

05.11.2015

THE HINDU

Farm varsity promotes TRY-1 vareity of paddy

It is said to be highly suited on land where water stagnates



TRY-1 seedlings being planted at a farm in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University's Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute near Tiruchi on Wednesday.

The timely onset of the northeast monsoon has come as a boon for the farmers in the district in general and the researchers in the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University's Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute in particular.

The TNAU authorities have intensified steps for planting the seedlings to be used as seeds for the "TRY-1" — a medium term variety in about two hectares.

The college was founded in Manikandam block about 25 years ago with an objective of evolving paddy varieties which can be raised in alkaline soil or salt-affected areas.

Manikandam block in the district has the largest area of about 5,000 hectares affected by salt or alkaline nature.

Explaining the impact of rainwater on the alkaline-affected soil, P. Pandiyarajan, Dean of the Institute, said the salt content would be leached because of stagnant rainwater, which facilitated the planting of the seedlings. The rainwater would strengthen the growth of paddy.

It would be mainly utilised as seeds for the farmers – particularly those in the coastal districts such as Nagapattinam.

The per hectare yield was expected to be about seven tonnes, he said.

Mr. Pandiyarajan said that there was a scramble for the TRY-1 seeds by virtue of its high yield in salt-affected soil. The institute had sold out its entire stock of seeds harvested during ‘Pongal’ this year.

S. Radhika, Assistant Professor of Agronomy of the Institute, said the TRY-1 had duration of 135 days and would be ready for harvest around ‘Pongal’ festival next year. The institute had raised TRY-3 variety, which was ideal for preparing idli in restaurants, on an area of about 20 acres, she added.

Cleaning the natural way



Useful decorationsThe kolam not only beautifies the house but also keeps hungry ants out. (Below) Bring the anti-bacterial properties of the mango leaves inside

The practice of pre-festival cleaning — be it Deepavali or Pongal — not only gets your house squeaky clean but also makes for healthy living.

Recently, social networking sites were full of pictures of organic dried cow dung cakes being sold online. These induced much laughter and witty comments. Later, however, it set me thinking. Some of us who own agricultural land are fortunate to have access to unadulterated cow dung but are shying away from the cow dung wash outside the home. Despite the strong smell, this is a practice I like to follow at least once a year.

Spring cleaning is used to denote any time of major cleaning and is not always particularly related to the season. Many homes in India undertake a spring cleaning before Deepaval. There are several reasons for this. The religious belief is that Goddess Lakshmi pays a visit on this day and must be welcomed into a clean environment. Another school of thought suggests that it is wise to do away with clutter as open spaces allow a free flow of energy. Whatever the reason, a yearly airing makes for healthy living.

The practice of pre-festival cleaning — be it Deepaval or Pongal — can be as elaborate or basic as you want. Personally I prefer to clean the home thoroughly in a manner passed on to me by my elders. The first thing is to get rid of all the unwanted objects. Rearranging crockery cabinets helps one take stock of what you actually need. There are many jumble sales that will take those off your hands. Dusting the corners that are otherwise ignored is a good place to start. I use this time to rearrange furniture so that the space gets a new look.

Clean the silver, brass and copper items with the time-tested *vibhuti* or lemon rind. Nothing matches that sparkle and it does no damage to one's skin either. Hang pouches of potpourri — available at home stores — inside the wardrobe to banish musty odours. Or try *pachai karpuram* (edible camphor), which also has a lovely lingering fragrance. Once the dusting, vacuuming and mopping is done, the home needs to look, smell and feel squeaky clean.

Benzoin resin, or *sambrani* , is effective in warding off mosquitoes. But ensure that you get it from a reliable source. When the powder is sprinkled over hot coals, it accelerates the process of drying out moisture. Mildew and wet spots can be minimised by infusing the home with these heavy fumes.

Agarbathis are instrumental in keeping bugs at bay. The best ones are organic incense sticks in flavours like lemongrass, patchouli, sandal and rose. These natural scents repel tiny insects and lizards. Fresh mint leaves in jars with water are great to deal with the fly menace.

A rice flour kolam not only helps beautify the front but also keeps hungry ants from feasting on the goodies inside. Fresh mango leaves contain anti-bacterial properties and the thoranam made of fresh leaves helps carry these cleansing scents inside.

These are the basic rituals that give the home a freshly scrubbed look. Then come the options of fussing over decor and adding other pretty touches in keeping with one's individual sense of style. I have a special affinity to candles with spice-scented ones being a favourite. Cinnamon, clove and vanilla-scented candles allow the olfactory senses to get in on the Diwali feasting. Brighten your upholstery with vibrant cushions or add a jewel-toned sari or dupatta as a throw. A fabric with metallic accents is ideal for the festive look.

Fresh flowers, aromatic oil diffusers and floating tea lights are simple ways to add a sparkle to the clean house. Vetiver is a wonderful grass that imparts an amazing fragrance for many weeks. A great way of using it is to have your local flower-seller make garlands and hang it on a doorway. Spray it water every day and you will be rewarded with an aroma. Whatever your cleaning ritual, give a thought to going the natural way.

