

February 16, 2012

**Prudent water management practices ensure self-sufficiency**

*The bunds act as check dams and prevent soil from getting washed away*



Progressive outlook:Somala Devi in her farm.Photo: Special Arrangement

A general opinion prevails among many farmers that more water means better yield. It is not true.

“In fact, more than 70 per cent of the irrigation water, especially in flood irrigation, evaporates. Only a small quantity reaches the root zone of the plants and gets utilised,” says farmer A.L Somala Devi, Mandya district, Karnataka.

The University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, conferred the Best Farm Woman award (district level) on her. Economical use of water with proper planning is essential to get a good yield. Especially during the summer months, farmers must go in for optimum use of water and conserve as much as possible, according to her.

Strolling around her farm one notices a number of raised mounds of earth on the fields.

### **Preventive bunds**

“These bunds serve two purposes. One, they act as effective check dams and prevent water from running off; two, they prevent the surface soil from getting washed away by the running water,” she explains.

In addition, she has also dug some small ponds in her farm to store rainwater. She raises coconut, arecanut, sugarcane, paddy, mulberry, ragi and napier grass. Cows and sheep are also reared in her farm.

“I am a strong believer in traditional farming. I do not use chemicals, which spoil the land. The soil is like a mother's womb and must be nourished and taken care of,” she says. Mulching dry leaves in the fields is a regular practice which she says, “prevents moisture evaporation and controls weed growth.”

Vegetables are grown in a small patch. Waste water from the kitchen irrigates the vegetable garden.

### **Grow some vegetables**

“I am surprised when I hear people speaking of malnutrition or increasing food production. If farmers in every village in the country grow some vegetables in their land then the concept of food security for the farmers' family can be solved.”

The excess vegetables can also be sold, thus fetching the farmer some extra money.

The farmer says with a sense of pride that she does not visit the market for buying vegetables.

All her kitchen needs are met from her vegetable garden.

## **Personal advice**

“My suggestion to farmers is that they should grow different crops, trees and rear animals in the farm. Do not practise monoculture (growing only one crop), because if any pest or disease attacks the crop then you will face huge losses.”

How does she manage any pest attack?

She says: “As long as farmers know the medicinal value and methods of using neem, basil, parthenium leaves, or cow’s urine as pest repellents, the problem can easily be tackled. “When there are so many low cost methods and bio-pesticides available, which can be made easily in the farm and are effective, a farmer need not borrow at high interest rates for growing crops.”

## **Two main problems**

“Today’s agriculture faces two main problems,” she says.

“One pertains to lowering the input cost, and the other, marketing. If these two are solved then our farmers will succeed,” she says.

Her advice to farmers is that even if one is not fully convinced of practising organic agriculture, he or she can try using both the natural inputs in a piece of land and also grow crops using chemicals in the rest. “Seeing is believing. This practice over time can change a farmer’s perspective towards organic methods,” she says.

## **Cost of inputs**

Today one cannot do chemical farming alone. Shortage of the inputs and the cost factor really create a problem for farmers.

“Natural inputs need to be used if we need to come out of excessive spending on chemicals,” she argues.

Instead of depending on some unknown middlemen to exploit the farmers it would be better if farmers organise themselves into small groups and start some sort of cooperative farming and marketing on their own.

For more information readers can contact Mrs. A.L Somala Devi, No 145-Hemmanahalli, Athgoor, Hobali, Maddur taluk, Mandya district, Karnataka:571428, mobile:09845746046.

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Published: February 16, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: February 16, 2012 04:29 IST

## **Scouting innovations in fisheries and aquaculture**

Innovation has been the foundation of civilization and civilization is constantly influenced by new developments.

“In our country with a long tradition in fisheries and aquaculture, fisheries and fish farmers have innovated a number of techniques and technologies and continue to innovate to sustain their livelihoods,” says M.C.Nandeesh, Dean, Fisheries College and Research Institute, Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu.

With a view to harnessing the innovative potential of people at the grass root level, an initiative has been undertaken by conducting a nationwide essay competition for fishers and fish farmers.

### **Objectives**

The objectives are: to document significant innovations made by fishers and fish farmers in fisheries and aquaculture. Recognize innovators and strengthen partnerships between fishers, fish farmers and development professionals and scientists.

Increase awareness on the benefits of farmer participatory research in innovation as well as in extension with a view to increase fish production

The competition is open to fishers and fish farmers from all parts of the country. The innovations have to be described with all details supported with drawings, pictures, etc.

Farmers can take assistance of others in providing description, if necessary. Essays can be written in any language with which the farmer is comfortable. Inclusion of an english translation is preferable but not mandatory. Last date for submission is February 29.

### **Last date**

The best innovators, selected by a panel of judges with interest in farmers innovation, will be awarded three prizes: First: Rs.25,000, second: Rs.15,000 and third Rs.10,000.

In addition, best entries would be chosen for inclusion in a special publication to be brought out under the title "Farmers as scientists: examples from Indian fisheries and aquaculture".

Further based on the levels of partnership additional plans to expose innovators to the best innovations around the world would be explored.

For further queries and submission of essays, please contact : Dr.D.Sukumar, Co-ordinator, farmer/fishers innovation documentation (FID), email : sukuds@gmail.com, Tuticorin: 628008, mobile: 9443844820 Tamil Nadu. "We are seeking, partnership to make this initiative a national movement. Those interested to join can email us at Dean, at mcnrāju@gmail.com and deanfcri@gmail.com, Phone: 0461-2340154, mobile: 9442551957 adds Mr. Nandeeshā.

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February 16, 2012

### Farm query

AZOLLA

What is Azolla? Can anyone guide me on its usage?

S. Deepak, *Tamil Nadu*

Azolla is a floating fern which resembles algae. It is rich in proteins, amino acids, vitamins and minerals. For details on its cultivation and usage you can contact Dr. Kamalasanan Pillai, Scientist, Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, mobile: 093872-12005. Dr. Pillai was recently awarded the Societal Innovation Award" by National Research Development Council (NRDC) for his work on Azolla.

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### "Study climate change impact on food production"

Special Correspondent

*M.S. Swaminathan delivers talk at sustainable development meet*

"Develop science to overcome the impact of the changes in the climate on food production," M.S. Swaminathan, eminent agricultural scientist, appealed to scientists on Wednesday.

Inaugurating the three-day consultation on 'Sustainable development- 20 years after Rio: biodiversity-food security and livelihoods', organised by the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation here, he pointed out that around 50 per cent of India's currently favourable, high potential, wheat production area may be reclassified as a heat stressed, lower potential, short season growing environment by 2050.

For each one degree Celsius rise in mean temperature, wheat yield losses in India are likely to be around six million tonnes per year. Hence, the major implication for research would be 'shift selection from per crop productivity to per day productivity'.

