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THE HINDU

Dutch lessons to keep Indian feet dry

Holland's response to rising sea levels and intense rainfall linked to climate change offers a template of policies and innovations for countries such as India

The devastating floods that swept Srinagar in September pose a critical question: as rainfall patterns become erratic, can India acquire the capacity to mitigate the impacts of such catastrophes?

The experience of the Netherlands, a country where more than half of the land is under constant threat of flooding from the seas and rivers, provides an interesting example of how it can be done. The Netherlands became a viable country eight centuries ago when separate territories surrounded by water were linked. This “land below the sea” has since built its economic fortunes around a vast system of dikes, and institutions of water democracy. “Polders” — as inhabited lands are called — were turned into productive agricultural and dwelling sites. A crippling flood in 1953 that killed many reinforced the nation's resolve to further strengthen its defences using science and technology.

The national goal is to “keep Dutch feet dry” and it has helped the Netherlands focus on new challenges posed by rising sea levels and intense rainfall linked to climate change. The country's other problems are subsidence of land, increase in salinity of soils, and growing demand for safe housing.

A twin approach

Holland's response to these challenges offers a template of policies and innovations for countries such as India. Dutch research into water management has produced software that can simulate floods, assess the impact of catastrophic events and help contain the havoc of a disaster. On the ground, the Netherlands is

building improved flood management barriers, ranging from strong dikes that can withstand the severest floods to off-the-shelf portable reinforcements that can be deployed in a matter of hours.

“The question is not whether we want to do it, but how — with concrete and steel or in a more natural way,” the Dutch Minister for Environment and Infrastructure, Melanie Schultz van Haegen-Maas Geesteranus told this writer and other journalists recently, during an invited visit to the Netherlands.

Holland is adopting a twin approach — a mix of hard engineering and soft, return-to-nature initiatives — to ensure the well-being of 9 million people who live in vulnerable areas mainly in the west of the country, which also yields three quarters of its GDP. The western region is under constant watch and a major programme is underway to strengthen anti-flood measures. The government has set itself the goal of sharply lowering risk to people and economic assets, under which the probability of dying from a flood should be no more than one in 1,00,000.

Building confidence in such risk modelling requires a commitment to research. The Netherlands has, through organisation such as Deltares, developed the expertise to scientifically estimate the number of people at risk of death and the economic losses to infrastructure segments such as power stations, if there is a serious breach in a dike.

The government at The Hague follows a rigorous programme of managing its deltas and has set out its goals in the Delta Programme 2015 document. The KNMI, or the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute, is adopting climate scenarios similar to those used by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. That is, the maximum rise in sea levels may be more than what was estimated earlier, at 40 cm by the year 2050. Five decades beyond that, the level could be 100 cm.

Equally important, the government is taking into account scenarios for soil subsidence, ranging from 10 cm per century, to a peak of 60 cm in two areas, Flevopolder and Groningen.

Given the country's geographical handicap, innovation in water management is the obvious national priority. The Rhine river is being broadened at 30 locations under the Room for the River project which is to be completed in 2015 (by contrast, Srinagar's Dal lake has shrunk to less than a third of its size eight centuries ago, and several wetlands have been lost in the valley). Architects in Holland's Delft region are designing large houses that float in man-made flood capture areas. In nearby Zeeland, dikes are being strengthened with geotextiles and new materials to prevent loss of protective dunes. Entrepreneurs have been coming up with off-the-shelf water barriers that can be deployed quickly and stored away for future use.

Spread to other countries

In another important initiative, freshwater use is being made efficient. As seawater levels rise, affecting the quality of soils, salt water-tolerant agriculture is the focus of research.

Information Technology and social media have also been harnessed, to build software applications for assessment of dike status, 3D modelling of disasters, and for early warning systems. The expertise developed by the Netherlands has been deployed in places as far apart as New Orleans and Jakarta. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, engineering firms constructed new delta infrastructure in Louisiana against high water, while in the Indonesian capital inhabited by some 9 million people, a Netherlands Water Partnership has been launched. The turnover of the Dutch water sector was €15.6 billion in 2011, of which €7.4 billion came from abroad.

The choice of both hard and soft solutions in the Dutch programme is of interest to all countries that face the impact of climate change: fewer days rainfall annually than the historical average, but with greater intensity. Some governments, Minister Schultz van Haegen points out, are looking for quick solutions that can be showcased for electoral gains, and not opting for sustainable development.

“We tell them you need to take more time, and look at downstream and upstream effects,” she says.

India has an ongoing engagement with the Netherlands on several aspects of development. Discussions in the past covered building of airports and use of inland waterways. But it is in the management of water that Dutch expertise seems uniquely promising, and capable of helping India face an uncertain climate future

Popularising the organic way



Eshwaran P. Teertha packing organic food products along 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.

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.

