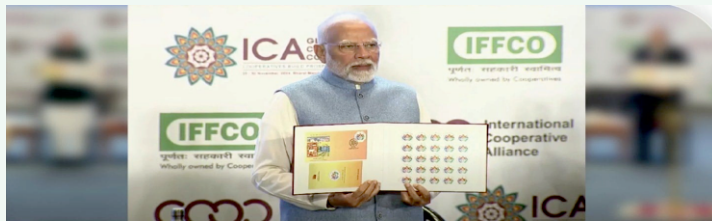


## PM inaugurates Co-op Conference; advocates Global Co-op Financial Platform



Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the ICA Global Cooperative Conference 2024 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi on 25.11.2024, highlighting the transformative potential of cooperatives in addressing global challenges. Addressing a distinguished audience, including Bhutan's Prime Minister Mr Dasho Tshering Tobgay, Fiji's Deputy Prime Minister Mr Manoa Kamikamica, and the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) leadership, Shri Modi proposed a visionary global financial platform to support weaker cooperatives and unlock their full potential, emphasizing that cooperatives are not merely organizational structures but embody India's cultural ethos of collaboration and mutual progress. He reflected on the role of cooperatives during India's freedom struggle, citing how movements like Mahatma Gandhi's Gram Swaraj and Shri Sardar Patel's milk cooperatives empowered communities economically and socially. He noted that AMUL, born from the independence movement, stands today as a global brand symbolizing cooperative success. India's cooperative sector, one of the largest globally, covers 98% of rural areas and engages 30 crore citizens through over 8 lakh cooperative societies. Lauding the sector's achievements across industries such as agriculture,

sugar, milk production, fertilizers, and housing, noting that cooperatives have helped elevate millions out of poverty, he pointed to significant reforms, such as bringing cooperative banks under Reserve Bank of India regulation and raising deposit insurance coverage to ₹5 lakh, which have enhanced public trust and financial transparency. He highlighted the importance of empowering women through cooperatives, revealing that women account for over 60% of cooperative members in India. He praised the transformative impact of 10 crore women participating in Self-Help Groups (SHGs), supported by govt loans totalling ₹9 lakh crore, which have catalysed rural development and wealth creation. He stressed the need for greater representation of women and underprivileged groups in cooperative leadership, underlined by recent legislative amendments mandating women directors on the boards of multi-state cooperative societies. For small farmers, he outlined the govt's efforts to form nearly 9,000 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) to streamline supply chains and improve market access. Digital platforms such as the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) and the Govt e-Marketplace (GeM) are enabling cooperatives to reach consumers directly, ensuring fair prices for agricultural produce. He also highlighted India's ambitious grain





storage scheme, under which cooperatives are constructing warehouses nationwide to benefit small farmers. Looking beyond India, he called for a collaborative global financial framework to provide transparent and accessible funding for cooperatives. He stressed the need for such platforms to finance large projects and support struggling cooperatives worldwide. Advocating for cooperatives to integrate into circular economies and adopt climate-resilient practices, including waste-to-energy initiatives and solar energy projects, he underscored India's commitment to inclusive growth, emphasizing the human-centric approach that drives its development agenda. Citing India's compassionate response during the COVID-19 pandemic, when it supplied vaccines and medicines to countries in need, he urged the global cooperative movement to embrace similar principles of solidarity and service. Envisioning India as a leader in revitalizing the global cooperative movement, particularly in supporting countries from the Global South, he called for innovative strategies to enhance international collaboration and ensure that cooperatives become engines of equality and prosperity. Reflecting on the significance of the upcoming International Year of Cooperatives in 2025, he expressed optimism about the movement's future and its potential to foster global brotherhood. Concluding his address, he emphasized that the cooperative spirit is the foundation of this movement and urged stakeholders to uphold integrity and morality in their efforts. He reaffirmed India's dedication to advancing the cooperative model and ensuring that its benefits reach the most marginalized sections of society, offering a blueprint for inclusive global growth. PM also launched the United Nations' International Year of Cooperatives 2025 and released a commemorative postal stamp. (Source: Indian Cooperative)

