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# THE HINDU

## **Hi-tech safety lockers soon in cooperative institutions**

The State government will allocate Rs. 2.5 crore to create hi-tech safety lockers in 50 cooperative institutions to help customers keep their valuables safely, Minister for Cooperation Sellur K. Raju told the Assembly on Monday.

Replying to the demand for grants of the department, Mr. Raju also said Rs. 64 lakh would be provided to seven agricultural cooperative institutions and an urban cooperative institution to create strong rooms with defender door for safe-keeping of customers' valuables. "The Chief Minister had announced that strong room with defender door would be provided in 203 cooperative institutions at an estimated cost of Rs. 8.32 crore in 2015-16. Works have been completed in 190 cooperative institutions, and works in the remaining would be completed shortly," the department's policy note said.

Earlier, replying to a question, Mr. Raju said private medical companies have reduced their rates for medicines after the State government set up Amma Pharmacies in the State. There are also 187 cooperative medical stores. Amma Pharmacies have sold medicines worth Rs.368 crore so far. "Medicines are sold at a discount of up to 15 per cent , making it accessible to everyone. Private companies have brought down their prices because of this," Mr. Raju said.

According to the policy note, 106 new Amma Pharmacies are effectively functioning in all 32 districts as on date. During 2015-16, medicines worth Rs. 124.80 crore were sold through the cooperatives and Amma Pharmacies.

***Strong rooms will be provided in 203 cooperatives at a cost of***

***Rs. 8.32 crore***

## Kumalur agricultural college cultivates brinjal using sprinklers



GOOD YIELD: Water being judiciously used for growing brinjal using sprinkler system at Agricultural Engineering and Research Institute at Kumalur near Tiruchi.— Photo: A.Muralitharan

*Demonstration plot raised on 320 square metres with micro sprinkler system*

The Tamil Nadu Agricultural University's Agricultural Engineering College and Research Institute at Kumalur has taken up cultivation of brinjal under sprinkler-irrigated conditions to demonstrate conservation of water.

The college has raised brinjal in its demonstration plot on an extent of about 320 square metres with micro sprinkler system.

Excess water use for irrigation only causes leeching but not many horticultural farmers are aware of this fact, said K. Ramaswamy, Dean of the Institute. The demonstration plot had been developed with a view to exposing the farmers to the advantage of using micro-sprinkler, he said.

Apart from saving water, the growth of the plants and the quality of vegetables are also enhanced as compared to the traditional method of cultivation, said K. Arunadevi, Assistant Professor, Soil and Water Conservation Engineering

Department of the Institute, who has been closely monitoring the growth of the plant. She said that the use of micro sprinkler would help achieve a yield 20 tonnes or more against the normal average of 18 tonnes per hectare under conventional irrigation.

Uniform distribution of water at low pressure was the special feature of the system. The rate of supply was 26 litres per hour. The flowering of the plants was not affected as water is sprayed at low pressure.

The timing of spraying could be adjusted depending on the wet condition of the plants.

Farmers would be exposed to the micro sprinkler technique in the course of time, after the plants registered appreciable growth.

### **Farming to begin in Aranmula pancha in Nov.**



In right earnest: Agriculture Minister V.S. Sunil Kumar visiting the Aranmula pancha on Monday.— PHOTO: LEJU KAMAL

*Plan to cultivate paddy in 3 lakh hectares in the State in next five years*

Agriculture Minister V.S. Sunil Kumar has announced that the Left Democratic Front government will launch cultivation in the Aranmula pancha (paddy

fields), which has been lying fallow for the past one decade due to waterlogging, in November.

The Minister, accompanied by Principal Secretary, Raju Narayana Swamy, and other senior officials attached to the departments of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Revenue, visited Aranmula on Monday, exploring the possibility of launching cultivation in the pancha in a time-bound fashion.

Enthused by the villagers' verve, Mr. Sunil Kumar said the government had got a constitutional obligation to protect the paddy lands and wetlands and the LDF government would abide by the rule of law and the Land Utilisation Act in letter and spirit.

The government was for increasing the State's extent of paddy cultivation to 3 lakh hectares in the next five years and all illegal occupation of farm lands, in violation of the Land Utilisation Act, would be cleared to facilitate successful farming there, he said.

He said the Agriculture Department has informed that peasants had come forward for launching paddy cultivation in 56 ha in the Aranmula pancha in the first phase in November. However, draining out the water from the pancha was a dire necessity to achieve this target and the Irrigation wing of the Water Resources Department should ensure smooth flow of water through the natural streams cutting across the pancha to the Pampa, he said.

### **Monitoring committee**

The Minister said a monitoring committee chaired by local MLA Veena George and Principal Agriculture Officer as convener would monitor the government's farming mission at the Aranmula pancha. The district administration should strictly comply with the Kerala High Court direction to restore the Karimaramthode. The District Collector should ensure smooth flow of the natural stream leading to the Pampa, he said.

## Young Punjab farmers wilt in agrarian crisis



More than 7,000 farmers and agricultural labourers committed suicide in the State during 2000-2010. File photo.

*48 % of all farmers' suicides were of those below 35 while it was 57 % for agricultural labourers, says study.*

A recent study by the Indian Council for Social Science Research of the growing number of farmers' suicides in Punjab has revealed that the agrarian crisis is hitting farmers and labourers below the age of 35 the hardest.

