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# THE HINDU

## Farmers use predator egg parasitoids to control pests

*The wasp that comes out of the egg on the 6th day will eat eggs of pests*



The cardboards carrying predator egg parasitoids fixed in a cotton field at Kovilpatti block in Thoothukudi district on Friday.— Photo: N. Rajesh

Shunning toxic chemical pesticides, farmers of Kovilpatti region produce predator egg parasitoids and successfully use them in their fields to biologically control a range of pests destroying fruits, vegetables and food grains.

The predator egg parasitoids – Trichogramma – are minute polyphagous wasps that are endoparasitoids of insect eggs. On getting the eggs of Trichogramma from National Institute of Plant Health Management, the farmers, trained by experts of the Department of Agriculture, multiply the eggs and use it in their fields to control pests that affect the yield of fruits, vegetables and food grains, including rice.

As per this procedure, several lakhs of Trichogramma eggs are produced by the farmers, who stick the eggs in cardboards and staple the boards in the fields.

“One lakh eggs would be enough for crop cultivated on one hectare. The wasp that comes out of the egg on the sixth day will eat the eggs of harmful pests so that the farmers need not use harmful chemical pesticides for killing them,” says G. Hariputhiran, Agricultural Officer, Soil Testing Centre, Kovilpatti.

Since a cardboard with 15,000 eggs is sold for Rs. 30, farmers can easily buy and use it in their ranches.

### “Save Rs. 4000”

Farmer A. Marimuthu of Kizhavipatti said Trichogramma eggs being used in their fields had saved them Rs. 4,000 per acre as this amount had to be used for buying pesticides.

“After we started using Trichogramma eggs, we were able to avoid this expenditure without the harmful residual effects of pesticides on the produce,” Mr. Marimuthu said.

*Since a cardboard with 15,000 eggs is sold for Rs. 30, farmers can easily buy and use it in their ranches*

### Farmers’ plea for procurement of coconut instead of copra



In discussion: Farmers speaking at the grievance day meeting in Dindigul on Friday.— PHOTO: G. Karthikeyan

Farmers appealed to the cooperatives to procure coconut instead of copra and sought permission to lift silt from irrigation tanks to revitalise cultivable land at the agriculturists' grievance day meeting held here on Friday.

Agriculture officials informed that rainfall during July was 187.04 mm, 75.66 mm less than the average rainfall of 262.7 mm. Sixty per cent of total 91,488 wells had water that could be pumped for one to two hours and storage in rest of the wells was very poor.

Similarly 50 per cent of total 2,065 irrigation tanks in the district had full storage, 30 per cent of tanks had storage to half its capacity and 20 per cent had less storage.

Coconut growers appealed to the cooperative officials to procure coconut instead of copra as they procured paddy from farmers directly.

Freight charges and copra processing costs did not match the procurement price.

They also suggested spot procurement. If not, they could increase the quantum of copra procurement. Ammayanaickanur Farmers' Association President T. Madhavan appealed to rehabilitate the Annasamudhram tank, the prime groundwater and irrigation source to several villages around Kodai Road.

Similarly, Sirumalai reservoir was also in a pathetic condition. Shutters were damaged and silt accumulated. No efforts were taken by the PWD to rehabilitate it.

When some representatives of farmers associations tried to appease officials, farmers asked them to stick to the subject and discuss the problems faced by them.

Details of schemes could be printed and distributed to farmers, they said.

The meeting commenced at the right time and the technical session was in full swing as the meeting was conducted by agriculture and horticulture officials.



## Farmers want to de-silt waterbodies



Win-win situation: Farmers say removing the silt will also increase the storage capacity of waterbodies. A view of the Nemam tank in Tiruvallur district. — Photo: B. Jothi Ramalingam

*But WRD, Tiruvallur district administration delay permit citing misuse and diversion of silt*

At a time when illicit sand-mining is posing a threat to waterbodies and rivers, farmers in Tiruvallur district are demanding that the government allow them to remove silt from waterbodies and use it for cultivation.

This would not only help increase their water storage capacity, but also lead to better groundwater recharge, the farmers noted. Several of them have also placed their demand in various grievance meetings and submitted petitions to Tiruvallur Collectorate.

Farmers said mixing of top soil removed from the neighbourhood ponds and tanks will help nourish their fields and improve crop production. They noted that the system was being practised in Andhra Pradesh.

Residents in the Tiruttani taluk mainly cultivate groundnut, paddy and sugarcane and the recently constructed check-dams in the region has ensured better water storage in the Kosasthalaiyar river.

Ranganatha Naidu, a farmer based in N.N. Kandigai, Tiruttani taluk, said, “Our area is close to the Kosasthalaiyar river and the sandy layer in irrigation land is up to a depth of 8-10 feet. We have been asking for permission for almost a decade. I often manage by cultivating sugarcane. If we can get silt from waterbodies in N.N. Kandigai and Nallathur during summer months when the tanks are dry, it will help improve soil condition in irrigation land.”

Farmers in Putlur near Sevvapet said that though some steps were taken to grant permission to clear silt from waterbodies in Putlur, Thiruvur and Thozhuvur, it had not materialised so far. K.G. Bhoopathi of Putlur said as the villages were along the Cooum, soil layers ran for a depth of six feet.

“I use more manure to make the soil fertile for paddy cultivation. We asked for permission to remove silt from tanks near our land. The local authorities even sought vehicle numbers to transport silt a few months ago. But, we are still waiting for permission,” he said.

Citing reasons like misuse and diversion of silt for other purposes, the district administration and Water Resources Department (WRD) have delayed issuing permission to farmers.

Sources in the WRD said the demand was under scrutiny. Pointing out challenges such as indiscriminate silt removal, they said such measures could be adopted if regulations were put in place. There was a need for coordination of various departments to implement a strict monitoring mechanism, they added.

### **Free training programme**

A free training programme on ‘Integrated pest and disease management in small onion’ will be held at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra in Veterinary College and Research Institute on August 3.

A press release from N. Akila, Senior Scientist and Head, KVK, said that the training will focus on selection of seeds, pest and disease management and safe storage of onion after harvesting.

Farmers, members of self-help groups, youth and interested persons can participate in the training programme.

Interested should register themselves for participating in the training before August 2.

## Registration

For registration visit the KVK in person or register through phone: 04286-266345 and 266650, the release added.

## “Karnataka must release water in time for samba”



BIDDING ADIEU: Farmers wishing Collector N. Subbaiyan, who has been transferred, at the grievance day meeting in Thanjavur on Friday.— Photo: R.M. Rajarathinam

*It is dodging release of water as per final orders of tribunal: forum*

Farmers want the State government to ensure that Karnataka released water in the Cauvery in time to undertake ‘samba’ paddy cultivation, “as ‘kuruvai’ had failed for five successive years in the delta and they were expecting water for at least the ‘samba’ crop.

Raising the issue at the grievance day meeting here on Friday, district vice-president of Tamil Nadu Vivasaya Thozhilalar Sangam V. Jeevakumar said Karnataka was dodging release of water as per final orders of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal and thereby denying delta farmers a chance to earn

their livelihood. It was a gross violation of basic rights of delta farmers which needed to be countered by the Tamil Nadu government.

Though the State government issued a G.O. on waiver of cooperative loans for small and marginal farmers, its implementation needed clarity. The government must clear the air, he said adding 'kuruvai' package must be extended to farmers engaged in manual transplanting.