Fresh flowers, aromatic oil diffusers and floating tea lights are simple ways to add a sparkle to the clean house

Khattar urges NABARD to release funds liberally for solar projects in Haryana

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar has urged National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development to release funds liberally for 'Saurya Urja Nigam (SUN) Haryana Limited', being formed for setting up of solar parks in the state.

Mr Khattar made this request during a meeting with Chief General Manager NABARD, P. C. Chaudhri, who called on him here on Wednesday, an official release said.

The 'SUN' Haryana Limited, is being formed jointly by Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Corporation and Haryana Power Generation Corporation Limited to tap the opportunity and potential of the solar power sector.

The joint venture would identify suitable pockets of land for setting up of solar park.

Mr Chaudhri said that NABARD would provide adequate funds for setting up of solar projects in the state.

He apprised the Chief Minister that recently NABARD has also sanctioned a loan of Rs 81 crore to the HSIIDC for creation of Mega Food Park at Industrial Estate Barhi in Sonapat district.

In addition, they have also provided loan of Rs 500 crore to Haryana State Warehousing Development Corporation for procurement of paddy during the current financial year.

Under Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) assistance, NABARD has released Rs 107 crore to various departments of the state.

Besides, it has sanctioned RIDF assistance to Haryana for 3,633 projects in various sectors involving an amount of about Rs 5,000 crore.

The Chief Minister also reviewed the financial position of cooperative banking sectors functioning in the state.

Haryana's Minister of State for Cooperation, Bikram Singh Yadav said that financial position of District Cooperative Banks as well as Haryana State Cooperative Agricultural Rural Development Bank is being improved.

“The recovery of loans during last 10 years was almost zero which is being improved with the consistent efforts of the present government. After a gap of many years, it is for the first time that the banks have deposited last loan installment to NABARD at their own level.

“The next instalment of loan would also be deposited by the banks itself,” Mr Yadav said, according to the release.

Cumbum farmers record bumper paddy yield

Highest yield in Theni district was 10,072 kg per hectare



Hands-full:Paddy being harvested at a farm near Cumbum.

Early onset of monsoon, timely release of water from Periyar dam for irrigation and adoption of modern agriculture practices, including System of

Rice Intensification, have helped farmers in Cumbum valley get a bumper yield in the first cropping season.

The highest yield in Theni district this season was 10,072 kilogram per hectare and the lowest 8,595 kg.

Agriculture Department had set up 14 model paddy plots in the valley to assess yield. Harvest was over in many plots and would be completed in the remaining plots soon, according to Joint Director of Agriculture V. Thilagar.

To assess the 'kuruvai' yield, the officials conducted crop-cutting experiments in some fields at Margaiyankottai in Chinnamanur block recently.

Effective propagation of the SRI, enthusiasm shown by the farmers, their willingness to accept new technologies and quick implementation of innovative practices helped farmers achieve success, they added.

Kuruvai paddy crop was cultivated using Periyar water on over 14,000 acres in Cumbum, Uthamapalayam, Chinnamanur, Bodi and Theni blocks. Paddy growers had raised hybrid and high-yielding paddy varieties.

Even as rains disrupted harvesting at many places, farm mechanisation helped farmers complete harvest in 90 per cent of the areas and also overcome labour shortage. At the same time, on-the-spot procurement by private traders too had minimised post-harvest loss. Even outstation buyers had camped in the district and started procuring paddy directly from the farmers.

Paddy is being procured at Rs. 13.7 a kg for finer variety and Rs. 12.8 for coarse variety with humidity of less than 17 per cent.

Reduced use of fertilizers

“Yield would have been much more. But rat menace scaled down yield in several fields. But profit margin was high as a majority of the farmers cut input costs. Another welcome sign was sharp reduction in use of fertilizers. Intermittent showers during milking period helped us scale down use of fertilizers,” said farmer M. Periyasamy of Margaiyankottai.

Farmers in the valley had already started using machines for transplantation, weeding, spraying fertilizers and harvesting.

With a good spell of north east monsoon, progressive farmers are expected to start preparing their fields for the second crop soon.

Raising nurseries will commence shortly in head areas like Gudalur as harvest was over in Uthamapalayam and Gudalur well in advance.

Tomato market stable in Chittoor despite rain

The tomato market in Madanapalle division, considered the largest in Rayalaseema, has remained stable despite incessant rain.

The price of one box of tomato (30 kg) stood at Rs. 1,000 for the first grade variety in the wholesale market, while the price stood at Rs 40 to Rs. 45 in the retail market.

Some growers who bore the brunt of recent rains in Madanapalle, Gurramkonda and Valmikipuram mandals said they had suffered much damage to the crop, with the produce, falling under the fourth and fifth grades, selling at Rs. 10 and Rs. 12 per kg.

Referring to reports of falling prices of the commodity in Vijayawada and elsewhere in the coastal areas, a trader said they belonged to the third, fourth and fifth varieties. Tomato prices, which soared to Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 three months ago, plummeted in September, but recovering in October.