### Shah highlights India's Co-op achievements at Global Conference



Union Home and Cooperation Minister Shri Amit Shah inaugurated the Global Cooperative Conference 2024 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on 25.11.2024. Addressing

the event, Shri Shah detailed the progress made by his ministry over the last three years and emphasized the transformative role of cooperatives in India's development. He described this milestone as a blessing for millions of poor people and farmers globally. He welcomed the inauguration of the International Year of Cooperatives-2025 by Prime Minister and the hosting of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) conference in India. Reflecting on the theme of the conference, he highlighted Prime Minister's call for "Sahkar Se Samridhhi" (Prosperity through Cooperation) three years ago, which he said has revitalized India's cooperative movement. He noted that after decades of stagnation,



the sector has been infused with new energy, benefiting villages, women and farmers across the country. He outlined ambitious plans for the cooperative sector

in the coming years, including the establishment of 2 lakh new Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) to ensure every village panchayat in India has a cooperative society. He highlighted ongoing efforts to modernize PACS with technology and make them economically viable. Additionally, he introduced three new national-level cooperative bodies: National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL), National Cooperative Organics Limited (NCOL), and Bharatiya Beej Sahakari Samiti Limited (BBSSL). These organizations aim to enhance farmers' access to domestic and global markets, promoting their participation in international trade. He cited success stories such as Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO), Krishak Bharti Cooperative (KRIBHCO), and Amul as inspirations for global cooperatives. He discussed key reforms initiated by the MOC over the past three years, including strengthening the legal framework for cooperatives by highlighting the launch of White Revolution 2.0 and Blue Revolution, where cooperatives are playing a crucial role in boosting India's dairy and aquaculture sectors. Announcing plans to establish a Cooperative University to create skilled and



technology-driven human resources for the sector, he also hinted at the introduction of a new cooperative policy to add fresh dimensions to India's cooperative movement. Under Prime Minister's leadership, significant

strides have been made in expanding the cooperative movement to reach every individual and sector. He stressed that cooperatives have opened new avenues for empowering underprivileged communities, especially women, farmers, and villages. He concluded by emphasizing that the International Year of Cooperatives, will serve as a catalyst for empowering millions worldwide, expressing confidence that through the cooperative movement, the vision of "Sahkar se Samridhhi" can be fully realized, ensuring dignity and respect for all. (Source: Indian Cooperative)

### As India inaugurates global co-operatives alliance, Bhutan pitches Gelephu as biggest co-operative project

Bhutanese Prime Minister Mr. Tshering Tobgay pitched the upcoming Gelephu Mindfulness City as the biggest cooperative project in Bhutan and extended gratitude towards India's support on the 2,500 sq km Zero Carbon City being developed there, at the 'Global Conference of the International Co-operative Alliance' being inaugurated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 25.11.2024 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. Around 3,000 delegates, including 1,000 representatives from 100 countries attended the five-



day event being held in Delhi, hosted by Union Home and Co-operation Minister Shri Amit Shah. Shri Modi said, "India has more than 8,00,000 co-operatives formed in every part of the country, and it

was necessary to create big global financial institutions that would finance co-operatives all over the world. The current situation in the world can be a big opportunity for the co-operative movement. For this, we will have to innovate and strategize our policies. To make co-operatives climate resilient, they should be linked to circular economy. It is also necessary to discuss how we can promote start-ups in co-operatives." Mr. Tshering Tobgay said, "The Gelephu Mindfulness City is designed to be a hub of knowledge, technology, and finance, grounded in the values of mindfulness, sustainability and harmony. It embodies the co-operative spirit, as every citizen of Bhutan is both a shareholder and a stakeholder, actively participating in this significant initiative." Since the announcement of plans for the Gelephu city last December, situated to the south of Bhutan and bordering Assam, Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck has visited India twice to discuss his plans for the city, and to seek investment and collaborations from the Indian private sector in infrastructure development, bringing projects in the areas like hotels and hospitality, educational institutions, IT and wellness centres.

