

# THE HINDU

## Growing forty traditional varieties in less than two acres



Mr. Raman with some of his rare varieties. Photo: Special Arrangement

What is it that makes a small farmer opt for growing and preserving several native paddy varieties when finding a good market for normal crops is proving to be a Herculean task?

“Probably it is the innate interest to preserve and protect the local biodiversity that spurs some to get into these type of activities. It is a fact that getting a good price for traditional varieties is still not easy in the country because among consumers several don’t know the

existence of such varieties and marketing people who buy them don't know their," says Dr. Joseph John, scientist, M.S. Swaminatha Research Foundation (MSSRF).

## **Varieties**

But inspite of all these odds Mr. Cheruvayal Raman, a tribal farmer in Wayanad cultivates about 40 varieties of traditional paddy native to Wayanad in his 1.5 acres. Having learnt from his parents the need for growing and preserving these native varieties the unique feature about his farm is that unlike other farms he doesn't believe in using modern machines like tractors in his fields to plough or harvest the crops.

"I shun modern implements like the tractor or threshing machines. Seeds contain the life of nature. We should treat them with extreme care. If we use machines to remove the paddy grains from the harvested straw then the seeds get broken (injured) so I use sticks to thrash the straw for separating the seeds," he says.

Selected seeds are dried for a week in the open and stored in traditional vessels called Thumba. By this method the seeds can be preserved for two years without losing their dormancy, according to Dr. K.P. Smitha, Senior Scientist, Agriculture & Natural Resource at the institute.

### **Before sowing**

Before sowing, the seeds are soaked in water for 12 hours to improve their germination. When soaked the well dried seeds start absorbing the water.

Later they are taken out and covered with banana or papaya leaves and a weight is placed on the top. By this method the seeds sprout in one day and are taken to be planted in the main field in the next 2-3 days.

The growing time of seedlings is directly related with the longevity of rice varieties, according to Mr. Raman.

The field is ploughed well. Cow dung and dried leaves are added to the field and thoroughly mixed with the soil and left undisturbed for about for ten days.

During this time the dung and leaves would have composed well thus becoming nutritious food for the several million beneficial microorganisms in the soil. After this the germinated seedlings are transplanted to the main field.

“I follow the biodynamic system of planting. In this system, farmers follow the lunar pattern for land preparation, sowing, harvesting etc and fullmoon days are considered ideal for planting since on that day rodents like rats remain in their burrows do not dig out the sown seeds,” he explains.

### **Practices**

Only organic cultivation practices are followed by him and a native cow is being managed in the cattle shed for the continuous supply of cow dung and urine. Tilling after 20 days and irrigation are the two requirements needed for the growth of traditional varieties. The rice varieties of Wayanad do not need tedious attention or chemical fertilizers and pesticides for growth. There is usually no pest or disease incidence noticed in them.

### **Free distribution**

The seeds are given free of cost to interested farmers on the condition that they have to return it in double the amount next year. Every year Mr. Raman distributes about 150 kg seeds of 30 varieties to 250 farmers and interested persons across the country.

In fact if not for people like Mr. Cheruvayal the traditional varieties of Wayanad would have been long lost to the common people, according to Dr. Smitha.

For details contact Mr. Raman Cheruvayal, Kammana, Mananthavady, Wayanad: 670645, mobile: 08281556350 and Dr. Joseph John, MSSRF, Puthoorvayal, Kalpetta, Pin- 673577, email: josephcabbc@gmail.com, mobile: 09388020650, phone: Ph.04936-204477.

## **Rescheduling of loans from today**

The farmers in Medak district were directed to reschedule their loans between September 25 and September 30.

Speaking to reporters here on Wednesday, Collector Rahul Bojja said that farmers can reschedule their loans which were taken in the year 2013 and about 400 bank branches in the district were directed to act accordingly. He said that the farmers can contact the revenue officers, agriculture officer or mandal parishat development officer if any problem arises at the bank. Mr. Rahul said that farmers can reschedule their old loans and take new loans for which the insurance may be applicable. He has informed that more than 4 lakh farmers were expected to benefit to the tune of Rs. 1,999 crore. Informing that input subsidy would be directly credited to the beneficiary accounts, he said that an inquiry would be ordered about the beneficiaries in the scheme.

## Minister bats for precision farming



Agriculture Minister Prathipati Pulla Rao advocated precision farming for higher productivity and returns.

The Minister, who took part in the “Polam Pilustondi” programme at B. Tandrapadu and Hussainapuram in Kurnool district on Wednesday, said the government was concerned about the travails of farmers and wanted to make agriculture remunerative. As a first step, it was decided that the deficiency of micro-nutrients should be addressed by supplying them at 50 per cent subsidy. The productivity was expected to go up by 10 to 20 per cent by this step. He said by applying micro-nutrients, farmers could bring down the cost of cultivation through reduction in usage of chemicals.

He mooted a proposal for issuing health cards fields in order to issue nutrients to farm owners. He said the government was planning to provide vehicles to a group of 10 farmers each for marketing fruits and vegetables. He promised to help Bengalgram farmers who were unable to market the pulse. An interest-free loan would be sanctioned to manage the crisis. The Minister interacted with the farmers and learnt about the integrated pest management methods adopted by farmers.