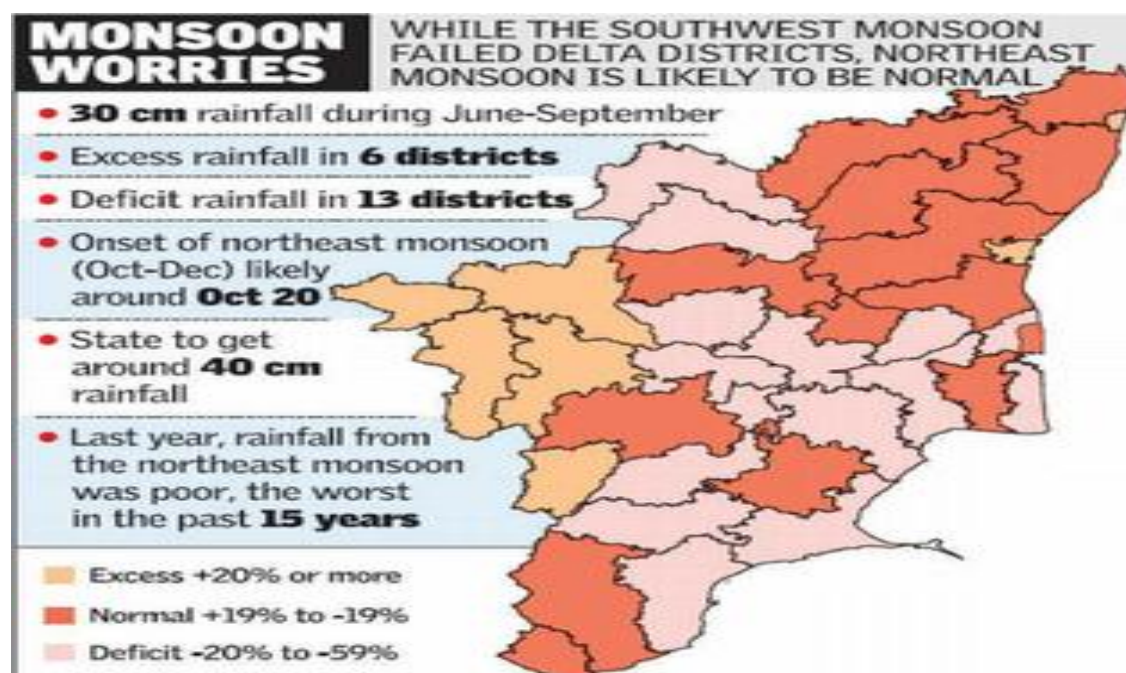
Eshwaran says that marketing the native variety of rice grown organically was a challenge. This inspired him to venture into value addition of agricultural produce.

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.

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

Northeast monsoon to be normal

If it does not yield much rainfall, the Cauvery delta could be in for trouble



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

Training on value addition for Thalavadi tomato growers

To protect tomato cultivators in Thalavadi from suffering losses due to periodic price fluctuations, the marketing wing of the Agriculture Department has planned a training programme for the farmers involving the Indian Institute of Crop Processing Technology.

At present, the increased arrivals have caused a fall in tomato cost to the level of Rs. 8 to Rs. 10 per kg. Besides Thalavadi where the Horticulture Department has a collection centre under the Peri Metro Cluster Development Programme, tomatoes are procured for Erode markets from Mecheri in Dharmapuri district and Hosur in Krishnagiri district, according to P. Ganeshamoorthy, Deputy Director of Horticulture Department.

Report

According to an Agriculture-Industry Interface report of MSME (Micro-Small and Medium Enterprises), tomato is cultivated in over 520 hectares in the district, with a productivity level of 20 metric tonnes per hectare.

Of this, about 200 hectares under tomato cultivation are in Thalavadi block. The training would in all likelihood be a precursor to launch of a Farmers' Producers' Company for manufacture of tomato pulp at times when the procurement price is low. The Uzhavar Sandhais in the district are in the process of determining the weeks of the year when tomato prices plummet.

The help of Agro Marketing Intelligence and Business Promotion Centre, Tiruchi, has also been sought to arrive at the pattern of price fluctuation, R.M. Subramanian, Deputy Director - Agri Business, said.

No major initiative has been taken for value addition of tomato so far in the district. Cold storage for tomatoes could be brought under the value-addition project, Mr. Subramanian said.

Farmers tend to dispose off the tomatoes at the earliest in rainy season due to fear that the crop would rot quickly.

A facility for value-addition would ensure the right price for tomato for farmers all through the year, retail traders say.

There is already a Farmers' Producer Company for ragi and millets in Thalavadi.

Similar companies exist for flowers in Sathyamagalam, for banana and vegetables in T.N. Palayam, for turmeric in Kodumidi, for coconut in Arachalur, for banana in Bhavani, and pulses and millets in Chennimalai

BARC's high-yielding groundnut seed supplied to progressive farmer

The bumper yield achieved by prisoners interested him



For bumper yield: Farmers sowing TG 37-A groundnut seed, prepared by Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, at Indira Nagar near Kudankulam in Tirunelveli district on Thursday.— Special Arrangement

When he saw in last June Palayamkottai Central Prison inmates harvesting nearly 2.50 tonnes of a high-yielding groundnut variety per hectare, supplied by Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), progressive farmer T. Selvaraj of Indra Nagar near Kudankulam started pleading with the prison and BARC officials to supply the seeds to him as he hails from a rainshadow region. And, he managed to get a promise from the officials on the spot.

After 100 days, his dream of cultivating this high-yielding groundnut variety in his farm was realised on Thursday as Mr. Selvaraj, under the guidance of J. Daniel Chellappa, BARC's Senior Scientist with its Technical Coordination Section, sowed it in his farm.

Prison activity

With the objective of tapping the farming skills of the inmates, Palayamkottai Central Prison, which is already cultivating a range of greens and vegetables on its premises and selling them through its outlet, sowed on five acres in four phases in March BARC's TG 37-A groundnut variety. When the inmates harvested the groundnut on June 26, the yield was enviable.

The Nuclear Agriculture Division of BARC developed the groundnut variety and 41 other varieties, mostly oilseeds (including groundnut and sunflower) and pulses after seven to eight years of research.

The TG 37-A was a unique variety having a combination of features such as drought-resistance, disease-resistance, high yield and early maturity.

The Palayamkottai prison got a net profit of Rs.2 lakh per hectare with its bumper yield within 105 days of sowing. The technical advice of the Department of Agriculture of the Tamil Nadu government helped it achieve this.

"Now, I can also propagate this variety among the farmers here to increase groundnut production in our region," Mr. Selvaraj said.

"This is the first time in Tamil Nadu that BARC's TG 37-A has been supplied to an individual farmer. With the guidance of Agriculture Department officials, Mr. Selvaraj will maintain the crop," Mr. Daniel Chellappa said.