### Awasthi bags highest global Co-op Award-2024 Rochdale Pioneers Award

Dr. U.S. Awasthi, Managing Director of the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO), has been honoured with the prestigious 2024 Rochdale Pioneers Award by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) in a glittering function at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on 26.11.2024. This award, established in 2000, is the highest honour conferred by the ICA and recognizes individuals or cooperative organizations that have significantly contributed to innovative and financially sustainable cooperative activities benefiting their members.



Dr. Awasthi is the second Indian to receive this accolade, following Dr. Verghese Kurien, the recipient in 2001. The award was presented to Dr. Awasthi by ICA President Mr Ariel Guarco. On receiving the award, Dr. Awasthi expressed his gratitude, stating, "I am humbled and honoured to receive this prestigious award from the ICA. This award embodies the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi of 'Sahkar se Samridhhi' and highlights IFFCO's exceptional efforts under the dynamic leadership of Hon'ble Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah. We remain committed to advancing India's cooperative movement on the global stage and promoting sustainable agricultural practices. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the ICA and the global cooperative

fraternity for this recognition, which inspires us to uphold and advance the cooperative spirit worldwide." A distinguished chemical engineer, Dr. Awasthi joined IFFCO in 1976 and has since led the cooperative to achieve remarkable milestones. Under his visionary leadership, IFFCO has significantly expanded its production capacity, which grew by 292%, and its net worth, which increased by 688%. He spearheaded the cooperative's diversification into various business areas and drove innovations such as the development of indigenously produced Nano Fertilizers, including Nano Urea and Nano DAP. These groundbreaking products have revolutionized farming practices by promoting sustainable and eco-friendly agriculture. Dr. Awasthi's efforts have addressed logistical challenges in fertilizer distribution, reduced reliance on imports, and replaced bulky fertilizer packaging with compact Nano Fertilizer bottles. These innovations have enhanced soil health, boosted farmer profitability, and fostered environmentally responsible farming practices.

(Source: Indian Cooperative)



The closing ceremony of the ICA Global Cooperative Conference, 2024 was held on 28th November 2024 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. Hon'ble Minister of State for Cooperation, Shri Muralidhar Mohol was the chief guest for the event. In his address, Shri Muralidhar Mohol, emphasized the growing role of PACS in rural development. He highlighted how PACS are diversifying their functions, now serving as PM Jan Aushadi Kendras, PM Kisan Samridhhi Kendras, and even playing a pivotal role as Paani Samitis in numerous villages, expanding their sources of income and impact.

### Constitution Day of India: President Murmu addresses Parliament, releases first Sanskrit copy of 'Samvidhan'

Since 2015, November 26 has been observed as Constitution Day to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India by the Constituent Assembly in 1949. President Smt Droupadi Murmu on 26.11.2024 addressed a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament in the historic Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan, marking the beginning of year-long celebrations to commemorate 75 years since the adoption of India's Constitution. The 'Samvidhan Divas' event saw the presence of Vice President Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla and other prominent leaders, showcasing the significance of the occasion in India's democratic journey. President also released translated versions of the Constitution in Sanskrit and Maithili, and there was also a ceremonial reading of the Preamble led by the President emphasising on the govts initiatives aiming at uplifting all sections of society,





particularly the weaker sections. She noted significant strides in providing housing for the poor and developing world-class infrastructure, reflecting the govt's commitment to inclusive growth and national progress. During her address, the President also recalled the contribution of the 15 women members of the Constituent Assembly in framing the document. "Our Constitution is a living and progressive document. Through our Constitution, we have achieved the goals of social justice and inclusive development. Law on women reservation has started new era of women empowerment in our democracy," added the President. Earlier on 25.11.2024, govt announced creation of a new website "https://constitution75.com" to enable citizens to engage with the legacy of the Constitution through interactive activities and resources. Mass readings of its Preamble took place in schools, cities and villages around the country.

