

Passion for cultivation of jasmine takes her places

T. APPALA NAIDU

Starting with Jasmine cultivation on a 2-acre land in 2006, Sridevi Appidi now exports flowers to Hyderabad, makes a profit of Rs.50,000 per acre



Sridevi at her jasmine field at Pulluru village in Mylavaram mandal in Krishna district.— Photo: T. APPALA NAIDU. She took a liking for agriculture during her college days and she chose her passion to be her profession. Starting her journey with farming from the 2-acre land of her father in 2006, Sridevi Appidi, is now a progressive jasmine farmer who not only exports flowers to Hyderabad but also created job opportunity for many women. A Bachelor in Arts from the Siddhartha Women's College, Vijayawada, Ms. Sridevi has scripted her success at her native village Pulluru in Mylavaram mandal. "When I felt I am suited for agriculture and can mould myself into a complete farmer, I tried my hand in Jasmine cultivation. Now, I export flowers to Hyderabad," Ms. Sridevi says.

Progressive woman farmer

She owns two acres on her name and takes pride in being a progressive woman farmer.

“I am a farmer and it is official as I raise crop loans from banks and enjoy the other benefits extended to farmers in the State. Many of my friends chose other professions. But, I always knew that agriculture was my passion. Now, I provide works for another 15 women on my fields half of the year,” says Ms. Sridevi, who allows only women to work on her field. “Only one male worker is there to spray pesticides as it is not recommended for women owing to health issues,” she says. Ms. Sridevi cultivates Jasmine on 4 acres and earns at least Rs.50,000 profit per acre per season, between February and August. “The income has been steadily growing after we started exporting flowers to Hyderabad instead of supplying them to local middlemen,” says Ms. Sridevi.

Drip irrigation

On farm technology front, she has installed drip irrigation facility in two acres. “It saves working hours and ensures timely irrigation to plants,” she adds.

Starting with jasmine cultivation on a 2-acre land in 2006, Sridevi Appidi now exports flowers to Hyderabad

Sanghatane condemns eviction of farmers by Forest Department

The Mysore unit of the Raitha Krishi Karmikara Sanghatane (RKS) has condemned the eviction of farmers by the Forest Department in Yadgir and Shimoga districts a few days ago. The farmers were evicted from four tandas in Kamalanagar in Yadgir district and Choradi and Byadanala villages near Ananthapuram in Shimoga district. They had been cultivating the forest lands for generations. Though the government had instructed officials not to evict the farmers or tribal people who have been cultivating on forest land, they had resorted to forced eviction, the sanghatane pointed out. Joint committee M. Shashidhar, convener of the Mysore unit of the RKS, in a statement issued here on Sunday said that as per the Supreme Court direction, the State government had formed a joint committee comprising of senior officials from the Revenue, Forest and Land Surveyors departments to conduct a survey of farmers subsisting on forest land and submit a report within six months to the government. How could forest officials evict farmers when the survey was in progress, he asked. He urged the government to exclude Forest Department officials who supervised the eviction from the joint committee and suggested that farmers’ leaders be included so that a “genuine” report could be prepared. Disciplinary action Mr. Shashidhar urged the government to take disciplinary action against the officials involved.

The farmers had been cultivating forest land in Yadgir and Shimoga districts

Prolonged dry spell render farmers helpless




With rainfall in June being almost on the negligible side, the sowing operations are seriously affected Farmers in Kurnool district are in deep distress due to adverse weather conditions. With the rainfall in June being almost on the negligible side, the sowing operations are seriously affected. Though the agriculture officials claim a rainfall of 58 mm as against the normal 77 mm, the farmers say that it's not sufficient to take up sowing operations except land preparation. The farmers say that they are facing unprecedented crisis the first time during the season. Apart from the dry spell, shortage of seed, power cut and lack of clarity on the loan waiver scheme has affected them badly. Due to this, there will be a drastic change in crop pattern this year. According to official estimation, 6.12 lakh farmers have borrowed loans worth Rs. 4,344 crore of which crop loan accounted for Rs. 2,819 crore, gold loan – Rs. 315 crore and term loan – Rs. 92 crore. The district has a total cultivable area of 5.85 lakh hectare. The area under cotton is likely to increase to 2 lakh hectare from 1.21 lakh hectare last year. Groundnut is cultivated in 1.34 lakh hectare. Maize area may also increase while paddy and other crops will remain the same. The bankers have told the farmers that they will renew the loans only when the government formally announces the loan waiver. Otherwise, they are to pay the loans and get them renewed. Some of the farmers say that they would repay the loans and get fresh ones, but the State government has to include them in the loan waiver.

With monsoon not keeping its date in Kurnool district, sowing operations have been seriously affected

SMSes come to the aid of farmers

R. AVADHANI

Farmers being imparted information on the nature of soil in addition to the kind of fertilizers to be used

KEEPING PACE WITH TECHNOLOGY			
	Each farmer is issued an identity number, which also carries his phone number	The soil testing result is automatically uploaded on a website	The results are uploaded by the Agriculture Commissionerate in Hyderabad
	Farmers can get the details by entering their 16-digit testing model number, supplied by the Soil Testing Lab	A pilot project was successfully completed in Medak and Rangareddy district by selecting 100 farmers from each district	
	Suggestions on nutrients through mobiles commenced last year on an experimental basis		As many farmers are not tech savvy, messages were sent to them in Telugu on their mobiles

Manaiiah, a farmer from Sadashivpet in Medak district, has decided to cultivate cotton in the current kharif season and has already submitted his soil sample at the testing laboratory located at the district headquarters.

Welcome advice

Early this month, Mr Manaiiah received a short messaging service (SMS) on his mobile no 73823 65726 about the condition of his soil which stated that his heavy black soil had pH 7.6 and EC 10. He was asked to use four tonnes of green manure per acre, in addition to urea and other required fertilizers.

