

ಕಾರಕೆರೆ ಕೃಷಿ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳಿಂದ ಸೋಮನಹಳ್ಳಿ ಗ್ರಾಮದಲ್ಲಿ ಕೃಷಿ ಕಲರವ ರೈತರ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಗೆ ಶಾಶ್ವತ ಪರಿಹಾರ ನೀಡಿ

ಹಾಸನ: ತಾಲೂಕಿನ ಸೋಮನಹಳ್ಳಿ ಗ್ರಾಮದ ಎಚ್.ಡಿ ದೇವೇಗೌಡ ಸಮುದಾಯಭವನದಲ್ಲಿ ಹಾಸನ ಕಾರಕೆರೆ ಕೃಷಿ ಮಹಾ ವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯದ ವತಿಯಿಂದ ರೈತರಿಗೆ ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಸಹಭಾಗಿತ್ವ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ ನಡೆಯಿತು.

ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮದಲ್ಲಿ ಕೃಷಿ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳು ಗ್ರಾಮದ ನಕ್ಷೆ ತಯಾರಿಸಿ ಗ್ರಾಮದ ಮುಖಂಡರು ಹಾಗೂ ಮಹಿಳೆಯರಿಂದಲೇ ಗ್ರಾಮದ ಪ್ರಮುಖ ಸ್ಥಳಗಳನ್ನು ಗುರುತಿಸುವ ಮೂಲಕ ಗಮನ ಸೆಳೆದರು. ಜೊತೆಗೆ ಹಳ್ಳಿ ಸೊಗಡಿನ ರಾಗಿ ಮಂಟಪ, ಚಲನವಲನ ನಕ್ಷೆ, ಬೆಳೆಗಳ ಗೋಪುರ, ಆದ್ಯತೆ ಶ್ರೇಣಿ, ಸಮಸ್ಥಾತ್ಮಕ ವ್ಯಕ್ತ ಬೆಳೆ ಋತುಮಾನ ಚಕ್ರ, ಶ್ರೇಣಿ ಪದ್ಧತಿ, ವ್ಯಕ್ತ ಸ್ಥಾಪನೆ ಮಾಡುವ ಮೂಲಕ ಸಮಗ್ರ ಕೃಷಿ ಪದ್ಧತಿ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ನಕ್ಷೆ ರಚಿಸಿ ಅದರ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಗ್ರಾಮದ ಮುಖಂಡರು, ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ಹಾಗೂ ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ನೀಡಿದರು.

ಈ ವೇಳೆ ಸೋಮನಹಳ್ಳಿ ಗ್ರಾ.ಪಂ ಮಾಜಿ ಅಧ್ಯಕ್ಷ ನಾಗೇಂದ್ರ ಮಾತನಾಡಿ, ಕಾರಕೆರೆ ಕೃಷಿ ಮಹಾ ವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯದ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳು ನಮ್ಮ ಗ್ರಾಮಕ್ಕೆ ಬಂದಾಗಿನಿಂದ ಗ್ರಾಮದಲ್ಲಿ ಹಬ್ಬದ ವಾತಾವರಣ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣವಾಗಿದೆ, ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿ ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲೇ ರೈತರ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಗಳು ಹಾಗೂ ಅವುಗಳಿಗೆ ಪರಿಹಾರ ಕಲ್ಪಿಸಿಕೊಡುವ ನಿಟ್ಟಿನಲ್ಲಿ

ಅನ್ವೇಷಣೆಗೆ ಮುಂದಾಗಿರುವ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳ ನಡೆ ಶ್ಲಾಘನೀಯ ಎಂದರು.

ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ರೈತರಿಗೆ ಮಣ್ಣಿನ ಮಹತ್ವ ರಾಸಾಯನಿಕ ಗೊಬ್ಬರಗಳಿಂದ ಆಗುವ ಅಪಾಯ, ಕೃಷಿ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಅನುಸರಿಸಬೇಕಾದ ಸಾವಯವ ಪದ್ಧತಿ, ಸಾವಯವ ಕೃಷಿಯ ಉಪಯೋಗ ಹೀಗೆ ವಿವಿಧ ವಿಚಾರಗಳ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ರೈತರಿಗೆ ತಿಳಿಸಿಕೊಟ್ಟು ಆರೋಗ್ಯಕರ ಕೃಷಿ ಉತ್ಪನ್ನಗಳನ್ನು ಬೆಳೆಯಲು ಅನೇಕ ಸಲಹೆಗಳನ್ನು ನೀಡಿದ್ದಾರೆ ಎಂದರು.

