

## **WTO imbroglio: India not for 1986-87 as base year**

B. MURALIDHAR REDDY

India has offered fixing of the base year for food subsidies on the basis of average of last three years, as opposed to 1986-87 as proposed by WTO, as a way forward for an agreement at the WTO and is very hopeful of convincing other members on the subject, Union Minister of State for Industry & Commerce Nirmala Sitharaman told the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday. Replying to clarifications sought by members on her statement on the Indian stand at the recent WTO meeting, Ms. Sitharaman maintained that India did a 'course correction' on the position taken at the Bali ministerial conference. "No economist worth his salt would agree to 1986-87 as a base year in 2014-15," she commented. Explaining the changed stance, the Minister said India insisted on a 'single undertaking principle' to ensure simultaneous implementation of nine plus one issues which the Ministers had agreed at Bali.

### **"Not isolated"**

Asserting that India is not isolated or pained at the criticism for the non-progress at the recent meeting, the Minister said: "We would have felt even more pained that we sat back and allowed this whole thing to go away, and the Western developed countries take or snatch away trade facilitation, and we are sitting with a Damocles sword over our heads thinking as to when it is going to come down heavily on us." The Minister said several less developed countries (LDCs) as well as others were appreciative of the stand taken by India as they themselves could not publicly articulate their concerns. Quoting the South African Trade Minister as having told her on the sidelines of the G-20, she said, "I am taking up the cause of the LDCs, but I know for sure that the LDCs themselves are not able to speak out of it, for whatever compulsions".

### **"Wait till Sept."**

Ms. Sitharaman said that India and other LDCs were willing to wait till September 2014, for every one to convince each other. "We are asking is trade facilitation the only thing, at the end of the day, about Bali, or, is it trade facilitation and also development? Because, for development we want inclusive growth, for which my poor [people] have to be fed, for which India should stand up, ensuring that the poorest of the poor farmers get the Minimum Support Price and the poor get fed through the PDS," the Minister told the House.

## **'Make timely announcement about release of water'**

The Agriculture Wing (Kisan Morcha) of Bharathiya Janata Party has urged the district administration to make timely announcement about the date of water release from the Bhavani Sagar Dam into the Lower Bhavani Project Canal for starting cultivation in the second zone. Though it is expected that water would be released on August 15, the absence of any announcement by the district administration has caused

concern among farmers. This is because a preparatory duration is required, K. Kalaiselvan, District president of the Agriculture Wing, said in a petition he submitted to the District Collector V.K. Shanmugam. Adequate stocks of IR 20, Bhavani, Ponni, Ko 43, and Aduthurai 38 varieties of paddy seeds, and other agricultural inputs must be maintained in the agricultural centres. The practice of sale of first and second quality seeds with price variation must be discontinued, and paddy seeds must be sold for Rs. 15 per kilogram, he said.

### **Maintenance work**

Maintenance works along the LBP canal and its distribution canals were taking place on a tardy pace, Mr. Kalaiselvan complained, and called for rectification of the Perumballam check dam and the canal till Nanjai Oothukulli for reviving agriculture in 2,500 acres spread over 46 Pudur, Lakkapuram, Nanjai Oothukulli, Khajapettai, and Muthukoundanpalayam areas. At a time when new rainwater harvesting structures were being created for recharge of ground water, wasting of an existing structure was not acceptable, he said. Likewise, at least 10 check dams must be constructed for preventing wastage of water originating at Kuranganpallam and passing through Pathu Panchayat before emptying into the Cauvery. Encroachments along the water path must be removed and there should be no more delay in desilting the canal, Mr. Kalaiselvan said. Drawing the attention of the district administration to the pathetic and unhygienic conditions in which vegetable sellers in Erode Market transact their business, the Agriculture Wing called for an exclusive commercial complex for vegetable sellers.

### **Officials inspect agriculture operations**

The Director of Agriculture, M. Rajendran, undertook an inspection of the agricultural activities initiated by the District Agriculture department here on August 2. He was accompanied by a team of officials including Joint Director of Agriculture Jeyasingh Gnanadurai and other Assistant and Deputy Directors of agriculture from the district. A green manure seed farm in Therkkuthuru village, Melur was inspected.

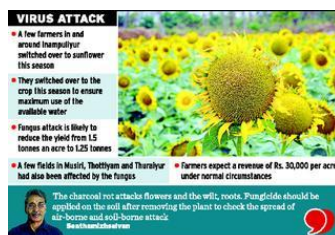
### **Use green manure**

Mr. Rajendran interacted with the ryots and stressed on the need for increasing the use of green manure and minimising the use of chemical fertilizers. In the Alanganallur block, an inspection was carried out in a farm in Alagapuri village where solar pumpsets had been installed. Percolation ponds in the Kuttimaykipatti village and farm ponds in Alagapuri which were maintained by the District Watershed Agency were also inspected, a press release issued said.

## **Fungus attack dims prospects of sunflower crop yield**

M. BALAGANESSIN

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Sunflower grown in parts of the district has been affected by fungus attack and an immediate action by farmers has resulted in prevention to other plants, particularly in and around Inampuliyur near Tiruchi. A few farmers in and around Inampuliyur have switched over to sunflower this season, taking into consideration the poor availability of irrigation waters, with the Kattalai Mettu channel in their village wearing a bone-dry look. Farmers had raised the crop this season to ensure maximum utilisation of the available and limited water. “Sunflower needs irrigation facility only once in 10 days and the duration of the crop is 90 days,” says A. Nagarajan, one of the farmers who had raised the crop on two acres of land in the village. Although the crop registered normal growth free from any pest attack, it was attacked by fungus at its roots last week, affecting the normal yield. Farmers anticipated that the normal yield of 1.5 tonnes an acre might fall to 1.25 tonnes. “The crop is due for harvest within a fortnight’s time but the fungus has caused extensive damage to the roots of the plant, resulting in the withering away of the flower,” say the farmer. R. Senthamizhselvan, a consultant in agriculture, said the affected plants should be removed and destroyed off the fields. Pointing out that the air-borne and root-borne fungus would spread to other plants, he suggested that fungicide should be applied around the soil where the weak plants had spread roots. A few fields in Musiri, Thottiyam and Thuraiyur had also been affected by the fungus.

### **Cropping pattern**

They said that although it had been attacked by fungus, timely prevention of its spread had ensured a good harvest. They anticipated a revenue of Rs. 30,000 an acre within 90 days. Vellakoivil was the main market area for sunflower, they added.

### **Agri expo in Bangalore from August 22**

Media Today Group will organise Agri Tech India 2014 in Bangalore from August 22 to 24. The expo, with focus on agriculture and food sectors, will have six concurrent events. Apart from domestic participants, it will have companies from eight other countries exhibiting their products. An agri business congress will be held on August 23, according to a press release.

## **‘Cautious approach needed on GM crops’**

MEENA MENON

Union Minister of State for Environment Prakash Javadekar said on Wednesday that cautious approach needed to be taken in the context of genetically modified (GM) crops and India cannot say ‘no’ to science. Speaking at the launch of the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) here, Mr. Javadekar said: “We have not said ‘no’ to science. Nobody can say no to science. Yes, we have to take proper caution, we have to take proper action. But you cannot deny it. We are not living in Galileo’s times. Galileo was telling the truth and he was punished. That was the worst day for the world.” The event was organised by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), in co-operation with the IPCC and the Climate Development Knowledge Network (CDKN), among others. Mr. Javadekar said whichever country did not believe in science was doomed to fail and would be left behind. “The country that worships science cannot be left behind. India has chosen the path of science,” he said, without specifying clearly if the field trials of GM crops would be permitted.

## **Centre draws flak**

Meanwhile, the Coalition for a GM-Free India condemned the government’s continued cold shoulder to scientific evidence and public concerns against open releases of GM crops, including those in the name of field trials. Releasing its analysis of the 47 field trials of GM crops that have been approved by the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC), the Coalition pointed to the unscientific and non-transparent way in which trials were being cleared. Besides, it said 72 per cent of those approved were from the private sector with 62 per cent from multinational seed corporations.