### **“Waiver, a gimmick”**

Another farmer V. Veerasenan said the loan waiver was a gimmick “as nobody knows who the real beneficiaries were and farmers continue to depend on private lenders as societies and banks do not lend credit to defaulting farmers.”

Samy Natarajan of Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam wanted anomalies in copra procurement rectified and sought immediate desilting and dredging of irrigation and drainage channels in the delta region. Water flow must be ensured till tail-end areas, he said.

Another farmer A. Thangavelu said there must be adequate stock of fertilizers, pesticides and other farm inputs for the 'samba' season.

### **“Malpractices in DPCs”**

A farmer A.K.R. Ravichander said rampant malpractices in direct purchase centres drained farmers' hard-earned money and they must be stopped.

The meeting was chaired by District Revenue Officer P. Chandrasekaran. Earlier, Collector N. Subbaiyan, who has since been transferred, thanked the farmers for their cooperation during his tenure.

A section of the farmers led by Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam district vice-president Kakkarai Sukumaran staged a novel protest against the State and Central governments for their inability to get water released by Karnataka in Cauvery.

## Less rain is pain for farmers

*Wayanad paddy farmers' plans for nanja cultivation go off track*



Farmers preparing fields for transplanting paddy seedlings in Wayanad. This is the time to complete such operations, but the majority of farmers have not started such works owing to lack of monsoon.

Monsoon deficiency has cast a cloud over the hopes of the farming community in Wayanad, a major coffee, pepper, rice, and ginger-growing region in the State.

The data of the Regional Agriculture Research Station (RARS) of Kerala Agricultural University, Ambalavayal, show that the district got 604 mm of rainfall from June 1 to July 29, as against the 912 mm during the corresponding period last year.

The average rainfall in the district during the period was 900-950 mm, S. Rajendran, associate director of research, RARS, told *The Hindu*. The station recorded a total rainfall of 1,011 mm, including summer showers, from January 1 to July 29 this year as against 1,357 mm last year. It was 1,440 mm and 1,560 mm respectively in 2014 and 2013, Mr. Rajendran said.

The dearth of rainfall in June and July has adversely affected thousands of farmers who had made preparations for the nanja (first crop) cultivation.



“As standing water is essential for transplanting paddy plants, we have not been able to complete farming operations,” K.N. Ajayan, a small-time farmer at Chekadi said.

“If the situation continues, we will be forced to keep our paddy fields fallow,” he said.

The vast paddy fields in the hill district were a major source of conserving rainwater and a decline in paddy cultivation would adversely affect the region, Mr. Rajendran said.

### **Coffee sector**

Sources in the coffee industry said coffee production would decline by 10 to 20 per cent owing to scanty monsoon rain.

Moreover, less rain during the monsoon would adversely affect the growth of coffee berry.

The monsoon had a crucial role in the production of pepper, which is a water-assisted pollinating plant.

Flowering and pollination in pepper vines usually take place during the south-west monsoon, but in most parts of the district the flowering was very low owing to scanty rain.

### **Deficit rainfall in 18 districts may hamper agricultural work**

The slow progress of south-west monsoon is all set to affect agricultural operation badly with as many as 18 districts in Odisha having deficient rainfall.

Between June and July 29, as against 530 mm of normal rainfall, the State has received 422.3 mm rainfall, which accounts for a shortfall of 20 per cent.

Deficiency by more than 19 per cent in rainfall is considered as deficit.

According to the India Meteorological Department, Odisha, the deficit in rainfall has been measured in the range of 20 per cent to 59 per cent in 18 districts.

Deogarh has reported the highest deficit of 53 per cent followed by 52 per cent in Sambalpur. Jharsuguda, Balangir and Boudh had deficit of 47 per cent, 46 per cent and 41 per cent respectively whereas in Bargarh, it was 37 per cent.

Atmospheric systems formed over Bay of Bengal usually make south-west monsoon more vigorous and cause widespread rain in Odisha.

However, this year the State has witnessed only three systems. It needs to be mentioned that there was no complete sea-based weather system.

According to Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre, there is possibility of a sea-based system forming by August 1.

The atmospheric system could trigger heavy rain over coastal and interior district in first week of August.

Meanwhile, farmers are confused over advancing their agricultural operation in view of prevailing dry conditions.

Although at some places, transplantation has been started, farmers are waiting for more rain to occur so that they do not face difficulty in de-weeding.

***June and July 29, as against 530 mm of normal rainfall, the State has received 422.3 mm rainfall***

## Tomato prices leave farmers in jitters



Apple variety of tomato is in high demand.

*Cost has declined to Rs.500 per 30-kg box in the market against last week's Rs.1,000*

Lack of storage facility and delay in procurement have resulted in the prices of tomato taking a tumble. The prices have declined to Rs.500 per 30 kg box in the market. It was Rs.1,000 last week.

Market sources say that bumper tomato production in Tamil Nadu early this season had forced the farmers in the Udumalai area to abandon their produce by the roadside as it could not even meet their transportation cost. Now yields from faraway places such as Hosur are arriving in the main markets. When there is a good demand, the prices tend to skyrocket and it had touched Rs.2,400 recently.

## **Two varieties**

Swapnesh, a retail vegetable seller, said that two varieties — nadan and apple tomato — are being sold. The nadan variety is locally available and the shelf life is too short. However, the market price for it is nearly half of the apple variety. The apple variety is in high demand in the market, he says.

## **Shift in crops**

Tomato farmers of Vattavada and Kanthallur say that they shifted to other vegetables due to lack of timely procurement.

Unlike other vegetables such as cabbage, potato, beetroot, and carrot, the harvest of ripe tomatoes cannot be delayed even for a day.

“We have to harvest them even if there is no demand for it,” says Planisami of Vattavada. He added that it was one of the reasons for the farmers to abandon tomato cultivation.

He said that timely procurement and proper storage facility were the need of the hour. Even when prices were at its peak, it was the middlemen who benefited and not the farmers. Only a steady price will benefit the farmers.

## **Minister promises irrigation facilities for upland areas**

*‘Committed to completing Polavaram left main canal work by May 2017’*

Finance Minister Yanamala Ramakrishnaudu has said that the government is taking all steps to provide irrigation facilities to upland areas in the Rajanagaram, Jaggampeta, and Prattipadu Assembly constituencies

“Many think that there is plenty of water in East and West Godavari districts, which are considered the rice bowl of Andhra Pradesh. But there are many upland mandals in both the districts where farmers depend on borewells and other sources. The government will spare no effort to provide water to those farmers through lift irrigation, or any other means,” he added.



Participating in the Vanam-Manam programme along with Deputy Chief Minister N. Chinarajappa and Irrigation Minister Devineni Umamaheswara Rao at Ramavaram village of Jaggampeta mandal on Friday, Mr. Ramakrishnaudu said that the government was determined to complete Polavaram left main canal by May 2017. This would help cater to the irrigation needs of these constituencies, besides providing water to Visakhapatnam.

Mr. Ramakrishnudu said that water was being provided to 1.80 lakh acres, covering the tail-end areas too, through the Pushkara lift irrigation scheme on the Godavari at Purushothapatnam.

Mr. Chinarajappa said that the government was committed to planting one crore saplings, 15.60 lakh in East Godavari, under the programme in the State.

