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# THE HINDU

**East should lead next Green Revolution: Modi**



*PM lays foundation stone of Indian Agricultural Research Institute in Hazaribagh, says eastern India can take the lead in launching a second Green Revolution.*

Calling for second Green Revolution, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on asked the farming community to adopt scientific methods to enhance foodgrain production particularly of pulses which India has to import because of shortages.

He said Indian farmers are still lagging behind in terms of availability of good quality seeds, adequate water, power, availability of right price and market for their produce.

“Unless we prepare a balanced and a comprehensive integrated plan, we will not be able to change the lives of farmers,” he said in Hazaribagh while laying foundation stone of Indian Agricultural Research Institute.

Emphasising the need for use of scientific methods for farming to increase productivity, Mr. Modi said it was high time that the country goes for the second Green Revolution as the first such revolution took place long back.

Noting that eastern India has the potential to bring about the second Green Revolution, Mr. Modi said, “It can take place in eastern U.P., Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Assam, Odhisa.”

Pitching for “per drop, more crop”, Mr. Modi stressed the need for research in the field of agriculture to determine the health of soil and its needs in terms of seeds, water quantity, amount of fertilisation etc.

He said the government was taking steps to train youth in soil testing so that such labs could be set up on the pattern of pathological labs for humans. “This will also lead to job creation,” he added.

Turning to pulses, he said India has to import these because of shortfall in production and noted that a special package has been given to farmers engaged in cultivation of pulses.

“The production of pulses in the country is very low and I urge farmers that if they have five acres of farming land, use four acres for other crops but cultivate pulses on at least one acre,” Mr. Modi said.

High production would help in reducing pulses import and availability of the commodity to poor people of the country, the Prime Minister said.

His appeal assumes significance as output of pulses is expected to be lower this year as against growing demand.

India imports about 3-4 million tonnes of pulses annually to meet domestic demand. The country produces about 19 million tonnes of pulses.

The production of pulses is estimated to have fallen to 17.38 million tonnes in 2014-15 crop year (July-June) from 19.25 million tonnes in the previous crop year due to deficient monsoon last year and unseasonal rains and hailstorms during March-April this year.

Mr. Modi also emphasised on the need to focus on enhancing food grain production by adopting scientific methods.

“Research is important in the agriculture sector. And this cannot happen only in one place... We have to see how can we make our agriculture more scientific and increase productivity and solutions are there for these issues,” Mr. Modi said.

He said the condition of the agriculture sector was not good in India as it was left on farmers’ fate. So, while farmers world over have made progress, in India they are still lagging behind because of this attitude, the Prime Minister said.

“Unless we make a comprehensive integrated plan for all the things including fishery, dairy production, bee keeping and honey production, we would not be able to change the economic situation of villages and lives of farmers,” he said, adding “That is why the central government is taking steps to make agriculture modern and scientific.”

He said the “issue of concern” is how to increase the per hectare production. “It’s not that we do not have solutions or we cannot have solutions. Through government policies, through training, resources should be provided and we can make agriculture modern and scientific“.

Noting that population is increasing and land is declining, Mr. Modi said, “In this situation, if we do not increase the productivity, then neither will we be able to feed the country adequately nor provide income to farmers... That is why there is a need to change the conventional and traditional way of farming and do more research.”

A scientific field assistant measures crop growth in a wheat field inside the campus of Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) in New Delhi, March 20, 2015. Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to promote a "per drop, more crop" approach to farming to make better use of scarce water, and aims to have a new satellite crop monitoring system working in time for the peak of this year's monsoon in July.

### **Second Green Revolution needed: PM**



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday laid stress on the need for second Green Revolution in the country.

“There is an immediate need of Green Revolution in the country. The Green Revolution should immediately start in eastern India including Jharkhand, Bihar, eastern Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha and Assam,” said Modi.

The prime minister was addressing the people at Barhi in Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand after laying the foundation stone of the Indian Agriculture Research Institute (IARI).

IARI—Jharkhand would achieve inclusive agricultural growth through Integrated Farming Systems (IFS) in the region, an official release said here.

The institute will attract the cream of post-graduate and doctoral students from all over India and abroad to conduct region-specific research.

The major regional challenges will be addressed by the IARI-Jharkhand, through prioritised thrust areas of research, integrated with post-graduate education and extension programmes, the release said.

“The government of India has started initiatives for the development of the region and decided to open the closed plants of fertilisers at Sindri of Jharkhand and Gorakhpur of Uttar Pradesh and opening new fertiliser plants in West Bengal. The opening of closed fertiliser plants and new plants will help the farmers and generate employment to youths,” the prime minister said.

Modi also appealed to the farmers to use scientific methods for modern farming. He asked them to use micro irrigation to increase production of foodgrain.

“I also appeal farmers to increase production of dalhan (pulses) as country still imports in large quantity of pulses. There is government policy to provide addition Minimum Support Price (MSP) to promote dalhan production in the country,” he said.

The prime minister appealed the farmers to avail the benefit of the Krishi Channel launched for the farming.

He expressed his concerns over the Indian farmers lagging behind in comparison to other countries’ farmers.

Besides Modi, Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh, Jharkhand Governor Draupadi Murmu and Chief Minister Raghubar Das also present on the occasion.IANS

### **Water level up by 6 feet in Periyar dam in 4 days**

*Public Works Department officials step up discharge*

Torrential showers that rocked the Western Ghats increased the inflow into Periyar dam sharply with water level ring by six feet in four days.

Now, Public Works Department officials stepped up discharge not only to irrigate the first crop in the double-cropping areas of Cumbum valley but also to improve the storage level in Vaigai dam for irrigation of 2.05 lakh acres of land in Madurai and other southern districts.

The level in Periyar dam rose to 126.70 feet on Sunday. The discharge shot up to 1,300 cusecs from 400 cusecs. The inflow into the dam increased to whopping 4,469 cusecs, and the storage was 3,985 mcft.

Farmers in Cumbum valley were jubilant over the sharp increase in the storage level.

### **Special subsidy scheme to benefit horticulture farmers in Salem**

The Government has allocated a sum of Rs. 2.37 crore for the implementation of a special subsidy scheme under the National Horticulture Mission in Salem district during the current year (2015-16).

A total area of 530 hectares will be covered under the scheme that will be implemented jointly by the Centre and the State Government. While the Centre will contribute a lion's share of 85 per cent, the State will share the remaining 15 per cent. The major beneficiaries will be vegetable and mango farmers. While an area of 150 hectares will be covered under vegetable crops, about 135 hectares will be covered under the high density and ultra high density mangoes in different parts of the district.

The area covered under other horticulture crops are: ultra high density guava 30 hectares, tissue culture banana 60 hectares, flower crops 50 hectares, chilly and coriander 75 hectares and pepper 30 hectares.

Both the Centre and the State Government has already finalised and approved the annual action plan under this programme, according to S. Kannan, Deputy Director of Horticulture.

Under this scheme, the farmers will get subsidy ranging from 60 – 75 per cent. Of the total allotment, 20 per cent has been earmarked for the farmers belonging to the notified communities such Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe.

The SC and ST farmers, for getting further details and applying for the subsidy, can contact the horticulture department officials for the same, Mr. Kannan said.

Besides, under the Protected Cultivation Techniques of the National Horticulture Mission, about 10,000 square meters will be covered under poly-green house and another 20,000 square meters under the shade net house special schemes. With the advancement in horticulture cultivation, various types of protected practices have emerged. Protected cultivation practices under different types of structures such as ply green house, shade net house will save plants from winter and extends the cultivation session for off-season crop production. Another 100 acres under horticulture crops will be covered under the plastic mulling to check weed growth, moisture conservation etc. A subsidy of Rs. 16,000 per hectare will be extended to the farmers under this programme.



The proposals under the different horticulture schemes being implemented under the State Government scheme in the district have been forwarded to the head quarters for its approval.

### **Winds of change as Ethiopia harnesses green power**



The wind blows hard over Adama, a range of rocky hills in Ethiopia’s highlands that provide the perfect location for one of the continent’s largest wind farms.

