

**VOL. 61 - II
SEPTEMBER 2021**

LAND BANK JOURNAL



**NATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE AGRICULTURE AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS' FEDERATION LTD.**



THE MEGHALAYA CO-OPERATIVE APEX BANK LTD.

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LAND BANK JOURNAL (QUARTERLY)

Editor
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Annual

₹60/- (For Members)

₹200/- (For Others)

Printed, Published & Owned by,

**National Co-operative Agriculture and
Rural Development Banks' Federation Ltd.**

701, BSEL TECH PARK, 7th Floor, A-Wing,
Opp. Railway Station, Vashi, Navi Mumbai-400 703

Phone No. (022) 27814114, 27814226

E-mail : nafcard.@gmail.com

Website : www.nafcard.org

Printed by:

ACHSA PRINTERS

Shop No. 39, Maruti Paradise, Sector - 15,
CBD Belapur, Navi Mumbai - 400 614.

Tel.: 27571209 / 27571210

*The opinions/views expressed in the Land Bank Journal are
not necessarily the official views of the National Cooperative
Agriculture & Rural Development Banks' Federation.*

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Shri Amit Shah, Minister of Home Affairs and Cooperation has recently stated that the Govt would soon formulate a new National Policy on Cooperatives. Subsequently, National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) had organized a Webinar on this subject, in which Cooperative leaders and practitioners from different sectors talked about their expectations from the new Policy. The Speakers generally supported a new National Policy that states with clarity the goals to be achieved and a plan of action to realize those goals. Our experience with the earlier National Policy on Cooperatives introduced in 2002, gives valuable lessons in formulating a new policy. The earlier policy aimed to ensure working of cooperatives based on cooperative values and principles, revitalization of cooperative structure, particularly in the sector of agricultural credit, reducing regional imbalances in the movement, removing restrictive regulatory regime, entrusting Federations with promotional, guidance and information center role ensuring timely elections, General Body meetings and audit through appropriate legal provisions and empowering poorer sections economically and socially. Though the National Policy on Cooperatives 2002 did not succeed in achieving these goals, to view it as a failed policy is not realistic. The policy in itself was sound and forward looking. However, the problem was lack of a machinery and resources for its implementation. Though the policy document mentioned about a plan of action to implement the policy with required budget support, nothing came out of it. In the first place, Department of Cooperation which was a small division under Ministry of Agriculture did not have human and financial resources to translate the policy into actions. Secondly, efforts and strategies were absent to make the national policy applicable to mainstream cooperatives controlled by the State Govts. With the formation of a full-fledged Ministry of Cooperation in the Centre, the issues in implementing the earlier policy are unlikely to come in the way of new policy. In the National Cooperative Conference organized recently by IFFCO, Shri Amit Shah talked at length about the mandate of the new Ministry. He said that cooperation is the path of development for the poor and deprived sections in the population and also mentioned about the goal 'Sahakar se Samrudhi' given to the cooperative movement by the Prime Minister. Allaying apprehensions that the formation of the Ministry of Cooperation will lead to a Centre-State jurisdictional conflict, Shri Amit Shah said that there is no conflict between the Centre and the States in the agenda of social and

economic development of poor. The Ministry will cooperate with the states to achieve this goal. The Minister in his address also threw light on the main aspects of the new policy on cooperatives as 'to strengthen, promote, modernize, make cooperatives transparent and competitive' and also 'connecting every village with a cooperative, necessitating a phenomenal increase in the number of PCAS to 3 lakhs in the next 5 years from about 65000 at present. Along with increasing the number of PACS which mainly meet the production credit needs of farmers, strengthening of cooperative structure for investment credit for increasing productivity in agriculture should also be a priority area in the new policy. The weak position of the long term credit structure in general has resulted in slowing down the rate of capital formation in agriculture. There has been drastic decline in the share of investment credit in the total agriculture credit in agriculturally important states like Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa where Long Term Rural Credit Structure has become sick or non-existent. The structure needs to be revived in those states through formation of new institutions either under concerned state laws or under Multi State Cooperative Societies Act. Similarly, earlier policy mentioned about the promotional and information center role of Federations but was silent on their role in strengthening self-regulation in their affiliates. Federations need to play an important role in self-regulation by cooperatives when external regulation is being brought down gradually. Increasing youth participation is another important challenge for cooperative movement to grow and sustain. Special efforts are required to attract Youths to the movement. Financial self-reliance should be an area of focus, which in fact is a precondition for the growth of cooperative economy. Dependence of Cooperatives on external resources should be brought down by removing restrictions in mobilizing internal resources through loans and deposits from members. Cooperatives also should be allowed to raise capital from the market through public issue of non-user shares, while user members still holding controlling shares. The new policy is expected to reflect the promise given by the Government in the last budget to ensure ease of doing business by cooperatives which includes equal opportunities and level playing field. We look forward to a new National Policy on Cooperatives which is proactive to address the constraints the cooperative movement faces in different sections today and futuristic to deal with emerging situations while moving forward.

K. K. RAVINDRAN
Editor



PARTHENIUM HYSTEROPHORUS (GAJARGHAS): A MENACE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Dr. Vinod Kumar *

What is Parthenium:

Parthenium hysterophorus is an herbaceous annual plant belonging to compositae family. It is commonly known by different names viz. carrot weed, white top, congress grass, chatak chandni, etc. in different parts of the country. It is most popularly known by gajar ghas (carrot weed) due to its appearance like carrot plant. It is considered to be emerged from Mexico. After noticeable occurrence of Parthenium in Pune (Maharashtra) in 1955, it has spread like a wild fire throughout India. At present, it has invaded about 35 million hectares of land in India. Earlier It was nuisance on road sides, railway tracks, vacant lands, wastelands, industrial areas, on the sides of open drainage system and irrigation canals but now it has started infesting agricultural lands also.

How to identify Parthenium plant:

The plant of Parthenium grows to a height of 1.5-2.0 meters with profuse branches and leaves which are covered with fine hairs. The flowers are white in colour. The plant starts flowering four weeks after emergence and this can happen at any time throughout the year (Nguyen et al, 2010). The seeds are very light in weight and can disperse very easily to the distant places with wind, water, farm machinery, human beings and animals. The population density may vary from 25 to 70 plants per square meter. One plant can produce 5000 to 25000 seeds. The production of seed per plant has been reported to be as high as 15,000 by a typical mature plant in the field in central Queensland (Haseler 1976) and in India 30,000 seeds (Joshi 1991). It can grow under all types of soil and weather conditions.



(Parthenium plant)

Harmful effects of Parthenium

It is a poisonous weed containing parthenin - a sesquiterpene lactone. The LD₅₀ (minimal lethal dose required to cause 50% mortality) for parthenin in rats was 42 mg/kg body weight (Narshiman et al 1984). It may cause skin allergy (dermatitis), hay fever and asthma in human beings. If fed to milch animals it may affect the quality and production of milk. It reduces the ornamental and aesthetic value of our residential areas, parks, schools and other public places where so ever present. It also affects the fodder production by infesting grasslands and pasture. It has allelopathic effect on crops. A study conducted by Singh (et al, 2002) reveals that germination and growth of Ageratum conyzoides was severely reduced by parthenin in the concentration range of 50, 100, and 200 µM, while at 400 µM a complete inhibition of germination was observed. Above all it is a serious threat to our biodiversity and environment.

Control measures:

Manual and Mechanical control

The Parthenium may be controlled manually by uprooting the plants before flowering during monsoon when soil is wet or mechanically with help of machinery like tractor drawn harrow or grass mower etc. However, the care must be taken to wear gloves while uprooting the plants manually as sensitive persons may be allergic to this weed. It is a not a problem of individual but it is problem for whole community, so there is a need to motivate farmers, colony residents, workers in the industry to uproot Parthenium in collective way.

Chemical control:

The chemical control includes use of chemicals to control the weeds. Parthenium can be controlled in non- cropped areas with the use of chemicals like Glyphosate @ 1 to 1.5 per cent or Metribuzin @ 0.3 to 0.5 per cent. Besides this it can also be controlled by spraying 2,4-D, Atrazine, Simazine, Alachlor etc. Care must be taken that herbicides should be sprayed only after consulting weed scientists .

Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar, Krishi Vigyan Kendra , Faridabad



Biological control:

Biological control is the intentional manipulation of natural enemies by man for the purpose of controlling weeds. It does not eradicate the weeds completely but keeps their population below the average that would occur in the absence of the bio control agents. Under this method the bio agents are imported from the native countries to the other countries where the weeds had entered and became invasive. This is a less expensive, permanent, pollution free and most successful approach when used under integrated weed management system. Parthenium is controlled by an insect Mexican beetle: *Zygogramma bicolorata* Pallister (Coleoptera : chrysomeliadae).

For biological control of Parthenium in India, *Zygogramma bicolorata* was imported from Mexico in 1982 and first time released in fields in Bangalore in 1984. The beetles are off white or light reddish in colour with dark brown longitudinal markings on elytra, measuring about 6 mm in length.



(*Zygogramma bicolorata*)

The beetles remain most active in field during June to October. One female can lay up to 2500 eggs during life span. It completes its life cycle in 27-32 days and can complete 4-5 generations from June to October. Single adult of this can eat foliage of one Parthenium plant in 6-8 weeks. Release of 500-1000 beetles at one spot is adequate for its establishment and control of Parthenium

Control by competitive plants:

The infestation of the Parthenium can also removed by the presence of certain competitive plants like *Cassia sericea*, *Cassia tora*, *Tagetes erecta*, *Tephrosia purpurea* etc. The seeds of these plants should be broadcasted in the Parthenium infested areas before onset of monsoon.

It is imperative to mention here that community approach involving all stakeholders from the society should be adopted to manage the Parthenium. The individualistic approach may not yield the desired results because of its presence on common land and extremely fast dispersal through light weight seeds. Therefore, the collective efforts are needed to sensitize the general public through various means like awareness camps, trainings etc. The Directorate of Weed Research, Jabalpur (M.P.) has already initiated organizing Parthenium Awareness Week every year in the month of August in collaboration with SAUs, Research Institutes, KVKs etc.

Compost preparation from Parthenium:

Due to continuous and large scale use of chemical fertilizers, fertility of land is decreasing gradually. Therefore, bio-fertilizer is a boon for soil health. The demand of bio-fertilizer is increasing day by day. We can make bio-fertilizer from abundantly occurred biomass of Parthenium. By making use of this weed, at one hand we can increase the productivity of our crop land by weeding out of this weed while at other hand we can even earn money by making compost on commercial basis from this waste material.

Method to make compost from Parthenium

It is always recommended by the scientists to collect the Parthenium biomass before flowering for making compost either by NADEP or open pit method. But it is not practically possible to collect only flowerless plants as all the stages of Parthenium are available at any time due to non-dormancy of seeds which may germinate on the availability of water. Therefore, farmers are bound to uproot every stage of Parthenium during weeding in their fields.





Following procedure can be followed for making Parthenium compost:

- Make a pit of 3x 6x10feet (depth x width x length) at a place where water dose not stagnate. Pit size can be increased or decreased but depth cannot be compromised.
- If possible, cover the surface and sidewalls of the pit with stone chips. It will protect absorption of essential nutrient of compost by the soil surface.
- If stone cheep are not available, make soil surface compact.
- Arrange about 100 kg dung, 10 kg urea or rock phosphate, soil (1-2 Quintals) and one drum of water near the pit.
- Collect all the Parthenium plants from your field and nearby area.
- Spread about 50 kg of Parthenium on the surface of pit.
- Over this sprinkle 500 gm urea or 3 kg rock phosphate.
- If possible add Trichoderma viridi or Trichoderma harziana (kind of fungi cultured powder) in the amount of 50 gm per layer.
- All the above constituents will make one layer.

- Like first layer make several layers till the pit is filled upto 1 fit high from the ground surface.
- Fill the pit in dome shape.
- While making layers, apply pressure by feet to make weed biomass compact.
- If there is no soil with Parthenium roots than add 1012kg of loamy soil on each layer.
- When pit is full with above described layers then cover it with mixture of cow dung, soil and husk.
- After 4-5 months we can get well decomposed compost.
- We can get 37–45% of compost from 37-42 quintals of Parthenium biomass.

Precautions

During Parthenium compost preparation following precautions should be adopted:

- Pit should be in open and shady upland.
- Cover the pit with the mixture of soil, dung and husk
- If you find fresh germination of Parthenium near the pit where weed was collected to fill up the pit, destroy them otherwise they may contaminate the compost after flowering.
- Check the moisture level of compost. If there is dryness in the pit, make a few holes and pour water in the pit and close the holes.
- During the process, the temperature rises 60-70 °C due to which seeds are killed.
- While it may take about four to five months to prepare the compost in a warm climate, in cold regions it can take more time.

Benefits of Parthenium compost

- Parthenium compost is a type of bio- fertilizer which has no harmful effects on crops, human – beings and environment.
- Parthenin, a poisonous chemical of Parthenium is fully degraded during the formation of compost.
- Parthenium compost is a balanced bio fertilizer which has more nitrogen, phosphorous, potash than that of farm yard manure. Some essential Manure micronutrients are also present in it.

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HONEY BEES: A PRODUCTIVE CREATURE OF NATURE

Nikhil Trivedi¹ and Dr. D. B. Sisodiya²

Honeybees are insects that come under order Hymenoptera and family Apidae exhibiting complete metamorphosis. Genus *Apis* is comprised of nine honeybee species viz., *Apis dorsata* Fabricius (rock bee), *A. florea* (little bee), *A. cerana* (Indian bee), *A. mellifera* (european bee), *A. koschevnikovi*, *A. andreniformis*, *A. laboriosa* (himalayan bee), *A. nigrocincta*, *A. cerana nuluensis*. India is fortunately endowed with four species of true honey bees and nearly half a dozen species of stingless bees. Honeybee species are characterized by particular functional traits that facilitate pollination services to a greater or lesser degree. Bees play an important role in pollination. In tropical forests, savannah woodlands, mangrove, and in temperate deciduous forests, many species of plants and animals would not survive, if bees were missing. This is because the production of seeds, nuts, berries and fruits are highly dependent on insect pollination and among the pollinating insects, bees are the major pollinators.

Plants pollinated by insects are called “entomophilous”, and insects are generally the most important pollinators. Bees and most flowering plants have developed a complex interdependence during millions of years. An estimated 80 percent of flowering plants are entomophilous i.e. depending more or less on insect pollination to be able to reproduce. It is estimated that half of the pollinators of tropical plants are bees. Bees have to find their food in flowers. The food can be nectar or pollen. Nectar is produced to attract the bees, while pollen is produced to ensure the next generation of plants. Usually, a honeybee can visit around 50-1000 flowers in one trip, which takes between 30 minutes to four hours. A colony with 25,000 forager bees, each making 10 trips a day, is able to pollinate 250 million flowers

Bees not only beneficial to environment but to humans also. That is why beekeeping has been carried out since the ancient times. Honeybees produce honey, bees wax, bee pollen, propolis, royal jelly, bee venom and also silk.

The gross salary of an average beekeeper in India is ₹4,07,880. An entry level beekeeper (1-3 years of experience) earns an average salary of ₹3,07,161. On the

other end, a senior level beekeeper (8+ years of experience) earns an average salary of ₹5,03,509.

Table 1: Increase in yield due to pollination by bees in India

Sr. No.	Crops	Percent increase in crop yield
1.	Capsicum	227%
2.	Tomato	160%
3.	Cashew	157%
4.	Pigeon pea	133%
5.	Flat bean	128%
6.	Chick pea	79.5%
7.	Mustard	75%
8.	Mango	68%
9.	Banana	63%
10.	Niger	60%
11.	Papaya	60%
12.	French bean	41%
13.	Jowar	33%
14.	Brinjal	31%
15.	Ridge gourd	27%

Pollination source:

Many fruits and other crops produce a greater number of qualitative fruits and seeds if they are pollinated by bees. The percentage of increased yield are very encouraging. Many orchard farmers have at one time or another, kept bees to perform this vital function for free. However, beehives have to be managed scientifically. Therefore, there is plenty of opportunity for a dedicated beekeepers who take their bees to various orchard at right time. This symbiotic relationship benefits the farmers in making more money from apple, pear, plum, etc. while, beekeepers from their bees and bee products. Mostly this kind of pollination contracts will surely make money to beekeeper, but at a cost. The main costs are fuel, sugar syrup (if the crop doesn't give nectar) and wages (employ people for hive management). It is hard work and always at night. Thus, beekeeping can be a very efficient source of income to the farm families and helps in employment generation.



Honey:

Honey, bee pollen and royal jelly are nutritious food with many medicinal properties. Besides that, there are many records that honey can prevent cancer and heart diseases, reduce ulcer and gastrointestinal disorders. Bees also act as anti-bacterial and anti-fungal agent, increase athletic performance, reduce cough and throat irritation, improve eyesight, help in weight loss, cure impotence, urinary tract disorders, bronchial asthma, diarrhoea and nausea, regulate blood sugar, heal wounds and burns, beautification of skin and used as probiotic food.

Bees Wax:

Bees wax is more valuable than honey and is the basic house-building unit of bee hive. It is generally used in making candle, pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries. It is often mixed with some propolis for strength and without it, a colony could not exist. It takes over 7 kg of honey to produce 1 kg of wax. So, if beeswax is taken away at harvest time for sale, the bees will need to use up a large amount of honey to replace it. It is estimated that a standard sized hive can hold up to 3.8 kg of honey. The wax necessary to hold this weigh only 100 g. Each wax scale produced by a honeybee weighs about 1 mg, which means that nearly one million scales are needed to make 1 kg of wax, and approximately 9×10^5 of these little scales are needed to make sufficient wax for a normal bee colony. The value of beeswax varies according to its purity and colour. Light coloured wax is more highly valued than dark coloured wax because dark wax is likely to have been contaminated or overheated. The finest beeswax comes from wax cappings, which are the wax seals with which the bees cover ripe honeycombs. This new wax is pure and white – pollen and other impurities turn beeswax yellow.

Bee pollen:

There is a large market for pollen, especially as healthy food products and some people regard it as the perfect food. Certainly, there are beekeepers in some countries such as Spain who dedicate their hives to pollen rather than honey collection and make an excellent living from it.

Propolis:

Propolis is resinous substance used as gum and in pharmaceutical industries. It is used for medicinal ointments and tinctures, paints and varnishes. It is commonly found in chewing gum, cosmetics, creams and lozenges. Propolis has

shown promise in dentistry for dental caries, as a natural sealant and enamel hardener. Scientific tests have been conducted on a variety of bacteria, fungi, viruses and other micro-organisms and many of them demonstrated positive effects on such organisms using various extracts and concentrations of propolis. A synergistic effect has been reported for propolis extract when used with antibiotics.

