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THE HINDU

Rains raise hopes of good harvest

As maize cultivation area shrunk, many farmers shifted to pulses and cotton

The good rains have raised the hope of increased agricultural productivity in Tuticorin district this year. The early onset of Northeast Monsoon, which accounted for a major share of annual rainfall in the district, has turned out to be a promise for farmers.

Pulses and millets were the principal rainfed crops cultivated by many farmers. The seasonal showers nearly doubled the average October rainfall of 150.7 mm to 294.6 mm this year, Joint Director of Agriculture N.K. Dhakshinamoorthy told *The Hindu* here on Sunday.

Anticipating rains, farmers had first sown maize, black gram, green gram and 'chulam', and they had sown 'cumbu' later, he said. While Kovilpatti, Pudur and Kayathar blocks experienced early showers, Vilathikulam, Ottapidaram, Pudukottai and Karungulam blocks received late showers.

Area under maize cultivation had dwindled this year due to erratic rainfall over the last two years. The district experienced a rainfall deficit of 42 per cent last year. Normally, 40,000 hectares would be covered under maize cultivation, but this year it had come down to around 25,000 ha.

To offset the shrinking maize cultivation area, many farmers had switched over to pulses and cotton, which was often referred to as 'white gold'. Cotton cultivation was expected to cover 7,000 ha from

5,000 ha at present. Cotton crop grew well in Kovilpatti, Kayathar, Pudur and in some parts of Vilathikulam and Ottapidaram blocks.

The total cultivation area of pulses was around 70,000 ha and millets 60,000 ha. With a good storage of rainwater, paddy plantation would pick up in the pishanam season in the middle of November. Water would be drawn from 53 PWD tanks.

Farmers would be engaged in transplanting paddy shoots grown in nursery beds in paddy fields mostly in Srivaikuntam, Alwarthirunagari and Karungulam blocks. Paddy was expected to be raised on 17,500 ha, he added.

Veggies too cost more, consumers in the soup

The sharp rise in milk prices has already left consumers worried. Now, there is no good news from the vegetable markets as well.

After staying low for sometime, prices of several vegetables have shot up in the last 10 days in Vellore district. Traders attribute the increase in rates to reduced supply following crop damage in the rains at the supply areas.

“Majority of vegetables for Vellore district comes from parts of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Rains in these areas have damaged crops, hence leading to loss in yield,” said A. Balu, president of Vellore Town Nethaji Market Kaikari Vyabarigal Sangam.

Under these circumstances, suppliers are unable to bring vegetables from the neighbouring States as the produce perished quickly unable to withstand the distance, he said, adding, “Hence, many were selling the produce in the local areas itself without supplying outside. The supply has reduced, and the prices have shot up.”

Though tomatoes and onions remain stable, carrots, beans, broad beans (avarakkai), lady's finger and brinjal have turned costlier. The prices of these vegetables have steadily increased by at least Rs. 15 to 20 in the last 10 days, Mr. Balu noted.

Buying a bunch of coriander could burn a hole in the purse for consumers. "Coriander is supplied from areas within Vellore district and Karnataka. But again, there was damage to the plants in the rains. As a result, the rate has skyrocketed, with a bunch costing Rs. 60 to Rs. 70," he said.

Tomato costs Rs. 10 to Rs. 15, while onions are priced at Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 per kilo. Carrots are priced at Rs. 50 to 60 a kilo, when compared to Rs. 20 to Rs. 25 almost 10 days ago. A kilo of beans costs Rs. 80, while broad beans costs Rs. 60 and lady's finger cost Rs. 25 to Rs. 30. Brinjal is priced at Rs. 60 to Rs. 80.

The cost of other vegetables (per kilo) are – small onions – Rs. 35, potato – Rs. 30 – 35, cabbage – Rs. 15, cauliflower – Rs. 20 to 25 (medium size) and Rs. 40 (big size), ginger – Rs. 35 to 50 and green chillies – Rs. 20 to 25.

Farmers tie up with State to provide millet seeds

'Kudirai vaali' production turns profitable in Vedasandur



For the first time, farmers, who raise only small grains in the rain-fed areas of Vedasandur block in the district, have gone to the level of having a tie-up with the State government to supply small grain seeds.

Their efforts and team work have made 'kudirai vaali' (fox tail millet) production a profitable business.