“Nearly 48.6 per cent of farmers who have committed suicide in Punjab in recent years are below 35 years of age, while the percentage is as high as 57.5 per cent in case of agricultural labourers,” says the recently conducted study “Agrarian distress and farmers suicides in North India”.

Further, 41 per cent of the suicides were of farmers between 36 and 55 years of age. The remaining 10.4 per cent were above 56 years.

Among agricultural labourers, 57.5 per cent of the suicides were of those below the age of 35, while 32.8 per cent of those between 36 and 55 years. Suicides of those above 56 years stood at 9.7 per cent, the study added.

The joint study by Lakhwinder Singh, Kesar Singh Bhangoo and Rakesh Sharma of Punjabi University, based on a survey of 1,392 rural households from three agrarian, suicide-prone districts of Malwa region — Bathinda, Sangrur and Mansa — has also examined factors that have pushed some to suicide while other farmers have overcome the pressure. The sample for the survey was based on census-based reports of the Punjab government on farmers and agricultural labourers' suicide that had showed that more than 7,000 farmers and agricultural labourers committed suicide in the State during 2000-2010, due to agrarian distress and indebtedness.

According to the study, in the controlled group (farmers and agricultural labourers on the brink of economic stress), around 51.6 per cent of farmers aged between 36 and 55 revealed that they were on the edge of suicide as their ability to tolerate and combat the agrarian crises was diminishing rapidly.

### **Women hit**

“We found that a majority of deceased group were below 35, that is a young group, and found to be highly distressed. This reflects that burden of agrarian distress has been faced by the young and middle-aged farmers. The distress was so cruel that it also engulfed the women of the households of farmers and labourers and even few women committed suicides due to economic distress,” Prof. Singh told, *The Hindu*. The study says the manifestation of agrarian distress is widespread in Punjab but the Malwa region is the epicentre.

The study also points out other reasons such as consistently lower prices of agricultural produce disproportionate to the prices of farm inputs, mounting indebtedness from both institutional and non-institutional sources resulting in a debt trap, exploitation of farmers by moneylenders, non-availability or inferior quality of inputs.

“Young farmers do not foresee a secure future in agriculture; besides they do not find prompt help from the government or philanthropists...they find themselves helpless,” Prof. Singh said.

Notably, 56 farmers in Punjab committed suicide so far this year due to agrarian reasons, Minister of State for Agriculture Parshottam Rupala told the Rajya Sabha last week.

### **Captive nurseries for fishermen in East Godavari district**

*These would be set up in micro irrigation tanks through fish spawn*

East Godavari District Collector H. Arun Kumar has said that captive nurseries will be encouraged in micro irrigation tanks through fish spawn to support the livelihood of fisher folk.

While reviewing the developmental works on Monday, he said that under this scheme fishermen would develop fish yearlings through spawn in ponds in the minor irrigation tanks and grow them in regular tanks for their livelihood.

He further said that NREGS would help the fishermen take up ponds in minor irrigation tanks to use them as fish nurseries.

The Collector directed the Fisheries Department and NREGS officials to identify 100 tanks in the upland area to take up this scheme under which each unit would cost Rs.11 lakh.

While reviewing the NREGS works, he directed the officials to expedite the NTR Jalasiri scheme and achieve the targets of open defecation free villages.

Mr. Arun Kumar said that 5,000 varmi compost units would be set up and directed the Agriculture Department to create awareness among the farmers for their involvement.

With regard to farm mechanization, he directed the Joint Director of the department to ensure fair pieces to farmers through custom hiring centres in the district.

On solar pumps to Kadiyam nurseries, he said that 450 units were given administrative sanction against the target of 500 and requested them to take up bore wells in places identified by the Ground Water department.

He also directed the officials to control iron wheeled tractors movement on the roads to prevent damage. Kits for kitchen gardens should be distributed and the kitchen sheds construction taken up in two phases by the Panchayat Raj department, he added

### **Special sanitation**

To control seasonal diseases, the Collector directed the District Panchayat Officer to organise a special sanitation week in the villages. Cleaning of water tanks, garbage removal, control of water stagnation were suggested to be taken up during this period.

Joint Collector S. Satyanarayana said e-office was being implemented in 46 departments of the 87 departments proposed and requested the other departments to follow the system. Joint Collector- 2 J. Radhakrishna murthy, Zilla Parishad CEO K. Padma and others attended the meeting.

### **Rajasthan to showcase its agri-tech potential**



ROADSHOW:Rajasthan Minister for Agriculture Prabhu Lal Saini (extreme right) at the Hyderabad Business Meet on Monday.- Photo: By Arrangement.

A State whose first reference brings to our minds images of camels, undulating sand dunes in deserts - Rajasthan, is gearing itself up to showcase what it terms the fantastic potential it has in the agriculture and related sectors.



Some facts, that many do not know, were thrown up at a meeting include those of the State's growth in agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and dairy development despite 61 per cent of its geographical area classified semi-arid and arid. It has only 9.32 per cent forest cover but there is a wide array of biodiversity.

On the irrigation front just about 34 per cent of its area is under assured irrigation, where two crops are raised.

“Come join us, grow with us at the three-day ‘Global Rajasthan Agritech Meet’ (GRAM), to be held in Jaipur between November 9 and 11,” invited its Agriculture Minister Prabhu Lal Saini and Secretary Women and Child Development Kuldeep Ranka. Hard-selling the growth and investment potential of the State at a road show here on Monday, they said several cash crops and irrigated crops were grown.

