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## THE HINDU

### **Farmers advised to use green manure before samba crop**

The Agriculture Department has launched a drive to enrich the soil by motivating farmers to use green manure in their fields before raising the 'samba' crop.

The soil condition should be enriched as a first step for minimising the problems caused by weeds and pest attack.

The green manure would bring down the use of chemical fertilizer and thereby increase productivity.

The department has planned to cover 1,920 hectares of land under the scheme and so far 1,415 hectares of land had been covered so far.

A special subsidy of Rs. 2,000 per hectare is given to farmers under this soil health improvement scheme, said an official. Daincha, sunhemp, and 'kolinji' are the major green manures being grown in the district.

"The objective is to improve organic content in soil. The daincha, sunhemp, or kolinji should be ploughed in the fields a week before planting the seedlings of 'samba,'" the official said.

The green manure was most needed in blocks with alkaline or saline soil such as Manikandam, Tiruverumbur, and Lalgudi.

The official said that microbes in the soil would be enhanced with increase in zinc, phosphorous and nitrogen.

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- *A special subsidy of Rs. 2,000 per hectare is given*
  - *Green manure is needed in places with alkaline soil*
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## **Vegetable market inaugurated**

*Free meals for farmers visiting APMCs mooted*

Minister for Horticulture Shamanur Shivashankarappa has said that the State government is planning to provide free meals to farmers visiting Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees (APMC) to sell their produce.

Addressing the inaugural function of the Fruit and Vegetable Wholesale Market in Taj Sultanpur on the outskirts of Kalaburagi city on Tuesday, Mr. Shivashankarappa listed out a number of measures the State government proposed to take up for the benefit of the farming community.

### **E-marketing**

He said the government was planning construct godowns in villages to help farmers stock produce free of cost. This would ensure farmers could get a good price for their produce when prices varied.

The e-marketing services launched in APMCs aims at enlarging the market through e-auctioning system, where traders from any part can bid for the farm produce at a particular market. Minister for Municipal Administration and Minority Affairs Qamarul Islam, in his inaugural speech, said that the wholesale market was constructed on 20 acres of land at an estimated cost of Rs. 19.39 crore.

The market has 80 shops for vendors, and the construction of 245 houses for workers has been taken up on 6 acres of nearby land. Leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, and MLAs and MLCs were present.

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- *Free meals for farmers visiting APMC mooted*
  - *'Government planning to set up godowns in villages'*
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## **Trademark for Pokkali rice**

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research-Krishi Vigyan Kendra attached to the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute here has registered a trademark *Jaiva Pokkali* at the Chennai trademark registry to be leased free to groups of pokkali farmers, who wish to use the trademark on their produce.

The registration has been done in class 29, which includes fish and in 30, which includes cereals. The traditional pokkali cultivation is in cycles of one fish and one rice crop through the year. Though the trademark is now the property of KVK, it will be “leased free of cost to farmer groups who are interested” in marketing their pokkali produce, says a press release from the KVK. However, such groups have to sign an MoU with the KVK. Pokkali is a rice variety that is now in the geographical indication registry. Grown in the coastal areas of Alappuzha, Ernakulam and Thrissur, the rice variety is resistant to salt and can survive in flooded conditions.

Special Correspondent

## **Villages in Udupi to be selected under Gram Vikas Yojana**



Savita S. Kotian (third from right), president of Udupi Zilla Panchayat, chairing the Karnataka Development Programme review meeting in Udupi on Tuesday.

M. Kanagavalli, Chief Executive Officer of Udupi Zilla Panchayat, said on Tuesday that the process of selection of five villages each in five Assembly constituencies of the district under the Gram Vikas Yojana was on. She was speaking at the monthly Karnataka Development Programme review meeting here.

Ms. Kanagavalli said that Rs. 75 lakh would be released to each village for the implementation of development works. She said that under the Swachh Bharat campaign, efforts would be made to construct toilets in villages by September 25.

She directed the nodal officers to submit details of the toilets constructed and submit a report to her. She also directed them to give priority to construction of toilets so that Udupi could become an open defecation-free district.

She directed the executive officers of taluk panchayats to identify land in the newly carved out gram panchayats in the district so that offices could be built there.

Anthony Maria Immanuel, Deputy Director of Agriculture, said that normally, the district should have received 4,027 mm of rainfall by now. But, it had received only 3,083 mm. In some places, crops were withering. Already, the department had distributed relief for crop damage in 100 hectares of land. Preparations were on to cultivate groundnut as second crop in parts of the district.

There had been 50 mm of rainfall in the district since the night of September 14. This had increased the prospects of a good second crop.

Though there was a scheme to take farmers of the district on a tour, it could not be taken up because of the high prices being demanded by tourist agencies, Mr. Immanuel said.

Ms. Kanagavalli said that the grant allotted for the farmers' tour should be utilised within the given timeframe. She asked the officials of the Minor Irrigation Department to submit complete details of the vented dams in the district.

District Health and Family Welfare Officer Rohini said that 28 cases of A (H1N1) had been reported in the district and four persons had died due to it in August. Twenty-four cases of dengue had been reported. Awareness was being created about precautionary measures to check the spread A (H1N1) influenza prevention, she said.

### **Organic farmers trained in certifying crops**

*Event by Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Agricultural Research Station*



M. Pandiyan, professor and head, Agricultural Research Station and Krishi Vigyan Kendra talking to farmers about organic farming. -Photo: Special Arrangement

Organically grown vegetables and fruits are much in demand among health conscious consumers. This is where certification for organic produce could come handy for farmers taking the natural route for raising crops.

Though many organic farmers in Vellore said they are aware of organic certification programme, they lacked information on how to get it done.

To help farmers to be in the know-how of the certification procedures, the Agricultural Research Station (ARS) and Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Virinjipuram, organised a training programme on organic certification. Around 45 farmers took part in the training.