## **Nationalised banks to extend fresh loans to distressed farmers**

NAGESH PRABHU

Chief Secretary Kaushik Mukherjee and M. Anjaneya Prasad, Executive Director, Syndicate Bank, at the bankers’ meet in Bangalore on Wednesday.— Photo: Bhagya Prakash K. Nationalised banks have agreed to extend fresh loans to grape, pomegranate and arecanut growers, who have defaulted on repayment owing to destruction of crops due to natural calamities and diseases. Banks have been denying fresh crop and term loans to them. Speaking at the State-level Bankers’ Committee (SLBC) meeting here on Wednesday, Chief Secretary Kaushik Mukherjee said that “SLBC will become a talking shop”, if bankers continue to deny fresh loans to growers who had lost crops due to consecutive droughts and diseases. “Growers are not wilful defaulters,” he said. Additional Chief Secretary and Development Commissioner Latha Krishna Rau told bankers that “mere waiving of interest on loans will not help farmers” and banks have to reschedule existing loans and grant fresh loans without imposing conditions. Responding to government’s demands, Preetham Lal, SLBC convener and General Manager, Syndicate Bank, said banks would reschedule loans and have been charging 9 per cent interest on crop loans up to Rs. 3

lakh and 10.5 per cent on term loans. Outstanding loans of arecanut growers stood at Rs. 190 crore. Arecanut crops have been affected due to yellow leaf disease in coastal and Malnad districts. Outstanding loans of grape and pomegranate growers stood at Rs. 659 crore and plants had been destroyed by blight disease and natural calamities. Pomegranate and grape crops had been affected in 13 districts and 11 districts, respectively. Karnataka accounts for about 27 per cent of India's grape production at 3,30,000 tonnes, and is behind Maharashtra. Almost 90 per cent of the loans borrowed by grape owners from nationalised banks and cooperatives have turned non-performing assets. During drought years, farmers were forced to bring water from faraway places in tankers to save their orchards as the groundwater reserve had depleted alarmingly in northern districts, the Grape growers' Association said. Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister T.B. Jayachandra suggested that all banks have to charge uniform rate of interest on crop and terms loans in all districts. On loan waiver, he said the government would take up the issue with the Centre. The SLBC has no powers to decide on waiver of loans. Only the State and Union governments have powers to waive loans, Mr. Jayachandra said.

### **Crops face moisture stress due to lack of follow-up rain**

M. AHIRAJ



Agricultural labourers removing weeds from an irrigated tract of land in Bellary taluk, where sowing is going on after the release of water into canals. Though sowing has picked up, the crop in the rainfed areas, particularly in Sirguppa, Bellary and Hospet taluks, are facing moisture stress in the absence of follow-up rain. Sowing during the current kharif season has been completed in 72.1 per cent of the targeted area and is likely to improve further in the irrigated tracts of the Tungabhadra command area with water being let into the canals.

### **Rainfall**

The district received an average 96.2 mm rain in July, a little more than the normal of 85.5 mm. This enabled the 30-45 day standing crop in Hadagali, Hagari Bommanahalli, Kudligi, Sandur and Hospet sustained, while the crops in the dry belts of Bellary and Sirguppa districts faced moisture stress without rain. The sowing target for the current kharif season was around 3.67 lakh ha of which 2.09 lakh ha was rainfed and 1.47 lakh ha had irrigation cover. Hadagali has recorded the highest sowing percentage of 99.8 with sowing completed in 58,107 ha as against the target of 58,200 ha. This is followed by Kudligi with 94.8 per cent (77,239 ha out of 81,450 ha), Sandur 88.2 per cent (25,148 as against 28,500 ha), Hagari Bommanahalli 80.8 per cent (38,499 as against 47,650 ha), Hospet 53.5 per cent (18,038 as against 33,700), Sirguppa 47.5 per cent (18,981 as against 23,277) and Bellary 29.8 per cent (17,570 as against 59,000 ha).

## **Horticulture Department to promote kitchen gardens**

RAVIPRASAD KAMILA

The Department of Horticulture plans to promote kitchen gardening in four taluk headquarters in Dakshina Kannada under a comprehensive horticulture development scheme. Sources in the department told *The Hindu* that the department was awaiting the release of funds from the government for the purpose. They said kitchen gardening would be promoted in Puttur, Sullia, Bantwal and Belthangady towns. In all, 250 kitchen gardens would be promoted. Each of 250 persons interested to take up the gardening would be given a kit worth Rs. 250. It would include seeds, bio-mix (manure) and a shovel. They would also be invited for training. Sources said the department organised training in terrace gardening in the city in this March. In all, 1,500 persons were given away the kits later. They said 250 more persons would be given away the kits for terrace gardening in the city before March next. Promotion of terrace gardening would be restricted to the city though the department is examining if it could be extended to Ullal and Moodbidri as well. But the inclusion of the two towns have not been finalised. The purpose was to prompt people to grow vegetables for their own consumption along with some flowers.

## **Damaged areca palms: growers await relief**

RAVIPRASAD KAMILA



This high yielding arecanut palm fell after rain accompanied by gusty winds lashed Markanja village in Sullia taluk on Tuesday night.— PHOTO: RAMESH DELAMPADY

Ramesh Delampady, an arecanut grower from Markanja village in Sullia taluk, lost three palms when rain accompanied by heavy winds lashed his plantation on Tuesday night. He can hardly hope to get adequate compensation. His counterparts in Kerala, who are facing a similar situation, are better placed. “They are 14-year-old palms. It takes 10 years for an arecanut palm to yield stably,” he said. Mr. Delampady would have harvested arecanut for the next 25 years at least. According to Manchi Srinivasa Achar, president, All India Areca Growers’ Association, Puttur 10 palms are lost per farmer. A palm could yield up to 2.5 kg of arecanut per annum. The matter of providing compensation to every palm lost came up at a meeting presided over by Bharatlal Meena, Principal Secretary, Agriculture here on May 7. After learning that there was no provision to pay compensation for each palm lost, Mr. Meena instructed horticulture department officials to write to the State government on the issue. A senior official of the Horticulture Department told *The Hindu* that his office wrote to the Director of Horticulture to this effect on May 12. But the government

refused. Sources said that Kerala government had been giving compensation to such farmers. A senior official at the Office of Principal Agricultural Officer, Kasaragod, told *The Hindu* over phone that the Kerala government gave Rs. 100 per palm. The official said it applied if an arecanut grower lost a palm due to wind, rain and shortage of water in summer. The compensation which was Rs. 45 per palm was hiked to Rs. 100 two years ago, the official said adding that the compensation was given under a Union government scheme. Kerala has issued a government order to this effect, he said. An areca palm in the plantation of Ramesh Delampady fell on a sprinkler system, completely damaging it. "Like me there are many who suffer similar collateral damage," he said. Palms have fallen on banana and cocoa plants, Mr. Delampady said. We are never compensated.

### **Agriculture produce to be scientifically priced**

Chairman of Karnataka Agricultural Prices Commission Prakash Kammaradi has said his panel will scientifically price agricultural produce, primarily taking into account the cost incurred on cultivation, market fluctuations, natural misfortunes like drought and floods, among other factors. He was speaking to media representatives at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur, on Tuesday. "The very purpose of constituting the Agricultural Prices Commission was to safeguard the interests of the farmers from these fluctuations. The commission will comprehend the cost of production incurred on cultivation along with natural factors and fix rational and scientific price for each agricultural produce," he said. He said that the commission would keep a watch on 12 produces including paddy, cotton, jowar, maize, red gram, groundnut, tomato, onion and potato that often face severe price drop every year. "The commission will undertake region-wise crop survey and collect information from farmers about the cost incurred on cultivation before fixing the price," he said. Hanumanagowda Belagurki, another member of the commission, expressed concern over people withdrawing from the agriculture sector. "Lack of awareness among farmers about the latest developments in agriculture sector, their hesitation to use the advanced techniques in farming, increased cost of cultivation and uncertain prices in the market are pushing farmers out of the sector. The commission will strive to infuse confidence among the farming community by fixing scientific prices for their crops," he said.

### **Agricultural contest with message of self-reliance**

ABDUL LATHEEF NAHA

After winning the hearts of many parents by boldly switching off the television sets during prime time, Ward No. 26 of Malappuram municipality is now geared up for a unique agricultural competition involving all households. Come the Malayalam month of Chingam, the 300-odd households of Warangode (ward no. 26) will take part in the competition by growing vegetables like ladies finger, chilli, and brinjal. Ward councillor K.P. Hyderali has roped in Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) to sponsor the event. Several agricultural experts and the Agricultural Research Station at Anakkayam have offered to lend technical support. "Our objective is not only to help the people understand the significance of promoting vegetables, but also to create

awareness about the benefits of organic farming,” said Mr. Hyderali. All houses in the ward have pipe compost. Mr. Hyderali and team will provide 10 grow-bags and enough seeds of brinjal, chilli, and ladies finger to each household. The results will be evaluated in three months, and the best farmer will be honoured at a mega function. V.T. Abdul Malik, assistant sales manager of IOC, has taken a keen interest in the scheme. According to him, the project will send home an important message of self-reliance, at least in vegetables. “We have devised the programme in such a way as to help all households. Many of them do not have any land. It will be as simple as using a little space on their terrace,” Mr. Hyderali said. Benoy Viswom, former Forest Minister, has evinced interest in the scheme. He has assured his participation in the function celebrating the event. “Mr. Viswom was, in fact, touched by our initiative against TV watching during the prime time,” Mr. Hyderali said. An exhibition showing the ill-effects of excessive TV watching is being planned along with the function. The women of 300-odd households in the ward made news a couple of months ago by deciding to switch off TV from 6.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. The initiative has had immediate results, with the children focussing more on their studies and parents getting more time to spend with their kids.

