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Two PACS linked with NCDEX Spot Exchange

In a major development that could change the way farmers trade their commodities, the warehouses of the Primary Agriculture Cooperative Societies (PACS) in Mahabubnagar and Kurnool districts have been linked with the National Commodities Exchange (NCDEX) spot exchange.

The initiative, first of its kind in the country, will help in providing seamless access of national markets to farmers whereby they can sell their produce through a computer-linked method. The linkage will ensure that farmers will get the best available price at the national level. The trading will ensure that sale of the commodity at a particular price is at the discretion of farmers helping them get the best price prevailing on the particular day.

Food security leads to increased alcoholism



Women wait outside a fair price shop to purchase subsidised foodgrains in Adilabad.- PHOTO: S. HARPAL SINGH

With loose ends dangling, food security in the form of supply of subsidised food grains will also promote, among other things, unwanted alcoholism

among men and domestic violence among the poor sections of society. The change brought about over the years through supply of subsidised foodgrains in the lives of the poor in Adilabad shows that women are now completely burdened with taking care of the family while men are given to carefree life styles.

Andhra Pradesh is among the first States in the country to experiment in food security by supplying rice at just Rs. 2 a kilogram way back in 1983. Pumping in of subsidised rice in the tribal areas of this district has had negative consequences like decline in the body resistance of the jowar consuming aboriginal people.

A greater change was initiated in 2002 when the then N. Chandrababu Naidu government introduced a Centrally-sponsored programme aimed at providing food security to the poor, the Food for Work (FFW) scheme. The poor were seen to be spending money gained through illegal sale of rice, a part of the wages, on alcohol.

From a paltry Rs. 27 crore that year, the sale of liquor by Andhra Pradesh Beverages Corporation Limited (APBCL) increased to Rs. 50 crore the next year. Decrease in the price of subsidised rice to Re. 1 a kg by Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy in 2009 gave a big boost to liquor sales by the government which added up to Rs. 300 crore the following year subsequently jumping to Rs. 600 in the current year.

Cheap liquor

As cheap liquor accounts for over 70 per cent of all government liquor sales in this district, it can be safely assumed that the labour class has taken to alcoholism in a big way and it could further go up as the State government has brought in the Amma Hastam, a programme to supply foodgrain and

groceries on subsidy. The scenario looks much worse if the sale of non duty paid and illicitly distilled liquor, assumed to be worth about Rs. 100 crore, is added to the figure.

A case study of Pusai village in Jainad mandal reveals that at least 50 per cent of its 200 male population, comprising mostly agriculture labourers and poor farmers, each consumes liquor worth a minimum of Rs. 100 every day. The average monthly income of a labourer family being about Rs. 7,000, calculated for 20 days of employment at Rs. 200 and Rs. 150 per day for men and women respectively, the expenditure on liquor itself is at least Rs. 3,000

Nizamabad records more than normal rainfall

Minister for Major Irrigation P. Sudarshan Reddy has said that so far in the current monsoon season, 798 mm rainfall has been recorded which is 76 per cent more than the normal rainfall in the district.

In 3.45 lakh hectares out of the normal sowing area of 3.57 lakh hectares different crops have been sown, he said during a review meeting with officials on Tuesday and hoped that there would be a bumper harvest this kharif season. Farmers had transplanted paddy in a large extent of 1.05 lakh hectares and were ready to transplant in another 35,000 hectares.

The Minister said that the district needed 1.23 lakh tonnes of fertilizer against which so far 90,000 tonnes had been received. Till date, 89,000 tonnes had been distributed and in a few days another 8,000 tonnes would arrive in the district.

Asking the officials concerned to take all necessary steps to distribute Bengal gram seed to farmers of Jukkal, Madnur and Bichkunda mandals as

the soya bean, which they had sown in 4,400 hectares getting damaged due to heavy rain, he said fertilizer should be given to respective Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies.

Buy it, water it and it's ready to cook

The IIHR's ready-to-fruit bags ensure availability of six sub-varieties of oyster mushrooms

Tired of going to departmental shops in search of mushrooms and not finding fresh ones?

The Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR) has developed a new technology for ensuring availability of fresh and good variety of mushrooms at affordable prices.

The IIHR's Mushroom Research Laboratory has developed "ready-to-fruit" mushroom bags containing mushrooms which are about to sprout. All you need to do is keep these one-kg bags in the corner of your house or hang them in a place away from direct sunlight, and sprinkle water. Within five to seven days, mushrooms are ready for harvesting. You can even harvest the next batch of mushrooms in another five to seven days.

Mushroom Research Laboratory Principal Scientist Meera Pandey, who developed this ready-to-fruit technology, says it is possible to get a total yield of 200 gm to 250 gm of mushrooms in two harvests through this process.

Unlike the button mushroom varieties that are commonly available in the market, these ready-to-fruit bags will offer oyster varieties of mushrooms that are good for reducing cholesterol and lipid. These varieties, which are

good for diabetics and have rich iron contents, cost Rs. 100 to Rs. 150 in the market.

However, the ready-to-fruit bags are available at just Rs. 10 a kg, Dr. Pandey told *The Hindu*. The oyster mushrooms come in six different varieties of pink, yellow, grey, brown, black, and white.

The IIHR has already provided such bags to around 3,000 women mostly in rural areas around its campus in Hessarghatta in the last two years.

“The feedback has been very good,” she says.

“As researchers, we are here only to provide relevant technology. It is up to others, especially farmers and farming organisations, to commercialise this technology. It is better if Krishi Vigyan Kendras take up the responsibility of popularising and supporting this technology so that farm women themselves can prepare these bags and earn money by selling them,” she says.

Terming mushrooms as “a biological tool for sustainable nutrition”, Dr. Pandey says the IIHR was focusing on mushroom cultivation with a twin objective of improving the nutrient intake among people, besides increasing the income of farmers.

For details on the new technology, contact Dr. Pandey on 080-28466420 (extension-347) or write tomeera@IIHR.ernet.in. The bags are available only on advance intimation.

Farmers lay siege to taluk office seeking drought relief



Farmers had brought their cattle in tow to the protest in Mulbagal on Tuesday.

Farmers under the banner of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha and Hasiru Sene (Puttannaiah faction) on Tuesday laid siege to the Mulbagal Taluk Office to demand that the taluk be declared drought-hit and relief be provided to them.

Farmers gathered on the office premises along with their cattle to highlight their plight and that of the livestock due to failure of rain.

Kolar district is reeling under drought for the last seven years, the protesters said, and demanded that a special package be announced for the district to provide relief to farmers. Goshalas should be opened at panchayat level and compensation of Rs. 10,000 an acre be given to farmers who have suffered crop loss, they demanded. They submitted a memorandum to the tahsildar. Raitha sangha's district unit president K. Narayana Gowda was present.

At a meeting here recently, district unit president of another faction of the two organisations K. Ganesh Gowda alleged that the Union and the State

governments had not formulated any programmes to tackle drought in the district.

The government should announce a relief package for farmers based on the Vidarbha model, he said. District working president of the organisations Bisanahalli Byche Gowda demanded that illegal sand extraction be stopped in the region. Livestock was suffering due to shortage of water and fodder, he added. Sangha leader T. Venkatesh Gowda charged banks with not helping farmers in the drought-affected district. Loans of farmers should be waived, he urged.

Tail-end farmers suffer from scarcity of water

'If situation is not resolved soon, there could be unrest'



The water-level at the 104th mile of the Tungabhadra left bank canal was at 1.7 ft as against the fixed 6.1 ft.— Photo: Santosh Sagar

Even 25 days after the release of water into the Tungabhadra left bank canal (LBC), around 3.75 lakh acres of the tail-end fields in Raichur district continue to feel the thirst. Keeping in mind the early release this year, tail-end farmers in Raichur and Manvi taluks had prepared their fields and

paddy beds for transplantation, but in vain, as the water has yet to reach them.

The Tungabhadra Irrigation Consultative Committee (ICC) has set water gauges to consistently be maintained at different points of the LBC. This would maintain water-levels across the LBC's entry points: 12.2 ft at the 47th point; 11 ft at the 60th; 9.2 ft at the 69th; 7.5 ft at the 90th; and 6.1 ft at the 104th point. However, when this reporter ventured to verify the matter, it was revealed that the water-level at the 104th entry point was a measly 1.7 ft.

A logbook maintained there showed that water had not flowed at the fixed rate in any of the five points mentioned. The worst-hit were the tail-end points, the 90th and 104th.

On the other hand, entries in the logbook revealed that the upper areas, particularly in Sindhanur taluk and parts of Manvi taluk, were receiving sufficient water, which indicates that water is being overdrawn somewhere between the 69th and 90th entry points.