The Madanapalle and Punganur markets in the district on an average supplies nearly 5,000 tonnes a day to the coastal areas of AP and Odisha, New Delhi, Haryana and Kolkota during peak season. The supply has now dipped to 500 tonnes a day.

CM asks district administrations to be prepared for monsoon

With northeast monsoon expected to be active till the end of December, Chief Minister Jayalalithaa has ordered the district administrations to be fully prepared.

In a release, the Chief Minister said she had ordered higher officials, District Collectors and Superintendents of Police to put in place all preventive measures. As there could be loss of lives and damage to property despite the government's best efforts, the Chief Minister has ordered officials to speed up relief work and award compensation as early as possible.

Ms. Jayalalithaa said she had enhanced relief and compensation. Families of persons killed in rain-related incidents would get Rs. 4 lakh and those whose houses were completely damaged would get Rs. 95,100.

Fully damaged and partially damaged huts would get Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 4,100 respectively. Families lodged in relief camps would be provided 10 kg rice, a sari and dhoti each, one litre kerosene and Rs. 1000 cash, she said.

As for possible crop loss, the government would give Rs. 13,500 per hectare of paddy crop or irrigated land, Rs. 18,000 per hectare for long term crops and Rs 7,410 for rain-fed crops. The compensation for the loss of cow or buffalo would be Rs. 30,000 and for goat and pig it would be Rs. 3000.

Loss to boats would also be compensated ranging from 50 per cent subsidy on Rs. 75,000 for FRP vallam types of boats to Rs. 32,000 compensation to completely damaged country boats, she said.

Budding scientists display their innovations

Students compete and showcase over 27 projects at 23rd State-level Children's Science Congress held in Puducherry



Students explaining their project at the State Children's Science Congress held at Education Department in Puducherry on Wednesday —Photo: S.S. Kumar

“We can tell the farmers in our area when to water the crops depending on the rainfall data that we have. We have installed a blackboard at the local temple where we display weather information which we have collected,” says Manisha M., a Class 8 student of the Indira Gandhi Government High School, Katterikuppam.

The project ‘Construction of local weather station at our school campus’ by Ms. Manisha and her team of four friends are one among 27 projects which have been selected for the ongoing 23rd State-level Children's Science Congress at Puducherry.

Arul Kumar, a team member, adds that the students want to continue to monitor the weather and provide information to the largely agrarian area as it will be useful for the farmers.

“Over the period from June to October, we have collected information on rainfall, wind speed, humidity and temperature,” says Ms. Manisha.

Students compete in district and State levels in junior (10-14 years) and senior (14+ to 17 years) categories, where they have to present their findings. Each team has a maximum of five members.

From 120 projects last year, the Pondicherry Science Forum in collaboration with the Directorate of School Education (organisers of the State-level Children's Science Congress) have received 185 projects this year signalling a growing interest in the programme.

Six projects from the Union Territory of Puducherry will be selected for the National Children's Science Congress (NCSC) in Chandigarh University, Mohali.

The NCSC is organised by the NCSTC Network under the Ministry of Science and Technology and is held annually in December. The theme from last year, 'Understanding Weather and Climate' continues this year as well for the NCSC.

The NCSC aims to instill scientific temper and team work among the young scientists and encourage them to find scientific solutions to the problems they see around them with a focus on research.

At the State-level programme, there are 27 projects, 135 child scientists and 27 guide teachers participating from Puducherry, Karaikal and Mahe.

"It is the number 1 science programme. We have received a good response this year," says A. Hemavathi, General Secretary, PSF. "If a school had more than 10 projects, then we have conducted 'project cleaning' where we helped them with their presentations," she added.

The State-level programme was inaugurated by L. Kumar, Director of School Education on Wednesday.

The organisers released a book with the 30 best projects of last year.

On Thursday, the children will be taken to the Science Centre and Planetarium in Lawspet.

The results will also be announced in the evening.

The six team leaders of the winning teams from the UT will participate in the NCSC, along with State Coordinator, NCSC, Puducherry, B. Ravichandrane.

From this year, special cash awards have been arranged by the Department of Science, Technology and Environment for the teams selected for the National Children's Science Congress (NCSC).

Two child scientists will also get the chance to participate in the 103rd Indian Science Congress at the University of Mysore in January 2016.

The topic for the NCSC next year will be based on sustainability.

Govt. to procure 36 lakh MT of kharif paddy; MSP set at Rs. 1,450 per quintal

The State government on Wednesday announced guidelines for procurement of paddy Kharif 2015-16 specifying the rates of different grades of food grains. In its guidelines issued, the Government has made sure that the quantum of procurement for the Targeted Public Distribution System is met.

Accordingly, it was proposed to procure 36 lakh metric tonnes of paddy for TPDS and Other Welfare Schemes (OWS) in the State. The farmers would get Rs.1,450 a quintal for "A" grade variety and Rs.1,410 a quintal for the Fair Average Quality (FAQ) of paddy. The government has however made provision for lifting up of 54 lakh metric tonnes of paddy under custom made, boiled rice, which would be contributed to the central pool.

