

# THE HINDU

## Raise farm productivity, says Abdul Kalam

*'Primary sector mission' launched; due priority to drought-hit Anantapur in water grid project, says Naidu*

Former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam has underscored the need for significantly enhancing agricultural productivity to ensure food security for the ever-growing population of the country.

Dr. Kalam wanted top priority accorded to organic fertilizers to ensure that the increase in productivity was sustained in the longer term. He, accompanied by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, formally launched the 'primary sector mission' aimed at ensuring the future of farmers and people dependent on agriculture and allied sectors, at Garudapuram village on the outskirts of Kalyandurgam mandal headquarters in Anantapur district. Dr. Kalam, who recalled his interaction with farmers in Kerala and Bihar, exhorted the State government to establish a water grid from Srikakulam to Anantapur, according due priority to Anantapur as it was one of the most backward districts in the country.

Mr. Naidu positively responded to the suggestion. The water grid project was estimated to cost around Rs. 2,000 crore and the government was keen on ensuring its timely completion, he said. The government was committed to making agriculture a profitable profession and would implement well rounded measures for its accelerated development.

"The State government is committed to completing modernisation of the Tunga Bhadra High Level Canal. I will be meeting the Karnataka Chief Minister in the coming month to discuss about the project and take up other issues," Mr. Naidu said.

These steps were part of the efforts on drought-proofing this perennially drought-hit district.

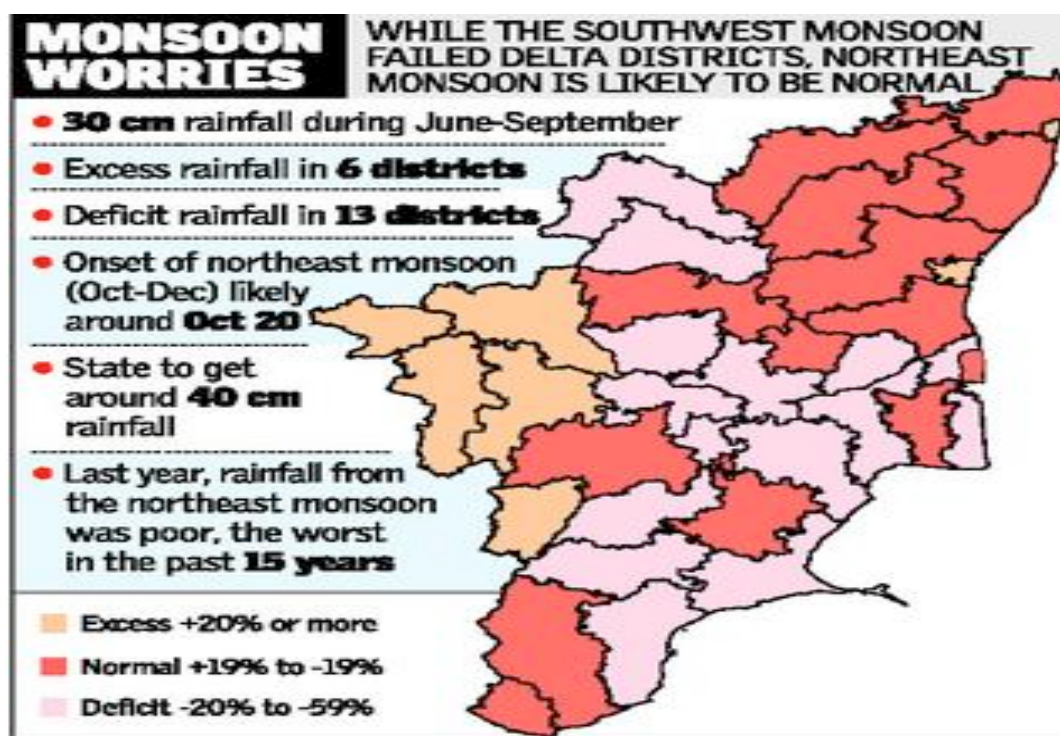
## Stone laid for research station

Dr. Kalam also laid the foundation stone for an agriculture research station set to come up near Nambulapula Kunta village in the district besides an oil seed research facility proposed at Bukkarayasamudram, on the outskirts of Anantapur. Dr. Kalam came along with Mr. Naidu from Hyderabad by a special plane to Puttaparthi and proceeded to Garudapuram by helicopter.

Anantapur Member of Parliament J.C. Diwakar Reddy expressed concern that aged farmers in the district who had more than 10 acres in their name were excluded from the ambit of the old-age pension scheme.

Mr. Naidu said the State government would make an exception for the farmers of the district.

## Northeast monsoon to be normal



This year's northeast monsoon could bring in enough rainfall, if not bountiful, to the State, compared to the poor monsoon last year.

"The monsoon may be close to normal or even above normal," said a senior official of the Meteorological Department.