“Powerful politicians and landlords in Sindhanur and Manvi taluks, who own huge tracts of agricultural land, overdraw water leaving tail-enders with very little,” alleged tail-end farmers. When district in-charge Minister Sharanprakash Patil visited the city on August 1, Deputy Commissioner S.N. Nagaraju had a lengthy list of complaints against engineers of the Irrigation Department.

“These engineers are answering to no one, not the afflicted farmers or me. I went to the canal with the police to fill the Ganekal and balance reservoirs. If those engineers can't maintain the gauge, relieve them of their duties and

hand it over to the Revenue Department. I will ensure that farmers get sufficient water,” Mr. Nagaraju had said.

Irrked by the engineers’ attitude, the Minister had strictly instructed them to maintain the water-levels. However, it seems that his instructions were disregarded, as the situation has yet to improve.

Speaking to *The Hindu* , Chamarasa Mali, State president of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha, predicted what long-term effects this scarcity of water could have. “The bigger the delay in transplanting Sona Masuri paddy, the lesser the yield. The cost of production would be higher and quality lower. The plants are aging in the beds, and the people are frustrated with non-availability of water. If the situation continues for another week, their accumulated anger would outburst into a violent upsurge. Early signs of unrest are already visible,” he observed.

Krishnamurthy, Superintendent Engineer of the Irrigation Department, said: “overdrawing of water in the upper areas is the main reason [for the scarcity of water]. Mr. Nagaraju is likely to impose Section 144 on the canal to take the situation under control. Hopefully the water-level in the tail-end areas would rise by tomorrow,” he told *The Hindu*.

Kharif sowing completed on 2.68 lakh ha in Bellary

Target fixed for the season is 3.74 lakh hectares

Farmers, particularly those dependent on monsoon, in Bellary district are very happy this year because of a good rainfall, which has prompted them to hope for a good harvest this kharif season.

The reason for their happiness is that the crops already sown, which are in various stages of growth, are in a good condition, without any moisture-

stress or other impediments, thanks to the early onset of monsoon and a good follow-up rain in the district. The average actual rainfall in the district during July was 85.1 mm against the normal of 85.5 mm. Moreover, the district recorded excess rainfall during June, when the average actual rainfall was 86.3 mm against the normal of 65.3 mm. The early onset of monsoon enabled farmers to commence the sowing early and, perhaps for the first time, the coverage of kharif jowar is the highest in recent years, Department of Agriculture personnel told *The Hindu*. Jowar had been cultivated on 25,226 hectares of land against the targeted 32,695 ha, they said. Buoyed by the early onset of monsoon and early release of water into high-level and low-level canals, farmers have completed sowing on about 2.68 lakh ha against the targeted 3.74 lakh ha and the sowing percentage was 71.6 on Tuesday.

Highest sowing has been recorded in Sandur taluk (102.8 per cent), followed by Hadagali with 90.4 per cent, Kudligi with 81.8 per cent, Hospet with 75.4 per cent, Siruguppa with 68.1 per cent, Hagari Bommanahalli with 57.1 per cent and Bellary taluk with 34.6 per cent.

However, sowing in Hagari Bommanahalli taluk had been hit hard due to scanty rainfall during July (49.2 mm against the normal 78.4 mm). In Bellary, which recorded the lowest sowing percentage, the transplantation of paddy is gradually picking up. Paddy, jowar, sunflower, maize, cotton, groundnut, Bajra and tur are among the major crops of the district. Sources informed that there was still time for sowing.

Drought study team comes late

In the wake of copious inflow into the Cauvery and farmers poised to take up samba cultivation this year, a two-member Central team arrived here on Tuesday for drought assessment for 2012. The visit was received with scepticism by farmers.

Anupam Barik, Additional Commissioner, Crops, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, led the two-member team with R.K. Gupta, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Fisheries, being the second member.

Interacting with the team, representatives of farmers' associations voiced their displeasure over the compensation of Rs.20,000 an hectare announced by the Puducherry Government. According to farmers, the compensation was inadequate and was yet to be disbursed. They recorded their concern over the timing of the Central team's visit.

Only recently, the UT government had declared the district with its 6,500 hectare of cultivable land as drought-hit. Of the cultivable area, 4,662 hectares was projected as drought-affected.

The team inspected around 300 acres of land in T.R.Pattinam affected by drought. The PWD, which had proposed to set up a lake over 35 acres, discussed the blueprint of the project with the visiting team.

The Puducherry government had assessed damages estimated at Rs.30 crore, of which Rs.16 crore would go towards agriculture and Rs.14 crore towards public works. However, this amount was yet to be disbursed.

Livestock was largely affected by shortage of fodder because of fall in cultivation, farmers said. On arrival, the team met with the line

departments, including Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Public Works Department.

Earlier, the team visited Ponpethi, Vadamattam, Andur, and Ossapur in Nedungadu. District Collector in-charge A. Muthamma was present.

Channels brimming with water



Wheel comes full circle: Transport Minister V.Senthil Balaji (right), Minister of Housing and Urban Development R.Vaithilingam, Minister of Khadi and Village Industries T.P. Poonatchi, and Chief Whip R.Manoharan turning the lever to release water from the Kattalai High Level Channel near Mayanur in Karur district on Tuesday. —Photo: M.Moorthy

Fields in interior areas of Tiruchi and Thanjavur districts irrigated by the New Kattalai High Level Channel and Pullambadi Channel got a lifeline when water was released into the channels from the Cauvery near Mayanur in Karur district on Tuesday.

The 133.80-km-long NKHLC irrigates more than 11,198 acres directly in the two delta districts besides feeding 107 tanks to irrigate 9,464 acres for a total ayacut of 20,662 acres. The Pullambadi Channel that runs 90.20 km irrigates 22,114 acres, including direct irrigation of 8,831 acres.

Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, in response to the plea of the ayacut farmers, had ordered release of water in the channels.

Following this, Housing and Urban Development Minister R. Vaithilingam, Transport Minister V. Senthil Balaji and Khadi and Village Industries Minister T.P. Poonatchi operated the lever to open the sluices and let water gush through NKHLC.

PWD officials said that around 550 cusecs water was being let into the NKHLC and there was possibility of a gradual increase in the discharge in the days ahead

Pear growers reap benefits of advanced farming techniques

Even as poor rain and shortage of water for irrigation haunt farmers in lower and upper hill, pear growers are happy over bumper harvest and better procurement prices for their produce, thanks to adoption of crop protection measures and use of modern agricultural practices.

Farmers have reaped a good harvest of pear fruits (mostly country pear) and almost got double the price for their produce when compared to their previous season's income.

Farmers in large numbers have shifted to pear fruit cultivation owing to conducive climate and availability of crop protection technologies.

Now, the total area under pear cultivation has expanded to 780 hectares, mostly at Shenbaganur, Prakasapuram, Pallangi, Vilpatti and nearby areas in Kodaikanal block. Good returns have tempted more farmers to adopt advanced technologies in pear cultivation in this region, says Deputy Director of Horticulture S. Raja Mohamed.

“We had imparted training to pear growers at these villages under Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) during September-October and December-January last year and also offered them

technological assistance before the commencement of the flowering season. Farmers, who have adopted advanced farming techniques, have started getting an income of Rs.7,500 per tree. But their income per tree in the last season was hovering between Rs.5,000 and Rs. 5,500 only. Luckily, short showers have enhanced the productive phase,” he adds.

Legislation proposed to ensure farmers' security

'Set up Farmers Income Commission'



K. Krishnankutty, chairman of the subcommittee for the draft agriculture development policy of the State, has urged the government to bring in legislation in the next session of the Assembly to implement its major recommendation of Farmers Income Guarantee programme.

He told *The Hindu* here on Friday that Kerala, which had created history in bringing major reforms in the agriculture sector such as the land reforms Act, should take the initiative in passing the Farmers Income Guarantee Act to assure all farming households a decent income to meet the basic living expenses. He said a statutory Farmers Income Commission should be established to ensure the accountability for thousands of crores of rupees being spent in the name of farmers.

The measures should include Minimum Support Price (MSP), procurement at remunerative price, price compensation, marketing and credit support, crop insurance, disaster compensation, and producer bonus for rain-fed and ecological farmers, Mr. Krishnankutty said.

The policy statement said that “if the vision envisaged in the policy document is to be accomplished, the farmers in Kerala should be assured an income to the tune of that received by Class Four employees in the State Service.” The National Farmer’s Commission has stated that “Progress in agriculture should be measured by the growth rate in the net income of farm families ... moving away from an attitude which measures progress only in millions of tonnes of food-grains and other farm commodities,” the Agriculture Policy statement said.