Less human intervention

This is being done automatically with less human intervention, except entering data. This was part of the exercise being held by the Agriculture Department to use technology to extend better services to farmers. Each farmer is issued an identity number, which also carries the phone number of the farmer when they approach soil testing lab (STL) to get their soil tested. Once the soil testing result was generated it was automatically uploaded in the website <http://agrisnet.tg.nic.in>. This was being done by the Agriculture Commissionerate in Hyderabad.

Website

Farmers who can visit the website can get the details by entering 16 digit testing model number which is being supplied by the Soil Testing Lab (STL) at the district headquarter. However, as many farmers are not tech savvy, it was decided to send the message in Telugu to their mobiles. Actually, suggestions on nutrients through mobiles commenced last year on an experimental basis by the department and a pilot project was successfully completed in Medak and Ranga Reddy district by selecting 100 farmers from each district.

‘By and large successful’

“During the months of April, May and till June 10 we have tested about 4,000 samples and the results were sent to farmers. For about 1,200 farmers we sent the results through SMSes. Some of the farmers are able to read and contact us, while some others faced a problem as there was no Telugu software available in the phones they were using to read the message. However, by and large the experiment was successful,” said M. Karunkar Reddy, Assistant Director, STL.

Each farmer is being generated with an ID number, which also carries a phone number of the farmer when they approach soil testing lab (STL)

Workshop on agricultural marketing

The Institute of Development Studies, University of Mysore, in association with the National Institute of Agricultural Extension, Hyderabad, will organise a five-day training programme on 'Agricultural marketing-the new paradigms' from June 23. Senior officers from the departments of Agriculture, Sericulture, Agricultural Marketing, Fisheries, and Horticulture, and from Krishi Vigyan Kendras will take part. The objective is to sensitise the participants about new dimensions in agricultural marketing and to equip them with tools to increase linkage with the market.

Fishing boat hit by ship, again

DEEPA H. RAMAKRISHNAN

KAVITA KISHORE

Six Kasimedu fishermen were adrift at sea for over 7 hours

A few minutes after 10.30 p.m. on Saturday, when a group of fishermen from Kasimedu were checking on their net at sea, a ship leaving Chennai Port suddenly loomed over them and hit their boat. "We were thrown into the sea in the dark along with our boat, which overturned and was damaged. Since we could not turn it over again, one by one we managed to get atop the boat and stayed there, waiting for light. As soon as we saw the first rays of the sun, we started waving our clothes hoping to get attention," said D. Gopinath, the driver of the boat. Along with Gopinath, Logesh (22), Suresh (37), Baba Rao (29), Josaiah (37) and Abdar Ali (43) were saved by a passing boat on Sunday morning. The men had left Kasimedu fishing harbour at 7 a.m. on Saturday, had their dinner around 9 p.m., and taken a short break when the ship hit them, despite their flashing warning signals. This is not the first instance of ships hitting fishing boats off Chennai coast. There were two such instances last year. In the first incident, in March, a fisherman, T. Anandan, died, and in the second incident, three men were injured when their boat was hit. M.D. Dayalan of Indian Fishermen Association said many such incidents went unnoticed as the police do not register complaints most often. "They say it is difficult to search for an unnamed ship. But when a ship as tall as the LIC building looms over us at night, it is impossible to see its name. We only think of saving our lives then. Last month, there was a similar incident in Pulicat but the police did not register the complaint," he said. Mr. Dayalan said the State government must direct police stations to register complaints in such cases. The N4 Fishing Harbour police station registered a complaint on Saturday's incident.

Withering flowers pass on their beauty

D. RADHAKRISHNAN

Horticulture Department collecting seeds from them at Udhagamandalam



Workers engaged in seed collection activities at the Government Botanical Garden in Udhagamandalam, on Saturday.— Photo: M. Sathyamoorthy With many of the flowers that provided a visual treat to lakhs of visitors who flocked to the Government Botanical Garden during the recently-concluded summer tourist season beginning to wither, the Department of Horticulture, which maintains the attraction, has started work on collecting seeds from them. Pointing out that during April and May alone, 8.38 lakh tourists enjoyed seeing the flowers in full bloom, the Deputy Director of Horticulture, N. Mani, told *The Hindu* that the collection of seeds was an important annual activity. Employees with years of experience in doing such jobs carefully remove the seeds and spread them out for drying. While about 25 per cent of the seeds are kept aside for use in the garden during the following summer, the remaining are sold to tourists and locals. Among the annuals from which seeds are usually collected are *Salvia*, *Aster*, *Calendula*, *Saponaria*, *Zinnia*, Candytuft and Marigold, he said that seeds of flowers like Marigold and *Salvia* are popular among tourists as they can be grown in the plains during winter. Arrangements for the autumn season (September/October) — also referred to as second season — had commenced, Mr. Mani said, adding that sowing operations to raise 1.5 lakh to 2 lakh plants were over. Among the varieties were those which were capable of withstanding wet conditions such as *Begonia*, French Marigold, *Helichrysum*, *Dahlia* and Sweet william.

Plan of action

A plan of action had been drawn up to spruce up the garden, particularly the lawns. During the 2013 autumn season, over 2.73 lakh tourists visited the garden.

Flower plants for sale

Different flowering plants and ornamental plants are for sale at the Department of Horticulture, Bendoorwell. The department is selling pepper, cocoa and cashew saplings at its nursery at Padil. Persons can purchase them by paying the fee fixed.

OFFICE-BEARERS OF RETIRED OFFICERS' BODY

B.J. Bhandary has been elected president of Dakshina Kannada Retired Police Officers' Welfare Association. Anusuya has been elected as vice-president, Manjunath Rai as general secretary and Narayana Baindoor as treasurer. Sai Kumar Poonja has been elected as honorary president, a release said.