“In February, during the dry season, it is even difficult to stand here,” said Solomon Yismaw, the engineer in charge of 102 Chinese-built turbines each rising 230 feet into the sky, lining the horizon.

The Adama wind farm opened last month, its 153 megawatt (MW) capacity making it the largest wind farm in sub-Saharan Africa, and the latest of three giant Ethiopian wind farms.

The hills here, 100 kilometres southeast of the capital Addis Ababa, are 6,500 feet high. Without its own reserves of either gas or oil, Ethiopia is turning to its significant renewable energy potential to fuel its rapid economic development — including damming the vast Blue Nile, with turbines there providing over 90 percent of the country’s electricity production, and the southern Omo River.

But the flow of rivers is subject to rainfall that is erratic in Ethiopia.

“We have an abundance of hydroelectric energy sources, but during the dry season and when droughts happen the level of the dam decreases,” said Solomon, who pointed out that the wind turbines were immune to the dry spells.

“At that time the wind will complement the dam. The wind is especially strong during dry season, so wind and hydro complement each other,” said Solomon.

Ethiopia’s energy needs are huge. Over 75 percent of Ethiopia’s 94 million people, mainly those living in rural areas, are not connected to the national grid, and the country needs to increase its electricity production by 20 to 25 percent per year to meet rising demand, according to figures from the country’s energy ministry.

Ethiopia has set a target of slashing its carbon emissions by two-thirds within the next 15 years, the most ambitious national goal yet presented to an upcoming United Nations climate change conference in Paris later this year. Ethiopia said it plans to cut emissions by adopting cleaner practices in agriculture, construction and transport, as well as slowing deforestation.AFP

### **Make way for the world’s first highway for bees**



From flower **emblazoned** cemeteries to rooftop gardens and balconies, Norway’s capital Oslo is creating a “bee highway” to protect endangered pollinators essential to food production.

“We are constantly reshaping our environment to meet our needs, forgetting that other species also live in it,” Agnes Lyche Melvaer, head of the Bybi, an environmental group supporting urban bees, which is leading the project.

“To correct that we need to return places to them to live and feed,” she explained. With its sunflowers, marigolds and other nectar-bearing flowers planted by bee-loving locals

and school children, Abel's Garden was until recently covered only in grass but is now a floral "feeding station" for bees.

Oslo's "bee highway" aims to give the insects a safe passage through the city, lined with relays providing food and shelter — the first such system in the world, according to the organisers.

Participants in the project that include state bodies, companies, associations and private individuals are invited to post their contribution on a website [www.polli.no](http://www.polli.no), which maps out the bees' route across the city.

### **Working with worker bees**

On the twelfth floor of an ultra modern office block , a major accountancy firm has covered parts of its terrace in brightly flowering Sedum plants and two bee hives.

It houses some 45,000 worker bees. "One should see it as a sign that companies are also taking responsibility for preserving biodiversity," said accountant and bee-keeping enthusiast Marie Skjelbred.

She convinced her employer to co-finance the project to the tune of 400,000 kroner (\$51,348, ) along with the owners of the building.

"The workers live about 60 days," she explained.

"During their lives, they don't produce more than a spoon of honey," she added.

"If we did their job, paid at the minimum wage, a pot of honey would cost \$182,000."

Although Norwegian bees may not be as seriously threatened by intensive agriculture and pesticides as bees in the US or other European countries, a third of the country's 200 wild bee species are nonetheless considered endangered.

And that is cause for concern for humans since 30 to 40 percent of food production requires pollination, a service provided for free by the insects which according to a 2005 Franco-German study is worth an estimated 153 billion euros.

### **Not enough?**

Christian Steel at the Norwegian Biodiversity Network, which brings together the country's professional and amateur biologists, supports the initiative but condemns the "short term policies" of Norwegian authorities.

"The government seems to hide behind these kinds of private initiatives, while pursuing in parallel a policy of promoting intensive agriculture which leads to the death of many bees," he lamented.



“Agriculture is completely dependent on pollinators to maintain food production just as insects are dependent on diverse agriculture to survive. It’s a mutual dependence,” he added.

The mass destruction of bee populations around the world has already forced farmers in the Chinese province of Sichuan to pollinate plants by hand, and in the US some farmers are left with no choice but to rent hives transported cross-country by truck to pollinate crops.

But in Abel’s Garden in Oslo, Agnes Lyche Melvaer says she has faith in the “butterfly effect”.

“If we manage to solve a global problem locally it’s conceivable that this local solution will work elsewhere too.”AFP

### **Milk federation responsible for spoilt milk, say farmers**

The Coimbatore unit of the Tamil Nadu Farmers’ Association has blamed the Tamil Nadu Cooperative Milk Producers’ Federation for milk getting spoilt.

According to a resolution passed at the recently held district committee meeting, the farmers said that the Federation procured milk from farmers only after quality test.

Therefore, the Federation blaming farmers for the milk quality was against truth.

If the procured milk was spoilt, it was the Federation administration that was to be blamed, and not the farmers, it said.

The association had passed the resolution after farmers complained that the Federation rejected and poured milk saying it was spoilt and also staged protest.

As part of the resolution, the farmers had suggested that the State Government introduce milk in noon meal in schools to increase procurement and overcome the problem of surplus.

Another resolution said that the farmers would conduct in August this year a meeting to protect River Noyyal and other water sources in the district.

To overcome the human-wildlife conflict, the farmers had suggested that the Forest Department increase the depth of the trenches near forest boundaries from 2 to 3 m to prevent elephants from straying into agriculture fields.

In the light of declining price of cocoons and raw silk that has triggered protest by sericulturists in several districts, the government has set up a 8-member technical expert committee to study cocoon and raw silk pricing, and their market set up in the State, and suggest measures to improve the sector.

The committee, headed by Professor of Agriculture Economics at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad H. Basavaraja, has been set up following a meeting of sericulturists, reelers, chawki centre owners and political representatives from the traditional silk-growing district last week with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. It has to submit the report to the State government in 15 days.

A release said that the major cocoon markets in the State handle on an average 150 tonnes of cocoon, but the drop in prices has affected sericulturists in Ramanagaram, Tumakuru, Bengaluru Rural, Mysuru, Mandya, Chamarajanagar, Kolar and Chickballapur districts.

Among others, the panel has been tasked with the responsibility of arriving at a rational cost of raw silk production and reeling, and find out the average price of raw silk in the last five years, and analyse government intervention during similar crisis in 1994 and 2011.

### **Rain hits normal life in Kanyakumari district**

Widespread rain and downpour in many parts of Kanyakumari district affected normal life as many low-lying areas were inundated.

The PWD officials are closely monitoring the situation as the two major reservoirs in the district are getting a steady inflow. A flood warning looked imminent. Perunchani recorded a rainfall of 1.2 cm in the last 24 hours ending at 8 a.m. on Sunday.

Sea erosion and incursion were reported in coastal villages near Thengaipattinam, Azhikal, Pillaihope, Midalam, Kurumparai and Colachel two days ago. Now, the continuous rain not only hit the routine, but also resulted in traffic jams on many stretches. Production was suspended in salt pans and brick kilns.

Public Works Department officials said that storage level in Pechiparai dam was 45.73 ft (full level is 48 ft), with an inflow of 2,651 cusecs. In Perunchani, the storage level was 75 ft (77 ft), with an inflow of 2,107 cusecs and discharge of 2,845 cusecs. As much as 537 cusecs was discharged from Chittar dam.

With intermittent rain continuing in the district, officials have cautioned the people living near riverbanks to move to safer places. In low-lying areas, transport was cut off and roads had been badly damaged.

The worst-affected were farmers in the district as many had just sown seeds in their fields. The rains had washed away seeds sown in close to 100 hectares.

In Alamparai, a long stretch of 200 feet road was not severely damaged. Over 30 dwellings suffered damage in the rain in Samiathope. Officials maintained that there was no casualty, and the residents had been moved to safety.

### **Boat service suspended**

For the third consecutive day, boat service to Thiruvalluvar statue in Kanyakumari remained suspended due to heavy wind accompanied by rain, the officials said. Triveni Sangamam, Sunset Park and Vivekanandar Memorial witnessed a huge turnout of tourists.