### **Move to insulate farmers from market volatility**

T. NANDAKUMAR

The State government has sought financial assistance from the Centre to create a price stabilisation mechanism to insulate farmers from market volatility and the impact of climate change and natural calamities on crop output. Agriculture Minister K.P. Mohanan met Union Minister Radha Mohan Singh in New Delhi on Tuesday and handed over a proposal for a Price Stabilisation and Farmer Relief Fund to be set up as a cost-sharing project between the State and Centre. The Rs.135-crore project seeks to protect the interests of farmers through market intervention or price support operations when crop prices fall below the cost of production. It also includes a Comprehensive Crop Insurance and Relief Fund scheme to compensate farmers for crop loss due to natural calamities and pest and disease attack. The proposed market intervention for crops like coconut, vegetables and fruits in times of price fall involves procurement through agencies like the Horticulture Products Development Corporation, Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council Kerala and Kerafed. Paddy will continue to be procured through the existing market intervention system of Supplyco. Under the price support mechanism, farmers will be compensated for the loss due to the fall in price of major commodities like pepper, cardamom, ginger, turmeric, clove, nutmeg, coffee, areca nut and rubber. A State-level committee with the Director of Agriculture as convener will be set up to recommend the compensation.



## **Vegetable farming could definitely do with some government backing**

S. HARPAL SINGH



A couple of progressive vegetable farmers in a broad beans field at Mannur in Adilabad district.– PHOTO: S. HARPAL SINGH

Despite excellent potential for large scale production, vegetable cultivation in Adilabad remains one of the most neglected areas. Progressive farmers producing vegetables in the district are confident of doing away with shortages if they receive government support for deploying relevant technology. Commercial vegetable farming in Adilabad, as an alternative to cotton, is restricted to the mandals of Ichoda, Gudihatnoor, Indervelli, Utnoor and Kagaznagar. This would make it easier for concentrating efforts in making use of technology. Every mandal now has around 500 farmers cultivating different kinds of vegetables. More would follow suit if they are given the right kind of help, say observers. “In Mannur, we can do wonders in vegetable production if we are able to get green houses in our fields,” says Githe Keshav, a pioneer in vegetable farming in Adilabad. He is also the Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency member from Gudihatnoor mandal. “Though Mannur is the ‘vegetable basket’ of the district, farmers here are not in a position to invest the required money on modern technology, including polyhouse cultivation,” he adds, making a case for the government to step in. The village, located on the busy NH-44, about four km from the mandal headquarters, has farmers cultivating a diverse variety of vegetables this season. There is tomato, cabbage, cauliflower, broad beans, bitter gourd, ridge gourd, lady’s finger, brinjal, coriander and more. These varieties will start arriving in the markets in a few week’s time, leading to a reduction in the high price of vegetables. “The sheer variety of vegetables cultivated in our village and its impact on the lot of farmers warrant governmental help in this sector,” observes Kendre Venkat Rao, another progressive farmer and chairman of the local primary agriculture cooperative society. “The government can begin supplying polyhouses on subsidy starting from Mannur,” he suggests.

### **Farm loans: CPI puts State Govt. on notice**

The State government should clear the air on the issue of loan waiver to farmers and give them fresh loans by August 15 or the CPI would lead a direct action movement from August 16, CPI State secretary K. Ramakrishna has said. The farmers were confused whether they would be getting a loan waiver as assured by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu or would have to repay them and get it reimbursed by the State government as suggested by Chairman and Managing Director Andhra Bank C.V.R. Rajendran.

## **‘Clear the air’**

There was an urgent need to clear the air on the issue and ensure that the farmers get fresh loans to start activities for kharif crop following recent rains and ample availability of water in the rivers, he said here on Wednesday. If the State government failed to take steps to enable the farmers to get loans by August 15, the CPI would lead a direct action and the State government would have to take responsibility for the consequences, he warned. Last year the tenant farmers did not get loans and so there was no question of getting a waiver. The State government should ensure that 25 lakh tenant farmers in the State get loans this year, the CPI State secretary demanded.

## **Leaders’ tour**

A team of CPI leaders would tour the North Andhra region for three days from September 9 starting from Polavaram up to Palasa to study the ground reality of the resources and issues in the backward region and prepare a report on steps to be taken for development of the region, he said.

## **Valedictory**

The valedictory of the centenary celebrations of Communist leader Chandra Rajeswara Rao would be held in Hyderabad on August 10 and 11. On the first day, an international seminar would be held and a public meeting on the second day. A host of leaders of Left parties from across the country would attend the programme, he said.

## **Farmers told to repay loans**

Andhra Bank appealed the farmers to repay their loans for becoming eligible for Kharif loans. Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday, Andhra Bank Deputy General Manager G.S.V. Krishna Rao appealed to farmers to repay the loans and promised that whatever exemptions declared by the government will be paid accordingly. He also appealed to DWCRAs to repay the loans in time to avail interest subsidy.

## **Management of nematode in mulberry**

Continuous cultivation of mulberry in the same field may favour the survival and multiplication of nematodes causing an infestation called nematodiasis. The infestation occurs throughout the year and is more prevalent in sandy soils under irrigated conditions causing crop loss up to 15 per cent. Severely affected mulberry plants are stunted in growth with marginal chlorosis and necrosis of leaves.

## **Symptoms**

Underground symptoms are the formation of knots/galls on the roots. Nematode infection hampers the uptake and translocation of water and minerals from the soil. The infestation spreads primarily through contaminated soil, farm implements and run-off irrigation. Infected saplings, cultivation of other susceptible crops along with

mulberry and growth of some susceptible weeds in and around the mulberry gardens act as secondary sources of infection. The nematode infestation can be reduced by deep digging /ploughing to a depth of 30-40 cm during summer. Always use nematode-free saplings for new plantation. Disinfect the farm implements either with 5 per cent formalin solution or dip in boiling water for 5-10 minutes before use. Plant marigold as intercrop in between mulberry rows. Apply neem oil cake at the rate of 2 mt/ha/yr in four split doses. Apply furadan (Carbofuran 3 G) at 40 kg/ha/yr in four split doses within 40-45 days. Fumigate the soil with Durofume (Ethylene dibromide + methyl bromide, 1:1) at 9 ml/m<sup>2</sup>.

### **Bionema**

Mix one kg of bionema with 24 kg neem oil cake and 200 kg FYM (sufficient for 1,000 plants) and store the mixture under the shade for about one week by adding 30-32 litres of water. Apply the mixture at 200 g/plant around the exposed roots (three times/year at an interval of four months). Bionema has no residual toxicity on silkworms. (Dr. N. B. Chowdary, Scientist, Research Extension Central Silk Board, Giddalur -523 357, Prakasam District, A.P. email: balaji\_narishetty@yahoo.com, Mobile: 09449994014 & Dr. V. Sivaprasad, Director, Central Sericultural Research and Training Institute, Mysore- 570 008, Karnataka).

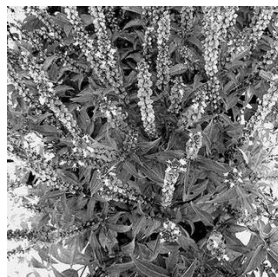
### **Enhancing biofuel yields from biomass**



Ramesh Sharma

A versatile, relatively non-toxic, and efficient way to convert raw agricultural and forestry residues and other plant matter — known as lignocellulosic biomass, into biofuels — has been developed.

### **Cutting water footprint of cultivated herbs**



New research is aiming to reduce the use of irrigation water during crop production, while improving the flavor and quality of the herbs and increasing their shelf life in the UK.

### **Promote cultivation of small millets**

Cultivation of small millets and promotion of the same in regular diets will help address nutritional deficit, said K. Ramasamy, Vice Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, at the inauguration of the National Consultation meeting on 'Promotion of Small Millets', held here on Tuesday. The University and DHAN Foundation conducted the meeting under the aegis of the 'Revalorising Small Millets in Rain-fed Regions of South Asia' project. At a time when problems of child malnutrition, diabetes and other lifestyle diseases were on the rise among the people, use of small millets could better the health as they were rich in minerals, vitamins, fibre content and had anti oxidant properties. M. Karthikeyan, Principal Investigator of the project, spoke about the challenges faced by the project team. The team had worked on improving varieties of small millets, addressing issues in production and post-harvest management, developing small millet-based food products and promoting consumption of small millets among others.

### **Consumption**

M.P. Vasimalai, executive director, DHAN Foundation, said that bringing small millets to the mainstream so as to increase cultivation and consumption was a key challenge. Kirit Patel, professor, Canadian Mennonite University, Canada, sought an increase in production of finger and kodo millets.