SC AND ST B.COM SEATS VACANT

Eight seats reserved for Scheduled Caste students and two seats reserved for Scheduled Tribe students for admission to I B. Com. course at Sharada College, Basrur, Udupi district for 2014-15 are lying vacant. Last date to fill the seats is June 28. Such students willing to join the course can contact the principal of the college, a release from Mangalore University said.

DEVELOPMENT MEET

IN BELTHANGADY

Deputy Commissioner A.B. Ibrahim will conduct a meeting in connection with development of remote villages and villages where Maoists activities have been noticed in Belthangady taluk panchayat office on June 25 at 9 a.m., an official release said.

TRAINING FOR ST LAW GRADUATE

The government's Integrated Tribal Development Project, Mangalore, has invited applications from Scheduled Tribe law graduates for imparting them four-year training in judicial administration. Applicants should not be aged above 40 years. Last date to apply is July 19. The trainees selected will be given a monthly allowance of Rs. 2,000 during the training period.

HOTEL MANAGEMENT COURSE

Government Women Industrial Training Institute, Mangalore, has invited applications for hotel management course for 2014-15. The course will be offered in association with The Gateway Hotel. For details, call 2216360.

SEMINAR ON PG CET

P.A. College of Engineering, Nadupadavu, will organise a free seminar on personality development and Postgraduate Common Entrance Test/ Karnataka Management Aptitude Test at the college at 10 a.m. on June 25.

UAS develops jackfruit biscuit, muffin, drink



Jack of all taste: Jackfruit peda and juice developed by University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore.

Even as the Department of Horticulture is contemplating organising a jackfruit fair at Kadri Park here next month to showcase value-added products of the fruit and create market opportunities for them, University of Agricultural Science (UAS), Bangalore, will exhibit various jackfruit products, including jackfruit biscuit and muffin, developed and standardised by it in the State capital on June 24. It would be an opportunity for food processors, budding jackfruit entrepreneurs from Dakshina Kannada to see and taste value-added products of jackfruit developed and standardised by the university.

According to a press release from the university, products like ready-to-cook tender jackfruit, ice-cream, peda, squash, jack seed powder, ready-to-serve drink, jackfruit biscuit and jackfruit muffin will be exhibited and also served for trial to the food industry representatives. The event titled 'Research-industry interface meet on jackfruit value-added products', is aimed at drawing the attention of food processing industry to take up mass production of these novel products, the release said. These products are being popularised by the university and the Union Department of Biotechnology through the multi-institutional project titled 'A value chain on jackfruit and its products', it said. The meet will be held at North Block Conference Hall at 10 a.m. There is no registration fee. Industry representatives may register on June 23, through phone or mail. For details, call 9901848985 or e-mail:re.uas.blore@gmail.com, the release said. Meanwhile, budding entrepreneurs at a jackfruit mela at Punacha in Bantwal taluk, Dakshina Kannada on Sunday shared their experiences of making different products. Speaking at the valedictory, Yogesh H.R., Deputy Director, Department of Horticulture, which was promoting jackfruit clusters in Dakshina Kannada, said that if the exhibition was organised at Kadri Park in Mangalore it would draw the attention of many entrepreneurs who could create new market for the products.

UAS to promote jackfruit nurseries

Farmers to multiply saplings by grafting will get Rs. 1 lakh

University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Bangalore, has planned to promote community nurseries of jackfruit in Dakshina Kannada and Uttara Kannada, said Shyamamma. S, Associate Professor (Horticulture), UAS. Speaking to *The Hindu* on the sidelines of a jackfruit 'mela' at Punacha, she said that the nurseries would be promoted under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY). Under the programme, the Department of Horticulture would identify farmers who would multiply the saplings of jackfruit varieties, identified by UAS, through grafting. They would be given Rs. 1 lakh grant initially for setting up nurseries and sale of saplings. She said that UAS had developed certain varieties of jackfruit which would have 60 per cent pulp. Those varieties would be promoted in community nurseries. She said food processors preferred jackfruit with high pulp content for making value-added products. Consumers also preferred such varieties. Ms. Shyamamma said the nurseries would initially be promoted in the two districts first and later in other districts. She said all grafted saplings did not uniformly yield in the State. Some varieties, which suited the coastal belt and Malnad belt, did not yield much in "bayaluseeme" areas and visa-versa. Hence, the varieties suited to the region would be promoted through community nurseries. Earlier in her key note address at the inaugural session of the 'mela', she said the university had plans to bring out a booklet on machinery and tools available for jackfruit harvesting, cutting and processing. The Karnataka Milk Federation (KMF) has made peda and ice-cream using jackfruit on a trial basis, said Shyamamma. S, Associate Professor (Horticulture), UAS.

Now KMF is looking for regular supply of jackfruit pulp if it is to go for commercial production, she said

Bacterial wilt not to bug vegetable farmers anymore

T. NANDAKUMAR

Better Returns	Wilt-resistant varieties
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ KAU's wilt-resistant vegetable seedlings■ Successful field trials over one year <p>It is a blessing for farmers and a small but vital step towards self-sufficiency in vegetable production."</p>  <p>P. Rajendran, Vice Chancellor, KAU</p>	 <p>BRINJAL Surya, Swetha, Haritha</p> <p>CHILLI Ujjwala, Anugraha</p> <p>TOMATO Sakthi, Anagha, Manulakshmi</p> <p>Bacterial wilt is caused by <i>Ralstonia solanacearum</i></p>

KAU scientists use grafting to produce wilt-resistant vegetable seedlings

Vegetable farmers in Kerala can now look forward to better returns, thanks to the success achieved by Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) in the fight against bacterial wilt, an infection that has blighted many a crop. The university has come up with a grafting technology to produce wilt-resistant vegetable seedlings. The methodology has been standardised following successful field trials across the State over the past one year. The university has released three wilt-resistant varieties of brinjal, namely Surya, Swetha and Haritha; two varieties of chilli, Ujjwala and Anugraha; and three varieties of tomato, Sakthi, Anagha, and Manulakshmi, all of them suitable for cultivation in wilt-sick soils.

