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THE HINDU

Ankapur, a role model for Telangana villages

Rich farmers who have earned global praise for their effective agricultural practices, and a strong NRI population, have made Ankapur self-sufficient

Ankapur is small, self-sufficient and agriculturally rich: a model for all villages in Telangana. Located in Armoor mandal on NH-63, 20 kilometres away from the district headquarters, the village is also known as 'mini USA' due to all the urban facilities it boasts of.

Farmers here are famous for having adopted modern farming methods in cultivating commercial crops like turmeric, maize and vegetables on a large scale. They cultivate commercial crops, as opposed to traditional ones like paddy, in a district now known to be the rice bowl of Telangana.

Farmers are well aware of how to adopt modern methods to augment their output amid scanty rainfall, and they therefore never look at governments for succour even in the worst of scenarios. Hence, more than 75 per cent farmers who took crop and other agriculture loans have already repaid the banks without seeking a waiver.

The village has earned recognition from national and international agricultural research bodies such as the ICAR, ICRISAT and the International Rice Research Institute. This, probably, is only the village in Telangana that has a separate web portal created by its NRIs.

“We have over 500 educated youth either working or pursuing higher studies in the USA, the UK, the UAE and other countries. The village has sound financial strength with the money sent by them, besides agricultural income,” says Challa Ananta Reddy, chairman of Village Development Committee.

Women work hard here and even though no household owns more than 10 acres of land, they produce a maximum output. During one bumper harvest, farmers were said to have purchased so many new cars with the remuneration from crops.

There are 22 seed processing units in the village. The red jowar seed developed here is exported to northern India. Seed companies like Pioneer, Pro-Agro, Ganga Kaveri, Kaveri, Tulasi and Nuziveedu have processing units in the village. These companies have mitigated the problem of unemployment to a large extent.

It is no exaggeration if one says that the village has no thatched houses and huts. Inhabited by 5,689 people (as per 2011 Census), the village has 1,520 households and over 2,000 acres of cultivable land. This could be one among a few villages which has a less number of white ration cards, according to Village Revenue Officer Mohan.

The VDC plays a pivotal role for the discipline and development of the village, says M.C. Ganga Reddy, president of the Rythu Sangham.

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao, on a recent visit to the village, had praised it and doled out several sops, while also appealing to other villages to emulate Ankapur for its self-sufficiency.

Fertilizer traders warned

The district administration has warned fertilizer traders to comply with rules in sales and not resort to malpractices.

The administration has said that following complaints from farmers in the last monthly farmers' grievances redress meeting, officials from the Agriculture Department inspected the fertilizer shop, KTV Agencies, in Annur and found the farmers' allegations to be true.

Plea for probe into Aavin scam

Farmers' association (Vivasayeegal Sangam) has called for a thorough probe in the state of affairs in the milk cooperative federation, Aavin. At its monthly meeting, the association said that there was a need for such a probe because what had been exposed and was being investigated was only the tip of the iceberg. It also called for direct transfer of fertilizer subsidy to the farmers saying that many a time the organisation and its members had complained about the financial misdemeanours of fertilizer traders.

The association sought the formation of an expert committee to look into the pest problem in tomato saying that neither the Horticulture Department nor Tamil Nadu Agricultural University was helpful. The association passed resolutions seeking action to prevent stray cattle menace, amendments to the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, in such a way that the law was not applicable to animals that strayed out of forest from Chithirai Chavadi Anaicut to Vedapatti so enable farmers to take produce to market.

African giant snails spotted in Mandya villages



The African giant snails (*Achatina fulica*), considered to be one of the “world’s worst invaders”, have been spotted in farmlands of several villages in Mandya district, causing concern among scientists and farmers.

The presence of invasive snail species (*Achatina Fulica* Bowdich) has been reported from Chikka Mandya, Gopalapura, H. Kodihalli, G. Patna, H. Malligere, Malligere farm, Shambhunahalli, Upparakana Halli, Gantegowdana Halli, Hampapura, Bilidegula, Hosuru, Garudanahalli, Tirumalapura, Gudigenahalli, Basaralu, Hulivana, Hosur Colony, Shivalli, Gorawale, Hulikere, Kebbahalli, Honnegowdana Doddi and Kommerahalli in the surrounding areas of Mandya.

Reports of these snails moving from one place to another have also arrived from several villages in Srirangapatna, Maddur, Malavalli and Pandavapura taluks of the district.

Residents of H. Malligere and Kodihalli said that they noticed the snails even on the top of coconut trees and sugarcane crops. Sources in the Agriculture Department said that proliferation of African giant snails was a grave threat to agricultural sector in the district.

“We are convening a meeting with the officials/field officers here on Tuesday to review the progress of the department. We will discuss at length the sighting of African giant snails,” M.N. Rajasulochana, Joint Director of Agriculture, told *The Hindu*.

The officer said that her department would conduct a survey in the villages where these snails were sighted and create awareness among farmers about these snails.

Severe damage

Scientists at the V.C. Farm (Zonal Agricultural Research Station) on the outskirts of the city have requested the farmers to take “immediate measures” against these snails to save their crops.

“These nocturnal creatures are known as one of the deadliest creatures that could eat hundreds of varieties of crops,” D.K. Sidde Gowda, Professor and Head of the Department of Entomology at V.C. Farm, said.

Speaking to this reporter on Monday, Mr. Sidde Gowda said that each snail would lay about 50 to 200 eggs once a year. They would eat more than 400 varieties of crops.

“The African giant snails are very active during rainy season. They come out of their hideout, mainly paddy fields, after sunset and cause enormous damage to crops,” he said.

