

Today Farm News

24.09.2012 A.M

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'Demand for wood-based panel products on the rise'

C.N. Pandey, director, Indian Plywood Industries Research and Training Institute, Bangalore, has said that the latest technologies should be adopted to bridge the gap between production and demand for wood-based panel products.

Dr. Pandey told presspersons here recently that the demand for these products was 8 million cubic metres a year against the production of 3.4 million cubic metres. "Growing population and economic development are the main reasons for the rise in demand," he said.

The wood-based panel industry in India, which was dependent on natural forests for their raw material requirement earlier, was on the threshold of a crisis in view of the restrictions on timber extraction owing to environmental considerations.

With the industry growing at the rate of 4.3 per cent a year and demand for industrial wood estimated to reach 55 million cubic metres by 2020, Dr. Pandey said that barely 3 million cubic metres of the requirement was expected to come from forests.

"The demand for nearly 31 million cubic metres is estimated to be met by the farm and agro forestry and other woodlots. The remaining has to be met by imports, which has gone up almost three fold in 10 years. The imports stand at nearly 6 million cubic metres," he said.

The solution to the problem was not increasing imports, but short rotation plantation of fast growing species besides utilisation of non-wood materials such as agro residues and bamboo, he said.

S.K. Nath, joint director of the institute, called bamboo a “wonder grass”. “We have the largest bamboo resource in the country. But, of the 13 million tonnes of bamboo that is available, only 4 million tonnes is utilised,” he said.

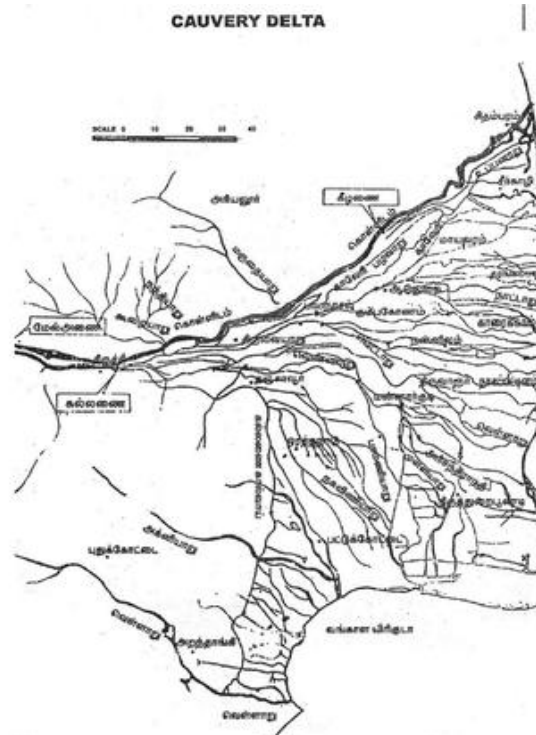
### Conference

The institute will hold a three-day international conference from September 26 on its premises in Bangalore to chalk out strategies for the future growth of the industry.

Scientists from China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Italy and Bangladesh will present papers, and 200 delegates are expected to participate.

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Farmers readying for the gamble of direct sowing



Map of the Cauvery Delta

Cultivation cost is hardly about Rs.2000-Rs.3000 per acre

“Direct sowing for samba crop is a real gamble. But we are left with no other option,” admit the farmers of Thiruthuraipoondi taluk in Tiruvarur district, the biggest of rice bowl districts in the State with 1.35 lakh hectares of paddy area.

It was direct sowing which stood farmers in good stead in 1987 when water from the Mettur dam was released for irrigation only on November 9, points out S. Ranganathan, general secretary of the Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association.

(The cultivation cost of direct sowing is hardly about Rs.2000-Rs.3000 per acre as against Rs.18,000-Rs.20,000 spent for traditional cultivation by raising nursery and transplanting. Besides, direct sowing reduces duration of cultivation by a fortnight and requires less water than the traditional method.)

J. Varadarajan, joint secretary of the Tiruvarur Mavatta Vivasayigal Manram, admits that direct sowing proved quite successful in 1987 and a family owning 150 acres proved inspirational by reaping plentiful harvest for four years at a stretch resorting to that method. But the current situation is “unprecedented” because there is no rain also.

Direct sowing had been taken up in about 16,000 hectares. With borewells benefiting 17 per cent of the cultivable area, it would be possible for us to raise samba in at least 25 per cent of the area, he asserts.

However, the quantum of water, meant for this area, should be doubled to ensure irrigation in certain blocks where the fields are at a higher level. Besides, tahsildars should be vested with the control of releasing water for various areas. Instead of ADT 38 being distributed by the Agriculture Department, he prefers ADT-42 and ADT 37 who are of 115-120 day duration.

K. Seshachalam Iyappan of Kokkalady, who has already gone in for direct sowing of his 10 acres, laments that 50 per cent has withered because of inadequate water.

“Though the water released from the Grand Anaicut would reach the tail-end areas in a couple of days, we will not get enough water because the channels are parched.”

Pameni R. Krishnappa points out that it was because of conducive rains that the 1987-88 season proved quite successful for direct sowing. Though several farmers have resorted to direct sowing even now, there has been “significant” rain only for a day. “Unless we get one more shower, we will be in dire straits,” he adds.

“Groundwater is of no use to us as it is saline. Now it is too late for us to raise nursery too as we would be caught in the fury of the North East monsoon.”

G. Narayanasamy, a member of the Federation of the Farmers Associations of Delta Districts, says it will be ideal to have at least five centimetre rain, preferably in two spells. “So far we have not received even two cm rain.” He also points out that direct sowing is almost over in Thiruthuraipoondi, Muthupet and Kottur blocks. While Andhra Ponni (BPT) variety, normally a 135-day crop, would be able to manage if used in direct sowing as it could be harvested in 120 days, it is the popular variety of CR 1009 which is proving problematic.

It is a 150-day-long crop which might run short of water at the fag end of cultivation as Mettur dam would be closed by the end of January.

“Despite having 40,000 pumpsets, we are terribly worried because we get three-phase supply only for two hours a day since September 15,” laments V.N. Sundaram, organising secretary of the Manram.

“We require power at least for 12 hours a day to survive in this situation,” he pleads.

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Water flows but the wastes yet to be flushed out

Farmers in the Cauvery Delta region were happy when water was released from Mettur Dam on September 17. But, villagers living on the banks of the River Cauvery in Namakkal and Erode districts had other reasons to cherish.

“The river flushes away all the human and industrial wastes that get accumulated in the river. But for water for irrigation it would be impossible to clear the accumulated wastes,” says R. Sivakumar of Pallipalayam. The water turns black when it reached the contaminated segment of the river at Pallipalayam and Komarapalayam.

Effluents from the hundreds of dyeing units that are dumped into the river make the water worse. The river is an open garbage dump for local bodies and residents of villages and municipalities on either side of the river.

These wastes are carried down stream when water is released from Mettur Dam.

People living on the banks say that they dump wastes into the river as local bodies don't have proper disposal mechanisms. Environmentalists feel that it is the duty of the district administration and the local bodies to ensure that houses are not built on the banks of the river.

“Priority should be given for establishment of Under Ground Drainage and treat the waste water before releasing it into the river”, says G. Ajeethan of Cauvery Family, a body comprising stake holders of the river.

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Experts stress on shifting rice cultivation to eastern states



Labourers work in a paddy field at Thaska village in Punjab.

With reports of the water table going down in Punjab and Haryana -- considered the "rice bowl of India" -- experts feel cultivation of the staple grain which requires a good amount of water could be shifted to the Eastern states having favourable conditions.

Ashok Gulati, Chairman, Agriculture Costs & Prices Commission said water table is going down by roughly 33 cm every year in Punjab, the cradle of green revolution of 70s.

Gulati, while addressing an Agricultural Summit last week, suggested shifting cultivation of rice from traditional belt of Punjab and Haryana that are facing water depletion due to excessive usage, to Eastern states like Bihar and Eastern Uttar Pradesh having good water availability.

Noted environmentalist R K Pachauri also expressed concern over depletion of water resources and supported the view to encourage rice cultivation in the Eastern states in the circumstances. Pachauri, Director General of Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI), while speaking at the same function, favoured creation of buffer stock of water in the country to deal with the crisis triggered by the phenomenon of climate change.

Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh are the leading producers of rice in the country.

