmers have already taken up direct sowing at many places in the district.

18.09.2012 Sep

Looming labour shortage dampens farmers' zeal

Even as water gushed out of the Mettur Dam on Monday providing relief to delta farmers a host of issues, including high labour cost, confronts them.

While male labourers have started demanding as much as Rs 250-300 a day, female workers are demanding Rs 120-150, almost double of what was prevailing a decade ago. Farmers, who have been crying hoarse for water, now do not know how to carry out even the preliminary operations such as transplantation faced with serious shortage of labour.

"While we will be running short of labour for agricultural operations by a mile, the labour component in the cost of cultivation might shoot up to 40 per cent from the normal 20 per cent," warns Aarupathi P. Kalyanam, general secretary of the Federation of the Farmers' Associations of Delta Districts.

Aiyilai Sivasuriyan, Tiruchi district unit secretary of the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangham, who contends that the labour component would not go beyond 20 per cent, concedes that there is serious paucity of labour and hence wage hike is inevitable.

Rajachidambaram, general secretary of the Tamilaga Vivasayigal Sangham, worried about the shortage of labour, wants the State government to impress upon the Centre again that all those registered for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS) should now be allowed to work only for farming operations.

Kolappan Committee Report

Citing the Kolappan Committee Report, Mr. Kalyanam points out that in 1997, the strength of agricultural labourers in Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts was 11.75 lakhs.

"Now hardly 50 per cent of them is available for agricultural operations. While a number of them have migrated to other avocations, especially construction, the younger generation is unwilling to opt for farming, considering it a drudgery and not remunerative," he says.

Mr. Sivasuriyan admits that construction industry is the most sought after by the youth as it is more “company like” where timings of duty are well defined and wages are as high as Rs. 400 a day.

Mr. Kalyanam estimates that on an average, 15 men and 18 women workers would be required per acre.”

Harvesting has become quite comfortable with harvesters but preliminary works are so sensitive that they require manual handling. At least 10 lakh acres would require labourers in the delta positively from October second week. What the farmers use to do in 70 days normally will have to be completed within a month as otherwise we might have to face the fury of the northeast monsoon. And then the available labour force would be woefully inadequate.”

The machinery with the Agricultural Engineering Department is too meagre to take care of such a huge area, he adds.

18.09.2012 Sep

Kolappan Committee Report

Citing the Kolappan Committee Report, Mr. Kalyanam points out that in 1997, the strength of agricultural labourers in Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts was 11.75 lakhs.

“Now hardly 50 per cent of them is available for agricultural operations. While a number of them have migrated to other avocations, especially construction, the younger generation is unwilling to opt for farming, considering it a drudgery and not remunerative,” he says.

Mr. Sivasuriyan admits that construction industry is the most sought after by the youth as it is more “company like” where timings of duty are well defined and wages are as high as Rs. 400 a day.

Mr. Kalyanam estimates that on an average, 15 men and 18 women workers would be required per acre.”

Harvesting has become quite comfortable with harvesters but preliminary works are so sensitive that they require manual handling. At least 10 lakh acres would require labourers in the delta

positively from October second week. What the farmers use to do in 70 days normally will have to be completed within a month as otherwise we might have to face the fury of the northeast monsoon. And then the available labour force would be woefully inadequate.”

The machinery with the Agricultural Engineering Department is too meagre to take care of such a huge area, he adds.

“We have got to take up samba cultivation somehow or other; but it is going to be a real challenge,” says Mr. Kalyanam.

18.09.2012 Sep

Cauvery Stage IV Phase II to be launched in October first week

Project to serve 10 lakh families in areas newly added to BBMP

The much delayed Cauvery Stage IV Phase II project, which will provide water to many parched outlying areas, will finally be commissioned in October first week.

Speaking to presspersons here on Monday, Urban Development Minister S. Suresh Kumar, who is in charge of Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), said that the project would be officially launched by Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar.

The project will supply 500 mld (million litres a day) additional water to over 10 lakh families residing in seven erstwhile city municipal corporation (CMC) areas of Rajarajeshwari nagar, Dasarahalli, Yelahanka, Bytarayanapura, K.R. Puram and Mahadevapura and the Town Municipal Council area of Kengeri.

18.09.2012 Sep

Major achievement

The Rs. 1,759-crore project was envisaged keeping in mind Bangalore’s population in 2016; 85 per cent of it was funded by Japan International Cooperation Agency and the balance shared by the government and the BWSSB. While the board achieved supply of 900 mld through the previous four stages, it succeeded in pumping 500 mld from this stage alone.