More production

“Immunity to bacterial wilt means a significant enhancement in vegetable production. It is a blessing for the farmers and a small but vital step towards self-sufficiency in vegetable production,” says P. Rajendran, Vice-Chancellor, KAU. Bacterial wilt is caused by *Ralstonia solanacearum*, a soil-borne bacteria which enters the plants through root injuries. Inside the plant, the bacteria multiplies and blocks vascular bundles, the chief conducting system of water and nutrients, leading to sudden wilting of plants. In Kerala, bacterial wilt is common in brinjal, chillies, and tomato, and occasionally found in cucurbitaceous vegetables such as bitter gourd, snake gourd, cucumber, and ash gourd.

Field trials

“Field trials were successful, and the grafted seedlings are gaining popularity,” says C. Narayanankutty, Professor, Agricultural Research Station, Mannuthy, who developed the technology. While brinjal and tomato seedlings were grafted onto wilt-resistant rootstock of *Solanum torvum*, hybrids of chilli and capsicum were grafted on to domestic varieties of wilt-resistant chilli.

Grafted seedlings

The Agricultural Research Station, Mannuthy, started supplying grafted seedlings of tomato, brinjal and chilli in large numbers last year. “Reports indicate that the technology of combining the yield of hybrids and the wilt-resistance of selected varieties has become a landmark success in vegetable farming in the State,” a university spokesperson said.

Keywords: vegetable farmers, Bacterial wilt, Kerala Agricultural University

His farm is termed a ‘rice bank’

While the rice diversity mapping initiative has resulted in the documentation of over 300 varieties indigenous to Karnataka, the Sahaja Samruddha’s network of farmers have formed a rice bank of 786 varieties from different parts of the country. These rice varieties are being stored by a farmer, Syed Ghani Khan of Malavalli, who is also known for the many mango varieties he cultivates in his farm.

Recognition

“Born in a family of farmers, Mr. Khan has been tilling the land given to his forefathers by Tipu Sultan. His farm is recognised as a rice bank owing to the many varieties available with him,” said Seema G. Prasad, State coordinator, Save Our Rice Campaign. An exotic variety, the Bangarkovi, was once cultivated near T. Narsipura in Mysore district and can be rarely found these days. So is the case with the Alursanna variety which used to be cultivated at Mudigere.

Rare varieties

While Gowrisanna and Mysore Mallige are still available, the Massuri variety, once grown in Mysore, is extremely rare. The other rare varieties include Sampige, Kyasari, Dappa Batha, Puttabatha, Chippiga, Swati Batha, Jolaga, Anekombina Batha, and Nettibellaki among others.

Preserving rice varieties for posterity

R. KRISHNA KUMAR

Rice diversity mapping has helped document over 300 varieties



Through a Participatory Rural Appraisal technique, volunteers collect information on the various rice varieties in villages.— FILE PHOTO: M.A. SRIRAM

A unique volunteer-driven effort to map the rice diversity of Karnataka has resulted in the documentation of more than 300 rice varieties. The project, an ongoing process, does not entail government help and is born out of the deep-rooted desire of organic activists to celebrate the diversity of rice in the State and create a seed bank for posterity. “The concept of documenting rice varieties in the State began almost 10 years ago. It coincided with the emergence of the ‘Save Our Rice Campaign’, a movement that spread across the country among farmer groups who rooted for indigenous rice varieties as they were suited for the local climate and soil conditions,” said Seema G. Prasad, State coordinator, Save Our Rice Campaign. She told *The Hindu* that the emergence of the high-breed variety, promoted by the government, saw a large many farmers opting for it and this has led to mono-culture in the present times. “Hardly any farmer cultivates the high-yielding indigenous rice variety. As a result most rice varieties will be lost to posterity,” she said. The mapping of rice varieties began when engineer-turned farmer Krishna Prasad, co-founder of Sahaja Samruddha, was determined to conserve as many rice varieties as possible and began networking with farmers. “We found that in each village there were a few farmers who were interested in the conservation of old rice varieties. Rice is not merely a crop but part of the cultural heritage of the land and its people. Some varieties have aromatic and medicinal properties and many proverbs and folk culture have evolved around them,” Mr. Prasad said. Through a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) technique, volunteers and farmers collected information on various rice varieties in each village. They obtained information from farmers belonging to the older generation on the yield and adaptability to local soil and climate. “Thus began the concept of seed mapping. The Bangarkovi variety, mainly grown in Mysore, is now rare and difficult to come by,” Mr. Prasad explained. The painstaking effort of rice mapping has led to the documentation of over 300 indigenous varieties of rice unique to the State. These varieties are available to farmers for cultivation through Sahaja Samruddha, a network comprising nearly 2,000

farmers, including rice breeders, and 30 organisations which are part of the rice conservation programme.

National rubber policy in the offing

The Union government will formulate a 'National Rubber Policy' (NRP) to address the various issues relating to production, development, consumption, and import of all types of natural, synthetic, and reclaimed rubber, and export of rubber and related products. For the purpose, the government has decided to set up an expert committee comprising representatives of various stake holders in the rubber sector. A notification in this connection issued by the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry on June 20 says that the expert committee will be serviced by the Rubber Board and has been advised to submit the draft of the NRP within six months. The notification says that the decision has been taken "in the wake of rubber consuming industries expressing concern over decline in rubber productivity and availability of various forms of rubber for industrial use in the country. Rubber growers have also agitated on the issue of increased risk to production due to climatic factors and adverse price movements caused by imports". The expert committee will comprise 23 members, and Kerala which is the major natural rubber producing State in the country will be represented in it by a representative of the State government and a representative of the Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram. The committee will also comprise the Chairman of the Rubber Board, a member of the All India Rubber Industries Association, member of the Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association, two representatives of the natural rubber growers association, and a member of the Association of Latex Producers.