If the overall procurement of the State is in excess of the total allocation of the State made by the Centre, under TPDS or OWS, such excess quantity shall be treated to be outside the Central Pool.

The government shall hold with itself the stocks of Custom Milled Rice (CMR) thus procured under proper scientific storage for distribution under TPDS or OWS as per allocation made by the Centre at prices notified. It would have to restrict availing credit facility from RBI for the estimated stocks of paddy to be procured for the Central Pool only. If the Stocks of the Rice procured by the government exceeds its allocation under TPDS and other Welfare Schemes, such excess stocks shall be handed over to the FCI by the government.



However, the FCI shall have the option to specify whether such excess rice that would be handed over to FCI for Central Pool by the State shall be in the form of raw rice or parboiled rice to meet the overall consumption requirement of the country under TPDS, OWS and type of rice milled in the State.

The A.P. State Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd.(APSCSCL), the government's agency, shall procure paddy on a large scale to protect the MSP by opening as many paddy procurement purchase centres as required through Women Self Help Groups (SHG), Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS), District Cooperative Marketing Societies (DCMS) etc.

The millers may purchase paddy of FAQ at a price not less than the Minimum Support Price. They shall invariably make payment to the farmers through A/c payee cheques / RTGS / NEFT transfer. For sale of preferred varieties of rice within the state, no release certificate is required by the miller. For sale of rice outside the State, the miller shall take release certificate consequent on sale of 2 unit of rice within the state for sale of 1 unit of rice out side the State.

A.P.S.C.S.C.L all make necessary arrangements for opening as many paddy purchase centres (PPC), identifying PPCs and tagging of rice mills to the Paddy Purchasing Centres (PPCs) for custom milling. Transport arrangements for immediate shifting of paddy to the rice mills or to the intermediary godowns, if necessary.

***Joint team of FCI, govt. to oversee procurement and attend to complaints
Farmers to be paid online through RTGS /NEFT money transfer
If total quantity of CMR falls short of allocation, the Centre will meet the deficit
Non-preferred varieties to be sold without permit or certificate***

Rain brings temperature down

The mercury went from 28.7 degree Celsius to 20.2 degree Celsius

Rain lashed the city on Wednesday evening, leaving in its wake some fallen trees, roads resembling rivulets and stagnant water and stranding pedestrians. People huddling under trees or shop porches was a common sight.

“We had 33.2 mm of rain by 8.30 p.m.,” said the weather duty officer, adding that they are expecting rains for the next four days, mostly in the second half of the day.

The humidity was 88 per cent. The temperature went from 28.7 degree Celsius to 20.2 degree Celsius, both one degree off normal. A cool breeze could be felt towards the evening, forcing some citizens to wrap a shawl or put on a light sweater.

BBMP control rooms reported distress calls from several parts of the city. “The road outside SJRC Public School in Rajajinagar was flooded and people were stranded. That was the biggest complaint on Wednesday evening. There were reports of trees falling in Mahalakshmi Layout and Crescent,” said an official in the control room, but added that the number of complaints was comparatively less than usual.



Another control room reported a fallen tree in JC Nagar. Traffic was diverted near Anand Rao Circle due to water-logging in the railway underbridge near Kino theatre, but no complaint was received by the BBMP. Areas on the outskirts, like Bommanahalli, Dasarahalli and Rajarajeshwari Nagar, reportedly had lesser rain and therefore no complaints till 8 p.m.

Choosing nutritious diet to be made easy

Farmers from Nagaland showcasing their local crop at the International Food Data Conference organised by National Institute of Nutrition, in the city on Tuesday.– Photo: By Arrangement

Hyderabad-based National Institute of Nutrition to release Indian Food Composition Database in December

How nutritious is your food? The last time this question was answered in a scientific way was in 1971. Now, after nearly 44 years, the Hyderabad-based National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) is set to release a comprehensive Indian Food Composition Database (IFCD) that will provide nutritional information of over 500 food items picked up from six geographical regions of India.

The IFCD will have information on more than 150 different nutrients like vitamins, minerals, proteins etc that will allow public to take an informed choice on their diet.



The IFCD is a result of four years of intense exercise of collecting key foods that constitute 80 per cent of the Indian diet and analyse them for their composition. The report with a comprehensive, coherent and validated databank that provides a single authoritative source for food composition data in India, will be released this December in New Delhi. While participating in the International Food Data Conference being hosted by the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), researchers said that the new database will revolutionise nutrition research with public health emphasis on diet related diseases in the country.

“The nutritive value of paddy grown in Telangana will be different from the paddy grown in Odisha because of local environmental factors, quality of soil etc. There was an attempt made to come up with a similar study in 1989, but it was not comprehensive. It’s very difficult to standardise nutritive value of food items in a diverse country like India and that’s why we took six different regions for IFCD,” explains In-Charge Director, NIN, T. Longvah.

It took four years of intense study of close to 500 food items and 150 nutrients and bio-active substances from six regions in India to prepare the IFCD. While developing the database, dietary intakes of 30,244 individuals were collected and consumption of each food was calculated for the IFCD.