### Govt approves ₹1,261cr Nammo Drone Didi scheme for Women SHGs

The govt has approved the "Nammo Drone Didi" scheme under the Central Sector to provide drones to Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) as part of the DAY-NRLM initiative, with a budget of ₹1,261 crore. Aiming to empower women and support agriculture, this scheme will offer drones to 14,500 SHGs across the country during the period 2024-2026. The drones will serve as rental services for farmers, primarily for applying liquid fertilizers and pesticides. The Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare has issued operational guidelines, urging all stakeholders to ensure the swift and effective implementation of the scheme. Governance of the scheme will be overseen by a central Empowered Committee, consisting of officials from several departments, including Agriculture, Rural Development, Fertilizers, Civil Aviation, and Women & Child Development. Additionally, an Implementation and Monitoring Committee, led by an Additional Secretary from the Department of Rural Development, will be responsible for the strategic planning and technical guidance essential for successful execution. Financial support forms a key component of the scheme, with an 80% subsidy, up to ₹8 lakh, allocated to SHGs for drone purchases. The remaining amount can be financed through loans under the National Agriculture Infra Financing Facility (AIF), which offers a 3% interest subvention. SHGs also have the flexibility to seek loans through other Ministry of Rural Development programs. The drone packages provided under the scheme come equipped with necessary accessories, including spray assemblies, carrying boxes, batteries, cameras, chargers, and measurement tools. Each package also offers additional battery sets and propellers, ensuring that the drones can cover up to 20 acres per day without interruptions. Training is integral to the scheme, with one

SHG member designated as the drone pilot and another as the drone assistant. The pilot undergoes a 15-day training in drone operation, while the assistant receives training in repair and maintenance. The scheme will be executed at the state level by Lead Fertilizer Companies (LFCs), which will collaborate with state departments, drone manufacturers, and SHG federations to ensure coordinated efforts. The LFCs will manage the procurement of drones, which will ultimately be owned by SHGs or their federations.

The scheme's implementation will be monitored to ensure that it targets areas where demand for drone services exists. Given the novelty of drone technology in



agriculture, the states will provide close support to the SHGs, helping them secure business and target an area coverage of at least 2,000-2,500 acres annually. A KIT-based Management Information System (MIS), known as the Drone Portal, will be established for effective monitoring, tracking, and managing the scheme. The portal will facilitate end-to-end service delivery, fund disbursement, and real-time tracking of drone usage. The "Nammo Drone Didi" scheme is expected to create sustainable livelihood opportunities for SHGs, boosting their income while introducing advanced agricultural practices. By providing drones for agricultural services, the scheme aims to enhance crop yields and reduce operational costs for farmers, ultimately benefiting rural economies. (Source: Indian Cooperative)

### RBI holds conference of RoCs; co-op's role in financial inclusion stressed

The Reserve Bank of India held the Second Conference of State Registrars of Cooperative Societies (RCSs) at its New Delhi office on 14.11.2024, in which a collaborative approach between RCSs and RBI to uphold governance standards was discussed, among other issues. Co-chaired by RBI Deputy Governors Shri M. Rajeshwar Rao and Shri Swaminathan J., the event brought together senior RBI officials, Shri Rabindra Kumar Agarwal, Additional Secretary, MOC and Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies (CRCS), and Pankaj Kumar Bansal, Additional Secretary, MOC, alongside Registrars of Cooperative Societies from multiple states. Deputy Governor Rao underscored the pivotal role of Cooperative Banks in advancing financial inclusion in rural and underserved regions. He highlighted governance and risk management as key challenges for these banks, advocating for a collaborative approach between RCSs and RBI to uphold governance standards, resolve weak institutions, and improve regulatory compliance. Deputy Governor Shri Swaminathan J. called for coordinated efforts between the RBI and RCSs to strengthen urban cooperative banks (UCBs), with respect for each entity's role. Although UCBs have shown progress in financial indicators, he pointed to the need for further improvement in business development, asset quality, and





liquidity. He urged UCBs to enhance their digital capabilities, addressing cybersecurity gaps, and emphasized a more effective liquidation process to protect depositors. Shri Agarwal, Additional Secretary and CRCS, proposed establishing a stakeholder group to draft model bylaws and a support framework for weaker Cooperative Banks, along with liquidator training initiatives. Shri Bansal highlighted the RBI's ongoing efforts in strengthening the cooperative sector and stressed the importance of supporting the Umbrella Organisation to advance Cooperative Banks, particularly in technological integration. The Conference discussions focused on regulatory and governance issues within UCBs, as well as expectations from the RBI and Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC). An interactive open house session provided RCSs and senior RBI officials an opportunity to engage directly on key challenges and strategies. (Source: Indian Cooperative)

