

## **Farmers learn mite control measures**



Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), in collaboration with National Agricultural Development Programme (NADP), conducted a training programme here on controlling mites that attack vegetable and fruits, particularly in summer. As many as 245 farmers, including 50 women, took part in the programme. T. Abdul Razak, Professor of Agricultural Entomology, Agricultural College and Research Institute (ACRI), said here on Tuesday that mites differed from insects, though the symptom of damage to the crops would be similar. Acaricides (chemical substance poisonous to mites) must be used to destroy the mites since they could not be controlled by common insecticides. The farmers were taken to the screen house of the Entomology Department where Dr. Razak explained how to detect early signs of mite attack on plants. The affected plants would have pale spots on top of leaves. In summer, the mites would weaken the plants by sucking the sap. Bhindi, brinjal, tomato, chilli and banana plants were vulnerable to mite attack in this region, Dr. Razak said. The participants who hailed from Karungulam, Tiruchendur, Ottapidaram, Srivaikuntam, Alwarthirunagari, Pudukottai, Kovilpatti, Kayathar, Vilathikulam, Pudur, Udangudi and Sathankulam received hands-on training in mite control measures.

## **Siruvani continues to overflow**



Water flowing out of Siruvani Dam.— Photo: K. Ananthan

For almost a fortnight now water has been overflowing from the Siruvani Dam — something that has not happened in the recent past. According to sources, ever since the water level touched and surpassed the full reservoir level of 49.50 feet on August 2, there has been a steady flow of water into the reservoir. In the last week, the water level has remained above the full reservoir level, though the rainfall remained negligible, and the quantity of water drawn to the city was a constant at over 101 million litres a day. The Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board sources said that on August 11 the rainfall at the reservoir was 2mm, on August 12 it was 40mm, on August 13 nil, August 14 1mm, August 15 22mm, August 16 33mm, August 17 1mm, and August 18 2mm. The water position in the reservoir, and the over-100 mld supply had moved the Coimbatore Corporation to supply Siruvani water on alternate days to 26 Wards in full, and another eight to 10 Wards in part. The result of the improved Siruvani supply had resulted in improvements in Pilloor supply to residents in the East Zone. The water supply now stood at once in seven — eight days, up from the once in 14 days supply, said K.R. Jayaram, Chairman, East Zone. The once-in-14-days supply happened when the Corporation diverted Pilloor water to meet the shortfall in Siruvani-fed areas. Mr. Jayaram said that the water supply situation in East Zone would further improve as and when the TWAD Board completed the construction of the overhead tanks as part of the Pilloor I extension project. Two tanks would soon come into use. The East Zone would see further improvement in supply once the Corporation completed 5.40km pipeline laying work connecting the Pilloor main storage tank in Ganapathy with the tank in DGR Nagar. This will help supply water once in three or four days.

### **Moderate rainfall**

The district received moderate rain on Sunday with Thammampatti receiving the maximum of 60.2 mm. Rainfall recorded in other places include, Salem 18.4 mm, Attur 21.4 mm, Yercaud 13 mm, Sangiri 10.2 mm and Vazhapadi 7.6 mm.

### **Groundnut and pulses pulsate with hope**



A farmer removes weeds from his field at Sathumadurai in the Kaniyambadi block in Vellore district. —Photo: C.Venkatachalapathy

Deficiency in rainfall has forced several paddy and sugarcane farmers to switch over to groundnut, pulses and millets in different parts of Vellore district. While the district received a total rainfall of 848.2 mm against the normal rainfall of 971.1 mm last year, it has received just 292.5 mm so far this year against the normal rainfall of 425 mm it ought to have received between January and August 17. R. Jayasundar, Joint Director of Agriculture, Vellore district told *The Hindu* that 7593 ha (hectares) have been covered under paddy (sornavari season) so far this year as against 8000 ha covered last year, while in sugarcane, the coverage got reduced to 5462 ha this year from 6773 ha last year. However, the coverage has increased in respect of groundnut, pulses, millets and cotton during the current kharif season. A total of 14,900 ha have been covered under pulses (as against 13,024 ha last year), 28,554 ha under groundnut (26,162 ha) and 2490 ha under cotton (1290 ha). Under minor millets, 2131 ha have been covered under 'samai' (foxtail millet), nine ha under 'thinai' (little millet) and seven ha under 'varagu'. The Joint Director said that the paddy and sugarcane areas were reduced this year owing to deficiency in rainfall. However, the farmers have switched over to either groundnut or pulses, as could be seen from the increase in the area under these crops. Deficiency of rainfall has been observed in Sholinghur, Arakkonam, Nemili, Kaveripakkam, Arcot and Timiri blocks where paddy farmers have mainly switched over to groundnut. The increase in the cotton area has been observed in the Tirupattur, Alangayam, Jolarpet, Gudiyatham, Madhanur and Kandili blocks where rainfall has been better, he said. C.K. Dhanapal, president of the Tamil Nadu Farmers Association, Vellore District said that several paddy and sugarcane farmers in the Alangayam block have switched over to groundnut, red gram and 'samai' owing to deficiency of rainfall. He said that borewells and open wells in Vellakuttai and surrounding villages have become dry forcing farmers to go in for rain-fed cultivation. He urged the Tamil Nadu government to withdraw the regulations including the punitive provisions which it has introduced for those sinking new wells. Mr. Jayasundar said that another new feature of the agriculture department's activities this year was the introduction of the method of red gram cultivation through transplantation of saplings after growing nurseries for about 25 to 30 days. This method which is expected to provide increased yield, has been introduced in all the 20 blocks in the district. A total of 21.5 tonnes of red gram seeds have been supplied, and 8430 ha are expected to be covered under transplanted red gram. "Wherever there is water, we arrange for drip irrigation and supply of fertilizers. We are awaiting funds from the government to implement the scheme".

### **Grievances meeting**

The monthly farmers' grievances meeting will be held at 10.30 a.m. on August 22 at the collectorate, said District Collector Jayashree Muralidharan in a press release.

### **Water flow revives banana crop**

The release of water from the Mettur dam has raised the hope of rejuvenating the banana crop raised in Karur-Tiruchi belt, which is badly in need of watering.

