

## High Court bars adjusting crop insurance sum towards loans

The Madras High Court has said that authorities should not adjust the insurance sum to be paid to farmers for crop loss towards loans they have obtained, pending the hearing of a writ petition by an agriculturists association's Cuddalore district unit.

The First Bench, comprising Chief Justice M.Y. Eqbal and Justice T.S. Sivagnanam passed the interim order on a writ petition by C. Arumugam, district secretary, Thamizhaga Uzhavar Munnani, Chidambaram.

The petitioner said that all primary agricultural cooperative (PAC) banks were affiliated to the Cuddalore District Central Cooperative Bank (CDCCB), which alone provided funds to them.

Agriculturists obtained policies from the Agricultural Insurance Company of India (AIC), Chennai, for possible crop loss, either due to bad weather or other natural calamities.

The premium payable would be deducted from the loan amounts being advanced by the primary agricultural cooperative banks to farmers. The premium would be paid to the AIC.

Whenever crops failed, the insurance sum would be paid to farmers through the respective PAC banks.

Mr. Arumugam said that the entire Cuddalore district was devastated by the cyclone 'Thane', in December 2011. Cash crops and short-term crops were completely damaged.

The AIC assessed the loss and fixed the insurance sum payable to farmers. The CDCCB had received the sum given by AIC. Instead of directing the disbursement of the compensation, the CDCCB had directed all its constituent PAC Banks to debit the insurance amount towards discharge of the farmers' loans.

The petitioner said this was totally in breach of trust and to the detriment of farmers in distress. The association had requested the authorities to take action for releasing the insurance sum. The repayment of the loan itself is to commence only after December 31 this year. Thus the CDCCB had committed an illegality, he said.

The petitioner asked the court to take action against the district cooperative bank for withholding the sum and a consequent direction to release the compensation.

The Government Pleader sought time to get instructions. The Bench ordered that the matter be posted after three weeks. In the meantime, pending the hearing of the writ petition, the authorities should not adjust the insurance sum towards the loan, it said.

### Tomato farmers dump produce



Tomato farmers in Kinathukadavu, who take their produce to the wholesale market, have started dumping it as the price has plummeted. According to T. Chinnasamy alias Chinnu, a tomato trader-cum-farmer, the current price of a kg of the vegetable varies from Re.1 to Rs. 5 depending on the quality.

The market, he says, sees an inflow of around 100 tonnes if the monsoon is good, or between 30 and 50 tonnes if the monsoon is bad. At present the flow is around 40 tonnes.

Though the tomato inflow is less, the price is still at rock bottom because the traders from Kerala who usually throng the market have almost stopped coming. They get their tomatoes from Gundlupet, Karnataka, and that works to their economic advantage as the transport cost is less.

Mr. Chinnasamy says that the transportation cost of a basket of tomatoes works out to Rs. 5. From Coimbatore it works out to around Rs. 15.

He wants the State Government to start work on the promised cold storage facility. Agriculture Minister S. Damodaran, who incidentally hails from the area, laid foundation for the facility a couple of months ago.

In a calendar year, the locality sees farmers raise the 90-day crop on nearly 25,000 acres. Sources in the Horticulture Department say that they have not yet received any information on farmers dumping their produce.

Sources in the Agriculture Marketing Department say that they have written to the Revenue Department for permission to enter the land to take up the work. They were expecting orders anytime to start work on the cold storage project.

## Samba harvest: tail-end areas facing bleak prospect



In dire need: A dried canal at Mayiladuthurai awaiting the Cauvery water.

As the Cauvery water has not reached the tail-end areas, the samba crops that have come up due to direct sowing are in danger of withering shortly, says Aarupathi P.Kalyanam, general secretary of Federation of Farmers Associations of Delta Districts.

The tail-end areas could not get water because the maximum quantum that has been released from the Mettur dam is around 18,000 cusecs so far since the dam was opened for irrigation on September 17. Despite the promise of the Chief Minister to ensure power supply for agriculture for 12 hours a day “we do not get power even for a few hours.” Thus even the transplanted seedlings are facing a bleak prospect.

He told *The Hindu* that it is imperative that at least about 24,000 cusecs (two thousand million cubic feet) is released daily from the Mettur dam for the next 40 days.

At the same time, the promise of 12-hour power supply should be honoured in letter and spirit. “Otherwise samba cultivation is going to be extremely difficult,” he added.

Referring to the refusal of Karnataka to release water to Tamil Nadu as directed by the Cauvery Monitoring Committee on Thursday, he said the Central government is now left with no other option but to invoke Article 355 to force Karnataka to comply with the order.

Or if that were also to prove ineffective it should invoke Article 356 and dismiss the Karnataka government.

All the Karnataka reservoirs should be brought under the control of the Central government in a bid to ensure water for Tamil Nadu.

**Stop buying rice**

**from Karnataka**

Tamilaga Eri Matrum Aatrupasana Vivasayigal Sangham has appealed to the State government and rice merchants to avoid buying rice from Karnataka in order to express farmers' protest against the intransigent attitude of the Karnataka government in releasing water for samba cultivation.

In a statement here, State president of the association P.Viswanathan has also urged all the farmers' associations to stage demonstrations in front of all the Central government offices in the State in a bid to force the Central government to ensure water for delta irrigation.

Recounting how Karnataka refuses to pay heed even to the Supreme Court and the Cauvery River Authority headed by the Prime Minister, he has asserted that the Central government is left with no other alternative but to invoke Article 356 and dismiss the Karnataka government.

Besides, army should be deployed to release water from Karnataka to Tamil Nadu. He demanded that at least two thousand million cubic feet (tmcft) water be released to Tamil Nadu for the delta irrigation from October 15 to November 15.

He suggested that the electricity generated at Neyveli and the lignite produced there should not be provided to Karnataka to make it understand that national assets are not the property of any single State but should be shared by all.