Royal jelly:

Royal jelly is possibly the most valuable (in monetary terms) product of the hive. There is always a market for royal jelly and, whether you are producing it for your own use as a health supplement or you want to go into royal jelly production for sale, it is well worthwhile adding royal jelly production to your beekeeping skills. Any beekeeper who has reared their own queens will know how to produce it.

Bee venom:

Bee venom is used for treatment of arthritis, rheumatic and in apitherapy. It can be used for treating chronic injuries (bursitis and tendonitis), hypertension, asthma, scar tissue removal, certain skin conditions such as eczema, hearing loss and premenstrual syndrome (PMS).

Silk:

The production of silk from honeybee colonies is probably not economically viable, but honeybee larvae produce silk to reinforce the wax cells in which they pupate. Researchers in Australia have now identified honey-bee silk genes and say that bees are among a group of insects that have evolved silks that are very tough and stable in comparison with classical silks.

Products of bees and their beehive like honey, honeydew, pollen, propolis, venom and silk, and all except silk (at the moment) can be a profitable commodity for beekeepers. There are other money-earning avenues for the experienced beekeeper, such as pollination services or producing queen bees for sale are actually a need of the society and can surely help proliferate the beekeeping in India.

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[Beekeeper Salary India - SalaryExpert](#)

[Honey Bees - Farmers best friends - LEISA INDIA.](#)



MANAGEMENT OF SOIL AND WATER A STEP TOWARDS DOUBLING FARMER'S INCOME

**Dr Anay K Rawat¹,
Dr Shradha Bople² and Dr Abhijeet Dubey³**

A recent study by the National Institute of Agricultural Economics and Policy Research has shown that ~70% farmers in the country have annual per capita income < Rs. 15,000. Moreover, ~70% farmers are marginal. All these need for a paradigm shift in agricultural planning if farming has to be made sustainably profitable. This is rather challenging and requires larger efficiency and productivity of soil and water. The challenge given by Hon'ble Prime Minister to double the farmers' income by 2022 is the right prospective in this direction. Agriculture has now playing vital role in changing ecology, climate and trade at Universal level. Throughout the world. According to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) "Agriculture will play a crucial role in addressing the planet's future challenge and is key to providing important adaptation, mitigation synergies to climate change as well as socio-economic and environmental co-benefits. Soil and water are the only pillars for profitable agricultural production system. Agriculture still depends on fact that soil and water in agricultural system is not new but emphasis was not given to save these natural resources because the agricultural strategy in the country during the planned development era focused on ensuring maximum food production with extensive use of agricultural inputs for food security. Diversion of surplus water to the crop land is critical for maximizing the net hydrological gain, especially in areas with poor ground water storage (Oweis et al. 2002). Faulty management of soil and water resources accounts loss of top layer of productive soil i.e. about 6000 to 12000 million tonnes which carry nearly 5.6 to 8.4 million tonnes of nutrients mainly because of Emphasis on application of major nutrients. This resulted in deficiencies of secondary and micronutrients like sulphur (41%), zinc (49%) and boron (33%) with many more micronutrients (Singh 2009). India witnessed remarkable position in food production and achieved self sufficiency but as a output soil turned less productive due to ill soil health and crop productivity, increasing costs of production and shrinking natural resources. Enhancing incomes of the

farmers and ensuring their income security, thus, has been of concern to all. These issues need to be tackled for improving the quality of soil and water resources, breaking the barriers and enhancing the efficiencies and net returns to make farming as profitable business.

Scarcity and uneven use of water is one of the major serious factor due to increasing demand for industrial and drinking purposes which restricts the share of available water resources to farming sector and efficient use of water is the viable solution. Currently about 2.8 billion people survives in water-scarce areas. By 2030, the overall demand for water in India is projected to double and forty percent of the population will have no access to drinking water. If we look global scenario near about 80 per cent of the agriculture is rainfed system and contributing about 60 per cent of world food production. This leads to explore appropriate water management techniques to produce more from per units of water, judicious use and enhance the farm income. Water withdrawals for agriculture sector represent 70 percent of all withdrawals. FAO estimates that more than 40 percent of the world's rural population lives in river basins that are classified as water scarce. In many low-rainfall areas of the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia, and in India and China, farmers use much of the available water resources, resulting in the serious depletion of rivers and aquifers.

Productivity restoration of degraded soils must be supported by other measures that affect the land use practices particularly water and nutrient management. Doubling the farm income will depends on integrated approach of enhancing the income and reducing the cost of production. Sincere research efforts for soil management to enhance productivity and profit have been focused in recent past. Most of the works emphasized the need of site specific and integrated management strategies for higher net returns from agricultural systems. Recycling of farm wastes minimizes the cost of inputs and degradation of soil quality and maximizes the profit. Efficient sensor based input management, conservation agriculture, use of bio-

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inoculants and nano-technologies were found more effective soil management tools for enhancing farm income with less expenditure.

According to the comprehensive assessment on water management in agriculture improving rainfed farming could double or quadruple yield. Reason for yield gaps due to farmers do not have sufficient economic incentives to adopt yield enhancing seeds or cropping techniques. .

- lack of access to information, extension services and technical skills.
- Poor backstopping, poor infrastructure and discouraging agriculture policies.
- Low adoption of improved technologies at farm-level.
- Strategies for enhancing farm income.
- Soil management.

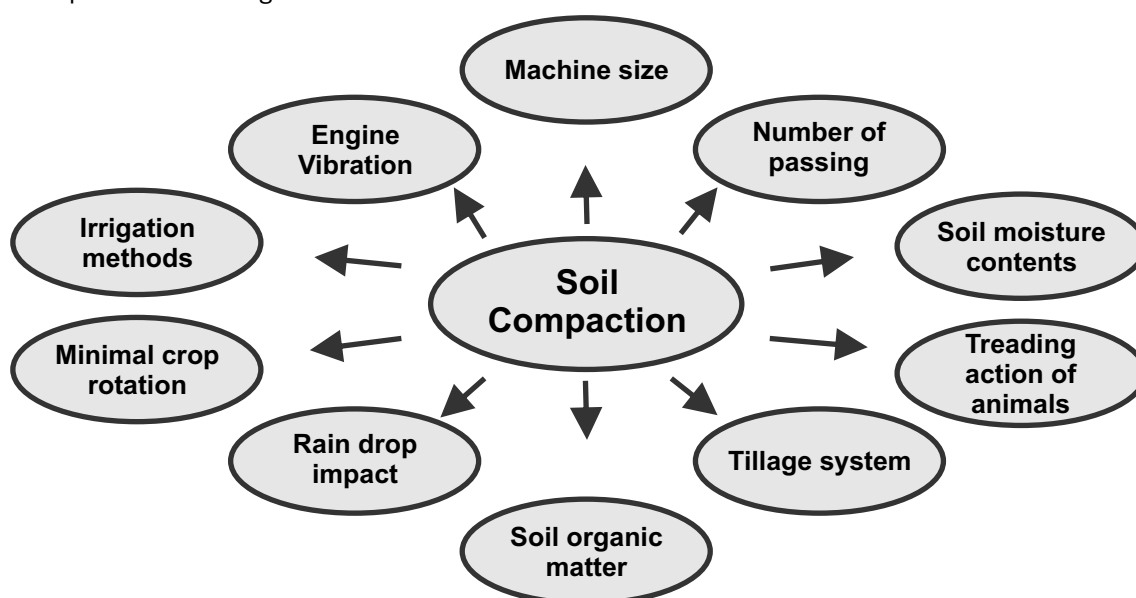
Soil consists of minerals, organic matter, air and water, which changes according to cropping season, cultivation, nutrient status of soil, agro climatic zone and the populations of soil organisms. Result oriented soil management starts with good structure and texture, balanced physical and chemical properties and optimum soil biology. This triggered, soil management is an integral part of land management and differences in soil types and soil characteristics to define specific interventions that are aimed to enhance the soil quality for specific area. Maintain the soil degradation, available water and biological resources, increase in crop and livestock production through suitable land use and

management practices are important part to secure food and livelihood security.

Proper management of soil need targeted returns should be focused on types and characteristics of soil and crops are to be grown. Imbalanced use of inorganic fertilizers, poor recycling of farm wastes and depletion of organic carbon physical, chemical and biological behaviors of soil have been deteriorated which resulted in low yield in spite of input management and adoption of new agriculture technologies. We may adopt any one of following soil management strategies for minimizing the cost of production and maximizing the productivity and monitory returns with aim of doubling the farmer's income:

Conservation agriculture

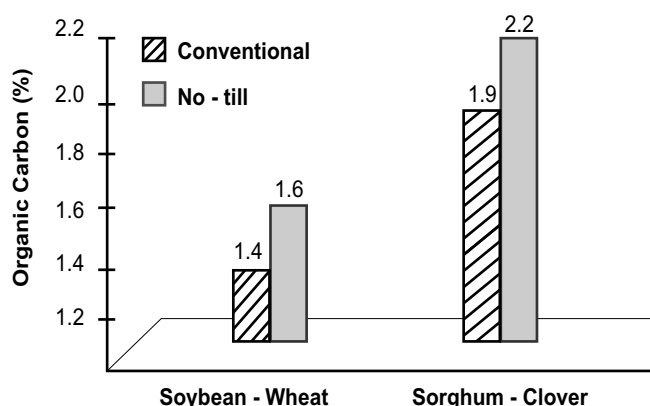
Deterioration in soil properties can be reversed by enhancing the soil carbon pools and their mean residence time which necessitate adoption of sustainable soil management practices like conservation agriculture (Lal, 2010). There has been ample number of reports on the role of conservation agriculture in modifying the physical, chemical and microbiological environment of soil (Malik et al., 2004 and Sidhu et al., 2007). Many studies showed that adoption of conservation tillage significantly reduce the bulk density and enhance the organic carbon and infiltration rate in rhizosphere. Under no-till management, soil disturbance is limited to seed planting and nutrient placement (Busari et al., 2015), which effectively promotes soil and water conservation (Lal, 1989; Unger and Vigil, 1998).





No-tillage is increased the soil bulk density in initial years and therefore, makes the soil more compacted at surface but lesser in rhizospheric zone. Surface cover under CA reduces erosion and run-off losses and facilitates the biological activities which results in poor crusting, higher aggregate stability and improved infiltration. Many evidences are available which shows that conservation agriculture promotes the biological activities in soil and nourishes the soil health (Acharya et al., 1998). Similarly, Singh et al. (2006) also reported that zero-tillage along with crop residue as mulch conserved 11 percent more rain water as compared to conventional tillage at 4 percent slope.

Figure 2: Effect of tillage practice and cropping systems on Soil OC



Conservation agriculture provides an opportunity for carbon sequestration in soil and creating a nutrient-rich environment in plant rhizosphere. It has been reported that organic matter levels have increased from 1.9 to 6.2 percent after 19 years of continuous no-till experiment (Schertz and Kemper, 1994).

The conventional practice of tillage, consumes a high proportion (25–30%) of total operational energy thus become expensive for crop production and is a key factor contributing to accelerated adoption of zero-till technology (Sidhu et al., 2004)

Water Management

With an evergrowing population, India is slowly reeling under water crisis and also land resources have taken great pressure due to urbanisation. Also, water losses in the form of percolation, evaporation, seepage and conveyance are

high, and the constant rotational system giving strain and stress to the crops, the water supply is unreliable and inadequate. Water is another crucial input for agricultural production. Uncertainty of monsoon and declining water-table due to its excessive use creates shortage of fresh water supplies for agricultural use. Strategies for efficient management of water for agricultural use involve conservation of water, integrated water use, and more crop per drop. These approaches will help farmers towards doubling the income.

Conservation of water

Conservation of water means a careful and economical use of water. We should conserve water as it is a precious natural resource. Conservation of water can happen in the following ways:

- Aforestation can help water to penetrate into the soil and replenish the water table
- Use of efficient watering systems such as drip irrigation and sprinklers to reduce water consumption by plants and help in conservation of water
- Building Dams and hydropower projects which help in checking flood and regulating the supply of water to agriculture
- Irrigation hours and frequency can be reduced
- Treatment of industrial and domestic wastewater in sewage plants before its disposal in water bodies help in conservation of water. It reduces the water pollution

Integrated water use

Efficient utilization of water resources and minimization of detrimental effect of water management on soil and water resources can be obtained through the integrated use of water from different sources viz., irrigation to supplement profile stored rainwater, conjunctive use of surface-water and groundwater, poor and good quality water and recycled (waste) water for irrigation. Supplemental irrigation for growing crops is an integrated use of rainwater stored in the profile and the irrigation water regardless of its source. Small (30-50 mm) early post-emergence irrigation stimulates root extension into deeper layers thus causing greater use of profile-stored water. So the water extraction obtained from the supplemental irrigation at crucial crop growth period is

**Table 1. Economics of wheat sowing under conventional and conservation systems.**

Particulars	Sowing Techniques			
	Conventional	Conservation		
		Zero-till	Roto-till	Strip-till
Time (h)	10.80	3.23 (70.1)	3.4 (68.1)	4.17 (61.3)
Fuel used (L ha ⁻¹)	34.60	11.50 (66.8)	13.80 (60.1)	17.50 (49.4)
Operational energy (MJ ha ⁻¹)	1976.11	648.96 (67.2)	783.60 (60.3)	1001.76 (49.3)
Cost of operation (Rs ha ⁻¹)	3400	1400 (58.8)	1800 (47.1)	2000 (41.2)
Saving (Rs ha ⁻¹)	-	2000	1600	1400

more than the proportionate increase in the level of supplemental irrigation, which is referred as priming effect of the supplemental irrigation. The priming effect varies with soil type, fertility level and amount of irrigation. It generally increases with the increase in the N rate, soil water retentively and decreases with the increase in the amount of irrigation after a certain threshold value.

More crop per drop - enhancing water-use efficiency crops

Agriculture has to achieve more 'crop per drop' to increase water efficiency. That should be done in two ways:

- Improving the efficiency of rain-fed production
- Modernisation of irrigation technologies

Optimizing the yields from existing crop production would enable farmers to grow more food with similar water volumes. To achieve that there is a need for effective spreading of agronomic knowledge and allowing farmer access to inputs including good quality seed and crop protection to reduce pre- and post-harvest losses to pests and diseases. Every crop that is lost is inefficient water management. These days it takes around 1.5 cubic meters of water to yield 1kg of crop and from that 15-35% of fresh water is unsustainable. Predictions saying that water consumption demands rise an additional 18% by the year 2050 in developed world and even 40% in developing world so it's even more important to use it right in agriculture.

The amount of rainfall converted into plant-available soil water is determined by the amount and intensity of rainfall, topography, infiltrability and water retentivity of soil, depth of root zone and soil depth. Depth of soil due to its effect on the available water storage capacity decides the type of cropping locality. On medium soil depth monocropping or

intercropping can be practiced whereas in deep soil with 200 mm available soil moisture status double cropping can be practiced.

Selection of crops and cropping sequences under limited irrigation situation should be done as there should be minimum water stress during the growing season although some water stress to the crops and associated yield reduction is inevitable. Therefore, along with selection of crops special care should be taken for irrigation scheduling of these crops.

Under fully irrigated condition selection of crops is not constrained by water availability but by adoptability of the crops to prevailing climatic and soil condition. In general, water use efficiency of C4 plants is higher than C3 plants, particularly under semi-arid environment.

Management of evapo-transpiration

Crop water use, also known as evapotranspiration (ET), represents soil evaporation and the water used by a crop for growth and cooling purposes. This water is extracted from the soil root zone by the root system, which represents transpiration and is no longer available as stored water in the soil. Consequently, ET is used interchangeably with crop water use. Prevailing weather conditions, available water in the soil, crop species, and growth stage influence crop water use.

Irrigation method

Efficient micro-irrigation methods like sprinkler and drip irrigation for utilization of available water in may be usefull for high value horticultural and plantation crops for saving of 50 percent of water and also increase the crop yield and quality substantially.

Efficient micro-irrigation methods will fetched maximum



WUE. There are different methods for irrigation scheduling viz., critical crop growth stages, feel and appearance method, soil moisture depletion approach, irrigation water at different cumulative pan evaporation method.

Tillage

Tillage practices mainly influence the physical properties of soil viz., soil moisture content, soil aeration, soil temperature, mechanical impedance, porosity and bulk density of soil and also the biological and chemical properties of soil which in turn influence the edaphic needs of plants viz., seedling emergence and establishment, root development and weed control. Tillage also influences the movement of water and nutrients in soil and hence their uptake by crop plants and their losses from soil-plant system. Gomma et al., (2002) also found similar results. They conducted field experiments and studied maize grain yield under different tillage systems and highest grain yield was obtained by conventional tillage treatment. Tillage practice improved the availability of nutrients and water for efficient uptake that ultimately resulted in high grain yield.

Tillage affects the WUE by modifying the hydrological properties of the soil and influencing root growth and canopy development of crops. Tillage methods influence wettability, water extraction pattern and transport of water and solutes through its effect on soil structure, aggregation, total porosity and pore size distribution. Tillage system suitable for a soil depends upon soil type, climate and cropping system practiced. Shallow inter-row tillage into growing crops reduces short-term direct evaporation loss from soil even under weed-free condition by breaking the continuity

of capillary pores and closing the cracks.

Conservation tillage reduces soil disturbance and retains crop residues on the soil surface. It can effectively reduce wind erosion, water erosion and soil bulk density and enhance soil total porosity and saturated water conductivity, thereby increasing rainfall infiltration and soil water holding capacity, reducing soil evaporation, and enhancing crop growth, yield, and WUE.

Mulching

In arid and semi-arid regions, plastic mulching is widely used in farming to control weeds, conserve water and improve soil temperatures (Kader et al., 2017). In fact mulching can be beneficial in realizing better crop yield.

Fertilization

Technologies such as drip irrigation and fertigation can improve WUE and decrease salinization while maintaining or increasing yields. Fertigation, which can improve the efficiency of irrigation water and fertilizer, is a new fertilization method of precision agriculture. Therefore, the development of efficient agricultural water use is not only necessary but also feasible.

Weed management

Weed management is the most efficient and practical means of reducing transpiration. Weeds compete with crops for soil moisture, nutrients and light. Weeds transpire more amount of water compared to associated crops plants.

The Prime Minister's vision of doubling farmers' income by 2022 is achievable through judicious use of soil and water and also science-led innovations to transform agriculture in a business model in achieving this goal.

continued from pg.05

- Parthenium compost is an eco-friendly bio fertilizer that can be made by low cost inputs and application of it in



crop fields will increase the fertility of soil.