#### **“Nendran” variety**

As usual, the farmers have raised the “nendran” variety on hundreds of acres along the Cauvery riverbed. Anticipating the opening of the Mettur dam, they completed planting of banana saplings in many areas in April and May. The delay in release of water had forced them to depend on pump sets. But the farmers said the drop in groundwater level and continuous dry spell in the region for two months had affected the growth of banana plants. At many places in Kulithalai and Lalapettai, the plants, which were about three or four months old, had started withering. “Though banana crop can survive drought for some time, the long dry spell hit the growth of plants. The strong wind played its role to an extent,” said a farmer of Veerambur near Kulithalai. However, the recent release of water has come as a relief to farmers. They are of the view that it can stem up the growth of the standing crop to some extent. “If the release of water had been delayed further, it would have posed threat to the crop. Now, we feel relieved to see the Cauvery come alive. It has raised our hopes to revive the young plants. But we need to take extra efforts to revive them,” he added. Stating that banana is raised on a large area in interior parts of Karur and Tiruchi districts, they demanded that the authorities ensure that the water reached the tail and end areas of the irrigation canals.

### **Egg price increases**

Wholesale price of egg in Namakkal Zone increased by 10 paise and stood at Rs. 2.85 on Monday. National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC) officials said that the egg price was Rs. 3.10 in Chennai, Rs. 3 in Bangalore, Rs. 3.48 in Kolkata, Rs. 3.25 in New Delhi and Rs. 2.70 in Hospet. Officials said that the price of egg would increase in coming days. The wholesale price of broiler stood at Rs. 85 in the zone.

### **Farmers’ grievance meet**

The monthly farmers grievances meeting will be held at 10 a.m. on August 21 at the Collector’s Office here, Collector Darez Ahmed said in a press release.

## **Chamundeshwari Sugar Factory agrees to pay dues to sugarcane growers**

*Decision taken at a meeting convened by the district administration*



Additional Deputy Commissioner H.N. Gopala Krishna chairing a meeting with sugarcane growers in Hassan on Monday.— PHOTO: PRAKASH HASSAN

The private management of Chamundeshwari Sugar Factory at Srinivasapura in Channarayapatna taluk on Monday agreed to clear the dues it owed to sugarcane growers. N. Srinivas, Managing Director of the factory, agreed to clear the dues at a meeting convened by the district administration. The factory had procured sugarcane from growers at Rs. 2,100 a tonne during 2013-14, though the State government had fixed a price of Rs. 2,500 a tonne. As in the case of many other factories across the State, Chamundeshwari factory too had objected to the government's price and agreed to pay the price on a par with other factories. The ICL Sugar Factory at K.R. Pet in Mandya had paid Rs. 2,400 a tonne. The growers often staged protests against the management demanding Rs. 2,400 a tonne. They staged dharna in front of the factory, demanding the dues, last week. Deputy Commissioner V. Anbukumar had met the protesters and assured them to resolve the issue after convening a meeting. As per his assurance, the meeting was convened at the Deputy Commissioner's office. Additional Deputy Commissioner H.N. Gopalakrishna chaired the meeting. Mr. Srinivas, at the beginning of the meeting, said that the factory suffered a loss of Rs. 6 crore in the last financial year, though it procured sugarcane at Rs. 2,100 a tonne. "The factory has moved the court, questioning the State government's price. The court's judgement is expected anytime in the near future," he said. Kodihalli Chandrashekhara, Nanjunda Gowda and other farmer leaders wanted the factory to reimburse Rs. 300 a tonne immediately as the factory had given that assurance in writing before moving the court. After arguments and counter-arguments for a couple of hours, Mr. Srinivas agreed to pay the dues. However, he did not make it clear in how many days he would pay the dues. The factory had crushed 2.12 lakh tonnes of sugarcane in 2013-14.

## **Arecanut prices recover slightly**



Private traders have increased arecanut prices by Rs. 5 per kg more than the CAMPCO prices.— Photo: File Photo

Prices of white arecanut have slightly recovered on Monday following a fall of 8 to 11 per cent in the last fortnight. Sources said private traders increased prices by Rs. 5 per kg more than the Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Cooperative (CAMPCO) prices. This has come after the Union government on August 14 issued a notification increasing the base import price of arecanut from Rs. 110 per kg. to Rs. 170 per kg. With this increase, arecanut imported from other than SAARC countries will cost Rs. 371 per kg, with 110 per cent for customs duty and other cess. If it was imported from any of the SAARC countries it will cost Rs. 252 per kg, with 40 per cent for customs duty and other cess. However, CAMPCO did not increase its price on Monday. Its prices remained at Rs. 270-Rs. 280 per kg for the old stock and Rs. 265-Rs. 275 per kg for new arrivals. Sources in CAMPCO told *The Hindu* that they would not react to a difference of Rs. 5 in the market. If the prices went beyond Rs. 10 per kg, they would be forced to follow the open market. Sources said that traders from North India have begun enquiring about the availability of the produce with the CAMPCO after the last week's notification. A November 9, 2011 notification which allowed importers to import arecanut through the least developed countries among SAARC countries, at zero customs duty still threatened domestic arecanut market, source said.

## **'Plant fruit-bearing saplings to keep away monkeys'**

Why can't the Forest Department plant fruit-bearing trees in the forests to prevent monkey menace in farm lands? The question came from Dinakara Gowda, a farmer from Bandaru village in Belthangady taluk, at a function organised by the Department of Horticulture to observe the birth anniversary of M.H. Mari Gowda, considered as the father of horticulture, here on Monday. Mr. Gowda, also a gram panchayat member, said that as fruit-bearing trees have come down in forests, monkeys directly took away farm produce. Another farmer suggested that monkeys could be sterilised after catching them. A paddy farmer suggested that the government should open its own rice mills. He said that a few years ago he was getting 74 per cent rice per a kilogram of paddy. Now it was 66 per cent. Now farmers have to depend on private mills and believe whatever they

said regarding the rice output. Horticulture Department officials said that one could grow vegetables on the terrace or in the backyard of houses for personal use . They said the government gave 90 per cent subsidy for drip irrigation and sprinkler irrigation. B. Ramanath Rai, minister in-charge of Dakshina Kannada, released a video CD on terrace and kitchen gardening. A video CD on coconut cultivation was also released. Handouts on various horticultural schemes of the government and organic farming were released. Mr. Rai expressed his displeasure over reports that Horticulture Department officials were making some farmers, especially in Bantwal taluk, run from pillar to post to get the arecanut 'kole roga' compensation cheques. Farmers were made to wait for more than an hour for the inauguration of the birth anniversary of M.H. Mari Gowda, considered as the father of horticulture, here on Monday, as guests arrived late. When the session was to end at about 2.15 p.m. some farmers sought to interact with MLAs and other elected representatives. The farmers objected the "one-way briefing" by officials before the inaugural session. However, B. Ramanath Rai, minister in-charge of Dakshina Kannada, and others left the hall saying that this was not an interactive programme.

