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# THE HINDU

## **‘PACS can function as multi-service centre’**

The Primary Agricultural Credit Cooperative Societies (PACS) could function as Multi Service Centres (MSCs) for their members, said District Collector M. Mathivanan at a regional-level workshop organised by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) here on Friday.

The NABARD organised the workshop for the officials of select PACS in Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, and Nagapattinamon districts.

Mr. Mathivanan while appreciating the efforts of NABARD for conducting the workshop for the officials of PACS, urged the participants to make use of the programme to the extent possible for the benefit of their society and its members.

N. Ravishankar, District Development Manager, NABARD, said the PACS had been playing an important role in purveying the credit to small and marginal farmers. The workshop was intended to reiterate that the PACS should provide many other services apart from the farm credit to its members, he mentioned.

K. Subramanian, NABARD DDM, Thanjavur, highlighted the financial support available with the NABARD for PACS for establishing the multi-service centres.

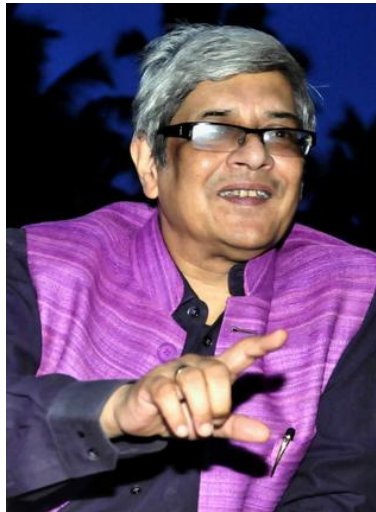
Some participants shared their experiences of undertaking multiple activities with the financial assistance availed from NABARD.

Managing Director of Kumbakonam District Central Cooperative Bank Rajendra Prasad said there existed a lot of scope for the PACS to offer a

bouquet of services to their members and that included provision of storage facilities, agro-services, and agro processing centres.

### **The Kerala link to Niti Aayog**

*It is a lot about people's planning which the State is familiar with, says Aayog member*



Bibek Debroy, member, Niti Aayog.

Kerala could find itself on familiar turf while working with the newly constituted Niti Aayog, with the Aayog being about people planning for themselves, a concept that the State has been familiar with right from the mid 90s.

Niti Aayog member Bibek Debroy, in the State capital on a short visit, said there were similarities between the concept of the Aayog and that of Kerala's People's Planning Campaign (PPC).

A successful collaboration however, would depend on how the State went about deciding on what it wanted. The PPC was not implemented in its entirety in Kerala, with only fiscal decentralisation happening here, he said, adding that the Aayog, playing the role of a facilitator, would be taking forward a similar concept of citizens planning for themselves.

## **Smartness of cities**

The Smart Cities Mission was an example, with the citizens to decide what kind and form of smartness they wanted in their cities. This sort of institutional change was currently being viewed with apprehension, but the idea of citizen participation would hopefully catch on soon, he said.

“We do not want Chief Ministers coming to us; we will be going to them. We are not in the business of dictating, instead, it will be up to the States to identify their priorities, preferably based on and built around their strengths and weaknesses in areas that require development,” he said.

Pointing out that Kerala had been ‘very forthcoming from Day One’ in its interactions with the Aayog, Mr. Debroy also hinted that there would be plenty of similarities between the State’s idea of development and the Aayog’s priorities.

## **Priorities**

“The Niti Aayog’s priorities will always be social sectors; deprived areas (deprived villages and districts); not just health or education sectors, but roads, electricity, agricultural and rural development as well. Youth and women will always be on our priority list, just like areas in the North East that have been cut off from mainstream,” he said.

Mr. Debroy also suggested that citizens should check for themselves the information that was available on the Union government’s websites to understand the concept. The Aayog’s website was in the process of slowly becoming a forum for interaction between the Centre’s think-tank and citizens, he said, adding that the Aayog was already active on Twitter (@NITIAayog) while its presence on Facebook would improve soon.

## **CPCRI to adopt villages**

*Scheme to promote interface between farmers and technology*

A workshop on 'Mera Gaon Mera Gaurav' (My Village My Pride) was organised at the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI) here recently.

According to CPCRI Director P. Chowdappa, the innovative scheme of the Union Ministry of Agriculture aims at promoting direct interface between farmers and technology. The objective is to provide farmers with requisite information, knowledge and suggestions on regular basis by adopting villages.

Accordingly, scientists from the CPCRI will facilitate farmers with timely information on research findings and technologies, opportunities for investment in agriculture, extension activities and facilities provided by different agencies.

A multidisciplinary team of scientists from the CPCRI will select villages in Kasaragod district for the project. The initiatives will commence on October 1.

Apart from experts from the CPCRI headquarters here, scientists from the regional stations and research centres of the CPCRI at Kayamkulam and at Vittal in Karnataka, Kahikuchi in Assam and Mohitnagar in West Bengal will adopt villages in their respective localities.

The initiative will be implemented with the support of local self-governments, Department of Agriculture, ATMA, non-governmental organisations and other agencies involved in implementing grassroots agricultural development and extension activities.

M. Govindan, Dean, College of Agriculture, Kerala Agricultural University, Padannakkad; and P. Pradeep, Principal Agricultural Officer, Kasaragod, participated in the workshop.

Deliberations on selection of villages, interface with stakeholders, baseline survey, linkage with other agencies, demonstration of technologies were held during the workshop.