The Organic Certification Department of the government will monitor registered farms for a period of three years to ensure that no chemical fertilisers or pesticides are used to raise the crops, M. Pandiyan, professor and head, ARS and KVK said. The department carries out certification of organic production system. Authorities will conduct periodic and surprise inspections of the fields during the three-year period, he added.

“We had brought a resource person to explain the certification procedures and benefits to our farmers. Farmers have to follow certain procedures that have been laid out by the department such as in pest control, soil fertility. Once the produce is certified as organic, the farmer will be able to get a good price in the market and get profits,” he said.

Several organic farmers in Vellore are raising crops such as banana, tomatoes, brinjal, lady’s fingers and greens.

### **Tag for produce**

Farmers felt that the certification could provide the organic tag for the produce and fetch good price. D. Kumaran, an organic farmer in Mottupalayam said the training was a real eye-opener. “I did not know about the certification procedures. I have been raising organic crops for the last four years, and have read and followed books on organic farming without knowing the ways and means for organic cultivation,” he said.

He has been raising crops on five acres of land, and it includes papaya, vegetables such as tomato, brinjal and chillies, and paddy for once a year.

Through this training, Mr. Kumaran said they have come to know of the numerous opportunities for marketing the organic produce including export opportunities.

D. Damodaran, another organic farmer at Vellari village, Gudiyatham said many farmers like him did not know how to get the organic identity for their produce until now. “Certification could fetch our produce a good price and consumers. ,” he said.

Organically produced vegetables, fruits and flowers had a longer shelf life than those raised inorganically using pesticides and chemical fertilisers. .

### **Training programme on pest management**

More than 100 agricultural input dealers from Vellore and Tiruvannamalai districts participated in a training programme on sugarcane insect pest management techniques organised jointly by the Salem branch of Dhanuka Agritech Limited, a Gurgaon-based agri-chemical company and the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Sugarcane Research Station, Melalathur under their public-private partnership initiative here recently.

A. Thirumurugan, Professor and Head of the TNAU Sugarcane Research Station spoke of the various insects attacking sugarcane and their symptoms, and management of the same by an integration of cultural, biological and chemical methods.

Abhishek Dhanuka, Company Director explained the need for water conservation for the future generations, and the benefits of interventions in farming.

### **The organic way**

Café Ethnic is different and as the name indicates serves variety of traditional dishes made with millets grown in an organic way. Ever since it was launched over a decade ago, it has captured the imagination of both epicureans and millet promoters. Located at Zaheerbad, just off the

Hyderabad- Mumbai highway, it is run by Deccan Development Society as part of its efforts to popularise millets, some of which have become “forgotten crops”. The menu has a range of delicacies like Korra (Foxtail Millet) / Saama (Little Millet) /Arika Khichdi, Korra Dosa, Korra Bajji, Jonna (Sorghum) / Taida (Ragi) / Sajja Rotte (Pearl Millet). Then there are Sajja Appalu, Sajja Malida, Taida Ambali, Saama Payasam, Noone Polelu, Taida laddu, Jonna pyalala laddu. And many more mouth-watering dishes that are tasty, packed with nutrition and good for health. Foxtail and little millets are fibre-rich and have more iron, protein and kerotene.

### **Do livestock freebies work for farmers?**

Has the rural economy benefited from the government scheme of free distribution of milch cows and goats?

Intervening in one of the lively debates, a rarity in the Assembly in recent times, the Minister of Animal Husbandry, T.K.M. Chinnaya, said the government has distributed 23 lakh goats to over 5.5 lakh beneficiaries so far and over 31 lakh kids were born out of them and valued at about Rs. 778 crore.

Likewise, 48,000 milch cows had been distributed to beneficiaries in about 1000 village panchayats and 1.70 lakh litres of milk was produced from the cows. He was responding to DMK MLA K.R. Periyakaruppan’s speech during the discussion on the demand for the dairy development, animal husbandry and fishing departments.

The DMK MLA wanted to know why the government was not paying the due for the milk supplied by the farmers on time. As a farmer, he said from his personal experience that the payment was pending for 25 days.

The Minister for Milk and Dairy Development, B.V. Ramana, said that till August the pending amount was only Rs 45 crore. A few minutes later, the Minister said what the member said was not true and that they were paying advance to the co-operative societies.



Mr. Periyakaruppan said he lived in Aralikottai village in Sivagangai district and he had not received the payment for more than 20 days. Finance Minister O. Panneerselvam intervened and said the goat scheme was really beneficial to the rural economy with 53,000 kids born in Theni district alone. It was then the Minister chipped in to give details of the free milch cow and goat scheme.

The DMK MLA was clever enough to buy time from the Speaker and raise the issues of Aavin milk price hike. The Minister said Aavin, which had suffered a loss during the DMK rule, was making Rs 150 crore profit now.

Mr. Periyakaruppan, complaining that the Ministers took most of his time, said the government should not look at services in terms of profit or loss.

#### **46 teams for FMD vaccination campaign in Tiruvarur district**

Considering the damage potential to dairy farmers and to prevent loss of cattle due to foot-and-mouth disease in Tiruvarur district, the Department of Animal Husbandry has been taking intense steps to vaccinate all heads of cattle against the dreaded disease that has the ability to wipe out a herd in pretty quick time under the Ninth Round of the Foot and Mouth Disease Control Programme. The eighth round was completed in March last.

The programme to prevent the disease is being organised in Tiruvarur district for 21 days from the beginning of the month in which it has been planned to vaccinate the estimated 1,98,646 heads of cattle enumerated in the district, Regional Joint Director of Animal Husbandry M. David told *The Hindu* here .

Two lakh doses of vaccines have been despatched to field units in action. Forty six special teams have been specifically constituted for vaccination and they would cover 433 villages in the Tiruvarur and Mannargudi divisions of the district before next Monday and administer the vaccine to the animals, Dr. David said.

Till date, 1,47,500 animals had been vaccinated and the special teams would comfortably cover all heads of cattle before the target date, he said.

