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THE HINDU

Techie turns cultivator



In a world of rapid urbanisation where almost everyone, especially engineering graduates, prefers to settle outside of India, there is an IT professional who came back to the country after working in Singapore for a decade to sell the vegetables he grew on his agricultural land.

Miryala Pradeep Reddy completed his B.Tech from Mother Theresa College of Engineering and Technology in Peddapalli town of Karimnagar district in 2006. In search of employment, he migrated to Hyderabad and secured a job. And soon after completing a SAP course, he moved to Singapore for a job in an IT firm.

Mr. Reddy worked in leading IT firms, with a salary of Rs. 50 lakh per annum. However, he was still not satisfied with his life. The young man's passion for agriculture forced him to come down to his motherland and take up farm activities. Now, he has become a star

in Karimnagar town for selling vegetables straight from his farm lands, that too at affordable rates.

A native of Laxmipur village in Ramadugu mandal, Mr. Reddy took up vegetable cultivation and floriculture by taking seven acres of land on lease in Malkapur village. Initially, he took up cultivation in his native village by growing drumsticks and redgram. But due to marketing and transportation problems, he moved to Malkapur.

After cultivating vegetables, he sold his produce to local traders who, in turn, made a fast buck by selling it at higher prices. At this juncture, Mr. Reddy decided to market his own vegetables and started selling them in his car at SRR Government Degree College in the morning, and at St. John's High School in the evening in Karimnagar town.

Mr. Reddy's vegetables have become so popular that many people from across the town flock to his car to purchase the fresh produce.

New tomato market in Madanapalle soon, says Agriculture Minister



Agriculture Minister Prattipati Pulla Rao on Friday said that the State government would initiate steps to construct a new tomato market in Madanapalle soon, and a 70-acre land would be allocated for the project. He foresaw a big business in tomato produce and assured the farmers that the disbanded jackpot system (commission system) would continue and the existing 4% commission module for traders would be implemented in true spirit.

The horticulture officials apprised the Minister that Madanapalle market happened to be the largest in Rayalaseema region, with a track record of exporting high-quality tomatoes to Mumbai, Chennai, Varanasi and several cities in the country and recording multi-crore business round the year.

The Minister was here to inspect the operation of rain guns in groundnut fields in Madanapalle division. Inspecting the trading outlets and dumping of tomato produce at the market yard, the Minister observed that Chittoor district holds the best potential to become a horticulture hub.

Though the price of tomatoes was plummeting from time to time, the crop had turned into a good business in the region.

He said that when the prices of tomatoes were stabilised, the farmers would reap rich benefits and escape the threat of falling prices. The farmers said that they never craved for bumper benefits, but were bogged down with sudden dropping of prices which would force them to abandon the crops in the fields as the scenario would throw them into a quandary with the labour charges becoming more than the tomato market price.

They informed the Minister to take measures for stabilising the prices at at least Rs. 350 per crate with 30 kg of tomatoes. Responding to their plea, Mr Pulla Rao said that he would place the same before Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu.

Later, the Minister inspected the rain guns at K.V. Palle masndal and interacted with the farmers, asking them to be bold as the government would stand by them.

HOPCOMS offers rebate on fruits

The Horticultural Producers' Cooperative Marketing and Processing Society (HOPCOMS) is offering a five per cent discount on fruits. "This is a festival discount from September 2 to 5, in Bengaluru Urban and Rural, Kolar and Chickballapur. The prices of fruits have fallen by nearly 20 per cent this year," said K. B. Krishna, MD, HOPCOMS. However, there is no discount on vegetables.

Designing cities for tomorrow

Gustav Herman Krumbiegel (b.1865-d.1956) was the man whose magical touch transformed Mysore and Bangalore into charming garden cities. His last resting place is in Bangalore, beneath an African tulip tree. The once-forgotten grave of this horticulturist and architect was recently given a facelift on the occasion of his 150th birth anniversary.

