

Date : 10.09.2013



TNAU takes up research on fine rice variety in saline soil

The Tamil Nadu Agricultural University – Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute at Navalur Kuttapattu near here has taken up a research project on developing fine rice variety suited for salt-affected soil.

This is the first time that the institute, which is to celebrate its silver jubilee next year, has taken up a research project on fine rice variety. The institute was started to evolve rice varieties for saline soil about two decades ago and so far it has released three varieties —TRY-I, TRY-(R) II and TRY-III, all these were bold grain varieties.

“We have collected a large number of species from the International Rice Research Institute in Philippines and all these seeds are salt tolerant varieties in different parts of the world. The fine variety will fetch attractive returns to farmers and the research is in progress,” says P. Pandiarajan, dean of the Institute.

Several beds of nurseries for various varieties had been raised at the institute. “We have been experimenting on the varieties which can withstand and grow in the soil condition in the Manikandam area,” he says.

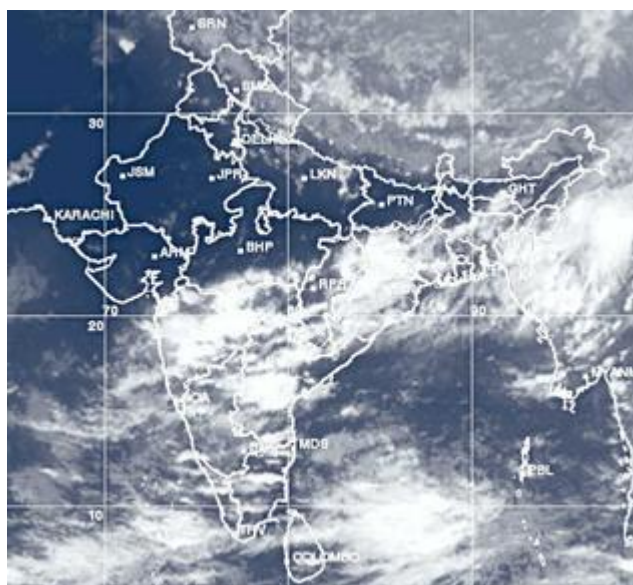
Pointing out that the Manikandam block accounted for 50,000 hectares of alkaline soil – maximum for a single block in the State, Mr. Pandiarajan said the institute had introduced reclamation of salt-affected soil using distillery spent wash.

So far, about 5,000 acres of land had been covered under the scheme benefiting 1,282 farmers growing paddy, banana, redgram and maize. The distillery spent wash was applied only once in these fields with a view to ensure environmental protection and the irrigation pattern and harvest benefits were closely monitored. The spent wash eliminates the use of potash in the fields.

“The discharge of distillery spent wash into the agricultural fields in the block reduces the alkaline quantum to a great extent. The yield has increased to a considerable extent — at least by 20 per cent over the normal yield registered during the previous seasons,” he says.

The institute has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with four leading distillery industries in the district.

Mainly dry weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on September 9th.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	36	25	0	518
New Delhi (Sfd)	34	24	3	785
Chandigarh	31	23	2	821
Hissar	36	24	0	507
Bhuntar	27	17	tr	403
Shimla	19	14	7	811
Jammu	31	22	4	1215
Srinagar	29	16	13	230
Amritsar	32	24	0	759
Patiala	32	25	0	722
Jaipur	37	25	0	661
Udaipur	33	23	0	656
Allahabad	35	27	0	943
Lucknow	35	23	0	707
Varanasi	36	26	0	741
Dehradun	27	20	35	2743
Agartala	30	25	6	801
Ahmedabad	33	24	0	772
Bangalore	25	19	tr	528
Bhubaneshwar	29	25	1	743
Bhopal	34	22	0	1113
Chennai	33	23	17	504
Guwahati	33	24	0	733
Hyderabad	29	20	46	575
Kolkata	32	26	35	1475
Mumbai	31	25	6	2069

Nagpur	34	25	0	1328
Patna	35	26	1	554
Pune	31	22	10	549
Thiruvananthapuram	30	22	17	974
Imphal	31	22	20	857
Shillong	23	17	tr	860

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

Southwest Monsoon has withdrawn from extreme Western parts of Rajasthan. The withdrawal line passes through Ganganagar, Bikaner and Barmer.

Rainfall: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at many places over Himachal Pradesh, at a few places over Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand and at isolated places over Haryana, Punjab, east Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Weather was mainly dry over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (3 cm and above) HARYANA: Bilaspur 5, Chhachhrauli and Sadhaura 4 each, HIMACHAL PRADESH: Kasauli 4, Bhoranj, Baldwara and Arki 3 each, JAMMU AND KASHMIR: Katra 4 and Udhampur I.A.F 3, PUNJAB: Phangota 5, EAST RAJASTHAN: Kumher 4, EAST UTTAR PRADESH: Ghaighat 5, Akbarpur and Muhammadi 3 each, WEST UTTAR PRADESH: Deoband 9 and UTTARAKHAND: Dehradun 3.

FORECAST FOR REGION VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 11th SEPTEMBER 2013 : Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places over Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh during next 24 hours and mainly dry weather thereafter. Weather would be mainly dry over rest of the region.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 11th SEPTEMBER 2013: Generally cloudy sky becoming Partly cloudy sky. Very light rain/thundershowers could occur in some areas.

Rain in Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri districts

Many parts of Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri districts received moderate rain till 8.30 a.m. on Monday.

Thally in Krishnagiri district received a maximum rain of 80 mm. In Dharmapuri district, the headquarters received maximum rain of 60 mm, according to Disaster Management and Mitigation Department of Revenue Administration.

Rainfall registered in Krishnagiri district, in mm, is as follows: Krishnagiri 45.2, Hosur 31, Royakottai 23, Benugondapuram 22.4, Anchetti 13, Denkanikottai and Barur 12 each, Nedungal 10.2, Shoologiri 8, Pochampalli 6.2 and Uthangarai 6. Total rainfall in the district was 269 mm.

Rainfall recorded in Dharmapuri district till 8.30 a.m. on Monday in mm is as follows; Harur 17.3, Marandaalli 10, Pennagaram 9, Palacode 8.1, Hogenakkal 6.4 and Pappireddipatti 4. Total rainfall in the district was 114.8 mm.

Water level



Water level in the Periyar dam was 124.20 feet with an inflow of 447 cusecs and discharge of 1372 cusecs. The level in the Vaigai dam was 57.64 feet with an inflow of 1138 cusecs and discharge of 560 cusecs. The combined storage in Periyar credit was 6411 mcft.

Rainfall

The amount of rainfall recorded (in mm) in the following places was: Periyar dam: 13, Thekkadi: 0.8, Vaigai dam: 2.4, Manjalaru: 16, Marudanadhi: 21.6, Sothuparai: 16, Peranai: 0.5, Mettupatti: 1, Chittampatti: 0.1, Thaniamangalam: 27, Idayapatti: 20 and Kodaikanal recorded 18.2 mm rainfall during the last 24 hours ending 8.30 a.m. on Monday, PWD officials said.

Egg rate

The National Egg Coordination Committee egg rate was Rs. 3.40 on Sunday.

Mettur level

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 109.85 feet on Monday against its full reservoir level of 120 feet. The inflow was 11,835 cusecs and the discharge 4,000 cusecs.

Meet of milk society

The annual general body meeting of the Thottiam Milk Producers Cooperative Society was held recently. Sadasivam, president of the society, said that it registered a profit of Rs.1.24 lakh during the year 2010-11.

Water level

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Monday stood at 100.10 feet (maximum level is 143 feet).

The dam had an inflow of 688.08 cusecs and 1,104.75 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam.

The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 61.03 feet (118 feet).

The dam had an inflow of 19 cusecs and 45 cusecs was discharged.

Kanyakumari

The water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 22 feet, 58.45 feet in Perunchani, 9.28 feet in Chittar I, 9.38 feet in Chittar II and 30.84 feet in Mambazhathuraiyaru dam.

Co-operative society extends loans



R. Kamaraj, Food Minister, handing over dividend to a member of the Tiruvarur Municipality Cooperative Credit and Thrift Society on Monday.

Members of cooperative bodies should be prompt in repaying loan dues, which will ensure sanction of assistance to more, said R. Karamaj, Food Minister, here on Monday. Mr. Kamaraj was speaking at a function to distribute loans and dividend to the members of Tiruvarur Municipal Employees Cooperative Credit and Thrift Society here.

The Minister said that the 165 members of Tiruvarur municipal employees cooperative society have been given a dividend of 14 per cent – a sum ranging from Rs. 1,500 to Rs. 2,500 – from the profit.

The society also sanctioned loans to the tune of Rs. 10 lakh to six members. Fresh loans will be sanctioned to all the members who have applied within 25 days, the Minister said.

