NEWS FLASH –28th September, 2016

SUGAR

AP: Paddy, sugarcane crops inundated in 3,406 ha

Heavy rain unleashed misery on the farmers of the district, as paddy and sugarcane crops inundated in an extent of 3,406 hectares, affecting 10,796 farmers.

With the crop fields being under three-feet-deep water, farmers have lost hopes on the kharif crop. With the Thandava and Sarada rivers overflowing, paddy and sugarcane crops have been completely inundated in 140 village in 16 mandals.

The district administration on Monday announced that paddy and sugarcane crops have been submerged in 101 villages of 13 mandals in the district. The crops were heavy damaged in Nakkapalli, Rambilli, Chodavaram and Yelamanchili mandals.

Several residential colonies and houses were inundated in Chodavaram, Yelamanchili, S Rayavaram, Munagapaka and Kasimkota mandals. The district administration has opened several relief camps.

According to the information reached to the collectorate, over 7,000 affected people have been shifted to relief camps. As many as 74 katcha houses were fully damaged and 18 pucca houses partially damaged. As many as 2,200 houses in Chodavaram mandal were inundated.

Collector Pravin Kumar on Monday said that special teams had been deployed to each mandal to carry out the resecue and relief operations.

Power supply was hit in several areas. Many colonies in S Rayavaram mandal and Nakkapalle faced a hard time, with water entering their houses.

"Electrical appliances and household articles are floating as the rainwater entered our houses," said Y Simhachalam, a resident of Yelamanchili.

The locals blamed encroachment of drains for this situation. Regions near Anakapalle have also been inundated with canals linked to the Sarada river which is in spate. Pendurthi and Rambilli were among the worst affected.

(http://sugarnews.in/ap-paddy-sugarcane-crops-inundated-in-3406-ha/, published on 27th September, 2016)

UP: 1,300 crore as cane interest waived of,government informs court

The state government on Monday stated in an affidavit filed before the Allahabad High Court that all the interest to be paid by the sugar mills to the farmers from 2012 to 2014 amounting to Rs 1,300 crores has been waived off by the state government. Hearing a PIL filed by Rashtriya Kisan Mazdoor Sangthan, a division bench comprising Justice Vimlesh Kumar Shukla and Justice Mahesh Chandra Tripathi fixed October 5 as the next date of hearing.

Earlier, at one stage, the court had directed the state government to make the payment of the entire dues of sugarcane farmers. The court had also warned that in case of failure of payment of sugarcane dues, the court would take serious action.

The plea taken in the PIL is that in spite of repeated orders of the court, payments are not being made either by the state government or by private sugar mill owners. The court had earlier directed the district magistrates of all concerned districts to take stern action against those sugarcane mills, who have failed to make payments of sugarcane dues to the farmers. Besides, the court had directed the district magistrates concerned to take coercive action for realization of sugarcane dues against the erring sugarcane mills.

(Source- http://sugarnews.in/up-1300-crore-as-cane-interest-waived-ofgovernment-informs-court/**, published on 27th September, 2016)**

Centre orders cut in sugar stocks, Maharashtra body moves Bombay High Court

The Maharashtra State Cooperative Sugar Factories Federation (MSCSFF) on Monday has filed a writ petition in the Bombay High Court challenging the Centre's directives to reduce sugar stocks to 37% by this month-end, top officials of the federation said. Mills are unhappy with the Centre's directive fixing stock holding limit and have sought relief against this order. The move by the government has been taken with the aim of keeping retail prices under control.

According to top officials of the federation, as on September 19, at least 90 cooperative mills had stocks to the tune of some 31 lakh tonne and rates have now slid down to R3,200 per quintal.
Sanjeev Babar, MD, MSCSFF, said that the rates have come down drastically and mills are going through a tough phase and they would end up incurring heavy losses. "The government has imposed duties on export, withdrawn the export subsidy and has imposed stock limits. The crushing is expected to be less in the new season since the acreage has dropped down by 50%. A normal season lasts around 160 days but this season could be shorter to barely 110 days," Babar pointed out.

As per the government directives, each sugar mill should not hold over 37% of total sugar available with it during the 2015-16 sugar season (Oct-Sep).

According to Shivajirao Nagawade, chairman, MSCSFF, the last couple of seasons have been bad for the millers. Around 69 factories have ended up with losses of R900 crore for the 2014-15 season and the total accumulated losses by the mills in the state are around R2,900 crore, he had said earlier.

The federation had earlier approached the Centre seeking relief against the directive and had also written to Maharashtra CM on September 8 seeking a solution. However, since no measures were taken, the federation has approached the court, he said.

(Source- http://sugarnews.in/centre-orders-cut-in-sugar-stocks-maharashtra-body-moves-bombay-high-court/**, published on 27th September, 2016)**

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Co-gen/Power

Security management system to safeguard country's power grid

The Centre plans to safeguard the country's power gridBSE 0.49 % by putting in place a security management system with the help of states amid growing fears of cyber attacks that can cripple the economy.

Power secretary PK Pujari told ET that power generating companies, transmission firms and power distribution companies have been asked to implement information security management systems to safeguard the grid.

The power ministry has asked all power companies to nominate a senior officer as their chief information security officer, who will coordinate cybersecurity related issues with the National

Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC) that was created under National Technical Research Organisation for taking all measures for protection of critical infrastructure in India.

(Source- http://indianpowersector.com/2016/09/security-management-system-to-safeguard-countrys-power-grid/, published on 27th September, 2016)

Kerala government gets tough with KSERC, invokes Power Act

The LDF government has instructed the Kerala State Electricity Regulatory Commission (KSERC) to simplify the procedure for releasing electricity connections.