Born in Germany, Dr. Krumbiegel underwent training in horticulture and later joined the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in the United Kingdom. It was during his association with the Kew Gardens that his name was suggested to Sayajirao Gaekwad, the Maharaja of Baroda, who was in search of a capable horticulturist. The Maharaja entrusted Dr. Krumbiegel with the task of designing his Ooty estate. While working on the project Dr. Krumbiegel was introduced to Krishnaraja Wodeyar, Maharaja of Mysore, who persuaded him to join Mysore State service in 1908 as the Curator of Botanical Gardens at Lalbagh. Later Dr. Krumbiegel was elevated to the post of Director of Horticulture and after 25 years of service, retired in 1932 as Economic Botanist to Government (Mysore). After retirement he settled down in Bangalore as 'Landscape Adviser' to Mysore State.

Further South, the erstwhile princely state of Travancore was undergoing many changes under the rule of Chithira Tirunal Bala Rama Varma, who came to the throne in 1931. As

part of infrastructure development and beautification of Thiruvananthapuram, the Town Planning Department sought the assistance of Dr. Krumbiegel in 1932. Dr. Krumbiegel's reputation as a master horticulturist and town planner and his association with the Mysore royalty might be the reason why his name was suggested in the first place. Moreover, it is probable that Chithira Tirunal, during his stay in Bangalore for administrative training (1930-31), might have had gathered first-hand information on the work of Dr. Krumbiegel.

In his proposal for Thiruvananthapuram, Dr. Krumbiegel stressed on the need for beautification of the township and its iconic structures. He also aligned and designed approach roads to Kanakakunnu and Vellayambalam palaces. The gardens in the State Guest House and Cliff House, as well as the realignment of some of the roads were proposed by him.

A careful survey of the city roads was carried out in 1932 and measures were proposed for its improvement by Dr. Krumbiegel. He advised the government to demolish the old mud walls (*kayyala*) lining either side of the Kowdiar-Vellayambalam road, in order to construct the more stable and aesthetically appealing boundary walls that we see today. Krumbiegel, as a first step towards the implementation of his proposal, worked on the stretch between Kowdiar palace gate and Vellayambalam junction. The beautifully designed Kowdiar Avenue Road was formally inaugurated in 1945. Later, Dr. Krumbiegel's expertise was sought after by the government in the preparation of Thampanoor Valley, Pangode and Vellayambalam-Mascot Hotel Roads. Dr. Krumbiegel, in his proposal for a Marina road, advised the government to establish a direct road along the coastal line, connecting Sangumugham and Kovalam.

In 1933, during his stay in Thiruvananthapuram, Dr. Krumbiegel prepared designs for the extension of Kowdiar palace complex and the Tennis Pavilion. In order to improve the quality of open spaces, he advised the government to develop Puttarikandam into a public park and brought it under a Town Planning Scheme.

It is unfortunate that Dr. Krumbiegel, despite his contributions to the beautification of Thiruvananthapuram, still remains relatively unknown to the public.

Odisha failed to spend Horticulture Mission Fund: Radha Mohan Singh



Odisha failed to spend Rs 54.45 crore allotted to operationalise the Horticulture Mission last year, Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh said on September 2 and hoped the state would use the entire amount received from the Centre this year.

“To operationalise Horticulture Mission in Odisha, an amount of Rs 54.45 crore was released for 2015-16, but the state could not spend Rs 4.15 crore last year,” Singh said addressing farmers on World Coconut Day and National Award presentation ceremony held here.

Stating that Odisha would get Rs 49.91 crore from the Centre for the mission this year, he said so far Rs 26.83 crore had already been released to the state where National Horticulture Mission has been operational under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH).

The main objective of the mission is to promote overall development of bamboo and coconut plantation sector through area based regional strategies.

Nearly a quarter of the mission’s budget should be on post-harvest infrastructure management, especially to build the cold supply chain and to link farmers’ producers directly to the market, he said.