### **Bank union seeks fund for agriculture infrastructure**

All India Cooperative Bank Employees Federation (AICBEF) has appealed to the Central government to allocate Rs.2.5 lakh crore in a period of three years to ensure improvements in agriculture infrastructure.

In a memorandum to Prakash Bakshi, Chairman of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), who has been nominated as the Chairman for the Expert Committee on Short-term Cooperative Credit Structure, P.Balakrishnan, general secretary of the federation pointed out that in India the yield per acre is the lowest in the world. "Our farmers are not able to raise more than three tonnes per acre on an average either wheat or paddy, whereas in most of the Asian countries and the US, it is seven to 11 tonnes. Our farmers can grow more crops only if there is uninterrupted flow of water, and supply of good manure and good seeds, for which the Government should allocate substantially to ensure improvements in agriculture infrastructure".

He also submitted that crop loan assistance given by NABARD in 2006 was at 2.5 per cent. Now it has been enhanced to 4.5 per cent. It should be reversed to 2.5 per cent and there must be 80 per cent refinance for agricultural operations by NABARD. And to that extent there must be enhancement in budgetary allocations for agricultural finance, he pleaded.

Even though the cooperative banks are more than 100 years old and their contribution towards agriculture, rural development and promotion of agro-based industries is immense, there are certain deficiencies persisting in the cooperative credit system, Mr.Balakrishnan said. He urged



the Central government to ensure functional viability of the Short Term Cooperative Credit Structure (STCCS). There must be effective supervision of the Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS) with regard to passing on the recoveries to the higher financing agencies. Wherever necessary, PACS may be consolidated, he suggested. All the cooperative banks should be encouraged to go in for self-sustenance and self-reliance. Cooperative banks should be motivated to go in for improved technology upgradation.

All of them should be motivated to embrace core banking solution, Real Time Gross Settlement , National Electronic Funds Transfer facilities, e-banking service, etc., and there must be professional managements in all the cooperative banks.

Cooperative banks should be motivated to go with the dynamism of the banking industry.

NABARD should ensure election to the cooperatives, where the cooperatives are under bureaucratic control.

Above all, the Government of India should repeal the amendment brought to Section 80-P of the Income-Tax Act and should free the cooperative banks from income-tax. There must be immediate recruitment to fill up the vacancies in cooperative banks. Otherwise many cooperatives will fail without exception. There must be proper HR policy in the cooperative banks and NABARD's initiative, in this behalf should be discussed and finalized with the employees' unions in each State.

### **Directive to cane farmers**

Collector P. Sankar has said in a release that cooperative, public sector and private sugar mills in Vellore district have been permitted to procure sugarcane from unregistered cane fields in their registered areas under the Sugarcane Control Act, 1966 in order to help them to achieve 100% sugar recovery during the current year.

In case the mills are not interested in procuring sugarcane from unregistered fields in their areas, farmers of the unregistered fields can supply cane to other registered sugar mills within the district or State, provided they obtain a No-Objection Certificate (NOC) from the sugar mills concerned. Farmers desirous of obtaining NOC should submit applications to the sugar mills concerned. The mills would issue NOC within 14 days, failing which the farmers could apply to the Commissioner of Sugars, Chennai-35. The government has banned the supply of cane from a registered area to sugar mills located in other parts of the district or State without the NOC.

### **Debt, hunger stalk tribes as paddy crop withers**

Nanja" cultivation fails in Wayanad



“Nanja” paddy cultivation keeps the wolf from the door for the tribal people of Wayanad. But this time, their gamble on the monsoon has failed, and hunger stares them in their face.

Gloom pervades the Chekadi hamlet, a settlement on the Kerala-Karnataka border inside the South Wayanad forest division. In good times, the labour of the people on their smallholdings would have given them at least enough to eat. But not this year. The drought has shrivelled all hopes.

Surya Narayanan, 49, of Valiya Airadi in the hamlet, cultivated the scented Gandhakasala paddy and the traditional Valichoori variety on his one hectare of land as he does every year.

But the rain kept away and the paddy withered away. He had incurred a debt of Rs. 60,000, borrowed from financial institutions, for the cultivation of the paddy and another 0.2 hectare of ginger.

The ginger was harvested prematurely and sold at a low price after wild elephants tore down the crop. Mr. Surya Narayanan said that he had a better fortune with paddy in the previous year with the timely rain and he could repay his loan on time. But this year, he was worried about how to repay the loan.

Many farmers in the hamlet are in a similar predicament. Close to 150 farmers — 90 tribal and 60 other farmers — cultivated the scented and traditional rice varieties as usual on 90 hectares of land.

“Last year, we cultivated paddy on 120 hectares by utilising water from the check-dam on the Mudavankara stream, but this year, the monsoon did not fill up the stream,” K.N. Viswanathan, president, Chekadi Padashekham, the largest Padashekham in Pulpally grama panchayat, says.

The cultivated area has shrunk, and they have no hope of getting anything worthwhile from the 20 hectares on which paddy has been raised. The perennial Kabani river flows beside the hamlet, but with no irrigation project, the priceless water does not come to the help of the tribal people.

The fate of the farmers in areas such as Sasimala, Madappallykunnu, Channothkolly, Vadikkadavu and Kappisite in Mullamkolly and Pulpally grama panchayats is similar.

“We had cultivated paddy on 40 hectares of the 60 hectares under the samithi this year,” Boban of Oveliyil, president of the Sasimala Padashekham, says. The drought destroyed half of it and if the rain does not show any urgency, all hopes will dry up.

The open wells and streams have started to dry out even before the advent of winter. The poor rain has affected coffee, ginger, cardamom and pepper crops too, sources say.

### **Feed subsidy for Malabar farmers**

The Malabar region of the Kerala Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (Milma), on Friday, announced a considerate subsidy for farmers to purchase cattle feed now being marketed through various cooperative societies.

The offer will be available only to farmers in the Malabar region.

