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## Community based organisations will solve many problems

M. J. Prabu



Dr. V. Rajagopal (left), president, She at the inauguration of the programme. Photo: Special arrangement

*It is a shame that we are placed with African countries on hunger index*

The Government's claim about agricultural production achieving a record of 241 million tonnes raises a pertinent question as to how far this can translate into alleviating poverty and reducing hunger index in the country, says Dr.V. Rajagopal, President, Society for Hunger Elimination (SHE), Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh.

The Society works with a missionary approach to care for farmers, those below poverty, and starving Indians.

### **Fooling the public**

“While data on farmers’ suicides is available in the country, there is hardly any projection on starvation deaths occurring in many tribal and rural areas. Does the Government want the public to believe that everything is fine with food security?” he wonders.

“Why does the Government want to provide subsidised grains to the general (above poverty line) category, who are already benefited mostly by the price index based dearness allowances twice every year to meet food inflation?,” is his next question.

### **More holistic**

Food security should be made more holistic than just providing only cereal based food — an incomplete food basket to the poor who need health and nutrition security more than the families above the poverty line.

“Is not the mismatch between the food production and chronic hunger among over 400 million Indians visible to the Government? Why are they turning a blind eye to this stark and ugly reality?” he asks angrily. Dr. Rajagopal urges the Government to work on a strategy to substantially reduce the hunger index to meet the target of the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations.

Whatever steps the Government has taken so far are not enough and only lacklustre, seems to be his view.

New initiatives with innovative ideas alone can solve the problem to some extent backed by strong political will to make our country hunger free; otherwise the number of hungry people will mount further, according to him.

### **National shame**

“Is it not a national shame that India is being placed alongside countries like Ethiopia and Rwanda on the hunger index. Where has all the money sanctioned for rural development and poverty alleviation disappeared?” he queries. Although the government boasts of record food production, the farming community responsible for achieving the same is left in the lurch.

### **Bad reflection**

This reflects badly on the policies and schemes like loan waiver announced by the government for the distressed farmers.

Obviously the Government could not implement some of the important recommendations of the National Commission on Farmers to combat the problem of farm suicides.

The problem still exists with the minimum support price for crops that does not satisfy the farmers who have to deal with high costs of cultivation.

The small farmers, who account for large scale suicides, are the worst affected. The concept of community based organisations (CBOs) for small farmers will be the best solution to minimize the risk of price fluctuations.

## **Technologies**

Technologies like zero tillage, good agriculture practices, multi crop system instead of depending on a single crop, product diversification, and value addition and crop insurance are some of the opportunities for the farmers to generate income and ensure sustainable livelihood.

“The Government needs to declare farmers as national assets and restore agriculture to a prime position,” he says.

Dr. Rajagopal recently presented a paper on this issue at the John Hopkins University, Rockville Maryland U.S.

For more details readers can contact Dr.V.Rajagopal President SHE, Flat 102 Sri Kataaksham, 18-4-60 Railway colony, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh -517 501 A.P. Phone number 0877-2287083, mobile number 094412 00217 and e mail id [rajvel44@mail.com](mailto:rajvel44@mail.com)

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## **Turmeric farmers hit hard as price softens**

S. Ramesh



The yellow spice, it appears, might not make its growers in Erode district richer this time as it did last year. On the contrary, it has left many growers to face colourless prospects.

The farming community's fears of incurring heavy losses is deepening everyday as turmeric prices remain around Rs. 4,500 a quintal for long and traders confirm the worst fears of the farmers. "The prices may fall further. But there is a very less chance for the prices to go up. Even if there is a rise, the prices will not go beyond Rs. 5,000 a quintal," many traders in the district say.

The farming community's hopes of getting at least Rs. 7,000 to Rs. 8,000 a quintal in the coming months has begun to fade. The higher production and the huge stock of turmeric with the farmers will prevent the prices from rising, traders point out. The turmeric production in Erode and other parts in the country witnessed a significant jump during the last year and the same was expected this year too. Over 10000 hectares were covered under the crop in Erode district.

"The Erode market alone is expected to receive around 60 lakh bags of turmeric in the coming year. The arrival of fresh crop will begin in January 2012. The market received around 35 to 40 lakh bags this year," president of Erode Turmeric Merchants Association RKV Ravishankar told *The Hindu*. Huge amount turmeric stocks with the farmers adds to the current sentiment among traders. "Many turmeric growers did not sell their produce after the drastic fall in the prices in the middle of this year and kept their produce in stock. So, there is no scope for enhancement of prices," traders say.

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### **'Steps taken to provide farm loans'**



REACHING OUT: Collector B. Maheswari distributing assistance to a beneficiary at mass contact programme at Nagarapatti village.

Necessary steps have been taken to provide farm loans to the farmers in the district, Collector B. Maheswari said on Wednesday.

Distributing welfare assistance to beneficiaries at a mass contact programme held at Nagarapatti village panchayat in Ponnamaravathy taluk, the Collector said Chief Minister Jayalalithaa had accorded priority to the agriculture sector and had been taking various steps aimed at improving their economic lot.

She said the State government had taken measures to double the production of rice by encouraging farmers to utilise scientific methods and called upon the farming community to adopt the system of rice intensification technique and get benefitted.

The Collector said there was adequate stock of paddy seeds and fertilisers in the district.

Free fans, mixies and grinders would be provided to eligible 54,000 families in the district before March, she added.

### **Ariyalur**

Benefits worth Rs.6,36,420 under various welfare schemes reached 105 villagers during the special Mass Contact Programme conducted at Madurapalayakudi village in Senthurai Taluk.

Collector Anu George distributed the benefits and said the State government was keen on making all girls take up higher education. She warned against marrying off girls before they attain 18 years of age. Stalls were put up by the departments of Agriculture, Health and Public Relations and Information. Several officials explained the schemes of their respective departments.

About 564 cows, 692 sheep and 528 goats belonging to 112 farmers were treated at the veterinary camp on the occasion.

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### **Services of scientists sought in shrimp pathology**

Syed Muthahar Saqaf



clear agenda: Leena Nair, Chairman, MPEDA, speaking at a workshop on shrimp pathology in Sirkazhi

Shrimp aquaculture industry in the country is particularly lacking clarity in disease identification, diagnosis and control methods. The government has sought the services of the best scientists in the world in shrimp pathology to help the aquaculture professionals in the country, said Leena Nair, Chairman, Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) and president of the Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Aquaculture (RGCA).

At the workshop on 'shrimp pathology' organised jointly by the RGCA in collaboration with the Aquaculture Pathology Lab (APL) under University of Arizona, USA, on the RGCA premises a Karaimedu village on Monday, Ms. Nair said the country has moved forward from the "start up era" where wild seeds were used for shrimp farming to the "hatchery era" where broodstock was collected from the wild for seed production and has now entered the "breeding era" where it is no longer dependant fully on the wild for our needs which are met by the SPF (specific pathogen free) domesticated stocks developed in the country itself.

