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# THE HINDU

## Farming resumes in Singur after a decade



*The physical possession of 103 acres was given to 298 farmers spread over five mouzas.*

The wheel of the iconic Singur agitation came a full circle on Thursday, with the resumption of farming at the demolished Nano car plant site after a decade. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee sprinkled mustard seeds on the land.

The physical possession of 103 acres was given to 298 farmers spread over five mouzas well within the 12-week deadline set by the division Bench of justices Arun Mishra and V Gopala Gowda of the Supreme Court on August 31.

The Bench had ruled that the land acquisition process in Singur for the car project was faulty and was not for public purpose.

“Most of the portion of the Nano car shed has been razed to the ground. Only a small structure is left and that will also be demolished in next few days,” a senior government official said.

Ms. Banerjee, who had steered a massive agitation against 'forcible' land acquisition in 2006, said, “Singur will be a model before the world and a monument will be constructed here.”

She said, “Except for 65 acres, the rest of the 997 acres is ready to be handed over to farmers. By November 10, the process of giving physical possession of the entire land would be complete.”

She talked to the farmers, enquired about the condition of the land and the kind of crops they plan to harvest in the days to come. She also handed over crop kits to some farmers.

Last month, Ms. Banerjee handed over land 'parchas' and cheques to the farmers in Singur.

'Parcha' is a document that establishes the ownership of a farmer over a piece of land in revenue records.

### **Make 'hay' as harvest nears completion**



With the harvest of paddy crop nearing completion in and around Lalgudi in the district, there has been a big demand for hay among the livestock owners of neighbouring districts

who have been making a beeline to Lalgudi to purchase the hay to feed their milch animals.

A couple of farmers from Kodumbalur near Pudukottai, said that non-availability of hay in Pudukottai district forced them to purchase it at Peruvalappur village in Lalgudi block.

“We conducted a village-wise search in the banks of the river, as we were aware that the harvest of paddy was in progress,” said V. Raju, one of the farmers from Kodumbalur.

Another farmer, Natarajan of Viralimalai said that he incurred a huge expenditure for transporting hay from Peruvalappur to Viralimalai.

The farmers said that they had to shell out Rs. 15,000 for taking the hay from Peruvalappur to their village in Pudukottai district. The farmers said that till a couple of years ago, they managed the situation by feeding their milch animals with maize straw. “But, due to failure of monsoon, maize was not raised in the villages in Pudukottai district, leading to a scramble for hay,” they said.

The growing demand for hay can be gauged from the fact that the livestock owners purchase the hay even as mechanical harvest is in progress right on the fields. This provides an opportunity for labourers to earn some additional wages. “At least 11 labourers are needed for taking the hay from the fields and for loading it on the tractor,” said Mr. Natarajan. The hay will be sufficient for them to feed their cows for a period of six months, he added.

***Non-availability of hay in Pudukottai district has forced farmers to purchase it from Lalgudi block***

## **Paddy to be farmed in 3 lakh hectares**



- State to have **500** Krishi Bhavans
- Agro parks in all **14** districts
- **200** plant health clinics
- **20** Kera Gramams
- **Seed bank** at Mannuthy
- **Farming** in school syllabus
- **Labour force**, in groups of 25
- **Value-addition policy** workshop in Dec.

The Department of Agriculture plans to raise the total land under paddy farming in the State to three lakh hectares, Agriculture Minister V.S. Sunil Kumar told the Assembly on Wednesday.

He was replying to the discussion on the demands for grants for the department. The department would initiate a Statewide mapping of fallow land and plans a rapid expansion of upland farming in the State.

In the next one year upland farming would be introduced in 10,000 hectares of land, he said.

Efforts would be launched to convert as much land under single crop farming to double crop farming. At least 5,000 hectares of farmland would be brought under double crop farming. This year double crop farming would be launched in 2,375 hectares of farmland. The department would also put in place programmes to reintroduce indigenous varieties of paddy to the State's farms.

