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# THE HINDU

Uncertainty shrouds fate of sugarcane ryots

## FATE OF SUGARCANE INDUSTRY

	<b>6,000</b> farmers are directly and another 2,000 people are indirectly dependent on NDSL	
	NDSL is spread in Mambojally of Medak district, Bodhan of Nizamabad district and Metpally of Karimnagar district	
Previous and present governments have promised to take over the industry	The crushing season will commence in a month	The sugarcane development area is spread in 6,000 acres
		A total of 1.8 lakh metric tonnes of sugarcane is crushed by NDSL
<b>NDSL MANAGEMENT REPORTEDLY NOT SHOWING ANY INTEREST TO INVEST</b>		

*Government's plans to take over Nizam Deccan Sugars make little headway. A total of about 1.8 lakh metric tonnes of sugarcane was crushed by NDSL.*

The indecisiveness of the State government on the Nizam Deccan Sugars Limited (NDSL) which is one of the oldest sugar companies in the State has been pushing the fate of about 6,000 farmers directly and another 2,000 people indirectly to the edge in Medak, Nizamabad and Karimnagar districts.

NDSL is spread in three districts -- Mambojally in Medak district, Bodhan in Nizamabad district and Metpally in Karimnagar district -- is laying in doldrums as the government has not revealed its plans about the fate of the industry though statements were issued by the Ministers time and again that it would be taken over by the government. A total of about 1.8 lakh metric tonnes of sugarcane was crushed by NDSL.

During the tenure of late Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, a house committee was constituted to submit a report on the proposed takeover of the NSDL which submitted a report to the government at a later period. The government during the tenure of former Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy also passed a resolution favouring the takeover.

Even Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao promised takeover of NDSL during his election campaign, but nothing transpired so far.

A high power committee constituted by the government had already submitted its reports to the government.

The sugarcane development area was spread in about 6,000 acres and it was estimated that about 4,000 farmers were supplying sugarcane to the industry in three districts. Another 2,000 people were dependent indirectly on the industry. However, the NDSL units need overhauling the management was reportedly not showing any interest to invest, as the government had stated that it would takeover the industry.

“We are not sure what is happening and what is in the store. The farmers are in total confusion,” said V. Nagi Reddy, the general secretary of NDSL Parirakshana Samithi.

In about a month, the crushing season would commence and the officials are clueless so far.

“The government is thinking of three options – one is takeover, the second being leasing out to some industrial experts who can run the units and the third one is diverting the sugar for crushing at other places. We hope a decision will be taken in the next one week or 10 days,” said an official on condition of anonymity.

### **Punjab’s farming sector in crisis**

*Agricultural experts say small farmers are working under severe economic constraints — their earnings are very low and they are indebted — and hence many are compelled to leave farming.*

Punjab’s farming sector is in crisis and showing signs of sickness as it suffers from falling productivity and shrinking returns. Farmers are reeling under debt, and

owing to low profitability, small farmers, in particular, are quitting farming. In the past few years, around 28 per cent of them have entered the labour market.

Agricultural experts say small farmers are working under severe economic constraints — their earnings are very low and they are indebted — and hence many are compelled to leave farming. Tragically, some reach a stage where they commit suicide.

Sukhpal Singh, senior economist and head of the Department of Economics and Sociology at Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), told *The Hindu*: “It’s high time that the authorities seriously looked into the problems of marginal and small farmers.”

He said the need of the hour was to make small farming viable through a massive public investment in agriculture.

A study of farmers’ issues conducted by Dr. Sukhpal Singh and a team of PAU reveals the farmers are reeling under debt. Of the sampled farmers, 88 per cent had an average debt of Rs.218,092 per household. The amount of debt per hectare was inversely related to the farm size. It was the highest among marginal farmers at Rs.1,70,184, followed by small farmers at Rs.1,04,155 and for other farmers at Rs.44,069.

“The rate of increase in cultivation cost has been much faster than that of produce prices. Therefore, the increase in income from farming has not been sufficient to meet the domestic and farm expenditure, which led a large number of farmers into a debt trap, and consequently forcing many to commit suicide,” Dr. Sukhpal Singh said. The study suggests 89 per cent of marginal farmers and 91 per cent of small farmers are in debt.

The study reveals small farmers are in crisis, both economically and socially, as their traditional source of livelihood has become unviable because of rapidly increasing input costs. “In a census-based study of farmers’ suicides in six districts of Punjab during 2011, it was found that the largest number who took their own lives belonged to the category of small farmers,” she said.

Of the 3,507 farmers who committed suicide in Punjab between 2000 and 2011, about 80 per cent were marginal and small farmers (up to 2 hectares). These

farmers had an average debt of Rs. 2,35,000 per household and they earned only Rs. 30,420 a year, which indicates the miserable condition of marginal and small farmers, says the study.

### **Award for farm scientist**

M. Subba Rao working as chief scientist at the Agricultural Research Station, Perumallapalle, Tirupati, received the 'Rythu Nestham 2015' award at a function in Hyderabad recently. In a career spanning 32 years, Dr. Rao has produced 15 high-yielding varieties of cereals and millets. The award was presented by Union Urban Development Minister M. Venkaiah Naidu and Telangana Finance Minister E. Rajender.

### **Organic certification for GCC products**

The Agriculture and Processed Food Products Exports Development Authority (APEDA) has approved the organic certification of the tribal produce marketed by the Girijan Cooperative Corporation. (GCC)

The certification was issued by an APEDA accredited agency Vedic Organic, Tribal Welfare Minister Ravela Kishore Babu said here on Wednesday. The agency examined the GCC products and expressed its satisfaction that they were in conformity with the National Standards for Organic Production and issued certification for one year till October 13, 2016. The organic certification was given to honey, tamarind, *amla*, *Sheekai*, *kumkudu kayalu*, gum, *Sugandhi palu*, *karakkaya*, *sarpa gandhi* among other things. Mr. Kishore Babu said.

### **Heavy showers evade water-starved city**

Residents, awaiting the arrival of the northeast monsoon, had to be content with an evening drizzle —Photo: R. Ragu

theast monsoon, officially, arrived over the State on Wednesday. But, rain continued to play hide and seek with Chennai city.



Tamparam recorded a whopping 9 cm (at 8 a.m. on Wednesday) following a heavy overnight rain, while Chembarambakkam (5 cm) and Meenambakkam (1.4 cm) also received good overnight showers. However, it only drizzled in many parts of the city, and Nungambakkam received less than 1 cm of rain between 8.30 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. on Wednesday.

However, a low pressure area over southwest Bay of Bengal and the adjoining Sri Lanka coast is expected to bring more rain to Chennai on Thursday. S.R. Ramanan, director of Area Cyclone Warning Centre, said the sky would be generally cloudy on Thursday as well. The city is expected to experience light-to-moderate rain. “We are monitoring the weather system and the possibility of it intensifying into depression. As of now, rainfall will be widespread in the coastal areas,” he said.

This rain spell is imperative for the water-starved city. It is now largely sustained by drinking water supplied from desalination plants in Minjur and Nemmeli, and nearly 120 million litres of water a day from over 200 agricultural wells in Tiruvallur district. The reservoir in Chembarambakkam received 200 cubic feet of water following good showers in the catchment areas on Tuesday night.

Chennai recorded 10 cm of rainfall against the average of 23 cm since October 1. Meanwhile, Chennai Metrowater is preparing to tackle monsoon issues. With more than 75,000 manholes in the city, the damaged covers will be replaced and depot engineers will monitor sewage overflow and check for water contamination complaints.

