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<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/01/28/stories/2010012851450300.htm>

Painting expo to create awareness of global warming

Special Correspondent

VELLORE: Bare tree stubs, houses about to be surrounded by tides and deleterious effect of blazing sun - these are some of the contents of paintings made by N. Thamizharasan, artist and president of 'Eeranilam,' a voluntary organisation based in Mannambadi in Vriddachalam taluk. They were displayed at Voorhees Higher Secondary School here on Wednesday, as part of a State-wide exhibition of paintings highlighting the theme, 'Let us save the earth,' organised by 'Eeranilam.'

Inaugurating the exhibition here on Wednesday, C. Rajendran, Collector of Vellore, congratulated Mr. Thamizharasan on conducting the exhibition in schools and colleges.

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Villages adopt resolutions against Bt brinjal

Staff Reporter

Gram sabha meetings convened on Republic Day

"In all villages where we raised the issue, people unanimously voted for the resolution"

"When we explained that it cannot be profitable for farmers, they accepted our argument"

Tiruvannamalai: Several villages in Tiruvannamalai district passed resolutions not to allow Bt brinjal in their jurisdiction at gram sabha meetings convened on Tuesday for Republic Day.

Members of the Communist Party of India (CPI), Tamil Nadu Women's Collective and other organisations moved resolutions at the gram sabha meetings held in their respective villages. Village panchayat president Bavani Kamalakannan issued a copy of resolution to activists, which would be handed over to the government along with resolutions from other such villages. An identical resolution was passed in the Kalasapakkam gram sabha meeting. In this village, 23 farmers jointly

proposed the resolution which was also unanimously accepted.

The resolution argues that introduction of Bt brinjal would lead to a scenario wherein farmers will have to depend on multinational corporations for seeds, apart from affecting health of people.

P.T. Rajendran, district secretary of Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, said that through members of their association and their sympathisers they have moved resolutions against introduction of Bt brinjal in about 50 villages in the district. “We are still collecting information from all the villages one by one. According to information reaching us, in all the villages where we raised the issue, people unanimously voted for the resolution. By Tuesday evening, we received confirmation from about 10 villages,” he said.

Kumar, husband of Kumari, panchayat president of Ariyur village in Cheyyar taluk, told *The Hindu* over phone that he moved the resolution against Bt brinjal in their gram sabha meeting. “People didn’t know anything about it earlier. We explained and sought their vote. While the majority of people accepted our contention straight away, some of them questioned why we should accept it when they assure higher yields. However, when we explained that it cannot be profitable for farmers as they will have to bear exorbitant expenses on seeds, and the health related risks involved, they accepted our argument,” he said.

P.Chandrasekaran, district committee member of CPI, successfully moved a resolution against Bt brinjal in Kuppanatham in Chengam taluk. He told *The Hindu* that he argued that while farmers are selling a bagful of paddy for Rs.800, they are purchasing a kilogram of seeds for Rs.300, even now. Once genetically modified crops come into existence, that would worsen the situation. “After we explained people about the ill-effects of Bt brinjal, gram sabha passed a resolution against introduction of the same in our village.”

Sumathi, coordinator of Tamil Nadu Women’s Collective in Tiruvannamalai, said that at least seven villages in the region, including Somasipadi, Kannakkurukkai, Uchimalaikuppam, had confirmed that they had passed resolutions against Bt brinjal.

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Coffee, pepper cultivation on in Jawadu Hills

A.D. Balasubramanian

The drive is aimed at providing additional income to tribals and prevent migration

Seed beds of coffee, pepper prepared in Kovilur

New crops will be raised only on unutilised portions of land

Tiruvannamalai: Coffee plants and pepper vines are being cultivated in Jawadu hills, the hill known for conventional crops such as 'samai' (small millet).

With an aim to provide additional income to the tribal people of this hill and thereby check their migration to the plains seeking employment, a couple of NGOs working in the hill have devised a plan to introduce spices, fruits and coffee to the hills, in coordination with the State Horticulture Department.

