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NABARD sets up 'Watershed Projects Unit' in Madurai

R. Sairam

It will oversee implementation of projects covering 80,000 ha

Projects in southern districts worth nearly Rs.22 crore to be supervised

It will also take up livelihood and capacity building projects

MADURAI: The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has set up a new unit here to exclusively focus on implementing its watershed projects in southern districts of Tamil Nadu.

The Watershed Projects Unit will supervise 60 projects covering 80,000 hectares in Madurai, Theni, Dindigul, Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga districts at a total cost of nearly Rs.22 crore, S. Natarajan, NABARD Deputy General Manager, who heads the unit, told *The Hindu* on Friday.

The funds are being provided under Water Shed Development Fund. The watershed unit was commissioned on Friday by Chief General Manager of Tamil Nadu Regional Office, NABARD R. Narayan. Under the watershed scheme, half the project cost is given as grant with the rest coming as loan from NABARD.

A total of 111 watershed projects were being supported by the NABARD in 25 districts of the State with another 60 in different stages of processing. Once sanctioned, this would take the total area covered to 1.9 lakh hectares, he said.

Ten projects are scheduled for completion by March. The projects will be implemented over a period of four to five years with the active participation of the local population. A committee is formed at village-level with non-governmental organisations being included as facilitators, informed Mr. Natarajan.

R. Shankar Narayan, Assistant General Manager, NABARD, said that the new unit would give focussed attention to the projects and also help expedite implementation. It would also take up livelihood and capacity building projects, besides helping NABARD to fine-tune its programme implementation strategies, he added.

The watershed project involved creation of huge percolation ponds in

government lands, similar but smaller-sized farm ponds in patta lands, installation of field bunds, deepening of tanks, desilting of supply/delivery channels, creation of 'stone gully plug' to arrest water flow and digging water absorption trenches.

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Rs. 2.25 crore for pulses

Staff Reporter

NAGAPATTINAM: Under the National Food Security Mission, about Rs.2.25 crore have been allotted for pulses.

Under the scheme, a subsidy of Rs.20 per kg for pulses seeds, a 50 per cent subsidy for micro nutrients and a subsidy of Rs.750 per hectare for gypsum are being provided to farmers.

Further a 50 per cent subsidy has been allowed for the implements.

Nagapattinam has over 90 per cent of farmers practising rice fallow cultures after the Samba harvest.

In order to increase the yield of rice fallow pulses, the agricultural department has recommended spraying of two per cent of DAP on leaves, twice, during the flowering stages of 20 to 25-day-old crops and 30 to 35-day-old crops.

According to R.V.Karunakaran, Joint Director, Agriculture, rice fallow pulses in the district are about 15 to 20 days old, rendering them vulnerable to attacks by pests.

Use organic pesticides

To contain pest attacks, the agricultural department has requested farmers to use organic pesticides and refrain from chemical pesticides.

The department has advised farmers to spray a solution of 250 ml of NP virus in 500 litres of water to contain insect attacks.

Additionally, a subsidy of Rs.200 per acre would be provided to farmers for DAP spraying.

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Leadership training programme for farmers' clubs

Staff Reporter

NAGAPATTINAM: A one-day leadership training programme for members of farmers' clubs was organised here at Krishi Vigyan Kendra at Sikkal on Friday.

The programme, organised by the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development, was conceived with content support from the MS Swaminathan Research Foundation.

Farmers' clubs are organised on the premise that a village or a panchayat-level forum is required to facilitate agricultural and socio-economic development of the entire village. Therefore, each Panchayat could organise one farmers' club of 20 members.

Unlike SHGs, where the focus is on the economic development of the group, farmers' clubs are centered on the development of the village.

A farmers' club would function as a bridge between the bank and the village and other agricultural and research institutions.

Under this, development is conceived through credit and technological transfer.

NABARD provides support of up to Rs.10,000 annually for the clubs' functioning, said A.Venugopal, Assistant General Manager, NABARD. These clubs also act as an interface between the village and various line departments such as agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, etc.

Nagapattinam has over 105 clubs. According to Mr.Venugopal, the potential for the clubs is high, considering that there are about 454 Panchayats and each Panchayat could organise a club. However, it is not target oriented, he says.