### **Few takers for crop insurance scheme**

The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana has failed to evoke much interest among farmers in the district, going by the number who have insured their crops under the scheme.

There are at least 3,85,725 farmers in the district and of them, only 2,668 have insured their crops for the kharif season this year under the scheme. This, despite the fact that the Agriculture Department had undertaken intensive campaigning. The last date for insuring crops under the scheme was July 30.

M. Mahanteshappa, Joint Director of Agriculture, told *The Hindu* that under the scheme, farmers could derive maximum benefit by paying a small premium. Assessment of crop losses would also be quick under the scheme, he said, adding that smart phones, remote-sensing technology and even drones would be used to estimate losses, assess compensation and settle claims without delay.

He said in most of the earlier crop insurance schemes, such as the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme, the premium charged, all to be paid by the farmer, was about 25 per cent of the sum assured. However, he said, both loanee and non-loanee farmers can insure their crops under this scheme, and farmers have to pay just 2 per cent of the premium amount (the remaining 8.5 per cent will be borne by the State and Union governments).

Farmers can insure most of the agriculture crops such as paddy, hybrid maize, ragi, groundnut, field beans, and pulses. Mr. Mahanteshappa said the reluctance of the farmers of Mysuru to insure crops under the scheme may be because in this part of the State, crop loss due to natural calamities was rare. He said that according to official data, more than 35,000 farmers have insured their crops in North Karnataka, where crop loss is more common.

There has also been poor response to the weather-based insurance system for horticulture crops.

### **‘Open second gate in Uzhavar Shandy’**

#### **DEMAND**

Stating that closure of the second gate in Uzhavar Shandy on Park Road is posing hardship to them in transporting vegetables, farmers demanded that it should be reopened.

The shandy is located in the heart of the town with the main gate located along Anjaneyar Temple Road and the small gate along Park Road. The presence of unauthorised shops on Park Road disrupts traffic every day as efforts by officials to relocate them failed.

Farmers who come to the shandy park their vehicles in the rear side and carry the vegetables to the shandy through the second gate. But, since the second gate is opened, unauthorised shops mushroomed on the road causing congestion. Hence, the gate was closed recently.

### **Cow-breeding business hit, Dairy farmers issue ultimatum to Punjab government**

Punjab’s dairy farmers on Monday accused the vigilante “cow protection groups” of hurting the Rs 2,500 crore breeding business, saying their flourishing trade of selling high-yielding cows to other states have shut.

The farmers led by Punjab Progressive Dairy Farmers’ Association also charged the SAD-BJP government with “creating obstacles” like seeking no objection certificates (NOC) to send cows to other States.

“Our trade has received a big setback because of vigilante cow protection groups which are unnecessarily harassing Punjab cow traders in the garb of protecting cows,” association’s president Daljit Singh said.

“Our Rs 2,500-crore industry has almost finished and cow breeding business has come to a standstill,” said Mr. Singh.

Dairy farmers used to have a decent income from cow breeding business as their crossbred fetch Rs 1.25 to Rs 1.50 lakh a cow. “But now we are not even able to get Rs 50,000 as buyers are afraid of entering Punjab,” he claimed.

He presented two dairy farmers from Punjab who were allegedly harassed by “cow protection groups” one month back.

“A false case was registered against them at the behest of a cow protection group,” he said adding that several instances have happened in the past and as a result farmers were now afraid to sell their cows.

### **Kanthallur makes a slow switch to garlic**

*Region’s traditional cool-season vegetables fall out of favour because of low prices*



A farmer at Kanthallur in Idukki district drying garlic. About 100 hectares of land is under garlic cultivation this season.

Farmers in Kanthallur, where cool season vegetables are largely cultivated, has largely shifted to garlic cultivation citing problems in marketing and low prices for traditionally cultivated vegetables such as potato, cabbage, beetroot, and carrot.

As per the estimate of the Kanthallur Krishibhavan, about 100 hectares of land is under garlic cultivation. Kanthallur Agriculture Officer Murugan told *The Hindu* on Monday that there was a major shift to garlic as its price had gone up the last season. Most farmers who cultivated potato had shifted to garlic as there was a slump in the potato price following a bumper production in the last season. Potato used to be the main crop in Kanthallur. Areas under grants cultivation were brought under potato cultivation through a government project.

Farmers mainly cultivate the Mettupalayam variety of garlic, which, though small, is of high quality. Mr. Murugan said the farmers sold it at the Vadukapatti garlic market in Tamil Nadu, for want of a selling space in the State.

The present price for garlic is around 200 per kilogram.

The growth period for garlic is three months and Kanthallur is all set to start the harvest within two weeks, said P.T. Mohandas, a farmer and president of the Kanthallur Cool-Season Vegetable Marketing Society. He said the sale was brisk in Vadukapatti market and farmers were enthused with the high price in recent times. Garlic from Vadukapatti is mainly used in pickle production centres and Kanthallur garlic has an upper hand in terms of price.

Mr. Mohandas said that unlike other vegetables, farmers can keep the garlic dried for three months.

Newly harvested garlic can be sold on the spot too, he said.

Enquiries from agents of the Vadukapatti market have poured in with the harvesting season nearing, he said.

## **Get crop insured today, farmers told**

Agriculture Minister Prathipati Pulla Rao asked farmers in the State to get enrolled for crop insurance by August 2, the last day for registration.

