

## **NABARD to promote 'Lead Crop Scheme' to sustain 4% agricultural growth**

R. Vimal Kumar

*A grant of Rs.50 lakh will be given to every cluster of five villages covered*

Tirupur: The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) will promote sustainable agriculture practices at village-level under a new scheme named 'Lead Crop Scheme' this fiscal to increase productivity of lead crops and thereby achieve four percent sustained agriculture growth in the State.

NABARD sources told The Hindu that the project will be implemented in phases in coordination with the Project Facilitating Agencies (PFA) such as agricultural universities, non-governmental organisations involved in farm sector and Krishi Vigyan Kendras. "The main objective of the scheme is to enhance the productivity of the lead crops of the respective villages to be covered through progressive farming practices resulting in increased income for farmers," sources said.

In the Kongu region, the scheme will be implemented in a cluster of five villages to be selected from among those hamlets which lie along the border of Tirupur and Coimbatore districts. The lead crops to be promoted in this region will be maize, sericulture, red gram and fodder with Tamil Nadu Agriculture University (TNAU) as the PFA. Similarly, the Lead Crop Scheme will be simultaneously implemented in cluster of five villages each in Krishnagiri, Villupuram, Ramanathapuram and Thanjavur districts during the preliminary phase. Official sources said that NABARD will allocate a grant of Rs.50 lakh to every cluster of five villages covered, which, in turn, would be utilised to train farmers, set up farmers' clubs and for transfer of technologies from laboratory to the field. For effective monitoring of the Lead Crop Scheme, cluster-level committees will be constituted comprising representatives of farmers, PFAs and NABARD.

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## **Demand for seed potato of PepsiCo**

Staff Correspondent

*Farmers from Dudda Hobli hold protest*

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*Its sale was stopped to prevent recurrence of blight*

*Farmers say this seed potato has given good results*

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HASSAN: Farmers from Dudda Hobli of Arsikere taluk staged a dharna outside the Deputy Commissioner's office here on Monday demanding supply of seed potato produced by PepsiCo.

Following the spread of blight in areas where the company's seed potato was sown, during 2008 and 2009, the district administration decided not to allow the sale to prevent the recurrence of the disease.

During his recent visit here, district in-charge Minister Bache Gowda announced that he would seek an opinion on the quality of PepsiCo's seed potato and would ban its sale in the State, if required.

However, farmers from Dudda hobli did not agree with this assessment. They had been using seed potato produced by PepsiCo every year and had got good results, they said. They demanded that the district administration supply these seeds.

They also complained that at the APMC yard in Hassan, only Kufri Jyothi variety was being sold. Hassan MLA H.S. Prakash assured the farmers that he would discuss the matter with the Deputy Commissioner on Tuesday, following which farmers withdrew their dharna.

### **200 protesting paddy farmers arrested in Davangere**

Staff Correspondent

*They have been demanding a higher support price for paddy*

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*The farmers were staging a rasta roko at Gandhi Circle and near the Deputy Commissioner's office*

*Basis of fixing support price at Rs. 1,030*

*a quintal questioned*

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DAVANGERE: Over 200 farmers were arrested when they tried to stage a rasta roko at Gandhi Circle and near the Deputy Commissioner's office here on Monday. Farmers of Davangere district have been protesting for a week, urging the Government to announce a support price for paddy.

President of the Raitha Sangha, Honnuru Muniyappa, and honorary president of the Sangha, Avaragere Rudrumuni, said, in a memorandum submitted to the Deputy Commissioner, that farmers had spent nearly Rs. 30,000 per acre to grow paddy, and stood to incur a loss of over Rs. 5,000 per acre if they were to sell the crop at the existing market price.

#### Support price

A few days ago, the State Government announced that it would purchase paddy at a support price of Rs. 1,030 per quintal; the protesters criticised this "whimsical" move and questioned the basis of fixing this price.

The Government should have roped in farm experts and scientists to assess the cost of cultivation, they said. Based on their findings, the support price should have been fixed, they added.

The price announced would in no way benefit the farmers as it provided opportunities for commission agents and middlemen to exploit the farmers, they alleged. Had the Government announced good support price for paddy, the price of their crop would have been automatically increased, they said.

They criticised Chief Minister B.S. Yeddurappa and Agriculture Minister S.A. Ravindranath for not understanding this "basic market strategy".

The farmers would sustain a loss of a couple of thousands even if they sell their paddy at the support price of Rs.1,030 a quintal , the protesters said.