### **Organic products within reach of common man, thanks to PGS**

ANNIE PHILIP



Products with PGS Organic Council certification in Puducherry.— Photo: Special Arrangement Children in Puducherry are taking a fancy to a dates-based toffee over traditional chocolates to celebrate their birthdays. The toffee is among the many organic products available at the local 'uzhavar sandhai' (farmers' shandy). While 'organic' products are nothing new to Puducherry, thanks to the influence of the Ashram and Auroville, this is the first time the toffee and a range of other products such as millets, vegetables, fruits and rice grains have been certified here. Unlike Tamil Nadu which has a government certification department for organic products, organic farmers in Puducherry had to depend on third party certification or sell without certification so far. This has changed with the introduction of the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) in Puducherry. PGS is a process in which a group of five or

more small producers assess, inspect and verify the production practices of each other and collectively declare their produce organic. PGS involves the stakeholders on a direct level and holds them accountable. This means that even if one of the farmers violates the procedures set down by the PGS Organic Council India, the certification of the entire group is cancelled. The PGS was launched in the country in 2011 through the National Centre of Organic Farming. The certification and use of logo is valid for a period of three years before it has to be renewed. In Puducherry, NABARD, in association with the Keystone Foundation, conducted training for organic farmers through the NGO, Ekoventure, which is now the facilitator for the PGS certification. So far, two groups, the Balaraman Iyarkai Velanmai Kuzhu and the Thiruvalluvar Iyarkai Velanmai Kuzhu, have received certification. "Normally, certification is a long process and an individual organic farmer would have to spend between Rs. 15,000 and Rs. 20,000 and group certification could cost around Rs. 3 lakh. Under PGS, it is free and the paperwork is minimal and in the local language," says S. Manimaran, coordinator at Ekoventure. "Certification cost is responsible for driving up the price of organic products and PGS would help bring it down," says R. Chandrapurani, facilitator, Ekoventure. The peer appraisal system helps keep checks, she adds. "There is a definite increase in demand for organic products with increased health awareness. There is a certain value attached to the term 'organic.' With the PGS, organic products can now reach the common man as product prices decrease," says Uma Gurusurthy, assistant general manager of NABARD, Puducherry. "Just as an ISI mark or AGMARK gives products a separate value, PGS will also bring about quality. PGS has also helped to bring traditional millets like kudiraivali and cumbu and products like gooseberry juice back on our dining table," she says.

### **Increase marketing outlets to make agriculture remunerative**

M. J. PRABU



Taking up agriculture as a full time profession in spite of all its uncertainties requires courage and a strong bent of mind, especially for young educated people like M. Nallamuthu, a young engineer turned farmer from Arasur village in Kancheepuram District. At a time when today's rural youth are moving away from farming citing lack of good income as the main reason, Mr. Nallamuthu seems to differ. "A constant income alone can serve as inspiration for people like us to take up or continue farming. If you work in a concern your annual increments, promotions and salary hike are decided by the company. "But for a farmer, his field and crops are everything. Farming can become profitable only if done scientifically and meticulously. Even when I was offered a salary of Rs.2.16 lakh per annum I decided to stay and work on my farm," he says.

## **Guidance**

The young farmer owes his success in this line to support from National Agro Foundation (NAF). The foundation trained him in use of latest technologies like drip irrigation, fertigation, lean farming with less use of agrochemicals etc. "More importantly, the foundation made me aware of the schemes and subsidies available in the agriculture department and helped me access the same," he says. Mr. Nallamuthu cultivates horticulture crops like chrysanthemum, chillies, bitter gourd and watermelon, in his 10 acres when his fellow farmers in the region are still cultivating traditional paddy round the year which consumes a lot of water.

## **Different crops**

He mixes his crops judiciously in order to get regular income, unlike others where farm income is seasonal. "His annual earnings from his acre is nearly Rs.7 lakh, which is better than the salary of an executive in any MNC, according to Mr. S.S. Rajsekar, Managing Trustee, NAF. "I harvest 15 tonnes of watermelon, 2.25 tonnes of paddy, 5 tonnes of bitter gourd, and about a tonne of flowers from an acre, on an average." All the products are sold at the local market and some at the farm gate itself.

## **Planning**

"I plan the cropping depending on the market demand and try to grow what the market requirement is. More marketing channels are the only way to make people enter and stay in this line. More than technology or inputs it is marketing which matters," says Mr. Nallamuthu. NAF constantly backs him up with lot of technical tips and low cost measures for solving the problems of pest and diseases.

## **Farmers' choice**

"Normally it is the farmer's choice whether he wants to adopt a natural method or conventional way to protect his crops. Whatever method he desires we guide him on that. "Our foundation has been guiding several hundred farmers in the region on maintaining soil health management and care for secondary and micro nutrition. We have been also trying to play a pro-active role in helping our farmers source the right marketing," says Mr. M.R. Ramasubramaniam, Executive Director. Nabard encouraged the young farmer to form a club in the region and the young farmer says "I am now looking forward to spreading my success experience to other farmers through the club in my village." A lot of changes have been happening in the agriculture scene in the last 20 years. We find through our grassroot interaction that mere theory, oration or advice will never work with today's rural youth. They need to see and get convinced by themselves. If the annual agriculture income is more than the salaried income, these youngsters will definitely take the plunge into agriculture.

## **Oldadage**

Unlike the old adage that agriculture profession is only for old people, today the interest among educated youth is increasing and their dedication towards farming is an encouraging sign that the agriculture scene is going through a renaissance, according to Mr. Rajsekar. For more information readers can contact Mr. M. Nallamuthu at 98434 25375 and Mr. M. R. Ramasubramanian, Executive Director on mobile: 9444864884, website: [www.nationalagro.org.in](http://www.nationalagro.org.in), email: [nationalagro@gmail.com](mailto:nationalagro@gmail.com)

### **'Make timely announcement about release of water'**

*From Bhavani Sagar Dam into Lower Bhavani Project canal*

The Agriculture Wing (Kisan Morcha) of Bharathiya Janata Party has urged the district administration to make timely announcement about the date of water release from the Bhavani Sagar Dam into the Lower Bhavani Project Canal for starting cultivation in the second zone. Though it is expected that water would be released on August 15, the absence of any announcement by the district administration has caused concern among farmers. This is because a preparatory duration is required, K. Kalaiselvan, District president of the Agriculture Wing, said in a petition he submitted to the District Collector V.K. Shanmugam. Adequate stocks of IR 20, Bhavani, Ponnai, Ko 43, and Aduthurai 38 varieties of paddy seeds, and other agricultural inputs must be maintained in the agricultural centres. The practice of sale of first and second quality seeds with price variation must be discontinued, and paddy seeds must be sold for Rs. 15 per kilogram, he said.

### **Maintenance work**

Maintenance works along the LBP canal and its distribution canals were taking place on a tardy pace, Mr. Kalaiselvan complained, and called for rectification of the Perumballam check dam and the canal till Nanjai Oothukulli for reviving agriculture in 2,500 acres spread over 46 Pudur, Lakkapuram, Nanjai Oothukulli, Khajapettai, and Muthukoundanpalayam areas. At a time when new rainwater harvesting structures were being created for recharge of ground water, wasting of an existing structure was not acceptable, he said. Likewise, at least 10 check dams must be constructed for preventing wastage of water originating at Kuranganpallam and passing through Pathu Panchayat before emptying into the Cauvery. Encroachments along the water path must be removed and there should be no more delay in desilting the canal, Mr. Kalaiselvan said. Drawing the attention of the district administration to the pathetic and unhygienic conditions in which vegetable sellers in Erode Market transact their business, the Agriculture Wing called for an exclusive commercial complex for vegetable sellers.

### **Water release from Amaravathi dam**

Chief Minister Jayalalitha ordered water release from the Amaravathi dam in Tirupur district from August 7. In a release here on Wednesday, Ms. Jayalalitha said this

would benefit 7,520 acres in Tirupur district. The water would be released through eight old irrigation canals for the Kuruvai crop.

### **The need to measure poverty**

C. RANGARAJAN



*Policymakers must continue to follow the twofold strategy of letting the economy grow fast and attacking poverty directly through poverty alleviation programmes*

In June 2012, the government of India appointed a committee to take a new look at the methodology for measuring poverty. The committee submitted its report towards the end of June 2014. The purpose of this article is to briefly explain the approach taken by this committee. Growth is not the sole objective of economic policy. It is necessary to ensure that the benefits of growth accrue to all sections of society. Eradication of poverty is thus an important objective. Human beings need a certain minimum consumption of food and non-food items to survive. However, the perception regarding what constitutes poverty varies over time and across countries. Nevertheless, there is a need for a measure of poverty. Only then will it be possible to evaluate how the economy is performing in terms of providing a certain minimum standard of living to all its citizens. The measurement of poverty, therefore, has important policy implications.