### **Experts predict fall in coconut price, advise farmers to sell stock**

The Agro Market Intelligence and Business Promotion Centre , Tiruchi, has indicated that prices of coconut and copra are expected to come down by August-September and has advised farmers to sell their produce immediately.

In a price advisory to farmers, it said the price of coconut at the farm level is expected to rule around Rs. 21,000 to Rs. 22,000 a tonne or Rs. 12 to Rs. 13 a nut and copra price will hover in the range of Rs. 78 to Rs. 80 a kg at Avalpoondurai regulated market between August and September.

Currently, the price of coconut is ruling around Rs. 23,000 a tonne or Rs. 13 to Rs. 14 per nut for average size weighing 550 to 600 grams. Copra is ruling at Rs. 78 to Rs. 82 a kg at Avalpoondurai Regulated Market in Tamil Nadu.

The advisory was based an econometric analysis of coconut and copra prices at the Avalpoondurai market carried out by AMI and BPC, the Centre for Agricultural and Rural Development Studies .

### **Fly-traps gaining popularity among mango growers**



Use of cost-effective fly-traps to protect mango crop is getting popular in Hassan district, where mango is cultivated in about 2,500 hectares of land.

The Hassan District Mango Growers' Association has been popularising the trap technique developed by the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR) in Hassan district to bring down the loss of yield due to flies.

Hemmige Mohan, mango-grower and president of the association, has been using the traps in his mango plantation at Bharatavalli, near Alur.

“These traps attract flies and as a result, the fruits remain safe. In the last two years, we have noticed a phenomenal decrease in the loss of yield as we have been using the fly traps. We can avoid the crop wastage by almost 80 per cent by using traps,” he said.

The traps contain a mixture of methyl eugenol, which attracts flies, and malathion, an insecticide. The flies get attracted by the mixture and die there.

Otherwise, female flies would lay eggs on the outer layer of fruits and maggots used to feed on the fruit pulp, causing loss in the yield. Five-six traps are enough for one acre of mango plantation.

The association had bought about 2,500 traps and distributed them among growers in the district this year. Each trap costs about Rs. 25.

John D. Mumford, noted entomologist from England, and Abraham Verghese, Director of National Bureau of Biological Pests, visited Mr. Mohan’s plantation on Wednesday and appreciated the technique used to avoid flies.

Prof. Mumford pointed out that a majority of mango-growers were suffering losses in the yield due to flies.

“This simple and cost-effective technology helps growers in a big way. European countries had stopped importing mangoes because of fly-attack.

Mango-growers can improve sales worldwide by adopting this technique,” he said.

### **Govt. mulls importing onions to control price rise**

*Retail prices of onion have already risen by up to 40 per cent in metro cities in the last one year.*

The government is considering importing onions to boost domestic availability of the commodity and prevent spike in its prices.

Retail prices of onion have already risen by up to 40 per cent in metro cities in the last one year.



The maximum increase in prices is seen in Delhi, where onion costs Rs. 34/kg at present, as against Rs. 24/kg in a year ago during the same period, as per data maintained by the Consumer Affairs Ministry.

“The issue was discussed in a meeting of the Committee of Secretaries last week. It recommended the Commerce Ministry to look at the possibility of imports to boost supplies in the market and keep a lid on prices,” sources said.

Last week, the government also increased the minimum export price of onion to \$425 a tonne from \$250 a tonne to restrict exports and increase domestic availability.

Prices in both wholesale and retail markets have started increasing due to sluggish supply of good quality onions in the wake of the crop being damaged in storage in major growing states, including Maharashtra, a Nasik-based trader said.

Much of the Rabi onion crop is stored to meet the demand in lean period. But this year, most of the onion kept in storage is of poor quality as the Rabi crop got damaged due to unseasonal rains in early March in Maharashtra and Gujarat, the trader said.

According to agri-experts, high storage losses are likely to reduce availability of onion in the market and put pressure on prices till the arrival of new kharif crop from mid-September.

The wholesale price of onion has risen to Rs.16-17 per kg from Rs. 11 per kg in last one month at Lasalgaon in Maharashtra, Asia’s biggest onion market.

To check prices, the government had imported a small quantity of onion last year too. It had also eased fumigation norms for smooth shipment of onions.



The country's onion production is estimated to have declined to 189.23 lakh tonnes in the 2014-15 crop year (July-June), as against 194 lakh tonnes in the previous year, as per government data.

The country's onion exports declined to 10.86 lakh tonnes in the 2014-15 fiscal due to high MEP (minimum export price), as against 13.58 lakh tonnes in the previous year.

### **Funds for agriculture: White Paper sought**

The former Minister M.P. Renukacharya has demanded that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah issue a White Paper on the government's contribution to agriculture and how it utilised the Rs. 1,174 crore allocated for the sector in the State Budget.

He told presspersons here on Sunday that more than 50 farmers had committed suicide in the State in the last three months. When the Opposition parties raised their voice, the Chief Minister tried to hush it up by issuing a statement that they were politicising the issue. "If the Congress has any concern for farmers, it should take steps to clear the bills of sugarcane growers and farmers in the State," he said.

In the last legislature session in Belgaum, the government had announced that it would take steps to clear the bills of sugarcane growers in three months. But no steps had been taken. Recently, the government seized sugar stocks in factories that had not paid the growers their dues.

### **Loans**

The government should keep in mind that almost all sugar factories had taken loans from banks and there was a possibility of them approaching the court questioning the steps taken by the government, he said.

"If the banks question the step taken by sugar factories in the court, the government may have to give back the recovered sugar. This way the government may once again protect the factory owners and do injustice to farmers," he added.

### **A field day for students**

The students of Chembuchira Government Higher Secondary School are striving to set a model for others to follow.

The students have taken up some farming activities and are growing paddy in a purely organic way. This is the fourth consecutive year that the students of the school have taken up organic farming.



Every year after the harvest, the rice is marketed under the brand, ‘Chembuchira Matta’. The rice is much in demand as it is free of pesticides and cultivated purely on organic basis.

This year’s farming activities were inaugurated by environmentalist K. Mohandas. Assistant agricultural officer T. Nandakumar was felicitated on the occasion.

Organic farming coordinator A.T. Jose spoke on the Subhash Palekar method of cultivation and the relevance of preserving nature. The programme was arranged by the nature club of the school.

### Deficient rainfall fails to hit sowing in Dakshina Kannada

RAINFALL (IN MM) IN DAKSHINA KANNADA							
TALUK	RAINFALL ON THE DAY		RAINFALL IN JUNE		NORMAL RAINFALL JANUARY-JUNE	ACTUAL RAINFALL JANUARY-JUNE	
	27.6.2014	27.6.2015	Average	TH 27.6.2015		2014	2015
Bantwal	0.0	30.0	990.0	601.0	1,218.0	941.7	866.8
Beltangady	0.0	28.2	977.0	637.0	1,208.0	821.7	908.0
Mangaluru	0.0	11.8	980.0	527.3	1,248.0	731.9	716.7
Puttur	0.0	31.1	959.0	644.2	1,192.0	848.6	1,107.5
Sullia	0.0	38.6	803.0	653.4	1,015.0	623.4	1,058.0
Dakshina Kannada average	0.0	27.9	941.8	612.6	1,176.2	793.5	931.4

SOURCE: DAKSHINA KANNADA DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Though the monsoon looks better this year compared to 2014, the district still is facing deficient rainfall, up to 21 per cent less than normal, until Saturday. Nevertheless, sowing of paddy in the district has commenced even as officials believe that there is no problem for horticulture crops — arecanut, coconut, cocoa and rubber.

### Normal pace

Against the normal rainfall of 1,176.2 mm between January 1 and June 27, the district has received 931.4 mm: better than the 793.5 mm received last year.

While the normal rainfall during June — that is after the onset of monsoon — is 941.8 mm, the district received just 612.6 mm this June. However, this is better than last year's 559.7 mm.

At the district natural calamity monitoring committee meeting here on Sunday, officials of Agriculture and Horticulture departments informed the district administration that agricultural activities are going on at a normal pace.