Food Minister lauds milk society for record output

Marginal money of Rs. 18.66 lakh sanctioned to Mannargudi society



shore up:Food Minister R. Kamaraj handing over new two-wheelers to milk vendors attached to the Mannargudi Cooperative Milk Producers Society.

The Cooperative Department has sanctioned marginal money of Rs. 18.66 lakh to the Mannargudi Cooperative Milk Producers' Society for the year 2011-12. This is the second instalment of the special sanction for society.

The society during 2010-11 had received Rs. 20 lakh. Handing over the marginal money to the members of society on Saturday, R. Kamaraj, Food Minister, hailed the society's record achievement in producing an average of 28,000 litres of milk each day.

While the daily sales in the local market stood at 11,500 litres, the balance is sent to Aavin.

He appreciated the sale of value-added dairy products through society, which supplied quality grass to its members. The marginal money would benefit 8,614 members of society.

During 2012-13, the society managed a profit of Rs. 77 lakh . The marginal money for 2012-13 would be relatively higher in the wake of record profit, Mr. Kamaraj said. Earlier, the Minister

gave away new two-wheelers to 15 milk vendors for selling milk and milk cans to three others. He gave away identity cards to 166 members.

K. Jayaraman, deputy registrar, dairy development, and Sudha Anbuselvan, Mannargudi Municipal chairperson, were present.

Mannargudi gets 71 mm rainfall

Mannargudi experienced the maximum rainfall of 71 mm in the district in the last 24 hours that ended at 8 a.m. on Monday. The other chief amounts of rainfall in the district during the same period are Muthupettai 30.6 mm, Tiruthuraipoondi 23.2 mm, Needamangalam 17.8 mm, Tiruvarur 7.2 mm, and Valangaiman 5.2 mm.

Drive to check quality of milk

The Dairy Development Department has intensified checking on the border check-posts to prevent the arrival of adulterated and low quality milk from neighbouring States during the Onam season. An official of the department said that 24-hour checking and sample collection facility had been arranged at the check-post in Kumily through which branded milk from Tamil Nadu arrives in the district. There are reports of milk being sold in fake packets. The outlets selling milk would be routinely checked, said the official.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra popularising low-cost first-aid for animals

Ethno veterinary medicinal practices in animal health care are both rewarding and efficient. Farmers need to be sensitised to the potential and utility of the systems, veterinarians stressed at the end of a three-day camp organised by Krishi Vigyan Kendra at Puzhutheri near here on Saturday.

NABARD-sponsored event, Capacity Building for Adoption of Technology (CAT) on Promotion of Ethno Veterinary Medicine Practices in Animal Healthcare, was organised in collaboration with Veterinary University Training and Research Centre, Thanjavur.

Over 40 participants from farmer clubs in Karur, Tiruchi and Perambalur participated.

Objective

The objective was to sensitise the farmers to good animal husbandry practices and to utilisation of low cost first aid options available through use of herbs and other location-specific ethno

veterinary practices, according to J.Diraviam, project coordinator, KVK. NABARD assistant general manager A.Parthiban said that NABARD was giving support to KVKs and agricultural universities for conducting such programmes to popularise new technologies among farmers.

N.Punniamurthy, professor and head, Veterinary University Training and Research Centre, Thanjavur, spoke on the need for ethno vet medicine, particularly as a first aid measure to reduce the intensity of the disease, in cases where a veterinarian was not immediately available.

Dr.Punniamurthy pointed out that the system is gaining importance in the light of the Food Safety and Security Act.

Various animal husbandry aspects such as general management of animals, types of feed, fodder requirement, feeding schedule, and ethno vet medicine practices for important diseases such as foot and mouth disease, mastitis, enteritis, their preparation techniques, and administration methods were discussed. Lalgudi Farmers Federation president Muthamilan and V.B.Raghavendran of the KVK spoke.

Stem borer a nightmare for banana farmers



Banana crops targeted by stem borer, in Vilavancode taluk, Kanyakumari district.

Horticultural Department official on field visit

The entry of banana weevil, a common pest, in tribal areas across the Petchiparai dam has become a cause of concern for both farmers and officials of the horticulture department as these areas had once been totally free from the pest.

'Nenthiran' and red bananas planted in these areas have become its victims. "Commonly known as stem borer, the pest could wreak havoc on banana crop and contribute to drastic decline in banana cultivable area." said Surendran Joseph, Assistant Director, Horticultural Department in Kanyakumari district, who identified the pests during a field visit.

Mr Joseph said when he received complaints of banana stems bending over and collapsing at Thatchamalai during the flowering stage, he was under the impression it could be due to some fungus attack.

"Even last year there was no incidence of this pest. But now I am surprised to find that it is the handiwork of the stem borer," he said. Even though the problem was prevalent in Kanyakumari district, particularly in Vilavancode taluk, the borer could not make a foray into tribal areas all these years.

He felt the weevil, which could reach 10-16mm length with a hard-shelled and curved snout, could have invaded the area along with banana suckers brought from outside for planting.

The damage is caused by the grub (larva of the weevil), which makes tunnels as it feeds on the corm and root stock. The tunnels encourage fungal infection, ultimately reducing it into a black mass of rotten tissues. This hinders root initiation and sap flow to the plants.

"The infection will result in yellowing of leaves and withering; particularly, young suckers show symptoms of wilting. In older plants, growth is retarded. In case of severe infection, plants produce small bunches and are easily blown over by wind," he explained.

Mr Joseph said the pest could be controlled through crop rotation, drip irrigation, selection of healthy planting material and keeping the garden clean from weeds and crop debris. "Uproot the infested plant, chop it into pieces and burn them. Removal of pseudo stem below the ground level," he said, and advised farmers to avoid planting susceptible varieties such as robusta and red banana

He said if the planting material is suspected of being infested, the suckers should be trimmed on all sides so as to eradicate the presence of eggs and grubs.

Students reap bumper harvest



Students of Horticulture College and Research Institute for Women, harvesting their bottle gourd crop at the college campus at Navalur Kuttapattu near Tiruchi on Saturday.

First-batch students of horticulture college and research institute raised bottle gourd on 15 cents, ash gourd on 10 cents; yield was about 3 tonnes

In their maiden attempt, the first-batch students of Tamil Nadu Agriculture University Horticulture College and Research Institute for Women at Navalur Kuttapattu have registered a high yield in bottle gourd and ash gourd. They had all raised the 70-day crops using quality seeds as part of application of their academic syllabus to the fields.

Crop cultivation techniques, protection from pests, and proper irrigation management were some of the important topics they analysed in the fields every day.

While bottle gourd was raised on 15 cents, ash gourd was cultivated on 10 cents. The yield was about three tonnes. It would be 20 to 25 tonnes an acre.

“The students have registered a bumper harvest, testifying to their interest in practical activities as most of them hail from agriculturists’ families” T. N. Balamohan, special officer of the institute told the media shortly after assessing the harvest in the fields on Friday.

He said that the students understand the nuances of cultivation, right from selection of seeds to application of fertilizer and chemicals.

The students have also raised brinjal through transplant technique which will be harvested in course of time.

They have also raised marigold and coriander.

Research projects

Mr. Balamohan said that the institute would take up two research projects in course of time.

The first project would be on ultra high density in guava, which aims at increasing the number of guava trees an acre.

“Presently, farmers raise 200 trees an acre and the ultra high density research aims at increasing it to 700 an acre,” he said.

The second project pertains to screening of vegetables and flowers in salt-affected soils. “We have already raised, on a trial basis, jasmine, marigold and meerium to start with,” he said.

The institute is located in Manikandam block which accounts for the maximum salt-affected soil in the State.

About 50,000 hectares in the block is alkaline.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

Now, farmers can keep tabs on technology

It is not just college students. Even farmers in Karnataka will soon be empowered with tablets to keep abreast of the latest developments in the field of agriculture.

Information Technology Minister S R Patil, at the inauguration of the cultural and literary activities of Sarvajna Pre-University Science College here on Sunday, said that a pilot project will be launched in his home district Bagalkot. “Hundreds of farmers will be given tablet PCs in Bagalkot and the same scheme will be extended across the state if the project succeeds there,” he said. However, he did not clarify if the tablets would be given for free, subsidised or sold to the farmers.

Patil’s announcement came following writer Ramzan Dargah’s request that the minister use his good offices to help the agriculture sector. Patil said software engineers from North Karnataka, who reside in the US, contacted him and gave a presentation about a software that they have developed for agriculture activities.

“This software, along with two others for education and healthcare, will be installed in the tablets. Farmers can browse any information regarding agriculture and the latest technology apart from data on education and health,” he said.

'40 percent of foodgrains wasted every year due to lack of storage'



State government's chief secretary S V Ranganath said that the lack of storage space for foodgrains is one of the hurdles faced by the Union government to realise its plans of the National Food Security Bill (NFSB).