The monsoon between October and December is the State's main rainy season accounting for about 50 per cent of the annual rainfall of 92 cm.

If this year's monsoon does not yield much rainfall, the Cauvery delta could be in for trouble, as two of the districts – Thanjavur and Nagapattinam - did not receive much rainfall during this year's southwest monsoon. The present storage of the Mettur reservoir is around 58 thousand million cubic feet (tmc ft), against the capacity of 93.47 tmc ft.

Last year, the State received 29 cm of rainfall, against an expected 44 cm – a deviation of minus 33 per cent. This despite three very severe cyclonic storms – Phailin, Lehar and Madi, and severe cyclonic storm Helen, which developed over the Bay of Bengal in the wintry months. Yet, in terms of rainfall, 2013 was the worst in the last 15 years for the State, Met officials say.

In the recent past, the northeast monsoon has not failed the State. Between 2004 and 2011, the rainfall departure from the anticipated amount, as recorded, was either excess or on the positive side of normal value.

Only in 2012, the deviation was minus 16 per cent, even though this was, as per meteorological parlance, regarded as normal (the departure ranging from minus 19 per cent to plus 19 per cent). This year, during the southwest monsoon, the State received 30.6 cm rainfall against the normal of 32 cm – a deviation of minus five per cent.

While six districts, including Coimbatore, Chennai and Theni, fell under the category of "excess districts," 13 districts each were under the classifications of "normal" and "deficit" districts.

## Biggest beneficiary

Coimbatore was the biggest beneficiary of the monsoon with 76 cm rainfall, recording a whopping deviation of 303 per cent. Chennai received 53 cm (a deviation of 21 per cent); The Nilgiris – 102 cm (34 per cent) and Theni – 30 cm (91 per cent).

Among the deficit districts were Thanjavur and Nagapattinam, which should be a cause for concern to officials in charge of water management and agricultural production. Thanjavur recorded 22 cm (deviation: minus 32 per cent) and Nagapattinam too received 22 cm of rainfall (minus 23 per cent).

The only consolation was that Tiruvarur received a few cm of rainfall (25 cm) more than what the other two districts had.

Tiruchi and Madurai also came under the deficit districts category, with 14 cm and 23 cm, the figures of deviation being minus 52 per cent and minus 32 per cent.

## Unease over 'development' in Jodeghat

*Government keen on putting the tribal hamlet, made famous by Kumram Bheem, on the tourist map*

Telangana's Shangri la is what Jodeghat is. The question is, will it retain its pristineness in the face of the 'onslaught' of the modern type of development as being planned by the State government.

Jodeghat in the present day Kerameri mandal of Adilabad district shot into fame after the legendary Gond leader Kumram Bheem attained martyrdom here fighting the Nizam's forces in 1940.

It has now attracted the attention of the government which wants to establish a tribal university, a botanical garden, a tribal museum and other facilities associated with tourism development in this environmental haven.

“The place has not changed since centuries and there is no reason why it should do so now,” observed Hyderabad-based builder Ashwin Rao, who is also a nature enthusiast and conservation protagonist. A drive on the 23 km of the curvy and uneven road leading to the remote tribal habitation, he pointed out, had him and his team of nature lovers transported back in time when they came visiting it on October 2.

“The only development needed here is eco-tourism in its purest form and architectural control being a must. Involvement of local Adivasi communities and promotion of old form of agriculture to ensure this place keeps exuding its old world charm is also necessary,” the visitor suggested.

There are a dozen habitations on the stretch between Hatti, the base camp on the main Kerameri-Asifabad road and Jodeghat which will be ‘affected’ by the proposed development programme. The villagers in this habitation however, are not aware of what lies in store for them when Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao comes here to participate in the 74th martyrdom anniversary on October 8.

Kumra Yashwant Rao, a youngster from Jodeghat, feigned ignorance when he was asked by *The Hindu* about the proposed tribal university in his village. Atram Kondu of Pedda Patnapur village had his brow contorting as he began imagining what a tribal museum would look like or comprise when he was told about the government's proposal.

“The reaction of the Adivasis underscores the need for the government doing exactly what the tribal people did here for centuries. Help them generate incomes though collection of non-timber forest produce, for one,” the nature lover added.

## Plan to get heritage tag for Pokkali fields

*Integrated rice, fish farming in Kole lands suggested*

A committee appointed by the government to suggest ways to conserve Pokkali rice fields in the State has recommended that steps be taken to get these ecologically fragile areas global heritage status.

The Pokkali fields are located in the coastal areas of Ernakulam, Alappuzha and Thrissur districts.

A statement from the Public Relations Department said here that the committee, headed by Vice Chancellor of the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies B. Madhusoodana Kurup, suggested that the traditional practice of having the cycle of rice and fish cultivation be promoted in the Kole fields too. The practice involves cultivation of rice during the monsoon season and shrimp farming during the drier months.

The committee said 10 per cent of the agricultural fields should be conserved as nurseries.