The six regions from where the food samples for composition analysis were collected for database include west, south, northeast, central, north and east regions. “Data on composition of foods like proteins, vitamins and minerals is essential for nearly all nutritional activities at the national, community and household level. This database will be uploaded on government websites so that everybody can access it,” Dr. Longvah said.

Rainwater harvesting

Residents Awareness Association of Coimbatore (RAAC) and Siruthuli have urged the public to identify and send details of water logging spots so that they could construct rainwater harvesting structures (RWH).

R. Raveendran, Honorary Secretary, RAAC, has made an appeal on his facebook wall asking people to map inundation-prone areas to create map and database.

“Members of the public will do well to send pictures of the water-logged places and, if possible, the latitude-longitude coordinates on Google maps so that the two agencies can prepare a database for constructing RWH structures at a later date,” he says.

This is the right time to do it because only during the rains will people be able to identify the spots.

In response to his post, people have mentioned places like K.K. Pudur, Saibaba Colony, VOC Nagar and Kamakshi Nagar in Kovaipudur, a layout on Kannabiran Mill Road and a private school on Avinashi Road.

Mr. Raveendran says that if the appeal goes viral, the two agencies are bound to be inundated with pictures of such spots.

Pulses to be sold at discount

It will be done so till Deepavali or till the existing stocks last



Pulses	Market price	Discounted rate
Toor dal	Rs. 155 per kg	Rs. 120 per kg
Urad dal	Rs. 180 per kg	Rs. 150 per kg
Chana dal	Rs. 72 per kg	Rs. 60 per kg
Green gram	Rs. 120 per kg	Rs. 110 per kg

➡ Each family will be given 5 kg of pulses at concessional rate: 2 kg toor dal, and 1 kg each of urad dal, chana dal and green gram

➡ Those who bring EPIC, ration card or any government identity card will be able to buy the pulses at subsidised rates

Mysuru Grain Merchants Association has decided to sell pulses at subsidised prices from November 5 until Deepavali in certain retail shops in all the four assembly constituencies in Mysuru city.

Apart from this, pulses would be sold to people at concessional rates at a shop in the APMC yard and Hale Santhepet main road.

R. Anand, secretary of the association and Sudhakar Shetty, president of the Chamber of Commerce, said that toor dal, urad dal, chana dal and green gram would be sold at concessional rates till the existing stock in all the grain merchant shops is exhausted or until Deepavali, whichever is sooner.

Traders would sustain losses owing to the sale of pulses at subsidised rates. All the traders in Mysuru city would bear the losses equally, Mr. Anand said.

District in-charge Minister V. Srinivas Prasad recently asked the traders to bring down the prices of pulses and enable people to celebrate Deepavali in all grandeur.

Mr. Anand said the grain merchants were not responsible for the steep hike in the prices of pulses. He said the key reasons for the price hike were the failure of the government to import pulses, and the lack of rainfall in places where pulses are cultivated.

To a question, he said the merchants would stop selling pulses after the present stock was exhausted, in protest against “harassment” by the Food and Civil Supplies Department. The grain merchants would not start selling the pulses until the district administration issues food licenses to all the 900 traders in Mysuru city and assures them that the department would not interfere unnecessarily in their business.



Mumbai: Tur dal to be available at Rs 100 a kg from today

CM has asked food ministry to release seized stock, urges Centre to provide more quota of pulses to Maharashtra.

It is estimated that over 25 lakh tonnes of pulses is likely to be released post this decision.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has directed traders in the state to bring down the prices of tur dal to Rs 100 a kg. The decision will come into force from Thursday in the open market. During his visit to Delhi, Fadnavis also urged the Centre to provide more quota of pulses to Maharashtra to facilitate regulation of prices.

At a meeting held late Wednesday night, the traders' association gave its consent to the state government. The [BJP](#) has, however, also set up its own outlets along with non-government organisations where tur dal will be provided at Rs 100 a kg.



The chief minister has also asked the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies to release the seized stock of tur dal to bring down the prices in the market. The state government has seized 46,397 metric tonnes of tur dal through 2,492 raids conducted across the state in the last two weeks.

Minister for Food and Civil Supplies Girish Bapat said, “There is no shortage of tur dal. From tomorrow, we will ensure it is made available at Rs 100 per kg. We are ready to allocate the seized dal quota to anybody who is willing to sell to consumers.”

State BJP chief Raosaheb Danve appealed to NGOs and retailers to come forward and sell tur dal at Rs 100 per kg.

According to highly placed sources, 3,00,000 metric tonnes of imported pulses have already landed at Mumbai port, while 2,00,000 metric tonnes more are expected next week.

The ministry has been asked to step up its surprise checks to ensure there is no hoarding of imported pulses stock that has arrived in the local market.