It is time to look beyond white spot disease to the other major shrimp diseases prevalent across the world, their detection, diagnostic, prevention and control methods to enable the professionals here to be prepared in the case of any eventuality.

The workshop is particularly relevant in the present context where spurious or duplicate broodstock/seed is being freely made available in the market branded as "SPF".

These bring in diseases, unhealthy stocks that can have a profound negative impact on the industry in the coming years and also affects the quality of shrimp being exported.

Ms. Nair said that MPEDA has been in the forefront in the development of shrimp aquaculture industry in the country over the last three decades by establishing shrimp aquaculture promotional field offices at all the maritime states.

These offices have played a major role in the development of the Industry by offering technical assistance on best management practices, subsidy schemes for new farm development, setting up of PCR labs, effluent treatment systems etc.

The MPEDA's initiative during the late 1980s revolutionised the aquaculture industry in the country resulting in an increase in area under shrimp farming.

Within a short period of time, Indian shrimp farming industry broke into the top five among shrimp producing nations in the world.

Ms. Nair said it has been proposed to set up modern state-of-the-art library that is solely devoted to aquaculture and also establish prototype aquaculture facilities to offer a complete inhouse training programme.

T. Balasubramanian, Director, Centre for Advanced Studies, Annamalai University, Parangipettai, presided over the inaugural.

Asia Mariyam, District Revenue Officer, Carlous R. Pantoja and Linda Nunan, both world renowned scientists attached to the APL, University of Arizona, USA, Y. C. Thampi Sam Raj, project director, RGCA, offered felicitations. According to G. Ganapathi, Assistant Project Manager and in-charge of the Technical Transfer Division of the RGCA, Dr. Pantoja and Dr. Nunan will be imparting training to the hatchery operators and farmers for the next few days.

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### **Subsidy-based project to put farmers' finger on the pulses**

S.Ganesan

*Agriculture department plans to cover 500 ha in nine blocks*



Input to spur output: T.Indira Gandhi, MLA, distributing agricultural inputs to beneficiaries under the Rainfed Agricultural Development Programme at Chinna Illupur on Monday.

The Agriculture Department has launched a new centrally sponsored project, Rainfed Agriculture Development Programme (RADP), in Tiruchi district aimed at encouraging farmers in rain-fed areas to go in for pulses cultivation immediately after a paddy crop. About 500 hectares (ha) in rainfed areas in nine blocks of the district would be covered under the project implemented under the National Agriculture Development Programme.

Farmers would be extended a subsidy of 25 per cent of the total cultivation cost of Rs.40,000 a ha. The project was launched at Chinna Illupur, a tribal hamlet in the Pachamalai hills in Thuraiyur block on Monday by T.Indira Gandhi, MLA, in the presence of T.Rajathi, chairperson, District Panchayat, and J.Sekar, Joint Director of Agriculture.

A maximum area of 100 ha each would be covered in the tribal areas of Pachamalai in Thuraiyur and Uppilliyapuram blocks in the district under project. The remaining area would be covered in Musiri, Mannachanallur, Marungapuri, Pullambadi, Mannaparai, Vaiyampatti and Thottiyam blocks.

“Normally farmers in rainfed areas in the district leave the field fallow after a paddy crop. The project aims to encourage them to go in for pulses soon after (the paddy crop), utilising the moisture content in the soil,” R.Chandrasekaran, Deputy Director of Agriculture (central schemes), Tiruchi, told *The Hindu* .

The subsidy would be given to the selected farmers in the form of farm inputs. Farmers would be given seeds, fertilizers, bio fertilizers, micro nutrients, weedicides and plant protection chemicals.

The project, to be implemented at a total outlay of Rs.77.82 lakhs, would also aim to achieve an increase of 30 per cent yield in pulses. Forty-nine vermi compost units would be established under the project. The units would be established with 50 per cent subsidy of Rs.30,000 each to improve the organic soil content in the project areas.

Seed farms to produce high quality yielding variety seed of pulses and oilseeds would be established covering a total area of 50 ha, 20 ha for pulses seeds and 30 ha for oilseeds.

For each farm, 50 per cent subsidy would be given to farmers to the tune of Rs.10,000 a ha.

The farm inputs were distributed to the beneficiaries by Ms.Indira Gandhi at a simple ceremony to launch the project. Mr.Sekar explained to farmers the technologies to be adopted for achieving higher yield in dry land agriculture.



Mr.Chandrasekaran elaborated on the objectives of the project and appealed to the farmers to avail themselves of the assistance extended to them. Pon.Kamaraj, chairman, Thuraiyur Panchayat Union, and S.Rajasekaran, Assistant Director, Agriculture, Thuraiyur, were present.

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## 'Industry should pay higher price for sugarcane'

Special Correspondent

SUGAR INDUSTRY SCENARIO			
Sector	Sugar factory	Co-gea	Distillery
Private	26	17	8
Joint Venture	3	1	1
Cooperative	11	2	-

• Total sugar factories in the State -40  
• Average cane price paid by sugar factories in 2010-11- Rs.1,996 per tonne  
• Demand from farmers for 2011-12 Rs.2,500 per tonne

In a hard bargaining with the representatives of private sugar industry managements, the government has offered little option for them but to increase the remunerative price for sugarcane to provide immediate relief to farmers.

In a meeting with the South Indian Sugar Mills Association-AP (SISMA-AP) here on Wednesday, Minister for Industry and Sugar J. Geetha Reddy said that with the cultivation cost going up steeply for the farmers, at about Rs.2,500 per tonne of sugarcane, they needed better price to sustain cane cultivation. Last year, the sugar factories offered price ranging from Rs.2,000 to Rs.2,280 per tonne.

Declining sugarcane acreage in the State had been a cause of concern due to mismatch between high cost of cultivation and remunerative price, delay in payment and lifting of the stocks by the factories, she said.

Unlike sugar factories which could earn revenue also through by-products- bagass, molasses and cogeneration plants, farmers were dependent only on their single season crop. In a *quid pro quo* arrangement, she said that if the industry increased the cane price, then the government would try to address the industry issues at its level.

Focusing on the constraints of the industry, SISMA-AP president Nageswara Rao said the sugar factories were operating only at 55 per cent of their capacity and only for 100 days out of 150-day season as the cane yields were not sufficient. With buffer stocks available, the price of

sugar had come down to Rs.2,600 a quintal while the factory earned an income of Rs.2,650 through sugar and other by-products from a tonne of sugarcane, making it difficult to pay more to the farmers. The industry urged the government to pay more for unit of power to sugar factories and lift 5 per cent VAT on sugar, ease excise duty of Rs.2,500 on molasses and do away with protection to sugar, alcohol and power in the State.

Dr. Geetha Reddy said a meeting would be convened with the Chief Minister to enable the sugar industry representatives to represent their grievances.