On complaints about plumbers charging more to facilitate connections, Mr. Suresh Kumar said that a meeting of accredited plumbers was convened recently where plumbers were warned against overcharging. If they do, they will be blacklisted, he said.

BWSSB had issued 75,000 applications, of which 8,000 were filled and submitted. Appealing to citizens to take authorised connections, he said that by doing so BWSSB could contain unaccounted use of water, which was as much of 45 per cent.

18.09.2012 Sep

Spices Board opens food safety unit

The collaborative training centre for food safety and supply chain management in spices and botanical ingredients was inaugurated here on Monday by Spices Board chairman A. Jayathilak. The training centre is being set up to clear apprehensions about the quality of spices and spice products exported from India, said Dr. Jayathilak.

The collaborative training centre **will help capacity building and in developing product-specific testing procedures in the spices and botanical ingredients sectors, said a press release issued by the Spices Board here on Monday.**

18.09.2012 Sep

Flowery welcome to Bamboo Day

Visitors to the sprawling campus of the Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI) at Palode, near here, will get the rare opportunity of seeing a bamboo in bloom.

A clump of *Bambusa pallida*, a species native to north-eastern India, has flowered 22 years after it was introduced to the bambusetum here. In the north-east, the stem of the species, which grows up to 30 ft, is widely used for construction while the shoots are used as food.

“This is the first time *Bambusa pallida* is flowering here,” said K.C. Koshy, scientist in-charge of the bambusetum. The JNTBGRI is celebrating World Bamboo Day on Tuesday. “Less than 10 per cent of the bamboo species in India is commercially exploited,” Dr. Koshy said.

The institute is arranging an education programme for students, NGOs, and members of the biodiversity management committee, Peringamala panchayat. Seedlings from the flowering clump of *Bambusa pallida* will be supplied to farmers, NGOs and visitors.

18.09.2012 Sep

National Institute of Design workshop to give bamboo a makeover

BANGALORE: Bamboo, the poor man's timber, is being re-invented. It has moved beyond furniture to finding applications as cycles and rocking chairs in toy industry, makeshift houses during disaster management, cottages and kiosks in the tourism sector, lifestyle accessories and even in the agarbatti industry. To rekindle interest in the humble grass, the National Institute of Design in Bangalore is starting a 10-day course to impart skills on bamboo products from Tuesday, September 18, which is also World Bamboo Day.

"The workshop is for artisans, designers and architects and just about anyone who wants to learn how to make bamboo products," says [Susanth CS](#), activity vice chairperson, Outreach Programmes Co-ordinator, Design for Retail Experience, NID.

The workshop will teach the basics. "Depending on their requirement, the learners can modify it. In Karnataka, bamboo grows in abundance. The only need is to make artisans aware of it being an eco-friendly, renewable natural resource and cost-effective product," says Kamesh Salam, former president of the World Bamboo Organisation.

Experts rue that bamboo is still considered a poor man's timber and therefore a substitute. Without a market of its own, bamboo is today struggling to find feet in the market.

Bamboo houses in Jharkhand

As part of an agreement with [Jharkhand](#) government, [NID](#) will help build bamboo houses for its [Silk](#) Board employees. A team from NID will first study the requirements and availability

structure before embarking on the five-year project, wherein they will give a new dimension to bamboo houses.

World Bamboo Day

On World Bamboo Day, the aim is to spread the awareness of bamboo globally and especially in Asia, the storehouse of the plant. The [World Bamboo Organization](#) aims to bring the potential of bamboo to a more elevated exposure - to protect natural resources and the environment, to ensure sustainable utilization, to promote new cultivation of bamboo for new industries in regions around the world, as well as promote traditional uses locally for community economic development. [World Bamboo Day](#) was declared by the Thai Royal Forest Department on 18 September in [Bangkok](#), during the 8th World Bamboo Congress.

18.09.2012 Sep

Vegetable prices spiral upwards

PANAJI: With [Ganesh Chaturthi](#) a day away, vegetable prices spiraled upwards on Monday.

Fast-selling vegetables like pumpkin, cucumber, ladyfinger and beetroot have had their prices raised.

Cucumber and beetroot are up from 20 a kg to 40. French beans have seen a steep jump from 24 to around 50 per kg.

Potato, tomato, onion prices have remained constant.

