

Climate-resistant seeds may cover 25% kharif paddy area

ICAR working on releasing 100 seed varieties and 100 technologies in 100 days

SANJEEB MUKHERJEE & AGENCIES
New Delhi, 15 July

The government is aiming to cover almost 25 per cent of this year's kharif paddy area with climate-resistant seeds. This comes as it looks to build on the success of such seeds in the bumper wheat harvest this year, a senior government official said.

In the just-concluded rabi season, almost 75 per cent of the total area under wheat was under climate-resistant varieties, director general of the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) Himanshu Pathak said on Monday.

As a result, total wheat production in the 2024-25 marketing season is estimated to be a record 113 million tonnes.

Pathak was addressing reporters on the sidelines of a press conference to celebrate the 96th Foundation Day of the country's premier agriculture research body.

Climate-resistant paddy seed varieties can withstand drought, prolonged lodging, and submergence, Pathak said.

Last year, around 16 per cent of the total kharif paddy area was under climate-resistant varieties. India, the world's second-largest rice producer after China, cultivates paddy in over 41 million hectares during the kharif season. Research studies indicate that climate change could reduce rice yields in India by 3-5 per cent under a medium-emission scenario, and up to 31.3 per cent by 2030 under high emission.

India's estimated rice production for the 2023-24 crop year (July-June) was at 136.7 million tonnes. Top rice-producing states include West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh.

The ICAR is also working on a plan to develop 100 new seed varieties and an equal number of farm technologies within a 100-day timeframe. This is to bolster India's agricultural sector.

The initiative, part of the government's 100-day action plan, focuses on climate-resilient and bio-fortified seed varieties. They also include farm technologies.

"We're actively working on two key action plans — 100 new seed varieties in 100 days and 100 technologies in 100 days," Pathak added. He indicated that ICAR is seeking Prime Minister Narendra Modi's time to unveil these innovations, likely in mid-September, when the 100-

STRONG MONSOON BOOSTS KHARIF SOWING

Sowing of kharif crops continued to remain strong during the week ended July 12 due to good monsoon so far in July after a drop in June rains. Data showed that the acreage of all kharif crops was almost 10.34 per cent more than the same period last year. Among kharif crops, acreage of arhar and soybeans showed maximum rise during the week ended July 12. This should augur well for the overall pulse and oilseeds production. The cumulative monsoon till July 15, 2024, was deficit by 2 per cent due to a slight weakening of rains over North-west India since the last week or so.



HOLDING THE GROUND

Kharif sowing as on July 12, 2024 (mn hectares)

Crops	2024	Y-o-Y % chg
PADDY	11.56	20.79
PULSES	6.23	25.86
Arhar	2.81	192.71
Urad	1.39	9.45
Moong	1.57	-19.49
COARSE CEREALS	9.76	-6.96
Jowar	0.73	-15.12
Bajra	2.83	-43.40
OILSEEDS	14.04	22.09
Groundnut	2.82	0.00
Soybean	10.81	31.19
SUGARCANE	5.76	1.41
JUTE	0.56	-6.67
COTTON	9.57	2.90
TOTAL*	57.51	10.34

Tomato varieties with longer shelf life might counter sky-high prices

As tomato prices across the country touch a staggering ₹80 per kilogram, two hybrid varieties, with a shelf life of over 20 days, could likely provide some safeguard, a top official said on Monday. These varieties were developed by the Bengaluru-based Indian Institute of Horticultural Research. Conventional tomato

varieties in non-refrigerated conditions usually have a shelf life of 7-10 days, but the new hybrid tomato varieties, Arka Rakshak and Arka Abedh can last up to three weeks. This characteristic could prove crucial in stabilising supply chains disrupted by erratic weather patterns.

SANJEEB MUKHERJEE

day period concludes.

With its workforce of 5,521 scientists nationwide, ICAR is developing new seed varieties across various crops, including rice, wheat, and horticulture.

The technologies under development

span water management, mechanisation, and plant protection.

ICAR also plans to expand its oilseeds hub programme to 174 districts this year and create model village hubs for pulse seeds in 130 districts.

ALL IN A DAY

Vikram Misri takes charge as India's new foreign secretary

Vikram Misri (pictured), widely regarded as an expert on China and national security, assumed charge as India's new foreign secretary on Monday.

Misri, a 1989-batch Indian Foreign Service officer who was serving as the deputy national security advisor, succeeded Vinay Kwatra.

The 59-year-old assumed charge of the key position at a time India is looking to navigate various geo-political challenges, including its frosty ties with China following the lingering eastern Ladakh border row and the consequences of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. PTI



SC dismisses D K Shivakumar's petition challenging CBI FIR

In a setback to Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, the Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a petition filed by him challenging the CBI's FIR against the Congress leader in the disproportionate assets case.