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### **State confident of meeting fertilizer requirements**

T. Ramakrishnan

*At present, the TANFED has a stock of 17,417 tonnes*

With the arrangements afoot for taking delivery of 70,000 tonnes of urea that was stuck at two ports, the Tamil Nadu Cooperative Marketing Federation (TANFED) is hopeful of meeting the present requirements of farmers in most parts of the State.

At present, the TANFED has a stock of 17,417 tonnes. Other types of fertilizers account for around 75,000 tonnes. An official says as transplantation is nearing completion, the need for urea is felt more by farmers.

Though 40,000 tonnes of urea reached the Krishnapatnam port, near Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, and 30,000 tonnes had come to Tuticorin, logistical constraints came in the way of lifting them early. Now, efforts are on to overcome them and the authorities are optimistic of taking delivery of the quantities at the earliest, says the official of the TANFED, which caters to the demand of farmers in the State through primary agricultural cooperative societies.

The federation does not cover Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts, where the Thanjavur Cooperative Marketing Federation operates.

An official of the State Agriculture Department, which monitors the movement and stock of fertilizers throughout the State, says the department has instructed distributors of fertilizers to ensure at least 10,000 tonnes each in Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam. Steps are being taken to move the stock from the Karaikal and Vishakapatnam ports to the delta areas. At present, Thanjavur has around 15,000 tonnes.

After the deregulation of prices of fertilizers in April 2010, the Union government is following the regime of fixed subsidy and floating prices. Previously, in times of increase in prices, the Union government was absorbing the burden of hike by providing subsidy to institutions such as TANFED. Now, the amount of subsidy is fixed. Besides, the TANFED is compelled to follow the system of purchasing fertilizers on cash payment against the earlier arrangement of buying the fertilizers on credit for 30 to 45 days. Considering the position of the TANFED, the State government has allowed it to take an interest-free advance of Rs. 70.5 crore this year.

The value of the TANFED's present stock is around Rs. 185 crore. For the last three years, the federation distributed 8 lakh tonnes of fertilizers.

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### **Forest Department plans to raise 10 crore trees**

B. Aravind Kumar

As a component of the Tamil Nadu Bio-diversity Conservation and Greening project, the State Forest Department has an ambitious plan of raising 10 crore trees in farmlands spread over 1.43 lakh hectares at a cost of Rs 182 crore over the next five years.

Buoyed by the success of government's tree cultivation in private lands in the past three years when three crore seedlings have been planted in about 50,000 ha of fallow lands benefiting 72,000 small and marginal farmers, the department has decided to scale up the initiative to achieve multiple objectives.

On the one hand, planting of 10 crore saplings will take the State further towards the target of bringing 33 per cent of the geographical area under forest and tree cover as mandated by the National Forest Commission. This tree plantation drive will also contribute to increased supply of wood and non-wood products from private lands thereby reducing the pressure on natural forests.

In its 'Wood Balance Study – Tamil Nadu 2009', the Madras School of Economics had assessed that the total demand for fuel wood in the State will be between 15.17 and 23.22 million cu.m. by 2013 and the total demand for timber would vary between 5.4 and 6.5 million cu.m. by 2013 and 5.7 and 7.7 cu.m. by 2018.

The stated objective is to bridge the gap between supply and demand through increasing and expanding tree cultivation outside forest areas.

To begin with, the forest department has its task cut-out. "Every year, 1000 villages will be identified through field visits by officials at the district forest offices. This year, the first 1000 villages will be identified by March," said a senior forest officer.

The officials will look at the existing records in Block Development Offices and Village Administrative Offices to find out the available extent of fallow lands to be taken up for tree cultivation.

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### **Scheme for fodder development**

Staff Reporter

Animal Husbandry Department has come out with schemes to encourage farmers to grow fodder. A release from the district administration says that farmers coming forward to grow K3 or K4 kambu napier ottupul (a grass) along with *muiyal masal* or *veli masal* on 0.25 acres will get a subsidy of Rs. 2,590. Farmers having irrigated lands and coming forward to grow fodder maize or fodder jowar along with another crop will get a subsidy of Rs. 1,350 for 0.25 acres.

Farmers in need of equipment for setting up sprinkler irrigation system will get 100 per cent subsidy of Rs. 25,000. Other farmers will get 75 per cent subsidy of Rs. 18,750. The Department will also extend subsidy to farmers to buy hand-operated grass cutting machines. It will pay 75 per cent of the cost of the machine, subject to a maximum of Rs. 6,375. For power-driven grass cutting machines the farmers will 75 per cent of the cost of the machine, subject to a maximum of Rs. 11,250. There are many more schemes, the release says and asks interested farmers to get in touch with the assistant veterinary doctors in their locality or apply in writing to the agriculture officers in their area.

*Interested farmers can get in touch with the assistant veterinary doctors*

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### **'Control price of fertilizers'**

Tamil Nadu Toddy Movement has urged the Union and State Governments to take steps to control the prices of fertilizers. The prices of many fertilizers have doubled in the last 12 months, when the farmers are already amidst extreme distress and reeling under high input costs.

The price of a 50-kg bag of potash, which stood at Rs. 260 three months ago, has gone up sharply to Rs. 600. There is a severe shortage for the fertilizer in the market. As a result, it is being sold up to Rs. 700 in the black market.

Prices of Di<sup>-</sup> ammonium Phosphate (DAP) that hovered around Rs. 550 a few months ago have also increased to Rs. 905, Movement Co-ordinator S. Nallasamy points out.

Apart from facing higher fertilizers prices, the farming community is also experiencing a severe shortage and the traders are capitalising on the situation.

The government, despite repeated representations from the farmers, is yet to bring in any concrete measures to check the prices of fertilisers and ensure adequate supply.

The farming community will not be able to bear the growing input prices for long. If the situation remains the same, it will ultimately lead to a drastic fall in the agricultural production, which in turn will affect the food security of the country, Mr. Nallasamy points out.

The movement further alleged that the Union Government was acting against the interests of the farming community on several key issues. The Commission for Agricultural Cost and Prices had recommended the government to increase the minimum support price (MSP) of paddy by Rs. 160 a quintal recently. But the government had increased the MSP only by Rs. 80 a quintal. Terming this move as anti-farmer, Mr. Nallasamy said the farmers were left to face high input prices, when they were given non-remunerative prices for their produces.

The movement wanted the government to take concrete efforts to protect the interests of the farmers.

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## **Farmers urged to make use of schemes**

Special Correspondent

A number of farmers benefited from an interface organised by the Department of Horticulture at Thenvayal, near Gudalur, on Monday.

Village councillor Saramma presided.

Listing the schemes being implemented by the department for the benefit of the farming community, Assistant Director of Horticulture V. Gunasekaran said that subsidy was being

extended under the National Horticulture Mission, Hill Area Development Programme, Integrated Horticulture Development Programme and Micro Irrigation Programme.

Urging the farmers to make optimum use of the schemes, he said that officials will extend assistance.