He was speaking at a one-day seminar on 'Food Security in India- Issues and Suggestions for Effectiveness', organised by the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Bangalore, and Indian Institute of Public Administration.

"Of the 260 million tonnes of foodgrains produced each year, 40 per cent goes waste as there is no storage space. The leakage of foodgrain has to be stopped and we have to monitor these procedures using information technology," he said.

Ranganath expressed doubts whether the subsidy of Rs 25,000 crore towards the NFSB is affordable.

He also said that the existing public distribution system (PDS) has to be improved. "Nearly half (43 per cent) of Indian children are underweight, 70 per cent of infants aged between six and 36 months are anaemic," Ranganath said.

He said the adoption of the Food Security Bill may be a landmark due to the overwhelming support it received in Parliament. But it has a long way to go before it becomes a turning point of a country struggling to minimise the gap between unequal developments.

He said that agriculture and food production methods must be improved. "There has to be a paradigm shift in governance to tackle the challenges posed by the Food Security Bill. It calls for transparency in administration while the other major problem in execution is corruption," Ranganath remarked.

UAS vice-chancellor Dr K Narayana Gowda said that farmers must form their own associations and organise businesses to bring down the overall cost of agriculture and increase productivity.

"Farming, as a profession, is not lucrative enough to attract the new generation. Special attention has to be given to this field. We need to build the confidence among the farmers and enforce an integrated approach to farming, which can help them sustain productivity (of the foodgrains) even under adverse conditions," Gowda said.

Farmers get advice on better farming from scientists

More than 300 farmers from Bangalore, Mysore, Chikballapur, Doddaballapur, Tumkur, Kadur and other parts of the state took part in the Field Day programme organised at the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR).

In a detailed interaction, farmers asked questions about crop diseases, availability of water, electricity, storage of onions, subsidies on micro irrigation and new resistant varieties of chillies to scientists and experts.

Some questions were also answered by principal secretary (Horticulture) M K Shankarlinge Gowda. He asked farmers to make smart use of water and electricity.

Scientists advised the farmers to dry onions in the field in a systematic manner before sending them for storage to ensure better quality. The division of vegetable crops had organised the programme on 'Improved Vegetable Varieties/ hybrids and their Production Technology'. Gowda was the chief guest at the event.

Scientists showcased the recently-released 44 high yielding varieties and hybrids of vegetables which are resistant to pests and natural conditions like droughts and water logging.

The first-ever developed high-yielding triple disease resistant tomato hybrid ArkaRakshak and ArkaSamrat, high-yielding disease resistant chilli hybrids, disease resistant high-yielding hybrids of brinjal, ladies finger, watermelon, onion, French beans, field beans and leafy vegetables were the highlight of the field day.

A T Sadashiva, head and principal scientist at the division, said, "ArkaRakshak has shown a yield of 190 tonnes per hectare, when normal yields are about 80 tonnes per hectare. This variety can also withstand long transportation so it is exported out of Bangalore. IIHR can release any quantity of seeds of this variety. Our seed prices are almost lower by fifty per cent than that of private companies."

IIHR director A S Sidhu, said, "India has increased production of vegetables and crops by 100 million tonnes in the last decade. If we continue like this, we will surpass China in the next five years."

Gowda told the farmers, "If you have five acres, you must grow five different varieties of vegetables."

Horticulture Dept, IIHR to sign MoU Horticulture department principal secretary M K Shankarlinge Gowda said on Saturday that the department would sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR), Bangalore.

The pact is aimed at providing better knowledge of good varieties of crops which retain their qualities for years and can be grown easily. Gowda, who was the chief guest on the occasion of Field Day on 'Improved Vegetable Varieties/hybrids and their Production Technology' said, "Though Karnataka produces 10 per cent of the country's (total) fruits and vegetables and Bangalore is the seed capital, we are not Number 1 growers of anything, except coffee."



Water biggest challenge for Indian agriculture: Farming pricing body chief

Expressing concern over the depleting ground water resources in states like Punjab, Ashok Gulati, the chairman of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), said the paucity of water for irrigation is emerging as the "biggest challenge" for the Indian agriculture sector. "The time has come when production needs to be measured by per thousand litres of water used for irrigation, instead of yield per hectare," he said while addressing the Vibrant Gujarat Global Agriculture Summit here Monday.

Comparing water usage by Punjab and West Bengal in cultivating paddy, Gulati said, "For producing one kilogram of rice, Punjab consumes 5,400 litres of water, whereas West Bengal consumes only 2,400 litres. This water-intensive cultivation process is causing ground water levels in Punjab to recede by 33 centimetres every day."

"The road ahead is diversification," Gulati told the gathering of about 4,000 farmers, which also included a strong contingent from Punjab, a state where 70% of the cultivable land is irrigated through tubewells. Punjab CM Prakash Singh Badal hit back at Gulati and the Centre saying, "We are being shown the stick like an animal in a zoo. They ask us to diversify, but are silent on how to go about it."

Acknowledging the importance of water in the future, CM Narendra Modi said the aim of the farmers should be to achieve "more crop, per drop". "In the last decade, over 9 lakh hectares of land in Gujarat has been brought under micro-irrigation," Modi said.

The CACP chairman went on to laud states like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Bihar for advancements in the agriculture sector. "What is happening in Gujarat is a miracle," Gulati said while applauding the 10% year-on-year growth clocked by the state. "In 2006, we had to import six metric tonne of wheat. However, we are in a position of surplus now. During the year 2012-13, we exported 22 metric tonne of food grains and today, even after the requirements of the food security bill, we will be left with 25 metric tonne of additional food grains," Gulati added.

Weather

Chennai

▼

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather

Tuesday, Sep 10

Max | Min

32° | 25°

Rain: 0 Sunrise: 05:57
 Humidity: 84 Sunset: 06:13
 Wind: normal Barometer: 1007

Tomorrow's Forecast

Wednesday, Sep 11

Max | Min

34° | 24°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday Sep 12	Friday Sep 13	Saturday Sep 14	Sunday Sep 15	Monday Sep 16
33° 24°	32° 24°	33° 24°	34° 25°	35° 24°
Cloudy	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast

Airport Weather

Chennai

▼

Chennai

Rain: 0 Sunrise: 05:57
 Humidity: 84 Sunset: 06:13
 Wind: normal Barometer: 1007

Paddy destroyed, farmers want wheat to be safe

More than 5-km stretch covering a number of villages in Muktsar and Faridkot districts is still submerged and the farmers are worried."After facing losses in paddy, we might also miss out on a good wheat crop as the time for sowing is near and there is no sign of water receding.

The government needs top help us in finding a solution to quick draining of the water," said Malkeet Singh, a resident of Chack Kalyan village in Faridkot. Paddy crop in Mrar Kalan village in Muktsar has been damaged bringing grief to the farmers.

"We got land in Mrar Kalan village in Muktsar on an annual contract of Rs. 35,000 per acre. We spent another Rs. 10,000 per acre on growing the crop," claims Lakhwinder Singh, another farmer.

"The low-lying fields have led to the loss. We are destroyed. No government has come to us. Even in 2011, the situation was not so bad."

"The Kotkapura link drain passes near the villages. We want the government should either lay underground pipes or dig up open channel from our fields to the drain," says another farmer Sikander Singh.

He claimed that most farmers were spending money out of their own pockets to drain out their fields of water.

"A special girdawri is on and we are also providing farmers with fuel to pump out water through the drainage department. We are trying our best to help the people," said Muktsar DC Parmjeet Singh

"My paddy crop is destroyed, yet as per the calculations of the revenue officials, my loss is not total. The compensation of Rs. 15,000 an acre is a joke," said Harbans Singh and Gurlal Singh, two brothers from Chack Kalyan.

Estimates suggest that 700 acres of the 1,100 acres has been damaged in the village.

"Twenty-six pump sets worked around the clock for eight days to pump out water from the village," residents said.

Farmers also complain that revenue officials record 100% loss only in case the crop is destroyed. "Officials take an arbitrary view here and several genuine complaints are rejected."

"A special girdawri is on in the district and revenue officials are visiting villages to assess the loss. We will provide adequate compensation," said Ravi Bhagat, deputy commissioner Faridkot.

"The date for the special girdawri has been extended up to September-end."

Sangrur promotes crop variety, breaks production target

Surpassing the target of production of vegetable farming, Sangrur has achieved a new height in promoting crop diversification.

Reviewing the report of horticulture department, deputy commissioner, Kumar Rahul said the

district was given the target to bring 104 hectare under vegetable farming but the department concerned has successfully promoted crop diversification in 114.5 hectare.

"Around Rs. 60-lakh financial support was provided to the farmers for adopting horticulture farming under the National Horticulture Mission and National Vegetable Initiative schemes," Rahul said.