### **History of studies**

In India, we have had a long history of studies on the measurement of poverty. There are, in fact, many approaches to it. Some analysts focus on deprivations in terms of health, education, sanitation or housing, but there are many problems associated with this approach including difficulties in aggregating deprivations on several scores derived from different sources. Perhaps the best approach is to look at it in terms of a certain minimum consumption expenditure per person or preferably per household. Any household failing to meet this level of consumption expenditure can be treated as a poor household. This minimum level of consumption expenditure can be derived, in turn, in terms of minimum expenditure on food and non-food items. Minimum food consumption is related to fulfilling certain nutritional standards. However, minimum non-food consumption is more problematic. Based on the analysis presented in the report, the monthly per capita consumption expenditure of Rs.972 in rural areas and Rs.1,407 in urban areas is treated as the poverty line at the all-India level. This implies a monthly consumption expenditure of Rs.4,860 in rural areas or Rs.7,035 in urban areas for a family of five at 2011-2012 prices. This level of private expenditure has to



be seen in the context of public expenditure that is being incurred in areas like education, health and food security. The actual 'well-being' of the household will be higher than what is indicated by the poverty line. Based on the methodology outlined in the report, the poverty ratio at the all-India level for 2011-2012 is 29.5 per cent. Working backwards, this methodology gives the estimate for 2009-2010 at 38.2 per cent. This is in contrast to the 21.9 per cent as estimated by the Tendulkar Committee methodology for 2011-2012 and 29.8 per cent for 2009-2010.

### **Rural and urban poverty baskets**

Are there conceptual problems associated with the new poverty line? Our group has gone back to the idea of separate poverty line baskets for rural and urban areas. This stands to reason. This is also consistent with the way we have derived the poverty line. Basically, there are three components in the poverty line: the food component, the normative level of expenditure for essential non-food items such as education, clothing, conveyance and house rent, and behaviourally determined expenditure for other non-food items. The group has been criticised for going back to calorie norms. The new poverty line is not limited only to calorie intake but also extends to fats and proteins. It is true that there is no direct correlation between calorie and nutrition. There are many other factors which contribute to nutrition. But taken in conjunction with other factors mentioned in the report, relating minimum food consumption to calorie, fat and protein requirements appears to be a reasonable approach. Without such norms, the minimum level may turn out to be arbitrary. The Tendulkar Committee itself did not abandon calorie norms. It took the urban poverty basket as given. It also claimed that the poverty line it recommended ultimately satisfied the norms of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization. The introduction of norms for certain kinds of non-food expenditures by our group is an innovation. It is a simple recognition of the fact that these expenditures constituted a significant part of total consumption. In the absence of any other normative criteria, the median fractile class expenditures were treated as the norm. In fact, non-food consumption as a proportion of total consumption has been steadily rising. That is why the group decided to take a new look at the basket rather than updating the old basket for price changes.

### **The concept of poverty**

Poverty is easy to perceive but difficult to be precise about. There is a need to distinguish the rural poverty line from the urban poverty line and then a need to work out State-specific poverty lines. While viewing the problem over time, the appropriate price index also becomes an issue. All of these have to be done in a consistent way. That is why though conceptually simple, measuring poverty is not that easy. The frequently used World Bank measure of poverty has no strong methodological roots. Instead of going for an absolute poverty line, one can also think in terms of relative poverty and define the poverty line in terms of median or average consumption expenditure. The group has done that and reported the results in one of the chapters. The methodology adopted by the new group on poverty is based on sound principles. However, as the group has clearly indicated, this measure is not considered as an appropriate basis for determining entitlements under various programmes. Each

programme that focusses on a particular kind of deprivation may have to choose that criterion which is most appropriate. But to obtain a general picture of progress in the country, a suitable measure on poverty is useful. Poverty is not the same as hunger. Hunger is far worse. Nor does the poverty line mean a comfortable standard of living. It represents the absolute minimum. Obviously, policies should work towards not only reducing the number of people below that line but also ensuring that people in general enjoy a much higher standard of living. Numbers do indicate that the poverty ratio in India is coming down, even though it may remain at a high level. Policymakers must continue to follow the twofold strategy of letting the economy grow fast and attacking poverty directly through poverty alleviation programmes.

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Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

### Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

**Thursday, Aug 7**

Max Min

36° | 26°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 40

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:54

Sunset: 06:34

Barometer: 1002

### Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

**Friday, Aug 8**

Max Min

36° | 26°

### Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday  
**Aug 9**



33° | 25°

Cloudy

Sunday  
**Aug 10**



36° | 27°

Partly Cloudy

Monday  
**Aug 11**



36° | 26°

Partly Cloudy

Tuesday  
**Aug 12**



37° | 27°

Cloudy

Wednesday  
**Aug 13**



36° | 27°

Cloudy

### Airport Weather

Chennai

Chennai

Rain: 0

Humidity: 59

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:55

Sunset: 06:33

Barometer: 1006



THE  NEW  
**INDIAN EXPRESS**

**Restrictions to Continue On Potato Transportation outside WB**

To arrest escalating prices of potato in the state, West Bengal government has decided to continue restrictions on its transportation to other states and abroad until normal situation was restored. The state would give priority to its own demand and contain the rising prices of potato before transporting them to other states or neighbouring countries, state Agriculture Marketing Minister Arup Roy told PTI here today. A meeting of the task force on price rise was held recently in which Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee clearly directed to give priority to the requirement of the state. Restrictions on sale of potato outside the state was imposed in June this year. The state still has a stock of about 30 lakh tonnes of potato which would help to meet its demand till December when the next crop is available, Roy said. Meanwhile, the state government also has set a guideline against unlimited stocking of potato and onion. "While traders in wholesale markets will be able to stock a maximum of 2,000 quintal of potato and 500 quintal of onion, the limit for traders in retail markets is 50 quintal for potato and 20 quintal for onion. The police will take action against anyone trying to violate this order," state Agriculture Minister Purnendu Bose said.

**GM Crops: Javadekar Emphasises On Proper Caution**

Amid a row over field trials of GM crops in the country, Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar today emphasised on "proper caution" but said "nobody can say no to science". "Yesterday, somebody asked me about the field trials of GM crops. I have said we are not saying no to science. Nobody can say no to science. We have to take proper caution. We have to take proper action. But you cannot deny, we are not living in the Galileo times," the Minister said at a meet on 'IPCC AR5: What it means for stronger, more inclusive India' here. The Environment Ministry is yet to give approval for field trials of certain varieties of Genetically Modified (GM) crops. The ministry, however, had stated that the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) has recommended certain cases for field trials. The statutory body had permitted confined field trials of 13 GM crops, including rice, brinjal, chickpea, mustard and cotton, out of the 15 cases it considered. However, the field trials, or small scale experiments, on these crops were subject to No Objection Certificate (NOC) from state governments. Sangh outfits have opposed field trials of GM crops. Batting for cleaner fuel, Javadekar said he had urged the Government to increase the norms on diesel emission while noting that the number of vehicles on roads double every ten years. He also said that the possibility of a "Green Channel" involving Doordarshan under Private Public Partnership mode would be explored. Welcoming the suggestion made by the Chairman of Energy and Resources Institute on an exclusive channel to deal with environmental issues, Javadekar, who is also the Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting said, "Why cannot Doordarshan partner with people like you. Yes, we will." Earlier addressing the gathering, IPCC Chairman R K

Pachauri said IPCC has completed three Working Group reports as part of the fifth assessment cycle. He said there was a peering need to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases particularly carbon dioxide at the earliest for limiting the temperature increase by two degree Celsius. "If we follow the 'do nothing' scenario, move along business as usual, then we could see temperature increase as high as 4.8 degrees Celsius, which would be disastrous," he said.

### **KCR Names Agri Varsity after Jayashankar**

As promised earlier, Telangana chief minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao officially named the agriculture university at Rajendranagar here after one of the key figures of Telangana Movement, the late Prof K. Jayashankar on his 81st birth anniversary. "The agriculture university will be known as Prof. Jayashankar Agriculture University from today," Rao announced at the university campus at Rajendranagar here on Wednesday. Describing Jayashankar as a great fighter, he said, "He never stepped back during his more than 50 years of fight for separate Telangana state." As a tribute to his contribution to the state, Jayashankar deserved this honour, Rao said and released a postage stamp on Jayashankar. Rao defended his decision of naming the institutes after the Telangana leaders, saying it's his right to change the names of institutes in his state and advised the Andhra leaders to mind their own business. "We live our own life, you live yours," he advised them. Describing his move as just a beginning, he hinted at more changes in future. "There are a lot of things to change in Hyderabad. We need our own names and our own culture," he said and challenged the AP ministers to compete in development instead of making provocative statements. "They aspire to build another Singapore in their state but claim to be lacking money for paying the fee of their students," he took a dig at the AP government. Andhra students can still take admissions in Telangana universities under 15 per cent non-local quota but Andhra government must pay their fees, he said. Instead of wasting time on unnecessary arguments, the two governments should focus on major issues like power and irrigation. At the same event the chief minister also launched a new scheme, 'Mana Ooru, Mana Kuragayalu', under which the state government will develop the surrounding villages of Hyderabad city as hub of vegetable farming. Around 2,000 farmers from 31 villages in Rangareddy and Medak districts will be trained in modern methods of vegetable farming to boost the vegetable production around the city. The government will ensure the regular supply of vegetables to Hyderabad city thanks to the scheme, according to B. Janardhan Reddy, commissioner and director of agriculture, Telangana. The state government is planning to bring about a complete reformation of agriculture, Rao said and announced that the agriculture department would examine samples of soil in all districts of Telangana and prepare a detailed report to find out suitable crops for the soil conditions in every village. The crops will be cultivated based on the report. The government will establish Crop Colonies where particular crops will be farmed in favourable conditions as the report suggests. He wanted farmers to produce more seeds along with grains. "The Telangana state should become a hub of seeds," he said. Rao said the government will tie up with private seed companies to market the seeds produced by farmers. If private companies do not come forward, the state government itself will form a seeds corporation and buy seeds from farmers. Citing the example of Ankapur village in