18.09.2012 Sep

Central Institute for Cotton Research initiative to create modern cotton culture among farmers

NAGPUR: City-based [Central Institute for Cotton Research](#) (CICR) has launched a series of initiatives under its "New Initiatives in Cotton Research" programme to provide a bunch of alternatives to cotton farmers across India. The institute has started working on a variety of new projects aiming at both - generating newer techniques in cotton cultivation using the existing

varieties, both hybrid and straight, mechanization of cultivation processes as well as developing new models for price prediction of cotton.

The institute director, [Keshav Kranthi](#), shared these initiatives with TOI on the backdrop of the launch of these initiatives during a national seminar. Union agriculture minister [Sharad Pawar](#) was to actually launch the programme on Monday. But due to cancellation of his visit, former chairman of the [Agriculture Recruitment Board](#) (ASRB), CD Mayee officially launched them. "Our aim is to generate a cafeteria of technologies which will provide more choice to farmers. He should have alternatives to pick from which he does not have today," Mayee said.

Joint secretary of technology mission on cotton, Atanu Purkayastha, additional commissioner of agriculture in government of India, [Anupam Barik](#), deputy director general of horticulture in [Indian Council of Agricultural Research](#) (ICAR), NK [Krishna Kumar](#), additional director general of commercial crops N Gopalakrishnan in ICAR were also present during the launch.

"As of today cotton farmers are a confused lot. The reasons are many. One being that there are almost 1128 Bt cotton varieties approved by the [Genetic Engineering Approval Committee](#) (GEAC) available in market. He doesn't know which one is good. In fact even seed companies like Nuziveedu are also confused and have started HDPS experiments," Kranthi observed.

"Though the benefits of Bt technology are grossly underplayed, even in front of the parliamentary committee which visited Vidarbha, reality remains that scientific institutes like CICR should have enough alternatives to Bt cotton," Kranthi suggested. CICR has introduced the HDPS technique adopted from [Brazil](#) in non Bt varieties like Suraj, a CICR variety, NH-615 and PKV 081 and also desi cotton variety HD-123. Trials of these varieties are already on in 200 acres of land (172 acres in farmers' fields and 30 acres in CICR fields) this season. This system basically involves cultivation of more plants per acre -almost 90,000 to 1 lakh plants per acre or 2.5 lakh per acre and reducing their foliage with growth regulators which ensures early maturity. It also reduces the cultivation cost manifold.

Kranthi said that though it was difficult to introduce the concept initially, the results in farmers' fields were encouraging. Since each plant will give at least 5-7 bowls per plant, the overall production will be higher. He is sure that once Indian breeders take up this method, it will change the face of cotton cultivation in the country.

CICR is also working on 'marker assisted breeding' techniques. It will be few years before they generate technologies to fight problem of leaf curl virus, nematodes menace, and bacterial blight but work has begun. Institute has already validated these markers (technique which can trace a trait in the variety or crop selectively) for different pests and drought resistance.

At present the cotton advisory board uses the information supplied by traders based on quantity of produce reaching market and market trends across world to decide the cotton price. Another prediction method is crop cutting experiments. "But these are not scientific solutions. My scientists - AH Prakash from regional centre at Coimbatore and SN Wasnik from CICR headquarters in city - have developed models based on remote sensing based on actual area under crop and studying global variability in production. These are science based and not market based," Kranthi added.

The other initiative is based on mechanization. One technique uses a machine picker. A series of models to sow and pick cotton are also being tried.

Sharing technologies on internet

CICR is introducing the concept of sharing technologies with farmers through e-extension for the entire country. To begin with it is planning to reach at least 1 lakh farmers in Vidarbha on their mobiles through voicemail service to take all kinds of information including weather bulletins, advisories in local language and of course the package of practices of cultivation including pest management.

Keshav Kranthi, the CICR director, informed that the institute would also be working on 25 different cotton related films which will be linked to YouTube. It will be difficult initially as farmers are not tech-savvy but gradually it will work. Efforts are also on to flash information through sms. All this is being done with the support of ministry of agriculture.

New initiatives in cotton research by CICR

Introducing high density planting system (45X10 cm plantation) in non Bt cotton as well as desi cotton.

Marker assisted development of pest and drought resistant straight and hybrid varieties.

Mechanization through cotton picker.

Reaching at least 1 lakh farmers through e-extension through sms, [YouTube](#) to provide weather advisories, pest management, sowing and cultivation practices.

Prediction of market cotton price using remote sensing techniques.

18.09.2012 Sep

Sowing crosses average mark after good rainfall

PUNE: The last two weeks saw several areas affected by drought receive good rains, resulting in increased seed [sowing](#) by farmers.

This year, the monsoon arrived late in Maharashtra, but later became active in Konkan and eastern parts of the state. Rest of the areas such as western Maharashtra, Marathwada and north Maharashtra remained dry for a long time and in many areas farmers did not even sow any seed.

