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# Business Standard

## **Arecanut farmers seek extension of market intervention scheme**

Farmers also want the scheme to be extended to growers in Kerala, says S R Satishchandra, president, Campco

Arecanut farmers have asked the central government to extend the market intervention scheme (MIS), currently offered to growers in Karnataka till December 31 this year, up to May 2017. Farmers also want the scheme to be extended to growers in Kerala, said S R Satishchandra, president, Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Cooperative (Campco).

The central government had last week announced it would procure white arecanut at a Rs 251 a kg and the red variety Rs 270 a kg from Karnataka, under MIS, in a bid to help farmers reeling under price crash. In the past two years, arecanut prices have come down from Rs 75,000 to roughly Rs 25,000 a quintal now.

MIS is a price support mechanism implemented on the request of state governments for procurement of perishable and horticultural commodities in the event of a fall in market prices. The total demand of the crop in India is estimated at around 1.2 million tonnes, while production is pegged at 703,000 tonnes.

While there are 14 states producing arecanut, around 50 per cent of the arecanut production is in Karnataka.

Growers are attributing the price drop mainly to imports. Most traders import the crop from Indonesia – through Sri Lanka – by getting ‘certificate of origin’ from Sri Lanka by value addition and processing. Imports from Sri Lanka to India attract zero per cent customs duty under the India-Sri Lanka free trade agreement. India had imported 67,824 tonnes of arecanut worth \$159 million in 2015-16 against 110,000 tonnes worth \$229.96 million in 2014-15.

## **Date for farm loan repaying to be extended by 2 months**

The decision has been taken to address the difficulties of farmers in repaying because of demonetisation



The government is set to extend the time frame for repayment of all crop loans which are due in November-December by two months.

The decision, expected to be notified soon, has been taken to address the difficulties of farmers in repaying because of demonetisation.

Officials said farmers who repaid with a delay of two months would continue to get the benefit of the 4% subsidy on interest for timely payment; the normal interest of 7% won't be charged.

Most repayments of short-term crop loans for which interest subsidy is available are usually made from November, as farmers usually have cash at that time from the *kharif* harvest.

The Centre has targeted Rs 8,50,000 crore of crop loans in 2016-17. It has kept a budget of around Rs 15,000 crore for interest subsidy on these. The Centre gives a subsidy of 4% on the interest on timely repayment, which brings down the effective rate to around 3% for farmers.

Earlier, the government had said farmers would be allowed to buy seeds with old currency notes from any state or central government outlets and from agricultural universities, ahead of the rabi harvest. Farmers may buy the seeds from centres, units or outlets of central or state governments, public sector undertakings, national or state seed corporations, central or state agri universities and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, on showing proof of identity.

### **Mosaic buys fertiliser business of Brazil's Vale for \$2.5 billion**

The deal will help Mosaic to become the leading fertiliser production and distribution company in Brazil, one of the world's preeminent agricultural markets



The Mosaic Company has agreed to acquire

from Vale SA's Vale Fertilizantes business for an aggregate purchase price valued at \$ 2.5 billion. Vale will have the potential to earn an additional amount of up to \$ 260 million to be paid in cash over the two-year period following closing if certain financial metrics are achieved. Upon closing the acquisition, Mosaic expects to become the leading fertiliser production and distribution company in Brazil, one of the world's preeminent agricultural markets.

"This acquisition provides Mosaic a tremendous opportunity to capitalise on the fast-growing Brazilian agricultural market and from improving business conditions. We see this as an ideal strategic fit for Mosaic. We have proven expertise in phosphate mining and manufacturing, a strong record of successful acquisition integration, and extensive relationships and experience in Brazil," said Joc O'Rourke, president and CEO, Mosaic.

Mosaic intends to fund the acquisition with \$1.25 billion in cash, which the company plans to raise through the issuance of debt, and approximately 42.3 million shares of its common stock. The shares of Mosaic common stock to be issued to Vale at closing are expected to represent approximately 11 percent of Mosaic's outstanding shares.

