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THE HINDU

The Hindu-ICAR unique initiative

The research and development agencies of the country in the field of agriculture are doing their best to increase the annual food production and expectations are running high on this sector's growth. However, there are also challenges to be faced.

Agriculture fails to capture the imagination of the youth and this is a serious cause of concern. To tackle this situation better, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research has formulated a programme for attracting and retaining youth in agriculture (ARYA).

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research has teamed up with *The Hindu* to work on a project to revive interest of youth in agriculture.

To demystify the agricultural processes, *The Hindu*'s school edition, *The Hindu In School*, has introduced an exclusive column called 'Farm and Food' every Wednesday.

Brainstorming session

To kickstart the programme, a brainstorming session was organised in Chennai on Saturday in which eminent scientists, officials from Krishi Vigyan Kendras, entrepreneurs, farmers and schoolchildren participated.

The project has two broader components — attracting and retaining youth in agriculture (ARYA) and also inculcating basic knowledge in agriculture to school students.

During the first year, five schools or at least one school as model school in five districts of each State may be selected and the project will be implemented.

The Director General, Indian Council for Agricultural Research, Dr. S. Ayyappan, said inculcating basic knowledge on agriculture to school students is the foundation for a country's stable future."

The Hindu's Senior Managing Editor V. Jayanth emphasised that it was essential to make agriculture attractive and remunerative to get the youth involved in it.

The Managing Director and CEO, Kasturi and Sons, publishers of *The Hindu*, Rajiv Lochan, said, "we have a responsibility to debunk many myths about agriculture and the many hurdles with solutions from experts and showcase success stories."

"The purpose of the above brainstorming session is to evolve a basic plan for a mission mode project, on a pilot basis for one to two years in the States of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala particularly to attract rural youth towards agriculture and to inculcate the fundamental knowledge in agriculture including its allied enterprises among school children, in coordination with Krishi Vigyan Kendras," explained Dr. Sreenath Dikshit, Zonal Project Director, Bangalore, ICAR.

Rain: onion, tomato crops affected

Small onions, and tomatoes being raised in over five hectares in Pongalur block have been slightly affected following rain. Official sources told *The Hindu* that a major chunk of the produce could be saved if the water gets drained in a day or two, and if doesn't rain. Extent of any damage to the standing crops can be assessed only after the water runs out of the fields, the officials said. Water entered almost six acres of maize fields at the State Seed Farm located near Pongalur after the heavy rain on Monday morning.

“We are in the process of draining out water, and no damage has occurred to the crop,” said Joint Director of Agriculture P. Santhanakrishnan. Tributaries of River Noyyal like Jamunai Odai had been flowing almost full. On Monday, rain water entered 75 houses in low lying areas of Muthian Nagar, Pushpa Nagar, and Karuvampalayam in the city.

District Collector G. Govindaraj declared a holiday for schools in the district. Most of the private schools functioned as many of the students had reached the school before the announcement was made.

Saxena new CEO

Sandeep Saxena, State Agricultural Production Commissioner and Principal Secretary of the Agriculture Department, has been appointed as new Chief Electoral Officer. He succeeds Praveen Kumar, who was holding the post since August 2010. An order to this effect was issued by Chief Secretary Mohan Verghese Chunkath on Monday. Mr. Praveen Kumar is yet to be given a posting. An officer of the 1989 batch of the Tamil Nadu cadre, the 48-year-old Saxena is holding the present post since November 2011.

Dr. Saxena did his postgraduation in water resources engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, and Ph.D. in vulnerability assessment from the Anna University.

‘Early transplantation key to paddy productivity in Erode’

Biometric observation showed 180 to 200 grains per panicle

The promising productivity of Kuruvai crop in T.N. Palayam and Gobi blocks in fields, where early transplantation method was adopted, could prompt replication of the methodology for Samba

crop, for which transplantation is progressing fast in other parts of the district, according to agricultural experts.

The Kuruvai crop has been raised in over 5,600 hectares in T.N. Palayam and Gobichettipalayam blocks. As for the Samba crop raised in over 38,500 hectares, transplantation has been completed in nearly two-third of the cultivation area, official sources say.

At a farm in T.N. Palayam block, productivity of 8,338 kg paddy per acre has been determined by the Agriculture Department. Based on the higher productivity in a farm at Gobichettipalayam owing to early transplantation, official sources say the productivity could have been more had the transplantation been carried out a week earlier.

In a biometric observation, the number of grains was found to be more in a panicle taken from the field where early transplantation was carried out. It was in the range of 180 to 200 grains per panicle in fields where the transplantation was done at 15 days time when compared to 120 to 130 grains in areas where the transplantation was carried out in 25 days.

The size of panicle under the two situations will seem to be same but the difference could be determined through minute counting of the grains, agricultural experts say. The yield of 1.5 kg per square metre in the fields where paddy was transplanted early will work out to 15 tonnes in a hectare measuring 10,000 hectares, the experts assure. Awareness initiatives of the Agriculture Department in this regard have reached farmers across the district. The successful experimentation in the T.N. Palayam and Gobi blocks will pave way for more farmers to opt for early transplantation, officials believe.

Productivity of 8,338 kg paddy per acre determined in T.N. Palayam block

Heavy rain: people issued warning in Krishnagiri



The Impact: (From left) Water gushing out from K.R.P. dam in Krishnagiri on Monday; a landslip along the Kadambur Road being cleared with earth-movers and a low-level part along Sathy-Athani Road in Erode district was inundated. — Photos:N.Bashkaran and M. Govarthan

The administration has cautioned the villagers not to cross selected causeways

The Krishnagiri District Administration has warned the people residing on the banks of River Thenpennaiyar in the five districts of Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Tiruvannamalai, Villupuram and Cuddalore, to move to places of safety following increased discharge of water into the river from Krishnagiri dam.