Residents may contact the 24/7 Metrowater helpline 4567 4567 as staff members will work in three shifts, including holidays, to attend calls during the monsoon. They may also get in touch with the area engineers for monsoon-related complaints.

### **Be safe, says Tangedco**

The Tangedco has advised people to avoid walking in stagnant water, stay away from touching any snapped overhead lines and keep off junction or pillar boxes. In the event of an emergency, residents can contact their offices in Anna Nagar (9445850286), Ambattur: (9445850311) and Avadi (94458 50344).

### **Wildlife photo exhibition begins**

'Uyir Nizhal 2015', an exhibition of wildlife photographs, organised by OSAI is under way at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in Coimbatore.- Photo: M. Periasamy

Uyir Nizhal 2015 - a five-day wildlife photography exhibition has begun at the Techno Park Hall of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University on Wednesday.

The exhibition is being organised by Osai, a non-governmental organisation involved in conservation of wildlife, in association with Coimbatore Division of Forest Department, Rotary Club of Coimbatore Metropolis, and NSS Unit of TNAU.

It was declared open by Srinivas R. Reddy, Field Director of Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. M. Senthilkumar, District Forest Officer, Coimbatore; Mahendra Ramdas, Managing Director of Mahendra Pumps; Air Vice-Marshal (retd) N. Vijayakumar; Iakoka Subramanian, Vice-President of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; S. Mahimairaj, Dean (Agri) of TNAU, and K. Kalidasan, president of Osai, were present during the inaugural.

Over 3,000 photographs of mammals, birds, butterflies, reptiles, amphibians, western ghat landscapes, that were taken by prominent wildlife photographers are on display. There will be screening of wildlife documentaries every day. The expo is on till November 1 and is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

### **One more farmer producers company launched**

*500 farmers have enlisted in the company*

Taking a cue from the Nachalur Farmer Producers' company, one more farmer producers' company has been launched in Karur district.

As many as 500 farmers have enlisted in the company registered under the name of Nadayanur Agricultural Producers Company Limited with a paid up capital of Rs. 25 lakh. Each of them has contributed Rs. 5,000 as share capital.

Considering the interest shown by farmers and initial services of the company, the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD) has sanctioned Rs. 33 lakh towards its working capital and term loan requirements.

It has been provided with the support of Producers Organisation Development Fund (PODF) of NABARDs. It is the second producer company in the district to get the support under PODF. Direct procurement, distribution of inputs to farmers including certified seeds and fertilizers, procurement and sale of coconut shells are among the special services to be offered to farmers.

D.S. Chauhan, Deputy General Manager, NABARD, Tamil Nadu, who inaugurated an oil-extracting unit of the company on Wednesday, said it had made a good beginning within a short span of time. He suggested that the company could go in for branding and labelling of their special products such as chemical-free sugar and oil so that it could promote sale through e-portal platform.

A. Parthiban, Assistant General Manager, NABARD, said the company had forayed into marketing since its inception.

NABARD would offer financial and technical support to the company.

A. Mathialagan Chief Executive Officer, Nadayanur Agricultural Producers' Company, said it had chalked out a plan to make use of growing demand of organic produces such as cooking oil, coconut oil, chemical-free sugar, and so on. The company would mainly supply all inputs to its members.

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  - ***The company has a paid up capital of Rs. 25 lakh***
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### **Agroforestry training programme on Nov. 3**

A free one-day training programme on integration of livestock with agroforestry will be conducted at Krishi Vigyan Kendra on the Veterinary College and Research Institute premises here on November 3.

A press release from B. Mohan, programme coordinator, said that the programme would cover the types of agroforestry, its importance, commercial opportunities in growing such trees, fruits and fodder based trees and integration with agroforestry.

### **Sustainability**

Also, integrating trees, crops and livestock on the same plot of land had the potential to achieve sustainability in agriculture.

Farmers, members of self-help groups, youth and interested can participate.

They can come in person on working days or register through phone numbers 04286 266345, 266244 and 266650, the press release added.

### **‘Innovations must reach farms’**

Let the outcome of research and modern innovations in the agricultural sector reach the fields of farmers said MLA Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri after inaugurating Krishi Abhiyana at Sirsi recently. He asked officials to inform him of the farmers’ suggestions, after interacting with them during the Abhiyan.

### **SELECTED FOR SCIENCE FAIR**

Akshay Pujari, a class 9 student in Government High School, Ganeshnagar, Sirsi, has been selected for 43<sup>rd</sup> National Jawaharlal Nehru Science Fair to be held at Puducherry from November 14 to 20. Akshay has been selected for preparing a science model of an energy-saving device under the guidance of his science teacher K.L. Bhat.

DDPI Prasannakumar and Block Education Officer B.V. Naik have congratulated Akshay and Mr. Bhat.

### **76% of Plan funds remain unutilised**

With hardly five months left in the current financial year, about 76 per cent of the State Plan funds apportioned for major development initiatives remain unutilised.

According to the latest Plan review report accessed by *The Hindu*, against an outlay of Rs.20,000 crore for the State Plan schemes for the year, the government could expend only Rs.4,896.88 crore, till September 30.



## **Target achievement**

Going by the current utilisation rate of 24 per cent, the government may not be able to achieve the 60 per target set for December 31. Funds earmarked for many major infrastructure projects remain unspent.

The best instance is the Rs.422.92 crore provided by the 14<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission for 21 priority schemes in fisheries, health, agriculture, education, and revenue. None of the departments have used the funds.

The State has been lax in utilising the one-time additional Central assistance for priority schemes too.

As per the budget estimates, the outlay for 45 schemes in this category is Rs.192.86 crore. The schemes are being implemented by 18 departments. These include setting up of new medical colleges in Malappuram, Pathanamthitta, Idukki, Kasaragod, and Wayanad districts, and development of hospitals for women and children.

The departments could expend only Rs.18 crore till September 30. Planning Department sources say attaining even a modest 60 per cent target by March 31, 2016 would not be possible within the available time. The government's eagerness to increase the Plan size annually does not match with its enthusiasm in timely execution of projects.

Poor fund absorption rate is being cited as a reflection of the inefficiency of the political leadership and lack of departmental coordination in executing projects within a specific time frame.

## **Officers not aware**

Most district project implementing officers are still unaware of the funds allotted for schemes and the department heads are not likely to get enough time this year to issue the clearances.

Since the government is entering the final phase of its tenure, the political leadership will be busy with the preparations for the Assembly elections.

This will slacken the Plan review process too. So, attaining a 60 per cent target by the year-end, would be tough for the government, sources said.

## Rain brings cheers to farmers

Motorists braving the rain in Tiruchi on Wednesday.— Photo: A. Muralitharan  
Moderate and widespread showers continued in the district for the second day on Wednesday signalling the onset of the North East monsoon and raising the hopes of farmers.

Agriculture Department officials said the rain augured well for crops in rain-fed areas. According to sources in the department, cotton has been raised on about 11,000 hectares (ha) in the district, maize on 14,000 ha, sorghum on about 30,000 ha and groundnut on about 5,000 ha.

The rains are expected to be beneficial to all these crops.

They said rains have raised hope of samba paddy cultivation in non-delta areas dependent on irrigation tanks where the department expected a coverage of about 25,000 ha.

So far, the crop has been raised on about 6,000 ha, mainly in Uppilliyapuram, Thuraiyur and Thathaiyengarpet belts, where the recent rains had brought in some good inflow to irrigation tanks.