Horticulture Officer Suresh Raja and Agriculture Extension Officer Ambiraja were among those who participated in the interface programme.

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### **'Globalisation affecting farming sector'**

Staff Correspondent

Globalisation and liberalisation have led to problems in the areas of agriculture, education and environment, according to writer G.S. Jaydev.

#### **Celebration**

He was speaking at a function to celebrate the 11th anniversary of the Centre for Agricultural Media at Daddi Kamalapur near Dharwad recently.

Mr. Jaydev said that culture and tradition grew along with agriculture and education. "However, in agriculture the country has been facing hardships as farmers' issues remain unresolved," he said.

#### **Concern**

Expressing concern over the authority wielded by multinational companies on the Indian market, Mr. Jaydev said that farmers were unable to grow indigenous varieties of various crops.

The development had adversely affected the farming sector, he said.

He said with the average landholdings of the farmers of the region being 1.3 acres, there was a dire need for the Government to take steps to encourage and support farmers and also revive the farming sector.

#### **Awards**

On the occasion, various awards instituted by the CAM and other organisations were given to Irayya Killedar, Ganadhalu Shrikanth, Mallikarjun Hosapalya, Suresh Dharwadkar, G. Ganapathi Bhat, Anusuya Sharma, K. Rekha Sampath, B.M. Prathiba, and Prakash Bhat Karki.

N.M. Nataraj, Manjunath L., B.M. Prathiba, Palchandra, Ramesh Balla, Asha Hegde, Kavya P.K., Vinod Patil and Sunitha Kusugal were given the 'CAM Fellow' certificates. Sanjiv Kulkarni welcomed the gathering while Anitha Pailoor of the CAM spoke on the objectives of the organisation.

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*By Express News Service*

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### **Onion prices fall, farmers turn violent in Gadag**

GADAG: In the wake of the sudden fall in onion prices at the Gadag APMC Yard, irked farmers set a car belonging to an onion trader on fire and hurled stones on three other vehicles and shops on Wednesday.

The farmers also staged a flash protest at APMC market at Amargol and staged a rasta roko on Hubli Dharwad road. The price of onion had come down from Tuesday's price of Rs 1,000 to Rs 100 per quintal on Wednesday as more than 25,000 quintals of onion were produced in the market itself.

Therefore, the huge quantity of onion caused the fall in the price and had reached Rs 100 to Rs 300 per quintal in the afternoon for good quality onions.

Reports of fall in prices in Gadag market and consequently farmers protesting in a violent manner only added to the suspicion and farmers resorted to stage at APMC administrative office in the evening hours.

Anguished farmers who were expecting more than Rs 1,000 per quintal lost their patience and started arguing with traders. The traders expressed helplessness and explained that the price of onions in the Bangalore market had come down to Rs 500 and they could not give more than that price.

This provoked farmers and some of them attacked the traders.

The farmers vented their ire first at the shop belonging to Krishan Hanjagi, who is a leading

onion trader in Gadag market and later moved on to other shops seeking good price for the onions. Anguished farmers later torched a car belonging to Krishnan Hanjagi and hurled stones at the shop of Kashinath Hanjagi who is another leading trader. Furniture in the shops were destroyed.

Some labourers at the APMC yard who tried to protect the properties of the traders were also targeted by the farmers following which three labourers were seriously injured and admitted to the District Hospital.

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*By R Saritha*

*17 Nov 2011 01:01:11 AM IST*

### **Cultivate mushrooms**

BANGALORE: The delicious mushrooms used in culinary delights are tasty as well as high on protein. Pizza, pasta, soups, curry -- name the dish and they are used; but one more place where you can find mushrooms is -- your balcony.

Now any one can grow mushrooms on their roof tops or in any available small place as these are easy to cultivate and can be a great and tasty hobby. The Krishi Mela organised in Gandhi Krishi Vignan Kendra (GKVK) has many solutions to offer to city-dwellers too.

At present, three mushrooms are being cultivated in India. These are the white mushroom (*Agaricus bisporus*), the paddy-straw mushroom (*Volvariella volvacea*) and the oyster mushroom (*Pleurotus sajor-caju*). The paddy straw mushroom is easy to grow at homes as it is hassle free and cost effective also.

A stall put up at the mela had scientists, led by A N Balakrishnan , professor of Agricultural Microbiology, UAS, explaining the methodology of cultivating mushrooms to viewers.

"To grow paddy-straw mushrooms at your home or farm all you need is some paddy straw, a plastic bag and mushroom spawns, which is easily available in any agriculture shop," he said. Take paddy straws and cut them into 2-3 inches and long soak them in hot water overnight. This process is called pasteurisation and is the most integral part in mushroom cultivation as this kills the unwanted organism from the paddy straws, cautioned the scientists.

In a plastic bag, fill a layer of paddy straws, some spawns and repeat it to make three to four layers. Seal the plastic bag from the top and make holes in the sides for ventilation. Keep these bags in dry place and every day ensure that the bags have necessary moisture. In two to three



weeks, one can see the mushrooms growing out of the holes. These mushrooms are now ready for construction.

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**THE ECONOMIC TIMES**

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### **Mobilephone software to offer farmers agro-advisory services**

COIMBATORE: The Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) is implementing a pilot project to provide farm-specific agro advisory services for farmers. "For this purpose, individual farmers database is being developed for 1,200 farmers in Tamil Nadu, for developing the farm specific agro-advisory services," TNAU Vice Chancellor Dr Murugesu Bhoopathi said. Data is collected directly from farmers with a new software developed jointly by IIT, Chennai and TNAU, as part of Rural Technology Business Incubator project, he said in his paper at a conference in Delhi on 'e-agriculture initiatives in TNAU to accelerate agriculture production and improve livelihood of farmers'. There is a need to develop such a digitised database for all the 82 lakh farm families in Tamil Nadu for rendering farm specific advisory directly by scientists, Bhoopathi said. Farmer can use their mobile phones to contact experts in TNAU, who in turn give solutions to them based on already available, real time data base, he said. TNAU is also taking the initiative to document successful farmers' case studies, with the help of journalists and publish them in national dailies for the benefit of farmers, Bhoopathi said.

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17 NOV, 2011, 03.08AM IST, SUTANUKA GHOSAL, ET BUREAU

### **CTC tea prices drop on improved supply**

KOLKATA: Increased availability of tea in the auctions has pulled down prices of CTC black teas by 4%. The September crop was up by 36 million kg, which has just entered the market and has resulted in a drop in prices. The prices will go up only if November production is lower. The bulk of the Indian tea production is CTC teas.

The CTC tea prices have slipped to Rs 127 per kg compared to Rs 132 per kg in 2010. Price of orthodox tea has slipped 17% to Rs 130 per kg from Rs 157 last year as tea exports to Iran

have declined due to payment crisis. Iran is one of the largest buyers of Indian orthodox tea. Orthodox teas from Himachal Pradesh have also arrived at the auctions and are fetching similar prices of those produced in Assam and Bengal.