Nizamabad and Mulkanoor village of Karimnagar district as ideal seed production stations, he wanted all the farmers and staff of agriculture university to visit both the villages to study their seed production. When agriculture minister Pocharam Srinivas Reddy sought more funds for the agriculture university, the chief minister announced a Rs 50-crore grant and said the government would develop it as a world-class university. Referring to other major problems like power, Rao blamed the previous governments for the current situation. "It will take a few more years to clear the mess but our government promises 24-hour non-stop power supply to agriculture after three years," he assured.

#### KCR speak

- It's just the beginning. A lot of things will change in Hyderabad. We need our own names and our own culture
- AP ministers should compete in development instead of making provocative statements
- They aspire to build another Singapore in their state but claim to be lacking money for paying the fee of their students
- Andhra students cantake admissions in Telangana universities under 15 pc non-local quota but Andhra govt must pay their fees
- Prof Jayashankar Agriculture University will be developed into a world-class university
- TS will be made a hub of seed production

#### **Crop Loss Pegged at Rs 95.6 Cr in State Ravaged by Rain**

The crop loss in the State as on Wednesday stood at `95.60 crore as per an estimate by the Agriculture Department.

AGRI LOSS	
District	Loss (₹)
Alappuzha	42.18 cr
Kannur	13.63 cr
Palakkad	6.75 cr
Ernakulam	6.64 cr
Wayanad	6.16 cr
Malappuram	5.9 cr
Kozhikode	4.7 cr
Kasargod	3.31 cr
Kottayam	2.8 cr
Idukki	1.75 cr
Thirissur	66.6 lakh
T'Puram	46.2 lakh
Kollam	45.78 lakh
Pathanamthitta	20 lakh

With the rains lashing many parts of the State damaging the crops it is feared that the loss would go up well beyond `100 crore. Alappuzha district reported a loss of `42.18 crore which is highest in the state. On Monday alone, the loss to the tune of `27.54 crore was reported from the district. The flood affected around 6,550 hectares of paddy in the district including Kuttanad. Paddy cultivated in 1,275 hectares of paddy was lost due to the breach of outer bunds, said A Kareem, deputy Director,

Department of Agriculture. The paddy submerged had completed 20 to 40 days of growth. More than 25 per cent of cultivated paddy in Kuttanad is currently under water. Around 52 hectares of plantain and 74 hectares of vegetable in the district were damaged by the rains. Tuber crops grown in 79 hectares of land too was lost, Kareem said. The actual loss could be estimated only after the water recedes. The monetary loss was estimated based on inputs from the various agricultural offices in the district.

**Kannur:** Cumulative agriculture loss in Kannur district since the onset of monsoon has been pegged at `13.63 crore. "The heavy rains did affect the crops which the self help groups were cultivating aimed at the Onam market. But, we are still hopeful of a good harvest this season," said Kudumbasree district coordinator M V Premarajan.

**Palakkad:** In Palakkad district 340 hectares of farm land lies submerged in water. The estimated loss is `6.75 crore. Fifty per cent of the loss suffered by farmers is on account of damage to paddy. Crops like plantain and vegetables were also damaged in the rain.

**Ernakulam:** The estimated crop loss in the district has touched to 6.64 crore so far. The figure will cross `10 crore if the estimate is revised taking into account crop loss suffered in the last two days. Crops like nutmeg, banana, arecanut, rubber and tapioca have been the worst hit. The district lost plantain trees numbering 7,4785 and 4,000 rubber trees. Crops like pepper, tapioca, paddy and vegetables too suffered a huge blow.

**Wayanad:** The Agriculture Department has estimated a loss of `6.6 crore in the district. **Kasargod:** In Kasargod the crop loss from 1,155 hectares has been pegged at `3.31 crore. **Malappuram:** The district has reported a loss to the tune of `5.9 crore.

**Kozhikode:** The loss due to crop loss from the district has been pegged at `4.7 crore.

**Kollam:** The crop loss at Kollam has been limited due to below normal rain in the district and the district suffered a loss of only `5 lakh.

**Idukki:** In Idukki district the loss has been pegged at `1.75 crore. Around 174.98 hectares of land, mostly rubber, has been affected.

**Thrissur:** Rain wreaked havoc in all villages destroying crops on 42.1 hectares of land. The district administration has estimated a loss of `66.6 lakh.

**Pathanamthitta:** The losses suffered by farmers in the district as per the preliminary estimates of the Agriculture Department, stood at `20 lakh.

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Crop loss to the tune of `46.29 has been reported from 11.57 hectares in the district.

### **Flower Show Goes Royal, Mysore Dasara in 3 Lakh Roses**

As many as three lakh roses have been used to replicate Mysore Dasara celebrations, which will be the highlight of the Independence Day flower show set to begin at Lalbagh from Friday till August 17. Twenty-five workers have been working since 10 days to create the floral replica of the Mysore palace and the Dasara procession including the tusker carrying the golden howdah with the statue of goddess Chamundeshwari. Horses and armed soldiers are also being recreated in the best of blooms. K Ramakrishnappa, Director of Horticulture and chairman of Mysore Horticulture Society, on Wednesday said the Mysore Palace replica is 45 feet long, 27 feet high and 12 feet wide. It's All Rosy! Ramakrishnappa said a pineapple structure is

also being created using rare varieties of roses. Rare ornamental plants will be on display at the glass house. Visitors can also see potted tropical, subtropical and temperate flowering plants. A vertical garden will house more than 5,000 plants during the show, he said. This apart, there are 748 exhibits at the glass house. On participants, Ramakrishnappa said this year, 878 people are competing in the garden category and another 476 are taking part in Ikebana, floral art, bonsai and vegetable carving competitions.

#### ENTRY FEE

Adults must pay Rs 40 on normal days and `50 on holidays

For children, the entry is Rs 10 on any day

Free entry for schoolchildren on August 13 and 14

#### 200th Show This Year

Since 1912, 199 flower shows have been organised and this year's edition is the 200th show. To mark the milestone, a herb garden with 200 medicinal plants will be inaugurated on Friday near the Bonsai garden at Lalbagh.

#### **Chicks turn cash cow for young farmer**

Seventeen years of experience in rearing and distributing pullets makes Meppakkudi Muhammad Shaji of Mavilikkadavu one of the reliable farmers under the Regional Poultry Farm at Chathamangalam in the district. The 38-year-old plays a vital role in building up poultry farming in Kozhikode by providing chicks for the Department of Animal Husbandry. He grows one-day-old pullets till they reach 45 to 65 days, after which they will be handed over to the applicants via veterinary hospitals at a subsidised rate. It was in 1998 that Muhammad Shaji applied to the Department of Animal Husbandry to get licence in running an egger nursery. When he got the nod he set up a shed on the terrace of his house, which can accommodate as many as 1,000 chicks. "The facilities were limited, but I strictly followed the directives received during the training class I attended," says Shaji. To offer better living conditions to the chicks he temporarily shifted his shed to the old Chemmeen Company building on the banks of the Purakkattiri river. "Now I can rear more than 2,000 pullets here, but the availability is limited," he says. The egger nursery is his sole source of revenue. He says the most important thing is to vaccinate young chicks to increase their immunity. He urges youngsters to take up poultry farming as a vocation. At his egger nursery he rears Gramasree, an improved variety. "I pay `20 per one-day-old chick and get `98 when it reaches 65-days-old. Though it cannot be called a huge profit, for me it is enough to run my family," he smiles. When the Regional Poultry farm fails to deliver enough pullets, he depends on the Regional Poultry farm at Mundayad in Kannur or the one at Mannuthi in Thrissur district. The farming can be called profitable if we get a batch of 2,000 pullets. Coming down heavily on the prevailing trends in poultry farms, Shaji says it is not safe to consume chickens that have been fed on antibiotics. "Here in my shed I had grown broiler variety once. From my experience I came to know that to get good results there is no need to inject any kind of antibiotics." He further says that profit-oriented business techniques make food poisonous.