Milma would supply the cattle feed produced in its plants to farmers from October 14 at Rs.650 per sack, which is Rs.200 less than the revised price to be effective from that day.

P.P. Gopinatha Pillai, chairman of the Malabar Region of Milma, told presspersons here on Friday that the amount to be given as subsidy would be realised from the annual profit of Milma. Over Rs.180 lakh would be required to maintain this subsidy, and per month, 4,500 tonnes of cattle feed would be supplied to the farmers linked to the federation, he added. Mr. Pillai pointed out that it was just a token of consideration for the farmers who were struggling to continue in the field despite all adversities.

### **Farmers' welfare**

K.T. Thomas, Managing Director of Milma in Malabar region, said Rs.4.60 of the total increase of Rs.5 in the price of milk would directly go to the farmers. The remaining amount would be equally divided among the milk cooperative societies and distribution agents, he said.

Mr. Thomas said Milma was not generating any unfair profits by snatching away what was due to the farmers as it totally focused on their welfare. "At present, 1,020 milk cooperative societies, comprising around one lakh farmers, effectively cooperate with the federation, and contribute 4.6 lakh litres of milk a day," he added.

Damodaran Nair, general manager of the Malabar region of Milma, said the subsidy now offered to the farmers would be reviewed after three months. "A meeting will discuss all possible measures with regard to continuing the subsidy if it was manageable with the total turn-over," he said.

### Call to check conversion of agricultural land

Leader of anti-Posco stir given reception in Thrissur



**RIGHTS OF FARMERS:** Abhay Sahoo, leader of the anti-Posco struggle, being accorded a reception by the AITUC in Thrissur on Friday.

Conversion of agricultural land should be prevented at any cost, Abhay Sahoo, leader of the anti-Posco agitation, has said.

The Posco Pratirodh Samgram Samiti (PPSS), led by him, has been spearheading an agitation against a proposed \$12 billion steel plant by the South Korean steel major Posco in Jagatsinghpur district of Orissa.

Addressing a reception accorded to him by the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) at the Thekke Gopura Nada here on Friday, Mr. Sahoo said that no force should be allowed to destroy the agrarian economy.

"The PPSS, AITUC or the Communist Party of India is not against industrialisation. The country needs industrialisation, but it should not be at the cost of destroying agriculture, the livelihood of a large number of people. Handing over farm land to corporates cannot be justified," he said.

He said the anti-POSCO struggle had proved that democratic, broad-based, non-violent movements could be effective.

"In all, 208 false cases have been foisted against 1,435 PPSS activists in the past seven years and four months. Fifty-three false cases have been registered against me. My sons have been

implicated. The police have resorted to firing and lathicharge against the activists. But the PPSS has never paid back in the same coin,” he said.

He recalled the agitation in Dhinkia grama panchayat last June by children of PPSS activists.

“The children fearlessly faced 32 platoons of armed security personnel. Which struggle can be more democratic and non-violent? A move for fresh land acquisition for the Posco project is on. The PPSS plans to intensify its agitation. It will not stop till Posco leaves Orissa,” he said.

V. S. Sunil Kumar, MLA, CPI district secretary C. N. Jayadevan, and party leaders K. P. Rajendran and A. N. Rajan were present at the reception.

### Over 1,700 centres to be set up for paddy procurement

Centres being located close to the farmers for their convenience: Minister



Government has increased the MSP by Rs. 170 over that of last year: Sridhar Babu MSP for common variety is Rs.1,250 a quintal, Grade A variety, Rs.1,280

With paddy arrivals for the Kharif marketing season set to begin from October 18, the government is setting up 1,779 purchase centres in the State to ensure farmers get the minimum support price for paddy.

The government also increased the MSP by Rs. 170 over that of last year and announced it well in advance. The MSP for common variety is Rs.1,250 a quintal, Grade A variety, Rs.1,280 a quintal.



For the first time, incentive price for eight varieties of fine rice was announced at Rs.1,500 to encourage farmers to take up cultivation of fine variety of paddy and bridge the demand-supply gap for this variety.

Minister for Civil Supplies D. Sridhar Babu told media persons here on Friday that the purchase centres were being located close to the farmers for their convenience and if required more would be opened. "The aim is to see that no farmer sells his produce at less than MSP. Last year State agencies procured 23 lakh tonnes of paddy," Mr. Sridhar Babu said. About 100 purchase centres would be set up for fine variety.

Farmers who did not get MSP could complain to toll free number 18994252977, he said. In Kharif, paddy cultivation was taken up in 22.57 lakh hectares including preferred variety in seven lakh ha. The yield was expected to be around 107 lakh tonnes.

Under the decentralised procurement policy, the State for the first time would directly procure rice from the millers in seven districts for supply to the PDS.

### **Training session held for members of Farmers' Club**

A local organisation, Nestham, in collaboration with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), organised a training programme for members of Farmers' Club at G. Konduru mandal. The objective of the programme was to engage farmers in development of agriculture and allied activities and rural development.

#### **Key factors**

Mandal Animal Husbandry officer Narasimha Rao said animal health and dairy management were key to farmers' progress in rural areas.

Mandal Agriculture Officer Ramesh, was also present.

The concept of Farmers' Club, earlier known as Vikas Volunteer Vahini (VVV), was launched by Nabard in 1982 to propagate the five principles of 'Development through credit'.

#### **Credit facility**

The thrust is on use of credit in accordance with the most suitable methods of science and technology, adherence of the terms and conditions of the credit policy, skilful work to enhance production and productivity, inculcate in the farmers the habit of saving and prompt repayment of loan instalments.

Farmers' Clubs are grassroots level informal forums of farmers, organised by rural branches of banks with the support of financial assistance of Nabard for the mutual benefit of the banks concerned and the village farming community/rural people.