In the canal irrigated delta areas, samba paddy is expected to be raised on about 34,000 ha and so far transplantation has been completed on about 26,000 ha.

Transplantation in the remaining delta areas of the district is expected to be completed by November 10.

The onset of the monsoon has led to cautious optimism among farmers.

“It has raised our hopes. But it has to sustain till December. We hope the monsoon will not fail us this year, unlike the past few years,” said Ayilai Sivasuriyan, district secretary, Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, affiliated to the Communist Party of India. However, Mr.Sivasuriyan faulted the Public Works Department for failing to clear the silt from irrigation tanks and inlet channels in time to harvest the rain flow.

### Rainfall

Though Tuesday’s showers were widespread it was not heavy as indicated by the statistics provided by the district administration:

Thuvakudi recorded the maximum rainfall of 27.30 mm during the 24-hour period ending at 8.30 a.m. on Wednesday.

The following is the chief amount of rainfall recorded in other parts of the district during the same period (in mm): Tiruchi Airport 26; Golden Rock 19.60; Tiruchi

Town 18.5; Tiruchi Junction 18; Navalur Kuttapattu 16.20; Devimangalam 16 and Pullampadi 14.60. The district received an average of 7.76 mm of rainfall.

### **Water release comes as a blessing for farmers**

Water being released from the Bennethora dam to the command areas of Bennethora Irrigation Project in Kalaburagi district.— photo: arun kulkarni

The water stored in two irrigation projects has come as a blessing in disguise for rain-starved farmers in the command areas of Bennethora Major Irrigation Project and Lower Mullamari Medium Irrigation Project.

The Irrigation Department, after getting consent from the district authorities to release water for irrigation, has for the first time released it to parched lands in the command areas of Lower Mullamari Project. The release of water from Bennethora dam to the command areas of Bennethora Irrigation Project is for the second time this year.

Authorities had released water to the command area farmers of Bennethora project to save the standing khariff crops a few months back. Once again now, water has been released in both the right and left bank canals of the project to water rabi crops. Jagannath Halangi, Chief Engineer of the Irrigation Project Zone, told *The Hindu* here that for the first time, water was being released in the right bank canal of the Lower Mullamari Medium Irrigation Project after getting permission from Deputy Commissioner Vipul Bansal.

The district administration has restricted the Irrigation Department officials from releasing water for irrigation in view of the serious shortage of drinking water in the district due to failure of rain. Mr. Halangi said that after completing necessary repairs in the canal to plug leakages, the authorities decided to release water up to 50 km in the right bank canal to provide water to 3,580 hectares out of the total command area of 9,713 km in the total 80-km length of the right bank canal.

He said that in the Bennethora project, water has been released up to 36 km of the total length of 82.16 km and in the left bank canal water has been released up to 35 km out of the total 62.24 km. “The released water was being used in full by the farmers to water their standing rabi crops.”

A total of 170 cusecs of water was being released in both canals of the Bennethora project and 81 cusecs of water in the right bank canal of the Lower Mullamari Project.

## **Soil testing from Dec. 1**

In order to help farmers know the condition of the soil on their farms better, the State government has decided to introduce soil testing in every district. The officers concerned should create awareness among farmers in every taluk of the district and help them in cultivating suitable crops, district in-charge Secretary Manjunath Prasad has said.

Speaking at the district-level officers' meeting held at the zilla panchayat meeting hall here on Wednesday, he said that based on soil testing, the farmers can taken up cultivation of suitable crops to avoid loss. "The officers concerned have been instructed to conduct at least 40,000 soil testings in Chitradurga district and the work on the same would commence from December 1," he added.

The government has already taken steps to recruit the required staff for the purpose. They staff would provide detailed information on the method followed to test the soil and also the quality of the soil. Based on the test report, the staff would suggest that farmers take up cultivation of crops, he added.

A separate committee has been formed under the leadership of the Deputy Commissioner and it would submit a detailed report on the progress of work on regular intervals, he said.

## **Seeds for rain-deficient areas showcased**

A seed fair, organised jointly by the Sahaja Samrudha and the Bharatiya Beeja Swaraj Manch, aims to enlighten farmers about various seeds that could be sown in areas where meagre rainfall occur and where there is no irrigation facility.

The event has been organised to impart knowledge on modern cultivation to farmers prominently on cultivating indigenous seeds, said K.P. Asha Kumari, field officer of the manch.

Farmers can grow many varieties of crops which do not require huge quantities of water, she said.

Thamal, an NGO from Kerala, engaged in seed conservation activities since four years also took part in the event. It had cultivated over 164 paddy crops in small plots Kerala to ensure that all the varieties would continue to exist for ever. A contest on preparing dishes from millets and other food grains was organised for women farmers on the occasion.

## **Australia offers lessons in dairy farming, fisheries**

Australian Minister for Trade and Investment Andrew Robb has extended support to share his country's expertise in two areas — dairy care and fisheries. Mr. Robb, who was here in Chennai on Wednesday, said: “we have an action plan and we can share our expertise in farm management, consolidation of farms and techniques to increase productivity of dairy. Fisheries and aqua management is another area we can contribute to.”

Australian dairy farming — a \$13-billion farm, manufacturing and export industry — has over 6,000 dairy farmers producing around 9.7 billion litres of milk a year. Road safety, urban and infrastructure development, road technology and water resource management are other areas where experts from both countries can collaborate.

The Minister said he wanted to explore possibilities of joint ventures and collaboration with Tamil Nadu, highlighting that Australia was a part of the Global Investors Meet in September. “We have discussed the creation of a working group in Tamil Nadu with the State Industries Minister,” he said.

Meanwhile, the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) between Australia and India is expected to be concluded by the end of this year. Australia will allow Indian companies to mine uranium and also, the nuclear co-operation agreement with India will be signed by the end of the year, he added.

***‘The countries can collaborate on road safety, urban and infrastructure development, and water resource management’***

## **Plea to promote FMD vaccination drive**

The vaccination for Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) is in no way harmful to the livestock contrary to the negative publicity it has received of late, District Animal Husbandry Officer John Kattakkayam has said.

In a pressnote issued in the backdrop of a recent controversy that a cow at Koyilandy was in critical condition after it was vaccinated, the veterinarian explained that the cow's death was not connected to the vaccination.

An FMD control programme is being implemented in Kozhikode district since October 7 and will conclude on November 4. The district has had most number of vaccinations in the State as part of the programme, with over 5,500 heads of cattle vaccinated every day. Around 70,000 animals have been vaccinated in the district so far under the programme and none of them have had any problems, Dr. Kattakkayam said.

The controversy was over the infection of the cow belonging to a dairy farmer in Koyilandy municipality. He had had six of his cows vaccinated on October 20. The vaccination was administered by the livestock inspector at Koyilandy Veterinary Hospital. One of the cows developed a swelling on one leg on the next day. Senior Veterinary Surgeon A.J. Joy visited the house of the farmer and provided treatment to the cow. But the cows's situation worsened in a few days. The cow was suffering from Babesiosis, a disease that destroys the red blood cells. Though effective treatment is available for the disease, there are records for the germs showing immunity against the available medicine. But there had been reports in local media that the cow's infection was due to vaccination and that the vaccination was administered by an attendant at the hospital. Dr. Kattakkayam claimed that the reports were false and that no one had sought an explanation from the doctors concerned.

He urged the public to pay no heed to rumours and to promote the vaccination programme to protect the livestock.