The business to be acquired currently has capacity to produce 4.8 million tonnes of finished phosphate crop nutrients and 500,000 tonnes of potash. It includes five Brazilian phosphate rock mines and four chemical and fertiliser production facilities, as well as one potash facility in Brazil.

Through the acquisition, Mosaic also will acquire Vale's 40 percent economic interest in the Miski Mayo phosphate mine in Peru, and its potash project at Kronau, Saskatchewan, Canada. Mosaic has the option to include the Rio Colorado, Argentina potash project at closing as part of the transaction. The inclusion of the Rio Colorado potash project in the transaction is subject to Mosaic's agreement following appropriate diligence. The transaction excludes Vale's Cubatao-based nitrogen and non-integrated phosphate business, which is required to be carved out of Vale Fertilizantes prior to closing.

"Mosaic has agreed to acquire high-quality and complementary assets in a powerhouse agricultural center that have significant cost advantages at an

attractive valuation. As commodity and crop nutrition markets improve, Mosaic will have the ability to meaningfully outperform our competition and generate shareholder value. Vale will be a valued minority shareholder and partner who will bring significant Brazilian expertise that we believe will benefit Mosaic in the years ahead,” said Rich Mack, executive vice president and chief financial officer.

# DECCAN Chronicle

## **Solar device for cleaning solid waste wins award**

From my school days I had been reading about water hyacinth weed in Ooty lake and many an efforts were made to remove it, Arun said



M.Arun, the Govt., higher secondary school-Ooty student and his mentor L.Sundaram, with the solar powered water bodies solid waste cleaning robot. (Photo: DC)

**OOTY:** M. Arun, a class 11 student at the Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) here has received the honour at the national level science exhibition for school students as his innovative device named, “Solar-powered water bodies solid waste cleaning robot”, got him 4th prize in the national level competition.

Certainly, Arun has proved a point that being born in an economically backward family and studying in government school is not a deterrent to make it big at the national level, as he exhibited sheer will and intent to compete with others across the nation to get due recognition for his device that has proved its worth in cleaning aquatic weeds.

Talking to DC, he said that he won the national level award of the Central department of science and technology (DST) in the ‘Innovation in Science and Pursuit for Inspired Research (Inspire)’.

Explaining his device, he said that he used a polythene pipe on a floating device, a leather roller, a cutter, a collection box and a remote controlled mechanism along with solar panels on the device to control the robot on the water surface to change its direction and to cut the water weeds, collect them and dump it on the collection box.

“From my school days I had been reading about water hyacinth weed in Ooty lake and many an efforts were made to remove it. I wanted to make it simple for the aqua weed management and I thought about fashioning this device. Mr L.Sundaram, a science teacher who is working in a government school in Kattbettu area helped me to fine-tune this device on the advice from Mr Ganesh Moorthy, chief education officer in the Nilgris.

“This device is also helpful to collect and remove other solid wastes floating in the water bodies,” he added . Mr Sundaram, his mentor, said that Arun had organised a couple of demonstration with his robot in Ooty lake a few months ago.

“His device won the district-level and state-level prizes already that helped him compete at the national level, where in Arun’s robot was chosen for the 4th prize at the national level and the first prize in south zone level” he added.

### **Youngsters help recover lost green cover in Chennai**

After the cyclone, the greenery of the city has come down to five percent from eight.



Bhagwan Singh, Executive editor of Deccan Chronicle, Justice P. Jyothimani and actor Aari take part in the tree planting drive, during which 5,000 saplings were planted in the city. (Photo: DC)

**Chennai:** A week after Cyclone Vardah devastated Chennai; the city is now taking steady steps to recovery. In an initiative that sets an example to many welfare associations and youth, like-minded activists on Sunday planted as many as 5,000 saplings across the city, as part of the 'Green Chennai Once Again' drive. Awareness on the tree plantation drive is wide, as indigenous and fruit bearing species were preferred, against the exotic ones that grow fast.