In a rare move, the government has employed Section 108 of the Electricity Act to issue the instructions, amply indicating its decision to end its silence on the bitter stand-off between the commission and the Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) over multiple issues, including long-term power purchase deals and power tariff.

In a September 20 letter to the commission, the Additional Chief Secretary (Power) has asked the quasi-judicial body to "re-work" its Kerala Electricity Supply Code in the light of a Union Power Ministry directive seeking a much simpler, three-step process to release industrial and commercial connections. Besides, simpler procedures are also key to the success of the state government goal to provide electricity for all by March 2017, the letter said. Existing supply code guidelines specify "time-consuming manual procedures and entails multiple visits" to KSEB offices, the letter said.

Among other things, the government wants the commission to incorporate simpler application formats, create an online facility for filing applications and making payments, and to reduce the number of documents to two: 'proof of identity and proof of ownership/legal occupancy' instead of the seven required at present.

Only rarely has the state government used Section 108 in this manner, power department sources said. The last time it was done was by the previous LDF government when it directed the commission to accommodate the cross-subsidy component to keep power tariffs low. While the government has cited 'public interest' in issuing the instructions, top power sector officials said that it in reality shows the government's resolve to use Section 108 if needed. This section makes it clear that the commission would be guided by government directives in matters of policy involving public interest. In the event of a dispute, the government decision will prevail, it says.The KSEB and the commission headed by T M Manoharan have been at loggerheads over a host of issues in recent months. Blaming the KSEB for not filing proposals on time, the commission had launched its own measures to fix power tariff for the current year. The KSEB has contested the move. A commission directive to release open access facility to industrial consumers had not gone down down well with the KSEB. In the latest instance, the commission had set aside a major chunk of various power purchase deals which the KSEB had entered into, saying that they had not conformed to central guidelines.

(Source- http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/Kerala-government-gets-tough-with-KSERC-invokes-Power-Act/2016/09/26/article3629726.ece, published on 26th September, 2016)

UN chief lauds India's decision to ratify Paris agreement

UN chief Ban Ki-moon on Monday lauded India for its "swift action" over the decision to ratify the Paris pact on climate change, saying he is looking forward to receiving New Delhi's instrument of accession.

"The Secretary-General has made clear his hopes for the ratification of the Paris Agreement by a large number of states as early as possible, so he would be pleased by Inda's swift action. He looks forward to receiving India's instrument of accession," UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's deputy spokesperson Farhan Haq told PTI.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday announced in Kerala that India will ratify the Paris climate deal made in Paris last year on October 2, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Earlier this month, the US and China, the world's two largest emitters, formally joined the Paris agreement, which was adopted by 195 parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change last December in Paris.

The agreement calls on countries to combat climate change and to accelerate and intensify the actions and investments needed for a sustainable low carbon future.

Specifically, it seeks to limit global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius, and to strive for 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The agreement will enter into force 30 days after at least 55 countries, accounting for 55 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, deposit their instruments of ratification or acceptance with the Secretary-General.

A total of 60 countries so far have deposited their instruments of ratification for the agreement, representing more than 47.5 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Ban said this week that since more than 55 countries have formally joined the Paris Agreement on climate change, a critical threshold has been crossed that will help bring into force the landmark pact that seeks to put the world on a path towards low-carbon growth and a more sustainable future.

"I am confident that, by the time I leave office, the Paris Agreement would have entered into force," the UN chief said.

"This will be a major achievement for multilateralism," he said.

India, which along with the US and China is among the world's top greenhouse gas emitters, has maintained that the burden of fighting climate change cannot be put on the shoulders of the poor after decades of industrial development by the rich nations.

It has announced plans to quadruple its renewable power capacity to 175 gigawatts by 2022 as part of the government's plan to supply electricity to every household.

India seeks to add 100 gigawatts of photo-voltaic capacity, 60 gigawatts of wind power, 10 gigawatts of biomass and five gigawatts of hydro projects.

(Source-http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/UN-chief-lauds-Indias-decision-to-ratify-Paris-agreement/articleshow/54518277.cms, published on 26th September, 2016)

NIPEF demands discussion on Electricity Bill 2014

Nine months after filing papers for an Initial Public Offering (IPO) at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), India-based Azure Power has finally made the offer public.

According to media reports, Azure Power, and its shareholders, will offer a total of 6.82 million shares in the price range of US$21-23 per share. Proceeds from the public offer, likely to be just under $113 million, will be used to cover operational costs of the company as well as equity investment towards future projects.

Recently, Indian media outlets reported that Canadian pension fund Caisse de depot et placement du Quebec (CDPQ) is looking to invest $180 million and pick up a 35% stake in Azure Power. Exiting investors in Azure Power International Finance Corporation (IFC) — Foundation Capital, Helion Ventures, and German development bank DEG — are expected to sell a portion of their stake.

Another Canadian company — Brookfield — was also reportedly looking to invest in the company, eyeing a minority stake in Azure Power for Rs 500 crore (US$75 million).

Azure Power is among the pioneering solar power project developers in India. The company set up the first utility-scale solar power project in India in 2009. It also claims to have the largest portfolio under the National Solar Mission, with 900 MW capacity at various stages of operation and development across 15 states.

The company is working on 11 additional projects with a combined capacity of 244 MW. It recently won 150 MW in an auction under the Punjab solar power policy and another 100 MW in Andhra Pradesh. The company operates the largest solar power project (100 MW) commissioned under the National Solar Mission central government auctions.

Azure Power has pledged to install 11 GW of solar power capacity over the next 5-7 years.

(Source-https://cleantechnica.com/2016/09/26/indian-solar-developer-azure-power-launches-ipo/, published on 26th September, 2016)

Quote of the day

'It is curious that physical courage should be so common in the world and moral courage so rare.' -Mark Twain