(Scientists of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Faridabad organized Parthenium awareness week during 16-22 August 2021)



RE-STRUCTURING COOPERATIVE ADMINISTRATION

The idea of Cooperation or interdependence in India is not entirely a new device. The use of the word in the modern sense however, is not native to the country. Our Vedas, the Upanishads and Bhagwat Purana have fully subscribed to Cooperative existence. In the Vedas, prayers have been made to the almighty to give human being power and "desire to work together, to live together and to think together."

Rig Veda preaches to all mankind that "May you all have common purpose. May your hearts be in unison. May you all be of the same mind so that, you can do work efficiently and well". In Bhagwat Purana, individual ownership is permitted only to the requirement of food. Similarly, Kautilya in his "Arthshastra" refers to Cooperatives as guilds of workmen who carry any work prescribing that they should divide their earnings equally or as agreed upon mutually.

On examining the evolution and growth of Cooperative Movement during British era, we find that development had completely been in the doll-drums. Firstly, as Professor Coupland rightly observes, "Dyarchy failed in its primary purpose which its authors intended to serve. It did not provide a real training in responsible government." Secondly, the Government failed to provide an environment for democratic functioning of the Cooperatives. Under the various Acts, authority was decentralized in theory, but, in practice, meant more and more control. Furthermore, illiteracy amongst the masses, poor socio-economic conditions, and absence of adequate infrastructure to guide and advise Cooperatives in the country to put them on a sound footing, were the other reasons for failure of Cooperatives to grow and prosper under the State Patronage.

COOPERATIVE ADMINISTRATION: INDEPENDENT ERA

Presently, administration of Cooperatives is essentially the responsibility of the State Governments (except matters under the Central Government). Item 32 of List II (Article 246, Schedule 7) reads as follows:

"Incorporation, regulation and winding up of Cooperatives, other than those specified in List-I and Universities, unincorporated trading, literary, scientific, religious and

other Societies and associations, Cooperatives Societies."

These provisions clearly show that Cooperative Societies is a State subject. The pattern of Cooperative administration in all the States is more or less same. The executive organization is headed by Registrar, Cooperative Societies. He is generally referred to as "Friend, Philosopher and Guide," "Creator, Promoter and Destructor", "Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh" and above all, in the new market regime as a 'Facilitator' than a 'Regulator'.

As regards Cooperative administration at Union Government level, due to Federal concept, it too has been influencing development of Cooperatives on the analogy of other State subjects like agriculture, health, etc. According to Entry 43 and 44, (List I Article 246), the Central Government has jurisdiction over those Cooperatives whose objectives extend beyond the State:

Entry 43

Incorporation, regulation and winding up of corporations, whether trading corporations including banking, insurance and financial corporations, but not including Cooperative Societies.

Entry 44

Incorporation, regulation and winding up of corporations, whether trading or not, with objects not confined to one State, but not including Universities. Such type of Cooperative Societies were hitherto-fore being governed by Multi Unit Cooperative Societies Act, 1942 which was a Central Act. The Act amended in 1984 has again been amended in 2002 to facilitate more autonomy.

The Central Government has also constitutional responsibility of the economic and social development of the country including the Cooperatives (Entry 20 of List III dealing with "Economic and Social Planning"). In other words, the responsibility of the Central Government to finance, direct, co-ordinate and plan Cooperatives for social and economic development has to be recognized.

The Constitution in the Preamble enjoins upon the State to secure for all its citizens; justice, social, economic and political and to this extent creates environment for the full growth of Cooperatives based on "voluntary association and



mutual help" principles. Article 43 specifically makes a mention of the importance of the Cooperatives. It states that "the State shall endeavor to secure, by suitable legislation or economic organization or in any other way to all workers, agricultural, industrial or otherwise, work, a living wage, conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of living and full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities and in particular, the State shall endeavor to promote cottage industries on an individual or Cooperative basis in rural areas." Thus, the State has to provide an environment wherein the Cooperatives are fully imbued in the realm of social policy. The Plan documents (only up to 7th Five Year Plan), too have given paramount importance to Cooperatives in process of economic and social development. But thereafter, the then ruling Governments instead of bestowing proper prestige and honor to the Cooperative Sector even dared to remove the Chapter on 'Cooperation' in the Plan documents.

From the Constitutional provisions as also Plan documents, it is apparent that the Union Government is responsible for the following matters in relation to 'Cooperation' :

- (i) Evolve a National Policy for Cooperative Development;
- (ii) Co-ordinate policies and programs with the States;
- (iii) Promote balanced regional development;
- (iv) Collect and disseminate Cooperative information for the country as a whole;
- (v) Promote and co-ordinate research;
- (vi) Collaborate with bilateral and multilateral International agencies with special reference to International Cooperative Alliance;
- (vii) Formulate perspective plans and to initiate pilot projects;
- (viii) Evaluate and review the progress of Cooperatives; and
- (ix) Allocate funds for Cooperative development in the various sectors.

COOPERATIVE MACHINERY : UNION LEVEL

For the effective functioning of the aforesaid activities, 'Cooperation Division' in the then Ministry of Food and Agriculture was set-up in the year 1955. It was on December 31, 1958 that the status of Cooperation Division was upgraded to the level of Department of Cooperation under

Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules 1961. In subsequent years, it has been bunched with a number of Ministries and has in fact, been given a step- motherly treatment as would also be evident from the Chart "Development of Independent Department of Cooperation." Merely one of the 25 Divisions in the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, it has no attached offices, subordinate offices or public undertakings, except one autonomous body - National Cooperative Development Corporation.

Development of Independent Department of Cooperation

Ministry	Department	Year
Ministry of Agriculture (with different designation from time to time)	Department of Agriculture and Cooperation. Cooperation Division out of 21 (1979), 22 (1980), 26(1981), 25 (1982 and 1983), 24 (1984-97), 23 (1988), 26(1999 2000) and 25 (2001) Division in the Department	1979 onwards
Ministry of Commerce, Civil Supplies and Cooperation	Department of Civil Supplies and Cooperation	1977
Ministry of Civil Supplies and Cooperation	Department of Cooperation	1976
Ministry of Industry and Civil Supplies	Department of Civil Supplies	1974
Ministry of Agriculture	Department of Cooperation	1971
Ministry of Good, Agriculture, Community Development and Cooperation	Department of Cooperation	1966
Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation	Department of Cooperation	1958
Ministry of Food and Agriculture	Department of Agriculture (Cooperation Division)	1955

In addition to the Cooperation Division, 21 National Federations in the sectoral fields have also emerged thereby adding a new dimension to Cooperative structure because of their promotional and financial (NCUI, Petrofils, NAFED, NCCF) role. These provides leadership and support in administrative, technical, financial and other allied matters to the Cooperatives at the State, district and local levels in their respective spheres.

It is pertinent to mention here the while Cooperation Division



is performing all the activities relating to agricultural sector as well as implementing various Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Cooperative schemes, there is no such central administrative hierarchy for the remaining important segments of Cooperation. In fact, the policies, programs and administrative machinery relating to Cooperatives in Sectors such as Khadi, Handicrafts,

Handlooms, Sericulture, Housing, Industrial, Consumers, Workers, etc. are being dealt with by functional Ministries alone. However, Cooperation Division on its part, has been providing fillip by getting the recommendations implemented from other concerned Ministries. But in reality as the A.R.C. aptly puts, "there is wide gap between accepted policies and actual implementation."

COOPERATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY: ROLE

It is all due to concerted efforts of Union Government and State Government that India celebrated centenary of the World largest Cooperative Movement in 2004. These entities being reckoned as a formidable force to harness local resources and skills are envied as the key to development and empowerment of the poor.

To be more specific about the obligations and achievements of the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, it has been arranging annual conferences of: (i) State Ministers of Cooperation, (ii) the Registrars, and (iii) national seminars and workshops, discuss and analyze various policy issues and suggest administrative, financial and technical measures to reorient the future Cooperative policies and programs.

The Department constituted 40 odd Expert Committees/Working Groups from time to time to study specific problems and issues. However, fundamental issues have remained as it is because the deliberations more or less have proved to be an 'old wine in the new bottle'. That is why, implementation of their recommendations have been reduced merely to an academic proposition. Perhaps, this was the reason why Parkinson-Well known management expert-remarked a few years back that in a country like India, a separate branch of knowledge, namely, Committeology should be extensively taught to administrators and representatives of the people.

COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENTS UNDER UNION ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY

Cooperative Machinery at Union Government of late, has given a great vitality to the Movement by initiating steps in the direction of formulating a National Policy as well as enacting various Acts for the sole reason that in wake of emerging scenario of liberalization and globalization, Cooperatives were at cross-roads of existence and launching Cooperative reforms was the only alternative for survival.

National Policy on Cooperatives (2002)

National Policy on Cooperatives, is a part of the conceded efforts of the Government in consultation with States/U.Ts. to provide appropriate policy and legislative support to Cooperative Sector as a whole. The objective is to facilitate all round development of the Cooperatives in the country. Under this Policy, Cooperatives would be provided necessary support, encouragement and assistance particularly in areas which require people's participation and community efforts. This is all the more important in view of the fact that still a sizeable segment of the population in the country is below poverty line and Cooperatives are the only appropriate mechanism to lend support to this section of the people.

The National Policy therefore recognizes Cooperatives as autonomous associations of persons, united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise. The Policy envisages regulatory role of Government limited to conduct of timely elections, audit and safeguarding interest of stakeholders in Cooperatives. Above all, Government recognizes apolitical nature of Cooperatives, i.e. least interference in its management and working.

Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act (2002)

The Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act in May 2002 was enacted to make a real triumph of Cooperative autonomy. It seeks to strengthen functional independence for Cooperatives and at the same time, removing restricted provisions hampering Cooperative growth. With the passage of the Act, there are no restrictions in having more than one Cooperative with the same objective in the same



geographical area. The Act removes political control and bureaucratic directions to Cooperatives so that "few and far between" success stories in Cooperatives could be replicated. The Central Government's power to give directions to and/or supersession of the Boards of the Multi-State Cooperative Societies has been restricted to such Societies in which not less than 51 percent equity is held by the former.

NCDC Act (2002)

Effective from September 16, 2002, NCDC has initiated qualitative changes by broad-basing its scope of activities and manner of lending. It is the truly apex promotional development funding institution for the Cooperative Sector. It provides funds directly to Cooperatives without State/Central Government guarantee on providing reasonable security by the borrowing institutions. It also finances projects of Service Sector and Industrial Cooperatives in rural areas.

Producer Companies (2003)

The New concept of Producer Companies as the 4th Type of Company, was incorporated in the Companies Act, 1956 in February 2003. Based on Alagh Committee recommendations, it facilitates incorporation of existing Cooperatives whether registered under Multi-State Cooperative Act or any State Act into Producer Companies and at the same time, ensuring that the legislation accommodates the unique elements of Cooperative business within the framework of Companies Act.

Liberal and Parallel Cooperative Legislation

Having realized the deteriorating conditions of Cooperative Sector, a parallel Cooperative law providing full autonomy to those Cooperatives which do not seek any financial assistance from the State Government, has also been enacted by some of the States.

97th Constitutional Amendment (2011) & Supreme Court decision thereon

The then UPA Government in 2011 by 97th Constitutional Amendment brought several changes with regard to working of Cooperative societies. While new Article 43B in Directive Principles of State Policy stressed for promotion of Cooperative Societies, Part IX(B) inserted in the Constitution

laid down several mandates from which States cannot deviate. These related to ceiling on number of directors to 21; duration of term as five years; conduct of elections, time period of audit, filing of financial accounts etc. Gujarat High Court however held that amendments introduced certain conditions for State Legislatures on Cooperative societies — being a State subject. Recently, Supreme Court by a majority decision & upholding High Court decision, struck down a part of 97th Amendment relating to Cooperatives.

INDEPENDENT MINISTRY OF COOPERATION

As already explained, there are manifold agencies looking after programs of Cooperatives at Union Government. Most of the new registrations in Cooperatives are coming up in Housing, Labour and many other sectors. It is an accepted principle that divided responsibility is none's responsibility. Experience suggests that development of functional Cooperatives has been very slow in contrast to Cooperatives in field of marketing, processing and distribution for which Cooperation Division has been giving attention on a sustained basis all the time. The main cause for slow progress is that the responsibility for administration of Cooperatives is not only dispersed, but also creates a lot of difficulty in co-ordination and execution. More so, Cooperatives cannot deal with all the intricacies, contingencies and exigencies alone. Besides, functional Ministries have also to be blamed being pre-occupied in other affairs or lag behind in having a regular administrative set-up. On some occasions, these are short of funds. In certain cases, the Ministries fail to receive expert guidance from the central machinery. Even various Cooperative Congresses and A.R.C. observed that there should be a full-fledged Ministry and given responsibility relating to Cooperatives of all kinds. Hence, if we really want to bring about modernization and social change, there is a dire need to upgrade the status of Cooperation Division to a full-fledged Ministry so that a unified administrative agency can engage its attention in formulation and execution of plans, research, training, evaluation and review of progress as also dealing with International agencies and attending to Parliamentary work relating to Cooperatives.

In the light of aforesaid observations, Modi Government in July 2021 has taken a historic step of setting up altogether a




new independent Ministry of Cooperation. Henceforth, there would be 41 Ministries in the Union Government. Setting up this Ministry has been hailed as a game changer and also fulfils one of the budget announcements made by the Finance Minister in recent past. She had assured to set up a separate administrative structure for Cooperatives to streamline processes allowing Cooperatives the Ease of doing Business. Resultantly, it will go a long way in strengthening rural economy; a massive boost in creating a true people's momentum for development; and growth of Multi State Cooperatives. In sum and substance, creation of new Ministry is bound to provide a separate administrative, legal and policy framework keeping in view the broad Vision of Sahakar Se Samridhi or Prosperity through Cooperatives.

Accordingly, in the recent biggest reshuffle, the Home Minister, a staunch repository of the Cooperative Movement, has been made political head of the Ministry assisted by a Minister of State. The administrative design of the Ministry is also being finalized to carry out its defined duties and responsibilities.

As usual, there has been a general criticism against the ruling establishment that it has abandoned the path of minimum Government and maximum governance . Instead of


integrating and merging administrative departments/ ministries to pave the way for efficacy and efficiency, the newly created Ministry shall concentrate even more powers in hands of Union Government. To some critics, it is another attempt to gain control over grass root institutions especially in the opposition ruled States and thereby undermining the fundamental principle of Federalism. Similarly, some argue that it aims at targeting the grip of influential leaders in Cooperative sector (especially sugar, milk and cotton lobby) in some key States like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka etc. Most of these misgivings do not appear to be tenable as there are many other State subjects for which Union Government has Ministries/Departments to provide policy direction to the States from time to time.

New Millennium therefore, urges upon Cooperative Sector to revitalize and compete with the market forces on an equal footing, by re-designing its Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives in such a manner that these turn out to be more member-driven and member-caring. For this, the newly constituted independent Cooperative machinery at Union level shall certainly usher in a conducive environment for Good Governance.



LAND BANK JOURNAL

(QUARTERLY PUBLICATION)
w.e.f. June 2021



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PAYMENT OF RETIREMENT BENEFITS TO THE EMPLOYEES OF COOPERATIVES - WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Cooperation is a social concept closely associated with the human life and the subject of 'Cooperation' has grown as a people's movement strong enough to meet the economic needs of the common man by practicing its principles in the economic sector. Sustainable development is at the very core of cooperative enterprises through self help and empowerment, capacities and re-investing surpluses which support and promote a vision of sustainable development and growth. The cooperatives have made their significant presence in almost all the areas of socio-economic activities. They have emerged as the most empowering institutions for the poor and down-trodden sections of the society. As they are community based organisations, they empower people in the communities to improve their socio-economic condition.

The contribution of the employees for the growth of cooperatives is sine quo non and to maintain their standard it is necessary that they are paid decent salary during their service tenure and paid retirement benefits on time.

The retirement benefits mainly consist of the employees' leave encashment (employees are allowed to accumulate leaves and exchange them for cash on their retirement), retirement gratuity and the amount that they were contributing to their provident fund account throughout their service.

All these, when put together, will result in a considerable corpus. This amount is going to be the backbone of the employee's retired life. Using this amount wisely will alleviate the need to depend on others for handling financial expenses. This will give them a sense of financial confidence.

The State Cooperative Societies Acts provide for establishing provident fund and gratuity fund for the employees. For example, Section 78 of the Tamil Nadu Cooperative Societies Act, 1983 provides that a society not being an establishment to which the Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous

Provisions Act, 1952 applies may establish a provident fund for the benefit of the employees to which shall be credited all contributions made by the employees and the society in accordance with the bye-laws. According to Section 79 of the Act, a society not being establishment to which the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972 applies may provide in its bye-laws for payment of gratuity to the employees at such rates and on such conditions as may be specified in the bye-laws and such society may establish a gratuity fund or make other arrangements for the purpose.

It implies that wherever the Central Acts apply, such societies shall be governed by the Central Acts for provident fund and gratuity. Where the number of employees is less than the statutory minimum prescribed under the Central Act, the societies may establish the fund in accordance with the State Cooperative Societies Act and frame regulations to this effect with the approval of the Registrar of Cooperative Societies.

It is provided that the provident fund and the gratuity fund shall be invested in the financing bank and shall not be used in the business of the society. These funds do not form part of the assets of the society and not liable to attachment or be subject to any other process of any Court or other authority. It is worth noting that Section 80A of the Kerala Cooperative Societies Act, 1969 also provides of pension scheme to the employees of societies.

REGULATION OF FUNDS IN REAL TERMS

In spite of the rigour that the provident fund and gratuity fund should be invested separately in financing bank and shall not be used in business, in reality the societies facing financial strain often fail to invest the funds and use them in the business. This results in accumulation of such funds being put into use in business and this poses a threat to the employee as he has to go empty handed on his retirement and driven pillar to post to get back the benefits. The very purpose of establishment of funds gets defeated.



Worse is the situation when the society goes for winding up and the accumulation of provident and gratuity funds reflect only in the accounts and nothing is available in real terms.

This article analyses on certain cases where the Court has directed the Registrar and/or the liquidator to pay off the liability on behalf of the liquidated society and the hurdles faced in implementing such orders.

In the case before the High Court of Madras in *S.Murugavadivelan vs. The Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Chennai and others*, W.P. (MD) No.16390 of 2015 dated 5.3.2019, the petitioner was an employee of Manapparai Taluk Cooperative Housing Society Ltd. and his plea was that he was not paid retirement benefits. The Registrar of Cooperative Societies (Housing) and the Regional Deputy Registrar (Housing) are the first and second respondents respectively, while the President of the society was the third respondent. A direction was issued by the Court directing the respondents to pay the retirement benefits to the petitioner with 8% interest.