He added around Rs. 15-lakh of subsidy was provided for power bleeders, beekeeping, power sprayer and constructing sheds for mushroom farming by this year.

"These efforts also help encourage farmers to get rid off traditional vicious circle of paddy and wheat," he said.

District horticulture officer, Hardeep Singh, said in order to promote horticulture, the department would sow fruit-bearing plants in another 180 hectare in four months.

"The department also provides regular technical support to farmers regarding insecticide sprays and fertilisers," he added.

"Around 450 fruit-bearing plants have already been planted in farmers' fields near tubewells and 800 more such plants will be planted," Rahul said.

Experts underline need for adopting GM crops

Expressing concern over difficulties in meeting the rising demand for food, the experts, who attended a seminar on 'genetically modified crops and food security' at Khalsa College stressed on the need to adopt GM crops. The seminar, dedicated to National Science Day, was held in collaboration with Punjab State Council of Science and Technology.

According to the experts, the food requirements cannot be met with the given agriculture outputs. Hence, GM crops have to be adopted for which an awareness campaign was needed to overcome misconceptions related to these new crops.

Avinash Nagpal of botanical sciences department, GNDU, said that GM crops and their role in ensuring food security had been a major issue of the decade. He said that adoption of these crops would end poverty and ensure sustainable development.

Nagpal maintained that this had been the issue of debate and had social-economic ramifications.

A quiz competition was held on this occasion. Prabhleen Kaur, Mannat Kaur and Namita Thakur, of chemistry department, stood first while Akashdeep, Navdeep and Joyti Devi were

second and Rashmin, Sagar Malhotra and Mohammad Adil, of bio-technology department, were third in the competition.

College principal Daljit Singh said that the seminar aimed at creating awareness about the subject. Others present on the occasion included registrar Devender Singh, head of chemistry department MS Batra, JS Gandhi, Jasjit Kaur Randhawa, HB Singh, Mohammad Arshad, Taminder Singh Bhatia, Mukesh Chander and Amandeep Singh.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Assam to go on a mission mode in cultivation of onion



Assam to go on a mission mode in cultivation of onion

GUWAHATI: Assam to go on a mission mode to increase the area under Onion cultivation in the state.

Assam Chief Minister, Tarun Gogoi on Monday asked the agriculture department to increase the production of onion in the State.

Officials of the department apprised the Chief Minister that Assam has been selected as one of the six States by Government of India to increase the production of onion and that the department has taken up a new initiative, CM's Onion Mission for 2013-14.

Assam has around 8525 hectares under onion producing 30.90 metric tonnes (MT). Majority of the requirement is sourced from outside the region.

The all India average for production of onion per hectare is 16.79 MT while that of Assam is 3.62 MT per hectare. Northeast India on an average requires 100 truck loads (20 tonne each truck) of onion in a week.

Gogoi reviewed the progress of activities of Agriculture department at a meeting with concerned minister and senior officials.

The Chief Minister said there is need for increasing the areas under double/multiple cropping and cropping intensity and to go in for farm mechanisation in a big way to boost production. "We have to bring more and more areas under mechanised farming. Government will raise the subsidy from 50 to 75 per cent to meet the farmers' requirements of tractors, power tillers and other equipment".

Gogoi asked the department to revive the Agriculture Farming Corporation (AFC). The Chief Minister directed the department to submit detailed project report for revival of 11 units of AFC.

Russia lifts ban on import of rice, peanuts from India



The Russian Federation had imposed the ban due to the presence of khapra beetles pest in rice and aflatoxin contamination of peanuts.

NEW DELHI: Russia has lifted an eight-month-old ban on the import of Indian rice and peanuts, effective from this month, a move that would help traders regain their lost market.

The Russian Federation had imposed the ban due to the presence of khapra beetle pest in rice and aflatoxin contamination of peanuts.

"Russia has cancelled the temporary restriction on import of rice, rice cereals and peanuts from India. Exporters can resume export of these products effective from September 1," a senior government official told PTI.

Russia decided to remove restrictions after its officials visited processing units in India in June. The delegation was convinced about the safety measures that were put in place here while processing these food items, the official said.

The resumption of trade comes as the country seeks to boost exports to address the current account deficit.

India, the world's second-biggest producer of rice, had shipped 61,000 tonnes of rice and 3,700 tonnes of peanuts in the last financial year, earning USD 31 million from the export of the two food items.

Onion exports drop by 81% in August after curbs on sale



On August 14, the government had imposed a minimum onion export price of \$ 650 per tonne to restrict shipments and control prices. (Pic: AFP)

NEW DELHI: India's onion exports fell sharply by 81 per cent to 29,247 tonnes in August as compared to same period a year ago, after the government imposed curbs on the overseas sale to improve domestic supply and check prices.

On August 14, the government had imposed a minimum onion export price of \$ 650 per tonne to restrict shipments and control prices after it touched Rs 80 per kg in retail marketson supply crunch. The retail price of onion continues to rule at Rs 50-60 per kg in most parts of the country.

According to the data maintained by the cooperative Nafed, onion exports declined to 29,247 tonnes in August this year from 1,56,283 tonnes in the same month last year.

In value terms too, shipments dropped to Rs 125.46 crore from Rs 164.92 crore in the review period.

During the April-August period of this fiscal, onion exports fell to 6,97,028 tonnes as against 8,50,634 tonnes in the year-ago period. However, in value terms, the outbound shipments rose sharply to Rs 1,341 crore from Rs 844 crore in the said period.

According to traders, exports in the coming weeks would depend on the supply situation. The supply of onion is limited during the lean period of July-October, as 60 per cent of produce is grown during the rabi season of March-June.

The rest is produced during the Kharif season of October-- December and late Kharif season of January--March period.

India, the second largest producer of onion in the world after China, is estimated to have harvested 166 lakh tonnes of the staple vegetable last year. The country had earned Rs 2,294 crore from the export of 18.22 lakh tonnes of onion in FY 2012-13.

Tea production up by 16% in July



Output stood at 133.02 million kg in the same month last year, the Tea Board said in an estimate.

NEW DELHI: India's tea production increased by 16 per cent to 155.06 million kg in July on account of higher output in West Bengal and Assam, says government data.

Output stood at 133.02 million kg in the same month last year, the Tea Board said in an estimate.

In Assam, tea production was up by 20.20 per cent to 92.90 million kg in July from 77.29 million kg in the same month last year. Output in West Bengal increased 26.89 per cent to 41.71 million kg in July from 32.87 million kg a year earlier.

Assam and West Bengal are the two major tea-producing states, with their combined output accounting for 87 per cent of the output in July.

In south India, tea output declined by 17.86 per cent in July to 16.83 million kg.

India is the world's second-largest producer and the biggest consumer of tea.

The country's tea production increased 3.62 per cent to 1,135 million kg in 2012-13 while output stood at 1,095 million kg in 2012.

Tea production up by 16 per cent in July: Govt data



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Himachal Pradesh launches a 170 hectares project to expand apple industry



The measure is expected to benefit nearly 350 apple growers initially and 10,000 growers in the long run.

Private investment is being encouraged. (BCCL)

SHIMLA: Himachal Pradesh, the country's main apple-growing region that is heading for a bumper crop this season, has launched a rejuvenation project spread across 170 hectares in a bid to expand the apple industry in the state, one of its principal revenue earners that gives employment to thousands of people.

The measure is expected to benefit nearly 350 apple growers initially and 10,000 growers in the long run. Private investment is being encouraged to set up storage facilities with a controlled atmosphere.

Under the Rs.85-crore apple rejuvenation project launched in 2012-13, Rs.24.36 lakh has been spent by the state horticulture department for replacing old and uneconomic apple plantations with improved, high-yielding varieties in 170 hectares, a government spokesperson told IANS.

The project aims to cover over a period of five years 5,000 hectares where plantation was done before 1960.

Apple constitutes about 93 percent of the total fruit production in the state. Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh, in his budget speech March 14, explained that the rejuvenation project would see the planting of new trees to replace old ones. He said the desired results were however not achieved because the project did not provide for the uprooting of old trees in plantations that were nearly 60 years old.

"Now, new guidelines, including uprooting of old plantation, will be issued so that apple growers can rejuvenate their old orchards," he said.

Director of state horticulture department Gurdev Singh said the old orchards had 250 to 300 plants per hectare; under the rejuvenation project, high-density plantations, ranging from 700 to 800 plants per hectare would be raised in phases.

Besides, improved varieties and rootstock of apple are being imported by the horticulture department from other countries. These are being multiplied at orchards run by the state horticulture department for distribution to growers.

The state government has so far imported 10,300 plants of apple varieties Scarlet Sur, Super Chief, Dorsett Golden and Anna from France, the spokesperson said.