They wondered how the price of paddy had come down when the price of rice had gone up. They suspected the role of commission agents and middlemen in the price crash of paddy.

The farmers demanded that a support price of Rs. 1,500 per quintal of paddy be given.

Communist leaders H.K. Ramachandrappa and J.M. Hanumanthappa, and Raitha Sangha leaders Huchavanahalli Manjunath and Kaidal Vasanthkumar were among others who participated in the agitation.

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Tamil Nadu - Chennai

**"Injecting cows with hormone an offence"**

Special Correspondent

CHENNAI: Injecting cows with oxytocin hormone is an offence and the government can impound the animal subjected to it, said Animal Husbandry Minister Pongalur N. Palanisamy said on Monday.

He was replying to Congress member ESS Raman, who wanted the government to clarify whether milk obtained from a cow injected with oxytocin hormone was harmful to health.

Mr. Palanisamy said the practice was prevalent only in Chennai and suburban areas, but the hormone was not known to have caused any health hazards. "According to studies in foreign countries the hormone is not absorbed in the milk. Even if there is a minute absorption, it will lose its effect once the milk is boiled."

He said oxytocin hormone, a Schedule H drug, could not be sold without a doctor's prescription. "Injecting cows with the hormone is punishable under section 12 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960." Moreover the persons injecting the hormone should be a certified pharmacist. "Others administering the injection will get 6 months imprisonment or Rs.1000 as fine."

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**Date:11/05/2010 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2010/05/11/stories/2010051156060300.htm>**

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Kerala - Malappuram

**Households to grow medicinal plants**

Staff Reporter

*Project will be launched today in 3 districts*

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*2 lakh rural houses to be involved*

*Project drawn up by Arya Vaidya Sala and NABARD*

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MALAPPURAM: Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala will join hands with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) to involve rural households of Kozhikode, Malappuram and Palakkad districts in the preservation and cultivation of medicinal plants.

The Centre for Medicinal Plants Research (CMPR) at Arya Vaidya Sala will launch a project aimed at promoting two Ayurvedic medicinal plants with the help of the rural farmers in these districts. K.C. Shashidhar, chief general manager of NABARD, will inaugurate the project on the CMPR premises on Tuesday.

#### Buy-back guarantee

The project, to be funded by the NABARD, envisages farming of Chethikoduveli and Kayapanpatavalam medicinal plants in nearly two lakh rural households in Malappuram, Kozhikode and Palakkad in three years.

“The project will help empower the rural people financially,” Indira Balachandran, project director of CMPR, will preside.

The Arya Vaidya Sala will supply saplings of the two varieties to farmers and also provide technical know-how. The Arya Vaidya Sala will buy back the plants grown by the rural households. “Apart from the buy-back guarantee, we are offering them all support for growing the plants,” said Dr. Indira.

#### 250 farmer groups

NABARD officials said activity-based groups of farmers from Kozhikode, Malappuram and Palakkad will be involved in for project.

As many as 250 farmer groups will be selected and group leaders will be trained in scientific cultivation.

#### Fund sanctioned

NABARD has sanctioned Rs. 9.84 lakh for the project as part of its financial assistance for lab-to-land programmes.

The project launch on Tuesday will be followed by a seminar on ‘Ayurvedic medicinal plants cultivation.’ Mr. Shashidhar will inaugurate the seminar. P. Unnikrishnan, District Lead Bank manager, will preside.

Sabu T., Arya Vaidya Sala estates manager, will speak on the ‘present scenario of medicinal plants cultivation.’ Gerald Martin, scientist at CMPR, will speak on ‘propagation techniques in medicinal plants cultivation.’ Satheesh K., extension scientist at CMPR, will speak on ‘cultivation practices of selected medicinal plants.’

## Weather

Chennai - INDIA

### Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Rain: 00mm in24hrs

Humidity: 34%

Wind: Normal

### Tuesday, May 11

Max Min  
38.8° | 28.6°

Sunrise: 05:45

Sunset: 18:26

Barometer: 1008.1mb

### Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

### Wednesday, May 12

Max Min  
37° | 28°

### Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday  
May 13



37° | 29°  
Partly Cloudy

Friday  
May 14



38° | 29°  
Partly Cloudy

Saturday  
May 15



37° | 27°  
Partly Cloudy

Sunday  
May 16



37° | 28°  
Partly Cloudy

Monday  
May 17



37° | 28°  
Partly Cloudy

**hindustantimes**



Press Trust Of India

New Delhi, May 10, 2010

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Last Updated: 23:04 IST(10/5/2010)

### Inflation to moderate, fall to more acceptable levels: FinMin

Inflation, currently near 10 per cent, is likely to moderate to more acceptable levels on good rabi crop and better rainfall prediction, Finance Secretary Ashok Chawla said today.

