

UK study on cotton to spur anti-GM lobby again

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A study of smallholder farmers in Maharashtra has found that under rain-fed conditions, farmers growing traditional Indian cotton crop can obtain similar revenue and profit as farmers growing genetically modified American cotton (BT American cotton).

The research conducted by UK scientists, published in Nature Plants, found that farmers growing BT American cotton (*Gossypium hirsutum*) obtained slightly higher yields than farmers growing Asiatic cotton (*Gossypium arboreum*), the native Indian variety. However, growing BT American cotton requires more expense on seeds, pesticides and fertilisers, as a result of which profits generated ended up being similar to those generated by farmers growing Asiatic cotton.

The researchers have suggested that Asiatic cotton should be considered when farmers are deciding which cotton to grow under rain-fed conditions, which are predominant in India.

The research is set to initiate a fresh debate on genetically modified crops and enrage the anti-GM lobby once again. Asiatic cotton was traditionally cultivated in India till the entry of BT cotton in 2002. BT cotton makes up 90% of the cotton grown in Maharashtra and even across India. Most farming in Maharashtra is dependent on rains due to skewed irrigation facilities. Even the average



Study found farmers growing American BT cotton got slightly higher yields than those growing Asiatic cotton, the native Indian variety

CCIL chief rejects study findings

The data was collected by lead author Dr Carla Romeu-Dalmau from 51 smallholder farmers. Dalmau also found that farmers growing BT American cotton under irrigated conditions obtained higher yields than farmers growing the same under rain-fed conditions. However, higher yields did not translate into higher profits as they spent more to cultivate. Director of Cotton Corporation of India Ltd MM Chockalingam rejected the findings, saying: "Though BT cotton requires higher input cost initially, the yield is far more than the traditional variety."

Some traditional growers are using high density seed-sowing, maybe three to six times more plants per acre, and getting higher yields than before — **MM Chockalingam**, director, Cotton Corporation of India Limited

rainfall in the state in the past few years has been 70%.

Anti-BT activists and farmer activists have been questioning since long its safety and economic feasibility, arguing that the variety is costlier and more input-intensive, and therefore an undesirable burden on resource-poor farmers. These groups have also been seeking review from the state government on whether BT cotton is suitable in rain-fed or non-irrigated regions such as Vidarbha.

"While economic benefits of BT cotton in terms of yields, farmers' net revenue and reduction in pesticide cost are well-documented, it was unclear to what extent ir-

rigation influences the performance of BT cotton, especially on smallholder farming, and if, in the absence of irrigation, growing BT provides greater economic benefits compared to traditional Asiatic cotton," states the paper.

American BT cotton became popular as it was promoted as 'far better' than the native variety. Its fibres are longer than Asiatic cotton fibres and better suited to existed textiles technology. As American cotton is sensitive to insect and disease damage, it has been genetically modified to be more resistant to pests, including bollworms.

The data was collected by lead author Dr Carla Romeu-

Dalmau, a James Martin fellow at Oxford University, from 51 smallholder farmers in Maharashtra. A comparison of input costs, yields and revenues suggests that while Asiatic cotton in the rain-fed area required an input cost ranging from Rs10,000 to Rs15,000 per acre, giving an average net revenue of Rs15,000 to Rs20,000, BT cotton cultivation required average input cost of Rs15,000-Rs20,000 per acre, giving an average net revenue of Rs15,000-Rs25,000.

Dalmau also found that farmers growing BT American cotton under irrigated conditions obtained higher yields than those growing the same in rain-fed conditions.

हाथ कागज प्रदर्शनी



विश्व पर्यावरण दिवस के मौके पर दिल्ली पुलिस के विशेष आयुक्त राजेश मलिक ने खादी ग्रामोद्योग भवन में एक विशेष हाथ कागज प्रदर्शनी का उद्घाटन किया। इस मौके पर दिल्ली खादी ग्रामोद्योग बोर्ड के एमडी बिपिन बिहारी समेत कई अधिकारी उपस्थित थे। इस मौके पर मलिक ने घोषणा की कि दिल्ली पुलिस द्वारा उनके कार्यालय में प्रयोग के लिए हाथ कागज फाइल कवर की खरीद की जाएगी।

बंद मिलें खोलने की मांग को लेकर रेलमार्गों पर जाम लगाया

दीपक सान्याल/एसएनबी

कोलकाता। पश्चिम बंगाल में बंद हो चुके जूट मिलों और अन्य उद्योगों को दोबारा खुलवाने की मांग को लेकर संयुक्त संग्राम कमेटी ने मंगलवार को हावड़ा, हुगली और कल्याणी (नदिया) इलाके में रेल यातायात को