The administration had already issued flood warning a week ago. The catchment areas of River Thenpennaiyaru were experiencing continuous heavy rain, following which the Kelavarapalli dam near Hosur was fast filling up. The water level in the dam on Monday stood at 42.5 feet against its full level of 44.28 feet. Due to this, the entire inflow of 2,120 cusecs was being let off into the river.

The causeways in the villages of Boothanatham, Thorapalli, Perandapalli, Kopachanthiram, Parathakotta along the river have submerged, due to which vehicle movement was suspended. The administration has cautioned the villagers not to cross these causeways.

The water level in the 52 feet Krishnagiri dam on Monday touched the 51 feet mark. The PWD officials were releasing the entire inflow of 1.500 cusecs into River Thenpennaiyar, following which District Collector T. P. Rajesh issued warning to the people of the five districts today.

Various parts of Krishnagiri district experienced widespread rainfall since Sunday night. Due to incessant showers, the Collector declared a holiday to all schools in the district on Monday.

Denkanikottai experienced the maximum rainfall of 64.2 m.m. in the last 24 hours that ended at 8 a.m. on Monday, followed by Rayakottah and Thali 27 m.m. each, Anjatti 24 m.m.; Hosur 13 m.m.; Shoolagiri and Pochampalli 3 m.m. each.

The lake in Narasipuram village Hosur was surplussing today. And the overflowing water damaged a small bridge on the Santharasettipatti road. The officials rushed to the spot and diverted the water.

In Salem, Gengavalli received the maximum rainfall of 20.5 m.m. in the last 24 hours , while Sankagiri received eight m.m. and the rainfall at Veeraganur stood at 2.4 m.m.

Special Correspondent from Erode adds:

Water bodies overflowing in Sathyamangalam Kadambur hills following incessant rain have caused excessive damage to roads and agricultural fields.

Traffic on ghat road leading to Kadambur was hit due to landslide. The district administration has estimated the losses due to crop inundation and damages to houses and roads around Rs. 10 crore.

The Kadambur ghat road and the road damaged due to breaching of Periyakulam Tank at Varathampalayam were being restored on a war-footing. The release of water from Bhavani Sagar Dam into Bhavani River has been stopped in the wake of the Kodiveri check dam surplussing.

On Monday, District Collector S. Prabakaran took stock of the damage caused by north-east monsoon rain at the Kodiveri Dam that feeds the Thadapalli-Arakkankottai irrigation canals with over 25,000 acres ayacut in Gobi area and the locations in Sathyamangalam.

The three smaller reservoirs: Perumballam and Kunderipallam that harness rain water from the Kadambur hills and the Varattupallam Dam that has its catchment in the Bargur hills have also filled up. The Perumpallam Dam fed by rainwater from the Kadambur hills and the Bhavani River is spread over 69 hectares while the Varattupallam reservoir spread over 225 acres is estimated to have a capacity to hold 3 tmc feet water covering an ayacut area of 3,500 acres.

On Monday, the depth of Bhavani Sagar Dam was 79.62 feet with storage of 15.48 tmc. The inflow was 8,775 cusecs and a discharge of 1,100 cusecs was made into Lower Bhavani Project Canal. Sathyamangalam and Bhavani Sagar recorded rainfall of 51 mm and 31 mm respectively in the last 24 hours ending 8.00 a.m. on Monday. Rainfall in other places:

Thalavadi - 38 mm, Bhavani - 25 mm, Gobichettipalayam - 11 mm, and Kodumudi - 2 mm.

Central team to study rain damage

A central study would be visiting Bidar and Gulbarga districts on Tuesday to study the damage caused to agricultural crops and public properties in the unseasonal rain and floods in the last week of August this year.

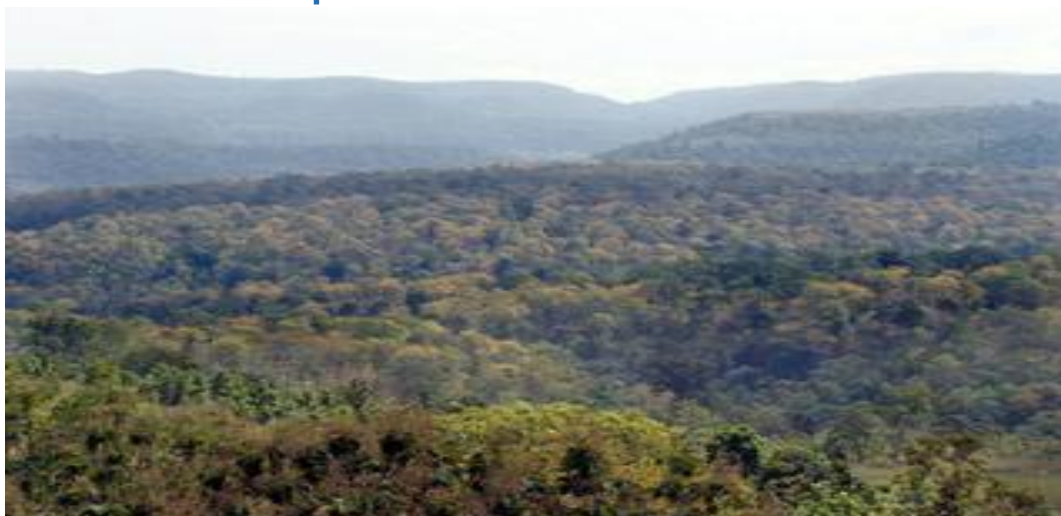
Official sources said the central study team will visit the flood-hit areas in Basavakalyan on Tuesday and will later visit Ladmugali and Ambalgi villages in Aland taluk and Mahagoan in Gulbarga taluk. The team members would also hold detailed discussions with Deputy Commissioners and Chief Executive Officers of both the districts on Tuesday.