Mr. Sidde Gowda has requested the farmers to destroy the snails to save their crops. For details, contact entomologist Mr. Sidde Gowda on 9449687599.

Karimnagar dairy reaping riches

Even as the district is reeling under acute drought conditions with decline in the agricultural produce, the Karimnagar District Milk Producer Company is reaping riches with the steady increase of milk procurement. Farmers of the district, who have otherwise neglected the dairy units following the bountiful rainfall during the last few years, are now taking up dairy units as alternate income source following the prevailing drought conditions. The Karimnagar dairy is also encouraging farmers to take up dairy unit as additional income source along with agriculture to mitigate the drought problem.

The dairy through its thrift and credit society is extending financial assistance for the purchase of milching animals by farmers. The farmer has to pay Rs.5,000 and the remaining Rs.30,000 is paid by the dairy as loan amount to purchase a milching animal (buffalo). Before handing over the financial assistance, the farmers are given training at the dairy. The dairy is also providing cash incentive of Rs.1,500 for growing fodder in the fields. Karimnagar dairy chairman Ch. Rajeshwara Rao said that there is steady increase of milk procurement from farmers as majority of farmers are taking up dairy units as alternate income source. Presently, they achieved procurement of 92,000 and odd litres of milk per day and expect it to go up by 1.2 lakh litres per day by November-end. He said that they have set a target of achieving 1.5 lakh litres of milk procurement per day and increase their sales market in the State. Dairy managing director V. Hanumantha Reddy said that they had sanctioned Rs.3.73 crore loans to 1,038 farmers for purchase of milching animals in the district till date. During the last year, they could provide financial assistance of only Rs. 8 lakh to 190 farmers as the farmers did not show interest in the dairy units. He said farmers of upland regions of Sircilla, Husnabad revenue divisions are showing more interest in taking up dairy units to mitigate the drought situations.

It sets a target of procuring 1.5 lakh litres of milk daily

Banana growers reel under pest attack



Banana skipper butterfly larvae have hit plantations in three taluks of Udupi district

Banana skipper, larvae of a chocolate brown butterfly, has hit the earnings of both banana cultivators and banana leaf sellers.

Banana plantations in many places in the district have been affected by the pest 'Erionota torus', also known as Banana Red-Eyed Skipper, Banana Leaf Roller or Banana Skipper, leaving farmers in distress.

The pest is a chocolate-brown butterfly belonging to the family Hesperidae. Its larvae cut the leaves at the edges and make a series of cylindrical rolls before developing into pupae. It can damage whole banana leaves leaving only the midribs.

Earnings hit

Banana is grown in about 1,065 hectares in Udupi district according to the Department of Horticulture. The pest is affecting both the farmers who sell bananas and those selling banana leaves.

Upendra Nayak, a farmer who has been cultivating bananas in 1.5 acres of land at Ajekar village in Karkala taluk for the last 30 years, said all the 1,000 banana plants in his field had been affected by banana skipper.

He used to earn about Rs. 2.5 lakh by selling bananas and Rs. 60,000 by selling plantain leaves.

“We are seeing this pest for the first time in the region. I tried everything to control it and failed. I have lost all my earnings from my banana plantation. The government should give compensation to the affected banana farmers,” he said.

Another farmer Srikanth Shenoy from Shirva village said that of the 1,500 plants in his field, nearly 200 were affected by the banana skipper. “I used neem oil mixture to control it. But the pest is spreading rapidly in small banana plantations. More awareness needs to be created about the pest to check its spread,” he said.

A team of agricultural scientists also surveyed the spread of the pest in the district. S.U. Patil, Associate Professor (Entomology) at the Zonal Agricultural and Horticultural Research Station (ZAHRS) in Brahmavar, said the pest had made its presence felt in all three taluks of the district, especially Karkala and Kundapur.

“We have noticed the pest in parts of Padubidri, Hebri, Ajekar, Hirgana, Kundapur, Byndoor, and Brahmavar. We have been receiving calls from farmers informing us of the damage done by the pest and also seeking measures to control it,” he said.

Biological control

Agricultural scientists suggest biological control methods to check the spread of the pest. “It would be better if the farmers install twigs or poles near the banana plantations so that crows and other birds can come and eat the larvae of the banana skipper.

This is most effective and safe method to check its spread,” said. Prof. Patil. Guruprasad, Assistant Horticulture Officer, said that if there was more infestation of the pest, farmers could mix four to five millilitres of neem oil in a litre of water and spray it on the leaves.

“It is better if farmers follow biological control methods instead of spraying chemicals to check the pest. Before using any chemicals, it is very essential that the farmers consult agricultural scientists,” Prof. Patil said.

In Dakshina Kannada

Yogesh H.R., Deputy Director of Horticulture, Dakshina Kannada, told *The Hindu* that banana skipper has been found in small quantity in almost all plantations.

He said banana was being cultivated as an inter-crop in arecanut plantations in the district. It was a short-term crop. Hence it was difficult to get area under its cultivation.

He said the department promoted *naendra* banana (plantain) cultivation only in 2011-12 as an inter-crop under cluster development programme.

Last date for Krishi Bhagya extended

The last date for submission of applications for the ambitious Krishi Bhagya scheme, introduced to help farmers in dry land zones and rain-fed areas, has been extended to October 31 from the previous October 15.

The State government would provide machinery to farmers for carrying out agricultural activities under the scheme, M.N. Rajasulochana, Joint Director of Agriculture, told *The Hindu*.

“The objective of the scheme is to promote modern technology for increasing agricultural output. The department has already issued applications to around 3,000 farmers and received the forms from 800 farmers,” he said.