The government also decided to provide one plant to family blessed with a newborn baby. DWCRA women would be given seed to grow plants in the hilly areas. They would also be encouraged to grow casuarinas along the coast. Earlier, the Ministers participated in the plantation drive at Ramavaram and distributed fruit-bearing plants to individual households.

### **NGO launched**

At Narendrapuram, the Ministers participated in the inauguration of the Sri Jyothula Nehru Foundation, an NGO that aims to serve the needy in education and medical fields.

ZP chairperson Namana Rambabu, MP Thota Narashimham, District Collector H. Arun Kumar, MLAs Jyothula Nehru, Varupulla Subba Rao, Penduthi Venkatesh, SVSN Varma, and B. Bhaskararama Rao, MLC Naveen Kumar were present.

***Committed to completing construction of Polavaram left main canal by May 2017***

***Yanamala Ramakrishnudu***

***Finance Minister***

## Sanction fresh crop loans, plead farmers



Alleging that many primary agricultural cooperative societies were not sanctioning fresh crop loans, farmers representatives of Tiruchi district on Friday urged the district authorities to take steps to sanction fresh crop loans to farmers immediately.

The farmers alleged that secretaries and officials in many PACS were turning away farmers saying that fresh crop loans would be sanctioned only in September and October. Raising the issue at the farmers' grievance day meeting, Ayilai Sivasuriyan, district secretary of Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, affiliated to Communist Party of India, said that officials in cooperative societies claimed that they were yet to receive guidelines on issue of fresh crop loans consequent to the waiver of loans announced by the State government.

Several other farmers, including P. Ayyakkannu of the Desiya Thennindia Nadhigal Inaippu Vivasayigal Sangam, P. Viswanathan, president, Tamizhaga Eri Matrum Attru Pasanga Vivasayigal Sangam, said secretaries of cooperative societies in Musiri, Manachanallur and other places were saying fresh crop loans would be sanctioned only by October.

## **“No direction given”**

Joint Registrar of Cooperatives K.C. Ravichandran, while responding to the complaints, however, said that no such direction had been given to the cooperative societies and they s would sanction fresh loans now.

There could have been some delay as the societies were compiling information on beneficiaries of crop loan waiver, he said.

Collector K.S. Palanisamy, agreeing to the farmers’ suggestion, said the Joint Registrar would hold meetings with secretaries and farmers of the respective areas within a week and issue necessary instructions to the cooperative societies.

## **Sediment issue**

R. Raja Chidambaram, State secretary, Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam, urged the district administration to allow farmers to take and transport tank sediment (vandal munn) from irrigation tanks for agricultural purpose.

Farmers were faced with depletion of soil nutrients in their fields and tank sediment could enrich the soil, he said.

As per provisions of the Tamil Nadu Minor Mineral Concession Rules,1959, and a government order issued in September, 2015, farmers should be allowed to quarry the tank sediment without permission. Farmers could be allowed to take the tank sediment up to at least 50 units, he said.

Mr. Ayyakannu regretted that small farmers who took tank sediments were being fined even while indiscriminate sand mining was allowed on rivers.

Mr. Ayilai Sivasuriyan and Puliur A. Nagarajan, president, Farmers Wing of the Tamil Mannila Congress, urged the State government to take steps to get Tamil Nadu’s due share of water in the Cauvery from Karnataka at least for the ‘samba’ season.

Earlier, a group of farmers led by Mr. Viswanathan staged a symbolic protest by dumping paddy on road to press their demand for increasing the paddy procurement price to Rs.2,500 a quintal.

## Pay drought compensation to irrigated area if crop is lost: Kagodu Thimmappa



Revenue Minister Kagodu Thimmappa speaking at a review meeting held at Zilla Panchayat Conference Hall in Raichur on Friday. – PHOTO: SANTOSH SAGAR.

Revenue Minister Kagodu Thimmappa today asked officials to pay compensation to all affected farmers, including those who have irrigated lands, in case they had lost their crops due to drought in the last season.

He was responding to the concerns raised by Basavaraj Patil Itagi, MLC, who said that many farmers who owned irrigated lands had neither received water for irrigation due to drought nor had they got any compensation for crop loss as government had ordered not to pay compensation for irrigated lands.

M.P. Maruthi, who was the Assistant Commissioner at the time of disbursement of input subsidies for drought-hit farmers, accepted that no compensation was paid for crop loss in the irrigated belt due to a government order.



“If any farmer had lost his crop due to drought, he must be paid compensation, whether his lands were irrigated or not.

Prepare a fresh proposal and submit it to the government at the earliest. I will ensure that required funds are released,” he directed.

When Kurma Rao, Chief Executive Officer of Zilla Panchayat and Deputy Commissioner (In-charge), said that a sum of Rs. 58.66 crore was released and

Rs. 43.59 crore was paid to affected farmers, Mr. Thimmappa directed him to pay the remaining funds within 15 days.

### **Hostels**

When officials from Social Welfare, Backward Classes and Minority Departments told the meeting that many government hostels were still running in private buildings on rent basis,

the Minister reprimanded the officials for being lethargic and negligent in identifying the lands and getting the buildings constructed on them.

He directed the Deputy Commissioner in-charge to specially focus on the issue and get the work done at the earliest.

“I cannot understand why you take years to do a work that could be done within a few days.

Don’t drag these minor issues. Do it on priority basis,” he said.

Hampanagowda Badarli, Hampayya Naik and Pratapgowda Patil, MLAs., N.S. Boseraju, Basavaraj Patil Itagi and

K.C. Kondaiah, MLCs, Additional Deputy Commissioner Rudresh Ghali and others were present.

## **Step up to the fiscal challenge**

With the latest figures on industrial output, the case for a stimulus is pressing.



Mutual discrimination will not carry us very far and the sooner we get a perspective on the strategy for this huge country, the better off we will all be.

It looked like the economy was about to sprout green shoots. The NITI Ayog and the finance ministry were optimistic.

More than that visiting finance managers, the men who invest multiple billions, were rating India highly, talking about the mild industrial pick-up from March and the revival since.

The governor of the Reserve Bank was also optimistic while urging more reforms. One was hoping to endorse all these sentiments.

But the Central Statistics Office's latest figures of the decline in investment rates in 2016 were too explicit to ignore.

The green shoots, it seems, were only in the statements. Inflation rates shot up to above 5 per cent in April and the trend persists.

The week-long delay in the monsoon will also take its toll.

The meteorological department (MET) should not say that the delayed monsoon will be made up by later rainfall. Most crops in the kharif season — apart from sugarcane — have a cropping season of 80 days or less.

A delay of eight days, all things being equal, means a 10 per cent shortfall in yield.

The MET says the monsoon is normal (as an econometrician I have never understood why they gave a forecast at 94 per cent probability levels) at 99 per cent probability levels.

With the latest figures on industrial output, the case for a fiscal stimulus is now pressing, unless we want to reconcile ourselves to a high growth economy led by a manufacturing growth rate of less than 3 per cent and an uncertain agrarian sector.

GDP growth in manufacturing being higher than the index of industrial production implies that value added growth is improving with greater efficiency, but not the production of goods with which employment rises.

The stimulus should focus on capital and intermediate goods' demand which is suffering the most. It has to be fiscally neutral at the macro-level i.e. the increase in government spending has to be compensated by parallel resource raising efforts.