## A global call for climate justice

*Neither Narendra Modi nor Xi Jinping attended the U.N. climate change summit despite being leaders of countries that are among the top three annual emitters of greenhouse gases*



GLOBAL APPEAL: The citizen's movement for climate justice is a sign of gathering impatience towards politically entrenched interests stalling the movement to reduce greenhouse gases. Picture shows protest signs during the 'People's Climate March' in New York

More than half a million people marched in nearly 3,000 simultaneous events conducted across 161 countries as part of the People's Climate March on September 21. They carried placards promoting alternative sources of energy and chanted slogans condemning governments for their inaction on climate change and for mollycoddling global capitalism. They targeted, in particular, the fossil fuel industry, which has recklessly promoted the practice of hydraulic fracturing or "fracking" and other carbon-intensive activities. The

demonstrations were to some extent mobilised by the non-governmental organisation 350.org, along with a growing global network of organisations, which are alarmed by the lethargy evident in international negotiations towards reaching a 'safe' limit for atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases.

The scientific consensus is that this should be around 350 parts per million (ppm) of carbon dioxide. However, the primary greenhouse gas is persistent in the atmosphere and has increased its concentrations by nearly half since pre-industrial times to reach about 400 ppm.

The demonstrations were timed to coincide with the U.N. Climate Summit called for by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the U.N. Headquarters in New York this week. This meeting of world leaders, heads of states, finance ministers, business heads and leaders of civil society and community groups was meant to energise global action to address the global warming challenge. Many commitments were made at the summit separate from the formal negotiation processes. For instance, countries of the European Union pledged to reduce emissions to 40 per cent below 1990 levels by 2030. Seventy three countries and over a thousand businesses and investors, making up more than half of the global economy, gave their strong endorsement for pricing carbon. Many leaders expressed their support for addressing loss and damage due to climate change and announced a number of initiatives for building resilience. India promised to double its use of solar and wind energy by 2020. A global movement and mobilisation for action that may have seemed impossible even a few years ago, appears now to be gathering force.

Neither Prime Minister Narendra Modi nor Chinese President Xi Jinping was at the summit, each citing busy schedules. This is unfortunate, because as new leaders of countries that make up nearly a third of the world's population and are among the top three annual emitters of greenhouse gases, the U.N. summit would have

been an excellent opportunity for them to learn and exchange views with other countries in a relatively informal setting. It is hard to imagine that either of them could fully appreciate all the intricacies of the ongoing climate negotiations under the various negotiating tracks of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) or indeed the evolving and complex concerns brought up by climate science. A face-to-face meeting with other leaders, on the other hand, would have been a chance to have genuine concerns about climate aired out along with an exploration of synergies involving trade relations, economic development and conflict and opportunities for their joint resolution.

### **Link with capitalist development**

The connections between capitalist development and the growth of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere are very clear. Starting in the 19th century and intensifying since the 20th century, industrial capitalism has relied on the mining of fossil fuels in the form of coal, oil and gas from under the surface of the earth. Use of these fuels has resulted in emissions of about half a trillion tonnes of carbon. Tellingly, the countries with the highest contributions to global concentrations also have the highest economic wealth today; similarly, GDP growth rates for much of the past century have been synchronous with growth in greenhouse gas emissions. Some European countries and Japan have made significant strides to decouple their economies from energy and carbon growth, but China, now responsible for producing consumer goods for much of the world, has shot up in carbon emissions in just the past decade. Even the U.S., responsible for a quarter of the cumulative emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and until recently the leading annual emitter, has reduced its emissions from energy in the past five years by about 5 per cent. Today, apart from CO<sub>2</sub>, other contributors to global warming are also becoming significant, such as nitrous oxides, black carbon, hydrofluorocarbons and methane, further complicating the picture.



Nevertheless, if future climate impacts are to be reduced to manageable levels, it has become clear that all countries need to shift their development pathways such that global emissions peak well before mid-century. Even this, it appears, may barely be sufficient to provide a fighting chance for avoiding a 2° rise in global average temperatures, which is seen by most scientists as a 'guardrail' against cascading climate effects.

The impact of climate change has just begun to make its mark. Its most devastating effects will be experienced by the poorest in those countries that have emitted the least. Thus, Bangladesh, responsible for less than 0.2 per cent of cumulative emissions will face devastating challenges as a result of sea level rise, floods and landslides, affecting nearly 120 million of some of the poorest people in the world. Several small island states face the prospect of losing their land entirely, creating a new category of 'climate exiles'. India too can expect to face more intense cyclones, flooding, droughts, sea level rise and variability in the monsoons accompanied by secondary effects such as destruction of ecosystems and threats to livelihoods, public health and food security. Even if emissions are reduced substantially today, many of these impacts will be felt over time. An emerging country such as India needs to get serious about climate compatible development that prioritises the provision of energy services for the 300 million or so of its poor. Planning cities, power stations, agriculture and modes of living that are sustainable for generations to come is the real challenge. Along the way, policies should avoid technological and institutional pathways that lock the economy into high-carbon and unsustainable modes of growth that worsen inequality rather than reduce it.

