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Read, Think, Learn



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VICHAR

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

CULTIVATING IDEAS,
GROWING FUTURES

GENERAL AGRICULTURE

Bayer to expand its regenerative agriculture initiative to over 16,000 hectares this year

Bayer plans to expand its Sustainable Markets Initiative (SMI) in India, focusing on regenerative agriculture in basmati rice systems. Launched in 2020, the initiative targets key producing states in Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. Implemented in 2024, the SMI solutions improved soil health, yields, profitability, and water usage, positively impacting farmers' livelihoods. SOURCE - THE BUISNESSLINE



Cocoa farming takes root in Kanniyakumari, boosts farmers' income

Kanniyakumari district farmers have gained expertise in cocoa cultivation, becoming a major intercrop in coconut farms and rubber estates. Some earn up to ₹70,000 per month from their plantations. The technique gained popularity after a 2007 Memorandum of Understanding with Cadbury India. Source - THE HINDU



PRESPL, APChemi and Intellecip collaborate to develop BiocharIND

India's PRESPL and APChemi have partnered with Intellecip to set up Biochar India Private Limited (BiocharIND), the largest biochar-based carbon credit platform in the country. BiocharIND will use over 122 million MT of crop residues annually, reducing pollution and soil degradation. The first high-tech production facility will be set up in Punjab-Haryana, producing 10,000 MT of biochar per annum and generating 25,000t CO₂e of carbon credits per year. The biochar will also produce up to 80,000 tons/year of wood vinegar, which will be used for organic pesticide, and biofertilizers. Source- AGROSPECTRUM



GENERAL AGRICULTURE

Coca Cola Company reports continued momentum in first quarter 2025 results

The Coca Cola Company reported strong Q1 2025 results, highlighting continued momentum in the industry. The company's global footprint helped navigate a complex external environment, with double-digit volume growth in India. The Maha Kumbh Mela Festival led to a 2% increase in unit case volume. Source - FNBNEWS



Chopra discusses healthier cooking at PHDCCI hands on workshop on healthier food reformulations

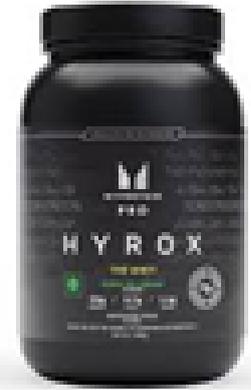
PHDCCI and IQAC- Bhaskaracharya College of Applied Sciences (BCAS) have organized a workshop on healthier food reformulations in New Delhi. The event, attended by former Ministry of Food Processing Industries Secretary Siraj Husain, highlighted the need to reduce excess salt, sugar, and fat in packaged foods to meet global health standards and protect citizens' health. Ajay Chopra, a chef, shared innovative ways to reduce sodium content in food, such as using monosodium glutamate (MSG) to add umami kicks to everyday dishes. The workshop aimed to create greater awareness, build capacity, and encourage responsible practices in the food industry. Experts from industry and academia shared their thoughts on reimagining healthier food formulations. Source- FNBNEWS



GENERAL AGRICULTURE

Myprotein fuels inaugural HYROX race in Mumbai

Myprotein, an online sports nutrition brand, will be the official nutrition partner for the Indian debut of HYROX, an indoor fitness competition. The event, known for its alternating 1km runs and functional exercise stations, will take place in Mumbai on May 3, 2025. Participants will face challenging exercises such as SkiErg, Sled Push, Burpee Broad Jump, RowErg, Farmers Carry, Sandbag Lunges, and Wall Balls. Myprotein will provide hydration products, The Electro and The Whey, with a Watermelon flavour and a premium Pista Ice Cream flavor. Source-FNBNEWS



Costa Coffee's sees India to be among its top 5 markets in 5 years

Costa Coffee, a British coffee chain, is expanding its presence in India, with plans to open 50 stores a year. The company, now owned by Coca Cola, is focusing on key metro cities and is operating over 200 stores in India. The company is also entering highway petrol stations and shopping malls. In FY24, revenue from operations increased by 49%, driven by store expansion. India is the second market to roll out Costa Coffee's new store design. Source - FNBNEWS



Agricultural activity picks up pace in Mysuru as pre-monsoon rains gather momentum

