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TNAU to release new variety of brinjal

The Tamil Nadu Agriculture University (TNAU) will release a new grafted technology in brinjal for increasing the yield in the crop. The brinjal plant is being grafted with ‘sundaikai,’ which doubles the yield.

The Department of Vegetables and Crops of the Horticultural College and Research Institute of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has tested the grafted technology in multi-location fields and large scale demonstration at various districts across the state. “Different species of brinjal are cultivated in various parts of the state. The grafting technology was applied for each and every local variety – all with ‘sundaikai’ at all demonstration plots,” says K. Kumanan, Assistant Professor of the Department of Horticulture of the college.

The grafting technology brought about multiple advantages. Primarily, it resulted in extension of the life of the brinjal plant. From six months, its life got extended to one year ensuring yield round the year. Secondly, the yield per plant doubled from 5 kg to 10 kg. Most importantly, the crop was protected from pest attack and diseases.

“The abundant availability of ‘sundaikai’ is another advantage of the grafting process,” he said. Sundaikai is free from any pest attack or disease, he added.

The TNAU would release the variety during January, he added.

Awareness up for organic products

Marketing avenues have increased and there are more organic outlets



Mohan Kumar (39), a farmer at Gobichettipalayam, cultivates sugarcane and paddy on about six acres. This includes organic cultivation on nearly four acres, which he started almost a decade ago.

“For the first four years, I struggled to improve soil fertility because I had used chemical fertilizers in excess. Now, the soil has become fertile,” he says.

Though he has not gone in for organic certification, Mr. Kumar says he is struggling to market the produce. There are not many retail outlets to sell organic products.

Price

Hence, farmers sell in the regular market and the price for the organic produce is the same as for other produce coming to the daily market, he explains.

Shantha Ramasamy, who runs an organic outlet in Coimbatore for the last 11 years, sources organic- cultivated vegetables, rice, and pulses from farmers in nearby areas and also from Madurai and Kodaikanal.

Normally, organic-certified or organically cultivated produce are priced 50 per cent higher.

Though the cost is high, demand for organic vegetables is only increasing as awareness among customers has improved, she says.

Marketing avenues have increased and there are more organic outlets. There are retail outlets selling organic products in almost every town.

Suppliers

Awareness has improved among farmers too and they want to try organic cultivation. So, the number of suppliers has also gone up, especially in the last three years, she says.

Registration

An official of the Department of Agriculture says that about 5,100 farmers (29,677 acres) have registered their farms for organic certification with the department.

This includes over 50 farmers from Coimbatore and Erode districts and about 25 from Tirupur district.

Free saplings distributed to farmers

Free tree saplings are being distributed to farmers under the Tamil Nadu Bio Diversity Conservation and Greening Project, a release from the Forest Department said.

According to the press release, growing trees in private lands was the prime

motive of the project launched in 2011-12 and was supposed to last till 2018-19.

Beneficiaries will get 200 saplings per acre free of cost. Type of tree saplings would be decided based on the facts that which type would be suitable for the concerned soil type and requirement of industry.

Small and tiny farmers and Self Help Groups would get priority in receiving free saplings.

However, big farmers too could get free saplings subject to the limit of 12.5 acres the release added.

Farmers may choose to plant the saplings as regular crop or as an inter crop. Even they choose to plant them only on ridges.

Three years after the distribution of saplings farmers would be given incentives based on the number of live trees grown out of the free saplings.

Interested farmers are asked to contact, divisional forest extension office, Tiruvannamalai at 04175-295384; forest extension officer-94870 12071; Forest Range Officer, Tiruvannamalai-97875 26773 or Technical Assistant-94424 57134.

Beneficiaries of the new scheme will get 200 saplings per acre free of cost

‘Near normal monsoon for Coimbatore’

The Agro Climate Research Centre of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has said that the South West Monsoon this year for Coimbatore will be “near normal”. This means a departure of minus 11 to minus 20 per cent from the normal rainfall, Head of the Centre S. Panneerselvam told *The Hindu* .

At an average rainfall of 210 mm for the four months that constitute the South West Monsoon season, the predict shortfall could vary between 23 mm and 42 mm, he said and added that there was nothing much to worry about the “near normal” prediction.

The average rainfall for the district – tabulated based on the last 30 years’ rainfall data – Coimbatore ought to receive 43 mm in June, 69 mm in July, 30 mm in August and 68 in September.

Weather data managers classify monsoon into normal, near normal and deficit. Normal rainfall came with a variation of plus or minus 10 per cent of the normal and deficit meant drop of more than minus 20 per cent of normal rainfall.

In the 2015 South West Monsoon prediction, Coimbatore enjoyed the near normal prediction along with Tirupur, Erode, Karur, Theni and Madurai. Districts that fell under the deficit category included Virudhunagar, Tirunelveli, Tuticorin, Ramanthapuram, Sivaganga and Nagapattinam. The other districts fell under the normal category, he said.

As for Coimbatore, South West Monsoon would also lead to a drop in temperature – both day and night – by one or two degree Centigrade. The day temperature could be around 32 – 33 and the night 22 – 23.

Officers in the Agriculture Department said that farmers were geared up for the South West Monsoon season. Farmers who cultivated paddy in the PAP ayacut were ready as paddy nurseries were ready.