In Paris

Since 1994, when the UNFCCC entered into force, global negotiations on reducing the threat of climate change have gone through several twists and turns, with the discussions themselves

becoming more arcane and complicated. Climate negotiations have become so complex that only large teams of lawyers seem to be able to understand their intricacies.

This week's summit and future preparatory meetings over the coming year, including an agreement on Sustainable Development Goals to replace the Millennium Development Goals after 2015, are building up to the 21st meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP-21) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris in late 2015. In Paris, international negotiators are expected to make pledges or set targets to reduce emissions so that global temperatures, which are now moving toward an increase of more than 4°C have a chance of remaining below the 2°C guardrail.

The emerging global citizen's movement for climate justice is a sign of an undercurrent of gathering impatience towards politically entrenched interests worldwide that have stalled the movement to reduce greenhouse gases. If, as most informed observers believe, climate change really turns out to be the most important environment and development challenge of the 21st century, world leaders, including our own, cannot afford to remain on the sidelines.

*(Sujatha Byravan is advisor, Center for Study of Science Technology and Policy, Bangalore, and Sudhir Chella Rajan is professor, IIT Madras.)*

***India needs to get serious about climate compatible development prioritising provision of energy services for its poor***

## **Managing thrips menace in garlic**

Garlic is widely cultivated in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Orissa and Maharashtra. The crop, like others, is infested with several pests among which onion thrips is a major one.

Both nymphs and adults suck the leaf sap and cause injury to the crop.

They remain in dense clusters at bottom of leaves and whorls and feed by lacerating the tissues and sucking the oozing cell sap.

### **Infestation**

The infestation results in a spotted appearance on the leaves, subsequently turning into silver coloured blotches. The leaf tips fade and the basal portions get blighted and distorted from tip downwards and finally the plant dries up. Infested plants yield less by small sized bulbs.

Adults are slender, yellowish brown and measure about 1mm in length with narrow fringed wings. Eggs are laid singly in tender leaves by making slits with sharp ovipositors by the females. A single female lays 40-50 eggs which hatch after 4-9 days. The entire life cycle is completed in 11-21 days. There are more than ten generations per year. The pest occurs on garlic from November to May and migrates to other crops from June.

### **Management**

Varieties with open type growth and circular leaf structure are not preferred by the pest.

Tolerant varieties of garlic viz. G-2, G-19, LCG-1, Ooty-1 can be grown.

High doses of nitrogenous fertilizers and close planting should be avoided.

Clean cultivation, regular hoeing and flooding of infested field will check the pest population.

Insect predators like green lacewing fly and tiny ladybird beetles check the population of this pest in nature.

Spraying of insecticides at rate of (10 thrips/plant) is advised.

Application of monocrotophos 0.036 per cent, formothion 0.025 per cent, dimethoate 0.03 per cent, profenofos or malathion 0.05 per cent, methyl demeton 0.025 per cent , , carbaryl 0.1 per cent or phorate 10G at 10kg/hectare can help.

(J. Jayaraj, Associate Professor and R.K. Murali Baskaran, Professor & Head, Dept. of Entomology, Agricultural College and Research Institute, Madurai 625 104, email: [vu2jrj@rediffmail.com](mailto:vu2jrj@rediffmail.com), phone: 0452- 2422956 Extn: 214.)

## **Tiny wasp SWAT teams to protect Indonesian crop**

They are the size of a pinhead and don't even pack a sting, but these tiny wasps are cold-blooded killers. They work as nature's SWAT team, neutralising a pest that threatens to destroy one of the developing world's most important staple foods: cassava.



The wasps are being released in Indonesia, the latest country threatened by the mealybug. It's a chalky white insect shaped like a pill that has been making its way across Southeast Asia's fields for the past six years.

### **Threat to food security**

But unlike in Thailand, where infestations reached some 2,50,000 hectares (6,18,000 acres) of crops grown mostly as part of the country's huge export business, cassava in Indonesia is a vital food source, second only to rice. That makes the mealy bug a serious threat to food security in Indonesia, which already has one of the region's highest child malnutrition rates.

The parasitic wasps, or *Anagyrus lopezi*, need the mealybug to survive. Females lay their eggs inside the insect and as the larvae grow, they eat the bug from the inside out, slowly killing it until there's nothing left but its mummified shell.

On Wednesday, scientists put 2,000 wasps into a holding cage at an affected field in Bogor, on the outskirts of Indonesia's capital, Jakarta. They will be monitored to see how well they handle local conditions as they multiply to an expected 3,00,000 over the next month before being released into the wild to start their relentless killing spree.

It's unclear how much damage mealy bugs have already caused to Indonesia's crops, but infestations have been reported on the main cassava-growing island of Java and in parts of Sumatra, said Kris Wyckhuys, an entomologist at International Center for Tropical Agriculture, which is helping to coordinate the release.

## Pushing for PPP model in food processing



PM inspecting the food park with Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal

Underscoring the importance of value addition in getting remunerative price for agricultural produce, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the Centre wants to develop infrastructure for value addition and food processing through public-private partnership (PPP) model.