The number of Krishi Bhavans in the State would be increased from 332 to 500. The department would also formulate a new marketing strategy for various types of crops farmed round the year. A new procurement system which would ensure fair prices to farmers would also be formulated. A sum of Rs.500 crore has been set aside for setting up agro parks in all 14 districts.

The government plans to set up 200 plant health clinics across the State and to give shape to 20 Kera Gramams. A seed bank to preserve the quantity, quality and diversity of seed varieties in the State would be set up at the headquarters of Kerala Agricultural University at Mannuthy.

### **In school syllabus**

Farming would be introduced in the school syllabus from standard one from the next academic year. The department would also set up a labour force, in groups of 25 workers, which is armed with diverse agricultural knowhow to tackle the shortage of skilled labour in the agriculture sector.

In order to bring to the State adequate technology for value addition of coconut and coconut products, the government plans to organise a value-addition policy workshop in December, he added.

## **Ryots pin hope on northeast monsoon, take up maize cultivation**



Pinning their hopes on the timely onset of North-East monsoon, farmers in the rainfed blocks of the district have taken up maize cultivation.

Farming activity has been brisk in a cluster of villages in Pullampadi, Mannachanallur, Thuraiyur, Uppliyapuram, Musiri and Thottiyam blocks in Tiruchi district.

Farmers said that they had raised a hybrid variety which fetches attractive returns every year.

The recent showers has facilitated the farmers to prepare the fields by ploughing and planting of the seedlings has been brisk in parts of the rainfed areas.

According to the Agriculture Department officials, an estimated 8,750 hectares will be brought under the crop this season which is of 105 days duration.

The Agriculture Department has taken up, under the Coarse Cereal Technical Demonstration Scheme of the National Food Security Mission, a special demonstration plan under which 1,000 hectares would be covered.

## **Seed production on 1,000 acres at Narsannapet, Erravalli**

In a move that would give a push to the ongoing activities at Erravalli and Narsannapet village in Markook mandal of Gajwel constituency being represented by Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao, the officials have decided to encourage farmers to take up seed production in thousand acres.

## **Soya harvesting**

The decision was taken in view of the successful completion of community harvesting of soya bean in 400 acres each in both the villages. Collector P. Venkataram Reddy held a meeting at Gouraram on Wednesday which was attended by Prof. Praveen Rao, Vice-Chancellor, Acharya Jayashankar Agriculture University.



It was decided to take up cultivation of mustard seed and sunflower in 200 acres, Bengal gram in 600 acres and maize in 200 acres in the coming crop season.

Officials of the concerned departments were asked to prepare an action plan immediately to begin the activity.



## **Centre to review steps taken by States, Union Territories to reform mandis**

### **New Delhi, October 20:**

To fast-track integration of States into the e-National Agriculture Market platform, the Centre has called a meeting of officials of all States and Union Territories on Friday to review the steps taken by them to bring about the required amendments in the APMC Act.

In addition to the ten states that have reformed their agricultural produce market committee Acts and already have several mandis connected to e-NAM, five States — Maharashtra, Assam, Mizoram, Orissa and Sikkim — have newly come on board, an Agriculture Ministry official told *BusinessLine*.

“In the meeting on Friday, we will evaluate the steps taken by the remaining States so far to bring their legislations in alignment with the model APMC Act. The idea is to encourage them to bring about the required changes to expedite the creation of a unified national agriculture market,” the official said.

e-NAM, or the National Agriculture Market, is a pan-India electronic portal for sale and purchase of agricultural produce launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in April this year. It was initially launched in 22 mandis in eight States.

The idea behind the online market is to reduce transaction costs, help farmers identify the best buyers, and maintain quality standards with the provision of quality testing.

### **Three key reforms needed**

For integration with the e-platform, States/UTs need to bring about three main reforms. These include implementing a single licence to be valid across the state, a single point levy of market fee and provision for electronic auction as a mode for price discovery.

“The idea is to first have States and UTs implement a single licence and single point of levy of market fees and then gradually move towards a single licence and single point of levy of market fees at the national level. It will remove disincentives for farmers and traders to trade across the country as they will not have to shell out more money from their pockets,” the official said.