### **Legal protection**

The practice of integrated rice and fish farming should be legally protected and the calendar of the practices should be maintained.

Rice cultivation should be carried out between April 15 and October and shrimp farming between November and April 14.

The committee also recommended that a Pokkali Park be set up in Kadamakkudi panchayat in Ernakulam district, where Pokkali rice cultivation is still being sustained substantially.

Maintaining the Pokkali Park as a heritage site would also be a boost to tourism activities. Institutions like KAMCO should intervene for the mechanisation of Pokkali rice cultivation, the committee said.

The recommendations were presented here on Saturday at a meeting on sustainable cultivation of the Pokkali and Kole fields in the State. Fisheries Minister K. Babu said the government accepted the recommendations.

### **Hatchery plan**

He said a Fish Seeds Authority would soon be constituted in the State and an ordinance issued in February had recommended it. A Rs.6.05 lakh hatchery was being set up in Bhoothathankettu. A fish seeds quality centre would be set up in Thevara, he said.

*Proposal for Pokkali park at Kadamakkudi panchayat*

*Fish Seeds Authority to be set up soon*

## **Pesticide residues in packaged spices**

Packaged spices and chilli products that go into many of the dishes prepared at home may not be as safe as you think they are. And it is not only cheap substitutes used for adulteration that place you at risk. The latest analysis of the Pesticide Residue Research and Analysis Laboratory under Kerala Agricultural University reveals that chilli powder, cardamom, and cumin seed are highly contaminated with toxic chemicals.

The most striking result of the analysis is the presence of at least two dangerous insecticides in almost all chilli samples and chilly products. While residues of Chlorpyrifos, Sypermethrin and Ethion were found in common chilli powder marketed under various brand names, Kashmiri chilli powder was found contaminated with Sypermethrin and Ethion.

Interestingly, the analysis showed that pesticide residue in fruits and vegetables had come down drastically. P. Rajendran, KAU Vice Chancellor, said samples of curry powders, dried fruits, spices and processed foods were collected from various outlets in

the State from January 1 to March end and tested, along with samples of vegetables and fruits which were being periodically tested earlier. The analysis revealed that cardamom was the most contaminated. Dried chilly, cumin seeds, chilly powder, Kashmiri chilly powder and big chilly dried with curd (thairu mulaku) also showed dangerous levels of pesticide residue.

Thomas Biju Mathew, professor in charge of the analysis, said very few samples of fruits collected across the State indicated pesticide residues. Among vegetables, only cauliflower and curry leaves were found to be contaminated. The residues of chemicals found in beans, snake gourd, amaranthus, drumstick, and cowpea were below the permissible level while other vegetable samples collected during this period were free of pesticide residues, thus earning a safe-to-eat tag. Among the 58 samples of dried fruits, almost all except dried grapes, had no trace of pesticide residue, Dr. Mathew said. The full text of the report is available on [www.kerala.gov.in](http://www.kerala.gov.in).

*Toxic chemical content in fruits and vegetables has come down drastically.*

## **Agribusiness meet from Thursday**

A three day conference on 'agribusiness management, opportunities and management' will be held at Sahyadri College of Engineering and Management here from October 9.

G. Parameshwara, president, Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee, would inaugurate the function. Some of the topics to be discussed include skill development in agriculture, retaining youth in agribusiness, role of women, agribusiness management, agricultural marketing and policy, entry of global agribusiness firms and foreign direct investment on agriculture and services such as finance and insurance. A release said 30 international participants from five countries and 125 delegates from different parts of the country are expected to participate.



## Traditional oil grinding machine comes back to Krishna district

The traditional grinding wood machine, known as Ganuga in local parlance, which has almost disappeared in Krishna and Godavari districts, has come back to Krishna district. Progressive farmer M. Vijaya Ram, who was involved in developing pure breed of Sahiwal cattle at his farm house near Tarakaturu village, had managed to own two machines, bringing back the 100-year-old traditional practice of natural mode of oil production process.

An expert Ganuga maintenance team led by Mr. Satyam of Srikakulam district was brought to Tarakaturu village where the team had successfully installed the two machines with the help of Hyderabad-based workers. Each machine largely made of wood costs above Rs. one lakh.

“Initially, Mr. Satyam’s team taught us how to operate the animal-drawn machine to extract oil from several agricultural products — groundnut and sesame and so on. Operation of another machine will begin soon,” Mr. Ram told *The Hindu* .

### Traditional practice

“Our effort to bring back the traditional practice is to preserve the gifted technology from our ancestors. The consumption of oil processed through the grinding machine will have no adverse impact on our health”, added Mr. Ram.

A blindfolded ox tied to the big log makes rounds the body of the machine, enabling grinding of the material from which oil can be extracted. However, the machine operator has to monitor the stages of oil production that takes at least a few hours.