After inaugurating the country's first food park developed under the PPP model on 110 acres of land at Vasanthanarasapura Industrial Estate, near Tumkur, Mr. Modi said the Centre would encourage private firms if they were interested in developing infrastructure for food processing.

"The farmer gives food to the entire country. But his pockets always remain empty. Value addition and food processing play a key role in economically strengthening him," he said. He observed that it was possible to prevent post-harvest losses of Rs. 30,000 crore to Rs. 40,000 crore a year through food processing.

“If you merely sell tomatoes, you may not get much money. But you are bound to get good money if you turn them into ketchup, bottle it and sell. Of course, the value will further go up if an actor holds this bottle [in an advertisement],” he said.

## **“Micro irrigation vital for better productivity”**

Micro-irrigation will help the country to overtake other countries in agricultural productivity, said J.Diraviam, Programme Coordinator, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Karur.

Speaking at a farmers’ fair on micro-irrigation, organised by the Krishi Vigyan Kendra on Wednesday, to create awareness among farmers, farm women, and rural youth on various technological developments in micro-irrigation, he said that though the country stood first in total area under irrigation followed by China and United States of America, China stood first in food grain production followed by the US and India.

It implied that there was a strong need for micro-irrigation to take agriculture to the next stage. China and USA were leading in farm productivity as they migrated to micro-irrigation in a massive way.

Diraviam also stressed that the success of micro-irrigation depended on careful selection of equipment, thorough planning, accurate design, and effective management of the system.

The Assistant General Manager of NABARD , Parthiban, highlighted the need for verifying water availability and quality before taking up micro-irrigation. He also stressed that proper maintenance, design, and capacity building of farmers during pre and post installation was pivotal for the success of micro-irrigation schemes.

The Indian Overseas Bank Rural Self Employment Training Institute director Dhamayanthi, and Executive Engineer (Agricultural Engineering) Sankaran spoke. Officials from Department of

Agriculture, Horticulture, Agricultural Engineering, NABARD, IOB RSETI, Tiruchi District Central Cooperative Bank and Bank of India, participated in the programme.

## **Awareness programme on warehouse schemes**

There is a gap of an estimated five to seven tonnes on the storage front for agricultural commodities in Thanjavur district. Farmers must come together to construct warehouses at the block level and bridge the chasm, District Collector N. Subbaiyan urged enterprising agriculturalists at an awareness programme on warehouse schemes organised by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) here on Wednesday.

The NABARD organised the programme to popularise “Negotiable Warehouse Receipts (NWRs) and Schemes of Warehouse Development Regulatory Authority (WDRA) under the aegis of the NABARD Consultancy services at District Industries Centre (DIC), Nanjikottai. More than 50 farmers representing village level farmers groups including Farmers Clubs, Commodity Groups, Farmers' Friends of ATMA participated in the programme.

Mr. Subbaiyan called upon the farmers to join hands and construct storage structures at the block level taking advantage of the financial support from the commercial banks. While admitting the risk involved in taking up the activities like storage and post-harvest processing of agricultural produce, he underlined that the risk in post production activities was much less than that in the crop production stage.

The Collector counselled the farmers groups promoted by the NABARD and State Government departments to work together for convergence of support from various agencies for availing maximum benefits.



Joint Director of Agriculture J. Sekar highlighted the status of storage and marketing of agricultural produce in the district. He said that the commodity-based groups should work together for better post-harvest management of agricultural produce in the district.

General Manager, District Industries Centre, M Ramalingam, listed the government schemes being implemented through the DIC and called upon agripreneurs to benefit from them. Agro based industries had huge scope in the district and the untapped potential could be explored, he added. Chief Regional Manager, Indian Overseas Bank, R S Varadarajan, said his bank was prepared to finance viable projects including construction of godowns.

NABARD District Development Manager K. Subramanian speaking on the advantages of NWR informed that banks could take recourse to the interest subvention facility being offered to small and marginal farmers for loans up to Rs. 3 lakh against negotiate warehouse receipts. The NABARD Consultancy Services was facilitating accreditation of godowns which would entitle them for issuing the NWR against the commodities stored.

Lead District Manager Gajendranathan, Personal Assistant to Collector (Agriculture) Chokalingam, Chief Manager, IOB, Raja Rukmangathan, Director IOB RSETI, Vetriselvan, Agricultural Officer Sarumathi and others spoke.

## **Government will release compensation in 10 days'**

The government will release crop loss compensation for those affected by drought or heavy rains in ten days, Krishna Byre Gowda, Minister for Agriculture, said in Bidar on Wednesday. He was speaking to farmers after listening to their grievances in Koutha village in Bidar taluk.

## **Visit**

He toured drought and rain-affected areas across the district. He said he had enough information about the crop loss suffered in the district and had come to express solidarity with the farmers.

## **Demand**

He said the government would consider demands by farmers for higher compensation. We have requested the Union government for Rs. 260 crore as compensation for crop loss, the Minister said. He instructed officials to conduct an error-free survey of crop loss.

Your work should be such that we should not face complaints about discrimination or errors.