## **Theses and research papers**

### *KAU takes steps to prevent plagiarism*

Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) has initiated steps to prevent plagiarism in theses and research papers submitted by its staff and students. “This is the first time that a university in the State is taking steps to block plagiarism virus even though such cases have never occurred in KAU.

The move to conduct workshops for teachers, scientists and librarians in detecting and preventing plagiarism was initiated by the Academic Council. KAU has the software for the purpose,” said Dr. Rajendran, Vice Chancellor.

Henceforth, KAU will accept doctoral and M.Sc. theses only after checking for plagiarism, he said. — Staff Reporter

## **Swine fever vaccine being developed**

The Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS) was engaged in developing a vaccine for swine fever among pigs, its Vice Chancellor S.Thilagar said here on Friday.

“Field trials of the vaccine are to be held soon,” he said addressing a press conference here. Dr.Thilagar clarified that swine fever was entirely different from swine flu affecting human beings and the incidence of the former was confined to pigs alone.

The TANUVAS, he said, had already brought out vaccines such as the oral pellet vaccine for Ranikhet disease and vaccines against mastitis and blue tongue.

The State government through the Animal Husbandry Department grants passed recently in the Assembly had announced the setting up of a DNA Molecular Analysis Centre at the Madras Veterinary College at a cost of Rs.2 crore and sanctioned Rs.6 crore for additional infrastructure at the Orathanadu and Tirunelveli veterinary colleges.

The university's Madurai Training and Research Centre would be upgraded as a disease diagnostic centre at a cost of Rs.1 crore.

All these projects would be taken up soon and completed over the next six to nine months, he said.

The Bargur Cattle Research Station has been set up for taking up research towards protecting and preserving the traditional cattle species.

A smaller level research project on preserving local dog breeds such as Rajapalayam and Kombai species has been taken up at the Tirunelveli Veterinary College.

The university has brought out e-learning modules for under graduate veterinary courses with the assistance of Indian Council of Agricultural Research, he said

The university would celebrate its Foundation Day and Livestock and Poultry Farmers Day with a meet in Tiruchi on Saturday and Sunday.

A knowledge sharing session between farmers and scientists would be held on Saturday.

Experts would brief farmers on low cost feed formulation, small scale fodder production, organic waste management, infertility management in cattle, pet animal vaccination, emerging diseases in livestock and poultry.

A session for students on educational opportunities in TANUVAS would also be held.

An exhibition would be organised as part of the event covering various aspects of livestock and poultry rearing such as dairy farming, goat, sheep, desi bird, Japanese quail and pig rearing, fodder production, live exhibits of different species of livestock and poultry, and demonstration on various topics such as de-worming, azolla cultivation and machine milking of cows, he said.

The two-day event would be held at the Kalaiarangam Marriage Hall in the city.

### **Crop cultivation contest**

The Agriculture Department will organise a crop cultivation contest for 'samba' season for paddy growers in the district.

In a press release issued here on Friday, D. Chandrasekaran, Joint Director of Agriculture, said that the district-level and state-level winners will get cash awards and citation. He has appealed to farmers to participate in the contest.

### **Agriculture outperforms industry, services sectors**

Notwithstanding the ranking second in ease of doing business in the country, the quarterly assessment for the financial year 2015-16 has indicated that the Andhra Pradesh is lagging behind in achieving its targets with regard to industries and services sectors.

The agriculture sector outperformed the industry and service sectors in first quarter of 2015-16. The agriculture sector achieved set targets for first quarter for Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).

In both constant and current prices (measurements, the agriculture sector achieved its target. (The real GSDP is calculated using constant prices whereas nominal GSDP uses current prices. The real GSDP minimizes impact of inflation.)

The State government has set a target of achieving 7.96 per cent growth in industries sector for the first quarter. However, it could achieve only 7.19 per cent. Likewise, the service sectors also did not fare well, and achieved only 10.15 per cent growth rate (at current prices) as against target of 12.05 per cent.

The first quarter industrial growth is mere Rs. 27,985 crore as against the target of Rs. 36,812 crore. The service sector could achieve only Rs. 60,829 crore while the target was Rs. 65,168 crore.

Both industry and services sectors' performance was below expectations even in constant prices. The service sector achieved Rs. 32,504 crore as against target of Rs. 33,064 crore; industry sector achieved Rs. 15,834 crore compared to target of Rs. 15,946 crore.

On other hand, the agriculture sector achieved Rs. 25,305 crore exceeding target of Rs. 18,763 crore. The target was to attain 9.19 per cent growth. The growth rate, however, touched 12.52 per cent.

### **It's a slippery season for banana farmers**



A recent unseasonal squall caught the farmers in Mettupalayam taluk off-guard.

Banana farmer M. Thangaraj of Sirumugai was joyous. He was ready to harvest the bananas in a few days. But the squall of September 4 changed all that. "It lasted only a few minutes and came at a time when the buyer was in my farm," he says.



Mr. Thangaraj is not alone. There are hundreds of farmers like him who suffered crop damage in Sirumugai, Thekkampatty, Jadayampalayam and other villages in the Mettupalayam taluk, thanks to untimely rain.

According to official figures, 96 farmers have suffered crop loss.

(The State government takes into account only those farmers who have lost at least 50 per cent trees on an acre – that is roughly 550 trees or more).