### **India working for permanent solution at WTO, says Minister**

Justifying the country's position at the WTO talks, Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said India had not made any change in the position it had taken during the negotiations before the Bali Ministerial Declaration. She told the Rajya Sabha that the Government had adopted a course correction but India is "honouring, reinforcing and taking forward what was agreed in Bali."

#### **No compromises**

Answering questions and concerns raised by members of the Upper House, Sitharaman said their apprehensions may be a result of reports in the Western media. She said India was trying to convince the WTO for a permanent solution and hoped some result will be evident by September. She said India will resist the attempts of the developed countries to move away from the central philosophy of WTO, which is multilateral. The Minister assured the House that the Government will not make any compromises on the issue of minimum support price and food security. "This whole debate is about India making sure that our MSP is decided by us. This whole debate is about how agriculture in this country will be run by our own policies... We don't allow our farmers' prices or agricultural production to be determined by somebody else outside; it is our right and we will decide and that is why the fight is going on," she said.

#### **Foodgrains base price**

She said the country has also raised apprehensions about the decision to fix the base price of foodgrains at the rate of 1986-88. She said one of the alternative suggestions that the country has given is to make sure that base year is shifted to a dynamic three years' average, which is nearest to the current year. "So, if you are talking about 2014, you would talk about the previous three years' dynamic average and that will move by one year when you are talking about 2015," she added. Earlier, initiating the debate, former Commerce Minister Anand Sharma said the real issue is not of food security but of procurement at administered prices.

#### **Uruguay Round**

"It flows out of the Uruguay Round of 1994 which allows the developing countries to procure foodgrains, but if it is on administered prices and is not on market prices, the *de minimis* of ten per cent, that is, the value of the production of the product," he said. CPI (M) leader Sitaram Yechury said the country should have the right to make the food security universal. "Now, even according to the interim conditions put by the WTO your food security is capped *ipso facto* at 67 per cent. You can't go beyond that



even today. Are we willy-nilly accepting that our food security, whatever we give the right, is capped at 67 per cent,” he asked.

### **Voice against duty-free import of US chicken legs gets louder**

The opposition to the External Affairs Ministry’s proposal to allow duty-free import of chicken legs from the US is gathering momentum with more poultry farmers protesting the move. Duty-free import of American chicken legs will wreak havoc on the domestic poultry industry, besides raising health concerns, they contend. The Ministry has made the proposal in return for access to Indian Basmati rice and fruits in the American market and immigration reforms designed to help IT professionals in the US. Several poultry farmers’ associations from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, leading poultry products producers in the country, have said that chicken legs in the US were “by-products”. In the US, consumers only prefer chicken breast meat, considered a lean, white meat, sold at a premium. “Chicken legs are discarded and sold at throwaway prices. Most of these are stored for months and years. And now they (US) are planning to dump this in the Indian market without restrictions or customs duty,” said G Ranjit Reddy, President, Poultry Breeders Association. He said that in the US while the whole chicken is sold at \$4 a kg, breast meat is sold at a premium of \$7.9, while chicken legs are sold at \$3.4 in the retail market. “Let the (Indian) Government allow import of full chicken from US on a level-playing field and we will compete. We are the cheapest producers of poultry products,” he said. Such free import of chicken legs from the US had severely bruised the poultry industries in Sri Lanka, Philippines, Vietnam, Mexico and Russia, following which these countries have banned such imports, the farmers said. India is currently the second-largest egg producer with an annual production of 65,000 million eggs and third-largest broiler producer with 3.8 million tonnes of poultry meat produced annually.

### **Antibiotic traces**

The associations have also expressed concern over reports by Centre for Science and Environment that traces of some antibiotic were found in chicken meat samples in Delhi. Reddy said the Indian poultry industry believed in vaccination rather than antibiotic treatment of chicken. “We use antibiotic as a last resort. The samples contained traces of antibiotic much below the permissible limits,” he said.

### **Volume rises at Coonoor tea sale**

The offer for Sale No: 32 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association to be held on Thursday and Friday has risen to 20.45 lakh kg. This is as much as 3.16 lakh kg more than last week’s offer. In this, teas remaining unsold in previous auctions account for 2.84 lakh kg leaving fresh arrival at 17.61 lakh kg. Of this, a volume of 14.54 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 5.91 lakh kg to dusts. As much as 19.28 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 1.17 lakh kg, orthodox variety. In the leaf counter, only 67,000 kg belongs to orthodox, while 13.87 lakh kg, CTC. Among the dusts, only 50,000 kg belongs to orthodox while 5.41 lakh kg, CTC. In the leaf auction last week, among

corporate buyers, Hindustan Unilever Ltd bought brighter liquoring varieties. Tata Global Beverages Ltd., showed some interest on good medium sorts. In the Dust auction, HUL was fairly active on good medium varieties. Godfrey Philips Indian bought medium sorts. Indcoserve expressed interest for good medium smaller grades. There was good demand for brighter liquoring teas from upcountry buyers. Overall, internal buyers were less active. Exporters chose mostly plainer grades.

### **Agribiz embracing the rise of machines**

Maybe he doesn't even have a laptop, and he has a touch screen on one of his walls which he uses to adjust for irrigation levels, fertiliser application, verifying soil analysis and planting soyabeans. The farm has a sensor that can send him data on soil, moisture, soil aeration, etc. All his farming machines are awaiting his instructions to change any inputs he may wish to make from his home. The one thing he might have to still count on is good weather for planting, which, of course, he can monitor from anywhere he is. This means he has more leisure and can even login from his vacation home in Florida to get in touch with his farm in Illinois.

### **Agri and cloud**

A larger commercial firm which runs soyabean crushing plants globally will be looking to source soyabeans and sell soyameal to chicken producers and soya oil to French fries manufacturers. They will be getting the data from the cloud, make predictive decisions on buying beans and selling meal and oil. Crush margins will be optimised efficiently. Bids to farmers and offers for meal and oil will go to their respective computers. This flow of information will help in real time decision making for trucking or barging. Sensors will beam data on river drafts, barge traffic, load times, etc., leading to predictive decision analytics. Goods will reach sea ports where data on the contract of sale will be already uploaded in the machines. The cranes should be able to load soyameal of correct quality and quantity without any human intervention. Data on goods loaded will be beamed to the cloud and can be picked up by an end-consumer in Thailand. Based on the exact quality and arrival time, the customer can start making predictive decisions on different feed mixes for the business. Financing, sales, and inventories will be better predicted and optimised. This is what we would call Internet of things as applied to agri-business. I will leave myriad additional applications to the imagination of the reader. The point is that agribusiness will become more and more facilitated and influenced by machines – machines that enable human beings working in the sector to focus their judgment, time and resources on more and higher order decisions. Fewer real-time, human decisions in areas where machine learning can incorporate prior data and outcomes mean reduced volatility due to idiosyncrasy and error. The entire value chain's efficiency will be dependent on the symbiotic working relationship between men and machines.

## Advantage cloud

What does this all mean? First, decisions will be standardised. This will lead to very little variability within a single time horizon. There will be inter-generational variability but given the predictive power of computing, this variability will be more an expected change than a sudden shock. Second, cost structure will go down substantially. Standardisation will bring about economies of scale, and improve total factor productivity. Third, there will be a great boom in information security and labour demand will dwindle. Fourth, the competitive advantage will move towards firms having smart machines, great data, and phenomenal analytics. Lastly, firms will need to retrain or hire people who can adapt to the new environment of machines and cloud.

## Improving value chain

Today, only a fraction of agribusiness firms globally are incorporating this new reality into their value chain strategies. They will inevitably be joined by many more, as competitive dynamics necessitate a technological revolution in the sector. Firms at the leading edge of this transformation are making long-term investments that are focused on the highest impact areas of real performance improvement. Instead of fearing the rise of the machines, they are embracing the opportunities presented. The writer is based in London and is the founder and Managing Director of OpalCrest.