Surveys of the state horticulture department say the productivity of apple ranges from 6 to 11.5 tonnes per hectare in the state, in comparison to 35 to 40 tonnes in more advanced countries.

Himachal Pradesh's apple boom is credited to Satyanand (Samuel Evans Stokes Junior), an American missionary, who first introduced high-quality apples in the Kothgarh-Thanedar belt in upper Shimla in the early 1920s. As per the estimates of the horticulture department, the state is heading for a bumper apple harvest this season after two consecutive years of less than normal yield of 25 million boxes.

A production of over 35 million apple boxes of 20 kg each is expected, which is approximately 765,000 tonnes, said the spokesperson.

So far, over 17.5 million boxes have been sent to various markets in the country, he said.

The area under apple cultivation in the state has increased from 3,025 hectares in 1960-61 to 104,000 hectares in 2011-12, which constitutes more than 48 percent of the total area under fruit cultivation.

Centre directs states to expand onion acreage



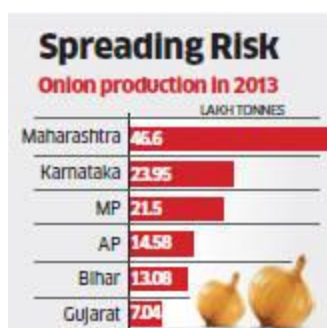
State-wise constitution of onion production has already undergone a change in the last few years. Karnataka has replaced Gujarat, which used to rank second after Maharashtra, due to deficient rainfall in onion growing regions of Gujarat.

PUNE: To reduce the country's overdependence on Maharashtra for onions, the central government has directed states that do not traditionally grow onions to increase the tuber's acreage.

When retail onion prices almost rose to Rs 100 per kg mark, various interventions by the central government helped to bring the prices under control. Wholesale prices reached their historic high in August and are still ruling above Rs 35 per kg at the farmer level.

In retail, prices are still Rs 50- Rs 60 per kg. State-wise constitution of onion production has already undergone a change in the last few years. Karnataka has replaced Gujarat, which used to rank second after Maharashtra, due to deficient rainfall in onion growing regions of Gujarat.

Production has increased more than five-fold in Madhya Pradesh from 4.16 lakh tonne in 2003 to 21.50 lakh tonne in 2013. Similarly, production of Bihar in 2013 is 13.08 lakh tonne, an increase of over nine-fold from 2003.



Yet Maharashtra accounts for about 30% of the country's production and traders at Lasalgaon and Pimpalgaon markets in Nashik district set prices for the country. During the rainy season, the country is heavily dependent upon onion stored in Maharashtra as there is not fresh harvest during this period.

"To further increase onion acreage in non-traditional geographies, the central government has directed the governments of West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and others to give incentives to farmers to shift to onion cultivation," said RP Gupta, director, National Horticulture Research and Development Foundation (NHRDF).

Some states which are not self-sufficient have sought help under various schemes to encourage farmers to shift to onion cultivation. Uttar Pradesh consumes 10 lakh tonne onions in a year but produces only 4 lakh tonne.

"We have demanded that like garlic, onion should be included in the National Horticulture Mission so that we can help farmers to increase productivity," said ON Sinha, director (horticulture), Uttar Pradesh.

Apart from increasing the area under onion, the NHRDF has recommended onion cultivation through bulblets. Onions cultivated using bulblets can be harvested in 65-70 days. In normal method, it takes 90-100 days for harvesting onions after transplanting.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Three fold increase in flower prices this festival season

NAGPUR: Swathed in hues of varied shades of flowers, Netaji flower market wore a festive look on Monday. But the business remained slack as sky high prices kept many buyers at bay. The volumes remained low as quality of flowers too was not up to the mark.

"This year the local produce has been totally washed out by rains," says Dhanraj Salekar of Shri Krishna Flower Mart. The eastern side of Nagpur like Bharatwada, Kuhi, Pawangaon and Paunapur were inundated by overflowing Nag river this year and the entire produce was destroyed.

"We are getting flowers only from western parts of Maharashtra like Nashik and Balapur near Bangalore," says Salekar.

The city consumes up to 15000kg of flowers during the ten-day Ganesh festival. The demand spikes during the three-day Mahalaxmi puja.

This year the prices have increased nearly threefold say wholesalers. "Marigold, tube roses, shewanti and roses are sold the most during this festival," informs Dilip Fating of Sai flower mart. "The most popular flower shewanti is selling for Rs300 while the price during normal times is about Rs90 to Rs100," he says. Fating laments the slow sales saying that prices are higher in retail.

For those who are buying from retailers the price of a medium size garland varies from Rs50 to Rs500 depending upon the flowers that have been used. "From 25kg of flowers we make around 100 small and medium sized garlands," says Manish Gadikar, who has a flower shop at Golibar chowk. "The most expensive garland is made with roses and tube roses and marigold and lily. The prices of these can go upwards of Rs500," he says."

"The retailer buys in bulk and is not allowed to select flowers here. At least 15% of what he purchases goes in waste. Besides, if garlands are being made then a lot of flowers remain unused," says Pravin Ingle a wholesaler.

Pointing to two varieties of marigold available with him, Ingle says that the smaller and bruised variety is selling for Rs40 per kg and the larger and fresher looking one is for Rs60. "In normal time we sell it for Rs20 per kg," he says.

Amid this price mayhem, it is cut flowers like Dutch roses and gerbera which have not seen a jump. "These flowers were extensively used till three years back for decoration. Now with the use of artificial flowers sales have dipped," rues Ritesh Padole who deals in cut flowers.

Not a rosy picture

Prices during festival Normal rates

Shewanti: Rs300 per kg Rs75 to 100 per kg

Marigold: Rs90 per kg Rs30 per kg

Lily: Rs90 for 100 Rs30 for 100

Tube roses: Rs400 per kg Rs120 per kg

Gerbera: Rs50 for 10pc Rs30 for 10pc

Dutch rose: Rs120 for 20pc Rs100 for 20pc

Despite excess rains, farmers stick with cotton

NAGPUR: Despite excessive rains this year, Nagpur district has seen a rise of 95% in area under cotton, 73% under maize and 30% under paddy. However, the area under soyabean, otherwise the second largest kharif crop of the region, has decreased by 19%. The area under

other kharif crops, tur and jowar too has decreased as the two crops are respectively covering only 83% and 26% of their normal area respectively. At 4.8 lakh hectare (ha) under kharif is a marginal increase of 3% over average.

Experts say heavy rains have severely affected the kharif crops. Archana Kadu, the district superintending agriculture officer, says the total crop production of season may be reduced substantially due to attack of pests and diseases caused by high humidity and moisture. It is difficult to predict right now the actual output from all crops of the season. "A break in the rain for almost a week has brought some relief to the farmers and they have begun taking protective measures and other cultivation practices needed at this stage," she said.

As per information from district collectorate, last year the total kharif area was 4.67 lakh ha which has gone up to 4.82 lakh ha this year. Cotton has been sowed on a total area of 1.25 lakh ha against the normal area of 63,860 ha. Normal area under paddy is 76,881 ha but this year it has increased 30%. For soyabean, the total sowed area is about 2.22 lakh ha as against the normal of about 2.75 lakh ha.

Tur is generally grown on about 55,570 ha but this year it is about 46,000 hectares which is 17% decline. Jowar has been sown on 4973 ha which is just 26% of the normal area under the crop. Paddy generally occupies about 60,000ha. At present paddy has been sowed in a nursery area of 3072 ha by seeds and 73,809 ha by nursery making it total 76,881 ha.

This year, as per the agriculture department, the projected area under various kharif crops was expected to be - paddy- 77,000 ha, jowar- 6500 ha, maize 3500 ha, tur 56,000 ha, moong 2000 ha, urad 2000 ha, other pulses 3000 ha, groundnut- 3000 ha, til 200 ha, sugarcane 3100 ha.

The average rainfall in Nagpur district is about 1138.86mm. Last year it was 1011.5mm or 98% and was spread out almost evenly in the district over 47 days. This year the district has already recorded 1279.36mm mm just from June 1 to September 4. Also it has rained practically throughout the period thus depriving crops of sunshine for growth and also resulting in higher pest attacks.

DECCAN Chronicle



Vijayawada: The situation is dire in Krishna delta, the rice bowl of AP, as large swathes of land are still not under cultivation, even though the Kharif season began three months ago.

The farmers of the delta could not complete over three lakh acres of paddy plantation in the limits of Krishna, Guntur, West Godavari and Prakasam districts.

Failure of the contractors to complete the scheduled delta modernisation works is said to be the reason behind the delay by irrigation department officials to release water for canals in Krishna delta area.