The farmers in the area invest between Rs. 1.21 lakh and Rs. 1.37 lakh to raise an acre of banana but the State government gives only Rs. 7,500 in compensation. And, only for those who have lost 50 per cent or more, clarifies M. Viswanathan, another banana farmer.

The farmers cultivate ‘nenthran’, ‘kathali’, ‘robusta’ or ‘sevvazhi’ varieties serving markets in Kerala, Karnataka, a few parts of the Andhra Pradesh and also Coimbatore and Tirupur. They get Rs. 26 for a kg of ‘nenthran’, Rs. 35 for a kg of ‘kathali’, Rs. 5 – 10 for a kg of ‘robusta’ and Rs. 25 – 30 for a kg of ‘sevvazhi’.

The unseasonal squall caught the farmers off-guard, says Mr. Viswanathan. To cushion the loss from such unforeseen happenings the farmers can opt for crop insurance which they did, says Mr. Thangaraj.

“But we gave up because we did not stand to gain. Filing claims became difficult and getting money even more so, for the rule says that for farmers to get compensation, all farmers in a particular firka (a revision sub-division) should have suffered losses.”

### **Rooftop solar panels in urban local bodies**

The government on Friday announced that it would set up rooftop solar panels in all urban local body buildings as part of measures to fulfil the solar energy production target envisaged by Chief Minister Jayalalithaa.

Addressing the Assembly, Local Administration Minister S.P. Velumani said 445 solar panels have been installed in 11 corporations and 124

municipalities besides and at the DMA office building in Chennai with a total capacity of 2198 KW.

The power produced at the buildings would be utilised for office requirements, street lights and water supply works in the future.

### **Rainwater harvesting**

The Minister said in his department's policy note that the rainwater harvesting scheme, which was made mandatory in 2001, has been revived, leading to an addition of 8 tmc ft of ground water through recharge.

On drinking water supply in Chennai, the Minister said a Detailed Project Report has been prepared for a 400 MLD desalination plant at Perur. The project awaits Japanese funding, which is expected soon.

### **Palmarosa oil extraction plant proposed in Dharmapuri**

For the vast area of palmarosa cultivated lands across three blocks of Dharmapuri, the administration's initiative to promote this ozone-friendly lemongrass may quite literally be an oxygenator.

This intervention has come in the form of a State Planning Commission grant of Rs.20 lakh for a proposed palmarosa oil extraction plant here. The aromatic lemongrass has over 3,000 cultivators in Nallampalli, Dharmapuri and Morappur blocks. Today, organised as a Farmer Producer Group (FMG), the farmers are the beneficiary of the State Planning Commission grant.

As the International Ozone Day was marked in varied ways across the State, the administration tapped in on the theme of Palmarosa as an ozone- friendly alternative to chemical aromatics and inaugurated two ozone parks with palmarosa saplings.

The idea of palmarosa to symbolise ozone protection is pretty straightforward, says Collector K. Vivekanandan. Palmarosa has significant aromatic value. The unit proposed under the State Planning Commission grant is essentially a boiler plant, where the grass is reduced to a concentrate. Palmarosa has an array of uses - from perfumes and room fresheners, to use in hand wash and perfumed candles.

Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) in perfume sprays and other cosmetics can be curbed by use of home-grown naturally available aromatic compounds. Palmarosa oil can be used for varied purposes and there are small units that are already purchasing the grass from farmers for incense sticks.

“The Ozone Park is conceptualised on lines of an “oxygen factory” that might evoke the curiosity among people who visit the collectorate. We are simultaneously listing out other ozone supporting plants and a certain type of Tulasi falls under this category,” says the Collector.

Also, taking cue from the rare endangered threatened species list, the administration has planned to identify traditional plant species that may now be on the brink of extinction, and revive their growth through the forest department.

While the ozone park at the collectorate is of demonstrative value, the administration has pitched a higher note with a proposal to set up ‘Bhima Bamboo’ plant enclaves in high traffic zones.

This special variety bamboo has high carbon sequestration ability (four times the ability to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere) and has quick growth. The Forest Department has already commissioned in growing saplings for the proposed Bhima bamboo enclaves.

### **Rains raise farmers' hopes**

Women farmers at their cotton field that has excellent crop health at Sawargaon in Adilabad district on Friday.

Rainfall since the last two days in the district has been beneficial in all aspects, to say the least. It has brought copious inflows into projects, improved groundwater level and destroyed all pest on standing crop, much to the relief of the farming community.



“The rainfall has washed away whatever pest there was on cotton crop,” pointed out farmer Jadhav Anasuya of Sawargaon in Neredigonda mandal, who entered her field for the first time since the rain on September 16. “We can now expect a bumper harvest provided there is no further rainfall,” he added.

This phase of rainfall has also obliterated the deficit in monsoon so that the number of mandals showing less than normal rainfall has fallen from 40 to 14 and the number of those recording normal rainfall has risen to 38. The actual rainfall received since June 1 is about 800 mm against a normal of 935 mm.

Almost all the projects are at full reservoir level after receiving good inflows and water released from Mathadivagu and Kumram Bheem project.

Though there was no discharge from Kumram Bheem project on Friday, about 28,000 cusecs was released by lifting 5 gates the previous day.

## **Minister monitors fine rice scheme**

*Action will be taken against offenders in case of irregularities, says Etala*

Minister for Finance and Civil Supplies Etala Rajender has warned the officials of serious action if they resort to any kind of irregularities in the implementation of fine rice scheme to the student community.

