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Govt. notifies new Urea Investment Policy



[The Hindu](#)

A file picture shows Urea bage being unloader from railway wagons and loader into lorries at Dindigul, Tamil Nadu. Photo: G. Karthikeyan.

In order to increase domestic urea production, the Fertilizer Ministry has notified New Urea Investment Policy for setting up and expansion of urea plants.

According to the policy, interested private companies are required to give a bank guarantee of Rs 300 crore for every project, while PSUs firms have been exempted from it.

The companies will get a subsidy on production only if the urea production starts in the next 5 years. The subsidy will continue till 8 years after the commencement of production.

In February, the government approved the amendments in the policy after as many as 13 players including IFFCO, RCF and Tata Chemicals proposed setting up of urea plants entailing capacity addition of 16 million tonne, whereas the shortfall between demand and production of urea is around 8 million tonne which is met through imports.

Sources said the proposed capacity addition by the applicants was more than the actual requirement as earlier policy was assuring the 'guaranteed buyback'

Following this, the ministry proposed for dropping the guaranteed buyback clause and replacing it with the Rs 300 crore bank guarantees so that only interested players approach for setting up of new urea projects.

According to the sources, as per policy the flexible lower limit and ceiling limit of urea cost has been fixed after factoring the gas price from \$ 6.5 mmbtu to \$ 14 mmbtu.

These provisions were made in the policy before the government decided to raise the gas prices from April 1, 2014.

The decisions on various issues during the implementation of this policy will be taken by a Committee of Secretaries including from Expenditure, Petroleum, Planning Commission and Agriculture. Fertilizers Secretary will be Chairman of the committee.

Efforts on to meet irrigation needs of farmers: Collector

Ensure water availability in tail-end areas also: Collector

Efforts would be made to ensure water availability to even tail-end areas of the district to meet irrigation demands of farmers, Collector N. Subbaiyan assured them even as he directed the Public Works Department (PWD) officials to ensure adequate storage in tanks and lakes in interior areas of the district.

Mr. Subbaiyan counselled the PWD officials to take stock of the water availability, take adequate steps to harness available water for proper use and inform aycut ryots accordingly so that frugal use of water would be ensured. He inspected Manayeripatti and Pudukkudi aycuts of the New Kattalai High Level Channel that branches off the Cauvery at Mayanur in Karur district. He inspected the Kavini tank at Manayeripatti, Nanji tank at Pudukkudi as also Sengippatti area served by the channel. While he took note of the water filled tanks in the aycut, he advised the officials to ensure that the remaining tanks were filled as soon as possible.

Mr. Subbaiyan inspected the Middle Cauvery as also the irrigation channels branching off below that and called upon the officials to ensure proper head up operations for water to reach the fields in time for irrigation requirement of the farmers.

With the samba paddy cultivation peaking in the district, the farmers are worried over the inflow drop into Mettur Dam and the weather playing truant. Though kuruvai is up for harvest in most of the places where the crop was raised, the prospect for enough water to see through the current samba is going to be a problem for the water managers if the rain gods fail, PWD sources revealed.

The district administration is readying the government machinery especially on the irrigation front to meet the burgeoning demand in any situation. PWD Executive Engineer (Cauvery) Kalaiselvan, Personal Assistant to Collector (Agriculture) Chokkalingam and other PWD, revenue officials were present during the visit.

Fertilizer stock adequate

The Agriculture Department in the district has made available sufficient stock of basal dose fertilizers in all the Primary Agriculture Cooperative Credit Societies (PACCS) and private firms as the farmers have taken up farm activities in about 1.71 lakh hectares of land, expecting onset of monsoon later this month.

As farmers of the arid district mainly depend on the northeast monsoon for their farming and many of them had begun sowing, taking advantage of the rains in September, the department had made available adequate stock DAP and NPK complex and top dressing fertilizers such as urea and potash, S.S.Shaiek Abdullah, Assistant Director of Agriculture, Quality Control, said.

As on Wednesday, the urea stock stood at 798 tonnes with PACCS and 1,771 tonnes with private dealers, DAP at 982 tonnes with PACCS and 207 tonnes with private dealers, potash at 27 tonnes with PACCS and 99 tonnes with private dealers and NPK complex at 605 tonnes with PACCS and 501 tonnes with private dealers, he said.

Besides DAP and NPK complex, the farmers could apply Single Super Phosphate (SSP) as basal dose fertilizer, the cheap source of fertilizer for phosphorous nutrients, he said.

Stating that there was also sufficient quantity of fertilizers for top dressing application, he said the department was taking steps to ensure continuous flow of fertilizers once the cropping season started.

Collector K. Nanthakumar recently held a meeting with Joint Registrar Cooperatives and Tamil Nadu Agriculture Marketing Federation and advised that all PACCS should have adequate stocks of fertilizers, Mr. Abdullah added.

Joint Director of Agriculture N.V. Krishnamurthy said monitoring cells had been formed in the district and all block levels to address the grievances of farmers. The farmers could approach the cells if they faced any difficulty in getting fertilizers, he said.

All the private dealers had been advised to display price list and stock position as per the Fertiliser Control Order, 1985. Stern action would be taken against those who tried to sell the fertilizers above the maximum retail price or violate the provisions of the order, he warned.

Solar powered pumping system brings cheer to farmers



Collector V. Dakshinamoorthy inspecting the solar powered pumping system at Keelsathambur village in Namakkal on Wednesday.-Photo: Special Arrangement.

Gone are the days when P. Ashokan , a farmer of Keelsathambur village in Namakkal could water the crops for four hours a day using the available power to run the motor.

For the past one month, after installing the solar powered pumping system with sprinklers, he is able to water the crops for over eight hours a day in his eight-acre land. The Department of Agricultural Engineering has launched the scheme to provide this facility to 103 farmers having open-wells, 16 farmers having borewells and seven farmers having underground tanks in the district for 2014-15 .