In the last two years, National Horticulture Board has provided assistance of Rs 6.50 crore to develop horticulture in Odisha through plans like greenhouse, poly house and cold storage. Several cashew promotion units have been established in Odisha's Koraput and Ganjam districts, he said.

The contribution of coconut in the country's GDP is about Rs 20,000 crore. In 2015-16 coconut products worth Rs 1,450 crore were exported from India.

India's coconut production stood at 2044 crore grown in 19.8 lakh hectare, while coconut productivity per hectare is 10345, the union minister said adding over one crore people in the country were dependent on it for livelihood.

In Odisha coconut is a major crop and is cultivated in over 50679 hectares and its production is 32.4 crore. The state produces 6404 coconuts per hectare.


The Coconut Development Board contributes towards the growth of coconut industry, the minister said adding the Technology Mission on coconut under the Board has established 402 coconut processing units where 242 crore coconuts are processed per year.

THE HINDU BusinessLine

Kharif acreage up 4 per cent on rise in sowing of pulses

Pulses top the growth chart

ROBUST COVERAGE		
Crop	This Year	Last Year
Rice	372.95	364.43
Pulses	142.82	106.92
Arhar	51.78	35.22
Uradbean	34.37	27.03
Moongbean	33.04	24.28
Kulthi/Horsegram	0.54	0.33
Coarse Cereals	184.13	175.59
Jowar	19.20	18.59
Bajra	68.18	67.38
Maize	83.21	74.61
Oilseeds	176.60	178.67
Groundnut	44.24	35.70
Soybean	112.28	115.37
Sesamum	13.85	16.15
Castor	6.53	8.90
Sugarcane	45.78	49.60
Jute & Meshra	7.56	7.73
Cotton	101.96	114.17
Total	1033.99	997.11



New Delhi, September 2:

Pulses have been the primary drivers of increased sowing in the ongoing kharif season with total acreage under the crop till September 2 surpassing the normal sowing area averaged over the last five years.

Acreage under rice, coarse cereals and oilseeds, too, has been robust, with sowing so far outstripping the previous year by 4 per cent. Total sowing of all seven kharif crops, at 1,033.99 lakh hectares (lh), is slightly lower than the normal area of 1,062.50 lh for the entire season, but is higher than sowing in the same period of the previous kharif season, which was 997.11 lh, according to figures released by the Agriculture Ministry.

With a few days of sowing still left in the ongoing season, total acreage is likely to catch up with the normal sown area of the last five years.

Rajasthan has taken the lead in sowing of pulses, followed by Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka. Total sowing of pulses till August 31 on 142.02 lh is higher than both last year's acreage of 106.92 lh as well as the normal area of 108.693 lh.

Sowing in most rice-growing States, including Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal has been up to expectations, with total acreage at 372.95 lh — higher than last year's 364.43 lh.

Sowing of coarse cereals till September 2 is at 184.13 lh (175.59 lh). Oilseed sowing for the period is at 179.60 lh (178.67 lh).

Cotton sowing at 101.96 lh till date was lower than the 114.17 lh sown in the same period last year as many farmers switched to other crops due to pest attacks.

Sugarcane sowing was also lower at 45.77 lh (49.60 lh). Jute and Mesta acreage, at 7.56 lh, is almost at the same level as last year's 7.73 lakh hectares.

Business Standard

Kharif sowing normal in Odisha, surpasses previous year area

Total sown area as on August 27 stands at 5.34 million hectare as compared to 5.24 million hectare at this time in 2015



Buoyed by normal rainfall in Odisha, Kharif sowing has gained momentum with the overall sowing area surpassing the previous year's figure.

The total sown area as on August 27 stands at 5.34 million hectare as compared to 5.24 million hectare at this time last year, says government data.

The state has witnessed 1.9% deviation in rainfall, which is termed as normal. Odisha has received 316 mm actual rainfall against the normal rainfall of 310 mm.