## Watermelon and weight management

STUDY Watermelons may help prevent heart attacks



FOR WEIGHT LOSS Watermelon Photo: NAGARA GOPAL

Researchers including one of Indian origin have suggested that a daily slice of watermelon could help prevent heart disease by halting the build-up of 'bad' cholesterol. Scientists who carried out the study on mice, which were fed a high-fat diet, found that the fruit halved the rate at which 'bad' low-density lipoprotein (LDL) accumulated. LDL is a form of cholesterol that leads to clogged arteries and heart disease. Researchers from Purdue University in the US also found that eating watermelon regularly helped to control weight gain and results in fewer fatty deposits inside the blood vessels. They believe the secret to watermelon's health-boosting properties lies in citrulline, a chemical found in the juice. Although the latest investigation showed no significant effects on blood pressure, it did reveal watermelons had a powerful impact on other heart risk factors. Fatty diets, lack of exercise and smoking are all key risk factors. Cholesterol is a type of fat produced by the liver that is essential to help the body produce hormones, absorb vitamin D and make bile to digest foods. It is transported in the blood by tiny 'couriers', called lipoproteins. LDL carries cholesterol away from the liver and dumps it in major blood vessels, where it can cause a life-threatening blockage. High Density Lipoprotein (HDL) has the job of transporting cholesterol back to the liver to be safely disposed of. The latest study suggests that watermelon juice could help. Researchers fed two groups of mice a high-fat diet but gave one, water to drink and, the other, watermelon juice. They tracked their health for several months and at the end of the experiment found that the mice given watermelon juice had 50 per cent less LDL than those on water despite eating the same diet. They also weighed an average of 30 per cent less, but their blood pressure was no different.

"We didn't see a lowering of blood pressure. But these other changes are promising," the *Daily Mail* quoted research leader Dr Shubin Saha as saying. The study has been published in the *Journal of Nutritional Biochemistry*.

## Add freshness to urban gardens with native plants

N. Chandramohan Reddy



Versatile: Most of the native plants are less exacting in terms of water requirement and care.—Photos: N. Chandramohan Reddy

## GREEN MATTERS

- Most of the ornamental exotic plants used in gardens require utmost care for their sustained survival, whereas maintaining the native plants is easier. Besides, the landscape would become stale with the use of the same old exotics in every garden, says N. Chandramohan Reddy

All civilizations of the world began on the banks of rivers and lakes. Hence most of the present urban settings once were the centres of rich natural habitats with abundant resources of water

and soil nutrients. Due to continuous destruction and fragmentation of habitats, these areas have become barren and impoverished. When it comes to the greening of these urban deserts, very limited variety of plant species are picked usually for the purpose of aesthetic appeal. These landscaped areas are poor quality habitats because they contain low plant diversity lacking complex vegetation structure. Bird and butterfly species that require healthy habitats containing a diversity of plants cannot sustain their populations in these sterile landscapes.

### **Native vs. exotic**

Generally we do not care much about the origin of the plants used in gardens, as their aesthetic value as expressed in showy foliage and spectacular blooms is given more preference while choosing. If the nativity of the plants is counted, we will be left wondering that more than 95% of the plants are exotics (plants which are not native to our region). Though the issue of 'native plants vs. exotic plants' is highly debatable, it is a fact that there are many advantages with native plants over the exotic ones. India has great diversity of plant species with many types of forest habitats in various agro-climatic regions, and there is no dearth of native plants which can match the exotic ornamental plants in aesthetic appeal.

### **Garden plant characters**

While selecting any plant for the garden, we generally expect certain desirable characters such as evergreen nature, compact crown, attractive foliage, colourful flowers, coppice vigour (ability to throw new shoots), and appealing branching pattern. Since there are popular exotic plants with most of these characters, available easily with the local nurserymen, we use only those plants repeatedly.

Though there is nothing wrong in using the exotic plants, there are certain problems with some of them. Sometimes the exotics may pose danger to the native habitats by becoming invasive (Lantana is one such plant) or they may not support native birds, butterflies and other wildlife.

Most of the ornamental exotic plants used in gardens require utmost care for the sustained survival, whereas maintaining the native plants is easier. Besides, the landscape would become stale with the use of the same old exotics in every garden. Most of the native plants are less exacting in terms of water requirement and care, as they are adapted to local pests, climate and soil conditions. Diversity of plant species is always preferable with native plants to add freshness and variety to the garden.

### **Native plants are water wise**

Water has become scarce and bought at high cost in urban areas and developing low-water-use garden utilising aesthetically appealing, and drought-tolerant native plants is the best measure to conserve water. Xeriscape, a water-efficient landscape concept (published earlier in this column) with potential to replace traditional landscape practices mainly focuses on the usage of

aesthetically appealing native plants in place of exotic species, as most of the exotics are generally water-thirsty and more demanding in terms of moisture and nutrients.

There is good choice of native plants for landscaping urban areas. Many native shrubs and trees produce showy flowers and brilliant foliage and some of the deciduous species if planted in gardens may turn evergreen due to lesser competition and more care when compared to their natural dry habitat. Native plants can be easily propagated through seeds, whereas many exotic plants and their cultivars do not produce fruits and seeds and they have to be propagated only by vegetative means. One must remember the fact that plants from seed are hardier and live longer.

On the other hand, some native plants may face adverse growing conditions if they are planted in cities. A plant that thrives well in the natural habitat or countryside may not be able to survive the heat and automobile exhaust if it is planted along a city road. Hence careful selection of hardy native plants which can withstand the vagaries of urban environment is needed for various situations and locations like polluted areas, rocky and shallow soil conditions, and shaded places.

Ecologists say that the species extinction, which has become rampant due to the urbanisation and degradation of forest habitats, can be prevented by introducing them into the horticulture trade. This is evident by the fact that many plants which are extinct in their native habitat are surviving in gardens. Thus the native plants nurtured in gardens can potentially aid conservation by contributing to genetic diversity and buffering the species from extinction.

Besides the advantage of requiring less care, the addition of many native plants in the landscape can improve the urban environment by having more number of native wildlife which helps in balancing the population of urban pests like mosquitoes, cockroaches, flies, and rats.