*Veterinarian says death of a cow at Koyilandy was not connected to the vaccination.*

### **Rain in southern districts**



With the Indian Meteorological Department announcing that the northeast monsoon would begin in many parts of the State by Thursday, a few southern districts received light to moderate rain on Wednesday.

In Madurai city, the temperature remained at 33 degree Celsius and towards evening, there were cloudy skies seen and a cool breeze. A few areas in the city received a light drizzle and other areas in the district too reported light showers.

The Meteorological department further predicted moderate rains for the district over the next five days and a minimum of 10 mm of rain every day.

### **Dindigul**

Moderate to heavy rain lashed various parts of Dindigul and Theni districts bringing the mercury level down on Wednesday.

Sharp showers also rocked some parts of Dindigul town, Chinnalapatti and Batlagundu in the evening cheering farmers, who raised rain-fed crops. The climate was cool in the evening. Kodaikanal hill too received moderate showers.

### **Theni**

Sudden showers rocked Bodi. Moderate showers hit Theni, Uthamapalayam and Cumbum areas cheering farmers who have long-term and perennial crops.

Farmers hoped that continuous rain would increase storage level in dams and irrigation tanks.

### **Heavy showers evade water-starved city**

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intensifying into depression. As of now, rainfall will be widespread in the coastal areas,” he said.

This rain spell is imperative for the water-starved city. It is now largely sustained by drinking water supplied from desalination plants in Minjur and Nemmeli, and nearly 120 million litres of water a day from over 200 agricultural wells in Tiruvallur district. The reservoir in Chembarambakkam received 200 cubic feet of water following good showers in the catchment areas on Tuesday night.

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### **Be safe, says Tangedco**

The Tangedco has advised people to avoid walking in stagnant water, stay away from touching any snapped overhead lines and keep off junction or pillar boxes. In the event of an emergency, residents can contact their offices in Anna Nagar (9445850286), Ambattur: (9445850311) and Avadi (94458 50344).

### **Toor dhal prices down in wholesale market**

The toor dhal price in the wholesale market has come down to Rs. 170 a kg from Rs. 210, bringing cheer to consumers. However, there is not much of a slide in prices of other pulses.

“The price has come down because of a ripple effect. The Central government has been taking action against hoarders in the north and at the same time the State administration asking traders and wholesalers not to stock more than the allowed limit. Hopefully we will see good results after Deepavali,” said Manish Parmar of the Madras Kirana Merchants Association.

N. Sathish, a wholesaler in Royapuram, said that Indian toor dhal was available at Rs. 170 a kg and imported quality at Rs. 135 a kg. “Channa dhal, which is used for



making sweets and savouries for Deepavali, is available at Rs.68 a kg. However, it will take sometime for this price decrease to reflect in retail markets,” he said. On Wednesday, Minister for Food R. Kamaraj, who held a meeting with dhal manufacturers, told them not to exceed their stock limits.

He also asked them to extend all cooperation to the government in its efforts to reduce the prices of pulses in the open market.

From November 1, the toor dhal would be available through cooperative retail outlets at Rs. 110 a kg, the Minister said.

Meanwhile, the Tamil Nadu Dhal Manufacturers Association said that it would make available imported dhal at reduced prices.

“We have told the government that in the wholesale market the imported toor dhal will be sold between Rs. 133 and Rs. 135 a kg. This will lead to a reduction in retail prices,” said R. Rajkumar, association secretary.

The association also requested the government to intervene and remove FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) restrictions in import of dhals at the Chennai Port.

“They are not permitting raw dhal import as it contains dust and other impurities. We are forced to use dhal from Tuticorin and Mumbai ports. The transportation cost is also being added to pulses,” Mr. Rajkumar said.

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They said rains have raised hope of samba paddy cultivation in non-delta areas dependent on irrigation tanks where the department expected a coverage of about 25,000 ha.



So far, the crop has been raised on about 6,000 ha, mainly in Uppilliyapuram, Thuraiyur and Thathaiyengarpet belts, where the recent rains had brought in some good inflow to irrigation tanks.

In the canal irrigated delta areas, samba paddy is expected to be raised on about 34,000 ha and so far transplantation has been completed on about 26,000 ha.

Transplantation in the remaining delta areas of the district is expected to be completed by November 10.

The onset of the monsoon has led to cautious optimism among farmers.

“It has raised our hopes. But it has to sustain till December. We hope the monsoon will not fail us this year, unlike the past few years,” said Ayilai Sivasuriyan, district secretary, Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, affiliated to the Communist Party of India. However, Mr.Sivasuriyan faulted the Public Works Department for failing to clear the silt from irrigation tanks and inlet channels in time to harvest the rain flow.

### **Rainfall**

Though Tuesday’s showers were widespread it was not heavy as indicated by the statistics provided by the district administration:

Thuvakudi recorded the maximum rainfall of 27.30 mm during the 24-hour period ending at 8.30 a.m. on Wednesday.

The following is the chief amount of rainfall recorded in other parts of the district during the same period (in mm): Tiruchi Airport 26; Golden Rock 19.60; Tiruchi

Town 18.5; Tiruchi Junction 18; Navalur Kuttapattu 16.20; Devimangalam 16 and Pullampadi 14.60. The district received an average of 7.76 mm of rainfall.

### **Need to use iodized salt in daily food stressed**



An awareness programme on educating students on the importance of using iodized salt in home was organised at St. Xavier's Higher Secondary School here on Wednesday.

The school's Consumer Club, Micronutrients Initiative and Department of Salt jointly organised the programme with the objective of creating awareness among the students of the need for using iodized salt in preparing food.

As over 300 students had brought the common salt being used in their homes, the samples were tested in front of them so that they could understand the iodine content in the salt samples.

Experts from the Micronutrients Initiative explained to the students the importance of using iodized salt in preparing food and the health problems being caused by iodine deficiency.

Headmaster Rev. Fr. Vincent Amalraj presided over the awareness programme. Assistant Headmaster Rev. Fr. Valan Irudhayaraj, Manager of Micronutrient Initiative Syed Ahmed and teachers participated.



## Indigenous oilseed may change fortunes of Bundelkhand's farmers

Bundelkhand conjures up a picture of poverty and backwardness in the minds of people. The region has also lagged behind agriculturally due to its typical geographical terrain and climatic conditions.

The Uttar Pradesh part of Bundelkhand comprises seven districts: Jalaun, Jhansi, Lalitpur, Hamirpur, Mahoba, Banda and Chitrakoot. It produces rabi crops like chana (gram), masur (lentil) and matar (pea) in large quantities. The cropped area during the rabi (winter-spring) season is around 18.50 lakh hectares (lh). But the fact that the corresponding area in kharif (summer-monsoon) has hovered just around 9 lh has meant farmers are largely dependent on a single harvest.

Low planting during kharif is primarily attributed to Anna Pratha, a traditional system under which people leave their cattle unfettered to graze in others' fields, making farmers less inclined to sow their lands.

This does not, however, happen in the rabi season, when farmers keep their cattle at home. To understand this, one must also appreciate the peculiar circumstances prevailing in Bundelkhand. Firstly, this region has traditionally been rainfed and suffers from shortage of water. Due to the vagaries of monsoon, the farmers generally leave their fields fallow during kharif and cultivate the main rabi crop using the residual moisture. Secondly, the average landholding size here has tended to be larger compared to other parts of UP.