There was, of course, the loose statement from Subramanian Swamy asking for interest rates to be reduced even though he is too good an economist not to know that the critical issue was the need for a fiscally-led initiative to raise public capital formation to bring in lagging private investment.

With the latest inflation figures, it would be risky to have agricultural demand pushing fiscal expenditure strategy.

The pressure on domestic prices could soon translate into exchange rate difficulties.

This would be bad news in the current volatile situation, particularly after Raghuram Rajan's exit.

Merits apart, 'Rexit' has affected market sentiment, as many global bankers have suggested.

Keynes once said, in volatile markets sentiments are more important than facts.

India must be the only country in the non-socialist world where a cabinet secretary was to chair the selection of the governor of the central bank.

Technically, the governor of the RBI is not a part of the order of precedence, but has a niche of his own and only policy illiterates would undermine his position.

A lot of learning seems to be needed at the highest levels.

The first thing for policymakers to do is to take the country into confidence on their understanding of the macroeconomic perspective.

While it has always been natural for the government of the day to paint a somewhat rosy macroeconomic picture, India's economic policymakers have generally been frank on their detailed assessment of past difficulties and their perspective on expected outcomes and the policies they would follow.

Coyness always leads to rumours — not a good thing for the economy.



Another casualty has been the lack of serious discussion at the official level of the devastating drought in parts of the country, in line with the MET's story.

Policymakers at the highest level, instead of explaining the seriousness of the situation and the requirements for action at the national, state and local levels, just ignore the facts.

In Gujarat and in other parts of western and central India, after two years of continued drought, the water shortage was devastating.

The rainfall deficit is high in western and eastern India.

These are less irrigated areas and a normal monsoon in north-west India does not matter because the area is almost entirely irrigated.

A reporter says the agriculture minister, when asked about this deficit, told him that farm incomes are to double in six years.

Unlike in the past, we have political leaders engaging in slanging matches with those who are opposed to them as a substitute for immediate policy action.

We need a contingency plan in case the monsoon is not adequate in some areas.

An action-based policy needs to be in position. In rain-deficit areas, good district collectors are already storing available water in village talavdis for drinking purposes and orders from above for releasing it for irrigation are being ignored.

If the first crop fails, there has to be a detailed plan for the distribution of seeds and agricultural credit which becomes very critical for farmers to maximise their yield through nutrients for the second crop.

Mutual discrimination will not carry us very far and the sooner we get a perspective on the strategy for this huge country, the better off we will all be.

## Supreme Court notice to govt over cruelty against egg-laying farm hens



According to the Animal Welfare Board of India, hens were kept in overcrowded wire-cages that have little room for movement. (Representative photo)

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Centre to explain why the rules recommended by the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) for preventing cruelty to egg-laying hens kept in wire cages at poultry farms were not being implemented.

“This poultry industry appears to be very powerful,” said a bench headed by Chief Justice of India TS Thakur.

It was hearing a petition filed by AWBI, a statutory body set up under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, which alleged that the department concerned failed to act on its recommendations regarding the caging of hens in 2010 and 2013.

“Why are you not implementing the recommended rules? Is there some pressure from the poultry industry?” the bench asked, issuing a notice to the Centre and asking additional solicitor general Maninder Singh to respond to the petition.

The bench also told Singh to find the reasons for the delay in implementing the AWBI recommendations, and fixed August 5 as the date for the next hearing.

Appearing on behalf of AWBI, senior advocate KK Venugopal said there was no response from the Centre, even though the draft rules were recommended twice.

“The industry of hatchery and poultry is probably very powerful because many politicians are in the business.

The industry may have prevented the government from going ahead with the recommended rules, otherwise (I can’t see) why they have not responded to the draft rules,” he said.

According to the AWBI, hens were kept in overcrowded wire-cages that have little room for movement.

“In India, we still follow the battery caging system — small wire cages for housing egg-laying hens — which was abandoned by the European Union long ago,” he said.

Under the battery caging system, egg-laying hens are provided with space equivalent to an A-4 sized sheet. In Europe, which follows the cage-free system, hens get enough space to move around and spread their wings.

“During the breeding season, males become very territorial and guard fixed areas.

Dominant males patrol the boundaries of their territory and keep other roosters away from the hens.

Subordinate males may occupy areas within the dominant male’s territory, including the roosting area, but without female partners,” the petitioner contended.

## **Malawians take ideas from Indian farmers**

A group of stakeholders in the agriculture sector from Malawi (Africa) are in India to take a tip or two from farm practices in India.

They are in here in a USAID programme that is aimed at exposing the Malawian agricultural practitioners and the seed industry there to the practices in vogue here.

“The Malawian seed sector is way behind, with most of the farmers using and reusing the seed varieties.

This has led to the steep drop in yields.

We have showcased them the practices here followed by farmers. We have taken to them the farms, seed firms, seed storage facilities and research institutes,” Akshat Medakker, Associate Vice-President (Innovation Advisory – Agriculture and Food), told Business Line.

“We are developing online modules for extension and learning. We are creating virtual classrooms for farmers there,” he said.

Sathguru is one of the implementation partners of the USAID’s Agricultural Innovation Partnership (AIP).

The other two partners are the US-based Cornell University and LUANAR (agriculture university in Malawi).

“The programme includes telling them about intricacies in certified seed production, seed processing and seed treatment. They will also be equipped with essential skills in the areas of sales, distribution and inventory management,” he said.



## Apex court notice to Centre on plea for preventing cruelty to hen



The Supreme Court today sought a reply from the Centre as to why it is not implementing the rules recommended by the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) aimed at preventing cruelty to egg-laying hens kept in wire cages in poultry farms.

“Why are you not implementing the recommended rules. Is there some pressure from the poultry industry,” a bench headed by Chief Justice T S Thakur asked the Centre after AWBI, a statutory body set up under the provisions of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, said that the department concerned has not acted on the rules recommended by it on caging of hens in 2010 and 2013.

The bench, also comprising Justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud, issued notice to the Centre and asked Additional Solicitor General Maninder Singh to respond to the petition filed by the Board.

It asked the ASG to take instruction from the authorities concerned as to “what is the reason for delaying the implementation of the rules recommended by the Board“.

The bench, which posted the matter for hearing on August 5, said, “This poultry industry appears to be very powerful.”

The remarks came as senior advocate K K Venugopal, appearing for the Board, said draft rules were recommended twice and latest in 2013 but there was no response from the Centre and perhaps the industry of hatchery and poultry is very powerful as many politicians are in the business.

“The industry may have prevented the government from going ahead with the recommended rules, otherwise why they would not respond to the draft rules,” the senior advocate submitted.

The Board has submitted that hens are kept in wire cages in an overcrowded condition and there is hardly any space for the movement of the birds.

Venugopal said, “In India, we are still following the battery caging system - small wire cages - for housing egg-laying hens,” which was abandoned by the European Union long back.

Under the battery caging system, egg-laying hens are provided the space equivalent of an A-4 size sheet, while in Europe which follows the cage-free system, the hens get space to move around and spread their wings.

He said, “During the breeding season, males become very territorial and guard fixed areas.

Dominant males patrol the boundaries of their territory and keep other roosters away from the hens. Subordinate males may occupy areas within the dominant male’s territory,

including the roosting area, but without female partners.”