The union government through "Initiative of Bringing Green Revolution to Eastern India (BGREI)" has made an attempt to increase rice production in the eastern states.PTI

24.09.2012 Sep

Farmers object to Shettar's claim on drought relief

Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar faced some embarrassing moments during the inauguration of the Krishi Mela 2012 at the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Dharwad, on Sunday, when a group of farmers objected to his statement that the Bharatiya Janata Party government was doing its best to tackle drought.

The farmers got enraged when Mr. Shettar claimed that no other government in the history of the State had helped farmers like the BJP government.

"You have totally failed to tackle the drought situation. We get power supply for hardly two hours a day... Is it possible to continue farming? Nothing is happening on the ground," they said.

They alleged that his words were not put into action.

Though the police whisked away one of the farmers who was shouting, others in the middle of the crowd continued their protest for some time.

Taken aback, Mr. Shettar promised to find solutions for their problems.

The Chief Minister said that the State Cabinet had approved a Rs. 50-crore scheme to rent out agricultural tools and equipment to farmers through Raitha Samparka Kendras.

The government had set up a committee led by Agriculture Minister Umesh Katti to look into the problems of sugarcane growers.

24.09.2012 Sep

High-density cashew orchard set up



Project Officer (Thane) K. Veera Raghava Rao explaining the 'model high-density cashew orchard' to Rural Industries Minister M.C. Sampath (third from right) at Meliruppu, near Cuddalore on Saturday— Photo : D. Gopalakrishnan

A 'model high-density cashew orchard' has been formed at Meliruppu in Panruti block here for the benefit of the Cyclone Thane-affected farmers, according to K. Veera Raghava Rao, Additional Collector and Project Officer (Thane), Project Management Unit.

Mr. Rao told *The-Hindu* that the model orchard had been set up on 20 acres of land, jointly owned by eight farmers. They had planted high-yielding and early-fruiting VRI-3 cashew variety in the orchard.

Unlike the traditional cashew farming done in rain-fed areas, the orchard concept had been promoted on the drip-irrigation system. A common borewell had been sunk to water the saplings that had been planted at the rate of 500 per row.

They had also formed a Joint Liability Group (JLG) to share the water to irrigate the fields as and when required. Mr. Rao said that the plant would start the “economic yield” of cashew from the third year, or in other words, the farmers could recover the expenses incurred on the third year.

Later, the yield would be two or three times higher than what was obtained from the traditional variety. So far the Project Management Unit had received 47 applications for developing combined orchards and 157 for individual orchards.

Those joining the JLGs should be four to 10 in numbers and should have removed all the uprooted cashew trees on an area of 20 to 25 acres.

Mr. Rao said that in Cuddalore district it has been proposed to form 50 JLGs with one deep borewell, each with government subsidy. Further, the individual farmers opting for orchards would also be eligible for one deep borewell with subsidy component.

He noted that as many as 18 lakh VRI-3 cashew saplings are kept ready for immediate distribution. Rural Industries Minister M.C. Sampath, who visited the Meliruppu orchard on Friday, evinced keen interest on the procedures adopted for raising fresh stock of cashew trees.

On the occasion, the minister gave away financial assistance to the tune of Rs. 6.90 lakh to the cashew farmers at Meliruppu, Vegakollai and Silambinathanpettai.

Mr. Rao said that soon after the cyclone hit Cuddalore district on December 30, 2011, the State government had announced the ‘Thane special package’, under which a relief amount of Rs. 118.75 crore was immediately disbursed to over two lakh farmers.



As part of the package, the following mini kits had been distributed to the farmers: paddy – 9,000; pulses – 1,24,285; millet – 6,250; oilseed – 1,700; greengram – 16,505 and vegetable – 430.

For the 3,534 coconut farmers, relief worth Rs. 8.23 crore was given away at the rate of Rs. 500 per tree, and, moreover, 1,62,086 coconut saplings worth Rs. 3.4.12 lakh were given freely to them for replanting.

For the removal of the uprooted cashew trees, Rs. 1.46 crore was given to 601 farmers, covering an extent of 610.12 ha, Mr. Rao added.

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Bamboo saplings planted

To increase awareness about bamboo and to protect natural resources, saplings of bamboo were planted near Pallapatti Lake here recently. Organised by Ashokar Pasumai Illam, to commemorate the World Bamboo Day, members of the organisation planted saplings and explained the need for growing bamboo. Members said that industrialization is fast affecting the environment and hence the responsibility of preserving it lies with every citizen. 'Farmers can earn their livelihood by selling the bamboo timber as there is a huge demand for the product,' they added. India ranks second (next to China) in bamboo cultivation and more than 1,500 products are made out of bamboo. A. Ganpathi, chairman and Esan Azhilvilian, secretary of the centre, forest officials, councillors and others participated.

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Ethanol production will save up huge foreign exchange"

Permitting ethanol production will save up huge chunk of foreign exchange spent on petroleum exports, said S. Nallasamy, pro-toddy activist and field organiser of People's Movement of India.

He was speaking to reporters here after the ethanol campaign journey led by him reached Tiruvannamalai on Saturday. "India relies on imports for 80 per cent of its petroleum needs. By extensively replacing petroleum with ethanol, that could be produced from sugarcane and corn etc., not only the foreign exchange, we can also save our farmers and the whole economy. Some may argue that by permitting ethanol production, we may end up permitting a steep hike

in the price of sugar. Currently, we have 560 sugar mills in the country. Let those them all continue as sugar mills to keep prices of sugar low. Let the sugarcane land area earmarked for these mills also be intact. We can start new dedicated mills for ethanol production and explore new area to cultivate sugarcane to feed those mills,” he said.

“If we can open 1,000 new ethanol mills and explore irrigation sources to cultivate lands to supply sugarcane to those mills by linking rivers we can replace almost all the petroleum imports with indigenously produced ethanol. Brazil proved this to be viable. It is estimated that the fossil fuel will exhaust in about 30 years and hence exploring alternative sources of energy is an imperative. Ethanol will prove to be such an alternative. We speak of food security but the food security comes from farmer security. Permitting ethanol production will save agriculture,” Mr.Nallasamy added.

He took a dig at food imports, saying “For India, a farm economy, importing food is a national shame ”. First phase of the mission organised by People’s Movement of India concludes in Chennai on Sunday and in the second phase it goes to Delhi.

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Deficient rainfall hits kharif sowing in State

Only 78 p.c. of targeted area covered

With kharif sowing coming to an end in the State in the coming days, only 78 per cent of the total targeted area has been covered owing to deficient rainfall.

Total acreage as on September 22 stood at 58.5 lakh hectares against the targeted area of 74.70 lakh ha. The deficit in rainfall is 25 per cent as on September 23.

Kharif output is expected to come down as a result of lower acreage. Coverage of cereals so far is 84 per cent, pulses 68 per cent, oilseeds 63 per cent and commercial crops 91 per cent.

Though the deficient in rain by July-end was 40 per cent, the late revival of monsoon reduced it to around 25 per cent.

The revival of the monsoon in August and September has brightened the prospects for rabi crops such as pulses, oilseeds and wheat.

Meanwhile, starting from Monday, officials of the Agriculture Department will deliberate on the strategy to be adopted to boost rabi output, particularly that of oilseeds and pulses.

### **Conference**

The two-day national conference on agriculture for rabi campaign 2012 in New Delhi would focus on making the best use of available soil moisture, sources told *The Hindu* on Sunday.

Officials would make presentation on the kharif sowing scenario as well prospectus for rabi in the State.

The conference would deliberate on area-specific recommendations for pulses and oilseeds and other winter crops. Issues related to use of high-yielding varieties, disease control programmes, improved agronomic practices, proper use of pesticides and taking technology to the farmers' fields would be debated.

### **Rabi target**

The State has set a target of 34.5 lakh ha for rabi season. Last year, rabi crops were sown on 30 lakh ha against the target of 34.39 lakh ha.

In the upcoming rabi season, cereals, comprising paddy, jowar, maize and wheat would be cultivated on 14 lakh ha and pulses on 11 lakh ha. Oilseeds and cash crops are major crops cultivated during the season.

Farmers also grow sunflower, mustard and sesame in the next two-three months. Commercial crops such as cotton and sugarcane too would be cultivated over a lakh ha.

The soil moisture is adequate to take up rabi crops, officials added.