Farmers could, therefore, make do with even one good crop. Thirdly, being rainfed made the area also prone to fodder shortages during the summer season, leading farmers to leave cattle free to survive on whatever came their way in the fields. This became an accepted practice and farmers stopped sowing during the kharif season. Such vast lands remaining un-cropped were, of course, a national wastage for the country. The above situation has, however, changed in recent times. With

increase in population levels, average landholding sizes have come down significantly in this region also.

Besides, the last two rabi seasons of 2014 and 2015 have seen unseasonal rains and hailstorm, causing severe losses to farmers. Although crop insurance covers 15 per cent of Bundelkhand's farmers, thrice the state's average, it is still far too small. Given their dependence on rabi proceeds, consecutive crop failures were a big jolt for the region's farmers. They now desperately sought a source of additional income. This is where the UP government stepped in with a policy announcement.

Recognising the potential for cultivation of til (sesame) in Bundelkhand during kharif, the subsidy on its seeds was increased from Rs 20/kg to Rs 100/kg. The decision to promote sesame was taken consciously, considering that the cattle do not eat this crop. Sesame seed was procured in large quantities to be distributed among farmers and an aggressive campaign to boost acreages during this kharif season was launched, involving departmental officers, NGOs, district and divisional officers and all others concerned. The results have been extremely encouraging.

As compared to kharif 2014, an additional 2 lh has been cultivated in Bundelkhand this year; the area under sesame alone has gone up from 2.25 to 3.5 lh. The premise that if farmers are able to get proper return from their crop, they will plant irrespective of Anna Pratha, has turned out to be correct!

This has been made possible with the active intervention of local administration. Farmers were particularly thankful to the administration for imposing restrictions on those who leave their cattle unfettered to graze in others' fields. All this has resulted in increased coverage — visible from the kilometres and kilometres of sesame on both sides along the Orai-Jhansi highway. Fodder for cattle is, no doubt, a crucial issue that needs addressing. But if the farmer has the purchasing power, he can very well procure his fodder requirement from the market. The economics of sesame cultivation is equally revealing. It is a crop ideal for rainfed areas. As an indigenous oilseed used in preparation of sweets from gajak, rewari and ladoos to tilkut, there is no dearth of a market for it either. Sesame fetches a better price for farmers than other oilseeds: Farmers are today getting around Rs 7,000 per quintal, which is more than the government's minimum support price of Rs 4,700 for the crop. This whole episode reminds one of the story of Alibaba — how when he used to say “open sesame”, the mouth of the cave would open up, showing a hidden treasure of wealth. This is an Open Sesame moment of sorts for Bundelkhand. The returns may not be very lucrative this year, but the crop holds tremendous hope for the future. The pattern of agriculture during kharif may have changed forever in this region.

## PM Narendra Modi to inaugurate Resurgent Rajasthan summit on Nov 19



The state government is hosting a two-day ‘Resurgent Rajasthan Partnership Summit 2015’ on November 19 & 20 at the Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Centre (JECC) in Sitapura. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the summit on November 19.

Union ministers such as Nitin Gadkari, Nirmala Sitharaman, Kalraj Mishra and Rajiv Pratap Rudy will participate in the event. The first day of the two-day event will witness eight sectoral sessions along with two country-specific sessions. While the ‘focus country’ sessions will be on Japan and Singapore, the parallel sectoral sessions will shed light on the thrust sectors of Rajasthan and will be centred on themes like ‘Smart Cities & Highways’; ‘Make in India:

Skilling Rajasthan’; ‘Leveraging tourism for sustainable development’; ‘Auto and ESDM sector’; ‘Agriculture and Food Processing’; ‘Regulatory Reforms’; ‘Sustainable Mining’ and ‘Transforming Healthcare Delivery in Rajasthan’. A host of luminaries will share their expertise on both days of the summit.

Prominent industrialists including Kiran Mazumdar Shaw of Biocon, Arun Nanda of Mahindra & Shri Mahindra, Mohandas Pai of Manipal Global, Sunil Kant Munjal of Hero Moto Corp, Vijay K Thadani of NIIT, Shobana Kamineni of Apollo Hospitals, SN Eisenhower of Saint-Gobain Glass India, Rakesh Bharti Mittal of Field Fresh Foods, Vipin Sondhi of JCB India Ltd, Katsushi Inoue of Honda Cars, among others, will take the dais on the first day of the summit.

The day two of the summit will be dedicated to MSME conclave titled ‘MSME: Growth Engine for Make In India – Opportunities and Challenges.’ The keynote speaker for the conclave will be Dr Anup K Pujari, secretary, Ministry of MSME, Government of India.

The session will see discussions on topics such as ‘Comparative Advantages of Investing in Rajasthan’, ‘Immense potential of handicrafts exports from Rajasthan and access to marketing’, apart from others. Industrialists including Jayant Davar of Sandhar Technologies, Dileep Baid of Dileep Industries and OP Mittal of Laghu Udyog Bharti will also speak on the occasion.



# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## **Of corporate might and farmers’ plight**

BENGALURU: Having battled with what they term "cruel hands" of the market — not "magical" as classical economists assumed — farmers in Kadoli, a village in Belagavi district, have taken to agriculture for themselves.

They grow to eat, not to sell. And it has worked out well in the last two decades. Yashwanth Bandurgi, a young farmer from the village says, "We are just growing what we want. We're focusing on rice, corn, groundnut and a lot of vegetables."

There has been no migration from this village in a long while and the farmers aren't debt-ridden either. A great model for farmers.

While Yashwanth's village has a self-sufficient answer to the ever increasing problems that farmers across the state and the country are facing, several others are still looking helplessly at the government which, they believe, has fallen prey to corporate controls — from fertilisers to price control, farmers have felt that the corporate world has taken over.

Maya Jaideep and K Vasuki have produced and directed a documentary - Dhare Hatti Uridhode (when the earth is on fire) - showcasing the way of these farmers.

The documentary shows over 30 farmers and experts speaking about the corporate



control on agriculture. The yet to be released documentary, which has also been re-produced in English (titled 'When Death Strides the Fields'), was specially screened for farmers' groups on Tuesday at Gandhi Bhavan in Bengaluru.

The 28-minute film will be released by Speaker Kagodu Thimmappa, on Friday, at Vidhana Soudha.

"We generally make a lot of regular films. But every time we manage to save some money we do movies like this," Maya told TOI, pointing to some of their earlier films like the "Heat in Dust" a documentary on illegal mining in 2005.

The film poses several questions and problems faced by farmers in the post globalization era and its consequences on the farming community. The movie also shows how the Gandhian way, practiced by some farmers like Yashwanth can also help the community get out of the vicious cycle caused market-led variables.

"Our hope is to prevent farmers from dying," Maya says.

### **New YEIDA CEO to take up farmer issues**

GREATER NOIDA: The Uttar Pradesh government on Wednesday designated Dr Arun Vir Singh as chief executive officer (CEO) of the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA). The CEO's post had been lying vacant after the UP government relieved IAS officer Anil Garg from the post about a week ago on October 21.

On September 21, the Uttar Pradesh government had appointed Deepak Agarwal as the CEO of YEIDA and posted another IAS officer, Anil Garg, as the CEO of GNIDA.

The transfer orders of September 22 included shifting of Garg to the post of CEO of YEIDA, while at the same time, Agarwal was transferred from his new posting

of CEO of YEIDA to additional CEO of GNIDA. Meanwhile, Singh officially took charge of the Authority late on Wednesday evening. The IAS officer was till now holding the position of additional CEO of YEIDA.