## **Scientists bid to revive mussel culture in Goa**

Faced with fast depletion of mussels and other shellfish on Goa's vast coast in recent years for varied manmade and ecological reasons, fisheries scientists from Goa-based Indian Council for Agricultural Research have begun an initiative to revive mussel culture here with seeds sourced from neighbouring Kerala.

## **Shortage of Cobia seeds harms Goa's sea cage project**

### **HURDLE FOR GOA'S SEA CAGE PROJECT**

Goa's open sea cage project for breeding Cobia fish along the coastline is facing a hurdle in the second year of its implementation because of the shortage of Cobia seeds in the country.

The State government this year is looking to import the seeds from Taiwan, said Goa Secretary for Fisheries Amjad Tak, who returned from New Delhi on Friday after attending a meeting of the State Secretaries of Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Husbandries convened by Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh.

## Rs.8.2 crore to promote organic pepper farming

*Fund to be used from Wayanad farm package*

The Agriculture Department is gearing up to regain Wayanad's past glory in pepper cultivation.

The department would spend Rs.8.2 crore to promote organic pepper cultivation on 1,679 hectares of land in the district this fiscal under the Wayanad Agriculture Package. The three-year project, launched in 2012-13, had already covered 2,000 ha, Principal Agriculture Officer K. Mohan told *The Hindu*.

A recent study by the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) had found that the prolonged use of fertilizers had caused soil imbalance and nutrient deficiency in the soil.

This was the main reason for the spread of quick wilt and yellowing diseases.

Hence, we earmarked Rs.1.2 crore to enrich the soil by applying lime powder and magnesium sulphate, Mr. Mohan said. Close to Rs.3.5 crore would be utilised for the management of quick wilt disease and Rs.4 lakh to set up 20 decentralised nurseries to ensure availability of quality planting materials to farmers, he said.

The department was also executing a spices development programme this fiscal for which the Union government had allotted Rs.2.58 crore.

Of this, Rs.2.4 crore would be utilised to expand pepper cultivation and Rs.18 lakh for 'pepper rehabilitation,' Mr. Mohan said.

Wayanad produced around 17,915 tonnes of pepper from 44,908 ha in 2000-01. In 2013-14 this came down to 21,000 ha and 5,560 tonnes respectively.

· *Rs.1.2 crore for soil enrichment activities*

· *20 nurseries to ensure availability of planting material*

**‘Market stability required to retain youth in farming’**



Agricultural equipments displayed at the conference on Sustaining Small Holder Agriculture, Issues and Challenges at Dharmasthala near Mangalore on Wednesday.



Speakers at a two-day conference, that began here on Wednesday, said that increased incomes and market stability were required to make the youth stay with agriculture.

International Network of Alternative Financial Institutions (India) and Shree Kshetra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project (SKDRDP) organised the conference on 'Sustaining Small Holder Agriculture, Issues and Challenges'.

### **Income level**

They said that the income level of small farmers would have to be increased through various means to sustain small holding farming and to prevent the youth of such families from migrating to urban areas. D. Veerendra Heggade, president, SKDRDP, said that the government should introduce a single window system if its farming and financial schemes were to reach small farmers with land holding up to two acres.

Now various departments handled farming schemes. Farmers would have to run from pillar to post to avail them. All its farming schemes would have to be routed through a single window system, if they were to really help farmers.

Mr. Heggade said that now many government schemes were not reaching the deserved. At the bottom level gram panchayats lacked information on various schemes meant for farmers. Since small farmers were unorganized there was a need for them to come together to emerge as a force.

### **Financial literacy**

Uma Shankar, Regional Director, Reserve Bank of India, Bangalore who inaugurated the conference said that spreading financial literacy was important before making people open bank accounts under financial inclusion scheme. It was because the structure of financial

institutions in the country was complex as there were many financial institutions since it was a democratic country.

She said that family farming should be strengthened to eradicate hunger and poverty in the country.

### **'Involve children'**

Monappa Karkera, a progressive farmer from Mundoor, said that committing suicide was not a solution to farm crisis. He said that farmer parents should allow their children to get involved in farming and promote their participation.

V.N. Salimat, managing trustee, Initiatives for Development Foundation, a non-government organisation, Bangalore suggested that a risk fund could be created to compensate farmers in cases of crop failure.

Representatives of non-government organisations, the government and farmers participated in the conference.

## **Food mela promises a grand feast**

The Dasara food mela will be held from September 25 to October 4 at the Scouts and Guides grounds here.

The highlight of this year's mela will be tribal food, which is being introduced for the first time.

The mela will also offer delicacies from Rajasthan, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Hyderabad and Kerala apart from coastal Karnataka, Uttara Kannada and Kodagu. Over 120 stalls have been set up at the venue. Tribal people from different parts of Mysore and Chamarajanagar have already set up their kitchen and are set to serve their dishes.

Chief Executive Officer of Mysore Zilla Panchayat Gopal and Senior Deputy Director of Food and Civil supplies Department K. Rameshwarappa said here on Wednesday that cooking competition, eating contest, fancy dress and cultural programmes would be held during the mela.



A seminar on food security, Anna Bhagya and organic farming will also be organised. Departments of agriculture, education and women and child development have been assigned to hold seminars during the mela, Mr. Rameshwarappa said. Mr. Rameshwarappa said the fancy dress competition would be held for children aged between 5 and 8.