From January to September this year, domestic tea production stood at 729 million kg against 693 million kg in the same period previous year. However, the Darjeeling tea prices have appreciated 16% due to increased demand in the domestic market. The average price of Darjeeling tea is hovering around Rs 340 per kg compared to Rs 293 per kg. "The price hike is driven by consumer demand. Indian consumers are gradually getting used to Darjeeling tea. The increased purchasing power has also contributed to this offtake," said Ashok Lohia, chairman of Chamong Tee.

The regional packeteers from Punjab and western India are buying heavily at the auctions. Retailers in West Bengal are also buying teas in good volumes as the prices have dipped.

However, the prices have improved for the small tea growers. Between October 8 and November 10, small growers were forced to sell green leaf to bought leaf factories at Rs 2-3 per kg due to a bumper crop. "For the last month, green leaves in Bengal and Assam have been selling at Rs 2-3 per kg on an average when the production cost was more than Rs 10," said BG Chakraborty, president of the Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers Association (CISTA).

17 NOV, 2011, 03.03AM IST, ET BUREAU

### **Rubber, pepper futures attract more hedger participation**

MUMBAI: Rubber, pepper and cardamom have drawn more actual users than many other commodities, say brokers and exchange officials. Exchange data shows these commodities have high open interest in relation to volumes.

Open interest (OI) indicates outstanding (buy/sell) positions at a given time and volume is the quantity of a commodity that is traded. In commodities traded by a large number of retail speculators, volumes tend to be higher than OI as positions are squared off rather than being kept open till delivery. In commodities where actual participants or hedgers are predominant, OI to volume ratio is higher.

NMCE data for all rubber contracts between June and mid-November shows average OI to be

1.75 times more than the average volume. Bloomberg data shows that average OI in pepper and cardamom, products in which Kerala is a dominant producer, was 1.6 times each more than volume over more or less the same period. Against this the ratio stands at 0.3 in gold, meaning OI was 30% of volume. Gold and silver futures witness physical delivery but retail speculators are also active in these counters.

"Rubber futures contracts are among the few commodities that witness high participation by actual users. Few consumers and their dealers had control of the market in the past, which they are trying to regain by making this market illiquid and eventually killing it. This will be at the farmers' cost," said Agreed Galipelli, "The high OI is on account of the hedging interest." CJ George, managing director of Geojit BNP Paribas Financial Services.

Dealers and tyre manufacturers feel price swings in rubber futures are high and should be reduced. Their demand is to cut daily price movement limit to 2% from 4%. However, this has drawn flak from brokers and exchange market officials who feel if price limit is narrowed, these constituents will be effectively able to manipulate prices as they can freeze the market by making a large order and force farmers to sell at their dictated price.

The issue of price band cap was discussed last week at a high-level meeting in Thiruvananthapuram, which was attended by Union consumer affairs minister KV Thomas and Kerala chief minister Oomen Chandy. After this, the ministers have decided to set up an expert committee to look into the issue of narrowing the price band.



## **Cotton growers take to streets with blessings of Maharashtra Opp**

THURSDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2011 01:19

PNS | MUMBAI

After sugarcane growers' agitation, it is now the turn of cotton growers to take to streets to demand a higher price for their produce. Like in the previous agitation, major Opposition parties - Shiv Sena, BJP and MNS-- have taken up cudgels for the agitating farmers.

The agitating cotton growers are demanding Rs.6,000 per quintal as minimum support price for raw cotton as against the current rate of Rs 3,300 per quintal.

On Wednesday, the agitating farmers staged road blockades at various places in Vidarbha, including Amravati, Washim and Yavatmal districts.

At Amravati, the Shiv Sena —which has thrown its lot behind the agitating farmers - set a local state co-operative cotton marketing federation office on fire. The Sena activists also resorted to rasta roko in the district. The police arrested nearly 110 farmers and Sena activists.

The agitating cotton growers resorted to rasta roko on the Mumbai-Kolkata National Highway 6 at Tiwasa in Amravati district, bringing the vehicular traffic to a grinding halt.

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### **Farmer set afire by cotton crop thieves in MP**

THURSDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2011 00:18

PNS | KHARGONE

A farmer who resisted a group of thieves trying to steal his cotton crop was burnt to death by them at Gandhawad village here, the police said on Wednesday.

Kailash Patidar, who went to irrigate his crop on Tuesday night, was set afire alive by the thieves by pouring kerosene on him killing him on the spot, Superintendent of Police SP Singh informed. The thieves killed him after he confronted them on the field, the SP said.

A total of 12 persons have been put under police custody in this connection and they are being interrogated, Singh said adding a case has been registered against four persons. The body was handed over to the victim's family members after post-mortem, the SP said adding further investigations were on.

The deceased's father Shobha Ram said his son did not have enmity with anybody. Local MLA, Balkrishna Patidar met the family members of the deceased and demanded financial assistance of `one lakh to the family from the MP Government.

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## **Steps taken for distribution of fertilisers to farmers**

THURSDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2011 00:18

The State Government has made proper arrangements for distribution of fertilisers to farmers in the State. Under the arrangements, cent per cent urea will be made available to institutions by IFFCO and KRIBHCO.

In addition to these companies, all other companies will supply urea to institutions and private sellers in the ratio of 75:25 as per quantities allotted by the Central Government. The ratio of supply of all other fertilisers including super phosphate, curate of potash etc except DAP Complex and urea to be made to institutions and private dealers will be 50:50.

It will be mandatory for fertiliser producers/importers to supply the quantities specified by joint director fertilisers and state registration officer and general manager of Marketing Federation to concerning districts. In the districts, supplies will have to be ensured as per instructions of deputy director agriculture and district registration officer and district marketing officer.

Sewa Sahkari Samiti will supply one-third of available quantities of DAP, complex and urea on cash payment to farmers not having taken loans. The entry of quantity of fertilisers sold to farmers by private dealers and cooperative societies will have to be made in farmers' loan books. A farmer will be supplied a maximum of four gunny bags of urea per hectare for irrigated land and two gunny bags for unirrigated land for crops sown in Rabi season. If less than stipulated supply is to be made by the specified companies and then subsidy will not be applicable on difference of quantity. Joint director fertilisers and State registration officer will write this fact on bills at the time of verification. All the specified conditions for distribution of fertilisers by the Union and State Governments will remain the same.

# **Business Standard**

Thursday, Nov 17, 2011

## **Agri ministry plans elimination of non-cigarette tobacco crop**

**Anindita Dey / Mumbai November 17, 2011, 0:52 IST**

The tobacco control programme of the ministry of health may see some paradox. In its strategy to curtail tobacco production to control its usage in India, the ministry of agriculture has decided

to embark on a phase-wise elimination of all varieties except the cigarette-producing one.