Sources in the department aver that even the distribution of free cow and goat scheme had been kept in abeyance for two months to both allow officials to concentrate in meeting the targets under the programme and to avoid any incidence of foot-and-mouth disease because of cattle brought from outside. The scheme would resume once the programme was through.

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### **New equipment for fishermen**

Fishermen venturing out into the sea on traditional craft will soon get floatation devices. Minister for Fisheries K. A. Jayapal, who announced this during the demands for the Fisheries Department in the Assembly on Tuesday, said that a sum of Rs.2.50 crore had been set aside for purchasing 10,000 such devices.

The government would also supply distress alert transmitters to mechanised boats and mechanised catamarans at 90 per cent subsidy. In the first phase, a total of 1,600 boats would get the transmitters at a cost of Rs. 2.60 crore in 2015-16. “These are especially necessary in situations where fishermen are unable to communicate with the shore,” Mr. Jayapal said. There are a total of 5,735 deep sea vessels, 27,899 mechanised catamarans and boats and 5,154 catamarans in the State. Fishermen using catamarans are exposed to the danger of being hit by the vessels.

In such situations the floatation devices would come in handy, said a fisherman. The Minister also announced that inland fishermen will now get a 50 per cent subsidy to purchase fibre reinforced plastic coracles used in fishing in lakes and tanks. A total of Rs. 1.60 crore has been allocated for this purpose. CPI (M) member Nagai Mari sought compensation for fishermen, whose boats have been seized by the Sri Lankan Navy and cannot be repaired.

## **Marketing division for Aavin**

With Aavin increasing its sale of milk and milk-based products, it is now looking to become more consumer-friendly. A separate marketing division to interact with consumers and help out in a better manner in obtaining milk cards will be formed, Minister for Dairy Development B.V. Ramana said on Tuesday.

Making the announcement, he said the division will also help serve consumers in the other districts and rural areas. He said that 25 high-speed packing machines would be installed to ensure leak-free milk packets. These would be procured at a cost of Rs. 5.25 crore. In addition, thermal transfer over printing equipment would be purchased at a cost of Rs. 1 crore so that the milk packets come with the required information.

## **Date extended for e-governance award**

Applications from students for the Excellence in e-Governance award can be submitted at the Collectorate till October 1. According to a press release, the award is presented to create awareness among students on the e-governance projects and to motivate them. The last date for receipt of applications was September 11 earlier. Now, it has been extended to October 1. Details of the award are available on [www.coimbatore.nic.in](http://www.coimbatore.nic.in)

## **Launch**

Pine Labs, an integrated payment solution company, is expanding its network in Coimbatore to simplify payment acceptance for retailers and to enhance customer experience. It already has a network of 700 points of sale. The company is extending its services to Madurai, Tiruchi, Salem and Puducherry, according to a press release.

## **Programme held**

Exide Life Insurance organised a customer awareness programme here recently.

It was help customers understand concepts of savings for a long-term. There were interactive sessions. Exide launched the initiative in July and plans to have it in 200 cities across the country.

## **Tender for 24x7 water supply soon**

The Coimbatore Corporation will take the first step towards implementing the 24x7 drinking water supply scheme by calling for bids. According to Corporation Commissioner K. Vijayakarhikeyan, the civic body will float the tender in a day or two.

It will be a two-stage process where the civic body will first identify the prospective companies and then open the financial bids.

The Corporation is floating the tender after obtaining the go-ahead from the Tamil Nadu Infrastructure Development Board for the Rs. 450-crore project.

The scheme is to revamp the water distribution network in the old city areas spread over 60 wards to provide optimum supply of Siruvani and Pilloor waters. It also includes construction of over-head tanks, sumps and fixation of meters to monitor supply. The 60 wards get over 200 million litres a day.

## **Flowers to Tirupati from Tiruchengode**

Devotees making garland to be sent to Tirupati in Tiruchengode in Namakkal district.

Seven tonnes of flowers were sent to Tirupati Tirumala Devasthanam (TTD) for the Brahmotsavam from Tiruchengode here.

Many varieties of flowers, including marigold, rose, jasmine and 'marikozhundu' purchased from Tiruchengode, Salem, Konganapuram, Attur and Rasipuram were brought to a marriage hall in Tiruchengode where over 400 devotees prepared the garlands.



The event commenced with rendering of special pujas after which devotees started using marigold flowers for making of the garlands.

The garlands are sent to the Tirumala temple for the third consecutive year from Tiruchengode. Also, 10,000 rose saplings were also sent to the temple.

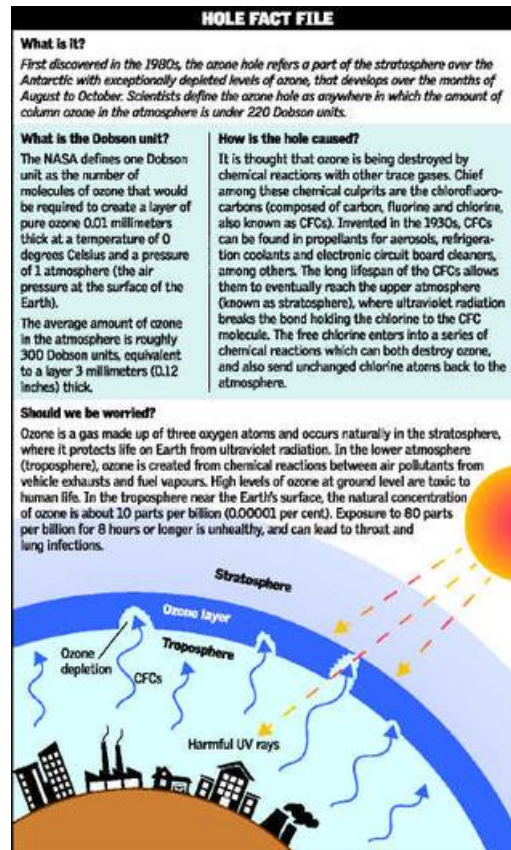
The Tirumala Tirupati Sriman Narayana Nithya Pushpa Kaingarya Sabha Trust in Konganapuram in Salem district made the arrangements for despatching the flowers to the temple. Organisers said that the flowers reached Tirupati on Tuesday.