## North-West, Central India can expect fresh rain spell of rain



A man watches the monsoon clouds hovering over the flooded fields in Morigaon district of Assam on Friday.

Continuous rain in the last couple of days have inundated six districts of Assam, affecting more than one lakh people in the first wave of floods in Assam  
Ritu Raj Konwar

The monsoon is forecast to be in an ‘active’ phase over the peninsular region during the period from July 29 to August 4 and over North-West India from July 29 to August 11.

This is as per an extended outlook made jointly by the India Met Department, Indian Council of Agriculture Research and the Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture.

### **Monsoon revival**

It said that between August 5 to 11, the monsoon could weaken over the western coastal region and the peninsula and be normal/slightly above normal over the rest of the country.

These forecasts point to a revival of the monsoon from next week, with the Bay of Bengal likely breaking the jinx and setting up a low-pressure area.

On Friday, the Met officially mounted a watch for a 'low' forming in the Bay basin over the next two-three days.

A preparatory cyclonic circulation has shown up over the Arakan coast (South Myanmar) and its western flanks have already entered the adjoining East-central Bay, the Met said.

This circulation is expected to move fully into the Bay and intensify into a 'low' and help boost the monsoon over Central and adjoining North-West India and the peninsular region.

### **Incoming 'pulse'**

Evidently, it has moved in as a 'pulse' generated by tropical storm Mirinae in the South China Sea, which made landfall over Hanoi, Vietnam, on Thursday.

Westward moving storms in the South China Sea have been known to be beneficial to the Indian monsoon since they send 'pulses' ahead, which drop anchor in the Bay.

In fact, the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts picks a follow-up storm developing in the North-West Pacific/South China Sea as early as on Saturday.

It would take shape close to the Philippines and move almost to the north to make a muted landfall over South China but could likely send another 'pulse' into the Bay.

This could set up a second 'low' in the Bay by August 6, which the European Centre sees as growing in strength before crossing the South Odisha-North Andhra Pradesh coast.

If the forecasts were to prove true, these two 'lows' should help the monsoon roar back to life and sustain itself during the first two weeks of August.

The subdivision-wise forecast suggested that, during the next two weeks, normal or above normal rainfall is likely to occur over Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, west Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Vidarbha, Marathwada, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Rayalaseema, Telangana and north interior Karnataka.

### **Buyers end boycott of Kochi tea auctions**

After staying away for five weeks in protest against some provisions in the pan-India tea auction system, buyers participated in the Kochi tea auctions on Friday.

According to auctioneers Forbes, Ewart & Figgis, all sections of the trade operated in sale no 30, which witnessed active participation by leading and regional blenders.

Good demand saw the price of CTC dust surge with the market for good liquoring teas rising by 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. Upcountry demand was subdued.

Demand for CTC orthodox was lower, and the quantity on offer was 17,500 kg. The market was down and witnessed heavy withdrawals. Exporters absorbed a small quantity offered.

In the Cochin CTC dust quotation, good varieties fetched 109-153, mediums quoted 94-125 and plain grades stood at 85-97.



The leaf sale also witnessed good demand. The market for high-grown brokens, whole leaf, and Fannings in orthodox grades was firm to dearer by 5-10. Clean, black, well-made medium brokens, whole leaf and Fannings appreciated in value. The quantity on offer was 140,000 kg.

However, the CTC leaf market eased and the quantity on offer was 29,000 kg. Kerala buyers and exporters shared the bulk of the segment's offerings.

## **BDN2: Gujarat's wonder dal**

Even as pulses prices have shown signs of easing on improving supplies and expectations of a good kharif harvest, prices of the premium tur dal variety (BDN2), better known as Gujarati tur dal, are unlikely to cool down in the short term despite a surge in acreage in the major producing regions.

Known for its flattish appearance and distinct taste and aroma, the premium BDN2 is the preferred choice of consumers in Western India, mainly Gujarat.

The BDN2 pigeonpea, which is currently ruling at 210/kg in the branded retail market and at around 125 at the mill-gate at Vasad in Gujarat, will continue to be in short supply even after imports from Africa begin next month.

Grown mainly in the Central and Western parts of the country, including Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and parts of Vidarbha in Maharashtra, as on July 25, the pulse had been sown on an area of 2,42,300 hectares in Gujarat, 48 per cent more than last year.

Gujarat mostly produces the BDN2 variety, which is preferred by those who relish North Indian and Gujarati cuisines.

Be it the famous North Indian Dal Tadka, Luknow's popular Dal Gosht or irresistible Gujarati Khichdi, the BDN2 variety is popular for its aroma, taste and quick cooking.

“ Indian tur dals are preferred to the dals imported from Sudan, Burma and Tanzania. And among the Indian varieties, the most popular is BDN-2,” said Suresh Agarwal, a leading pulses trader in Mumbai.

Nationally, tur sowing has increased by 67 per cent from 25.61 lakh hectares (lh) last year to 42.93 lh as on July 29.

Experts classify tur dal varieties mainly into two types. One, has a white-yellow seed, while the other type is a reddish seed.

“North Indian consumers are habituated to this variety and because of its lesser availability due to limited crop area, this is considered a premium variety. This variety has only 7-10 per cent share in the total tur dal production in the country,” said Agarwal, who is also Vice-President of the India Pulses and Grains Association (IPGA).

As per the third advanced estimate of the Government of India, tur production in the kharif season is likely to be 2.60 million tonnes for 2015-16, while total pulses production is estimated to be 5.49 million tonnes.

### **Southern comfort**

The bigger and darker variety is largely sown in Southern India and parts of Central India, and mainly used for South Indian cuisines. “The red variety is mainly consumed in South India as it has a bigger seed and also makes darker dal, which is useful for making sambhar or other South Indian cuisines. The white-yellow variety is popular across the country and commands a premium,” said Mitesh Patel of Laxmi Toor Dal.

Patel sells his Laxmi brand of premium tur dals online through his own portal at 1,010 for a 5-kg pack ( 202/kg).

“The local tur, which is sown in the kharif season, will not be available before November. Hence, those waiting for prices of this variety to come down may have to wait longer,” says Patel.

## Sowing of rice, pulses, oilseeds keeps kharif acreage on track



Increased sowing of rice, pulses, coarse cereals and oilseeds pushed the total area covered under kharif crops till the end of July up by 6.3 per cent to 799.51 lakh hectares (lh) from a total acreage of 752.29 lh in the same period last year.

The acreage under pulses continued to expand with total sowing up to July 29 at 110.35 lh against 78.25 lh in the same period last year.

Karnataka and Maharashtra witnessed the steepest increase in acreage during the period.

Pulses sowing increased to 10.01 lh (3.34 lh) in Karnataka and to 13.94 lh (8.52 lh) in Maharashtra.



Transplanting of paddy on 231.92 lh at the end of July was higher than 225.68 lh in the same period last year, with States such as Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Punjab posting an increase.

Coarse cereals sown increased to 150.76 lh (144.84 lh).


While there was a rise in acreage under maize, jowar, small millets and ragi, sowing of bajra declined.

Acreage under oilseeds rose to 159.78 lh compared to 147.98 lh in the same period last year with groundnut, soyabean and sunflower higher and sesamum, niger and castor lower.

Cotton sowing picked up slightly in the last week of July as rains progressed throughout the country, with total acreage at 92.33 lh compared to last year's 101.91 lh.