Inaugurating the drive at Madras School of Social Work, Judicial Member of National Tribunal Southern Zone, Justice P. Jyothimani said, “The best service one can do is to nature. I am really happy to witness many youngsters eager to participate to bring back the greenery in the city.”

After the cyclone, the greenery of the city has come down to five percent from eight. Even though people are aware about the method of re-planting the uprooted trees, it is sad that they are not doing it, Justice Jyothimani felt.

Appreciating the participation of youth, Actor Aari said, “It is the duty of a common man to join in such missions. Educational institutions should also encourage such initiatives.”

Attributing the massive tree fall to improper tree plantation methods, Social Activist Abdul Ghani said, “Around two feet of land must be dug to plant a tree, of which one foot should be covered with manure and another with soil.”

Requesting the public to get involved in tree re-plantation activities, Abdul Ghani said, "Six-year-old trees at Madhavaram were replanted successfully." “The Chief Minister has promised support to regain the city's green level to 33.3% with required fund,” he added.

Dr. Amal Prakash Reddy, representative of Green Council of India, distributed the tree saplings that consisted of native species like Pongam, neem, mango, guava, hibiscus and palm. Various youth organisations including National Service Scheme, Care and Welfare and Angels of Marina, joined the drive that covered campuses as well as a few residential area in Besant Nagar, KK Nagar and Anna Nagar.



## **Farmers advised to spray PPFM bacteria**

### **Demonstration of spraying of the bacteria conducted at Narpavalakudi**

Even as farmers are gripped by anxiety as to whether they can save the standing ‘samba’ crop, the Agriculture Department and Krishi Vigyan Kendra in Vamban have suggested spraying of Pink Pigmented Facultative Methyloph (PPFM) bacteria on the fields to mitigate drought and protect the crop.

A demonstration of the spraying of the PPFM bacteria was conducted at Narpavalakudi village near Aranthangi on Monday, to drive home its efficacy.

N. Annamalai, Joint Director of Agriculture, said that the PPFM bacteria, found on plant phyllosphere, secrete variety of growth hormones which could be used by the plants leading to an increased growth and yield.

S.Mathiyazhagan Assistant Professor of Plant Pathology of the Kendra, explained the uses and different method of PPFM application in paddy crop.



M. Kathiravan, Assistant Professor of Seed Science and Technology and G. Prabu Kumar, Assistant Professor of Agronomy spoke on the uses of the bacteria. It would expedite seed germination and seedling growth and accelerate vegetative growth.

It would also increase leaf area index and chlorophyll content. The cost of spraying would be around Rs. 300 an acre, they said.

Further details can be had by contacting Programme co-ordinator of the Kendra, R.Manimekalai or R. P. Gnanamalar, Professor and Head of National Pulses Research Centre, by dialling 04322 290321 during working hours.

Paddy has been raised in Aranthangi, Avudaiyarkoil, Manamelkudi and Arimalam blocks in the district.

### **Every ration card holder will get 1 kg tur dal from next month: KAPC**

Karnataka Agriculture Price Commission Chairman T.N. Prakash Kammardi addressing a press conference in Belagavi on Monday.

The State government has decided to distribute one kilogram of tur dal to every ration card holder through the public distribution system from January, Karnataka Agriculture Price Commission (KAPC) chairman T.N. Prakash Kammardi has said.

However, he did not elaborate on the matter further except that every card holding family will get one kg of tur dal at subsidised price from the first month of the new year.

#### **Report**

Speaking to presspersons here on Monday, he said that the KAPC had also prepared a detailed report after studying the cost of production of 27 agricultural and horticultural produces to project price forecasts for each crop.

The report, which would help the government in fixing remunerative prices for crops, would be submitted to the government very soon.