### **Farmers will get double grants for planting fruit-bearing trees, says Forest Minister**



B. Ramanath Rai, Minister for Forests, planting a tree as part of the Laksha Vruksha programme in Mangalore on Monday.— PHOTO: Special Arrangement

With the forest cover declining drastically, the State government has decided to more than double the grant given to farmers to plant fruit-bearing trees in their land. From the current Rs. 45 for three years, the amount will be increased to Rs. 100. Forest Department officials said that more than 75,000 such saplings had been taken by farmers in the district, while 1.65 lakh saplings were available for planting from this year onwards. The subsidised saplings are given at rates ranging from Rs. 1 to Rs. 5. For the second year, the Forest Department celebrated the Laksha Vruksha (one lakh trees) campaign on Monday by deliberating on the need to augment tree planting drives across the State. The campaign was started to make up the shortfall in the 33 per cent forest cover needed for sustainable living, said B. Ramanath Rai, Minister for Forests, Ecology and Environment, who

inaugurated the programme. “Overpopulation has destroyed large swatches of forests. With the food source for animals having reduced, we see increased instances of man-animal conflict. This is why the State government is bringing out schemes to encourage planting of fruit-bearing trees,” he said.

### **Afforestation**

Similarly, urging for the focus of afforestation to be on the youth, MLA J.R. Lobo said an affinity to the forests can be inculcated in school children if they are taken routinely for treks or stays in forests. The Forest Minister was seen agreeing with the suggestion. MLC Ivan D’Souza suggested that these campaigns should not be restricted to only programmes in cities, but should be made mandatory in gram sabhas. Three persons were conferred the Aranya Mitra (Friends of the Forest) award by the Forest Department. Harish Rao M., a progressive farmer from Dharmasthala, was hailed for his efforts of undertaking plantation of forest trees in two acres of his 20-acre plot. A.V. Harinath, Deputy Chief Engineer of New Mangalore Port Trust, was awarded for the extensive plantation drives taken out on the premises of the port. Ganapathy Bhat, an ayurveda practitioner in Kallige in Bantwal taluk, was also recognised.

### **Pest attack affects green gram crop**



Green gram crop affected by attack of the sucking pests at Saidapur in Yadgir district.—  
ARUN KULKARNI

Farmers who are reeling under the effects of inadequate rainfall, now have sucking pests attacking crops in different parts of the district. As per an estimate prepared by the Agriculture Department, the yield of the crop is likely to come down by more than 50 per cent due to the attack by sucking pests. As against the normal yield of around 8 quintals per acre, the yield of the green gram in the affected fields was likely to reduce to 4 quintals. The attack of the sucking pests damaged the leaves of the green crop and affected its growth. Sources in the Agriculture Department said the sucking pests thrived due to the deficient rainfall. Farmers have been asked to spray Monocrotophos pesticide to control the pest attack.



### **Jackfruit festival**

A State-level jackfruit festival, Jack fest 2014, organised by the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) will begin at its Regional Agriculture Research Station (RARS) at Ambalavayal in Wayanad on Wednesday. Chief Minister Oommen Chandy will open the six-day fest at 2.p.m. “The first-ever State-level jackfruit fest is an earnest attempt of the KAU to sensitise the public on the commercial potential of the fruit,” P. Rajendran, Associate Director of Research, RARS, told *The Hindu* —Staff Reporter

### **Compensation for crop loss to be considered**

Minister for Rural Development K.C. Joseph has said that the State government will seriously consider the requests from farmers to sanction compensation for crop loss in various natural calamities. The Minister made the assurance while inaugurating an agriculture seminar organised as part of the State-level Farmers’ Day programmes at the Marine ground, here, on Monday. Mr. Joseph said that a reasonable compensation would be extended to farmers who lost their cultivable land in unexpected flood and landslide. “The attempt of the government is always to encourage genuine farmers and offer them a satisfactory environment to work,” he said.

### **Organic farming**

Expressing anxiety over the increased use of pesticides, Mr. Joseph said Kerala was currently witnessing the outbreak of several diseases as a result of the reckless use of pesticides. “The trend really shows the need to turn our attention to organic farming,” he said. C.K. Nanu, MLA, presided. Managing Director of Kerafed Asok Kumar, District Cooperative Bank president Manayath Chandran and scientists from various research institutes were present.

### **Farmers’ Day fete ends today**

The State-level Farmers’ Day celebrations will conclude at the Beach Marine Grounds in the city on Tuesday. Industries Minister P.K. Kunhalikutty will inaugurate the valedictory function of the five-day festival. Exhibitions, seminars and cultural programmes were organised as part of the celebrations, said a press release here. — Staff Reporter

### **Farmers honoured**

The Krishibhavan at Athavanad observed Farmers Day on Sunday by honouring five farmers, including a student-farmer. The Krishibhavan gave them radio sets as mementoes. Athavanad grama panchayat president Hafsa Ismail inaugurated the function. Vice president Abdul Kareem presided. Agriculture Officer Bindu Mol welcomed the gathering. Assistant Agriculture Officer P.M. Krishnakumaran proposed a vote of thanks. — Staff Reporter

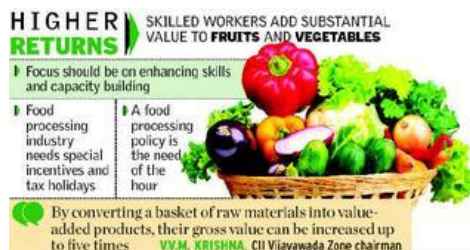
## High hopes on deemed varsity status for agri college