### **Target**

Joint Director of Agriculture Kempe Gowda said paddy had been sown on about 980 hectares so far, against the target of 33,000 hectares. In the coming days, the target was expected to be achieved, he said.

### **Seeds available**

Adequate quantities of paddy seeds, fertilizer and pesticides were available in the district, Mr. Gowda said. Already 258 quintals of seeds had been distributed, the officer said.

District in-charge Minister B. Ramanath Rai presided the meeting.

Deputy Commissioner A.B. Ibrahim, Superintendent of Police S.D. Sharanappa, and zilla panchayat chief executive officer P.I. Sreevidya were present.

### **Keeping alive green patches amid a concrete jungle**



As you pass the busy stretches of Athipet near Ambattur, small patches of greenery greet you amidst residential and industrial localities.

Though urbanisation has caught on rapidly in many localities that have been merged with the Chennai Corporation, some people continue to cultivate crops. While some cultivate paddy, green gram and black gram, others have shifted to vegetable farming.

Even before houses and schools started coming up in Athipet, S. Venkatesan had been practising agriculture. “Many people stop by in surprise to take a look at my nine-acre field and compliment me for pursuing farming in an urban area,” said Mr. Venkatesan who recently shifting to organic vegetable farming due to shortage of labour.

He and his family cultivate brinjal, bottle gourd, ladies fingers, cucumber and greens. “I grow manure crops like *Thakaipoondu* and use bio-fertilisers. I sell my produce in Ambattur market and several regular customers also buy in bulk. I get enough to sustain my livelihood,” he added.

His desire to remain a farmer made Navasekara Reddy retain his 10-acre paddy field instead of letting it be an apartment complex. “It is increasingly becoming difficult to cultivate paddy as I use water from borewells only. But, I continue it as it is my family profession,” he added.

To encourage such farmers, the agriculture department distributes biofertilisers at subsidised cost. “We create awareness about organic manure and seeds through meetings to motivate farmers”, said D. Vijayakumar, assistant director (Ambattur), Agriculture department.

Shortage of labour and cost escalation on raw materials is slowly driving a few of them to sell bits of agricultural land that they own in Corporation limits.

A third-generation agriculturist, P. Palanivel, (65) of Mugaliwakkam, says that though agriculture is not rewarding, they continue as it is a matter of pride. He and his relatives own pieces of land adjacent to his land on Madhanandapuram Main Road.

He brings 15 persons from Cheyyar in Tiruvannamalai district to work in his field apart from his family members. He has to depend on the team’s availability every season. Despite the hardships, he cultivates every season as Urban Land Tax would be levied if the land is kept idle for a season or two, said Mr. Palanivel. K. Rathinammal, who cultivates in her small piece of land in Baraniputhur near Kovur, said: “Until the 1970s, there were many paddy fields around Manapakkam, Moulivakkam, Irandamkattalai and Kovur, but all have turned into housing plots now.

## Proposals to maximise Musi water use under consideration



The Irrigation authorities in the district are considering proposals to ensure maximum utilisation of water from Musi reservoir located in Kethepally mandal of Nalgonda district. The plans to increase its capacity from the existing 3.87 tmc ft to 10 tmc ft apart from increasing water allocation to the three canals are also being considered.

There are also plans to construct massive check dams across Musi reservoir. A team of Irrigation officials led by Bhongir MP Bura Narasaiah Goud had inspected the canals after which it decided to rope in a private agency to study the proposals. Work would be executed based on the report that will be filed by the agency. “Irrigation Department is set to issue a GO appointing a consultancy to study these proposals,” Mr. Goud said. Apart from bringing additional area under cultivation, the irrigation officials plan to feed hundreds of minor irrigation tanks. The first two canals on Musi river – Pillaipally, Buniyadgani – have allocation of 55 cusecs while the third one, Dharamareddypally, has 100 cusecs. The government is now planning to increase the allocation for all the three canals to 300 cusecs. Executive Engineer, Irrigation, M.A. Hameed Khan, said that check dams would be constructed where the supply of irrigation water on gravity to agriculture fields would be possible by digging canals. The Musi reservoir water was being supplied to Suryapet town for drinking purpose earlier. But it was stopped as the water got polluted due to release of drainage water from Hyderabad.

Bhongir MP said that the plan includes setting up of a sewage treatment plant upstream so that the water can be used for drinking purpose in the coming days.

He mentioned that water consumption in Hyderabad has increased manifold in the last few years.



## **CBI issues notices to Cotton Corporation of India**

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has served notices on the authorities of the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) to disclose details of procurement from at least half-a-dozen market yards in Karimnagar and Warangal districts during 2004-08.

Officials sources in Karimnagar said the CBI issued notices to CCI authorities involved in lifting of stocks from Karimnagar, Jammikunta, Gangadhara, Choppadandi and Vemulawada market yards to furnish details pertaining to purchases from farmers during the said period. It is alleged that the CCI authorities had denied minimum support price (MSP) to the farmers and encouraged traders and commission agents to procure the produce at less than the MSP and dispose it off to the agency in fictitious names for a commission. The CBI had sought details of all farmers who had sold their stock at market yards, cheques that they received and the extent of their cropped area. It is alleged that the CCI authorities had colluded with the traders and commission agents and denied MSP to the farmers to the tune of over Rs 20 crore in each marketyard during the period. In Warangal, the CBI has served notices to the Marketing Department seeking details of cotton procurement by CCI at the Enumamula agricultural market in the town from 2004 till date.

The CBI notice sought details such as bidding report, inward and outward records, photostat copies of farmers pass books and amount paid to farmers. The notices were served to Joint Director (Marketing) Ashok. The officer confirmed that they got the notices from CBI in the name of an officer, Praveen Kumar.

## **Names of paddy farmers out**

The list of names of farmers who had raised paddy in 2014-15 in Karaikal had been released at the Farmers' Help Centres for scrutiny and verification by paddy cultivators for sanctioning back-end subsidy at the rate of Rs. 4,000 a hectare.

In a release here on Friday, K. Madhiyazhagan, Additional Director of Agriculture, said 4,820 hectares had been brought under paddy cultivation in 2014-15 — 4,200 hectares in 'samba' and 620 hectares during the 'thaladi'.

The release appealed to farmers to go through the list. Objections, if any, could be registered with the office of the Additional Director of Agriculture on or before July 3, the release added.

## Officials told to assess damage to crops caused by recent heavy rain



Minister of State for Primary and Secondary Education Kimmane Ratnakar has directed the officials to conduct a survey of the damage caused by the recent rain across the district and submit a report to the government at the earliest.

Mr. Ratnakar was speaking at a meeting at the Deputy Commissioner's office here on Saturday to review the rain damage.

According to preliminary estimate, standing crops in more than 50 hectares of land in Tirthahalli taluk had been damaged by rain. The arecanut trees in Hosanagar and Sagar taluks had touched the ground owing to rain and heavy wind.

Owing to accumulation of sand and silt in agricultural land, adjacent to streams and tanks, due to floods in Hosanagar and Tirthahalli taluks last year, the farmers were facing difficulty in cultivating such land.

He directed the officials of the Department of Agriculture to extend necessary assistance to such farmers. Electricity poles on the premises of the Government Higher Primary School at Gartikere, Sampekatte and Nagara villages should be shifted to ensure safety of students there. In Hosanagar taluk, the frequent land slides along the road near Doddinagadde and Mastikatte villages during monsoon had posed problems for vehicular movement, he said and asked the Public Works Department personnel to evolve a permanent solution for the problem.

Mr. Rathnakar directed the Department of Health and Family Welfare officials to take precautions to prevent outbreak of infectious diseases during monsoon.

Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner V.P. Ikkeri said, the government had released Rs. 5 crore to the district for relief measures in the rain-affected areas.

Chief Executive Officer of Shivamogga Zilla Panchayat B. Ramu and Superintendent of Police Ravi Channannanavar were present.