Dr. Swaminathan said former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had raised a very important question at the Stockholm meet of 1972 : How can we speak to those who live in villages and slums about keeping the oceans, the rivers and the air clean when their own lives are contaminated at the source.

"When ecological footprint exceeded the biocapacity, this would mean a serious threat to food security," he added. He pleaded that everyone should realise the dream of Mahatma Gandhi who said "unsustainable lifestyles and unacceptable poverty should become problems of the past to achieve harmony with nature and with each other".

Lamenting the fact that growth rates of yields for major cereals are slowing down in developing countries, with "fatigue setting in on Green Revolution", he advocated an "ever-green revolution." It meant increasing productivity in perpetuity without associated ecological harm, he explained.

According to him, a green economy is one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risk and ecological scarcities.

It is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. Charting a pathway to sustainable livelihood, he suggested bio-villages with a focus on natural resources conservation and enhancement. While they should go in for high productivity and profitability, their non-farm activities should lead to market-driven products. Referring to emissions, he said "now the task is to negotiate the agreement (arrived at Durban) so that the scale and pace of the emission cuts increase and also the agreement secures our right to development".

## **Terrestrial**

### **carbon banks**

He underlined the role of terrestrial carbon banks in mitigating climate change. "Increasing soil carbon pool by one tonne carbon per hectare per year in the root can increase food production by 30 to 50 million tonnes," he added. Dr.Swaminathan was confident that bioresources could be converted into jobs and income in an environmentally sustainable and socially equitable manner. "This is the only way to break the dichotomy between the prosperity of Nature and poverty of people", he asserted.

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Published: February 16, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: February 16, 2012 04:17 IST

### **Crops begin to wither for want of water**

*Power cuts hamper use of motors to irrigate fields*



Root cause:A view of the wilted groundnut plants at Pazhakanoothu near Oddanchathiram in Dindigul district on Wednesday.— PHOTO: G. KARTHIKEYAN

Even as many irrigation wells have sufficient quantum of water and primary agricultural cooperative banks enough stock of fertilizers, farmers, irrespective of the land holdings, have been struggling to protect the standing crops particularly long term and horticulture crops, owing to acute power shortage and unannounced load shedding.

Worst-affected are the farmers who depend only on well water for irrigation. Normally, these farmers raise only one crop in a season using the water in the wells.

After good rainy season and de-silting of tanks in some areas, water level in many wells have gone up substantially.

Present storage in many wells is sufficient for farmers to irrigate the crop till harvest.

They will not face any difficulty in getting the yield. Good storage in wells encouraged many farmers in the district to raise crops.

Watering at least once in three or four days is necessary to protect long term crops like coconut and once-a-day to banana, sugarcane and vegetable crops.

Now, farmers have sufficient quantum of water in their wells. But they cannot use them because of power cuts.

Already, short term crops like paddy and vegetables, and rain-fed crops like groundnut, maize and Cumbu have started withering.

The Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (TANGEDCO) had assured to supply power for three hours for agriculture pumps.

Actually, the supply has been made only for two hours a day, says K. Kaliappan, farmer in Palakkanuthu. Even such two-hour supply is not continuous. Frequent tripping has paralysed agriculture activities.

The loss does not end with crop damage and slump in yield. Burning of motors owing to trip in supply too scales up the loss.

“No one knows when the power will come and go. More than 40 electric motors meant for irrigation pumps were burnt in Reddiyarchatram and Oddanchatram blocks.

Agriculture has already become an expensive vocation owing to the rise in input costs and shortage of labour. “We have to invest more on farm mechanisations also,” he said.

Prices of fertilizer (20:20) rose to Rs.950 a bag from Rs.600, potash has shot up to Rs.650 from Rs.300. Price of other fertilizers too have gone up sizably.

“With no power for irrigation, all these investments were of no use. Ultimately, we will incur huge loss,” farmers worry.

If this trend continued, even long term crops like, coconut, guava, mango, banana and sugarcane will also wither.

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**Milk prices go up**



Staff Reporter

The price of Ponlait milk will increase with effect from Thursday. The blue packet, which previously cost Rs. 10.50, will now cost Rs. 13. The green milk packet will now cost Rs. 14, instead of Rs. 13. Also, the small packet, which cost Rs. 4.50, will now cost Rs. 5.

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### **Two lakh sapling to be planted in Theni**

A total of two lakh saplings will be planted in different places in the district between February 24 and June 30. A sum of Rs.92 lakh had been sanctioned for executing the work, said Collector K.S. Palanisamy. He was inspecting the saplings collected from various sources and nurseries of Forest Department at Boodhipuram near here on Wednesday.

The saplings will be planted on the campus of government and private educational institutions and private and government industries' campus, roadsides and in public places.

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### **Mettur level**

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 82.91 feet on Wednesday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 639 cusecs and the discharge, 1,832 cusecs.

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CHITRADURGA, February 16, 2012

### **Aid to fight pests attacking coconut crop**



Initiative: The Ministry of Horticulture will offer growers 75 per cent subsidy on pesticides to treat damaged coconut palms.

There is good news for coconut growers in the State, whose hopes of profit are frequently destroyed by pest attack and disease affecting the crop.

The Ministry of Horticulture has introduced a programme under the coconut development scheme to help contain various pests and diseases that damage the palms. Under this, the Ministry will offer 75 per cent subsidy on pesticides after identifying the problem.

### **Targets**

In the first phase, the Government wants to cover 3,350 hectares of coconut farms under the scheme; the total area under coconut cultivation in the State is 4,87,075 ha.

The Government has set aside Rs. 17.58 crore for the programme and a maximum subsidy of Rs. 7,000 an ha will be given to the growers.

### **A first**

Speaking to *The Hindu*, P. Vishwanath, Technical Officer, Department of Horticulture, said that although the Government had schemes for coconut growers to help contain pest attacks, this was the first one that was "exclusive and extensive".

Pests and diseases such as mites, black headed caterpillar, ganoderma, rhinoceros and red-palm weevil, bud rot and steam bleeding damage the crop, hinder the growth of the plants and cause sharp decline in productivity, he pointed out. "The Government wants to help the growers contain the spread of pests and diseases by providing financial assistance to buy pesticides, which are quite expensive." Mr. Vishwanath said the department would directly identify the farms affected, and also go there if the growers complained. "After the area is identified, officials will conduct a survey of the total area affected and allow growers to purchase the [subsidised] pesticides," he said. Growers could contact horticulture offices for further details, he added.

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KATTAPPANA, February 16, 2012

### **Food from hibiscus flowers**

It was a rare experience for the residents of Kovilmala tribal settlement near here on Tuesday when they tasted various food items derived from hibiscus flowers made by students of the Women Studies Centre of the St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam.