He said that the government was supplying adequate quantity of fine rice for the implementation of the midday meals to the students and urged upon the authorities to ensure that the children get stomach full of fine rice meals.

Participating in the district vigilance and monitoring committee in Karimnagar on Friday, the Minister said that they would increase the quantity of fine rice to the students if the present rice was not sufficient. He also warned the officials of stern action if they fail to provide egg twice in a week to the students eating midday meals.

Following the complaints over the violation of protocol, the Minister instructed the officials to follow the protocol and inform all elected representatives. He said that the officials should inform the Minister if the developmental work was more than Rs. 10 lakh.

Vigilance and monitoring committee chairman and Karimnagar MP B. Vinod Kumar said that they would constitute village education committees in all schools.

Committee vice-chairman and Peddapalli MP Balka Suman also expressed concern over the violation of protocol by the district authorities in the district.

Collector Neetu Prasad said that they were taking all measures for the installation of RO water plants in all KGBVs and model schools in the district. She said that the Infosys had come forward for the installation of 500 fabricated toilets in the government schools. ZP chairperson Tula Uma, Chief Whip Koppula Eshwar, legislators Rasamayi Balakishan, B Shoba, G

Kamalakar, S Satyanarayana, D Manohar Reddy, MLC P Sudhakar Reddy, joint Collector Pausumi Basu and others were also present.

### **Plantation of 50,000 saplings taken up in Warangal**



Finance Minister E. Rajender launching the boat service in Pakhal lake in Warangal on Friday

As part of the Haritha Haram programme, Finance Minister E. Rajender and Forest Minister J. Ramanna launched the plantation of 50,000 custard apple saplings in the forest areas of Khanapur and Narasampet mandals here on Friday. They also inaugurated boat service in the sprawling Pakhal lake in a bid to promote tourism.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Rajender said that Haritha Haram was aimed at benefitting all sections of the society. Besides improving the greenery, it results in good rainfall.

Mr. Ramanna said the TRS government dispelled the notions that a separate State was not viable and people would not get power supply. “Within a year, we succeeded in providing enough power. Soon, farmers will also get power supply round the clock,” he said.

### **Mango lassi**

Mangos in India are amazing, and they come in different flavours and aromas. They are not just high in Vitamin C, Vitamin K, fibre and protein; they are pretty much your summer elixir drink.

Since this recipe replaces buttermilk with nut milk, it is not just healthier, but this recipe is also vegan-friendly, and for lactose-intolerant people, and just plain healthier.



**Ingredients:**

Mangoes – Two to three ripened

Banana – one ripened

Honey – One tbsp

Nut milk – one cup (of almond, cashew or soy)

Sea salt – half tsp

**Directions:**

Using a high-speed blender, blend all the ingredients above until smooth and creamy. Serve with ice.



**Express Recipes: How to make crispy Bread Rolls**

Crispy fried exterior and warm soft inside — just the thought of bread rolls takes my taste buds on a memory lane.



Crispy fried exterior and warm soft inside — just the thought of bread rolls takes my taste buds on a memory lane. They used to be Sunday treats if we had behaved well the whole week. I haven't had them in ages and last weekend, out of nowhere, came back the memories of Sunday morning breakfasts in my mother's kitchen and I just had to make us some of these delectable treats.

## **Bread Roll**

Preparation Time: 10 mins | Cooking time: 20 mins| Serves 2

### **Ingredients**

6 bread slices  
½ kg potatoes  
2 green chillies, finely chopped  
2 tsp coriander powder  
1 tsp cumin powder  
Salt to taste  
¼ tsp red chilli powder  
¼ tsp turmeric powder  
1 tsp chaat masala  
A pinch of asafoetida  
Oil for frying

### **Method**

- \* Boil, peel and mash (in the same order) potatoes. Keep aside
- \* Heat 1 tbsp oil in a kadhai.



- \* When the oil is hot; add asafoetida followed by green chillies and all the spices. Stir well for about 30 seconds.
- \* Add the mashed potatoes and mix well.
- \* Cook for 2 minutes. Remove from heat and keep aside.
- \* Heat oil for frying in a deep kadhai.
- \* Fill a flat bowl with water.
- \* Taking one bread slice at a time; soak the bread slice in water; carefully press it between your palms to squeeze out all water. This can be tricky, be careful not to squeeze very hard, else the slice will break, but squeeze enough to remove all water.
- \* Keeping the bread in one palm, put some of the potato mixture in the centre of the bread and fold it to form an oval ball.
- \* Repeat for all slices.
- \* Deep fry on medium heat, till the rolls are golden brown in colour.
- \* Serve with green coriander-mint chutney and ketchup.

*Food is never just food. I believe it's story telling, it's conversation. It brings people together and it speaks a universal language! I love to play around in my kitchen. The thrill of being able to create something new and sharing it with others is what fuels my passion for cooking. The fact that dear husband is a foodie and an honest critique helps! I blog about my adventures in the kitchen at <http://www.myweekendkitchen.in/>*

### **Diet diary: Wheat and increasing incidence of celiac disease**

While improved diagnosis certainly is a factor, but it cannot alone explain the current epidemic of celiac disease.