Addressing a press conference here, Mr. Pulla Rao said that last date was applicable to all farmers irrespective of their loan status. Bankers had agreed to extend the time for renewal of loans to August 17, he added. “Chief Minister spoke to the insurance companies and ensured a system to settle claims within 48 hours. The bankers also asked for speedy survey of loss at the time of disasters and government agreed to it. To avail such speedy claims, all the farmers should get crop insurance,” he added.



## **Rajasthan seeks partnership from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh farmers**

Rajasthan shall showcase investment opportunities in the products like pressure irrigation, solar pumps, custom hiring of farm machinery and implements, farm mechanisation, agro-processing, it said.



Rajasthan shall showcase investment opportunities in the products like pressure irrigation, solar pumps, custom hiring of farm machinery and implements, farm mechanisation, agro-processing, it said. (representative image; Express archives)

Rajasthan Minister Prabhu Lal Saini on Monday invited farmers and industrialists from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to partner with the states' agriculture and allied sectors.

The Minister for Agriculture and Allied Sectors was here for a road show for the forthcoming

Global Rajasthan Agritech Meet-2016 (GRAM) to be held at Jaipur from November 9 to 11, a release from Rajasthan government said.

During the meet, Rajasthan shall showcase investment opportunities in the products like pressure irrigation, solar pumps,

custom hiring of farm machinery and implements, farm mechanisation, agro-processing, it said.

As per the release, the international event – with representations from Netherlands, Israel, Australia and Canada – will be attended by over 50,000 farmers.

This event will feature an exhibition showcasing strengths of the Rajasthan agricultural sector, live demonstrations of latest agro-technologies and equipments, B2B and B2G meetings with national and foreign partners,

Conference on knowledge sharing and best agri practises and a networking session between the agri industry, academia and policy makers including Government officials, the release added.

## **After strike, Maharashtra wants to encourage farmers to go in for direct marketing**

The state govt plans to bring down substantially the present bank guarantee of Rs 10-15 lakh and licence fee of Rs 15,000-50,000



Earlier this month, the state had amended the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee law and delisted fruits and vegetables from the marketyards.

DELISTING of fruits and vegetables might have propelled traders and commission agents to go on strikes but it has also seen a sizable number of farmers venturing into direct marketing and successfully managing to keep the supplies up in cities such as Mumbai and Pune.

Buoyed with this positive development, the state government is now in the process of reducing both the bank guarantees and licence fee to allow for more farmer-producer companies and farmers groups to get into direct marketing.

This the government hopes will create for an alternate channel to the existing marketyards for trade of fruits and vegetables.

Earlier this month, the state had amended the 1960s Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) law and delisted fruits and vegetables from the marketyards.

This move now allows farmers to directly sell vegetables and fruits anywhere without having to visit the APMCs.

As expected, this move had generated much heat among the traders and commission agents. Marketyards across the state were closed for three days following a strike called by them and shutters were lifted only at the announcement of a special committee to look into the matter.

Retail traders from Pune had subsequently gone on a four-day strike to protest against another amendment, which had shifted the onus of payment of commission on the buyer instead of the farmers. The Pune retailers' strike has also been called off.

During the course of the strike, both the directorate of marketing as well as the Maharashtra State Agricultural Marketing Board (MSAMB) had mobilised farmer producer companies and farmers' groups to directly sell in cities like Mumbai and Pune.

On an average, alternate marketing channels had managed to meet more than 50 per cent of the vegetable needs for both Mumbai and Pune.

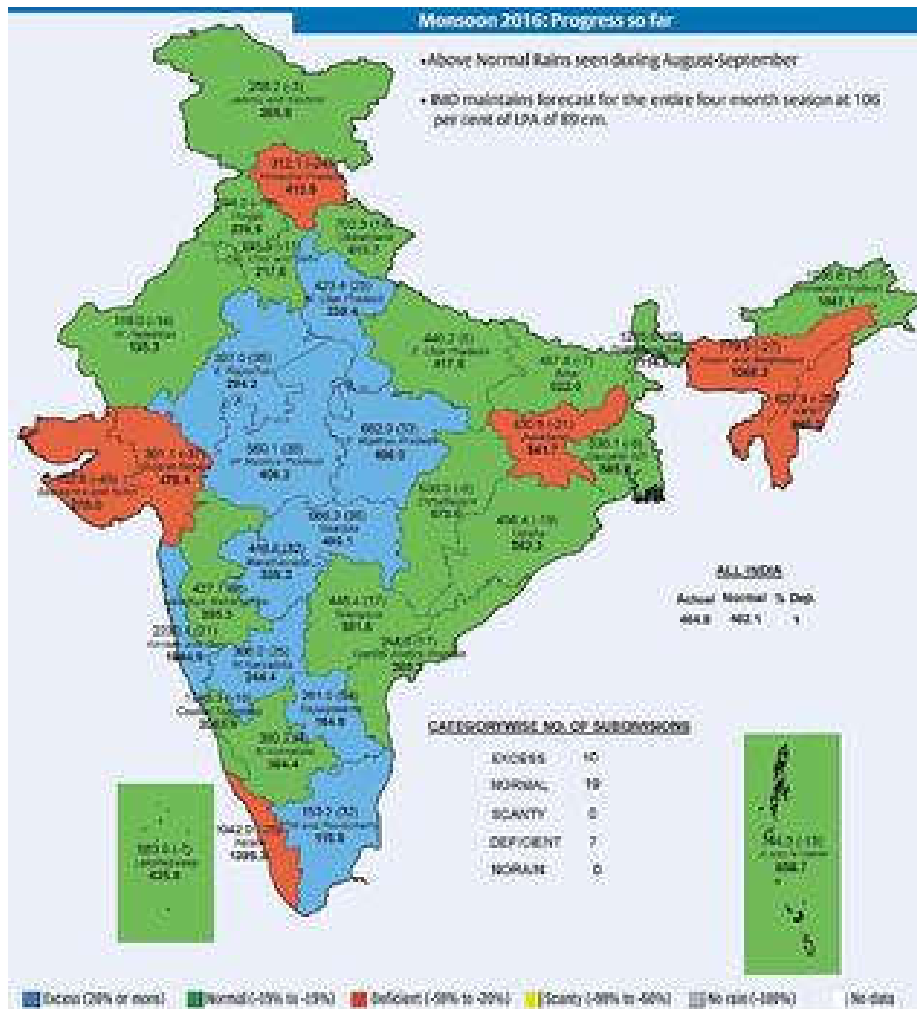
Although the strike has now been called off, senior officials of directorate of marketing said they want the farmer producer companies to establish an alternate marketing platform particularly in Mumbai and Pune.