Jawadu Tribal Women Development Society, in coordination with the department, has prepared seed beds of coffee and pepper in Kovilur. "About 20 kg of coffee seeds brought from Yercaud have been sowed in the seedbed. It will produce about 50,000 seedlings, which can be transplanted on about 50 acres of land. Likewise, about one lakh pepper cuttings were planted in a seedling bed, which can be replanted on about 100 acres of land," J. Karunakaran, Horticulture Officer, Tiruvannamalai, told *The Hindu*.

Both coffee and pepper seedlings prepared in these beds would be ready for plantation in about six months, he said. "As these crops are new to Jawadu Hills, a 10-day training programme is being hosted with the help of NABARD, starting from January 18. Methods of nursery rising and cultivation of these crops are being taught to 30 tribal women.

These crops which require shades will be planted under trees on the lands of the tribals. The new crops will not disturb their conventional crops such as 'samai' or paddy. Coffee and pepper crops will be raised only on unutilised portions of land. So, it is likely to give the tribals additional income. "The climate here is also very conducive to such crops," Mr. Karunakaran said.

"Saplings of eight varieties of fruits and spices, all new to the hills, including Surinam cherry, Rambutan, litchi, Duriyan, nutmeg (Jathi), cinnamon, clove and garcinia have also been distributed to various tribal villages. About 3,300 saplings of these varieties brought from Kallar State Farm were distributed to the tribal people from Aattiyannur, Nachamalai, Nallapattu, Mel Athipattu, etc.," Mr. Karunakaran said.

Senthil, president of Jawadu People Development Society, another NGO involved in the drive, told *The Hindu* that people from the plains started purchasing lands in the hill while tribals of the hill move to the plains seeking employment. "We hope these crops keep a check on the trend," he said.

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Water level

MADURAI: Water level in the Periyar dam on Wednesday stood at 115.30 feet. The level in the Vaigai dam was 46.92 feet.

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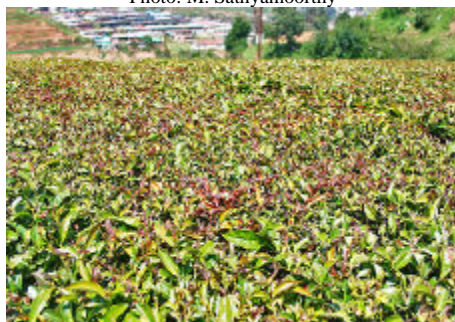
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Frost gives a jolt to tea growers in some areas

Special Correspondent

There is a marked change in weather pattern this year

Photo: M. Sathyamoorthy



Unsuitable conditions: A frost-affected tea garden near Udhagamandalam. —

Udhagamandalam: Delayed frost has given a jolt to tea growers in some parts of the district.

Though usually by this time of the year the intensity of the frost would have come down considerably, this year there has been a marked change in the weather pattern.

Heavy rain

Following the heavy rain in November, some parts of the district had experienced wet conditions even in December.

Consequently, it was felt that the winter will not be harsh.

However, contrary to expectations, for the past few days Udhagamandalam and its surroundings have been experiencing moderate to severe frost.

Though it is bright and sunny during the day it gets very chill between dusk and

dawn.

It has become a major source of concern in many of the tea gardens in the frost-prone areas. Sources in the Department of Horticulture told *The Hindu* that the yield in most of the frost-hit tea estates was likely to come down considerably till there was a change in the weather.

The small tea growers in the frost-affected areas have been advised to go in for plant protection measures like top shading with ferns and mulching with locally available materials.

Meanwhile the demand for warm clothes has gone up and bonfires at street corners have become a common sight.

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Hold back stocks, maize farmers told

Staff Reporter

COIMBATORE: The Domestic and Export Market Intelligence Cell (DEMIC) of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has forecast that the maize price will increase after March. Hence, it has asked the maize farmers to build their stocks for the forthcoming months.