It was for the first time the people heard about the food items made of hibiscus petals though the flower is abundant in the area.

The programme was organised as part of 'Arogyotsavom' programme of the Idukki unit of the Arogya Keralam organisation for creating awareness on preparing energy-rich food from locally available items.

Thankamma, a local resident, said that she benefited from the training session and when vegetables became costly, she could use the hibiscus flowers to make food.

Experts at the function said that hibiscus had great ayurvedic value.

The 'Arogyotsavom' was organised at Kovilmala to create awareness on malnutrition among tribals in the plantation sector where a survey conducted recently showed that malnutrition among children was high. The team members of the Arogya Keralam also took classes on preventing diseases.

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KOCHI, February 16, 2012

### **Farmers looking forward to good harvest**

Farmers in the Mundakan crop areas in the district are looking forward to better than average yields this season and an unusually long dry spell has helped smoothen harvesting and threshing operations though a paucity of harvesting machines continues to trouble farmers in most of the panchayats.

Farmers across the district's Mundakan area are expecting an average yield of around 1,500 kgs of paddy per acre, said an official of the Department of Agriculture.

Helped by favourable conditions, this paddy season overcame early difficulties, including some instances of serious pest attacks and spiralling price of fertilizer to end on a happy note.

Harvesting is in full swing though in most of the areas it has only just covered between 10 and 15 per cent of the total area.

Farmers in Mazhuvannoor panchayat, where 250 and 300 hectares are under the crop this season, are facing a paucity of harvesting machines. While in some areas farmers are doing the work manually, in others they are borrowing combine harvesters from neighbouring panchayats.

It was also pointed out that three harvesting machines bought by the district panchayat was lying idle because they were unwieldy.

Amballoor panchayat has about 140 hectares in this season and farmers expect a better-than-average crop. Harvesting is in progress, so far covering about 10 per cent of the area. In Okkal panchayat fields are small and it is difficult to deploy combine harvesters, said an official. However, manual harvesting is on and there are about 50 hectares under paddy this winter season.

### **Harvesting slow**

Farmers in Piravom panchayat expect above average yields this season. There are nearly 130 hectares under paddy this season. But there is just one combine harvester and the progress of harvesting has been slow. About 10 per cent of the fields has been harvested so far.

In Mulanthuruthy, where harvesting started early, farmers expect to complete the process by early March. About 60 hectares have been brought under paddy this season and farmers expect better yield this year than last.

In Thirumarady panchayat, about 140 hectares are under paddy. About a quarter of the fields have been harvested so far with the farmers only facing a shortage of harvesting machines. Manual harvesting is on some of the fields. Harvesting machines are being borrowed from neighbouring areas like Ramamangalam, Piravom and Kalloorkkad.

Farmers in Kothattukulam too are facing a severe shortage of machines and progress has been slow on the harvesting front. Only about 15 per cent of the total area of 40 hectares have been

harvested so far. Farmers are happy with the yield this season and expect about 600 kgs of paddy per acre.

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KOZHIKODE, February 16, 2012

### **Expo to feature farm technology**

#### *Three-day 'Krishi Jalakam 2012' at Indian Institute of Spices Research*

A three-day agricultural technology exhibition — 'Krishi Jalakam 2012' organised by the Indian Institute of Spices Research (IISR) — will begin on its campus at Chelavoor here on Thursday.

The event will showcase various agricultural technologies developed by different centres of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and State agricultural universities for the benefit of the farming community.

City Police Commissioner G. Sparjankumar will inaugurate the exhibition at 10 a.m.

M .Tamil Selvan, head of the Directorate of Arecanut and Spices Development (DASD), Kozhikode, will preside over the function. More than 20 research institutes and government organisations will put up their stalls exhibiting various technologies and machineries developed by them at the venue.

### **Participants**

Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI), Kasaragod; Central Tuber Crops Research Institute (CTCRI), Thiruvananthapuram; Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Kochi; Indian Institute of Spices Research (IISR) Kozhikode; Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Peruvannamuzhi; Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT), Kochi; Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM), Kunnamangalam; National Research Centre for Banana, Trichy; National Horticulture Research and Development Foundation (NHRDF); Milma, Kunnamangalam; Kelappaji College of Agricultural Engineering, Thavanur; Coconut Development Board (CDB), Kochi; Farm Information Bureau; Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council Kerala (VFPCCK); and National Seeds Corporation, Palakkad are among the institutions scheduled to attend the show.

Krishi Jalakam is organised under the auspices of the National Agricultural Innovation Project (NAIP) meant to mobilise mass support for sharing agro-information among farming community members.

The exhibition will be open to the public, including schoolchildren, on all three days.

- *Focus on sharing farm information*
- *City Police Commissioner to inaugurate*

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## Weather

### Chennai - INDIA

#### Today's Weather



Sunny

Thursday, Feb 16

Max Min

32.4° | 21.1°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 94%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 6:35

Sunset: 18:03

Barometer: 1011

#### Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Friday, Feb 17

Max Min

29° | 21°

#### Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday

Feb 18



Sunday

Feb 19



Monday

Feb 20



Tuesday

Feb 21



Wednesday

Feb 22



27° | 20°

Cloudy

28° | 21°

Cloudy

28° | 19°

Cloudy

28° | 19°

Cloudy

28° | 19°

Cloudy

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# THE ECONOMIC TIMES

16 FEB, 2012, 05.25AM IST, PK KRISHNAKUMAR,ET BUREAU

## Glut in global market hits coffee exports

KOCHI: Coffee exporters are facing a glut in the world market amid a lull in demand. Arabica shipments are down 23% in the January-February period. Robusta is holding steady because arrivals from Vietnam are still lagging.

Arabica crop has been delayed by three weeks in India, which has affected shipments out of the country. Though availability could improve, a sluggish demand may dampen exports.

"Buyers in Europe have deferred purchases. But there is no drop in consumption, which is a relief," says [Ramesh Rajah](#), president of the [Coffee Exporters Association of India](#). Demand is thin in most other markets as well. Arabica prices slipped in the overseas market.

The ICE Arabica futures fell to a 14-month low with investors liquidating their positions.

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16 FEB, 2012, 05.19AM IST, PTI

## Bihar procures 8 lakh tonnes paddy

PATNA: The Bihar government has procured eight lakh tonnes of paddy till date out of a target of 30 lakh metric tonnes even as the farmers have been paid 850 crore towards procurement of their paddy produces, Food and Civil Supply minister Shyam Rajak said today.

The Food Corporation of India (FCI), State Food Corporation (SFC) and the Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (PACs) have together procured eight lakh metric tonnes paddy till date from farmers, Rajak told reporters. The PACs were the largest procurer at 6.5 lakh tonnes, while the SFC and FCI have procured one lakh metric tonne and 50,000 metric tonnes respectively, he said.