The government as a precautionary measure opened food camps for cattle in scarcity hit areas and provided drinking water with tankers. However, climatic conditions turned in favour of farmers and Western and central Maharashtra - the area known for foodgrain production - received spells of showers. Sweet sorghum, bajara and pulses are the major crops of the central part of the state.

The report submitted by the state [agriculture department](#) stated that the average rainfall received in the state till this week was 913.4 mm as against the average rainfall of 976.4 mm. The state has received 93.5% rainfall, so far. Except Jalna district, the remaining 32 districts have received more than 50% rainfall. As many as 10 districts have received more than 100% rainfall, so far.

The area under cultivation has crossed the average mark because of the recent rains. While the average cultivation area in Kharif season is 132.34 lakh hectares, the actual area where sowing has been reported is 133.10 lakh hectares, which is more by 76,000 hectares, said the report, released by the state agriculture department.

Out of the eight divisions in the state, only Pune, Kolhapur and Konkan divisions have failed to reach their average area under cultivation, while the rest of the divisions have surpassed the average sown area, said the report.

18.09.2012 Sep

Villagers to be trained to generate organic manure from solid waste

VARANASI: While [Varanasi Nagar Nigam](#) (VNN) failed to manage the solid waste generated in extensive quantity in city, the initiative taken by department of [Mycology and Plant Pathology, Institute of Agricultural Sciences](#) (IAS), Banaras Hindu University (BHU) to convert bio-degradable solid waste into organic manure is not only expected to reduce the load of garbage but also help farmers in growing crops rich in organic content with minimal use of fertilizers.

Notably, Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Science and Technology, had sanctioned a three-year project worth Rs 9.96 lakhs to the department to train and provide guidance to villagers to prepare organic manure from kitchen waste. According to Prof Asha Sinha, project head, the project is now in its last phase, and over 500 villagers have already benefited from its training programme. "Staff members collect the kitchen waste from restaurants, canteens, mess and eating outlets. Around 1 foot deep pits are dug, which is filled with kitchen waste. Around 250 gm of microbes (Decomposers) are also added to the waste to increase the decomposition, after, which water is sprinkled to maintain moisture content followed by covering the mixture with a layer of soil. After around 25-30 days, waste is converted into microbial rich manure. This cycle is repeated after every 30 to 35 days", said Sinha.

Interestingly, the project also aims at providing training to rural women specially those belonging to SC/ST categories. "Villages of Varanasi and Mirzapur are the main target. So far over 500 villagers have been benefited from the training cum demonstration programme. The villages that have been covered so far near Chiraigaon, Barkachha lack basic resources, and villagers have no other occupation except farming. For that matter, apart from creating awareness among farmers and villagers for proper disposal of solid waste for production of manure, they are also promoted to adopt the technique for self employment by creating awareness among villagers about the market value of organic manure", she informed.

"There are several methods of recycling solid waste into manure, however, the local economy of the area is such that most of the farmers are poor and have less resources with minimum access to technologies and new developments. The low scale aerobic decomposition of kitchen waste is cost efficient and can be easily understood by them", she said. According to Sinha, agricultural production has increased in last two decades but the extensive use of fertilizers and pesticides has resulted in negative impact on health apart from polluting environment and reducing the fertility of the soil. The organic manure prepared in this way have good amount of biological matter, which will reduce the use of fertilizers and increase the quality of soil. It is worth mentioning here that decomposed solid wastes are non-hazardous and eco friendly.

Today Farm News
18.09.2012 A.M

18.09.2012 Sep

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Rain: 0
Humidity: 79
Wind: normal

Tuesday, Sep 18

Max Min
35.0° | 25.0°

Sunrise: 05:57
Sunset: 06:07
Barometer: 1007

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Wednesday, Sep 19

Max Min
34° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday Sep 20	Friday Sep 21	Saturday Sep 22	Sunday Sep 23	Monday Sep 24
30° 25° Rainy	32° 27° Rainy	30° 26° Rainy	33° 26° Rainy	32° 26° Rainy

Airport Weather

Delhi **Delhi**

Rain: 2.2 mm in 24hrs
Humidity: 74%
Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 7:14
Sunset: 17:48
Barometer: 1008



18.09.2012 Sep

Koyambedu braces for bandh against diesel price hike, FDI in retail



- Traders at Koyambedu wholesale market are gearing up to down shutters on September 20 to protest against diesel price hike and the Centre's proposal to allow FDI in retail. A Raja Chidambaram / EPS

The Koyambedu Wholesale Market is a picture of activity, with trucks and other storage vehicles bustling in and out, transporting merchandise, and people loading or unloading them. On September 20, this place will come to a grinding halt, with all the traders of this market expressing their support to the pan-India bandh call against the hike in diesel prices and most importantly the Central government's proposal to introduce multi-brand retail.