31 centres

The department would financially assist farmers to construct a farm pond or install drip irrigation in their fields. Application forms will be available at raitha samparka kendras established at 31 places.

According to Ms. Rajalochana, 200 farmers from each taluk would be selected under the scheme in the district.

For details, contact the department officials at the Deputy Commissioner's office here or any raitha samparka kendras.

Farmer alleges sale of “poor” certified seeds

S. Perumal, a paddy farmer of Varadharajapuram in Srivaikuntam taluk, alleged that the certified seeds procured from a government-owned depot at Sivakalai were not fit for use.

According to a petition submitted to Collector M. Ravikumar here on Monday, he said 17 bags each containing 50 kg of paddy seeds were procured from the depot at a cost of Rs.23,800 on October 7.

He said the seeds did not have proper germination rate. Citing this problem, he sought compensation from the Government and demanded necessary action against officials involved in maintaining such poor quality seeds in the depot.

Joint Director of Agriculture, N.K. Dhakshinamoorthy, when contacted, said seed test experiment would be done based on the petition to assess the germination percentage of such seeds and on its outcome, necessary action would be taken.

New registrar for KAU

P. V. Balachandran has taken charge as Registrar of the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU). E. K. Mathew, who had been the Registrar since November 2012, went on leave prior to his retirement, stated a KAU press release here on Monday. Dr. Balachandran was Director of Extension at KAU. He also holds the charge of Director, State Project Planning and Monitoring Cell. A professor of agronomy, Mr. Balachandran had earlier occupied the posts of Head, Regional Agricultural Research Station, Pattambi and Director, Paddy Mission, Kerala.

AWARD ANNOUNCED

The Dr. C. Chandrasekharan Memorial Award for Innovative Research in Conservation of Forests has been announced. Sandeep Das, a Junior Research Fellow at the Kerala Forest Research Institute, shares the award with V. P. Thomas, an Assistant Professor at Catholicate College, Pathanamthitta. The award, instituted in memory of Dr. C. Chandrasekharan, an expert in tropical forestry, carries a purse of Rs. 40,000, a gold medal and a certificate each.

Paddy crop suffers damage in 14,000 acres in EG Dist.

The Hudhud cyclone had affected around 14,000 acres of Paddy crop in upland areas of East Godavari district and about 8,000 acres of banana gardens, sugarcane, beetle leaf were also damaged due to heavy winds followed by rains from Saturday night to early hours of Monday.

According to Joint Director of Agriculture Vijayakumar, the cyclone had not done much damage to paddy crop this time as the rainfall in the district was not as expected while gale speed was less than 80 km throughout the district.

Paddy was damaged due to gales and rain in upland areas like Tuni, Pitapuram, Gollaprolu and Tondangi and Kothapeta in Central Delta. Crop is in pollination stage in Ramachandrapuram, Alamuru, Anaparthi and Kakinada Rural areas.

According to preliminary estimates of Agriculture department, cotton was partially damaged in 3750 acres and sugarcane in 3190 acres. On the other hand, the Horticulture department field staff sent reports to district Collector by Monday evening about the preliminary losses on banana gardens in the district.

According to Assistant director of Horticulture, banana gardens suffered major losses in Ravulapalem, Kothapeta, Pitapuram, Gollaprolu and few areas of Konaseema. The beetle leaf was affected in Tondangi, Kakinada rural, Anaparti, Alamuru and other areas.

Desperate paddy farmers bet big on gen sets

They stand lose their standing crops if they fail to tap groundwater

Worried over their standing crops withering away due to severe shortage of power, farmers in Karimnagar district are buying diesel generator pump sets in a big way.

With the prospect of thousands of acres of paddy crops drying up in Jagtial, Peddpalli, Manthani and Huzurabad revenue divisions, which is part of the SRSP command area, farmers are desperately purchasing generator sets. Initially, they hoped that the fairly good groundwater table would enable them to cultivate paddy but the erratic power supply has spelt doom.

As a last ditch-effort, farmers have begun buying diesel generator pump sets to lift water from open wells and borewells to irrigate the standing crops.

The farmers have been spending Rs. 22,000 to Rs. 50,000 for the purchase of diesel generator sets and spending several thousands of rupees on diesel to water their crops. Freshly, the arrival of China diesel generators have come as blessing in disguise to the farming community as they were costing only Rs 12,000.

Raji Reddy, a farmer from Kistapur village of Ramadugu mandal said, that they had purchased diesel generator pump set at a cost of Rs. 23,000 to protect his standing crops on two acres. The consumption of diesel was two litres for one hour. "Though it is expensive, there is no other way to protect our crops," he maintained.

"If we don't operate diesel engines, the crops will wither and we don't even get food for our daily needs," said Tirupathi of Bejjanki mandal. He said China diesel engines have come in handy for farmers but there is no alternative to electricity supply as operation of diesel engine is a costly affair.

Srinivas, proprietor of Venkataramana Generators in the town, said every day he was selling three to five diesel generator sets. The arrival of China-made generator sets had boosted the sales as their price -- Rs. 12,000 a piece -- was lower than the local branded ones. Moreover, they were fuel efficient, needing one litre diesel for two hours of operation.

Grievance day

The farmers' grievances day meeting will be held at the Collectorate here on October 24. In a release here on Monday, C. Manoharan, Collector, has appealed to farmers to participate in the meeting and get their grievances redressed. — Staff Reporter

YSRC urges fair deal to TS cotton ryots

A remunerative price of Rs. 5,500 per quintal sought

The YSR Congress has demanded that the State and Central governments purchase cotton from farmers through the designated procurement agencies and ensure minimum support price.