Reports received from all 35 districts in Maharashtra show the average rate of tur dal in the open market is still high at Rs 160 to Rs 180 per kg. The lowest rate of Rs 120 per kg has been reported from Nagpur. The shortage of urad and channa dals are also being attributed to higher tur dal prices. Maharashtra, which accounts for almost 35 per cent of pulses cultivation in the country, has faced major shortfall due to drought and hailstorm.

The state government has already lifted the restrictions on import limits with a rider to make it available in the open market and retail shops.

Opposition [Congress](#) and NCP are, however, still firm on their decision to continue with their protest against price hike.

Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil said, “The chief minister has taken some measures but the prices are still very high. In Mumbai, prices of pulses are not less than Rs 180 to Rs 200 per kg.”

Vikhe-Patil, who held the agriculture portfolio during the Congress-NCP regime, said, “When prices of vegetables were high during our regime, I ordered to open outlets across the city. The state government does not have to make any investment. We ordered APMC and vegetable suppliers to regulate prices. It worked.” In a symbolic protest, Vikhe-Patil has taken the decision to gift packets of tur dal to every cabinet minister in the BJP-Shiv Sena government.

Agriculture research: Feeling India’s pulse the right way

The impression of Indian farm scientists not doing enough for legumes is misconceived.

It is generally believed that our agricultural scientists have done little in pulses breeding and research, proof of which lies in the country’s production not keeping pace with growing demand.

Thus, between 1955-56 and 2005-06, India’s pulses output hardly rose from 11.04 million tonnes (mt) to 13.38 mt. Although it did increase subsequently to 19.25 mt in 2013-14, so too have imports, touching a record 4.58 mt worth \$2.79 billion in 2014-15. With back-to-back monsoon failures impacting production and leading to skyrocketing prices, pulses imports may go up further this year.

It would be incorrect, though, to blame all this on lack of research in developing high-yielding or pest, disease and drought-resistant varieties. One shouldn’t forget a simple fact here: Pulses are largely cultivated in

drylands under rainfed conditions, often on marginal soils deficient in important nutrients like sulphur, zinc and molybdenum. Also, with the spread of irrigation, even areas previously growing pulses have switched to other crops, including wheat, paddy and sugarcane. In one sense, it is a wonder how India's pulses production has not fallen despite these factors, while actually increasing significantly in the recent period.

A major contribution of our national agricultural research system has been in breeding short-duration pulses varieties.

Take chana or chickpea, where the traditional varieties grown in the Indo-Gangetic plains were of 140-150 days duration.

Today, there are 100-110 days high-yielding varieties maturing towards end-January or early-February. These are also photo-thermo insensitive, i.e. tolerant to terminal heat and drought at the reproductive stage, making them amenable for cultivation even in southern India. A number of such varieties like JG 11, KAK 2, JAKI 9218 and MNK 1 have been developed for Andhra Pradesh; ICCV 37, JAKI 9218, JG 63, JG 11, MNK 1 and Phule G 0517 for Karnataka; and JG 11 and CO 4 for Tamil Nadu. They have not just helped expand chana cultivation acreage in the warmer southern environments, but also compensated for the 2-2.5 million hectare area in the Indo-Gangetic plains that has moved to wheat and rice because of access to irrigation. The jump in India's chana production from 5.6 mt in 2005-06 to 9.53 mt in 2013-14 is no less a result of technology.

Equally significant has been the breeding of kabuli varieties of chana. Earlier, these large-seeded chickpeas, of 9-10 mm diameter and also called 'dollar chana', were being imported from Turkey, Mexico and Iran. But with the development of kabuli chana varieties such as KAK 2, MNK 1, PVK 1 and Phule G 0517, India is today annually exporting about 50,000 tonnes of such chickpea!

Similar credit can be taken for breeding of short-duration varieties in mungbean (green gram). Traditionally grown mung was of 70-80 days duration. This has come down to 60 days in Samrat, IPM 02-3, IPM 2-14, HUM 16 and SML 668 — varieties that farmers are planting during spring/summer after harvesting wheat, potato and rapeseed-mustard in Punjab, Haryana and parts of Rajasthan, western Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Availability of short-duration mung has helped in rice-wheat system diversification, besides increasing cropping intensity. We have varieties currently under various stages of evaluation like IPM 205-7 and IPM 409-4, which can mature in just 52-55 days and may be commercially released in the next couple of years.

Likewise, in arhar (tur or pigeonpea), too, the area lost from traditional 300-day varieties mainly grown in northern India has been offset by coverage under 150-160 day varieties. Such short-duration varieties have, moreover, been bred for different areas: GAUT 001E and GTH 1 for Gujarat; BDN 708, Vipula, BDN 711, TAT 9629 and Phule T 0012 for Maharashtra; CORG 9701 for Tamil Nadu; NDA 98-1, MAL 13, NDA 99-6 and IPA 203 for UP; BRG 1 and BRG 2 for Karnataka; WRG 53 and WRG 65 for AP; and TT 401, TJT 501 and JKM 189 for MP. There is even a 120-day UPAS

120 arhar that gives 8-10 quintals per hectare, as against 12-15 quintals from 300-day varieties.