Singh was posted as additional commissioner of NCR Planning Board for a few months in 2014 and as additional commissioner (Trade Tax) in Noida for a month the same year. On March 17, 2015, Singh was appointed as additional CEO, YEIDA.

Speaking to TOI, newly appointed Singh on Wednesday said that his focus would be on further development of the area. Singh said he would also immediately take up the farmers' issue of distribution of enhanced compensation of 64.7% so that development takes wing.

"My priority would also be to collect outstanding dues from allottees to keep the cash-flow rolling and also hand them possession of their land," said Singh.

The officer further said that connectivity and public facilities in terms of infrastructure would also be on his agenda.

### **Cage culture helping farmers get into fish farming**

RAIPUR: To spread awareness about fish rearing in sweet waters in entire state, fisheries department has developed 'cage culture', which is becoming very popular among farmers. About 300 metric tonnes of fish have been produced with this new practice.

Department director VK Shukla said, "Fishes are being reared in Saroda Sagra, which is located at Kawardha, Sheer waters also at Kawardha, Gonga Water body at Bilaspur, Jhumka water resources at Korea and Teeranga water body at Gariyabandh."

Cage culture is being encouraged under National Protein Feeder Mission. It consists of floating blocks, which are inter-locked. Fish weighing 100 grams each are left in the ponds. They are fed on a daily basis. Three metres of floating blocks

is under water and only one meter is above water. Pangosias breed of fish is reared under this. The 100 gram fish grows into 1kg fish in about 10 months. The experiment was first made in Gonga waters in Bilaspur district. Ducks and poultry rearing had also been started here.

Cold chains have been established to market the fishes of Bharatpur through cooperative samitis. Fishes are being reared in 496 cages all over state. They are fed with 30% protein-laced diet.

In Shirpani Waters of Kabhirdam district, there are 96 fish rearing cages, Bilaspur district Gonga waters has 48 cages, Jhumka Waters in Korea district has 96 cages, Tauranga Waters in Gariyaband district has 48 cages, Korba district's Bango Waters has 48 cages and Ambikapur district's Gunghuta Waters has 48 fish rearing cages. 3,500kg fish is produced in each cage. There is a gain of Rs 70,000 to the farmer after deducting all expenses.

### **Niravu brings out soil mix for terrace farmers**

KOZHIKODE: Terrace farmers who have been worrying about making quality soil mix to sow the seeds need not worry anymore. 'Niravu Vengeri' that has been popularizing organic farming entered into making ready-to-use agriculture kit to help the people residing in the apartments to carry out farming. The kit is being prepared on the basis of enquiries received from public about the availability on raw materials required for the preparation of quality soil to get high yields.

The agriculture kit comprise soil mixture that includes high quality soil, peat, groundnut cake, neem cake, dried cow dung, goat dung, rock phosphate and organic manure made from chicken and fish waste.

The agriculture mixture is being prepared by a team of seven members under the supervision of retired agriculture officer V Raveendranath. The team undertakes door-to-door delivery of the kit on the basis of demand from consumers. The kits are also being sold through an outlet in Nadakkavu.

Babu Parambath, Niravu project coordinator said that Niravu has been getting orders for 50 to 100 packets of soil mix per day.

"Rs 100 is fixed per kit of soil mixture. The venture aims at helping professionals residing in flats and apartments who are find it difficult to get the quality soil to sow the seeds," he said. "Production of high quality soil mixture has made the farming tension free and the people can reuse the kit twice to carry out farming," he added.

# THE HINDU BusinessLine

## US plan to mandate FDA audit of farm imports irks India



India has raised serious concerns over a proposed US legislation that will require agriculture imports to be mandatorily inspected and audited by the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA).

New Delhi fears that once the law is implemented — in about a year from now — it will raise costs for Indian exporters sharply, making exports unfeasible in many cases.

Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is expected to take up the issue in her meeting with US Trade Representative Michael Froman at the Trade Policy Forum in Washington on Thursday.

“The Agriculture Ministry, at a recent dialogue on plant and animal health with US officials, has already pointed out the difficulty that exporters would face if all consignments were to be inspected by USFDA officials. India wants either the law to be repealed or some relaxations made in terms of allowing Indian agencies to carry out the inspection,” a Commerce Ministry official said.

The legislation, called the US Food Safety Modernisation Act of 2011, includes several Bills that would come into force one after the other. The Act requires large-scale exporters to register themselves with the USFDA for inspection and audits by 2017 and medium- and small-scale exporters in the following two years respectively.

### **Exports on the slide**

India's agriculture exports to the US is already on a downslide, falling to less than \$2 billion last year compared with \$3.7 billion two years ago, due to an overall slowdown in demand and falling commodity prices.

"It is a serious issue for Indian exporters, as getting consignments physically inspected by USFDA officials would require resources for their travel, stay and other expenses, including inspection fee. Inspections may also delay shipments. Moreover, getting audits done by the USFDA would require exporters to furnish information in a way many are not used to," the official quoted above said. Some small exporters may have to shut shop as the additional costs may make their transactions unfeasible.

### **Confirmatory assessment**

New Delhi wants that if the US goes ahead with the law it should have a confirmatory assessment system, whereby a certification of quality given by India's local standards bodies such as the Export Inspection Council (EIC) or Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) should be recognised.

"We want that exporters following globally recognised systems, such as the GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices) and the HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points), and certified by the FSSAI, should be recognised by the USFDA," the official said.

India's primary agriculture exports to the US include guar gum, basmati rice, honey, cereals, processed/fresh fruits and vegetables, milled products, non-basmati rice and jaggery.

### **CAI expects cotton output to dip 4%**

Strong offtake: The International Cotton Advisory Committee's forecast sees global area and production declining, while consumption and trade going up in 2015/16.

The Cotton Association of India expects cotton output to be lower by four per cent at 370 lakh bales (lb) this season (started October) against 382 lb (of 170 kg each) recorded in the same period last year.

The crop damage in the northern zone due to the whitefly pest attack this year is certainly a cause of concern but nothing to panic, said the association in a statement on Wednesday.

Despite lower crop this year, it said the impact on supply would be lower as the country will have highest ever opening stock.

The crop output in northern zone comprising Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan is expected to be lower at 47 lb (53 lb).

In the central zone of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh the production is estimated at 205 lb (204 lb), while in the southern zone covering Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka it may be marginally lower at 112 lb (118 lb). The total supply including Odisha and other minor cotton producing is estimated at 370.50 lb (382.75 lb).

### **Cottonseed sales hit as farmers shift to pulses this kharif**



Cottonseed makers faced a decline in sales during the kharif season this year as farmers made a switchover to pulses from the fibre crop due to the better prices during the sowing season. According to the provisional estimates by the seed industry, cottonseed sales were lower by about a tenth over last year.

National Seed Association of India (NSAI) President M Prabhakara Rao told *BusinessLine* that pulses acreage have gained about 10-15 per cent as cotton and maize reported a dip in area.

### **Reasons for switch-over**

Currently embroiled in a legal battle with Bt technology provider Mahyco-Monsanto over the issue of trait value quantum, the seed industry is busy assessing the exact drop in sales as the season ended.

“The shift to pulses has been dramatic this year. If it is because of better prices in one State, it is due to erratic rainfall in some other States. Acreage of pulses such as blackgram, greengram and red gram have gained about 15 per cent,” P Satheesh Kumar, a top executive of Nuziveedu Seeds, told *BusinessLine*. The decline in acreage is reflected by a drop of about 10 per cent in sales of seed packets this year. As against 5.30 crore packets (of 450 gm each) sold during last kharif, the industry could sell only 4.40 crore packets this kharif season.