To strengthen bond with the government, 20 farmers at Thoppupatti have formed a cluster, named Small Millet Growers Association, to expand 'kudirai vaali' cultivation area to 50 acres.

"Instead of selling the gains in open market, we sell them as seeds to the government," they said.

"The cluster procures seeds at Rs.50 a kg. We pack grains in two kg and five kg bags for distribution to farmers in other parts of the State because two kg of grains are required to grow fox tail millet in one acre and five kg for one hectare," says association president S. Appavu.

At present, the production does not meet the rising demand. "We have plans to rope in more farmers to expand cultivation area," he adds.

"We have gained experience in supplying quality seed grains to Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore which, in turn, distributed them to 506 farmers in Western region. Now, our village has become a major seed production centre for 'kudirai vaali'," farmers say. (The cluster had harvested 1,250 kg of seeds last year and sold them to the TNAU.)

"Earlier, as individual farmers, we raised different crops in small-scale and the margin was very low. This joint venture scaled down expenditure and enhanced profit," says R. Kamaraj, another farmer.

This drought-tolerant crop requires less water and grows even in hard terrain. Two spells of rainfalls will suffice for 90-day-old crop. Plant protection measures are almost nil and pest attack is very less, says Assistant Director Agriculture P. Suriliappan.

Besides buy-back arrangement, Agriculture Department offered seeds and inputs freely and a revolving fund of Rs.20,000 to meet expenses, says Deputy Director for Agriculture M. Thangasamy.

'Kudirai vaali' is used as fodder for cattle and seed for human consumption.

It is rich in fibre, protein, minerals, phosphorous, calcium and iron with less carbohydrate, says Joint Director for Agriculture N. Sampath Kumar.

Cotton auction

The regular auction held at the Tiruchengode Agricultural Producers Cooperative Marketing Society branch at Konganapuram near here on Saturday registered a sales turnover of Rs. 8 lakh. The cotton farmers of Dharmapuri, Krishnagiri, Tiruvannamalai, Erode and Namakkal districts had displayed their cotton stock for auction. The 100 kg BT cotton bag fetched a price ranging between Rs. 3,970 and Rs. 4,490.

Irrigation board resolves to supply Godavri water to delta farmers for rabi

DAUNTING TASK AHEAD

- Irrigation Advisory Board (IAB) has decided to supply water to delta, regardless of water shortage in Godavari
- Estimation suggests that there would be hardly 34 tmcft of water available for western delta during rabi
- If the govt seek quota from Sileru river from Odisha govt, it would receive an additional 40 tmcft of water. The delta still would fall short of another 7 tmcft to meet its irrigation needs

Photo caption: Minister for Women and Child Welfare Peethala Sujatha speaking at the IAB meeting in Eluru on Sunday. - PHOTO: A.V.G. PRASAD

“ More than 80,000 acres of the 5.3 lakh-acre ayacut in the western delta are unlikely to receive the canal water, if the dwindling inflow into the river is any indication **HARIBABU**, Irrigation Department Chief Engineer

“ Not even an acre of land will be left uncultivated for want of water this rabi season **PEETHALA SUJATHA**, Minister

Even as Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has promised to supply Godavari water to the delta area for rabi crops, it appears to be a daunting task for the West Godavari district administration to implement the same.

Mr. Naidu had cleared the air over the rabi prospects in the Godavari delta during a 'Janmbhoomi-Maa Vooru' programme here on November 1. The district Irrigation Advisory Board (IAB), which met here on Sunday, decided to toe the CM's line, regardless of water shortage in Godavari.

Ministers Peethala Sujatha and P. Manikyala Rao and the TDP MLAs were at their best pleasing the delta farmers, saying not even an acre of land would be left uncultivated for want of water this rabi season.

Haribabu, Chief Engineer of the Irrigation Department, cautioned that more than 80,000 acres out of the total ayacut of 5.3 lakh acres in the western delta was unlikely to receive the canal water, if the dwindling inflow into the river was any indication.

Going by the current inflows at Dhavaleswaram Barrage, the irrigation authorities had estimated that there would be hardly 34 tmcft of water available for the western delta in the river during rabi season.

If the government seek its quota from the Sileru river by negotiating with Odisha government, it would receive an additional 40 tmcft of water. The delta still would fall short of another 7 tmcft to meet its full irrigation needs.