In short, commendable research work has been done in breeding short-duration varieties that fit well into different pulses-based cropping systems, apart from being resistant to diseases such as fusarium wilt fungus and sterility mosaic virus.

We need to now also tap new technologies, including genetic modification, which can help confer resistance against insect pests. For example, Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat has developed a chickpea variety containing a *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) gene in collaboration with Sungro Seeds Ltd, a private player. The resultant Bt chana — resistant to the legume pod borer, a major pest affecting the crop — has been found to give up to 25 per cent extra yield. Similar efforts are ongoing at the Indian Institute of Pulses Research, Kanpur and ICRISAT near Hyderabad to develop transgenic pigeonpea and chickpea for resistance against polyphagous insects, which feed on a variety of crops and are difficult to control through normal pest management practices.

It is not lack of research as much as policy support — including a favourable regulatory environment for new technologies — that is presently missing in pulses. Farmers also need to be incentivised through proper minimum support price (MSP) and procurement support to grow more pulses. While fixing MSPs, the government should additionally factor in the benefits from pulses cultivation, including rejuvenation of the soil and ‘fixing’ of 40-70 kg of atmospheric nitrogen per hectare.

Nestle says Maggi on shelves this month, all tests cleared

Nestle India on Wednesday said that the company will make efforts to commence the sale of Maggi noodles masala within this month stating that the popular snack has cleared the tests ordered by the Bombay high court at three accredited laboratories.

“We have received the results from all the three NABL (National Accreditation Board for Testing Calibration Laboratories) mandated by the Bombay High Court to test newly-manufactured Maggi noodles samples,” the company said in a regulatory filing with stock exchanges.

“All the samples of the Maggi noodles masala have been cleared with lead much below permissible limits,” the statement said, adding this has validated their stand, maintained all along, that the noodles were and continue to be safe.

“We will make our best effort to commence the sale of Maggi noodles masala within this month, as well as continue engaging with the states where permissions are needed or specific directions may be necessary.”

The company said Maggi was currently being manufactured at Nanjangud in Karnataka, Moga in Punjab and Bicholim in Goa, and that it was engaging with the state governments of Himachal Pradesh and the Uttarakhand for commencing production at Tahliwal and Pantnagar, respectively.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Rs 7000 crore farmer relief proposals to be tabled in the House: MP CM

A day ahead of a special session of Madhya Pradesh Assembly, chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday said that proposals to the tune of Rs 7,000 crore to provide relief to farmers in the midst of agrarian crisis, will be tabled in the House for clearance.

"Proposals amounting to Rs 7,000 crore in farmers' interest will be tabled in the House for clearance tomorrow," Chouhan told reporters here as the state government geared up for the day-long session.

"Our priority is to provide relief to farmers whose crops have been damaged due to scanty rainfall and other reasons in the state. For farmer's sake we have convened the session," he said.

The CM said that the state was working for turning agriculture in profitable business under which it is providing zero per cent interest loans to the farmers, among other facilities.

"The agriculture growth rate of MP has been excellent at over 20 per cent consecutively in last four years which is a rare feat," he said.

Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Satyadev Katare said, "We welcome the move of the ruling party to hold the special session, following our demand."

He claimed that the condition of farmers was so worrisome in MP that 2230 of them have committed suicide in last 7 months in the state according to a survey of Bharatiya Kisan Sangh - a body of Sangh Parivar.

He said that had the MP government been serious, such a huge number of farmers might not have ended their life.

"The farmers are in distress since last three successive years due to crop failure. As the government has failed to address their woes, they are taking the extreme step," Katare alleged.

He said that the state government should come out clear regarding the relief amount it is going to receive from the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre for Madhya Pradesh farmers.

Katara said that though Chouhan and his Cabinet colleagues have had met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other Union cabinet ministers seeking help for the farmers, no relief has yet trickled in MP.

The previous UPA government had given adequate relief amount to Madhya Pradesh whenever the state faced some crisis, he added.

The best time to eat!

Eating food may sound very simple in itself but it's the simple mistakes we make that make a huge difference. It is important to know that when it comes to eating, the timing of meals is the key.



How often do you delay your breakfast or skip your meal after a heavy workout? How often do you eat right before bedtime? Do you have long gaps between meals? The best times to eat can be a tricky question to answer.

Here we demystify it for you

BREAKFAST

- Eat within 30 minutes of waking up
- Ideal time to have breakfast is 7am
- Do not delay breakfast later than 10am
- Make sure you have protein in your breakfast



LUNCH

- Ideal time to have lunch is 12.45pm
- Try and keep a gap of 4 hours between your breakfast and lunch
- Do not delay lunch later than 4pm.

DINNER

- The ideal time to have dinner is before 7pm
- You should keep a gap of 3 hours between your dinner and bedtime
- Do not delay dinner later than 10pm
- Eating close to bedtime can interfere with the quality of sleep

WORKOUT MEALS

- Never workout (especially weight training) on empty stomach
- The right pre-workout meal could be protein sandwich (with chicken, tuna etc), protein shake, scrambled egg with whole wheat bread, peanut butter sandwich

BusinessLine

Indian dairy sector's wait to enter Russia grows longer

Indian dairy companies will have to wait for sometime more to enter the lucrative Russian market as the country continues to dilly-dally over the procedure that the Centre seeks to follow to ensure that exports are free of contaminants.