The finding of the learned single Judge was taken on appeal before the Division Bench in the Registrar of Cooperative Societies (Housing), Chennai and another vs. S. Murugavadivelan and another, W.A. (MD) No. 1062 of 2021 dated 3.6.2021. The appellants contended that the second respondent society has been wound up and a liquidator has been appointed. In the liquidation proceedings, preference will be given to the depositors. It was submitted that balance loan amount to be recovered from the borrowers is Rs.3,24,000. Even if the same is recovered, it will not be sufficient to defray even the arrears of salary of the serving employees.

It may be true that the second respondent society has been wound up. In fact, in the grounds of appeal filed by the appellants, they would blame the first respondent for the present situation to which the society has been pushed. However, the appellants do not dispute the fact that the first respondent has been allowed to retire on attaining the age of superannuation. Therefore, at this juncture, by citing that the affairs of the society were not properly managed cannot be a reason to deny the retirement benefits payable to the first

respondent. There is no good reason to interfere with the order and direction issued by the learned single Bench. However, considering the fact that the second respondent society has already been wound up and liquidation proceedings are being undertaken, the Division Bench modified the percentage of interest granted to the first respondent and the retirement benefits by reducing it to 6% instead of 8%. Except for the above modification, the order and direction issued is confirmed. The writ appeal was dismissed.

In W.P. Nos. 12505, 12506 and 13241/2015, 35 former employees of Pondicherry Public Servants Cooperative Stores and Ariyankuppam Public Servants Cooperative Stores, both the societies were liquidated, sought intervention of the Court for settlement of their terminal benefits such as EPF, gratuity, unpaid salary, bonus, encashment of earned leave etc. The Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Puducherry and the liquidator were the third and fourth respondents respectively. Taking the petitions on file, by interim order dated 25.7.2015, the learned single Judge directed the third and fourth respondents to pay the EPF dues to the tune of Rs.97,72,300 to these employees. The Court observed that these respondents cannot withhold the EPF contribution made by the employees after the closure of the establishment and hence it shall be repaid to them.

This interim order was impugned on the ground that though the EPF dues have been shown only in the books, the society has not deposited the amount separately, but utilized in the business and hence no money was readily available with the society. Further the Registrar has no role in the administration of the society and a direction to him will not be sustainable. Further, the liquidator can pay the dues to the employees subject to realization of assets of the liquidated societies and availability of further funds.

The Division Bench in *The Chief Secretary, Pondicherry and others vs. 1. Kanchana and others*, W.A.Nos.322 To 324 of 2016 dated 22.3.2016 found no error in the order of the learned single Judge and held that the employees were entitled to the EPF contribution made by them. The Division



Bench has not deliberated on the tenability of the direction issued to the Registrar for refund of the EPF contribution and how the liquidator could make the payment when funds were not available with him. The Government has taken the matter to the Supreme Court and the direction issued by the High Court was stayed by the Apex Court.

Judgments Analyzed

In the afore judgments, the Court considered the cooperative society as an extended arm of the Government and hence directed the authorities to make the payment of the EPF to the former employees. While dealing with the question whether cooperative societies in Kerala, not substantially financed by the appropriate Government, would fall within the purview of the Right to Information Act, 2005, the Supreme Court in *Thalappalam Service Cooperative Bank Ltd., and others vs. State of Kerala and others*, 2013 (12) SCALE 527 : 2013 (6) CTC 98 : (2013) 7 MLJ 407 : 2013 (4) KLT 232 : 2014-1 L.W. 273 : CDJ 2013 SC 902 : 2013 AIR SCW 5863 : RTIR IV (2013) 75 held that societies are, of course, subject to the control of the statutory authorities like Registrar, Joint Registrar, the Government, etc. but cannot be said that the State exercises any direct or indirect control over the affairs of the society which is deep and all pervasive. Supervisory or general regulation under the statute over the cooperative societies, which are body corporate does not render activities of the body so regulated as subject to such control of the State so as to bring it within the meaning of the 'State' or instrumentality of the State.

In these cases, there is no employer-employee relationship between the Registrar and the employees of the cooperative society. The direction issued to the Registrar to pay off the terminal benefits to the employees of the societies appears to be misplaced. The Registrar cannot use the exchequer of the Government to pay the retirement benefits of the cooperative societies and he does not have budgetary support for this purpose.

It is just and proper for the employee to implead the society concerned or the liquidator as the respondent(s) but arraying the Government or the Registrar as one of respondents appears to be mis-joinder of parties or as

redundant. It is trite that the Government or the Registrar is made a party to the writ petition just to maintain the writ, as otherwise no writ will lie against a cooperative society in the normal circumstances. Whenever writ petitions are filed in the High Court by the employees of cooperative societies seeking a direction to pay retirement benefits, the office of the Registrar should seek to delete him as a party to the proceedings, stating that no relief can be claimed from the Registrar in this regard and the employee can work out his remedies only from the society or from the liquidator, if the society is wound up. If this is not done right in earnest. There is every likelihood for the Court to issue a direction against the respondents, which, of course, include the Government or Registrar. Crying hoarse that the said order cannot be implemented at a later stage is like to close the stable door after the horse has bolted.

Giving direction to the Government or the Registrar to pay off the benefits of an employee of a society cannot be viewed as an isolated incident. Spate of such requests may crop up from similarly placed employees, seeking relief and the Court cannot shut the door saying that such large scale relief cannot be granted. Moreover, the societies will be emboldened that the responsibility is on the Registrar to grant terminal benefits to their employees, as if they were the employees of the Government.

It is true that even public sector/Government Corporation employees face such ticklish issue and are not paid their benefits in time. But the situation is altogether different. The Government can bailout such employees by granting one-time grant, but the same analogy cannot be extended to the employees of the cooperative societies.

With regard to the role of the liquidator to pay the retirement benefits to the employees, the statute provides, inter alia, that the liquidator has to dispose of the assets and pay the liabilities as per the priority and ratably as the assets of the concerned liquidated society may permit. The law does not impose a liability on him to make payment outside the funds of the liquidated society. Imposing a liability on the liquidator to perform an impossible task is contrary to the legal maxim *lex non cogit ad impossibilia*, meaning the law does not



compel one to impossible things.

Juris Effectus in Executione Cosistit

The effect of an order consists in its execution. The adversarial form of adjudication is both cost and time consuming. It makes the access to justice to a forbidden fruit. Approaching the Court for redressal of grievances has made the litigants to believe that the damage or the injury caused is more endurable than the hurdles involved in getting it redressed. Caught between the procedural wriggles and overflowing dockets, fortunate are the litigants whose case gets disposed of before they are disposed of. Sadly, the battle does not end there. The real challenge lies in getting the order implemented. The proof of pudding is in the eating.

Likewise, the sanctity of the order lies in its execution. An order which remains on paper becomes a cosmetic justice. In the present trend, voluntary compliances of Court orders have become a forgotten rule. The litigants, more often than not, are forced to approach the Courts again, seeking implementation of its orders and initiation of contempt proceedings is the only way out, if the order is passed by the Constitutional Court. We may note that the contempt proceedings have become an offshoot of the principal lis, adjudicated between the parties. Though initiation of contempt proceedings is on surge, yet, punishing the contemnor for defying its order is a rarity. [Implementation of orders passed by Constitutional Courts - Another battle? (2021) 5 MLJ 9-Article].

When the employees get a direction from the Court for payment of retirement benefits, directed against the Government or the Registrar, he gets a relief only in paper and for getting it executed, he has to fight a tough battle tougher than the first round. Similarly, the direction against the liquidator is also hard nut to crack, because the liquidator has to prioritize the claims and makes payment as per law. When it comes to payment to the retired employee, the coffer is almost empty.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE REGISTRAR

The role of the Registrar of Cooperative Societies is unlike

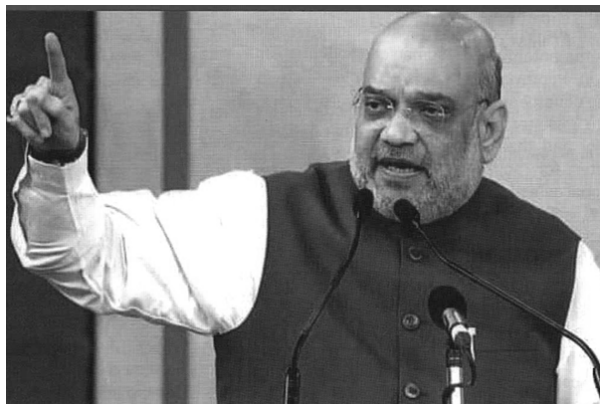
the Registrar of Companies or Registrar of Societies. The Registrar cannot shirk his responsibility by saying that payment of retirement benefits to the employees of the cooperatives is purely an internal management. As a supervisory and controlling authority, he has so many regulatory mechanisms in his armory like audit, inspection, inquiry, surcharge, supersession etc. Over a period of time the society fails to contribute the funds towards the provident fund and gratuity and this gets accumulated to an unimaginable level. This trend should be arrested right in the bud. The Registrar should ensure that statutory auditors of the society ensure that the management does not commit any default in this regard and in case of such default, it should be reported in the schedule of defects. The employees also have to exert pressure on the management that the contribution is made periodically. They should not be just satisfied with receipt of salary alone. When the default continues, the employees have to realize that at the time of retirement even if the society wants to pay the benefits, they cannot. The Registrar has to play a pro-active role that the employees are not left in lurch when it comes to retirement benefits.

IN FINE

The payment of retirement benefits to the employees primarily rests on the respective societies, but when the employees knock the doors of the Court seeking direction for payment of such benefits, the case has to be defended in right prospective.



COOPERATIVES WILL BE GIVEN THEIR DUE PRIORITY - AMIT SHAH



Addressing the first Cooperative Conference organized recently by IFFCO, NCUI, NAFED, KRIBHCO and other cooperative organizations on 25th September 2021, Hon'ble Union Home and Cooperation Minister Shri Amit Shah said that the Government will bring a new cooperative policy with suitable changes, which will be implemented by the end of this year. He said that the cooperative sector needs to be strengthened and all important units in the entire network will soon be computerized.

"Many people say that cooperatives is a state subject but I must tell you that we will not have any confrontation with the states and will be working with them in poverty amelioration and help them in the matter of cooperatives", Shri Shah said. He also said that all PACS, district cooperative banks, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development and other important financial institutions will be revamped with a new software system.

Noting that the Cooperative credit facility has to be made more liberalised, Shri Shah further said that many people in this country do not get small loans from banks or financial institutions as they do not have any paper or something to mortgage. These cooperative institutions will address their concern.

He also said that the cooperative sector will have a major role in achieving Prime Minister Narendra Modi's target of a five trillion dollar economy by 2025 and that after creating a

new Ministry, nobody will be able to do injustice to this sector.

He also urged the representatives of the various cooperative federations to make this sector successful. Training, skill development and transparency was required for filling in posts and appointing office bearers. He said that PM Modi's mantra of 'Sahkar se Samriddhi' (prosperity through cooperation) will play an important role in poverty alleviation in rural India.

The Minister also attacked the critics who say that the days of the cooperatives are over. Referring to the example of Amul Cooperative, Shah further said that it was created on the vision of Sardar Patel with only 80 farmers in 1946 and now its turnover has been over Rs 53,000 crore per annum.

After 75 years of independence, it was the vision of the Prime Minister who saw the potential of co-operatives in improving the economy of the country and formed a separate ministry. "I count myself lucky and thank the Prime Minister for appointing me to a post which is close to my heart", said Shah, who is known to have worked at the grassroots level in Gujarat in the past.

In his captivating speech, Shri Shah mentioned both the goals of the Ministry and his expectations from the cooperative sector and its leaders. "All of you are here and I expect you to focus on areas of neglect and work hard for five years to make the country self-sufficient in the field", Shah said asking why we can't get rid of the need to import quality seeds. The ministry will lend you all support, he assured.

"The Co-operative today stands on a robust platform because of your efforts, now the time has come to build a multi-story on it." Shah said, enumerating the role cut out for the new ministry. He chose PACS as one of the main tools through which the last man can be brought into the prosperity cycle.

The new Minister also hinted that the multi-state co-op Act



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**RECIPIENT OF FIRST EVER INDIRA PRIYADARSHINI VRIKSHA MITRA AWARD PROUDLY
ANNOUNCES JUST A FEW OF ITS RESPLENDENT ACHIEVEMENTS**

Advances (From inception to 30-06-2021)	Over ₹ 6579.18 Crores
No. of loan cases sanctioned as on 30-06-2021	18.94 Lakhs
Share of Small & Marginal Farmers in Bank's financial assistance.	68.94 Lakhs
Fixed Deposits outstanding as on 30-09-2020 (Tentative)	43536.03 Crores

STRIKINGLY INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMES INTRODUCED BY THE BANK

- Non-Farming Rural Enterprises, Rural Housing, S.R.T.O.
- Sericulture, Integrated Horticulture/ Floriculture, Medicinal Plants, Individual Dairy Development and Sheep / Goat rearing / Poultry/ Piggery / Rabbit Rearing / Fisheries and Fishing Boat
- Big and Small Lift Irrigation Schemes
- Rural Godowns / Agri Clinic & Agri Business Centres
- Purchase of Agriculture Lands
- Solar Lights/Solar Pumps
- Purchase of Two Wheelers
- Rain Water Harvesting Structures
- Vermi Compost Units
- Bio-digester
- Farm Mechanisation
- Combined Harvester
- JCB/Dozers
- Coffee curing, Drying yards (Paddy, Areca, Coffee etc.)
- Agricultural Implements
- Gold Loans, Salary Loans etc.

BANK ACCEPTS FIXED DEPOSITS

1. 91 days 6.00%
2. 181 days 7.00%
3. One year and upto two years 8.40%
4. Two years and above 8.50%
5. 0.25% of additional Interest to Senior Citizens
6. Bank advances Gold(11%), Vehicle Loan(12%), Salary(14%), House Mortgage Loans(13%) at attractive rate of interest.
7. Safe Deposit locker facility is available/House and site mortgage loan urban area.

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President

S. Poornima, K.C.S.
Secretary I/C

Dr. K.C.Yathish Kumar, M.A.Ph.D.K.C.S.
Managing Director



would be suitably amended to make it more conducive to the growth of co-operatives. "We will have a national policy on cooperation soon", he underlined. While assuring cooperators of all help Shah also asked them to ensure honesty and transparency in the co-op dealings..

"I am aware of the issues of step-motherly treatment to the co-op sector", said Shah, referring to the Kribhco Chairman's mention of unfavorable taxation of co-ops vis a vis Corporates. "There are issues of taxations, issues plaguing UCBs and sugar mills and many more; I am seized of the matter and can assure you that none can be partisan to the sector anymore", Shah said underlining the Co-op Ministry's resolve to coordinate with other ministries for the benefit of the sector.

Remembering Deen Dayal Upadhaya whose birthday fell on Saturday, Shah said his "Antodaya" finds reflection in co-op activities. On the occasion, he also recounted the success stories of various co-operatives including Amul, IFFCO, Kribhco, ULCCS, and others. He thanked Amul for empowering women and IFFCO for ushering in a green revolution. He also lauded IFFCO for its Nano urea project.

On the occasion, Shah also urged the ICA President Ariel Guarco present on the occasion to help set up a Centre of "Best Practices in Co-operatives " in India. Govt of India will help you in this, he added.

Shri BL Verma, Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Cooperation, speaking on the occasion highlighted the creation of a separate Ministry of Cooperatives as an important landmark.

He said that Hon'ble Union Minister for Cooperation Shri Amit Shahji's guidance will be inspiring for the growth of the cooperative movement.

Shri Devendra Kumar Singh, newly appointed Addl Secretary, Ministry of Cooperation said that digitalization of PACS, training of cooperative functionaries, and ease of doing business for cooperatives will be some of the priority areas of the new Ministry of Cooperation.

Dileep Sanghani, President, NCUI speaking on the occasion

thanked profusely the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi for creating a separate Ministry of Cooperatives . He said that it is indeed heartening that Shri Amit Shah Ji has been appointed the 1st Minister for the new Coopertaion Ministry . Pointing out NCUI's initiative towards 'Sahkar Se Samriddhi', he said that NCUI's new Skill Development Centre at Noida through skill-based training is geared to achieve this objective. He also reiterated NCUI's commitment to ensure optimum youth participation in the cooperative movement by informing that through a unanimous resolution passed at NCUI Governing Council, a separate Committee for youth has been constituted .

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Shyamalbhai Patel, Chairman AMUL said "I thank on behalf of lacs of farmers associated with Amul, the Prime Minister for forming a separate co-op ministry and appointing Amitbhai Shah as its minister. GCMMF Chairman also traced the history of the growth of Amul and narrated how a few dairy farmers from a village are ruling the dairy scene not only in India but also in the world. Shri Patel said that Amul today produces 21% of dairy of the total global output. "We are number one in the world", he claimed. The GCMMF Chairman also said that Amul has been active in adopting new technology and its success is partly due to the fact that a strong tech team is actively monitoring the latest development in the field.

NAFCUB President Jyotindra Mehta delivered one of the finest speeches of his life when he said the arrival of Amit Shah on the co-operative scene him of Sardar Patel.

75 years ago, there were two messiahs of co-operative Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel and now they are kind of reincarnated as Narendra Modi and Amit Shah, said Jyotindra Mehta while thanking the Prime Minister for carving out a separate ministry and choosing Shah to head the same.

"Amitbhai will complete the remaining job left behind by Sardar, I have no doubt", said Mehta who is said to have worked with Shah in reviving the Gujarat co-op movement in the wake of the Madhavapura Mercantile Bank fiasco .



Mehta, who is both in Nafcub and Sahakar Bharati also explained the rationale behind the formation of the ministry. "A vast segment of our population is in the unorganized sector and bringing them into the main stream is the job of this ministry", he underlined. The nation cannot progress if this huge segment is not taken care of, added Mehta.

"Amitbhai has an uncanny knack of understanding and dealing with issues. He has worked at the grassroots levels such as PACS and DCCBs and as such, it would be tough for anyone to hoodwink him", said Mehta elaborating on the personality traits of the new minister. "Now people will listen to us", he added, saying Shah also has a great comprehension of economic matters.

Speaking on the occasion, Kribhco Chairman Dr. Chandra Pal Singh Yadav raised the issue of parity between cooperatives and corporates.

"There are cases of disparity with co-operatives as we are taxed more than Corporates. Even merging our subsidiaries to the parent body, costs us much more than it costs corporates", underlined Chandra Pal.