Water level at Mettur

The water level in the Mettur Dam stood at 43.39 feet on Sunday against its full level of 120 feet.

The inflow was 320 cusecs and the discharge, 2,000 cusecs.

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Monday, Jun 23

Max Min
38° | 29°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 59

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:44

Sunset: 06:37

Barometer: 1007

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Tuesday, Jun 24

Max Min
39° | 30°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday
Jun 25



39° | 30°
Cloudy

Thursday
Jun 26



40° | 30°
Partly Cloudy

Friday
Jun 27



39° | 27°
Cloudy

Saturday
Jun 28



37° | 28°
Partly Cloudy

Sunday
Jun 29



37° | 30°
Partly Cloudy

Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:24

Humidity: 62

Sunset: 07:22

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1002



Weak Monsoon Prediction Puts Farmers in a Fix



Those farmers in other areas and depending on canals, local tanks and, of course, the rain god have started preparations for sowing the Kharif crops. According official reports, about -32.5” deficit rainfall registered in the district so far. In view of the weak monsoon, agriculture officials expect the crop area reduced by 42,700 hectares. In the 2013 Kharif season, it was 5,61,049 hectares and in the 2014 season it is expected to be 5,18,349 hectares. Enabati Bikshapathi from Manikyapur in Bheemdeverapalli, who raised paddy, maize and cotton in his 5-acre land, suffered a 50 per cent yield loss last year and is now hesitating to get into the act. He desperately seeks rain god’s mercy. He has a 120-ft-deep agricultural well but water is available to a mere height of 3 feet. If he starts irrigating his field, the available water won’t be sufficient even to wet half of the field. Moreover, electricity should be available when needed. Supply of adequate quantities of paddy seeds from the nearby cooperative society will be another problem he will encounter. In the district, the main crops raised are paddy, maize and cotton. This time, agriculture officials estimate the area under paddy crop to be 1,63,574 hectares (2,13,934 hectares last year), maize 57,432 hectares (63,540 last year) and cotton 2,30,589 hectares (2,33,248 hectares last Kharif). Joint director of agriculture B Prasad claims that there is no shortage of seeds and fertilizers and advises farmers to lift the stock as per their requirement and not to resort to hoarding which may result in shortage and deprive other farmers of seeds and fertilizers. About 1,06,016 quintals of fertilizer is available now and seeds have been allotted to the district on 50 % subsidy. Cotton seeds (Mahyco and others) have been allotted more than the indent. “We had placed an indent for 14,13,050 quintals and were allotted 14,64,550 quintals by the government. We have distributed 3,92,069 quintals of seeds so far and are keeping a stock of 7,59,672 quintals,” the joint director said.

Mrigasira Karte Belies the Hopes of Nalgonda Farmers

By A. Seshacharyulu



NALGONDA: The farming community is suffering a lot with no sign of rains though the Kharif season has already commenced in the first week of June. Farmers expect to see the rains by second week but there has been no sign of the rains even after commencement of the third week and now with reports that rains can not be expected till another week, they are a distressed lot. As such, there are few rains in certain places which are not sufficient for planting. As per the system in vogue, from the date of commencement of Mrigasira Karte itself temperature has to come down. But it has not been the case in the present season. The persisting oppressive heat is spoiling plantation in some areas. In the recent past there was some unseasonal and unwanted rainfall prompting farmers in some places to plant idle crops (metta pantalu) but the efforts went in vain. The farming community fears that if plantation is delayed, the yield will be reduced which will result in loss of income to them. Agriculture department officials assure farmers of rains by the 15th of July. During the present Kharif season, the 5.5 lakh hectares of land in the district will be cultivated with different crops, mostly paddy and cotton. There is a stock of 38,000 quintals of paddy seeds, 14,80,176 cotton seed packets and 52,647 tonnes of fertilizers with the agriculture department. Joint director of agriculture K. Narasimha Rao told Express that they were expecting rains by 15th of July. If it is delayed further, the department would come out with a contingency plan, he said. In case of rains do not occur till July 15, an area only 4,82,837 hectares of the normal 5,33,516 hectares is likely to be sown. Thus, an area of 50,679 hectares will be left without sowing and a contingency plan will be prepared for that area. Red gram and green gram will be the major crops to be raised in 15,000 and 10,000 hectares respectively under the contingency plan. Castor in 8,050 hectares and groundnut in 7,500 hectares of land will be the other important contingent crops. In case rains do not occur till July 30, an area of 4,32,137 hectares is likely to be sown, leaving 1,01,379 hectare area uncultivated and a contingency plan is prepared for 42,150-hectare area. Red gram and green gram will be cultivated under the contingency plan in 22,500 hectares and 5,000 hectares respectively. Castor in 4,100 hectares, and groundnut and maize in 3,500 hectares each are the other important contingent crops. S. Lingaiah of Kurrampally village in Kanagal mandal said that there was some rain in the village a month ago. "I thought it was the beginning of rains and I have planted cotton seeds in my two-acre field. But monsoon played truant and the harsh summer persisted, damaging the land. We are waiting desperately for rains," he said. N. Ratnam of Madugulapally village in Thipparthi mandal said that the last three years had seen rainfall in the first week of June itself but this year there has

been none this year. Compounding the woes, the underground water table has also gone down and borewells too are devoid of water. “All the cotton seeds I have planted in my one-acre field have now gone waste,” Ratnam rued.