Meanwhile, the officials and the leaders seemingly lacked harmony on the supplying canal water for aquaculture.

Aqua farmers warned

Collector Bhaskar Katamneni warned stern action, if the aqua farmers would indulge in pilferage of canal water during water-stress period.

Aquaculture is being practised in 1 lakh acres in the delta.

Desilting taken up in channels of Maruthur dam

Sterlite Copper has initiated desilting in the east and west channels of Maruthur dam, known as Maruthur Keezhakkal and Maruthur Melakkal channels, here on Sunday.

After performing a special puja, the works commenced under the guidance of public works department officials in the presence of S.P. Shanmuganathan, Tourism Minister, Alangaram, chairman of Maruthur Melakkal, Seenivasan of Maruthur Keezhakkal Paasana Farmers' Association, and Dhanavel, Associate Vice-President, Commercial and Projects, Sterlite.

The project at a cost of Rs. 6 lakh would ensure free flow of water in these channels to benefit around 50, 000 farmers relying on 10, 000 acres of agricultural land in more than 20 villages.

The desilting works are expected to be completed in 10 days. According to a press statement, water received from the Tamirabarani river is being stored in the Maruthur dam and the water is supplied for irrigation through the Maruthur west channel and Maruthur east channel.

Maruthur west channel caters to the water needs of 20 villages from Maruthur to Perungulam. Currently, 1, 350 cusecs of water is being released from the dam and only 350 is reaching the downstream.

Once the desilting works are completed, almost 1000 cusecs will be reaching.

Moreover, tanks would also get adequate water supply and the excess water would reach the tank in Perungulam to its full capacity. The ongoing desilting work would also help ward off drinking water scarcity.

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Workshop on farming

A two-day workshop on 'Open Access to agricultural knowledge for inclusive growth and development' was organised at NAARM in association with Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) and FAO, Rome as a part of 'Open Access (OA) Week'.

Ajit Maru, Senior Knowledge Officer, FAO, Rome, stressed on aspects like India's potential for farming.

Rain brings cheer to rabi farmers

Rain lashed coastal mandals in the drought-hit Prakasam district on Sunday, under the influence of well-marked low pressure over west-central Bay of Bengal and adjoining coastal areas, giving a boost to Rabi farm operations.

Weatherman predicted more rain for the district in the next 24 hours under the influence of the weather system which is likely to weaken into a low pressure area on Monday. District Collector G.S.R.K.R. Vijayakumar asked fishermen not to venture into the sea for the next two days. A control room was opened at the Collectorate and those in distress could call 08592-281400.

Rain brought cheers to farmers. The drought in all the 56 mandals put paid to their hopes of getting a decent return from crops grown in 2.09 lakh hectares as against the normal acreage of 2.42 lakh hectares during kharif, when 218.3 mm rainfall was recorded as against the normal rainfall of 388.3mm.

Farmers could take up cultivation only in 50,000 hectares against the normal extent of 3.44 lakh hectares during rabi so far. "This rain is beneficial for the crops. Ryots can take up cultivation of paddy, sorghum, black gram and cow pea," Agriculture Joint Director J. Muralikrishna said. Kothapatnam recorded a rainfall of 40.2 mm, followed by Chirala (36.6mm), Ulavapadu (34.8 mm), Singarayakonda (32.6), Vetapalem (32.4mm), Parchur (25.2mm), Karamchedu (25mm), Jarugumalli (22.6 mm) and Ongole (20 mm).

NABARD targets 4 p.c. growth in farm sector

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development has set a target of achieving 4 per cent growth in agriculture sector in Srikakulam district in the next fiscal year under the Potential Linked Credit Plan (PLP).

NABARD has put agriculture as a priority sector and sanctioned Rs. 4516.25 crore, 19.53 per cent more than that of the PLP projections for this financial year.

NABARD District Development Manager M.D. Vasudevan said that the PLP for 2015-16 financial year had its focus on rapid capital formation in agriculture for sustaining growth in farm sector, adding that the PLP envisaged a potential of Rs. 2,222 crore for short-term crop loans and Rs.1,033.33 crore for agriculture term loans and credit to self help groups (SHGs). “MSME sector is likely to get Rs.383.92 crore ,” he added.