Agricultural has gained momentum in Mysuru district due to pre-monsoon showers, which are higher than the long-period average. Farmers have taken to tilling fields and sowing the crops, and the agricultural department has set a target of bringing 3.74 lakh hectares under various crops during the Kharif season this year. Source- THE BUISNESSLINE



GENERAL AGRICULTURE

Okkal seed farm set to explore carbon trading

In a first, the government seed farm at Okkal, near Perumbavoor, is exploring the possibility of gaining credits for carbon trading, even as the process of assessing carbon emission and sequestration at the farm is complete and an official declaration of the results is expected later this month. An official associated with the seed farm, which will be the second in line to get the carbon-neutral certification after the Thuruthu Seed Farm, Aluva, said the Okkal farm had grown into a comprehensive experience for farmers as well as students who care for nature



APEDA mulls strategies to boost exports of agri, processed foods

India's Commerce Ministry's APEDA is developing strategies to boost agricultural and processed food exports. The strategy was discussed during an inter-ministerial dialogue, with representatives from state governments, policy experts, and industry leaders. The ministry aims to reduce logistical barriers, enhance market access, and focus on research and development for innovation and sustainability in agri exports.

SOURCE - THE BUISNESS LINE



ICAR to launch two genome edited rice varieties

ICAR has developed two genome edited rice varieties, which will be announced in New Delhi on Sunday (May 4, 2025) by Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. The ICAR said the seed was “first-ever such achievement” using new genome editing technology. The first variety, named as DRR Dhan 100 Kamala, was developed from a high yielding green rice Samba Mahsuri and the second variety is from Maruteru 1010 (MTU1010), which is widely used by farmers .

SOURCE- THE HINDU



GENERAL AGRICULTURE

PJTAU to allot 15% seats to children farm workers.

Professor Jayashankar Telangana Agricultural University (PJTAU) has decided to allot 15% of seats in the courses offered by it to the children of farm workers from the 2025-26 academic year in addition to the existing provision of allotment of 40% seats to the children of farmers. Source - THE HINDU



Agri minister Chouhan unveils first genome-edited rice varieties, yield to rise up to 30%

Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched two genome-edited rice varieties, DRR Dhan 100 (Kamala) and Pusa DST Rice 1, developed by ICAR. These varieties promise to boost rice yields by 20-30%, conserve water, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Recommended for major rice-growing states, they offer drought tolerance, high nitrogen-use efficiency, and earlier harvests, addressing climate change and enhancing food security. Source- THE ECONOMIC TIMES



ICAR introduces world's first climate robust rice cultivars: Viksit Kheti, Viksit Bharat

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed two genome-edited rice varieties, DRR Dhan 100 (Kamala) and Pusa DST Rice 1, using CRISPR-Cas technology. The development aims to increase productivity by 15-20%, improve quality, and reduce production costs. The varieties are recommended for cultivation in key rice-growing states, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20%. source - AGROSPECTRUM



GENERAL AGRICULTURE

Climate change forcing rural men to migrate due to poor crop yields, says expert.

Climate change is causing rural men to migrate to cities due to poor crop yields, impacting health and economies. Expert Eilia Jafar warns that food insecurity is increasing globally due to climate change, with projections of reduced yields for staple foods like wheat, maize, and rice by 2050 and 2080. SOURCE - THE BUISNESSLINE



Madhya Pradesh farmers involved in stubble burning to lose Kisan Samman Nidhi aid.

The Madhya Pradesh Cabinet has given its approval to suspend for a year the financial assistance provided under the Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme of those farmers involved in stubble burning, a Minister has said. The Cabinet also decided that the produce of such farmers will not be purchased as per the minimum support price (MSP) for one year. Source- THE HINDU



Andhra Pradesh Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan moots 'war room' for monitoring drinking water supply.

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister K. Pawan Kalyan has instructed officials to establish drinking water war rooms in the Rural Water Supply Department head office and Collectorates to monitor water supply issues and resolve problems promptly. He emphasized the need to link agriculture with the scheme. Source - THE HINDU



GENERAL AGRICULTURE

Govt to review restoration of PDS wheat supply after procurement ends.