The farmers have been paid 850 crore through account payee cheques in lieu of procurement of their paddy.

Rajak said adequate arrangements have been made for storage of paddy and base camps have been set up at the compound of 53 market committees throughout the state and cold storages and private godowns too were being used for the purpose.

To meet the procurement target, the Chief Secretary and Development Commissioner were conducting video conferencing with the district officials on regular basis.

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16 FEB, 2012, 05.16AM IST, RITURAJ TIWARI,

### **Government mulls cold chains for fruit to cut wastage**

JAIPUR: The Union agriculture ministry has drawn up plans to invest in cold chain infrastructure for fruits in the upcoming financial year. India produces 230 million tonne of vegetables and fruits a year but around 25% of the produce goes waste due to poor and inadequate infrastructure for perishable products.

The ministry has joined hands with Fresh and Healthy Enterprises, a fully-owned subsidiary of government-owned Container Corporation of India, to form a special purpose vehicle. The SPV will provide end-to-end cooling logistics for fruits such as kinnow, orange, banana and mango in the first phase of the project.

"The investment in each cold chain will range from Rs 70-100 crore depending on the location. The government's stake too will vary from 40% to 55%. The detail of this SPV is being worked out," said agriculture secretary P K Basu.

The cold chain facilities will come up at major production centres. "Facilities for mangoes and oranges are likely to come up at areas near Lucknow and Nagpur respectively," he said.

FEHL, the Rs 65-crore Concor arm, operates a cold chain at Rai near Delhi with an annual capacity of 12,000 tonne. The company buys apples from farmers directly, stores them in its cold chain facility and sells to retailers like Bharti-Walmart, Big Apple, Reliance Retail, Mother



Dairy, Future Group and Heritage Foods. After incurring losses in its first three years, it has managed to break even last year.

"India produces over 230 million tonne of vegetables and fruits. Around 25% of the produce goes waste. The industry needs a robust farm-to-retail cold chain solution to sustain the growing domestic and export demand. Banana, mango and citrus are the main fruits with a share of 36%, 21% and 12% of the total horticulture produce respectively," said a company official.

The country has around 30-million-tonne cold storage capacity. It needs around 70-million-tonne capacity as on date to minimize losses that occur through wastage. A parliamentary panel has pointed out that post-harvest losses of fruits and vegetables are as high as 35%, valued at more than Rs 50,000 crore a year. "A government-appointed task force has envisaged an investment of Rs 8,150 crore on cold chain development creating additional 9-10-million-tonne by 2012," said the official.

The government has also approved the setting up of a national centre for cold chain development with members from government, industry bodies like CII, FICCI and stakeholders like growers and cold chain equipment manufacturers.

"There is a shortage of 40-million-tonne capacity and the country needs a huge investment to meet the deficiency. This centre will promote and support the setting up of cold chains in the country. The government will gradually reduce its stake in the centre after it sets the ball rolling. Industry bodies should come together to attract investment in this sector, " Basu said.

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15 FEB, 2012, 09.45PM IST, PTI

### **Tea prices to rise by Rs 10-12/kg on wage, input cost hike**

MUMBAI: Tea prices are expected to go up by Rs 10-12 per kg from April in view of the rise in input costs and likely wage hike in Assam tea gardens, an industry official said today.

"We expect tea prices to go up by Rs 10-12 per kg, as new tea crop will start arriving in April-May.

"Following the recent revision of tea workers' wages in the gardens of West Bengal by 34 per

cent, and the likely wage hike of tea workers in Assam, the production cost per kg is likely to be dearer," Indian Tea Association (ITA) Vice- Chairman Arun Singh told reporters on the sidelines of a road show.

Assam is the largest tea producer state in the country, with 500 million kg per annum followed by Bengal having 240 million kg per annum tea production capacity.

The wages constitutes 60 per cent of cost, and 20 per cent of input costs includes diesel, coal and electricity in tea production.

The wage hike of tea workers in Assam will push up the price of tea by Rs 14 per kg, Singh said.

Nearly 2.2 million people are directly employed in the Rs 10,000-crore tea trade in the country.

The average auction tea price across the country is Rs 103 per kg and branded tea sold at around Rs 200 per kg.

Commenting on tea industry scenario, Singh said the country is expected to produce 985 million kg tea in 2011 as compared to 966 million kg produced in 2010. The company exports around 190 million kg, which means it left with roughly 780 million kg as against the demand of 860 million kg per annum.

While majority of the tea is still sells through auctions, ITA, however, felt it necessary that the producer should attempt to engage directly with the tea trade to better understand the needs of the consumer, Singh said.

After many years of recession, tea industry is now looking bright and tea sold through all tea auctions in India is fetching better price realisation.

It has been observed that producers who are being consistent in supply of quality teas have been rewarded with good support from buyers, Maharashtra Tea Traders Association president Harendra Shah said.

Meanwhile, the Indian Tea Association has launched road shows across the country to discuss the complexities of the tea industry, and work towards improving the overall structure of the industry and making domestic and export tea trade more competitive.

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### **Efforts on to register all State farmers in time for wheat procurement**

THURSDAY, 16 FEBRUARY 2012 00:13

STAFF REPORTER | BHOPAL ‘

This year, advanced registration of farmers has been made for procuring wheat on support price from them. Wednesday was the last day of this process which was continued till 12 midnight.

The farmers, who have been unable to get themselves registered even after these efforts, have been given yet another opportunity for registration. Such farmers can sell their wheat at the procurement centre of their respective area by getting themselves registered over there from May 1.

E-procurement arrangements have been made this year with the express objective of streamlining the whole procedure and making it clean and transparent. For this purpose, e-registration of farmers was made mandatory. This process was set in motion in every district since October 2. Its last date was today and this process was continued till 12 midnight with a view to bringing maximum number of farmers under its ambit.

Minister of State for Food and Civil Supplies Paras Chandra Jain informed that the farmers who could not get them registered during this period can now get them registered at the concerning procurement centre and sell their wheat over there. He said the Government intends to benefit maximum number of farmers by associating them with this arrangement.

E-procurement arrangements have been made to ensure the benefit of procurement of wheat on support price to bonafide farmers of the state and eliminate any possibility of irregularities in the process.

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## 'Huge number of tractors unnecessary: Farmer Commission

WEDNESDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2012 23:28

MONIKA | CHANDIGARH

Punjab State Farmer's Commission wants the agriculturists in Punjab not to reap too much benefit from tractors. Taking cognisance of growing number of tractors in the fields of Punjab, the Commission has recommended the farmers do away with the over-dependence on the machine.