The project cost for open-well is Rs. 5,01,512 with subsidy of Rs. 3.84 lakh from the government and the farmers contribution stands at Rs. 1,17,512. Solar panels and converters are installed near the well in shadow-free space so that water could be drawn from the well between 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. A pre-programmed tracking system tilts the solar panels by 2.5 degrees every 15 minutes, so that the panels are directed towards the sun as it moves. Mr. Ashokan told *The Hindu* that crops could not be watered earlier due to erratic power supply. “Now, without recurring expenses, water is used effectively by using sprinklers”, he added.

It is installed by a private company with contract for maintenance for five years. The system is expected to have a life span of 30 years.

Engineers said that the system would promote the use of non-conventional energy in the sector and also improve the productivity.

They said that a total of 20 solar systems were installed till date in agricultural fields in the district and the rest would be installed as planned.

Collector V. Dakshinamoorthy who along with officials inspected the system on Wednesday and called upon the farmers in the district to effectively utilize the scheme.

From classroom to field, students get a new learning experience

Done as part of UNESCO-funded project



Students of Government Higher Secondary School, Athanur, during their visit to the paddy fields in Kolli Hills, Namakkal- Photo: Special Arrangement.

Giving a break to the traditional classroom learning methods, 40-odd students of Class VIII and IX of Government Higher Secondary School in Athanur in the district got a unique opportunity to gain hands-on-experience in farming and learn the skills involved in paddy cultivation in Kolli Hills here.

The school is one among the nine schools in the country selected for implementing the UNESCO-funded Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) that allows students to acquire knowledge, skills and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. As part of the project, students were on a day-long camp to paddy fields in Poongulapatti in Valavandi Nadu in Kolli Hills to learn the pattern of cultivation followed traditionally at the hilltop.

S. Soundarrajan, Assistant Director of Agriculture, Kolli Hills, explained the process involved in cultivation starting from preparing the land for sowing, planting, weeding methods and harvesting.

The difference between the cultivation methods in plains and hills were explained to the students.

Though T. Dhivya, Class VIII student and D. Premkumar, class IX student were from agricultural families, both were amazed at the cultivation methods followed in the hills. Watering is not done as the land is located along the river way and fertilizers are not used here.

Since each farmer has less than 20 cents of land, they work in each other's field without paying daily wages. Also, the prevailing humidity is favourable to the crop, they added.

Students also interacted with farmers and shared their experience and learned about the traditional culture prevailing in the hills. V. Chandrasekaran, coordinator for the project told *The Hindu* that practical learning helped students to know about environment and sustainable development.

They were accompanied by N. Mahesh Kumar, District Environmental Coordinator, Chief Educational Office.

The team would again visit the hilltop in December when harvesting is carried out. They would also visit paddy fields in Vennandur areas and submit a report to the UNESCO.

Selected students will have a chance to attend the UNESCO ESD Youth Conference to be held in Okayama, Japan on November 7.

Farmers to give undertaking to refund loan waiver amount if found ineligible

It is the responsibility of the farmer to renew the loan account

The Telangana government has been closely monitoring the verification and renewal of loan accounts of farmers and fresh loan disbursements, on a day to day basis.

After the government released Rs. 4,250 crore to the banks towards 25 per cent of outstanding crop loans, one-fourth of the crop loan up to Rs.1 lakh availed by individual farmers is being credited to their accounts for renewal in the first phase. The government has given its commitment to clear the rest of the dues within the next two years.

The government also made it the responsibility of the eligible farmer to renew the loan account till its complete repayment by the government to avoid imposition of penal charges by the bank.

Parallel to this, the District Collectors have taken up detailed verification of loan accounts of farmers on a war-footing to ensure that eligible farmers alone get the loan waiver benefit. Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao directed the Collectors to complete the verification process by October 15.

However, in the detailed verification, if it is detected that a farmer is ineligible for the crop loan waiver as per the terms of the scheme, he has to refund the instalment amount received by him along with the interest to the bank branch concerned, so that it is remitted to the government's account.

The farmer borrower will have to give an undertaking to that effect and give it to the bank branch manager concerned.

The pro forma of undertaking will be sent to farmers by the District Collectors after October 31.

Sources said that in many villages, farmers have renewed their loan accounts and availed fresh loans depending on parameters such as land holding, type of crop and scale of finance for a particular crop.

The banks can also give additional amount up to 30 per cent over and above the scale of finance in accordance with NABARD guidelines.

To speed up the process, the Agriculture Department officials are holding teleconferences every evening with bankers and Collectors to review the progress of loan account renewals as well as fresh loaning.

In addition, random calls were made to farmers to crosscheck the situation at the field level.

“It will help us to look into the grievances of individual farmers, if any, and address them by October 31,” an official said.

PACS cell in Wayanad

Ramesh Tenkil, Chief General Manager, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), will inaugurate a Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (PACS) development cell at the Wayanad District Cooperative Bank on Thursday. The cell would support the PACS in preparing and implementing the business plan for a three-year period. Resource persons had been appointed for the purpose, N.S. Sajikumar, District Development Manager, NABARD, said in a release here.

Mr. Tenkil would also inaugurate a milk processing unit of the Mupainad Milk Cooperative Society and a training programme on precision farming for the members of the joint liability groups of the District Kudumbasree Mission and members of the NABARD farmer clubs on the day, he added.

Rain shelters to boost vegetable production

In a bid to enhance the domestic production of vegetables and strengthen the concept of family farming, the Department of Agriculture has embarked on a pilot project to promote the rain shelter method of cultivation as a low-cost alternative to polyhouse farming.

Estimated to cost Rs.1 crore, the project seeks to establish 200 rain shelters across the State. The partially covered low-cost structure uses a transparent UV stabilized polythene film for the roof and GI pipes or wooden or bamboo poles for the framework to protect the plants from extreme weather conditions such as severe summer and heavy rains.