The one-day session entailed leadership training on lines of HRD modules.

The content included inputs on managerial roles and responsibilities, leadership qualities, lines of communication, etc., by Nancy Anabel, Principal Scientist from MSSRF.

Members from over 50 clubs participated in the programme and the infrastructural support was provided by KVK, Sikkal. S.Velvizhi, Senior Scientist, MSSRF, and Gauthaman, KVK, Sikkal, were present.

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Farmers should be vigilant: Collector

Special Correspondent

PERAMBALUR: Farmers should be vigilant and buy only best quality inputs and not fall prey to middlemen, said Collector M.Vijayakumar here on Thursday.

Inaugurating a special training programme for the farmers, organised by the Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department, the Collector said that the Government had implemented several welfare schemes for the benefit of the farmers, including farmers' markets to get remunerative price for their produce.

Mr Vijayakumar appealed to the farmers to be careful while selling produce and buying farm implements. The aim of the Government is to provide the necessary inputs under one roof. More than 100 farmers took part in the training programme and a similar programme will be conducted on February 18 and 25 at the Collectorate here. District Revenue Officer K.Palanisamy and Joint Director of Agriculture Radhakrishnan and others spoke.

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Check dams

SALEM: Public Works Department (PWD) has decided to construct check dams at 8 places in Salem and Namakkal districts to augment water supply and recharge ground water.

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Training programme

Staff Reporter

Tuticorin: A three-day training programme on ornamental fish culture by the Department of Fisheries Extension, Fisheries College and Research Institute, came to a close here on Friday.

With the objective of generating self-employment to the fisher women as an

alternative livelihood and for economic development, the programme was organised under the aegis of Integrated Cooperative Development Programme. Presiding over the programme, M. Venkatasamy, Dean (in-charge) explained the developments occurring in the field of ornamental fish culture, which enhances the livelihoods of the fisher folk.

M. Murugan, Regional Joint Director of Cooperatives, spoke.

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Training programme on ornamental fish culture

Staff Reporter

To generate employment for fisherwomen

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M. Murugan, Regional Joint Director of Cooperatives, highlighted the assistances being provided by the Government through different schemes to promote the economic activities among the self-help group women.

Dr. Venkatasamy also released the training manual of the programme. Totally, twenty-five fisherwomen from the coastal villages of the district attended the programme.

R. Santhakumar, Associate Professor, Department of Fisheries Extension, coordinated the programme. M. Nagoor Meeran, Associate Professor, A. Antony Xavier, Assistant Director of Fisheries (Marine), K. Senthamizh Selvi, Joint Registrar and General Manager, District Integrated Cooperative Development Project, and others were present.

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Water level

MADURAI: The level in the Periyar dam on Friday stood at 112.10 feet (full level 136 feet). The reservoir had an inflow of 11 cusecs and 400 cusecs of water was discharged from it. Vaigai dam had water at 38.19 feet (71 feet), with an inflow of 69 cusecs and outflow of 260 cusecs. The combined Periyar-Vaigai credit was at 936 mcft.

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1 lakh saplings to be named after babies born in the city

Staff Reporter

Responsibility of nurturing trees falls on the parents

— Photo: Special Arrangement



ROPING IN THE PUBLIC: Mayor M. Subramanian inaugurating the scheme to plant saplings in the name of babies born in the city.

CHENNAI: Mayor M. Subramanian on Friday launched a scheme to plant saplings named after babies born in the city.

He said a total of 41,471 saplings in the names of children born since September 15, 2009 till date will be planted by the Chennai Corporation.

In a year about one lakh saplings would be planted, which would add to the city's green cover.

The saplings would either be planted in the homes of the children or if space is not available in nearby parks or open spaces. The tree guards would bear the names of the babies and the parent.

Saplings of 'Pungai', 'Poovarasu', 'Mathi', 'Vembu' and 'Naval', which are nearly 7 feet tall, are being planted. The responsibility of nurturing the trees falls on the parents, who get a certificate stating how the plant has been named after their ward.

Corporation Commissioner Rajesh Lakhoni said that zonal offices have been directed to plant saplings every month based on the number of births. Saplings that are planted on Corporation grounds would be taken care of by the civic body.