He, however, said inflation is spreading to non-food products from food items, which ruled over 16 per cent despite some moderation.

"We are hopeful that with the rabi (winter) crop coming in ... with the prospect of good monsoon which has been predicted by the Met department, inflation is starting to moderate, will moderate further and will come down to reasonably more acceptable levels," Chawla told reporters on the sidelines of an Assocham function in New Delhi.

Chawla said that the price rise is spreading to non-food items for some time now and that the government has taken a number of administrative and policy steps to rein in the negative impact on inflation.

"Inflation has for sometime been spreading to non-food items," he said.

Though Chawla acknowledged that the money expected to come through the 3G spectrum auction looks very impressive, he said that this would not have any impact on the government's borrowing plans at this point of time.

"The money which is coming in through the 3G auction is certainly very impressive and that indicates the fact that it was totally transparent, competitive process ... As for what impact it will have on borrowing, we have already put out the calendar. I don't expect much change in that at this point in time," he said.

On Day 23 of the 3G spectrum auction, the government's revenue crossed the Rs 45,000-crore mark, even as the pan-India bid for radio waves rose to Rs 11,327 crore.

#### **Press Trust Of India**

Shimla, May 09, 2010

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#### **India to be among three top economies by 2030: Anand Sharma**

The consistent foreign policy of the Congress has made India expand and diversify its commerce and business base and the country is poised to figure among three top economies of the world by 2030, Union Commerce and Industries Minister Anand Sharma said on Sunday.

Speaking at a seminar on the "Impact of Congress on Foreign Policy" to mark the 125th anniversary of the Indian National Congress here, Sharma said Indian economy had recovered fast from economic recession and its policy of non-alignment had helped in building business and commercial relations with more than two dozen countries.

The Congress led the struggle against colonialism and started the process of decolonisation across the world, he said.

He said the first half of the 20th century belonged to Mahatma Gandhi who led the freedom movement in the country and the second half to Nelson Mandela who inspired the other countries under colonial rule to fight for independence.

**Press Trust Of India**

New Delhi, May 09, 2010

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Last Updated: 13:21 IST(9/5/2010)

**New inflation basket to have 676 items; likely from June**

The new wholesale price-based inflation basket will have as many as 676 products, including LCD TVs, mobile phones, and packaged drinking water among others, and is likely to be rolled out in June or July.

In the new series there will be no obsolete items like typewriters and VCRs.

The new index, with 2004-05 as the base year, will have 241 new items and is expected to provide a more realistic picture of price rise and its impact on the common man.

Currently there are 435 items in the WPI basket.

"We are making efforts to release the data according to the new basket and base year next month or in July," a senior official told PTI.

"The existing series has some obsolete items. They will not figure in the new series," the official added.

With the addition of new items, data reporting would be more representative and give a better picture of the price situation, the official informed.

"While the existing system of inflation is accurate, the new series with bigger basket will be more credible as all major products have been included," he said.

The Reserve Bank is the major consumer of the inflation data as it helps them in formulating and monitoring policies.

The wholesale price inflation is at present calculated with 1993-94 as the base year. The government had earlier revised the base year for WPI in 1952-53, 1961-62, 1970-71, 1981-82 and 1993-94.

**Zia Haq, Hindustan Times**

Email Author

New Delhi, May 09, 2010

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## **Production picks up, sugar crisis on its way out**

India's sugar production has shown signs of picking up, prompting the government to consider reversing some sharp measures it had taken to bring down the prices.

Domestic production for the current sugar crop year (October 2009-September 2010) is now estimated to be over 18 million tonnes, up 11 per cent from earlier industry projections of 16 million tonnes.

Hit by last year's drought, states had predicted even lower estimates of 14 million tonnes.

Aided by both improved domestic forecast and higher production in Brazil, the world's biggest exporter, sugar prices have dipped to Rs 35 a kg from a peak of Rs 50 last year — a 30 per cent fall.

"World prices continued to decline through April," Dutch investment bank, Rabobank, which tracks global commodity markets, told HT.