While a greenhouse with covered sides requires additional investment on installation of foggers and sprinklers to keep the rising temperature under control, the open sides of a rain shelter provide adequate natural ventilation.

The polyhouse method also has the drawback that only non-pollinated varieties can be grown because the plants are insulated from insects.

This effectively confines the utility of a greenhouse to the production of certain high-value crops such as tomato, salad cucumber, and capsicum which have limited market demand.

Trials conducted by the Precision Farming Development Centre (PFDC) under Kerala Agricultural University have demonstrated that rain shelters can ensure round-the-year of vegetables such as tomato, capsicum, salad cucumber, cabbage, cauliflower, brinjal, amaranthus, chilly, and bitter gourd. The trials showed a significant increase in the off-season yield as compared to open field farming.

According to R. Ajithkumar, Director of Agriculture, small and marginal farmers will find a rain shelter appropriate and more affordable than a greenhouse. It is also much cheaper and easier to maintain. While rain shelter cultivation will be promoted through farmer clusters, homestead- level initiatives will also be encouraged.

Low cost alternative to polyhouses

Small and marginal farmers to benefit

Year- round production, better yield

Popularising the organic way



Eshwaran P. Teertha engaged in packing organic food products with his wife Latha.— Photo: VAIDYA

Fast food and fast lifestyle are blamed for many health ailments. Inspired by the 'slow food movement' initiated by Italian journalist Carlo Petrini against the fast-food culture promoted by multinational companies, Eshwaran P. Teertha, a small farmer from Kudligere village in Bhadravathi taluk has ventured to popularise traditional cuisines that are delicious and beneficial to health.

His father Parameshwarappa Teertha, although an allopathy doctor, advocated herbal cures for common ailments. Eshwaran, like his father, has been guarding the health of people, not through medicines but through organically-grown food.

'Gandhasale' rice

After completing PU II in 1992, Eshwaran took up organic farming. He cultivated 'Gandhasale,' a native variety of paddy on his five acre land. His father used to advise his patients to consume soup prepared from *Bilvapatre* and *Tulsi* , known for their medicinal properties to maintain good health.

Along with green manure, Eshwaran would administer 'soup' prepared from *Bilvapatre* and *Tulsi* to the soil to maintain its health. Owing to these organic farming practices, there was an enhancement in yield and the paddy cultivated on his land developed resistance to blast disease and leaf hopper disease.

Eshwaran says that marketing the native variety of rice grown organically was a challenge. This inspired him to venture into value addition of agricultural produce.

As Gandhasale rice is known for its aroma, he created a strong consumer base for the rice by selling payasam and pulav prepared from it at fairs, haaths and food melas across the State.

Motivated by the response his food products received, he decided to take up value addition in large scale and launched his own brand named Arya Slow Food.

Long-term exposure to fast food results in diabetes and other health problems, says Eshwaran. It is possible to avoid many health problems by consuming food grown in local conditions in an environment-friendly manner. Food items prepared from millets like ragi, navane, jowar, saje, barugu, udalu, koralu, haaraka and saame

were part of the diet of the people of Karnataka in the past. The rich food diversity was slowly disappearing owing to the onslaught of fast-food culture, he rued.

He purchases millets grown by farmers organically and gets them powdered at Sidvi Organic Rice Bowl, a home industry established by him. He then markets them under the brand name Arya. Recipes on preparing various food items from millet powders are also provided for consumers. Along with this, mixtures for preparing traditional food like *tambuli* , *badanekai enegai* , *holige saaru* and *keelasa* are also prepared and marketed by him.

Eshwaran is now planning to get Institute for Market Ecology (IMO) certification for his products and market them outside Karnataka.

Let people in neighbouring States also get an opportunity to relish yummy *hunase* chutney and *tambuli* , he says.

A farmer tries to popularise traditional cuisines that are healthy and tasty

E-sale of jaggery in Chamarajanagar soon



The e-tendering system will help farmers get better price for their produce and eliminate the scourge of middlemen.— PHOTO: M.A. SRIRAM

The facility of an e-tendering system for sale of jaggery will be introduced in Chamarajanagar in due course to help farmers get better rate and eliminate the scourge of middlemen.

Besides ensuring higher rates, e-sale will obviate the need to pay commission to middlemen and the concept will be a strong incentive to farmers to increase production.

Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) secretary Sannaiah told *The Hindu* that a preliminary training-cum-familiarisation programme will be conducted for farmers about e-sale and its benefits during this week. Farmers have to ensure quality and their product will be graded and the price fixation will be based on the grade of the product, said Mr. Sannaiah.

Traders too will be trained and the authorities have established a laboratory to test and grade the product, which will be indexed online. This will enable traders from anywhere in the country to bid for it, quote their rate and buy the products, he said.

Kurubur Shanthakumar, president, Karnataka Sugarcane Cultivators' Association, said farmers have been demanding online or e-auction facility for all crops as the concept is beneficial to cultivators. "The association has not only supported e-auction of commodities but has apprised the farmers of its benefits and most of them are now familiar with the concept," said Mr. Shanthakumar.

Farmers are gradually veering towards e-commerce as they stand to benefit the most. Under the conventional system of trade that continues to be in vogue, the middlemen have to be paid brokerage and commission while traders tend to gang up and quote low to keep the prices artificially depressed thus denying the farmers a fair price. "Even if the quality is good, agents and middlemen have a tendency to nitpick and reduce the price and farmers desperate to sell the commodities would agree to the price quoted," said Mr. Shanthakumar.

But under the e-sale, the product quality and price would be quoted online by traders from anywhere in India and the farmers are assured of the best possible rates. Another benefit is that the sale proceeds are immediately realised by the farmers as the payment is credited to their bank accounts by the traders bidding online, said the APMC official.