Mr. Krishnankutty said that as per the National Commission for Enterprises in Unorganised Sector report (NCEUS-2007), real income of farmers has stagnated, with the average being Rs.1,650 per family per month as against the family expense in the villages of Rs.2,150 a month. Even at such below-poverty level consumption, the average family still spends more than it earns, thus getting into debt.

He said that in spite of the promised price support, the government often intervenes to keep prices low for the consumers and industry. This is a reason for not providing adequate MSP to farmers. Farmers did not want the burden of providing affordable food to people upon them, the State and nation should bear it, he said.

Professor changes jobs, flaunts green fingers



V. Sivaprasad with the produce from his farm at Nedungolam near Kollam.— Photo: C. Suresh Kumar

These days when farmers quit farming and go to cities to earn a livelihood, a Professor of Chemistry at Sree Narayana College here has quit his job and city life to cultivate about five hectares of government land lying idle for decades at rural Nedungolam, near Paravur. The farm he has raised will tempt many into farming.

V. Sivaprasad took voluntary retirement when he had three more years of service and turned to farming because of his love for it. But he is no novice to the chemistry of farming. He comes from a family with farming roots. To people who ask him about it, he quips that he would love to make everyone eat food not poisoned with pesticides.

With a fellowship from the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, to his credit, this expert in computational chemistry and computer simulation says that without growing food crops, there is no existence for any land. Huge tracts of government land are being leased away for paltry amounts to cultivate plantation crops, he says.

If at least 25 per cent of that land is given to grow food crops with some basic infrastructure even at a lease rate of Rs. 500 a hectare, true farmers will come forward and aid the much-publicised food security programme, he feels. His farm is, in fact, spreading awareness of the importance of food crops.

The farm is on the land of Rama Rao Memorial Taluk Hospital. The hospital, which started operations 125 years ago to meet the medical needs of the Dalit peasants of the area, shows the thrust given by the erstwhile kings to farming and the health of farm labourers. The land was meant to cultivate crops and the proceeds from them utilised to meet the expenses for running the hospital.

But later on, farming was ignored and the land turned into a shrubbery and became a haven for anti-social activities. Professor Sivaprasad took it on lease for two years for an amount of Rs. 10,000 a year. But he had to shell out double that amount to clean up the property. And now a variety of crops are thriving on it.

But water is the most important factor for a farm to succeed, and the government is thrifty when it comes to providing that to even true farmers, he says. He began sowing at the height of the drought and had to depend on a depleted well in the land to irrigate hundreds of banana saplings and

vegetable crops. This was done at intervals so as to enable water to accumulate in the well after pumping.

“When water is being diverted from irrigation projects for drinking water supply, why can’t some portion of that be supplied to farms facing water problems,” he asks. While his banana crops have started bearing fruit, the bunches would have been much bigger had there been enough water, he says.

The Professor does not have to spend much time to find a good market for his produce. His market is in the neighbourhood. The harvest sells like hot cakes every morning, and he has permanent customers who even call up to tell that the harvest is ready

Neera may boost coconut farmers’ incomes



There are around 50 lakh coconut farmers in the State. Of them, 10 lakh depend solely on farming for their livelihood.— File Photo

Neera production and distribution that is being planned in the State in a major way may boost the incomes of coconut farmers.

A frequent complaint of coconut farmers, especially those in rural areas, has been that coconut farming is increasingly unprofitable. They often sell

raw coconuts to “middle-men” at a price of Rs. 4 or Rs. 5 each. The produce is then sold in retail outlets at Rs. 15 per nut.

The productivity level of coconut in Kerala improved (5.5 per cent) significantly, but is still lower than that in other southern States.

In the context of farmers terming coconut farming unprofitable, promotion of Neera is a major development in the State’s agriculture sector. A sum of Rs. 15 crore has been earmarked in the 2012-13 Budget for production and popularisation of value-added coconut inflorescence sap.

In July, the State government cleared three pilot projects of the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU), which would cost Rs. 5.4 crore, for demonstration, training, production and distribution of Neera, a health drink. Three units of KAU for Neera production and processing will be based at Pilicode, Vellanikkara and Vellayani.

Neera is the sweet, oyster white-coloured sap tapped from the immature inflorescence of coconut.

The collected sap is then subjected to filtration, refrigeration, centrifuging, processing and packaging. The processed product has a shelf life of one year. Value-added products such as palm syrup, palm jaggery and palm sugar too can be produced from the sap.

According to T. K. Jose, chairman, CDB, Neera production can contribute substantially to the Gross State Domestic Production (GSDP).

“If 50 per cent of the consumer price of Neera is offered to the coconut farmer, 25 per cent to the Neera worker and the remaining 25 per cent is earmarked for processing, packaging and marketing, the outcome is an all-round increase in the incomes of all stakeholders. If 10 per cent of the palms in the State are tapped, the contribution of Neera to the GSDP would

amount to Rs. 54,000 crore (with market price of Neera pegged at Rs.100 per litre). The generation of rural employment through Neera will be around 10 lakhs. The total income to the work force of Neera will be around Rs.13,500 crore. The income of coconut farmers will be about Rs.27,000 crore. About Rs.4,050 crore will be generated as tax revenue to the state through the increased purchasing power of the farmers and workers,” he was quoted as saying.

There could be roughly 17 per cent increase in GSDP through Neera production. Production of palm syrup, palm jaggery and coconut palm sugar may add more value to GSDP.

The KAU has named the Neera it plans to produce Keramritham.

KAU Vice-Chancellor P. Rajendran said one tapper could tap at least 12 palms a day, extracting an average of 18 litres per day, and this would produce a minimum of nine litres of Keramritham. “If it is sold at Rs. 20 per 150 ml bottle, the monthly income from 12 palms will be Rs.36,000. The minimum net income will be 12,000. The KAU has also developed technologies for producing coconut jaggery and coconut honey,” he said.

13,000 pumpsets in Malavalli taluk to be replaced

The Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation (CESC) signed an agreement with Energy Efficiency Services Limits (EESL), a Government of India enterprise, here on Tuesday, to replace the agriculture pumpsets in Malavalli taluk in Mandya district. The MoU aims to promote energy efficiency.

The agreement was exchanged between Vijayendra, General Manager (Technical), CESC, and Shashi Kant, Deputy Manager (Technical), EESL,

in the presence of CESC Managing Director A.B. Ibrahim. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Ibrahim said the programme being implemented by the EESL under the Agricultural Demand Side Management (AgDSM), was expected to save energy, reduce power purchase cost, bring down loadshedding, reduce peak load demand and ensure monetary benefits to CESC.

The project is expected to commence within three months and should be complete in six. Benefits to farmers include lower pump failure rates and savings on repair and maintenance costs. EESL would conduct a workshop in this regard, he added.

Mr. Kant stated that 13,000 pumpsets in Malavalli taluk connected to four feeders — Basavanapura, Banasamudra, Antharalli and Chandahalli — would be replaced under the project free of cost. The entire project costs around Rs. 10 crore. There would be no financial burden on CESC or the farmers, Mr. Kant clarified.

Implementation of the programme assumes significance since the energy bills for agricultural pumpsets are being met by the government in the form of subsidies.

Energy-efficient pumps mean that there would be no compromise with regard to the flow of water.

Compost from poultry litter works wonders for crops

Suresh Kumar develops aerobic fermentation technology



R. Suresh Kumar engaged in a research project at Haritam Agri-clinic in Vijayawada.—PHOTO: V. RAJU.

To address the issue of shrinking agricultural land due to urbanisation, the Government recognised the need for a vertical growth in farming by introducing high-end technology.

To take technology to the grassroots level in Public-Private Participation mode, the Government introduced the concept of Agri-clinics and Entrepreneurship in 2002 in coordination with the Nabard and the National Institute of Agriculture Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad, to train financial and agriculture professionals and to bring financial assistance from banks.

Haritam Horti Agriclinic is one such agri-clinic developed in Vijayawada city by R. Suresh Kumar in 2003. The clinic provides technical support to farmers of Krishna, Guntur and West Godavari districts in soil and water testing and agronomical practices besides promoting bio pesticides at a reasonable price.

As part of his passion, Mr. Suresh Kumar developed a technology of aerobic fermentation of poultry litter with a selective microbial culture. The

poultry compost produced by Haritam Horti Clinic when tried on all crops, found it to be giving better results than other composts in use.

“Through constant use of poultry compost for two years in paddy the NPK chemical fertilizers can be stopped from the 3rd season. The yield is on par with the NPK-used fields with a comparatively low pest incidence. The quality of the produce is also good,” says a farmer Y.S.S. Mukharjee.