Farmers to get one-fifth of loan as fresh credit

Though the State government has initiated the process for registration of Farmers' Empowerment Corporation by October 12, there is no clarity yet on the number of eligible crop loan borrowers or the quantum of loan to be redeemed by the government on behalf of farmers.

The registration of FEC would be an important step in the Agriculture Debt Redemption scheme facilitating the government to release Rs. 5,000 crore or more towards disbursement of 20 per cent of outstanding crop loans of farmers with a cap of Rs. 1.5 lakh. The disbursements to the farmers' accounts would commence any day after October 22, sources said.

An estimated 41 lakh farmer households availed loans and banks were given a deadline to submit the list of accounts of crop loan and agricultural gold loan borrowers by October 10. As 95 per cent of the farmers' bank accounts were seeded with the Aadhaar number, the government would verify the list by running a special software to identify the eligible borrowers for debt redemption.

Once the bankers submit the list, the government would complete verification by October 15. Clarifying that it is not loan waiver but debt redemption to benefit both banks and farmers, official sources said the government would take over the responsibility of servicing the farmers' loans thus freeing them from the debt burden.

The government decided to repay in the first instalment 20 per cent of crop loan availed by the farmers. Once the part payment is made, that old loan account will be closed and the remaining loan would become the fresh loan account for the farmers under the interest subvention scheme.

The FEC would give an undertaking to clear the remaining outstanding amount along with 10 per cent interest to the banks in four years or early depending on the fund mobilisation, sources added.

If a farmer availed Rs.1 lakh loan, government would credit Rs.20,000, one-fifth, into the account of the farmer so that his loan account would be renewed afresh. This amount the farmer can

take again as fresh loan so that his total outstanding loan would be Rs.1 lakh under the interest subvention scheme. If he does not avail it, his outstanding loan amount would become Rs.80,000.

The govt. will identify the beneficiaries by running a special software

Krishi Mela in Brahmavar from tomorrow

The Zonal Agricultural and Horticultural Research Station (ZAHRS), affiliated to the University of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences, Shimoga, will organise a 'Krishi Mela' at Brahmavar in Udupi district on October 11 and 12.

Addressing presspersons here on Wednesday, M. Hanumanthappa said the Krishi Mela would be held in association with various government departments, Sri Kshetra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project (SKDRDP), and Krishik Samaj.

The main objective of the mela was transfer of the latest agricultural technologies through demonstrations, discussions, field visits in ZAHRS and seminars.

There would be interaction programmes between agricultural scientists and farmers as well. "This mela will provide a platform to the farmers to find solutions to their problems," Mr. Hanumanthappa said.

Three seminars would be held during the mela. A seminar on 'Cultivation of horticultural crops' would be held on the first day. On the second day, the topics 'Profit-oriented integrated farming system' and 'Scope for mechanisation in agriculture' would be discussed.

Heads of agriculture and allied departments, Directors of Research and Extension Wing of the UAHS, scientists from Indian Council of Agricultural Research, ZAHRS, and Krishi Vigyan Kendra, and progressive farmers would participate as resource persons.

Agricultural technologies and latest farm machinery would be on display at nearly 125 stalls at the exhibition arranged on the mela grounds.

The other attractions of the mela include high-yielding varieties of rice and seed production; preparation of Dapog nursery, SRI method of cultivation; CO-4 fodder grass demonstration, multi-storeyed cropping system, grafting, organic and vermi compost, dairy, poultry, goat, rabbit, and duck-cum-fisheries demo units.

“Last year, nearly 25,000 farmers had participated in the mela. This year we are expecting nearly 40,000 farmers from Udupi, Dakshina Kannada, Uttara Kannada and Shimoga districts at the mela,” he said.

Vinay Kumar Sorake, district in-charge Minister, will inaugurate the mela. Shobha Karandlaje, MP, will inaugurate the exhibition. Savita Kotian, president of zilla panchayat, will inaugurate the new Agriculture Diploma College at ZAHRS campus, Dr. Hanumanthappa said.

‘Farmers should become businessmen’

Agribusiness conference emphasises on optimising production and profits



Foreign delegates at the international conference on agribusiness management in Mangalore on Thursday.— Photo: R. Eswarraj

P. Chandra Shekara, Director, Agri Business Centre, MANAGE, Ministry of Agriculture, on Thursday said a combination of technology, group-led initiatives, growing crops according to market trends, exploitation of information technology, private participation, enhancing quality and favourable government policy could convert agriculture into a profitable business.

He was delivering the keynote address at the inauguration of a three-day international conference on Agribusiness Management-Opportunities and Challenges organised by Sahyadri College of Engineering and Management here. Mr. Chandra Shekara said there was no dearth of technology in the country as more than 70 agricultural universities and Indian Council for Agriculture Research Centres constantly working on improving technologies.

However, not all the innovations have reached the farmers and if that happened, there could be drastic improvement in production. The group-led extension by farmers would not only improve the produce but also enhance their bargaining power, thus boosting the agri-business. At the same time, farmers should grow the crops in demand and not hang on to traditional crops to get better returns.

The private sector had come to play an important role, particularly in food processing and marketing and the trend had to be encouraged, he said. Meanwhile, farmers should improve entrepreneurship qualities to become good businessmen. All these should be supported by proper government intervention in the form of policies to encourage innovations and inventions, Mr. Chandra Shekara said.

Plantation crops

Inaugurating the conference, P. Chowdappa, Director of Central Plantation Crops Research Institute, Kasaragod, said in order to improve profitability and production, farmers should grow horticulture crops also. Value addition to plantation crops could bring more revenue, Mr. Chodwappa said, citing the example of innovating coconut chips, Neera and virgin coconut oil at his centre. If profitability increases, youngsters would naturally stay with agriculture, he said.