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Food production likely to be hit in the district during 2012–13

More than 95 per cent of maize has dried up in Mysore and Nanjangud taluks



During the 2012-13 kharif season, sowing has been taken up on 3,81,992 hectares.— PHOTO: M.A. SRIRAM

Food production in Mysore is expected to come down this year because of the prevailing drought in all seven taluks of the district.

Though paddy transplantation process has been completed, pulses appear to be the worst affected. All seven taluks in the district have been declared as drought-hit.

K.R. Krishnaiah, Joint Director of Agriculture, told *The Hindu* that more than 95 per cent of maize has dried up in Mysore and Nanjangud taluks. Pulses such as cowpea, green gram, black gram, horse gram, red gram and others have been lost to the extent of 90 to 95 per cent, he said.

The food production for Mysore district during 2012-13 was initially estimated at 7.56 lakh tonnes (cereals and pulses) during the kharif season and 1.55 lakh tonnes in the rabi season, for a total of 9.11 lakh tonnes.

Of the 7.56 lakh tonnes targeted kharif crop, cereals such as paddy, ragi, maize, jowar constitute a total production of 7.03 lakh tonnes and pulses would account for 0.53 lakh tonnes. Estimates for oil seeds (0.15 lakh tonnes), sugarcane (10.74 lakh tonnes), tobacco (97 million kg), and cotton (1.72 lakh tonnes) have been made separately. Both pre-monsoon and regular rainfall was deficient this year compared to last year, Mr. Krishnaiah said. Doddakavalande hobli in Nanjangud taluk remains the worst affected.

As far as rainfall in the district is concerned, there was a surplus of 22.4 per cent this April (compared to last year), but the subsequent months had remained poor. During 2012-13, kharif season, 4,31,575 hectares had been targeted to be covered under various crops in the district of which sowing has taken place in 3,81,992 hectares, amounting to 89 per cent performance. But, poor rainfall has dashed the hopes of farmers and the projected output as well, Mr. Krishnaiah said. Sowing is better under rain-fed cultivation (95 per cent) than the irrigated area (72 per cent). More than 90 per cent of groundnut crop has been lost in the district while entire sunflower crop has dried up in Nanjangud taluk. Cotton yield in H.D. Kote taluk could be lost up to 75 per cent while yields in Mysore, Hunsur and Nanjangud taluks are estimated to be down by more than 80 per cent. As far as seed supply was concerned, 26,448 quintals was distributed among 66,720 beneficiaries in the district and Rs. 3.12 crore was given as subsidy, Mr. Krishnaiah said. As much as 72,526 metric tonnes of fertilizers were supplied among the farmers.

## Schemes

Mr. Krishnaiah stated that 9,744 farmers would receive the benefits of 'Survarna Bhoomi' scheme in the district during this year—7,525 in the general category, 1,582 Scheduled Castes and 637 Scheduled Tribes. Fresh applications would be received from farmers who did not get the benefits last year. A total of 82,146 farmers had applied last year and only 8,552 had received the benefits.

Under the 'Bhoo Chetana' scheme, 2.53 lakh hectares of land would be developed this year of which sowing had taken place in 1.70 lakh hectares, he said. Farmers in 1,134 villages had been given 3,160 tonnes of gypsum, 188 tonnes of zinc sulphate, 56.24 tonnes of borax and 545 tonnes of bio-pesticides, he added.

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Zero-budget farming finds takers



Green method: The paddy cultivated in 30 cents using the zero budget natural farming method by a farmer in Nedumudi grama panchayat in Alappuzha district.— Photo: J.S. Bablu

P.J. Thomas of Muttanaveli paddy podler in Nedumudi grama panchayat is determined to bring more of his fields under zero-budget natural farming.

Thomas has tested the farming method twice in his paddy fields and his second crop will be ready for harvest in a month. He says confidently that the new method has brought in more yield. "The last time, I got at least 10 to 20 kilos more of paddy from 30 cents of land than when the same area was under cultivation using chemical fertilizers. My second crop through zero

budgeting is to be harvested in a month; I expect at least at least a quintal more. Moreover, the paddy is more yellow and larger than that in other paddy fields using chemical fertilizers,” Mr. Thomas, who has 40 years of experience in paddy cultivation, said.

Zero-budget natural farming is based on the experiments of Subhash Palekar of Amaravathi district of Maharashtra. During 15 years of experimentation, Mr. Palekar cultivated upto 30 acres of land using just dung of native-breed cow and its urine. There is no need for chemical fertilizers or weedicide. The method uses practices suitable to the soil of the area. “Not using chemical fertilizers helps the farmer reduce his budget to a large extent as most of the production cost goes into buying chemical fertilizers. The prices of these fertilizers are also rising sharply these days,” Mr. Thomas said.

K.G. Mohananpillai, who propagates zero budget farming in the district, says that the idea was to multiply the microorganisms in cow dung and to provide a suitable atmosphere for the microorganisms to act on the soil to make it fertile. In Alappuzha district, especially the Kuttanad area, the yield is more for farmers using this method than their counterparts elsewhere in the State using the same method, he said.

P.J. Joseph, retired assistant director of agriculture and now engaged in publicising the zero-budget model to farmers in the district, says the rice obtained from the paddy cultivated using this method was very soft and tasty too. “Though there is a shortage of native-breed cows in the State, more are now being made available. The State government is also providing artificial insemination to native breeds like Vechur cows free of cost at all major veterinary hospitals in the district and elsewhere in the State from June onwards. This could encourage people to adopt the method,” he said.

Mr. Thomas got Rs.2,000 per quintal for the paddy cultivated through zero budget farming last time, while it was only Rs.1,500 per quintal for cultivation under chemical fertilizers. However, Mr. Joseph says that the method has not caught the fancy of majority of the farmers in the district.

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## Seminar on hi-tech farming

Seminars on various aspects of hi-tech farming was held as part of the second International Horti Expo at Hotel Blue Nile here on Sunday. Speaking on Organic Farming, Philip J. Kanat of an Ernakulam-based NGO threw light on how maximisation of soil fertility and minimal use of chemical content could help in yielding better farming results. P. Susheela, associate professor, Communication Centre, Mannuthi, presented a paper on 'Engineering aspects of Poly house.'

George K. Mathai, agricultural officer, Krishi Bhavan, Meenachil spoke on 'The scope of traditional vegetable cultivation in poly house.' K. Krishnankutty, former MLA, talked about ensuring the quality of materials used in poly house construction. Digoul Thomas, recipient of Young Farmers Award, spoke

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## Help centres for farmers

The Agriculture Department will open Karshika Sevana Kendras, which will act as one-stop centres for implementation of agriculture-related projects and as resource centres for the farmers, a press release from the Farm Information Bureau has said.

The main aim of these centres will be to promote farming, ensure the proper functioning of farmer communities, promote mechanisation of group agricultural initiatives and encourage participation of the youth in agro industries.

The centres will provide guidance and technical advice on various areas in farming and agriculture with support from the bureau.

These centres will function as societies registered under the Charitable Societies Act.

They will be started at the block level at the initial stage at a cost of Rs. 32 lakh.

Each district will have a model society, which will be established under guidance from technical experts from the Agriculture Research Station, Mannuthy.



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## Farmers transplant paddy despite dry spell

In spite of the dry spell continuing in the State, farmers transplanted paddy across 7 lakh acres and the government is making all efforts to provide water to the standing crops, according to Minister for Major Irrigation P. Sudarshan Reddy.

Talking to mediapersons after releasing water from the Gutpa LI scheme at Ummeda village, on Sunday, the Minister said farmers cultivated paddy in 3.20 lakh acres and maize in 90,000 acres in the district.

### Minister satisfied

He expressed satisfaction at the sowing of paddy in 30,000 acres and maize in 2,000 acres in Nandipet mandal despite the fact that there had been no rains. Observing the water level in the Godavari river, he said that the Gutpa was meant to give water to 40,000 acres and farmers could draw water from it as long as water was available.

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## No farmer suicides here

Yerrolla Lakshamma is in her early 40s and is a resident of Chilamamidi Village in Jarasangam mandal. She is one among the thousands of women farmers who practices traditional farming, a technique that several others like her, have inherited from their ancestors.

Ms. Lakshamma has never had to worry about survival.

Not only she, but her fellow farmers, Pedda Tuljamma and Begari Sammamma of Bidakanne, Anjamma of Gangwarand Aidala Sushila of Raipally have never had to worry.