## **Training for SC, ST farmers**

A. Surender Reddy, State consultant on Sustainable Agriculture and Livelihood in the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP), said that the society had selected five mandals – Machareddi, Tadwai, Jukkal, Bichkunda and Gandhari in the district to economically empower SC and the ST farmers by encouraging them to undertake cultivation of different crops.

Addressing a gathering of members of Self Help Groups here on Saturday, he said that under the scheme, farmers would be trained and provided necessary inputs and implements to raise crops such as soya bean and vegetables, depending on their advantages.

For example, he said vegetable cultivation would be encouraged in Tadwai and soya bean in Machareddi mandal, depending on the soil health and other factors, he said.

The main idea behind this scheme is to show farmers a suitable way to earn profits by taking up crops which have good market, he said.

He also appealed to the women to participate in the Harita Haram programme, beginning on July 3. He suggested that they plant at least five saplings each on vacant land, wherever available. Seeking to reiterate the significance of greenery, he said the State was short of 12 per cent forest cover. With Harita Haram, forest cover can be increased to 33 per cent, he said.

## **Monsoon covers entire country, way ahead of schedule**



*The normal date for the monsoon to cover entire India is July 15.*

Moving at a brisk pace, the Southwest Monsoon on Friday covered the entire length and breadth of the country, way ahead of schedule in a year in which there is a deficit rainfall forecast for India.

“The Southwest Monsoon has further advanced into remaining parts of West Rajasthan. Thus, it has covered the entire country today, June 26, 2015,” the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in its bulletin.

The normal date for the monsoon to cover entire India is July 15.

“The Southwest Monsoon has covered the entire country. Even the last post of West Rajasthan has been covered entirely.

“In fact, monsoon onset over the region usually happens around July 15, but some good rains in the last 24 hours has led to the declaration of monsoon over West Rajasthan,” added Skymet, a private forecasting agency.

The monsoon made a late entry this year as it hit the Kerala coast on June 5 — a delay of four days from its normal onset date. However, it made speedy progress and has covered the entire country in some 21 days.

Incidentally, IMD has predicted “deficient” rainfall this year.

Meanwhile, Laxman Singh Rathode, the Director General of IMD, said that in 2013, too, the monsoon had covered the entire country before schedule.

So far, from June 1 onwards, the country has received 28 per cent more rain than its normal limit. For the first time in the season, northwest India has recorded 27 per cent more precipitation than normal while central India has so far received 55 per cent more rainfall.

The southern peninsula has witnessed 30 per cent more rain than what it usually receives. Eastern and northeastern India received 3 per cent more rainfall than the normal.

Over the past 24 hours, northwest India has received 469 per cent more rain. While the normal rainfall is 3.2 mm, the region received showers measuring 18.2 mm.

Jammu and Kashmir received a whopping 1,324 per cent more rainfall as the state measured 34.2 mm rainfall in the last 24 hours as against a normal limit of 2.4 mm.

East Rajasthan, where the normal precipitation is 2.6 mm, received 24.6 mm rainfall, marking a 846 per cent increase.

Gujarat region saw 635 per cent more rain while showers were 812 per cent more than the normal in Saurashtra and Kutch.

### **Farmers seek more compensation**

Farmers from Sirgapur in Basava Kalyan taluk fell at the feet of Deputy Commissioner Anurag Tewari and outgoing Deputy Commissioner P.C. Jaffer seeking increasing in

compensation for their crop loss due to heavy rains six months ago. The two officials consoled them and told them they would see if their problems could be addressed. The farmers said they had received only around Rs. 1,000 per acre as compensation. They were part of a delegation led by Congress leader B. Narayan Rao.

### **Farmers bear the brunt of monsoon fury**



Heavy rains that lashed the district since Saturday has brought disaster to the farmers in Kuttanad. Paddy fields have been inundated at several places.

Poonthuram Padasekhara Samithy secretary Bhuvanachandran told *The Hindu* that over 200 acres of paddy fields in the North Punnapra panchayat have come under water due to a breach in the bund. Water from the Pampa gushed into the fields through the breach, immersing the entire area under cultivation. Paddy was sown 20 days ago and the entire crop has been lost. “More than Rs.10,000 per acre has been spent so far for the cultivation and the entire effort and money have been lost,” he said.

It will not be possible for farmers to begin farming operations afresh after the water gets drained out, primarily due to lack of finance. “Unless the government comes up with immediate relief measures, the farmers will be forced to skip the current crop, again resulting in loss of their sole revenue source,” he said.

The farmers have always been at the receiving end of the vagaries of nature. The government agencies too have added to their woes by delaying the payment of procurement price of paddy. Arrears amounting to several lakhs of rupees have not been paid to the farmers.

The government machinery has not been able to disburse the sums on time and farmers have been demanding a revolving fund to meet their requirements.



Despite promises, the farmers do not get the funds on time, causing delay in farming operations.



# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## **Gaya likely to get highest rainfall in recent yrs in June**

Monsoon arrived in Gaya nearly two weeks behind schedule but the early deficiency of rainfall was more than made up in just two days of heavy rainfall and the district received much more than its quota of rain average for the month of June.

As against an average of 124mm rain in the month of June, the district has so far received 174mm rain. With predictions of more rainfall and two more days left to the month of June, the district is likely to receive the highest rainfall in the month of June in recent years. As per Meteorological department figure, Gaya got 89.4mm rains on Wednesday night and the same was almost repeated when 84.6mm rainfall was recorded on Saturday night.

It rained uninterruptedly throughout the night. Waterlogging and power problems facing the town residents due to heavy downpour notwithstanding, the rain has breathed life in the farming community as the late monsoon arrival gave them anxious moments for the simple reason that in the absence of assured irrigation almost the entire 3,308 sq km sowed area of the district is heavily rain dependent.

In most of the places, watertable had gone dangerously low making the irrigation pumps virtually redundant. In some cases, villagers resist attempts to draw excessive underground water for irrigation purposes. According to farmers of the area, the rain was enough to see through the first phase of farming in which seedlings are grown for subsequent plantation. Even minor showers in the next few weeks will be sufficient for the seedlings.

Gaya DM Sanjay Agrawal says that the rain is doubly advantageous as besides facilitating agricultural operation, it has helped improving the water table which, in many cases registered alarming drop. For the non-agriculturists, rain has given the much needed relief from an unkind summer.

In the town, rain has made the job of the municipal authorities more difficult. Though the old drainage system of the town is one of the best in the state, according to municipal corporator Lalji Prasad, the indiscriminate use of polythene and lack of civic sense has resulted in blockage of several important drains including the one near Bottom bridge on the GB Road. Most of the polythene end up in the drains and the Corporation, said Prasad, does not have enough legal powers to rein in the polythene sellers and users.

### **MD forecasts less than normal rainfall in July, Aug**



According to Laxman Singh Rathore, director general of the India Meteorological Department, rainfall could be deficient by 8% and 10% in July and August, respectively.

"June has received a good amount of rainfall. It was also a sowing season. But then we should not be complacent and there should be a contingency plan in place as July and August may not have as good rainfall as June," he said.

Rathore added that there was some respite because pre-monsoon showers had helped fill up reservoirs to some extent.

Monsoon has started slipping into a weak phase after more than two weeks of bountiful rains that were mainly concentrated in central and south India. The countrywide monsoon surplus in June, which stood at 28% on Thursday, was down to 19% by Sunday.

Weather website Accuweather said monsoon's weak phase could carry into at least the

middle of July as the effects of El Nino take hold. "July rainfall will end up being below normal across India, except along the southwestern and northeastern coasts," an Accuweather meteorologist said.

IMD, India's official weather forecaster, has raised the spectre of a drought this year, predicting a "deficient" monsoon this year with rains pegged at 88% of normal. The outlook for northwest India is bleaker, with IMD saying the region could see a 15% shortfall in rains.

However, Skymet, a private weather forecasting agency, has predicted normal rainfall (104%) in July and August (99%).

Rathore advised farmers to choose their crops wisely after a careful look at the weather forecast. "For instance, a region which usually gets 100-110mm of rainfall, receives only 60-70 mm should go for maize instead of paddy," he said.