With Monsoon Setting in, It's Time to Relish Crabs



BELGAUM: With the commencement of monsoon, crab vendors are doing brisk business in the city for the past couple of days. A temporary crab mini-market crops up in front of the fish market at Camp every year. Local vendors are happy that the demand for crab meat has been increasing year by year. It is tasty and considered healthy for its medicinal values. Salim Patel, who came to the market to buy crabs on Wednesday, told Express that it is a preferred food item for many people this season. He said people suffering from chronic cough and cold and asthma, are advised to eat crab meat. Housewife Shobha Chavan of Shahapur said cleaning and cooking crab is a skill. Slight negligence in cleaning may lead to indigestion problems. Black crabs are tastier and healthier than the other varieties, she added. Nagavva Kamati, a vendor, said a pair of small crabs is sold at `30 to `40 at present while medium sized and big crabs sell at `50 to `60 and `70 to `80 per pair. Nagavva of Arbhavi said many men, women and children from her place have been selling crabs here for years. “We catch the crabs at night in the Hidkal waters and sell it in Belgaum in the morning. We earn around `250 to `800 per day,” she said. Those who catch crabs on the banks of Krishna river also sell them at the mini market.

An 'Organic' Mobile Van to Spread the Message of Healthy Eating

KALPETTA: In a simple but effective move to spread the message of healthy and cost-effective eating, a panchayat in Wayanad with a population of about 30,500 has taken up a project that could serve as a model for other panchayati raj institutions in the state. Vellamunda panchayat's move to roll out a mobile van to ferry organically grown local products has encouraged many farmers in the area to part ways with chemical farming and embrace organic methods. The project is being implemented with the assistance of Bodhi women self-help Group, based in Cherukara, the 16th ward of the panchayat. Every morning, on receiving the calls, the vehicle goes to the site to collect vegetables from farmers and products made by self-help groups before travelling the length and breadth of the Mananthavady taluk, selling them at reasonable prices.

“A supply network of over 100 farmers forms the crux of the scheme. We have started with marketing vegetables, fruits and leaves grown by small-scale farmers apart from organic eggs and produce grown in kitchen gardens. Also, we are trying to assist self-help groups to sell their products,” said ward member Prathyush C G. The self-help groups had been badly in need of an innovative marketing strategy as they were finding it difficult to sell their products, he said. “Products such as pickles, pappads, masala powders and processed/canned items that do not perish and adhere to minimum quality standards, are procured from self-help groups and marketed along with vegetables and fruits,” he said. Notably, the move to provide direct marketing facilities to farmers has led to a significant rise in their incomes. “This method helps us avoid the presence of middlemen and ensure maximum profits to the farmers. Since these products are grown locally, they are priced much lesser than that in the open market. For example, one kilogram of tapioca costs `15-20 in the local market, but the middlemen pay the farmer only `4-5 for the same. But, we collect it from farmers paying `7 a kg and sell it for `9,” said panchayat president P P Muhammed. The panchayat has plans to expand the project by roping in Kudumbashree units. “If we are able to widen our network, we will be able to provide vegetables to schools for the mid-day meal programme in the near future,” Muhammed added.

Popular Fish Species Fast Vanishing from the Coastal Waters of Kerala: Experts

KOCHI: Those whose tastebuds go on a roller-coaster ride at the sight of white pomfret (avoli) on the dining table, should be prepared to face lean times. According to experts, there is a possibility that the availability of your favourite dish will be scarce. If at all it is available, it would be expensive. White avoli already costs around Rs 600 - Rs 700 per kg in the market. According to a study conducted by the team of fisheries scientists, the resources of two popular species - lactarius lactarius (Parava) and white pomfret have depleted. While the resource of arius species (Kadal Etta) has collapsed. “Still, we can preserve these species, if steps are taken immediately,” said the scientists. ‘Depleted’ means unavailability at an alarming rate while the term ‘collapse’ indicates scarcity. The expert committee which studied the impact of trawling ban along the Kerala coast analysed catch data of 19 species and figures showed that 47 per cent of them are declining while 37 species maintain a healthy status (abundant or less abundant). Parava and white avoli have depleted and resources of nine other species are declining. “Collapsing of ‘Kadal Etta’ is the best example for our bad fisheries management. We caught them and did not even spare the eggs,” said principal scientist K Sunil Mohammed, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), a member of the committee. The report submitted by the committee recommended, “Majority of the depleted or collapsed stocks are those species which are mainly caught in trawling. As a first step towards building stocks, trawling has to be reduced and the legal cod-end mesh size in these trawls has to be implemented.” Two major recommendations of the committee are to extend the trawling ban to 60 days and issuance of license on the basis of

gear and mesh size of the net.' It is nearly 25 years since 'Kadal Etta' depleted and collapsed. The stock appears to be improving during recent years, and there should be efforts to ensure that excessive fishing does not happen," the committee recommended. The committee with additional director of fisheries Saira Banu as chairperson included K Sunil Mohammed and T V Sathianandan, principal scientists of the Central Marine Fisheries Institute (CMFRI) P Pravin and M V Baiju of the Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT), Department of Fisheries law officer Chandrasekharan Nair and joint director fisheries K M Lethy and State Fisheries Resource Management Society (FIRMA) executive director P Sahadevan. Deputy director of Fisheries (Marine) Laila Devi was the convener and Department of Fisheries technical assistant P S Sivaprasad was the co-convener.

THE HINDU BusinessLine

Fertiliser makers waiting for a lifeline

NALINAKANTHI V

	Stock return*	Year-on-year growth in FY14	
		Revenue	Net profit
RCF	40.2	-2.7	-11.6
Coromandel International	30.5	11.3	-15.4
GNFC	29.9	14.0	7.0
GSFC	28.5	-13.4	-34.0
Chambal Fertilisers	2.5	8.6	5.4
Tata Chemicals	-0.2	3.7	-22.2
National Fertilisers	-29.3	19.4	20.8

* From 2013 budget to now

BL Research Bureau:

The performance of fertiliser stocks since last Budget was a mixed bag. While stocks of phosphatic fertiliser makers did turn around from February 2013, the stocks of urea manufacturers remained lacklustre during this period. The financial performance of urea makers was weak in 2013-14. For instance, Chambal Fertilisers and RCF saw operating profit decline by 2 per cent and 4 per cent respectively in 2013-14. Dependence on expensive gas sources due to unavailability of cheaper domestic gas impacted profits. In addition to weak operating performance, delay in subsidy payment by the Government added to the stress on the working capital and profits. In contrast, stocks of phosphatic fertiliser producers — Coromandel International, GNFC and GSFC — have had a good run. These stocks have seen increased buying interest following an improvement in the financial performance during the March 2014 quarter. These fertiliser makers are to a certain extent import dependent. Therefore, the appreciation of the rupee against the US dollar, stable raw material prices and a moderation in fertiliser inventory were sentiment boosters for phosphatic fertiliser makers. For urea makers, the long pending proposal to increase farmer price, amendment in expansion policy and revamping projects to

compensate for higher gas prices, will be eagerly awaited in the Budget. For phosphatic fertiliser makers, there are no major reform expectations. But stable crude and other raw material prices, a steady rupee against the dollar, a good monsoon and demand pickup will be critical to sustain healthy performance in FY15.