The alarming increase in Celiac disease and gluten-related disorders over the last decade has led to much speculation, both in the scientific community and general public, regarding the reasons. Dramatic changes appear to have taken place in their symptoms and presentation after new cereal hybrids were introduced into our diet. It, therefore, points to the fact that changes in the gluten-containing cereals themselves have been the principal cause.

Sophisticated hybridisation techniques have been used to produce new strains of modern wheat, which could be high-yielding, high-gluten, disease resistant or pest resistant. These have made their way into our food supply in the absence of human safety studies. It is believed that these newer varieties are highly immunogenic compared to earlier varieties. Physically too, modern day wheat looks dwarfed when compared to the tall grass it traditionally used to be. It bears little resemblance to traditional varieties, even in terms of its chromosomal uniqueness.

The first one genome wild wheat (also called einkorn) has the simplest genetic code of the plant, containing only 14 chromosomes. Shortly after the cultivation of the first einkorn plant, the emmer variety of wheat made its appearance in the Middle East and contained 28 chromosomes. Modern wheat, however, is a 42-chromosome plant.

The difference is not only physical. Disease triggering gluten proteins are indeed expressed to higher levels in the modern variety. Other factors such as total gluten intake, use of fertilisers and pesticides and genetic susceptibility also may determine development of celiac disease and gluten sensitivity.

While improved diagnosis certainly is a factor, but it cannot alone explain the current epidemic of celiac disease.

Wheat is listed among the top eight food allergens and adverse reactions to wheat and wheat protein can be in the form of an allergy, celiac disease, skin rashes (dermatitis) or intolerance also known as non-celiac gluten intolerance (NCGI). Symptoms for allergies could be respiratory, asthma, atopic dermatitis, urticaria, and anaphylaxis.

Celiac disease is the chronic inflammation of the gut which leads to mal-absorption of food and symptoms can be diverse, ranging from diarrhoea,

gastrointestinal disturbances like abdominal distension, flatulence, pain, constipation, nausea, vomiting to growth problems, stunting and anaemia. Not everyone though presents these symptoms. In fact, only 50 per cent cases may present with typical symptoms.

Other symptoms include weight loss, lethargy, tiredness, bone problems like osteoporosis and cramps; skin problems, infertility, mouth ulcers, numbness and behavioural problems like depression, anxiety, irritability and poor school performance. Absence of typical symptoms makes the diagnosis difficult and often leads to ill health and life threatening maladies.

Symptoms and presentation of celiac disease and non-celiac gluten intolerance are similar and are associated with auto-immune diseases. With the increasing recognition of toxicity and ill-health associated with modern wheat, farmers, agriculturists, food industry, government and consumers may need to adapt to the new requirements. The exponential growth of the gluten-free market in the last few years globally cannot be ignored as yet another food fad.



**THE TIMES OF INDIA**

**Agri college receives positive response**

The state's first full fledged agricultural college, Don Bosco College of Agriculture in Sulcorna, Quepem, affiliated to Goa University has received an overwhelming response in its initial year, proving that youth are not moving away from agriculture.

The college's eight semester, four-year Bsc degree course in agriculture with its curriculum based on the national syllabus of the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) received over 90 applications from interested students this year. With a capacity of only 40 students, the college enrolled 39 students from the state including students from states of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala. Classes began on August 3 and the college is scheduled to be formally inaugurated by chief minister Laxmikant Parsekar next month.

Situated in the heart of the mining belt, and spread over 810 acres of land of which 260 acres have been brought under cultivation, the Don Bosco's property in Sulcorna is an ideal location for the college and its students to get hands on experience. Sugarcane, cashew, coconuts, bananas, papayas, guavas, egg plant, radish, okra, cluster beans and other local vegetables are already being cultivated on the farm. In the third year of their course, as part of their practical experience under 'crop production' students will each be allotted 500sq m of land and asked to profitably grow a crop. A minimum of a 1 profit will be necessary for them to pass the subject. "They can't be advising farmers to grow profitably if they can't demonstrate how it is possible," assistant professor of horticulture, Miguel Braganza, who facilitated the setting up of the college, told TOI. "This is one of the few courses promoting organic agriculture in practice at the undergraduate level. Although the students will study about pesticides and fertilizers in theory we will encourage them to use organic matter only," he adds.

Once they graduate, students will have the scope to be employed into the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) as agricultural officers. Others can pursue an MBA and enter the industry.

Starting November agro eco tourism will be encouraged at the farm. With two kms of the Kushavati River flowing through the campus, swimming, water sports and adventure trails and treks will be organized.

### **‘Crop insurance scheme a scam’**

Describing Weather-Based Crop Insurance (WBCIS) as a major scam, a veteran whistleblower in Chhattisgarh on Thursday demanded a high-level probe. Alleging that Raman Singh government blindly accepted private insurance companies' term sheets, with clauses heavily loaded in their favour, leading to losses to both the farmers as well as state exchequer. Armed with documents collected through Right to Information Act (RTI), veteran activist Rama Shankar Gupta told media, "As per guidelines issued by Centre and Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA), crops have to be insured on the basis of declaration from farmers about total sowing area. However, insurance has been done on the basis of total land area as mentioned in Kisan credit card."

Gupta said initially state government had prepared a term sheet for the scheme, but later a state-level committee approved another term sheet prepared and submitted by private insurance companies. He said as per state's announcement, maximum compensation for crop loss would be Rs 20,000 for paddy and Rs 15,000 for other crops per hectare.