High hopes are pinned on 'deemed university' status for the Agriculture College at Mahanandi near Nandyal in Kurnool district. The government had recently announced a deemed university of agriculture and seed research station at Nandyal. According to reports, the 100-year-old Agriculture Research Station at Nandyal is capable of offering the infrastructure facility for both institutions contemplated by the government. Apart from offering educational facilities for the students, the institutions have potential to generate enormous commerce and lead to setting up of processing units. Around 400 acres of well-established Agriculture college campus was available at Mahanandi. With an addition of a few buildings, a full-fledged deemed university could be established. Former Professor of the University K. Ravindranath said the university should focus on new age courses like biotechnology, weather forecasting, water management, environmental sciences, forest management (the two courses would get aid from environmental agencies) and agriculture engineering. The deemed university could affiliate three polytechnics and training centres besides bringing under its purview the Veterinary Research centre contemplated at Banavasi near Yemmiganur. The Agriculture Research Station at Nandyal on 120 acres with adequate infrastructure was suitable for seed research station.

## Water released into Kakatiya Canal

The total release of water for drinking purpose into the Kakatiya Canal, the main canal of the Sri Ram Sagar Project, was increased to 1,000 cusecs on Monday. The release of water from the SRSP began on Sunday and to begin with, 500 cusecs was released. Meanwhile, 175 cusecs was given to the Lakshmi Canal for the same purpose. The SRSP, which was full to its capacity of 90 tmcft by this time last year, did not receive a considerable quantity of water this year. Except 0.5 tmcft received in the early days of this monsoon, the reservoir did not get water from the upper reaches of the river. At present, though there is 23.09 tmcft of water at 1,066 ft, it was reserved for drinking water purpose as a precautionary measure. The release of water for drinking purpose, in a way, will give relief to paddy farmers as they can draw water for their paddy fields using pump sets from the canal. However, this is also not conducive to farmers as there are frequent interruptions in power supply. Farmers who had transplanted paddy along the canal are very worried about the kharif harvest.

## Food processing industry needs value addition



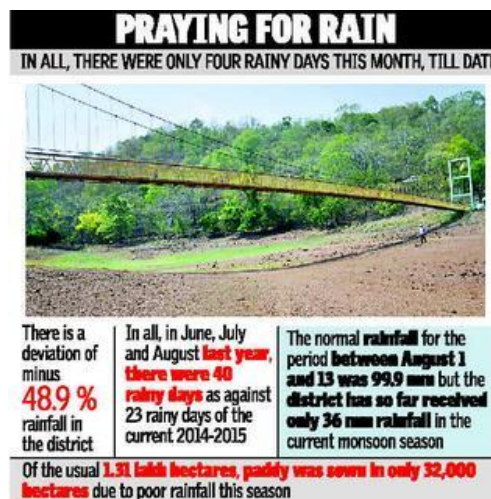
**HIGHER RETURNS** SKILLED WORKERS ADD SUBSTANTIAL VALUE TO **FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

- Focus should be on enhancing skills and capacity building
- Food processing industry needs special incentives and tax holidays
- A food processing policy is the need of the hour

By converting a basket of raw materials into value-added products, their gross value can be increased up to five times **V.V.M. KRISHNA**, CII Vijayawada Zone chairman

Andhra Pradesh which is scouting for large industrial investments is expected to give due importance to the tremendous opportunity that its food processing sector offers. An impressive variety of crops are cultivated in Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam and the two Godavari districts but a major portion of the output is exported in raw form and a sizeable part of it consumed locally. The investments will yield far higher returns if proper value addition is made not only to the agriculture but also marine and mineral produce available in the State. Guntur district, for instance, has vast areas under paddy, chilli, cotton and turmeric and other crops. Guntur and Prakasam districts have thriving tobacco trade and Krishna and the Godavari districts are major producers of paddy and other food crops. Unfortunately, successive governments have not realised that value addition is the key to unlocking their full potential. Across the region, bananas, guavas, palm oil and many more crops are grown extensively in addition to the rich marine wealth generated by the lakhs of traditional fishermen. CII Vijayawada Zone chairman V.V.M. Krishna says that by converting a basket of raw materials into value-added products, their gross value could be increased by five times compared to the current levels of processing. This is an opportunity that the A.P government can ill-afford to miss in the present circumstances. It would be doing a great deal of good to the nascent food processing industry by giving special incentives and tax holidays to help the producers in moving up the value chain. Like in other sectors, the lack of skilled manpower acted as a drag on the food processing sector too. Skilled workers can add substantial value to fruits and vegetables which are produced on a massive scale in the State. It is therefore imperative that due focus should be laid on enhancing skills and also capacity-building without which scalability cannot be achieved. The State has very few food processing industries worth mentioning and handful of projects like the Spices Park coming up near Guntur are progressing at a sluggish pace. A food processing policy that suits the current needs is sought to be given top priority.

### Scanty rainfall hits farming operations



Farmers who abstained from sowing crops owing to scanty rainfall this year, still hope that there may be some rainfall after Ganesh Chaturthi, this month's end. In all, there were

only four rainy days this month till date. There is a deviation of minus 48.9 per cent rainfall in the district. In all, in June, July and August last year, there were 40 rainy days as against 23 rainy days of the current 2014-2015. The normal annual rainfall of the district is 993.7 mm. The rainfall recorded in 2013-2014 was 1351.4 mm. The scanty rainfall has been causing distress to farmers who have been waiting to begin farming operations. Speaking to *The Hindu*, M. Ramesh, a farmer in Lybarthi village of Wardhannapet mandal said that the village had nearly 3,000 acres of irrigable land of which not even 50 per cent was sown due to lack of sufficient rainfall this season.