The difference in acreage compared to last year narrowed to 9.6 lh from about 13 lh a week ago.

<b>KHARIF ACREAGE</b>				(in lakh hectares*)
<b>Crop</b>	<b>This year</b>	<b>Last year</b>	<b>% change</b>	
<b>Rice</b>	<b>231.92</b>	<b>225.68</b>	<b>2.76</b>	
<b>Total Pulses</b>	<b>110.35</b>	<b>78.25</b>	<b>41.02</b>	
Tur (Arhar)	42.93	25.61	67.62	
Uradbean	26.77	19.78	35.3	
Moongbean	26.14	18.88	38.44	
<b>Total Coarse cereals</b>	<b>150.76</b>	<b>144.84</b>	<b>4.09</b>	
Jowar	16.34	15.08	8.36	
Bajra	52.23	58.07	-10.07	
Maize	75.94	66.12	14.84	
<b>Total Oilseeds</b>	<b>159.78</b>	<b>147.98</b>	<b>7.97</b>	
Groundnut	38.57	28.7	34.4	
Soyabean	109.16	106.27	2.72	
Sunflower	1.28	0.56	128	
<b>Sugarcane</b>	<b>46.83</b>	<b>45.91</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Jute &amp; Mesta</b>	<b>7.54</b>	<b>7.72</b>	<b>-2.31</b>	
<b>Cotton</b>	<b>92.33</b>	<b>101.91</b>	<b>-9.4</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>799.51</b>	<b>752.29</b>	<b>6.28</b>	

\*as on July 29

Sugarcane sowing till July 29, at 46.83 lh, marginally exceeded last year's acreage of 47.40 lh, mainly due to a slight increase in acreage in Uttar Pradesh.

Cumulative rainfall this monsoon season has been normal at 436.9 mm.

About 28 metrological sub-divisions accounting for 77 per cent of the geographical area of the country have received normal-to-excess rains, while the remaining 8 sub-divisions have received deficient rainfall.

# Business Standard

## Onion trade affected at Nashik on sale procedure

Lasalgaon mandi in the district is the biggest in the country for onions



The state government is trying to end a dispute between farmers and onion traders on the commission fees and mode of purchase at the wholesale markets in Nashik district.

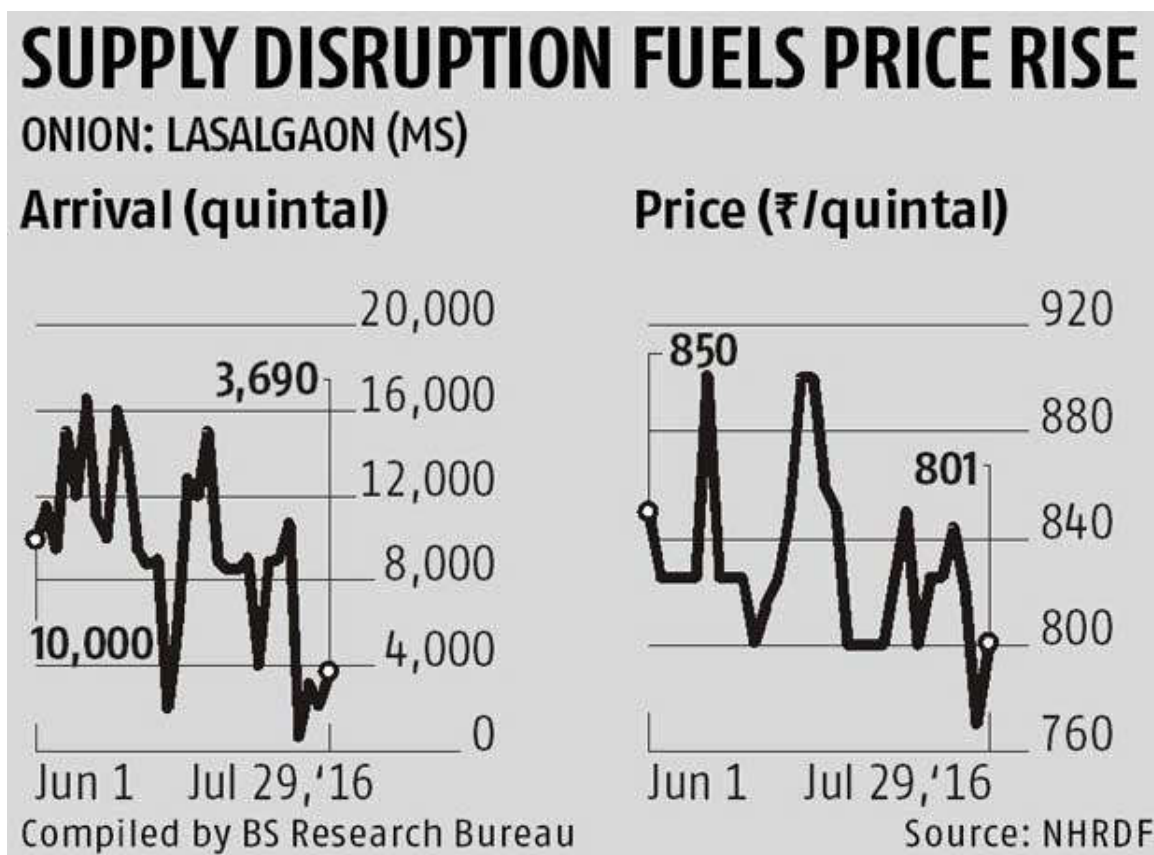
The Lasalgaon mandi in the district is the biggest in the country for onions. Earlier, auctions were held for onions in loose, unpacked form; now, the produce has to be brought in gunny sacks. Traders say this is a problem, as onions differ in quality and size.

“Prices have dropped since traders could not inspect the entire produce and are, therefore, hesitant to pay a good price. It has also affected the supply. Farmers are looking at other options but there are limitations in doing so,” said Jaydutta Holkar, chairman of the Lasalgaon Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC).



Nafed, the central government procurement agency, has begun buying onions from farmers since April under the Price Stability Fund set up by the Centre to control prices and prevent artificial hoarding. A purchase of 5,000 quintals was made in the inaugural programme at Nashik district.

The Lasalgaon Kharedi Vikri Sangh, a sub-agency of Nafed, is setting up a private market parallel to the Lasalgaon APMC for auction of vegetables and onions from the coming week. This is now possible as the state government has removed the earlier compulsion to sell vegetables and fruit only at an APMC.



Nana Tidke, a local farmer, says he has started supplying onion to Nafed and some malls. “We cannot wait for too long and have to find options. This is one but we are incurring losses due to the crisis (with traders),” he said.

Traders say they have to incur an additional Rs 70 a quintal expense under the new auction system. On Friday, 13,000 quintals were supplied at the APMC, instead of the usual daily range of 20,000 to 30,000 qtls.

The state's minister for co-operation, marketing and textile, Subhash Deshmukh, minister of state for agriculture Subhash Khot and rural development minister Dada Bhuse held a meeting with traders' representatives from Nashik district on Friday.

### **India to buy 6.7% more summer-sown rice for welfare schemes**

The world's second biggest rice producer had bought 30.93 million tonnes of rice a year before



India is planning to buy 33 million tonnes of summer-sown rice from farmers in the 2016/17 season for its food welfare programmes and meet emergency needs, it said in a statement on Friday.