Cotton should be procured by the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) and farmers should be paid a remunerative price of Rs. 5,500 per quintal instead of the MSP of Rs. 4,050 per quintal fixed by the Centre as the farmers were in deep distress, working president of the YSRC in Telangana P. Srinivasa Reddy, who is also Khammam MP, and party leader B. Janak Prasad said here on Monday.

Speaking to newsmen, they said the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) had promised to work for the welfare of the farmers and it was time the ruling party kept its word.

The situation was bad as farmers were being exploited by middlemen by paying just Rs. 3,000 per quintal of cotton against the MSP of Rs. 4,050.

Cotton was the major crop cultivated in Telangana and this year it was cultivated in an extent of 17 lakh hectares, next only to Gujarat, they stated adding that the government should ensure a fair deal to cotton farmers.

A YSRC delegation would soon meet the Chief Minister and the Governor seeking their intervention to help the farmers, they said.

Falling rubber price hits ryots

The falling price of rubber has started hitting hundreds of small-scale farmers in Kozhikode. Government-level initiatives are yet to come up to procure raw rubber and ensure them a better supportive price.

In Thiruvambadi, Mukkam, Koodaranji, Thamarassery and Koombara, farmers no longer appoint labourers to tap rubber as they do not get a reasonable return to meet the production cost.

Currently, farmers get Rs.93 a kg of rubber, which was priced above Rs.250 till recently. Though the market rate of 'A' grade rubber is currently Rs.120, farmers are not guaranteed this sum because of the uncompromising grading process of local merchants.

Chilli farmers complain against cold storage unit

After being allegedly duped by the management of a town-based cold storage unit last year, around 18 chilli farmers from Khammam, Warangal and Krishna districts have been running from pillar to post seeking justice.

According to sources, the aggrieved farmers have earlier lodged a complaint against the errant management of the cold storage unit with the three-town police in the past.

In their complaint, they maintained that they have stored huge quantity of their chilli produce in that particular cold storage situated under the three town police station limits last year.

Disruption in urea supply may hit samba farmers



IFFCO urea bags being unloaded from a goods wagon in Tiruchi.— FILE PHOTO: R.M. RAJARATHINAM

Disruption in urea supply is likely to hit the samba farmers in the Cauvery delta districts after Madras Fertiliser Limited and Southern India Petrochemicals Limited (SPIC) suspended production.

A cross-section of urea dealers in Pudukottai district said the supply had come to a grinding halt since October 1, causing an acute scarcity and urged the Union Ministry of Chemicals and Fertiliser to keep up the supply.

L. Kailasanathan, State joint secretary of the Tamil Nadu Vanigar Sangankalin Peravai, said that with the samba cultivation gathering pace at and around Aranthangi and Avudaiyarkovil in the district, farmers were bound to face a crisis. The Centre should allow the two naphtha-based units to make urea, he said.

Imports

However, official sources said the Centre had taken steps to ensure uninterrupted urea supply through imports.

A 50-kg bag of urea made by the gas-based units cost Rs.270. On the other hand, the naptha-based urea would cost Rs. 2,000-Rs.2,500, the sources said.

Pranab interacts with Indian scientists at Arctic station

As five Indian scientists from “Himadri,” India’s Arctic station at Svalbard, listened in by video link, a dire climate change warning that linked varying monsoon patterns in India with Arctic ice melts was presented to President Pranab Mukherjee on Monday evening.

Jan-Gunnar Winther, director of the Norway Polar Institute, said at the Fram maritime museum that scientists had consistently underestimated the process of climate change.

Sitting alongside Norwegian King Harald V, President Mukherjee asked the five scientists about the links they had managed to establish between Arctic ice melting and monsoon pattern changes in India.

“I wish you all success,” the President told the five scientists who were standing in snow at temperatures of minus five degrees at the “Himadri” station. He said the Indians at the Arctic station were taking risks by subjecting themselves to the cold, hostile climate.

Mr. Mukherjee also sought suggestions from three Indian Ph.D candidates Archana Mesram, Srikumar Rai and Tina Chauhan, who joined in by a separate video link from the University Centre, Svalbard, on how India-Norway cooperation could be taken forward.

Ms. Mesram said being able to study in Norway presented a huge opportunity for her and suggested to the President that more Indian universities should be involved in research activities with their Norwegian counterparts.

Dr. Winther, on his part, said the period of the Indian monsoon was getting longer while rainfall was getting concentrated.

Earlier, King Harald V received the President at the Akerhus Castle even as a few school children stood around waving Indian and Norwegian flags on a sunny Monday morning.

Mr. Mukherjee also visited the Norwegian Parliament, or Storting, where he was greeted by its President Olemic Thommessen.

A dire climate change warning that linked varying monsoon patterns in India with Arctic ice melts was presented to the President

Keeping the disaster-response apparatus primed for action

Training people to be effective 'first-responders' in the event of a natural calamity is one of the key priorities of the City Corporation's disaster management cell.

Last year, 16 municipal wards were chosen for the first phase of the Community-based Disaster Risk Management Programme. A comprehensive training programme for 200 people was held recently.

Despite the delayed start, Corporation officials are confident of gathering momentum. They will soon select 40 more wards before the end of the financial year, in March.

The 200 participants of the training session was split into four task forces handling shelter management, evacuation, first aid, and search and rescue.

Two agencies, Profexcel and Angels, along with trainers from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Arakkonam, handled the training sessions at the St. Antony's Church, Valiyathura and the Corporation.

NDRF trainers demonstrated rescue and evacuation techniques for different situations. Teaching of first-aid techniques occupied a bulk of the programme and this included sessions on cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Making various knots using ropes are vital during rescue operations, especially in high-rise buildings and trenches, Ramesh Krishnan, a trainer, said.