Koppal

A central team would be visiting Koppal and Raichur districts on Wednesday to assess the damage caused to public and private properties due to the recent heavy rain.

N.M. Krishnanuni, Director Central Water Commission, Bangalore and Jagadish Yeligar, Central Road Transport and National Highway, both members of the team, will be visiting the affected places in Koppal district and later in Raichur.

Adilabad acquires the hues of autumn



Magical change:A view of the yellowing forest from top of the Kerameri ghat in Adilabad district on a misty Monday.— PHOTO: S. HARPAL SINGH

The lush greenery of the vegetation in Adilabad is giving way to a pleasant golden yellow and rusty brown as Autumn has started setting in along with the winter season. As it is still early days for the leaf-fall season, the green is still dominating the scene though there is a seemingly generous sprinkling of Autumnal colours in the famous jungles of this district.

The Kerameri hills, as seen from the popular Kerameri ghat road, offer a breathtaking view as the landscape is changing colours layer by layer. The view starts with the dark green of the agriculture fields and turns into bright yellow of the drying leaves as the vision progress upwards.

The mountain range with a dominant blue at the top completes the picture casting a spell on the beholder. Descending the ghat road brings one closer to the clusters of trees which are changing colours.

Same is the case with the thick Sarkepalli forest in Wankidi mandal and the Malini forest in Sirpur (T) mandal where the jungles beckon with differently vibrant colours. A drive to Malini from Sirpur (T) mandal head quarter village will be an experience in itself in November.

Fresh perspective on forestry

FOREST CONSERVATION CONCERNS IN INDIA: S. Shyam Sunder, S. Parameswarappa; Bishen Singh Mahendra Pal Singh Publishers & Distributors of Scientific Books, 23-A, New Connaught Place, Dehra Dun-248001. Rs. 475.

Shekar Dattatri

Given that it is largely rooted in the past, the title of this book might be a bit misleading to those expecting a review of current forest conservation concerns in India and how to tackle them. Nevertheless, it is an important addition to the existing literature on forests and forestry practices.

At the outset, the authors, S. Shyam Sunder and S. Parameswarappa, retired senior forest officials from Karnataka, are at pains to set the record straight on the popular notion that Indian forests were reverentially nurtured by local people until the British came along and laid waste to them. Delving into old records, they instead depict an India in which, despite a much lower population density in times past, slash and burn cultivation by local people was so rampant that it led to widespread forest destruction, especially in the hill regions of the country. It was also a time when potentates, from kings to local satraps, did their utmost to push back forests by any and all means, for reasons including expansion of settled agriculture, eliminating refuges of robbers and tax evaders, and protecting the path of their armies from ambushes.

The book documents how the destruction of forests worsened with the arrival of the British East India Company. The clearing of more forest for growing cash crops like sugarcane, cotton, indigo, tea and coffee took a vast toll, as did the insatiable demand for timber for public works like bridges, offices, schools, hospitals, military barracks and the laying of a vast railway network. This was apart from the public requirements for firewood, and wood to fuel railway engines and steamers. Thankfully, a handful of ecological visionaries of the Raj, such as Cleghorn, Griffith, Wallich, Royle, Roxburgh, and Beddomi, among others, brought enough pressure to bear on the authorities of the times to ensure the preservation of at least some of the best forests.

In chapter 3 the authors explain how the foundations of organised forestry were laid in 1856 when Lord Dalhousie appointed a German forester, Dr. Dietrich Brandis, as Superintendent of Forests, Burma. Brandis went on to become the Inspector General of Forests of India in 1864, bringing with him a rigorous knowledge of tried and tested forestry practices perfected in Germany. The German methods were adapted to suit Indian conditions, paving the way for systematically managed tree plantations for timber and other uses, in place of arbitrary and indiscriminate felling.

The authors argue that instead of vilifying these pioneering foresters as the destroyers of India's natural forests, we must commend their vision, foresight and hard work.

In fact, they aver, it is thanks to the collective efforts of these concerned and hardworking men that the Indian Forest Act, which was to become the basis of all forest acts of the different states of India, was enacted in 1868.

Chapter 5 describes in detail the 'free for all' that ensued after India's independence, and the widespread encroachment of public lands, especially forests. This prompted the government to come out with a new National Forest Policy in 1952, which called for restraint in the release of reserve forests, and recommended that the country should aspire for a forest cover of 33% of its land area. The plight of the forest commons is also dealt with in this chapter.

Today, when many human demands are being made on the last remaining forests, the authors remind us that twice the amount of land as was declared reserve forests was set aside for grazing and meeting the biomass needs of the populace. Sadly, this vast area of 'commons' has completely disappeared, leaving the reserve forests to bear the brunt of human need and greed.

Chapter 6 chronicles the reconstitution of the Indian Forest Service, the enactment of conservation legislations and the setting up of various institutions such as national forestry institutes, the Forest Survey of India, the Indian Institute of Forest Management and the Wildlife Institute of India.