**Native plants are less demanding maintenance-wise**

N. Chandramohan Reddy





Myriad options: Gardens with native plants provide more variety. –Photo: N. Chandramohan Reddy

| Some native plants which can be popularised in the gardens<br>(In addition to the plants already in use) |                                      |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| SPECIES  | SIGNIFICANCE                         |  |                                      |
| <b>Trees</b>   |                                      |  |                                      |
| <i>Barringtonia speciosa</i> (B. acutangula, B. asiatica)  | Evergreen, flowers, foliage          | <i>Mitrasyria parvifolia</i>                               | Foliage                              |
| <i>Bischofia javanica</i>  | Foliage                              | <i>Acrotaria zeylanica</i>                                 | Evergreen, foliage                   |
| <i>Bombax ceiba</i>  | Flowers                              | <i>Dios dioica</i>   | Evergreen, foliage, fragrant flowers |
| <i>Bumelia sericea</i>   | Foliage, bark                        | <i>Oryzium indicum</i>                                     | Foliage                              |
| <i>Bischofia robusta</i>   | Foliage                              | <i>Persea macrocarpa</i>                                   | Evergreen, foliage                   |
| <i>Bilua macrocarpa</i>  | Flowers                              | <i>Pterocarpus santalinus</i> (Red sanders)                | Foliage, pods                        |
| <i>Callicarpa macrophylla</i>  | Evergreen, flowers                   | <i>Pterocarpus</i> species (P. caucasicus, P. stylocarpus) | Evergreen, foliage, fragrant flowers |
| <i>Cassia limicola</i>   | Evergreen, foliage                   | <i>Pterygota aita</i>                                      | Foliage                              |
| <i>Carypa arborea</i>  | Foliage, flowers                     | <i>Santalum album</i> (Santal wood)                        | Evergreen, fragrant wood             |
| <i>Cassia glauca</i>   | Foliage                              | <i>Schleichera oleosa</i>                                  | Foliage                              |
| <i>Chromola latifolia</i>  | Foliage                              | <i>Schreberia salicoides</i>                               | Foliage, fragrant flowers            |
| <i>Cochlospermum religiosum</i>  | Flowers, fruits                      | <i>Sloanea strobilifera</i>                                | Foliage, fruits                      |
| <i>Cumpliphora cusata</i>  | Foliage, bark                        | <i>Spondias pinnata</i>                                    | Evergreen, foliage                   |
| <i>Dalbergia latifolia</i> (Rosewood)  | Evergreen, foliage                   | <i>Terminalia</i> species (T. arjuna, T. bismulana)        | Evergreen, foliage, bark             |
| <i>Diosia</i> species (D. indica, D. pentalyria)   | Foliage, fruits                      | <i>Vitex altissima</i>                                     | Foliage                              |
| <i>Diospyros sylvatica</i>   | Evergreen, foliage                   | <i>Wolara trifoliata</i>                                   | Evergreen, foliage                   |
| <i>Dioscarpus lactaria</i> (Rudraksha)   | Evergreen, foliage, flowers          | <i>Zanthoxylum</i>   | Evergreen, fragrant flowers          |
| <i>Erythrina speciosa</i>  | Flowers                              | <i>Zinnia americana</i>                                    | Evergreen, foliage, fruits           |
| <i>Ficus</i> species (F. amplissima, F. arnottiana, F. auriculata, F. microcarpa, F. virens)             | Foliage                              | <b>Shrubs</b>  |                                      |
| <i>Fimbristylis</i>  | Flowers, fruits                      | <i>Berberis pinnatifida</i>                                | Flowers                              |
| <i>Gonolobus</i> species (G. spicata, G. xanthochrysum)  | Evergreen, foliage                   | <i>Capparis</i> species                                    | Flowers                              |
| <i>Handkea</i> species (H. guamifera, H. latifolia, H. rosulata)   | Foliage, fragrant flowers            | <i>Citrus</i> species                                      | Flowers                              |
| <i>Glochidion hirsutum</i>   | Foliage                              | <i>Citrus</i> species                                      | Foliage                              |
| <i>Gynerium americanum</i>   | Bark, fruits                         | <i>Psychotria mallicola</i>                                | Foliage, flowers                     |
| <i>Hilgardia populifolia</i>   | Foliage, flowers                     | <i>Tournefortia</i>  | Foliage                              |
| <i>Isara pinnata</i>   | Evergreen, fragrant flowers          | <b>Climbers</b>  |                                      |
| <i>Kandelia ceras</i> (Shorea) species   | Foliage, bark                        | <i>Spananum heynei</i>                                     | Foliage, flowers                     |
| <i>Lagerströmia parviflora</i>   | Foliage                              | <i>Ardisia</i> species                                     | Flowers                              |
| <i>Melastoma philippense</i>   | Evergreen, foliage                   | <i>Chonemorpha fragrans</i>                                | Foliage, flowers                     |
| <i>Miconia surire</i>  | Evergreen, foliage, fragrant flowers | <i>Cinnamomum</i> species                                  | Flowers                              |
| <i>Miconia</i> species   | Evergreen, foliage, flowers          | <i>Homalium indicum</i>                                    | Foliage                              |
| <i>Miconia</i> species   | Evergreen, foliage, flowers          | <i>Jatropha benjalensis</i>                                | Flowers                              |
| <i>Miconia</i> species   | Evergreen, foliage, flowers          | <i>Jasminum</i> species (J. auriculatum, J. sambac)        | Flowers                              |
| <i>Miconia</i> species   | Evergreen, foliage, flowers          | <i>Thunbergia</i> species (T. fragrans, T. mysorensis)     | Fragrant flowers                     |
| <i>Miconia</i> species   | Evergreen, foliage, flowers          |  |                                      |



Native plants have evolved with animals, fungi and microbes to form a complex network of mutual relationships, thus striking a perfect balance in the eco-system they sustain, writes N. Chandramohan Reddy

Who is watering the millions of plants in the forests, supplementing the fertilizers and taking care of the pests? When the forest plants do not make many demands, why do the garden plants? Can't we mimic the forest situation in our gardens? Having those forest plants in our garden is the answer to all these questions. As the native plants have adapted themselves to the climate, geology and hydrology, and evolved according to the local conditions over thousands of years, they are not exacting. Also these indigenous plants have co-evolved with

animals, fungi and microbes, to form a complex network of mutual relationships and make perfect balance in the eco-system they sustain.