Successful implementation of the model, they say will allow for the replication of the model elsewhere in the state.

The first step towards this exercise is the reduction of the license fee as well as the bank guarantees necessary to obtain direct marketing license.



**Met predicts surplus rainfall in Aug-Sept period**



In line with predictions, the South-West monsoon, the country’s agricultural lifeline, has stayed on course for the first half of the four-month season, starting June.

The timely and widespread precipitation, after two-successive weak monsoon years, has provided a fillip to crop plantings this kharif season, thereby raising prospects of a good harvest, which has induced a softening trend in prices of many farm commodities.

## **Surplus forecast**

Cumulative rainfall for the season so far has been normal at 454.7 mm as against a normal of 452.8 mm for the period.

Though the arrival of the monsoon was delayed by about eight days, the swift progress has ensured adequate rainfall across most parts of the country, except pockets such as Gujarat, Kerala and some North-Eastern States.

Rainfall in July was 9.8 per cent above normal, while in June it had registered a deficit of 11 per cent.

Global models are of the view that for the rest of the season, the monsoon will stay on track, delivering normal to above-normal rains across for many parts of the country.

In fact, a long-range forecast for the second-half of the season (August-September) issued by the India Meteorological Department on Monday said that rainfall is likely to be above normal (106 per cent of the long period average, LPA).

Quantitatively, overall rainfall during the second half is likely to be 107 per cent of the LPA of 43.5 cm, with a model error of 8 per cent.

Rainfall in August is likely to be 104 per cent with a model error of  $\pm 9$  per cent of the LPA as was forecast in June.

As for the entire season (June to September), rainfall over the country as a whole is likely to be 106 per cent with a model error of  $\pm 4$  per cent of LPA of 89 cm as was forecast in June.

## **Kharif gets a boost**

The timely and normal precipitation has given a boost to sowing of kharif crops such as rice, pulses and oilseeds. In fact, the total kharif acreage, so far, has been 6.28 per cent higher at 799.51 lakh ha over corresponding last year's 752.29 lakh ha.

Acreage under pulses crops such as tur, urad and moong have gained significantly from crops such as cotton and bajra this year.

The area under rice, the main kharif cereal crop, has also gained, as have coarse cereals such as maize and jowar, and oilseeds such as groundnut, soyabean and sunflower.

### **‘Neutral’ pacific**

The Met update observed that the strong El Nino event of 2015-16 in the tropical Pacific had ended in May this year and currently ‘neutral’ conditions (neither El Nino nor La Nina) are prevailing.

It says there is a strong probability (70 per cent) that ‘neutral’ conditions will persist during the remainder of the monsoon.

### **IOD watch**

However, some of the global models suggest development of weak La Nina conditions in the latter part of the season.

La Nina conditions have mostly coincided with a reasonably good Indian monsoon, though there is no direct cause-effect relationship between the two.

Closer home, over the Indian Ocean, there is a 40 per cent probability that the current negative Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) conditions will persist during the remainder of the monsoon season.

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology has already classified the prevailing negative IOD as a ‘strong’ one.

The IOD mimics the El Nino-La Nina conditions in the Indian Ocean and is known to have a more immediate impact on the monsoon.

A positive IOD (when the western part of the Indian Ocean warms up relative to the east) boosts the Indian monsoon while these conditions reverse in a negative IOD event and have a drag effect on the monsoon.

## **Kerala oil traders urge govt to remove tax on coconut oil**

The Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA) has approached the Subject Committee (Economic Affairs), Kerala Legislative Assembly, seeking withdrawal of the five per cent tax on coconut oil imposed in the State budget.

Thalath Mahmood, President, COMA, said that all the successive governments have fully exempted coconut, copra and its products from the levy of tax under KVAT Act and the proposed amendment to bring back those levies would be detrimental to the industry as well as coconut farming.

Even if tax is levied on coconut oil or copra, he said it would not bring any benefits to coconut oil in view of the input tax credit mechanism. Even in the absence of exemption on coconut and copra, oil millers will be liable to pay tax on the end-product like coconut oil at 5 per cent without any rebate. Thus, the levying of the tax on coconut oil in the budget would impact the traditional coconut oil industry which comprises around 1,200 millers in the small and medium sector.