As against the normal 1,50,000 ha paddy cultivation, this year paddy could be cultivated on 1,30,000 ha. Likewise, millets would cover around 10,000 ha, pulses, 4,000 ha and oil seeds 3,000 ha. There was an increase in coconut area by 2,000 ha as increase in prices had propelled farmers to go in for coconut. The Agriculture Department was ready with fertilizers, pesticides and seeds, they added.

Solar dryer to help produce value-added farm products



P.Madhusudhan Reddy, Sub-Collector, inspecting the solar dryer plant at Veppanthattai.

A farmer of Annamangalam village near here has set up a solar dryer unit for manufacturing value-added farm products. The dryer has been set up under a subsidy-based programme of the Agricultural Engineering Department to enhance the shelf life of vegetables and fruits, particularly banana.

The dryer would help farmers get uniformly ripened bananas, said S.Mukilan, the farmer, who had set up the farm. Kadappa stone slabs have been installed inside the dryer to enable solar dryer to absorb heat instantly and retain it for a longer duration.

Solar dryer could improve the shelf-life of vegetables. The dryer, used mainly for amla, beans, and bananan, was set up at an estimate of Rs. 3.97 lakh, including a subsidy component of Rs. 1.84 lakh.

P.Madhusudhan Reddy, Sub-Collector, inspected the field on Saturday and appreciated the farmer's initiative. He also inspected the drip irrigation technique employed in several fields in the village.

Fall in prices brings cheer to mango lovers



The production of mangoes almost doubled this summer. —Photo: B.V.S. Bhaskar

Here is juicy news for mango lovers this year as the mango prices have become much lower compared to last few years. The production almost doubled this summer.

The mango market in Agriculture Market Yard (AMC) in Korukonda Road here has been witnessing a hectic activity from the past fortnight as the retail sellers (mostly cyclists from villages) are participating in auctions throughout the night.

According to Cherukuri Rama Rao, former chairman of AMC, the market registered entry of 50 to 60 small trucks daily till last year, but the number had crossed 120 this year. Most of the mango varieties come from Diwancheruvu, Velugubanda, Chakradwarabandham, Farizallipeta on one side, Konthamuru, Korukonda, Rajanagaram, Rampachodavaram and Kothapeta, Ravulapalem. This year Banginapalli, Chinna Rasalu, Pedda Rasalu and Collector varieties are in good demand and the prices of these varieties have also come down.

In retail market, the Banginapalli variety (big) is being sold at Rs.170 to Rs. 220 per 'paraka' (13 mangoes) and medium size are between Rs.100 and Rs.150. Rayudu Rajesh, farmer-cum-wholesale seller at Diwancheruvu wholesale market, said that large extent of harvesting, high yielding and competition between farmers to sell their produce quickly in view of onset of monsoon are the reasons for downfall in prices. He said in wholesale market the load of Banginapalli variety was at Rs. 16,000 to Rs. 30,000 a tonne, while the maximum price for the number one variety of the fruit was Rs. 20,000 per tonne last year. However, the 'Chinna Rasalu' variety which is mostly imported from Nuzvid, Mylavaram and Vissannapeta in Krishna district are costlier than last year. A dozen mangoes of 'Chinna Rasalu' variety costs as high as Rs 350 - Rs 400.

Prabhakar, an SBI employee and who is a regular customer to Kambalacheruvu mango market, said that the prices of mangoes were less compared to last year and pickle mangoes are also came down sharply.

He said that mangoes sold by the Central Prison, Rajahmundry were in a great demand, but they were sold out with in four to five days.

Pre-monsoon shower brings smiles on ryots

The pre-monsoon rains that lashed the district in the last two days has bought smiles on the farmers.

The rains are expected to help ryots to take up preparatory works and make nurseries which would be useful for seeding activity. The district has been facing drought for the last few years with the deficit in rainfall in crucial months of August and September. Paddy, maize, groundnut, sugarcane, pulses and cotton are being grown in the district in 2,41,329 hectares.

Paddy is cultivated in 1,99,345 acres every year and sowing was done hundred per cent last year. However, farmers, who depended on maize, groundnut and sugarcane, lost their investment as the yield was confined to below 30 per cent owing to the water scarcity.

Agriculture Joint Director K. Ch.Appala Swamy told *The Hindu* that the current rain would certainly to help farmers. “Rains due to South-West monsoon are yet to begin, since they have just now crossed Kerala. The pre-monsoon rains will help to take up the preparatory works. Yield will be good, if the district gets normal rainfall from second week of June,” he said.

Campaign on profitable agriculture to be launched

Anthony Maria Immanuel, Joint Director of Agriculture, said on Monday that his department would soon launch an agriculture campaign focusing on profitable agriculture . He was speaking at a meeting held at the zilla panchayat here.

Integrated agriculture

Mr. Immanuel said the campaign would emphasise on integrated agriculture and encourage farmers to take up modern farming techniques. The farmers would be given information on increasing production, crop diversity, input cost reduction on small land holdings.

They would also be encouraged to take up supplementary occupations such as dairy farming, silk rearing and fisheries.

Exhibitions

Interaction programmes of farmers with agricultural scientists would be held. Agricultural exhibitions too would be organised, Mr.

Presiding over the meeting, zilla panchayat CEO M. Kanagavalli said that implementation committees should be formed to make the agricultural campaign successful at district, taluk and hobli levels. Hobli-level programmes should be held at panchayat-level so that it reached the real beneficiaries, she said.