The tobacco control programme is the government's commitment as the country is a signatory of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) of the World Health Organization (WHO). The treaty envisages non-price, price and tax measures to reduce the supply and demand for tobacco in the world. While the ministry of health is conducting the tobacco control programme, the ministry of agriculture is the authority to decide on the framework for keeping tobacco crops under check.

The objective for tobacco production control is to bring down the total area under the crop from 450,000 hectares currently to 200,000 hectares in 2020. This is expected to bring down tobacco output from 750 million kg to 250 million kg.

Official sources said the cigarette smoking varieties, such as flue-cured virginia (FCV), burley and oriental, etc, are also export varieties of tobacco.

"These are highly remunerative cash crops, with tremendous exchange earning potential, being export varieties. Producers of FCV varieties earn very high return on investment, unlike non FCV varieties. Besides, there is an institutional mechanism to support the marketing, funding and other facilities for tobacco production and exports under the aegis of the ministry of commerce and the Tobacco Board. Thus, these varieties have wider implication in terms of domestic employment and exports for the country.

It is difficult to phase out these varieties as compensation to be paid to producers will be very high to shift to alternate crops," said an official source involved in drawing up the framework for the tobacco control programme.

Thus, it has been decided to just do away with non-cigarette varieties (non-FCV), as these are not highly remunerative and producers will not have much problem shifting to alternative crops. The financial compensation for helping farmers shift would be borne by the ministry of health, officials clarified.

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## Global pepper output may increase 4% this season

George Joseph / Kochi November 17, 2011, 0:54 IST

The latest estimates of world pepper production indicate a four per cent increase in the 2012 season (November 2011-December 2012). According to the estimates of a leading export house, the total production next year would be around 270,000 tonnes. Vietnam will lead the global supply of the spice, with a total production of 140,000 tonnes. The output from the country this year was 130,000 tonnes. The global supply in 2012 is estimated to be 320,000 tonnes, including the carryover stock in major producing countries. This is 10,000 tonnes less than the supply of 330,000 tonnes in 2011.



The estimates differ on Vietnam's production, as the country projects 150,000 tonnes production. It is certain that the production in Vietnam would be higher in the new season, since there is a sharp rise in the acreage in the country. The upward trend in prices during the last two-three seasons caused the increase in the area under pepper plantations in Vietnam. So, the supply would remain intact in 2012. It is also known that the authorities there had advised farmers not to increase the area under the spice, to keep the product in the high price zone. A section of Vietnamese growers said production would be either steady or lower in the next season because of the quick wilt disease and damage to pepper vines due to excessive use of chemical fertilizer in some areas. The estimates suggest production in India would be lower at 42,000 tonnes, as against 48,000 tonnes in 2011. Production in Brazil and Malaysia is expected to be steady at 30,000 and 20,000 tonnes, respectively, while that from Indonesia is pegged higher at 15,000 tonnes. Production in Indonesia was 10,000 tonnes last year, affecting global supply.

Meanwhile, low supply has led to a sharp rise in prices in global markets. Vietnam raised the Asta grade price to \$7,900 a tonne from \$7,350 last week. The Indian Asta prices increased from \$7,250-7,300 last week to \$7,450 today.

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# THE HINDU Business Line

## Farm-advisory services on phone

Our Bureau



Coimbatore, Nov. 16:

Not many would have believed the effectiveness of getting farm advisory services on phone a couple of years back. Farmers too, were in the habit of collecting and carrying soil samples or the parts of the plant infested by pest for appropriate guidance from researchers.

This could go into history now with the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University stepping up its e-initiative efforts to provide farm advisory services.

TNAU has, in association with the Indian Institute of Technology Madras, developed mobile software to provide farm-specific agro-advisory services under the Rural Technology Business Incubator project.

Stating that the future of agricultural development would depend on the extent of use of virtual agro-advisory services, the farm varsity Vice-Chancellor, Dr P. Murugesu Boopathi, said the institute was experimenting on a number of with knowledge empowerment for farmers as the central focus.

“This project that is being implemented for providing farm-specific agro-advisory services is funded by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). In the pilot phase, we have collated database for 1,200 individual farmers. This is being further strengthened using the Global Positioning System and Geographical Information System and the data maintained at the



central database at TNAU and IIT. Farmers would be able to get their issues resolved by contacting our scientists using their mobile. We feel that there is a need to develop such digitised data base for all the 82 lakh farm families for providing farm-specific advisory services.”

He also said that TNAU's “Dynamic Market Information through Web and Mobile” service helped farmers in South India take prompt and meaningful decisions for marketing their produce by providing real-time market information. “We collect the market prices of 153 commodities from 13 major markets and uploaded the same. This site [http://indg.in/india/market\\_information](http://indg.in/india/market_information) can be accessed by anyone. Besides making it available in a public domain, we send SMS to over 42,000 farmers, free of cost, daily. We are looking to provide holistic market information such as market trends, quality preference, demand and supply analysis for different produce in the coming months,” he said.

On the e-Velanmai initiative, he said 19 sub-basins across 14 districts in the State were covered under this project. “Farmers take pictures of the affected parts of the plant and forward it to the experts at TNAU for advice through their mobile. Experts process the information and revert to the farmers in the shortest possible time. The number of farmers seeking such advice is on the rise,” he added.

#### **Local, export offtake lift chickpea**



Indore, Nov. 16:

Dollar chana or chickpea rose on robust export and local demand.

Even as 1,000-1,200 bags were offloaded in local mandis, dollar chana (best quality) gained Rs 200 at Rs 7,800-8,100 a quintal. Chana was flat on slack buying support, with chana (kanta) at Rs 3,450 a quintal and chana (desi) at Rs 3,400 a quintal. Chana has peaked in this season and

more arrivals from Australia and Tanzania are likely to bring down prices, said Mr Rahul Vora, a chana trader. According to trade sources, Madhya Pradesh has witnessed 22 per cent increase in sowing till date compared with the previous year.

Chana dal was unchanged despite slack demand, with chana dal (average) ruling at Rs 4,225-4,250, chana dal (medium) at Rs 4,325-4,350 and chana dal (bold) at Rs 4,500-4,525. Masoor, tur, moong and urad also were unchanged despite subdued demand. Masoor (bold) quoted at Rs 2,850. and masoor (medium) at Rs 2,650. Masoor dal, on the other hand, declined on slack demand, with masoor dal (average) being quoted at Rs 3,275-3,300, masoor dal (medium) at Rs 3,375-3,400, and masoor dal (bold) at Rs 3,500-3,525.

Tur and its dal were unchanged despite sluggish demand. Tur (Maharashtra) sold at Rs 3,550 and tur (Nimari) at Rs 2,500-2,800. Tur dal was flat, with tur dal (full) selling at Rs 5,500-5,550, tur dal ( *sawa* no.) at Rs 4,800-4,850 and tur (marka) at Rs 6,300-6,350.