### **Telangana’s woes**

For one, it was a disappointing year for cotton farmers in Telangana. Though sowed on about 17 lakh hectares, cotton proved to be a dampener in the State this year due to the complete failure of the monsoon. But for a few pockets in Khammam, Warangal and Adilabad, the crop withered in several parts, pushing the farmers into a serious financial crisis.

“Last year’s sales were a bit of aberration. Farmers had bought the seed packets more than once last year as rains failed initially. This additional sale of 30-40 lakh packets did not happen,” Satheesh Kumar, who was former President of Seedsmen Association of Andhra Pradesh, said.

On an average, Indian farmers annually consume about 4.7-4.8 crore packets in a normal year.

### **Demand hopes**

The cottonseed industry, however, is hopeful of renewed demand next year. “Price for commercial cotton has been good in several parts of the country, except Telangana. It is ruling above the minimum support price. We expect a good demand next year as farmers will be encouraged by the higher price this year,” a top executive of a seed firm, who doesn’t want to be quoted, felt.

### **N-E monsoon rains lash parts of Tamil Nadu, Kerala**

North-East monsoon rains have commenced over Tamil Nadu, Kerala and adjoining areas of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday.

Rainfall received during the 24 hours ending in the morning was (in cm) is as follows:



Machilipatnam and Vallam-9 each; Tambaram and Mettupalayam-7 each; Chembarambakkam-5; Papanasam, Sendurai and Ariyalur-4 each; Kakinada and Tiruchirappalli-3 each; Kozhikode and Puducherry-2 each; and Chennai, Kannur, Tondi, Pamban and Cuddalore-1 each.

### **May spread out**

The rains are forecast to propagate northward along the Tamil Nadu coast during the next few days, an India Met Department update said.

Heavy rain would occur at isolated places over coastal Tamil Nadu on Thursday. A similar forecast is valid for isolated places over coastal Tamil Nadu and Kerala for the two days that follow.

On Wednesday, a storm in the form of a depression developed over East Arabian Sea, which triggered a rush of easterly winds across the peninsula and the Bay of Bengal precipitating the rain.

The Met said that the depression would intensify into a deep depression and further into a tropical cyclone in the next two to three days, but away from the Indian coast.

### **'Low' persists**

This will help sustain the easterly flows and keep the North-East monsoon steady, pushing rains into more parts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

The rush of the flows caused the counterpart low-pressure area over South-West Bay of Bengal to drift partly into land over Sri Lanka, compromising its potential to grow.

It may weaken around the region, but still pilot a wave of rainfall along the Tamil Nadu coast towards the north.



The residual flows are later forecast to converge off the Odisha coast and propel rains into the North Coastal Andhra Pradesh as well.

An extended forecast valid for the next seven days (until November 4) said that rain or thundershowers would occur at many places over South India.

### **Rain, snow**

The rains would be isolated over the rest of Peninsular India and the East Coast during this period.

Meanwhile in North-West India, a western disturbance located over north Pakistan is expected to impact weather all the way into East and North-East India.

Rain and thundershowers have been lashing isolated places over Jammu and Kashmir. Thundershowers occurred over West Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and West Uttar Pradesh.

Emerging hostile weather is expected to spread out into East and North-East India. Thundersquall/hailstorm is forecast for part of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and the North-East.

### **Wily pink bollworm survives Monsanto's Bollgard-II**



Pink bollworm, the wily worm that eats away cotton bolls, has developed resistance to Monsanto's second generation biotechnology protection Bollgard-II. The Nagpur-based Central Institute for Cotton Research (CICR) has confirmed the resistance to the technology in some parts of Gujarat.

"There is resistance to Bollgard-II. We have collected some insects. They are eating up the bolls," CICR Director Keshav Kranthi told *BusinessLine* here on Wednesday.

### **Impact on seed industry**

This development could have a serious impact on the seed industry as almost complete cotton area is covered by BG-II seeds.

A constituent of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the CICR conducts basic research in cotton to improve yield and fibre quality. It also collects, conserves, evaluates and catalogues cotton germplasm in the country.

The CICR Director feels that the resistance could be more in the next three-four weeks and in the next season.

### **Company response**

Asked whether the reports were true, a Monsanto spokesperson said that resistance is a natural, evolutionary process. “However, its development and further spread can be delayed if proper mitigation practices are followed, including planting a mandatory refuge at farmers level,” he said.

Growing a refuge crop (other than cotton) around the main crop is a safety mechanism advised by the scientists and regulators to delay resistance. However, in the absence of awareness, extension mechanism, majority of the farmers give a go-by to this norm, quickening the resistance-building process in the worms.

“We continue to find that our technologies are still bringing great value to farmers in all the regions where they are used. We remain committed to developing new high-performing products to give farmers a wider choice of insect-control technologies,” Monsanto spokesperson added.

### **Background**

Four years after it got the permission from Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) in 2006 for commercial release, the firm admitted that its entomologists detected and, ultimately confirmed, pink bollworm resistance to the first-generation single-protein (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) Bollgard I cotton in four States in Western India.

Just around that time the company launched Bollgard-II promising protection against pink bollworm and other smaller pests . The technology is based on the premise that if the plant has the protection from within, farmers are not required to go for expensive pesticide sprays.

While Monsanto asserts that it is imperative to stay ahead of insect resistance through research, activists fighting against the genetically-modified crops argued that Bt is a classic example to show that it was futile to taking on monophagous (animals living only on one kind of food) as their ability to develop resistance is immense.

## Coconut oil edges up on demand hopes

After a declining trend in the last few consecutive weeks, coconut oil prices seem to have started moving up slightly.

The market is ruling steady this week both in Kerala and Tamil Nadu and the trend is likely to continue ahead of festival season in North India, Thalath Mahmood, President of Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA), said.

It may be recalled that the Coconut Development Board also predicted a reverse trend in the price fall by November ahead of festival season. However, COMA President said that they are expecting only a “moderate price increase rather than a jump”.

The rates are now quoting at ₹10,400 a quintal in Kerala (₹10,300) while in Tamil Nadu, it went up to touch ₹10,000 (₹9,800).

The increasing trend was witnessed in copra also, with prices at ₹7,600 a quintal in Kerala against ₹7,200 and ₹7,400 in Tamil Nadu (₹7,100).

The market, according to him, is now pinning its hopes on the upcoming Diwali demand in North India for a further price recovery and the trend is expected to continue with the commencement of the Sabarimala season which starts by the mid-November.

The upcountry and corporate demand has been sluggish even though there was a good arrival from production centres, he said.

# Business Standard

## FoodMin proposes Rs 47.5-55.5 a tonne direct subsidy to sugar cane farmers



After much deliberation, the **food** ministry seems to have decided on the amount it proposes to directly transfer into the bank account of millions of **sugar cane farmers** from the 2015-16 crop season.

This first-time move would, if successful, allow similar experiments with other crops, like cotton. The central government would directly transfer the subsidy or incentive to growers.

### Centre claims pulses' prices falling



The central government claimed on Wednesday that retail and wholesale prices of **pulses** had begun falling in about 20 cities, even as the amount seized in continuing raids on alleged hoarders has reached almost 100,000 tonnes.

Also, state governments have decided to sell both the confiscated pulses and other amounts purchased at Rs 120-140 a kg through various retail networks.