Operation and owning the grinding machine was once a profession of a community called 'Telukula' in Northern Andhra Pradesh, who preserved the technology. The remains of old machines can be sighted in parts of Krishna and Godavari districts.

*Progressive farmer M. Vijaya Ram installs two machines at Tarakaturu*

## **New paddy procurement policy under scanner**

Once bitten, twice shy. This maxim sums up the mood of farmers over the new paddy procurement policy, which is scheduled to come into force from the current khariff.

In line with the State government's policy, the West Godavari district administration is preparing ground to open 200 paddy purchase centres enabling the SHG women from 200 Village Organisations to get into the shoe of Food Corporation of India (FCI) to undertake procurement business, according to District Supplies Officer S. Sivasankar Reddy.

The policy envisages that 75 per cent of the grains procured by the SHGs from the farmers shall be accepted by the government for supplies to the public distribution system and 25 per cent allowed for sales in the open market by millers.

But the novel policy failed to cheer the farmers in the backdrop of the alleged poor track record of the SHG women in the procurement business. Given their poor capabilities, the SHGs were quite unsure of handling the paddy procurement in enormous quantities in the districts like West Godavari, said M.V. Suryanarayana Raju, president of the Godavari Delta Parirakshana Samithi.

The procurement targets of the SHGs had never crossed 1 lakh tonne in the past and most of the SHG-run purchase centres remained the namesake, he recalled.

The district is expected to produce 12 lakh tonne of paddy in the current kharif, of which nearly 9 lakh tonne is meant for procurement.

Logistical problems are likely to greet the new procurement policy. Even as the harvest is expected to gain the momentum in the next three weeks, uncertainty prevails over identification of locations for opening procurement centres and the centres are to be strengthened with basic facilities.

A request was reportedly made some time back by the Department of Civil Supplies to the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) for identifying locations to open the procurement centres and allot 200 VOs to run them.



## 'Globalisation stimulates new thinking'

What is globalisation? Does this mean that all countries of the world are becoming the same? With globalisation, companies have forayed into the developing countries and hence generated employment for them. But it can turn out to be either good or bad, depending on the point of view you wish to see it from. A lot of companies have invested a lot of money just to develop the

country. There are many exporters that bring things and execute it to the companies. The world that we live in today is a result of several cultures coming together.

As a result it is resulting wonderful because women are acquiring equal rights in education. A person living in India can go to another continent for a new experience which he may not find in his own country. Our countries are becoming the same hence, it is resulting marvelous for the Indian society.

### **Arjun Khanna VII, IGCSE, RBK School Mira Road**

Globalisation is the process in which different countries trade their goods with each other to improve their economy.

There are many advantages of globalisation. The manufacturers aim to develop new markets to increase their profits. As a result the manufacturers strive to improve their technology to reach the international levels in turn benefiting the consumer.

Today several international brands are available in the Indian market at reasonable prices only because of globalisation. But for globalisation, Indian markets would have sold only Indian brands and manufacturers would hardly be motivated to improve technologies to match the international levels. There may be many negative effects of globalisation, like loss of jobs due outsourcing, illegal activities, terrorism, etc. We can reduce or eliminate these problems by making laws which are agreed and implemented at international level.

Globalisation is a necessity for each and every country today in order to progress.

### **Jayant Rao VII, IGCSE, RBK School, Mira Road**

Yes, Globalisation is a positive process. People in various countries are interested to inter connect and work together and become more creative in the fields of commerce, finance, cross-border trades and technology. It is actually an attempt to integrate and interact globally by many countries and people. It has become a world wide

movement .It is inevitable and now unavoidable.It stimulates new thinking and joint activity. Large amount of information and money flow over quickly more than ever.If a person is creative,he can lead a decent life in a single generation thanks to globalisation.Goods and services produced in one part of the world are simply available in all parts of the world within a few hours. International tour and international communication are very easy due to globalisation.

**Joel James VII, IGCSE, RBK School, Mira Road**

Globalisation raises the standard of living in developing countries, spreads technological knowledge, and increases political liberation, although globalisation may not be the perfect solution to end all of the world's problems, it is a good start. Countries that embrace globalisation, such as Peru, have benefited tremendously. Globalisation is apt for a country's economy, politics, and most importantly, for its people. Peru was once a third-world

# DECCAN Chronicle

## [Most Tamil Nadu states remain deficient in rainfall](#)

**Chennai:** Only 10 of the 32 districts in Tamil Nadu have received normal or excess rainfall in the past one week while all the other districts have remained deficient in rainfall.

According to the data released on the Regional Metrological Centre's website, Chennai has received 100 per cent deficient rainfall from normal for a period starting 1st October and ending 6th October.

Chennai, which should have received 31 mm of rainfall has received no rain in the past week making the city join the list of other two districts (Kancheepuram and Nagapattinam) which have also received nil rainfall in this week. Puducherry has also remained dry this week with no rain.