E-sale of turmeric is already in vogue in Chamarajanagar since February, as a result of which farmers are getting a better rate for their commodities. As against nearly Rs. 6,150 a quintal of turmeric, it was quoted during peak demand at nearly Rs. 10,000 a quintal and hence their profitability increased, said Mr. Sannaiah

225 persons identified for integrated farming

A total of 225 beneficiaries have been identified under integrated farming system in five blocks, which are considered backward areas in the district.

The programme was aimed at enhancing livelihood source of farmers in poor background, especially in drought-prone areas, according to Joint Director of Agriculture N.K. Dhakshinamoorthy.

Collector M. Ravikumar took special efforts to launch this system, which would create an opportunity to generate their income. During the previous fiscal, only two blocks — Sathankulam and Vilathikulam — were chosen.

This system had been extended to five more blocks unlike any other districts in the State, he told *The Hindu* here on Wednesday.

Apart from agriculture, officials from departments of horticulture, agriculture engineering and animal husbandry had also been involved in implementing this programme.

Under the state-balanced growth fund, each of the identified beneficiaries would be provided with components, including crop husbandry, a vermicompost unit, 30 desi poultry birds (nattu kozhi), 11 goats and a farm pond at 50 per cent government subsidy.

These five components would be provided to every beneficiary under dry land model, which would be adopted in Kovilpatti, Kayathar, Ottapidaram and Pudur blocks.

Fifty beneficiaries had been identified in each of these four blocks, said the joint director. Udangudi was the other block, in which garden land model would be taken up under this integrated farming system.

Except farm pond, every beneficiary at Udangudi would be given two milch cows and other components as mentioned in the dry land model. Twenty-five beneficiaries would come under this garden land model, Mr. Dhakshinamoorthy added.

Organisation sought for empowerment of tribals

Andhra Pradesh Girijan Joint Action Committee has demanded that the State government launch Andhra Pradesh Girijan Empowerment Organisation for uplift and development of tribals in the State.

Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday, Joint Action Committee State convener Merajothu Hanumanth Nayak said that the government issued pattas to tribesmen who were dependent on agriculture in forest lands.

The tribesmen who were tilling lands prior to December 13, 2005 were identified as beneficiaries as per Forest Rights Act, 2006. As many as 74,960 beneficiaries were given pattas for 1,75,649 acre land, he said.

Issue of pattas

But, mere issuance of pattas was not helping the tribals. Bankers were not sanctioning loans to the tribals who were dependent on forest lands and also possess pattas.

Loans were being sanctioned to farmers dependent on revenue lands. The tribesmen were not recognised as farmers, he pointed out.

Crop loan waiver

The government announced that an organisation would be floated to implement the crop loan waiver scheme etc.

However, there was no mention of tribals in the government proposals. The government was requested to consider these issues and take necessary action, he added.

Joint Action Committee co convener Ramavathu Harilan Nayak also spoke.

‘Declare 49 mandals as drought-hit’

District Collector K.V. Ramana has recommended that the State government declare 49 of the 51 mandals in the district as drought-affected, in view of poor rains.

Reviewing the drought conditions in the district with Agriculture and Animal Husbandry officials, he said only Obulavaripalle and Railway Kodur mandals had received normal rainfall between June and September. “Proposals have been forwarded to the government seeking sanction of Rs. 2 crore to address fodder scarcity,” he added.

Farmers observe fast for pension

Activists of Puducherry Vivasagal Sangam here on Wednesday observed a fast, demanding that the government pay a monthly pension of Rs. 3,000 to the farmers and agricultural labours who attained 60 years of age.

They sat in protest near Swadeshi Mills under the leadership of T.Geethanathan, general secretary of Puducherry Vivasagal Sangam. They also urged the Union government to bring separate budget for agriculture department like railway budget and to implement the recommendations of M.S.Swaminathan Commission.

Urging the Puducherry government to allocate more fund for development of agriculture in the Union Territory, they said it should also enact law to prevent conversion of agricultural lands into residential plots.

NABARD to float 5,200 joint liability groups

The floating of joint liability groups by farmers and self-help groups facilitates banks to sanction loans expeditiously, said speakers at a function held at Senapanallur near Thuraiyur on Tuesday. They said the recovery was relatively prompt from members of joint liability groups.

The function was organised to mark the disbursement of loans to 25 joint liability groups formed by farmers sanctioned by the Thuraiyur branch of Indian Bank. S.Suresh Kumar, Assistant General Manager, National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development, said that it had been planned to float 5,200 joint liability groups in the district this financial year. This branch had been in the forefront in floating joint liability groups in the district and extending credit facility. So far, 100 groups had been formed and loans given to agriculture and allied activities.

Felix Edward, branch manager of the bank, said the groups were floated by a non-governmental organisation, Shalom Foundations. Loans had been provided to groups for bulk purchase of feed for milch animals.

To help SHGs access loans expeditiously

Utilisation of weeds for productive purposes

Floating cultivation helps reduce the pressure on arable lands by turning the flooded and waterlogged areas into productive ones .

A pilot study was undertaken at RARS, Kumarakom, Kerala Agricultural University on open water culture of seasonal vegetables by utilising water hyacinths as seed beds in floating rafts for vegetable farming.

Seed beds

Bamboo poles were used to fix the seed beds in position to avoid damage due to water ripples or drifting. The average dimensions of the seed beds were 5.7 m (L) x 1.8 m (B) x 0.7 m (H). Within this area dense water hyacinth is allowed to stand on and more of it was piled up to make it compact.

The duration or stability of the floating bed depends on the first layer, which remains at the bottom. The length and width of the bed can be decided by the farmer. Though the bed has no definite size, small sized bed is easier to manage and better for crop production. The thickness depends on the duration of crop as it needs to float for the whole time.