### **Revenue dept forms 22 sub-committees to review I-T act**

The dept of revenue has set up 22 specialised sub-committees to review the income tax act. Revenue Secretary Shri Sanjay Malhotra conveyed this at a meeting taken by Union Finance Minister Smt Nirmala Sitharaman to take stock of the progress of the review announced in the Budget on 04.11.2024. Smt Sitharaman chaired the meeting to assess the progress as the govt is looking to introduce the draft bill in the budget session. The meeting was attended by Central Board of Direct Taxes Chairman Shri Ravi Agarwal, and other senior CBDT officials. The dept has also received 6,500 suggestion from the public, to simplify the IT law. In her Budget speech on July 23, finance minister had proposed that the I-T law review will be completed in six months in January. The review aims to make the law simple and taxpayer friendly.

### **PAN 2.0: All Services under unified portal**

All services related to PAN and TAN will be hosted on a single portal for ease of taxpayers under the PAN 2.0 Project of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), according to an official release on 26.11.2024. At present PAN-related services are hosted on three different portals - e-Filing Portal, UTIITSL Portal and Protean e-Gov Portal. The single portal would host all end-to-end services related to PAN and TAN such as allotment, updation, correction, online PAN validation (OPV), and Aadhaar-PAN linking, thereby further simplifying the process and avoiding delay in PAN services delivery, delay in redressal of grievances. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, had approved the ₹4,435 crore project on 25.11.2024 to streamline and modernise the process of issuing and managing PAN and Tax Deduction and Collection Account Number (TAN). The PAN 2.0 Project will be rolled out in early 2025. The existing PAN cardholders are not required to apply for new PAN under the upgraded system (PAN 2.0). The PAN card will not be changed unless the PAN holders want any

updation/correction. The CBDT also clarified that the QR code is not a new feature, and it has been incorporated since 2017-18.

### **Govt kick-starts process to achieve 'One State, One RRB'**

The finance ministry has drawn up a proposal to amalgamate Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), in a bid to ensure that each state has only one such bank that works with enhanced cost efficiency. The aim is to reduce the number of such rural banks to 28 from 43 now, according to a note from the Department of Financial Services to sponsor public-sector banks. This is the fourth round of consolidation of RRBs, which play a major role in rural economy, especially as agriculture loan providers. To enable RRBs to minimise their overhead expenses, optimise the use of technology, enhance the capital base and area of operation and increase their exposure, the Centre initiated structural consolidation of RRBs in 2004-05, which had led to a reduction in the number of RRBs from 196 to 43 till 2020-21 through three phases of amalgamation. Given the rural expansion of RRBs and agro-climatic/geographical ethos and in order to retain the USP of RRBs viz. the closeness to communities, it is the felt need to embark on further consolidation of RRBs towards the goal of 'One State-One RRB' so as to derive the benefits of scale efficiency and cost rationalisation, wrote Finance Ministry to Chairman/MDs and CEOs of sponsor banks of RRBs. As per the guiding principles suggested, the RRB with largest business among the amalgamating RRBs in the state would be the transferee RRB in the state. The sponsor bank of the transferee RRB, would become the sponsor bank of the amalgamated RRB. Name of the amalgamated RRB may include name of the state and Gramin in the local language. The head office of the amalgamated RRB may preferably be located at the head office location of the transferee RRB or it may be established in the state capital. RRBs play a crucial supporting role in the rural economy. About 70% of RRBs credit flows through agricultural sector, 64% is targeted towards weaker sections including small and marginal farmers. As of 31.03.2024, RRBs together had deposits worth ₹6.6 lakh crore or 3.2% share of all bank deposits. The RRBs share in advances was ₹4.7 lakh crore or 2.9% of all bank advances. According to the plan drawn up by the finance ministry, four RRBs sponsored by different public sector banks in Andhra Pradesh would be merged into one, which would be sponsored by Canara Bank. Three RRBs in Uttar Pradesh would be amalgamated and Bank of Baroda would be the sponsor of the merged RRB. Punjab National Bank would be the sponsor of the three merged RRBs in West Bengal. Two RRBs in each of these states would also be amalgamated: Bihar, Gujarat, J&K, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan and Telangana. RRBs have recorded the highest ever consolidated net profit of ₹7,571 crore in FY 2023-24. The Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) ratio of 6.1% is the lowest in the previous 10 years. The shareholding pattern of RRBs is Centre 50%, sponsor banks 35% and states 15%.