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Mettur level

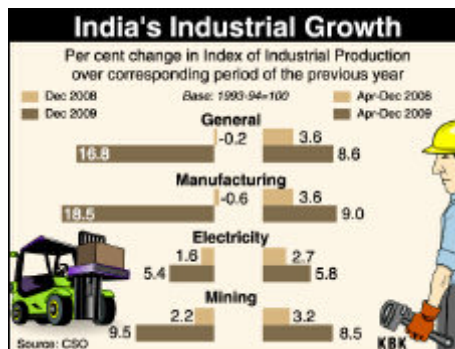
The level in the Mettur dam stood at 76.28 feet on Friday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 868 cusecs and the discharge 1,800 cusecs.

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Surge in industrial output

Special Correspondent



NEW DELHI: In yet another surprisingly better-than-expected show, as in the case of the 7.9 per cent GDP (gross domestic product) growth in the second quarter this fiscal, industrial growth soared to 16.8 per cent in December 2009 as against a contraction of 0.2 per cent in the same month a year earlier.

Even though the healthy IIP (index of industrial production) figures released by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) here on Friday derived advantage from the low base effect, the mere robustness of the growth numbers may be interpreted as a further acceleration in economic recovery and spark a fresh debate on the timing of withdrawal of the fiscal stimulus packages.

Manufacturing drives

According to the IIP data, the surge in overall industrial growth was mainly driven by the manufacturing sector with an output increase of 18.5 per cent during the month as compared to a slippage of 0.6 per cent witnessed in December 2008.

Within the manufacturing sector which accounts for nearly 80 per cent of factory output, it was the consumer durables industry segment of autos, refrigerators and other white goods makers that posted a robust growth of 46

per cent in December 2009 as against a contraction of 4.2 per cent in the like month in 2008.

What is more, even the capital goods industry segment, which caters to the equipment needs of other manufacturers, also posted a production increase of 38.8 per cent to indicate a sustained high growth momentum during 2010 as well. The intermediate goods segment also recorded a growth of 21.7 per cent against a contraction of 8.9 per cent in December 2008. Apart from manufacturing, mining output was also 9.5 per cent higher in December 2009 as against just 2.2 per cent a year ago while electricity generation rose by 5.4 per cent as compared to 1.6 per cent.

Thus, for the first nine months of this fiscal, industry witnessed a growth of 8.6 per cent as compared to just 3.6 per cent in the same period a year ago.

Not surprising then that the government is hoping for a higher GDP growth than the 7.2 per cent projected by the CSO in its advance estimates for the entire fiscal year. Commenting on the IIP data for December, a confident Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee said: "It [industrial growth] is quite encouraging and I do hope that [the] third quarter GDP figures will also be encouraging...it will get reflected in the overall GDP [for 2009-10]."

On expected lines

Echoing similar sentiment, Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia, however, was more specific on overall GDP growth and industrial performance. "I hope that we are well positioned for next year, that is, fiscal year 2010-11, to have a GDP growth of over eight per cent...We thought it [industrial growth in December] might be 13 per cent. It is now just under 17 per cent. So the performance is very much in the direction that we expected of a good revival," he said.

Alongside, Dr. Ahluwalia noted that the high industrial growth was on a low base and would stabilise in the coming months.

While hailing the healthy growth numbers, India Inc., however, was circumspect and cautioned against any early withdrawal of the stimulus measures.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

One-third of milk is contaminated

IANS, 13 February 2010, 12:00am IST

Researchers from the University of Valencia (UV) advised against keeping milk in jugs and suggest that these foodstuffs need to be better handled. The team detected unsuitable practices, such as reheating milk over and over again, even in a microwave, and then pouring it back into the thermos, which increases the

risk of microbial contamination. The study shows that there is a greater contamination risk from milk kept in jugs.

"Out of all the dairy products we analysed, 35 percent of the samples exceeded the maximum contamination levels established by EU law for enterobacteriaceae, and 31 percent exceeded the limits set for mesophilic aerobic micro-organisms. The latter grow at an optimum temperature of between 30 and 45 degrees Celsius," said Isabel Sospedra, UV researcher in preventive medicine and public health and a study co-author, according to SINC.