“We sow more than 12 varieties of crops which make us self-sufficient. These include Anumulu, three varieties of togari (red- gram), two varieties of jowar, two types of sajja (pearl millet), bebbari and pundit. All these are useful for our consumption as well as to sell,” said Ms. Lakshamma.

### Nutritious food

“There is no guarantee of returns when we go for a single crop, that too if it is a commercial crop. But, if you go for multiple cropping and food crops, you are safe. We get nutritious food not only for our family but also for our cattle. This is one of the reasons for the survival of the farming community in this area,” said Ms. Sushila.

The better part of their living is that they never need to take more debt than they can repay. “We only need around Rs. 20,000 to take care of our farm requirements, which can be repaid easily.

It is never a burden when compared to our revenue,” she added.

Though two suicides were recorded in the area in the recent past, they were attributed to those who went in for commercial crops which failed due to adverse weather.

Had the farmers gone in for multiple cropping, they might not have committed suicide, Ms. Sushila adds.

Farmers Federation leader Narasimha Ramasharma backed them by saying that compared to other parts of the region, suicides in their areas were minimal.

***‘We sow more than 12 varieties of crops which make us self-sufficient’***

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NABARD schemes for innovative ideas

Chennai

## Chennai - INDIA

### Today's Weather



Sunny

Monday, Sep 24

Max Min

33.9° | 25.5°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 75

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:57

Sunset: 06:03

Barometer: 1008

### Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Tuesday, Sep 25

Max Min

34° | 26°

### Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday  
Sep 26



30° | 27°

Rainy

Thursday  
Sep 27



30° | 26°

Rainy

Friday  
Sep 28



31° | 26°

Rainy

Saturday  
Sep 29



31° | 26°

Rainy

Sunday  
Sep 30



31° | 25°

Rainy

### Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 06:10

Humidity: 70

Sunset: 06:14

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1008



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Govt's apathy troubles Krishna delta farmers

The state government's continued silence on the release of water for the [Krishna](#) delta is giving the farmers sleepless nights as the crops reached a stage where they cannot survive without sufficient waters. The current reserves in Srisailem and Nagarjunasagar projects provide the government a leeway where it could release a portion of the waters for the delta but no decision has been taken yet.

With farmers from Sagar ayacut, who comprise a good portion of Telangana region, demanding release of water, the government is in a tight spot. "If the government wants to let out water from Sagar, it had to supplement the requirements of both delta and Sagar ayacut. Since the current reserves in the projects would not suffice the requirements of both delta and Sagar ayacut, the decision is being delayed," observed a senior irrigation official.

Sources said the government is also worried about the backlash from Telangana region, particularly before the 'Chalo Hyderabad' march planned on September 30. About six lakh acres falling under Sagar ayacut is in Telangana region.

While the water levels in Srisailem touched a safe 869 ft, levels at Nagarjunasagar too reached a good 520 ft by Saturday. The AP high court ordered the government not to release waters from Srisailem and Nagarjunasagar if the levels fall below 834 ft and 510 ft respectively. With

both the reservoirs receiving good inflows, farmers from Krishna delta expected the government to make an official announcement on the release of waters. But the assembly session ended without transacting any business and the government escaped from making a statement on the issue.

"No minister and ruling party legislator will be allowed to visit their constituencies in both Krishna delta and Nagarjunasagar ayacut regions," fumed TDP senior leader Kodela Sivaprasada Rao. He appealed to farmers to gherao the ruling party legislators and ministers and asked them to stop the leaders from touring their constituencies to protest against the government's negligence on release of water for the crops.

While transplantations in about 10 lakh acres of the 14 lakh acres in the Krishna delta spread over [West Godavari](#), Krishna, [Guntur](#) and Prakasam districts were completed, farmers of about 10 lakh acres under Nagarjunasagar ayacut in Guntur, Prakasam, Nalgonda and Khammam districts are anxiously waiting for the government's announcement.

Water for Sagar ayacut is usually released by the end of August or first week of September to enable the farmers to go for kharif. Sources said that government could declare a crop holiday for Sagar ayacut after the September 30 rally and keep the present reserves for drinking water needs till the next summer.

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Krishi mela a crowd puller on Day 1

The four-day Krishi Mela-2012 and the global agriculture festival began with much pomp and show at the sprawling University of Agricultural Sciences campus in Dharwad on Sunday. The first day attracted a large number of farmers from across the state.

The mela with the theme 'agricultural technology for drought management' is focusing on educating farmers on alternative cropping system and water and land management in the wake of severe drought in major parts of the state.

The mela will have an exhibition of the latest farm equipment, demonstration of their functioning, informative sessions on organic farming, integrated pest management, horticulture

development, land and water management and agriculture marketing.

Experts from various fields will interact with farmers.

Inaugurating the mela, [chief minister Jagadish Shettar](#) reiterated the state government's commitment to safeguard the interest of the farming community and urged the farm scientists to evolve a mechanism to adopt a change in agriculture pattern to suit the changing climatic and economic scenario.

He also promised to consider the demand for starting a veterinary college in Dharwad.

Water resources minister Basavaraj Bommai asked the researchers and teachers in agriculture universities to extend their sphere of activity and take up experiments on farmers' lands.

[Education minister Vishweshwar Hedge](#) Kageri, minister for agriculture Umesh Katti, MP [Prahlad Joshi](#) and UAS vice-chancellor R R Hanchinal were present on the occasion.

### **CM promises permanent solution to sugarcane growers' issue**

Chief minister Jagadish Shettar on Sunday said the committee appointed to fix fair price for sugarcane in the state will submit its report in a month. The committee has been asked to evolve a policy where the factory owners and growers can share the revenue. The government wants a permanent solution to the problem and the committee has been asked to find a way, he said. Stating that the focus of his government would be to prevent large-scale migration of people from agriculture sector to urban areas, he said this can be done by providing better infrastructure in villages and making agriculture a viable occupation. The government will include another 1,000 villages under the Suvarna Grama Yojana and spend Rs 1 crore on each village to provide infrastructure, he said. Shettar said the report of Paramashivaiah panel on streamlining the flow of Benne Halla in Dharwad and Doni river in Bijapur would be placed before the Cabinet during its next meeting.

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## Wind fluctuation may deprive Kanpur of rain

With no rainfall for six consecutive days, met experts have said this year's [monsoon](#) is withdrawing, but is likely to shower some generous rainfall on its way out.

The sunny skies on Sunday took the mercury up to 33.8 degrees Celsius, and the minimum temperature recorded on the day was 22.1 degrees. According to weather scientists at [Chandra Shekhar Azad](#) University of Agriculture and Technology, the frequently changing wind directions indicate signs of season change for the city. They said the sudden rise in temperature has been brought about by the change in wind direction from south-westerly to north-westerly.

Meanwhile, the humidity recorded during morning hours on Thursday was 88%, which declined in the afternoon and was noted at 54%. Weather scientist at [CSA](#), CB Singh said similar weather is likely to prevail in the days to come and there is a good chance of rains soon. "If the wind fluctuations continue, however, the chances of rainfall would decrease. Nevertheless, light and isolated rains may still be expected,"

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## Camera traps capture dispersing wildlife and bamboo thieves

Evidence of carnivores and herbivores coupled with images of illicit bamboo felling and theft in the [Nagzira-Navegaon corridor](#) show how wildlife habitats for dispersing animals are under threat.

The maiden camera trap survey launched recently by the [Wildlife Trust of India](#) (WTI), a non-profit conservation organization, emphasizes the need to conserve the shrinking corridor. The tiger occupancy survey is part of WTI's 'Securing corridor between Pench-Tadoba' project. The project will help the state forest department prepare a plan to strengthen the corridor.

"In the first phase, we have taken up project to secure Nagzira and Navegaon corridor, which is [spread](#) over 300 sq km. In phase II, survey between Navegaon and Tadoba will be conducted," said Prafulla Bhamburkar, manager, WTI. TOI recently visited part of the corridor project in Gondia district where the survey has been launched.

"Prior to the launch of the project, we conducted a small occupancy survey for principal tiger prey species in the corridor. This was mainly to understand abundance and distribution of prey species and factors that affect them," said field officer [Aditya Joshi](#), who is working on the project.

"We quantified the extent of human and biotic pressure exerted on the area and in turn its effect on prey species. As there was no information available for large carnivores, we started systematic camera trapping in the corridor," Joshi told TOI at Alebadar where cameras were installed.