The world's second biggest rice producer had bought 30.93 million tonnes of rice a year before.

The government agencies usually start paddy rice procurement in September and buy mainly non-basmati rice. The purchases help farmers in avoiding distress sales.

As on July 29, farmers have cultivated rice on 23.19 million hectares, slightly higher than 22.56 million hectares during the same period a year ago.

### **Sowing of pulses tops five-year average**

Centre raises rice procurement target for 2016-17, on hope of bumper harvest



As the southwest monsoon continued its impressive run over most parts, pulses seem the biggest gainer. The sowing is already more than the average area grown in the past five kharif seasons.

As of Friday, pulses were sown on 11.03 million hectares, almost 41 per cent more than what was covered during the same period last year. The kharif average has been 10.8 mn ha.

The largest area has gone to arhar (split red gram), on 4.29 mn ha, 68 per cent more than last year. Its price had soared to a little over Rs 200 a kg at the start of 2016, which might have prompted farmers to plant in a big way.

The Centre's significant increase in the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and promise to purchase at market rates to build its own buffer seems to have also influenced farmers.

The area under urad (split black gram), moong (split green gram) and kulti (horse gram), the other main kharif pulses, has risen by 35 per cent, 38 per cent and 136 per cent as compared to the same period last year.

The biggest rise has been in the rainfed areas of Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Karnataka.

Officials said large tracts earlier used for growing soybean in MP, guar in Rajasthan and cotton in Gujarat and

Maharashtra have shifted to pulses this year, on expectation of better return and fear of pest attack in some existing crops. In Karnataka, there has been a natural increase in sown area.

In UP, farmers have sown pulses, mainly arhar, in the Bundelkhand region, under a drought for two years, with rains plentiful so far.

With the southwest monsoon expected to get more active over north and central India by the first week of August, the area is expected to expand.

The Centre expects pulses production this year to cross 20 million tonnes.





year (2015-16) and around 7 per cent more than actual rice procurement for this year which is around 31 million tonnes.

“The optimism in sowing in pulses is mainly due to good rains in rain-fed areas where predominantly pulses are sown during the kharif season, but the Centre’s intervention in hiking MSP and more importantly ensuring assured purchase to create a buffer has also contributed,” a leading expert said.

The monsoon did play its part and till Thursday the rains across the country this year was normal or excess in 80 per cent of the geographical area, while it was deficient or short in just 20 per cent.

The areas where the southwest monsoon was yet to make a mark was Saurashtra and Gujarat and also in Jharkhand, Assam, west Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh.

Of these, Gujarat and Jharkhand are prominent agriculture states and a big drop in showers could cause a lot of distress as the showers in 2014 and 2015 have also not been very good.

In Gujarat, the southwest monsoon so far is around 40-50 per cent less than normal, while in Jharkhand it is around 20 per cent short of normal.

Overall the rains are near normal across the country and in July, which is most crucial month for sowing of kharif crops it is around 108 per cent of the Long Period Average (LPA).

The good rains have also filled up the reservoirs and on July 28, they were around 38 per cent of their full capacity, which at the start of monsoon season was only 17 per cent of capacity.





# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## **Over 2 lakh farmers benefitted under MIDH: Himachal govt**

Over two lakh farmers benefitted from Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) for which nearly Rs 300 crore has been spent, the Himachal Pradesh government said today

"As many as 2, 22,595 farmers had benefitted from Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) for which there has been an expenditure of Rs 295.20 crore," Horticulture Minister Vidya Stokes said while presiding over the review meeting of the department.

She said the government was implementing the Rs 1169.15 crore World Bank assisted Himachal Pradesh Horticulture Development Project (HPHSP) and stressed the need for developing water sources and efficient water application and distribution system through modern techniques like micro-irrigation (drip and sprinkler) under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojna (PMKSY).

Stokes said under World Bank Project, high quality plants of apple, pear, plum, peach, cherry and clonal root would be imported from advanced countries.

"Around 2.23 lakh plants have been already imported under the HPHDP World Bank assisted project and around 30,000 plants under Horticulture Mission," she said.

The minister said "the government has decided to provide 40 per cent additional budget on a central sponsored scheme to give 80 per cent subsidy to encourage the unemployed youth to adopt beekeeping as an avocation."

"During the current financial year, 9 lakh square meter area would be covered under anti hail nets for protection of fruit crops. Total cultivable land under horticulture has now risen to 2,24,354 hectares," she added. PCL AQS ZMN CPS

# THE ECONOMIC TIMES

## Good rainfall to bring rebound in pulses, kharif harvest



Total kharif planting is up 6.3 per cent at 799.51 lakh hectares compared to a year ago, but the output may rise even higher due to better productivity in the course of this year's normal monsoon.

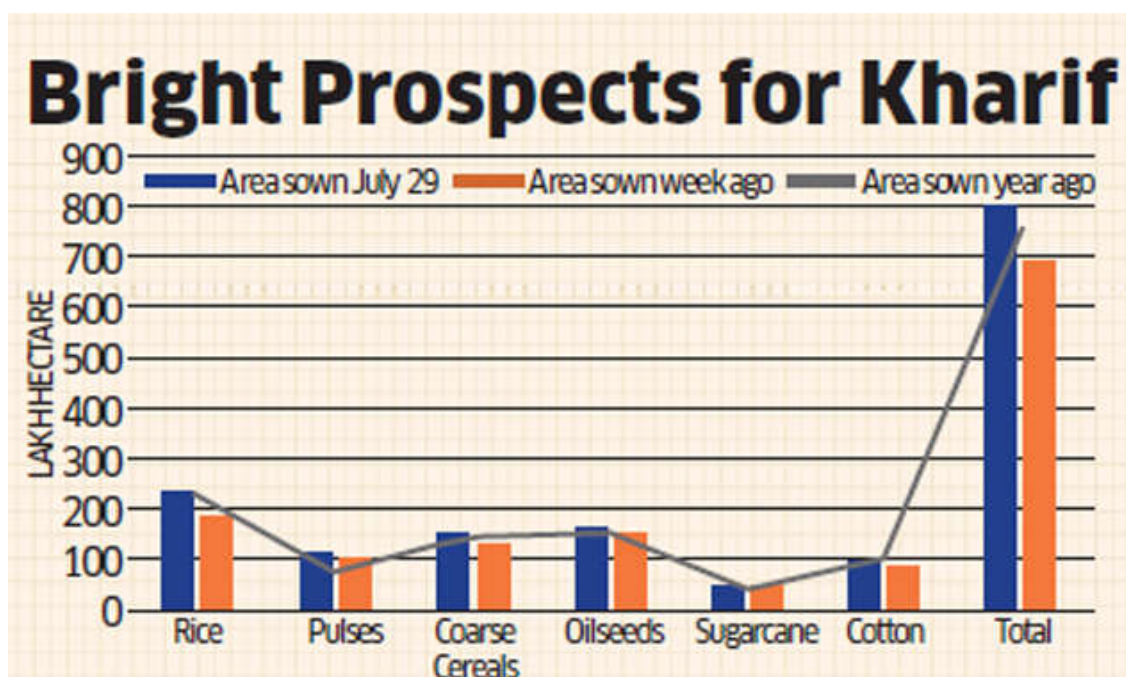
NEW DELHI: A bumper harvest of pulses along with a rebound in the kharif harvest is on the horizon because of higher planting of crops and better rainfall, which officials say will cheer farmers after two years of distress and calm food inflation.