### **Designing native landscape**

Before deciding the design of the landscape, one has to assess the factors of locality like – light availability, drainage pattern, soil depth and its characters, site terrain, irrigation facility, species growing naturally in the surroundings; and accordingly finalise the type of the landscape which can match the site. Since many of the urban open spaces are barren and sterile with no good soil (in most of the situations the ground is filled with construction debris mixed with plastics), cleaning the area and soil amendment may be needed to have good growing media for the plants.

### **Plant selection**

By observing native plants in their natural habitat, one can learn about the cultural requirements and growth habits of various species. We can choose plants basing on the soil, light and water requirement, location in which the plant to be placed and size, shape, texture and type of foliage and blooms. Also the selection shall be based on what type of garden we intend to develop – wild-flower garden, butterfly garden, bird garden, screen garden, tree grove, fruit garden or pond garden.

Whatever we plant it is the commercial availability of native plant species in local nurseries that will determine which plants we may use in the landscape. As of now, sourcing many of the native plants is very difficult in commercial or forest nurseries, because there is no demand for them in ornamental landscaping. But things may improve with the increased awareness on the 'naturescape' development projects in future.

### **Characteristics may get altered**

The native plants, which have adapted to the climate, soil, and interactions with other plants and animals may face certain adverse growing conditions in the city environment, change in the chemical characteristics of soil, decrease in soil organic matter, increase in shade due to the high-rise structures, interference from pollution, invasive weeds and physical damage, increased supply of nutrients especially when irrigation is sourced from the urban lakes to mention a few. Due to this changed environment, the characteristics of the species may get altered in terms of the foliage, flowers, time of flowering and form of the plant.

Since native plants require less care, there will be savings of time, energy, money, water and other resources in maintaining the landscape. These gardens provide more variety in plant species and offer myriad alternatives to the same old exotic species. Also the landscape looks different with more diversity, not only in terms of plant species but also the visiting birds and butterflies, which add colour and vibrancy to the garden.

*(The author is a forest officer, presently Additional Commissioner (Parks) in GHMC and can be contacted at 'nchandramohanreddy@*

### **Impose anti-dumping duty on imported red gram**

The State unit of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has urged the Union government to impose anti-dumping duty on imported red gram , to protect the interest of red gram growers in the country.

U. Basavaraj, CPI (M) State secretariat member, who is also vice-president of Karnataka Pranta Raitha Sangha, told presspersons on Friday that the Cabinet meeting here on October 18 should take a decision on seeking anti-dumping duty of 40 per cent on imported red gram.

He said import of more than one crore quintals of red gram from Africa and other countries would result in crash in prices of red gram in the Indian market. Red gram was being imported at Rs. 35 per kg, he added.

For red gram growers in the district, Mr. Basavaraj said, this season had been good, unlike for others elsewhere in the State, which was reeling under drought. However, import of red gram had shocked , he said.

He said the Union government should increase the minimum support price of red gram to Rs. 5,000 per quintal, and also open a regional office of the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED) in Gulbarga district. Mr. Basavaraj sought at least Rs. 200 crore for the Red Gram Development Board to diversify its activities.

The Cabinet meeting should take a decision on providing 500 acres of land for a pulses research station and extend additional financial support to take up research and development on disease resistant red gram varieties.

### **Replace costly apples with cheaper eggs**



6,500 boiled eggs were distributed free of cost as part of World Egg Day celebration in Namakkal on Friday.

“We will soon make a representation to the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers to include egg in the noon meal scheme,” said R. Nallathambi, president of the Tamil Nadu Poultry Farmers Association.

He was speaking at a function to mark World Egg Day organised by Kemin – a U.S.-based nutritional ingredient manufacturer – here on Friday. “The Tamil Nadu Government has made egg a part of the Nutritious Noon Meal Scheme because it has understood the importance of egg, which is rich in calcium, protein and Vitamin-A,” he added.

Dr. R. Kulandaivel of Thangam Hospital spoke on “Overcome the Malnutrition through Egg Nutrition.” He suggested that those visiting patients at hospitals could give eggs to the patients in place of apples. “An apple costs about Rs. 25 and gives less protein compared to what two eggs that cost about Rs. 8 can give,” he said.

“We call egg expensive when it is Rs. 4, but we don’t hesitate to buy an imported tin of protein extracted from egg that costs about Rs. 1,500. Egg is also rich in albumin. In many cases human albumin is bought at Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 3,000 a bottle when patients undergoing surgery don’t have the required albumin level in blood. This can be averted if he consumes an egg everyday,” he added.

Consuming egg would not lead to heart attack, he said adding that those suffering from heart ailments and high cholesterol should not consume egg.

Dr. K.A. Duraisamy, Dean of the Veterinary College and Research Institute (VC & RI), said that consuming an egg a day would protect the consumers from eye-related problems. “Egg contains 6 gm of protein including amino acids that are essential for the development of the brain,” he said.

Samraj Jeyachandran, senior vice-president of Kemin, said that the egg industry in the country accounts for 0.74 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product. "The egg industry provides direct employment to 3.2 million people and indirect employment to about 20 million people who cultivate feed for the chicken.

About 6,100 crore eggs are produced a year in the country and this is expected to increase to 10,000 crore eggs in 2020.

Later 6,500 boiled eggs were distributed free of cost to the people as part of the awareness programme.