So what's new in this protest call? The nation burst in uproar after Prime Minister Manmohan Singh announced that the Centre would allow FDI in the retail sector.

Summing up the view of the traders, M Thiyagarajan, president of the Koyambedu Periyar Market Tomato Dealers' Association says, "Earlier, we were warned of the tiger. Now, it is at our doorstep."

He adds that at present, farmers and vegetable merchants form an eco-system, helping one another in terms of crisis. "We support the farmer, at times even provide him with financial aid before sowing season and ensure that he is not left in the lurch. Bringing in FDI will disturb this, and result in the monopoly of foreign conglomerates," he details.

Thiyagarajan avers that the foreign companies such as Walmart will only focus on making profits. "A situation where such companies will not even hesitate to usurp the lands of farmers should their crops fail and they are unable to meet their terms is not difficult to imagine," he said. He adds that traders will not be able to compete with such companies which will be able to undersell products.

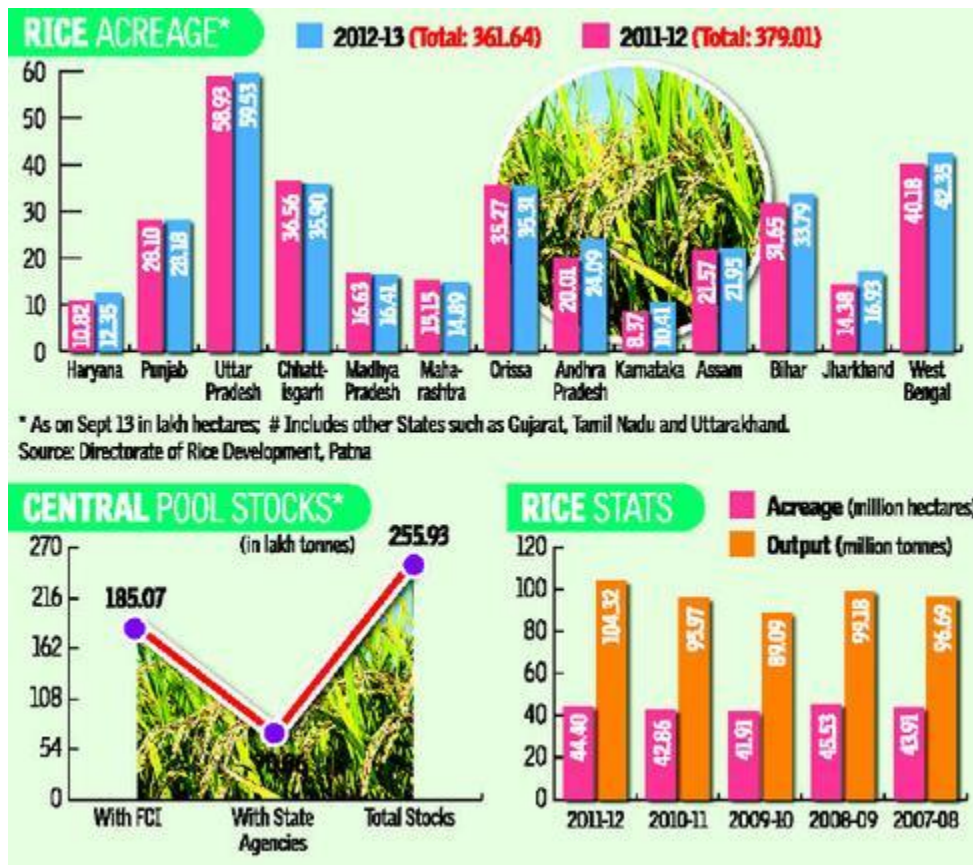
He is dismissive of the fact that FDI in different sectors, notably the automobile sector, has been of benefit, as companies such as Maruti have effectively staved off the onslaught of auto majors. This, he says, cannot be replicated in the agriculture sector as it comprises millions of small-scale and marginal farmers and traders who have no backing whatsoever. "What happened to native brands of soft drinks like Vincent and Kalimark?" he asks to buttress his argument.

Another trader picked holes in the government's proposal that FDI will boost the agrarian sector and help curb wastage by bringing in cold chains. "Can't this be achieved by the government itself by setting up the storage units at the places of production?"