### **Hoping for the best**

Farmers in my village hope that there will be some rainfall after Ganesh Chaturthi, he added. The normal rainfall for the period between August 1 and 13 was 99.9 mm but the district has so far received only 36 mm rainfall in the current monsoon season. In the last 24 hours, only three mandals out of 51 received rain. Devaruppula received a rainfall of 24.2 mm, Narsampet recorded 2.4 mm while Nasimhulupet mandal received 4.2 mm rain leaving all other mandals dry. It might be noted that the number of rainy days for the corresponding period in 2013-14 was three. Power cuts have only compounded the problems of farmers in the district. Of the usual 1.31 lakh hectares, paddy was sown in only 32,000 hectares due to poor rainfall.

### **Few irrigation sources**

Agricultural scientist R. Uma Reddy explained that the total arable land in the district was about 5.20 lakh hectares, of which only 38 per cent has access to irrigation facilities such as tanks, open and bore wells while 0.02 is irrigated through SRSP canals. The remaining 52 per cent of arable land is rain-fed. Unless there is good rain or at least minimum rainfall, farmers cannot start their agricultural operations, he explained.

### **Inflow at Mettur recedes**

Despite the drop in inflow by over 1,000 cusecs, water level continues to be on the rise at Stanley Reservoir in Mettur as the level stood at 113.13 feet against its Full Reservoir Level of 120 feet on Monday. The inflow was at 20,104 cusecs against 21,084 cusecs on Sunday. Officials said that the storage also improved from 82.304 tmcft to 82.935 tmcft against the dam's capacity of 93.470 tmcft. Currently, 12,500 cusecs of water was being discharged for cultivation in delta region and for cultivation in Erode, Salem and Namakkal districts.

### **Water level at Mettur**

The water level at the Mettur Dam stood at 113.09 feet on Monday against its full reservoir level of 120 feet. The inflow was 10,980 cusecs and the discharge 11,999 cusecs.

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

### Today's Weather



Cloudy

**Tuesday, Aug 19**

Max Min

30° | 25°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 75

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:56

Sunset: 06:28

Barometer: 1010

### Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

**Wednesday, Aug 20**

Max Min

34° | 25°

### Extended Forecast for a week

**Thursday  
Aug 21**



34° | 26°

Cloudy

**Friday  
Aug 22**



35° | 25°

Partly  
Cloudy

**Saturday  
Aug 23**



35° | 25°

Partly  
Cloudy

**Sunday  
Aug 24**



35° | 25°

Partly  
Cloudy

**Monday  
Aug 25**



34° | 25°

Partly  
Cloudy

### Airport Weather

Chennai

Chennai

Rain: 0

Humidity: 75

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:56

Sunset: 06:28

Barometer: 1010



THE  NEW  
**INDIAN EXPRESS**

**Food Safety Project Opening**

Surakshita Aharam Arogyathinu Adharam' project will be inaugurated by Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala on Tuesday at Cotton Hill Government Girls' HSS. Health Minister V S Sivakumar will preside over and Education Minister P K Abdu Rabb will release a documentary CD related to the project. The government claims that the project, to be implemented by the Food Safety Commissionerate under Mission 676, will be the first such project to be implemented in India for schoolchildren. It aims to tackle diseases, including the ones caused by lifestyle, which is prevalent in the society, by making the younger generation aware of safe choices in food. Through pamphlets, documentary films, magic shows, seminars and competitions, the project aims to raise awareness about the side effects of junk food, trans fat, colouring and flavouring in food as well as narcotic substances such as gutka and pan masala. In the first phase, students chosen from selected schools would be imparted training under the Education Department. They in turn would be trained to make other children aware. Shashi Tharoor MP, Mayor K Chandrika, Collector Biju Prabhakar, top officials from the Education Department and Food Safety Commissionerate, LSG representatives and principals of the school would be present. Complaints regarding food materials can be registered at the toll-free no. 1800-425-1125 or the following numbers. T'Puram: 8943346181, Kollam: 8943346182, P'Thitta: 8943346183, Alappuzha: 8943346184, Kottayam: 8943346185, Idukki: 8943346186, Ernakulam: 8943346187, Thrissur: 8943346188, Palakkad: 8943346189, Malappuram: 8943346190, Kozhikode: 8943346191, Wayanad: 8943346192, Kannur: 8943346193, Kasaragod: 8943346194. Contact numbers of Intelligence Dept are T'Puram: 8943346195, Ekm: 8943346196, Kozhikode: 8943346197.

THE  HINDU  
**BusinessLine**

**'Rubber Board must help finance investments'**

The Rubber Board must shift its focus from providing investment subsidy for new/replanting trees to facilitating investment finance, say industry stakeholders. Small holders (less than two hectares) may be granted an interest subsidy on the capital for the pre-tapping period (first seven years) and it can be paid directly to the financial institution concerned. No investments shall go uninsured, according to consensus emerging from consultations to provide policy inputs for the National Rubber Policy 2014.

The event was organised by the National Research Programme on Plantation Development at the Centre of Development Studies here. The Centre of Development Studies is a member of an expert committee appointed by the Ministry of Commerce for the formulation of the Rubber Policy. To achieve growth, investment needs to be promoted in all segments of the sector, stakeholders felt. The current level of subsidy for new/replanting (about 10 per cent of cost till the tapping stage) paid ex post is highly inadequate.

### **Subsidy level**

The subsidy component compared poorly with that prevailing in competing countries, depriving growers in India of a level-playing field. This is also one of the reasons for the absence of timely replanting, which has in turn resulted in the aging of plantations and low productivity.

### **TN sugar industry bears the brunt of scanty rainfall**

While the sugar industry in Tamil Nadu is struggling due to a fall in area under cane cultivation and consequent drop in supply, a severe shortage of seeds could be another threat in the coming season, said N Vijayan Nair, Director, Sugarcane Breeding Institute, Coimbatore. "Scanty rainfall for the past two-three years and near drought-like situation has impacted the crop adversely. Sugar mills which had about 25,000-30,000 acres of cane planting to their command are now left with just 7,000-8,000 acres," Nair said. The Institute conducted a drought survey in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka during the first week of August. Borewells and tanks have dried up and there is no water available even for drip irrigation. Partially dry canes are now being harvested and sent to the factory for crushing, resulting in low recovery, Nair said.