Red Amaranthus (Arun red variety) was transplanted on a thin layer of coir pith compost over the bed. It was spaced closely at a distance of five centimeters between plants since open water culture permits trapping of maximum solar radiation.

Application of either 19:19:19 at rate of one per cent or supernatant filtered cow dung slurry was sprayed at weekly intervals for nutrient requirement.

No pests/diseases were noticed. The crop was harvested in 60 days. A yield of 17.8 kg was obtained from a single bed (approximately 17.5 t/ha).

Floating beds

Floating beds are mostly made of water hyacinth, a very invasive weed that doubles in area within ten to fifteen days.

These type of experiments provide a means of using the weed in a beneficial way viz., reducing breeding grounds for mosquitoes, improves free water movement and navigation, facilitates open-water fishing etc.

(Dr.Vandana Venugopal is Associate Professor (Agronomy) and Dr.A.V.Mathew is Associate Director of Research,Regional Agricultural Research Station, Kumarakom, Kerala Agricultural University, email: vanjanil@yahoo.co.in, mobile: 098475814726.)

Programme on insurance schemes

A day-long programme on 'advantages of insurance schemes' will be organised at Krishi Vigyan Kendra on October 10 to benefit farmers and livestock owners.

In a press release issued here on Wednesday, R.P.Gnanamalar, Professor and Head of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, said that the programme aimed at creating awareness about the importance of various insurance schemes which would come as a great relief in case of natural calamity or any emergency.

She appealed to farmers and livestock owners to participate in the training and get their doubts clarified.

Those interested can contact by dialling 04322-290321 or 94447-19043 during working hours, she added.

Timely onset of North-East monsoon gladdens farmers

Timely onset of North-East monsoon has gladdened farmers in the district who are mid-way through paddy cultivation.

Though water has been released into the three canals fed by the Bhavani Sagar Reservoir - Thadapalli-Arakankottai, Kalingarayan and Lower Bhavani Project canals - there was apprehensions among the farming community about adequacy of water for sustaining the supply till December.

On Tuesday, the dam level stood at 71.40 feet with an inflow of 3,057 cusecs, and discharge of 2,500 cusecs. The storage was 11.5 tmc.

Other dams, including the Gunderipallam and Varattupallam Dams in the district are fast filling up, thanks to the continuous rain for the last four to five days. Since the South-West monsoon played truant, purportedly due to El Nino effect, farmers have pinned their hopes on the North-East monsoon.

The rain from the North-East monsoon that has started on a promising note, according to Public Works Department (PWD) sources, has resulted in water percolation. In addition to the flow of water in the irrigation canals, the rain from the North-East monsoon was a vital factor for profitable cultivation of paddy crop, according to K.V. Ponnaiyan, president of Tamil Nadu Swadeshi Farmers Association.

PWD officials said the positive effect of South West monsoon this year was confined to the southern districts in the State.

This year, the North-East monsoon has commenced with the start of October, the officials said.

The North-East monsoon rain will particularly be of use in the rain-fed areas in Perundurai and Anthiyur belts. In the ayacut areas, there was presently no water shortage. Farmers are, in fact, not averse to the likelihood for the PWD to resort to turn system to sustain water supply till the end of the cultivation season, Mr. Ponnaiyan said

Engagements

SALEM

Krishi Vigyan Kendra of TNAU, Santhiyoor: Training programme for farmers on country chicken rearing, KVK premises, 9 a.m

New plans for Sericulture sector

The sericulture sector in Karnataka is in for an overhaul with the government keen on injecting fresh reforms similar to the exercise that was undertaken over three decades ago. Karnataka is the largest producer of silk in the country and accounts for nearly 30 per cent of the country's exports, over Rs. 1,000 crore.

What has prompted the government to act is the steady decline in the area under mulberry cultivation over the past two decades, although the total silk production (8,500 tonnes) has more or less been constant given the increase in productivity and the new reeling techniques. The Central Silk Board is expected to extend support to the exercise in stepping up the area under sericulture.

Sericulture in Karnataka is over 200 years old, with Tipu Sultan having given a fillip to mulberry cultivation in several of the Old Mysore districts. The 'Sultani Kaddi', as a variety of the mulberry stem is known, was under cultivation in several regions of Mysore for a long time and has since been replaced with new high yielding varieties.

Commissioner for Sericulture G. Satish said subsidy would be extended to all farmers seeking to newly engage in mulberry cultivation. For those wanting to start a mulberry nursery, the subsidy will be Rs. 1.7 lakh a hectare and for cultivation it will be Rs. 30,000 a hectare.

The primary focus will be on bivoltine cocoon production in preference to multivoltine since the yield under the former is far higher. While around 400 metres of silk thread can be obtained from a single multi-voltine cocoon, it is three times higher in a bivoltine.

A recent review has revealed that the area under mulberry has reduced from 1.12 lakh hectares in 2000-01 to around 80,000 acres in 2013-14 and proportionately the number of sericulturists has also reduced from 2.56 lakh to around 1.30 lakh. The primary reasons attributed for the same are the reduction in labour availability , rapid urbanisation with people migrating to better paying vocations etc.

The Union Government about a year ago raised the import duty on silk yarn (primarily yarn is imported from China by the powerlooms) from five per cent to 15 per cent after repeated pleas from the State. Currently, home-grown silk yarn sells at Rs. 2,400 to Rs. 3000 a kg, which is Rs. 300 to Rs. 500 more than the price of silk yarn imported from China. Mulberry is an important cash crop in the districts of Mandya, Ramanagaram, Chickballapur, Bangalore , Tumkur and Kolar. The proposal is to extend it by another 15,000 acres of which 10,000 acres will be in the traditional sericulture regions and the remaining in Mysore, Bellary, Chitradurga

CPCRI schemes to help marginal farmers

Farmers urged to recycle organic waste



CPCRI director P. Chowdappa

Having played a key role in initiating research works, Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI) here has come out with a series of novel plans aimed at reducing input cost and called for extensive cultivation of hybrid and disease-tolerant crop varieties to address the woes of arecanut, coconut and cocoa farmers.