This community-based programme falls under the comprehensive US Agency for International Development (USAID)-supported Climate Risk Management Project in Urban Areas. It is supported by the supported United Nations Development Project (UNDP). Eight Indian cities were chosen for revamp of the current disaster management system.

The dismal state of the city's infrastructure, in terms of managing calamities, was apparent during the monsoon.

The District Planning Committee has sanctioned Rs.32 lakh for the Corporation to procure essential equipment and carry out awareness drives, they say.

Training to make residents effective 'first-responders.'



Cane farmers, not banks, have first right over due recovery sum, says SC

Regretting suicides by farmers owing to financial distress, the Supreme Court on Monday held that the farmers in Uttar Pradesh will have precedence over the banks for recovery of their dues after the state government auctions the sugar stocks.

A bench led by Chief Justice of India H L Dattu rejected the appeals by state-owned State Bank of India and Punjab National Bank, which sought priority over the farmers as sugar mills in UP get ready to repay the dues.

Upholding the Allahabad High Court order, the bench said that it could not put farmers' lives at risk and that they must have the first right over the proceeds of selling sugar by the mills for the recovery of their dues.

"Let the farmers also live on this planet...in this country. This is why farmers in this country are committing suicide. Farmers cannot be put at risk," said the bench, while turning down banks' appeals.

The Allahbad HC had directed mills to pay dues to farmers on priority by October 31. It had asked the Akhilesh Yadav-government to auction sugar seized from mills and distribute the entire sale consideration towards clearing cane dues to farmers through the respective District Magistrates.

Banks, however, expressed concerns over loans to private sugar millers in the state turning into Non-Performing Assets and argued that they should get back the money they loaned to the mills on priority basis.

Seeking the first right on the liquidation proceeds, the banks have told the apex court that such HC order would erode their collateral value and further discourage lending to the cash-starved sugar industry in UP.

The banks in their appeals further said the HC order would result in the entire sale proceeds of mills going towards cane payments, thus nothing would be left for millers to pay loan installments and this would affect the banks.

- See more at:

<http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/lucknow/cane-farmers-not-banks-have-first-right-over-due-recovery-sum-says-sc/#sthash.sMWQG6HI.dpuf>

DECCAN Chronicle

Telangana reduces rabi farming estimate



Based on the monsoon and water storage capacities in projects and water bodies, the farmers will sow paddy, cotton, sugarcane and maize crops. In rabi, farmers prefer ID crops. Cultivation of paddy is not encouraged during rabi citing shortage of water. Picture for representational purpose.

NIZAMABAD: For the first time in the last 25 years, the agriculture department in Nizamabad district has reduced the estimate of cultivation area for rabi, compared to last year, due to unfavorable climatic conditions.

In view of the prevailing drought-like conditions in the district, officials estimated that crops would be grown in only 2,03,900 hectares. During last rabi, crops were grown in 2,50,269 ha.

Usually, officials would propose cultivation of crops in extended area, compared to the previous season, but this time, officials have gone for reduced estimates.

In kharif, usually, paddy is cultivated in a larger extent. Based on the monsoon and water storage capacities in projects and water bodies, the farmers will sow paddy, cotton, sugarcane and maize crops. In rabi, farmers prefer ID crops.

Cultivation of paddy is not encouraged during rabi citing shortage of water. This time, the drought-like conditions are prompting officials to encourage farmers to grow ID crops.

According to statistics available with the agriculture department, crops were sown in around 2.5 lakh hectares in last rabi. At present, the paddy sown area is restricted to only 60,000 hectares against 1,08,689 ha in last season.

On the same lines, estimates regarding coarse grains, pulses and commercial crop area has also been reduced. Speaking to this newspaper, assistant director of agriculture MA Wazid Hussain said never had September been so dry without any rain.

Three farmers end life in Telangana every day



Over 30 suicides, have been reported from Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao's home district Medak, mostly from Gajwel, Dubbaka and Siddipet. (Photo: DC/File)

Hyderabad: Over 230 suicides by farmers have been reported since Telangana was formed four months ago. At least three suicides are being reported every day. The failure of crops due to lack of rainfall, power supply and delay in implementing the crop loan waiver scheme are stated to be the reasons.

On Sunday, five suicides were reported from Adilabad, Nalgonda, Mahbubnagar and Karimnagar. Out of the 230 deaths so far, only 70 were registered as distress suicides. The victims' families claim that all the deaths were due to failure of crops and inability to repay debts. They alleged that the government was avoiding recording the suicides as being the result of distress.

Over 30 suicides, have been reported from Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao's home district Medak, mostly from Gajwel, Dubbaka and Siddipet. Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao is planning to tour the districts to instil confidence among farmers besides sending ministers to counter the onslaught by the Opposition TD and Congress. Both parties have toured districts and offered financial assistance to the families.

Irrigation minister Harish Rao lashed out at the Congress and TD for politicising farmers suicides.

"It's ridiculous that Congress and TD, which are responsible for the power woes in Telangana with their years of misrule, are taking up yatras to console farmers in distress," Mr Harish Rao said.

"They are not trying to build confidence among farmers but are creating panic among them and prompting them to commit suicide. All our ministers and MLAs will soon visit districts and explain the facts to farmers about who is responsible for this present crisis and the measures being taken by the CM to improve power supply in a short period."

Congress leader and MLC Shabbir Ali, who is involved in district tours, said, "Telangana has never witnesses such largescale suicides in such a short period due to erratic power supply. Not only suicides, several farmers have died after receiving electrical

shocks as power is being supplied during odd hours. The TRS government has to take responsibility for the deaths of farmers during the last four months."