Dharmapuri has received the maximum amount of rainfall with 54.3 mm rain against the normal of 42.5 mm. Coimbatore (31 mm), Namakkal (47.8 mm), Nilgiris (36.8 mm), Salem (51.2), Theni (30.3 mm), Tirunelveli (26.2 mm), and Virudhunagar (24.4 mm) are the other districts which have received excess rainfall

## Farmers keen to practice Israeli farming methods



**Vijayawada:** A few farmers in Guntur district are slowly adopting the Israeli farming techniques to grow hybrid saplings, seeds and crops. The Israeli farming technique, which is gaining popularity among farmers helps to increase the productivity using less space as well as less water when compared to that of traditional farming, which is largely followed by farmers.

The techniques can be used to produce anything from seeds to final products like vegetables and fruits.

Kallam Narendra Reddy, a 51-year-old farmer in Penu-maka village of Tadepalli mandal in Guntur district, started to use Israeli farming methods putting aside his two decades experience in traditional farming.

Mr Reddy grows saplings and seeds for variety of vegetables and flowers including cauliflower, papaya, plantain, brinjal, drum sticks, cabbage, tomato and others in his 2-acre land.

“With an initial investment of `12 lakh, I started to grow saplings in the one-and-a-half acre land in two different methods. While one is under nets another is under special poly house,” said Mr Narendra.

Many of my colleagues ventured to start farming in this method but stepped back as there is no support from the government, he added.

Best advantages of growing hybrid crops in trays under the specially designed houses is that productivity could not be affected by the climate and can be grown in any season of the year.

Meanwhile, the state government has no plans to encourage such farmers and provide facilities for them. Farmers have appealed to the government authorities to provide raw materials and export facilities so that more number of farmers can adopt the Israeli technique.

“Though it is one-time investment we have to spend some lakhs to start it. If the government recognizes this method and encourage farmers we can produce more number of crops,” said Mr K. Aadi Narayana, a farmer in Yerabalem village near Magalagiri.

## Technical glitches mar solar grid connectivity



KSEB Limited's renewable energy and planning director K Valsalakumari conceded that only one such plant could be connected to the KSEB grid. Sources said that it had become virtually impossible to provide connectivity in most of the cases. (Photo: DC/File)

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:** Unexpected technical issues have put spanner in the works of KSEB Limited's plans to provide grid connectivity to roof-top solar plants. The plan was to make 13 roof-top solar plants grid-connected by the end of July.

KSEB Limited's renewable energy and planning director K Valsalakumari conceded that only one such plant could be connected to the KSEB grid. Sources said that it had become virtually impossible to provide connectivity in most of the cases.

"When the KSEB switches off power in the grid, it has been found that there is a dangerous flow from the solar plant to the grid. When the grid is switched off, now power should flow through it. In other words, the two mechanisms cannot be synchronized in most of the cases," a source said. Even KSEB sources admit that the grid-connectivity technology needs to be fine-tuned.



What's more, KSEB has asked the consumer to purchase the net meter, which is the bi-directional energy meter for measuring the quantum of electricity flowing in opposite directions and the net quantum of electricity consumed by the eligible consumer or injected into the distribution system of the licensee. This costly equipment forms an integral part of the net metering system.

As of now, solar plants installed on household premises are stand-alone systems that come with financial and practical strains. The power generated will have to be consumed real-time and the excess will have to be stored in storage batteries with inverter. Batteries of one kilowatt capacity would cost about Rs 60,000. Since a battery has only a life span of about 4 years, the average cost would work out to around Rs 15,000 a year.

The cost of solar energy only on account of storage battery alone would work out to about Rs 10 per unit. Once connected to the grid, a smooth two-way arrangement is set in motion. All the power generated on the roof top panel will be transferred straight to the public network, making a storage battery redundant.

## Air pollution behind decline in monsoon rains



Representational image. (Photo: visualphotos.com)

**Washington:** A new study has shown that it may be human induced air pollution that has caused a decline in the annual monsoon rainfall over the past 50 years.

In the second half of the 20th century, the levels of rain recorded during the Northern Hemisphere's summer monsoon fell by as much as 10 per cent, researchers say. Changes to global rainfall patterns can have serious consequences for human health and agriculture.

Scientists found that emissions of tiny air particles from man-made sources - known as anthropogenic aerosols - were the cause. High levels of aerosols in the atmosphere cause heat from the sun to be reflected back into space, lowering temperatures on the earth's surface and reducing rainfall.

Levels of aerosol emissions have soared since the 1950s, with the most common sources being power stations and cars.

According to the researchers at the University of Edinburgh, their work provided clear evidence of human-induced rainfall change. Alterations to summer monsoon rainfall affect the lives of billions of people, mostly those living in India, South East Asia and parts of Africa.