The bandh, Thiyagarajan adds, is only to register their outrage at the Central government's proposal. "Depending on the government's actions, we will resort to our next line of action," he adds.

18.09.2012 Sep

Rice production may dip marginally this year



The country's rice output that touched a record high of 104.3 million tonnes (mt) last year could see a marginal dip this season ending June. This is on account of a shortfall in kharif acreage, as scanty rains during the early phase of monsoon hit plantings in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

However, crop prospects have improved with the monsoon's revival in August. The showers are seen aiding the standing crop that is in grain formation stage. Besides, they also led to expansion of acreage. Transplantation of paddy is still on in key eastern rice-growing States of Bihar, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal.

Crop size

Various estimates peg the crop size in the range of 98 to 102 mt. The rice trade estimates the crop to be around 100 mt, while the Food Ministry expects it to be at last year's level.

The recent pick-up in monsoon prompted the United States Department of Agriculture to raise its estimates to 98 mt from its earlier forecast of 94 mt in August. The Food and Agriculture Organisation expects the rice crop to be around 99 mt, while the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy has pegged it at around 102 mt.

The rain deficit, which stood at 29 per cent as of end-June, stands reduced to around 7 per cent as of mid-September. This sharp recovery could help boost rice yields but may not reverse the damage.

So far, the total rice acreage is down by 5 per cent at 361.64 lakh hectares, which may keep the output lower than last year. Kharif is the main season for rice crop, which is typically sown in June-July and harvested in November-December. About 84 per cent of the country's rice is grown during this season.

South situation

"The crop condition is almost normal except in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, where drought has hit planting," said M.S. Diwakar, Director of the Patna-based Directorate of Rice Development. In Andhra, where acreage is down by about 4 lakh hectares, farmers have switched over to crops such as cotton, pulses and maize.

Diwakar expects the shortage of water availability in the Cauvery basin could also result in lower acreage in Tamil Nadu, where rice area has declined by 1.6 lakh hectares to 2.28 lakh hectares over corresponding previous year.

The acreage decline in these States is partially made up by higher planting in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Price, stocks

Vijay Setia, former President of All-India Rice Exporters Association, expects rice output at 100 mt. The improving quality in inputs, such as seeds and planting technology, would help boost the yields, he added.

However, the marginal dip in output is unlikely to be a cause of worry as the stockpile with the Government is about five times the prescribed buffer norms. As a result of a huge surplus, the rice prices are expected to rule steady, says Setia.

As on September 6, rice stocks in the Central Pool stood at 25.59 mt, much higher than the stipulated buffer of 5.2 mt as of October 1.

Setia estimates India's consumption at 94-95 mt and with a projected output of 100 mt coupled with surplus Government stocks, "the availability of rice would be comfortable".

Meanwhile, paddy arrivals have started in Karnal, the key market in Haryana. The arrival of non-basmati paddy is likely to be in full swing by the end of this month, said Sewa Singh Arya, a rice trader and President of Bharatiya Kisan Union in Haryana.

"The arrivals are not regular, as the crop is not fully matured in all parts. Farmers who have harvested their crop are coming in the grain market, as they don't want to take chances with the matured crop. Paddy arrivals of aromatic varieties may start by the end of October," Arya added.

M.P. Jindal, President of AIREA, said farmers were likely to get better prices than last year, as rice prices in the international market have increased and production is low this year.

Exports to continue

The sufficient stocks should prompt the Government to keep rice exports open this year. India, which re-opened non-basmati rice exports since September 2011, shipped 5.64 mt till mid-July. Another 1.1 mt is registered for exports through the land custom stations. Including basmati

shipments, India has emerged as the largest exporter of rice for the year-ended March 2012 and is expected to remain a key player this year.

18.09.2012 Sep

Bamboo consumption on the decline in AP



Bamboo cultivators in Andhra Pradesh are a distressed lot as consumption is on the decline as paper mills are increasingly switching over to hard wood.

The AP Forest Development Corporation has pointed out that paper mills in the State have cut bamboo consumption to less than five per cent of their requirement. And to make it worse, there are hardly any industries here that make use of bamboo for making products such as floor tiles and furniture.

The corporation made this observation at a State-level seminar on 'Promoting Bamboo Farming in Andhra Pradesh', organised by the Bamboo Society of India and Federation of Andhra Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry here today.