PULSES, VEGETABLES GET DEAR

With prices shooting up, lower income groups are dropping pulses from their diet



It has been two weeks since Basappa, a construction labourer working in the city, dropped pulses from his family’s diet. The family of six, which lives on meagre daily wages, is finding it hard to afford pulses anymore.

“We were farmers back in our village. We came down to the city in search of a job after successive years of drought. Now we ourselves cannot afford food,” the farmer from Yadgir lamented.

The price of toor dal, an integral part of meals, has shot up by more than Rs. 40 in the past two weeks alone. Toor dal now sells at Rs. 95 to Rs. 110 a kg in the retail market. This steep hike is attributed to crop failure due to lack of rainfall in Kalaburagi, the major source of pulses in the State. An official from the Agriculture Department said a recent survey in that district revealed that 63,000 hectares of land with pulses had been affected by scanty rainfall and the flowers were withering. It is feared that 50,000 more hectares of crop would be severely affected if rains are delayed by another week, raising fears of another steep increase in toor dal prices.

The prices of urad dal and moong dal have also skyrocketed to more than Rs. 100 in the last month alone. Urad dal is being sold at Rs. 103 to Rs. 105 a kg and moong dal at Rs. 115 to Rs. 125 in the city.

Ramesh Chandra Lahoti, president of Bangalore Wholesale Foodgrains and Pulses Merchants’ Association, told *The Hindu* that two consecutive crop failures of urad and moong dal in Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh were the reasons for the unprecedented hike. He said the next crop was expected by February and hoped that there would be a good yield, which would stabilise prices in the market.

Vegetable prices

Vegetable prices have also seen an increase over the last two weeks. A kilogram of potatoes is being sold at Rs. 42 at Horticultural Producers’ Co-operative Marketing and Processing Society (HOPCOMS) outlets in the city and at Rs. 50 in retail shops. A week ago it was Rs. 30. A kilogram of beans is being sold at Rs. 57, an increase of Rs. 20 in just a week.

A HOPCOMS official said that the supply of greens had taken a hit over the past few weeks, initially due to heavy rain in areas and later for lack of sufficient rain. A kilogram of coriander leaves in HOPCOMS has almost doubled to Rs. 196.

More issues regarding Bt cotton research at UAS–D surfaces

Following the controversy over the transfer of a researcher who was leading the project to develop a Bt cotton seed at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, several other issues regarding the research seem to be coming out in the open.

While the university's original project to develop a Bt cotton seed is at an advanced stage and is awaiting clearance for field trials, another research funded by the Karnataka State Seed Corporation (KSSC) has started in the varsity.

Sources said that the Bt gene Bollgard II, developed by seed major Mahyco Monsanto Biotech, will be tried on 12 hybrids developed by the university, and could take at least three years before it could be released for commercial purpose. Currently, KSSC is not involved in cotton seed sales since it does not have Bt cotton in its portfolio.

“Though we are late starters in the market, we hope to do well with the pricing,” a source in KSSC said, refusing to disclose the project cost.

A 2012 assessment by the Central Institute for Cotton Research found that there were 1,128 Bt cotton hybrids sold by around 40 companies in the country.

“When the public sector Bt cotton research in University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, is already in its advanced stage, there is no need for the government to go ahead with a new research.

Instead, the current public sector research can be hastened,” said Vivek Cariappa, a cotton grower from Mysuru.

Question on commercialisation

He has written to Agriculture Minister Krishna Byregowda seeking his intervention on the issue. Besides, Mr. Cariappa has also questioned the commercialisation of the Bt cotton seed with Bollgard II, before the Karnataka Biodiversity Board.

However, the KSSC source defended the selection of Bollgard II saying that a committee looked into “notified genes” and selected Bollgard II since it is a multigene capable of protecting against multiple pests.

Bill to regulate Bt cotton prices on the anvil

It will be tabled in the winter session of the legislature



KEEPING TRACK

THE BILL envisages constitution of an authority for fixation of price of Bt cotton seeds	IT WILL BE drafted on the lines of the Maharashtra Cotton Seed Act, 2009	BT COTTON forms more than 75 per cent of the area under cotton cultivation in the State
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To regulate the prices of Bt cotton seeds in the State, the government is planning to introduce a Karnataka Cotton Bill, 2014, at the State legislature session to be held in Belagavi in December.

The Bill envisages the constitution of an authority headed by the Director of the Agriculture Department for fixation of prices of Bt cotton seeds each year.