He said there had been great demand for stalls from food manufacturers. Over 600 applications were received by the Food Mela sub-committee. An environmental engineer has been posted at the venue to ensure cleanliness all through the 10 days.

Mr. Rameshwarappa said the stalls would remain open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m

## Awareness camp on WDRA held

The National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD) conducted an awareness programme for farmers on Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA) at the Agriculture Market Yard in Pamarru on Wednesday.

On the occasion, NABARD Assistant General Manager N. Madhumurthy stressed the need for promoting scientific storage of agricultural and horticultural commodities and implementing the Negotiable Warehouse Receipt System so as to bring about effective supply chain management.

NABARD Consultancy Services Private Limited was an agency identified for giving accreditation to warehouses in the country in accordance with the provisions of WDRA and the Warehousing Development and Regulation Act 2007.

## Enchanting rural life of Vizag.

*'Green drive': The drive to interior areas of Visakhapatnam District towards Chodavaram is a pleasant experience with the lush green fields greeting the traveller. One comes across groups of farmers with their bullocks and farm labour heading to the fields. The farm operations are in full swing with copious rainfall in September. Farmers are busy transplanting paddy in flooded agriculture plots turning them into green carpets overnight. Some are cultivating millets in small plots of land. Bullocks, buffaloes and a few tractors here and there are busy ploughing the land adding colour to the landscape. The Hindu photographer C.V. Subrahmanyam captures some of those scenes.*









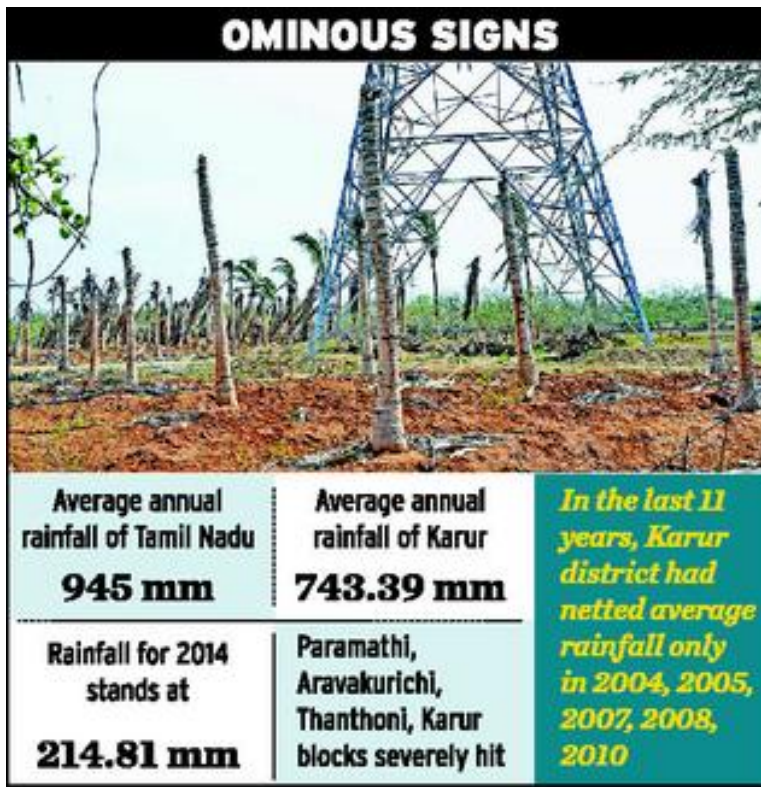




A picturesque view of the lush green fields and clouds clinging to the hills on a rainy day at Turuvolu village in Visakhapatnam District. In the foreground is the indigenously built granary.



## Karur reeling under drought



The people of Aravakurichi are in for a trying time as the block is reeling under a severe drought-like condition. Parched lands, withered palm and coconut trees, dried up lakes and ponds, arid water courses, and scorched landscapes are a common sight across several blocks in the district. Felling of coconut trees too is a common sight.

Continuous failure of monsoon over the last four years has led to the current precarious situation. A close review of rainfall statistics of the district reveals the dark side of the story. As against the normal rainfall of 743.39 mm (State average is 945 mm), Karur district received 528.01 mm in 2012. The situation was challenging in 2013 too as the district received just 489.09 – 254.3 mm lesser than the average annual rainfall.

The situation for the current year too is far from satisfactory. The district should have received at least 338.66 mm till date this year, but

it has so far received a paltry 214.81 mm. The southwest monsoon too has failed.

Figures for the last 11 years reveal that the district had netted average rainfall only in 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, and 2010.

Water managers, who find it extremely difficult to meet the drinking water demand, feel that the situation is slowly slipping out of control in many areas except along the Cauvery River.

According to a survey, many of the 157 revenue panchayats, save a few, have been facing extreme dry weather condition and water table has plummeted to a new low. Though the exact figure on damage to coconut trees is yet to be known, officials admit that besides other crops, hundreds of coconut and palm trees in Paramathi, Aravakurichi, Thanthoni and Karur blocks have been affected totally or partially.