The delta has 14 lakh acres suitable for paddy cultivation area under the ayacut of Krishna River. Kharif season starts from June and ends between the months of November and December. This year, the government had delayed water release for the delta.

The officials of the irrigation department released the water from Prakasam Barrage at end of July, that too, a meagre quantity. The government released the water from Nagarjunasagar only from August.

Adding to the problems is the fact that Eluru and Bundar canals are not in a position to receive their full capacity of water. Similarly, Kommumuru canal and various channels in Guntur district are also in a weak position.

While overflowing water in Bundar canal at Thotlavalluru and Eluru canal led to a breach at Kesarapalli of the district recently, paddy fields in mandals of several tail end area like Kaikaluru, Avan-igadda, Nagayalanka, Koduru and Machilipatnam have still not received sufficient water for completing the plantation.

At present, plantation has not been completed in over 1.5 lakh acres in Krishna district alone. The farmers had already lost the last two Rabi crops due to government announcing crop holiday on account of the modernisation works.

The delta failed to produce its full capacity of paddy last Khariff season and a similar situation may be repeated this season too, said Farmers Welfare Association member A. Hanuman Prasad.

Veggie prices see slight rise



Chennai: Onion prices continue to induce tears with prices stabilising at prohibitively high levels. Vegetable prices have also seen a slight rise, but are yet to scare consumers off.

Onion prices were ruling between Rs 40 and Rs 60 in the wholesale market on Sunday. Maria Sebastian, a teacher in Ayanavaram, says, "Onion prices are very high. Onions seem to have become as expensive as gold.

Garlic, which was Rs 60 a kg, was Rs 100 when I bought it two days ago. The rise in prices seems to have affected not onions alone, but has had an effect on other vegetables too. This would hit the poor very badly."

Muthu K., a shopkeeper, says, "Vegetable prices are the same as last week, chilli prices have gone down though. From Rs 100 a kilo it's now Rs 40."

Shamila Thomas, a homemaker, says, "The prices of consumer products are going up all around, be it vegetables, gas or gold. Though I have not stocked up any vegetables or onions I hope the prices come down."

The scene at Koyambedu market on Sunday was chaotic as usual as fresh supplies came in and consumers were busy picking them up.

After the earlier diversion of tomatoes to Chennai following the Telangana issue assuming prominence, its wholesale price has gone up to Rs 15 from Rs 10 a kg last week. Suresh K, a buyer, says, "Vegetable prices are increasing slightly. Drumsticks, which cost Rs 0 a kg, also saw a Rs 5 increase."

Price of fish varieties rise sky high in Chennai

The recent hike in petrol and diesel prices has added to the rising cost of seafood and poultry products. The price of retail chicken has risen to about Rs 170 a kg and is likely to surge further. Similarly, the cost of much sought after fish like seer, sea bass and pomfret, has reached Rs 400. "The increase in fish prices has never been because of the fishermen; the middlemen who transport the fish are the prime reason," said Nanjil Ravi, spokesperson for the all India fishermen's association.

"One can get fish at more subsidised rates when buying directly from fishermen who sell them at the seashore. But the middlemen sometimes sell the fresh fish with 100 per cent profit and reduce the profit rate on subsequent days," he added. Consumers of chicken also face a similar hike in prices, but traders say that the price hike has been negligible. "The increase in the price of chicken is due to the deliberate drop in production.

The producers reduce hatching of eggs, forecasting the fall in demand during different seasons and cut the production weeks ahead," said Eashwar, a trader and member of the Tamil Nadu Poultry Association.



GUJARAT GOVT ORGANISES BIGGEST GLOBAL SUMMIT ON AGRICULTURE

India's population has surpassed 1.24 billion and to feed so many mouths, it is imperative to rethink and rework on the country's agricultural sector. Nearly 70 per cent of the country's population is involved with agriculture directly or indirectly.

But the current state of this sector and its stakeholders has gone worse. In order to find solutions to various challenges relating to agriculture, Narendra Modi led Gujarat Government organised a two day Agricultural Global Summit from Monday.

The first of its kind, summit was attended by Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi along with Punjab Chief Minister, Prakash Singh Badal. Narendra Modi's vision behind the global summit on agriculture is to bring the global expertise and knowledge to the Indian farmers. Over 4,000 farmers from 29 States, two Union Territories and 542 districts attended the event to discuss, learn and exchange farming knowledge.

Apart from key political figures, the event also saw presence of experts from countries like South Asia, Denmark, Netherland and other African countries along with over 125 companies. While inaugurating the event, Modi said that the summit of the global magnitude was being organised to interact and understand the plight of the Indian farmers and give them a global platform to learn from global experts. "In 1947, 51 per cent of the GDP came from agriculture but now it has been reduced to just 14 per cent. Every day nearly 2,500 farmers are giving up agriculture and switching to new professions. This is a big concern and Government needs to take some action to help boost the country's agriculture sector."

Indian farmers have been subjected to a lot of pressure, be it from the rising debts or from the significantly low compensation the Government gives them. "We need to improve the banking system and make the loan process for farmers much simpler. Currently, less than 30 per cent of farmers are only able to raise loans from banks. We also need to put focus on research. For instance, in the last 60 years, no research is carried out on how to improve the production of pulses. Also, the Government needs to spend more on warehouses and cold storages," Modi added.

Water is another vital part of farming, and with the current scarcity of water, Gujarat Government has started an initiative of 'per drop more crop'. The initiative is aimed at improving the productivity by minimising wastage of water.

Ashok Gulati, Chairman, Agricultural Costs and Prices, Government of India also added that water will be a big concern in the coming time. He further added, "The biggest challenge is to raise agricultural sector's contribution to the GDP. Apart from that, water will also be a major concern in the coming days."

While suggesting ways to increase agriculture's contribution to the GDP, he said: "Agricultural GDP will come from high value agricultural products for which we have to connect processors and retailers directly to the farmers. Also, currently 80 per cent of the resources are spent on giving subsidies while only 20 per cent are fresh investments in the sector. We need to increase investments and going further farmers need to diversify crops."

Taking a stand on reducing subsidies and diversifying of crops, Punjab Chief Minister, Prakash Singh Badal said, "Expense cost of farming is increasing due to the rise in diesel prices, which happen almost every month now. In such a situation the Government should not reduce subsidy payments to the farmers. Also, it is very difficult for farms to diversify farming if the Centre is not willing to provide funds. "

With over Rs 30,000 crore combined debt on Punjab farmers, Badal stressed that the Centre should include all the State Governments on issues pertaining to agriculture. He also suggested more interstate exchange of knowledge between the farmers to help increase the total productivity of the country.

CM INVITES TAIWANESE FIRMS TO INVEST IN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROCESSING SECTORS

Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Badal on Monday invited Taiwanese firms to invest in agriculture and food processing initiatives in the state, promising all possible assistance and cooperation.

Sukhbir, in an interaction with a Taiwanese delegation, assured all possible support to the firms of Taiwan in setting up joint ventures, especially in food processing sector.

The Taiwanese delegation was led by Philip Wen-Chyi a former Ambassador of Taiwan in India. Sukhbir said that Punjab government would set up two mega food processing parks at Sirhind and Fazilka.

Stressing that food processing sector has the biggest scope for expansion, he said that Punjab government in its Agro Industrial and Food Processing Policy, 2013, had announced huge incentives for projects worth `1 crore to `100 crore.

Sukhbir claimed that it was for the first time in the country that any state has given VAT and CST exemption up to 90 per cent, whereas there would be no property tax, stamp duty on the land used for these units. There would be full incentive on electricity duty for a period of 10 years, he added.

Philip Wen-Chyi said that Taiwan companies were mainly investing in China and ASEAN countries, but now they have turned their focus to India, especially Punjab. "Our main target for investment is agriculture and food processing sectors," he said.

FARMERS COLD TO GOVT'S AGRI-PRODUCE PURCHASE PLAN

The State Government's policy of buying apples and potatoes from the farmers belonging to natural disaster-affected areas of the mountain State has found a few takers.

It is surprising to know that no farmer from the natural disaster-affected areas of the region has come to dispose off potatoes so far through the purchasing centres of the Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN) which has been assigned the task of purchasing agri-produce like apples and potatoes from the natural disaster-affected areas'farmers.

It is believed that apart from delay in announcing the said popular policy on part of the State Government, poor minimum support price that the State Government has set up for buying apple at Rs 20 a kilo and potato at Rs 10 a kilo from the farmers is one of the major factors that could not attract the farmers to dispose off their produces through the Government agencies like the KMVN here.

There is no potato left with the farmers here. Therefore, perhaps there is no disposal off potato through the KMVN purchasing centres, said Dr Rameshwar Singh, District Horticulture Officer (DHO), Nainital, while talking to The Pioneer.

However, the farmers have been able to dispose off about 490 quintal apple so far through the KMVN purchasing centre, he added.