The team calculated the average summer monsoon rainfall in the Northern Hemisphere between 1951 and 2005. They used computer-based climate models to quantify the impact of increasing aerosol emissions and greenhouse gases over the same period. They also took account of natural factors such as volcanic eruptions and climate variability to gauge the impact of human activity on the amount of monsoon rainfall.

Researchers said that the levels of man-made aerosols were expected to decline during the 21st century as countries had begun to adopt cleaner methods of power generation.

The study is published in the journal *Geophysical Research Letters*.

## Small growers seek floor price for green tea

**Chennai, October 6:** The Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers' Associations (CISTA) has asked the Commerce Ministry to formulate a policy for floor price of green tea.

"The floor prices should also be implemented properly to ensure that small tea gardens are able to returns above the cost of production. Regular studies should also be undertaken on the cost of producing green tea," said confederation president Bijoygopal Chakraborty in a letter to Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

The Commerce Ministry, which supervises the functioning of the Tea Board, should also look at providing financial support to small tea gardens. Crop insurance, price stabilisation fund, soil map card and irrigation are the need of the hour for small tea gardens, he said.

Quality tea can be produced by small tea gardens at a lower cost and thus tap the export market in a big way. The Centre should now take initiative to promote micro and mini tea factories as suggested by the Tea board to tap the potential, Chakraborty said in the letter.

He also said that the Small Growers' Development Directorate should help small gardens get a fair price from bought leaf factories. Growers are having problems with bought leaf factories and the directorate should help in settling them, he said.

## Pepper output set to rise on bumper crop in Karnataka

**Kochi, October 6:** Pepper production is likely to be higher during the 2014-15 season following the prospects of a bumper crop in Karnataka. The Karnataka crop, according to farmers' estimates, will be some 70 per cent more than the normal crop of 25,000-30,000 tonnes.

"I harvested 10 tonnes of pepper last season while this year, I expect it to be 16-17 tonnes. A similar scenario exists in most plantations in the State," Sunil Kumar, a pepper grower from Sakleshpur, told *BusinessLine*.

Many have brought more areas under the crop in recent years, he said, in view of record prices during 2013-14.

However, the current assessment cannot be taken for granted, he said, adding that: "When there is a bumper crop, diseases would also be wide-spread."

Karnataka's production alone could be between 50,000 and 55,000 tonnes, according to the current estimates. Others in the State have put it at 70,000-80,000 tonnes. The area under pepper in Karnataka has more than doubled since 2011-12 when the 16,000 tonnes of the spice was produced on 21,061 hectares. The gestation period is three-five years and yielding normally peaks from the fifth year onwards. Hence, estimates appear to be exaggerated, said official sources.

In Kerala, production during 2011-12 was 16,500 tonnes from an area of 1,72,182 hectares. Though a vast area is reported to be under pepper cultivation, the number of vines may be few.

"For instance, we have pepper in one hectare of land in Kumily. It used to take two weeks to harvest the entire pepper crop until some 10 years ago. But, now it takes just two days as much of the vines have been destroyed by quick-wilt, said Punnoose, a grower.

The number of vines has declined continuously due to diseases, mainly the quick-wilt, said PA Thomas, a grower in Upputhara, Idukki.

Scarcity of labour, diseases and price instability have forced many to shift to cardamom in several areas in the district, he said.

Pepper growers in Pathanamthitta and Wayanad districts also complain of quick-wilt diseases. Extension officers under the Kerala State Agriculture Department have reported quick-wilt infestation of pepper gardens in several panchayats of Pathanamthitta district. Bina Varughese, Krishi Officer of Aruvapalam Panchayat, said some 1,200 vines have been found infested by the disease in the panchayat. According to Joshua Daniel, a pepper grower in the region, a good number of pepper vines in his plantation has been found affected and immediate remedial measures have arrested its further spreading.

Total output in 2013 -14 has been estimated at around 35,000 tonnes, including carry forward stocks, according to the trade. It is against the normal output in the range of 55,000-65,000 tonnes until few years ago.

Internal absorption of pepper in the country is projected at 45,000 - 48,000 tonnes. Since the usage of pepper is in very small quantity, the price hike has not affected the consumption.

## Outlook turns bearish for soyabean

**Indore, October 6:** The sluggish trend continued in soyabean and its oil on slack physical demand and rise in selling pressure. Even as local *mandis* remained closed on Monday on account of Bakrid, in private trading soya refined ruled at Rs. 610-13 ( Rs. 612-15 last week). Soya solvent, on the other hand, ruled at Rs. 575-80 for 10 kg. Given rise in arrival of new soyabean crop in the coming days and rise in selling pressure with stockists releasing

their existing carryover stock in mandis, bullish trend both in soya oil and soyabean appears unlikely in the coming days. However, with expected rise in demand during the festival season, any major fall in soya oil prices from its current level appears unlikely, said a soya oil trader .

Soyabean also traded low on poor physical buying with i prices across Madhya Pradesh being quoted at Rs. 2,800-3,200 a quintal.