### **Move to align co-ops banks with RRBs**

Union Home and Cooperation Minister Shri Amit Shah informed the Rajya Sabha that the Reserve Bank of India



(RBI) has been requested to relax the eligibility criteria for State Cooperative Banks (StCBs) and District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs) to align them

with the revised criteria applicable for Regional Rural Banks (RRBs). This move aims to expand digital banking services in rural areas through the extensive network of StCBs and DCCBs. Considering the need to further promote the spread of digital banking in rural areas through the extensive network of StCBs/DCCBs and the low number of StCBs/DCCBs offering internet banking with transaction facilities, the RBI has been approached for a review of eligibility criteria. As of now, only 4 out of 34 StCBs offer internet banking with transaction facilities, and 21 provide mobile banking. Among the 351 DCCBs, only 8 offer internet banking with transaction facilities, while 113 provide mobile banking. Notably, StCBs and DCCBs were prohibited from offering internet banking services until 2015. To promote digital banking, the RBI issued a notification on 05.11.2015, allowing StCBs and DCCBs meeting specific eligibility criteria to apply for internet banking licenses. Similarly, mobile banking services were permitted for eligible StCBs and DCCBs from 08.10.2008. Additionally, NABARD has played a pivotal role in modernizing the cooperative banking sector by bringing all Regional Cooperative Banks (RCBs) onto the Core Banking Solution (CBS) platform. Through a special initiative, 201 RCBs (14 StCBs and 187 DCCBs) from 16 states and 3 union territories, with a total of 6,953 branches, joined the NABARD-initiated CBS Project using a cloud-based Application Service Provider (ASP) model. This effort has significantly enhanced the digital infrastructure of cooperative banks, paving the way for improved banking services in rural areas. (Source: Indian Cooperative)

### **GeM launches 170 new seed categories on its portal featuring nearly 8000 seed varieties**

On a mission to simplify access to quality agricultural & horticulture seeds, Govt e-Marketplace (GeM) has revamped & introduced 170 Seed categories on the portal. Created ahead of the upcoming cropping season, the newly populated categories feature nearly 8,000 seed varieties that can be procured by Central/State PSUs and other governing bodies for further dissemination across the country. Created after consultation with stakeholders including state seed corporations and research bodies, seed categories on GeM portal offer a ready framework for seed procurement, incorporating the extant rules & regulations by Govt of India and necessary parameters, easing the entire process for procuring authorities. The roll out of these new categories is a part of GeM's broader strategy to promote category based procurement through the portal. With an emphasis on increasing efficiency, category based procurement of seeds aims to

reduce time consumed in tendering processes, stimulate transparency & accountability in govt procurement, while facilitating increased participation of sellers across the country. "We invite sellers to leverage these new seed categories and list their offerings to participate freely in govt tenders. We also encourage seed corporations/state bodies to utilise these new categories for cost-effective procurement of quality seeds" said Smt. Roli Khare, Deputy CEO, GeM.