In chapter 7, the authors rebut prominent academics including Madhav Gadgil, Ramachandra Guha and Vandana Shiva, whose various writings on forests and forestry, they feel, have portrayed a distorted picture that has come to be accepted as the truth.

Using case studies, and citing specific examples and passages from their writings, they attempt to 'set the record straight' on a host of issues such as the true intent behind reserving forests, the factoring in of the needs of local people, and the plantation efforts of British foresters.

Forest Conservation Concerns in India is no easy read, given the esoteric nature of the subject, and could have benefited from some incisive editing. However, its value lies in the fact that it presents a perspective that has been missing up to now. Undoubtedly, it will prove to be an important source of reference for all those who wish to acquire a more balanced view of the history of Indian forestry.

Rain brightens prospects for farmers in Karur

The district may surpass the average annual rainfall this year

The current spell of rain that lashed different parts of the district has brought relief, albeit temporary, to the water managers, and farmers of the district, which was reeling under severe drought because of the failure of monsoons for the last three years continuously.

Much to the delight of water managers, Aravakurichi block, which was worst affected in the district, has received good rain. Moreover, the present pattern of rain suggests that the district is likely to surpass the average rainfall this year for the first time in the last three years.

According to official statistics, the district has so far received 442 mm, up to October 24, as against the annual average rainfall of 652 mm. Similarly, October has got 145 mm so far as against the average rainfall of 129 mm.

The district would get 287 mm in the northeast monsoon from October to December. Officials were optimistic that it might surpass the average rainfall in the season.

The inflow in the Amaravathi river, which has brought cheers to the people of Karur as they see noticeable flow in it after four years, is seen as a good sign for recharging the parched land and water courses. It is expected that the inflow might increase once the Amaravathi dam was released in a few days.

“The current rain has brought considerable relief to us. We have done extensive ground work in different parts of the district to save the rainfall. We have received inputs that rain harvesting structures, including check dams, farm ponds, sunken ponds, and others have stored water,” says Collector S. Jayandhi.

Project Director of the District Rural Development Agency B.R.K. Ramesh said most of the rain harvesting structures had water. Since modern technology had been adopted on creating the structures, they would help recharge the water table.

The farmers, who raised crops such as jowar, cumbu, red gram, and others on about 9,000 hectares of land under rain-fed cultivation, too heaved a sigh of relief. Besides saving the standing crops, the rain had brightened the prospects of good harvest.

M. Deivendran, Joint Director of Agriculture, said it had rained at the right time. He had received reports that the standing crop raised under rain-fed cultivation was good.

Moreover, it had given momentum to paddy transplantation. Of 15,000 hectares, transplantation was completed on 10,000 hectares. Remaining 5,000 hectares would be covered very soon.

- *Karur district has received 145 mm rainfall in October*
- *Transplantation of paddy completed on 10,000 hectares*

APEDA promotes better farmer-trader interaction

Holds interaction on cluster development of banana



A.S. Rawat (centre), Director, APEDA, New Delhi, at an interaction on 'cluster development of banana and banana products for exports' in Tiruchi on Monday.— PHOTO: B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Banana growers should be aware of the market requirement and maintain excellent tie-up with traders and exporters which would enable them in selling their produce at a competitive price, A.S. Rawat, Director, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), said on Monday.

The growers should be sensitised and educated to the modern practices in raising banana, Mr. Rawat said at an interactive meeting on cluster development of banana and banana products for exports in Tiruchi.

The meeting organised by the Department of Agricultural Marketing and Agri Business was attended by progressive banana farmers, exporters, clearing, and forwarding agents, officials from the Airports Authority of India, Departments of Horticulture and Agriculture, Plant Quarantine, and Agro Marketing Intelligence and Business Promotion Centre besides those from the National Research Centre for Banana and the Indian Institute of Crop Processing Technology.

Mr. Rawat said Tiruchi and Theni districts were endowed with best climate for raising banana and farmers of these two districts should take advantage of this.

Laying thrust on a robust supply chain system in marketing banana and its products, Mr. Rawat said banana farmers should keep themselves well-versed and understand this vital aspect.

A well-integrated and a sound supply chain system would greatly benefit banana growers as it would enable them in knowing the market requirement and the demand besides helping them in fetching a competitive price for their produce, Mr. Rawat observed. Banana growers should be sensitised to post-harvest measures and the establishment of pack houses for marketing banana.

The APEDA had been offering numerous schemes for farmers and exporters, he said. Prashant Waghmare, Assistant General Manager, APEDA, Bangalore, made a power point presentation on the slew of schemes offered by the authority.

The Deputy Director (Agri Business), R. Chandrasekaran, spoke.

New scheme for entrepreneurs

Farmer-entrepreneurs can concentrate on value addition in food production

A new scheme was launched for entrepreneurs to access agro-food processing industry in Tuticorin district. It would benefit them in the long run, Collector M. Ravikumar said here on Monday.

The scheme, which ensured income generation for stakeholders, was also aimed at preventing post-harvest loss of agricultural and horticultural crops, increasing production of processed food, avoiding wastage of food and adding value to agro products.

The agro products such as vegetables, fruits, cereals, pulses, oil seeds, chilly, edible mushroom, horticultural crops and other food crops could be processed.

Under the National Mission for Food Processing, the entrepreneurs could avail themselves of 20 per cent subsidy for establishing such a food-processing unit.

Besides, funds for setting up this industry could also be tapped from State-balanced growth fund, small farmers' agriculture business consortium and integrated scheme for agriculture marketing, he said.

Tuticorin, one of the 10 backward districts in Tamil Nadu, had been selected under this scheme, the Collector added.