### **Healthy quail eggs are here for breakfast**

The petite Japanese quail eggs with their brown, speckled shells, rich in nutrients are considered a gourmet delicacy in many parts of the world, as well as in India.

In Goa, the bird that has been reared at the ICAR- Central coastal agricultural research institute for the past six years is yet to gain popularity locally.

Called 'bater' in Hindi, the bird, belonging to the pheasant family, was domesticated in Japan and imported by the central avian research institute, UP, in the 1970s. The wild varieties of quails found in India are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and cannot be reared.

A health-conscious couple from Margao who were looking for an alternative to the antibiotic and hormone-laden chicken has recently begun rearing the Japanese quail for their nutritious eggs. Anacleto and Fatima Figueiredo have around 700 birds on their farm, producing 350 eggs each day. The birds consume 25kg of special bird feed which includes maize, wheat and barley, each day. A Japanese quail egg weighs 10g compared to a chicken egg that weighs 60g and is rich in protein, vitamins, iron, potassium, phosphorus, calcium and HDL (good cholesterol).

Anacleto, a retired barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court in London, with degrees in clinical and health psychology swears by the eggs. "I consume five eggs, almost raw, each morning for breakfast. They give me strength and leave me feeling energetic throughout the day. I feel satisfied and don't have to consume anything else until lunch time. I wish more people knew about the various health benefits of consuming these eggs. In the UK they're more expensive than chicken eggs. Here they're cheaper," the 82-year-old told TOI.

At ICAR, Old Goa, raw as well as pickled quail eggs are sold, but there aren't many takers for quail farming despite the low investment required to rear the birds. "Quails are hardy birds compared to chickens. They are disease resistant and don't require as many vaccinations as chickens do. Chickens start laying eggs at 18-20 weeks while quails begin laying eggs in six-eight weeks.

The bird is reared for its eggs and meat in north India as well as in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Unfortunately in Goa, backyard poultry is more popular and there isn't a market yet for Japanese quail eggs or meat. Although the eggs are small, they contain more protein and less cholesterol as compared to chicken eggs. Few people have purchased quails from our farm, but, most prefer to keep them as ornamental birds," R S Rajkumar, scientist (livestock products technology), ICAR, said.

### **How to wean kids away from Maggi and other noodles**



*So what do you do if your child hankers for noodles, now that Maggi and other brands are under a cloud? Experts say one should go for the generic varieties or make alternatives more interesting.*

It's difficult to stop children from eating their favourite noodles or fast food, so put in extra effort, suggests Archie Bhatnagar, dietician at BLK Super Speciality Hospital here.

"Mothers can buy plain raw noodles and cook, adding vegetables to make the dish healthy. Momos or burgers can be also made at home by replacing maida with rice floor," says Bhatnagar.

But what about pesticides, contaminants and germs in raw food bought locally. From the farm to the table, our food passes through different processes and different hands.

Experts advise that vegetables and fruits should be washed well. Peeling fruits will cut down surface pesticide content.

The water-soluble compound potassium permanganate may also come to your aid.

"Mix enough of the permanganate in water to give it a light pink colour. Soak fruits and vegetables and rinse them well. This will effectively remove pesticides, bacteria and other pests," advises Kanika Malhotra, senior clinical nutritionist from HealthCare at Home (India), a global venture offering home health care services.

Too much of the permanganate, though, can be harmful so ensure that the water colour is light pink and not dark, she adds.

Sonia Bajaj, an acclaimed nutritionist and fitness expert advises that suma tablets (chlorine-based sanitising tablets) may be used to clean or sanitise vegetables and salads. Even vinegar can help, she adds.

Another option for healthy food at home is to look for a good ultrasonic food washer. This washer uses the principle of ultrasonic and reactive oxygen to remove most of agricultural chemicals from fruits and vegetables.

It also removes fungicides, pesticides and contaminants and has been found to be quite effective, says Ritika Samaddar, head (dietetics) at Max Super Speciality Hospital in Delhi. "The cost, however, is an issue and cannot be a solution for the masses," explains Samaddar. The price of a washer starts at around Rs 7,000.

But should vegetables and other food items be bought only from reputed grocery stores? According to Bhatnagar, one should only buy food items from reputed stores as they have certain basic hygienic standards in place. "This will ensure certain purity but adulteration-free food cannot be guaranteed," she maintains.

For Samaddar, "buying even from a local vender is fine provided the fruits or vegetables are washed properly before consumption".

Organic food is another choice. An organic product is considered truly organic when it is duly certified and contains 95 percent or more organic ingredients.



"Organic foods will mostly be without pesticides and more nutritious per serving. But these are more expensive, hence not an option for the public, Samaddar says. She advises that one should look for certification, wherever possible, from Food Safety and Standards Authority of India or ISO.

What are the other ways to ensure that healthy food items reach our table? Read food labels carefully and do not get fooled by gimmicks.

"Check how much fat or sugar is there in the food. Just saying 'contains oats' and actually 'containing four percent per 100 gms' is not justified," Malhotra points out. As a rule, the more processed the food is, the more toxic it is likely to be.

But what about the children's craving for junk food. Samaddar says junk food can also be made healthy by incorporating some simple changes at home.

"Use a wheat crust for your pizza and top it up with lots of crunchy veggies. Have a whole wheat bun and add lettuce with your patty to make it more healthy," she says.

Malhotra suggests that parents can ensure that kids eat healthy at home. Start the day with fruit and a handful of nuts. For breakfast, pack upma, poha, stuffed veggies, chapati roll or sandwich. Keep lunch simple with a roti or rice, sabzi and dal.

In the evenings, give them a glass of milk and another fruit.

"Make dinner interesting with a bowl of soup, stuffed rolls with chopped tomatoes and pav bhaji minus butter, with whole wheat bread/barbecued or tandoori chicken/paneer with a bowl of soup and salad," says Malhotra.

Once the kid is full, he or she will not look for junk food. Hopefully.

### **PM Modi stresses on need for research in agriculture**

HAZARIBAGH: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday stressed on the need for research in the agriculture sector, stating that India is 'desperate' for a second green revolution.



"How can we make our agriculture more scientific and increase productivity? Solutions are there for these issues. Research is important in the agriculture sector, and this cannot happen only in one place. A revolution in agriculture can take place in eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Assam...the eastern part of India," the Prime Minister said.

"There is desperate need for a second agriculture revolution in the country," he added.

The Prime Minister is in Hazaribagh to lay the foundation stone of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) here.

He will later depart for Varanasi.

## THE HINDU BusinessLine

### **No monsoon blues for markets**

Thanks to the strong growth in the services sector led by IT, the share of agriculture in the country's GDP has fallen steadily over the past decade. From around 25 per cent in the early part of the decade, agriculture now contributes less than 18 per cent to India's GDP.



Hence, the direct impact of a deficient rainfall on the country's economic growth may be limited.

Sample this. In 2009-10, when the monsoon was almost 22 per cent below normal, the country's real GDP (at factor cost) growth recovered to 8.59 per cent from 6.72 per cent in 2008-09. In the subsequent year, the economy expanded by 8.91 per cent.

Given the weak correlation between monsoon and GDP, the market has remained quite oblivious to a deficient monsoon, in the past. The market delivered positive returns in 2002, 2004 and 2009, when the monsoon was significantly below normal.

For instance, in 2009, benchmark indices Nifty and Sensex made whopping gains of almost 76 per cent and 81 per cent, respectively, driven by hopes of an economic recovery. Likewise, Nifty and Sensex gained about 11 and 13 per cent, respectively, in 2004.

A below-normal monsoon is definitely not good news for India as almost half the country's population is dependent on agriculture for its livelihood.

And monsoon plays a critical role in the country's agricultural prospects as over two-thirds of the country's agricultural land is rain-fed.

However, monsoon may have to be viewed in conjunction with other triggers, such as corporate earnings, interest rates and inflation.

## Why monsoon does not matter

Rain or no, investors seem to have little cause for worry. The impact of monsoon on agri related sectors and consumption has been neutral in the past

After playing truant in the early part of the month, the south-west monsoon has picked up pace in the last few days. Thanks to heavy showers, the cumulative rainfall in June is almost 21 per cent higher than the long period average. (LPA is the average rainfall received during the 1951-2000 period.)