Moong (bold) was firm at Rs 4,200-4,350, while moong (medium) was quoted at Rs 3,600-4,000.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 17, 2011)

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### **Centre makes 90% jute packaging mandatory for foodgrain, sugar**



New Delhi, Nov. 16:

The Centre has approved the mandatory packaging of 90 per cent of the production of foodgrain and sugar in bags made of natural fibre during the current jute year.

The decision by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), however, exempts sugar fortified with vitamins, packaging for export of commodities, small consumer packs of 25 kg and below and bulk packaging of more than 100 kg from this provision.

“...The CCEA has approved the packaging of 90 per cent of the production of foodgrain and 90 per cent of the production of sugar in the jute packaging material for the jute year 2011-12 (July-June),” an official statement said. Sugar packed for outbound shipment but could not be exported will also be exempted from this decision.

The statement also said that in the case of any shortage or distribution of jute packaging material or other contingency, the Textiles Ministry, in consultation with the user Ministries concerned, will relax these provisions further, up to a maximum of 20 per cent of the production of foodgrain and sugar. “The decision will provide relief to 3.7 lakh workers employed in jute mills and ancillary units as well as support the livelihood of around 40 lakh farm families,” it added.

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*The CCEA has approved the packaging of 90 per cent of the production of foodgrain and 90 per cent of the production of sugar*

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(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 17, 2011)

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### **Champion Agro gets Asia Pacific award**

Our Bureau

Ahmedabad, Nov. 16:

The Rajkot-based Champion Agro Ltd has been awarded the prestigious Asia Pacific Entrepreneurship Award for 2011 for outstanding performance in developing successful businesses within the region.

The Rs 350-crore Champion Agro, a company in the agriculture services vertical introduced the concept of agro retail malls in Gujarat, and has, during the last three years, set up 34 agro clinics, Mr Dhirubhai Patel, Chairman and Managing Director, said in a statement here.

The company, started with manufacture of pumps, has now expanded to almost all the verticals that touch the lives of farmers.

Apart from agro retail malls, the company deals in contract and lease farming, green houses, cattle feed, fresh and processed fruits and vegetables etc.

Champion Agro has also ventured into processing of fresh fruits and vegetables along with contract farming and horticulture parks. The company is planning expansion with cold chains in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh, and tie-ups with the State Governments for setting up green house projects all over India.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 17, 2011)

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### **Cotton farmers grappling with weed menace**

L. N. Revathy

Coimbatore, Nov. 16:

After experiencing success with first generation in-the-seed insect protection Bt trait technologies, farmers are now seeking solutions to address other mid-season challenges in cotton, including innovations for weeding, wider insect protection and water stress.

“I grow cotton in three of the five acres of land I have. I started cultivating Bt cotton since its introduction and am an early adopter of Bollgard II technology.

While the income from my farm has been quite remunerative, weeds (unwanted plants growing around the main crop) management is becoming a big challenge for us, particularly because of the acute shortage of farm labour, on the one hand, and the cost of engaging them to pluck the weeds on the other,” says Mr Selvaraj, a cotton farmer of Anukoor Village in Perambalur District.

Mr Selvaraj was joined by fellow farmer Mr K. M. Palanivel of Thedavur village, Salem District, who is also into cotton cultivation. The duo brought a bunch of weeds to explain the plight of farmers in this part of the country.

#### **Yields affected**

“While sowing and harvesting grab attention (historically), these weeds, which impact the plant yield potential by 35-76 per cent by robbing the main crop of water, nutrient and sunlight, are becoming a real pain for us.

Managing weeds in the early stage, especially 8-10 weeks after crop emergence, is critical, else, these unwanted plants cause significant yield loss,” said Mr Palanivel.

The duo pointed out that ineffective weed management increased the susceptibility of crops to pests and diseases such as whitefly, jassids, thrips, mealy bugs, etc., restricting plant growth and limiting yield and farm income.

Stressing the need for a spray-formulation to control weed growth, Mr Palanivel said the labour costs moves northwards from mid-season, because around that time we start to rely heavily on manual labour for weeding (July-September) and picking (October- December).

The farmers say that manual hand-weeding with hired labour is done at least 2-3 times per season on an average and intercultural practices such as use of tractor and bullocks, 2-4 times a season.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 17, 2011)

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### **Volume hits 16-week high at Coonoor tea auctions**

P.S. SUNDAR

**Coonoor, Nov. 16:**

A volume of 16.93 lakh kg will be offered at Sale No: 46 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions to be held on Thursday and Friday, reveals an analysis of brokers' listing.

This is the highest volume in the last 16 weeks. It is 4.20 lakh kg more than last week's offer and as much as 7.05 lakh kg more than the offer this time last year.

Of the 16.93-lakh kg on offer, 12.22 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 4.71 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades. As much as 16 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 0.93 lakh kg, orthodox variety. The proportion of orthodox teas continues to be low in both leaf and dust grades. In the leaf counter, only 0.49 lakh kg belongs to orthodox, while 11.73 lakh kg, CTC. Among the dusts, only 0.44 lakh kg belongs to orthodox, while 4.27 lakh kg, CTC. In the 16.93-lakh kg, fresh teas account for 14.23 lakh kg. As much as 2.70 lakh kg comprises teas which had remained unsold in previous auctions. Quotations held by brokers last week indicated bids ranging Rs 43-48 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 80-114 for brighter liquoring sorts. They ranged Rs 45-50 for plain dusts and Rs 85-135 for brighter liquoring dusts.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 17, 2011)

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### **Spot rubber slips despite lower arrivals**

Our Correspondent

Kottayam, Nov. 16:

Physical rubber prices remained subdued on Wednesday. Despite the fact that the commodity is going through its peak production season, arrivals in the market and stocks in warehouses were low for the past few weeks. This indicated that growers are holding on to stocks. Major buyers either stayed away or kept a low profile on reports of tapping in full swing in most of the plantation areas. Hence, prices drifted southwards even though there was no visible selling pressure in the market. Sheet rubber dropped further to Rs 188 from Rs 190 a kg, according to traders and the Rubber Board. Most of the growers were unwilling to sell their produce below Rs 200 a kg, an observer said. The trend was mixed.

### **Futures up**

RSS 4 improved with the December contracts rising to Rs 193.20 (186.53), January to Rs 194.98 (187.79), February to Rs 197.65 (190.19), March to Rs 197.50 (192.01) and April to Rs 200.50 (195.01) a kg on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) closed firm at Rs 171.24 (168.11) a kg at Bangkok. The November futures weakened to ₹ 253 (Rs 166.66) from ₹ 257 a kg during the day session but then remained inactive in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange. Spot rubber rates (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 188 (190); RSS-5: 186 (187); Ungraded: 179 (180); ISNR 20: 171 (171) and Latex 60 per cent: 113 (113).