Joint Director of Agriculture N.K. Dhakshinamoorthy, when contacted, said a district-level committee comprising 12 members had been formed to monitor the effective implementation of the scheme.

Any like-minded persons or groups of cooperative societies, farmer producers organisations, private, government and public sector enterprises could access benefits of this new scheme.

Since there was a growing demand for agro food exports, the farmer-entrepreneurs could utilise this opportunity and concentrate on value addition in agricultural food production.

He said those interested in this scheme could also access www.mofpi.nic.in to get more information on investing in this project.

Digging wells, the solid scientific way



[The Hindu](#)The centre's facilities will help residents avoid the unnecessary sinking of deeper bore wells to find water - Photo:M.Karunakaran

Wondering which spot to dig for groundwater or what is the quality of water in the land you own? Are you still thinking of folks walking around with those peculiar 'Y'-shaped twigs? It's not quite that way any more.

We've become more scientific, we're using special tools to figure out where the water lies. The 'we' in this case refers to the State Ground and Surface Water Resources Data Centre, Taramani, which provides consultancy services to identify groundwater potential.

The centre is also set to improve its water testing laboratories in Chennai, Tiruchi, and Madurai, at a cost of Rs. 5 crore, to test more parameters.

On an average, the staff members of the centre functioning under the Water Resources Department carry out nearly 30 field inspections every month to choose suitable sites for digging wells.

“We survey the site with a geophysical receptivity metre to check the depth of water availability and soil condition. We also analyse the water quality using the equipment. Consumers can get results about groundwater table and quality in a week,” said an official.

Consumers can save time by not having to sink deeper bore wells unnecessarily. Farmers, residents and commercial establishments also make use of the service, which is offered for Rs. 500 for farmers and Rs. 1,000 for others.

“As per the government order, consumers will also have to provide transport facility,” the official added.

To increase patronage, the centre plans to hold more awareness meetings on its services and groundwater among residents and students.

At present, the water testing lab in Taramani gets only around 30-40 samples every month. The lab also has facilities to test the presence of harmful heavy metals like cadmium and pesticides in groundwater.

“We are taking measures to create awareness about the water testing facility and expand the infrastructure of the lab. We have the facility to test up to 29 parameters. Consumers can get up to 18 parameters tested for Rs. 250 and get results in three days through post or in person,” an official said.

The centre also shares data on groundwater with students and research scholars for a fee of Rs. 100.

Widespread rain to benefit horticulture



The recent widespread rain is expected to immensely benefit the standing horticulture crops in the district.

The State Horticulture Department has urged farmers to apply fertilizer and manure immediately, taking advantage of current showers for registering higher yield.

A total area of 56,838 hectares has been brought under various horticulture crops in the district, including fruits 9,200 hectares, plantation crops 9,000 hectares, flowers 3,000 hectares, arecanut 2,500 hectares and medicinal plants 1,500 hectares. Tapioca, tomato, bhendi, brinjal, onion are the major vegetable crops cultivated in the district.

Among the fruit varieties, mango has been raised on 5,000 hectares in Sankagiri, Makudanchavadi, Konganapuram, Pottanaickenpalayam, Ayodiyapattinam, Vazhappadi, and banana on 1,500 hectares in Kolathur, Edappadi, Pethanaickenpalayam.

Jasmine, chrysanthemums and other flower varieties have been raised on 3,000 hectares in Kadaiyampatti, Mecheri, Veerapandi, Omalur, Panaimarathupatti and Ayodiyapattinam.

Even though the district has experienced widespread showers, it is still a deficit rainfall, official sources say. The official machinery and farmers alike are pinning hopes on the North East Monsoon to intensify further.

The current spell of rain would prove beneficial to all standing horticultural crops, in particular the plantation crops, S. Kannan, Deputy Director of Horticulture told *The Hindu* here on Monday.

This was the stage when flowers would absorb nutrients and adequate care should be taken for applying manure now.

The showers favoured much the application of fertilizer and manure, he said, advising farmers to utilise the spell immediately to influence flowering of mango, which was expected to commence during December - January, and other fruit crops.

The department had been giving thrust on application of manure and fertilizers for all rain-fed horticulture crops and creating awareness among the farmers on the same.

In case of heavy rain in the next few days, the farmers should ensure proper drainage to annual root crops such as turmeric, tapioca, vegetables, onion which would go a long way in protecting these crops from withstanding heavy downpour, Mr. Kannan said.

Karimnagar Dairy clarifies

Karimnagar Milk Producers Company Limited chairman Ch. Rajeshwara Rao has clarified that Karimnagar Dairy was converted into a production company as per Indian constitution and registered with the Union government and that it is a government institution and not owned by any individual.

Terming the allegations made by former MP Ponnampalagan Prabhakar as false and baseless, Mr. Rao said that Karimnagar Dairy was providing more milk procurement price to farmers than Vijaya Dairy. Stating that the Karimnagar dairy is owned by the milk producing farmers, he said that the profits of the dairy would be shared among the farmers only.

In a press note here on Monday, Mr. Rajeshwara Rao said that they have launched several welfare schemes to the milk producers and spent over Rs. 4.2 crore during the last year.

He said that Karimnagar Dairy was providing insurance scheme to the cattle, veterinary medical camps at the doorstep of farmers, farmers' insurance scheme, scholarships to their children and Kalyanamasthu scheme and others.