ಕಾರಕೆರೆ ಕೃಷಿ ಮಹಾವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯದ ಬೇಸಾಯ ಶಸ್ತ್ರ ವಿಭಾಗದ ಪ್ರಾಧ್ಯಾಪಕ ಸದಾಶಿವನಗೌಡ ಮಾತನಾಡಿ, ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಸಹಭಾಗಿತ್ವ ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ಎಂಬ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮದ ಅಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಆಯೋಜಿಸಿರುವ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮದಲ್ಲಿ ಗ್ರಾಮದ ರೈತರು ಸಹಾತ್ಮಕವಾಗಿ ಸ್ಪಂದಿಸಿ ಕೃಷಿ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ರೀತಿಯ ಸಹಕಾರ ನೀಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ. ಜೊತೆಗೆ ಕೃಷಿ ಕ್ಷೇತ್ರದಲ್ಲಿನ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಉಪಯುಕ್ತ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಪಡೆಯುವ ಮೂಲಕ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಶಕ್ತಿಯುತವಾದ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ ಎಂದರು. ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮದಲ್ಲಿ ಗ್ರಾಮದ ಮುಖಂಡರು, ಮಹಿಳೆಯರು ಹಾಗೂ ಕೃಷಿ ಕಾಲೇಜಿನ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳು ಇದ್ದರು.



ನಮ್ಮ ಕಾಲೇಜಿನ ಅಂತಿಮ ವರ್ಷದ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳು ಗ್ರಾಮಕ್ಕೆ ಭೇಟಿ ನೀಡಿ ಸತತ ಮೂರು ತಿಂಗಳು ಇಲ್ಲೇ ನೆಲೆಸಿ ಗ್ರಾಮದಲ್ಲಿನ ಕೃಷಿ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಇರುವ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಗಳ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಅಧ್ಯಯನ ಮಾಡಿ ಅವುಗಳಿಗೆ ಪರಿಹಾರ ಮಾರ್ಗೋಪಾಯದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಗ್ರಾಮದ ರೈತರಿಗೆ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ನೀಡುವ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

■ ಸದಾಶಿವನಗೌಡ,
ಕಾರಕೆರೆ ಕೃಷಿ ಮಹಾವಿದ್ಯಾಲಯದ ಪ್ರಾಧ್ಯಾಪಕ

ICAR scientists hired without reservation

They still form the core of its agri researchers but they have little chance to make it to senior posts, which are filled through the lateral entry system.

The ICAR is one of the largest agricultural and allied activities research bodies globally. It employs 6,304 scientists, as per a July 2020 office memo. This is a marginal increase of 23 positions since 1997 across ICAR's eight divisions. Of the current 6,304 on its rolls, 4,420 hold the grade of Scientists, who are recruited through the single-entry system that adheres to reservation policies. The remaining 1,884 positions – comprising Senior Scientists, Principal Scientists, Directors, Heads of Divisions (HoD), Heads of Regional Centres (HoRC), Project Coordinators (PCs), Directors-General, Additional and Deputy Directors-General – have been filled through the direct interview, or lateral entry process, which restricts affirmative action policies to be only followed for the lowest entrant. Including past appointments, there are more than 2,700 who have been hired using this system.

An August 2023 ASRB advertisement to fill senior-level positions relies on a July 7, 1994 letter from ICAR exempting such vacancies from the re-

servation policy. While this does not violate existing norms, it overlooks the 1995 Constitutional amendment introducing Article 16(4A) enabling reservations to be followed in promotions for SCs and STs. A five-judge bench of the Supreme Court in 2006 in *Nagaraj Vs Union of India* upheld the amendments as constitutionally valid while leaving it to the States to decide the adequacy of reservation based on quantifiable data.