According to a release from DEMIC, 54 per cent of maize crop is sown in the Adi Pattam. Delayed rain in June-July and excess downpour in August-September reduced the sowing of maize. Farmers were in a dilemma whether to sell the harvested Adi Pattam maize or store it to get better price. DEMIC analysed the past 10-year price prevailing in Udumalpet market and forecast that the price of maize will be on the higher side.

Reduced arrivals from Tamil Nadu, supply of maize from Karnataka to Northern States and continuous demand for maize by the poultry industry is expected to keep the price high.

The price of maize that was around Rs. 900 a quintal till December 2009 is expected to increase to Rs. 1,000 after March. The crop can be stored for six months. The cost of storage is Rs. 3 a bag for a month.

The loss estimated for storage for six months is Rs. 5 a bag. Hence, farmers are asked to release the stored produce after March. Large private poultry firms are offering Rs. 940 a quintal when delivery is done at the farms directly. Farmers are advised to use the opportunity.

They should ensure that the grains were bold with a moisture content of only up to

12 per cent and less when delivery is made to the poultry farms directly.

Farmers who have sown maize in Thai Pattam (mid-January) can expect a price of more than Rs. 1,000 a quintal during harvest in May- June if the prevailing market condition prevailed.

THE HINDU

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[Back](#) [Sci Tech](#)

FARMER'S NOTEBOOK

Bio-waste gasifier that works out cheaper than grid power

M.J.PRABU

Fuel consumption is almost 30-40 per cent less than that of other designs

— Photo: Special Arrangement



Different uses: Rai Singh Dahiya of Rajasthan with his invention.

Many ingenious innovations in agriculture do not require an IITian's brain, but are by humble, poor peasants across the country.

From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, several hundreds of these innovators endowed with their curiosity, traditional knowledge and skills have made farming easier for themselves and their ilk.

Mr. Rai Singh Dahiya in Rajasthan never stepped into a school, but it did not stop him from receiving an award from the local District Collector for building a unique biomass gasifier for operating modified diesel engines.

The biomass-based gasifier unit processes about 20 kg of bio-waste to run an engine of

30 HP for an hour. So far about 50 gasifiers have been sold in the village.

Shape of the unit

The gasifier is conical in shape, compact in design and surrounded by a water jacket with the capability to handle multiple fuel sources.

Fuel wood or agricultural residues are fed into it. An air inlet is provided at the bottom. The system comprises two stages, one for removing ash, and the other, for charred residue and tar.

The primary filter unit comprises a series of rows of filtration units. Perforation becomes progressively smaller from the first to the third filtration unit.

The filter can be easily cleaned and is surrounded by a water jacket. The secondary filter has layers of different sizes of sieves ranging from 2 inches to a fine size with the cleaning gate at the bottom.

Detailing its operation the farmer says, “first, the bio-waste must be deposited from the top. This unit acts as a furnace and heats up to 200 degree centigrade to generate gas.

The gasifier is monitored and fed continuously first for about 30 minutes. An aspirator is turned on for sucking producer gas until the flame appears.

Water cooling

“Next, the air supply from the bottom is cut off. The produced gas is made to pass through the first cyclone where water-cooling is done; the gas is cooled and partial cleaning is also achieved.

“The gas then passes through the second cyclone, which removes carbon and ash based residues, and enters the filtration unit consisting of sieve grills and cloth.” This cleans up the gas completely. After cleaning, the gas is fed into the mixer unit, which mixes the gas with air in the right “fuel-air ratio”, which is set for the engine and power rating.

Calibration mark

There is a calibration mark for optimal ratio set by the innovator, but the user can override that and choose his settings.

Alternatively, the nature of the knocking sound, which changes at optimal ratio, can also be used as a cue for optimal mixing ratio.

The fuel mixer then feeds the fuel-air mixture into the modified engine, which runs on this clean fuel.

The furnace in the gasifier unit can be built to different capacities as per availability of biomass and agricultural residue. “Considering the cost of machine, fuel-biomass and local labour, this arrangement is estimated to cost less than half the cost per unit of

power when compared to normal electricity grids costing 4 Rs per unit.