The Centre plans to review the restoration of wheat entitlements under the Public Distribution System (PDS) after the procurement drive concludes, encouraged by projections of a record 115 million tonnes of wheat production. As of April 30, 256.31 lakh tonnes of wheat have been procured, a 24.78% increase from last year, benefiting over 21 lakh farmers. Source- THE ECONOMIC TIMES



Fonterra funds the EcoPond initiative to lower emissions on farms.

Fonterra has invested in a new mobile effluent pond dosing service called EcoPond, which uses sulfuric acid and polyferric sulphate to reduce methane emissions in wastewater ponds. The service, which will be tested by up to 200 Fonterra farmers in Waikato and Southland, aims to reduce on-farm emissions by 30% by 2030. The service uses a vehicle to treat the pond as needed, reducing deployment costs compared to the previous EcoPond system. The Co-op and Agnition are funding the project, with additional customer incentives and partnerships with Mars and Nestlé. The trial on the Net Zero Pilot Dairy farm showed a 97% decrease in methane emissions. Source- AGROSPECTRUM



The Fertilizer Institute (TFI) releases public policy priorities focused on strengthening supply and food security.

The Fertilizer Institute (TFI) has released its 2025-2026 public policy priorities for working with the Trump administration, regulatory agencies, and Congress. The priorities include tax & trade, energy & economic growth, environment, transportation, permitting, registrations & designations, safety & security, innovation, and Farm Bill reauthorization. TFI aims to strengthen the domestic fertilizer industry, promote grower adoption of nutrient stewardship practices, and ensure reliable infrastructure. Source- AGNEWS



GENERAL AGRICULTURE

DBN's transgenic soybean event DBN9004×DBN8002 approved for cultivation in Brazil.

Beijing Dabeinong Technology Group (DBN) has been granted a cultivation permit for its transgenic insect-resistant and herbicide-tolerant soybean event DBN9004×DBN8002, marking a significant step for the company's expansion in South America. The stacked event combines herbicide tolerance and insect resistance, offering a more competitive range of trait products and technical services. DBN has already obtained cultivation permits in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay for its technology export and grain import strategy. The company is currently conducting biosafety assessments and international cooperation research on insect-resistant and herbicide-tolerant transgenic crops, with the aim of expanding the market space for Chinese transgenic products internationally. Source- AGNEWS



DA-BAR and IRRI discuss strategies for advanced rice research and innovation in the Philippines.

IRRI and DA-BAR have collaborated to enhance productivity, sustainability, and resilience in rice-based systems in the Philippines. Key projects include OneRicePH, Climate Smart Pest Management, and Drones4Rice. The meeting emphasized the importance of data-driven approaches, technology integration, and capacity building. New project proposals include sustainable rice byproduct management, digital tools, seed systems, and advanced pest surveillance. Source- AGNEWS



GENERAL AGRICULTURE

Innovative vegetable grafting technology offers resilient yields for climate-stressed cultivation, ICRISAT study shows.

A study by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) has shown that vegetable grafting can be an efficient and climate-smart innovation for smallholder farmers. When combined with protected cultivation like Naturally Ventilated Polyhouse (NVPH), this technique can boost crop yields and farm income. The technique can also improve plant vigor, extended harvesting periods, and stronger resistance to environmental stresses. The research highlights the potential of vegetable grafting to improve agricultural outcomes without genetic modification. Source - AGNEWS



Belagavi start-up launches AI-based agriculture app SBOF Agrosmart.

Belagavi-based SBOF Agrosmart Private Limited has launched SBOF Agrosmart, which is being billed as India's first AI-based all-in-one agriculture app. It will provide all-round support to farmers and could lead to a revolution in agriculture, according to start-up founders Savio Pereira and Swati Pereira. Farmers across India are facing increasing uncertainty — climate change, market price fluctuations, pest & disease outbreaks, lack of timely information, low-quality inputs, and difficulty accessing government schemes and modern tools. Source - THE HINDU TIMES



Agriculture and research institute bags seven awards.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru College of Agriculture and Research Institute (PAJANCOA & RI), Karaikal, has bagged seven awards, including Best Research Institute Award, of the Indian Institute of Rice Research (ICAR-IIRR), Hyderabad. Each year, the ICAR-IIRR national awards are given in recognition of excellence across various domains of rice research including methodology, scientific innovation, and impactful outcomes. Source - THE HINDU



GENERAL AGRICULTURE

Farmers protest U.K. trade deal saying it's a threat to agriculture and MSMEs

The farmers' organisations expressed grave concern at the signing of a free trade agreement between India and United Kingdom. The organisations alleged that the treaty was signed despite protests by farmers, fish workers and cattle farmers, is a matter of grave concern.