Business Standard

SEAI seeks Rs 1,000 cr to boost seafood sector in state

The Sea Food Exporters Association of India (SEAI)-Odisha region has sought an investment of Rs 1,000 crore for the infrastructure development in the seafood sector. "There is need for funding of Rs 1,000 crore in the road, electricity, sea food park, coal chains to boost the sea food industry. Out of 32,000 hectare (ha) suitable for aquaculture, only 3,500 ha are developed in the state," Gora Chand Mohanty, president, Odisha chapter of SEAI told media persons at an event organized to felicitate Jai Oram, Union minister for tribal affairs. Due to non-availability of proper infrastructure, there is significant quality loss of products to the tune of 25 per cent, he added. Odisha produces around 15,000 tonnes of shrimps compared to more than 200,000 lakh tonnes produced in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh. The average productivity in the state is abysmally low at 1.3 tonne per ha compared to 10 per ha in Andhra Pradesh. "Odisha can easily increase its exports from Rs 1,700 crore presently to Rs 10,000 crore in three years, if emphasis is given by both the Centre and the state government on infrastructure development," Mohanty said. The regional chapter urged the Union minister to prevail upon the Centre to accord agriculture status to the sea food sector to avail the tax benefits. It also wanted the minister's intervention for exemption of custom duty on aquaculture equipment like aerators and simplification of procedures to facilitate farmers (or group of farmers) to import these items. The exporters requested Oram to pursue with the Union ministry of Food Processing for approval of a proposal to set up a sea food park in the state. Due to lack of refrigeration facility at Paradip port, most of the exporters are shipping their consignments through Vizag and Kolkata ports. "Intervention of Union shipping ministry is required to start marine product exports from Paradip," the association said. SEAI said, there is a need to re-visit crop insurance scheme currently in practice as it is not beneficial to shrimp farmers. "I will find out the impediments in granting the agriculture status to the sector and will take up the matter with concerned agencies. All issues raised by the association will be taken up with the respective ministries," Oram assured.

The Telegraph

calcutta, india

Mango genes find a storage



preserving a rich variety

Bhubaneswar, June 22: Odisha is home to 264 varieties of mangoes, some of which — such as Hamilton Sundari, Himsagar, Kalija Munda, Baldev and Kuanri — are facing the threat of extinction. The state's mango heritage is now being preserved at a germplasm bank near Saptasajya near Dhenkanal, about 100km from here in the first such initiative by the state government. A germplasm is a collection of genetic resources for an organism. For plants, the germplasm may be stored as a seed collection, while for trees, in a nursery. Spread over 20 acres, the facility boasts of 78 mango varieties found in various parts of the state. A joint venture of state directorate of horticulture and the Central Horticulture Experiment Station, Ainginia, which functions under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the Saptasajya germplasm bank will serve as a live gene bank for indigenous mango varieties. Principal scientist and head of the Central Horticulture Experiment Station H.S. Singh said: "The germplasm bank will be a repository of all the elite and popular mango varieties of the state. Gene banks generally store seeds but since mango kernels cannot be preserved, we will have plants of different varieties in an orchard." Horticulture directorate data reveal that the country boasts of 1,000 indigenous varieties of mango, of which Odisha alone has 264. Some of these — such as Hamilton Sundari, Himsagar (Mayurbhanj district), Kalija Munda, Baldev & Kuanri (Keonjhar district) — are endangered. Known for their unique taste and colour, some of the mango varieties from the state are quite popular. Of these, Amrapalli is being marketed by Safal, a venture initiated by the National Dairy Development Board in New Delhi. Dashehari mangoes from Odisha are the biggest in size in the Indian market, claims the state horticulture directorate. "Odisha mangoes get directly shipped to Bangladesh. But, export to other countries such as the US, the UK, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates takes place via Delhi, Lucknow and Bangalore-based traders because of the absence of direct international air cargo facility and handling of such cargo at the ports," said horticulture director Sanjeev

Chadha. The Saptasajya centre will also work on developing market varieties besides propagating endangered varieties. It will also work to popularise mango varieties such as Totapuri (with a high pulp content) with an eye on mango-based food processing industry. "Every year, the state government is organising mango festival in the city, but the germplasm bank is going to help all of us to preserve good varieties of the king of fruits," said Pinku Rai, a mango connoisseur from Bhubaneswar. Apart from Odisha's new mango germplasm centre, institutes such as the Central Institute for Sub-tropical Horticulture, Lucknow, the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, Bangalore and the Horticultural and Agro-forestry Research Programme, Plandu, near Ranchi, have mango germplasm banks. All the germplasm banks are, however, under the control of the ICAR. Besides, several agriculture universities also have mango germplasm banks.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Most farmers to get relief from power cuts