It was pointed out that farmers were going in for eucalyptus instead of bamboo due to higher yields. It was shown that eucalyptus required an investment of Rs 70,000/hectare giving revenues of Rs 4.8 lakh, while bamboo involved a cultivation cost of Rs 60,000/hectare, but giving a revenue of only Rs 2.38 lakh. Moreover, eucalyptus had a ready market, unlike bamboo.

The corporation has cut bamboo plantation targets from 300 hectares for 2013 to 200 hectares each for the next three years. It has, so far, raised 15,000 hectares of bamboo plantation, covering 3,400 hectares in the last decade using macro proliferation technique. These plantations are mainly concentrated in east and west Godavari, Khamam, Warangal and Adilabad districts.

KDR Jayakumar, Special Secretary, Department of Environment and Forest, Government of Andhra Pradesh, pointed out that bamboo-based biomass was a good option for power generation. "This is a right time to develop biomass units across the State, he felt.

18.09.2012 Sep

Spices Board joins hands with CII, USFDA for training centre

The Spices Board has decided to partner with CII and USFDA to set up a collaborative training centre for food safety and supply chain management. This is to clear apprehension and concern on quality of spices and spices products exported from India.

Inaugurating the collaborative training centre here on Monday, A. Jayathilak, Chairman, Spices Board, said that the centre, the first of its kind in India, is the culmination of the decision taken in the aftermath of the World Spice Congress held in Pune in February this year.

The collaborative training centre for food safety and supply chain management in spices/botanical ingredients is being set up to facilitate capacity building and developing product specific testing procedures in the sector of spices and botanical ingredients.

Spices Board and CII – FACE (Jubilant Bhartia Food and Agriculture Centre of Excellence) is partnering with JIFSAN (The Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition) / USFDA (US Food and Drug Administration) in establishing the centre.

The first phase of the training has commenced in Kochi on Monday being attended by over 60 officials and functionaries from 50 organisations from both the Government and non government sector consisting of processors, trader, exporters, etc.

The phase two for selected delegates will be held in the US for two weeks. In phase three, participants attending phase two would be involved in a series of workshop and training programmes in different regions of India.

Supply chain help

The training centre assumes importance in the context of most of the countries especially the US and EU bringing in stringent legislations regarding the standards of spices imported to respective countries. This will give producing countries like India, an edge over the other competitors on the export front.

The centre would strengthen the supply chain management for both domestic and international trade through providing technical support to organisations through training, information sharing and technical consultancy to organisations selected by the Board, in the upgradation of their manufacturing, processing facilities, quality control assurance system, implementing hygiene and food safety management system, etc.

Various stakeholders in the supply chain will be provided with training, counselling, consultancy, etc to build up their capabilities and enable them to be globally competitive.

18.09.2012 Sep

Late rains should boost rabi crop prospects: RBI



As the monsoon season draws to a close, the Reserve Bank of India today said the late revival of rains should brighten the prospects for key rabi crops like wheat, allaying to an extent fears over farm growth outlook.

Monsoon, the lifeline of Indian agriculture, has revived in the last one month but Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan continue to face deficit rains.

The overall monsoon deficit has declined to 7 per cent so far, from 22 per cent a month ago.

While announcing the mid-quarter review of the monetary policy, the RBI said: "With the progressive reduction in rainfall deficit, kharif sowing, though still below normal, has improved. Reassuringly, the late rains have augmented the storage in reservoirs which should improve the prospects for the rabi crop, mitigating to some extent concerns about agricultural prospects."

Recently, Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar had said that deficit rains have impacted the sowing of kharif crop and the production of coarse cereals and pulses will be affected. However, the revival of monsoon augurs well for rabi crops, he had said.

According to official data, the total area under kharif crops is lower by over 1.2 million hectares as on September 14, compared to a normal year (average of five years), with major fall being in coarse cereals, pulses and oilseeds.

Due to impact of poor monsoon on agriculture, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) had in August pegged the farm sector growth at 0.5 per cent for the current fiscal, a projection that is even lower than in 2009-10 when monsoon was the worst in 28 years.

The farm sector had expanded at growth rate of 2.8 per cent in the last fiscal.

18.09.2012 Sep

Lorry strike threat pulls down Coonoor tea purchase

With the impending lorry strike likely to affect tea movement, buyers took a 'wait-and-watch' approach at Sale No: 37 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions resulting in the sale percentage dropping to 86.5 per cent from 91 per cent in the previous week.

Homedale Estate tea, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped the CTC market at Rs 157 a kg. Among orthodox teas from corporate sector, Chamraj got Rs 200.