In a clear signal to the farmers to prune over-mechanisation of agriculture, the Farmer's Commission believed that the State just does not need so many machines. However, the Commission has all praise for the State's new scheme of renting out tractors and other machinery to the farmers.

With nothing less than 4.35 lakh tractors harvesting the fields in Punjab, the Commission has admitted that the State has become "over-mechanised".

The Commission, in its report submitted to the State chief secretary SC Aggarwal, stated that such a huge number of tractors is "unnecessary", and a useless cult. The Commission believed that buying tractor is just not viable for the farmers of the State, who are already burdened under the debt.

The report stated that for 62 per cent of farmers in the State, buying and not hiring a tractor just does not work out financially, yet even the average farmer still won't let go of the tractor.

The level of "over-mechanisation" can be gauged from the fact that there are as many as 14 tractor companies operating in the State; and interestingly, most are doing pretty well. It is noted that they sell new tractor models the moment they are launched.

The Commission also pointed out that the tractor does not become cost-effective if it does not run for 1,000 hours. And, the average for Punjab is just 250 hours and that even a farmer with 10 acres cannot really afford a tractor now.

Then why the farmers are buying tractors? Experts believed that more than buying a tractor for farming land, it has become a symbol of prestige and honour in the farming community. It has been seen that the Jat farmers are selling their land to buy the machines.

Coming to the rescue of the small farmers. The State Government's move to rent out tractors and other expensive machinery for farming purposes at reasonable rates has gained good ground in the State.

Commission believed that the scheme has encouraged the farmers to hire and not buy tractors and even threshers.

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# Business Standard

Thursday, Feb 16, 2012

**Labour woes: Tea prices to rise Rs 10-12/kg**

**BS Reporter / Kolkata February 16, 2012, 0:19 IST**

The Indian Tea Association (ITA) is expecting retail tea prices to increase by Rs 10-12 a kg in the new season, due to a 34 per cent rise in labour cost.

"Labour cost in Darjeeling, Assam and Bengal have gone up by 34 per cent. As a result, the retail price will go up by Rs 10-12 a kg in stages," said Arun N Singh, vice-chairman, ITA, at the Indian Tea Roadshow in Mumbai.

The price realisation of tea has multiplied more than three times in the past three years. But, the onus was on producers to ensure quality. Industry representatives say the consistency in quality is maintained irrespective of manufacturing practice.

Though the industry witnessed a long period of depression between 1997 and 2007, there has been an uptrend after 2008. "Tea consumption is increasing 2.5 per cent every year and prices are also up," said the chairman of export and import committee of ITA, Azam Monem.

Annual tea consumption is pegged at 860 million kg while availability would be around 795 million kg. Despite good production in 2011, the industry expects good prices in the new season, with rising consumption and a pipeline deficit. The industry ended 2011 with its highest every production at 988 million kg, 23 per cent up over last year.

Representatives at the roadshow also said the e-auctions should be smooth for better price discovery. "While framing the rules and process of e-auctions, there were many anomalies which resulted in improper, unfair and biased price discovery. These anomalies have to be removed from the system at the earliest to have a fair auction system," said Harendra Shah of Girnar Tea.

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### **Cardamom sheds 2% on profit-booking**

**Press Trust of India / New Delhi February 15, 2012, 15:57 IST**



Cardamom prices fell by Rs 19.50 to Rs 881 per kg in futures trade today due to profit-booking by speculators and a weak trend at spot market.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, cardamom for delivery in May month fell by Rs 19.50, or 2.17%, to Rs 881 per kg in business turnover of 207 lots.

The February contract shed Rs 1.20, or 0.16%, to Rs 727 per kg in 216 lots.

Analysts said profit booking by speculators and a weak trend at spot markets on subdued demand led to fall in cardamom futures.

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### **Turmeric falls 2.6% on profit-booking**

**Press Trust of India / New Delhi February 15, 2012, 15:45 IST**



Turmeric prices fell by Rs 140 to Rs 5,160 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators booked profits at existing higher levels amid fall in demand in the spot market.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, turmeric for delivery in April month fell by Rs 140, or 2.64%, to Rs 5,160 per quintal with an open interest of 13,890 lots.

The May contract lost Rs 132, or 2.58%, to Rs 4,992 per quintal in 5,845 lots.

Analysts attributed the fall in turmeric futures to profit-booking by speculators at prevailing levels and fall in demand in the spot market.

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# THE HINDU Business Line

## Castor declines on profit-booking



Rajkot, Feb. 15:

Castor price on futures market declined as market participants booked profit. On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), castorseed February contract decreased by Rs 160.50 to Rs 4,016 a quintal, with an open interest of 5,420 lots, NCDEX March contract declined Rs 40 to Rs 3,860 a 100 kg, with an open interest of 11,650 lots.

At the Rajkot Commodity Exchange (RCX), castor March contract went down by Rs 42 to Rs 3,677 a quintal. RCX spot castor declined Rs 67.50 to Rs 3,865 a quintal.

About 32,000 bags arrived in Gujarat and price was Rs 760-775 a 20 kg. Around 4,100-4,200 bags of castor arrived in Saurashtra region and price was Rs 745-770 a 20 kg. A Rajkot-based castor broker said, "Castor demand in spot market is poor at present. Moreover, expectation of good castor production restricts the new buying."

A RCX trader said, "With weak demand in spot, market participants booked the profit today."

Experts said heavy selling in the wake of increased supply and fall in demand at physical markets led to fall in prices.

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### Dull offtake drags down tur



Indore, Feb. 15:

Decline in buying interest at the higher rate, dragged down tur for the second consecutive day with the prices of tur (Maharashtra) in local mandis being quoted at Rs 3,725 a quintal, while tur (Nimari), on the other hand, ruled at Rs 3,000-Rs 3,100 a quintal.

Decline in tur has been attributed to lack of buying interest by the traders from outside the State. Besides, dip in local demand has also added to the bearish sentiment in tur.

Tur dal prices, on the other hand, remained steady even as buying support in pulses continued to remain weak. Tur dal (full) Rs 5,300-Rs 5,400 a quintal, tur dal (sawa no.) was quoted at Rs 4,600-Rs 4,700, while tur marka ruled at Rs 6,000-Rs 6,200 a quintal. According to traders, future of tur appears to be bullish in the long run with expected decline in tur yield this year.

Urad perked up by Rs 25-50 at Rs 3,650 a quintal with rise in prices of imported urad at Mumbai port which was being quoted at Rs 3,000-Rs 3,100 a quintal. Urad (medium) ruled at Rs 2,800-Rs 3,000.



Urad dal ruled steady on sluggish demand with urad dal (medium) being quoted at Rs 3,800-Rs 3,900 a quintal, urad dal (bold) at Rs 4,500-Rs 4,600, while urad mongar ruled at Rs 5,400-Rs 5,500 a quintal.