Giving an update on the implementation of the scheme, Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh recently said that it had been implemented in 250 markets across ten States. They are Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Chattishgarh, UP, Jharkhand and Haryana.

The Minister is optimistic that the goal of connecting all 585 regulated mandis by the end of 2017 instead of March 2018 will be achieved.

## Bearish trend in cooking oils



### **MUMBAI, OCTOBER 20:**

Edible oils market witnessed a bearish trend on higher selling pressure amid weak futures. On the BCE, groundnut oil and cotton oil declined by ₹80 and ₹5 each. Palmolein eased by ₹2. Sources said as stockists have bought enough quantity recently they stayed away from fresh bets. Arrival of new crops is increasing and that is putting pressure on indigenous edible oils. Allana's rates: palmolein ₹595, soya refined oil ₹680 and sunflower refined oil ₹735. At Rajkot, groundnut oil *telia* tin crashed to ₹1,450 (1,600) and loose (10 kg) declined by ₹100 to ₹925. BCE spot rates (₹/10 kg): groundnut oil 1,020 (1,100), soya ref. 670 (670), sunflower exp. ref. 670 (670),



sunflower ref. 725 (725), rapeseed ref. 860 (860), rapeseed exp. ref. 830 (830), cottonseed ref. 730 (735) and palmolein 583 (585).

### **Improved demand lifts soya**

#### **INDORE, OCTOBER 20:**

Barring groundnut oil, majority of oils in Indore mandis have gone up in the past one week on improved demand and buying support. Soya refined traded higher at ₹657-60. Similarly, soya solvent ruled at ₹624-27 (₹610-15 last week) on improved buying. Palm oil quoted at ₹665, while cotton oil (Gujarat) ruled at ₹705-8. Slack demand dragged groundnut oil to ₹1,030. Mustard seeds ruled flat at ₹4,100 , while raida declined to ₹3,900. Mustard seeds for Jaipur line at ₹4,765-70.



### **Govt weighs prospect to cut sugar import duty to cool prices**



Government Thursday said it is looking into the possibility of a reduction in import duty on sugar to check prices and also assured it will not let the prices of sweetener as well as chana dal to rise. At present, there is 40 per cent import duty on sugar. Union Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said the government will soon start selling pulses through post offices.

“We will not allow prices of chana dal and sugar to rise. We have many ways to control rates,” Paswan told reporters on the sidelines of a Consumer Mela organised at Connaught Place in the national capital.

“We are selling pulses through Mother Dairy and Kendriya Bahandar outlets. Now, we have decided to sell pulses through post offices. We will soon run pilot project at 100 places,” he said.

Paswan said the government is monitoring the prices of all essential commodities including chana dal and sugar and will take measures to check prices. He warned hoarders to offload stock in the market. Consumer Affairs Secretary Hem Pande said the possibility of reducing import duty on sugar is being “examined”.

Yesterday, Cabinet Secretary P K Sinha reviewed the availability as well as the prices of essential commodities and asked the Department of Consumer Affairs to consider all options to check the prices of chana dal and sugar. According to government data, chana dal is currently being sold at an average price of Rs 110 per kg. The maximum price is Rs 145 per kg. Sugar is available at an average price of Rs 40 per kg, although the maximum rate is Rs 47 per kg.

In the national capital, chana dal is available at Rs 136 per kg and sugar at Rs 43 per kg. Earlier addressing the event, Paswan asked celebrities to endorse products after giving due consideration. He said the industry should do proper labelling on products and display manufacturing/expiry dates, MRP and process of redressal of consumer grievances prominently.

He directed corporates to advertise only that what is written on the product. The minister said the government is making provisions in new Consumer Protection Bill to take strict action against misleading advertisements and adulteration.

Paswan said a group of ministers would soon meet to finalise the amendments in the new Bill and hoped that it would be passed in the upcoming Parliament session. The Centre in August last year had introduced the Consumer Protection Bill 2015, in Lok Sabha, to repeal the 30 -year-old Consumer Protection Act. A Parliamentary Standing Committee submitted its recommendations in April.