It should be noted that the recruitment of scientists to government departments such as Space, Atomic Energy, and Earth Sciences are also exempt from reservation norms.

The Hindu sought comments from the Agriculture Ministry, ICAR, and ASRB. An Agriculture Ministry official would neither deny nor confirm that the lateral entry system of recruitment is being followed, but said that the hiring process is “complex”, requiring a fuller explanation. While ICAR declined to comment, there was no response from ASRB until the time of the publication of this article.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, ARSSF president, and Principal Scientist Dr. S. Manivannan said: “You can count on your fingers the number of SCs, STs, OBCs, and minorities who have become Directors, or held RMPs. And a few among them were promoted following prolonged court battles challenging selection committee decisions and procedures.” He added that “past DGs converted a few lateral entry positions to Direct Scientists positions, but still sizable numbers have been left out.”

31-08-2024
Hosadiganta
Pg 12

31-08-2024
Hindu
Pg 12

FUNDRAISE AT DOUBLE THE VALUATION

Blue Tokai Coffee gets a Verlinvest Flavour

Who is Verlinvest?

Investment vehicle of AB-InBev founding shareholders of Belgium

Global portfolio
Vitamin Water, Remy Cointreau, Oatly, Juicy Chemistry, Kopi Kenangan

India portfolio Sula Vineyards, Future Retail, WakeFit, Epigamia, Veeba, Byju's, Purple, Heads Up For Tails, among others

Arijit Barman

Mumbai: Verlinvest, investment vehicle of the Belgian family behind the world's largest brewer, AB-Inbev, is poised to invest Rs 200 crore (about \$24 million) in Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, at a ₹1,200-crore (\$143 million) valuation — double that from a year-and-a-half ago, said people in the know.

Existing investor Hemendra Kothari's family office and Anicut Capital are also expected to join the homegrown specialist coffee chain's ₹250-crore round, with the residual amount comprising a mix of primary and secondary sale of shares, the people said.

The round will be the 11-year-old company's largest raise, as a battle brews between some of India's top business houses and upstarts.

Announcement Soon ▶▶ 7

BLUE TOKAI ROASTING SINCE 2013

FY24 Financials

Revenue

₹240 cr

Loss
₹15-20 cr



ಉದ್ದು, ಸೋಯಾಬಿನ್ ಖರೀದಿಗೆ ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಅನುಮತಿ

ನವದೆಹಲಿ: ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ ಯೋಜನೆಯಡಿ ಉದ್ದು ಹಾಗೂ ಸೋಯಾಬಿನ್ ಖರೀದಿಗೆ ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಕೃಷಿ ಸಚಿವಾಲಯ ಅನುಮತಿ ನೀಡಿದೆ.

ನಾಲ್ಕೈದು ದಿನಗಳ ಹಿಂದೆ ಹೆಸರು ಮತ್ತು ಸೂರ್ಯಕಾಂತಿ ಬೆಳೆಯನ್ನು ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಖರೀದಿಸಲು ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಅನುಮತಿ ನೀಡಿತ್ತು. ರಾಜ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ 2024-25 ರ ಮುಂಗಾರು ಹಂಗಾಮಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ ಯೋಜನೆಯಡಿ 19,760 ಟನ್ ಉದ್ದು ಹಾಗೂ 1,03,315 ಟನ್ ಸೋಯಾಬಿನ್ ಖರೀದಿಗೆ ಒಪ್ಪಿಗೆ ನೀಡಿದೆ.

ಉದ್ದಿನ ಕಾಳು ₹7,400 ಮತ್ತು ಸೋಯಾಬಿನ್‌ಗೆ ₹4,892 ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ ನಿಗದಿಪಡಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಕಳೆದ ವರ್ಷ ₹6,950 ಇದ್ದ ಉದ್ದಿನ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ ಪ್ರಸಕ್ತ ಮುಂಗಾರು ಹಂಗಾಮಿನಲ್ಲಿ ₹450 ಹೆಚ್ಚಳ ಕಂಡಿದೆ. ₹4,600 ದರವಿದ್ದ ಸೋಯಾಬಿನ್ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ ಈಗ ₹292 ಹೆಚ್ಚಳವಾಗಿದೆ.