"In most cases, Rs 4,000 was debited from farmer's account and an equal amount was contributed by the state government for insuring crops in an area of 10-acre," he said adding that the issue of paddy and other crops were not taken into consideration. "Even in cases where the farmers have not sworn paddy in total area, premium was calculated on the basis of total area," he claimed.

Pointing out that insurance companies have mopped up Rs 336 crore in Chhattisgarh alone, Gupta said similar schemes were being implemented in 13 other states as well. While state government carried out a publicity campaign about this scheme, Gupta said, these companies were supposed to set up weather stations at a distance of every 10km but this was not done. "Thus, the daily weather data, being provided by insurance companies to agriculture department lacked credibility," he added.

Gupta said he was contemplating to move the high court, seeking a CBI probe or a court monitored SIT probe. Former legislator Virendra Pandey, who was present, said the conditions in the term sheet, accepted by state government, was something akin to 'rain betting' and not a crop insurance scheme in its true spirit.

### **Late rain saves kharif crops**

Better late than never. The withdrawal of the monsoon on Friday brought rain to many parts of the state saving the kharif crops, the primary source of livelihood for thousands of farmers in Gujarat. Agriculture scientists across the state have welcomed the much-awaited rain.

"Although it got delayed, the rain surely lifted the spirits of millions of farmers. All kharif crops, be it paddy, groundnut or cotton, will benefit," said M C Patel, vice-chancellor of Anand Agriculture University (AAU).

"This round of shower is like raw gold for farmers in Gujarat. The state is expected to get good rain at a time when the threat of drought was looming

large over it. If proper rainfall continues, it will not only benefit the present kharif crops but also help preserve water for the winter crops," said AAU's director of research K B Kathiria.

The entire south Gujarat region, including Valsad, Navsari, Surat and Dang, received a fair amount of rain on Friday. The heavy downpour from the skies greeted citizens in Vadodara and other parts of central Gujarat giving much-needed reprieve from the sultry heat.

Several talukas in the tribal-dominated Dang district received heavy rain coupled with strong winds resulting in overflowing rivulets and waterfalls, uprooting of over two to three dozen trees. Ahwa received 157mm rain followed by 140mm in Saputara, 124mm in Subir and 103mm in Waghai.

In Tapi's Dolvan taluka, high velocity winds coupled with heavy rains damaged around 15 tin-shed houses. Navsari and Valsad districts too received heavy rain on Friday.

Vaddoara city received one-and-half inch of rain within hours. Entry gate of a Ganesh pandal in Raopura fell on the main road damaging one auto-rickshaw and two other vehicles. The road witnessed traffic jam for a while but no one was injured. Many areas also witnessed power outages.

A farm labourer died at the Karsana village of Godhra taluka in Panchmahal district due to lightning on Friday afternoon. Lightning struck Parbat Parmar, 45, and Rangit Parmar who were working at a farm. While Parbat died in the incident, Rangit was rushed to the Godhra Civil Hospital for treatment.

## THE HINDU BusinessLine

### **Centre notifies mandatory 4 mt of sugar exports for 2015-16 season**

The Centre on Friday notified the mandatory export of 4 million tonnes (mt) of sugar for the 2015-16 season (October to September).

The amount will be divided among the mills based on average production through the last three seasons.

The industry welcomed the move, saying that it will help take pressure of prices by reducing domestic stockpiles. It however, added that it will look to the Government “for help” since current prices were unviable for Indian exports.



“In view of the inventory levels with the sugar industry and to facilitate achievement of financial liquidity, minimum indicative export quotas are being specified for sugar season 2015-16 commencing October 1,” said the notification.

Mills will also be allowed to trade quotas, it added.

A subsidy formula is being mulled by the Centre to facilitate foreign sales in line with the rupee depreciation. The current subsidy scheme of ₹ 4,000/tonne for raw sugar exports, will lapse on September 30.

“A subsidy of ₹ 5,000 per tonne is our calculation but this will be reviewed since the rupee has weakened and sugar prices have begun to firm. It will be announced once the season begins,” said a senior Food Ministry official.

The Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) estimates a carryover stock of about 10.2 million tonnes (mt) from this season.

With sugar output in 2015-16 expected at 28 mt, total supply next season is pegged at 38.2 mt.

Domestic demand is estimated at 25.2 mt, which could leave a surplus of 13 mt next season.

“The decision...to export 4 mt of sugar fixing individual export quotas for each mill will help reduce most of the surplus sugar which has been depressing domestic prices,” said Abinash Verma, Director General, ISMA.

Domestic prices (ex-mill) have slid by ₹ 8-10/kg over the last 14-16 months and the directive — applicable for all grades of the sweetener — should help improve sentiment, Verma said.

Ex-mill prices are hovering around ₹ 2,300/quintal in Maharashtra and about ₹ 2,600-2,650/qtl in Uttar Pradesh.

Importantly, the decision being announced before the season will allow mills to plan production early and make necessary arrangements for production of raw and white sugar.

“Exports are essential at this stage given the large opening stock and if this experiment works then it should improve the price situation,” said Manohar Joshi, Managing Director, National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories, who added that tradable quotas will help inland mills.

If domestic prices do improve on the back of compulsory exports reducing the glut, it could help mills clear dues owed to sugarcane farmers quicker. Cane arrears across India stood at ₹ 14,000 crore at the end of August.