“The whole compost process takes 25 to 30 days. Recognising the use of this technology, the Nabard granted funds to establish a microbial lab for production of compost culture under Rural Inventory Fund scheme and commercial production began in 2012,” says Mr. Suresh Kumar.

Many agriculturists and poultry farmers using compost culture are now producing their own compost at a cost of about Rs. 1,500 per tonne. “A kilogram of compost culture requires a tonne of poultry litter. The poultry compost application has also reduced use of chemical fertilizers by more than 25 per cent,” he observes. “The microbial culture, when tried in poultry litter in layer bird sheds has effectively reduced bad odour in litter, which is one of the major problems in layer bird sheds,” says Ramesh Babu, a poultry consultant.

A number of poultry farmers are using it in their poultry sheds in Krishna and West Godavari districts. Mr. Suresh Kumar can be contacted on 9848257135 (rsureshkumar@gmail.com).

Suresh Kumar of Haritam Horti Agriclinc develops a technology of aerobic fermentation of poultry litter with selective microbial culture

Special cane crushing season begins

Rural Industries Minister P. Mohan inaugurated the second sugar cane crushing season in the Kallakurichi-II Cooperative Sugar Mill on Tuesday.

Mr. Mohan said the season would last 40 days, or would go on till September 14. A target of crushing one lakh tonnes of had been fixed .

It would benefit a total of 2,000 farmers who had grown sugarcane on 4,500 acres in places such as Moorarpalayam, Kachirayapalayam, Chinna Salem and Thiagadurgam.

Normally, there would be only one crushing season spanning from November to April .

However, on a special request made by Mr. Mohan, Chief Minister Jayalalithaa had given her consent to the special crushing season now.

Collector V. Sampath, and Joint Registrar of the cooperative sugar mill A.K. Sivagami were present.

Mobile laboratory for soil testing inaugurated in Tiruchi



பெரும்பலூர் வேளாண்மைத்துறை சார்பில் நடமாடும் மன்பரிசோதனை நிலைய மாவட்ட கலெக்டர் தரேஸ் அஹமது திறந்து வைத்து பார்வைபிட்டார். அருகில் வேளாண்மை விற்பனை வாரிய த்தலைவர் மா. ரவிசந்திரன், சட்டமன்ற உறுப்பினர் இரா. தமிழ்ச்செல்வன், இணையுயக்குநர் சங்கரலிங்கம் மற்றும் பலர் உள்ளனர்,

The agriculture department has made arrangements for conducting soil test through a mobile laboratory to enable farmers to ascertain the deficiency in soil at their doorsteps.

The laboratory will camp in villages and collect soil samples from fields and furnish the results to the farmers at a nominal cost of Rs. 20 per field.

After inaugurating the services of the laboratory at Nochikulam in Alathur block, Darez Ahmed, Collector, said that loss of nutrients in soil was a major reason for the fall in yield, and a majority of farmers failed to ensure proper test of soil.

The laboratory would visit the villages in Perambalur and Ariyalur districts, and the scientists would release the results on the spot the same day.

Specific test for pH content, salt, acid, and other minerals would be conducted. A hand book would be given to guide the farmers for soil test.

Test would be conducted at Melamathur village on Wednesday; Echachampatti village on Thursday; and Ammapalayam on Friday.

Sankaralingam, Joint Director of Agriculture, said that the farmers could contact agriculture department officials on 90470-72766, 90470-72764, 90470-72763, and 90470-72768.

Tamilselvan, MLA, and M. Ravichandran, chairman of Tamil Nadu State Marketing Committee spoke

Q&A on the science of growing hamburger in the lab

On Monday, scientists unveiled the world's first lab-grown beef burger, frying it in a little oil and butter and serving it to volunteers in what they hope is the start of a food revolution.

What are stem cells?

Stem cells are an organism's master cells and can be turned into any other cell type in the body, i.e. blood, tissue, muscle, etc. Adult stem cells are found in small numbers in most human tissues, including bone marrow, fat and muscle.

Why is the meat so expensive to produce?

The technology is new and scientists are making very small quantities of meat. There are no economies of scale to offset the initial high costs. If more scientists or companies start using the technology to produce more meat products, that could drop the price substantially and speed up its production.

When could this meat be in stores?

Probably not for another 10 to 20 years. It would take years to refine the technology, encourage other producers and scientists to get involved, and overcome any regulatory issues.

How is this better for the environment?

It could reduce the number of animals needed for the meat industry. Raising cows, pigs, chickens, etc., contributes substantially to climate change through the production of methane gas. Growing meat in the laboratory could reduce the impact on agricultural land, water and resources.

How long does it take to grow a burger?

At the moment, a long time. It has taken two years for scientists to refine the process to grow enough meat. To actually grow enough meat for a couple of burgers would probably take about eight weeks. Actually forming the lab-made meat into a hamburger patty takes about two hours because scientists must put many separate strands together.

What does the process involve?

See the graphic.

What are the implications for vegetarians?

PETA, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, supports attempts to grow meat in labs because they say that will greatly diminish the amount of animal suffering. Donor animals are needed for the muscle cells, but taking those samples doesn't hurt the animal. One sample can theoretically provide up to 20,000 tons of lab-made meat. But lab-grown meat is still meat.

Is it possible to make other kinds of meat in the laboratory?

Yes. The science is theoretically the same, so the same techniques should also allow researchers to make chicken, fish, lamb, etc. Dutch researcher Mark Post, who led the research on the lab-made hamburger, initially started working with pig cells before switching to cows. He said it would even be possible to make meat products from other animals like penguins, though he has no plans to start on that.

Can they make other meat products?

At the moment, scientists are only working on making processed or minced meat, because that is the easiest kind to replicate. Processed meat accounts for about half of the meat market. Post said it should be possible to make more complicated cuts like steaks or chops in the future, but that involves using more advanced tissue engineering techniques. He estimates that it might be possible to make a steak in about 20 years.

Perhaps most importantly, what does it taste like?

Apparently it's a little bland. At a public tasting on Monday in London, two food experts said the texture was convincing but that it lacked flavor; the

lab-made burger does not contain any fat, but was cooked in oil and butter. Post said he wanted people to taste the burger without condiments, in its purest form.

No shortage of fertilizer: Minister

Minister for Civil Supplies D. Sridhar Babu has said that there is no shortage of fertilizer in Karimnagar district and called upon the farming community not panic about the situation. In a press note here on Tuesday, the Minister said that they had so far distributed 84,882 tonnes of urea during the kharif season in the district. He said that the Agriculture Commissioner had allocated 50,000 tonnes of urea for the district for the month of August. — Staff Reporter

Kharif sowing completed on 2.68 lakh ha in Bellary

Target fixed for the season is 3.74 lakh hectares

Farmers, particularly those dependent on monsoon, in Bellary district are very happy this year because of a good rainfall, which has prompted them to hope for a good harvest this kharif season.

The reason for their happiness is that the crops already sown, which are in various stages of growth, are in a good condition, without any moisture-stress or other impediments, thanks to the early onset of monsoon and a good follow-up rain in the district. The average actual rainfall in the district during July was 85.1 mm against the normal of 85.5 mm. Moreover, the district recorded excess rainfall during June, when the average actual rainfall was 86.3 mm against the normal of 65.3 mm. The early onset of monsoon enabled farmers to commence the sowing early and, perhaps for

the first time, the coverage of kharif jowar is the highest in recent years, Department of Agriculture personnel told *The Hindu*. Jowar had been cultivated on 25,226 hectares of land against the targeted 32,695 ha, they said. Buoyed by the early onset of monsoon and early release of water into high-level and low-level canals, farmers have completed sowing on about 2.68 lakh ha against the targeted 3.74 lakh ha and the sowing percentage was 71.6 on Tuesday.

Highest sowing has been recorded in Sandur taluk (102.8 per cent), followed by Hadagali with 90.4 per cent, Kudligi with 81.8 per cent, Hospet with 75.4 per cent, Siruguppa with 68.1 per cent, Hagari Bommanahalli with 57.1 per cent and Bellary taluk with 34.6 per cent.

However, sowing in Hagari Bommanahalli taluk had been hit hard due to scanty rainfall during July (49.2 mm against the normal 78.4 mm). In Bellary, which recorded the lowest sowing percentage, the transplantation of paddy is gradually picking up. Paddy, jowar, sunflower, maize, cotton, groundnut, Bajra and tur are among the major crops of the district. Sources informed that there was still time for sowing.

Tree

As many as 2,500 graft mango saplings were distributed from Moodadi Krishi Bhavan as part of its 'Oru veetil oru Bhalavrikham; (A fruit tree in every house) project. K. Dasan, MLA, inaugurated the project on Saturday in the presence of Moodadi Panchayat president K.Jeevanandan and Agricultural Officer V.P.Nanditha, a press release said.