Private traders here have already purchased the potatoes from the farmers much earlier. Though damage to the potato crop can't be ruled out due to the natural disaster, private players/traders were quick to purchase the hill potato much earlier.

So there is no potato left with the farmers. Besides, price factor depends on a region. As apple is being sold at Rs 70/ Rs 80 a kilo in the market, so most of the farmers are disposing off their apples to the market as the market watchers of the Haldwani vegetable and fruit market say.

The farmers of the Nainital's hilly regions have been able to dispose off about 490 quintal apple through the KMVN purchasing centres set up at Nainital's hilly regions like Supi and Satbunga.

"According to the Government's order, we have to purchase apples and potatoes from the farmers of the natural disaster-affected areas in coordination with the respective District Magistrates and District Horticulture Officers (DHOs). However, no farmers have come to us to dispose off potatoes so far from any part of the Kumaon division," TS Vora, Manager, the KMVN, told The Pioneer.

"But in coordination with the Nainital district administration, we have purchased apple from Nainital's hilly region. But no farmer has come to sell potatoes to our purchasing centres even from the Nainital district so far," he added.

"However, we are fully prepared to follow the Government's order in this regard. If any farmer comes to us to sell apples or potatoes or the officials concerned of the respective districts inform about availability of the potatoes or apples, the KMVN is ready to help the farmers in disposing off their produce," Vora added.

Business Standard

Guar prices rise 70% on potentially high demand

In the beginning of August, the spot price of guar seed was close to Rs 5,000 a quintal, which has risen to Rs 8,275 a quintal at present



Guar prices have started rising again, due to the onset of the lean supply season and the potential of renewed demand from the US.

Guar seeds for near-month delivery on the National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) surged 72 per cent to close at Rs 7,210 a quintal on Saturday, after hitting a low of Rs 4,180 a quintal on August 1.

Similarly, guar gum for delivery in October closed at Rs 19,910 a quintal on Saturday, a rise of 70 per cent from Rs 11,740 a quintal on August 1.

Both contracts have hit the upper circuit intermittently on NCDEX, with the Forward Markets Commission, the commodity derivatives markets regulator, suspending lean season contracts on the futures platform. The trend followed in the spot market, too.

Spot prices of guar seed have risen 65 per cent in the past month, according to data at the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

In the beginning of August, the spot price of guar seed was close to Rs 5,000 a quintal, which has risen to Rs 8,275 a quintal at present, the data reveals.

Such a sharp rise has not been seen in recent times, after US energy companies curtailed fresh purchases due to a high inventory since the beginning of this year. Spot prices of guar gum have been at less than Rs 5,000 a quintal since January this year. While a section of traders believe that the sudden price rise has been due to the possibility of crop damage, others see punters rigging the prices.

India's guar seed production has fluctuated between one and 1.7 million tonnes (mt) in recent years. India's guar production in 2012-13 was estimated at 1.7- 2 mt, according to MCX data.

"It is possibly due to speculation that guar prices are rising. There are reports of lower rainfall in parts of Rajasthan, but this year, the guar acreage has risen by 25 to 30 per cent. While it is early to predict this year's crop size, there are expectations that it would be normal. We expect guar prices should not sustain above Rs 7,200-7,300 a quintal," said Santosh Jhanwar, vice-president, consulting, Agriwatch.

At present, daily guar seed arrival in the Jodhpur mandi is less by 60 per cent, at close to 6,000 bags (Rs 100 kg each) a day, against the normal arrival of 15,000-20,000 bags a day.

"This year, there has been a shortage of guar seeds. Some speculators have spread the rumour that the guar crop has been destroyed. We believe, even with less rain, the crop size should be close to 10.50 million bags, more than last year's production of 10 million bags. Demand is also muted, so there is no reason that prices should rise," said Suman Jain, owner, Vasundhara Gums & Chemicals.

"There is no reason for such an abrupt rise in guar prices, as the demand is still muted and most US shale gas companies have enough stock for the next five to six months," said Ganesh Prajapat, agri-business consultant.

On the other hand, a powerful farmers' lobby in Rajasthan, the Deenbandhu Chotu Kisan Samiti, led by guar merchant B D Agarwal, has been advertising in newspapers that this year, guar seed production could be down by 25 per cent, which would lead to further price rise.

"I expect guar seed prices to cross Rs 10,000 a quintal, for a reasonable price of the

commodity, given the international demand. It was due to price manipulation that prices had fallen below Rs 5,000 a quintal," said Agarwal.

Onion, cotton may lose export incentives

Some products like onion on the one hand avail of export incentives under Focus Market Scheme or Focus Product Scheme while on the other hand they face curbs



Products like onion and cotton are likely to lose export incentives as there are restrictions on their outbound shipments, a senior commerce ministry official said today.

The matter is under active consideration of the Commerce Ministry. The issue came up during a meeting of senior officials of the ministry recently.

"The senior officials pointed out that some products like onion and cotton are on one hand availing export incentives under Focus Market Scheme (FMS) or Focus Product Scheme (FPS) while on the other hand there are curbs on their exports," the official said.

The objective of the FMS is to offset the high freight cost and other disabilities to select international markets with a view to enhancing export competitiveness.

It allows a duty credit of 2.5 per cent of free-on-board value of exports to countries that are identified as focus markets by the government. The duty credit may be used for import of inputs or goods including capital goods. The products covered under FPS are entitled for 2 per cent duty credit scrip.

In the case of onion, the government has fixed minimum export price of \$650 per tonne and the commodity also avail export incentive under FMS or FPS.

"It is not logical that on one hand we are giving incentives to boost export and on the other, putting restrictions on the shipments," the official added.

Similarly, the government has imposed quantitative restrictions on the exports of cotton and cotton yarn.

Exporters can apply for registration certificate (RC) for a maximum quantity of 30,000 bales or actual quantity exported in the previous cotton season, whichever is less. One bale contains 170 kg of cotton.

Cotton production was estimated to be around 34 million bales for the 2012-13 cotton season (October to September).

India's cotton exports are likely to remain flat at around 10 million bales in the 2013-14 season due to lesser demand from China. China is the biggest importer of the Indian natural fibre.

[Vietnam wants more of Indian rubber industry](#)

Vietnam's NR export to India jumped to 51,273 tonnes in 2012-13 from 28,114 tonnes in 2011-12



The Indian rubber industry has been invited to invest in Vietnam, a country consuming only 15 per cent of its annual output of 900,000 tonnes of natural rubber (NR).

A delegation of the Vietnam Rubber Association visited India recently and met leading members of the All India Rubber Industries Association (AIRIA). India is one of the largest importers of NR from Vietnam; more is imported here only from Indonesia. Vietnam's NR export to India jumped to 51,273 tonnes in 2012-13 from 28,114 tonnes in 2011-12.

It also plans to boost domestic rubber manufacturing and has targeted 1.2 million tonnes of production, plus an increase in domestic consumption from the current 15 per cent to 40 per cent of the NR produced. Hence, it wants to strengthen business ties with the Indian rubber industry, said Niraj Thakkar, president of AIRIA. "We are working out the feasibility of a delegation to Vietnam soon," he said.

According to Government of India data, trade between India and Vietnam grew to \$6.1 billion in 2012-13 and is likely to cross \$7 billion by 2015.

THE HINDU Business Line

Kochi, Sept. 8:

Tea prices for some varieties increased on good demand at the Kochi auctions last week. For small quantities, the demand was good and 6.2 lakh kg were on offer at the auctions. At sale no 36, the quantity on offer in the CTC dust grades was 6,11,500 kg.

The market for good liquoring teas was fully firm to dearer by Rs 2-3 and sometimes more, according to auctioneers Forbes, Ewart & Figgs Pvt Ltd. Others were irregular and lower following quality. Medium and plain browner teas were lower and witnessed some withdrawals. The arrival in orthodox grades were very low at 4,500 kg compared to last week.

In the best CTC dusts, PD varieties quoted at Rs 110-133, RD grades ruled at Rs 134-160, SRD stood at Rs 145-167 and SFD at Rs 145-177.

The demand was good in orthodox leaf grades and the quantity on offer was 67,500 kg.

The market for select best Nilgiri broken, whole leaf was fully firm to dearer.

Others were irregular and lower. Corresponding fannings witnessed strong feature and appreciated in value.

Well made medium bolder broken, whole leaf tippy grades steady to firm and sometimes dearer following quality.

Smaller broken and fannings from the same region moved up in value.

The quantity on offer in the CTC grades was 42,500 kg. The market for good liquoring varieties was fully firm to dearer. Others were irregular and sometimes lower and witnessed some withdrawals. Exporters, upcountry buyers and Kerala buyers lent useful support.

In the dust category, brands such as Manjolai SFD, Kallyar SFD and Mayura SFD quoted the best prices of Rs 177 each followed by Pasuparai SFD at Rs 176.