### **Rare Sept storm dumps heavy rain over drought-hit Maharashtra**

The depression over South Peninsula intensified into a deep depression (just below cyclone status) on Thursday and wound back to its older self the day after, India Met Department said.

The flare-up happened over Vidarbha, and much earlier than expected. It helped escalate the monsoon, now entering the last phase, to a rare September peak.

### **MORE RAIN SEEN**

Going forwards, another flare-up is predicted to come about over Gujarat, as the system moves west-northwest piloting heavy to very showers across Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.



India Met said the monsoon was ‘vigorous’ over Vidarbha and ‘active’ over Coastal Karnataka and Telengana during the 24 hours ending Friday morning.

Heavy to very rainfall was reported from (in cm) Buldana (13); Jalgaon (12); Washim (11); Yeotmal, Wardha and Khargone (10 each); Malegaon and Aurangabad (9 each); and Amravati and Parbhani (8 each).

In this manner, the rains sloshed around in one of the most drought-stricken areas of North Peninsular India and adjoining East and Central India which have accumulated massive rain deficiency during the monsoon.

Thought late in the season, these rains are expected to significantly lead to fresh inflows into the mostly empty reservoirs of the region.

### **N-W INDIA, NEXT**

After dropping most of its moisture over Konkan-Mumbai, West Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, the system may weaken but plough into the Rajasthan desert.

This could bring a trail of fresh wet spell all across West and adjoining Northwest India just as the monsoon had exited or was preparing to exit many parts of the region.

Rains are forecast to spread out from Gujarat and Kutch into southwest Rajasthan, West Rajasthan, and East Rajasthan, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

Abnormally heavy rain is forecast for parts of Himachal Pradesh and adjoining Uttarakhand after the monsoon system interacts with an incoming western disturbance.

In this manner, the withdrawal of the monsoon from Northwest India will stay disrupted through the weekend.

## **FRESH ‘LOW’**

Meanwhile, a storm ‘pulse’ entering the Myanmar region from an active West Pacific/South China Sea has set up a fresh low-pressure area over the North Andaman Sea and adjoining East-central Bay of Bengal.

Its further evolution over the Bay of Bengal will be closely watched since opinion is divided over its ability to hold on to itself across time and space to be able to cross India’s East Coast.

The US Climate Prediction Centre sees the system making it in time to cross the Andhra Pradesh coast next week and dumping heavy rain in the neighbourhood.

The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecast is not that optimistic, and suspects that the system may die out in view of a developing typhoon over the Northwest Pacific.

### **Siddaramaiah: Increase average size of farm loans to mitigate distress**

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has urged bankers to increase the average size of loans to farmer to help them tide over the present crisis.

Addressing the 132nd State Level Bankers’ Committee-Karnataka (SLBC) on Friday, Siddaramaiah said, “For a long time, the loan size has been around ₹30,000 to ₹35,000, which is very low. I appeal to all the banks to extend need-based credit to help farmers increase their income.”

### **Interest subvention**

Banks need to become more pro-active in addressing this issue as also in releasing the full quantum of loans, which is not being done in spite of subsidy and margin money being released by the State government.

Further, interest subvention schemes should be pursued in the right spirit by adhering to scheme guidelines, not creating hassles by asking for unnecessary surety or collateral security and disposing pending applications. MI Ganagi, Chief General Manager of Nabard, said, “The State is facing a severe agrarian crisis. Nabard recently conducted a study into the reasons for

farmer suicides. Mounting debt and harassment by moneylenders are the real reasons.”

RBI Regional Director Eugene E Karthak said, “RBI’s monitoring cell conducted a small research. As per the preliminary report, the reasons are crop failure and inability to repay loans taken from moneylenders at exorbitant rates.”

### **Annual credit plan**

According to the Convenor of SLBC, under the annual credit plan for 2015-16, banks in Karnataka have disbursed ₹22,331 crore as against the annual target of ₹1,12,460 crore, recording a level of 19.86 per cent under priority sector credit, during the quarter ended June 2015.

The disbursement under agriculture and allied activities was ₹14,676 crore as against annual target of ₹62,620 crore, an achievement of 23.44 per cent of the target. Out of which the crop loan/kisan credit card was to the tune of ₹8,309 crore against the annual target of ₹41,600 crore.

Disbursement under MSE sector was ₹5,834 crore against the annual target of ₹18,105 crore. Disbursement under education, housing and other priority sector was ₹142 crore, ₹892 crore and ₹787 crore against the annual target of ₹2,989 crore, ₹14,459 crore and ₹14,287 crore respectively.

### **Centre hikes import duty on edible oils by 5%**

Coming to the aid of domestic oilseeds farmers and the processing industry, the government has hiked the import duty on crude and refined edible oils by 5 per cent each. But, the industry is far from satisfied, as it believes that the hike is insufficient to prevent cheap overseas purchases.



As per the Central Board of Excise and Customs notification issued on Friday, duty on crude edible oil has been raised from 7.5 per cent to 12.5 per cent and from 15 per cent to 20 per cent on refined varieties.

“We welcome the decision to raise import duty rates, but it is not enough to help farmers or domestic refiners. The industry’s demand to create a larger duty differential between crude and refined oils by at least 10 per cent was not taken up,” said BV Mehta, Executive Director, Solvent Extractors’ Association (SEA).

The industry had pitched for a duty hike to 25 per cent and 45 per cent on crude and refined edible oil categories, respectively.