He said that they had urged Minister for Finance Etala Rajender to prevail upon Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao to provide the government announced incentive of Rs. 4 per litre to the farmers of Karimnagar Dairy also. He said that the dairy made strides with the support of farmers. The milk procurement had increased from 5,000 litres in 1998 to 1.1 lakh litres per day. The turnover had increased from Rs. 5 crore to Rs. 155 crore during this year.

Paddy crops submerged in rainwater

Life in Puducherry has been thrown out of gear owing to incessant rain in the past one week. Standing paddy crops on 2,000 hectares in Puducherry and another 2,000 hectares in Karaikal region have been submerged. However, assessment of the damage is still at a preliminary stage.

“Out of 7,000 hectares, where paddy has been sown, crop in 2,000 hectares has been submerged. Most of the submerged crop was in the early stages. The damage is huge.

It will take a long time for farmers to recover as all their hopes are shattered. Crops have been submerged in Bahour, Mannadipet, Nettapakkam, Thirukkanur, Ariyankuppam and Embalam,” V. Chandrasekhar, president of Bangaru Vaikal Neeradhara Kootamaippu, told *The Hindu*.

The government had not provided incentive of Rs.4,000 a hectare to farmers for taking up paddy cultivation. Incentives had not been provided to farmers for the last three years. If the government provided the incentive immediately, it would be of immense help to farmers. It should also conduct a survey to assess the extent of crop damage and announce adequate compensation, he said.

Though there was a respite from the rains on Sunday several areas in Puducherry remain affected due to severe water logging. Residents of Boomianpet, Krishna Nagar, Uppalam and suburban areas complained of water-logging and clogged storm water drains.

Chief Minister N. Rangasamy inspected the rain-ravaged areas in Marapalam, Uppalam, Mudaliarpet and Thavalakuppam on Sunday.

Jasmine reels under pest attack: rain plays spoilsport



A farmer applying pesticide at his jasmine field in Gopurapatti.—
Photo: B.Velankanni Raj

The recent showers have caused a setback to jasmine growers particularly in and around Kuzhumani, Ettarai, Koppu and Neyvasal, Sirugambur and Tiruppainjeeli.

Jasmine cultivators point out that October and November is the peak period when the yield picks up. In fact, the yield stabilised only after the discharge of waters from the Mettur in August this year. The recent showers supplemented irrigation of the crop to a great extent. But, the mist over the last three days has led to pest attack on the flowers. Jasmine cultivators have started applying pesticide to prevent spread of the attack to other plants.

K. Ilangovan, a farmer of Gopurapatti, who had cultivated the crop on one acre, said that he could harvest 40 bags of the flowers a month fetching a revenue of Rs.15,000. Although the showers favoured the yield in the last fortnight, the sudden attack of pest had discoloured the flowers. He applied the pesticide immediately as the air-borne and soil-borne pest would spread to other plants.

According to official sources, the attack by bud worms occurred due to formation of mist. It discoloured the flower and then diminished its size and growth. An official suggested that timely application of 'nuvan' at 200 litres an acre or 2.5 ml a litre of water would control the pest attack. The district accounted for about 450 hectares under jasmine.

Land resource information system

No plan to scrap planning board, says Minister



Minister for Dairy Development K.C. Joseph addresses a dairy farmers' meet at the Kodakara block panchayat in Thrissur on Monday.— PHOTO: BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Minister for Rural Development, Planning and Dairy Development K.C. Joseph has denied reports that the government is planning to scrap the Kerala State Planning Board.

He was addressing a function here on Monday to launch Land Resource Information System (LRIS) for Thrissur district, a web-based Geographic Information System developed by the Kerala State Land Use Board (KSLUB).

“Planning is essential for development. A move by the Union government to scrap the Planning Commission has created confusion,” he said. A database of land and water resources was essential for decentralised development, he added.

Therambil Ramakrishnan, MLA, presided.

The LRIS, a comprehensive database of land and water resources, is intended to demonstrate and promote the use of spatial data technologies for local level planning and to provide software support for data management, modelling and operation research.

Spatial depiction of land and information on water resources are integrated with a geo-referenced cadastral database. State-of-the-art web technology tools and systems conforming to services-oriented architecture are used. The web GIS application has been developed using open source tools and standards.

The application may be accessed through any standard web browser with user-friendly navigational approach. The information may thus be transmitted to the grassroots for supporting decision making and development planning.

The database will include details of land use, geomorphology, lithology, geological structures, drainage lines, canal network, micro watershed, boundaries of local self-government institutions, forests, wells, settlements, road and rail networks, ground water, wetland and wasteland.

Famers' pension

Addressing a dairy farmers' meet at the Kodakara block panchayat, Mr. Joseph said the government was considering increasing the pension for dairy farmers.

"Kerala should achieve self-sufficiency in milk production. Dairy farmers will continue in the sector only if milk gets a fair price," he said.

C. Ravindranath, MLA, presided. A livestock show and a seminar were also held. A few dairy farmers were felicitated.

Promote fodder cultivation'

E.V. Ramana Reddy, district in-charge secretary, has instructed officials to start drought relief measures like promoting fodder cultivation and setting up cattle sheds, wherever necessary. At a meeting in Bidar on Tuesday, the secretary observed the district had received below average rainfall and suffered crop damage.

“Surface water levels have gone down and there are doubts about groundwater recharge. Green grass may not be available in expected quantity. That is why, we need to start rolling out relief measures,” he said. He said the State government would support all initiatives taken by the district administration and zilla panchayat in this regard.