Rs. 75 lakh set aside

Mr. Immanuel said that an amount of Rs. 75 lakh had been set aside to implement the programme in each hobli. A taskforce had been formed for each hobli and a time table had been drawn up. Intensive publicity campaign for two days will be held in every gram panchayat.

Besides the campaign, a team of officials and agricultural scientists will interact with farmers in every gram panchayat.

The farmers would be given details of all programmes including 'Bho Chethana', 'Atma', National Food Security Mission and 'Savayava Bhagya', he said.

Srinivasa Rao, Chief Accounts Officer, and other officers were present.

Farmers would be given information on increasing production, crop diversity, and input cost reduction on small land holdings

Krishi Abhiyan in 33 hoblis from Saturday

Officials of the Agriculture, Horticulture, Sericulture, Animal Husbandry, Forest, and Fisheries departments will meet and interact with farmers and enlighten them about modern methods of cultivation.

This is part of the three-day Krishi Abhiyan programme that will begin from June 13 at all the 33 hoblis of Mysuru district.

Officials, accompanied by agricultural scientists, will help farmers take up agriculture in a scientific way and give them on the spot solutions to problems.

An 'agriculture exhibition' will also be held to educate farmers about modern implements and agriculture machineries. Technical know-how and guidelines to grow certain crops will also be provided.

M. Mahanteshappa, Joint Director of Agriculture, told *The Hindu* here on Monday that the government in its 2015–16 budget, had announced Krishi Abhiyan, under which the entire staff of agriculture and allied departments and those from universities of agricultural sciences would visit hoblis during the kharif season to meet farmers.

Teams from various departments and scientists would interact with them and resolve issues pertaining to their cropping plans on pre-specified days. The staff of all departments would have to work together under one roof at Raitha Samparka Kendras during the abhiyan.

Mr. Mahanteshappa said during the first two days, farmers will be enlightened about mechanised farming and modern techniques and on the final day, there will be an interactive session between farmers and agricultural scientists.

New schemes

He said farmers will be informed about the new scheme of renting machineries and implements.

The State government has sanctioned Rs. 75, 000 for each hobli to organise the programme, which will be inaugurated by Minister of State for Agriculture Krishna Byre Gowda, he said.

Guidance to farmers

The State government's ambitious Krishi Abhiyan programme was to be held in the first week of May to provide expert guidance to farmers prior to kharif season. The programme was, however, postponed owing to the gram panchayat elections.

Farmers have already completed about 70 per cent of the agricultural activities for the kharif season and sowing is nearing completion in whole district. The programme is to resolve issues pertaining to their cropping plans on pre-specified days and the programme is expected to provide convenient access to farmers and promote a coordinated and integrated approach.

The farmers, after a lull for the GP elections, are now fully engaged in agricultural activities all over the district.

State to test floating-cage technology in coastal districts



The State government is all set to test the viable conditions to encourage cultivation of fish through low-cost floating High-density Polyethylene cages in natural flow of water and reservoirs across the State.

The floating-cage method, in which high value fish can be grown, is considered to be one of the cheapest methods in fish farming, according to the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Kochi. Recommended by Fisheries Department Commissioner Ram Sankar Naik, who inspected the existing cages in the Krishna river at Nagayalanka in April, the State government has chalked out plans to test the method in strategic reservoirs, brackish water channels and rivers in all the coastal districts.

One unit in each district

“At least one floating cage unit will be set up in each of the costal districts, from Srikakulam to Nellore, to prepare a data base of the success and list of fish species which survive in the respective waters,” Krishna District Fisheries Department Deputy Director P. Jayaraj told *The Hindu* .

“The State government should encourage cage-based fish farming in the marine brackish waters instead of sweet water,” suggested CMFRI Former Director G. Saida Rao. He had introduced the method in India when he was the CMFRI chief and spread it across the country.

Huge demand

“When fishing is banned for most of the time in a year on both East and West Coasts of India, high value fish species such as Asian Sea Bass, Mullet, Silver Pampano must be tried in the floating cages to meet its huge demand in Indian cities,” Mr. Saida Rao said.

‘Allow entrepreneurs’

He stressed the need for the State government to use the marine space for promotion of cage technology, allowing entrepreneurs and landless farmers. On the other hand, the National Fisheries Development Board will sanction floating-cage units for those interested in taking up the method of farming with 40 per cent subsidy on the total cost.

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State to set up 100 poultry farms in Nellai district

The State government planned to establish 100 poultry farms in the district during the current fiscal, for which each beneficiary would be given subsidy of 50 per cent, Collector M. Karunakaran said.

In a statement, Dr. Karunakaran said the government, with the objective of encouraging poultry industry in districts where this venture was yet to take off in a big way, included Tirunelveli district as a ‘poultry zone’. Under this scheme, the aspirants will get 25 per cent subsidy for erecting the shed and procuring the equipment required for setting up the poultry farm.

In addition to this, the NABARD will give another 25 per cent subsidy from its ‘Broiler Venture Investment Capital’ and hence the investor will have to spend only 50 per cent of the total project cost. If the entrepreneur is not in a position to invest his share, he can approach the banks for loan.

Farmers, individuals and self-help groups may avail this assistance for establishing their own poultry farm. Besides the new aspirants, those who are already in this profession may get the assistance for expanding their venture. However, those who had already availed this subsidized loan cannot apply again.