But, does a good spell in June guarantee rainfall through the season?

Not always, suggests an analysis of the month-wise rainfall data for the period beginning 1901. Between 1901 and 2014, rainfall during the month of June was above normal almost half the time. However, despite a good start, the rainfall did not progress well and thus the cumulative rainfall for the season was deficient almost a third of the time.

If the monsoon slips into a lull, should investors fret? Not quite.

Contrary to conventional belief, the impact of monsoon on sectors that are directly linked to agriculture has been neutral in the past. Over the last two decades, the south-west monsoon rainfall has been significantly lower than the LPA on three occasions. But interestingly, the sales of agri inputs — seeds, fertilisers and pesticides — have remained resilient during these periods.

Why has it been so? The principal reason for this is that farmers purchase bulk of the agri-inputs much ahead of the onset of monsoon.

### Resilient seeds

Take the case of seed, a primary agri input. Farmers purchase seeds well ahead of the start of the monsoon season, even though the actual planting may commence closer to the onset. Seed sales have thus been indifferent to the monsoon rainfall pattern. According to data compiled by the World Bank, distribution of certified seeds in India has remained healthy even during drought years — 2002, 2004 and 2009.

For instance, consider 2009, when the country faced the worst drought since 1972 and monsoon rainfall was 21 per cent below normal. The distribution of certified seeds increased by about 8 per cent to almost 28 lakh tonnes that year. Strong demand for seeds provided a leg-up to the performance of seed producers such as Kaveri Seed Company, that year.

The company, which is a leading player in cotton hybrid and maize seeds, saw its revenue grow about 32 per cent in 2009-10. The company's profit rose about 27 per cent that year. This was thanks to the strong ramp-up in sales of its hybrid cotton seed brand — Jadoo.

Similarly, in 2002 and 2004, when monsoon rains were 19.2 per cent and 13.8 per cent below LPA, respectively, the total quantity of seeds distributed in India rose by 7 and 11 per cent, respectively.

Healthy seed sales helped Kaveri clock a 13 per cent growth in revenues in 2004-05; its profit grew 28 per cent that year. Likewise the company reported profit of Rs. 12 lakh in 2002-03, compared to a loss in the previous year.

### **Fertilising profits**

The usage of fertilisers, the other important farm input, has risen steadily even during the drought years. For instance, in 2009, total fertiliser sales in the country rose 6 per cent. So also, in 2002 and 2004, consumption of fertilisers rose by about 1 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively.

Similar to seeds, a good portion of fertiliser sales happens ahead of the monsoon onset, which has helped it buck the weakness in the monsoon trend, in the past. Besides this, the massive price subsidy provided by the government on fertilisers has also made sales resilient to fluctuations in monsoon rainfall. For instance, in India, farmers pay barely a fourth of urea's total cost of production. While the cost of producing a tonne of urea is in the Rs. 15,000-25,000 range, the sale price has been kept unchanged at Rs. 5,360.

The difference between the sale price and the cost of production is paid by the government as subsidy directly to the producer. Farmers prefer urea fertilisers because of the lower sale price. This has helped urea producers such as Chambal Fertilisers and Tata Chemicals sustain healthy profit growth even during the drought years — 2002-03, 2004-05 and 2009-10.

In 2002-03, Tata Chemicals recorded revenue and profit growth in excess of 16 per cent and 55 per cent, respectively. Likewise, in 2005-06, the company recorded revenue growth of over 17 per cent and profit growth of almost 4 per cent. Similarly, Chambal Fertilisers managed to clock profit growth of almost 16 per cent and 77 per cent in 2002-03 and 2004-05, respectively. Again, in 2009-10, despite the severe drought, the company managed to rake in 8 per cent growth in profit.

The government provides price concession for complex fertilisers too. Currently, under the nutrient-based subsidy scheme, the subsidy amount is fixed by the government.

Farmers bear three-fourth of the production cost while the balance one-fourth is paid by the government as subsidy directly to the fertiliser makers. As with urea, complex fertiliser despatches have remained strong even during periods when the monsoon was deficient. This has enabled complex fertiliser makers such as Coromandel International and GSFC achieve healthy volume growth even during challenging times. Even as these companies did sell more fertilisers during the drought years, their profitability was impacted due to reasons other than the monsoon.



For instance, while Coromandel managed to clock a healthy 61 per cent jump in profit for the year 2004-05, its performance for the 2002-03 and 2009-10 periods was impacted by changes in the fertiliser pricing policy and volatility in global commodity prices.

### **Agrochemicals unbowed**

Similarly, below-normal monsoon rainfall has had little impact on the sales of agrochemicals. For instance, the consumption of agrochemicals in India during the 2002 and 2004 drought years remained healthy.

However, the total consumption of crop protection chemicals declined 5 per cent in 2009; and this was largely on account of supply-side issues due to closure of several active ingredient manufacturing facilities in China.

However, despite the erratic monsoon, pesticide makers have managed to sustain healthy growth. Bayer Crop Science, for instance, saw its revenue surge 51 per cent and profit more than double in 2002-03. Likewise in 2009-10 too, the company managed to grow its revenue and profit by 17 per cent and 35 per cent, respectively.

Similarly, Rallis India has also been successful in growing revenues and profit during poor monsoon years. For instance, in 2005-06, the company's revenues and profit grew 8 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively.

### **Automobile**

Companies in sectors that are believed to thrive on rural consumption — such as automobile, FMCG and consumer durables — have also remained immune to fluctuations in monsoon rainfall.

Consider two-wheeler sales. In 2004-05, the total sales of two-wheelers made in India grew almost 17 per cent. This includes export sales to other countries, which partly compensated for the slowdown in rural markets. And the monsoon rainfall was almost 14 per cent below normal that year.

If you expected the impact of a poor monsoon to show up in two-wheeler sales with a lag, the strong 15 per cent growth in two-wheeler sales in the subsequent year, 2005-06, belies that. So also in 2009-10, when the country experienced severe drought, two-wheeler sales grew a strong 25 per cent. This was on four counts.

First, launch of new models across segments — entry, mid and high-end — aided growth.

Second, a sharp cut in lending rates also spurred the demand for automobiles. Following the global financial and commodity meltdown in 2008-09, the RBI, to spur domestic growth, slashed policy rates from 9 per cent in October 2008 to 4.75 per cent by April 2009.

Third, the government's efforts to keep the farming community in good humour by way of a higher minimum support price (MSP) also played a role in keeping rural consumption demand intact. Fourth, the Rs. 60,000-crore agriculture loan waiver implemented in 2008 did go a long way in alleviating the stress on the farmer community.

Companies in the two-wheeler space saw their sales and profits soar in 2009-10. The country's leading two-wheeler maker Bajaj Auto recorded sales growth in excess of 36 per cent; its profits saw a 2.5-fold rise that year.

Likewise, two-wheeler maker TVS Motor Company made a profit of over Rs. 33 crore in 2009-10, compared with a loss of Rs. 63 crore in the previous year.

Likewise, the cumulative sales of passenger cars (which includes domestic and export sales) also remained strong at about 27 per cent in 2009-10. Here again, there was no lag effect on car sales for the subsequent year.

For instance, car sales in 2010-11 remained healthy at over 22 per cent. In the passenger car segment, consider the performance of market leader Maruti Suzuki. The company's sales grew at a robust 42 per cent while its profit more than doubled that year.

## **FMCG**

FMCG companies, believed to benefit from the aspirational demand from the rural population, also put up a good show during times of deficient monsoon. Leading consumer goods producers such as ITC, Dabur and Emami have managed to sustain healthy revenue growth even during the drought years. This was on three counts. First, generous increases in the MSP in the drought years partially compensated for the loss due to inadequate rainfall.

Second, price increases by these companies also helped mitigate the revenue loss on account of weak volume growth. That most FMCG companies are also present across price points also helped partly capture any down-trading into cheaper brands.

Third, the implementation of the Sixth Pay Commission in 2008-09 and resultant wage increases have had a positive rub-off on sales in urban markets. This possibly made up for the weakness in rural markets.