Two percent of the samples of hot milk (kept in jugs or stainless steel thermos flasks) also tested positive for the bacteria *E. coli*. The scientists examined 265 batches of milk and ready to use milk derivatives in a range of bars and restaurants in Valencia, and checked whether their microbial quality fell into line with European Union (EU) regulations. The results show that one-third of the samples had some kind of microorganism contamination and were not fit for human consumption. "Luckily none of the batches we analysed tested positive for *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Listeria monocytogenes* or *Salmonella* spp., which are pathogenic micro-organisms that cause both food poisoning and toxoinfections," the study authors say.

The experts advise that when using milk in any way it is important to clean jugs, thermos flasks and the steamers of coffee machines thoroughly and frequently, using the right kind of hygienic sponges or cloths, which is not always the case, said a university release. "Kitchen cloths are not suitable for disinfecting because of their microstructure, which means they transfer even greater levels of contamination," the scientists explain.

G-20 reflects growing importance of India, China: Barack Obama

IANS, 12 February 2010, 01:52pm IST

WASHINGTON: President Barack Obama has told the US Congress that the key role given to the Group of 20 (G-20) leading economies in the global financial crisis reflects the growing importance of key emerging economies such as India and China.

"Given the central role the G-20 had played in the response to the crisis, it is not surprising that the leaders agreed in Pittsburgh to make the G-20 the premier forum for their economic coordination," he said in the annual economic report of the president.

"This shift reflects a shift that was reinforced by the agreement in Pittsburgh to realign quota shares and voting weights in the IMF and World Bank to better reflect shifts in the global economy."

The 458-page document sent to the Congress on Thursday details the actions taken by Obama to prevent the economy from falling into a depression, and outlines White House's outlook and policies on areas as diverse as savings and investment, health care and climate change.

The G-20, which includes India and 18 other nations plus the European Union is

composed of most of the world's largest economies, both advanced and emerging, and makes up nearly 90 percent of world's gross national product.

Turning to the global financial crisis, Obama noted that even as world GDP was estimated to have fallen roughly 1.1 percent in 2009 from the year before, "Asia continued to grow at a robust pace for the year as a whole (over 6 percent)".

While "industrial production fell in Brazil and Mexico in a manner similar to that in industrial economies, but in China and India it merely stalled for a brief period and then accelerated again".

"This overall performance in the emerging world is a turnaround from previous crises, where recessions in the advanced countries were followed by sustained collapses in some emerging countries," he said.

But "rather than resort to beggar-thy-neighbour policies, this crisis has been characterised by international policy coordination," Obama said, noting: "National policies did not take place in a vacuum; to the contrary, nations used a number of international institutions to coordinate and communicate their rescue efforts."

Turning to climate change, Obama said: "Developing countries such as China and India are responsible for a growing proportion of emissions because of their heavy reliance on carbon intensive fuels, such as coal."

"Given the global nature of the problem and the declining US share of greenhouse gas emissions, US actions alone to reduce those emissions are insufficient to mitigate the most serious risks from climate change."

Thus "cooperation by both past and future contributors to emissions will be required to stabilise the atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases," he said.

In December, the US worked with major emerging economies, including Brazil, China, India, and South Africa, developed countries, and other regions around the world to secure agreement on the Copenhagen Accord, Obama recalled.

The US, he said, also spearheaded an agreement in September to phase out fossil fuel subsidies among G-20 countries, a goal seconded by countries in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in November.

The G-20 also called on all nations to phase out such subsidies worldwide, he said, noting "fossil fuel subsidies are particularly large in non-OECD countries, such as India and Russia".

Zia Haq, Hindustan Times

Email Author

New Delhi, February 13, 2010

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Sun shines on both farm and factory

Foodgrain production is not going to be as bad as feared some months ago, show farm output estimates released by the government on Friday.

And expect prices to cool down after months of free flight upwards.

Foodgrain production in 2009-10 is likely to be around 217 million tonnes. This is only 7 per cent lower than last year, compared to an earlier projection that had predicted a decline of 18 per cent.

The expected cut in losses is being attributed to aggressive handling of rabi or winter-sown crop, with the government's pumping a subsidy of Rs 288 crore for cheaper seeds.

Friday's data could help rein in food prices, which have surged in recent months, partly on fears of shortage.