The tax on coconut oil would push up the prices, leaving consumers to shift to other edible oils where there was zero per cent tax. Imported palm oil at much cheaper prices has already made inroads into the Kerala markets in a big way, he said.

According to him, there has been a considerable reduction in the arrival of impure coconut oil from neighbouring States following the initiatives of COMA to check adulteration at border check posts.

Meanwhile, the Onam festival demand coupled with active corporate buying pushed up prices of coconut oil and copra by at least 200 a quintal in Kerala and Tamil Nadu in the last two days.

Coconut oil prices went up to 7,800 a quintal in Kerala and 7,600 in Tamil Nadu, while copra prices shot up to 5,400 and 5,200 respectively. A buyers' trend is prevailing in the market, which is likely to continue, he said.

Bharath Khona, former Member, COMA, said that the price increase is evident in the loose oil market in Tamil Nadu which went up to 1,200 for 15 kg against last week's level of 1,100.

### **Cardamom retains aroma on tight supplies**

A steady/firmer trend was visible in the small cardamom prices at auctions held in Kerala and Tamil Nadu last week on good buying support amid a squeeze in supplies.

The arrivals continued to show a downtrend as the harvesting has been delayed and almost 90 per cent of material arriving at present is from the stocks held by growers/primary market dealers. As a result, the material held from the previous crop would get liquidated before the harvesting begins in its full swing, trade sources in Kumily said.

Only 10 per cent of the arrivals are from the fresh picking which is taking place in some small pockets that have received isolated showers. Normally, at this time of the season 90 per cent of the supply used to be of the new crop. It gives the impression that the crop is going to be less by 40-50 per cent due to dry spell and erratic rains, PC Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC, told *BusinessLine*.

Given this scenario bullish sentiments were building up in the market and that might push up the prices in the coming days, trade sources in Bodinayakannur claimed.

Availability of exportable grade capsules at competitive prices is attributed to the upsurge in the cardamom exports, Punnoose said. Supply of quality material continued to remain squeezed and good colour capsules were fetching good price, they said.

At today's auction held in Bodinayakannur by the Cardamom Planters' Association, the average price moved up to 768.08 from 735.31 a kg the previous Monday. Today's arrivals stood at 15.4 tonnes and of this 9.6 tonnes

were traded. The maximum price was at 920 a kg. The individual auction average was vacillating between 780 and 832 last week.

Total arrivals during the season up to July 30 were at around 34,013 tonnes and sales were at 32,878 tonnes. The individual auction average for the season stood at around 640/kg.

Prices in /kg: 8 mm bold good colour 1,200; 7-8 mm 900; 6-7 mm 725-730 and below 6 mm: 630-640.

### **Tea prices rise at Kochi sale**

At sale no 30 of the Kochi tea auctions, there was an active participation of leading and regional blenders. A good demand spurred CTC dust price with the market for good liquoring teas up 5-10 a kg.

Medium teas were steady to dearer by 2-4. However, plainer teas were irregular, lower and witnessed some withdrawals.

The quantity on offer in CTC dust grades was 7,78,500 kg.

The upcountry demand was subdued. In CTC orthodox, the demand was less and the quantity on offer was 17,500 kg.

Exporters absorbed a small quantity offered. In Cochin CTC dust quotation, good varieties fetched 109-153, mediums quoted 94-125 and plain grades stood at 85-97.

The leaf sale market for high-grown brokens, whole leaf, Fannings in orthodox grades was firm to dearer by 5-10. However, the CTC leaf market tended to ease and the quantity on offer was 29,000 kg

### **Dilip Rath takes over as Chairman NDDB**

After the former IAS officer T Nanda Kumar abruptly resigned from the chairmanship of National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), Govt of India has given Dilip Rath,

Managing Director of the Dairy Board an additional charge of Chairmanship till the regular appointment.

Rath was closely involved in project conceptualization and formulation of NDP. As the Mission Director of NDP, he is actively pursuing the project objectives, an NDDDB statement said here.

Rath brings with him a wide experience in dairy development and cooperatives. He was instrumental in implementing various schemes of the Central Government, viz., National Project on Cattle and Buffalo Breeding, Intensive Dairy Development Programme, Clean Milk Production, Assistance to Cooperatives, besides being the divisional head of 12 cattle development organizations under Central Government.

After receiving Master's degree in Economics from Jawaharlal Nehru University, he received MSc in Economics from the London School of Economics.

He joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1979 and served in different capacities under the State Governments of West Bengal, Odisha and the Central Government.

He was Joint Secretary in the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Government of India from 2008 to 2010 and Director on the board of NDDDB.

Rath also held post of chairman of the Delhi Milk Scheme's management committee. He was also responsible for monitoring country's milk situation in the context of inflation of essential commodities.

### **Turmeric flat despite poor inflow**

Despite poor arrival of turmeric bags at Erode markets, prices of the spice did not increase. "Only 3,000 bags arrived for sale but the price of the commodity did not appreciate. There was no upcountry demand for the turmeric," said RKV

Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association, the finger variety went for 7,434-9,286 a quintal and the root variety 7,239-8,511. Of the arrival of 811 bags, 558 were sold.

### **Mixed trend in sugar**



Sugar prices on the Vashi remained unchanged in spot and *naka* level while declined by 10 a quintal at mill level.

Higher local demand and offtake kept activities active.

Local demand remained higher than arrivals despite continuous rains in the city. Arrivals were 58-60 truck loads and local dispatches were at 60-62 loads.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade 3,652-3,752 (3,656-3,742) and M-grade 3,742-3,852 (3,742-3,862).