"The import duty, waived off to boost supplies, could now be re-imposed," a senior government source said. The sweet respite is now stoking problems for millers. Cheap duty-free imports are impacting sales of domestic sugar.

Less-profitable sales eventually affect farmers, who depend on millers for payments.

"(Re-introducing) import duty is imminent," said M.N. Rao, deputy director-general of the Indian Sugar Mills Association. Rao said since production would be better than expected, the industry, on which farmers depend, needs some support. "Or payments to farmers may suffer," he said.

"The situation is comfortable, but we can't say it's hunky dory until we return to a surplus position," N Sanyal, joint secretary in charge of sugar, told HT.

India requires 23 million tonnes of the sweetener annually, but 60 per cent of it is used up by commercial buyers.

**Samrat, Hindustan Times**

Email Author

January 19, 2010

First Published: 21:32 IST(19/1/2010)

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**Change climate change!**

Ever since the Copenhagen climate summit, I've been very worried about climate change. I check my car's Pollution Under Control certificate every day, walk to the grocer's, and generally make little sacrifices to make the world a better place.

I was starting to think all my efforts — and those of countless unsung others — are beginning to pay off. I've been feeling rather cold for the past month. In fact, very cold. My legs are often frozen all the way up to my unmentionables. I have to drink a stiff vodka before I can work up the courage to enter the bathroom in the morning. In other words, the part of the globe I live in — Delhi — has not exactly been hot.

However I am only a layman, and I believe in experts, so I didn't buy a heater. In fact, I even postponed buying a new sweater. Surely global warming can't have turned tail already, I kept telling myself. The Himalayan glaciers are melting. Soon, it will be warm. Next year, Delhi will probably have no winter, and I will have to walk to office to reduce my carbon footprint and bring the fog back. The year after that, we may even celebrate New Year's by the beach in Gurgaon, since as you know, sea levels are rising alarmingly.

Now I'm a little mortified to read that the glaciers may not be melting after all. What's more, a bunch of scientists I had not heard of before are saying an ice age could be on its way. This winter has been bitterly cold across the northern hemisphere, and the hitherto unheard of gurus of climate change are saying it's only the start of a cooling trend.

A Russian astronomer named Khabibullo Abdusamatov from St Petersburg has predicted the next ice age will start between 2035 and 2045 due to a decline in solar activity. He also says the warming trend in recent years was simply because the sun was pumping out more heat. Apparently, the sun has its hot and cold periods. Abdusamatov's not a fan of carbon trading, I think.

Less Russian sources — like, for example, the US National Snow and Ice Data Centre in Colorado — have reported a jump in the Arctic summer sea ice by 26 per cent over the past two years. It had hit a low in 2007, but has recovered spectacularly since. And this was before Copenhagen, before I even started walking to the grocer's.

"Just months — that's how long it took for Europe to be engulfed by an ice age. The scenario, which comes straight out of Hollywood blockbuster *The Day After Tomorrow*, was revealed by the most precise record of the climate from palaeohistory ever generated," said *New Scientist* last November.

The most precise record of the climate showed that 12,800 years ago there was an ice age funky scientists call the Big Freeze. It froze up most of the northern hemisphere in less than a year. The scientists from Canada who carried out the study said the effect would be like "taking Ireland and moving it up to Svalbard in the Arctic". I guess if we moved Delhi by a few notches less than that, we'd end up in cool, scenic Ladakh.

Thing is, now I'm no longer sure what I should do for the planet. How do I make the world a better place today? Should I try to warm it because an ice age is coming, or cool it because global warming is upon us?

I think for starters I will throw an uttapam at a scientist today.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/541851.aspx>

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**DECCAN**  
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### ***Fuel price meet likely on May 21***

May 11 2010

New Delhi, May 10: An empowered group of ministers (EGoM) headed by the finance minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, is likely to meet on May 21 to decide on freeing petrol and diesel prices from the government control. The ministerial panel will also decide on ways to deal with the revenue lost on selling LPG and PDS kerosene below cost, an official in know of the development said.

"The EGoM meeting has been tentatively scheduled for May 21. There are availability issues about one or two ministers on that day and if they are unable to make it on that day, the meeting may be postponed," he said.

According to the terms of reference (ToR), the EGoM is to consider a pricing policy for petrol and diesel, including decontrol, he said, adding that it also has to decide on ways to bridge the deficit between imported cost and retail price of LPG and kerosene through a marginal price hike.