Manjunath Bhandary, Chairman of Bhandary Foundation, the promoters of the college, recalled old days of agriculture and said it used to be more of a social service than business. However, one has to go with the changing trends, he said and stressed on the need for agribusiness.

In his introductory address, Business Administration Department Chairman A.P. Achar said the conference had been truly international with 35 of the 200-odd delegates coming from two other countries. He said the conference would deliberate upon six themes, including retaining the youth in agriculture and how to convert farmers into businessmen. College Principal Umesh M. Bhushi was present.

Engagements for Oct 10

Sahyadri College of Engineering: International conference on Agribusiness, session on agri-entrepreneurship: skill development in agriculture, 9 a.m.; retraining youth in agribusiness, women in agribusiness, 10.15 a.m.; institutional and infrastructural framework for agribusiness management, 2 p.m. and agriculture marketing: domestic and international trade, Sahyadri campus, Adyar, 3 p.m.

Tobacco Board wins Golden Leaf Award

The Tobacco Board has added another feather in its cap by bagging the prestigious “2014 Golden Leaf Award” for its “most impressive public service initiatives” in the tobacco sector at an International conference held in West Virginia, USA, recently.

Tobacco Board Chairman Koothati Gopal received the award at a meeting of Global Tobacco Networking Forum (GTNF) held at Washington D.C. and West Virginia, U.S.A.

“I dedicate the award to 89,507 FCV tobacco growers and their family members involved in production of FCV tobacco in India,” said Mr. Gopal, after receiving the award.

In the past one year, the Tobacco Board has taken various initiatives relating to extension activities, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), elimination of Non-Tobacco Related Material (NTRM) and elimination of pesticide residues and initiated a series of measures for achieving sustainability in the sector.

The implementation of electronic auction (E-Auction) system to ensure transparency and accountability in sale of tobacco leaves across the 30 auction platforms in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

Solar power scheme: farmers angry

Allege lack of transparency

Farmers were agitated when the process of receiving online applications for setting up grid-connected mini-solar power plants got over in seven minutes on Thursday morning. The process was carried out by State-held Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Ltd. (KREDL).

Under this scheme, farmers who set up such power plants would get a tariff of Rs. 8.40 per unit for power sold to Escoms.

KREDL had called for online applications to set up solar power plants with a capacity of one to three megawatts in their farms. There was an enthusiastic response for this pet project of Energy Minister D. K. Shivakumar.

A few farmers who spoke to *The Hindu* from different regions of the State alleged that they could not even open the website. However, KREDL maintained that it closed the process as it received enough responses for a total capacity of 300 MW.

But farmers allege that the process lacked transparency and suspect that only those close to the power centres managed to send in their applications.

Now, get bottled fresh milk



Farm freshness: A worker testing milk at an automated packing unit at Thariyode in Wayanad.

After scripting a success saga in the production and marketing of farm fresh cow milk, the dairy farmers at Thariyode in Wayanad district are getting ready to repeat the success in marketing bottled farm fresh milk.

For this, the Thariyode Milk cooperative society has set up a farm fresh milk automated packing unit, a first time in the State, at a cost of Rs.20 lakh. Youth Affairs Minister P.K. Jayalakshmi will inaugurate the unit at 10 a.m. on Saturday.

“Consumers prefer fresh milk of a single cow but it is not easy now to cater to the demand. They have to be satisfied with a mix of milk from various cows available in the market. But we are trying to provide each customer milk from a single cow with its purity intact,” M.T. John, president of the milk society, said.

When the project was launched nearly 13 months ago on an experimental basis, the society had procured 15 litres of milk from three farmers by providing a premium price to them. It was then supplied to 30 consumers a day in Kalpetta town, Jose Immanuel, Deputy Director, Dairy Development Department said.

“But now the society can supply as many as 115 litre of milk a day to more than 230 consumers in the municipal areas,” he said.

Farm fresh milk would be collected from as many as 15 selected dairy farmers in separate cans before 4 a.m. and the door-to-door delivery in the same cans would be made to more than 239 consumers before 8 a.m. after ensuring the quality of the produce, Mr. John said.

When the demand for milk increased, the society set up a packing unit to cater the need of the consumers, Mr. Jose said, adding that it would help the society to include more dairy farmers in the network.

Ksheera Mela-2014 begins today

The Ksheera Mela-2014, a two-day district level dairy farmers’ meet, organised jointly by the Dairy Development Department, Kerala Veterinary and Animal Science University, Milma and milk cooperative societies in the district will be held at Kappuvayal, near Thariyode, in the district on Friday and Saturday.

Various programmes including pencil drawing and painting competitions for students, dairy quiz for farmers and workers of various milk cooperative societies, a cattle show, and a seminar on ‘Climatic change — a new approach’ would be held, Jose Immanuel, Deputy Director , Dairy Development Department, said. The department had selected C.J. Sebastian who had produced 77,733 litres of cow milk during 2013-14 as the best dairy farmer. Lilly Mathew of Ayyanikkattu, Mananthavady, and V.C. Sankaran of Vettuvadi at Moolamkavu are the best female farmer and tribal dairy farmer respectively.

Gujarat refuses GM field trials of food crops

However, it will approve field trials for non- GM food crops

Even as the Union Ministry of Environment seems to be in favour of experimenting with genetically modified (GM) crops, the Gujarat government has firmly indicated that it will not approve of field trials of GM food crops in the State.

In a letter dated September 30 to Kapil Shah of the Baroda-based NGO Jatan, , a section officer of the Gujarat agriculture and cooperation department has said that after due consideration of various representations, the government had decided not to grant a no objection certificate (NOC) for field trials of GM food crops.

The NOC from the State is a statutory requirement for conducting open air field trials. However, it will approve field trials for non- GM food crops, Mr. Shah said.