At a meet-the-press programme here on Wednesday the new CPCRI director, P. Chowdappa, urged farmers to recycle organic waste generated in coconut and arecanut gardens through vermicomposting to reduce the input costs so that more youths took up farming as a vocation.

The organic farming, coupled with inter or mixed crops, setting up of dairy and poultry farms in the gardens could treble income that would

be of great boon to small and marginal farmers, Dr. Chowdappa said.

Admitting that steady rise in labour cost and fluctuating markets have been major areas of concern among the arecanut farmers, he said the CPRI has developed dwarf arecanut hybrids, which would help in applying timely pesticide without relying much on workers.

Stressing on the need to go for value addition methodologies, Dr. Chowdappa said CPCRI had been making laudable efforts in developing technologies for producing virgin coconut oil, neera, a health drink, copra dryer and bio-fertilizers for enhancing coconut and cocoa productivity.

Dr. Chowdappa said coconut production in the country generated an income of Rs. 9,500 crore and arecanut was touching the Rs. 4,500 crore mark.

CPCRI is planning to supply disease tolerant and high yielding saplings and refining neera collection and its processing into different value added products like jaggery and sugar, he said.

Dr. Chowdappa said CPCRI also aims to achieve self-sufficiency in cocoa production by promoting its cultivation as a mixed crop.

Rubber price: KKS plans stir

The Kerala Karshaka Sanghom (KKS) will organise a protest gathering of rubber farmers and a farmers' chain in front of the District Collectorate here on Friday. Sanghom district unit secretary Panoly Valsan said at a press conference here on Wednesday that the protest was part of a State-wide agitation to highlight its demand that the government procure rubber at Rs.250 a kg, and ban uncontrolled import of rubber. The steep fall in rubber price from Rs.240 a kg to Rs.100 a kg had hit the rubber growers.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

Preparations for Monsoon Reviewed

CHENNAI: The State government is gearing up to face the impending north-east monsoon with Chief Secretary Mohan Verghese Chunkath holding discussions on Wednesday with Secretaries and other officials of key departments on the preparations to be in place for the rainy season lying ahead.

Secretaries of Revenue, Municipal Administration, Health, Highways, Electricity, Agriculture, Food, Public Works, Fire and Rescue Services and Commissioner of Revenue Administration, representatives of Armed Forces, Meteorology Department were among those who had attended the meeting held at the Secretariat. On behalf of Chennai Corporation, the civic body's Commissioner Vikram Kapur was in attendance.

A round-the clock control room is likely to be set up in all district headquarters with a toll free number to lodge complaints by the public. Availability of adequate rescue and relief materials, medicines with various departments and agencies, prevention of clogs in drainages during the floods in the city was among the other issues discussed.

PM's panel on climate change to be revived

Written by [Amitabh Sinha](#) | New Delhi | Posted: October 9, 2014 12:57 am | Updated: October 9, 2014 12:58 am

The government is all set to reconstitute and revive the Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change, an advisory body that has not met in the last three years, as India prepares to assess its domestic actions on the issue.

The Council, established in 2007, had framed India's National Action Plan on Climate Change in 2008 which had given rise to eight 'missions' to undertake actions that would put India on a low-carbon growth path and help adapting to the effects of climate change.

These actions were considered essential to strengthen India's case at the international climate change negotiations as well.

But the Council, chaired by the Prime Minister, has not met for the last few years and the eight 'missions' have meandered along, most of them under-achieving targets.

With the Council unable to meet, an Executive Committee had been set up in January last year, mostly comprising officials from different ministries, to assist the Council and monitor the implementation of work being done by the eight 'missions', which include the National Solar Mission to promote solar energy, the National Water Mission to ensure sufficient supply of water for all kinds of uses, a Mission on Energy Efficiency, and the Green India Mission to increase green cover in the country.

With climate change firmly back on the international political agenda now, the Narendra Modi government is learnt to be working on reconstituting the Council soon.

Sources said the composition of the Council, which had representation from the government and outside, could be different this time with more members from the industrial sector.

In the existing Council, only Ratan Tata, who was inducted in his capacity as chairman of the Investment Commission, was from the industry. Most of the government members will have to be changed because they no longer hold the positions by virtue of which they were included in the Council.

But more importantly, the Council is likely to make a comprehensive reassessment of domestic climate policy and review the functioning of the eight missions.

The sources said in view of increasing international pressure on India, which is the world's fourth largest emitter of greenhouse gases now, to take more ambitious actions on climate change, the government was likely to scale up the targets of each of the missions and lay down strict timelines for their implementation.

The sources said there was even the possibility of creating more missions.

- See more at: <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/pms-panel-on-climate-change-to-be-revived/#sthash.rTevf7B1.dpuf>

weather

INDIAN CITIES

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Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Rain: 0

Humidity: 84

Wind: normal

Tomorrow's Forecast

Thursday, Oct 9

Max 33° | Min 26°
Partly Cloudy

Sunrise: 05:58

Sunset: 05:53

Barometer: 1009

Friday, Oct 10

Max 34° | Min 24°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday
Oct 11



34° | 24°
Cloudy

Sunday
Oct 12



35° | 24°
Partly Cloudy

Monday
Oct 13



36° | 24°
Partly Cloudy

Tuesday
Oct 14



35° | 24°
Partly Cloudy

Wednesday
Oct 15



35° | 24°
Partly Cloudy



[Food security scheme deadline for states expires](#)

NEW DELHI: Rolling out the Food Security Act (FSA) across states seems to have dropped down the priority list of the Narendra Modi government. This is evident from the fact that the Centre did not issue any notification to extend the deadline for its implementation by all states, which ended on October 4.

