IIMB forays into weather info service

Crop alert system launched on pilot basis

BANGALORE: Farmers who are at the mercy of nature now have a reason to rejoice.

The Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) has set up a Weather Resource Centre at Gubbi in Tumkur district as a pilot project to provide advance information to farmers on weather conditions.

The centre was inaugurated on Monday.

Express Weather (EW), a Kolkata-based weather forecasting company, will provide relevant data on weather and put in place a crop alert system, and a weather-related implementation for controlling crop diseases.

According to EW Managing Director and CEO Angushujy-

oti Das, the centre will work on the Proof of Concept (PoC) basis. PoC refers to the demonstration of a concept or theory to verify its usefulness.

Software applications will be provided by Wipro whereas Intel will provide the hardware. Cisco Systems will provide connectivity.

"A team of specialised agriculturalists, headed by plant pathologist R D Rawal, will guide farmers on issues like sowing, use of pesticides and fertilisers. While the entire process of generating relevant information and passing it on to the farmers will be an automated one, the team will work closely on developing the input," Das said.

Although the means of sending information on weather to farmers has not been fixed, Das says mobile applications may be used for this. The system will function round the clock. The information will be about mango, betel nut and banana which are the major crops of the region.

"Heavy rains, time of sowing, and use of fertilisers play a crucial role in a successful crop. Wind direction, moisture content of soil, dew, humidity, etc., also play an important role in cultivation and harvesting. Farmers simply cannot afford to be unaware of these issues. Hence, the project will benefit them," Das told *Deccan Herald*.

Nearly 10,000 farmers in the four gram panchayats are expected to benefit from the initiative. Weather forecasting technology based on numerical models such as the Global Forecasting System and Weather Research and Forecast will be used for predicting the atmospheric conditions.

Precise forecasts will be made up to 100-metre domain, while accuracy of prediction for rainfall, humidity and dew measurements will be 90 per cent, Das added.

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