DECCAN Chronicle

Bogus crop loans mar waiver in Telangana



Minister for agriculture Pocharam Srinivas Reddy detected the irregularities and warned the officials maintain care while implementing crop loan waiver scheme. (Photo: DC/File)

NIZAMABAD: A few bankers, staff of primary agriculture cooperative societies have resorted to irregularities in implementing crop loan waiver scheme. Shockingly, in Gandipet village alone Rs 14 crore bogus crop loans issued.

Minister for agriculture Pocharam Srinivas Reddy detected the irregularities and warned the officials maintain care while implementing crop loan waiver scheme.

While interacting with agricultural and lead bank officials through video conference, he said that waiver should be provided to the eligible farmers' only and that serious action would be initiated on errant officials.

Minister also said that bogus crop loans were issued on a large scale in Banswada, Sirikonda, Lingampet and other mandals. He suggested priority should be given to the small and marginal farmers in implementing the scheme.

He suggested priority should be given to the small and marginal farmers in crop loan waiver scheme. In Nizamabad district Rs 437.89 crore released to the 3.99 lakh bank accounts of farmers for crop loan waiver scheme. About Rs 790 crore renewed for crop loans to 2.80 lakh farmers.

Remaining 30 crop loan renewals will be completed by October end. Meanwhile, errant staff of banks and cooperative societies planned to swindle the funds. Using the photo copies of old crop loan applications, they sanctioned new loans with bogus bank accounts.

Without involvement of farmers, a few bank employees availed the crop loans and now planning to get the waiver facility. Noticing all these, irregularities the state government has decided to conduct thorough inquiry on beneficiaries.

THE HINDU BusinessLine

Soyabean slips on global cues

Indore, October 27: With local mandis opening after four days holiday on Monday, soyabean in 'muhurt' trading was quoted at Rs. 3,111-3,155 a quintal. However, as normal trading progressed during the day, prices slipped to Rs. 2,900-2,950 a quintal on weak global cues and higher arrivals. In the futures, however, soyabean traded marginally higher notwithstanding weak global cues with November and December contracts on the NCEDX closing at Rs. 3,087 and Rs. 3,138 a quintal, respectively. Plant deliveries of soyabean on Monday also rose to Rs. 3,025-75 a quintal on improved buying by crushers.

Arrival of soyabean in mandis across Madhya Pradesh on Monday rose to 4 lakh bags, while arrival in Indore was 20,000 bags.

On the other hand, soya oil rose marginally on improved buying despite weak global cues with soya refined on Monday being quoted at Rs. 595-98 for 10 kg, while soya solvent rose to Rs. 565-70 (up Rs. 10 from last week). Soyameal ruled firm at Rs. 26,000-26,300 a quintal at the ports.

Cardamom continues to rule steady

Upcountry traders buying to build inventories after good Diwali sale



Kochi, October 27: Cardamom prices ruled steady last week as demand nearly matched supply at the auctions.

However, supply continued to increase as the harvesting has reached its peak. Good variety capsules are arriving in good volume, market sources said.

At the Cardamom Planters Association (CPA) auction on Monday in Bodinayakannur, 32.3 tonnes of cardamom arrived and almost the entire quantity was sold. The auction average was Rs. 723.50 a kg.

Upcountry buyers bought actively as they need to build inventories. They exhausted their stocks as demand for Diwali was good.

Exporters have slowed down on the assumption that their active entry might push up prices further. Besides, prevailing prices, according to them, are marginally on the higher side. However, they have bought around 50 tonnes.

Prices during the current season have been on higher side compared with the same period a year ago, they said.

Higher demand

Prices are likely to rule stable between Rs. 730 and Rs. 780 a kg as the wedding season could see some demand emerge for the spice.

At the Sunday auction held by the Kerala Cardamom Processing and Marketing Company, arrivals were 107 tonnes against 120.7 tonnes the previous Sunday. The entire quantity was sold out.

The maximum price was Rs. 937 a kg and the minimum Rs. 422 a kg. The auction average was nearly steady at Rs. 743.45 a kg, PC Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC told *BusinessLine*.

Some in the market anticipate that the average price might even top Rs. 800 a kg, he said. The individual auction average price remained nearly unchanged between Rs. 720 and Rs. 760 a kg.

Supply of 8mm bold continued to remain thin and good colour bold capsules were fetching Rs. 950 - 1,000 a kg. Total arrivals during the season, officially between August 1 - October 26, stood at 4,922 tonnes as against 6,144 tonnes during the same period last year.

The sales were at 4,834 tonnes and 5,905 tonnes respectively. The individual auction average as on October 26 this year was at around Rs. 733.5 a kg and on the same date last year, it was around Rs. 570 a kg.

Graded varieties

Prices of graded varieties on Monday in the open market in Bodinayakannur remained nearly steady at previous levels and that in (Rs. \kg) were: 8mm bold at 950 - 1,000; 7mm - 8mm at 825; 6mm - 7mm at 725-735; below 6 mm at 690-700.

The weather conditions remains favourable as the growing areas are receiving good rains.

Pepper stable on limited activity

Kochi, October 27: Pepper prices ruled steady on Monday following limited activities. On the IPSTA platform, all active contracts ruled steady at the previous levels of Rs. 74,460 for November, Rs. 64,665 for December and Rs. 59,800 quintal for January 2015.

Spot prices ruled steady at Rs. 67,000 (ungarbled) and Rs. 70,000 (garbled) a quintal.

Turmeric falls as rain hits quality

Erode, October 27: Prices of hybrid turmeric decreased by Rs. 500 a quintal on Monday as continuous rain in Erode district has affected the quality of the spice.