Officials said this should not be seen as a big issue as the states availing subsidised food grains for their public distribution scheme (PDS) will continue to get the grains from central pool. They also added the deadline will be extended very soon. Last time, the deadline was extended by three months despite a few states including West Bengal demanding an extension of six months.

Meanwhile, the Centre is focusing more on whether the state governments have built adequate capacity to implement the scheme. The food ministry has even sought details of the preparedness in states where the act is in force.

Sources said that only two more states - Assam and Uttarakhand - have informed the ministry about their readiness to launch the scheme. So far 11 states have either implemented the scheme completely or partially.

"Our focus is not just to see that every state launches the food security scheme just for the record even when it is not ready and has not done enough to ensure the successful implementation of such a major scheme. It has no meaning if states are unable to store,

transport and distribute the grain that we are sanctioning under this scheme," said a food ministry official.

The ministry has circulated a revised proforma seeking detailed response from all states including on issues such as whether the governments have identified the beneficiary households as per the guideline and whether the list of such persons has been put out in the public domain.

Some of the other queries are whether states are making doorstep delivery of foodgrains and whether they have created sufficient and scientific storage capacity at different levels. The ministry has also sought response on steps that have been taken to set up an internal grievance redressal mechanism including call centres, help lines and designation of nodal officers.

Among the states that have implemented the FSA are Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Punjab, Bihar, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka

Food bowl of India starts farming seafood

CHANDIGARH: Landlocked Punjab has started feeding shrimps to coastal Dubai! A progressive farmer has started using waterlogged wastelands in the state as fish farms, unlocking the possibility of more such farms coming up in select pockets of the state.

In fact, the first consignment of two tonnes of shrimps from a trial farm in Fazilka was sent to Dubai with the help of the Gujarati farmer only last week for Rs 9 lakh. Plans are now afoot to popularize the project with the help of experts from GADVASU University, Ludhiana. Farmer Sanjeev Nagpal from a waterlogged area of Fazilka pioneered shrimp farming in Punjab and his company is now getting more offers to export stocks to Dubai.

Nagpal says the Vannamei variety of shrimp has been found to be most suitable for the region as it grows in saline water, consumes

calcium and makes hard water soft. "We can target more countries for export if the facility of quick storage is made available in the state," he says.

Sardines displayed at the Seafood weekend at the Taj West End, in Bangalore (TOI Photo)

"Till now, shrimp farming has always been associated with coastal regions and achieving the feat in a landlocked place seemed hard to digest when we set out," he adds. "But now there are plans to develop 10 to 15 acres of shrimp farm in every affected village and balance area will become fertile as shrimp farms will use saline ground water and help reduce water-logging. Fazilka, Muktsar and Giddarbaha are suitable for shrimp farming."

Prof Asha Dhawan, dean, college of fisheries, GADVASU University adds, "It is a delicacy in most countries and can prove to be very profitable for farmers who can bear the input cost in terms of shrimp seeds and feed. In case of the trial farm, these were airlifted from hatcheries in Andhra Pradesh. Cluster farming is the way ahead to make such projects economical. Higher returns and readily available overseas markets can be a profitable vocation for farmers dealing with waterlogged areas."

"Brackish water shrimp has been reared successfully in inland salt-affected waterlogged wasteland attaining an average weight of 20 gm in a three-month culture period. The varsity is working on development of low cost larval and grow out 'aqua-feeds' for carps, catfishes, murrels and prawn and shrimps," she says

DECCAN Chronicle

Krishna water for Chennai to be delayed



Storage in Kandaleru reservoir in Andhra Pradesh, whence water is supplied to the city, has too little water to share with Chennai. Senior TN WRO (water resource organization) officials in the know of things admitted to not even writing to their Andhra counterparts seeking water release, which was last stopped around September 15. (PHoto: DC/File)

Chennai: The city cannot expect Krishna water supply from Andhra Pradesh at least for a while. It has to be content with the two tmcft (thousand million cubic feet) water jointly stored in its four reservoirs.

Storage in Kandaleru reservoir in Andhra Pradesh, whence water is supplied to the city, has too little water to share with Chennai. Senior TN WRO (water resource organization) officials in the know of things admitted to not even writing to their Andhra counterparts seeking water release, which was last stopped around September 15.

WRO officials decided against the writing to their Andhra counterparts based on the confidence given by Chennai Metro Water (CMWSSB) that it has enough water, 2tmcft, to last till December end.

The average month requirement of the city is around 1.2tmcft. CMWSSB official website put Kandaleru's storage at little over 17tmc on Wednesday evening. The four reservoirs, Chembarambakkam, Poondi, Puzhal and Cholavaram, jointly store 2.009 tmcft as on date.

With the northeast monsoon expected to hit the city anytime before the month end, CMWSSB is confident that the monsoon season would replenish its reservoirs enough to meet the city's requirements during the coming dog days.

The city has received little over 5tmcft since July. As per the inter-state water sharing agreement reached between the two states, Tamil Nadu is entitled to receive 12tmcft per year from Andhra. (8tmcft during July-December period and another 4tmcft for January-April period)

THE HINDU BusinessLine

Volume rises at Coonoor tea sale

Coonoor, October 8: For the third consecutive week, the volume at the auctions of Coonoor Tea Trade Association has increased compared with the previous week.

A volume of 17.68 lakh kg has been catalogued for Sale No: 41 to be held on Thursday and Friday. This is 1.89 lakh kg more than the offer made last week. Of this, a volume of 11.98 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 5.70 lakh kg belongs to dust grades.

As much as 16.52 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 1.16 lakh kg orthodox variety. In the leaf counter, only 52,000 kg belongs to orthodox while 11.46 lakh kg CTC.