"TRS government has spent the last four months with Bonalu and Bathukamma festivals. It has money to release Rs 10 crore for Bathukamma and Rs 30 crore for Bonalu and Ramzan. But it has no money to offer help for distressed farmers who are committing suicide. The inexperience of TRS government in administration is clearly evident with its failure in handling the power issue effectively," said TD MLA A. Revanth Reddy.

Though TRS government had promised the crop loan waiver scheme, it has only paid 25 per cent of the total Rs 17,000 crore arrears so far. The farmers are yet to receive fresh loans as the banks are refusing lend on grounds that they have not received any communication on the matter so far.

"It's ridiculous that Congress and TD, which are responsible for the power woes in Telangana with their years of misrule, are taking up yatras to console farmers in distress," said irrigation minister T. Harish Rao.

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Congress leader and MLC Shabbir Ali, who is involved in district tours, said, "Telangana has never witnesses such largescale suicides in such a short period due to erratic power supply. Not only suicides, several farmers have died after receiving electrical shocks as power is being supplied during odd hours. The TRS government has to take responsibility for the deaths of farmers during the last four months."

“TRS government has spent the last four months with Bonalu and Bathukamma festivals. It has money to release Rs 10 crore for Bathukamma and Rs 30 crore for Bonalu and Ramzan. But it has no money to offer help for distressed farmers who are committing suicide. The inexperience of TRS government in administration is clearly evident with its failure in handling the power issue effectively,” said TD MLA A. Revanth Reddy.

Though TRS government had promised the crop loan waiver scheme, it has only paid 25 per cent of the total Rs 17,000 crore arrears so far. The farmers are yet to receive fresh loans as the banks are refusing to lend on grounds that they have not received any communication on the matter so far.

Business Standard

[Tobacco panel for increase in the permissible age to 25 from 18](#)

Advertisements of tobacco products in the traditional media are banned in India

The panel formed by the Union ministry of health and family welfare to review the [Cigarettes](#) and Other [Tobacco](#) Products Act, 2003, has come out with its suggestions.

These include a ban on advertisements of tobacco products at points of sale, banning the sale of loose cigarettes sticks, heftier fines on violations of the Act and increasing the permissible age for buying tobacco products to 25 from 18.

The panel was formed in July. It was led by Ramesh Chandra, advisor at the ministry. According to the proposed recommendations by the committee the new amended act may be called the COTPA 2014.

It has recommended that sale of loose cigarette sticks or tobacco products in loose should be completely banned as it makes it cheaper and convenient for youngsters to avail themselves of tobacco products.

It has also been recommended in the report that the minimum legal age for buying tobacco products should be increased to 25 years. At present anyone 18 or above can buy tobacco products and cigarettes.

If implemented, the move could dent profits of major cigarette companies in India as a substantial chunk of their consumers are in the age group of 18-25. A [Global Adult Tobacco Survey](#) of 2010 conducted among 15 and above, 35 per cent of the adult population in India (15 or above) consume tobacco: 47 per cent of males and 20 per cent of females.

Advertisements of tobacco products in the traditional media are banned in India, a further ban at point of sale has been recommended by the expert committee.

Point of sale are usually flooded with banner and poster ads of various tobacco products specially, cigarettes. The recommendations by the Chandra led committee further point out to the needs of amending provisions which would lead into complete smoking ban from public places to tobacco free public space.

It has recommended deleting the section 4 of the act which would result into prohibition of smoking into smoking areas of hotels and restaurants. While the recommendations are surely not going to be favourites among cigarette manufactures of the country the fines for violations of the act are going to make it tough for these companies.

Under section 20 of provision for punishment for failure to give specified warning and nicotine and tar contents, the penalty has recommended to increase the fine to Rs 50,000 from the current level of Rs 5000 for first conviction.

For smoking in public places, the penalty amount should not be less than Rs 200 but which may extend to RS 1,000. Similarly, the penalty for advertisements of tobacco products fine should be ten times from the current level of Rs 1000 for first conviction. For selling tobacco products to a person below the age of 18 the fine should be between Rs 500 -1000, the committee has recommended.

Tea prices expected to rise again, by 10%

Lower production may lead to 10% rise in coming months



Tea prices are likely to increase by around 10 per cent over the next few months, with lower availability. Tea Board figures for this calendar year, till August, say production in North India — the term covers Assam, West Bengal and all other states outside the four southern ones — was 543.6 million kg as compared to 561.6 million kg in the same period last year.

The industry does not expect availability to improve in the coming months, as the three-month lean season starts in November.

“From now on, prices will move up,” said Azam Monem, additional vice-chairman of the Indian Tea Association.

Asked to what extent, he said nine to 10 per cent. Till August, production in South India, was 158.5 mn kg as compared to 147.7 mn kg last year in this period.

As a consequence, auction prices were down Rs 16.3 a kg. Availability in North India has been an issue this year from the start of the season due to weather conditions. Till May, shortfall was a shade shy of 20 mn kg. “This year, we are likely to end with a shortfall of 30-35 mn kg,” said Monem.

TEA OUTPUT (In million kg)			
Area	2014	2013	Change
North India	543.65	561.63	-17.98
South India	158.49	147.73	10.76
All India	702.14	709.36	-7.22

Note: Till August , Source: Tea Board

Total production in calendar year 2013 was 1.2 billion kg. Each year, consumption grows by around 30 mn kg.

The lower availability has kept prices on the higher side. Up to September, the average price of North India tea was Rs 155 a kg as against Rs 148 a kg last year. Packet tea companies passed on the increase to consumers a couple of months earlier.