The WTI exercise, going on 25km away from Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary, intends to sample maximum area to look at presence of tiger and co-predators in the corridor. The information will help identify critical areas in the corridor and classify them into priorities based on animal presence.

"We started a few days ago and have already started getting signs and evidence of large carnivores like tigers and leopard along both sides of the national highway 6 that divides Navegaon and Nagzira. The cameras have also recorded prey species like nilgais and sambars," Joshi said.

Not surprising, camera traps are also catching images of illicit felling which is rampant in the corridor. Most of the bamboo felling has been noticed in [Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra \(FDCM\)](#) area.

"The illicit bamboo felling is a major cause of concern as in the occupancy survey, presence of bamboo was positively correlated to presence of prey species. Decrease in bamboo will have a negative impact on wildlife," warned Bhamburkar and Joshi.

WTI report said that there were 89 villages in the 45-km corridor. These put huge pressure on forests. Only silver lining is that most of the threatened area outside Nagzira and Navegaon has automatically been protected after it was notified in new sanctuaries.

However, sites along the NH-6, state highways and railway tracks, besides encroachments in terms of agriculture land and built-up area still pose a threat.



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Monsoon set to withdraw from northern, parts of western India

The southwest monsoon, which accounts for more than 70 percent of India's annual rainfall, is set to withdraw from northern and some western parts of the country in the next 48 hours after bringing bountiful showers since August in a late rally that cheered millions of farmers.

This will be the seventh straight year when the withdrawal of monsoon, which normally begins in the first week of September, has been delayed to the third week of the month.

Data released by the weather office last Friday for this season showed that rainfall was just five per cent less than normal till now as against 31 per cent deficiency in June.

According to a bulletin released by the weather department this afternoon, "conditions have become favourable for withdrawal of southwest monsoon from parts of Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Saurashtra and Kutch during next 48 hours".

Satellite imagery and the observations, it said, clearly indicate reduction in moisture over parts of northwest India.

The late rally of the monsoon helped cut the deficiency in summer rainfall experienced in the first two months of the season.

In July, the country received 13 per cent deficient rains prompting the government to roll out relief measures.

Usually monsoon withdraws from the entire country by September end, but in the past eight years, this has been delayed till as long as October 11.

Even in 2005, when the withdrawal had started on September two, the progress had stalled after the initial phase with the next stage taking place towards month end.

Copious rains in August and the first half of September have helped dispel fears of a widespread drought, which seemed imminent after deficient rains in June and July.

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Drought: Haryana demands Rs 4,050 cr

With the state facing 70 per cent deficit rainfall, Haryana government on Friday demanded an assistance of Rs 4,050 crore from the Centre to bail out the state from the 'drought-like situation'.

The demand was made by Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda to Union Ministers Sharad Pawar and Jairam Ramesh during their review meeting in Chandigarh on the drought-like conditions in the state. Addressing mediapersons, after the meeting, Hooda said Ramesh had promised an additional budget of 30 per cent under the MGNREGA and Rs 230 crore for drinking water and watershed management.

"The deficiency of rainfall in Haryana was the severest in the country and the situation of deficit rainfall is worst this year as compared to the last 10 years," Hooda said, adding, the central ministers admitted that a drought-like situation prevailed in state. He, however, said that the situation had improved after rainfall in the past few days.

"The monsoon season is not over yet...I hope good rainfall will take place in the coming days...if it doesn't then the government will review the situation once again," he said.

"The government purchased power to the tune of Rs 610 crore (for agriculture sector) and in the coming days additional power worth Rs 1,500 crore will be further purchased by the state," he said, adding that Centre has assured "help on this as well." The state government also demanded a bonus of Rs 200 per quintal on the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of paddy and Rs 100 on other crops on account of the extra cost incurred by the farmers in the rain deficit season.

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Cauvery water row: Seers, actors join protest



The agitation organised by the Cauvery River Protection Committee gained momentum on Sunday with seers, actors, politicians and farmers, including women, taking part in it.

Sri Balagangadharanatha Swamiji of Adi Chunchanagiri Mutt, Sri Chandrashekara Swamiji and others participated in the protests in Mysore. Actor Prem and members of Kannada organisations took part in the stir at Silver Jubilee Park in Mandya. The agitation has taken a serious turn after Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at the Cauvery River Authority meeting directed the state to release 9,000 cusecs of water to Tamil Nadu till October 15.

Balagangadharanatha Swamiji told reporters here that the Cauvery is the property of the people of the state and no one has the right to give it to others. People should launch an apolitical agitation to protect the interests of farmers, he added.

Sri Chandrashekara Swamiji said that all people who use Cauvery water should take part in the stir and called upon the Tamil population to take the lead.

Prem said that the demand for water has posed a threat to farmers who are already suffering from drought.

Karnataka Rakshana Vedike president Narayan Gowda said that they will lay siege to the Raj Bhavan on Tuesday and urge Governor H R Bhardwaj to break his silence over the issue. A meeting will be held at National College Grounds on Thursday.

### **Stir in Ch'nagar**

Former MLA Vatal Nagraj and his party men burnt the effigy of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalithaa. They took out a march from Chamarajeshwari temple and burnt the effigy at Buvaneshwari Circle.

Nagraj criticised the Centre for taking a unilateral decision when the state is reeling under severe drought. He accused Jayalalitha of using the Cauvery issue for political gain, adding that there is enough water in Mettur reservoir.

He also demanded that Karnataka file a petition in the Supreme Court against the Cauvery River Authority direction. He said that Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar should dissolve the government if he toes the line and releases water to Tamil Nadu. Nagraj also called upon the political parties and Kannada organisations to support the Karnataka bandh on October 6.

# Business Standard

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INDIA-OIL-DEMAND-POLL: Soaring edible oil demand to push 2012/13 imports to record: Reuters poll

India's 2012/13 edible oil imports could rise 4.2 percent to a record high, with palm oil cornering the bulk of that, a Reuters poll showed, as the world's second most populous country fails to raise output quickly enough to meet demand from a growing middle class.

The world's biggest importer of edible oils could buy 10 million tonnes in the year to October 31, 2013, against an estimated 9.6 million tonnes in the current year, the poll of 10 industry experts attending the Globoil India Conference showed.

Higher Indian imports could provide crucial support to palm oil prices, which are flagging compared with rivals like soyoil, weighed down by a build-up in inventory in the top two producing countries -- Indonesia and Malaysia.

"Population and prosperity are the two main drivers of (Indian) demand," said Govindbhai G. Patel, managing partner of GG Patel & Nikhil Research Co.

Indians use vegetable oils to cook most of their famous curries from pav-bhaji to samosa but recycling is common, keeping per capita consumption below global averages.

Increased wealth from an economy targeted to grow at 6.5 percent this year should prompt more purchases of fresh oil while prosperity also boosts consumption of biscuits and sweets made with edible oils.

India's 1.2 billion population is expanding at around 1.6 percent per year - or more than the population of the Netherlands.

The scale of demand is forcing India to fulfil more than half of its requirements through imports.

Despite higher prices, local demand is expected to rise by 3.1 percent in 2012/13 to 17.1 million tonnes. Domestic supplies are likely to increase by 2.5 percent, Patel said.

A sharp drop in the value of the rupee in the past six months has made imports of edible oils expensive and that could prompt price-sensitive India to buy a greater amount of palm oil, which is cheaper by nearly a quarter than soyoil.

"The entire incremental growth in imports will be fulfilled by palm oil," said Dinesh Shahra, managing director of Ruchi Soya, the country's top soybean processor.

India could therefore buy 7.8 million tonnes of palm oil in 2012/13, up 12.2 percent from the year earlier, the poll showed.

Palm oil share in India's edible oil imports: <http://link.reuters.com/dup72t>

India's monthly edible oil imports: <http://link.reuters.com/jut52t>

#### PALM OIL EATING SOYOIL'S SHARE

Soyoil imports into India, which traditionally buys more than 1 million tonnes a year from the world market, are likely to fall in 2012/13 as it is asking a hefty premium of nearly \$300 per tonne over palm oil.

"Prices are not in favour of soyoil imports. It is costly," said Atul Chaturvedi, chief executive of Adani Wilmar, a leading India-based edible oil importer.

Local supplies of soyoil are also set to rise next year due to higher production, industry officials said.