The Brahmotsavam will be held from September 16 for nine days in which pilgrims from all over the country and abroad are expected to participate.

### **Today is World Ozone Day**

Reducing our carbon footprint, be it in our personal lives or industrial activity remains key to saving the Earth from environmental degradation, say experts in the city as the world observes the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer on Wednesday.

More commonly known as the ‘World Ozone Day’, September 16 commemorates the Montreal Protocol that was signed on this date by 24 UN member nations in 1987, to limit and ultimately phase out the production of manmade chemicals like chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and 95 other ozone-depleting materials.



The slogan for this year “Ozone: All that is there between You and UV” is meant to show how human activity can impact the ozone layer and ultimately, the survival of the Earth and its environment as we know it.

The ozone layer forms a protective shield around the Earth and staves off the ultraviolet radiation of the Sun.

The ‘ozone hole’, refers to an area of depleted ozone levels over Antarctica, which naturally occurs during August to October. “We need to understand that ozone reacts differently at different levels of the atmosphere,” A.

Aslam, assistant professor, Botany, Jamal Mohamed College, told *The Hindu* .

“Ozone in the lower atmosphere is harmful for human and plant life, while in the higher level (stratosphere) it protects our planet against ultraviolet radiation.

“But you cannot produce ozone and mechanically replace it in the depleted area,” said Dr. Aslam, who has extensive research experience in climate change.

He suggested a regulatory mechanism to check the marketing of gadgets using ozone in processes as varied as air-filtering and water-purification.

“It is important for us to see how we can streamline traffic in our city,” said Dr. Aslam.

“In a traffic jam, vehicles that are forced to slow down will have less fuel efficiency. They will emit more gases and CFCs.

The engine heats up, the air-conditioner and paint on the vehicle get affected, and this ultimately increases CFC emissions.” Car-pooling, or using public transport could lead to lesser vehicles on the roads, he added.

At home, consumers could see how much pollutant is emitted by products such as disposable vessels and pre-packaged foods. “When we burn disposable paper and plastic items, they produce CFCs, which is why it is more eco-friendly to use glass tumblers and plates,” said Dr. Aslam.

“Ozone depletion is one of the major impacts of secondary air pollutants,” said M. Premalatha, head, Department of Engineering and Environment, National Institute of Technology, Tiruchirapalli (NITT). While it is easy to see the impact of a primary and inert pollutant such as carbon dioxide on the environment (in the form of global warming), secondary pollutants are faster and more unpredictable in their effect, said Dr. Premalatha.

The department is involved in researching the potential of microalgae versus terrestrial plants to reduce global warming through photosynthesis since 2007. For the process called “carbon sequestration” (a natural or artificial method by which carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere and held in solid or liquid form), the department project used more than 100 strains of microalgae from different locations in India, of which two were identified as being able to absorb carbon dioxide emissions from industries.

The project is now used by Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), Tiruchi, to study the carbon sequestration capability of various microalgal species in flue gas, at a cost of Rs. 20. 1 lakhs, said Dr. Premalatha.

DEE has signed a memorandum of understanding with Trichy Distilleries and Chemicals Limited to use microalgae to treat organic and inorganic chemicals in distillery effluent.

“Any untreated waste becomes a source of atmospheric pollution,” said Dr. Premalatha.

India’s tropical weather is conducive for the growth of micro-organisms on solid and liquid waste, which is why treatment greater urgency, she added.

“More innovation and inventions are required to solve environmental problems, since each one is unique and no general solutions are available,” she added.

### **Fishing Harbour to get a facelift**

*Plan drawn up to spend 15.2 crore on modernization*

TDP urban president and Visakha South MLA Vasupalli Ganesh Kumar inspecting the Fishing Harbour along with VPT officials on Tuesday.

The Fishing Harbour here, known for its deplorable hygienic conditions, will get a facelift with the authorities finalising a plan to spend Rs.15.2 crore on creating amenities on par with international standards.



Creation of basic amenities like drinking water supply and toilets and improvement in drainage, facilities for drying of fish and storage of nets and other accessories are a long time demand of the fishing community. Though several attempts have been made by Visakhapatnam Port to improve the conditions, it has not yet taken any shape.



European Union has stopped accepting consignments originating from the harbour due to deteriorating sanitary conditions. The fishing harbour set up in 1976 on 24 hectares is under the administrative control of Visakhapatnam Port.

After inspection of the fishing harbour, Visakha South MLA Vasupalli Ganesh Kumar said the modernisation of the fishing harbour would be made with a total allocation of Rs.15.2 crore.

He said facilities like black top/concrete roads, proper drainage and waiting room would be created besides repair of jetty 11 damaged by Cyclone Hudhud and directed the port officials not to create any hurdles. He said street lights would also be provided in the harbour area. He said more funds would be allocated as and when required.

## Forest officers arrive in Nalgonda for field visit



The batch of trainee Forest Range Officers from Telangana Forest Academy, Dhulappally, in Nalgonda, on Monday.– Photo: Singam Venkataramana

A batch of trainee Forest Range Officers (FRO) from Telangana Forest Academy, Dhulappally, arrived on a field visit to Nalgonda.

Headed by tour in-charge Kondal Rao, Deputy Director at the Academy, the young batch of forest officials visited the forest block near Chityal on Monday.

Explaining the impact of digging trenches around the forest block, Divisional Forest Officer S. Satyanarayana said that they had dug trenches around the 124 hectare reserve forest block.

The DFO showed how the trench could help to replenish ground water and prevent the entry of domestic animals, apart from protecting the forest area from encroachments.