Mr. Shah told *The Hindu* on Thursday that after a spate of campaigns and representations to the Chief Minister and other authorities, he had written a letter to the government on September 11 demanding to know what steps were taken on the issue of GM crops. This clarification was in response to that. His efforts and those of other groups have resulted in the Chief Minister appointing a committee to formulate a policy for organic farming in the State.

The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) on July 18 had recommended 13 cases of GM crops for confined field trials subject to NOC from the State government.

There are 79 applications for field trials pending before the GEAC, including 42 new cases involving confined field trials related to cotton, rice, castor, maize, wheat, groundnut, sugarcane, potato, chick pea, mustard, sorghum and brinjal.

The centre also has to decide on the commercial release of Bt brinjal which had been kept in abeyance by the earlier government.

Welcoming the decision, the Coalition for GM Free India in a statement said Gujarat joins Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana which have denied permissions for field trials of GM crops.

The Coalition said this decision was also in line with the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture and the Supreme Court appointed Technical Expert Committee.

With Gujarat also saying no to field trials of GM crops, Maharashtra remains the only State where field trials were taking place, the statement said. The Coalition had earlier written to Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar pointing to the rampant violations of GM field trials of Monsanto in his home State as reported by the media and demanded that he immediately stop all GM trials.

Tibetan plateau becomes focus of intense climate study



REUTERS Tibetans are seen near the Kharola glacier some 200km (125 miles) west

The Tibetan plateau has become the focus of intense meteorological study in a never-before attempt to understand its effect on climate locally as well as globally, notes *Nature News*.

This development follows close on the heels of the massive floods which hit Kashmir and Pakistan recently.

The \$49-million Chinese effort, in which the plateau is being flooded with sensors, is aimed to help predict extreme weather — both in Asia and as far away as North America — and give scientists knowledge on how climate change affects these events.

Having a high altitude, the plateau receives more sunlight, gets hotter than land at sea level. Acting like a giant heating plate it pumps air upwards which disperses in the upper troposphere, influencing atmospheric circulation and thereby, climate.

The heat also intensifies monsoons, which are caused by land-ocean temperature differences which in turn cause pressure gradients.

Being the biggest and highest plateau in the world, it disturbs the troposphere unlike any other structure on earth. However, there are little data on the impact on climate.

The plateau's remoteness, altitude and harsh conditions — it is often called the third pole because it hosts the world's third-largest stock of ice — meaning that even basic weather stations are few.

Satellite data are also plagued by large errors owing to lack of calibration from ground observations.

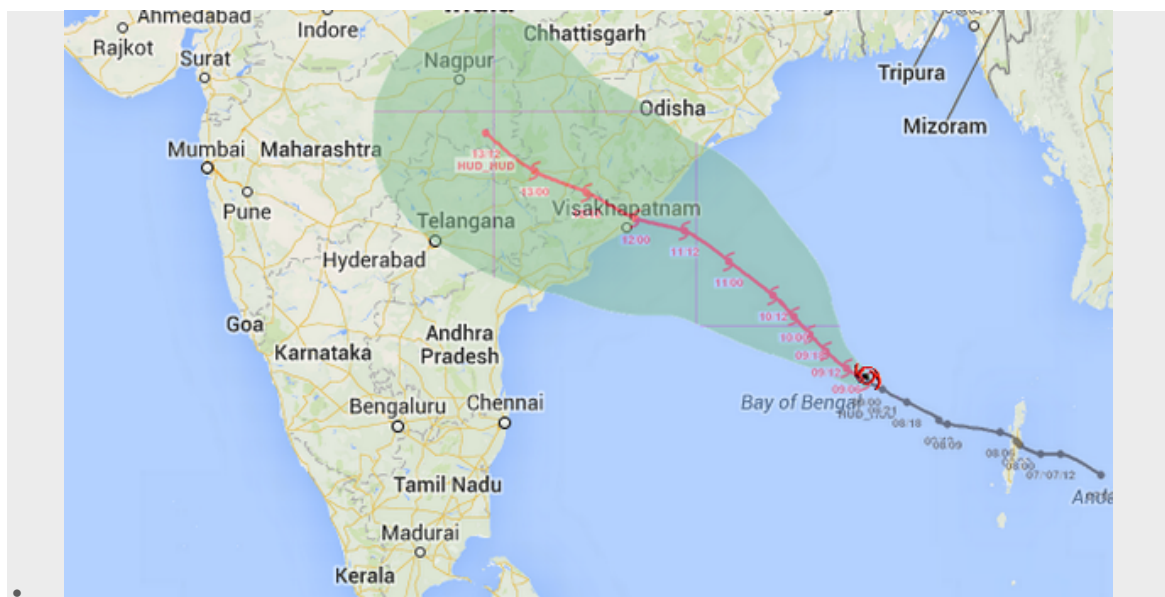
But now, in central and western Tibet, researchers jointly funded by the China Meteorological Administration and the National Natural Science Foundation of China began, in August, to place temperature and moisture detectors in the soil and to erect 32-metre-high towers laden with sensors that measure cloud properties. In recent weeks, the team has begun deploying sensors mounted on weather balloons and unmanned aerial vehicles.

“The data should help determine the extent to which different types of land surface heat up the overlying air, and how this might vary in response to factors such as snow cover and vegetation changes,” Wu Guoxiong, an atmospheric scientist at the Institute of Atmospheric Physics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) in Beijing and a principal investigator of the project told *Nature News*.

“Climate models have the greatest uncertainties in Tibet and the Himalayas, and are especially weak at simulating monsoons,” Xu Xiangde, an atmospheric scientist at the Chinese Academy of Meteorological Sciences in Beijing and investigator on the project said to *Nature News*.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

Cyclone Hudhud Moving Westnorth Westward from Bay of Bengal



VISAKHAPATNAM: Cyclone Hudhud over East Central Bay of Bengal moved westnorth westward and lay centred over West Central Bay and adjoining East Central Bay at 17.30 hours today at about 675 km east-southwest of Visakhapatnam, a weather office report said.