"Orthodox leaf marketed oscillated up and down Rs 2-4 a kg. High-priced CTC leaf lost Rs 2-4, while others oscillated up and down Rs 1-2. Primary orthodox dust market eased by Rs 4-5.

High-priced CTC dusts oscillated up and down by Rs 2-3 while others Re 1-2”, an auctioneer told *Business Line*.

On the export front, Pakistan bought in a wide range of Rs 86-105 a kg and the CIS, Rs 75-135. There was some purchase for European ports at Rs 88-98.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 72-74 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 100-130 for brighter liquoring sorts. They ranged Rs 81-83 for plain dusts and Rs 100-140 for brighter liquoring dusts.

18.09.2012 Sep

Continue sops for farm mechanisation: Parliamentary panel

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce, which studied the plantation sector, has recommended that the subsidy scheme for mechanisation be continued in the 12th Plan (2012-17).

“Mechanisation with adequate financial outlay and more machinery like green bean separators, fertiliser applicators, drip irrigation equipment, etc., must be included under the scheme for greater benefit of the growers,” the committee, which tabled its report in Parliament last month said.

Welcoming the recommendation, Marvin Rodrigues, Chairman, Karnataka Planters’ Association (KPA), said “We at KPA had suggested the scheme with an enhanced budget of Rs 300 crore and the scheme be extended to all sectors inclusive of corporates/co-operatives.”

The Commerce Ministry through the Coffee Board had introduced a scheme at the fag end of the 11th Plan during the financial year 2011-12. “Titled ‘Mechanisation of Farm Operations’, it was included as new scheme along with others with a budget allocation of around Rs 105 crore,” said a senior Coffee Board official.

“The move to facilitate mechanisation of farm operations at estate level is coming at a time when there is severe labour shortage. This will ensure proper and timely completion of all cultivation practices,” said Nishant Gurjer, Chairman, KPA’s Scientific Committee.

Tractors for small growers

The committee has also recommended that subsidy on purchase of tractors and tillers, which is currently extended to growers who own 20 hectares and above only, be extended to growers with smaller plots.

The committee is of the view that since the cost of a machine remains same irrespective of the category of holdings, the department may revise the ceiling level after taking into account the average price of all the essential machines.

The department for the requirement of coffee farm operations may fix price uniformly for all categories of landholdings. The subsidy component may vary according the category of holdings of the growers.

18.09.2012 Sep

Mixed trend at Kochi tea auction

A mixed trend persisted for almost all varieties of tea at Kochi auction last week. Of the quantity of 9,92,000 kg on offer in the dust category, the demand for grainer varieties was better, while it was fair for powdery varieties.

Clean, black, well-made PD, RD, SRD grades were dearer by Rs 2-3 and sometimes more following quality. Medium and Plainer varieties were fully firm to dearer by Re 1 to Rs 3.

The quantity on offer in Orthodox dust was 9,500 kg and it was dearer by Rs 2-3. Most of the offerings were absorbed by exporters and upcountry buyers.

In the best CTC dusts, PD grades quoted at Rs 98/109, RD varieties quoted at Rs 100/107, SRD at Rs 102/110 and SFD quoted at Rs 101/110.

The demand for Orthodox leaf sale was only better and the quantity on offer was 1,32,000 kg. The quantity on offer in the CTC leaf category was 90,500 kg and the demand was good.

In the dust category, Injipara (Prm) SRD quoted the best prices of Rs 140, followed by Injipara (Prm) SFD at Rs 136. In the leaf varieties, Pascos Hyson Green Tea quoted Rs 300 followed by Chamraj FOP Green Tea at Rs 276.

18.09.2012 Sep

Rubber flares up on thin arrivals

Spot rubber flared up on Monday. After remaining closed during the weekend session owing to a 12-hour hartal in the State, physical rubber prices recorded sharp gains filling the wide gap between the domestic futures on the National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE).

Buyers were on their toes to accumulate the narrow arrivals while the market scaled further highs amidst low volumes. According to observers, there were no quantity sellers on any counter even at the prevailing levels.

Sheet rubber increased sharply to Rs 195 (185) a kg as quoted by the traders. The grade improved to Rs 194 (185) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to Rubber Board.

The October series slipped to Rs 193.52 (194.17), November to Rs 192.75 (193) and December to Rs 193.50 (193.58) a kg while the March series concluded the debut trading session at Rs 190.50 a kg on NMCE.

RSS 3 (spot) increased to Rs 172.42 (170.04) a kg at Bangkok.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 195 (185); RSS-5: 186 (180); ungraded: 180 (175); ISNR 20: 175 (167) and latex 60 per cent: 127 (127).