Soyoil, along with sunflower and groundnut oil, are long-standing traditional local products preferred by the middle class, while palm oil is a cheaper option which the government subsidises for poorer Indians. Industrial buyers like biscuit and sweet makers also use palm oil.

India is likely to produce a bumper crop of rapeseed, which contains higher oil than soybean, due to ample rainfall in the top producing Rajasthan in August and September, said Davish Jain, chief of the Indore-based Prestige Group, a soybean processor.

India's imports of sunflower oil are expected to jump nearly 50 percent in 2011/12 to 1.2 million tonnes and are likely to remain steady next year, Shahra said.

"Sunflower and soyoil prices are trading at almost the same level. When you offer housewives soyoil and sunflower oil, they will choose sunflower oil," he said.

India imports palm oil mainly from Indonesia and Malaysia and soyoil from Brazil and Argentina.

Palm oil faces bearish Q4 on high stocks, slow demand

Palm oil prices will fall further this year as slowing economic growth reins in demand for biofuel production, leading to higher stocks at top producers Indonesia and Malaysia, an industry meeting concluded on Sunday.

Any support from India, the world's largest importer of cooking oils, will be curbed in the last quarter as its own farmers start marketing product from the summer harvest.

"Stockpile is building in Indonesia and Malaysia, but there are few buyers right now. Offtake from the biofuel industry is very thin despite offering a big discount over soyoil," said Dinesh Shahra, managing director of Ruchi Soya, India's top soymeal exporter.

Palm oil stocks in Malaysia could rise to 3 million tonnes at the start of next year from early September levels around 2.1 million tonnes, according to Dorab Mistry, head of edible oil trading with Indian conglomerate Godrej Industries and a leading expert on the industry.

Indonesia and Malaysia's combined palm oil stocks could total 4.5 million tonnes by the end of 2012, Shahra added.

With stocks high and production climbing, the pressure will stay on prices, delegates said, with Malaysian crude palm oil (CPO) potentially falling as low as 2,500 ringgit per tonne in the last quarter from around 2,760 ringgit now.

Mistry said there was a 50 percent chance CPO futures prices could even drop to 2,300 ringgit in the last quarter as Indonesia makes tax changes to grab market share from Malaysia, which has been pushing tax-free shipments to India.

Falls in crude oil prices could exacerbate the situation as that makes biofuels less attractive as an alternative.

"I am bearish on crude oil prices. They should come down. Demand is slowing due to a slowdown in the global economy," James Fry, chairman of commodities consultancy LMC International, said.

CPO prices could even fall to 2,285 ringgits in the fourth quarter, he said, if Brent crude drops as low as \$80 per barrel from current levels around \$111.

#### SOYOIL PREMIUMS TO CURB DEMAND?

Meanwhile, as the major producers continue their drive to reduce stocks, the hefty discount of palm oil to soyoil is likely to continue, delegates said.

"The palm oil discount is big and will probably stay big to avoid burdensome stock building," said Stefan Gierga, managing director at Bunge Handels GmbH trading company.

That differential could cut India's soyoil imports in the marketing year from November 1, 2012 from about 1 million tonnes in the current year, according to Atur Chaturvedi, chief executive of Adani Wilmar, a leading India-based edible oil importer.

But even so, delegates felt India's total cooking oil imports may hit a record around 10 million tonnes in 2012/13 as its bulging population -- adding about 19 million people a year -- along with an increasingly wealthy middle class raise demand.



Soyoil prices themselves could start to wilt as soybean output in South America rebounds after a severe drought last year and the crushing season gets underway in the United States -- with China snapping up the output to make its own soyoil.

"China is aggressively buying new soybean crop of the United States. It is unlikely to raise edible oil imports significantly in the next three months as it will get oil from crushing of soybean," said a dealer with a global commodity trading firm.

Shahra cautioned that things could change if South America's crop was hit by adverse weather.

"I am expecting prices to correct based on stocks. But you don't know what is in the mind of the weather god. If the weather becomes unfavourable for the soybean crop in South America, like last year, then everything will change. Then prices will rise to record high level," he said.

And it is also possible that the deep discount could favour palm oil and push demand higher, said Thomas Mielke, editor of Hamburg-based Oil World.

"Palm oil is offered at discounts of more than \$250 (per tonne) under soybean oil. I think this is not sustainable. We are going to see world import demand to shift to the more effectively priced palm oil," he said in his presentation.

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Agricultural futures fall on hopes of good kharif production

**The Ministry of Agriculture has estimated India's total foodgrain production this kharif season would fall 10% to 117.19 mn tones**

The prices of agricultural commodities declined in futures trade, amid hopes a revival in the monsoon season would raise the prospects of a good kharif output.

Today, castor seed and chana contracts for near-month delivery hit the lower circuit to close at Rs 3,375 a quintal and Rs 4,377 a quintal, respectively, while Kapas for delivery in February plunged three per cent to end the week at Rs 860 per 20 kg. Commodities like Shankar kapas saw a steep fall

Ajay Kedia, managing director of broking firm Kedia Stocks and Commodities, attributed the fall in prices to the repercussion of global trends for India. Globally, the sentiment for agricultural output had suddenly turned positive, he said. Last month, prices were rising on anticipated demand in the festive season. While the festive demand sentiment in the retail market would continue, the sentiment in the futures market had receded, he added.

In a recent report, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) stated about 75 per cent of the rainfall deficit had been bridged, owing to good rains since the first week of August. The monsoon season is expected to withdraw in a week. Though monsoon rains were delayed in major kharif crop growing areas this year, sowing intensified later. This led to hopes of a higher output this year, compared to last year.

Indranil Sen Gupta, India economist at DSP Merrill Lynch (India), said the recent revival in the monsoon had pulled the seasonal rainfall deficit down to nine per cent of normal from 22 per cent in mid-July. However, it is too late for a full recovery in the kharif crops' output.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Agriculture has estimated India's total foodgrain production this kharif season would fall 10 per cent to 117.19 million tonnes (mt). The ministry had earlier forecast a higher decline in the kharif foodgrain output. In the kharif season last year, foodgrain production stood at 129.94 mt.

Swing of kharif crops, which began in June, is almost over, and harvesting these crops would begin in early October.

According to the first advance estimate for rice output this year, production would fall to 85.56 mt from a record 91.53 mt last year. The output of pulses is projected to fall from 6.16 mt to about 5 mt, while coarse cereals' output is estimated to fall from 32.26 mt to about 26 mt. Cotton production is seen at about 32 million bales (of 170 kg each), compared with 35.2 million bales last year, while sugarcane output is estimated to remain flat.

In central India, farmers are keen to increase the acreage for tur and urad, owing to the revival in rains. The Ministry of Agriculture has, therefore, reported an increase in the acreage of kharif crops.

Soybean output is expected to be at record high'

Soybean production this kharif season is expected to be at a record high of 10.5-11.5 million tonnes (mt), and arrivals are expected to reach its peak in mid-October, say industry officials.

“We feel that this year the soybean crop will be very good and expect production between 11.5 and 12 mt due to good rains received towards the end of the season,” said Atul Chaturvedi, chief executive officer of Adani Wilmar Ltd, a major exporter of edible oil. Echoing the view, Ruchi Group of Industries said it was expecting the country to produce about 10.5 to 11 mt of soyabean.

We are expecting this rise in exports mainly due to higher global demand as the crops in South America was affected following drought,” said Dinesh Sahara, managing director of Ruchi Group of Industries.

The late rainfall did not have any major impact either on the crop yield or the size and this will boost the overall soyabean meal exports to about 5 mt this crop year (October-September) from 4.5 mt last year.

Rape seed or mustard crop is also likely to be 10-15 per cent higher than last year at about 6.5 mt in this season mainly due to good rainfall and better soil condition in the producing areas Last year, the overall mustard output stood at 5.34 mt.

“Decline in production of groundnut and cotton seed import is likely to be at 9.8 mt this oil year (November-October), which is yet to end,” Sahara added. Chaturvedi also expects oil imports to be around 9.7 mt this year. Ruchi Group of Industries is also expecting a rise a 15 per cent growth in revenue on the back of higher crushing, better margins and growth in soy meal exports.

“We are expecting 10-15 per cent growth in sales this fiscal year mainly on account of higher crushing, better margins through product innovations and increase in branded sales. Rise in soya meal exports will also help in boosting our revenue,” Sahara said.