Also Read: [‘Hudhud’ Likely to Cross Vizag Coast on Sunday](#)

The depression would continue moving westnorth westwards and intensify into a very severe cyclonic storm during the next 12 hours, it said.

The depression would cross north Andhra Pradesh and Odissa coasts between Visakhapatnam and Gopalpur by forenoon of October 12, 2014, the report said.

Distant warning signal number two has been kept hoisted at Visakhapatnam, Machilipatnam, Nizampatnam, Krishnapatnam ports, the report said.

Distant warning signal number two with section signal number two and three have been kept hoisted at Kakinada and Gangavaram ports, the report said.

Fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea and those at sea have been advised to return to the coast immediately, the report said.

[Psychiatric Disorders on the Rise](#)

Mental health is an integral and essential component of health. The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines mental health as a state of well-being in which an individual realises his or her own abilities that can cope with the normal stresses of life, and work productively to make a contribution to his or her community. In this

positive sense, mental health is the foundation for individual well-being and the effective functioning of a community.

Mental and behavioural problems are increasing the world over. The burden of illness resulting from psychiatric and behavioural disorders is enormous. Psychiatric symptoms are common in general population across the globe. These symptoms are worry, tiredness, and sleepless nights which affect more than half the number of adults while one out of every seven persons experiences some form of diagnosable neurotic disorder.

Prevalence of mental disorders as per World Health Report (2001) is around 10 pc and it is predicted that the burden of disorders is likely to increase by 15 pc by 2020. According to various community-based surveys, prevalence of mental disorders in India is 6-7 pc for common mental disorders and 1-2 pc for severe mental disorders.

In India, the rate of psychiatric disorders among children aged between 4 to 16 years is about 12 pc and nearly one-third of the population is less than 14 years of age. With such a magnitude of mental disorders, it becomes necessary to promote mental health services for the well-being of general population. Treatment gap for severe mental disorders is approximately 50 pc and in case of Common Mental Disorders it is over 90 pc. Problems relating to mental health would be managed with sensitivity at the community level through better training of community workers and primary care teams, and through educating care-givers. Every year, October 10 is observed as the 'World Mental Health Day' by the WHO, with the aim of spreading awareness about mental health issues all over the world.

An illness like schizophrenia can be manageable and cured with proper medication and counselling so that the affected people can lead normal life and join the mainstream. Schizophrenia can cause an individual to struggle with numerous challenges, which get affected specially when there is a lack of social support.

Proactive family support, presence of friends and a supportive network of people, as well as a focus on rebuilding life can help to ensure that quality of life can be enhanced and restored to certain levels. Generally, people sympathize with the sufferers of schizophrenia instead of empathising with them because of lack of awareness. It is high time the public thought about the psychological disorders and mental health to provide proper medical treatment and counselling.

As per the National Survey of Mental Health Resources carried out by the Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, in May and July, 2002, the ideal required number of mental health professionals has been calculated and the details of present requirement and availability of mental health professionals in the country

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weather

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Today's Weather

tomorrow's Forecast

Friday, Oct 10

Saturday, Oct 11

Max Min

Max Min

Clear





cloudy

32° | 26°

35° | 26°

Rain: 0 Sunrise: 05:58
Humidity: 79 Sunset: 05:53
Wind: normal Barometer: 1005

Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday Oct 12	Monday Oct 13	Tuesday Oct 14	Wednesday Oct 15	Thursday Oct 16
				
34° 24°	34° 24°	36° 24°	35° 24°	34° 24°
Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Sunny

DECCAN Chronicle

[Paddy crop on the verge of withering](#)



Picture for representational purpose

Karimanagar: Paddy crop being cultivated in an extent of 1.61 lakh hectares is on the verge of withering due to scanty rainfall and erratic power supply. A significant amount of the crop, which is presently reaching ripening stage, is likely to be affected by low rainfall and inadequate power supply. Consequently, the yield of the crop is likely to get reduced remarkably.

Despite low rainfall, farmers managed to sow paddy in the ongoing kharif season. The crop is being irrigated with the help of water from dug wells, bore wells and local tanks. But the district is registering high temperatures and there is a heat wave in the last few weeks. As a result, wetting paddy crop has become a major concern. Meanwhile, power is being supplied for agriculture needs for only four hours due to shortage in power production.

This has intensified the troubles of the farming community. Now, farmers are not able to irrigate paddy crop, which has reached ripening stage, when it requires more water to reach the harvesting stage.

Pingili Malla Reddy, a farmer from Kamalapur mandal, said he was growing paddy in an acre and that it almost got withered due to inadequate water supply. "I sowed paddy in three acres and it will get damaged if irrigation remains poor," said Gorre Ilaiah of Manthani.

Nukala Ellaiah, a farmer from Kodimyal, said he had never witnessed such a pathetic situation in the last 20 years. Many farmers lamented that they would not be able to get back at least the amount they had invested.

Students given tips on facing monsoon crisis



Fire department trained students on how to keep themselves afloat during monsoon

Coimbatore: When flash floods hit your neighbourhood, do you just scream and await a rescuer? You don't need a rescuer, you can save yourself from drowning, say fire department officials. With monsoon round the corner, school and college students were given crucial tips on how to save themselves in the face of natural calamities on Thursday. Two 2 litre cocoa cola bottles in the armpit

will help us stay afloat. Blowing air into at least 5 polythene covers and tying them on the chest will help avert drowning.