## Model villages

The KAPC had short-listed a village each in eight districts, including Belagavi, to develop them into model villages towards sustainable growth on an experimental basis. The survey, which included preparation of soil health and human health cards, would be completed and a detailed report would be submitted to the government before the presentation of the annual financial budget proposals next year.

## To boost income

He said that once the plans were finalised, all necessary steps would commence through modern technological interventions and with the support of Universities of Agriculture and Horticulture and amalgamation of various schemes to develop such selected villages into model villages in the sense that every farmer of the village got remunerative price for his produce and his income was boosted to a considerable extent over a period of three years.

The measures in this direction were in response to the Prime Minister's budgetary announcement to double farm income in a five-year period, Dr. Kammardi added. Joint Director of Agriculture V.J. Patil was present.

## **'Demonetisation has hit farm workers'**

But instead of being in fields, the farm workers were standing in queues before banks and ATMs for getting their petty deposits encashed or to exchange their soiled notes. The Centre had gone for demonetisation without making adequate and alternative arrangements to ensure financial liquidity, she said.

Having failed in the currency ban exercise, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was now speaking of cashless economy. In a country where transactions were primarily cash based, it was impossible to implement cashless transactions in rural areas.

Cashless transactions required high rates of literacy, internet connectivity, wide banking network and other infrastructure facilities, which were lacking in villages.

She said that she was worried about the spread of the divisive ideologies of religious fundamentalists, who were organising workers on the basis of religion, caste, creed, etc, and thereby disrupting the unity among them. This tendency had become prominent in the country and it was having a serious impact on its social fabric.

“Hence, the contemporary responsibilities of the working class are two pronged. One, fight for economic emancipation and, two, defeat the communal and caste divisiveness in society. These responsibilities are inseparable, one cannot be achieved without fulfilling the other,” she said. The society was passing through a difficult period. Socially backward castes, especially Dalits, were subjected to even physical attacks for the jobs they were doing and the food they were eating, Ms. Shylaja said.

S. Thirunavakkarasu, A. Vijayraghavan, G.N. Nagaraj, Nithyananda Swami, Chandrappa Hoskera, Venkatesh Koni, union leaders, and G.V. Sriram Reddy, K. Shankar, and Balakrishna Shetty, CPI(M) leaders, were present.

### **Agriculture engineering college to be set up in Vijayapura**

He said that while only 5 per cent of agriculture graduates had taken up agriculture after completing the course, 35 per cent of diploma student were going back to fields instead of looking for a job.

“With this, we are meeting the objective of encouraging the youth to take up agriculture. We have now reserved 5 per cent of seats in degree courses for diploma students,” Dr. Biradar said.

He said that the quota for children of farmers had been increased from 25 per cent to 40 per cent in degree courses in agriculture colleges. The objective was to attract more students from rural areas to go for agriculture.

Dr. Biradar said that the university had started a jowar seed processing unit at the agriculture college here to supply quality seeds to farmers.

## Silver jubilee

The agriculture college in Vijayapura will celebrate its silver jubilee on December 22 and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah would inaugurate the programme.



The college was established in 1990 when the late S. Bangarappa was the Chief Minister. “We are happy to celebrate 25 years of the agriculture college in drought-prone Vijayapura district,” Dr. Biradar said.

## Prakasam farmers find better alternative in Malabar neem



While farmers opting to sell Malabar neem to paper mills can easily get a premium price of Rs.5,500 per tonne, those waiting for eight years can get up to Rs. 8000 per tonne, explains Mr. Pollappa, who has also been promoting it for growing on farm fringes as also on village wastelands by dovetailing with the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme(MGNREGS) to improve the green cover.

“We can facilitate marketing arrangement for Malabar neem with traders in Karnataka, where it is sought after by the plywood industry,” adds Mr. Pollappa, who has facilitated planting of Malabar neem in about 5,000 acres in the district.