### **Cyclonic whirl off TN coast signals scale-up of monsoon**

An upper air cyclonic circulation has sprung up over the southwest Bay of Bengal off the Tamil Nadu coast signalling a take-off in the monsoon over south peninsula. Upper air cyclonic circulations descend to lower levels in the atmosphere to form low-pressure areas. Initial forecasts had suggested such a possibility in the southwest Bay not many days ago. But latest indications are that the circulation would cross the coast, move towards west-southwest and ignite a flare-up over coastal Karnataka and Kerala. Along the way, a stray rain-head would move west-northwest and weave itself into a confluence of opposing winds over interior Maharashtra. The 'charge' behind the escalating monsoon over the South-West is a passing Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) wave over the Indian Ocean. MJO waves are responsible for sudden surges in monsoon setting up onsets, low-pressure areas, depressions and even storms.

## **‘Missing low’**

These waves transit from east Africa into Indian Ocean but can touch off activity over ground, in this case over south-east Arabian Sea, just off the south-west coast (Kerala). US National Centres for Environmental Prediction is of the view that the ‘missing low’ in the Bay may unveil itself in the melee here over land. The rains would keep away from northwest India while getting heavy over North-East India and less so but more widely spread over the peninsula. This state of affairs may hold right until the end of the month, which is still 13 days away, and ahead of September 1 when the monsoon is known to start signing off from the north-west border. Meanwhile, convective (rain-driving) clouds are moving east to east Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Gangetic West Bengal in the Himalayan foothills and adjoining plains. They are also seen rising over Assam, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Nagaland, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha in clear signs that the heavy rain belt is shifting in here. To the south-west of the country, the offshore trough ran down from south Maharashtra to Kerala.

## **Jasmine loses fragrance as arrivals zoom**

Jasmine is losing its charm as its prices are falling daily. “Jasmine prices had increased slightly over the past ten days, but now it has dropped sharply. Till August 10, the flower was sold at Rs. 125 a kg. But on Monday, the flower fetched Rs. 240 a kg initially but dropped to Rs. 100,” said Muthuswamy, President, Flower Merchants Welfare Association, through which the sale is conducted at Sathyamangalam. Arrival increased to 10 tonnes on Monday. This may be one of the reasons behind the fall in price. Flower vendors said that the current price may prevail for a few more days but will increase during *Ganesh Chaturthi* and also three days before Onam which falls on September 6. They said Arabian varieties of jasmine will arrive for the festival. The Arabian variant was also sold at a decreased price of Rs. 100 a kg and the arrival of the same was low at two tonnes. Some other fragrance flowers like sambangi, marigold etc also arrived for sale.

## **‘Despite curbs, China will still import cotton’**

Cotton prices in India are ruled higher than global prices, putting immense pressure on spinning mills. The divergent price movement has surprised many, as India is one of the largest cotton producers. Textile companies have demanded that the state-owned Cotton Corporation of India buy cotton during the start of the season and offload it when prices go up sharply. However, BK Mishra, Chairman and Managing Director, CCI, does not foresee the Corporation playing any role in stabilising prices. Edited excerpts:



### **Is your staff strength of 1,000 on the higher side?**

I do not think so given our mandate to support prices when it falls below minimum support price (MSP). In 2008-09, of the 290 lakh bales produced in the country, we procured 90 lakh bales, about 33 per cent. In that situation, we thought the staff strength we had was not sufficient and employed many field staff on contract and temporary basis. After 2008-09, cotton prices have risen sharply making MSP irrelevant. But even today, we have 300 centres across 11 cotton growing States. On an average, one centre needs four to five persons, and with that yardstick, we are unable to have a full strength in all our centres. We have a staff strength of 980, as against 1,100 three years back. We recruited about 20-25 people, but we need more field staff. When there is no MSP, we undertake commercial operations to meet our overhead cost. Our overhead cost is about Rs. 80 crore and employees cost is Rs. 45-50 crore.

### **How do you see the coming cotton season?**

China is the biggest consumer of cotton in the world, and was the biggest producer till 2013-14. Interestingly, after 2010-11, China has been reducing its exposure to cotton production and consumption. This is because in 2010-11, it consumed 10 million tonnes (5.88 bales equals one tonne) and produced 7 million tonnes. China's consumption has come down to 8.5 mt while production is down to 6.5 mt. Of the two million tonnes shortfall, China imports 50 per cent from India. In the last two years, China accumulated 11 mt of high-cost stock and curbed imports to sell its inventory in the domestic market. In fact, the fall in global cotton prices is due to lower imports by China. The decrease in global prices is due to panic created by the US. International spot prices are hovering 83 cents per pound, while the December contract in the futures market are trading at 69 cents per pound on the assumption that when the Indian season starts, prices may fall further. In the Indian spot market, cotton is sold at 85-87 cents per pound and may remain stable. China mills may still opt for imports as their domestic cotton prices are higher. Even with the duty of 40 per cent, imports will be a better option for Chinese companies. The Chinese government has prescribed that if a textile mill buys three bales of domestic cotton, it can import one bale. Given their consumption of 800 mt, they have to import two mt of cotton to make their yarn and fabric competitive.

### **Will the high cotton prices in India affect fabric makers?**

It is a temporary phenomenon. This is an exciting time for garment companies. We are a cotton-surplus country. Most of the ginneries have increased their capacity. So far, they have utilised the export opportunity well. Now with the slowdown in the global markets, they have to find an alternative. China may not be that lucrative. Yarn prices in India may come down with goods slated for the export market flowing into the domestic market. This will help fabric manufacturers get a cheaper input. On the other hand, prices of

fabrics and garment will remain at the same level. This will increase their profit margins. I think most of the spinning mills should go for forward integration to reap the benefits.

### **Can the Cotton Corporation play the role of a price stabiliser?**

In 2011-12, we were given the mandate to procure 10 lakh bales as a buffer stock and the government agreed to reimburse any loss incurred. We still have two lakh bales of cotton left, nobody is there to buy. I believe the textile mills just want to have a sense of security that prices will not run sky-high with an assurance of the CCI holding cotton.