In FY 12, the company’s revenue stood at Rs 26,000 crore.

# Business Standard

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Grain, oilseeds market rally could lead to rise in meat prices



The currently rally in grain and oilseed prices could affect supply chains, especially the animal protein industry, resulting in rising meat prices.

Right now, food inflation is weather-driven in exporting nations, mainly resulting from the US facing its worst drought since 1936 and water shortages in Russia and South America, according to Rabobank.

**Record highs**

With prices of agricultural commodities skyrocketing, it could result in “agflation” globally. As a result, food prices are likely to hit record highs next year.

The surge could well continue into the third quarter of next year. This would see feed-intensive crops coming under pressure resulting in repercussions for the animal protein and dairy industries, Rabobank said in a report.

Luke Chandler, Global Head of Agri Commodity Markets Research at Rabobank, said that this would lead to consumers, especially those in the lower strata, to switch over from animal protein to grains such as rice and wheat.

“These commodities are currently 30 per cent cheaper than their 2008 peaks. Nonetheless, price rises are likely to stall the long-term trend towards higher protein diets in Asia, West Asia and North Africa. In developed economies – especially the US and Europe – where meat and corn price elasticity is low, the knock-on effect of high grain prices will be felt for some time to come,” he said.

Grain shortage will be sustained since herds take a longer time to rebuild and also since the animal protein and dairy industries have long production cycles. This will result in pressure on food prices.

Since food makes up only a smaller portion of spending in emerging countries, the current period of “agflation” would not lead to unrest as was seen in 2008, Chandler said.

### **Better supply**

The Food Price Index of the Food and Agricultural Organisation will increase by 15 per cent by the end of June next year. Prices will have to remain high to ensure demand is rationed and encourage better supply.

Rabobank says it expects prices of grains and oilseeds to rule higher for the next 12 months.

The situation could worsen on intervention by governments despite favourable macro-economic conditions, such as low growth, lower oils prices and a weak dollar, reducing the impact of higher food prices. Stockpiling and export bans are a distinct possibility during 2012/13 as governments seek to protect domestic consumers from increasing food prices.

Increased government intervention will encourage further increase in commodity and food prices in the global market, Rabobank said, adding that efforts to increase stockpiles will prove counterproductive at the global level.

This is because countries that are unable to pay higher prices could see greater food inflation soaring.

On top of these, global food stocks have not been replenished since 2008. This has left the market without buffer stocks to meet any adverse condition. Therefore, efforts by governments to rebuild stocks are likely to add to food prices and take supplies off the market at a time when they are most needed, the bank said.

24.09.2012 Sep

Monsoon continues to be active in eastern parts



Monsoon continued to be active over northeast India and parts of peninsula even as it readied to exit west and northwest India.

A north-south trough of lower pressure linking eastern hills of the Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal was responsible for the active monsoon conditions in that region.

### **Moisture flow**

Moisture piped in along the trough from the Bay circulates in the region. The humid air rises against the Himalayas and cools suddenly to trigger rain/thundershowers.

The monsoon was 'active' over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Jharkhand and Marathwada during the past 24 hours ending Sunday morning, an India Meteorological Department (IMD) update said.

A weather warning valid for the next two days said that heavy to very heavy rainfall may lash Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Elsewhere, flows feeding into latest Pacific typhoon named Jelawat have dropped rain of varying amounts over peninsular India during the past couple of days.

### **PACIFIC TYPHOON**

It had also caused the formation of a weather-friendly circulation off the Maharashtra-Karnataka coasts.

A few places in Vidarbha, madhya Maharashtra, east Gujarat, Saurashtra, east Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Konkan, Goa, interior Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Rayalaseema reported overnight showers.

Forecasts valid until Wednesday said that thundershowers would occur over West Bengal, Sikkim, Odisha, south Chhattisgarh, Vidarbha, Marathwada and north Andhra Pradesh.

An extended outlook valid until September 30, last day of this year's monsoon season, said rain or thundershowers may occur over the Northeastern States and south peninsular India.

### **DRY AIR**

Meanwhile, the weather would be mainly dry over northwest and central and adjoining east India during this period.

Already, a dry-air setting anti-cyclonic circulation sits over south Rajasthan and adjoining Gujarat.

Satellite imagery and observations clearly indicated reduction in the moisture over parts of northwest India, the IMD update said.

Conditions have thus become favourable for the withdrawal of monsoon from Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Saurashtra and Kutch.

24.09.2012 Sep

UAS-Dharwad technologies on display at Krishi mela

The following production and protection technologies developed by the UAS-Dharwad are on display at Krishi Mela:

- Technology modifications to fertiliser doses for Bt Cotton under assured/irrigated conditions.
- Compartment bunding in rabi sorghum.
- Deena Bhandu (dome shaped) biogas plant.
- Yield maximisation in black gram through integrated nutrient management
- Efficient nitrogen scheduling in irrigated maize.
- Management of fruit borer and aphids in pomegranate.
- Management of citrus leafminer with biodigester solution.
- Mechanical vermi compost sieving machine.
- Sapota fruit processing and value-addition.
- Growing condition and planting geometry for cultivation of broccoli, celery, lettuce, China cabbage, cabbage and zucchini (small squash) and leek (salad onion).
- Nutrition for shade house cultivation of alpinia carnation varieties for green house cultivation

24.09.2012 Sep

BARC's new genetic variability in crops benefits farmers

The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre's (BARC) nuclear technique for agriculture, particularly in creating new genetic variability in crop plants has been a success.



Radiation and chemical-induced mutation and subsequent use in recombination breeding at BARC has, till date, resulted in the release of 39 improved crop varieties in oilseeds and pulses.

The key beneficiary of BARC's initiatives is the University of Agriculture Sciences (UAS) Dharwad. Through a collaborative effort with BARC, UAS-Dharwad has been able to solve a few long-standing problems such as seed multiplication of popular 'Trombay' groundnut varieties.

After the intervention, the Trombay groundnut has successfully entered the seed chain in many parts of Karnataka due to large-scale breeder seed production by UAS Dharwad.

"This variety can be of immense benefit to the farming community. I must compliment UAS Dharwad for taking up large-scale multiplication of our mutant varieties in order to offer quality seeds to farmers," Ratan Kumar Sinha, Director, BARC, Mumbai, recently said.

According to R.R. Hinchinal, Vice-Chancellor UAS Dharwad, "Currently, we have projects going on with BARC on multiplex for bio-fertiliser."

Similarly, BARC has also worked on pulses like blackgram, greengram and pigeon pea.

The mutant varieties have not only benefited the farming community, but are being used as genetic resource material in national/State breeding programmes.

"Several of our pulses varieties have early maturity, resistance to diseases and suitability for residual moisture situations in rice fallows. These varieties are very popular in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and Tamil Nadu," said Sinha.

While enhancing the agricultural production system itself is a challenge, the problems are compounded by post-harvest losses due to microbial spoilage, insect infestation etc, which add up to 10-30 per cent, depending on the commodity.

"We not only need to increase our agricultural productivity, but also focus our attention on post-harvest management of our agricultural produce. Post-harvest technology, for conservation and value addition, is going to play an increasingly important role in the new world order. Radiation processing is one of the upcoming methods to achieve this," said Sinha.

Radiation processing of various foods and food-products involves controlled application of the energy of radiation, such as gamma rays, X-rays and accelerated electrons. This kills pathogens and storage pests.

This processing is used for sprout inhibition in bulbs and tubers, delayed ripening of fruits, shelf-life extension of sea-foods, meat and meat products, hygienisation of spices and for quarantine purpose, said Sinha.

He further added that “Radiation processing can also be used for non-food products like cut flowers, health foods, herbal and ayurvedic preparations, cattle feed, pet foods and packaging material. It is an eco-friendly alternative to fumigants, which are being banned and phased out due to their deleterious effects on human health and environment.”

24.09.2012 Sep

Project launched to revive coconut cultivation in Kerala

The Coconut Development Board has entrusted a project with SCMS Biotech Research Institute to develop a low-fat cream from tender coconut.

T.K. Jose, chairman, Coconut Development Board, expressed the hope that the product will be a boon to coconut growers.

Jose was speaking at the three-day leadership training conducted at SCMS Business School for a group of representatives of Coconut Producers Societies in Alappuzha district.

### **Coconut revival**

The board’s dream project to revive coconut cultivation in Kerala and guaranteeing a bright future for the growers was also launched at the leadership camp.