बाधित किया। ऑफिस टाइम में रेल यातायात को बाधित किए जाने की वजह से नौकरी पेशा करने वाले यात्रियों को भारी परेशानियों का सामना करना पड़ा। संयुक्त संग्राम-कमेटी ने

वाउड़िया (हावड़ा), हिन्दमोटर (हुगली), कल्याणी (नदिया) और बेसब्रिज (दक्षिण 24 परगना) में रेल मार्ग पर जाम लगाया।

प.बंगाल में जूट और चाय उद्योगों के सामने हमेशा से संकट बना रहा है। एक समय हावड़ा मैयुफैक्चरिंग और फाउंड्री उद्योग के लिए काफी प्रसिद्ध था, लेकिन इस्पात की

बढ़ती मांग के कारण हावड़ा के प्रसिद्ध फाउंड्री उद्योग को ग्रहण लग गया। हुगली में हिंद मोटर कारखाना और शालीमार पेंट्स के बंद होने से भारी संख्या में श्रमिक और कर्मचारी बेरोजगार हो गए। अब हावड़ा, हुगली और अन्य जिलों में एक के बाद एक जूट मिलों के बंद होने से श्रमिकों को भुखमरी का सामना करना पड़ रहा

■ हुगली में हिंद मोटर कारखाना और शालीमार पेंट्स के बंद होने और अब हावड़ा, हुगली और अन्य जिलों में एक के बाद एक जूट मिलों के बंद होने से श्रमिकों को भुखमरी का सामना करना पड़ रहा है

है। मंगलवार को विभिन्न रेल लाइनों पर रेलवे सुरक्षा बल और रेल पुलिस ने कार्रवाई कर अवरोध तो हटा दिया, लेकिन संग्राम कमेटी ने स्पष्ट तौर पर कहा है कि

यदि राज्य में बंद कारखाने और जूट मिलें जल्द नहीं खोली गईं तो आंदोलन को तीव्र किया जाएगा। कमेटी का कहना है कि सत्ता में आने के बाद मुख्यमंत्री ममता बनर्जी ने बंद कल कारखानों को खोलने का आश्वासन दिया था, लेकिन अब उनके रवैये से लगता है कि वह श्रमिकों को धोखा दे रही है।



EXHIBITION (BMB)

Santosh Gangwar, MoS (IC) Textiles & Parliamentary Affairs, WR, RD&GR, visited ABAHONI Artisans Crafts Bazaar & Handloom Expo 2015 at Dwarka, Delhi, sponsored by BMB. Earlier, U Ananthasubramanian, CMD, BMB inaugurated the Expo.

A gift from Karnataka to the Gujarat CM

Weaver couple present Anandiben Patel a 200gm diaphanous silk saree

RUTAM VORA

Ahmedabad, June 9

The chief minister of Gujarat, Anandiben Patel's collection of sarees just got richer on Tuesday with a diaphanous silk saree gifted by a silk weaver couple from Karnataka here.

The couple in their early 70s, Gurum Narayanappa and his wife Kamalamma travelled all the way from Sunkadakatte near Bengaluru to the Capital of Gujarat, Gandhinagar just to gift a 6.5-metre Karnataka silk saree that weighed about one fourth of the normal saree.

The saree, weighing about 200 grams was prepared with extensive manual labour of 20-25 days and estimated to cost anywhere between ₹30,000 to ₹40,000 in the market.

"The chief minister ex-

pressed pleasure to received this unique gift and appreciated Narayanappa's art and his efforts," said a statement from the Chief Minister's office.

Full of surprises

Notably, the couple also showcased a 25-gram silk saree that fit in a match-box. "The Chief Minister was surprised to see a 6.5 meter silk saree being unveiled from a match-box. She congratulated the couple for their art and encouraged them to showcase their craft to the people of Gujarat," said Himanjal Palival, state organisation secretary, Samskrita Bharati, who assisted the couple during their meeting with the chief minister.

The language barrier for the couple, who interacted only in Kannada, necessitat-



Silk saree weavers from Karnataka meet the Gujarat CM

ed the a local support. "The couple is not from an affluent background. They cannot afford pricey gifts to any individual. But in order to get their art recognised, they decided to present this saree to the Chief Minister. They also sought permission to gift a similar saree to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother, Hiraba. But the appointment has not been granted so far," Palival told

BusinessLine.

Interestingly, the artisan couple from Karnataka has several feathers to their hat. Their handmade diaphanous silk saree has also found a place in the wardrobe of US first lady Michelle Obama, whom they had gifted a silk saree weighing just 70 grams along with a 30-gram silk scarf for the US President Barack Obama during their India visit in 2010.