*Naka* delivery rates: S-grade 3,620-3,700 (3,620-3,700) and M-grade 3,680-3,800 (3,680-3,800).



## Sluggish demand drags soyabean



Despite improved global cues, favourable weather condition and crop report, both soya oil and soyabean continued to trade lower in Indore on sluggish demand with soya refined being quoted at 628-30 , while soya solvent ruled at 590-95.

Amid arrival of 2,500-3,000 bags, soyabean ruled stable at 3,700, while plant deliveries were quoted at 3,750 a quintal.

Soyameal ruled stable at 33,000-34,500 a quintal on the spot on subdued domestic demand.

# Business Standard

## IMD sees 'above normal' rains for Aug-Sept

Southwest monsoon likely to be 107% of long-period average; augurs well for farmers



The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Monday retained its earlier forecast of 'above normal' rains during the four-month season of monsoon that started in June. The Met Office also said rains during August and September would be 'above normal'. This could boost both kharif and rabi crops, which would not only push up economic growth but also pull down food inflation.

The Met Office maintains its June forecast for overall showers to be 106 per cent of the long-period average (LPA). It also said rains during August and September would be at 107 per cent of LPA. LPA is the average rainfall of the last 50 years, estimated at 89 cm.

The Met Office said the forecast for August and September is with an error margin of eight per cent. The latest update means there is a strong possibility of the rains making a delayed withdrawal.

This would not only aid kharif planting but also leave enough residual moisture in the soil for a bumper rabi harvest. Already, sowing of kharif crops in the first two months of this year's monsoon season has crossed last year's level.

The southwest monsoon is the lifeline of the country's agriculture sector since two-thirds of cultivable land is still unirrigated. Although the share of agriculture has come down in the overall gross domestic product (GDP), it still employs the largest rural folk. With the urban demand likely to pick up from implementation of the 7th Pay Commission, rural demand might give further boost to India's GDP, estimated at 7-7.75 per cent this financial year, against 7.6 per cent a year ago.

Despite two years of back-to-back drought, agriculture growth was 1.2 per cent in 2015-16, against contraction of 0.2 per cent in the previous year.

#### TAKING A RAIN CHECK

- IMD says August-September rains to be 107% of LPA, which is 'above normal'
- India got around 43.5 cm of rainfall in the last two months of the four-month monsoon season that started from June
- IMD says August rains to be 104% of LPA
- Met Office sticks to its overall monsoon forecast of rains being 'above normal', at 106% of LPA between June and September
- Rains between 105-110% of LPA are classified 'above normal'
- The average rainfall in 50 years during the four-month monsoon season is estimated to be 89 cm

The rains might also bring down the current pressure on inflation in food items. Retail price index-based food inflation rose to 7.79 per cent in June, against 7.47 per cent in May.

India gets 43.5 centimetres of rainfall during August and September, which is 49 per cent of the LPA.

The Met Office kept unchanged its projections for full season rainfall — from June to September — at 106 per cent of the LPA. This forecast was made in June.

IMD classifies rains between 105 and 110 per cent of the LPA as ‘above normal’, while that between 96 and 104 per cent of the LPA is categorised ‘normal’. Showers between 90 and 95 per cent of LPA are called ‘below normal’.

### **APMC delisting: Vegetables price crash as farmers sell directly to consumers**

Bitter gourd leads decline as green veggies nosedive up to 50% on Maharashtra's move to delist them from spot mandis



Vegetables prices have crashed in Mumbai over the past two weeks on a sudden increase in direct supply from farmers to consumers following the state government's move to delist green veggies from spot mandis.

Prices of green vegetables have nosedived by up to 50% since July 15, with bitter gourd leading the decline to currently trade at Rs 1,900 a quintal (model price in wholesale) in Mumbai. Bitter gourd in the Hyderabad wholesale market also fell by over 30% to trade at Rs 1,600 a quintal. In Delhi and Kolkata, however, its price jumped by 18% and 6%, respectively.

Normally during the monsoon, vegetable supply is interrupted due to slow harvest in deep mud fields, non-availability of transportation, and fear of high spoilage. Since normal-season vegetables are harvested in August, the pre-season sown crop with mechanised irrigation facility is hitting mandis, especially in Maharashtra.

Interestingly, the farmers in Maharashtra tested the advantage of a free market system for the first time after the state government announced delisting of fruits and vegetables from mandi system early July. This meant that farmers were given a free hand to sell their produce directly to consumers, unlike earlier when they often had to resort to distress sales to the middlemen or *arhatiyas* who reaped the benefits of high prices at the retail end of the chain.

"Farmers turned entrepreneurs for the first time to sell their vegetables output directly to consumers. Farmers have joined hands with one another to aggregate their produce and sell directly to consumers. They bring in truckloads of vegetables directly to consumer centres and sell them directly by ignoring the middlemen," said Shri Ram Gadhave, President, Vegetables Grower Association of India.

In January this year, the Centre had proposed state governments to delist fruits and vegetables from the Agricultural Produce Markets Committee (APMC). While Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka accepted the proposal earlier, Maharashtra followed suit in July. With this, Maharashtra became the fourth state to delist fruits and vegetables from APMC mandis.

Meanwhile, vegetables prices in Delhi and Kolkata remained elevated. Barring a few, all other green vegetables recorded an increase in their prices.