Also, a pair of trousers can help us to stay on the surface of water. Fire Station Officer of Peelamedu Dhowlath Mohammed said that the department had conducted a live demonstration of the ways by which one can stay afloat when confronted with floods to the Plus-1 and Plus-2 students of Kanya Gurukulam, at the swimming pool of Jenny's Residency.

District Fire Officer S. R. Chandran told Deccan Chronicle that the department has launched an awareness drive among students on how to save themselves from drowning.

While this is being done as part of monsoon preparedness, the fire service department will commence training on keeping oneself safe this Deepavali from October 12, he said.

The students of Gopal Naidu Higher Secondary School were also trained on monsoon preparedness, fire rescue besides shifting the injured even if a stretcher is not available .

They were also taught to tie the ropes for rescue especially when there is a fire outbreak. The swift rescue act and evacuation was also demonstrated by the fire service personnel.

The fire department has been conducting frequent awareness programmes and training at least two schools in a month. "I have been taking regular classes for the B Ed teachers because tutoring a teacher would mean educating hundreds of children", station officer Dhowlath Mohammed added

Drought in many AP mandals



Deficit rainfall between June and October 15, which is the prime period for sowing operations and raising crops, is taken as the basis for declaring mandals as drought-hit. “AP should have normally received 609 mm of rainfall during this period, but it received only 435.3 mm,” said a senior revenue official. (Photo: DC/File)

Hyderabad: Several mandals in Andhra Pradesh are staring at drought. Deficit rainfall in many mandals, in 12 of the 13 districts in the state between June and October, has badly affected agricultural activity.

Deficit rainfall between June and October 15, which is the prime period for sowing operations and raising crops, is taken as the basis for declaring mandals as drought-hit. “AP should have normally received 609 mm of rainfall during this period, but it received only 435.3 mm,” said a senior revenue official.

While Kadapa district collector has already sent a report to the state government to declare several mandals as drought hit, the situation is no different in Anantapur and Chittoor.

Kadapa 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. He said this after reviewing the drought conditions in the district with agriculture and animal husbandry officials. Only Obulavaripalle and Railway Kodur mandals received normal rainfall between June and September.

DEFICIT RAINFALL	
JUNE 1-SEPT. 30	
■ East Godavari	-44 %
■ Guntur	-24%
■ Krishna	-46%
■ Nellore	-15%
■ Prakasam	-31%
■ Srikakulam	+8%
■ Visakhapatnam	-13%
■ Vizianagaram	-1%
■ West Godavari	-19%
■ Anantapur	-34%
■ Chittoor	-25%
■ Kadapa	-34%
■ Kurnool	-4%

Collectors of other districts too have been asked to prepare a list of mandals hit by deficit rainfall. Officials in the revenue department said the overall deficit rainfall recorded in Andhra Pradesh for the

period between June 1, 2014 and September 30, 2014 is 29 per cent.

“While the state should have normally received 609 mm of rainfall during this period, it received only 435.3. Now, even if all the districts of AP receive good rains due to Hudhud cyclone, a large number of mandals are likely to be declared as drought hit due to less rainfall between June and September,” said a senior official in the revenue department.

Except Srikakulam district that has 8 per cent surplus rainfall during June 1 and September 30, all the remaining 12 districts have recorded deficit rainfall.

THE HINDU BusinessLine

Indian coffee growers gain on Brazilian woes

Prices steam up on fears over the LatAm country's crop; planters here expand acreage



Sergey Nivens/shutterstock.com

Chennai, October 9:

Your favourite cup of filter coffee or latte or cappuccino is set to get costlier as domestic bean prices have surged to record highs. This follows a rally in the global market on the back of the Brazilian crop running into problems due to dry weather.

Corporates owning coffee estates such as Tata Coffee and Amalgamated Bean Coffee Trading Company – which runs Café Coffee Day – could gain as a result. Nestle and Hindustan Unilever, which source coffee, could be shelling out more for their products.

Record prices

Currently, farm gate prices of Arabica parchment are quoting at a record of over Rs. 12,000 for a 50-kg bag, while robusta parchment is ruling near Rs. 8,000.

Robusta cherry is being quoted around Rs. 3,750 per 50-kg bag. Robusta cherry accounts for over 40 per cent of coffee exports totalling three lakh tonnes in the last couple of years.

Brazilian output

“We are looking at a scenario which we last saw in 1977 when a disastrous frost affected the crop in Brazil. Dry weather earlier this year affected coffee production in Brazil. The crop this year has been estimated at 40.1 million bags (60 kg each). Now, Met forecasts of the crop’s blossom shower being delayed have fired

up the market,” said Anil K Bhandari, a planter and former president of United Planters’ Association of Southern India.

Rains are crucial during September-October for the Brazilian coffee crop. But forecasts say that no showers are likely till the end of the month. This means, the already stressed coffee plants could be weakened further and production could be hit next year too, said Bhandari.

Coffee trade across the globe now fears that next year’s crop could be lower than 40 million bags. This has resulted in prices surging to near 30-month high of \$2.20 a pound. On Thursday, coffee on ICE US for delivery in December ruled at \$2.175 a pound.

“Domestic prices are high in line with global prices. Availability is low since we are at the fag end of the season,” said Ramesh Rajah, President of Coffee Exporters’ Association.

“But, there are no buyers in view of the high prices,” said Bose Mandanna, a grower from Kodagu and former Vice-Chairman of the Coffee Board.

“Since the market is volatile, buyers are staying away. They don’t want to take risk. Once the market stabilises, they will return. Also, coffee prices cannot continue rising and lose consumers,” said Bhandari.

Few deals have been signed for the new crop, said Rajah. “Not much business has been done for the new crop in view of the problems we faced with the crop last year,” he said.

Domestic crop situation

Last year, the Coffee Board had initially projected production of 3.47 lakh tonnes but finally, it turned out to be 3.04 lakh tonnes as the crop was affected by unseasonal rains.