Samyukt Kisan Morcha core committee member and All India Kisan Sabha president Ashok Dhawale said as per statements from both the governments, products from the U.K. such as lamb, salmon, soft drinks, chocolate, biscuits, medical devices, cosmetics, electrical machinery, and aerospace will be dumped into our markets without any restrictions by slashing Indian tariffs. "This will act against the interest of farmers, fish workers and micro, small and medium enterprises that are engaged in food processing. In the past, all such free trade agreements, both bilateral and multilateral, have failed the Indian farmers and small industries," Dr. Dhawale said.



Drones can help agriculture a lot: Eluru Collector

Eluru District Collector K. Vetriselvi on Wednesday (May 7) said drones can enhance agricultural productivity and reduce costs, and the government is focusing on leveraging drone technology to support farmers. She was speaking at an awareness programme here. Ms. Vetriselvi said farmer groups and Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) can apply for purchase of drones under subsidy (up to 50%). In the first phase, the government has allocated 40 drones to the district, to be distributed in 27 mandals. Villages have been organised into clusters of 10 to 15 for this purpose.



GENERAL AGRICULTURE

India-Pakistan tensions drive up basmati rice prices

Basmati rice prices in India have surged by up to 10% recently, reversing a previous decline, as West Asian countries increase imports amid rising India-Pakistan tensions. Concerns over potential supply disruptions are driving demand, particularly from Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Yemen. US buyers are also stocking up before potential tariff changes.



Govt to launch pan-India farmers awareness campaign from May 29 to boost output: Shivraj Chouhan

Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announces a nationwide campaign. It aims to educate farmers about modern farming techniques. The 'Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan' will run from May 29 to June 12. Teams will visit 700 districts. They will share information on climate-resilient seeds and government programs. The goal is to boost crop productivity and farmer income.



Palm Oil prices dip amid higher output forecasts, slower Indian demand

Palm oil prices are facing downward pressure due to bearish sentiment, falling BMD crude palm oil (CPO) futures, and anticipated production increases in key producing countries like Malaysia and Indonesia. Malaysian palm oil futures fell to around MYR 3,750 per tonne in early May 2025, while Indian palm oil imports dropped in April 2025 due to ample inventories and a shift in buying preference towards softer-priced oils. The outlook for palm oil prices remains soft in the near term.



GENERAL AGRICULTURE

Vegetable Oil sector urges wider tariff gap to support domestic refining

India's vegetable oil industry has called for a widening of the tariff differential between crude and refined oils to protect local refineries and curb the growing influx of refined oil imports. The Solvent Extractors Association of India (SEA) has suggested raising import duties on refined oils or reducing those on crude oils, arguing that the current gap is too narrow. India currently levies a 27.5% import duty on crude vegetable oils and 35.75% on refined oils, creating a small difference of 8.25%. The SEA's call for a greater tariff gap reflects the need for a more strategic policy to support local refineries and reduce dependency on imported refined oils.



Arya.ag reports Rs 32 Cr PAT in FY25 marking a 70% increase from the previous fiscal

India's Arya.ag, the largest integrated grain commerce platform, reported a 70% increase in Profit After Tax (PAT) for FY 2024-25, with gross revenue of Rs 5,738.7 crore and net revenue of Rs 447 crore. Despite volatile agriculture conditions, the company maintained focus on core execution, achieving near-zero NPAs and market share gains in underserved regions.



Tropical Agro unveils patented granular insecticide for paddy

Tropical Agro has launched Tag Stem Lee, a patented granular insecticide designed to combat the devastating pests Stem Borer and Leaf Folder in paddy cultivation. These pests significantly impact rice productivity in India, causing economic losses and threatening farmer livelihoods. The patented solution, which is easy to apply, delivers superior pest control with just 2 kg per acre, eliminating key symptoms and ensuring long-lasting protection.



TROPICAL AGRC