ತಕ್ಷಣ ಖರೀದಿ ಕೇಂದ್ರ ತೆರೆಯಲು ಒತ್ತಾಯ: ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸರ್ಕಾರ ತಕ್ಷಣವೇ ರಾಜ್ಯದಾದ್ಯಂತ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಬೆಲೆ ಖರೀದಿ ಕೇಂದ್ರಗಳನ್ನು ಆರಂಭಿಸಿ ಹೆಸರು, ಸೂರ್ಯಕಾಂತಿ ಜತೆಗೆ ಉದ್ದು ಮತ್ತು ಸೋಯಾಬಿನ್ ಖರೀದಿ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆಗೆ ಚಾಲನೆ ನೀಡಬೇಕು ಎಂದು ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಸಚಿವ ಪ್ರಲ್ಹಾದ ಜೋಶಿ ಅವರು ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸರ್ಕಾರವನ್ನು ಒತ್ತಾಯಿಸಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

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ದುಬಾರಿ ಕೀಟ

ಕೀಟಗಳ ಬಗೆಗೆ ನಾವು ಹೆಚ್ಚು ತಲೆ ಕೆಡಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಕೀಟಬಾಧೆ ಎಂದೇ ಅವುಗಳನ್ನು ಪರಿಗಣಿಸುತ್ತೇವೆ. ಆದರೆ ನಮ್ಮ ಪ್ರಕೃತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅಪರೂಪ ಹಾಗೂ ವಿಶಿಷ್ಟವಾದ ಅನೇಕ ಕೀಟಗಳಿವೆ. ಆ ಪೈಕಿ ಬಹುಶಃ ಅಗ್ರಸಾಲಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಇರೋದು ಸ್ಪ್ಯಾಗ್ ಬೀಟಲ್ ಎಂಬ ಕೀಟ. ಕನ್ನಡದಲ್ಲಿ ಇದನ್ನು ಸಾರಂಗ ಜೀರುಂಡೆ ಎನ್ನುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಬಹುಶಃ ತಲೆಯ ಮೇಲೆ ಸಾರಂಗದ ಕೋಡಿನಂಥ ರಚನೆ ಹೊಂದಿರುವುದರಿಂದ ಈ ಹೆಸರು. ಇದು ಇಷ್ಟೊಂದು ಬೇಡಿಕೆ, ಪ್ರಸಿದ್ಧಿ ಪಡೆದಿರುವುದಕ್ಕೆ ಕಾರಣ ಈ ಕೀಟಗಳು ಅಪರೂಪ. ಕೀಟ ಸಂಗ್ರಹದ ಹವ್ಯಾಸಗಾರರಿಗೆ ಇದರ ಮೇಲೆ ಸದಾ ಕಣ್ಣು. ಈ ಕಾರಣಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಇದಕ್ಕೆ ಬೇಡಿಕೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚು. ಅದೇ ಕಾರಣಕ್ಕೆ ಬೆಲೆಯೂ ದುಬಾರಿ. ಹಾಗಾದರೆ ಇದರ ಬೆಲೆ ಎಷ್ಟು? ಕೇಳಿದರೆ ಬೆಚ್ಚಿ ಬೀಳಬಹುದು. ಒಂದು ಕೀಟದ ಬೆಲೆ ಸುಮಾರು 75 ಲಕ್ಷ ರೂ. ಎಂದು ಅಂದಾಜಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

31-08-2024
Prajavani
Pg 12

31-08-2024
S-karnataka
Pg 04

Announcement on Infusion Soon

▶▶ From Page 1

Global giants such as Starbucks and Tim Hortons are also competing in this fast-growing industry. A formal announcement on the transaction is expected as early as this weekend, the people said.

Verlinvest didn't immediately respond to ET's queries. Matt Chitharanjan, cofounder of Blue Tokai, did not comment. In January 2023, Blue Tokai raised ₹200 crore from A91 Partners in a Series B round, which also saw investment banker Kothari come in at a ₹600-crore valuation, post-money.