Realizing that the coming assembly polls will be tough for the Congress-NCP combine, the DF government has started distributing freebies to reduce the 15-year-old anti-incumbency factor. The energy minister has been on the forefront of these charitable exercises. Most farmers in the state get power for their fields through separate feeders. There are some feeders that supply both the village and the field under the single phasing scheme. In agricultural feeders, three-phase power was supplied for 10 hours at night or 8 hours during daytime on rotation basis. There was no power for rest of the time. In single phasing feeders, there was 8 to 10 hours three-phase power, 8 to 10 hours single-phase power and a compulsory six-hour power cut. To woo the farmers, there will not be any power cut on agricultural feeders and single phasing feeders whose distribution losses are less than 42% (the ones falling under A, B, C and D categories). However, as the load goes down during rainy season, there would have been no power cuts during July, August and first two weeks of September. This means that the agricultural feeders will either get 10 hours three-phase power at night and 14 hours single-phase power during day or eight hours three-phase power during the day and single-phase power for the remaining 16 hours. The same will happen in single phasing scheme feeders. In case of single phasing scheme feeders, the villages covered will benefit as they won't face power cuts. The agricultural feeders don't supply to villages so domestic consumers will not be affected. To extend benefit to maximum farmers while calculating the losses of a single phasing feeder, only those pertaining to domestic ones will be taken into account. This is because agricultural consumers have huge arrears. The Congress-NCP has been giving relief to power consumers since February. In order to offset the proposed 20% hike in power by MSEDCL, it provided a subsidy of Rs8,000 crore. Then it provided a subsidy of Rs4,500

crore to waive off arrears of farmers who were ready to pay half of the principal amount of the bills owed by them. It waived off the bills of the farmers whose crops were damaged by hailstorm for the January-June period. Chandra Shekhar Azad University of **Agriculture and Technology to introduce 8 new courses**

Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology will introduce eight new courses from the academic session 2014-15. The new courses are BSc agriculture, BSc forestry, BTech computer science, BTech dairy technology, bachelor of fishery sciences, MBA agri business, master of science horticulture, MTech dairy engineering and master of fishery science. A total of 405 students will be given admission in these courses. BSc forestry and BSc horticulture were closed down and these will be started again. The admission in the new courses will be taken on the basis of results of conducted by Uttar Pradesh Combined Agriculture and Technology Test (UPCATET). BSc forestry and B.Sc horticulture were started without permission from the the governor in 2010. The vice-chancellor tried to re-start the courses for which he had sent a proposal to the governor. Governor BL Joshi had approved these courses recently. The university will charge Rs 40,000 as fees for these courses. In 11 courses, 405 students will be given admission in the next session.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

High-level meeting tomorrow to discuss Rs 11,000 crore sugarcane dues



Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan has called a second high-level meeting tomorrow to discuss ways to bail out the sugar industry that is unable to pay Rs 11,000 crore dues to sugarcane growers. In the first meeting held on June 6, the informal ministerial panel had suggested various steps for improving liquidity of sugar mills including providing Rs 4,400 crore additional interest-free loans to sugar mills, hiking import duty to 40 per cent and increasing ethanol blending in petrol. Besides Paswan, Transport Minister Nitin

Gadkari, Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh, Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi, MSME Minister Kalraj Mishra among others are part of the panel. "The meeting of an informal group of ministers is scheduled to meet tomorrow to discuss issues concerning the sugar sector," sources said. Sources said Cabinet Secretary Ajit Seth will also attend tomorrow's meeting, which has been called following the direction of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to sort out problems faced by growers and sugar millers. Some major decisions are expected as Modi has given clear cut directions on the suggestions made in the previous meeting to ensure sugar mills pay cane arrears at the earliest, sources said. To improve cash flow of sugar mills, the government had in December 2013 approved Rs 6,600 crore interest-free loans to the sugar industry exclusively for clearing sugarcane arrears. It decided to give loans via banks equivalent to the excise duty paid by the mills in the past three years. The sugar industry has been facing a cash crunch due to higher cost of production and lower selling prices in the wake of surplus output over the past few years. Currently, sugarcane arrears stand at about Rs 11,000 crore across the country, with the maximum of Rs 7,200 crore in Uttar Pradesh. Mills are facing a cash crunch as domestic prices have slipped below the cost of production, hurting their profits. They also fear domestic prices could fall further if cheaper imports are not curbed.

Started in 1982, SMP project to become operational by 2017



The Swarnarekha Multi-Purpose (SMP) project, work on which started in 1982 to irrigate vast stretch of agricultural land in Odisha and Jharkhand and to reduce damage caused by floods in West Bengal and Odisha, will become operational by 2017. "We are expecting the SMP project to be complete by 2016 but in case of any delay, we will make it operational by 2017 at any cost," said K Srinivasan, Administrator of SMP. Expressing

satisfaction over the work progress of the project, Srinivasan, a senior IAS officer told PTI today that currently the focus was on the construction of Icha dam in West Singhbhum district. Of the two dams originally envisaged under the project, Chandil Dam on river Swarnarekha in Saraikela-Kharswan district has already been completed while the construction of Icha dam is underway. Elaborating further, Srinivasan said the construction of Icha dam would help to divert the flow of river Kharkhi to adjoining Odisha, which is one of the party to the tri-partite agreement for the project, besides West Bengal and Jharkhand. Besides the construction of the dam, SMP had also envisaged developing two barrages--Kharkhai and Galudih, which were near completion stage, he said. Asked about the number of villages to be affected by the Icha dam, Srinivasan said we have ensured that minimum displacement should be caused due to the project and planned accordingly. Srinivasan said over 2.5 lakh hectares of land will be irrigated in the three districts of East and West Singhbhum and Seraikela-Kharswan of Jharkhand following the completion of the SMP, which was being developed by the Union government and the three states of eastern India. Asked about the project outlay, SMP Administrator said 10 per cent of the total outlay was to be borne by the Jharkhand government while 90 per cent of it contributed by the Union Government. As per the 2010 price index, Srinivasan said the cost of the project was estimated at Rs 6,600 crore with Rs 3,500 crore already been invested. However, the cost of the project was likely to be escalated by 20 per cent by the time it would become operational, he claimed.