



BASAI News Updates

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Cold weather mars HP's bid at coffee cultivation

BHANU P LOHUMI
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, AUGUST 9

The Himachal Agriculture Department's pilot project to introduce coffee cultivation in the hill state has failed to yield the desired results.

The cold climate conditions have marred the prospects of coffee plantation as an alternative cash crop as the survival rate of the plants is very low, ranging only between 5 and 10 per cent.

The department had launched the project in 2014. The plants were sown on a trial basis on 7.34 hectares in Kangra, Mandi, Una and Bilaspur districts. The area

SURVIVAL RATE OF PLANTS JUST 5-10%

- Dept launched pilot project in 2014 in Kangra, Mandi, Una and Bilaspur districts
- Area under coffee increased from 7.34 hectares to 30.12 hectares in 4 years
- One lakh plants, mainly of arabica and robusta variety, provided to over 500 farmers
- Only arabica plants survived to some extent in few pockets not lashed by cold winds

under coffee plantation initially increased four times to 30.12 hectares in 2018-19.

The department provided

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Cold weather...

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one lakh plants to over 500 farmers since 2014, aiming to augment their income as raw coffee seeds fetch Rs 150-200 per kg. The Central Coffee Research Institute, Chikmagalur, Karnataka, had recommended two varieties for cultivation in Himachal — arabica and robusta. During the trial, it was observed that the robusta variety required more water as compared to arabica and the farmers were told to go for the latter.

Under the ideal conditions, coffee plants should be raised under the shade, protected from frost and cold, and the temperature should range between 4 degrees Celsius and 35 degrees Celsius. Specific locations were identified in certain districts to grow coffee plants.

The idea was to grow coffee on the pattern of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu as the plants start bearing fruit in four years, while commercial production starts after 10 years. A single plant produces 500 gm to 1 kg of coffee and 100 saplings are planted in one kanal (500 sq yards).



Biological Agri Solutions Association of India

Poor link roads irk apple growers

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, AUGUST 9

Even as the apple season is about to hit the top gear, some link roads in the apple belts are in bad shape, leaving the growers worried about how to market their produce.

Rohit Thakur, Congress MLA from Jubbal-Kotkhai, has alleged that the government has reduced the budget of the PWD this year, making it difficult for the department to repair and maintain the roads in rural areas ahead of the apple season.

"The department's JCB machines have become non-operational and the roads in the rural areas are neither being repaired nor maintained. In the Jubbal-Kotkhai Assembly constituency alone, several roads are non-functional at the moment," said Thakur. He further alleged that the PWD was not releasing payments to contractors, and the latter had been delaying the work even on the projects awarded long time back.

"Apple growers are already under a lot of stress due to

FULL OF SLUSH

The admn should repair the Chamaith-Bartog-Nagpuri road. The harvest season is just a week away, but the road is full of slush. it's impossible for a loaded vehicle to ply on it.

RESIDENTS OF PANDLI PANCHAYAT

the rising input costs. The non-functional roads in the middle of the season will add to their woes as they will face problems in taking their produce to the market," said Thakur, urging Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur to intervene and provide funds to PWD for the repair and maintenance of these roads.

Meanwhile, residents of Pandli panchayat, Kotkhai, have urged the government and the administration to repair the Chamaith-Bartog-Nagpuri road immediately.

Machinery worth ₹100 cr found missing, says report on agri scam

Three districts fail to submit findings, government threatens action

VISHAV BHARTI
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, AUGUST 9

A report submitted on Monday in Rs 1,178 crore agri-machinery subsidy scam has revealed that 11 per cent of the machinery is untraceable in 20 districts.

In terms of financial implication, the machinery worth Rs 100 crore remains missing.

According to sources in the government, three districts have failed to submit their reports, where the number of missing machinery is the highest.

Following *The Tribune* did a series of stories, the state government had ordered an audit and physical verification of each of the 90,000 machines, which were purchased across the state with Centre's subsidy. The officials were asked to furnish the details, including name of the beneficiary, village name, the amount of subsidy received by the farmer, Aadhaar number of the farmer and details of the machine. The officials have been asked to check whether the machine was physically present



To curb stubble-burning, the Centre had provided ₹1,178 crore subsidy from 2018-19 to 2021-22 to farmers. FILE PHOTO

FARM MACHINERY BANKS NOT SET UP

- In all, 34 farm machinery banks were supposed to be set up in Bathinda with the help of 80% Central subsidy
- The state received the subsidy, but a large number of the farm machinery banks remained only on paper
- When the matter was flagged, the previous Congress government tried to cover it up
- As per the reports submitted by 20 districts, 11 per cent machines have remained untraceable

on the ground or not. The verification was to be completed within 15 days.