Chandra Pal's words were immediately noted by the minister who referred to them in his speech. Amit Shah said, "I am aware of issues plaguing cooperatives and I assure you Chandra Paljee that nobody can do injustice to co-operatives now".

In his speech, the Kribhco Chairman also raised the issue of PACS and said that they should be made the engine of growth for rural development. "Co-ops should take benefits from several govt schemes announced recently", said Chandra Pal.

A key highlight during the conference was the presence of ICA President Ariel Guarco, who was given a grand welcome by all the esteemed dignitaries present on the occasion. ICA President Ariel NCUI recently held 16th Meeting of National Cooperative Committee for Empowerment for Women on the occasion of Annual General Body Meeting of NCUI held on 24th September, 2021. Key initiatives of NCUI were briefed to the members who also presented their own

reports. NCUI Haat initiative was appreciated by the members during the meeting.

Guarco said that the diversity of sectors and regions represented in the organization of the event speak to the enormous power of the Indian cooperative movement.

Guarco who spoke in his native language, said "It is a real honor for me to be able to be in your country again. After many months of isolation, uncertainty, and pain caused by the coronavirus pandemic, meeting again is a deep joy. I am also very pleased to be able to share this important day with you".

"The work you carry out in areas such as agriculture, housing, finance, and many other services is evident from profound contributions made by cooperatives in terms of food security and poverty alleviation, among other objectives involved in the global Sustainable Development agenda" Guarco felt.. He expressed great satisfaction over the creation of a separate Ministry of Cooperatives, and hoped that this would usher in a new era of prosperity for cooperatives.. Earlier, Dr. U.S. Awasthi, Managing Director, IFFCO in his speech highlighted the achievements of IFFCO over the years, most importantly its great contribution in ensuring 20% payment of dividend to its members in true cooperative spirit. Dr. U.S. Awasthi also spoke on the benefits of nano fertilisers, and their contribution in creating Atmanirbhar Bharat. The conference was attended by 2000 representatives of the cooperative sector, and more than 80 million people were connected virtually to the event.

(Based on inputs received from newspaper reports and Indiancooperative.com)



1) 165th Meeting of the Board of Management

The 165th Meeting of Board of Management of the Federation was held on 8th September 2021 at Hotel Courtyard by Marriot, near International Airport, Mumbai. Shri K. Sivadasan Nair, Chairman presided over the Meeting. Vice Chairpersons Shri K. Ravinder Rao and other member banks Chairmen, also participated in the meeting. The Board considered policies and operational issues faced by member banks and also reviewed their performance in key operational areas. The Meeting welcomed the formation of the Ministry of Cooperation in the Centre with the objective of strengthening cooperatives and realizing the vision 'Sahakar se Samrudhi'.

2) Annual General Meeting of the Federation

The Annual General Meeting of the Federation was held on 8th September 2021 at Hotel Courtyard by Marriot, near International Airport, Mumbai. The Meeting was chaired by Shri K. Sivadasan Nair, Chairman of the Federation. Vice Chairman Shri K. Ravinder Rao, also participated in the meeting.

The AGM passed the Accounts for F.Y.2020-21 and the revised budget for 2021-22, and also approved the revised programmed of activities for the year 2020-21.

3) Election of Vice Chairmen for North Zone and South Zone

The Board of Management of Federation in its meeting on 8th Sept. 2021 elected Shri Kamaldeep Singh Saini, Chairman, Punjab State Cooperative Agricultural Development Bank Ltd., and Shri Parimal Azhagan, Chairman, Tamil Nadu Cooperative State Agriculture & Rural Development Bank Ltd, as the Vice Chairmen representing North Zone & South Zone respectively, against positions vacated by previous incumbents due to change of delegates by their banks.

4) Workshop on Improving Risk Rating of SCARDBs

Federation organized Workshop on Improving Risk Rating of SCARDBs on 8th September 2021 at Mumbai. The Inaugural session of the Workshop was chaired by Shri K. Sivadasan Nair, Chairman. Dr. Bijender Singh, Chairman, NAFED was the Chief Guest on the occasion. Shri K. Ravinder Rao, Vice Chairman of the Federation and Shri Shridhar, General Manager, IDD, NABARD were also present. The Workshop was attended by 24 delegates representing various member banks.

This workshop recommended on action plan for SCARDBs to improve risk rating. The Workshop also recommended NABARD to stop charging risk premium from SCARDBs as they are already paying guarantee fee to the Govt. to risk proof NABARD's exposure to them.

Appointments/Elections

- 1) Shri Sanjeev Kaushal, Additional Chief Secretary to Govt. Haryana, Coopn. Deptt. has assumed charge as Chairman of the Haryana State Cooperative Agriculture and Rural Development banks Ltd., Panchkula w.e.f. 1st May 2021.
- 2) Smt. M. Hema, Joint Registrar has assumed charge as General Manager (P&S) of the Tamil Nadu Cooperative State Agriculture Rural Development Bank Ltd., Chennai w.e.f. 4th August 2021.
- 3) Shri Binoy Kumar M., Additional RCS (Credit) has assumed charge as Managing Director of the Kerala State Cooperative Agricultural and Rural Development Bank Ltd., Thiruvananthapuram w.e.f. 25th August 2021.
- 4) Shri Dollarrai Kotecha has assumed charge as Chairman of the Gujarat State Cooperative Agriculture & Rural Development Bank Ltd., Ahmedabad.



Maharashtra | Over 7 lakh farmers call insurance firms to inform about crop damages due to excessive rain

More than seven lakh farmers in Maharashtra have called up insurance companies during the current monsoon season to inform about crop damage due to excessive rainfall, officials said. Representatives of crop insurance companies need to personally visit the farms and assess the damages, and based on their report, the farmers will get the insurance amount, they said.

A total of 2,56,985 calls were received till August 1 from farmers across Maharashtra intimating about extremely heavy rains that led to damage of crops. The number of such calls increased to 4,15,747 by September 1, 2021 and reached 5,53,491 on September 9, 2021. In last two days, the number of such calls reached over seven lakh," State Agricultural Commissioner's Chief Statistical Officer Vinaykumar Awate told. The figures could increase further as the data of calls made during the weekend will be updated in the system, the official said.

To a query, the official responded, We held a meeting with officials of the Union government last week and discussed the issue. The central government has increased its technical

support to help us accept more number of such calls in the wake of the excessive downpour in the Marathwada region and north Maharashtra. Further, there were glitches in the system as the rise in the number of such calls from farmers would clog the phone lines or servers would be down.

But, with the help of the Union government, we have managed to address these issues. Apart from phone calls, other options are also available which farmers can use to register their names with the insurance companies for damage survey, he added. Since the introduction of the crop insurance scheme for farmers, it is necessary for the insurers to record every such call from cultivators.

Farmers can call up a number given by the insurance company, send an e-mail or call up the local revenue officer to inform about the crop damage. They can also inform their local bank branch, which further updates about their intimation call on the common portal to the state agriculture department. The call has to be made within 72 hours of the crop damage faced by a farmer. An app is also available for farmers to inform about crop damage, officials said.

Union cabinet approves modifications to the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund to increase investment

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved modifications in the central sector scheme of financing facility under 'Agriculture Infrastructure Fund'. Eligibility has now been extended to State Agencies/APMCs, National & State Federations of Cooperatives, Federations of Farmers Producers Organizations (FPOs) and Federations of Self Help Groups (SHGs). At present interest subvention for a loan upto Rs. 2 crore in one location is eligible under the scheme. In case, one eligible entity puts up projects in different locations then all such projects will now be eligible for interest subvention for loan upto Rs. 2 crore. However, for a private sector entity there will be a limit of a maximum of 25 such projects.

This limitation of 25 projects will not be applicable to state agencies, national and state federations of cooperatives,

federations of FPOs and federation of SHGs. Location will mean the physical boundary of a village or town having a distinct LGD (Local Government Directory) code. Each of such projects should be in a location having a separate LGD code.

For APMCs, interest subvention for a loan upto Rs. 2 crore will be provided for each project of different infrastructure types e.g. cold storage, sorting, grading and assaying units, silos, etc within the same market yard. The power has been delegated to the Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare to make necessary changes with regard to addition or deletion of beneficiary in such a manner so that basic spirit of the scheme is not alter e.g. cold storage, sorting, grading and assaying units, silos, etc within the same market yard.

PM Modi says farm sector needs post-harvest revolution; govt impetus on scientific ecosystem

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said there is a need for a "post-harvest revolution" in the farm sector, which has been

witnessing an increase in production. The hardworking farmers have made record production of commodities



despite the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the ever increasing agricultural production, there is a need of post-harvest revolution and value addition, Modi said in a message to commemorate the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development's foundation day, which was read out at an event hosted by the state-run lender.

The Prime Minister said the government's focus is to encourage youth and promote startups associated with the agricultural sector. "We are giving the impetus to create a

scientific ecosystem, speed up development according to the wishes and expectations of the villages and transform the agricultural sector of the economy through holistic approach. A self-reliant rural economy is necessary for 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' or self-reliant India, and added that the government has taken concrete measures over the last seven years for the same. The government is committed to empower close to 12 crore small farmers and help them become the driving force of the rural economy, he added.

States lift 15.3 lakh ton food grains so far for free distribution during July-November - 2021

States have lifted 15.30 lakh tonnes of food grains so far for free distribution under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY). Under this scheme, an additional food grain quota of 5 kg per person per month is being provided free of cost to around 80 crore beneficiaries covered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA). The additional food grains will be provided till November.

This additional quota is over and above the distribution of 5 kg food grains per person every month at highly subsidised rates of Rs 1-3 per kg via ration shops to beneficiaries covered under the NFSA. The Government of India is running the longest ever exercise of distributing free food grains to the people during COVID-19 pandemic time to ensure food security, an official statement said. The Central Government has extended the PMGKAY for five months i.e. July-November 2021 and further allocation of 198.79 LMT food grains has been made under PMGKAY-IV (July-November 2021), it added.

Under the PMGKAY-IV (July-November 2021), lifting has been started by 31 States and 15.30 lakh tonnes food grains have been lifted upto 12th July, 2021. Food Corporation of India (FCI), the nodal agency for procurement and distribution of food grains, has already positioned adequate stocks in all States/UTs for successful implementation of PMGKAY-IV. At present, 583 lakh tonnes of wheat and 298 lakh tonnes of rice (Total 881 lakh tonnes food grains) are available under the Central Pool, the statement said.

Under PMGKAY-III (May-June 2021), FCI supplied 78.26 lakh tonnes of free food grains to all 36 States/ UTs. The Centre will spend Rs 93,869 crore this year to provide 5 kg of foodgrains per month free of cost to over 80 crore people during May-November for providing relief to the poor amid the second wave of COVID-19. The Centre spent Rs 1,33,972 crore last financial year on this scheme. The total financial implication is estimated at Rs 2,27,841 crore for PMGKAY.

IFFCO Kisan Sanchar setting up 17 FPOs in Gujarat in tie-up with NABARD, NCDC

Fertiliser major IFFCO's arm IFFCO Kisan Sanchar Ltd is setting up 17 Farmer Producer Organisation (FPOs) in Gujarat in association with NABARD and NCDC. A total of 5,000 farmers will get associated with these FPOs by the end of this year and more than 50,000 farmers by 2025, IFFCO Kisan said. These FPOs are being established in association with National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) and will be spread across several districts of Gujarat, it added. IFFCO Kisan has been selected by two implementing agencies - NABARD and NCDC to set up 17 FPOs in the state of Gujarat. These FPOs will cater to

various kinds of crop, said Sanjeev Sharma, Chief- Agri Business Services, IFFCO Kisan Sanchar Ltd. the company said it intends to hand hold farmers for creating a sustainable business model.

It will impart regular training on agri-tech usage, Package of Practices (PoPs), post harvest management, primary processing, quality parameters, market intelligence and diverse business planning etc. IFFCO Kisan would also be facilitating market linkage support to these FPOs/ farmers under its Farmer Forward Linking Program (FFLP) to farmers. IFFCO Kisan will establish five FPOs in association with NABARD in four districts Anand, Patan, Surendranagar and



Valsad. These FPOs will focus on banana, castor, cumin and cashew/ mango. The company will set up 12 FPOs in Gujarat in association with NCDC. These FPOs will be located in Junagarh and Sabarkantha districts with both the districts having 6 FPOs each. The FPO at Junagarh will cater to mango, groundnut, jowar and cumin while those coming up at Sabarkantha will cater to groundnut, castor, amla and potato. Sharma said the company will provide forward linkages to the farmers so that they are able to fetch better prices for their produce.

IFFCO Kisan, in association with NABARD, has already established Rajeshwar FPO in Vav Taluka, Tharad in Banaskanth .. engaging more than 1,000 cumin farmers. IFFCO Kisan helped them in establishing a primary processing unit (cleaning, grading and sorting line) and trained them to trade on NCDEX in future and Spot market. The Centre has formulated a central sector scheme and is targeting formation and promotion of 10,000 FPOs by 2025-26. IFFCO Kisan said it is currently connected with around 60 FPOs directly or indirectly spread across the country.

Over 21.40 lakh farmers enrolled under PM-KMY: Narendra Singh Tomar

More than 21.40 lakh farmers have so far joined the voluntary pension scheme for small and marginal farmers Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan-Dhan Yojana (PM-KMY), Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said. The pension scheme was launched in September 2019 to provide old age protection and social security.

As on July 23, 2021, a total of 21,40,262 farmers have joined the scheme, Tomar said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha. The enrollment of eligible farmers under PM-KMY was started by Common Service Centres (CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd) from August 2019. When the PM-KMY was launched on September 12, 2019, about 13,29,353 farmers had joined the scheme.

Since PM-KMY is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme, further, no specific target for enrolment was kept for last year. However, CSC under the IT Ministry -- which is responsible to enroll the eligible farmers -- has taken up campaigns from time to time. Further, state nodal officers of PM-KISAN and PM-KMY also assisted CSCs in the enrolment

of desirous farmers, he added.

The minister also said an Empowered Committee under the chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary with Secretaries of Agriculture, IT and Finance Ministries was set up to review and monitor implementation of the scheme through appropriate implementation strategies and to approve any modifications. Further, as per directions of the committee, a Group of Secretaries was constituted to adopt a common approach, and monitor and coordinate implementation of the scheme, he added.

PM-KMY is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme in which eligible farmers falling in the age group of 18-40 years are required to make a monthly contribution between Rs 55-200 and matching contributions are shared by the Centre with the pension fund manager Life Insurance Corporation of India. From the accruals, a monthly pension of Rs 3,000 per month would be provided as and when the farmers attain the age of 60 years.

Amit Shah promises to direct banks to adopt flexible financing policy for new ethanol projects

Union co-operation minister Amit Shah has promised to direct the banks to adopt a flexible lending policy while financing the sugar mills for setting up new ethanol plants before August 15, informed National Federation of Co-operative Sugar Factories (NFCSF) in a release. A delegation of the co-operative sugar mills headed by Sharad Pawar, head of the Nationalist Congress Party met Union Co-operation minister Amit Shah in the Parliament. According to the release issued by the Federation, Shah promised to issue orders before August 15 asking the banks

to adopt a flexible policy about financing of the ambitious ethanol projects. The requirement of Tripartite Agreement (TPA) between ethanol suppliers, OMCs and banks has not been a success for cooperative sugar distilleries due to their unhealthy balance sheets. As a result, only 88 out of 422 proposals have been funded by banks, in which the share of the co-operatives is negligible. To overcome this major roadblock, we suggest establishing an independent Ethanol Manufacturing Unit within the premises of the present co-operative sugar mill. Banks will have a comfort level to enter



into TPA with these independent business units based on their future estimated revenue on supplying committed ethanol to OMCs who can release payments in ESCROW accounts from where banks can collect their loan amount, said NFCSF letter written to Amit Shah, the first co-operation minister of the country.

It added: To reduce bulging sugar inventories, the projects producing ethanol directly from unsold sugar and projects of mixing 15-20% sugar in molasses to produce ethanol needs to be encouraged and be given higher selling prices of such ethanol to enable these projects to be economically viable.

PM announces mission to make India self-sufficient in edible oils.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a National Edible Oil Mission-Oil Palm (NMEO-OP) to make India self-sufficient in cooking oils, including palm oil, as the PM stressed on reducing the dependence on imports. Addressing a virtual event on PM-Kisan scheme, he said over Rs 11,000 crore will be invested in the edible oil ecosystem.

The Prime Minister also transferred over Rs 19,500 crore to over 9.75 crore farmers under the government's flagship PM-Kisan scheme. On the occasion, PM said while India has become self-sufficient or Aatmanirbhar in production of rice, wheat and sugar, but it was not enough as the country is dependent on huge imports of edible oils. Modi stressed

The delegations of Maharashtra's co-operative sugar mills headed by Pawar also apprised Shah about the need to increase the minimum selling prices (MSP) of sugar. The MSP, which is currently fixed at Rs 31/kg, has not been increased for 2.5 years. MSP increase does not put any financial burden on the government. The delegation also demanded differential pricing as per different grades of sugar," said the NFCSF letter addressed to Shah. The Union co-operation minister agreed with our demand to increase the MSP. He assured to soon take action about it after discussing the matter with the Prime Minister, the release said.

India must become self-reliant in edible oil too as he announced NMEO-OP. The government will ensure that farmers get all facilities, from quality seeds to technology to promote farming to produce palm oil and other oil seeds. It is to be noted here that India is dependent on imports of edible oil to meet the domestic demand. Of the total imports, palm oil constitutes about 55 per cent.

The country spent thousands of crores of rupees on edible oil imports, PM said, that this money rather should go to farmers. North-eastern states and Andaman and Nicobar Islands could be promoted for palm farming.

Govt procures record 890 lakh tonnes of paddy for Rs 1.68 lakh crore so far this marketing year

The government has so far procured nearly 890 lakh tonnes of paddy, an all-time high, at MSP in the current marketing year ending September for around Rs 1.68 lakh crore. This comes amid the ongoing farmers' protest at Delhi's borders. Thousands of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, have been protesting for more than nine months over their demand for repeal of three new farm laws and a legal guarantee for minimum support price (MSP). In a statement, the food ministry said the Centre has purchased 889.62 lakh tonnes of paddy till September 5 in

the ongoing 2020-21 Kharif Marketing Season (KMS). Food Corporation of India, the government's nodal agency for procurement and distribution of food grains, had purchased 764.39 lakh tonnes of paddy in the corresponding period of the previous marketing season. This year's procurement includes 718.09 lakh tonnes of paddy grown in kharif (summer sown) season and 171.53 lakh tonnes in rabi (winter sown) season. Paddy is a major kharif crop, but it is also grown in rabi season.