The coverage area of food grains as on August 27 stood at 4.362 million hectares compared to 4.247 million hectares covered during the same period of the previous sowing season.

"Transplanting of paddy crop is under progress. Intercultural operations including Fertilizer application is going on. However, intercultural operations are delayed due to late onset of monsoon and less rainfall received during June and July. Early transplanted paddy crop is in flowering to grain filling stage," said a government source.

Cereals have been sown in 3.8 million hectares. Paddy, the key Kharif crop of the state, is cultivated on 3.41 million hectares, compared to 3.33 million hectares in the same period of the last year. Pulses have been sown on 0.571 million hectares. The state government

has set a foodgrain production target of 10.1 million tonnes (mt) in the Kharif season after standing crops were destroyed by the drought last year.

Cereals will be cultivated on about 4.01 million hectares with a productivity ratio of 2,332 kg per hectare. This includes rice on 3.6 million hectares, with yield rate of 2,370 kg per hectare, maize on 0.3 million hectares, with productivity quotient of 2,850 kg per hectare, and ragi on 0.16 million hectares, with yield rate of 900 kg per hectare. Similarly, the targeted for pulses is 1.02 million hectares, with productivity ratio of 616 kg per hectare.

Oilseeds, fibres and vegetables are cultivated in 0.14 million hectares , 0.15 million hectares and 0.6 million hectares , respectively.

Sowing of non paddy crops like pulses, oilseeds, vegetables are under progress. Sugarcane is at grand growth stage. Overall the crop condition is normal, the government said.

Govt soon to make GM mustard stance public, develop more varieties

This is seen critical to Modi's goal of attaining self-sufficiency in edible oils as currently govt spends around \$12 bn annually on vegetable oil imports



The Indian government will soon make public its stance on allowing the commercial cultivation of genetically modified (GM) mustard - what could be its first transgenic food crop - and "ideology" will not influence the decision, a minister said.

The mustard variety has been developed by a group of New Delhi scientists over the past decade, and Environment Minister Anil Madhav Dave said India would also come up with other GM food as its population increases and arable land shrinks.

"You'll get to know about our view on GM mustard very soon," Dave, whose ministry decides on GM crops, told Reuters on Friday.

"Naturally if Indian scientists do some research for India, that is an advantage. India's money is staying within India."

Allowing GM mustard is seen as critical to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's goal of attaining self-sufficiency in edible oils.

India spends around \$12 billion annually on vegetable oil imports. GM mustard - with yields up to 30% higher than normal varieties, also loosely called rapeseed - will give Modi a chance to slash this bill.

But the path to a commercial launch is not without hurdles.

Public opposition to lab-altered food remains fierce, including from groups close to Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) who object to reliance on technology developed mainly by Western countries.

This could throw a spanner in the works for GM mustard, which recently got technical approval from a panel of government and independent experts after multiple reviews of crop trial data.

In 2010, India placed a moratorium on GM eggplant and that too after an expert panel had given its clearance, effectively bringing the regulatory system to a deadlock.

But Modi, who was instrumental in making Gujarat India's leading user of GM cotton while chief minister there, cleared several field trials for GM crops soon after taking office in New Delhi in 2014.

"You must have different parameters for what you eat and what you only come in contact with, like cotton," Dave said. "(But) eventually it is the doctor who gives the medicine. Ideology has no connection with this."

Dave, a river conservationist and amateur pilot, said the government's aim was to make regulation on GM crops foolproof and that people's views would be taken into consideration before finalising anything.

The Modi government is at loggerheads with Monsanto over how much the world's biggest seed company can charge for the GM cotton seeds it supplies, after some farmer groups complained about high rates.

India has also proposed that Monsanto, which dominates India's GM cotton seed market, share its technology with local firms.

Major international seed companies in India are now rallying together as a flurry of regulatory steps in recent months stands to hurt their business.