Earlier this year, 12 Flags Group, a consumer fund set up by former Reckitt Benckiser global chief Rakesh Kapoor, joined the cap table at a ₹1,000-crore valuation.

Blue Tokai is also backed by Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone, Kirloskar family office Snow Leopard Ventures, Negen Capital, Mauryan Capital and White Whale Venture. The brand operates through physical cafes, e-commerce and business-to-business (B2B), with the first category generating the lion's share of revenue.

In FY24, Blue Tokai clocked a revenue of ₹240 crore and losses of ₹15-20 crore. This fiscal, losses are expected to narrow to ₹5-7 crore. Blue Tokai posted a revenue of ₹75 crore and ₹2.5 crore of losses in the quarter ended June. The

CO HAS 3 VERTICALS



Blue Tokai operates through

three verticals – physical cafes, e-commerce and B2B. Cafes generate the lion's share of revenue

company currently has a nationwide footprint of 120 cafes, which it aims to grow to 200 in the next 12 months.

Rival Third Wave Coffee has about 100 stores, but is facing headwinds and stalled growth in the last few months, according to industry observers. Alternative beverage (tea) rival Chaayos has around 230 outlets. US coffee chain Starbucks has some 400 stores in India, but Blue Tokai's products are at least 25-30% cheaper than Starbucks.

The estimated \$17.54-billion Indian cafe and bar market is projected to reach \$26.17 billion by 2029, according to market intelligence and advisory firm Mordor Intelligence. India's coffee industry is forecast to surpass \$4.2 billion, with coffee retail chains likely to reach \$850 million by 2025.

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The beneficial side of invasive plants

Invasive plants are detested for the ecological devastation they cause, but in rural India, people have adapted to some alien species in unique ways and are reaping benefits, writes **Spoorthy Raman**

Ecologists have shown how devastating invasive plants, such as lantana and water hyacinth, are to our ecosystems and economies for decades. They stifle native species, overrun our farmlands, threaten fish and other aquatic life, and cause massive economic losses. A 2022 study estimates that invasive species—plants and animals—cost the Indian economy anywhere between \$127.3 billion to 182.6 billion (8.3 trillion to 11.9 trillion) in the last 60 years. Across the world, invasive species receive a bad rap for being the Grim Reapers of a healthy ecosystem.

But that's just the well-known side of the story. In a first-of-its-kind study, researchers at the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) have uncovered the little-known side of invasive species—how they affect the well-being of India's rural households, such as their safety, access to resources and livelihoods.

The researchers peered through nearly 50 published studies on the impact of invasive plants on human well-being, covering 20 species. Their findings were published in the journal *Environmental Development*.

A quarter of India's 650,000 villages are on the peripheries of forests, where people, mostly belonging to Indigenous and marginalised communities, depend on non-timber forest products for food, fuelwood and sustenance. Invasive species that permeated most of India's forests and grasslands have invariably become a part of their lives—a crucial aspect for ecologists to consider while managing these species.

"In India, unlike in developing countries, there are very few inviolate spaces where people and forests (including grasslands and other open natural ecosystems) do not coexist," says study author Ramya Ravi, "Therefore, separating ecological impacts alone cannot be a key focus of biological invasions and their management."

Ecologist Alok Bang from Azim Premji University, Bhopal, who was not involved in the study, says countries like India do not always have updated checklists of invasive species. Hence, studies like this, which bring to light the lesser-known socioeconomic impacts of such species, are essential, he says. "The study is based on 350 studies done in India, and thus, has synthesised something



A thicket of mesquites in Blackbuck National Park, Gujarat. IMAGE CREDIT: ANKILA HIREMATH

new—this is a precious knowledge-generation process at the national level."

Many benefits, few harms

Mesquite (*Prosopis juliflora*)—a native Mexican thorny shrub widespread across India—was a significant source of firewood and fuelwood in many parts of the country. In coastal Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, women preferred fuelwood from mesquites to venturing deep into the forest in search of other firewood. Prosopis-based charcoal derived from the plant, which has a better combustion rate and higher calorific value than firewood, provided supplementary income.