Applicants who are jointly approved by the chick suppliers and the banks alone will be eligible to get the loan. Applications for getting the subsidy are available with the revenue divisional offices.

Filled-in applications should be submitted before June 30 in the assistant director's office along with the recommendation of the veterinarian in the nearby veterinary clinic, who will forward the application to the banks.

On getting the bank's 'in principle approval' for releasing the loan, the applicant should get the consent of the chick supplier also before sending it to the Collector for the ultimate approval for release of the grant, Dr. Karunakaran said.

Interested persons may contact the Assistant Directors of Animal Husbandry, Tirunelveli (0462 – 2321454), Ambasamudram (04634 – 260070), Tenkasi (04633 – 227744).

Moringa seeds exported to Hong Kong from Tiruchi

The Tiruchi international airport, which has been sending an array of perishable commodities to various overseas destinations, saw export of dried moringa seeds to Hong Kong .

Around 750 kg of moringa seeds were exported to the South-East Asian country by a Madurai exporter by an Air Asia flight to Hong Kong via Kuala Lumpur.

The consignment was dispatched from the export cargo terminal , airport sources said.

Although moringa (drumstick) seeds were exported to certain West Asian countries and Japan in the past, they had been dispatched to Hong Kong from the international airport here for the first time. This airport has been witness to export of perishable commodities more than other goods.

Wheat shipment arrives in Kochi port after a decade

The port of Kochi received a shipment of 31,800 tonnes of wheat on Monday. This is the first wheat shipment that has reached Kochi in a decade, said a communication from the Cochin Port Trust.

An official of the Port Trust said each of the shipment would create about 15,000 man days of work and the trade unions had been roped in to see that the wheat is evacuated in a timely manner.

Meeting

The port authority and Headload Workers' Welfare Board officials had convened a meeting of the trade unions operating in the port area for smooth operations and to prevent delay as the consignment had arrived during the monsoon season.

The wheat has been imported from Australia for a Kozhikode-based company, the press release said. It said that the next shipment was expected in a fortnight.

Shipment of 31,800 tonnes of wheat imported from Australia for a Kozhikode-based company.

Thousands take 'fish prasadam'

Fish 'prasadam' was administered to thousands of people who thronged the exhibition grounds on Monday which marked the beginning of Mrigasira Karthi.

The Fisheries Department arranged 50,000 fingerlings to be available for the 24-hour event which began 11.45 p.m. at Exhibition Grounds with another 80,000 fingerlings available on demand at Rajendranagar.

The fingerlings are being sold at Rs.15 a piece, Rs. 5 higher than previous years.

The 'prasadam' is a traditional medicine prepared by the Bathini Goud family, which has secretly guarded the formula even as it claims their preparation cure treat asthma if taken as prescribed.

After the first dose administered on Monday, six other doses are prescribed for three consecutive fortnights.

Patients are also being asked to come back for three consecutive years for complete cure besides, following a diet regimen prescribed on the family's website.

Last year, around 58,000 persons had availed the prasadam.

This time the organisers expect a bigger turnout.

The fingerlings are being sold at Rs.15 a piece, which is Rs. 5 higher than previous years

Enough water available for kuruvai: farmers' association



The Tamil Nadu government not opening the sluices of Stanley Reservoir in Mettur for kuruvai (short-term) cultivation citing shortage of water shortage was not acceptable, a farmers' association leader said.

Addressing reporters here on Monday, Tamil Nadu Farmers' Association leader C. Nallasami said the four-lakh-odd hectare cultivable area in the delta would require 80 tmc. Therefore, the government's claim that 76 feet of water in the reservoir was insufficient for meeting kuruvai cultivation was unacceptable.

Adding 10 tmc for drinking water needs makes the total requirement at 90 tmc and the current level in the reservoir translated into 35 tmc. As per the final award of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal, Karnataka must release 134 tmc in the next four months at 10 tmc in June, 34 in July, 50 in August

and 40 tmc in September. “This will leave surplus water in the reservoir for samba cultivation as well,” Mr. Nallasami said.

Commenting on the State government’s relief package for farmers in delta districts, he said the farmers did not need subsidies and freebies, but the liberty to determine the price of their produce. In short, the State government would do well to implement the recommendations of the M.S Swaminathan committee.

‘Ban all harmful food items’



Members of the Social Awareness Movement petitioned the District Collector here on Monday asking him to direct the food safety authorities concerned to test all types of packaged food items, and to impose a ban on them if found harmful to consumers. They came to the Collectorate carrying packets of some snacks stating that the manufacturers were advertising the product healthy food.

The organisation’s president J.D. Socrates claimed that no action has been taken against manufacturers of packed products so far despite repeated petitions submitted to the Collector. He alleged that a senior food safety officer here was colluding with companies against whom complaints were lodged on earlier occasion.

He said that action should be taken against juice, and flour manufacturers too.

Statue

The youth wing members of Indu Makkal Katchi (Tamilagam) in a petition asked the Government to grant permission to install statues of LTTE leader Prabhakaran across the State.

Action sought

Representatives of a trade union sought action against a watchman of a private firm for sexually harassing a widow who was staying in a house on the premises of an industrial unit at Press Colony, where her husband had worked. No action has been taken on her complaints in this regard.