### **Mamata opposes retail FDI due to national ambition'**

Questioning Trinamool Congress chairperson and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's campaign against the Centre's decision allowing foreign direct investment (FDI) in multi-brand retail, the State Congress leadership said here on Friday that the protests were aimed at fulfilling her "higher political ambitions" at the national level.

"She (Ms. Banerjee) can clearly say that FDI in multi-brand retail will not be applicable to the State. What is the purpose for campaigning against the issue in the entire country? Surely her higher political ambitions at the national level must be the reason," State Congress president Pradip Bhattacharya said.

The State Congress released a document "FDI in multi-brand retail -- economic reforms for the interest of the country" and said the party will campaign across the State to dispel misconceptions on the issue.

Party workers will campaign against at the grassroots against the "false propaganda" being spread against the reforms of the UPA Government, he said.

Mr. Bhattacharya said Ms. Banerjee's priority before concentrating on national issues should be to protect the interests of the State.

"It is surprising that those who do not have a blueprint for the development of the West Bengal are showing concerns about the entire country," he said.

Claiming there are enough checks in the proposal to allow FDI in multi-brand retail, he said the interest of small traders will not be affected.

"What are the alternative economic policies of the Trinamool and the Left parties who are opposing the move?" he asked. Observing that FDI in multi-brand retail will benefit farmers, Mr. Bhattacharya said it will end the dependence of the State's small and marginal farmers on middlemen.



Referring to the closure of various industries in the State as well the increasing loans on the State government's exchequer, Mr. Bhattacharya said the State was heading for a complete disaster. "Those who criticise others should first look at themselves."

# HindustanTimes

TODAY FARM NEWS  
13.10.2012 A.M

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Weather

Chennai

## Chennai - INDIA

### Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Saturday, Oct 13

Max Min

34.4° | 25.4°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 66

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:59

Sunset: 05:50

Barometer: 1011

### Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Sunday, Oct 14

Max Min

31° | 25°

### Extended Forecast for a week

| Monday<br>Oct 15   | Tuesday<br>Oct 16          | Wednesday<br>Oct 17 | Thursday<br>Oct 18 | Friday<br>Oct 19   |
|--------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                    |                            |                     |                    |                    |
| 32°   25°<br>Rainy | 32°   25°<br>Partly Cloudy | 31°   24°<br>Rainy  | 30°   25°<br>Rainy | 29°   25°<br>Rainy |

### Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 06:21

Humidity: 35

Sunset: 05:53

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1012



# THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

12.10.2012 P.M

13.10.2012 A.M

12<sup>th</sup> oct 2012 P.M

States told to amend cooperative societies Act



Charan Das Mahant, Minister of State for Agriculture

The Centre has asked state governments to amend their respective State Cooperative Society Act in tune with the Constitution (97th Amendment), 2011 before February 14 next year.

“I have already written to Chief Ministers/Lt Governors of states/Union Territories to amend their respective Cooperative Societies Act in tune with the Constitutional Amendment within the stipulated time,” Charan Das Mahant, Minister of State for Agriculture said here today.

Speaking at a national conference on the Constitution (97th Amendment) Act, 2011, organised by the National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI), the minister urged the representatives from states and union territories to expedite the changes.

Elaborating further, Mahant said that the objective of the Constitutional Amendment is to ensure that the cooperative societies in India function in a democratic, professional, autonomous and economically sound manner.

With a network of about six lakh cooperative societies and a membership of about 24.92 crore, the cooperative movement in the country has emerged as one of the largest in the world, he added.

“The cooperative sector provides direct and self employment to about 23.86 million people and it has been the endeavour of the government to evolve an appropriate policy and legislative framework to create environment conducive to the healthy and sound growth of cooperatives,” Mahant added.

### **RRII's training programme**

The Rubber Research Institute of India (RRII), Kottayam, will host an international training programme, organised by the Specialist Group on Physiology of International Rubber Research and Development Board (IRRDB), from October 15-28. The theme of the training is

'Physiological and Molecular Basis of Breeding for Tolerance to Biotic and Abiotic stresses in Hevea'. Representatives from 13 natural rubber producing countries such as India, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Cote d'Ivoire, Guatemala, Myanmar, Nigeria, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam will attend this two-week training programme. Dr James Jacob, RRII Director (Research) and IRRDB Vice-Chairman, will be the course director of the programme which precedes the International Rubber Conference (IRC) scheduled to be conducted at Kovalam from October 29-31. — **Aravindan**

### **Spot rubber saps on global cues**

Rubber prices slipped further on Friday. The overall weakness in the commodity and the wide gap between the domestic and global quotes were the critical factors which took the local market to lower levels. According to observers, there was not much improvement in arrivals as the weather is still unfavourable for production even after the resumption of tapping in most plantation areas.

Sheet rubber declined to Rs 188 (189) a kg, according to traders. The grade closed weak at Rs 188.50 (189) a kg at Kottayam and Kochi, as reported by the Rubber Board.

The October series slipped to Rs 190.50 (190.98), November to Rs 185.40 (185.96), December to Rs 184.26 (184.90), January to Rs 186 (186.16) and February to Rs 186.55 (188.39) a kg, while the most distant March series remained inactive on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) dropped to Rs 173.62 (174.46) a kg at Bangkok. The October futures weakened to ₹257.5 (Rs 173.42) from ₹259.7 a kg during the day session and then to ₹252.6 (Rs 170.16) in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

**Spot rates were (Rs/kg):** RSS-4: 188 (189); RSS-5: 180 (182); ungraded: 173 (174); ISNR 20: 170 (171) and latex 60 per cent: 123 (123.50).

### **Coonoor tea turnover rises 4.17%**

This week's turnover at the auctions of the Coonoor Tea Trade Association, which concluded on Friday, has posted an increase of 4.17 per cent over last week. This has happened despite selling a lower volume because of an increase in price, reveals an analysis of the market reports. The average price dropped to Rs 84.03 a kg from Rs 84.61. This helped the off-take to rise to 11 lakh kg from 10.48 lakh kg. This was the highest volume sold in five weeks.