That the end-season shortfall is limited to 30 mn kg is due to lower export to Britain and Pakistan. “Exports are lower as Kenyan prices have been competitive,” Monem explained. Till July, production in Kenya was higher by 1.7 per cent over last year.

World tea production, till August, was lower by 0.5 per cent, led by India and Uganda.

Punjab, Haryana procure 2 million tonnes of paddy



Paddy procurement for the 2014 **kharif** season has started with arrival of the crop in the grain markets of **Punjab** and Haryana. The arrivals are at almost the same pace as last year and two million tonnes have been procured in the two states.

Punjab and **Haryana** are the early procurement states where procurement started registering from October 1. Punjab procured 1.08 million tonnes till October 12, compared to 1.23 million tonnes in the full kharif season of 2013.

The procurement is still on in Punjab till the middle of November. Procurement in Haryana stood at 9.2 million tonnes till October 12, which is similar to the last season.

The procurement in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Karnataka would start from October 26.

The month of November is crucial for paddy procurement as Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh would be harvesting their paddy crop staggered throughout the month.

In West Bengal and Jharkhand, the crop would mature in December. Cyclone Hudhud, which hit the coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh, might not affect the paddy crop because the districts affected by the cyclone do not contribute significantly to the procurement of paddy, said an official in the Food Corporation of India.

There might be some insignificant drop in the procurement and that will not create a dent in the total procurement. The Union food ministry had projected paddy procurement of 30 million tonnes; this is likely to remain 28 million tonnes, because of the withdrawal of bonus on minimum support price (MSP) in certain states, fall in area under non-basmati varieties in Punjab, and a fall in levy rice obligation from 75 per cent to 25 per cent in Andhra Pradesh.

Under levy-rice regime, the millers directly buy paddy from farmers and sell rice to government agencies at MSP.

[Basmati prices fall as Punjab opens up market to other states](#)

The Basmati paddy price plunged to Rs 2,000 a quintal in the beginning of the kharif season this year, Rs 1,500-Rs 2,000 a quintal lower compared with the corresponding period last year



A fall in the price of [basmati rice](#) in [Punjab](#) has been registered after the Punjab government opened the doors for the millers from other states, driving up the demand for Basmati paddy.

The Basmati paddy price plunged to Rs 2,000 a quintal in the beginning of the [kharif season](#) this year, Rs 1,500-Rs 2,000 a quintal lower compared with the corresponding period last year.

Because of the excess milling capacity of [Haryana](#) mills and lower price in Punjab, Haryana millers wanted an access to Punjab grain market to optimally utilise their capacities and pick the grain at a more viable price.

The Punjab government is now offering the same concessions to the millers operating outside Punjab as they were offering to local millers. An exemption of one per cent in market fee and one per cent in rural development fund is offered to the Haryana millers to safeguard the interests of the farmers.

This has helped restore the basmati paddy price in the range of Rs 2,300 to Rs 2,600 a quintal, said Vikas Khosla, a rice miller in Haryana. Haryana farmers are getting Rs 2,600 to Rs 2,950 a quintal for different varieties of basmati. A fall in basmati price of five per cent to 10 per cent is expected in both the states in November when the harvesting is at its peak.

The basmati acreage in Punjab is 860,000 hectares and is 750,000 hectares in Haryana. An annual crop size of basmati paddy of five million tonne in Punjab and 4.2 million tonne in Haryana is projected this year.

The sharp fall in Basmati price is the outcome of the tepid international demand. But traders expect the demand to revive as the stocks with the Basmati consuming countries may not last for long.

Weak cues sap rubber

Kottayam, October 13: Spot rubber closed unchanged on Monday. The market opened better but surrendered the early gains later following a weak closing on the NMCE.

The trend was partially mixed as latex lost further on low demand.

Sheet rubber finished steady at Rs. 122.50 a kg, after hitting an intra-day high of Rs. 123, according to traders. The grade weakened to Rs. 122 (Rs. 122.50) and Rs. 119 (Rs. 119.50) respectively, according to the Rubber Board and dealers.

October futures declined to Rs. 124 (Rs. 124.94) November to Rs. 118.82 (Rs. 120.21), December to Rs. 118.30 (Rs. 119.91), January to Rs. 118.25 (Rs. 119.90) and February to Rs. 119.50 (Rs. 120.34) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) improved to Rs. 96.09 (Rs. 95.63) at Bangkok.

Spot rubber rates (Rs. /kg): RSS-4: 122.50 (122.50); RSS-5: 116 (116); Ungraded: 108 (108); ISNR 20: 105.50 (105.50); and Latex 60%: 81 (82).

Diwali buying lights up cardamom market

Kochi, October 13: The cardamom market gained flavour last week on demand for Diwali despite higher arrivals at auctions. However, supply, currently, is below compared with the same period a year ago. The arrival last week stood at 576 tonnes while it was at around 730 tonnes in the corresponding week last season.

Exporters have slowed down buying after “Bakrid” demand got over. But fresh orders are expected from next week, trade sources in Bodinayakannur told *BusinessLine* . They bought an estimated 60 tonnes last week.

Even at Monday’s auction in Bodinayakannur, conducted by the Cardamom Planters Association, 55 tonnes of cardamom arrived. Of this, 54 tonnes were sold and the average price was 727.54 a kg.

According to traders, this is on the higher side. Auctions last week were held after a five-day long holiday and hence there arrivals increased.

At the same time, every one, especially Tamil Nadu growers, sold to meet their expenses for Diwali.

Meanwhile, buyers all over the country are also actively covering to meet festival demand. Therefore, the market witnessed a firm trend.