Price of hill grown tapioca may decline during June-August

The Agro Market Intelligence and Business Promotion Centre (AMI&BPC) of the Department of Agricultural Marketing and Agri Business has indicated that the price of hill grown tapioca may decline and trade in the range of Rs.4800-5200 a tonne during June-August.

As per trade sources, imports from Vietnam and Thailand are expected to be higher in coming months, the AMI&BPC said in a price advisory.

Hence, the chances of a price increase are very limited and tapioca farmers have been advised to sell their produce immediately.

The price advisory was based on an analysis of the price of raw tapioca in the Salem market over the past 15 years by the AMI&BPC at the Centre for Agricultural Rural Development Studies (CARDS), Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, and a trader's survey.

Normally, raw tapioca price is calculated based on its starch content. Currently, raw tapioca fetches Rs. 7200-7800 a tonne. Sago and starch was traded at Rs. 4000 and Rs. 2500 respectively per 90kg bag during April and it declined to Rs. 3850 and Rs. 2350 respectively due to poor response from north Indian traders as they have started importing both food and industrial grade starch from Vietnam and Thailand.

Due to favourable rainfall during the last North-East Monsoon season (Oct-Nov, 2014), majority of farmers in Karumandurai, Salem district, and Kolli

Hills of Namakkal district, had taken up tapioca cultivation.

As per sources in Horticulture Department, tapioca has been cultivated on about 4,300 hectares in Kolli Hills.



Monsoon impact hard to assess now: TCA Anant



Trying to dispel confusion over weak sectoral trends such as auto sales or corporate earnings and the high gross value addition in the [manufacturing](#) sector in 2014-15, the country's chief statistician TCA Anant said that correlating a segment with the overall GVA is a strong assumption to make. In an interview with Surabhi, he further said that the impact of a weak monsoon on GDP growth in 2015-16 is difficult to assess as of now.

Excerpts:

With growth estimated at 7.3 per cent in 2014-15, India is now considered the fastest growing economy in the world. What is your view?

I personally don't take much recourse on cross country comparisons on growth without a more detailed assessment of levels as well as other structural elements which may impinge on comparisons on growth rates. Structural elements such as the composition of the economy, the total share

of different components on the economy are all important before I can try to do a simple assessment of growth rates.

Manufacturing GVA and sectoral indices

8.4%: The estimated growth in gross value addition (GVA) in manufacturing in the fourth quarter of 2014-15.

7.1%: The estimated expansion in manufacturing GVA in 2014-15.

BUT OTHER DATA SHOWS A CONTINUED WEAKNESS IN FACTORY OUTPUT:

2.8%: The estimated growth in the IIP in 2014-15

3.2%: Aggregate sales growth of 146 non-financial firms from the BSE 500 in 2014-15

5.6%: The gross credit of take last fiscal

4.99%: Growth in domestic auto sales in 2014-15.

Defending its manufacturing growth estimates Central Statistics Office said it was revised on the basis of revised manufacturing IIP.

2.3%: revised IIP of manufacturing for 2014-15 as against advance estimate of 1.6%

"Industrial production has been recovering unevenly. The weakness of consumption spending, especially in rural areas as indicated in sales slowdown of two-wheelers and tractors, continues to operate as a drag. Corporate sales have contracted."

RAGHURAM RAJAN,
GOVERNOR, RESERVE BANK OF INDIA

The Reserve Bank of India and a number of analysts have questioned the divergence between the growth in the gross value addition (GVA) in manufacturing sector and other corporate sector indicators such as sales and profits?

Let me take different terms and then try to explain. GVA can be defined in two ways —one is that it is the difference between revenue and intermediate costs. The other is that it is the sum of payments made to wages, profits, consumption of capital, etc. So if you say that the growth in GVA differs from the growth rate in profits that is bound to happen because you have not

factored in the fact that there are at least two big elements which also go into GVA — wages and consumption of fixed capital.

This is an arithmetic identity. So people will say that profitability is low, it is possible. But it may be that growth in wage costs may be such that the two add up in the direction. It has to be, because it is an arithmetic identity. Similarly, when you look at sales, you have to also look at what happened at intermediate costs because GVA is sales less intermediate costs. So it is possible that growth in sales is low but if the growth in intermediate costs is even lower then GVA can still go up. I am simply stating an arithmetic proposition.

When you get to components, then of course you have to realise that any one component you pick up will only reflect that component. So if you are talking of automobile sales, then you have to look at the GVA for automobile sector. What happens at the aggregate is then dependent on how the things add up. Let me make one more point in this. When you look at partial indicators, say automobile sales or some other indicator and you say that this growth is such but the overall growth is such, you are implicitly assuming that there is a very high degree of correlation between the segment you are seeing and the aggregate that the GDP or GVA as a whole is trying to capture. That is also a strong assumption.

Is the National Statistical Commission auditing the GDP methodology?

The National Accounts revision had been done based on a set of recommendations by the National Accounts Advisory Committee, which had been accepted by the NSC. The NSC is now doing an exercise to review the implementation of the recommendations of the advisory committee, which they ordinarily do as a matter of course and then decide on future lines of work. There will always be future line of work in any area of GDP calculation.