### **Co-ops from Kashmir to Kanyakumari celebrated 71st Co-op Week**

Cooperators from across the country celebrated the 71st All India Cooperative Week with events dedicated to strengthening the cooperative movement, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. The apex body of cooperatives in the country, National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI), celebrated the 71st All India Cooperative Week from November 14 - 20, with a different theme each day. The main theme was, 'Role of Cooperatives in Building Viksit Bharat.' NCUI President Shri Dileep Sanghani kicked off the event at NCUI headquarters in New Delhi. Several top-notch cooperators, including Dr. Chandra Pal Singh Yadav and Shri Bijender Singh joined him, according to program details provided by the NCUI. (Source: Indian Cooperative)

### **Kerala's jaggery hub Marayur will get a centralised production facility soon**

The jaggery hub of Marayur in Idukki will soon be able to reduce production cost and enhance quality with the implementation of a centrally funded jaggery production project. Initiated by the CSIR National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (CSIRNIIST),



Thiruvananthapuram, the project is funded by the Union Dept of Science and Technology. Under the project, which is set for commissioning by April-May 2025, a centralised production facility will be established for

the Marayur Hills Agricultural Development Society (MAHADS), a farmers' collective at Dhinducombu, Kanthallur. With a planned production capacity of 5 - 7 tonnes of cane crushing a day, the project is designed to meet Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) regulations and achieve international standards. The new processing unit will feature a controlled firing process with constant stirring to produce jaggery in both lump and powder forms. The main objective is to create a modern facility that meets FSSAI standards and significantly lowers production costs. The project also aims to increase demand and unique labelling of GItagged Marayur jaggery. MAHADS will manage production and processing, besides procurement of sugar cane from farmers at a nominal fee. "This new system can cut production costs by half compared to traditional methods, which will be a game changer for our farmers. The existing system cannot produce pure jaggery powder, but the new facility promises to meet this demand effectively," said MAHADS secretary K.





Indrajith highlighting the growing demand for pure jaggery powder. At present, the average extraction cost per kg of jaggery is around ₹18, a significant financial burden on farmers. Marayur jaggery earned its Geographical Indication status in 2019.

### Trial farming of three varieties of finger millet a huge success

A trial farming of three finger millet varieties in Idukki has yielded remarkable results. Conducted at Aduvilanthakudy, a Muthuvan tribal settlement in

Poopara village, the initiative was spearheaded by the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Idukki, under the Tribal Sub Plan scheme. The high yield seeds used for the trials are GPU 67, CFMVI, and ATLI. These were developed by various millet research centres and was cultivated in Idukki for the first time. The trial farming was part of an on-farm testing initiative to evaluate the performance of selected finger millet varieties in the region. Traditional millet varieties typically take 180 days to mature, but these new varieties require only 120 days, significantly reducing the farming cycle.



Hon'ble Union Home & Minister of Cooperation, Sh. Amit Shah chaired the 91st General Council Meeting of the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), focusing on the White Revolution in Northeast States on 22.11.2024 in New Delhi. He highlighted NNDDB's collaboration to establish Milk Producers' Associations, empowering tribal communities & women.

## AGRICULTURE NEWS

### Kharif output seen up 5.4%, to boost rural income

India's food grain production will likely reach a record level of 164.7 million tonne (MT) in 2024-25 kharif season, with year-on-year increase of 5.4%, the ministry of agriculture said on 05.11.2024, releasing the first advance estimate. This augurs well for the rural economy and consumption, with improved income prospects for farmers. With above-normal monsoon rainfall and high reservoir levels, the rabi sowing, which has just started, is also expected to be robust. Potentially, higher grain output could give a boost to the gross value added (GVA) in agriculture and allied sectors in the current fiscal year, although rural incomes are also a function of prices fetched by the cultivators. The record production estimate for rice comes at a time the govt has huge surplus stocks in the central pool, which is three times the buffer. The harvesting of paddy, which accounts for more than 85% of country's annual output is currently being underway across the country and will continue till March, 2025. Among coarse cereals, maize output is estimated at an all-time high of 24.54 MT for the 2024-25 kharif season (July-June), up 10% on year. While jowar production is estimated higher at 2.19 MT, bajra output is likely to decline to 9.37 MT. Pulses - tur, urad and moong output is expected to remain almost flat at 6.95 MT compared to 6.97 MT, while oilseeds production is likely to increase to 25.74 MT from 24.16 MT. India imports about 58% of its annual edible oil and 15% of pulses consumption due to huge shortfall in domestic pulses and oilseeds output. Among cash crops, sugarcane production is projected to decline to 439.93 MT from 453.15 MT last year. Cotton output is estimated lower at 29.92 million bales (170