Cultivation of pulses has expanded 41 per cent this year, which should calm soaring prices, latest official data shows. Total kharif planting is up 6.3 per cent at 799.51 lakh hectares compared to a year ago, but the output may rise even higher due to better productivity in the course of this year's normal monsoon unlike erratic and deficient rainfall in the past two years.

Ramesh Chand, a member of Niti Aayog said agricultural growth can touch 6 per cent in 2016-17 with the country receives good rains and increase in planting area.

"I expect a major impact on productivity of crop which can easily grow by 3-4 per cent. Good monsoon rains will also provide some respite to farmers facing the agrarian distress as they will be save on the input cost like diesel," he told ET.

Heavy rainfall in key agricultural areas helped total kharif planting increase by 15 per cent in a week. The increase was largely seen in acreage of rice, pulses, oilseeds and coarse cereals. The kharif crop accounts for more than half of the total food output.



Among pulses, planting of arhar rose more than 68 per cent from last year and is expected to further increase with farmers in Saurashtra region of Gujarat going for planting. Higher planting was recorded in Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

Rice planting, at 231.92 lakh hectare, is 2.8 per cent higher than last year. The acreage has increased largely in Maharashtra, Bihar, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh. This kharif season rice will be planted on 392.81 lakh hectare. Area under coarse cereals which includes maize, bajra, ragi, small millets and maize rose 4.09 per cent over the previous year to cover 150.76 lakh hectares.

Oilseeds planting increased 8 per cent from the previous to 159.78 lakh hectare, while area under groundnut saw a significant increase from the previous year and has till date been planted on 38.57 lakh hectares.

Planting of soyabean, an important commodity in the edible oil basket, has also increased and was planted on 109.16 lakh hectares. This year's monsoon has been normal so far with a surplus of 4 per cent-7 per cent in north, south and central India, which is agriculturally the most relevant. Only the east and northeast have a rainfall deficit of 12 per cent, which has contributed to the statistic of 23 per cent of the country getting deficient rain.

The agriculture ministry has set a target of producing 270.1 million tonnes of foodgrain in 2016-17 beginning June, which is 7 per cent higher than the previous year's crop.

### **Indian animal feed producers stare at squeezing margins**



Despite attempts to pass on the increase in inputs to the customers, the \$15 billion domestic animal feed industry that saw multinationals intensifying competition through their India foray, finds margins pressured

HYDERABAD: Indian animal feed industry, which caters to poultry, aqua and meat segments, is seeing pressure on margins with the prices of key inputs like maize, corn and soya rising significantly on account of back-to-back droughts in the last couple of years.

Despite attempts to pass on the increase in inputs to the customers, the \$15 billion domestic animal feed industry that saw multinationals intensifying competition through their India foray, finds margins pressured.

Large and medium feed producers like Cargill, CP Foods, Godrej Agrovet and SKM Feeds were facing the heat of price rise in feed ingredients and were unable to pass on the entire additional costs to the consumer, point out analysts. The price rise was not only on account of demand-supply gap but also owing to huge hoardings by traders, allege industry insiders.

India is the fifth largest global producer of animal feed with an annual production of 29.43 million tons, growing at a compounded annual growth rate of 8%, a Yes BankBSE 0.51 % report said.

"The price rise in the past four months has strained our profits to the extent of 20-25% per ton of feed as we can't pass on the entire burden to consumers," said Balram Yadav, managing director of Godrej Agrovet. "While earlier, the entire cost burden was passed on, we are unable to do so now owing to increasing ompetition and are forced to take a hit."

Godrej Agrovet, part of Godrej IndustriesBSE -1.67 % and the largest producer of feed in India, is looking to tap the capital market with initial public offering (IPO) sometime next year.

While cattle feed prices have gone up by a fifth in the last four months, poultry and aqua feed have become costlier by 15% and 12%, respectively.

A majority of feed ingredients are usually khariff season produce and low production owing to draught conditions last year led to spurt in feed prices, say industry insiders. Around 3-4 months of time taken by the state trading bodies like PEC and STC to import feed ingredients has only aggravated the problem.

"We are put in a tight spot when there is a scarcity of feed ingredients in the market and slow procurement by the state trading corporations. If the government allowed feed producers to import directly, the consignment would have arrived in 30 to 40 days as against 90 days taken by the state trading corporations," said M Chandrasekhar, managing director of SKM Animal Feeds and Foods.

However, Godrej Agrovets Yadav hopes prices will stabilise by October going by the good monsoon and the new harvest arrivals in the market by then.

### **Tea prices to remain stable this year in domestic and global markets**



Global black tea production was lower during 2015 on account of loss of crop in Kenya and India. The global black tea production during 2015 is estimated at 2,900 million kg.

KOLKATA: Tea prices are likely to remain firm this year both in domestic and global markets as the demand for tea is increasing across the globe by 2% -3%, according to the annual report of McLeod Russel India Ltd BSE 0.52 % (MRIL) - the largest integrated tea company in the world.



Global black tea production was lower during 2015 on account of loss of crop in Kenya and India. The global black tea production during calendar 2015 is estimated at 2,900 million kg of black tea and 2,300 million kg. Tea production is likely to remain stagnant within a small range depending on weather conditions.

McLeod Russel said that stagnancy in global production has mainly crept in because of insignificant increase of land under tea cultivation. "Global demand is likely to grow by 2% -3% thereby creating shortages and lower inventory levels. Indian exports, which were negatively impacted due to geopolitical instability and currency fluctuation amongst major consuming countries in the previous, has seen recovery of demand with stability on geopolitical issues. These factors should have positive impact on prices both in global and domestic markets in medium term," the MRIL annual report added.

MRIL added that small tea growers form a considerable part of the industry. The recent revised figures show a total production of around 300 million kg from the small growers in Assam and West Bengal. "This gives an opportunity to create a segment based more on variable cost as compared to fixed cost for own production," MRIL annual report said .

### **Mamata government keen to get private investment in agriculture infrastructure**



The state agriculture minister Purnendu Basu said on Friday that the state has to be self sufficient so that it doesn't need to depend on any other state.

KOLKATA: In a bid to make the state self sufficient in all aspects of agriculture, West Bengal government is keen to get private investment for development of agri infrastructure.

The state agriculture minister Purnendu Basu said on Friday that the state has to be self sufficient so that it doesn't need to depend on any other states for a better quality yield. "But it is not possible by the state government on its own.

Thus, we are inviting businessmen to invest to develop cold storages, cold chains, seed industry and factories to manufacture machinery essential for farming," he said, adding that there are no units in the state to manufacture machinery which are being used by farmers in the state.

West Bengal is the leading state in the country in vegetable production. "Storage capacity for vegetable needs to go up and it can be developed easily with private investment to set up cold chains," the minister said.

At present there are 145 automated weather stations (AWS) in the state. Basu said that there is to set up more such weather stations in the state and it can be undertaken in Public Private Partnership (PPP) model.

"Farmers who produce jute are mainly dependable on Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra for seeds. Why cannot we develop seeds for jute in West Bengal itself?" he raised the question.

The minister also stressed on the need for more Farmers Producers Organisation (FPOs) as it will help in better marketing of crops. At present FPOs directly sell their yields in the shops owned by the state government - Sufal Bangla.