“We are closely monitoring the situation. The priority is to provide drinking water to the people in the affected areas,” says Collector S.Jayandhi. Admitting that it was experiencing worst-ever drought after 2003, a senior official said that the situation extremely bad in many areas. The impact was palpable and is being felt in neighbouring Namakkal and Tiruchi districts too.



## weather

INDIAN CITIES

INTERNATIONAL CITIES

### Chennai - INDIA

#### Today's Weather



Cloudy

Rain: 0

Humidity: 89

Wind: normal

#### Tomorrow's Forecast

Thursday, Sep 25

Max 32° | Min 24°  
Clear

Sunrise: 05:57

Sunset: 06:05

Barometer: 1009

Friday, Sep 26

Max 32° | Min 26°

#### Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday  
Sep 27



31° | 26°

Partly Cloudy

Sunday  
Sep 28



34° | 26°

Cloudy

Monday  
Sep 29



33° | 26°

Cloudy

Tuesday  
Sep 30



33° | 26°

Partly Cloudy

Wednesday  
Oct 1



33° | 26°

Partly Cloudy

#### Airport Weather

Chennai

Rain: 0

Humidity: 89

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:57

Sunset: 06:05

Barometer: 1009





## Setting up solar plants more expensive in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu government to introduce 'Amma tea' Telecom, IT industry hopes for better taxation in Budget 2014 Showcase MP as viable investment destination Mumbaiikars get a new water-party destination Calangute appalled at 'sex destination' tag CHENNAI: Even as the Tamil Nadu government is trying hard to be seen as India's next solar destination, taxation rules are serving as a hurdle.

Setting up a solar power plant in TN is about 8% more expensive than in other states since companies have to pay between 5% and 14.5% more as taxes while procuring solar equipment, and liaisioning costs are higher.

A company that wants to set up a 10MW solar plant in Tamil Nadu would have to shell out about `3 crore more as the state imposes value added tax (VAT) of 5% on equipment required for solar plants."Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Punjab offer full VAT refund. Tamil Nadu's solar policy offers no such exemption," Dakshinamoorthy Arumugam, director of Marigold Steel and Power, said.

Companies get around this by procuring and billing equipment from their offices in other states."TN offers no exemption for inverters and other equipment, but if you get it from other states and submit a

document called Form C, VAT is reduced from 5% to 2%," Arumugam said.

"The overall project costs go up, because about 95% of the cost of a solar plant is the equipment while construction cost is very low. And it is the equipment that is taxed. We have petitioned the government but to no avail," Anil Jain, managing director of Refex Energy , said.

Companies said most of them seek exemptions, but they are at a disadvantage when they set up plants in Tamil Nadu since they still pay the additional 2% tax, which they wouldn't if they went to states like Andhra Pradesh which waive VAT on solar plants.

"Liaisoning costs and costs of procuring permissions and other documents are more expensive in Tamil Nadu," R Chellappan, managing director, Swelect Energy Systems, said.

While large companies circumvent tax hurdles, albeit at some cost, smaller entities that put up solar plants are at a disadvantage. "The law says only registered companies and business houses are eligible to procure a Form C and pay lower taxes, but others who wish to set up solar plants in the state will end up paying more," K Vaitheeswaran, advocate and tax consultant, said.

## Scientist meet on climate concern

CHENNAI: In the run-up to the Climate Summit in New York, scientists in India came together to present the scenario of climate change at IIT-Madras on Monday and urged the public to take steps to reduce the impact of the global crisis.

Taking stock of the changing climate and its implications on the country, scientists and experts from JNU, IIT Delhi, IIT-Bombay, IARI and UCAS Bangalore discussed the facts of climate change issues in India.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) had released the Assessment Report 5 that detailed the impacts of climate change, the future risks from a changing climate and the opportunities for effective action to reduce risks. The report identified vulnerable people, industries, and ecosystems around the world. Ranking third in terms of carbon emissions, India is considered among the top polluting countries. Keeping this report as the premise, Indian National Science Academy (INSA) hosted the discussion to sensitize the public on the actual impacts of climate change specific to India and gain insights on the climate change issues.

## THE HINDU **BusinessLine**

### **Kochi tea prices gather steam on demand**

**Kochi, September 24:**

A higher demand perked up prices of some varieties of tea at the Kochi auction last week.

Good liquoring varieties along with popular marks in the CTC dust category was dearer by Rs. 2-3 a kg and sometimes more especially the powdery grades. Others were irregular and occasionally tended to ease. According to auctioneers, Forbes, Ewart & Figgis, plainer varieties appreciated in value.

In sale no 38, the quantity on offer in CTC grades was 8,13,000 kg. A better enquiry noticed from exporters and upcountry buyers. However, the demand was less in Orthodox grades and the quantity on offer was only 14,000 kg. In the best CTC grades, good quality

fetches Rs. 106-157, medium grades quoted Rs. 71-100 while plain varieties stood at Rs. 58-66.

In the leaf grades, there was a better demand for orthodox grades with 85,000 kg on offer. The market for Broken, Whole Leaf and Fannings appreciated in values following quality. Medium Clean Black Bolder broken, tippy grades was firm to dearer.