The seed companies will have to pay compensation to farmers in case of crop failure or supply of spurious seeds.

The Agriculture Department has drafted the Bill on the lines of the Maharashtra Cotton Seed Act, 2009.

Official sources in the department told *The Hindu* that the Bill empowers the authority to issue licences to private firms to sell seeds to cotton growers. The Joint Director of the department will monitor the prices in each district. Currently, there is no body to regulate seed prices and companies charge differently. During the last kharif season, the price of Bt cotton seeds in the State was at Rs. 830 per packet of 450 gms for BG I, and Rs. 930 per packet for BG II. Over 20 lakh packets were sold last season. Major seed companies, including Mahyo, Rasi Seeds Ltd., Ganga Kaveri Seeds, are involved in convincing farmers about the benefits of Bt cotton.

Hybrid variety

Over four lakh farmers in the State had been planting Bt cotton in nearly six lakh hectares of land.

Bt cotton would form more than 75 per cent of the total area under cotton cultivation in the State. The sources pointed out that despite controversies and misgivings about Bt cotton, many farmers have been switching over to the hybrid variety on account of high profit and aggressive marketing by private companies. Bt cotton was introduced in India in 2002.

- *Currently, there is no body to regulate seed prices*
- *Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Gujarat are major Bt cotton growing States*

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Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Gujarat are major Bt cotton growing States in the country.

Rs. 2,826 cr. credit target for Nagapattinam dist.

The Government has fixed a credit target of Rs. 2,826 crore for agriculture and its allied activities and industrial sectors in 2014-15 for the district.

The credit flow for agriculture was Rs. 2,465 crore and Rs. 310 crore for non-farming sectors which totally included a subsidy of Rs. 79.5 lakh, said K. A. Jayapal, Minister for Fisheries.

Distributing financial assistance to 225 beneficiaries of Rs. 4.76 crore in a function organised by Indian Overseas Bank, lead bank for the district here on Saturday, the Minister said the banks should accord priority to educational loans to students and other credit to fishermen.

T. Munusamy, District Collector, urged unemployed youths to utilise credit facility for improving their social and financial status.

Ernakulam Milk Union waits for aseptic packaging unit

The Ernakulam Regional Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Ltd. (Ernakulam Milk Union), Milma, is keeping its fingers crossed about the fruition of its ambitious aseptic packaging unit even though the Union government is yet to make a call on its request to fund the entire project cost as grant. The packaging unit has been proposed at the Ernakulam Milk Union's dairy at Tripunithura at an estimated cost of Rs. 24 crore.

It is part of the Union's development projects worth Rs. 75 crore aimed at enhancing the collective storage and processing capacity of its four dairy units, including the ones at Kattapana, Thrissur, and Kottayam. The key feature of the packaging unit is its capacity to preserve milk and related products for up to three months without turning sour. Selected States like Karnataka and Gujarat already have such units.

"It is central to maintaining our competence in the market since we expect customers to restrict the frequency of purchases to perhaps once in a week. In such a scenario they cannot be expected to go out just for the sake of buying milk," P.A. Balan, chairman, Ernakulam Milk Union and Milma board member, told *The Hindu* .

The project, if it becomes a reality, would be able to cater to the demand of the milk unions in Malabar and Thiruvananthapuram as well. Former Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar had told the union that central assistance would have to be restricted to 75 per cent of the project cost under the existing schemes. He had promised to explore the possibility of funding it under some special schemes by which time Lok Sabha elections were declared.

The key feature of the packaging unit is its capacity to preserve milk and related products for up to three months.

Farmers toil in Chennai to send money home

Unable to meet rising agriculture costs, they do odd jobs

Ever heard of a farmer who rides a tricycle for a living, or one who lifts heavy load for a wage? Meet the new migrant-inhabitants of the city. Groups of illiterate farmers from rural districts of Tamil Nadu are enduring short periods of homelessness in Chennai to earn enough to meet rising production costs in agriculture.

The Chennai Corporation is yet to commission suitable night shelters for people who have no roof over their heads during the monsoon season.

Groups of men belonging to farming communities in the villages of Perambalur district ride tricycles with goods in congested north Chennai neighbourhoods, even as their wives and children cultivate their land back home. One such group consists of at least 50 men from a single village where farmers have reportedly been unable to manage crop failures, perhaps for successive years.