Cuddalore Collector assures farmers of adequate seeds, fertilizers

Even as farmers in Cuddalore district are getting ready for samba cultivation, District Collector R. Kirlosh Kumar has given them an assurance that there was adequate supply of seeds and fertilizers for a successful harvest.

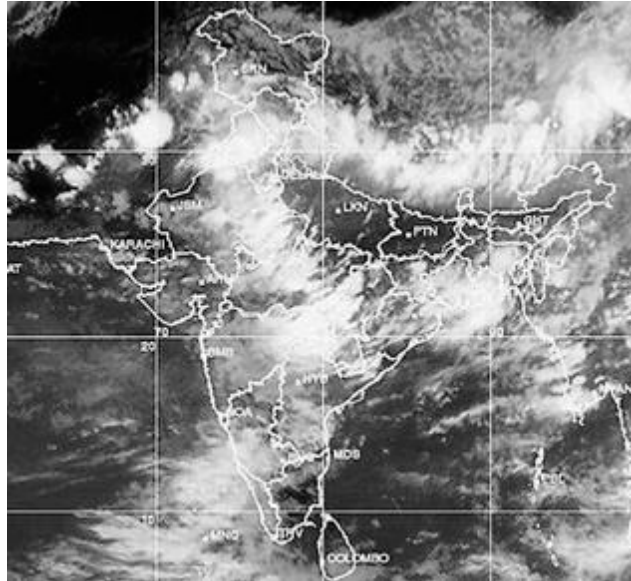
In a statement, the Collector said the agriculture extension centres in the district have been stocked with 500 tonnes of paddy seeds of the following varieties: BPT - 5204, Savithri, Aduthurai -38, Aduthurai-39, Co-39 and Co (R) - 50. The seeds would be made available to the farmers at subsidised rate. The Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies and private traders too have been instructed to keep adequate seed stocks. Besides, 3.4 lakh tonnes of fertilizers such as azospirillum and phospo bacteria have been kept ready.

Officials of the agriculture department have been directed to carry out awareness campaign in every revenue village on the technology aspect of crop cultivation and also water management to enable the farmers get better yield.

If the farmers face any shortfall or constraint in accessing seeds, they could contact the Assistant Agricultural Officers on the following cell phone numbers: Parangipettai - 94436-17056, Mel Bhuvanagiri - 75986-91252, Keerapalayam - 75986-91264, Kumaratchi - 79596-91262 and Kattumannarkoil - 75986-91263.

Any enquiries regarding fertilizer availability could be obtained from the Assistant Agricultural Officer (Quality control) on cell phone 79586-91270.

weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs. Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on Aug. 6.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	35	27	1	347
New Delhi (Sfd)	34	26	11	471
Chandigarh	34	25	19	510
Hissar	37	24	41	356
Bhantar	27	20	11	334
Shimla	21	17	12	564
Jammu	32	25	49	728
Srinagar	33	21	0	149
Amritsar	34	23	50	373
Patiala	35	25	47	505
Jaipur	33	24	71	409
Udaipur	29	24	6	515
Allahabad	33	28	tr	657

Lucknow	34	23	9	519
Varanasi	33	27	1	428
Dehradun	26	23	23	2070
Agartala	32	25	tr	546
Ahmedabad	33	26	0	673
Bangalore	26	19	1	330
Bhubaneswar	33	25	11	554
Bhopal	29	23	3	957
Chennai	33	25	0	318
Guwahati	34	25	3	567
Hyderabad	25	21	15	435
Kolkata	33	26	11	796
Mumbai	31	25	0	1915
Nagpur	31	24	26	1168
Patna	34	27	0	179
Pune	28	21	0	527
Thiruvananthapuram	27	22	11	855
Imphal	26	23	7	563
Shillong	23	17	4	570

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (tr-trace) and total rainfall in mm since 1st June.

RAINFALL

Southwest Monsoon has been active over Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, east-Rajasthan Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The axis of monsoon trough on SLC passes through Sriganaganagar, Narnaul, Gwalior and thence South-East wards.

RAINFALL: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at most places west Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, at many places over Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, east-Rajasthan and east Uttar Pradesh, at a few places over Jammu and Kashmir and at isolated places over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (8 cm and above) HARYANA: Bilaspur 9, HIMACHAL PRADESH: Palampur 16, Joginder nagar 14, Nagrota Surian 12, Kheri and Nurpur 11 each, Dehra gopipur, Guler and Kangra 9 each, Pandoh and Nahan 8 each, JAMMU AND KASHMIR: Katra 8, PUNJAB: Gurdaspur 15, R.S.Dam Site 14, Phangota 9 and Shahpur Kandi 8, EAST RAJASTHAN: Sangod 15, Mangrol 12, Anta, Atru and Kishanganj 11 each, Nawalgarh 9, Dausa and Sikar 8 each, EAST UTTAR PRADESH: Sidhauri 23, Laharpur 22, Kheri Lakhimpur 19, Sharda nagar 13, Bhatpurwa ghat 11, Neemsar and Sitapur 9 each, WEST UTTAR PRADESH: Mawana 11, Nagina and Najibabad 9 each and UTTARAKHAND: Hardwar 11 and Chamoli 9.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 8th August 2013 : Rain/thundershowers would occur at many places over Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Haryana. Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places over Uttar Pradesh and east-Rajasthan during next 24 hrs and increase thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over west Rajasthan. **HEAVY RAINFALL WARNING:** Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab during next 72 hours. Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places over Haryana and Uttar Pradesh on 07th and 08th. Heavy rainfall may occur at one or

two places over Uttarakhand during next 48 hours and heavy to very heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places during the subsequent 24 hours.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 8th August 2013: Generally cloudy sky. Rain/thundershowers would occur.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Dairy projects to benefit poor: Akhilesh

Chief minister Akhilesh Yadav launched a host of schemes under animal husbandry and dairy development departments on Tuesday. The schemes include setting up of commercial layer and broiler farm units, 'Kamdhenu dairy scheme', automatic curd plant and automatic flavoured milk plant.

Terming the schemes as beneficial for poor and focused on rural areas, CM said these schemes besides providing direct and indirect employment to lakhs of people would also improve the ruraleconomy of the state.

Since UP is a big market of dairy products, he said that by making dairy development sector competitive, it would benefit farmers and consumers. He claimed his government besides taking effective steps to improve milk development in the state also cleared pending payment of milk unions. "The government would soon order payment of dues of farmers supplying milk to milk unions, he said.

The CM while distributing certificates to entrepreneurs for 36 units under the government's new dairy development policy-2013 said that as per commercial layers scheme interest free loan and subsidy in mani fee would be given to the entrepreneurs. A total 425 Kamdhenu schemes' would be established in the state.

Nabard wants co-ops to understand reality

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) chief general manager R Amalorpavanathan said here on Tuesday that primary agricultural cooperative societies (PACS) should understand the emerging reality in the banking sector and initiate urgent steps to keep themselves in the mainstream.

He told a news conference here that the RBI and the Union government had the responsibility to evolve a safe and secure payment system in the country and the RBI directives were aimed at better services to all bank account holders, including farmers.

"As per the RBI norms, institutions like PACS which haven't been given banking licence are not eligible to function as financial institutions. The Union government has decided that all subsidies such as fertilizer subsidy, incentive for prompt repayment of crop loans etc. will gradually be credited directly to the Aadhar-linked services account of farmers. Since banking cannot be done by the PACS and they are not part of banking payment system, the account holders of PACS will not be eligible to get money directly on their accounts," he said.

Amalorpavanathan said the PACS, however, could continue to advance loans to farmers as was being done hitherto. "However, they will not be considered as banking institutes," he said.

The country has over 1.93 lakh PACS and 1.5 crore account holders, of

which nearly 80% societies are situated in Kerala. "The major issues faced by the PACS are poor know-your-customer (KYC) standards and technology upgradations. The KYC is essential to fight money laundering while core banking solutions (CBS) are required to transfer all assets and liabilities now recorded in books," he said.

Asked what would happen to the customers of PACS if they are completely set aside from banking activities, he said, "Customers will have to be covered by a bank; those of PACS will slowly move to banks whether it's lending, loan or deposit."

The officer pointed out that PACS, except in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, are ready to function as banking correspondents of scheduled commercial banks, which will ensure the customer base of both parties.

Nabard had earlier requested the state government to constitute a high-level committee with preferably chief secretary as its head to discuss the matter and find an amicable solution to keep primary cooperative societies alive.

Barc's nuclear seeds can boost crop yield

Using nuclear technology, the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (Barc) has developed 41 new varieties of genetically modified seeds of cereals, oilseeds and pulses.