“Indian Arabica is expensive in the global market as also the Robusta. But when Brazil is short, there will be demand for the Indian produce,” said Rajah.

“Coffee export value can increase this year in view of the high prices,” said Bhandari, adding that the key was the new crop that is shaping up well.

“Arabica has suffered loss due to the borer menace but Robusta has shaped up well,” said Bhandari.

“Harvest has begun in Tamil Nadu and in Karnataka, it will start next month,” said Mandanna. “The crop is much better than last year. Robusta will be 10-15 per cent higher, while Arabica has been affected by the white stem borer,” he said.

Rajah said coffee production this year will be in line with the Board’s projection. According to the Coffee Board’s post-blossom estimates, production this year could be a record 3.44 lakh tonnes with Robusta making up 2.39 lakh tonnes and Arabica the rest.

Area expands

Higher prices this year and forecast of the rally continuing next year have resulted in growers expanding the area under coffee.

According to sources, nurseries have run out of coffee plants in view of demand.

“Coffee is being planted on large plantations where the borer menace has resulted in lot of vacant space being available. Some growers are shifting to coffee from crops such as cardamom,” said Mandanna.

Sources said coffee plantations in Karnataka are now extending to plains such as Piriapatna in Mysore.

“We will have to see how far it can be sustained. Such a development took place in 1977 also,” said Bhandari. “The problem is coffee will take time to give returns. People should be able to sustain till then,” he said.

Spot rubber prices stretch gains

Kottayam, October 9:

Sheet rubber prices increased on fresh enquiries from the tyre sector but latex dropped on slack demand.

RSS-4 improved to Rs. 122.50 (Rs. 122) a kg, according to traders and the Rubber Board.

The grade increased to Rs. 119.50 (Rs. 119), according to dealers.

The market was in a mixed mood on Thursday.

Ungraded rubber gained on sustained demand from the general rubber goods sector.

The October futures improved to Rs. 124.40 (Rs. 123.36), November to Rs. 121.30 (Rs. 120.68), December to Rs. 121.25 (Rs. 120.06), January to Rs. 121.20 (Rs. 120.33) and February to Rs. 121.74 (Rs. 121.10) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) closed unchanged at Rs. 95.76 at Bangkok.

October futures closed at ¥175.4 (Rs. 99.34) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates (Rs. /kg) were: RSS-4: 122.50 (122); RSS-5: 116 (116); ungraded: 108 (107); ISNR 20: 105 (105); and Latex (60% DRC): 83 (85).

5 ways to avoid losses in commodity market

Following certain guidelines can help maximise profits



J ames Steidl/shutterstock.com

Commodity markets have a tremendous impact on the economy and the life of people. Though demand-supply is the prime factor behind the price volatility, currency moves, geopolitical issues, economic growth and government policies are other factors influencing commodity prices. Typically, the commodities market is

subject to rallies and crashes, so it is more susceptible to speculation than the stock markets.

Before participating in commodity futures, an investor or trader should be prepared and ready to learn how the market works. Futures contracts unlike stocks have different expiry periods. As the futures platforms are primarily intended for hedging with a view to reduce the risk in portfolio, those who are participating in the commodities segment without fully understanding the fundamentals of the contract will stand to lose their initial capital or a part thereof. Anyhow, if we follow certain guidelines before investing, it can reduce the threat of losses and maximise profits.

Diversifying capital

It is very essential to articulate the proportion of risk and reward. One must know in advance how much risk he can afford on his available capital while trading in futures. Also, never invest the whole money in a single commodity. The best option is to allocate the capital in different assets, so any wrong trade resulting in a loss can easily be halted. In addition, while facing any uncertain situation, the ideal strategy will be to remain patient until a clear picture is revealed. Executing a bad decision is worse than not trading at all. Compared to equities, a commodities futures contract provides greater flexibility to the participants, helps the hedgers to protect their physical position and attract more speculators. Hence, predetermining the risk reward is vital to overcome the large number of speculative traders.

Maintaining stop loss

Trading in commodity futures includes a certain degree of risk as it is influenced by various factors, it is essential to protect positions ourselves. Using a sell or buy contains losses at a comfortable level or through using hedging strategies are important. The main reason why traders give up trading is due to huge losses they suffer as they normally would not place a stop loss in their trading strategies. It has been noticed that maintaining appropriate stop losses helps minimising losses and maximise profits.

Market attention

Every successful trader has his own system that helps them improve profits and keep losses at a minimum.

These techniques can be gained by constant market attention over a period of time. Avoiding common mistakes will help improve gains. Planning ahead of trading is also important. Any sudden price movement may not be a proper entry or exit point of your trade.

Play it slow

It has been noticed that traders with little experience rush to book profits on their winning strategies at the first instance, but hold on to the losing strategies to accumulate losses. It is very important not to close the winning trades too early. Always try to trail the market price by continuously revising stop losses and grab maximum profits in such trades. Fear and impatience will lead to unfair decisions; so avoid it.

Be prepared

A new trader in commodity should start with a small initial capital. Never go beyond rumours and invest the whole capital at a time in hopes of profiting quickly and easily.

A good futures trader can make profits in any market condition. A clear knowledge on world-related events which influence price fluctuations helps in taking the appropriate decisions. Application of fundamental and technical analysis will help the trader spot more opportunities. Attending seminars and understanding the mistake of other traders will help in identifying the pitfalls and avoiding the same.

Apart from the above strategies, it is very important to control one's emotions.

Fear, anxiety and greed are the common traits of human beings, overcoming such emotions are a must for every winning trade. Confidence based on solid research helps overcome emotional trading decisions. However, real success in trading comes with discipline and experience.

The writer is a Senior Analyst/ Research Head at Geojit Comtrade Ltd. The views are personal.