Cigarette-to-hospitality conglomerate ITC's revenues grew over 16 per cent in 2009-10, a year when monsoon was deficient by almost 22 per cent.

Likewise, revenues at personal care products manufacturer Emami's jumped 37 per cent that year. Personal care multinational P&G Hygiene's sales grew a healthy 17 per cent in 2009-10.

## **Consumer durables**

It was not just fast moving consumer goods that defied the weak monsoon rainfall trend, but also consumer durable goods. Companies in the brown and white goods space such as Havells India, Bajaj Electricals, Whirlpool and Videocon Industries have been able to buck the trend and sustain healthy growth. Higher MSPs, agri loan waiver and lower interest rate regime aided growth.

Consider Bajaj Electricals; the company managed to grow revenues by over 26 per cent in 2009-10, aided by better product mix and ability to take price increases in specific products.

Likewise, Havells India and Videocon Industries have managed to grow revenues by almost 12 per cent and 57 per cent, respectively, that year.

## **It's different this time**

While the agri and consumption themes may be insulated from any weakness in the monsoon, the impact of deficient rainfall may be more pronounced this year than in the past, for three reasons. First, the government's keenness to keep inflation under check to provide room for the RBI to cut interest rates further may restrain it from providing any big relief to farmers by way of higher MSPs.

Second, to take advantage of the massive untapped potential in the rural markets, companies in the automobile, consumer goods and durable goods space have ramped up presence here.

The share of revenues from the rural market has gone up steadily over the last few years. Hence, the impact on account of a subdued monsoon may likely manifest in the forthcoming period.

Given the below-normal monsoon last year, the rural economy has been gearing for a slowdown. Two consecutive years of bad rainfall will only accentuate the woes of rural India.

## **PM calls for 2nd Green Revolution without any delay**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today called for second Green Revolution, saying it should start immediately from eastern India.

He said Indian agriculture has been lagging in several areas, including inputs, irrigation, value-addition and market linkages, and his government is committed to modernising the sector and making it more productive.

“We have seen the first Green Revolution but it happened several years ago. Now it is the demand of time that there should be second Green Revolution without any delay. And

where is it possible? It is possible in eastern UP, Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Assam, Odhisa,” Modi said, while laying the foundation stone of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute at Barhi.

“That is why the government is focusing on the development of this area. For that we have started this research institute,” the Prime Minister said.

He said urea plants in this area have been closed and a decision has been taken to reopen them as farmers will need fertilisers.

### **Scientific methods**

Emphasising the need for use of scientific methods for farming to increase productivity, Modi said: “Unless we prepare a balanced and a comprehensive integrated plan, we will not be able to change the lives of farmers.”

Pitching for ‘per drop, more crop’, Modi stressed the need for research in the field of agriculture to determine the health of soil and its needs in terms of seeds, water quantity, amount of fertilisation etc.

He said the government is taking steps to train youth in soil testing so that such labs could be set up on the pattern of pathological labs for humans. “This will also lead to job creation,” he added.

Turning to pulses, he said India has to import these because of shortfall in production and noted that a special package has been given to farmers engaged in the cultivation of pulses.

“The production of pulses in the country is very low and I urge farmers that if they have five acres of farming land, use four acres for other crops but cultivate pulses on at least one acre,” Modi said.

### **Bajaj Allianz launches weather-based crop insurance**

Private insurer Bajaj Allianz has launched a weather-based crop insurance scheme for orange crops in Nagpur, Hingoli and Washim districts of Maharashtra.

The index-based insurance policy will cover losses incurred by orange fruit-growing farmers due to deviation in weather conditions and has been approved by Central and the State government, a company release issued here said.



The company has also launched a campaign to create awareness about the scheme in three districts.

The losses would be assessed on the basis of pre-defined and government-approved term sheets and actual weather data received from an approved automatic weather station installed in each block of these districts.

Vice president & Head Agriculture Business, Bajaj Allianz Ashish Agarwa said, “The company has identified the need to offer the product in these areas looking at the volumes of the produce and how unfavourable weather conditions had an impact on the produce.”

The new product will mitigate the losses incurred and ensure that farmers do not lose out on their income because of uncertainties of nature, it said.

Farmers who have taken loan through Kissan Credit Card (KCC) would automatically get insured (for the scheme) by their banks, while those who don't have KCC but savings accounts need to visit the bank branches and authorise the banks to enrol them in the scheme.

As part of the awareness campaign, a van will travel for 10 days in the orange-growing belt of Katol, Narkheda and Kalmeshwar and educate farmers while it will also use radio, hoardings, street plays mediums.

Bajaj Allianz insured more than 33 lakh farmers last year under government crop insurance programmes. It paid claims worth Rs. 434 crore under these programmes, which benefited more than 27 lakh farmers, it claimed.



# Business Standard

## **Below normal rains in July, August: IMD**

Notwithstanding the plentiful rainfall in June, the weatherman has forecast less than normal precipitation over the next two months and advised the agriculture ministry to keep ready a contingency plan.

Total rainfall from June 1 to June 28 was 19 per cent more than normal, down from 27 per cent a few days ago.

According to Laxman Singh Rathore, director general of India Meteorological Department (IMD), rainfall could be deficient by eight and 10 per cent in July and August, respectively.

“June has received a good amount of rainfall. It was also a sowing season. But then we should not be complacent and there should be a contingency plan in place, as July and August may not have as good rainfall. There is, however, some respite as the pre-monsoon showers have helped fill up reservoirs to some extent. There was good rainfall in June, which is a crucial month for sowing,” Rathore said.

However, Skymet, a private weather forecasting agency, has predicted “above normal” rainfall (104 per cent) in July, “normal” rainfall (99 per cent) in August and (96 per cent) in September.

Anything less than 90 per cent of long period average (LPA) is considered ‘deficient’ rainfall, 90-96 per cent is ‘below normal’, 96-104 per cent ‘normal’, 104 to 110 above normal and anything over it is ‘excess’.

IMD has predicted 88 per cent of normal rainfall this year, which is “deficient”. Many parts, especially northwest India, might witness a deficient monsoon. However, June received 28 per cent more than normal rainfall. Rathore advised farmers to choose their crops wisely, after a careful look at the weather forecast.

“For instance, a region which usually gets 100-110 mm of rainfall but receives only 60-70 mm should go for maize instead of paddy,” he said.

## **Prime Minister Calls upon Farmers to Raise the Level of Pulses Production in the Country**

The Prime Minister called upon farmers to raise the level of pulses production in the country, to help make India self-sufficient in pulses. Invoking former Prime Minister Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri's call Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Shri [Narendra Modi](#) asked every farmer to try and grow pulses on a part of his land. He also mentioned steps being taken by the Union Government for the pulses sector. He said pulses were an important part of the diet

of the common man. The Prime Minister was speaking after laying the Foundation Stone of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute today at Barhi in Jharkhand.

Shri Modi also said that the need of the hour was a second green revolution, without any delay, in eastern India. He said that the Union Government was therefore committed to the development of this region. The Prime Minister further said that animal husbandry and fisheries were equally important for the agriculture sector. He further added that the Government has decided to pay special attention to the dairy sector in Jharkhand.

The Union Agriculture Minister, Shri Radha Mohan Singh while welcoming the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at the foundation laying ceremony of the IARI in Jharkhand, said that it was the need of hour to set up a second IARI in Jharkhand on the lines of IARI, Pusa, New Delhi. The Union Minister said that the Institute at Jharkhand will help in meeting the challenges in the field of agriculture in the State in a scientific manner.

The Institute would help in developing this Economic Zone in a scientific manner. The Minister added that the announcement of setting up of a second IARI in the country was made in the General Budget of the year 2014-2015 and he thanked the Prime Minister that the setting up of such an Institute was made possible under his leadership and guidance.

Soon after this announcement in the Budget-2014-2015, the [Ministry of Agriculture](#) and the State Government of Jharkhand went into action to identify the land for the second IARI and this activity was completed within a years time. And that is how, the Minister added that this laying of Foundation Stone for IARI was possible.