Cotton farmer A. Murugan (42) earns a few thousands in the city and uses the money to procure farm inputs, including seeds, fertiliser and equipment, for raising this year's crop in Vayalapady village of Perambalur district.

His family has to work harder this year as the rains have been inadequate this Aadi (mid-July to mid-August). Murugan saves at least Rs. 200 per day from the earnings made by ferrying goods on a tricycle, in George Town.

He visits his native village at least 10 times a year, timing it such that he can help his family members with farming.

“The women and children need our assistance only during harvesting. They manage most of the other tasks themselves. We just send

money to meet rising farm expenses,” says P. Shankar, another farmer who remains homeless on Mint Street.

Farmer Kolanchi (60) says some of the members of his group continue to stay on the pavement during the rains.

“Many of us are allowed to sleep in front of shops at night. We also help out the others who have recently joined our group. Yet, it is challenging during the rains,” says A. Subramani, a farmer from Thungapuram, another village in Perambalur district.

“Production costs are rising. But we are unable to sell produce at market prices. Our stay in the city helps us sustain agriculture,” he says.

The Corporation is yet to commission night shelters for people who have no roof over their heads during the monsoon

Jasmine price zooms to Rs. 2000 a kg

The price of one kg of Jasmine zoomed to Rs. 2,000 on Saturday at the Thoivalai flower market, one of the biggest markets in south Tamil Nadu.

Traders attributed the hike to the start of the marriage season. The price ruled at Rs.700 on Friday, said Rajendran, a leading trader.

He told *The Hindu* that the market was the biggest in south Tamil Nadu, where hundreds of farmers from Oddanchatram in Dindigul district and other areas brought their produce. As the market is close to Kerala, thousands of buyers from across the border thronged it.

Continuous rains in the last fortnight and the subsequent formation of mist were affecting the production. This could be one of the reasons

for the hike, Mr. Rajendran said. The other flowers were also sold at higher prices at the Thovalai market.

A kg of Pichipoo went for Rs. 900; Arali Rs. 250; Kozhipoo Rs. 75; Granthi Rs. 90; Red Grandhi Rs. 80; Vaadamalli Rs. 60; Button Rose Rs. 200; and Sampangi Rs. 150.

With the marriage season setting in and production falling, the prices might rule at the present level for some more days, traders said.

Continuous rain, mist affect production of flowers

Diabetes study moots SMS campaign

Initial study by India Diabetes Research Foundation reveals communication with pre-diabetics reduces chances of the disease developing, by 36%

The India Diabetes Research Foundation is conducting a study on motivating people with high risk of diabetes to adopt lifestyle changes, through SMSes.

“An initial study, which was published in late 2013, revealed that regular communication with pre-diabetic patients reduced the chances of them developing diabetes by 36 per cent,” said A. Ramachandran, president of the India Diabetes Research Foundation, speaking on the sidelines of World Diabetes Day celebrations on Sunday.

The event was organised by Dr. A. Ramachandran’s Diabetes Hospital and the India Diabetes Research Foundation.

As a continuation of the project, the team is working with Imperial College of London and Cambridge University to simultaneously study 500 pre-diabetic patients in India and the U.K.

“The earlier study only had male patients, but this time we are seeing if communication is as effective across gender and ethnicities,” said Nanditha Arun, head of Dr. A. Ramachandran’s Diabetes Hospital. She added the three-year study was nearing completion and the analysis would be completed by next year.

Speaking at the function, Governor K. Rosaiah said, “In India, 65 million people live with diabetes, and it is predicted to increase to more than 100 million by 2030.”

“With over 77 million people in India diagnosed with pre-diabetes, strong strategies and networking with medical fraternity and voluntary organization is necessary,” he added.

M. K. Narayanan, former Governor of West Bengal, said, “In Chennai, it is estimated that around 20 per cent of the population is diabetic. Diabetologists and diabetes clinics play an active role in the control and prevention of diabetes in the country.”

Earlier in the day, Apollo Sugar Clinic conducted a walkathon along Marina Beach to raise awareness on diabetes.

According to Sharath Chandran C., head (clinic operations), Apollo Sugar Clinic, one out of three diabetics are unaware of their condition.


“There are increased possibilities of 25-30 per cent of these patients developing blindness,” he said. D. Shantharam, vice-chancellor of Tamil Nadu Dr. MGR Medical University, led the rally.