At a seminar organized by BARC, with Public Relations Council of India, Dr

Suresh G Bhagwat, head, BARC's nuclear agriculture & biotechnology division, said: "If the country has to be food self-reliant, then it has to embrace nuclear agriculture technology. , with farm land getting scarcer and demand for food growing exponentially. Not many are aware that nuclear radiation-based technologies can contribute to this effort significantly.

These varieties give increased yield, are more disease resistant, mature early and have better tolerance towards salinity or water stress."

Mini forest in backyard

With growing greens becoming a viable business option, start-up helps NGO plant 300 saplings on a 1,000sq m plot in a city school

An NGO has decided to make the most of the heavy monsoon this year. Instead of a regular plantation drive, they commissioned a start-up to create a miniurban forest in the backyard of a school in Dwarka. Tree plantations, which are usually low input and fairly easy, are undergoing a makeover. The NGO signed up the start-up because they wanted to ensure thick foliage and biodiversity value of a real forest on a small patch.

A small 1,000-sq metre land that would seem tiny even for a lawn was used to plant 300 saplings of various indigenous varieties in very close proximity to each other. Swechha conducts a "monsoon wooding" plantation drive every year around this time.

This year it got a unique Bangalore-based start-up company, Afforestt, to

give them technical expertise on making an urban forest for a price of about Rs 1.5 lakh. Afforestt has created 27 urban forests in eight cities. But it is not a landscaping company; it creates patches that mimic how nature would have created a forest, says entrepreneur Shubhendu Sharma who founded the company.

Shubhendu, an industrial and production engineer who worked with a leading automobile company, quit his job in 2010 to become an urban forest entrepreneur. He had assisted noted Japanese scientist and naturalist Akira Miyawaki in developing a miniforest in Bangalore for the automobile company he worked for.

The experience inspired Shubhendu so much that he decided to make a living out of developing forests. It took Shubhendu a couple of years to make the idea of commissioning forests instead of gardens popular with clients. But it did work eventually.

"Miyawaki's method is based on a theory called potential natural vegetation. It basically means that when a piece of land is deprived of human intervention, a forest will grow. The trees that grow in forests are all native varieties. So Miyawaki's method makes self-sustaining miniature forests," said Shubhendu, explaining the six steps that he follows while growing a forest. He also claims that the urban forests they create grow ten times faster than regular plantations. The saplings have a survival rate of about 92% through this method.

"The forest grows very fast because we create a condition that is conducive to its growth. There is enough organic matter in the soil and it's moist most of the time because of the leaves, husk and coco peat that is used. The saplings are planted in very close proximity interspaced with 'light loving' species and 'shade loving species so that both can thrive After about 12 months, you will notice that there is no light reaching the floor of the forest," adds Shubhendu.

The most important aspect of the exercise is to source native species . For the plot at St Mary's School in Dwarka, native saplings were sourced with great difficulty as they were not available at all nurseries. Some of the tree species that were used are amaltas, jamun, champa, goolar, maharookh, ber, sitaphal, karonda , chandan (sandalwood), imli (tamarind) and kadamb.

The students and volunteers who helped are excited about the new idea. "We are expecting the saplings to be one feet high by January. It's amazing how these saplings have already started growing so fast," says Karan Desai, a Swechha volunteer . Shubhendu also clarifies that landscaping involves design and aesthetics but a forest doesn't so the clients cannot expect a manicured set of trees.

On how he sold the idea of urban forests, Shubhendu says that there was space to develop it as a business idea. "People are slowly realizing the value of forests as opposed to monocultures. I am providing them a service like any other service," he says. The largest forest that his firm has created

is 5,000 square metres at a cost of Rs 30 to 40 lakh in Indore, Madhya Pradesh.

Weather-Chennai

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Wednesday, Aug 7

Max Min

35° | 26°

Rain: NO Sunrise: 0

Humidity: 0 Sunset: 0

Wind: 0 Barometer: 0

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Thursday, Aug 8

Max Min

33° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday Aug 9	Saturday Aug 10	Sunday Aug 11	Monday Aug 12	Tuesday Aug 13
34° 26°	35° 26°	36° 26°	36° 26°	36° 26°
Cloudy	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast

Airport weather

Rain: 0 Sunrise: 05:55
Humidity: 74 Sunset: 06:33
Wind: normal Barometer: 1007



Post harvest, Bihar loses Rs. 10,700 crore worth of fruits, veggies

Bihar incurs a post-harvest fruits and vegetable loss of over Rs. 10,700 crore annually, apex industry body Assocham said on Tuesday.

"Gujarat ranks second with post-harvest fruits and vegetable losses of about Rs. 11,400 crore, followed by Bihar (over Rs. 10,700 crore), Uttar Pradesh (Rs 10,300 crore) and Maharashtra (Rs 10,100 crore)," Assocham secretary general DS Rawat said.

Lack of proper storage facilities was responsible for wastage of substantial quantities of fruits and veggies produced in India and it could be prevented to a great extent by controlling post-harvest environmental conditions, Rawat said.

"The magnitude of post-harvest loss in fruits and vegetables can be minimised by proper cultural operations, harvesting, transportation, storage, pre and post harvest treatments and other such significant measures," Rawat said.

"Considering that storage is most important aspect of post-harvest fruit and vegetable handling as it extends the storage life of the produce thereby enhancing its availability period," he added.

Rawat said the total storage capacity in India was over 300 lakh million tonnes and there was an additional requirement of cold storage of about 370 lakh tonnes for fruits and vegetable storage.

"The existing cold storage capacity in India is confined only to wholesale markets while majority of fruits and vegetables are sold at local or regional markets which do not have cold storage facility," said Rawat.

"The wholesale market development is also equally important for reducing post-harvest losses as in its absence price transparency gets undermined and transaction costs rise," he said.

Storage and handling conditions need to be enhanced in the fruit and vegetable markets thereby providing infrastructure facilities to bring down post-harvest losses and promote increased productivity, the study reveals. West Bengal is India's leading horticulture producing state with over 27,000 tonne of fruits and vegetables produced across the state annually, thereby accounting for over 10 % share across India. Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra are other states that have topped in horticulture production, accounting for a share between 8% to 9%.

"About 30% of total fruits and vegetables produced are rendered unfit for consumption due to spoilage after harvesting as they are highly perishable commodities," said Rawat.

THE HINDU Business Line

District-wise benchmark price to be fixed for green tea

The Tea Board has urged factories buying green leaf from small growers to comply with its new guidelines to heed the order passed by the Madras High Court regarding the fixation of minimum price for the green leaf.

The average price for the teas sold through the auction centre in each district will be published on the Board's Web site at the beginning of every month. The District Price Monitoring Committee will regard this as benchmark and fix the minimum price to be payable to the small growers. The DPMC will notify the monthly minimum green leaf price within the first week of every month.

Based on this, factories should fix the final price adhering to the 'Price Sharing Formula' as prescribed by the Board. Each factory should pay the green leaf price to the small growers, equivalent to sharing formula or the minimum price declared by the committee, whichever is higher.

Factories should pay the green leaf price to the growers immediately on receipt of the raw material. They should conform to the green leaf standards prescribed by the Board. "Factories should display prominently the green leaf price payable and average price fetched during the month. Tea Board will provide this Notice Board and the concerned Factory Advisory Officers will guide the factories regarding the place to display. For monitoring purposes, factories should mandatorily submit data on green leaf price in the prescribed format through e-mail before 4 pm on every Friday", Tea Board Executive Director R Ambalavanan told the factories.

Tea body hopes Iran exports will rise

India Tea Association (ITA) is expecting tea exports to Iran to increase by nearly 80 per cent to 20 million kg in this fiscal.

In 2012-13, the producers lobby entered into a memorandum of understanding with Iranian buyers to push up exports to 30 mkg in two years.

As part of the ongoing buyer-seller dialogue, a nine-member delegation led by the Chairman of Iran Tea Association is currently visiting Kolkata from August 5-9.

The delegation includes leading importers and government officials, an ITA official said.

The delegation will participate in interactive sessions with Indian exporters, Tea Board, Banks, shipping lines and others.

Also lined up is visit to a couple of tea estates in Assam.

According to ITA, buying interests from Iran has resulted in higher orthodox tea production in India.

Raw material shortage lifts rubber

Physical rubber prices improved on Tuesday. The market continued to suffer from acute shortage of the raw materials as widespread heavy rains were disrupting the tapping since last couple of months. According to observers, there were no active buyers or sellers, in the local trading houses and the prices improved amidst low volumes led by supply concerns.

Sheet rubber firmed up to Rs 195.50 (Rs 195) both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to traders and the Rubber Board. The trend was partially mixed.