“It can be used to operate pump sets in remote fields, pump up water in homes, operate basic machines such as saw mills, flour mills and generate electricity by charging an alternator,” explains Mr. Dahiya.

Fuel consumption

He claims that the fuel consumption to be almost 30-40 per cent less than other available designs. The prices vary from Rs. 1,25,000 for 10 kW unit to Rs. 3,25,000 for 35 kW unit.

For more details contact Mr. Rai Singh Dahiya, Thaldak village, Taluka Bohar, Hanumangarh, Rajasthan 335 524, 09414535665.

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[Back](#) [Sci Tech](#)

Kisan mela at Indian Institute of Spices Research

The Indian Institute of Spices Research (IISR), Kozhikode and its Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVK) are together organizing a Kisan Mela from February 8 to 12, showcasing various field technologies for the benefit of the farming community.

The programme will be organised at IISR Research Farm at Peruvannamuzhi, Kozhikode District.

Participants

About 20 organisations such as Central Plantation Crops Research Institute, Kasaragod, Central Tuber Crops Research Institute, Thiruvananthapuram, Directorate of Cashew Research, Puttur, Karnataka, Directorate of Aromatic and Medicinal Plants, Gujarat, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Kozhikode, KVK, Kannur and Malappuram, RAIDCO, Kerala, Indian Council of Agricultural Research complex, Goa are expected to put up stalls, exhibiting various technologies and machineries developed by them.

The inaugural function will be followed by honouring outstanding farmers who won National and State-level awards for their achievements.

Award winners

The award winners will also share their experiences during at the event. Experts will answer various queries of farmers during the farmers' interactive session in the afternoon.

Participation is restricted to 250 farmers who register their names on first come first serve basis. The exhibition is open to public and school children from morning of 9th February to forenoon of 12th February.

For registration and other details contact Mr. P S Manoj, Horticulture at 09447565549 or Mr. K M Prakash, Agronomy at 09447526964 or KVK office at 0496-2662372.

THE HINDU

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[Back Sci Tech](#)

FARM QUERIES

Groundnut with more oil

Where can I get information on Dhiraj 101 groundnut variety?

Megna Naidu

Secunderabad, Andhra Pradesh

Dhiraj 101 crop variety contains 42-45 per cent oil content, matures in 95-105 days and bears 35-40 pods per plant. The variety is also resistant to stem rot For details contact Mr. Dhirajlal Virjibhai Thummar, Via Mota Akadiya, PO Pipal lag, Taluka Pipal lag, Amreli 365455, Gujarat, mobile: 02792-286093, 9825513469.

Drumstick variety

Where can I get PAVM moringa variety plants?

Namasivayam

Tamil Nadu

Contact Mr. P. Alagarsamy at No:6/39, south street, Pallapatti, Nilakottai Taluk, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, mobile: 98653 45911 and 97917 74887. The variety yields for nearly 8-9 months a year, requires less water About 150-200 kg of matured pods can be harvested from a single tree from the second year of planting, according to Mr.

Alagarsamy.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

'Himalayan glaciers here to stay'

Anand Bodh, TNN, 28 January 2010, 04:03am IST

CHANDIGARH: Glaciers are here to stay in the Himalayas. Studies conducted by glaciologists across the Himalayan region in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand have shown that global warming has little to do with their melting.

The conclusion was drawn by glaciologists after studying the behaviour of 35 Himalayan glaciers. The Mentossa glacier in Miyar valley of Lahaul-Spiti in Himachal Pradesh has, in fact, expanded in the last few years while there is no change in the Kangriz glacier in Zaskar valley of J&K since 1913.

Glaciologists, claiming that global warming and melting of glaciers have no relation with each other, say each glacier is behaving in a different manner. Had global warming been responsible, then all of them would have behaved in a similar manner, they claimed.

The prediction that glaciers would melt by 2035 by Professor Syed Iqbal Hasnain may have landed the Inter Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) chairman R K Pachauri in a tight spot, but data collected by glaciologists across the Himalayan region shows that such claims do not hold water, and the major rivers originating from the Himalayas would continue to flow for the years to come as the glaciers are going to stay.