As per the reports submitted by 20 districts, 11 per cent machines have remained untraceable. The districts where the number is high are

Faridkot (23 per cent) followed by Ferozepur (17 per cent), Amritsar and Gurdaspur (14 per cent each), Fazilka (13 per cent) and Bathinda (12 per cent).


Earlier, officials of 15 districts had failed to submit the reports.

Taking note of the lethargic attitude of agriculture officers, the Department of Agriculture has asked them either to immediately submit the reports by Monday or be ready to face disciplinary action.



Significantly, to control stubble-burning, the Union Government had provided Rs 1,178 crore subsidy in four years (2018-19 to 2021-22) to farmers for buying the crop residual management machinery under In-Setu Crop Residual Management Scheme. However, the subsidy amount was embezzled by the officials.

The Tribune had, on October 18, 2019, highlighted that 34 farm machinery banks in Bathinda were supposed to be established with the help of 80% Central subsidy. The state received the subsidy, but a large number of the farm machinery banks remained only on paper.


The previous Congress government had failed to act on time and the scam continued for the next three years. When the matter was flagged, the previous government tried to cover it up.



Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
Government of India

World Biofuel Day
(Biofuels towards a Carbon Neutral World)



A CLEANER ENVIRONMENT AND PROSPEROUS FARMERS. BIOFUEL MAKES IT POSSIBLE!

♦♦ Our government's primary goal is to increase the income of farmers, to prepare alternatives for petrol, diesel and gas, and to save the environment. ♦♦
- Narendra Modi

↔ Dedication to the Nation of IndianOil's ↔

2G Ethanol Plant at Panipat Refinery

Project Highlights

- Production of clean energy from agricultural residues
- Increase in the income of farmers
- Direct benefit to 1 Lakh farmers
- No need to burn the leftover crop
- New employment opportunities
- Reduction in CO₂ emissions of about 3 million tonnes annually
- Production of 100 kilolitres of ethanol per day
- Investment of ₹900 Crores

by
Shri Narendra Modi
Prime Minister
(through Video Conference)

In the august presence of
Shri Bandaru Dattatreya
Governor, Haryana

Shri Narendra Singh Tomar
Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare
Govt. of India



Shri Hardeep Singh Puri
Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Housing and Urban Affairs, Govt. of India

Shri Rameswar Tell
Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas & Labour and Employment, Govt. of India

Shri Sanjay Bhatia
Member of Parliament

Wednesday, 10th August 2022, 4.30 pm
To watch the live webcast please log in to
<https://pmindlawebcast.nic.in/>

The above program's live telecast can be watched on 'DD News channel'


BASAI

Biological Agri Solutions Association of India

GOVT BETRAYED FARMERS ON POWER BILL, DID NOT HOLD ANY DISCUSSIONS: SKM

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NEW DELHI: The Centre's tabling of the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2022, in Lok Sabha, which has been referred to a standing committee, is a "betrayal" of written assurances given to farmers, the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), a platform of farm unions, has said.

Farm unions have alleged that reforms in the proposed legislation will erode subsidised electricity for agricultural uses. Union power minister, RK Singh, told the Parliament that "there is no change in subsidy provisions". "The state can give any amount of subsidy, even free power to any category of consumers. There are no provisions in it that would affect farmers," he said.

The SKM said it had agreed to withdraw its massive year-long protests in December last year after receiving a set of assurances in a letter signed by then agriculture secretary, Sanjay Agarwal, on behalf of the Centre, along with government's decision to scrap the three farm laws that had ignited the uprising.

Among various demands, the SKM had opposed the proposed Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2022, demanding its withdrawal. "The Centre did not hold any discussions with us on the electricity Bill despite the written assurance and tabled the Bill. This is a betrayal," said Darshan Pal, a leader of the SKM.

"The bill will now be scrutinised by a parliamentary standing committee. So, it is bound to undergo changes. It will give choice to consumers to choose their supplier. But there are issues of whether urban areas will benefit and rural areas will remain underserved," said Prof. Abhijit Saha, an expert.