August futures improved to Rs 194.90 (Rs 194.61) while, the September contracts weakened to Rs 183.90 (Rs 184.32), October to Rs 174.63 (Rs 174.99), November to Rs 168 (Rs 168.44) and December to Rs 167.10 (Rs 167.86) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) dropped to Rs 149.52 (Rs 150.11) at Bangkok. August futures closed at ¥249 (Rs 155.89) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 195.50 (195); RSS-5: 191.50 (191); Ungraded: 181 (180); ISNR 20: 177 (177) and Latex 60 per cent: 163 (162).

Groundnut oil flares up on fresh buying

On the back of fresh buying, groundnut oil increased on Tuesday.

Demand in cotton oil also rose, however, the price remained steady.

According to traders, festival demand at the lower level increased groundnut oil price.

Groundnut oil increased by Rs 15 to Rs 965-970 for loose 10 kg while groundnut oil new tin for 15 kg was traded higher by Rs 15 to Rs 1,700-1,705.

Teliya tin has gone up by Rs 23 to Rs 1,490-1,491 for 15 kg.

About 5-7 tankers were traded from mills in Saurashtra. According to traders, festivals are coming in this month so that brands and re-packers demand started in the market.

Moreover, groundnut oil price was almost at its bottom level.

At this level, more buying is expected and price may increase in the coming days.

Cotton oil remained steady in retail market at Rajkot.

Cotton oil wash gained Rs 5 to Rs 605-608 for 10 kg, cotton oil new tin was traded on Rs 1,070-1,080 for 15 kg.

Moreover, higher availability of groundnut for crushing also pressurised the oil price.

Govt not to ban onion export for now



The Government has decided not to ban export of onions at the moment, as shipments this year have been lower than last year. It also feels that the sharp rise in onion prices in the domestic market is mainly due to supply problems and not exports.

An inter-ministerial committee comprising senior officials from the Department of Commerce, the Agriculture Ministry, the Food Processing Ministry, the Consumer Affairs Ministry and Nafed has decided against an export ban after examining figures for production, export and prices.

“We have analysed the situation and feel that placing a ban on exports will not have a significant effect on domestic prices as exports are already lower than last year and international prices, too, are not ruling high,”

Commerce Department Joint Secretary Asit Tripathy, who is heading the inter-ministerial committee, told *Business Line*.

Tripathy, however, said that monitoring prices and supplies was a continuous mechanism and the committee would be meeting periodically to review its decision.

The committee examined figures furnished by the National Horticulture Research and Development Foundation (NHRDF) and figures collated by the different ministries.

Retail prices of onion in Delhi have touched Rs 50/kg. There has been a 50 per cent rise in onion prices in the last one month in Delhi and Lasalgaon, according to the NHRDF.

The inter-ministerial committee believes that the rise in prices is largely due to supply constraints and a rise in input costs. "One of the reasons behind the price rise is that farmers and traders are releasing their supplies slowly since slightly lower production in 2012-13 has resulted in availability of storage space. If State Governments feel that hoarding may be happening, it is something they should look into," another official said.

Rising input costs, especially fuel and transportation cost, too, is adding to the higher prices, the official added.

Both the Agriculture and Consumer Affairs ministries are strongly opposed to a ban on exports. Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar has gone on record saying that he was not in favour of banning exports and the spurt in prices of onion was only a temporary phenomenon.

Uncertainty forces stockists to curb chana sale



After trading low for quiet sometime on weak demand and buying support, chana is on rebound with its prices in the past one week going up by Rs 200-250 a quintal.

Though local mandis remained closed on Tuesday on account of a local holiday, in private trading, chana (kanta) was quoted at Rs 3,050.

Chana (desi), on the other hand, ruled at Rs 2,700-2,800.

Amid uncertainty over crop report, stockists have restricted release of chana and other pulse seeds with them.

As a result, arrival of pulse seeds have declined even after improvement in weather condition.

According to Prakash Vora, an Indore-based pulse trader, chana due to the rupee declining to a new low against the dollar, could gain of Rs 100-200 as speculators and stockists, who have incurred losses on sharp fall in

chana prices sometime ago, will try to push up its prices in the coming days to compensate for their earlier losses.

Added to this, festival demand will also likely to add strength to chana prices even as the country has huge domestic stocks and a large stock of imported Australian chana in the Mumbai port.

Rise in spot chana has also lifted chana dal by about Rs 200 in the past one week.

Chana dal (average) in local mandis being quoted at Rs 3,600-3,625, chana dal (medium) at Rs 3,675-3,700, chana dal (bold) is ruling at Rs 3,875-3,900.

dollar chana

Dollar chana (chickpea) ruled at Rs 3,400-4,300 on subdued demand and buying support, even as arrival of dollar chana remained negligible with closure of mandis.

Compared with last week, dollar chana prices in container is up Rs 100 on improved buying support.

On Tuesday, dollar chana (42/44 count) in container ruled at Rs 5,350-75; 44/46 count at Rs 5,150-75; 46/48 count at Rs 4,950-75 while dollar chana (58/60 count) ruled at Rs 3,450-75.

Edible oils static as trade turns cautious

Palmolein and rapeseed oil rose by Rs 5 and Rs 7 for 10 kg each on Tuesday.

Other edible oils ruled unchanged as the market sentiment remained cautious, tracking thin volatility in Malaysian palm oil futures which closed slightly higher after moving both the ways.

The world market scenario for the coming days indicates the possibility of higher supply. Liberty sold 350-400 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 541, Ruchi sold 350-400 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 540 and soyabean refined oil 150-200 tonnes at Rs 640, Allana sold 250-300 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 540. Resellers off-loaded 250-300 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 536-539.

Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 541, super palmolein Rs 575 and super deluxe Rs 595, soyabean refined oil Rs 644 and sunflower refined oil Rs 809.

Ruchi quoted palmolein Rs 542, super palmolein Rs 560, soyabean refined oil Rs 641 and sunflower refined oil Rs 800.

Allana quoted palmolein at Rs 542, super palmolein Rs 575, soyabean refined oil Rs 640 and sunflower refined oil Rs 800. Gokul's rates were Rs 540. In Rajkot, groundnut oil improved by Rs 20 to Rs 1,500 (Rs 1,480) for *telia* tin and by Rs 20 for loose (10 kg) to Rs 970 (Rs 950). Soyabean arrivals dropped to around 40,000 bags at Rs 3,325-3,350 ex-mandi and Rs 3,375-3,400 for plant delivery. Mustard seeds arrivals also dropped to 50,000 bags and the prices were Rs 3,000-3,590.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, soyabean refined oil September future was higher at Rs 647.60 (Rs 643.05), October up Rs 619.80 (Rs 615.50) and November increased to Rs 615.50 (Rs 612.55).

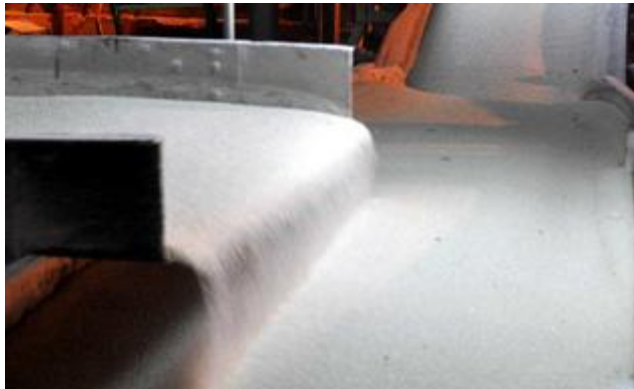
Malaysia BMD crude palm oil September futures closed up to MYR 2,277 (MYR 2,268), October at MYR 2,246 (MYR 2,240) and November at MYR 2,238 (MYR 2,234).

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were: Groundnut oil 970 (970), soya refined oil 640 (640), sunflower exp. ref. 720 (725),

sunflower ref. 800 (800), rapeseed ref. oil 692 (685), rapeseed expeller ref. 662 (655) cottonseed ref. oil 645 (645) and palmolein 537 (532).

Vikram Global Commodities (P) Ltd has quoted Rs 585 for 10 kg for Malaysian super palmolein for August delivery.

Shortage of trucks drives sugar up



Sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale market increased by Rs 5-10 a quintal on Tuesday due to rise in freight charges from Kolhapur-Karad line on shortage of trucks due to Ramadan and improved local demand ahead of festivals.

Demand for fine variety was high. Prices in the futures market were bearish.

On Tuesday, local demand outstripped supply after a long time but market still had sufficient stocks capping the price rise, sources said.

Analyst said that since the start of the season year, sugar prices are under pressure.