### **Heavy rains in Karnataka may shrink coffee output**

Incessant rainfall over key coffee growing regions of Karnataka, the largest producing State, has resulted in berry droppings that may impact the overall bean output for the next season starting October. Harried growers in Kodagu, Chikmagalur and Hassan are looking forward to a break from continuous precipitation that has also brought in diseases such as leaf rot and stalk rot to save their crop. On Monday, the Coffee Board initiated a sample survey to assess the damage caused by heavy rains. "We will get a complete picture by the end of the week," said Y Raghuramulu, Director of Research, Coffee Board. "Rains have slowed today. Till last week, it rained heavily in some parts of coffee growing regions in Karnataka. The heavy rainfall has caused berry drop and the intensity has been very severe in the high rainfall zones," Raghuramulu said.

### **Berry dropping**

Berry dropping of about 8-10 per cent during monsoon is normal. However, this year, due to heavy rainfall some areas have reported 20-25 per cent drop. "In the high rainfall zone, berry drop is to the extent of 30-40 per cent," Raghuramulu added. Karnataka accounts for over two-thirds of the around three lakh tonnes of coffee produced in the country. This year traditionally high rainfall areas of Bhagmandala and Madikeri in Kodagu, Mudigere in Chikmagalur and Sakleshpur in Hassan had to face the nature's fury. Large areas growing mainly the robusta variety around Napoklu, Virajpet and Gonikoppa have been affected, said N Bose Mandanna, former Vice-Chairman of Coffee Board and a planter in Kodagu. "In some areas the dropping is about 20-25 per cent, while in places such as Murnad and B Shettigeri it is as high as 50 per cent. There is no possibility of a recovery," he said. Excess rainfall has also triggered leaf fall, thereby hurting the prospects for the next year's crop too, Mandanna said, adding that a break in rains would help growers to take up preventive measures against diseases such as leaf rot and stalk rot. "We have also got complaints of berry drop in cardamom areas," Raghuramulu said.

## **Output projections**

The Coffee Board, in its post-blossom estimates, has projected a record crop of 3.44 lakh tonnes for the new season beginning October, a 13 per cent increase over current year. Total output of Arabicas is pegged at 1.05 lakh tonnes, while that of Robustas is forecast at 2.34 lakh tonnes. In Karnataka, the robusta output for next season is pegged at 1.67 lakh tonnes, higher than current year's 1.32 lakh tonnes. The output of arabicas is forecast at 80,700 tonnes. D Govindappa Jayaram, Chairman, Karnataka Planters' Association, estimates that as per the current situation, the Robusta crop will be affected by 10 per cent due to stalk and bean rot.

## **Judicial intervention can resolve UP cane pricing row**



Uttar Pradesh farmers are exposed to Rs. 5,000 crore sugarcane arrears on account of dichotomous policy of the State Government of overpricing the cane unrelated to market realisation of sugar. Citing lack of profitability, millers have ignored dictates of the State Government for short payments. The Allahabad High Court on August 13 directed that 15 per cent of the three million tonnes (mt) of sugar inventory of UP mills be sold within three weeks (@5 per cent a week) to clear the dues to farmers. Any coercive action on UP's sugar mills by the State Government is held in abeyance for time being. The matter being sub judice, it inter-alia isolates Union Food Ministry, at least for next three weeks, from considering industry's other demands such as raising import duty on sugar, raw sugar export subsidy and interest-free loans from sugar development fund. The industry is lobbying for Central assistance to inject bullishness in prices and squaring up short payments. The Food Ministry's response to the industry is well-articulated and well-crafted: Clearance of cane arrears is a must for anything else. The court has fixed a minimum selling price of Rs. 3,100/quintal. Net realisation will be about Rs. 1,395 crore or about Rs. 465 crore a week by auctioning 1,50,000 mt a week – a huge tonnage, 35 per cent of weekly national consumption of 4,30,000 mt/week (annual consumption 22.5 mt). Amount realised, as directed by the court, will be deposited in separate bank accounts of District Magistrates, of which 30 per cent (about Rs. 418 crore) will go to farmers. The banks have argued that sugar stocks are hypothecated to them by millers against working

capital loans. Thus they hold first charge from such accruals. On August 14, NCDEX spot price was Rs. 3,300/quintal at Delhi. The spread of Rs. 200 (Rs. 3,300-3,100) is awfully insufficient for sustenance of wholesale chain for defraying cost of financing, labour, transportation, transit shortages, warehousing, carrying charges, incidentals expenses and profit. If by chance, first weekly disposal is a success, market price will drop further, thereby stalling next week sale. Possibility of sale to any MNC/industrial users such as Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Cadbury, Britannia, etc. appears bleak as they can avail themselves of credit facility from millers in Karnataka, Maharashtra or Tamil Nadu. The entire banking system is already under a microscope due to rising bad debts. Currently, they are highly stressed and distressed by the recent case of Syndicate Bank. Therefore, banks may assert their precedence and priority with full force in the Supreme Court, if the High Court fails to provide relief. The matter in courts will get prolonged; UP mill owners may get protracted reprieve, while sugar stocks stay where they are. Recovery of cane arrears appears to be a distant dream. Sugar prices domestically and internationally are foreseen depressed for another year. Even at such a bearish scenario and factoring monsoon too, Indian output in 2014-15 is forecast to remain unchanged at 24-25 mt with carry in of about 7.5 mt on November 1, 2014 – a surplus of around 10 mt (taking consumption 22.5 mt). Farmers are not downsizing sugarcane production and appear to be content with even partial payments availed by them. The industry is also on a capacity expansion mode. Does it not lend credence to collective viability of the sugar industry when appraised with other by products? This may perhaps be debateable either way. Due to prolonged controversy, the UP Government would have realised the mess they have created by pursuing theory of absurdity in fixing irrational State Advisory Prices (SAP) of Rs. 280 in 2013-14, while in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu it varies between Rs. 220 and Rs. 240/quintal. To set matters right, the UP Government may announce reasonable SAP closer to Rs. 220 for 2014-15 by appropriately calibrating it with rate of recovery and applying the condition that mills will settle old cane arrears too. This will average out two years cane value to about Rs. 245. If this is politically unpalatable or unworkable, then this is a golden opportunity for the industry to file an interlocutory application, if it has not done already, in the Allahabad High Court with documentary evidence of input-output data correlated to market prices. The Centre and the banks can also be made party to this petition and the court may seek Central endorsement on the faux-pas committed by the UP Government. Rational policy for SAP can then be defined by the judiciary. The concept of sugar 'Made in India' has to be supported by dynamics of market rather than political or bureaucratic ideas. Why not revert to the old rationale of FRP (Fair Remunerative Price) decided by CACP than to have 10 SAPs? Policies of populism of poverty favour political parties rather than individuals. Framers – big or small – are also land owners, an asset class. Their earnings are exempt from tax. Disparity in income with other sections of society cannot be construed as poverty. Recent World Bank report suggests sharp decline in Indian poverty in 2011 to 100 million in poor based upon PPP of \$1.25 a day. Also, sugarcane remains the most profitable crop compared to other crops as per CACP analysis. This is the time to make the change in SAP's policy profile.