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### Downward trend continues in turmeric



Erode, Feb. 15:

The price of spot turmeric decreased by Rs 200 a quintal on Wednesday, extending its downward trend of the last two days.

“As expected, prices of both varieties of turmeric decreased by Rs 200-300 a quintal. In the last two days, prices have decreased by Rs 500 a quintal. Arrivals have started increasing daily and on Wednesday 12,500 bags arrived for sale.

“Because of the decrease in price, only 60 per cent sales were registered,” said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants' Association.

He said the sale of the new crop was high when compared to the old crop. Buyers were arranging to process their purchases. The old crop was being sent to the local masala firms. He said if arrivals increased further, prices would go down sharply.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants' Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 2,619 to Rs 4,938 a quintal and the root variety at Rs 2,419 to Rs 4,811 a quintal.

**Salem crop:** The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,016 to Rs 5,509 a quintal and the root variety at Rs 4,159 to Rs 4,695 a quintal.

Totally, 3,027 bags (new crop 2,520 bags and old crop 507 bags) arrived for sale, but 1,540 bags were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,769 to Rs 5,269 a quintal and the root variety at Rs 2,679 to Rs 4,690 a quintal. Out of 227 bags kept ready for sales, 218 were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,136 to Rs 5,269 a quintal and the root variety at Rs 3,711 to Rs 4,696 a quintal. Of arrivals of 855 bags, 775 were sold.

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### Edible oils slip on weak demand



Mumbai, Feb. 15:

Weak sentiment prevailed in edible oil market on Wednesday due to lack of demand. Most edible oil prices tracked the bearish trend prevailing in the foreign and domestic markets. Groundnut oil and rapeseed oil declined by Rs 5 each, cotton refined oil extended losses by Rs 2 and palmolein dropped by Re.1 for 10 kg. Sunflower and soyabean refined oil ruled unchanged.

Volume was negligible due to absence of fresh demand. Continuous import arrivals and shortage of storage led to a higher selling pressure in the physical market. Mumbai commodity exchange will remain closed on Thursday due to election.

Analysts said that market sentiment remains weak as lower closing of Malaysian palm oil futures added more pressure at domestic level. Malaysia BMD CPO futures fell succumbing to profit-taking after yesterday's rally to a one-month high. CPO futures closed lower by 10, 8 and 2 ringgits a tonne, reflecting weaker export demand and tracking a decline in CBOT soya oil. Malaysia's palm oil exports in the first 15 days of February fell 14 per cent from a month earlier to 4,94,294 tonnes, cargo surveyor SGS (Malaysia) Bhd said on Monday.

Meanwhile, India's January edible oil imports fell 6.4 per cent from a year ago to 6,47,693 tonnes due to higher summer-sown oilseed output and weak local demand. China is likely to import 3.97 million tonnes of soyabeans in February, down 14 per cent from January, the State-backed China National Grain and Oils Information Centre said on Wednesday.

A wholesaler said volume in palmolein was negligible and isolated in resale as market witnessed good volume previous day. Continuous arrivals of import shipment and shortage of storage tank - space have pushed up storage charges making import cost expensive. On Tuesday about 1,000-1,200 tonnes of palmolein were traded, hence, stockists keep away from fresh buying. Local retail demand was also less than expected keep volume routine at semi-wholesale level, he said.

In local market last resalers were quoting palmolein Rs 558-560. Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 563-564. Ruchi was quoting palmolein at Rs 560; soya refined oil at Rs 665 and sunflower refined oil at Rs 668. Allana's Palmolein was at Rs 565 and Mewah was quoting palmolein at Rs 561. In Saurashtra – Rajkot, groundnut oil ruled steady at Rs 1,655 for *Telia* tin and Rs 1,085 for loose - 10kg. In Madhya Pradesh, soyabean arrivals were about 1.25 lakh bags. In Indore market, soya refined oil was at Rs 662-665 and soyabean prices were Rs 2,340-2,430 a quintal. Domestic soya oil futures improved on speculative buying.

**Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg):** groundnut oil 1,060 (1,065), soya refined oil 666 (666), sunflower exp. ref. 615 (615), sunflower ref. 670 (670), rapeseed ref. oil 765 (770), rapeseed expeller ref. 735 (740), cotton ref. oil 615 (617) and palmolein 561 (562).

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## Pepper rebounds on buoyant overseas markets

G. K. Nair

Kochi, Feb. 15:

Pepper recovered on Wednesday on bullish overseas reports indicating firmer prices in other origins such as Vietnam and Brazil and floating of enquiries from overseas markets.

The market opened at lowest price of the day and remained steadier and slightly dipped in the beginning of the forenoon session. Then cued by the bullish reports moved up sharply and in the beginning of the afternoon session touched the highest price of the day. Thereafter, started sliding and traded with high volatility and ended substantially above the previous day closing.

Feb, Mar and Apr touched the highest prices of Rs 30,400, Rs 30,800 and Rs 31,115 a quintal respectively.

As the difference between the nearby positions and later positions are widening there was some switching over. Some of the exporters and interstate dealers were seen buying Feb and Mar delivery, while speculative position holders were liquidating. Primary market dealers were also buying, they said.

As the overseas brokers, traders and end users who were attending the World Spice Congress in Pune last week and were holding the hope that by mid-Feb Vietnam pepper would hit the market and the prices would drop, were visiting here earlier this week and some business was said to have taken place on Monday. Since the market did not fall and instead turned out to be firmer, they were showing interest to cover. This phenomenon coupled with no arrivals from the primary market/growers was taken as a tool by the speculative operators to push up the market, market sources told *Business Line*.

Feb contract on the NCDEX increased by Rs 590 to close at Rs 30,125 a quintal. Mar and Apr increased by Rs 620 and Rs 700 respectively to close at Rs 30,595 and Rs 30,950 a quintal.

Total turn over went up by 491 tonnes to close at 3,615 tonnes. Total open interest moved up by 14 tonnes to 7,815 tonnes.

Feb open interest decreased by 166 tonnes to 2,827 tonnes while Mar and Apr increased by 180 tonnes and 5 tonnes respectively to close at 3,368 tonnes and 774 tonnes.

### **Spot gains**

Spot prices in tandem with the futures market trend and tight supply scenario moved up by Rs 300 to close at Rs 30,200 (ungarbled) and Rs 31,700 (MG 1) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market, following the rise in futures market coupled with strong rupee against the dollar, was up at \$6,575 -6,600 a tonne (c&f) Europe and \$6,875-6,900 a tonne (c&f) for the US and yet remained competitive, with chances of orders coming to India.