What do you think will be the impact of the weak monsoons on GDP growth in 2015-16 given that farm sector growth contracted for two straight quarters in 2014-15? I don't know. We need to know not only what the rainfall is going to be but also get a sense of how it is going to be distributed and how much of the distribution characteristics were internalised by the farmers at the time of planting. At this stage, we don't even have the sort of information which agriculture has at the time of its first advance estimate. So

there is no basis for me to make any statement beyond that. What will be the impact on food inflation of the weak monsoon? The same principle applies. What will be agriculture production is hard to say. Please keep in mind that growth rates are a function of a change over the base. In 2014-15, we are coming off a relatively high base in 2013-14. But the same principle may benefit 2015-16 as the base effect will be dampened. So what will be the growth rate, I am not in a position to say.

State takes steps to regulate milk



In a move aimed at regulating milk trade, the Maharashtra [government](#) has decided to crackdown on those profiteering in the trade. It has vowed to cut off supply of toxic or adulterated milk and has also launched action against those misusing Aarey stalls let out by the government in Mumbai.

Following Dairy Development Minister Eknath Khadse's missive, the state dairy development department has already sealed 70 out of the 1,811 Aarey stalls functioning in Mumbai, after these were found to be selling private milk and other unpermitted products.

The state [government](#) has also formed 28 flying squads to act against milk adulteration. Maharashtra, the seventh largest milk producer in India, is staring at a milk crisis amid crashing milk prices worldwide and surplus milk production.

Sources confirmed that Khadse, who has already held talks with private dairies for lowering retail milk prices while paying milk farmers atleast Rs 20, has also told Controller of Legal Metrology (Weights and Measures)

Sanjay Pandey to launch a drive against firms selling milk at prices higher than the maximum retail price.

The dairy department has already announced plans to issue an ordinance for initiating criminal action against private dairies and cooperatives found paying milk farmers less than Rs 20 a litre — the price state-run dairy Mahananda pays to farmers. The proposal, Khadse said, would soon be placed before the Maharashtra cabinet.

A senior dairy development department official said that during the drive against Aarey stalls, it was found that a number of these were selling milk promoted by private dairies, even as the state [government](#) has not granted permission for it. The stalls were basically set up to promote state's own brand Aarey. In fact, sources said some were found not selling Aarey products at all, while stocking private milk in an unauthorised fashion. The government has only permitted milk from seven milk cooperatives to be stocked.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

[Direct sowing of paddy: Haryana to set up demo plots](#)

Haryana agriculture department will set up demonstration plots on over 32,000 acres to promote direct sowing of paddy during this kharif season.

According to Haryana agriculture minister OP Dhankar, farm scientists have advised farmers to go for direct seeded rice (DSR) up to June 15 and through transplanting till July.

Dhankar said direct sowing of paddy reduced the cost of cultivation and resulted in greater yields. Besides, it also saved 20% to 25% of water and also lowered electricity consumption by 20% to 30%. He said adopting the DSR method increases the output of the next crop.

The demonstration plots would be set up on 2,500 acres in Yamunanagar district; 4,000 acres each in Karnal and Kurukshetra; 7,500 acres in Kaithal; 2,500 acres in Sonapat; 1,500 acres in Panipat; 2,500 acres in Jind; 1,500 acres each in Sirsa and Fatehabad; and 2,500 acres area in Palwal.

Dhankar said direct sowing of paddy would also be done on 1,000 acres in Ambala, 400 acres in Jhajjar and 600 acres in Rohtak under National Food Security Mission (NFSM). He said farmers setting up demonstration plots under NFSM would also get inputs like manure, seeds and fertilizers amounting to Rs 7,500 per hectare.

Monsoon forecast forces farmers to stick to cotton

Motivated by the higher prevailing rates of cotton, farmers in Punjab are opting for the fibre crop. Last year, farmers suffered on account of fall in exports and damage to crop due to untimely rains. Raw cotton is selling in the range of Rs 4,600-4,800 per quintal, which has driven farmers to pick the fibre crop again this kharif season.

Even in neighbouring Haryana and Rajasthan, area under cotton is likely to go up. While sowing of the crop is nearly over in Punjab and Haryana, officials and experts said about 15% planting was still pending in Rajasthan.

Farmers in the cotton belt, comprising Bathinda, Mansa, Barnala, Muktsar, Fazilka and Faridkot, are preferring to grow cotton given the forecast of deficient monsoon rainfall in Punjab. Weaker monsoon and erratic power supply may force farmers to spend more on water-intensive paddy crop for which they have to draw groundwater using diesel-run pumpsets.

As per the data compiled by the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI), this season area under the fibre crop is expected to be around 4.60-4.70 lakh hectares in Punjab, 6.50 lakh hectares in Haryana and 4.25 lakh hectares in Rajasthan. Punjab agriculture department has slightly lower estimate of 4.50 lakh hectares.

According to data, cotton was sown over 4.27 lakh hectares in Punjab in 2014, and the area under the crop was 6.39 lakh hectares and 4.14 lakh hectares in Haryana and Rajasthan respectively. From September 1, 2014, till May 31, 2015, 12 lakh bales (1 bale=170kg) arrived in the mandis of Punjab while the arrivals in Haryana and Rajasthan stood at 19.90 lakh bales and 16 lakh bales respectively.

"It is expected to witness a slight jump in these three states. Clear picture about the final figures will be out by the end of June," said CCI general manager (Punjab region) A K Srivastva.