“The total impact in terms of duty could have been ₹ 2.60 per kg but the market will move just 70-80 paise. This was a good opportunity to impose higher rates since it will have generated more revenue at a time of when global prices are possibly lowest in a decade,” Mehta added.

The increase in import duty follows a meeting held earlier this week between officials from the Ministries of Commerce, Food and Consumer Affairs, and Agriculture and Hasmukh Adhia, the Revenue Secretary to review the situation.

Senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel had also written to the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in which he pitched for the import duty hike to protect farmers.

“As it stands, the import duty is too low for refined oil not to be coming in at a time when capacity utilisation is poor. Farmers will not get remunerative prices and will lose interest in the oilseed crop,” said Mehta.

As per SEA estimates, edible oil imports are likely to touch 14 million tonnes (mt) in the current year (November to October) from 11.6 mt last year. Between November 2014 and August 2015, imports are pegged at 11.56 mt.

The total import bill this year could touch \$14 billion, according to Assocham, particularly due to lower oilseeds production on the back of an El Nino-hit deficit monsoon.

### **Kharif plantings up 1.6%, late monsoon surge to help Rabi**

Almost 97 per cent of Kharif crop sowing has been completed and acreage this year is 1.6 per cent higher than at the same time last year.



Area under crops such as rice, sugarcane, cotton, soyabean and a range of pulses touched 1021.86 lakh hectares (lha) as of Friday, as per the latest estimates released by the Agriculture Ministry.

Pulses, in particular, have recorded a higher area by nearly 12 per cent although yields are unlikely to rise appreciably as per the Ministry’s first advance estimates released earlier this week. Moong and urad areas are higher by 10 per cent and 21 per cent, respectively.

However, cotton and groundnut are exceptions, having recorded lower coverage as compared to last year by 8.4 per cent and 3.6 per cent, respectively.

According to the Ministry's early estimate, production of foodgrains – which includes rice, pulses and coarse cereals – is expected to decline by 1.8 per cent to 124.05 million tonnes (mt) this year from 126.31 mt last year due to a poor monsoon.

The production estimates will be revised three more times over the year. Rainfall has been 15 per cent below normal at 705.8 mm between June 1 and September 18, according to the India Meteorology Department (IMD).

Although in its withdrawal phase, the monsoon is likely to bring much needed precipitation to parched areas in Maharashtra, Karnataka, the Konkan coast and Kerala through the week.

The southern peninsula has benefited from the rain which has seen the deficit in the region narrowing to 13 per cent as of Friday from almost 22 per cent at the end of August.

“The recovery has been led by torrential systems forming in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal and will likely converge over central India before drifting north,” said an Met agency official.

Out of 36 sub-stations, 17 have reported deficient rainfall through the four-month monsoon.

“There was initially a fear that a consecutive poor monsoon could also impact the Rabi season but with these showers over the last few days, soil moisture will improve and support better crop growth,” said a senior government official.

The late surge is also likely to improve water levels in reservoirs which as of this week was 92.63 billion cubic metres (bcm) or 59 per cent of total storage capacity, and 23 per cent lower than the average storage of the last 10 years.

# Business Standard

## Kharif sowing area up 1.6% as on Friday



Deficient [monsoon](#) notwithstanding [Kharif](#) crops sowing rose 1.6 per cent to 102.2 million hectares as on Friday, compared with 100.6 million hectares in the corresponding period of 2014-15.

Meanwhile, withdrawing monsoon recovered in major drought-affected areas, which account for one-third of India's food output.

There was a rise in the area of all kharif crops, except [jute](#) and cotton.

Pulses, whose prices are defying the general softening trend both in terms of wholesale and retail, saw an 11.6 per cent increase in the area under cultivation to 11.2 million hectares, compared to 10.1 million hectares.

Oilseeds were planted at 18.2 million hectares against 17.4 million hectares, an increase of nearly three per cent. The government on Friday increased the

import duty on edible oils by five percentage points as the import bill on them surged.

Sugarcane was cultivated on 4.88 million hectares as on Friday, marginally higher than 4.87 million hectares in the corresponding period of the previous year. As the sugar sector faces glut, the government imposed a compulsory limit on sugar mills to export the sweetener. The area under rice cultivation also rose moderately to 37.3 million hectares from 37.2 million hectares.

Coarse cereals were sown on 18.3 million hectares, 5.2 per cent higher than 17.4 million hectares in the comparable period of 2014-15.

[Cotton](#) was planted on 11.5 million hectares, nine per cent lower than 12.6 million hectares. Jute, however, was cultivated on four per cent less area at 7,80,000 hectares against 8,13,000 hectares.

According to the first advance estimate, the foodgrains output in the 2015-16 kharif season is expected to be 124 million tonnes, nearly four million tonnes more than the first estimate of 2014-15 kharif output.

However, when compared to the final kharif production of 2014-15, this year's first advanced estimate is 2.26 million tonnes less. India had achieved a record 131.27 million tonnes of foodgrain production in 2011-12.

There has been a less-than-normal southwest monsoon over 30 per cent of the country.



On Thursday and Friday, Maharashtra's Vidarbha region, Chhattisgarh and Telangana saw good rains. Odisha, central Maharashtra, Goa and Kerala, too, received showers.

The late revival of showers has narrowed the rainfall deficiency from 16 per cent to 15 per cent during June-September.