Centre to disburse PM-KISAN payouts

The Union government disbursed the next instalment of PM-KISAN, its cash transfer scheme for farmers, on 9 August, totaling ₹19,000 crore to about 90 million farmers, an official with knowledge of the matter said. Under the scheme, launched on 24 February 2019, the government provides

annual income support of ₹6,000 to every land-owning farmer with a valid enrolment. The money is paid in three equal cash transfers of ₹2,000, once every four months. The government had disbursed little more than ₹19,000 crore to 90 million farm households in the last instalment paid in May.



So far, the Union government has paid nearly ₹1.15 trillion under the scheme.

Nearly 4.2 million people who were not eligible for payouts under the scheme were given ₹2,900 crore since the scheme's roll out, agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar said in reply to a parliamentary question. States where ineligible people received money have been asked to recover the amount, according to guidelines in force. Any

Govt. to empower cooperatives

The government is determined to make cooperatives and all cooperative institutions more empowered, Union minister Amit Shah, who met some leading figures of the country's cooperative sector.

The meeting came three days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi reallocated the portfolios of his ministers in which Shah was given the charge of the newly-created Ministry of Cooperation.

Those who met the Union home minister include chairman of

farmer can enrol for PM-KISAN by applying at local revenue offices or with a state's nodal officer for the scheme, who is nominated by the state government. Farmers can also self-register through the PM-KISAN portal and common service centres, a network of public-services offices spread across the country. The identification of beneficiaries is the responsibility of state governments.

the National Cooperative Union of India Dileep Sanghani, the chairman and the managing director of the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) B S Nakai and U S Awasthi respectively and chairman of the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED) Bijender Singh. In the meeting, the minister asked cooperatives like IFFCO and KRIBHCO to work in the field of seed production using vacant land of 38,000 hectares as well as in organic farming, the NCUI said in a separate statement.

Experts raise concerns over mandatory fortification of food items

In a pushback against the Centre's plan to mandatorily fortify rice and edible oils with vitamins and minerals, a group of scientists and activists have written to the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), warning of the adverse impacts on health and livelihoods. They cited multiple studies to show that dietary diversity and higher protein consumption are key to solving undernutrition in India, rather than adding a few synthetic micronutrients which could harm the health of consumers.

The letter, sent to the FSSAI as well as the Food, Agriculture and Health Ministries and the Ministry of Women and Child Development, was signed by 170 individuals and organisations including eminent nutritionists, economists, doctors and farmers groups. One of the signatories is the National Institute of Nutrition's former deputy director Veena Shatrugna, who warned that "evidence supporting fortification is inconclusive and certainly not adequate before major national policies are rolled out."

The letter points to recent studies published in the medical journal Lancet and in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition which show that both anaemia and Vitamin A deficiencies are over diagnosed, meaning that mandatory fortification could lead to hypervitaminosis. It also notes

that many of the studies which FSSAI relies on to promote fortification are sponsored by food companies who would benefit from it, leading to conflicts of interest. Studies funded by the Nestle Nutrition Institute and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition were mentioned as cases in point.

The letter explains that one major problem with chemical fortification of foods is that nutrients don't work in isolation but need each other for optimal absorption. Undernourishment in India is caused by monotonous cereal-based diets with low consumption of vegetables and animal protein. Adding one or two synthetic chemical vitamins and minerals will not solve the larger problem, and in undernourished populations can lead to toxicity, it said, citing a 2010 study that showed iron fortification causing gut inflammation and pathogenic gut microbiota profile in undernourished children. The letter also argued that mandatory fortification would harm the vast informal economy of Indian farmers and food processors including local oil and rice mills, and instead benefit a small group of multinational corporations who will have sway over a ₹3,000 crore market. Dietary diversity was a healthier and more cost-effective way to fight malnutrition. Once iron-fortified rice is sold as the remedy to anaemia, the value and the



choice of naturally iron-rich foods like millets, varieties of green leafy vegetables, flesh foods, liver, to name a few, will

have been suppressed by a policy silence, it warned.

Plan is a recipe for disaster

Soon after launch of the Rs.1040 crore National Mission on Edible oil – Oil Palm (NMEO-OP), Meghalaya, MP, Agatha Sangam warned that the focus area were biodiversity hotspots and ecologically fragile and oil palm plantation would denude forest cover and destroy the habitat of endangered wildlife. It could also detach tribes people from their identity linked with the community ownership of land and wreak havoc on the social fabric.

Ex- Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh said proposals for large-scale oil palm cultivation had been studied and rejected as part of the technology mission on edible oils in the late 1980s as it was a “recipe for ecological disaster”.

He alleged that the present proposal of course is designed to benefit Patanjali and Adani, both corporates with interests in edible oil expansion.

The palm is an invasive species. It's not a natural forest product of northeastern India and its impact on our biodiversity as well as on soil conditions has to be analysed even if it is grown in non-forest areas. Any kind of monoculture plantation is not desirable, said Bibhab Talukdar, a biologist who heads the Guwahati-based conservation organisation Aaranyak, advising caution in introducing oil palm.

Depositors of stressed banks to get up to Rs 5 lakh back from Nov 30

Depositors of stressed banks like Punjab & Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank are now set to get up to Rs 5 lakh back from November 30 as the government has notified the amendment to the DICGC Act. Parliament earlier this month passed the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2021 ensuring that account holders get up to Rs 5 lakh within 90 days of the RBI imposing moratorium on the banks. The amount of Rs 5 lakh would be provided by the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC). The government has notified September 1, 2021 as the date on which the provisions of the

Act shall come into force, according to a gazette notification dated August 27, 2021.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (2) of section 1 of the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (Amendment) Act, 2021 (30 of 2021), the Central Government hereby appoints the 1st day of September, 2021, as the date on which the provisions of the said Act shall come into force," it said. Consequently, 90 days from the effective date is November 30, 2021 for depositors to get their funds back.

MSME, agri, retail lending sees a sharp rise in July

Lending patterns are slowly changing after the revival of economic activity as the lockdowns eased across states. While bank lending to large corporates continues to be tepid, lending to MSMEs, agriculture and retail picked up sharply in July this year over previous year's levels, data on sectoral deployment of bank credit released by Reserve Bank of India showed. Much of the growth has accordingly come from urban, semi-urban and rural areas. Weighted average lending rates on outstanding and fresh loans are down 91 basis points (bps) and 80 bps, respectively, since the pandemic-induced lockdown in March 2020. One basis point is 0.01%.

Credit to agriculture and allied activities expanded 12.4% in July 2021 as compared with 5.4% in last July. But credit to

medium industries rose at a much faster pace - by 72% - in July 2021 as compared to a contraction of 1.8% a year ago, thanks to initiatives and incentives by the government. Credit to micro and small industries rose 7.9% in July 2021 as compared to a contraction of 1.8% a year ago. Retail loans, too, expanded at a faster pace of 11.2% in July 2021 as compared to 9% a year ago, primarily due to higher growth in 'loans against gold jewellery' and 'vehicle loans'. But credit to large industries contracted by 2.9% in July 2021 as compared to a growth of 1.4% a year ago. Credit growth to the services sector slowed to 2.7% in July 2021 from 12.2% in July 2020, mainly due to slowdown in bank lending to 'NBFCs', and 'commercial real estate'.



Govt introduces rules for calculating taxable interest on PF contributions beyond specified limits

The Government has notified rules for calculating tax on interest accrued on employees' provident fund (EPF) and Voluntary Provident Fund (VPF) contributions above Rs 2.5 lakh in cases where the employer is contributing and above Rs 5 lakh where the employer isn't. In a notification issued the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said two separate accounts within the PF account will have to be maintained during 2021-22, and onwards, for segregating the taxable and non-taxable contributions.

The taxable contribution account will be the aggregate of the contribution made by the person beyond the threshold limit and interest accrued on the contribution, minus any withdrawals made. On the other hand, non-taxable contributions will be the aggregate of closing balance as of March 31, 2021, contributions made by the account holder that are not included in taxable contribution account and interest accrued on the total sum, minus any withdrawals.

The rules will come into effect from April 1, 2022, the notification. Experts said the amendment could lead to higher compliance burden, even as the attempt is to

dissuade high salaried individuals from parking funds in fixed income generating avenues.

In the Union Budget this year, the government had introduced the provision to tax interest income on contributions above Rs 2.5 lakh a year. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman then raised the limit on the annual contribution to provident fund accounts for tax-free interest to Rs 5 lakh from Rs 2.5 lakh for funds where there is no contribution by the employer. Most often, it is employee contribution and employers' contribution, but there are contributions, which are only employee and no employer contribution is made. In such cases, that amount is raised to Rs 5 lakh, Sitharaman had said.

The government had introduced the change to plug the misuse of the benefit by high-income earners who were making large deposits in the employee provident fund or EPF. Interest earned on the provident fund corpus is tax-free and no tax is levied at the time of withdrawal, making it an attractive investment option.

Seci discovers Rs 2.69/unit tariff in latest wind auction

The Solar Energy Corporation of India's (Seci's) latest bid to set up 1,200 MW of wind power plants has discovered the lowest tariff of Rs 2.69 a unit, lower than the Rs 2.78 quoted by companies in the last auction held in March. According to sources, subsidiaries of ReNew Power, Sembcorp Energy, EverGreen Power quoted the lowest tariff for building 300 MW, 180 MW and 150 MW of wind projects, respectively. Adani Green Energy and Azure Power quoted the second lowest bid of Rs 2.70/unit, and is set to win contract for 450 MW and 120 MW capacity.

Including the latest one, Seci has so far held eleven reverse auctions for wind power since February 2017. The highest tariff of Rs 3.46 a unit was discovered in the maiden auction, and the lowest rate of Rs 2.44/unit was discovered in the third tranche in February 2018. India has set a target to raise

the capacity of installed RE generation plants from the current level of 100 GW to 450 GW by the end of 2030.

Currently, solar power has become the key driver of capacity addition in the renewable energy sector, increasing its share in the overall green mix to around 45%, and has surpassed the wind power capacity for the first time in FY21. Analysts have pointed that the wind market may not be key driver in medium term due to the widening gap between solar and wind tariffs.

Solar rates plummeted to record low of Rs 1.99 a unit in December 2020. With rising prices of solar modules, which comprise about 60% of the total project expenditure for plants, tariffs in recent solar auctions have been around Rs 2.34/unit.

Edible oil prices likely to ease by December: official

Soaring edible oil prices are likely to soften by December as international commodity futures show a declining trend and the arrivals of domestic oilseed crops, Food Secretary

Sudhanshu Pandey said. However, he indicated that the government would be constrained from further import duty cuts to reduce oil prices as it needs to augment its own



resources which have also been affected by COVID.

Retail prices of major edible oils have risen up to 48% over the last year, driven by surging global prices, and lower domestic production of soybean which is India's largest oilseed crop. However, Mr. Pandey expressed confidence that the spike is over.

December futures for soybean and palm oil are showing marginally declining trends. So at least we can expect that there will be no more rise in prices. adding that the arrivals of domestic soybean crop and the rabi season mustard crop would also help to soften prices. Hopefully, prices should

Demand revival to facilitate 33% jump in textile exports

Demand for textile and clothing from India has revived, particularly in the U.S., EU and U.K. markets, and lends confidence that the industry can achieve a 33% growth in exports this financial year, said Upendra Prasad Singh, Secretary, and Union Ministry of Textiles.

Asserting that several factors were now in favour of Indian exporters, with many top brands looking at alternative sources to China and that India was one of the main options, Mr. Singh said that government policies, especially RoSCTL

remain under control. There will be a decline, but not a very dramatic decline because global commodity pressures are still there Mr Pandey told.

Officials say that one of the reasons that global prices have surged is excessive buying of edible oil by China. Another reason is that many major oil producers are aggressively pursuing biofuel policies and diverting their edible oil crops for that purpose. That includes oil palm in Malaysia and Indonesia as well as soybean in the United States, the two oil types that make up 50% of India's domestic consumption.

and RoDTEP, would help exporters this year. Textile and clothing exports had been almost stagnant for the last seven years at less than \$40 billion, he told The Hindu.

Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Textiles, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution, Piyush Goyal had urged the industry to aim to raise textile and clothing exports to \$100 billion, from \$33 billion, at the earliest and called on them to lift domestic production to \$250 billion.

Database created with records of 5.5 cr. farmers

The Centre has created a National Farmers' Database with records of 5.5 crore farmers, which it hopes to increase to 8 crore farmers by December by linking it to State land record databases, according to Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar.

Addressing Chief Ministers at a virtual conference on agriculture, Mr. Tomar said the farmers' database was key to advances in digital agriculture. Agriculture has to be linked with digital technology, scientific research and knowledge, according to an official statement

Mr. Tomar explained that the national database was created by taking data from existing national schemes such as PM-KISAN, soil health cards and the insurance scheme PM Fasal Bima Yojna. So far, 5.5 crore farmers had been identified in this manner. The Agriculture Minister urged States to create their own databases using the national database's federated

structure and also allow linkages to the land records maintained by the States. With the help of State governments, a total of eight crore farmers would be included by the end of the year, he said. He also urged them to study the Karnataka model for digital agriculture presented at the conference.

Mr. Tomar had told the Lok Sabha that the database could be used "for targeted service delivery with higher efficiency and in a focussed & time bound manner" and that it was the core for the proposed Agristack digital agriculture ecosystem. Already, companies like Microsoft, Amazon and Patanjali had been asked to develop technology solutions for farmers using data from the database. Activists have raised some privacy and consent concerns about using farmers' data in such a way.

Excess agri labour shifts to low-wage employment

Excess agricultural workers are getting into less-privileged, less-wage employment as maids, cooks or security guards,

failing to find their usual way, during this time around of the year, into the construction and manufacturing sectors,



Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) said.

Excess or seasonal labour released from agriculture usually finds its way to construction sites. In better times, this is part of the transition from farms to factories. But, the construction industry itself shed over half million jobs in August. And, manufacturing also shed nearly a million jobs. In the circumstances, labour seems to have found employment in the household sector as maids, cooks, gardeners, security guards and the likes, a transition that could be described as from farms to the kitchen-sink instead of farms to factories, wrote CMIE's MD & CEO Mahesh Vyas, in a recent article.

In the post-sowing season around this time of the year, excess labour in agriculture is not a new phenomenon. It is rather seasonal in nature. According to CMIE, employment in agriculture had averaged 124 million during the kharif crop sowing months of May, June and July. In August it fell to 116 million. In August this year, employment in agriculture fell by 8.7 million, shrinking India's employment, in absolute terms, by 1.9 million to 397.8 million in August from 399.7 million in

July. This spiked India's joblessness rate to 8.3% in August from 7% in July and dropped overall employment rate to 37.2% from 37.4% a month ago.

The composition of this fall in employment in August reveals the challenges India faces in providing jobs. The loss was essentially in farm jobs. Non-farm jobs increased to absorb a very large proportion of the jobs shed in the farm sector to leave a net deficit of 1.9 million jobs. However, the non-farm jobs that expanded were mostly not the kind that could be considered as good quality jobs, Vyas wrote.

During the month, non-farm jobs increased by 6.8 million. Of these, employment in the form of business persons increased by nearly 4 million and those in the form of small traders and daily wage labourers increased by 2.1 million. Salaried jobs increased marginally, by 0.7 million, during the month, he wrote.

Much of the labour shed by agriculture was absorbed in the services sectors which provided 8.5 million additional jobs in August.

FSSAI Prepares Draft Rules for Vegan Food

India has formulated food safety standards for vegan food which includes introduction of a new logo to identify vegan food packets and proper licensing for vegan food manufacturers. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has formulated draft Food Safety and Standards (Vegan Food) Regulations 2021. The draft regulations will define vegan food for the first time in India and introduce safety regulations and labelling rules to identify vegan food products. Vegan food will be defined as "those foods or food

ingredients that have not made use of any ingredients, additives and processing aids of animal origin including milk and milk products, fish, poultry and meat, egg or egg products, honey or honey bee products, materials of insect origin like silk, dyes, chitin/chitosan etc or ingredients that are clarified using animal sourced products e.g., bone char used in sugar bleaching, isinglass in clarifying beer etc. The regulations propose that vegan food will not be tested on animals for evaluating final product safety.

Agri exports play important role in doubling farmers' income: Govt

Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Piyush Goyal said agriculture exports have an important role to play in doubling farmers' income, and stressed the need for boosting India's outward shipments to be among top-5 nations in farm exports.

Goyal and Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar addressed the second day of the Chief Ministers' Conference on initiatives and schemes of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, according to an official statement. Speaking at the event, Tomar asked the states to take advantage of the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund so that

the benefits can percolate to the small and marginal farmers who lack warehousing and cold storage facilities at the farm gate.

On digital agriculture mission, he said the farmers' database is our wealth and will usher in focused programme delivery, reducing seepages, better policy formulation and smart farming in the country. Database with 5.5 crore farmers is ready and work is progressing for verifying others with land records, he added.

Tomar said the Union Cabinet recently approved the National Edible Oil Mission (NMEO-OP) for palm oil with a focus on the



northeast region and Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Through this scheme, the production of edible oils will be accelerated in the country, thereby reducing the import of edible oils. This mission will immensely benefit the palm oil farmers, increase capital investment, generate employment, reduce

dependence on imports and increase the income of farmers. During the meeting, the northeastern states appreciated the National Edible Oils-Oil Palm Mission started by the central government, and assured their cooperation in its implementation at their level.

Sugar exports set to cross 70 lakh tonnes

Sugar exports during the 11 months of the current sugar season (October 2020 to September 2021) stand at 66.70 lakh tonnes, almost 11 lakh tonnes higher compared with the same period last season, according to the Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA). According to ISMA, the data for the current season includes about 4.49 lakh tonnes of exports

done under the Maximum Admissible Export Quota (MAEQ) of the 2019-2020 season. As on September 6, 2021, another 2.29 lakh tonnes of sugar is at the ports, implying that by the end of this season in another 20 days, total exports will cross 70 lakh tonnes.

Kharif output may hit record 150 m tonne this year

Food grain production is likely to touch a new record 150 million tonne in the kharif season of the 2021-22 crop year (July-June) due to good rains, agriculture secretary Sanjay

Agarwal said. Sowing of Kharif crops like paddy, which begins with the onset of the southwest monsoon from June, will get over.

Government cuts import duty on cooking oils

The government cut import duty on crude and refined palm oil, soybean oil and sunflower oil to provide a respite to consumers amid rising food prices ahead of the consumption-driven festive season.

In a notification issued the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) notified the changes in customs duty rates, applicable from September 11, 2021.