## Cyclone alert in Bay; rains forecast for TN, Puducherry

**Thiruvananthapuram, October 6:** As expected, a low-pressure area has sprung up over the Gulf of Thailand and adjoining Andaman Sea, which is forecast to grow as a cyclone (to be called 'Hudhud') soon.

India Met Department traced the 'low' over the Tenasserim coast (south-east Myanmar and adjoining Thailand).

It is expected to rapidly concentrate into a monsoon depression by Tuesday.

### Cyclone forecast

It would intensify into a tropical cyclone, the first of the North-East monsoon season 2014, and would race towards the east coast of India.

Squally winds speeding up to between 60- to 70 km/hr have been warned of around the Andaman and Nicobar Islands on Tuesday. Isolated heavy rainfall is likely over south interior Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry during the same period.

Almost similar forecast is valid for the next day as the depression ramps up into a tropical cyclone.

Meanwhile, the withdrawal process of the southwest monsoon from land has acquired a sense of urgency as it braces to cover more parts of peninsular India.

### **Monsoon withdrawal**

The south-west monsoon has to retire fully from land before the Met can declare the onset of successor northeast monsoon over the peninsula.

Both are expected to happen simultaneously, given the build-up of conditions over the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal.

Profile of wind pattern projected by the Met showed the 'low' sitting pretty in an environment of easterly flows from the Gulf of Thailand into the Andaman Sea/south-east Bay. The Met merely joined peer international models to project the formation of the cyclone, which may barrel in towards Andhra Pradesh coast by October 12.

The build-up is similar to that of Super Cyclone Phailin that hit the same coast last year and tracked the same direction after having taken birth in the same location.

### **Transition phase**

The period of monsoon transition from southwest to northeast in October is otherwise even known to create ideal conditions for cyclones to take shape in the Bay of Bengal. Twin Pacific typhoons Phanfone and successor Vongfong have already surfed up the northwest Pacific basin and 'excited' the neighbouring South China Sea.

Phanfone has hit Japan, and Vongfong appears to follow a similar track, which is farther and away from South China Sea and the Bay of Bengal.

Southeasterly to easterly flows associated with these storms and warming up of the South China Sea and the Bay of Bengal ensured ideal conditions for storm development in these basins.

## Ample supply may not make apple a forbidden fruit this festival season

**New Delhi, October 6:**

The fear of apple prices soaring by 40-45 per cent during the festive season due to the floods in Jammu & Kashmir appears to be speculative if market players' opinions are considered.

While retail prices have risen about 10 per cent in Delhi, most do not expect to see them rising any further as supply from Himachal Pradesh is ample and the extent of damage to the crop is restricted to lower orchards and packed produce at J&K's mandis.

"Prices have not been particularly attractive, a minor hike of Rs. 100-200\20-kg pack is what we have noticed," said Ravinder Chauhan, President, Apple Growers Association of India (AGAI). Himachal Pradesh is estimated to have produced two crore boxes this season (50 boxes make one tonne).

"A 20-kg box was selling at Rs. 1,200-1,300 last year and we began the year at Rs. 1,600-1,700. It's now between Rs. 1,100-1,300. In my opinion, lower supply from J&K won't influence prices anymore. There maybe a slight increase around December-January but it should be offset when stored apples are released. Fruits are now available through the year, the concept of seasonal fruits has changed," he said.

The AGAI estimates that 40-45 per cent of the crop in J&K has been destroyed while about 25 per cent has been partially damaged, thereby causing considerable financial losses of up to Rs. 500 crore. It is in line with an ASSOCHAM study released last month that estimated the sector losing up to Rs. 1,000 crore with big apple-producing districts such as Baramulla, Sopore and Kupwara being particularly affected by the floods.



## Limited damage

Traders based in J&K, however, said that flooding affected transportation far more than the crop itself. “The bigger orchards are on higher ground. Packaged apples lying at mandis were damaged but the main losses were due to roads being affected,” said Puneet Gupta of Jammu-based Mahavir Fruit Traders.

Gupta said that price hikes depended entirely on the quality demanded by consumers. “During peak season, availability of good quality apples is greater but around December, such produce will be available in lesser numbers which is usually the case. Prices may rise a little then but I don’t see supplies being hit,” he said.

Delhi retailers also did not anticipate a further price hike once produce from J&K is available. Ramesh, a South Delhi fruit seller, who procures apples from Azadpur, did not expect higher prices in the months to come. “The price at this time last year was Rs. 100-110/kg, it’s about Rs. 120-130/kg now,” he said.