kg each) against 32.52 MB while jute production may fall to 8.45 million bales (180 kg each) from 9.69 million bales in the previous year. For the first time agriculture ministry has prepared area estimates using Digital Crop Survey (DCS) data under the Digital Agriculture Mission, replacing the manual Girdawari system. The digital crop survey covered all districts of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Odisha in Kharif 2024, leading to substantial rise in area under rice particularly in Uttar Pradesh. The ministry releases production estimates of foodgrain, oilseeds, cotton, sugarcane and jute four times annually. With digital crop survey being undertaken across states, more accurate production estimates can be arrived at over the next few years. The area under paddy was 41.35 million hectares this season, 2.2% higher on year.

### World's only autumn cherry blossom fest in Meghalaya

Every spring, cherry blossoms enthrall with their delicate pink flowers, and social media is full of trees laden with the beautiful flowers the world over, sparking off dedicated tourist travel. But no need to wait for a full year for another spell of cherry blossoms. In Meghalaya, cherry trees blossom in autumn, and as the state takes on all hues of pink, it celebrated the Shillong Cherry Blossom Festival 2024 on 15-16 November, 2024. Japan has also partnered with Meghalaya for the festival this year, an interest sparked by the striking resemblance of cherry blossoms in







Meghalaya and Japan noted by the Japanese ambassador during his visit to the state last year. Visitors to the festival explored Japan's culture and heritage through a dedicated stall at the venue. While the Shillong Cherry Blossom Festival was first launched in 2016, and is also the world's only cherry blossom festival in autumn, the tradition of celebrating Hanami (cherry blossom) dates back over a thousand years in Japan. The festival's 2023

edition saw record participation, with visitors all across the country and even international travellers, with this year it was even grander. Besides the natural beauty, visitors experienced a host of activities which ranged from fashion shows, cosplay competitions to art installations, food and wine stalls, and much more. The state's other attractions include hiking, serene lakes and hidden caves.

## NEWS FROM MEMBER BANKS

### 71st All India Cooperative Week 2024 (14th – 20th November)

On the occasion of 71st All India Cooperative Week 2024 (14th – 20th November) several member banks celebrated the event by observing various activities.

#### West Bengal SCARDB



Dr. Moinul Hassan, Special Officer, West Bengal SCARDB launched the Special Edition of Newsletter "Samabay Katha" on 18.11.2024 at ICMARD training centre in Ultadanga, Kolkata.



West Bengal SCARDB held Women's Rally of Self Help Group (SHG) where approximately 300 women took part on 15.11.2024 at Kolkata conducted through Howrah District CARD B. Following the event, a meeting was held at the Howrah District CARD B by Shri Pulak Roy, Minister from West Bengal, Dr. Moinul Hassan, Special Officer, West Bengal SCARDB and Shri Kalipada Roy, MLA and Chairman of the bank to discuss the significance and role of Cooperatives in Viksit Bharat.

#### Karnataka SCARDB

Shri A.R. Shivaram, Director, Karnataka SCARDB, Vice-Chairman, NAFCARD and Shri Timmarayi Gowda, Director, Karnataka SCARDB were awarded "Sahakara Ratna" on 20.11.2024 at Bijapur, Karnataka.



#### Tamil Nadu CSARDB

Thiru.M.Murugan, Managing Director, Tamil Nadu CSARDB hoisted flag and took cooperative resolutions along with other bank staff on 14.11.2024 at Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

Editor : Shri K.K. Ravindran, Managing Director

Printed, Published & Owned by : National Co-operative Agriculture and Rural Development Banks' Federation Ltd., 703A, BSEL Tech Park, 7th Floor, A-Wing, Opp. Railway Station, Vashi, Navi Mumbai - 400 703. • Ph. (022) 27814114, 27814226 • E-mail : nafcard.org@gmail.com • Website : www.nafcard.org