In arid regions, such as Ranthambore, mesquite pods were used as fodder for livestock when grass was scarce. The plant's nectar-filled flowers support bees in the region, whose honey local communities depend on. The plant is also used as fencing material around croplands and homesteads or for making bullock carts and other agricultural equipment.

On the flip side, mesquites caused slow-healing injuries to people and livestock and became a barrier to accessing natural

resources. For instance, in Rajasthan's Keoladeo National Park, these invasive plants increased conflicts among pastoralist communities over available pastures, resulting in some communities giving up pastoralism.

Lantana (*Lantana camara*), a native plant in the American tropics, is used by some communities to make furniture, sculptures, baskets, and medicine. However, when the dense shrub grows in forests, it reduces visibility. It increases people's encounters with dangerous wildlife, as reported by the Soligas living in Karnataka's Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple Tiger Reserve (BRT). The plant also makes it challenging for them to find edible tubers. Lantana expands in forests and reduces the abundance of native forest crops such as Indian gooseberry (amla), soapnut tree, ritha, Indian walnut (haritaki) and Indian frankincense (guggulu)—all of which forest communities collect and sell to make a living.

With their dense mats, aquatic weeds choke water bodies and prevent access to them. In Kashmir, the spreading alligator weed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*) has increased costs for fishermen who must remove the plants to help their fishing boats

access the lake. In some regions, aquatic weeds hindered the harvest of water chestnuts and Indian lotus, which some communities collect and sell for livelihoods.

"It is very interesting to note a mixed response of invasive plants on people's well-being, especially on how it could positively impact livelihood-related criteria," says plant biologist Geetha Ramaswami from Nature Conservation Foundation, who was not involved in the study. "Maybe we are seeing some human adaptations towards using invasive species."

Implications on managing invasive plants

The study shows that communities in rural India depend on invasive plants for many aspects of their lives. Hence, the management approach to them cannot be just removal, like it has been. "In instances where there are positive impacts, removal and restoration could result in social justice issues," warns Ravi. "Even though the predominant impacts from invasive species are negative, we cannot entirely undermine the positive impacts to people, given that our study also finds that poverty appears to be a key driver of adaptation to invasive species."

The researchers suggest that decisions on invasive species management must consider the social and cultural context and the perception and use of these plants among communities. For some species, such as alligator weeds and *Azolla crisata*, which have no benefits, removing the plants might be the best way to manage them. On the other hand, eliminating mesquites in Kutch's Wild Ass Sanctuary, despite them hindering grass growth needed for wild asses, may be detrimental to people's well-being as communities in the region rely on the plant for their livelihoods.

"There is, therefore, a need for qualitative methods—social, cultural, and spatial realities—that influence decisions to remove or retain," argues Ravi. Policies around invasive species management, therefore, must involve input from local communities, consider diverse perspectives, promote environmental justice, and reflect the many realities of invasives. "Communities can offer crucial insights on management, invasion processes, cost-benefit analyses, and contextualize the positive or negative impacts."

Cheer for ryots as Centre approves MSP for black gram and soybean

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: In a relief for farmers, the Centre has approved Karnataka's request to procure black gram and soybean at revised minimum support prices (MSP) set by the Union govt in June this year.

The Centre has sanctioned procurement of 19,760 tonnes of black gram and more than 1 lakh tonnes of soybeans. Pralhad Joshi, Union minister for consumer affairs, food, and public distribution, described the decision as a "gift to Karnataka farmers for the Gane-

sha festival."

MSP for black gram has been set at Rs 7,400 per quintal, up from Rs 6,950 last year, marking an increase of Rs 450 per quintal. Soybean MSP has been fixed at Rs 4,892 per quintal, up from Rs 4,600, reflecting an increase of Rs 292 per quintal. Recently, the Union govt also approved MSP procurement for green gram and sunflower.

Joshi said the central agriculture ministry has instructed the

state to open purchase centres for these crops. "I urge the state govt to establish centres to purchase soybean and black gram, in addition to already approved green gram and sunflower MSP centres," he said.

The Centre has authorised these centres for 90 days to facilitate procurement from farmers. This step is intended to support farmers, as the market prices for these crops are currently lower than the MSP.



31-08-2024
Dec Hrd
Pg 09

31-08-2024
Eco of Times
Pg 01