Do you know: How to test for water quality

Quality of drinking water can no longer be taken for granted. Water quality can fluctuate throughout the year. Various factors, including contamination and lack of sufficient groundwater recharge, contribute to change in the quality. It is imperative to check the quality of water you drink, particularly during the monsoon, as it has implications on health.

DO YOU KNOW




HOW TO TEST FOR WATER QUALITY



There are several tests, including physical, chemical and bacteriological parameters, to determine water quality

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VARIOUS GOVERNMENT AGENCIES HAVE LABS TO TEST WATER QUALITY FOR DOMESTIC PURPOSES FOR A FEE RANGING FROM RS. 75 TO RS. 500

1 Chennai Metrowater lab, New Avadi Road, Kilpauk Ph: **044-26449851**

2 Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board (TWAD), Chepauk, Ph: **044-28412098**

3 State Ground and Surface Water Resources Data Centre, Taramani, Ph: **044-22541527**

4 King Institute of Preventive Medicine and Research, Guindy, Ph: **044-22501028**

HOW OFTEN SHOULD WATER BE TESTED?
Water sourced from wells must be tested twice a year, when the season changes. Water supplied through public distribution system can be checked once in three months

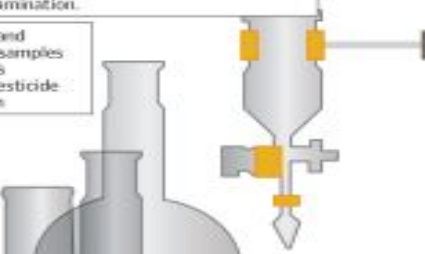
WHY SHOULD WATER BE TESTED?
Drinking water apart, water used for construction, and commercial and agricultural purposes can be tested. There are separate facilities for each

BASIC PARAMETERS THAT ENSURE WATER QUALITY
Total dissolved solids (TDS), chloride, iron, nitrate, hardness and pH value are the basic parameters essential to determine safe drinking water quality. High TDS can decrease palatability of water with its salty taste. While the desired level is 500 mg/litre, water with TDS level up to 2,000 mg/litre is permitted to be used for purposes other than drinking

HOW TO COLLECT SAMPLE FOR TESTING?
Only plastic containers must be used to collect water sample. A minimum of two litres is essential to test for domestic use and five litres for construction purposes. **Samples must be given to the lab within 24 hours of collection**

CAN INDIVIDUALS CHECK WATER QUALITY?
Yes. TWAD offers field testing kits to check 12 chemical parameters, including ammonia and chlorine contamination. **About 100 samples can be tested with one kit that costs Rs. 2,500. Individual test kits are also available at a cost ranging from Rs. 100 to Rs. 150**

ON HOW MANY NUMBER OF PARAMETERS CAN GROUND AND SURFACE WATER BE TESTED?
Water can be checked for nearly 35 parameters. Groundwater in some areas is tested for arsenic and uranium contamination




Both surface and groundwater samples are sometimes checked for pesticide contamination


HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET LAB RESULTS?
Results can be obtained in person or through post from the testing laboratory concerned.


The best results can be obtained in three days or even a fortnight later, depending on the parameters that need to be tested

66 Samples from borewells can be collected 2-3 hours after pumping. We insist on plastic bottles as other metals will influence water quality. Bottles must be rinsed thrice with the same water given as sample. Most labs have 250 ml sterilised bottles for collection of sample. Samples must be given within six hours of collection or within 24 hours if stored in an icebox

— M. NATHARAJAN, RETIRED TECHNICAL EXPERT, STATE GROUND AND SURFACE WATER RESOURCES DATA CENTRE



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Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Rain: 0

Humidity: 63

Wind: normal

Tomorrow's Forecast

Monday, Nov 10

Max 31° | Min 24°
Cloudy

Sunrise: 06:05

Sunset: 05:39

Barometer: 1012

Tuesday, Nov 11

Max 30° | Min 24°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday
Nov 12



29° | 24°

Partly Cloudy

Thursday
Nov 13



34° | 27°

Cloudy

Friday
Nov 14



34° | 27°

Partly Cloudy

Saturday
Nov 15



34° | 27°

Sunny

Sunday
Nov 16

34° | 27°

Sunny

DECCAN Chronicle

Andhra Pradesh to legalise sops for land



The Andhra Pradesh government will provide legal guarantee for fulfilling land pooling offers to benefit farmers and there ought not to be doubts on this issue, irrigation minister D. Umamaheswara Rao said.