Meanwhile, the Opec's secretary general said on Sunday global oil markets were oversupplied, but it was too early to talk about the producer group taking action to halt the sharp price fall sparked by the euro zone debt crisis.

The US crude oil futures settled at \$75.11 a barrel on Friday, posting their largest weekly loss in almost a year and a half, on concerns that Europe's problems could derail global economic recovery. "We have a lot of crude oil on land and offshore," the Opec secretary-general, Mr Abdullah al-Badri, told reporters on the sidelines of an industry event in Doha. —

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*By Athul Lal A G*

*09 May 2010 05:11:00 AM IST*

Kerala state farmers debt

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The recent splits in the constituent parties of the LDF is likely to hit the smooth functioning of the Kerala State Farmers Debt Relief Commission. The disposal of applications for relief will be affected in the coming days with the nominees of Janata Dal and Kerala Congress walking out of the Commission. Janata Dal nominee Varghese George left the Commission during September, 2009. But the State Government is yet to fill that vacancy. Now, Kerala Congress representative M J Jacob, who was the cooperative expert of the Commission, has also walked out thereby reducing the strength of the Commission to five.

"The Commission used to dispose around 1,200 applications a week when seven members were in the Commission. Absence of two members means around 1,200 applications remain pending every month. This will affect the rate at which the Commission currently disposes files," Commission sources said.

Of the 4.10 lakh petitions, around 1.10 lakh petitions have been disposed off by the Commission since its inception in 2007. Around three lakh applications are still pending before the Commission, the tenure of which will come to an end in 2012.

"Even after the resignation of Varghese George, agriculture expert, the Commission used to dispose off the same number of applications. But now, with the shortage of one more member, it will not be possible," sources said. During the last financial year, the Commission had fully utilised the sanctioned funds worth Rs 16.03 crore. Besides, proposals worth Rs 3.5 crore, which were due in the 2008-09 financial year, were also disposed off in the last financial year. However, in the current financial year, the State Government has only sanctioned Rs 10 crore for the Commission.

"The amount is not sufficient.

Proposals worth Rs 8.5 crore, which were sanctioned by the Commission, are already pending for approval before the State Government. So, the balance amount will not be sufficient for the Commission to function this year. At least, a sum of Rs 25 crore is required to work in this financial year," sources said.

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### **Fuel pricing: EGoM likely to decide on May 21**

**Agencies** Posted online: Mon May 10 2010, 14:35 hrs

**New Delhi** : An Empowered Group of Ministers headed by Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee is likely to meet on May 21 to decide on freeing petrol and diesel prices from government control.

The ministerial panel will also decide on ways to deal with the revenue lost on selling domestic LPG and PDS kerosene below cost, an official in know of the development said.

"The EGoM meeting has been tentatively scheduled for May 21. There are availability issues about one or two ministers on that day and if they are unable to make it on that day, the meeting may be postponed," he said.

Besides Mukherjee, the EGoM also includes Oil Minister Murli Deora, Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar, Chemical and Fertiliser Minister M K Alagiri, Railway Minister Mamata Banerjee, Road Transport Minister Kamal Nath and Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia.

According to the terms of reference (ToR), the EGoM is to consider a pricing policy for petrol and diesel, including decontrol, he said, adding that it also has to decide on ways to bridge the deficit between imported cost and retail price of LPG and kerosene through a marginal price hike.

For petrol and diesel prices to be freed from Government control, rates would have to be raised by over Rs 6 a litre.

Indian Oil Corp, Hindustan Petroleum and Bharat Petroleum currently lose Rs 272.5 crore a day by selling fuel below cost. They may end the fiscal with a Rs 90,150-crore revenue loss.

They currently sell petrol at a loss of Rs 6.63 a litre while the loss is Rs 6.25 per litre on diesel, Rs 19.74 per litre on PDS kerosene and Rs 254.37 per 14.2-kg LPG cylinder.

Industry sources said the EGoM may decide to free just the petrol price for now and approve a marginal increase in diesel and LPG rates, they said.

The official said the three firms had lost Rs 46,051 crore on selling petrol, diesel, domestic LPG and PDS kerosene below imported cost in 2009-10. Of this, Rs 14,430 crore was the loss on petrol and diesel, which is entirely being met by upstream firms like ONGC and OIL.

To partly cover the Rs 31,621-crore loss on LPG and kerosene, the finance ministry has agreed to give Rs 26,000 crore. The issue of the remaining Rs 5,621 crore would also have to be decided by the EGoM, he said.