Trade analysis agency Indian Cotton Association Limited (ICAL), which studies trends in cotton sowing and procurement, is not that optimistic about the increase in acreage of cotton. "Due to late sowing, labour shortage and high cost of picking, we expect the cotton sowing could remain at same levels or witness some decrease in these states this year. We have recorded that the sales of cotton seed is less than the previous year," said ICAL president Mahesh Sharda.

He said they were optimistic about the future prices of the commodity give the prevailing rates of raw cotton to be in the range of Rs 4,800 per quintal. He said weak monsoon would not affect the prospects of cotton crop in Punjab and neighbouring states.

Jaswant Singh, a farmer from Gehri Bhagi village of Bathinda who has sown cotton in five acres, said, "We may not have got the desired rates last year, but going by the prediction of weak monsoon we preferred to sow cotton. Growing paddy could have proved counter productive as we would have to depend more on diesel-run pumpsets to draw water for maintaining the crop."

THE HINDU BusinessLine

PM for 'multi-pronged' irrigation strategy



Urging his Government to treat a likely below-normal monsoon as an opportunity, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for the quick adoption of

a multi-pronged strategy to enhance India's irrigation network here on Monday.

Addressing officials from the Ministries of Agriculture, Water Resources, Rural Development, and Finance, as well as the NITI Aayog and the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Modi asked for a re-examination of administrative mechanisms, financial arrangements, and technology applications in the irrigation sector, according to an official release.

"Reviewing the preparations for the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana, the Prime Minister said expansion of irrigation has to be linked with a comprehensive evaluation of cropping patterns across States, as well as a judicious mix of modern and micro irrigation systems such as drip and sprinkler irrigation. Simultaneously, a thorough study should be made of various traditional irrigation methods across the country," the release said.

Modi also highlighted that young university researchers should be involved in planning irrigation policy, which he said should be worked out at the district level.

He also noted that falling groundwater levels in some states made it essential to bring an urgent shift in cropping patterns and called for a focus on maize and value-additions for the crop to make it attractive for farmers.

‘Cotton Corpn should target exports to cut inventory’

The Cotton Corporation of India, the government body buying cotton at minimum support price from farmers, will be left with an inventory of 30 lakh bales (of 170 kg each) by September-end if it continues to offload cotton at a slow pace, said Dhiren N Sheth, President, Cotton Association of India.

The huge inventory does not augur well for the new season that would begin in October and the government body would be forced undertake another massive operation to support prices, he said.

CCI procured about 87 lb in this season. It has been offering about 50,000 bales (of 170 kg each) on a daily basis on its e-auction platform. However, mills are buying only 80-90 per cent of the offering as the base price on the platform is on the higher side.

“Until now, CCI has not sold a single bale in the international market. In order to liquidate their stock, it is necessary for the CCI to sell at least some cotton in the international market,” said Sheth.

The Association has reduced its crop estimated for the coming season (starting October) to 382.75 lb from its earlier forecast of 384.50 lb in April.

The current estimate foresees total supply of 453.65 lb and domestic consumption of 310 lb.

CAI estimates cotton output at 382.75 lakh bales



The Cotton Association of India (CAI) today estimated the May output of the crop at 382.75 lakh bales for the 2014—15 season (beginning from October 1, 2014).

The total cotton crop stood at 407.25 lakh bales (of 170 kg each) during 2013—14, according to CAI data.

The main reason for reduction in the crop estimate is untimely rain in the Central Zone that has affected the output, CAI said.

Total crop in the central region in May is estimated at 204.50 lakh bales, compared to 235.75 lakh bales last year.

The Central Zone includes Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

The projected balance sheet drawn by the CAI for 2014—15 estimates total cotton supply at 453.65 lakh bales while domestic consumption is estimated at 310 lakh bales, thus leaving an available surplus of 143.65 lakh bales.

CAI further said that prediction of a below normal rainfall is a cause of concern but not a cause of panic.

The Cotton Corporation of India needs to liquidate their stock otherwise they will be left with about 30 lakh bales stock at the end of the season, it said.

Business Standard

Text of Union Agriculture Minister Shri Radha Mohan Singh at Conference of FAO at Rome

Shri Radha Mohan Singh, Union Agriculture Minister addresses the 39th session of Conference of Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, today at Rome, Italy. The full text is as follows:

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates and dear Friends.

I am delighted to address this august gathering and share with you our experiences in agricultural development and views on the work plan proposed by FAO for the next two years.

However, before I do so, let me take the opportunity to congratulate Mr. Graziano da Silva on his election as DG, FAO for a second term a couple of days back. The unanimous election itself is a testimony to the faith reposed by member nations in his leadership and vision. Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate FAO on successfully completing 70 dedicated years in the service of the poor, marginalised and hungry.

It will be remiss on my part if I do not thank the DG, FAO and his entire team for the excellent arrangements for this conference and for introducing an agenda that highlights the major issues affecting global food security and agricultural development. This conference would, I am sure, serve as the primary global platform for sharing development experiences and knowledge from different countries. I am sure the deliberations here and the outcomes would strengthen FAO in fulfilling its mandate of achieving food and nutritional security for all.

India has to support 17% of the worlds population on just 2.4% of its geographical area and we are conscious of our need for sustainable agricultural development keeping the interest of future generations in mind. Agriculture continues to be a vital component of Indias economy contributing over 16 per cent of Indias GDP in 2014-15 and providing employment to the majority (55%) of its population. Indian agriculture has

achieved self sufficiency and today takes pride in not only meeting the needs of our population but also playing a major role in agricultural trade.