July month is a lean season for new arrivals of vegetables. In Delhi, for example, arrivals of okra declined to 143 tonnes on July 31 from 166 tonnes on July 15. Similarly, bitter gourd arrivals in Delhi slumped to 48 tonnes on July 31 from 83 tonnes two weeks ago.

"*Arhatiyas* are an integral part of the trade system as they release the quantity of vegetables as per requirement. Since entire quantity of arrivals is not sold in a day, arhatiyas hold farm output for the next day. Farmers, however, would not have such a carryover system. Hence, farmers would not be able to execute direct sale for long. Like arhatiyas, no one would extend farmers monetary support in their needs and hence, they would have to come back to us i.e. to the old system of trade with arhatiyas buying farm output from farmers," said Sanjay Bhujbal, a vegetables trader in Vashi APMC.



# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## **Agriculture polytechnic school soon**



In order to raise farmers' income, the government insisted arhatiyas to collect their four per cent commissions from buyers instead of farmers earlier.

The district administration has announced that it would acquire over 160 acres of land along the Rachapalli-Ragupeta hill fringe stretch in Makkavaripalem mandal to set up an Agricultural Polytechnic and Gurukul School.

Almost all the land is D-Patta but farmers do not have ownership rights. However, a 70-acre stretch around Gandipeta in Bheemaboyinapalen village was originally privately owned and later donated to poor landless farmers of the village.

The local revenue divisional officer (RDO) Narsipatnam and his staff, including the mandal revenue officer (MRO) of Makkavaripalem, conducted public meets in various villages in the Rachapalli-Ragupeta stretch two days ago and informed the farmers that their lands would be acquired by the state for setting up a Gurukul.

Following the news, farmers protested the acquisition proposal. The RDO said the farmers would be compensated as per the new norms.

### **Farmers to get 3% premium relief in crop insurance scheme**

Just before she offered to step down on Monday, Chief Minister Anandiben Patel made an important pro-farmer decision to provide the maximum benefit of crop insurance scheme to farmers. Accordingly, farmers will have to pay only 2% premium instead of 5% premium as decided earlier.

Under Prime Minister Crop Insurance Scheme, it was decided that farmers will have to pay 5% premium for yearly commercial and yearly horticulture crops and 2% premium for yearly food crops and oil-seeds including pulses growers. And state and central government's share for assistance will be equally on further premium.

Moreover, for kharif season cotton (irrigated & Non-irrigated) and banana crop, total 5.14 lakh farmer occupants will be paid total Rs. 317.71 crore premium assistance (including additional 3% assistance) by state government for approximately 10.42 lakh hectare insured area. As many as 7.80 lakh farmers who are growing food crops including pulses and oil-seeds crops will get Rs. 908.88 crore premium assistance for approximately 28.00 lakh hectare area. This assistance is over and above the 2% premium on the part of farmers.

According to the proposal for insurance premium assistance of Rs 884 crore to 6.76 lakh groundnut farmers in 14.34 lakh hectares area, premium assistance of Rs 317.70 crore to 5.13 lakh cotton farmers in 10.41 lakh hectares area, premium assistance of Rs 12.98 crore to 1.01 lakh paddy farmers in 1.37 lakh hectares area, premium assistance of Rs 7.57 crore to 0.42 lakh millet farmers in 1.02 lakh hectares area and premium assistance of Rs 2.62 crore to 0.35 lakh castor farmer in 1.02 lakh hectares area will be provided by the state government.

Thus so far, as per insurance proposal, the state government will assist total Rs 1226.68 crore premium for cotton and crops, a maximum of 3% premium assistance worth Rs. 147.42 crore including insurance proposal for 28.00 lakh hectare crops estimated by 12.94 lakh farmers.

## THE ECONOMIC TIMES

### **NDDB Chief was not speaking to Agriculture Minister for a year**



There comes a time in everyone's life when one's value system comes into serious conflict with the external environment: T. Nanda Kumar



NEW DELHI: The former chief of the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) T. Nanda Kumar was not speaking to the Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh for the last one year and government had planned to terminate his services, senior officials have told ET.

Kumar created stir by resigning from his post last week and saying in an internal e-mail to NDDB employees that "there comes a time in everyone's life when one's value system comes into serious conflict with the external environment."

A senior government official however countered what he termed as the "moral high ground" taken by Kumar, saying the former IAS officer "was not in communication" with the Agriculture Minister for almost a year. "The government had planned to terminate his services and gave him an honorable exit by asking him to resign. His way of running the NDDB was not seen in line with the larger government policy," the official told ET, not willing to be identified for the story.

When contacted, Kumar declined to comment on a query on his alleged non-communication with Singh. "I thank the government for giving me an honorable exit. I have relinquished charge...I don't want to join issues. My resignation letter is on personal grounds. I have not said anything against anybody. My reasons are personal," Kumar said.

ET accessed his resignation letter submitted to the Cabinet Secretary on June 27 in which he thanked the government for giving him an opportunity to work in the prestigious institute of national importance. Kumar asked for permission to relinquish charge on October 1, 2016 as a three-month notice is prescribed - the government decided to immediately relieve him. A senior official said government has to put in motion its agenda and officials need to tailor the policies accordingly. "All funds are given by government and it has a right to know what is going on," the official said.

NDDB was incorporated by a special act of Parliament and is headquartered in Anand, Gujarat. Kumar, the former food and agriculture secretary, was appointed NDDB Chairman by UPA government in 2014 for a 5-year-term.