### **Agriculture college to start in-house organic course for farmers**

In a major move to give thrust on organic farming, Agricultural College and Research Institute (AC & RI), Madurai of Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, will sign a Memorandum of Understanding with organic farming community of Aruppukottai. Through this MoU, TNAU will share its expertise on organic farming, providing in-house training to this farmer's group. The college will be signing the MoU with Sustainable Agro Alliance (SAAL) of Aruppukottai during the inauguration of golden jubilee year on Tuesday. The 90-day in-house training programme will be carried out through open and distance learning centre of TNAU. Explaining about the programme, P Shanthi, director of ODL, TNAU said a group of organic farmers from Aruppukottai approached them to learn organic farming in a more scientific manner. The first batch of 30 farmers will start their training from September. During the training, they will be allotted five to 10 cents of land inside the AC & RI premises and they will be taught to carry out organic farming. Most candidates who opt for the course are organic vegetable farmers and they can harvest the vegetable crop within 90 days. The minimum qualification for attending this course will be a pass in Class 8. However, most candidates who approached them for the course were ITI (Technical Institute) diploma holders who had become organic farmers, she mentioned. The course fee has been fixed as Rs 4,000. Around 250 farmers from Aruppukottai region are part of SAAL and willing to learn organic farming and there will be steady flow of candidates for training, she said. Jayabala Murugan of SAAL from Aruppukottai said that they have been carrying out organic farming for more than a year under the guidance of an agency called Christian Aid in Aruppukottai. "We have sought technical expertise from TNAU and we will be able to absorb these trained hands in our organization as agro-entrepreneurs. Further the ones trained under TNAU can act as master trainers to reach out more people educating them on organic farming", he said. Shanthi also stated that B F Technology (Bachelor of Farm Technology) course offered by TNAU through ODL is a great success and they are getting steady stream of students from all walks of lives. "There is increased interest among people to take up farming and we have lot of candidates for the course", she added.

# THE ECONOMIC TIMES

## Horticulture farmers hit by flash floods in Uttarakhand, UP



The death toll in floods that have hit parts of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam and Uttarakhand has been put at 100, although that's seen as conservative, while more than 20 lakh people may still be marooned. Nearly 50,000 have been rescued, according to estimates. The number of people who have died could rise once rescue operations are completed. National Disaster Response Force relief teams in the flood-hit states are moving people to safer areas, officials said. A cloud burst in Uttarakhand left a massive swathe of destruction, washing away homes and schools, besides leaving villages and farms submerged after flash floods. Areas in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Assam were inundated as rivers overflowed after Nepal was forced to open dam gates upstream. At least 50 people are estimated to have died in Uttarakhand. Officials in neighboring Uttar Pradesh state reported 34 deaths while nine are said to have died in Bihar. Farmers are trying to cope with the situation where possible. "It's a challenging situation with 120 villages hit by the floods. We estimate over 25,000 hectares largely under paddy to be impacted. Sugarcane crop is unlikely to see any major loss," said Amrit Lal Meena, agriculture secretary, Bihar. Farmers in these villages could sow short-duration paddy or opt for early rabi sowing of maize, pulses --masur, chana--and oilseeds such as mustard, he said. Paddy has been sown on 85 per cent of the targeted 34 lakh hectares in the state. Most parts of the flood-hit regions are totally marooned and can only be reached by helicopter, said AK Bishnoi, Uttar Pradesh director of agriculture. "The districts of Bahraich, Shravasti, Balrampur, Gonda, have been severely impacted. We assume over 65,000 hectare under paddy, sugarcane and pulses to be affected by the floods," Bishnoi said. He said that if the water remained stagnant it could damage the paddy. We are advising farmers to go for 60-day oilseed crop, toria, if their farms are flooded," he said.

Horticulture farmers have been badly hit, said Anuj Kumar, managing director of Knids Green Pvt., which procures 10-15 tonnes of vegetables a day from producer companies in Bihar and individual farmers and traders in different states. "The immediate impact of the floods has been on horticulture farmers, who were harvesting the crop," he said. "Prices have increased by over 50 per cent to 100 per cent, so there is some comfort to farmers." In Patna, lady finger, which was quoted at Rs 25 a kg in retail two days ago, was being sold at Rs 45-50 a kg. Potato prices had increased by 50 per cent to Rs 30 a kg, while cucurbits had doubled to Rs 30 a kg, said Kumar. Vegetable vendors in Delhi reported a jump in prices. "Prices of most vegetables have increased by Rs 5-10 a kg in the past two days," said Ranjit Singh, a vegetable vendor in the Mayur Vihar area of New Delhi. He said prices of potatoes, onions and tomatoes had also seen an upswing. The weather office forecast heavy rainfall over east and northeast India and parts of the south in the next 48 hours. "We don't see any possibility of heavy rains over Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh in the next 72 hours. However, in isolated pockets of east India, heavy rains are expected. These are not going to be as intense as it has been in the past four days," said BP Yadav, head of the National Weather Forecasting Centre at the India Meteorological Department in New Delhi. Rain over the past few days is expected to help sowing of paddy and maize in Bihar, said Meena. "Twenty-nine out of 37 districts in the state have received less-than-normal rainfall. We expect sowing to pick up this season," he said. The seasonal monsoon deficit in the state is 10 per cent. IMD data showed that 57 per cent of the country — 20 out of 36 subdivisions — received normal monsoon rainfall this season.