At the Sunday auction held by the Kerala Cardamom Processing and Marketing Company, arrivals were 113 tonnes on Sunday and almost the entire quantity was sold out, PC Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC told *BusinessLine* .

The maximum price was Rs. 1,007 a kg and the minimum was Rs. 557 a kg. The auction average was Rs. 754.19 a kg, he said.

The individual auction average moved up last week to between Rs. 725 and Rs. 760 a kg from Rs. 700-720 a kg a week ago.

Supply of 8mm bold continued to remain thin and good colour bold capsules were fetching Rs. 980 a kg.

Total arrivals during the season stood at 3,801 tonnes against 5,110 tonnes during the same period a year ago.

Sales were 3,727 tonnes against 4,896 tonnes. The individual auction average, as on October 12, was around Rs. 737 a kg against Rs. 587 a kg a year ago.

Prices of graded varieties (Rs. /kg): 8mm bold (950-980); 7mm-8mm (825); 6mm-7mm (730-740); below 6 mm (650-660).

Foodgrain stocks hit 47.93 mt on October 1

Bangalore, October 13: Foodgrain stocks in the Central Pool stood at 47.93 million tonnes as on October 1, more than twice the buffer norms and strategic reserves for the period.

Balance sheet

The stocks included 32.85 mt of wheat and 15.08 mt of rice, according to provisional estimates by the Food Corporation of India. Stocks with FCI were estimated at 26.23 mt, while State agencies held the rest. The high and comfortable Central Pool foodgrain stocks, ahead of the commencement of the kharif harvest season, should augur well for the Government as the country faced the weakest monsoon this year since 2009.

Lower output

The erratic monsoon is expected to impact the productivity and production of most of the kharif crops including rice this year. According to the first advance estimates, foodgrain production during kharif this year is expected to be lower by about 8.97 mt at around 120.27 mt. Rice output is estimated at 88.02 mt, lower by 3.67 mt as compared with last kharif's record production of 91.69 mt.

Monsoon woes

The delayed recovery in monsoon that has enhanced soil moisture levels should boost the prospects for rabi or winter sowings.

Why Vadodara agri produce market is a hit among farmers?

Better infrastructure helps attract regular flow of produce, reduce variability in prices and arrival

The under-utilisation of potential of the country's agriculture lies in the fact that in India there is dire need of services that are essential for development. A single factor cannot be held responsible for absence of facilities but lack of innovations in marketing practices has been a major curse till recent past. In India, institutional innovations have emerged recently to overcome the issues which farmers face.

These innovative organisations/ practices can provide growers an array of services including better management of their produce, better market access, negotiating power, access to information and knowledge.

It is imperative to recognise the critical role of these innovative organisations/practices to be more effective in supporting farmers to uplift their socio-economic status.

Institutional innovation has a deeper and fundamental meaning which defines the rationale for the existence of such bodies in developing an environment, which is more democratic. Such innovation should not only be a supportive mechanism for the stakeholders but also a model that can be replicated.

There is a need to bring institutional innovations in APMC by redefining the roles of stakeholder, using information technology, dismantling the present trade-offs and expanding the approach of APMC to that of being service organisation to make them economically viable for farmers.

There is also a necessity to make the agricultural markets environmentally sustainable by making them responsive toward the recycling of waste, maintaining the energy of ecosystem of market.

Though the APMCs in the country are being criticised and are facing bleak future, the APMC at Vadodara has established itself as a centre of excellence in catering to the need of farmers by promoting three market yards – Sayajipura, Hathikhana and Kewdabaug. Hathikhana market of the APMC is the oldest established in 1958 while Sayajipura is the latest.

Sayajipura market yard has been developed on 30 acres consisting of 259 shops-cum-godown of grains, vegetables and pulses. The auction takes place in a covered place. All the vegetables that enter the market are packed in different sizes and packing material. The market is well-equipped with a cold storage of 3,750 tonnes which has been beneficial to farmers and traders in enabling them to store their produce in the market itself.

Other features of the yard are wide approach road, private telephone exchange, 100-tonne ripening chamber for banana, mango and papaya, organic waste converter, an information system to address issues relating to farmers and soil health laboratory.

The integrated model of APMC Sayajipura with all basic infrastructure as well as modern concepts in agriculture marketing attracted peak arrival of fruits mainly banana, papaya and mango. The ripening chamber of 100-tonne capacity has been optimally utilised by traders for ripening banana and papaya. The post-harvest facilities such as cold storage and ripening chambers for perishable horticulture produce serve as an effective tool for getting better return for the produce and also help in avoiding wastage at markets. The APMC has the right focus in explaining the concept of environmental sustainability of a market yard.

Prior to establishment of Sayajipura market, the yearly average income of APMC Vadodara was limited to Rs. 149 lakh, while the same was worked out to Rs. 493 lakh in post-establishment period of Sayajipura market. During 2011, when the cold storage facility was started, arrivals grew by 12 per cent compared with previous year.

Against this during the same year, the arrival has halved in Hathikhana market yard. Similarly during 2012, the Sayajipura market yard started facility of ripening chamber. The market again witnessed a growth of 11 per cent whereas the pace of growth in Hathikhana market yard was 8 per cent only.

Currently, study indicates that with establishment of modern infrastructure, the income and arrival of the APMC Vadodara has increased manifold. The modern infrastructure helped in attracting regular flow of produce and thus reduced variability both in prices and arrival.

It is recommended that based on the produce pattern in the market area of APMC, the modern infrastructure should be promoted at yard level so that produce flows are regular in the yard and markets are more stabilised.

Authors are associated with National Institute of Agricultural Marketing, Jaipur. Views are personal.