### **Overseas trend**

According to an overseas report today, Vietnam pepper prices were up and it was attributed "to holding back by local market to push up the prices". Add to this, "West Asia was reportedly rushing to buy for Feb shipment and as well as local processors were also covering", it said.

Prices quoted were 500 GL \$6200 a tonne (fob) HCMC; 550 GL \$6,600 a tonne (fob) and white pepper at \$9,500 a tonne.

Brazil also the prices moved up. B 1 went up to \$6,700 a tonne (fob) from \$ 6350 a tonne (fob) as producers were said to be unwilling to sell, the report added.

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### Mounting selling pressure drags spot sugar



Mumbai, Feb. 15:

Spot sugar price rule weak on increase selling pressure at naka level on Wednesday.

In physical markets, spot prices declined by Rs 5-10 a quintal. Naka rates eased by Rs 10-20 as stockists were under lifting pressure for their old commitment for which due date was February 15. Mill tender prices were almost unchanged on regular demand. Middle month routine retail demand keeps sentiment steady, said market sources.

Wholesaler said traders were under pressure to fulfil the old commitments due on February 15 lead to bearish trend at naka level on need-based and limited local demand. Local retail demand eased in middle month period. Stockists were avoiding big inventory buying as they hold ample stocks. More mills came with tender offers at regular rates and sold routine quantity on Tuesday.

A leading broker said that upcountry market rule par with Maharashtra keep fresh buying of neighbouring States at bay. Rail rake volume is lacking since last one month. There is no positive indication from export front also. So far, a Directorate of Sugar has issued release

orders for export of 9.50 lakh tonnes (lt) against the first tranche on 10 lt allowed for export in November. The last date for seeking export permits for this tranche is Wednesday.

On seventh of this month, the Government has again declared additional 10 lt of export as second tranche is yet to be notified. Total 20 lt export allowed by the Government for the current year starts from October. Last year, India has exported 15 lt in world market, he added.

In world market, sugar futures price fell by \$15-16.50 on Tuesday. March-12 futures closed lower at \$640.40 (\$656.90) and May-12 futures closed at \$622.80 (\$637.80). Arrivals in Vashi market were 52-53 truckloads and local dispatches were around 49-50 truckloads. About 21-22 mills offered tenders on Tuesday and sold about 70,000-75,000 bags in the range of Rs 2,760-2,830 (Rs 2,760-2830) for S-grade and Rs 2,860-2,930 (Rs 2,860-2,940) for M-grade.

**Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates:** S-grade Rs 2,900-2,962 (Rs 2,902-2,962) and M-grade Rs 3,002- 3,082 (Rs 3,016- 3,092). **Naka delivery rates:** S-grade Rs 2,870 - 2,900 (Rs 2,860 - 2,920) and M - grade Rs 2,960-3,020 (Rs 2,970-3,050).

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### Navara rice farmers seek Govt support for marketing



Navara rice

*Navara rice, associated with Ayurveda and considered to be an energetic food for people of all ages, was the first farm product that received Geographical Indication Registration in the country.*

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb. 15:

Farmers engaged in the cultivation of “Navara” rice, a unique endemic crop native to Kerala with high medicinal properties, are facing a crisis due to the lack of a marketing network and absence of remunerative price for the product. Navara rice, associated with Ayurveda and considered to be an energetic food for people of all ages, was the first farm product that received Geographical Indication Registration in the country considering its importance. “It is now mainly grown in Palakkad in an area of 30 acres and total production is about 10 to 15 tonnes a year,” Navara Rice Farmer's Society President, Mr P. Narayanan Unny, told PTI here.

Farmers were not taking up cultivation of the rice in spite of high demand owing to poor marketing network and absence of remunerative price, he said. The farmers, who cultivate organic Navara rice, were not getting buyers as the crossed varieties grown with chemical fertilisers were cheap, he pointed out. “What we need is certain marketing support to sell the product at a competitive price with that of other rice variety. It is cultivated mainly in Palakkad and only about 10 farmers remain in this field now.

A few farmers in Malappuram and Kozhikode were also engaged in Navara cultivation. As the production cost of this particular variety was high compared to other rice items, the retail price of Navara was also high at around Rs 350-400 a kg, he said.

## New director on Dwarka Milk board



The screenshot shows the Dwarka Milk website. At the top left is the logo "DWARKA MILK" with the tagline "Shudh Aahar... Shudh Vichaar...". To the right are "Home" and "Career" links. Below the logo is a navigation menu with items: ABOUT US, PRODUCTS, QUALITY, NEWS & EVENTS, CSR, CATTLE FEED, MILKY WAY, SUPPLY TO US, and FACTORY LOG. A banner image displays several Dwarka Milk products: Dige, Dwarika, and Ghee. Below the banner, the breadcrumb trail reads "Home > Products > MILK". The main heading is "MILK". The text below reads: "There's an old Hindi saying: Shudh Aahar, Shudh Vichar. A pure diet leads to pure thoughts. We are firm in our belief that everyone should be able to buy high-quality, great-tasting milk products that are produced with integrity and without the use of antibiotics, added hormones or dangerous pesticides. Naturally, our products are organic and hormone-free." Below this, it says: "Dwarka Milk is rich, wholesome, delicious, and good for everybody. We deliver fresh and high-quality milk directly to thousands of happy customers every day in packs of 250 ml, 500 ml, 1 litre & 5 litres." At the bottom left, there is a "COW MILK" link.

Mumbai, Feb. 15:

Mr V.K. Malhotra, a retired IAS official, has been appointed director of Dwarka Milk, Maharashtra's leading private milk producer with 52 plants across the State.

Prior to joining Dwarka, Mr Malhotra was a Member of the Board of Industrial and Financial Reconstruction and Chairman and Managing Director of Food Corporation of India.

He has about four decades of experience in economic development, strategic industry and finance-related planning.

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### Distillery effluent finds use in crop production in Karnataka

Anil Urs

Bangalore, Feb. 15:

The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board has managed to help utilise effluent (spent wash) discharged by polluting distilleries in the State for crop production.

Distillery spent wash is the unwanted residual liquid waste generated during alcohol production.

Recently, the board persuaded the Karnataka Brewers and Distillers Association (KBDA) to carry out research and development for use of spent wash for agriculture and provided seed money of Rs 6 lakh.

“The study taken up in two agricultural universities to evolve a practical solution on this problem has met with initial success. Now the pollution board has come out with guidelines for utilisation of distillery effluent for crop production,” Mr A.S. Sadashivaiah, Chairman of Karnataka State Pollution Control Board told *Business Line*.

“Based on these guidelines, the board is permitting the distilleries to use bio-methanated spent wash maximum up to 30 per cent for one-time controlled land application under the supervision of University of Agricultural Sciences both in Bangalore and Dharwad,” he added.