# DECCAN Chronicle

### Tamil Nadu gets 500 tonnes of pulses

**CHENNAI:** With the Tamil Nadu government receiving 500 tonnes of pulses from the Centre, state cooperative and food departments have started to despatch

the processed pulses to cooperative supermarkets and ration shops across Tamil Nadu.

Based on a request from Chief Minister J. Jayalithaa, the Union government allotted 1,000 tonnes of pulses to the state, of which the first phase of 500 tonnes had reached Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu government had already been selling tur dhal and urad dhal at Rs 30 per kg in over 34,000 fair price shops across the state at a time when the price in open market was about Rs 300.

In the first phase of Centre's consignment, the state government has allotted 350 tonnes for cooperatives department and remaining for civil supplies corporation. The pulses will be distributed to people across the state through 91 cooperative super markets in Chennai, Tiruchy, Madurai and Coimbatore, besides over 30,000 fair price shops in the state.

The pulses are being processed in seven mills in Chennai and are being packed as 50 kg bags each. Two days ago, the cooperative department sent the dhal load to Madurai district and on Wednesday, five tonnes each were dispatched to Coimbatore and Tiruchi districts, Chennai would get 10 tonnes.

The cooperative supermarket in Triplicane has been packing pulses as one kg and 500 grama and has started to send them to cooperative supermarkets in Chennai. Meanwhile, cooperation minister Sellur K. Raju and food minister R. Kamaraj held separate review meetings with officials to discuss about distribution of pulses. Kamaraj convened a meeting with private vendors and asked them not to hoard dhal and not to sell the commodity at a higher price.

## THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

### Partnering Africa: India must go beyond transient gains



The world's fastest-growing continent, Africa, has grown faster over the past decade than East Asia ( as per The Economist). It is no longer the mysterious and forbidding Dark Continent; it seeks to stride past the horrors of Darfur, the persistence of HIV/AIDS or Ebola, the failure to end famine and civil wars—McKinsey (2010) found it to be Lions on the Move.

In end-1990, only three African countries had democracies; the number now is 25. Foreign direct investment in the continent tripled, from \$15 billion in 2002 to \$46 billion in 2012. Real income per person increased by more than 30%. Sub-Saharan Africa has made huge leaps: secondary-school enrolment grew by 48% between 2000 and 2008; malaria deaths declined by 30%, and HIV infections by 74%. Life expectancy increased by 10%; child mortality rates declined steeply. By 2017, nearly 30% of households are expected to have a television set, an almost five-fold increase over ten years, and consumer spending is set to almost double.

Mobile phones are as ubiquitous as they are in India. Kenya-based Safaricom accounts for 95% of country's mobile money market. Ericsson estimates the mobile phones will increase to 930 million by 2019, almost one per African. Smartphones are likely to push internet penetration to 50% within a decade.

The ongoing four-day India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) III being hosted in New Delhi, unlike the previous IAFS I (New Delhi, 2008) and IAFS II (Addis Ababa, 2011), is indeed ambitious, with representation from all 54 African countries, including heads of state and the governments of 40 of them, besides the African Union, accompanied also by about 400 business delegates. The summit affords India and Africa an opportunity to reinforce their shared identity, enabling them to

usher in bonds of understanding and partnership. New worldwide concerns of terror and climate change beckon the summit to jointly grapple with the challenges.

Like diverse India, Africa is too big to follow one script. The majority of the continent's billion people are stalked by disease and hunger. The spread of wealth is uneven, notwithstanding sporadic signs of a break from the stereotype. An IMF survey reveals that six of the African countries (Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda) recorded an annual average GDP growth of over 5% during 1995-2010 and a per capita GDP annual increase of over 3%. Rwanda has jumped to 32nd in World Bank's global ranking for Ease of Doing Business. Burkina Faso today produces gold; natural gas flows off the Tanzania coast; Mozambique has a promise of a big source of energy—coal, oil and gas.

Ever since the arrival of Cecil Rhodes more than a century ago, local African miners have generated immense wealth, commodities generating one-third of Africa's GDP growth. Natural resources make up over a quarter of export revenues for half of the 45 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Zambia thrives on copper, Botswana on diamond mining. In 2013, Kenya discovered niobium, rare earth deposits estimated at \$62 billion. Angola is rich in diamonds, Nigeria in oil. Oil and gas fuel the rising aspirations—take a 2012 discovery of oil around Lake Turkana in north-western Kenya, of 3.5 billion oil barrels by Lake Albert in Uganda, and also on the other side of the lake, in Congo. Ethiopia is exploring furiously, as is South Sudan along its border with Kenya. Nigeria churns out about

2 million barrels of crude oil a day. Africa's biggest wind farm is being built east of Lake Turkana at a cost of \$1 billion. South Africa recently inaugurated a \$640-million concentrated solar power plant (CSP), one of the six among world's 10-biggest CSPs being built.

India extends duty-free tariff preference, encompassing 98% of tariff lines for African exports. Its bilateral trade, up from \$5 billion in 2000-2001 to \$70 billion in 2012-13, is projected to be around \$100 billion by end-2015. India's EXIM Bank had 129 lines of credit in operation until end-2013, amounting to \$6 billion for projects in 45 African countries. Indian conglomerates such as the Tatas, Reliance and Essar, automobile companies such as Mahindra, Bajaj and TVS, and telecommunication companies, also ONGC and [Bharti Airtel](#) have a long-term vision for Africa.

India's approved cumulative investments in sectors such as FMCG, mining and minerals, telecommunications, construction and projects during 1996-2013 are estimated to be \$37.8 billion. Africa offers a vast scope to Indian companies to explore mutually beneficial sustainable cooperation in IT, agriculture, mining, food processing, besides a gamut of infrastructure, consumer durables and services sectors. Human resource development continues to be high on the agenda. The Indian government has offered scholarships to 22,000 African students.

Albeit, until 1999, India's trade with Africa exceeded China's, since 2009, China has been Africa's largest trading partner. Chinese trade with Africa, rising from \$12 billion in 2002 to \$198 billion in 2012, is projected to be four times bigger than India's by 2015. A Nairobi-based economic expert estimates that there are



about 2,500 Chinese firms in Africa. An estimated 1million Chinese are now resident in Africa. The main thoroughfare in Senegalese capital, Dakar, is now known as Boulevard Mao. Yet, typical of quiet resentment brewing against Chinese incursions, the Governor of the Nigerian Central Bank, recently excoriated the Chinese for exuding “a whiff of colonialism”, and called upon “Africans to wake up to the realities of their romance with China”.

From 1 billion now, African population it is set to double by 2050. Sub-Saharan Africa is projected to be home to one-fourth of the world’s below-25 population by end-2020. With a fast-growing middle class, around 100 million Africans have an income of \$3,000 a year. African economy is projected to expand from a GDP of \$2 trillion to \$2.6 trillion by 2020, with a consumer base amounting to \$1.4 trillion. About 40% of Africans are city-dwellers now, up from 30% a generation ago; by 2025, the share is likely to be 50%.

Eastern and southern Africa host large population of people from India. India needs to be circumspect that in no way it falls prey to a whiff of hegemony; its commercial and industrial entrepreneurs must eschew temptations of transient gains. They need to be true partners in the continent of hope and promise. Rights activists brand some Indian investments in Africa as instances of land grab. There are allegations of some Indian investors entering Africa to make a quick buck. India and Africa need to scan their infirmities and coalesce their strengths, to mutual gain. They need to take on the difficult jobs of building infrastructure, rooting out corruption and clearing the tangle of government regulation that holds them back.