The Russian standards authority, Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillances (FSVPS), has asked the Commerce Ministry to send a team of experts to Moscow this month to personally explain to them how small dairies would ensure that their products were safe.

Safety aspects

“We had sent a report prepared by the Export Inspection Council (EIC) explaining the safety aspects in details through our embassy in Moscow, but now they want a meeting with officials dealing directly with it. We are hopeful that after this meeting our dairy industry will finally get access to the market,” an official told *BusinessLine*.

The Commerce Ministry will send a delegation of senior officials to Moscow later this month which will include experts from the EIC and Agriculture and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (Apeda) to discuss one-on-one issues raised by FSVPS on veterinary inspection of dairy animals to ensure they were disease-free.



“The indications that we have got from the Russians so far on allowing market access to all dairy plants are positive. However, the final view will be clear only after the meeting,” the official said.

Cap over capacity

Initially, Russia had said that it would allow dairy exports from only those plants that had its own cattle farm with over 1,000 cattle, as it could then get a certificate from an authorised veterinarian servicing the dairy. It wants certificates specifying that the cattle had been properly vaccinated and was free of foot-and-mouth disease, tuberculosis, brucellosis and leukemia. India opposed the move as it would lead to disqualification of most dairy companies in India, including Amul.

“As we specified in our EIC report, we are going to tell the FSVPS that we will identify clusters of villages from where dairy plants source their milk and assign veterinarians for those specific clusters who could give the required certification,” the official said.

Russia’s annual imports of food items from Western countries are to the tune of \$40 billion, but it has banned imports of most food products from the

region due to the on-going Ukrainian crisis. New Delhi has been trying to get a chunk of that business.

DestaGlobal looks to tap rural India with online platform

DestaGlobal, an online marketplace aimed at providing agri-input to farmers, has raised ₹13 crore from its US-based investor Ron Boehm.

The socially conscious start-up said it will use the funding to expand its reach to improve the income and livelihood of farmers.

Ron Boehm, Co-founder, Desta Global, told *BusinessLine* that the company is in talks with various sellers to list on its platform.

“Rural consumers have fewer choices for products and services compared to urban consumers. Companies, on their part, also find it expensive to sell and deliver products to rural areas. We are building an infrastructure that will help any product reach rural areas in cost-effective manner,” he said.

The company said its Destamart – a B2B portal linking agri-input manufacturers and suppliers with agri-store owners in rural India, is targeting to help farmers to make wise business decisions. The three areas that Desta operates in are Desta Sales, selling products that are of use to villagers; Desta Marketing Services, working with corporates to help them reach out to the local population; and Desta Fulfilment and Payment Service, helping rural e-commerce and traditional commerce fulfilment and payments.

Mohnish Sharma, CEO of Desta Global, said agri-input products such as farm equipments, seeds, fertilisers, pesticides and other products can find an easy platform on DestaGlobal.

The company, which has been in operation since last four years, said it will be rolling out its initiatives in Maharashtra first and subsequently elsewhere.

According to recent reports, the number of mobile Internet users in rural India is set to grow at a rate of 33 per cent from October 2014 to reach 49 million by March 2015 and 53 million by June 2015.

Boehm said Desta research shows that 75 per cent farmers have access to smartphones /desktops in the western belt of Maharashtra.

Turmeric gains colour as arrivals dip

Spot price of turmeric increased at Erode markets by ₹200 a quintal as arrivals registered a decline. The arrival of turmeric decreased to 10,000 bags and 60 per cent of the goods were sold.

The price of finger variety was up ₹200 a quintal and the root variety by ₹100.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger turmeric went for ₹5,609-8,809 a quintal; the root variety ₹5,299-8,299. Of the arrival of 2,965 bags, 1,420 bags were sold.

Slack buying pounds pulses

Slack buying support at higher rate, pressure of imported crop and government's tough move against hoarders have arrested rally in tur with tur (Maharashtra) declining to ₹10,500 a quintal (down ₹1,000 from last week). Similarly, tur (Madhya Pradesh) dipped to ₹9,500 (down ₹500 from last week). Tur dal (sawa no.) was being quoted at ₹13,200-500, tur dal (full) ₹13,600-900, while tur marka went for ₹14,700-15,500 respectively.

Moong (bold) fetched ₹8,000-8,200, while moong (medium) declined to ₹7,500-7,600. Moong dal (medium) traded at ₹8,900-9,000 (down ₹400 from last week), moong dal (bold) ruled at ₹9,300-9,600, while moong mongar declined to ₹9,200-9,700. Urad (bold) went for ₹10,500, while urad (medium) ruled at ₹9,500. Urad dal (medium) was at ₹12,000-300, urad dal (bold) was at ₹12,700-13,500, while urad mongar ruled at ₹13,700-14,200 a quintal respectively.