### **Multiple uses**

Speaking on the advantages of growing the neem, a species belonging to the neem family, Prakasam District Development Forum president Chunduri Ranga Rao says farmers could get decent returns in view of the multiple uses for Malabar neem in view of its anti-termite quality.

The wood with high calorific value, is also used for packing cases, ceiling planks, building purposes, agricultural implements, pencils, match boxes, catamarans, musical instruments and tea boxes.

In the coming years, more farmers will switch over to Malabar neem from the conventional subabul and eucalyptus with the paper mills driving down the prices for these social forestry crops, observes Acharya N.G. Ranga Kisan Sabha secretary Ch. Seshaiiah.

The agreement reached at the behest of State Transport Minister Sidda Raghava Rao for purchase of subabul at the rate of Rs.4,000 per quintal and eucalyptus at Rs. 4,200 per quintal from farmers is followed more in breach, farmers wing TDP District President K.Venkaiah laments while pressing for a uniform rate for the logs across the State as in the past.

The downward revision in the purchase price came in the wake of paper mills expressing inability to purchase subabul at Rs.4,400 per tonne and eucalyptus at Rs.4,600 per tonne fixed earlier.

### **Collector calls for value addition to farm produce**

Highlighting the need for establishing fruit ripening and coconut drying chambers in the horticulture zones in the district, Collector H. Arun Kumar on Monday asked Horticulture and Agriculture officials to work out strategies to ensure value addition to farm produce.

Addressing officials of all departments here, the Collector discussed development programmes and said a PowerPoint presentation on the same would be made at the two-day Collectors' conference to be held from December 21.

“Paddy farmers achieved a remarkable yield in the kharif season. Many of them have cut the expenses on fertilizers and pesticide by switching over to natural farming. Similarly, the dairy and fisheries sectors too are on the growth path,” he said.

The initiatives taken at the district level to promote industries would also form part of his presentation. Joint Collector S. Satyanarayana and other officials were present.

## **Training programme**

The RUDSET Institute here will conduct a free training programme in 'mushroom cultivation and spawn production' in the last week of December.

According to a RUDSET Institute press release, men, women and transgenders in the age group of 18 to 45 years and with a minimum educational qualification of eighth standard can apply for the programme.

Preference will be given to those engaged in agriculture. Applications with name, address, educational qualification and experience should reach the Director, RUDSET Institute, Airport Road, Perungudi, Madurai 625 022 on or before December 27.

Phone: 9445600561, 0452 2690609.

## **Farmers told to diversify**

Cooperation Minister Kadakampally Surendran has exhorted farmers to learn new methods for diversification of agriculture and value addition of crops to enhance income.

Inaugurating the Technology Week celebrations organised by the Agricultural Technology Management Agency, (ATMA) and the Central Tuber Crops Research Institute (CTCRI) here on Monday, he stressed the role of research institutions in developing modern technologies to improve agricultural yield.

## **India ‘to be self-reliant in silk by 2020’**



India plans to attain self-reliance in raw silk and plans to bring imports to zero level by 2020.

“With consistent supply of raw silk of high quality in adequate quantities and the country seeing increased production of bivoltine silk, we will be able to attain self-sufficiency,” KM Hanumantharayappa, Chairman, Central Silk Board (CSB), told reporters.

Towards achieving this objective, CSB has been making concerted efforts and developing new technologies for quality cocoon production and its conversion into silk yarn of global standards.

He said, “The Board is working towards self-reliance and we will bring imports to zero level by 2020. Currently, we are producing nearly 4,000 tonnes of 4A grade of silk, equivalent to the top grade of silk imported from China.”

The silk production is around 28,000 tonnes, of which 10,000 tonnes account for Crossbreed mulberry variety.

“There is a gap between silk production and demand, besides shortage of skilled manpower, necessitating imports. To bring this to end the Central Silk



Technological Research Institute (CSTRI) under funding from the board has developed indigenous Automatic Reeling Machine (ARM) and it will be supplied to reelers from next year,” he said.