Unsold: Among the dusts, only 64,000 kg belongs to orthodox while 5.06 lakh kg, CTC. With substantial volumes remaining unsold in previous auctions, as much as 2.52 lakh kg of such teas are being re-offered this week. Last week, some invoices of orthodox leaf were withdrawn.

Better liquoring CTC leaf suffered less demand while better mediums could not be sold even after shedding Rs. 3-4 a kg. Following limited demand from exporters, many invoices of plainers remained unsold despite shedding Rs. 2-3 a kg.

In the dust sale, orthodox teas tended easier and suffered withdrawal. High-priced CTC dusts eased towards the sale end.

Some better mediums could not be sold despite shedding Rs. 1-2. Because of low export enquiry, plainers suffered withdrawal despite shedding up to Rs. 2 a kg.

Oilmeal exports plunge 73% on costlier soyabean

Oilmeal exports		Shipments in tonnes	
	FY14-15	FY13-14	% change
June	2,02,244	3,60,822	- 44
July	1,25,042	1,82,133	- 31
August	1,36,325	3,17,161	- 57
September	82,749	3,01,717	-73

Mumbai, October 8:

Oilmeal exports plunged 73 per cent in September to 82,749 tonnes against 3,01,717 tonnes in the same period a year ago. This was largely due to soyabean prices ruling higher in the domestic market, leading to lower crushing and lower soyameal export. Soyameal shipments were down 68 per cent last month to 868 tonnes against 2,778 tonnes in August while that of rapemeal dipped 80 per cent to 58,567 tonnes.

Though export of rapeseed meal increased to 572,352 tonnes from 417,668 tonnes in the last six months, it could not make up for the sharp fall in supply of soyameal. Soyameal prices are down at \$569 (Rs. 35,278) a tonne against \$616 (Rs. 38,192) a tonne in August. Rapeseed meal was up at \$237 a tonne from \$229.

In the first six months of the fiscal, oilmeal exports were down 43 per cent to 950,599 tonnes against 1,657,697 tonnes in the same period last year, according to the data released by the Solvent Extractors' Association of India.

In last two quarters, oilmeal exports to South Korea were down to 464,555 tonnes (518,178 tonnes) comprising 258,729 tonnes of rapeseed meal, 204,082 tonnes of castor meal and 1,744 tonnes of

soyameal. Iran imports were lower at 142,357 tonnes (571,171 tonnes) and it includes 35,500 tonnes of soyameal and 106,857 tonnes of rapeseed meal. Thailand imported 91,602 tonnes of rapeseed meal and 2,407 tonnes of soyameal.

Vietnam and Taiwan imported 70,051 tonnes (72,622 tonnes) and 39,528 tonnes (45,817 tonnes), respectively. Export from Kandla accounted for 75 per cent of total shipments at 714,246 tonnes, followed by Mumbai which handled 108,814 tonnes (11 per cent) and Bedi handling 32,197 tonnes (three per cent). Mundra and Kolkata handled 53,747 tonnes (6 per cent) and 41,331 tonnes (4 per cent).

New urea plants have to provide Rs. 300-cr bank guarantee

Govt tightens policy for private sector projects to eliminate non-serious players



New Delhi, October 8: The Government has tightened the policy for new urea projects undertaken by the private sector to keep out non-serious players.

For timely execution of the projects, it has now proposed that companies will have to furnish a Rs.300-crore bank guarantee for each undertaking.

Mode of release

The Department of Fertilisers has notified an amendment to the New Investment Policy. The amendment stipulates that “all project proponents” will now have to provide Rs. 300-crore bank guarantee for each project which will be linked to different stages of execution.

“Out of the Rs. 300 crore, Rs. 100 crore will be released after finalisation of LSTK/EPCA contractors and release of advance to the contractor’s account,” it said.

Another Rs. 100 crore will be released when ordering of requirements and its supply is completed or in the middle of the project, “whichever is earlier”. The balance amount will be liquidated once the project is completed.

New policy

Notably, the amendment does away with the “dispensation of guaranteed buy-back” outlined earlier, ostensibly to support only those companies who are serious about setting up new urea projects. Earlier this year, a number of companies had proposed to set up new plants to augment production capacity by 16 million tonnes.

Subsidy

“This is the New Investment Policy for the new plants. That clause is just to make sure only those players who are serious about urea production get involved. This way, there is clarity provided to the Government on how many plants are coming up,” said Satish Chander, Director-General, Fertiliser Association of India.

The notice also states that urea companies will receive subsidy on domestic sale for eight years from the date from when the production begins. India currently produces some 22 million tonnes of urea while domestic consumption is to the tune of 30 million tonnes. The shortfall is met through imports.

The retail price for urea has been capped at Rs. 5,360/tonne, the difference between it and the cost of production is paid out as subsidy to manufacturers.

The country's fertiliser subsidy bill costs the Government more than Rs. 70,000 crore and Minister for Fertilisers and Chemicals, Ananth Kumar, announced in August that the Ministry was working on a new holistic fertiliser policy.

Sheet rubber gains on short supply



Kottayam, October 8: RSS 4 improved further to Rs. 122 (Rs. 121) a kg, according to traders and the Rubber Board. The grade firmed up to Rs. 119 (Rs. 118) as reported by the dealers.

There were enquiries from the tyre sector probably since the market is said to be suffering from acute short supplies.

Moderate gains in domestic futures continued to keep the sentiments positive during late trading hours.

Unless the market recovers from the prevailing levels there might be causalities in the plantation sector, sources said.

The October futures flared up to Rs. 123.50 (Rs.121.33), November to Rs. 120.85 (Rs. 119.08) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) closed at Rs. 95.76 (Rs. 94.78) at Bangkok. The October futures closed at ¥173.9 (Rs.98.52) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates (Rs. /kg): RSS-4: 122 (121); RSS-5: 116 (115.50); Ungraded: 107 (106); ISNR 20: 105 (105) and Latex (60% drc): 85 (85).