The annual food inflation rate touched an 11-year record of 19.95 per cent on December 5.

"These improved outlook should at least have a positive effect in terms of sentiment," Planning Commission member Abhijit Sen told Hindustan Times.

According to the second advance estimates, or the government's second of the quarterly projections of farm output, India is likely to harvest 80.28 million tonnes of wheat in 2010, a tad lower than last year's record 80.58 million tonnes.

India is the world's second-biggest producer of wheat, sown in October and harvested in March.

But farm officials are worrying over possible higher-than-normal temperatures, which can damage wheat, nearly ready for harvest.

"The 2009 drought was obviously better-handled than previous ones. But rabi is still up in the air. Adverse weather can still damage it," Sen said.

India exceeded its foodgrain production target for 2008-09 at 233.88 million tonnes, with both rice and wheat leading the surge. However, last summer's drought – the worst in three decades – was thought to trim output considerably.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/508199.aspx>

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Foodgrains output dips by 7.51% to 216.85 MT

Agencies Posted online: Friday , Feb 12, 2010 at 1830 hrs

New Delhi : India's foodgrain production is estimated to decline by 7.51 per cent to 216.85 million tonnes in the 2009-10 season mainly due to a fall in summer output owing to the worst drought in 30 years.

According to the second advance foodgrains estimate released by the government, the country's foodgrains output is pegged at 216.85 million tonnes (MT) in the 2009-10 season, as against 234.47 million tonnes in 2008-09 season.

The production estimate includes crops grown in the Kharif (June-September) and Rabi (October-June) season.

The production of rice, which is largely grown in the Kharif season, is estimated to be lower at 87.56 million tonnes, as against 99.18 million tonnes in the 2008-09 season.

Production of wheat, grown mainly in the rabi season, is projected at 80.28 million tonnes, as compared with 80.68 million tonnes in the year-ago period.

The total coarse cereals output is estimated to decline to 34.27 million tonnes from 40.03 million tonnes in the review period.

However, pulses output is estimated to be slightly better at 14.74 million tonnes in the current year as against 14.57 million tonnes in 2008-09 season.

Oilseeds production is estimated at 26.32 million tonnes as against 27.71 million tonnes in the year-ago period. Also, sugarcane production is estimated to be 251.26 million tonnes as against 285.02 million tonnes in the year-ago period.

India, China to blame for growing proportion of emission: US

Agencies Posted online: Friday , Feb 12, 2010 at 1345 hrs

Washington : Noting that greenhouse gas emissions impose global risks, the Obama Administration believes that developing countries such as China and India are responsible for a growing proportion of emissions because of their heavy reliance on carbon intensive fuels, such as coal.

"Greenhouse gas emissions impose global risks. As a result, just as US efforts to reduce emissions benefit other countries, actions that other countries take to mitigate emissions benefit the United States," said the Obama Administration in its 'The Economic Report of the President', to the Congress.

Given the global nature of the problem and the declining US share of greenhouse gas emissions, US action alone to reduce those emissions are insufficient to mitigate the most serious risks from climate change, it noted.

"Developing countries such as China and India are responsible for a growing proportion of emissions because of their heavy reliance on carbon intensive fuels, such as coal," the report said.

In 1992, China's carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel combustion were half those of the United States and represented 12 percent of global emissions.

By 2008, China's carbon dioxide emissions represented 22 per cent of global emissions from fossil fuels, exceeding the US share of 19 per cent and the European share of 15 per cent, it said.

"China's share of global emissions is projected to grow to about 29 per cent by 2030 absent new emission mitigation policies. By contrast, the US share of global emissions is projected to fall to about 15 per cent by 2030 even absent new emission mitigation policy," the report said.

Thus, Obama Administration argued, cooperation by both past and future contributors to emissions will be required to stabilize the atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases.

In December, the report said, the Administration worked with major emerging economies, including Brazil, China, India, and South Africa, developed countries, and other regions around the world to secure agreement on the Copenhagen Accord.

"For the first time, the international community established a long-term goal to limit warming of global average temperature to no more than 2°C (3.6 °F). Also for the first time, all major economies agreed to take action to address climate change," it said.

"Under the Accord, both developed and major emerging economies are in the process of submitting their emission mitigation commitments and actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions," the report said.