Mr. Satyanarayana told them that they had witnessed good results since the forest had started becoming more dense and took up plantation in the gaps with about 5,000 saplings. Later, they also visited another forest block at Chowdampally near Narketpally where they were shown the plantation on a hilly terrain. Mr. Kondal Rao said that the visit would prove to be a good experience for trainee personnel. Forest Range Officer, Devarakonda, Venkateshwarlu, was present.

## **Turmeric auctioned**

Turmeric was auctioned for Rs. 1.30 crore at the Tiruchengode Agricultural Producers Cooperative Marketing Society here on Saturday. While 'Virali' turmeric fetched a price between Rs. 6,999 and Rs. 9,689 a quintal; 'Kilangu' variety fetched a price between Rs. 6,459 and Rs. 8,015 and 'Panankali' variety fetched a price between Rs. 6,200 and Rs. 17,119 a quintal.

About 2,500 quintal of turmeric was auctioned for Rs. 1.30 crore, according to society sources. At Mallasamudram branch of Tiruchengode Agricultural Producers Cooperative Marketing Society, coconut kernels were auctioned for Rs. 5.50 lakhs on Saturday.

While first quality kernels fetched a price between Rs. 68.75 and Rs. 76.65 a bag; second quality kernels fetched a price between Rs. 46.75 and Rs. 58.85 a bag. About 160 bags of kernels were auctioned for Rs. 5.50 lakh.



## **Kundalini cultivation**

Agriculture minister is backing growth by psychic radiation. Is it real? Or even legal?



Farmers will be empowered with Rajayoga, on the basis of numerous studies allegedly conducted on this arcane subject.

Let us celebrate the halasana, the “plough posture”, which suggests that the seeds of yoga lie in India’s rolling fields and farms.

Let us rejoice, for the minister for agriculture has promised state backing for yogic farming. Farmers will be empowered with Rajayoga, on the basis of numerous studies allegedly conducted on this arcane subject. So far, almost so good. But the notion that the energised farmers will act like human capacitors and discharge beneficial rays on their sacks of seed, potash and nitrate, causing cabbages and radishes to spring briskly and autochthonously from the soil, is really a bit much. Never mind the physics and chemistry, is it even legal to irradiate GM seeds with parmatma shakti? Wouldn’t an astral licence be necessary?

Rajayoga will apparently replenish the farmer’s lost confidence in the “age-tested knowledge of farming”. Is the good minister, then, speaking up for the loonies who think the Green Revolution was a great perversion with no redeeming qualities? Would the minister oppose GM trials, then, since the technology removes agriculture even further from traditional practices? If ancient technologies like grafting are better than the modern practice of fiddling with genetic material, perhaps there is reason to rewind beyond the agricultural revolution and recapture the lost glory of the hunter-gatherers? Numerous peer-reviewed studies suggest that humans find it hard to digest grains, pulses and milk because the fruits of agriculture were not part of the ancient diet. Shall we discard them?

Essentially, this nation is all for yoga, and it should be performed in the farthest field as enthusiastically as it was on the capital’s Rajpath. But yoga is a tool useful for the objectives of the health ministry, not the agriculture ministry. The cabbages and radishes can do without it. They get their health kick from phosphates.



**THE TIMES OF INDIA**

**Modern veggie, fruit mkts to come up in HP**

Himachal Pradesh will soon establish world-class vegetable and fruit markets in all districts of the state. Himachal Pradesh Agricultural Marketing

Board advisor-cum-vice chairman Devender Shyam said that 12 spaces had been marked for the purpose and a feasibility report of the markets would be prepared soon. "Construction shall start next year and these markets will be huge with all modern facilities including large parking spaces.

We are also planning to build controlled atmosphere cold storages along with these markets where our growers can store their produce if they feel they can get better prices after a gap of few days or weeks," he said at a four-day seminar in Manali where strategies and policies to modernize the markets are being framed.

Moreover, the problems faced by apple growers of the state in selling their produce in other states were also discussed during the seminar. The apple growers of the state shall not face any problem in other states and action will be taken if commission agents charge any commission from the fruit growers as per the direction of the Delhi High Court, said Himachal Pradesh agricultural marketing board chairman Dr Subhash Chand Manglate.

"We are working hard on marketing in many states so that our fruit growers will not have to face any problem," he said. Delhi agricultural marketing board vice chairman V P Rao said he would check if fruit growers of Himachal were being exploited in Delhi markets. "Growers can complain to us if they are being charged commission by agents. Culprits will not be spared," said Rao.

Himachal Pradesh was given an excellence award for its marketing strategies. Himachal agricultural marketing board managing director Dr H S Baweja said that it was a proud moment for a small state like Himachal to get an excellence award for the marketing of its products. "Geographic conditions of the state are very hard. We have 54 fruit and vegetable markets across the state and more are to come up in future. We are doing

extraordinary work in production, marketing and distribution of our agriculture and horticulture products," he said.

The existing fruit and vegetable markets of the country will be upgraded with installation of CCTV cameras are making the services available online, said National Council of State Agricultural Marketing Boards (COSAMB) chairman Ajmer Singh Lakhawal.

"Farmers and representatives of marketing boards of different states are being trained in all modern skills starting from production and marketing till distribution of the product. Soon our farmers and fruit growers will not be confined to the local markets," said Lakhawal.

Around 80 representatives of agricultural marketing boards of 12 states are taking part in the seminar.

### Avg wholesale onion prices dip 10%

The average wholesale onion prices at the country's largest wholesale onion market at Lasalgaon Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) declined by 10% on Monday due to rise in supply as compared with the demand. The drop was, however, not reflected in the retail markets where the kitchen staple was selling at a steep rate of Rs 50-55 a kg.

The average wholesale onion price declined to Rs 4,300 a quintal on Monday, against Rs 4,750 a quintal last Thursday. The drop in the onion prices was attributed to the increase in the supply at the key onion market. The arrival of the summer crop, which was around 15,000 quintals a day two months back, had reduced to 2,000 quintals a day recently. Almost double the quantity, around 4,000 quintals, of onions were auctioned at Lasalgaon APMC on Monday.