The quantity on offer in CTC varieties was 63,500 kg and the market for Good Liquoring Bolder Broken was higher. Corresponding Smaller Broken and Fannings was steady and tended to ease. There was a better enquiry from upcountry buyers while exporters demand was subdued.

In the dust varieties, Monica SFD fetched the best prices of Rs. 158 . In the leaf grades, Chamraj Green tea FOP (Sup) quoted Rs. 361 a kg.

## **Cashew exports decline on surging raw nut prices**

**Kochi, September 24:**

Export of cashew kernels continued to show a declining trend while the domestic demand has witnessed an upsurge, of late.

Shipments of cashew during April-August 2014 fell to 46,240 tonnes valued at Rs. 2,031.05 crore from 52,771 tonnes valued at Rs. 2,120.04 crore during the corresponding period last year, according to Cashew Export Promotion Council of India (CEPCI) sources.

The unit value during the current fiscal stood at Rs. 439.24 a kg against Rs. 401.74 last fiscal, he said. So far during the current fiscal there has been a decline in exports of cashew kernels and allied

products, K Sasi Varma, Executive Director and Secretary, CEPCI, told *Business Line*.

“High raw nut prices resulted in high kernel costs which makes it difficult to sell in overseas markets. Consequently, more quantities are sold to the domestic market,” he said.

Export of salted and roasted kernels dropped to 488 tonnes valued at Rs. 18.99 crore at the unit value of Rs.389.46 a kg from 842 tonnes valued at Rs. 30.40 crore at the unit value of Rs. 360.84 during the period under review last fiscal.

Cashew nut shell liquid shipments also fell sharply to 3,095 tonnes worth Rs. 13.54 crore from 4,023 tonnes valued at Rs. 14.63 crore in the first five months of last year.

Meanwhile, imports of raw cashew nuts (RCN) have soared to 5,79,215 tonnes valued at Rs. 3,799.71 crore at the unit value of Rs. 65.60 a kg during April-January 2014 from 4,86,574 tonnes valued at Rs. 2,638.01 crore at the unit value of Rs. 54.22.

KA Rethesh, Managing Director, Cashew Development Corporation, said that Indian annual cashew exports used to be around 1.25 lakh tonnes from the organised sector which sells an equal quantity on the domestic market also. At the same time around 1.25-1.50 lakh tonnes of cashew kernels are marketed in the country by the unorganised sector. The demand is mainly for the pieces while wholes have also good demand. The peak demand season has started and it has already reflected on the prices which have gone up by 25 per cent, he said.

The prices of wholes at present ranges between Rs. 800 and Rs. 1,000 a kg whereas in the international market the average price rules at around Rs. 440.



During the season, RCN prices have gone up by \$150-250 a tonne depending on the origin and quality. On an average, RCN prices in 2014 have been 15-20 per cent higher than 2013, Pankaj N Sampat, a Mumbai-based dealer said.

## Growers voice concern over rising arecanut imports



### Mangalore, September 24:

Issues related to the impact of areacnut on the domestic market dominated the 40th Annual General Meeting of Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Cooperative (Campco) Ltd in Mangalore on Tuesday.

Many grower-members of the cooperative wanted to know the reasons for the sudden crash in the prices of white and red varieties of arecanut recently. K Padmanabha, President of Campco, said the prices of white and red arecanut had reached a maximum of Rs. 300 and Rs. 800 a kg, respectively, in the recent past. After a brief stint, the prices started coming down.

The cooperative infused funds and bought more arecanut from growers to arrest further fall. He attributed the large-scale import of the commodity as a main reason for this fall.

The cooperative approached the Union Ministry of Commerce seeking its intervention to control the arecanut import into the country. Following this, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) initiated steps in August to increase the minimum import price of the arecanut from Rs. 110 a kg to Rs. 170 a kg. However, that decision could not be notified in the gazette. This followed a case filed by importers in the Calcutta High Court. A single judge bench of the court had ruled that DGFT did not have the power to fix or increase the import base price.

Following this, the DGFT had filed an appeal in the Division Bench of the Calcutta High Court against this order. The Division Bench has stayed the order of the Single Judge Bench, Padmanabha said.

The Campco President urged members to sell arecanut to the cooperative institutions that pay tax to the market. Some growers prefer to sell the commodity to private traders when the prices are good, and approach the cooperative when the prices start crashing. "Don't sell the commodity to those who evade tax," he said.

## **NCDEX launches forward contract in agri commodities**

**Mumbai, September 24:** The National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) plans to launch a forward contract on its national level electronic platform from Thursday.

Unlike futures contracts, the buyer and seller decide the quality and quantity of the commodity traded through forward contracts mutually. The exchange provides guarantee for delivery.

Dubbed as Agrim Sauda, the facility will offer the benefits of transparent trade practices and national market reach through registered Farmer Producer Organisation.

Samir Shah, Managing Director, NCDEX, said the country needs well functioning agricultural markets to raise the income of farmers and provide high quality food to 1.25 billion consumers.

In addition to the farmers, Agrim Sauda will help almost every participant in the segment including processors, exporters, traders and other value chain members.

The Government procurement agencies can also benefit from this segment.

The facility may make price predictability less onerous and contribute to the development of storage infrastructure for traded commodities, said the exchange.