A bench of justices Bela M Trivedi and Satish Chandra Sharma said it was not inclined to interfere with the Karnataka High Court order.

"Sorry. Dismissed," the bench said.

As the hearing commenced, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Shivakumar, submitted that the investigation in the matter started without obtaining the sanction under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act. PTI

Delhi-based Velmenni wins grant to develop submarine communication

AJAI SHUKLA
New Delhi, 15 July

A small Delhi-based firm, Velmenni, is among the high-tech defence companies awarded the Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) grant to develop wireless communication between submarines and the control centre.

The award is a Ministry of Defence (MoD) financial incentive for cutting-edge defence research and development.

The grant was awarded last year, but since the disbursement is milestone-based, it is still being paid out.

The iDEX programme aims to foster innovation in India's defence economy by identifying cutting-edge technologies such as Velmenni's Light Fidelity (Li-Fi) and matching them with requirements raised by other firms, under MoD projects such as Make in India, Start-up India and the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM).

To obtain iDEX funding, which must be matched by the winner, a defence firm must provide a solution to a "defence challenge", identified by another company. A list of these "defence challenges" is then promulgated and companies are invited to provide technical solutions.

Velmenni addressed one of the Navy's longstanding problems relating to the transmitting of data between their submarines and the control centre. After a submarine returns from patrol or surveillance, it is required to transfer large volumes of data, amounting to several terabytes, to the submarine command centre. Radio frequency (RF) data cannot be transmitted securely, since it is vulnerable to interception. To transfer data safely, a physical cable connection must



Velmenni addressed one of the Indian Navy's longstanding problems relating to the transmitting of data between their submarines and the control centre

be laid from the submarine to the command centre. Since the submarine would typically be docked at a distance of over 200 metres from the command centre, the submariners have to physically lay down a cable to extract the data.

Velmenni offered to transfer the data wirelessly, in a fully secured manner and proved they could technically do so.

Ujjwal Minocha, Velmenni's co-founder and chief operating officer, explains this was done using the technology Li-Fi. This involves using light to transmit data rather than the insecure RF band. "The iDEX grant is a testament to the potential of our Li-Fi technology," said Deepak Solanki, chief executive officer, Velmenni. "With these resources, we are poised to revolutionise wireless communication, ensuring secure and efficient data transmission using light," Solanki said. "Li-fi uses both parts of the light spectrum, visible and invisible, to transmit data from one point to another. Since data is made up of zeros and ones, it can

be transported through multiple mediums. While RF has been most widely used for this, light communication has also been in existence, such as in optic fibre cables, where data travels through light only," says Solanki.

Light Fidelity was first heard of in 2011, when it was raised by Professor Harald Haas of the University of Edinburgh, while researching alternate source of wireless communication.

"The MoD grant strongly validates Li-Fi's potential to address the Navy's communication challenges in harsh defence environments," said Minocha.

When Velmenni was launched, fundraising for deep-tech business in India was a major challenge and the company set about exploring opportunities overseas. Looking at the merit of the technology, Velmenni was given an opportunity to be incubated with airbus in Toulouse. This gave the company a credible head-start and it set up its first office in Estonia.

TEAMMARKSMEN

#MDPreferredWorkplace



21ST JUNE 2024

HYATT REGENCY HOTEL, NEW DELHI

Inspiring Environments
Empowered Teams

Recognizing the MOST PREFERRED WORKPLACES

The 4th Edition of the Most Preferred Workplace 2024-25, organized by Team Marksmen Network, recognized workplaces that prioritize employee well-being, growth, and happiness. These workplaces distinguished themselves through a nuanced understanding of the complex global economic landscape and leverage their unique talent pools. This recognition celebrated their commitment to creating workplaces that are not just preferred, but truly transformative for both employees and the broader business ecosystem.

THOSE RECOGNISED AS LEADING THE CHANGE AND CREATING ASPIRATIONAL WORKPLACES INCLUDE



Presented by



Televised on



Magazine partner



Media partners



Research partner



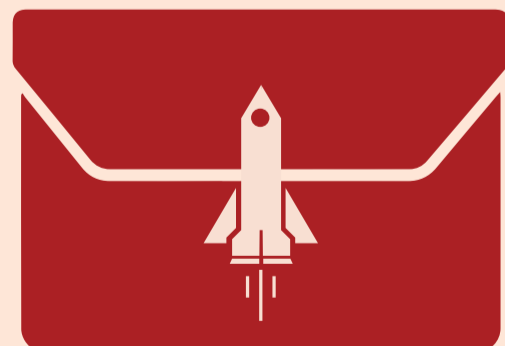
Brought to you by



To know more, contact@teammarksmen.com | Visit our website: www.teammarksmen.com

BUDGET INSIGHT OUT 2024-25 THE INDIA STORY

The Budget funded Earth's first landing on the dark side of the moon.



50 years of covering the India story.

Business Standard 50 Years of Insight