“After six days markets opened on Monday, but no farmer brought turmeric for sale to the Regulated Market Committee. Farmers said that due to the rain turmeric prices dropped,” said RKV Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

On Monday, the hybrid finger variety price dropped by Rs. 550 a quintal, while the hybrid root variety by Rs.600 a quintal. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association, the finger turmeric was sold at Rs. 3,889-6,215 a quintal, the root turmeric fetched Rs. 3,799-5,534.

Salem hybrid: The finger turmeric sold at Rs. 5,284-6,559, the root variety at Rs. 4,691-5,691. Of the 337 bags on offer, 43 bags were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Committee, the finger turmeric fetched Rs. 5,189-6,216, the root variety Rs. 5,189-5,842. All the 390 bags placed for sale were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative marketing Society, the finger turmeric was sold at Rs.5,242-6,160, the root variety at Rs. 4,789-5,686. All the 33 bags put up for sale were traded.

What govt should do to make forward trading popular

Slack response to NCDEX's maize, sugar forward contracts needs a thorough study

Establishment and expansion of commodity exchanges in India has facilitated stakeholders with alternatives of spot market. Future and forward transactions are supposed to be an useful tool for commodity traders, processors and other stakeholders to hedge their position and ensure regular supply. Commodity exchanges are the platform where futures and forward transactions are carried out by market participants. In case of futures, the guarantee by exchange for delivery and settlement of dispute mitigates the counterparty risks. The same does not hold good for forward contracts as these are exclusively between two parties.

In a new avatar

The recent move of the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) to start forward contracts in maize and sugar is a laudable move to develop the market and provide alternatives to market participants. The way these forward contracts are engineered by NCDEX, most of the risk factors associated with normal forwards have been mitigated. In the case of normal forward contracts risk factors, such as lack of regulation, bilateral trade, private transaction, less access to other sellers/ buyers, absence of provisions for dispute settlement, self-assessment of quality of underlying commodity etc, are associated. Most of these contracts do not result in price discovery. In case of NCDEX forward contracts, most of these issues have been taken care of. NCDEX forward contracts are regulated, traded on electronic platform and thus provide multiple options to buyers and sellers from across the country and provide option for quality assessment of underlying commodity. The platform acts as arbitrator with these contracts resulting in better price discovery.

Additional advantages

A sudden change in commodity trading in the country is unlikely with the launch of NCDEX forward contracts, though. However, other commodity exchanges may also launch forward contracts and also, NCDEX will launch forward contracts for more number of commodities. If the exchange can make its members store commodities in exchange-approved warehouses, additional benefits from these contracts may reduce wastages while storing. Primary observation indicates that exchange approved warehouses maintain better quality standards compared to other warehouses. Participation of farmers in forward trading will bring more volume in exchange approved warehouses and thus, the extent of loss on account of poor maintenance of warehouses can be reduced to a greater extent.

Market response

Despite, exchange-traded forward contracts mitigating most of the risk associated with normal forward contracts, the response to the launch of NCDEX maize and sugar forward contracts has been lukewarm. During the first 15 days of launch of these contracts, a total of 29 contracts for maize and 3 contracts of sugar were traded. These contracts accounts for a total volume of 1,060 tonnes of maize and 600 tonnes of sugar. In this period, maize contracts were traded for 8 days while sugar contracts were traded for only 2 days. These results seem to be discouraging compared with futures contracts in the respective commodities. Futures contracts of maize were traded on every trading day during the same period on the NCDEX platform and the number of contracts were as large as 13,317 for a total volume of 1,33,170 tonnes. Similarly, futures contracts of sugar were also traded on all days on the NCDEX platform during the period and the number of contracts traded was 5,565 for a total volume of trade of 55,650 tonnes.

Scope for FMC, Government

The slack response to forward trading in maize and sugar calls for a thorough study by commodity exchanges and the Forward Markets Commission (FMC). A primary reason for such response seems to be lack of awareness among different stakeholders. The FMC in consultation with its various networking institute such as NIAM, is conducting training/ awareness programme on futures trading for farmers, officers of Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees and other stakeholders. On a similar line, FMC should promote not only awareness campaign in futures trading but trading on the electronic platform as well. The fundamentals of futures and forward contracts and working of commodity exchanges must be known to each stakeholder. In order to promote futures and forward trading, the government should incentivise farmers to participate in commodity futures and forward by subsidising warehouse rent. Such a move will not only increase the participation of farmers on electronic exchanges but will also result in popularising the utilization of negotiable warehouse receipt. The writers are associated with National Institute of Agricultural Marketing, Jaipur

Mixed trend in spot rubber

Kottayam, October 27: Spot rubber was mixed on Monday. The most active counter RSS 4 opened steady but pared initial gains, possibly following a weak closing on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. Meanwhile, ISNR 20 and Latex finished higher on comparatively better demand but overall volumes were low. Sheet rubber dropped to Rs. 125.50 (Rs. 126) a kg, as quoted by traders. The grade closed unchanged at Rs. 126 and Rs. 123 respectively, according to the Rubber Board and dealers.

November futures declined to Rs. 124.80 (Rs. 125.62) December to Rs. 123.78 (Rs. 124.82) and January to Rs. 124 (Rs. 124.99) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) slipped to Rs. 105.42 (Rs. 105.74) at Bangkok. October futures closed at ¥184.5 (Rs. 104.84) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange. Spot rubber rates (Rs. /kg) were: RSS-4: 125.50 (126); RSS-5: 119.50 (120); Ungraded: 116 (116); ISNR 20: 111.50 (110) and Latex (60% drc): 80.50(80).