In the leaf varieties, P's Woodlands Hyson Green Tea fetched the best prices of Rs 306 followed by Goldsland Select BPS at Rs 252.

2 Lt arecanut loss due to fruit rot disease: Campco



Mangalore, Sept. 8:

The spread of fruit rot disease in arecanut plantations during the monsoon this year will lead to a shortfall of around two lakh tonnes in production.

This will lead to a loss of around Rs 2,000 crore to farmers, according to the Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Cooperative (Campco) Ltd.

Addressing presspersons here, K. Padmanabha, President of Campco, said that the major arecanut growing States such as Karnataka and Kerala produce around 3.75 lakh tonnes every year.

However, arecanut crops in these States were affected by fruit rot disease during the monsoon this year. On an average, farmers have suffered a crop loss of around 60-70 per cent in these two States. This will lead to a production loss of around two lakh tonnes next year. (The new stocks of white arecanut arrive during February-March.)

Plantations in Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Uttara Kannada, Kodagu, Shimoga and Chikmagalur districts in Karnataka and in Kasaragod, Kannur, Mallapuram, Thrissur, and Kozhikode districts in Kerala have been affected by fruit rot disease, he said.

Campco has estimated the loss to farmers at Rs 1,200 crore in Karnataka, and at Rs 800 crore in Kerala.

(Fruit rot is characterised by rotting and heavy shedding of immature nuts. Continuous heavy rainfall with intermittent bright sunshine hours, low temperature and high humidity are the factors suitable for the spread of disease.)

Padmanabha said that a delegation of arecanut cooperatives from Karnataka met the Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, in Bangalore on September 6.

The Chief Minister has been informed about the plight of farmers because of the fruit rot disease in arecanut plantations.

He has promised to look into the problems in this regard, Padmanabha said.

The Chief Minister has been requested to lead a delegation to the Centre seeking adequate compensation to farmers, he said.

Soon the arecanut cooperatives will also meet the Kerala Chief Minister, seeking his Government's assistance to plantations affected by fruit rot disease in Kerala, he added.

Kharif set to register record rice output this year

Production may exceed 92.78 million tonnes

Top 10 States			
(In lakh hectares)			
State	This year	Last year	Normal area
Uttar Pradesh	59.64	58.79	56.91
West Bengal	41.70	40.42	41.15
Chhattisgarh	36.45	36.70	37.27
Odisha	34.67	32.84	40.09
Bihar	28.49	31.24	31.94
Punjab	27.73	28.25	27.59
Andhra Pradesh	23.22	18.50	26.48
Assam	20.60	20.79	21.17
Madhya Pradesh	18.43	16.63	15.9
Maharashtra	14.89	14.90	14.97
Total	365.50	352.49	392.05

Source: Ministry of Agriculture

New Delhi, Sept 8:

After an erratic monsoon affected plantings last year, kharif rice output is set to rebound to a record this year. This, in turn, is set to boost exports with a weak rupee aiding the Indian grain's competitiveness in the global market.

The general consensus among the rice trade, Agriculture Ministry officials and exporters is that the production this kharif would touch a new high, exceeding the record 92.78 million tonnes in 2011. This is despite deficient rainfall affecting transplantation in States such as Bihar, Odisha and Jharkhand.

The timely arrival of the South-West Monsoon and the excess precipitation across the country prompted farmers to bring more area under rice, mainly in Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The total area under rice is up 3.7 per cent at 365.50 lakh hectares this year against 352.49 lakh hectares during the corresponding period a year ago.

Though flooding in several areas of Andhra Pradesh affected the crop to some extent, officials say that it would be made up by other States. Also, in some of the affected areas replanting has been taken up by farmers, they said. "The crop is definitely better than last year in the State," an AP Rice Millers' Association official said.

Until the first week of this month, the country received eight per cent excess rainfall from the monsoon's influence. Rains which were deficient in the early part of the season in Bihar and Jharkhand revived last week. This should boost transplantation over the next couple of weeks. Also in Orissa, where rice is the only crop planted by farmers, the transplantation can go on till September-end, officials at the Directorate of Rice Research Institute said.

The crop conditions are satisfactory and no major cases of endemic or epidemic disease has been reported so far anywhere in the country.

Officials in the Agriculture Ministry expect the output to be higher than last year, though they are not putting a figure on the actual crop size. In the recent past, Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar and his deputy Tariq Anwar have expressed confidence that the bounteous monsoon this year would help the country produce record foodgrains, including rice.

A bumper output would help the Government implement the Food Security Programme.

The Government is expected to procure 34.5 million tonnes of rice this year.

The London-based International Grains Council, in its latest estimate, has pegged India's rice output at 107 million tonnes, up 2.5 per cent from last year. Last year, production, both kharif and rabi seasons, was 104.40 million tonnes, according to the Government's 4th Advance Estimates.

Added aroma

Also, in the case of Basmati, the initial field surveys point to a good crop. "The rains have been good and transplanting was done on time. The crop is currently in the flowering stage in some areas. Overall, we expect a higher yield this year," said Rajen Sundaresan, Executive Director of the All-India Rice Exporters' Association. Basmati production in 2012 was a little over 7.1 million tonnes. In the current year, the production is expected to be higher by 10-40 per cent.

While basmati exports have taken off on a positive note, non-basmati rice shipments have been sluggish.

According to the Directorate-General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, basmati exports during April-June this year were up 17 per cent at 11.16 lakh tonnes.

In terms of value, shipments were up 67 per cent at Rs 7,756 crore compared with last year.

Non-basmati exports were down by a tenth in volume for the April-June period to 14.16 lakh tonnes against 15.84 lakh tonnes.

In value, the non-basmati rice shipments were estimated at Rs 3314.12 crore against Rs 3365.06 crore.

According to IGC, rice exports this year are estimated at at 8.5 million tonnes, down 5.5 per cent from last year.

Tomato arrivals may increase



Karnal, Sept 8:

Tomato arrivals may increase further in the coming days and demand may also improve, said market experts.

An increase in demand pushed tomato prices marginally up by Rs 100-300 a quintal on Sunday. Around 700 crates (of 25 kg each) of different varieties of tomatoes arrived at the Karnal vegetable market and were quoted at Rs 2,200-4,000.

Around 1,100 crates of varieties such as Himsona and hybrid were received in Karnal district.

Vikas Sachdeva, a trade expert, told *Business Line* that an increase in domestic demand coupled with good quality of the arrived crop helped tomato prices to get back into positive territory.

It is unlikely to see any major alteration and prices may continue to rule around current levels in the coming days, he added.

Out of total arrivals, about 10 per cent stock was of low quality; around 40 per cent stocks were of medium quality while about 50 per cent was of superior quality.

Prices of superior quality improved by Rs 300 and quoted at Rs 3,800-4,000. Medium quality produce went up by Rs 150 at Rs 2,900-3,100 while the low quality was at Rs 2,200-2,400, Rs 100 up from the previous levels.

On Sunday, just around five per cent crates remained unsold.

Traders expect that market may witness some good buying and arrivals may also increase gradually in the coming days.

Quality of the stocks arrived from Nashik was good and it may improve further in the coming days, said Vikas Sachdeva.

Pepper buoyant on good demand amid tight supply



Kochi, Sep 8:

Pepper which witnessed some overseas buying and the consequent impact on the prices has shown some slow down as it reached the weekend.

Upcountry demand was met by sales from Karnataka which was offering low bulk density pepper at Rs 400 a kg delivered anywhere in the country on cash-and-carry basis. Last week, saw buyers from West Asia, mainly from Dubai and Muscat which have become the major hubs for pepper trade, of late, were actively covering from origins that were found to be competitive. They are shipping the material to those markets in Africa and other regions which are not catered to by Indian exporters directly, market sources said. Indian exporters having facilities in West Asia were also buying from Karnataka and Kerala, mainly from the plains.

Dealers from Tamil Nadu were buying high bulk density pepper directly from the door steps of the growers in Idukki at terminal market prices on cash-and-carry basis, they said.

Pepper from the plains was sold at Rs 409-410 while that from Wayanad was at Rs 413-414. High range pepper was traded at Rs 417-418. Because of the continuous rains, pepper arrived from the plains was infested by fungus and was having high moisture. The trade claimed that this had pushed the processing cost to higher levels.

Active contracts on the NMCE showed an increase.

Sept and Oct increased by Rs 40 and Rs 756 a quintal respectively to Rs 44,610 and Rs 45,500. Total turnover went up by 13 tonnes to close at 150 tonnes.

Total open interest decreased by 14 tonnes to 44 tonnes.

Spot prices rose by Rs 400 on good buying support to close at Rs 40,900 (ungarbled) and Rs 42,900 (MG 1).