India is one among the 15 leading exporters of agricultural products in the world with significant exports of cotton, rice, meat, oil meals and sugar. Export competitiveness has also been developed in specialized agricultural products like basmati rice, guar gum and castor.

Responding to shifts in consumption pattern of Indias consumers towards high value crops as well as fruit, vegetables and meat, and the price signals emanating from this shift, Indian farmers have began to switch from food-grains to more remunerative and high value crops as well as horticulture and livestock. This in turn has led to increased requirements for investment in agriculture in general and post harvest infrastructure, processing facilities & warehousing in particular. Realising the need to support the farmers and combat the negative impact of climate change and also to safeguard their production from adverse impact of declining international commodity prices, Government of India has launched major programmes for revival of public investment in agriculture, both through targeted schemes of the federal government as well as through greater devolution of resources to the provincial governments. Targeted support to farmers at large and women and small scale family farmers in particular, marginalised and vulnerable sections of the society and the poor through rationalization of subsidies combined with better social safety net through insurance and universal financial inclusion is the cornerstone of our intervention strategy.

In keeping with UN declaration of 2015 as the Year of Soils, and understanding the need to conserve the most primary source of production soil, we have launched new measures to provide Soil Health Cards to all farmers in the country in a time bound manner. This countrywide exercise in which we intend issuing more than 14 crores cards over a period of 3 years will go a long way in further increasing the production and productivity of Indian agriculture.

At the same time, National Food Security Act has been enacted with the objective of providing food and nutritional security to all by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices. At last years Committee on World Food Security (CFS) we have already made a presentation on the salient features of the Act to the membership and I will desist from reiterating them here. The Act whose implementation costs our

government over 20 billion US dollars has already started showing positive results in combating hunger and malnutrition and is the base on which we have build our intervention strategy to fulfil our commitments to the Rome Declaration under International Conference on Nutrition (ICN) last November.

There is no doubt that sustaining an overall agricultural growth rate of about 4 percent over long years is a major challenge in the face of stagnating productivity levels combined with increasing abiotic and biotic stresses which constrain crop yields. We need to focus on research products that can provide us break through in yields which can be made accessible and affordable for different categories of farmers and for this purpose there is an urgent need to further strengthen the CGIAR institutions to generate technology innovations that can be further up-scaled by national agricultural research systems. FAO must play a vital role in this. FAO remains the premier knowledge depository and partner for its member states in addressing the emerging challenges in agricultural development. It not only provides us with the platform for knowledge sharing and technical support, its initiatives through the various technical cooperation programmes that are oriented to national needs deserve special commendation. However, FAOs role in India and other such Middle Income Countries needs to be reworked and a symbiotic relationship established for an effective partnership ahead. We are glad that FAO is already thinking on these lines and this is reflected in their Medium Term Plan (MTP) and Programme of Work and Budget (PWB).

The MTP and PWB come as a breath of fresh air. The Management has made an honest attempt to list areas of priority and areas of de-emphasis in the document. This is most welcome as it helps us understand and appreciate the way forward and also helps us provide relevant inputs. We commend the Management for this.

We would also like to commend FAO and all the member countries for having reached a consensus on the budget level during the Council meeting, a first for FAO. While we are all happy with this development, I feel it is necessary to flag the need for member nations to appreciate the financial constraints which we have placed on FAO while demanding enhanced performance from it with every passing year. I think the time has come for all of us to reconsider the zero nominal growth model which we have chosen for FAO.

In conclusion, I would like to inform that agricultural growth remains one of the top most priorities for our Government and we are addressing the concerns of our farming community with renewed focus on public and private investments to provide infrastructure, ensure technology transfer to farmers, generate employment both on and off the fields and to sustain agricultural development as well as to strengthen the countrys nutritional and food security. We are committed to our farmers, especially small scale family farmers and women farmers and look forward to a fruitful partnership with FAO and with all of you as we dedicate ourselves to the commitment of eradicating hunger and malnutrition with our lifetime.

I wish the conference success in its deliberations.

Cotton Association cuts 2014-15 crop estimate



The [Cotton Association of India](#) (CAI) has reduced its production estimate of cotton for the 2014-15 season to 38.27 million bales (of 170 kg each) from the previous estimate of 39 million bales released in March this year.

"The projected balance sheet drawn by the [CAI](#) for 2014-15 estimates total cotton supply at 45.36 million bales while domestic consumption is estimated at 31 million bales, thus leaving an available surplus of 14.36 million bales," said Dhiren Sheth, president, CAI. According to the Association, by the end of May, domestic mills consumption has reached 27.4 million bales against 26.66 million bales in the same period last year. Talking about monsoons, Sheth said: "Prediction of a below-normal rainfall is a cause of concern but not a cause of panic."

Meanwhile, CAI urged [Cotton Corporation of India](#) (CCI) to push sales internationally. "[CCI](#) should liquidate its stock faster. If the CCI continues to liquidate its stock at the current pace, it would be stuck with a stock of about three million bales at the end of the season."

This augurs badly for the new season as it will trigger a massive support price operation in the new season also. This will result in a big hit to the cotton farmer. Until now, the CCI has not sold a single bale in the international market. In order to liquidate its stock, the CCI should sell at least some cotton in the international market.