## Spot rubber prices end flat

### Kottayam, October 6:

Spot rubber closed almost unchanged on Monday. The market was in a holiday mood owing to Bakrid. The only gainer of the day was ungraded rubber which improved on the buying from the general rubber goods sector. RSS 4 closed steady at Rs. 120 a kg, according to traders. The grade was quoted flat at Rs. 120.50 and Rs. 117.50 respectively by the Rubber Board and dealers. RSS 3 weakened with October futures ending at ¥169.5 ( Rs. 95.39) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange. Spot rubber rates ( Rs. / kg) were: RSS-4: 120 (120); RSS-5: 115 (115); Ungraded: 105 (103); ISNR 20: 104 (104); and Latex (60% drc): 86 (86).ARAVINDAN

## Why farmers' inclusion is necessary in warehousing

It will help them to hold their produce and sell it at a favourable time

With advent in technology and its dissemination, the Government's priority and increasing responsibility due to ever-increasing population, Indian agriculture has grown by leaps and bounds over the years. In view of this, increasing infrastructure requirements have always been a concern of every Government. Though the sector has always been accorded priority status, a remarkable change in the life of the Indian peasant (especially small and marginal) is yet to happen. Many reasons can be assigned for this, but the most important, which one can identify, is the farmer's inability to take advantage of the time of his/her produce.

Most farmers grow the crop, harvest and sell quickly without waiting for a favourable condition in the market. An urgent need of cash forces them to sell their produce at an unfavourable price.

To address this problem and for promotion of scientific storage in the country, the Government started the *Grameen Bhandaran Yojana*, a special scheme for rural India.

Over the years, the scheme has resulted in a storage capacity of over 54.2 million tonnes being built in rural areas. Though the increase in storage capacity was much needed inclusion of farmers in storage should also be ensured.

Banks are critical to fulfil the Government's objectives of providing loans to farmers against the produce stored in the godown/warehouse.

Despite efforts by the Government, the loan against warehouse receipts is not yet popular as bankers are not confident with management and maintenance of the warehouses in the country, as reported in the Working Group on Warehousing under the 10th Plan.

With the aim of regulating and promoting the growth of warehousing in India and also to introduce the negotiability of warehouse receipts by launching the Negotiable Warehouse Receipt System (NWRS), Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA) was established by enacting the Warehousing (Development and Regulation) Act 2007.

The act came into force from October 25, 2010. For the purpose of building confidence of different stakeholders over warehouses, WDRA defined norms for construction and operation of warehouses. The Warehouse Service Providers (WSPs) have to ensure compliance with the norms defined for accreditation of warehouses with the authority.

### **Growth in pledge finance**

In the current agricultural scenario, pledge finance is very important as most farmers hold small- or medium-sized land and thus lack financial resources.

Most of these farmers do not possess any collateral which can be offered to financial institutions for availing loan. Negotiable Warehouse Receipts are now being used as collateral. Thus, in many States, pledge finance has been growing in the recent past. Among the 28 States, only 12 have made headway in spreading pledge finance among farmers and other stakeholders dealing in agricultural commodities. Pledge finance has become popular in Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan.

After the establishment of WDRA, most States have witnessed growth in availing pledge finance except Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. The highest growth was recorded in Gujarat (62 per cent) followed by Orissa (49 per cent) and Punjab (27 per cent). West Bengal, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Haryana have witnessed a growth of less than 10 per cent.

This has been possible with the concerted efforts put forth by agencies such as Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC), State Warehousing Corporation (SWC), State Agricultural Marketing Departments/ Boards, Collateral Management Service provider i.e., National Collateral Management Service Ltd and National Bulk Handling Corporation (NBHC).

### **Farmers' inclusion**

In the remaining States where pledge finance is prevalent, awareness camps on a mass scale is needed for reaching the producer growers. In order to help growers, the Government should ensure farmers' inclusion in all agriculture-related schemes.

A primary investigation into the matter reveals that most of the farmers do not store the produce in warehouses as they need cash quickly after harvest. Lack of awareness of the pledge loan scheme and utilisation of NWR is also among the reasons why farmers are not utilising warehouses.

The investigation also revealed that the unwillingness of bankers due to the risks involved in sanctioning loan against NWR has also become a hurdle in promotion of such schemes.

Though bankers are aware of accreditation norms of WDRA, they still hesitate due to the many risks associated with warehousing.

## Risk mitigation

The norms of accreditation by WDRA address the issue by including mandatory insurance by the WSPs. According to the direction of WDRA, the insurance policy covers: Insurance of items stored; fire and perils; Earthquake, spontaneous combustion; and Fidelity and personal indemnity. Though these are the major risk factors associated with warehouses, factors which are yet to include to increase bankers confidence are Insurance against price fluctuation, loss in quality of stored item due to climatic factors, fidelity by temporary wagers and bankruptcy of WSPs.

Apart from this, another lacuna in the insurance coverage is that in cases of terrorism / burglary / misappropriation / theft etc, the insurance coverage is only 20 per cent of the value of goods. If these risk factors are addressed properly, bankers may come in to the comfort zone, which will result in promotion of pledge finance and farmers' inclusion in warehousing.

The writers are from the National Institute of Agricultural Marketing, Jaipur. The views are personal.