The pollution board has instructed the distilleries to educate the farmers about the advantages of utilisation of such effluents for agriculture and also have been advised to set up demonstration farms under their supervision or control to highlight the benefits.

Mr Neelakanta Rao R. Jagdale, President of Karnataka Brewers and Distillers Association said, “The association has contributed about Rs 1 crore to carry out research and development for use of spent wash for agriculture.”



“So far about eight distilleries have opted for this initiative and we are working out modalities to bring in others also into this fold,” he added.

This action of KSPCB has given distilleries in Karnataka more options to dispose off spent wash in a eco-friendly manner.

Mr Sadashivaiah said, “The pollution board believes that it will be better to allow distilleries to adopt more than one option for treatment and disposal of effluents to suit the local conditions rather than restricting to a single option.”

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### Tepid trading keeps rice steady



**February 15, 2012:**

The rice market witnessed a steady trend even as trading remained lukewarm on Wednesday.

Steady domestic demand coupled with uncertainty over exports is not allowing any recovery in the market, said market sources. It's a testing time for the Indian rice exporters. After the payments default by Iran, efforts were made to resolve the impasse over the payments but the recent bomb attack has complicated the situation, said market experts. Also, few exporters are not signing new contracts as further defaults cannot be ruled out in the present scenario.

## NEW MARKET

However, Iraq is emerging as a new market for Indian exporters, but it will take a couple of years to become a major market, said experts. In the physical market, after witnessing a fall earlier this week, rice prices have been ruling unchanged. Pusa-1121(steam) quoted at Rs 3,900-4,000 a quintal, while Pusa-1121(sela) sold at Rs 3,400-3,475 a quintal. Duplicate basmati sold at Rs 3,200-3,300 a quintal, pure basmati (raw) at Rs 4,500, and pure basmati (sela) at Rs 4,000. For the broken of Pusa-1121, Tibar sold at Rs 2,800, Dubar at Rs 2,425 Mongra at Rs 2,000 a quintal. Sugandha (steam) ruled at Rs 3,200 a quintal, and PR14 (steam) at Rs 3,300. Sharbati (steam) sold at Rs 2,800-2,850, and sharbati (sela), at Rs 2,700-2,750.

Permal (sela) was at Rs 2,000-2,150 a quintal, and permal (raw), at Rs 2,050-2,150.

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### India may import 2.75-2.8 mt pulses this yr, says govt official



Mumbai, Feb. 15:

India is likely to import 2.75-2.80 million tonnes of pulses in the current financial year, slightly higher compared with last year's 2.6 million tonnes, Mr Rajiv Agarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, said today.

During April-December, 2.4 million tonnes of pulses have been imported, a tad up compared with last year's imports of 2.25 million tonnes, Mr Agarwal said on the sidelines of a three-day global pulses conference in Mumbai.

Pulses imported so far include 1 million tonne yellow peas. The rest include black matpe or urad, pigeon pea or tur and gram or chana.

The country currently has record stocks of yellow peas. "There are over 500,000 tonnes of yellow peas in four ports," said Mr Pravin Dongre, President, India Pulses and Grains Association. After a record crop of pulses last year, India is poised for an output of 17.4 million tonnes, according to the second advance estimates of the government. Last year, the country's final pulses production was a record 18.2 million tonnes. Of the 17.4 million tonnes output estimated, gram or chana accounts for 7.66 million tonnes. This compares with 8.22 million tonnes produced last year. "Climatically, this is a good year. Chana figures may improve," Mr Agarwal said. According to him, demand for pulses could be slightly lower because of a huge potato crop. Demand for pulses is largely price elastic. Wheat crop is also expected to be a bumper crop at 88.31 million tonnes, he said. Last year, wheat output was 86.87 million tonnes. According to Mr Agarwal, the Government is likely to introduce the amendment bill of Forward Contracts (Regulation) Act in the Budget session of the Parliament.

## India could show the way in organic farming in 30 years

Nuremberg (Germany), Feb. 15:

The world's largest annual organic products event, BioFach 2012, began here with a sharp focus on India and its products.

“Millions of small and marginal farmers practise organic farming by default.

This is because they do farming in rain-fed areas and cannot afford modern agriculture that encompasses using fertilisers and pesticides,” said Mr Asit Tripathy, Joint Secretary in the Union Ministry of Commerce.

Changes were happening in Indian agriculture with mechanisation, corporatisation and contract farming, but in the last 10 years, the Indian Government has woken up to the potential of organic farming, he said.

Indian organic products exports currently are valued at \$400 million and the target was to top \$1 billion by 2015, he said.

“The \$400 million makes up just 16 per cent of organic products produced in India,” Mr Tripathy said, adding that the domestic organic market was growing.

“Domestic organic products are competing against mainstream products in supermarkets in India,” he said.

With the setting up of National Project for Organic Farming, the Government was trying to launch organic certification programme for the domestic market. Default forums have been asked to set up a group of 500 farmers and encourage them to take up certification of their products, he said.

India is the ‘Country of the Year’ at BioFach 2012 and there is a strong presence of 51 manufacturers, including in textiles, at the fair.

Besides Agricultural and Processed Food Products Development Authority, the Tea Board and Spices Board are also participating.

Earlier in his address, Dr Ulrich Maly, Mayor of Nuremberg, said that a meeting of network of organic cities in Germany would be held during BioFach.

Dr Gerd Mueller, German Secretary for Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, said that Germany was attempting to expand organic cultivation to another 10,000 farms to meet the increasing demand.

Dr Felic Prinz zu Lowenstein, Chairman of Federation of Organic Enterprises in Germany, said organic farming can provide food security and feed the world.

He said that India could show the way in organic products in 30 years, especially in sustainable agriculture and food safety.

Mr Andrew Leu, President of UN's IFOAM, said the current focus was on food security and poverty reduction. "If this has to be achieved, logically the focus should be small growers who make 70 per cent of farming in the world," he said.

(The trip for the event has been sponsored by Nuremberg Messe with the collaboration of Apeda.)

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### Spot rubber rules steady



Kottayam, Feb. 15:

Physical rubber prices finished unchanged on Wednesday.

There were no fresh incentives or news specific to the commodity, and the market lost its direction in the absence of active traders on either side. Sheet rubber closed steady at Rs 187.50 a kg according to traders and the Rubber Board. In domestic futures, the February series expired at Rs 188.30 (188.67) while the March series dropped to Rs 190.85 (191.57), April to Rs 196.75 (197.94), May to Rs 200.41 (201.30) and June to Rs 202.61 (203.79) a kg for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) recovered to Rs 200.06 (199.61) a kg at Bangkok. Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 187.50 (187.50); RSS-5: 184 (184); ungraded: 178 (178); ISNR 20: 187 (187) and latex 60 per cent: 130 (130).

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