Sources said the average wholesale onion prices recorded an all-time high of Rs 5,700 a quintal at Lasalgaon APMC on August 22 following a decline in arrivals. The minimum and maximum prices on Monday were recorded at Rs 3,500 and Rs 5,001 a quintal, respectively.

Sources added, "Private traders are importing onions from Egypt and Afghanistan. Moreover, arrival of fresh kharif crop has also increased in other states like Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. The arrival of new crop has also started at some locations like Pune in Maharashtra, but it is in very low quantity. Hence, there will be no effect on onion prices in the country although arrivals decline at Lasalgaon APMC."

The average wholesale onion price at another major market at Pimpalgaon APMC was recorded at Rs 4,500 a quintal on Monday, against Rs 5,400 a quintal on Thursday. The minimum and maximum prices were recorded at Rs 3,500 and Rs 5,001 quintals, respectively. Around 7,500 quintals of onions were auctioned at Pimpalgaon on Monday.

### [Manali hosts agriculture marketing meeting](#)

A four-day seminar of officials of agriculture marketing boards of Karnataka, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Himachal started here on Monday. The seminar is organized to discuss the various aspects of marketing and strengthening of agriculture and horticulture produces. A group of officials, led by Delhi Agriculture Marketing Board vice-chairman V P Rao, visited agriculture produce market committee in Kullu on Monday and discussed the local marketing strategy.

Himachal Pradesh Agriculture Marketing Board managing director H S Baweja welcomed representatives of all the states and made them acquainted with the problems that farmers and fruit growers of Himachal were facing in

markets of Delhi. He also said that Himachal was working towards making state's products special brand which would help get it better prices in other states. Delhi board secretary S K Singh assured to resolve the issue soon and provide better facilities in the national capital.

### Cauliflower takes over world-class seed potato in state's cold desert

Having established its distinguished identity for production of world-class disease-resistant seed potato, the cold desert of Lahaul valley in Himachal is seeing sweeping changes with farmers replacing potato with cauliflower.

Of the total 3,470 hectare cultivated agriculture land in Lahaul, majority is under cauliflower, pushing pea cultivation to the second place. A few years ago, 1,800 hectare land was under potato cultivation, making it the major cash crop in the valley. However, potato crop has now been pushed to the third place. Both Kufri Jyoti and Kufri Chandermukhi varieties of seed potato produced in Lahaul are in danger.

Amit Shashni of Goshal village said he has been cultivating cauliflower for last three years. "It is more profitable than potato. Unfortunately, this year we are getting cheap prices for our produce as maximum farmers from the valley have grown similar crop and demand is less than production," he added.

As far as the eye can see, vast farms of cauliflower can be seen spread till the horizon. Many farmers have cultivated vegetables in the apple orchards. According to experts, the cold and dry weather of Lahaul is perfect for vegetable production. However, unavailability of water is a problem in some places. Unlike other farms of the country where farmers are forced to spray pesticides on vegetables to kill pests, there are no pests in cold environment of Lahaul.



"Cauliflowers of Lahaul are huge in size and colour is snow-white. We are transporting them to Kullu, Chandigarh, Punjab, Delhi and other parts of the country," another farmer Ajeet Sharma said. He added that he has cultivated potato and peas in a little portion of the land. "I have also tried a hand at hops. But as its price was too low, I adopted potato farming and now major crop is cauliflower."

The main markets for Lahaul's seed potato are Gujarat, West Bengal, Punjab, Haryana, UP, Maharashtra and Uttarakhand and Bhutan, Bangladesh and Nepal also sourced it from here. Uncertainty of its production, hard work and fluctuation in prices are other reasons that led farmers to adopt other crops.

### [Korba farmers get tips on pisciculture](#)

As a part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR), Bharat Aluminium Company Limited (Balco) in association with National Agriculture & Rural Development Bank (Nabard) has launched training of pisciculture for farmers of Korba district since last six months. Besides training, 40,000 fish seeds were distributed to 12 farmers and women's self help group on Saturday.

This CSR project has been initiated under watershed project in four villages of Korba district and outsourced to Raipur-based Action For Food Production, which is responsible for coordination and implementation for the programme. With help of district fisheries department, distribution of fish seeds of 'Rohu', 'Katla', 'Mrigal' etc was done.

BALCO's corporate affairs head Vinod Shrivastav said, "By implementing scientific methods in fisheries, people will get an opportunity to raise additional income for their families. Officers have assured farmers that with

help of Balco, Nabard and fishery department they would be provided every possible technical help."

### Farmers for early buy of Pusa Basmati

A delegation of farmers, 'arhatiyas' (commission agents) and rice millers called on Amritsar deputy commissioner Ravi Bhagat seeking early purchase of Pusa Basmati 1509 variety and fixation of price. The delegation demanded that procurement of Pusa Basmati 1509 should be started 15 days prior to the slated schedule of October 1. They said the price should be fixed for the variety of rice to facilitate farmers.

Punjab president of Jamhoori Kisan Sabha, Satnam Singh Ajnala, said government should start early procurement of the crop in the region due to the availability of huge area for growing basmati. The farmers also raised the issue of non-availability of J-forms and said the ones they got were provided to them by some traders.

They also said the procurement agencies should also remain present in the mandis at the time of basmati purchase. D C Baghat assured the delegation that he would take up the issues with additional chief secretary (development) to resolve the issues as soon as possible. He also directed all procurement agencies of Amritsar and Tarn Taran districts to ensure hassle-free procurement, besides facilitating farmers and 'arhatiyas'.

### Government expects Rs 36,000-crore investment in green energy corridors

The government is expecting an investment of Rs 36,000 crore in [green energy corridors](#) across the country.

"Ministry of new and renewable energy (MNRE) expects Rs 36,000 crore public investment forthcoming into setting up of green energy corridors across high density solar-fed states of the country," a PHD chamber statement quoted MNRE secretary Upendra Tripathi as saying.