The effective import duty — including the base rate and various other taxes — on crude palm oil, crude sunflower oil and crude degummed soybean oil has been reduced to 24.75% from 30.25%. Duty on RBD palmolein and refined soybean oil has been reduced to 35.75% from 41.25%. Basic customs duty on crude palm oil has been reduced to 2.5% from 10% earlier, while that on crude soya oil has been reduced to 2.5% from 7.5% earlier. Import duty on refined grades of palm oil, soybean oil and sunflower oil has been cut to 32.5% from 37.5%. In a separate notification, the government increased the agriculture infrastructure and

development cess on crude palm oil to 20% from the earlier 17.5%.

The move will reduce prices, experts said. This duty reduction can help in cooling down the edible oil prices by Rs 2-3/litre in the coming weeks as some of the benefits of the duty cut will be absorbed by an increase in prices in the countries of origin that export edible oils to India, said BV Mehta, executive director, Solvent Extractors' Association of India. The move comes in the wake of prices of mustard, vanaspati, soya and palm oil having increased almost 30% while that of sunflower oil has risen by more than 40% over last year. The government expects prices to cool down soon on the back of these measures and arrival of the kharif crop. Oil and fats retail inflation in July was 32.53% compared with 6.65% in January. India is the largest importer of vegetable oils and more than 65% of the domestic demand is met through imports.

Microfinance loan portfolio rises 4.2% to ₹2,37,369 crore as of June-end: MFIN

The microfinance industry's gross loan portfolio (GLP) rose 4.2% to ₹2,37,369 crore as of June 30, 2021, compared with ₹2,27,727 crore as of June 30, 2020, according to a report by Microfinance Institutions Network (MFIN).

Microfinance loan disbursements during the first quarter of the financial year 2021-22 improved significantly to ₹25,503 crore, compared with ₹6,186 crore in the corresponding quarter last year. MFIN is an industry association comprising



58 NBFC-MFIs and 39 associates including banks, small finance banks (SFBs) and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs).

As of June 30, 2021, the microfinance industry served 5.68 crore unique borrowers, through 10.30 crore loan accounts, the association said. The microfinance active loan accounts

decreased by 0.67% during the past 12 months to 10.30 crore as of June 30, 2021, it said. The MFIN said the gross loan portfolio (GLP) of NBFC-MFIs stood at ₹76,237 crore as of June 30, 2021, a 6.9% year-on-year increase. Total equity of the NBFC-MFIs grew 11.9% year-on-year to ₹18,660 crore as of June 30, 2021.

Excess September rainfall shrinks monsoon deficit to 3%

The September rainfall in India is 27% more than what's normal for the month. With a fresh rain-bearing pressure system forming in the Bay of Bengal, it is also likely that the withdrawal of the monsoon, which normally starts by September 17, is expected to be delayed. Until August-end, a crippling rainfall deficit had brought India dangerously close to a drought like situation with a nearly 9% deficit, but a resurgence of rainfall since September has narrowed the deficit to 3%.

Not unusual'

Delayed monsoon withdrawals aren't unusual. In 2019, the southwest monsoon commenced withdrawal on October 9,

and last year, the withdrawal began on September 28. The monsoon also saw delayed withdrawals in 2017 and 2018. From September 1-20, rainfall was excessive in all regions of the country. Central India saw an excess of 71% over what's normal and northwest India 26% over its normal. The monsoon completely withdraws from India around mid-October. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the monsoon withdrawal from northwest India takes place if there is cessation of rainfall activity over the area for continuous five days. An anti-cyclonic wind has to form over the lower troposphere, and there should also be considerable reduction in moisture content.

India needs 4-5 more banks like SBI

Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said India would need four or five more banks like the SBI to support economic growth. The way in which the economy is shifting to a different plane altogether, the way in which industry is adapting, so many new challenges keep arising. To address these challenges, we need not just more, but bigger banks, she told bankers at the 74th Annual General Meeting of the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) in Mumbai. A video of her speech has been released by the Press Information Bureau. She said, Exhorting the banking industry to imagine how banking has to be in the immediate and long-term future. If we look at post-COVID scenario, India's banking contour will have to be very unique to India, where there has been an extremely successful adoption of digitisation. Underlining the importance of seamless and interconnected digital systems in creating a sustainable future. The long-term future of Indian banking is going to be largely driven by digitised processes.

She urged the IBA to improve access to banking in every district through a rationalised approach and optimal utilisation of digital technologies. To achieve this, she advised

the IBA to carry out digitised location-wise mapping of all bank branches for every district. Almost two-thirds of nearly 7.5 lakh panchayats have optical fibre connection. The IBA should consider this and conduct an exercise and decide where banks should have a physical presence and where we are able to serve customers even without physical branch, she said.

The IBA should take the initiative and complement government's efforts for financial inclusion and enhancing access to financial services, especially in unserved and under-served areas. Stressing on strengthening the UPI, the FM said: In the payment world today, Indian UPI has actually made a very big impression. A RuPay card which was not as glamorous as a foreign card is now accepted in so many parts of the world, symbolic of India's futuristic digital payment intentions. It is a formulation which is intended to clean up banks' assets and dispose of NPAs in a speedy manner. Banks are now able to raise money from the market. Hence the burden on the government to recapitalise banks will be less, this is how we want banks to function — a lot more professional, with a changed mindset.



Kisan Saarathi: Digital platform for farmers launched

The government has launched a digital platform named as 'Kisan Saarathi', which is available in Hindi and many regional languages, through which farmers can interact and avail personalised advisories on agriculture and allied areas directly from the respective scientists of Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVKs), the nodal centres that ensure growers benefit from research and technology.

Releasing the platform at the foundation day of Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR), minister of information technology Ashwini Vaishnaw urged scientists to take up research on new technological interventions in the area of transportation of farmer's crops from farm gate to warehouses, markets and other places with minimum damage. He assured that the IT ministry would always be

ready to provide all necessary support to the agriculture ministry as well as fisheries, animal husbandry and dairying ministry for empowerment of farmers.

Fisheries and animal husbandry minister Parshottam Rupala asked ICAR to develop a similar digital platform for the animal husbandry and fisheries sector on the model of 'Kisan Saarathi'. Commending ICAR for bringing research and technology to the farm gate, Rupala suggested scientists to develop a mechanism that helps fish farmers to know about the condition of fishing in particular ocean blocks, similar to the soil health card for agriculture farmers. Agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar said 'Kisan Saarathi' will facilitate farmers to get right information at right time in their desired language.

Punjab govt. to give incentives to industries for using stubble

In an effort to check stubble burning menace during the paddy season, the Punjab government has decided to permit certain categories of industries to install paddy-straw-fired boilers to claim fiscal incentives.

The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Amarinder Singh. The Cabinet also decided to provide cumulative fiscal incentives of ₹25 crore to the first 50 existing industries on 'first come first serve' basis for using paddy straw as fuel in boilers, said an official statement. The industries that can get this benefit include sugar mills, pulp and paper mills among others.

The Cabinet also approved non-fiscal incentives to industries in terms of availability of 'Panchayat' land for storage of paddy straw with lease agreement upto 33 years. Apart from this, balers would be made available on priority in areas where paddy straw is used as fuel in boilers, said the statement, adding that the move would help in tackling the

menace of stubble burning during Kharif harvesting season which will also help to conserve the fertility of soil by retaining the beneficial micro-organisms.

The statement said the decision assumes significance in view of the challenge of managing crop residue. Post harvesting, while the wheat straw is used as fodder for the livestock, paddy straw in the fields is set on fire by the farmers to quickly clear their fields for next crop. Due to field fire incidents during the month of October-November, the problem of air pollution is widely prevalent in and around the rural area, causing major health issues, it said.

Stubble burning significantly adds to deterioration of the air quality in the national capital region along with various local sources such as domestic, vehicular, industrial and municipal solid waste dump fires. Paddy is cultivated in 31.49 lakh hectare area (2020) in Punjab, generating of about 20 million tons of paddy straw, the statement added.

Palm oil plan enthuses Kerala farmers

The National Mission on Edible Oils-Oil Palm (NMEO-OP), a ₹11,040 crore project by the Union government to maximise cultivation and production, is expected to bring in remarkable growth prospects for the palm oil industry in Kerala.

While both farmers and refiners find the scheme extremely encouraging, it can also revitalise the estates run by the Oil Palm India Limited and the Plantation Corporation of Kerala.

Since India is heavily dependent on imports when it comes to crude and refined palm oils, the industry stakeholders believe that the current development will be highly beneficial for the sector.

The NMEO-OP proposes to extend cultivation of oil palm, considered a top oil crop, to an additional 5 lakh hectares so that the crude palm oil (CPO) production touches 11.20 lakh tonnes by the 2025-26 financial year.



In the total financial outlay of ₹11,040 crore, the share of the Centre will be ₹8,844 crore while the State share of ₹2,196 crore includes the viability gap funding as well.

Potential sites for cultivation were identified in Wayanad and

Palakkad districts, where more farmers including struggling rubber farmers were rejected to switch to oil palm attracted by the incentives and the prospects of higher returns.

Onion prices likely to rise 100% as erratic rains delay harvest: Crisil

Prices of onion are likely to go up substantially, with an erratic monsoon leading to an eventual delay in the harvest. The delay in arrival of the kharif crop and shorter shelf life of the buffer stock because of Cyclone Tauktae may result in a rise in prices, says a research note from Crisil.

Crisil said, the trend of the past two years shows untimely rains in August-September hampered onion harvest, and prices doubled compared with 2018 when conditions were normal. Crisil Research forecasts an increase of more than 100% in onion prices this year. Prices are expected to cross Rs 30 per kg for kharif 2021 because of the challenges faced in transplanting the crop in Maharashtra, though this will be slightly lower on year to (1-5%) on a high base of kharif 2020. The note also said natural calamities have increased moisture content in the stored rabi crop, thereby shortening its shelf life. This is expected to prepone the arrival of stored rabi crops before the lean season, adding to supply woes.

On an average, India consumes an estimated 13 lakh tonne of onion every month. The crop is grown in three seasons: kharif, late kharif and rabi to meet this demand. This makes onions available for most of the year. Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh are major kharif onion-producing states, contributing over 75% of total kharif onion production.

Govt extends pulses import window till December 31

In order to ensure adequate supplies of pulses, the Centre has issued a notification extending the imports period for tur, moong and urad up to December 31, 2021. Import consignments of these items with the Bill of Landing issued on or before December 31, 2021, will be allowed by the Customs till January 31, 2022. Earlier, the import policy of free imports was to expire on October 31 with arrivals allowed till November 31, 2021.

Welcoming the government's decision, Bimal Kothari, vice-chairman, India Pulses and Grains Association (IPGA), said that the disruption in monsoon for about three weeks between June and July, compounded by excessive rainfall, is

The bulb's supply and price dynamics are dominated mainly by climatic conditions, especially the southwest monsoon. While rabi onion contributes to 70% of the total production, the kharif crop plays a vital role in maintaining supply during the lean period of September-November.

According to Crisil, during the corresponding festive season last year, onion prices had doubled compared with the normal year of 2018 – mainly due to supply disruption caused by heavy and erratic monsoon that damaged the kharif crop in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

The fluctuating monsoon is expected to pose challenges in transplanting the crop in Maharashtra, which accounts for 35% of the total kharif onion produced in the country. With Nashik, which contributes 37% of the Kharif onion produced in Maharashtra, facing a rainfall deficit of 33% as of 30th August, followed by Pune, which contributes 13% of the Kharif onion produced in Maharashtra, many farmers, who had set up nurseries in anticipation of good returns have been unable to transplant owing to the erratic monsoon. This is likely to delay the process and may result in late arrival of the onion crop, thus widening the supply-demand gap during the lean months of September to November, the Crisil note said.

expected to hamper the production of tur, urad and moong this year. This could result in a severe shortage in domestic production. The government, taking early cognizance of this, has taken a proactive step by extending the import window which will ensure adequate imports of these pulses to tide over the ongoing festive season till the time the new domestic crop arrives in the market. This will also help stabilise the prices during the festival season, he added.

In a recent video conference with commerce secretary BVR Subrahmanayam, IPGA had also requested for an extension in the arrival deadline for pulses imports from Myanmar and East Africa by 60 and 90 days, respectively. This was primarily



because the disruption in global logistics has caused severe shortage of containers as well as vessels, the association said.

Tur is harvested in East Africa around August and shipments start in September. However, due to non-availability of containers as well as vessels connecting to India from transit ports, these cargoes are taking far more than the normal

sailing time. Traders are worried that the extended sailing time would result in cargo reaching India post November 30, 2021, which was the initial deadline. With the arrival deadline being extended till December 31 and arrival before January 31, 2022, importers now have ample time to procure and ship the pulses to India," the association said.

Government stands by the small farmer : Narendra Modi

In his first rally in western Uttar Pradesh after protests against the contentious farm laws, broke out last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed that his government stood by the small farmer.

In the 'city of locks' to lay the foundation stone for the Aligarh node of defence industrial corridor and a State university

named after freedom fighter, educationist and social reformer Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh, Mr. Modi described U.P. as the future hub of defence production and education in the country. India was fast moving away from "being an importer to an exporter of defence products, he asserted.

Edible oil, pulses main contributors to inflation

Major contributors to inflation are edible oil and pulses, and to boost their availability in the market, the supply side has been addressed through duty cuts, a senior finance ministry official said. On the issue of petrol prices, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman reiterated that the Centre will have to coordinate with states on ways to reduce the taxes and duties. Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj said inflation will come

down once the crop harvests come into the market, and expected it to be within 4-6 per cent. The RBI has come out with a guidance on inflation and said that the inflation, which is a little on the up, will cool down in some time, and we also feel that once the crops come out, inflation should come down, he told reporters.

Campaign for one million soak pits in 100 days

The Jal Shakti Ministry has launched a campaign to create a million soak pits in villages across the country over the next 100 days, to help manage grey water and prevent the clogging of water bodies. Although the Central government does not have any comprehensive estimate of the total number of soak pits needed countrywide, the States have been asked to develop their own targets.

The household or community soak pit is the simplest solution for grey water management, explained additional secretary Arun Baroka, who heads flagship Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM). With modernisation, people feel that the only solution is to have drains for waste water, which is then dumped in a common village pond. However, that is not the best solution for most villages which are generally dry, where grey water can be safely and inexpensively filtered through a soak pit, he said. A household soak pit could be constructed for about ₹3000-5000 in most cases, he noted.

The Swachh Bharat Mission's first phase was to achieve open defecation free (ODF) status by constructing a toilet in every rural household and persuading all villagers to use it. The second phase, termed ODF+ aims to sustain and extend these sanitation gains by focussing on solid and liquid waste management.

'Sujalam' campaign

Unlike the toilet construction phase, however, where targets were uniform across the country, the second phase has required a more nuanced approach. In a letter to the States regarding the launch of the 100-day 'Sujalam' campaign, Mr. Baroka asked them to "develop ambitious and measurable targets" of their own.

In regions such as Punjab where the ground water table was high, the soak pit would not be a viable solution. Thus, there was no nationwide estimate of the number of soak pits required. A dashboard would be made public within the two



weeks to enable proper monitoring of ODF+ work, he stated. Besides constructing soak pits, the States have been asked to use the campaign period to construct toilets in new

households and retrofit old toilets as needed. Apart from the SBM funds, the Fifteenth Finance Commission grants and MGNREGA funds could also be used, suggested Mr. Baroka.

BRICS nations can play leading role in achieving 2030 SDG goals

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said BRICS nations are capable of playing a leading role in achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of eradicating hunger and poverty.

Tomar, who chaired the 11th Meeting of BRICS Agriculture Ministers virtually, shared efforts taken by India in preserving the agro-biodiversity and for promoting diversification of the agri-food system.

BRICS comprises Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

He said the BRICS Agricultural Research Platform has been created to promote cooperation in agricultural research and innovations, and its implementation has been started. In his opening remark, Tomar said, BRICS countries are well-positioned to take a leading role in helping to achieve the

objectives of the 2030 SDGs (sustainable development goals) to eradicate hunger and poverty. By increasing agri-production and increasing the income of farmers, the problem of income inequality and food price volatility can be overcome, he added. To preserve agro-biodiversity, India has set up national gene banks for plants, animals, fish, insects and agriculturally important microorganisms, an official statement said. Programmes on pulses, oilseeds, horticultural crops, and the recently launched National Palm Oil Mission are implemented to promote diversification of agri-food systems, he added.

Tomar further said India is focusing on capacity building in research, teaching, policy making, trade and farming of nutritious cereals, which will benefit the farmers while conserving the diversity available in this group of crops.

Need to raise collective power of small farmers with new facilities, PM Modi says

Stressing that shrinking farm sizes is a challenge, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said there is a need to increase the "collective power" of small farmers, who account for more than 80 per cent of the farming community with new facilities in the coming years. Small farmers have less than 2 hectares of land. Additionally, farm holdings are getting smaller and smaller in villages with rise in population and division in families, he said in his Independence Day speech.

Unlike the previous regime, the current government is bringing farm reforms and programmes with focus on small farmers, he said, adding that schemes like PM-KISAN and Fasal Bima Yojana will strengthen these cultivators. Modi said, in the coming years, we will have to increase the collective power of the small farmers of the country. They have to be given new facilities. "The government will run a campaign to set up warehouse facilities at the block level. 'Chota Kisan Bane Desh Ki Shaan!' It is our dream, our mantra that small farmers become the pride of the country.

Stressing on the need to focus on major challenges facing the agriculture sector, the Prime Minister said, "One

challenge is the shrinking farm sizes in villages." More than 80 per cent of the farmers in the country have less than 2 hectares of land. But the earlier policies did not focus on small farmers. "Now, keeping these farmers in mind, farm policies and reforms are being made," he said, highlighting the programmes being implemented for empowering small farmers.

Be it reforms in Fasal Bima Yojana, increasing the minimum support price (MSP) by 1.5 times (the cost of production), linking farmers with Kisan Credit Card (KCC) for cheaper farm loans, taking solar power schemes till farm land or setting up of Farmer Producers organisations (FPOs) -- all these efforts will strengthen small farmers, he added. Under the PM-KISAN scheme, an annual financial benefit of Rs 6,000 is provided to eligible beneficiary farmer families, payable in three equal four-monthly installments of Rs 2,000 each. That apart, He said 'Kisan Rail' trains are being operated on more than 70 rail routes to ensure farmers are able to transport their produce at lower cost to different parts of the country.



Most farmers sold to private traders in 2019, new survey data shows

Between 2013 and 2019, the share of agricultural households (HHs) that sold their produce in APMC mandis reduced sharply, while those that sold their produce to private traders increased significantly. Data show that a majority of the farmers were unaware of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) programme and procurement agencies. Among those who were aware, a significant share did not sell their produce to procurement agencies due to lack of infrastructure. More importantly, the share of households that were aware of MSP but did not sell to procurement

agencies because they received better prices was negligible.