Monsanto has said it is contemplating leaving India, its biggest market outside the Americas, and recently pulled an application to sell next-generation cotton seeds.

Dave brushed aside concerns that Monsanto's withdrawal of the cotton variety will hurt Indian farmers as existing seeds become vulnerable to pests.

"Indian scientists are capable enough to meet the requirement of Indian farmers, in every crop," Dave said.

Pulses area Rise by 33 per cent



Area under kharif pulses rose 33 per cent to 14.2 million hectares as on Friday year-on-year on the back of good monsoon which may lead to fall in prices of lentils, already visible in some of them.

As Kharif season sowing is nearing completion, total acreage under various crops rose 3.7 per cent to 103.4 million tonnes in this period.

While acreage seems to be only marginally higher than last year's, good monsoon would lead to rise in productivity and better agriculture growth in third quarter compared to a mere 1.8 per cent in the first quarter of the current financial year.

This is despite monsoon falling below expectations in August and June as the Met Department has forecast better than normal rains for the four-month season ending September.

Good monsoon would also enable rabi crops to be give better production this year as adequate soil moisture would be there.

"We expect agriculture production to grow by 4 per cent in the second half," Devendra Pant, chief economist with India Ratings, said.

However, production of sugarcane, Jute and cotton may fall as acreage under these crops declined.

The government expects pulses production to increase to 20 million tonnes in the 2016-17 crop year (July-June) from 16.47 million tonnes in the previous year.

According to data released by the Agriculture Ministry, pulses acreage has gone up significantly in Rajasthan at 3.3 million hectares, followed by Maharashtra (2.5 million hectares), Madhya Pradesh (2.1 million hectares) and Karnataka (1.8 million hectares) so far in the ongoing kharif season.

Pulses area has also gone up in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Jharkhand, the data showed.

Meanwhile, harvesting of moong has begun in parts of Karnataka and Rajasthan, and the government is gearing up to procure the lentil at the minimum support price (MSP) to avoid distress sale by farmers.

According to the ministry's data, area sown under oilseeds has improved marginally to 17.9 million hectares so far from 17.8 million hectares in the year-ago period.

The sowing area of paddy, the main kharif crop, has also increased marginally by 2.3 per cent to 37.3 million hectares from 36.4 million hectares earlier.

Coverage for coarse cereals stood at 18.4 million hectares, 4.9 per cent higher from 17.5 million hectares in the same period of the previous year.

However, sugarcane area fell by 7.7 per cent to 4.5 million hectares, from 4.9 million hectares. Sown area for cotton too declined by 10.7 per cent to 10.2 million hectares from 11.4 million hectares.

Jute and mesta acreage fell by 2.2 per cent to 0.76 million hectares from 0.77 million hectares.

The country produced around 252 million tonnes of foodgrains in each of the past two crop years (2015-16 and 2014-15), impacted by two consecutive drought years.

Amid hopes of better rains this year, the government is targeting a record production of 270 million tonnes in 2016-17 crop year.

Sugar up 2% as govt imposes stock limit



Sugar prices tumbled Rs 70 to Rs 3,425 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators preferred to trim their positions after the government imposed stock limits on sugar mills during the festival season till October-end.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, sugar for delivery in far-month December contracts was trading sharply lower by Rs 70, or 2% to Rs 3,425 per quintal having a business volume of 13,970 lots.

Sweetener for delivery in October also slumped by Rs 55, or 1.58% down at Rs 3,405 per quintal in business volume of 1,600 lots.

Analysts attributed weakness in sweetener prices at futures trade offloading of positions by speculators after the government yesterday imposed stock limits on sugar mills.

To check spiraling price of sugar which has crossed Rs 40 per kg, the government today imposed stock limits on sugar mills during the festival season till October-end.

The decision to impose stock limit on millers would boost availability of sugar in the open market and help in controlling the price rise.