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The Cabinet sub-committee on the new capital toured Tulluru and Nelapadu villages on Sunday and interacted with farmers to persuade them to pool their land.

Mr Umamaheswara Rao said that Guntur and Vijayawada would become mega cities due to the new capital. He announced that the

government would give houses to the poor of the capital villages free of cost and assured developing all villages.

Several farmers of Nelapadu gave their consent to join the land pool, giving up about 400 acre. Farmers expressed the fear that there is no act or legislation for the land pooling system. They said that besides this, the government is offering common price to prime and normal lands which is unacceptable. They demanded separate compensations to farmers according to crop variety and commercial land value. They said that they would cooperate with the government towards building the capital.

CM Chandrababu Naidu to meet farmers to address land issues

Agriculture minister P. Pulla Rao said that there will be a meeting between farmers and Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on November 17 in Hyderabad and suggested that farmers bring their issues to the notice of Mr Naidu. He asked farmers not to sell their land in a hurry and make good use of the land pooling scheme.

Mr Pulla Rao and irrigation minister D. Umamaheswara Rao clarified various doubts of the farmers during an interaction.

Farmers led by village sarpanch D. Subba Rao gave consent letters to the ministers during the meeting. Earlier the ministers conducted a meeting with farmers in Tulluru where all party leaders and farmers agreed to give lands for the construction of the new capital.

Business Standard

Himachal apple farmers worry as Nepalese workers fly to the Persian Gulf

For over half a century Nepalese in large numbers have been coming to Himachal Pradesh's scenic mountains to work as labourers at the apple orchards



Farmers in Himachal Pradesh's apple orchards are facing labour shortage as more and more [Nepalese labour](#) is moving to the [Persian Gulf](#) and the West Asia region in search of relatively high-paying works.

For over half a century Nepalese in large numbers have been coming to Himachal Pradesh's scenic mountains to work as labourers at the apple orchards.

Apple is the largest cash crop of Himachal Pradesh, booming at Rs 3500 crore as more and more land comes under apple cultivation every year.

The biggest concern in the last couple of years for farm owners is shortage of labour as Nepalese are choosing to go to Dubai and Qatar with hopes of making more money.

"After working in Himachal Pradesh's apple orchards for the last ten years I am now set to go to the Gulf. Many young men in my area are preparing to leave. We are waiting for our passports and work visas," said Vishnu Bahadur, a Nepalese-origin worker.

"Even though I cannot take my family along, it is worth as I hope to send back handsome sum," he added.

The flight of labour overseas is bound to hit farm work in Himachal mid-hills which produces a third of India's apple.

Most of the works at the apple orchard has been traditionally done by Nepalese men who are at ease in this harsh Himalayan terrain. The work involves carrying big loads on the steep terrain to the nearest godown or road head.

"Believe me, only Nepalese can do this tough work as they come from the land of the Everest. Thanks to the very steep mountains scope for mechanised farming is limited here," said Rajeev Chauhan, chairman of the Himalayan apple growers' society.

Although there are no exact numbers available but thousands of Nepalese young men descend from Nepal to work in Himachal's apple farms every summer for the harvest and return home in a few months. Some choose to stay back with their families and manage the orchard for much of the year.

"Gorkhas have now started going to the Gulf, West Asia and even Malaysia. Also, they prefer to work on infrastructure projects in other Indian cities. So we are facing a shortage and the position will get worse in coming years," says Chauhan. "Nepalese labour wages have doubled in the last five years as the demand continues to grow," says Ranjeet Mehta, another local farmer.

Despite extreme heat and the stories of poor working and living conditions in the Gulf, for these hill men there is a huge rush to leave and ignore [Himachal Pradesh](#) as the attraction to make handsome money is irresistible for them.

With the recent visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Kathmandu and promise to help Nepal in tapping its huge hydro electric potential to light up power deficit northern India, ties between the two neighbours seems to be on good track. Besides Himachal Pradesh, Nepalese are sprinkled in other parts of India working in different sectors as labourers, watchmen and other menial jobs but now greener pastures overseas are attracting them.