Sugar production in the 2013-14 year beginning October is estimated at 237 lakh tonnes, down 5.2 per cent from a year ago but higher than the local demand of around 230 lakh tonnes.

Current year, sugar production is expected around 250 lakh tonnes. Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, the top two sugar producers have received more rainfall than normal boosting prospects of higher sugar yield. Arrivals in the Vashi market were 59-60 truck loads (each of 100 bags) while local dispatches were 61-62.

On Monday evening 21-22 mills offered tenders and sold about 68,000-70,000 bags at Rs 2,920-2,980 (Rs 2,910-2,980) for S-grade and Rs 2,980-3,120 (Rs 2,980-3,110) for M-grade.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, September futures declined to Rs 3,011 (Rs 3,019), October down to Rs 3,029 (Rs 3,035) and November lower to Rs 3,000 (Rs 3,004) till noon.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S-grade Rs 3,052-3,142 (Rs 3,046-3,135) and M-grade Rs 3,162-3,322 (Rs 3,156-3,311).

Naka delivery rates were: S-grade Rs 3,010-3,070 (Rs 3,010-3,060) and M-grade Rs 3,100-3,220 (Rs 3,100-3,220).

Futures pound spot turmeric



“A two per cent drop in the futures market was seen unreasonable. Prices quoted at Rs 4,600 against Rs 6,000 in Erode.

“This made traders reluctant to buy,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said on Tuesday 3,800 bags arrived for sale. Traders purchased 45 per cent to meet local orders.

However, they are still waiting for upcountry orders that are expected by the middle of August.

Farmers said that though they are having huge stocks , they are bringing limited stocks and selling them for their immediate expenses.

The price was stable in three markets, but it decreased by Rs 200 in the Regulated Market Committee due to quality.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,107-6,074, the root variety Rs 3,611-5,575. The Salem hybrid crop finger variety was sold at Rs 5,491-6,878, the root variety Rs 5,834-5,861. Of 599 bags that arrived, 218 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,909-6,099, the root variety Rs 4,899-5,609. Of 486 bags on offer, 433 found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,759-6,116, the root variety Rs 4,404-5,489.

Of 700 bags put for sale, 685 were traded.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 4,929-5,971, the root variety Rs 4,369-5,656.

All the 114 bags kept for sale were sold.

Wheat futures seen ruling in ranges



Wheat futures may rule in a tight range, while dara wheat in the physical market is likely to rule flat in the coming days, according to market experts. Radhey Shyam, a commodity expert, told *Business Line* that since demand matched supply, prices were unchanged.

In the absence of any major market moving factors, dara and flour prices have been ruling steady since last week and may continue to rule around current levels for the next few days, too, he said.

Around 1,000 bags of wheat arrived and stocks were directly offloaded at the mills. In the physical market, dara wheat remained unchanged and sold at Rs 1,460-1,465 a quintal. Mill delivery was at Rs 1,460, while delivery at the chakki was at Rs 1,465. Similarly, desi wheat variety ruled flat and went for Rs 2,600-2,650.

A positive trend was witnessed on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat for August contracts improved by Rs 11 and traded at Rs 1,570 with an open interest of 9,760 lots.

The grain had touched a high at Rs 1,603 earlier in the day. September contracts were fluctuating between negative and positive territory through

out the day, went up by Rs 4 and traded at Rs 1,572. In the spot market, wheat was traded at Rs 1,492.5.

According to the market experts, futures market has been ruling in a tight range and market may continue to witness a flat tone in the coming days. Following a steady trend in wheat, flour too ruled flat and quoted at Rs 1,700. Similarly, Chokar ruled flat at Rs 1,150.

Pepper gains on lower inflow



Pepper futures gained despite limited activities, while spot prices ruled steady.

Movement of goods from the growing areas of the high ranges and even from some areas in the plains continued to remain disrupted.

Consequently, there were no arrivals today. However, five tonnes of material were traded at an average price of Rs 390.

Even though there were indications of domestic demand, buying activities were limited because of the non-availability and unfavourable weather conditions, market sources said.

There was no export demand and those who had committed earlier appeared to be slowing.

In the international market, Sri Lanka seems to have emerged buyers' choice. Anticipating the arrival of Brazilian new crop in September, Indonesia has started offering, said an overseas report.

August and September contracts on the NMCE increased by Rs 267 and Rs 208 respectively to Rs 41,500 and Rs 41,550.

Total turnover dropped by six tonnes to 23 tonnes .

Total open interest decreased by two tonnes to 88 tonnes.

Spot prices remained unchanged at Rs 39,000 (ungarbled) and Rs 41,000 (garbled) on limited activities.

Indian parity in the international market was at \$6,925 a tonne (c&f) Europe at \$7,175 a tonne (c&f) US and remained out priced.

Business Standard

Sugar mills owe Rs 5,800 cr to cane farmers

Sugar mills have paid nearly Rs 53,000 crore to sugarcane farmers
Sugar mills have paid nearly Rs 53,000 crore to sugarcane farmers and over Rs 5,800 crore was due till June of the 2012-13 marketing year ending September, Lok Sabha was informed today. In a written reply, Food Minister K V Thomas said the total cane price payable till June of the 2012-13 marketing year (October-September) stood at Rs 58,806.97 crore and out of that mills had made payments to the tune of Rs 52,895.94 crore. The cane price arrears stood at Rs 5,821.03 till June, which is about 10 per cent of the total payable amount. Mills in Uttar Pradesh, the leading sugar producing state, owes maximum to cane farmers at Rs 4,234.60, the data showed.

The cane price arrears in Maharashtra was almost nil. The outstanding payment of sugar mills in Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand and Karnataka stood at Rs 501.37 crore, Rs 375.82 crore and Rs 352.69 crore, respectively.

“The dues position changes continuously on account of fresh supplies received and payment made for previous supplies. As such, it is not possible to indicate time by which dues are likely to be paid to the farmers,” Thomas said replying to a query on the deadline by which arrears of sugarcane growers would be cleared.

The minister also informed that the Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966 stipulates payment of cane price within 14 days of supply, failing which interest at the rate of 15 per cent annum is payable to farmers. Sugar production of India, the world’s second largest producer and biggest consumer, is estimated at 25 million tonnes in the 2012-13 marketing year.

The annual domestic consumption is seen at 22 million tonnes.

Potato up 4%, hit upper limit on strong demand

Potato for delivery in August contract also moved up by 3.01%

Potato prices shot up by 4% to hit upper circuit at Rs 821.80 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators enlarged positions amid strong demand in the spot market against tight supplies.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, potato for delivery in September month spurred by Rs 31.60, or 4% to Rs 821.80 per quintal in business turnover of 167 lots.

The potato for delivery in August contract also moved up by Rs 24, or 3.01% to Rs 822.60 per quintal in 148 lots.

Market analysts said speculators enlarged their positions, driven by strong demand in the spot market against tight supplies from producing regions following heavy rains mainly led to an upswing in potato prices, hitting upper limit of 4% at futures trade.

Cardamom rise by 4% on rising demand

Tight supplies in the physical market, on less arrivals from producing regions, following heavy rains also influenced the sentiment

Cardamom prices climbed further and hit upper limit of 4% to Rs 757.40 per kg in futures trade today as speculators enlarged their positions, tracking a firm trend at spot market on rising demand.

Further, tight supplies in the physical market, on less arrivals from producing regions, following heavy rains also influenced the sentiment.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, cardamom for delivery in August climbed further by Rs 29.10, or 4% to Rs 757.40 per kg in business turnover of 1903 lots. It had spurted by 4% in yesterday's trade.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in September contract gained Rs 4, or 0.52% to Rs 779.40 per kg in 170 lots.

Market analysts said apart from rising domestic and export demand in the spot market, tight supplies on less arrivals from producing regions mainly led an upsurge in cardamom prices, to hit upper limit for the second day at futures trade

Mentha oil declines by 0.8% on profit-booking

Adequate stocks position due to increased arrivals from Chandousi in Uttar Pradesh also put pressure on mentha oil

Mentha oil prices declined by 0.75% to Rs 843 per kg in futures market today as speculators indulged in profit-booking at prevailing higher levels amid sluggish demand from consuming industries.

Adequate stocks position due to increased arrivals from Chandousi in Uttar Pradesh also put pressure on mentha oil.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, mentha oil for delivery in August declined by Rs 6.40, or 0.75% to Rs 843 per kg in business turnover of 889 lots.

Similarly, the oil for delivery in September traded lower by Rs 4.70, or 0.55% to Rs 855.50 per kg in 233 lots.

The fall in mentha oil prices at futures trade was mostly due to profit-booking by speculators at prevailing higher levels, sluggish demand from consuming industries in the spot market, analysts said