Speaking at a business event, Tripathi said MNRE will gradually "develop a new solar or [renewable zone policy](#) in due course in which the accountability and responsibility for land acquisition be laid with developers of proposed zones and the Centre will have no role in such land acquisition process," the statement said.

The secretary also informed that the the ministry would shortly release Rs 1,074 crore to states of Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan for setting up of green energy corridors.

"The new solar or renewable zone policy" will, however, happen following take off (of) the existing solar parks mission of the government as 14 states have already been given approvals to set up solar parks and four more exhibited a fresh interest for creation of such facilities to lighten their states, Tripathi said.

The ministry would evolve "A New Solar or Renewable Zone Policy in which the land acquisition would be effectively done by developers in

consensus with farmers and that the Centre will perform the role of a third party in such process," he added.

The Secretary indicated that this route could be explored to escape the provisions of existing Land Acquisition Act, the statement said.

## BusinessLine

### **Vegoil imports up 3% on robust demand, shrinking supply**



Vegetable oil imports last month were up three per cent to 13.75 lakh tonnes (13.33 lt) despite the rupee depreciating four per cent against the dollar.

The robust demand ahead of festival season led to import of 13.64 lt of edible oils and 9,477 tonnes of non-edible oils in August, said the Solvent Extractors' Association in a statement.

Soyabean oil imports hit a new record of 4.06 lt, exceeding the highest level of 3.49 lt recorded in July and 3.10 lt in August, 2001.

## **Unviable production**

The high prices of oilseeds in the domestic market have made production unviable for oil mills.

The industry faces an uncertain future particularly when the farmers have started harvesting soyabean and supply is slowly increasing in local mandis in Madhya Pradesh.

Globally, both oilseed and edible oil prices are falling consistently in last few months due to a glut, especially in palm products.

The overall import of vegetable oils between November 2014 and August was up 23 per cent at 117 lt compared to 95 lt recorded in the same period last year.

BV Mehta, Director, SEA, said the country is being used as a dumping ground for excessive supply of edible oils in the world market.

Excessive import has put tremendous pressure on the local prices, which are at a level where Indian oilseeds growing farmers are in distress and losing interest in oilseed crop.

## **Inventories**

As on September 1, the inventory at various ports is estimated at 925,000 tonnes which includes 435,000 tonnes of crude palmolein, 95,000 tonnes of refined palm oil, 240,000 tonnes of degummed soyabean oil, 110,000 tonnes of crude sunflower oil and 45,000 tonnes of rapeseed oil.

This apart, about 14 lt of edible oil is in the pipeline.

The total stock including the ones lying at ports and pipelines decreased to 23 lt (equal to 44 days requirement) from 24 lt. India's monthly requirement is about 16 lt.

## Now, Pokkali rice gets a trademark



In a move that could provide a major boost to Pokkali rice, the Krishi Vigyan Kendra – Ernakulam has registered a trade mark for the cereal at the Chennai Trade Mark Registry under the brand name Jaiva Pokkali.

### **What is pokkali**

Pokkali is a unique saline-tolerant rice variety organically cultivated in the water-logged coastal regions of Alappuzha, Thrissur and Ernakulam districts of Kerala.

The trade mark, presently the property of KVK, would be leased free of cost to farmer groups who are interested to market their pokkali products. However, such groups have to sign an agreement with KVK, said Shinoj Subramanian, Senior Scientist and Head, KVK.

The objective is to bring back the glory of this traditional naturally organic farming system by ensuring good remuneration to pokkali farmers. He said that an assured remuneration will surely attract more farmers to this mode of farming.

Earlier, Pokkali rice had received a geographical indication registration from the GI Registry Office, Chennai in 2008.

## **Acreage dips**

The area under pokkali has seen a decline over the years. From around 25,000 hectares 25 years ago, the acreage has now been reduced to around 1,000 hectares.

The decline in acreage is attributed to high labour costs, lack of suitable machinery available for farming due to heavy clay content, heavy reliance on manual labour, which is costly as well as climate dependent.

## **Marketing issues**

The marketing of a quality produce in a common brand name could attract consumers' confidence.

Production of pokkali is estimated to be around 500 tonnes per annum and the market is mainly dependent on local consumption.

As the marketing is in an unorganised manner, the pricing is in the range of Rs. 30/kg.

There is an enormous potential once the marketing starts in an organised manner way. Pokkali is synonymous with organic paddy.

KVK has also plans to form a Pokkali Farmer Producer company with funding from Nabard for widespread pokkali farming and marketing of rice, rice products and fish. Nabard has already sanctioned funds to KVK-Ernakulam for formation of the company

## **Rich harvest for fertiliser firms this Kharif season**

Fertiliser sales through this Kharif season — between April and July — outstripped sales during the same period in the previous year but an inventory build-up with dealers could affect sales through the Rabi season.

“Good rainfall distribution early in the monsoon had ensured increased demand. Hence, companies' sales increased. Since late July there has been a build-up of stock with dealers and this will probably mean slower sales in the Rabi season,” said a senior industry official.

Sales refer to the movement of fertilisers from manufacturers to dealers, who then sell them to farmers.

With more inventory, the offtake from manufacturers is likely to be lower in the coming season.



### **Good offtake**

Fertiliser Association of India data showed that domestic sales of urea touched 9.97 million tonnes (mt) in the four-month period, around 9.4 per cent more than during the same time last year.

Only the maximum retail price of urea, the most widely applied fertiliser, is fixed by the Centre.

The difference between the cost of production and the MRP — Rs. 5,360/tonne — is paid to manufacturers as a subsidy. Between April and August, urea imports also increased to 3.06 mt against 2.13 mt during the corresponding period last year. Sales of diammonium phosphate (DAP) rose 56.3 per cent over the year to touch 3.02 mt while NP/NPK fertiliser sales recorded a 20.7 per cent increase to 2.43 mt.