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 17, 2011)

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### **Mixed trend in edible oils**



Mumbai, Nov. 16:

Imported oils showed mixed trend with palmolein declining by Rs 2, while soya refined oil increased by Rs 3 despite a rebound in Malaysian crude palm oil (CPO) futures. Rapeseed oil rose by Rs 2 taking a total rise of Rs 18 in the last four days. Cotton refined oil was up by Rs 5,

while groundnut oil declined by Rs 5 following weak reports from Saurashtra where it dropped by Rs 35. The volume was negligible in absence of demand from stockists.

In indigenous oils, improved arrivals in producing centres kept fresh demand arrested.

Resellers sold palmolein at Rs 570-571. Liberty's rates for palmolein was at Rs 585-587 for November, for super palmolein at Rs 600 and for soya refined oil Rs 622. Ruchi was quoting palmolein at Rs 573 for November delivery, soya refined oil at Rs 620 for November delivery and sunflower refined oil at Rs 680. **Malaysia's CPO's** December contracts settled higher at MYR 3,254 (MYR 3,184), January at MYR 3,246 (MYR 3,176), February to MYR 3,241 (MYR 3,178) and March to MYR 3,240 (MYR 3,178) a tonne. Soya oil for December futures closed at Rs 639.80 (Rs 633) while January closed at Rs 644.50 (Rs 637) on National Board of Trade in Indore.

**Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg):** groundnut oil 835 (840), soya refined oil 617 (614), sunflower exp. ref. 625 (625), sunflower ref. 685 (685), rapeseed ref. oil 714 (712), rapeseed expeller ref. 684 (682), cotton ref. oil 610 (605) and palmolein 562 (564).

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 17, 2011)

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### **Castor futures rise on industry demand**

Our Correspondent



Rajkot, Nov. 16:

Castor futures gained on new buying by industries. Castor for November delivery on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange was down Rs 1.50 to Rs 4,470 a quintal with an open interest of 11,550 lots, while it increased by Rs 23 to Rs 4,105 a quintal for December delivery, with an open interest of 14,100 lots. It rose by Rs 7.75 to Rs 4,304.15 a quintal in the spot market on the exchange.

On the Rajkot Commodity Exchange, castorseed's December contract increased by Rs 19 to Rs 4,002 a quintal even as spot castor declined by Rs 7.50 to Rs 4,127.50 a quintal. While 14,000-15,000 bags arrived in Gujarat and sold at Rs 825-840 for 20 kg, 900-1000 bags arrived in Saurashtra and sold at Rs 780-815 for 20 kg.

New demand from shippers and soap industries lifted castorseeds, said a Rajkot-based broker. Weak export enquiries in coming days and a likely bumper castor crop in 2012, though, may restrict the rise in prices, said commodity analysts. Acreage of the crop has increased by 3.9 lakh hectares to 1.27 million hectares in 2011 from 882,000 hectares last year. Industries expect production to be between 1.7 and 1.8 million tonnes. New arrivals will hit the market in January.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 17, 2011)

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### **Ample stocks keep rice down**



**Karnal, Nov. 16:**

Prices of aromatic varieties continued to tumble on Wednesday, while non-basmati varieties were quoted with marginal variations.

Mr Amit Kumar Chandna, Proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company, told *Business Line* that sluggish domestic demand, coupled with ample stocks, pulled prices down. Retail traders are placing orders according to demand as prices are falling continuously, he added.

Pure basmati (raw) decreased by Rs 200 and was sold at Rs 4,600 a quintal while basmati (sela) was sold at Rs 3,500-3,550 a quintal.

Prices of Pusa-1121 (steam) dropped further by Rs 60 and were quoted at Rs 4,340-4,400 a quintal while Pusa-1121 (sela) was quoted between Rs 3,450-3,500 a quintal.



Among the brokens of Pusa-1121, Tibar decreased by Rs 70 at Rs 3,300-3,330; Dubar dropped by Rs 50 at Rs 2,900-2,950; and Mongra was trading at Rs 2,300 a quintal.

PR-11 (sela) sold at Rs 2,100-2,200 a quintal, while PR-11 (raw) quoted at Rs 1,900-2,150 a quintal.

Permal (sela) sold was at Rs 1,800-1,950 a quintal, while Permal (raw) was around Rs 1,900 a quintal.

Around 1.1 lakh bags arrived at the Karnal Grain Market Terminal.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 17, 2011)

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### **Maharashtra sugar up on higher UP cane price**



**Mumbai, Nov. 16:**

Sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale market shot up by Rs 60-80 a quintal on Wednesday after witnessing a downward correction of Rs 50-70 on Tuesday.

New buying by stockists and neighbouring States at higher rates pushed up the prices in the physical market. Spot rates increased by Rs 50-60, while naka rates shot up by Rs 60-80 a quintal. Mill tender rates improved by Rs 40-70 based on quality and higher demand.

Sugar prices are high in Uttar Pradesh due to the sharp hike in State-advised cane price by the Mayawati Government this week, a leading broker said. Compared with Uttar Pradesh, a lower hike in cane price by Maharashtra kept the price low in Maharashtra for northern buyers. This led to sharp improvement in sentiment in physical and futures markets. Domestic sugar futures also shot up by Rs 140-150 in the last two days, indicating bullish sentiment.

In the Vashi physical market, the volume was as usual in the middle of the month, market sources said. On Tuesday evening, mills in the State sold about one lakh bags at higher rates. It includes one rake (27,000 bags) of S-grade sold to neighbouring-State buyers. Expectation of active buying of northern States in Maharashtra due to higher prices in Uttar Pradesh, kept sentiment firm at the upper level here. Further strong belief of permission for more sugar exports soon is another factor to push the prices up. In Maharashtra sugar price is Rs 200 lower than northern States. Sugar prices in Mumbai spot market rose nearly Rs 165-170 in first fortnight, tracking sharp jump in mill tender rates. In the current month, out of the 16 days, the market witnessed only two-three days profit taking correction, while in other days, sugar prices kept rising continuously.

Currently, ex-mill price in Uttar Pradesh is around Rs 2,900-2,950. .

On Tuesday, about 18-20 mills offered tenders and sold about 65,000-70,000 bags to local traders and one rake (27,000 bags) to upcountry buyers in the range of Rs 2,840-2,940 (Rs 2,770-2,850) for S-grade and Rs 2,940-3,040 (Rs 2,920-3,000) for M-grade. Arrivals in the Vashi market were at 50-52 truckloads and local dispatches were nearly 47-48 truckloads. In the international market, December-11 futures was up by \$10.50-669.70 (\$659.20) and March-12 futures at \$640.90 (\$639.50) on Tuesday.

**Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates (Rs/quintal) :** S-grade - Rs 2,986-3,061 (Rs 2,931-3,001); and M-grade - Rs 3,061-3,191 (Rs 2,996-3,131).

**Naka delivery :** S-grade - Rs 2,980-3,000 (Rs 2,900-2,970); and M-grade - Rs 3,050-3,150 (Rs 2,970-3,100).

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