Change in destination

The table depicts the % point change in the share of HHs that sold their produce to various agencies in Jan.-June 2019 period compared to Jan.-June 2013. Sharp reductions can be observed in HHs that sold to APMC mandis, across crops. HHs that sold to private traders/markets increased while the share of sale to procurement agencies remained stagnant.

India's agriculture exports can be doubled in 'medium term', says ITC Chairman

India accounts for only 2.5% of the global agriculture exports, and there is an opportunity to double it in the medium term and improve the economics of the sector, ITC Chairman Sanjiv Puri said. There is an urgent need to deal with the agriculture value chain, which would help in improving the quality of income in rural areas and ushering in socio-economic transformation in the country," Mr. Puri said while virtually addressing an event organised by industry body PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI.)

The sector also needs immediate and substantive transformation because it is also the most threatened by global climate change. I think the most important sector that we need to deal with is really the agriculture value chains. And to that I would also add the wood-based value chains as an opportunity, Mr. Puri said. Because of our productivity and limitations on quality, sustainability and limitations of value addition, India merely accounts for only 2½% of the global exports. The opportunity is very clearly to be able to double it in the medium terms and doubling this offers the opportunity to actually improve, and improve the economics of this sector it needs a lot of policy reforms.

The dependence of the workforce on the agri value chains in India is also immense. Nearly two-thirds of rural livelihoods come from the sector and about half of the workforce of India is engaged in the sector. Despite such a large workforce being engaged in agriculture, its share in the GDP is under 20%, reflecting the endemic problems of productivity and low incomes. So, this is really a serious

concern in terms of the quality of incomes here he added.

The food processing industry which lies at the intersection of agriculture and active manufacturing is an "enormous economic multipliers" and has the best employment to capital ratios, Mr. Puri observed. It is an industry which creates an enormous amount of post-harvest management livelihood. It also brings inefficiencies, and also positively impacts farm incomes Mr. Puri said.

According to him, agriculture is a sector threatened by climate change, though it is a small contributor to it. We have witnessed the extreme weather events, year on year, and the devastation they have caused on many facets of economic activity, but certainly substantially to agriculture, and experts actually predict that by 2050, if climate change continues unabated in the trajectory that it is progressing today, extreme weather events will multiply 75 times he added.

For example, wheat yields could drop by 50% after climate change. Moreover, India is already a water stress country, with 54% of the country falls in that. According to Mr. Puri, agriculture is a sector, which has immense opportunity. By 2050, the world is going to be home to 9 billion people and by 2027, India is going to be the most populous country with 1.5 billion people. And by that time, people would have better incomes better consumption, and therefore the world would need an enormous amount of food to manage the requirements and India will be the largest arable land in the world and a leader in many commodities, he said.

APMCs can access Farmers Infrastructure Funds: Narendra Singh Tomar

The Agricultural Produce Markets Committees (APMCs) will have access to Rs 1 lakh crore allocated to Farmers

Infrastructure Fund, said Narendra Singh Tomar, Minister of Agriculture while addressing a press briefing after the first



meeting of the new cabinet.

Alleviating fears of farmers, the minister said that APMCs will not be done away with after the implementation of farm laws. Instead they will receive huge funds from the Centre's Infrastructure fund to strengthen them. Apart from APMCs the eligibility has also been extended to national and state Federation of Co-operatives, Federation of Farmers Producers Organisations and Federations of Self Help Groups.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced Rs 1 lakh crore for Agricultural Infrastructure Fund under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan in August 2020 under which

Kharif sowing till July 9 lagging by 10%

A mid-season pause in the monsoons has slowed the pace of crop sowing in India, with the acreage tilled so far declining about a tenth from the same period last year, although an anticipated revival in rainfall later this month should help bridge the gap and limit potential risks to farm-output shrinkage. Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab have less area coverage due to erratic rainfall, while the southern peninsula, Bihar and Jharkhand have lower area coverage due to excess soil moisture, the Ministry of Agriculture said. It appears that at present, there is no reason for concern on achieving the normal area coverage in the country. India has completed sowing of the kharif season crop on 46% of the normal area of 1,073 lakh hectare

agri-entrepreneurs, start-ups, agri-tech players farmer groups were to have access to credit at subsidised interest for building warehouses, cold storages and other facilities to reduce post-harvest waste. At present interest subvention for a loan upto Rs 2 crore in one location is eligible under the scheme. In case, one eligible entity puts up projects in different locations then all such projects will be now be eligible for interest subvention for loan upto Rs 2 crore. However, for a private sector entity there will be a limit of a maximum of 25 such projects. This limitation of 25 projects will not be applicable to state agencies, national and state federations of cooperatives, federations of FPOs and federation of SHGs.

allocated for summer cultivation. Farmers have sown kharif crops on 499.87 lakh hectares until July 9, about 10.4% lower than 558.11 lakh hectares sown during the corresponding period last year. The decline is rather pronounced for moong pulses, soya beans, groundnut and cotton.

Rice, the most important cereal crop this season, has been planted on 114.82 lakh hectares against 126.08 lakh hectares sown during the comparable period last year, a decline of about 9%. Kharif pulses have been planted on 52.49 lakh hectares, against 53.35 lakh hectares during the corresponding previous year. Moong beans have been sown on 11.92 lakh hectares, against 13.49 lakh hectares.

India's agricultural exports will cross \$40 billion in FY22: NABARD Chairman

India's agricultural exports will cross \$40 billion in FY22 driven by strong global demand for sugar, cotton, oilcakes, oilseeds and non-basmati rice and due to better understanding of the global markets by the Indian farming community, according to GR Chintala, chairman, National Bank for Rural and Agriculture Development (NABARD). Producers have understood the overseas market requirements and the quality of products that are in demand. This is driving agri exports from India. China has emerged as a major buyer of agriculture products in the world markets. Also, we are in the midst of a commodity super cycle, said Chintala.

After remaining stagnant for the past three years at \$38.43 billion in 2017-18, \$38.74 billion in 2018-19 and \$35.16 billion in 2019-20, the export of agriculture and allied products

(including marine and plantation products) jumped to \$41.25 billion in 2020-21. This represented a stunning 17 percent rise. On the other hand, overall exports from India suffered a 7.2 percent fall to \$ 256.34 billion, down from the \$ 313 billion in 2020-21.

Chintala said Farmer Producer Organisations (FPO) are playing a key role in increasing exports from the country. There are about 8,000 FPOs in the country, of which 4868 FPOs are funded by NABARD and its subsidiaries. The farmers' benefits have increased by 20 per cent to 40 per cent after they joined FPOs because they get the inputs at competitive prices, hire machinery and add value to their produce to garner better prices in the markets. NABARD has a target of disbursing Rs 7.5 lakh crore for agriculture and rural development in FY22 as compared to 6.57 lakh crore in



FY21. To ensure farmers obtain minimum support price for their produce, NABARD has strengthened procurement operations of various state governments. In FY21, we had disbursed around Rs 50,000 crore on procurement head. This year we aim to increase it by another Rs 5,000 to Rs

Masur prices may remain range bound as Govt cuts import duty

To boost domestic supplies and control the rising prices, the government of India reduced basic customs duty on masur dal (red lentil) to Nil for all origins except USA and halved Agriculture Infrastructure Development Cess on the lentil to 10%. A notification in this regard was tabled in Rajya Sabha by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

"The basic customs duty has been reduced from 10% to nil on Lentils (Masur) originated in or exported from countries other than the USA. Also, the basic customs duty has been reduced from 30% to 20% on masur originating in or exported from the USA. The Agriculture Infrastructure Development Cess on masur has been reduced from the present rate of 20% to 10%," the notification said. The effective rate of duty will be 10% on masur imported from all countries except the USA, which will have 30% on masur imported from the USA. Wholesale prices at Mumbai market are ruling around Rs 6600/quintal from around Rs

10,000 crore. NABARD has come out with a new product called Rural Infrastructure Assistance (RIAS) for eastern India states. We are seeing that a number of eastern India states are keen to borrow under RIAS to set up medical infrastructure, Chintala said.

5900/quintal in March, a rise of 12% in four months. According to trade estimates, India consumes about 20 lakh tonnes of masur in a year, while it produced about 9 lakh tonnes during the previous rabi season. Government estimate is higher at 13 lakh tonnes. While prices of most of the other pulses were ruling below the minimum support price (MSP) levels, only masur prices have been ruling firm above the MSP of Rs 5100/quintal. International masur prices have been rising and expected to continue the rally betting on India cutting duties on imports.

According to IGrain India reports, masur prices at ports on the west coast had jumped by over 5% after the government removed the stock limit on pulses in the previous week. According to trade sources, during April to June, India already imported more than 1 lakh tonnes of masur, while more than 1.5 lakh tonnes of imported masur is at special economic zones (SEZ) and some ports.

Volatile weather may hit pulses yield, drag kharif output down

Even though the government is confident of having another record year of Kharif foodgrain on the back of higher acreage under pulses, there could be a decline in the production of pulses. Farmers in Madhya Pradesh are battling a dry weather while surplus rains in Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Karnataka during the first fortnight of this month have inundated fields in many areas, potentially lowering yields. Foodgrain production may cross 150 million tonne (MT) in the kharif season of 2021-22 crop year (July-June) due to good rains, agriculture secretary Sanjay Agarwal had said. The country's kharif foodgrain output was recorded 149.56 MT last year comprising 140.87 MT of rice and other cereals and 8.69 MT of pulses. However, with lower acreage under coarse cereals (-2%, y-o-y) and flat paddy acreage (0.2%, y-o-y), pulses crops hold the key to achieving another record in foodgrain output this year, people watching the sector said adding, even a marginal decline in pulses output may affect the production estimate. The agriculture ministry is

expected to release its first advance estimate of crops output soon. The disruption in monsoon for about three weeks between June and July, compounded by excessive rainfall in September, is expected to hamper the production of tur, urad and moong this year, Bimal Kothari, vice-chairman of India Pulses and Grains Association Mr Kothari said earlier. This could result in a severe shortage in domestic production. With an average yield of 0.58 tonne per hectare (actual during kharif 2019-20) and an expected acreage of about 14 million hectare, this year's kharif pulses output may drop 6.6% to 8.12 million tonne (MT), an official source said. The pulses acreage in the last kharif season was 13.18 million hectare, according to a presentation by the agriculture commissioner on April 30 at this year's annual kharif conference.

But the agriculture ministry's weekly sowing update shows acreage as of September 17 last year was at 13.79 million hectare. Even many experts working on crop estimation



through satellite mapping do not concur with the government's pulses acreage data for the current season at 14.07 million hectare. Tur, moong and urad are major pulses grown in kharif. Though the urad area in Madhya Pradesh has captured a decline in official data, the extent of fall is much more as there is hardly any crop in the Vidisha and Sagar area, said a top executive of a company involved in satellite mapping of crops. Madhya Pradesh, the top producer of urad, has recorded a 2.2% drop in acreage under this pulse while the pan-India area is 2% higher from year-ago. Tur acreage in Maharashtra has recorded a 6.2% increase at 1.32 million hectare and in Karnataka 13% up at 1.45 million hectare. Both these states, the top two producers, have over 50% share in the country's total acreage under tur. Similarly, the moong area in the top producing state Rajasthan is up 2.8% at 2.15 million hectare.

There may be a marginal fall in yield in moong and urad which were sown early. But overall, the crop conditions are normal, so far, said N P Singh, director of Kanpur-based Indian Institute of Pulses Research. Singh, who was travelling in Rajasthan to survey the pulses crops, also said that there might not be any problem for tur crop as its sowing window is very wide with harvesting done as late as in April and

farmers decide the timing of planting based on weather conditions. Even if there is a decline in kharif, overall pulses output may not be impacted since rabi season has 65% share in production, Singh added. The recent decision to extend the import window of pulses and the possibility of further extension point to not-so-rosy picture of kharif output, said a trade expert. Depending on the sowing in rabi season which will be known by December, the government will decide whether to allow import in 2022, the expert said. To ensure adequate supplies of pulses, the Centre on September 13 had issued a notification extending the imports period for tur, moong and urad up to December 31. Import consignments of these items with the Bill of Lading issued on or before December 31, will be allowed by the Customs till January 31, 2022. Earlier, the import policy of free imports was to expire on October 31 with arrivals allowed till November 31. Meanwhile, pulses prices in mandis have increased marginally in the first fortnight of September from the previous month. The retail price inflation in 'pulses and products' was up 10.01% in June, 9.04% in July and 8.81% in August. This softening in trend may be stopped from September if pulses prices continue to rise.

Agricultural and processed food exports up 21.8% in April-August

The government said India's export of agricultural and processed food products rose 21.8% on year in April-August with rice, fresh fruit and vegetables and cereals exhibiting growth. Exports of products under the ambit of the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) were \$7.9 billion in the first five months of the fiscal as against \$6.4 billion a year ago, the commerce and industry ministry said in a statement. Rice exports increased 13.7% to \$3.8 billion from \$3.3 billion a year ago. Outbound shipments of fresh fruits & vegetables

registered a 6.1% rise while those of processed food products like cereals preparations grew 41.9%. India reported a significant 142.1% jump in export of other cereals while the export of meat, dairy & poultry products witnessed an increase 31.1% in the first five months of the current fiscal, the ministry said. The export of other cereals increased to \$379 million from \$157 million in April-August 2020-21 while that of meat, dairy and poultry products rose to \$1.5 billion from \$1.1 billion.

Kharif foodgrain output estimated at record 150.50 MT this year

India's foodgrains production in kharif season of 2021-22 crop year (July-June) has been estimated at a record 150.5 million tonne (MT) on the back of increased acreage under paddy and pulses. Last year's kharif output was 149.56 MT as per the latest (fourth) estimate, up from 144.52 MT seen in the first estimate. The robust output could increase pressure on the government to buy the crops at the MSPs if market rates fall below the benchmark rates on bumper

arrivals at mandis. Ahead of the kharif harvesting season starting October 1, mandi prices of most crops barring pulses are ruling below their respective minimum support prices (MSPs). As the summer-sown crop arrivals pick up by early October, the prices could fall further. The average mandi price in major producing states in eight out of twelve key summer-sown crops namely paddy, jowar, bajra, maize, ragi, urad, moong and sunflower were 3-32% below the MSP



during September 1-15. Only tur, cotton, groundnut and soyabean were costlier to wholesalers than the MSP during the period. Rice output in kharif 2021-22 is estimated to be a record 107.04 MT, up from 104.41 MT in the previous season. The sowing area under paddy was 0.2% higher at 40.96 million hectare as of September 17 as against the year-ago period. A higher output means the government will have to buy more rice from farmers, experts said. Amid the farmers' protest, the Centre has purchased record 59.82 MT of rice (nearly ₹1.68 lakh crore on MSP value) as of September 20 during 2020-21 marketing season (October-September), which is 49% of the all-time high production of 122.27 MT. According to the first estimates of the kharif crops released, the production of pulses such as tur, urad and moong is likely to be 9.45 MT, up 8.7%, mainly due to increase in sowing

area. The tur production is estimated at 4.43 MT, moong and urad at 2.05 MT, each. The total output of kharif-grown coarse cereals is seen lower by 6.7% at 34 MT, including 21.24 MT of maize. The output of jowar is estimated at 1.54 MT, bajra at 9.35 MT and ragi at 1.52 MT. Among the cash crops, cotton output for this year has been pegged at 36.22 million bales (of 170kg each), up by 2.4% from last year, despite 5.8% drop in acreage and dry weather in key producer Gujarat. Sugarcane production is likely to jump 5% to 419.25 MT. Commenting on the latest estimate, an expert said: There is almost always an upward revision between first and fourth estimate. However, as September rainfall has been above normal in most parts of the country, there could be some yield losses due to which the food grains output in current kharif season.

Rising global prices: Fertiliser subsidy to rise by another ₹25,000 crore

The government will likely allocate an additional ₹25,000 crore as subsidy on fertilisers for the current financial year to insulate farmers from rising global prices of diammonium phosphate (DAP) and urea, official sources told. With this, the budgeted subsidy on fertilisers will be around ₹1.19 lakh crore against the budget estimate (BE) of ₹79,530 crore. On June 16, the Centre had announced a ₹14,775-crore additional subsidy over and above the BE as it increased the subsidy on DAP by 140% for the kharif season to ensure that sowing of summer crops were unaffected by the surge in global prices of the fertiliser, which is largely imported. Fertiliser subsidy, which has remained around ₹70,000 crore/year for the last one decade, rose 58% on year to ₹1.28 lakh crore in FY21 as the government cleared arrears. Additional subsidy of ₹40,000 crore on fertiliser over the BE would put pressure on government finances even though buoyant tax revenues will cushion it to an extent and extra market borrowing may not be required. To the discomfiture of the Centre, the global fertiliser prices are not showing any sign of cooling down. In fact, DAP prices have gone up by 16% to since June 16. In the rabi season beginning October, industry estimates total fertiliser requirement of 256 lakh tonnes, of which 45% is imported (mostly DAP, MOP and urea). DAP futures prices for October deliveries were up 56% on year at around \$672/tonne. India is estimated to import 46.58 lakh tonnes of DAP in the coming rabi season. Urea futures for October deliveries were up 85% at \$518/tonne. India's urea import requirement is projected to be 50.5 lakh tonnes for the upcoming winter crop season. Sowing of rabi crops may not be impacted, but yield could be affected if

fertiliser prices increase or availability becomes an issue, said Ravi Kishore, an industry expert. As seen in kharif season, the government has been controlling sales of urea after global prices increased because farmers tend to buy more of the nitrogenous fertiliser than DAP and MoP. Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in July had urged the Centre to increase availability of urea since the supplies were sufficient to meet only 60-65% of the requirement during April-July. Although the Centre increased the subsidy by ₹14,775 crore in mid-June, the global prices of DAP and MoP continued to rise relentlessly, putting pressure on companies to raise retail prices. The global prices of DAP have increased from \$580/tonne to \$672/tonne and that of MoP from \$280/tonne to \$445/tonne in past three months. Urea prices, which were around \$410/tonne in August, increased to around \$440/tonne in September and the October futures at CME is trading around \$518/tonne. The increased prices are mainly due to ban on its export by China. India is reported to have imported about a million tonne of urea from China during April-July this year. For over a decade now prices to the farmers of phosphatic and potassic (P&K) fertilisers are to a large extent determined by the market as subsidies provided by the government are fixed. Considering this crisis of pricing of DAP in India, the Centre had increased the subsidy rates under nutrient based subsidy scheme as a special package for farmers in such a way that MRP of DAP (including other P&K fertilisers) can be kept at the last year's level till the present kharif season, the government had said in June.



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