Only Muriate of Potash (MOP) sales for direct application registered a decline, of 7.5 per cent to 0.68 mt. Data for sales in August are expected next week. “Through June and early-July, rainfall spread and quantity was good, which saw greater sowing. This anticipation of a good monsoon saw demand increasing and more sales,” the official said.



## **Kharif acreage up**

According to Agriculture Ministry data, the Kharif acreage as of September 11 stood at 10.12 million hectares, about 1.8 per cent more than at the same time last year. However, sowing had been higher by as much as 58 per cent between June and the first week of July compared to the same period the previous year.

This was due to a promising start to the monsoon with June receiving 16 per cent surplus rainfall.

That divergence, however, narrowed to about 9 per cent by July-end and to 1.1 per cent by the end of August with rainfall deficits pegged at 17 per cent and 22 per cent in July and August, respectively. Sales of agro-chemicals such as pesticides and insecticides are likely to slide due to the poor monsoon, which, as of Tuesday, is 16 per cent deficient.

## **Agro-chemicals concern**

“The weak monsoon will impact the sector due to lower consumption across Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and parts of Gujarat. These areas account for 50 per cent of total sales,” said MK Dhanuka, Managing Director, Dhanuka Agritech.

While a drop in sales was difficult to quantify at the moment, Dhanuka said that steady rains over the southern peninsula and Maharashtra’s vegetable belt could help recover some of the sales lost through the season.

## **Cardamom rules steady on strong demand**

Cardamom prices remained steady last week on good demand amid heavy arrivals at auctions held in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Arrivals continued to rise last week and stayed at three times of that of the same week previous season.

“Good export buying coupled with moderate coverage by upcountry dealers has kept the market steady,” PC Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC, told *BusinessLine*.

*He said the erratic monsoon conditions are attributed to the change in the market sentiment.*

*Arrivals last week increased to 846 tonnes from 808 tonnes the previous week .*

*The individual auction average went up last week and vacillated between Rs. 640 and Rs. 685 a kg.*

*Of the current arrivals, 8 mm and 7 mm capsules constituted 30 per cent each. Hence, bulk capsules were fetching Rs. 700 a kg. Total arrivals during the season up to September 12 stood at 4,385 tonnes (1,848 tonnes). Sales were at 4,324 tonnes and 1,808 tonnes respectively.*

*The auction average as on September 12 was at Rs. 652.79 a kg (Rs. 821.83).*

*Prices of graded varieties (Rs. /kg): 8 mm bold good colour 925-975; 7-8 mm 720-740; 6-7 mm 630-650; below 6 mm: 590-600.*

### **Slack demand grinds turmeric**

Spot turmeric prices decreased at Erode markets due to want of demand.

“We are waiting for fresh demand from North India, so the traders are buying very limited but quality stock. Unfortunately only medium quality turmeric is arriving and the sales were only 55 per cent,” said traders.

Most traders expected the arrival of Salem Hybrid turmeric but only medium variety Salem Hybrid turmeric arrived and all the 150 bags were sold for decreased price.

On Tuesday, the finger turmeric decreased by ₹100 a quintal and the root variety was up ₹350.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger turmeric fetched ₹5,155-7,685 a quintal; the root variety ₹5,100-7,558. Of the arrival of 1,417 bags, 710 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at ₹6,639-7,685 and the root variety ₹6,389-7,399. 574 bags of turmeric was sold against the arrival of 1,021 bags.

## Business Standard

Veg oil import duty may rise



Vegetable oil import during August touched 1,374,049 tonnes, up from 1,333,480 tonnes in the same month a year ago. The overall import of vegetable oils between November 2014 and August 2015 rose 23 per cent from 9,525,374 tonnes in August 2014 to 11,725,065 tonnes in August this year, according to data compiled by the Solvents Extractors' of India (SEA).

“India is being used as a dumping ground for excessive supply of edible oils in the world market,” said B V Mehta, executive director, SEA.

He added the Union ministries of food, commerce and agriculture have recommended an increase in duty on crude oils and refined oils and now it is under consideration of the finance ministry.

According to sources, the decision is likely to be taken in the Cabinet meeting being held in a day or two.

Excessive import has put tremendous pressure on local prices. As a result, Indian oilseeds-growing farmers are in distress and losing interest in the crop. India's dependence on imported oil has further increased to nearly 70 per cent, an alarming situation for the country's food security.

India imported 406,000 tonnes of soybean oil in August 2015, which is among the highest. In the past, high imports had been recorded in July 2015 (349,000 tonnes) and August 2001 (310,000 tonnes).

Coconut output likely to drop 10% on below normal monsoon



The Coconut Development Board (CDB) has said coconut production across the country is likely to be around 10 per cent lower than in the previous season, owing to a below-normal southwest monsoon. For 2014-15, production stood at 19,503 million nuts.

In Andhra Pradesh, the CDB estimates, production is likely to fall 40 per cent compared to 851 million nuts last season. The declines in Karnataka and Kerala are estimated at 24 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively. Tamil Nadu is expected to record a four per cent increase.

These four states account for 93 per cent of national production.

CBD Chairman T K Jose said a poor monsoon had affected production in all the major producing states. He added more varied use of coconut and demand for tender nuts would be vital to determining prices.

Around 10 per cent of the overall production is used for products such as desiccated coconut powder, coconut milk, milk powder and virgin coconut oil. Jose said export of virgin coconut oil had increased sixfold during the June quarter of this financial year, compared to the corresponding period of 2014-15.

CBD plans to increase the production of Neera, a soft drink made from coconut water. It also plans to issue licences to manufacture Neera to all the 624 coconut producer federations.

Jose said adulteration of coconut oil was one of the biggest challenges, adding those behind this had sabotaged the market by supplying cheap and adulterated oil. To address this, coconut producer companies are planning an entry into the branded oil segment in a big way. So far, 14 such companies have started producing branded products.