Hanumantharayappa said the Board is launching its second Centre of Excellence (CoE) at its headquarters in Bengaluru which is expected to be inaugurated by Union Textile Minister Smriti Irani.

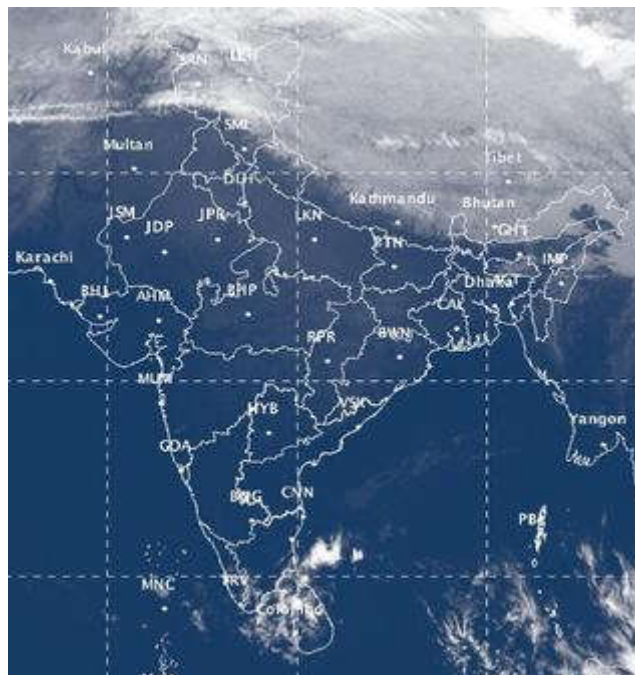
Managed by the Central Silk Technological Research Institute, the CoE will conduct specialised skill training and advanced short-term and long-term courses in silk reeling, spinning, twisting, weaving, processing, finishing and computer-aided design development and colour matching, besides packaging.

### **Global weather models suggest ‘rain-normal’ New Year for the country**

Thiruvananthapuram, December 19:

Scattered to isolated rain is the forecast for Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and Lakshadweep for the the next four days even as Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telanagana will stay dry.

A trough of lower pressure in the South-West Bay of Bengal (off the Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka coasts) is the lone meteorological feature seen driving the off and on showers over parts of the South.



## **Rain deficit**

According to the European Centre for Medium-Range Forecasts, the rain-carrying trough would come back into the reckoning back to back towards the last week of the month (and the year).

The India Met Department has predicted a weather pattern along the same lines with parts of South India managing to receive spill-over of rain breaking out over Sri Lanka.

But the US Climate Prediction Centre has a different view. It predicts mostly normal rain during the week ending December 24 for the entire South Peninsula but a dry phase over south Tamil Nadu and adjoining south Kerala during the week that follows, which is the last of the year as well.

The overall rain deficit of 60 per cent for the Peninsula during this North-East monsoon is expected to stay as such as the season comes to an end with the year-end.

## **Better New Year?**

Global weather models have been hinting that the December-January-February (2016-17) might be able to witness nearly normal rainfall for the country as a whole.

This outlook received better traction from the latest seasonal outlooks made available by the Application Laboratory of Jamstec, the Japanese national weather forecaster.

They seemed to favour less-than-normal heat during the December-January-February quarter for the South Peninsula while it will be warmer for West, North, North-West, and East India.

## **Normal rainfall**

Mostly similar weather conditions are forecast to pan out during the March-April-May quarter for the South Peninsula while North-North-West and East India will stay warmer.

As for precipitation, Jamstec is of the view that most of the country would receive normal rainfall for the December-January-February quarter.

But March-April-May might see the normal rain pattern migrate to West and North-West India (except the fringes along Himachal Pradesh, Uttarkhand and the foothills of the Himalayas where it will be less than normal).

However, the area extending from South Peninsula and the adjoining East Coast to East India is forecast to receive just below normal rainfall during these three months.