# Business Standard

## Soymeal exports seen weak until Oct



Poor supply of soybeans in India will curb soymeal exports by Asia's top producer of the animal feed until at least the new bean harvest from October, despite a jump in shipments of soymeal last month. Soymeal exports more than doubled in July from the previous month's record low, the Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) said on Wednesday, as their premiums relative to South American grades shrank last month. Exports of the feed, which typically account for about two-thirds of India's annual oilmeal exports, rose by 152 per cent to 6,635 tonnes in July from a month ago, SEA said. But overseas sales of soymeal were sharply lower compared with the same month a year ago, when India exported 107,038 tonnes to its traditional buyers in Southeast Asia. Soymeal's share of exports has come in lower than usual since May due to poor availability of soybeans. Traders said poor availability of soybeans for

crushing in local markets have made Indian soymeal more expensive in recent months than supplies from other origins, driving away buyers from West Asia, Southeast Asia and Europe India's soybean output is estimated to have dropped 4.4 per cent to 10.23 million tonnes in the 2013-14 year, as rains during the harvest damaged the crop yield. India grows soybean once a year with its sowing taking place in June-July with the spread of annual monsoon rains to main growing areas of central and western regions. The summer crop is harvested in October. "Our soymeals are completely out-priced globally due to poor domestic supplies," said B V Mehta, executive director of SEA. In July, soymeal export prices eased on better crop outlook for soybean from the United States due to favourable weather conditions. India soymeal supplies were \$44 per tonne cheaper at \$652 a tonne than the previous month. Currently, Indian soymeal shipments were \$60-\$70 a tonne costlier than South American supplies, which were available at about \$530 a tonne. Last month, soymeal exports were 14-15 per cent costlier than a year ago, they added. In July, India's castor meal exports to South Korea and rice bran meal exports to Vietnam slumped, dragging down the overall oilmeal exports. Castor meal is used as an organic fertiliser while rice bran meal is used as animal feed. India's overall oilmeal exports fell 43.1 per cent from a month ago to 115,094 tonnes, the trade body update showed.

#### **Maharashtra sugar output estimated at 8.8 mt in 2014-15**



Maharashtra's sugar production is estimated at 8.8 million tonnes in 2014-15, compared to 7.1 mt in 2013-14. The 2014-15 season begins after September. This is a result of a rise in area sown under sugarcane to 1.05 million hectares from 936,000 ha earlier. Nearly 77 mt of cane will be available for crushing against 67.6 mt in the 2013-14 season. A ministerial panel chaired by Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan decided last week that the crushing season would begin from October 15. Sanjeev Babar, managing director, Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories in Maharashtra, told Business Standard: "The estimated sugar production of 8.8 mt for the ensuing season is based on recovery of 11.4 per cent. About 165 sugar factories, both cooperative and private, are expected to take part in this year's crushing season, compared to 157 last year."

<b>MAHARASHTRA SUGAR PRODUCTION</b> (In mn tonnes)			
Year	Cane crushed	Sugar output	Recovery in %
2009-10	61.4	7.1	<b>11.56</b>
2010-11	80.25	9.07	<b>11.30</b>
2011-12	77.1	8.99	<b>11.67</b>
2012-13	70.02	7.98	<b>11.41</b>
2013-14	67.6	7.12	<b>11.41</b>
2014-15E	77	8.8	<b>11.41</b>

Source : Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories in Maharashtra  
E: Estimated

He said the carry-forward stock would be two mt. At the national level, it would be 8.5 mt. He said the majority of factories in the state had paid the 'Fair & Remunerative Price' recommended by the central government to cane growers. "The average FRP was Rs 2,600 a tonne, at a recovery of 11.4 per cent. Mill-wise FRP varies," he added. Babar said the Federation had appealed to the Centre to soon announce the sugar policy before the crushing season began. And, to issue a notification on the rise in import duty to 40 per cent, the decision having been announced about two months earlier.

### **Sugar up 0.2% on spot demand**



Sugar prices rose 0.23% to Rs 3,073 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators created fresh positions on festive season demand in the spot market. At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, sugar for delivery in September rose by Rs 7, or 0.23%, to Rs 3,073 per quintal with an open interest of 8,470 lots. Similarly, the sweetener for delivery in August traded higher by Rs 6, or 0.20%, to Rs 3,038 per quintal in 18,690 lots. Analysts said the rise in the sugar prices was mostly attributed to pick-up in demand in the spot market amid festive season demand.

### **Low prices, erratic monsoon boost cotton imports**



A sharp drop in cotton prices overseas and a weak monsoon have raised India's imports in recent weeks, which could lift shipments more than 25% above the official forecast for this season ending September and help support cotton futures.

Cotton sowing in India, the world's second-largest producer and exporter of the fibre, has been delayed this year due to erratic monsoon rains, raising concerns about production. Mills in the coastal textile hubs of southern India buy cotton from Africa due to lower freight costs and are bringing in shiploads now as benchmark prices fell to a five-year low on Aug 1 because of the prospect of ample global supply. Worldwide inventories could swell to a record of nearly 106 million 480-lb bales by the end of the US crop year ending July 2015, helped by a surge in output in the United States, according to the US Department of Agriculture. This is also depressing spot prices in some countries, with rates in Tanzania as much as 10% lower than the 86 cent per pound quoted in India. "Imports of cotton mainly from West Africa have increased because their prices are much cheaper than India's and the quality is also good," said M.B. Lal, managing director of Shail Exports and former chairman of the Cotton Corp of India. The pick-up in shipments could take India's total imports for the season ending Sept. 30 to more than 1 million bales, traders said, above the forecast of 800,000 bales from the state-run Cotton Advisory Board on July 2. However, imports will still be below last season's 1.4 million as China is buying less yarn that uses cotton. India's cotton output in 2013/14 is estimated to be 39 million bales. "Imports in this season are going to be more than 1 million bales. West Africa and Tanzania are the most preferred destinations because availability is sufficient and quality is good," said S. Dinakaran, joint managing director at Sambandam Spinning Mills in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. A delay in the arrival of the new crop next season due to delayed sowing could also force Indian buyers to sign extended import contracts. "Imports may rise (further) if new season supplies get delayed or prices increase in the absence of supply," said Arun Kumar Dalal, a trader in the main cotton growing state of Gujarat. More than half of India's farmland relies on rainfall, with a heavy dependence on the June-September monsoon season. This year's monsoon had one of its slowest starts in a century but a late revival shrank the shortfall in rain to about 10% below average in July, a sharp improvement from the 43% deficit in the first month of the season.

## **THE ECONOMIC TIMES**

### **Cotton cultivation likely to cover more acreage this year**



India may end up with a higher cotton cultivation area this year than last as farmers from top cotton-growing states such as Gujarat, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh have already covered the normal area, with sowing operations on in many

places. However, with uncertainty about exports to China, cotton prices are likely to remain lower than last year, say industry insiders. Top cotton producing state of Gujarat has completed sowing on 28.20 lakh hectare of land as on August 4, which is higher by 1.71 lakh hectare than previous year, and 103% of the average cotton area of the state. In Maharashtra, cotton has been sown on 96% of the targeted area. As on August 4, it has been sown over 36.30 lakh hectare as against 38.43 lakh hectare last year. Farmers have planted cotton on 152% of the normal area as on August 6 in Andhra Pradesh and the overall cotton acreage in the state is expected to be higher than the last two years. "Farmers are still planting cotton with the progress of rainfall," said an official of the Andhra Pradesh agriculture department. Cotton seed companies too confirmed that the sale of cotton seeds so far has risen by about 15 to 20 lakh packets over previous year. "We think the sale has been more because of the re-sowing in some areas, increase in plant population by farmers to make up for the loss in yield due to delayed planting," said MG Shembekar, vice president, National Seed Association of India (NSAI). A large number of farmers, who could not get good soyabean seeds, have also shifted to cotton in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. "When the final figures come, the total area is likely to be higher than last year, which will make up for any loss due to delay in sowing," said a top official of a leading multinational trade house. Last year, farmers received about Rs 4,500/quintal to 5,000/quintal against the minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 3,950/quintal. "Some traders are doing forward trading for December at Rs 36,000/candy. If the rates rule like this, then farmers' price may not be much higher than the MSP," said a big cotton trader from Marathwada in Maharashtra.

## DECCAN Chronicle

### **Wait for Met weather app may soon be over**

The Agro-Met advisory to farmers via SMS has been successful in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, but the much-awaited SMS-App from the Indian Meteorological Department is yet to materialise. IMD officials say the ministry would soon launch a mobile app to disseminate information on the weather. Speaking to Deccan Chronicle over phone from Delhi, Rahul Saxena, Scientist, numerical weather prediction department, IMD said that the IMD would launch its mobile app 'Indian Weather' around the second or third week of August. "We have upgraded the app recently to include 310 cities across the country," he added. According to Mr Saxena, the improvised app would provide details on thunderstorms, current weather and also predict the weather for the next four days. The app would be available free of cost and the users of Android, Windows and Blackberry mobiles could download them. It would not be available on the IOS platform. The Met department hosted a mobile app last year with weather data for 200 cities, but due to some issues the app did not find favour with the public. On the contrary, the Agro-Met services provided by the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) and Agro Meteorological Field Unit have been successful. Dr S. Panneerselvam, head, Agro Climate Research Centre, TNAU said

that the agricultural university has been issuing weather advisory every Tuesday and Friday for the registered users. “About 1.13 lakh farmers residing in Tirupur, Coimbatore and Erode benefit from our information,” he added. Apart from the agro advisory, the SMS also provides warning on the general weather. The latest advisory talks about the forthcoming heavy rainfall in the western belt and advises people in the hilly areas to stay safe. “We have also advised farmers to provide support to banana and sugarcane plants, as we experience unusual winds now,” he further said.