Glaciologist Milap Chand Sharma from Jawaharlal Nehru University says after studying 27 glaciers in Lahaul-Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh, he has found that the melting taking place is normal. His conclusion is based on study of the behaviour of glaciers from 1975 to 2008.

The Miyar glacier in Lahaul region covers an area of 27 square km. Since 1971, it has receded by just 150 meters. If it continues to melt at this pace, it would take around 3,000 years for it to melt completely, he added.

A comparison of photographs of glaciers available from 1907 shows that after 1998, glaciers have not changed much, says Sharma.

DECCAN
Chronicle *On The Web*

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Bt Brinjal cleared without proper tests: Scientist

Jan 27 2010

IANIS

New Delhi: A leading molecular biologist, Mr Pushpa Bhargava, on Wednesday said that India's biotech regulator had cleared genetically modified brinjal for commercial release without all the tests that should have been carried out.

"According to the international scientific community, some 30 tests should be done before any GMO (genetically modified organism) release. In the case of Bt Brinjal less than a dozen of these were conducted. Tests like protein-mix analysis, transprotein analysis and on metabolic processes weren't done. Long term toxicity tests were also ignored," Mr Bhargava, a recipient of Padma Bhushan in 1986, alleged.

Mr Bhargava, founder director of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), was speaking on the sidelines of a seminar on Bt Brinjal at the Jawaharlal Nehru University here.

He is also the independent nominee of the Supreme Court to the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC), the country's biotech regulator.

In October last year, the GEAC approved the commercialisation of the genetically modified crop, which drew flak from various green NGOs and public health activists.

The Environment Minister, Mr Jairam Ramesh, is now holding public consultations on the issue and the approval is on hold. States that account for over 60 percent of the production of the vegetable have refused to allow Bt Brinjal.

Mr Bhargava alleged that the head of GEAC's expert committee II, Mr Arjula Reddy, had called him and told him that that he was under pressure from "the agriculture minister, GEAC and industry" to grant approval.

In a document that he sent the environment minister, Mr Bhargava wrote: "Arjula made a totally confidential call to tell me that eight of the tests that I had said should be done on Bt Brinjal and with which he agreed had not been done...he was under tremendous pressure to clear the Bt Brinjal and had (received) calls from the agriculture minister, GEAC and industry."

Source URL:

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/latest-news/bt-brinjal-cleared-without-proper-tests-scientist-268>

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Varsity first to set up weather station in city

By By Our Correspondent

Jan 28 2010

Jan. 27: In the wake of global warming and climate change taking its toll on the Indian climate, Sathyabama University in the city has installed a weather-monitoring station with which the university becomes the first educational institution in Tamil Nadu to set up such a station.

Addressing scientists and students during the launch of weather station, Sathyabama University chancellor Jeppiaar said that this station would be used for monitoring wind speed, direction, temperature, relative humidity, pressure, rainfall, poisonous gases, aerosols and nuclear radiation. "We installed this station in association with Indira Gandhi Centre for

Atomic Research (IGCAR) at a cost of Rs 1 crore. We would be providing the data collected from the station to every one on our university website www.sathyabamauniversity.ac.in,” he said.

Inaugurating the station, IGCAR director Dr Baldev Raj said that IGCAR had already setup a similar station in its campus at Kalpakkam.

Director of National Remote Sensing Centre Dr V. Jayaraman said that Isro would be setting up such weather stations in various parts of the country. “The tower and station set up at Sathyabama is the only station set up outside Sriharikota Range. We want to install high power sensors in towers with height of over 50 metres. Only Doordarshan has such kind of towers in India and we will ask them to help us install them,” he said.

Director of the area’s cyclone warning centre S.R.Ramanan pointed out that the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University was planning to set up 226 automatic weather stations that would provide uninterrupted weather data.

Source URL:

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/chennai/varsity-first-set-weather-station-city-362>