The project envisaged by the board is to produce a variety of value-added products and export them under the auspices of the federation of CPS, he said.

A low-fat cream from the tender coconut, virgin coconut oil with medicinal properties, coconut milk powder, sugar from Neera that can be used even by diabetic patients, activated carbon

from coconut shell are some of the value-added products proposed by the board. These products will be much more profitable to the growers, he added.

### Quality seedlings

Seeking continued cooperation from SCMS in fulfilling his dream project, the chairman assured the growers that steps would be taken to make available sufficient number of quality seedlings to them in time.

The leadership training camp, he said, was conducted as an initial step to inculcate managerial and leadership skills among the growers with a view to preparing them for higher responsibilities. The agriculture sector would also require better managerial skills if it has to progress in the modern globalised world, he added.

### Value-additon

He said that the coconut growers in Sri Lanka, Thailand and Philippines are benefited from value-addition when the coconut oil prices are not very high.

It is a model that could be replicated to save the growers here. If the growers take the initiative to form a strong federation to revive coconut cultivation, the board will extend all support to them, he added.

24.09.2012 Sep

Minister urges planters to adopt mechanisation

Kerala Power Minister Aryadan Mohammed has called upon the plantation sector to adopt mechanisation in order to tide over labour shortage.

Addressing the 73rd annual general meeting of the Association of Planters of Kerala here on Saturday night, the Minister said the plantation sector was relatively free of agitations.

He said there should be focussed research to develop appropriate machinery for use in the sector. With power shortage being felt in the State, the Minister said, it would be ideal if planters initiated mini hydel projects to meet the power requirements. The government will try to give permission for such projects, he added.

### **Plea to abolish Agri-income tax**

The association has urged the State government to abolish agriculture income tax, which has already been done in neighbouring Tamil Nadu.

Addressing the meeting, G. Somanadah, chairman, APK, pointed out that the exemption of agriculture income tax, as promised in the UDF election manifesto, would be a great help to the Kerala plantation industry for its sustained development in the years to come.

The amount collected by way of agriculture income tax is negligible and plantations have been contributing substantially to the State exchequer by way of various taxes and levies, he said.

He said that Tamil Nadu government has taken the lead in abolishing the agriculture income tax and other plantation States such as Assam and West Bengal have reduced the rate from 45 per cent to 30 per cent as a relief measure to the plantation industry, which is passing through a lean patch.

Excessive levies will take away the competitive edge vis-a-vis other States that too at a time when all are trying to be cost-competitive at all levels, he added.

### **Other demands**

The association also requested that the plantation industry be exempted from the purview of the recommendations of the Western Ghats Ecology Experts Panel, which is not viable to plantations.

APK is also planning to file a petition before the State Electricity Regulatory Commission to shift the plantations from the HT-1 industrial category to HT-III agricultural category for power tariff. It is a long-pending issue and the government has not taken a decision on the matter, Somanadah said.

The association also expressed concern over the move by the Kochi Port to develop a coal handling facility to store imported coal dust near the wharf. This is going to have dust pollution, which will affect tea packing industry, he said.

“We request the government to take necessary step for continuing the present system of tea packing,” he said.

24.09.2012 Sep

### Karnataka Krishi Mission to spend Rs 150 crore to boost seed production

Karnataka Krishi Mission is planning to earmark Rs 150 crore to improve the quality and quantity of seed production in the State. “There is an urgent need to improve the seed production in the State. “The State has consistently failed to meet its own needs.

“Hence, a sizeable budget is being planned,” said S.A. Patil, Chairman of the mission, speaking at UAS-Dharwad’s Beeja Mela. “Grant of Rs 150 crore is being provided under the mission’s schemes this year for seed production.

“Farmers’ groups and universities should be roped in to achieve self reliance in seed production,” he added. Also, the State’s track record in seed production has been poor as it has not been able to produce and supply seeds for several crops and vegetables. Patil told farmers that seed production is a profitable business, and they should carry out farming as a business.

“Therefore, farmer education is important. “If they are uneducated it is the duty of the agricultural scientists to educate them and make agriculture a profitable industry.” As for marketing, there are many opportunities at our door step. Universities should explore export of seeds to the African countries, he said.

“There are opportunities to export seeds to the African countries where agricultural activities are picking up but there is no seed production,” said Patil. At the Beeja Mela, Dr David Barnard of Manitoba University, Canada, released a booklet on ‘Onion Seed Production’.

Later speaking to farmers, Dr Barnard said food security is a global problem. Agricultural universities should serve the farmers in overcoming the food security problem, he said.

24.09.2012 Sep

BhooChetana' for enhancement of farm productivity, income

The partnership between agriculture universities' and the International Crops Research Institute for Semi Arid Tropics (Icrisat) in watershed management has boosted the crop yield in rain-fed areas in Karnataka.

Icrisat's watershed and soil enrichment initiative, called 'BhooChetana' in the State, has improved farm productivity and incomes by 20-25 per cent.

"Farmers, who implemented this, have improved their farm management practices and are experiencing the benefits of inter cropping on their fields," said Suhas P. Wani, Principal Scientist-watershed, Icrisat.

Another reason for higher productivity is through the propagation of efficient water usage and disbursement of improved seeds, micro nutrients, seed treatment with bio pesticide and fungicides, he added.

The UAS-Dharwad and Icrisat chose Niralakatte village in Dharwad district to roll out watershed development initiatives about two years ago. Now, it has become an example for training farmers in the neighbouring taluks and districts.

"After the successful implementation at this village, both Icrisat and UAS-Dharwad have been showcasing it as a successful model to roll out in the state," said R.R. Hanchinal, Vice-Chancellor, UAS Dharwad. After trial runs in Haveri and Dharwad districts two years ago, the State Government now plans to roll out in the entire State.

The State Government plans to roll out 'BhooChetana' to 50 lakh hectares in rain-fed districts in 2012-13.

Currently, the scheme covers 28 lakh hectares and has helped 22 lakh farmers. In the first year (2009-10) of BhooChetana initiative, about two lakh hectares were covered in six districts.

Icrisat is planning a consortium approach for its roll out, where in it has partnered with the department of agriculture being the nodal department; others include: Watershed development department, UAS Bangalore, Dharwad and Raichur, community-based organisations.

According to Hanchinal, "Universities like us have been roped in to offer services to farmers and help empower them as farm facilitators at village, taluk and district levels."

24.09.2012 Sep

Prices slide amid lower offerings at Kolkata tea sale

Both Orthodox and CTC leaf recorded lower prices at Sale Number 38 last week at Kolkata auction *vis-à-vis* Sale Number 37 in the previous week, according to J Thomas & Company Pvt Ltd, the tea auctioneers. The average Orthodox price at Rs 210.43/kg was lower than Rs 224.91/kg at Sale Number 37. Similarly, the average CTC price was lower at Rs 144.39 (Rs 149.27) per kg.

Associated Brokers' list attracted highest average Orthodox price of Rs 229.28, followed by J Thomas (Rs 224.38), Parcon (Rs 213.58), Contemporary (Rs 193.27), Paramount (Rs 125.52) and Assam Tea Brokers (Rs 124.98).

In CTC, J Thomas list attracted the highest average price of Rs 156.91, followed by Assam Tea Brokers (Rs 156.79), Contemporary (Rs 144.89), Parcon (Rs 137.22), Associated Brokers (Rs 122.96), Paramount (Rs 121.10) and S Chatterjee (Rs 109.51).

Meanwhile, total offerings (packages) last week at Sale Number 38 in three North Indian auction centres at Kolkata, Guwahati and Siliguri were lower at 4,32,942 (4,40,723). The offerings at Kolkata comprised CTC/Dust 1,54,509 (1,56,057), Orthodox 31,110 (22,356) and Darjeeling 9,809 (5,096). The offerings at two other centres, mainly CTC/Dust, were: Guwahati 1,25,141 (1,50,518) and Siliguri 1,12,373 (1,06,696).

Liquoring Assam CTCs sold at irregularly lower rates. Plainer sorts met with less demand and eased in value. Dooars was barely steady and easier with plainer sorts seeing some withdrawals. Tata Global was the mainstay and there was selective support from Hindustan Unilever. Western India dealers operated on the liquoring sorts. North India and local sections

were selective. Exporters operated on the larger broken and fannings. Orthodox offerings met with steady demand at easier rates.