Consequently, the turnover increased to Rs 9.24 crore from Rs 8.87 crore last week. This meant that the turnover rose Rs 37 lakh or 4.17 per cent in one week. This was the highest turnover in a month. This week, about 78 per cent of the offer was sold against 81 per cent last week.

## Inauspicious period makes cut flowers lose fragrance

Cut flowers prices have crashed by 50 per cent in Bangalore due to *pithru paksha* (inauspicious period) and entry of new small growers. “Flower prices have dipped sharply for the last two-three weeks on account of *pithru paksha* - inauspicious period - to conduct any Hindu ceremonies,” said Jayaprakash Rao, General Secretary, South India Floriculture Association.

Normally, flower prices at the International Flower Auction Bangalore (IFAB) trade around Rs 2.50-3 a stem. But due to inauspicious period, prices have come down and are trading at Rs 1.30-1.50. Flower prices were impacted similarly during the inauspicious June-July period, but then they ruled between Rs 2 and Rs 2.50 a stem. Cut flower demand from others cities such as Hyderabad, Chennai and Coimbatore is also low due to same reason of inauspicious month.

Growers are waiting for post-November period for regular sales to pick up. After November, growers get clear five months of continuous sales including lucrative Valentine Day sales. “This year with rain at regular interval backed with adequate sun light has led to good production. Arrivals at the auction platform stood around 8-10 lakh stems against the normal output of around 6-8 lakh,” said Rao. The State Horticulture Department said flower-growing regions of Doddaballapur and Hosur area near Bangalore have got adequate rain since August-September. .

### New growers

In addition to low prices/sales due to inauspicious period, the market has also been impacted by entry of new small farms/growers. Lured by subsidy to growers under the National Horticulture Mission (NHM) and the National Horticulture Board (NHB), many growers have mushroomed in and around Bangalore. Without quantifying the number of new growers, Rao said: “The market is witnessing about 10-15 per cent additional flowers entering the market.”

### Malaysia to lower export duty on crude palm oil

Vishwanath Kulkarni





To capture more market share and take on rival Indonesia

Kuala Lumpur, Oct 12:

Malaysia has decided to reduce export duty on crude palm oil from January 1, to boost shipments and bring its products at a par with rival Indonesia.

Malaysia, the second largest palm oil producer, also expects a pick-up in exports to India on rising demand, said Yusuf Basiron, Chief Executive Officer of Malaysian Palm Oil Council (MPOC).

The country exported about 1.9 million tonnes (mt) to India till end-September this year, registering a 58 per cent year-on-year growth.

Last year, Malaysian palm oil exports to India stood at 1.66 mt, accounting for about 21 per cent of India's imports. Indonesia accounted for the remaining 81 per cent of a total of 8.1 mt imported into India in 2011.

With the proposed reduction in duty from the current 23 per cent to around eight per cent, effective early next year, Malaysia hopes to get back its market share in countries such as India.

"We were a big player in India before Indonesia became big. Indian buyers preferred to buy from Indonesia because of lower prices," Basiron told a group of visiting Indian journalists on a trip sponsored by MPOC.

He said that the demand from countries such as India and China continues to rise on growing consumption. India, currently, is the third largest market for Malaysia, after China and Pakistan.

The proposed duty cut, approved by the Malaysian Cabinet on Friday, will not only make the country's palm oil exports more competitive, but would also help check the decline in prices. The Malaysian Cabinet has also decided to abolish duty-free export quotas from January 1.

Crude palm oil prices had declined by about a third over past 11 months, since Indonesia dropped its export duties from 23 per cent to 10 per cent.

Accusing Indonesia of undercutting prices, Basiron said such a low duty structure was not sustainable. The drop in CPO prices has led to value erosion of close to 20 billion Malaysian ringitt or around \$7.5 billion, he told a Palm Oil Trade Awareness Seminar organised by MPOC.

Besides, it has also led to an inventory build-up of around 2.48 million tonnes in Malaysia as of end September, a growth of 17 per cent over August.

**Natural rubber consumption rises 6% in April-Sept**



A raw natural rubber sheet rolled into a funnel

New Delhi, Oct 12:

Natural rubber consumption in the country rose by 6 per cent to 5.02 lakh tonnes in the first half of the current financial year.

Its production rose marginally by 1 per cent to about 3.96 lakh tonnes during the same period, according to the Rubber Board data.

The country consumed 4.76 lakh tonnes of natural rubber and produced 3.91 lakh tonnes in the 2011—12 fiscal.

Natural rubber import rose by 24 per cent to 1,12,640 tonnes in the April—September period of 2012—13 fiscal from 91,186 tonnes in year—ago period, while exports fell by 59 per cent to 7,466 tonnes from 18,083 tonnes in the same period.

In September 2012, the consumption of natural rubber rose by 9 per cent to 81,500 tonnes from 74,870 tonnes in September last fiscal, whereas the output was up marginally by 2 per cent to 82,000 tonnes from 80,200 tonnes in the same period.

India's natural rubber imports rose by 16 per cent to 14,779 tonnes last month from 12,763 tonnes in the year—ago period.

However, exports declined by 78 per cent to 1,053 tonnes in September this year from 4,785 tonnes in September 2011.

### **Orthodox tea rules easy at N. India sale**

As Sale No. 40 for CTC/dust and orthodox could not be completed last week at Kolkata auction due to link failure, it was held this week. The average price of orthodox was Rs 203.84 a kg and of CTC Rs 142.68, according to J. Thomas & Company Private Ltd, the tea auctioneers.

The total offerings (packages) this week were 4,60,166 compared with 4,26,696 in the corresponding sale of the previous year.

The offerings at Kolkata auction comprised CTC/dust 1,56,423 (1,03,190), orthodox 32,888 (37,931) and Darjeeling 7,060 (5,722). The offerings at two other centres were: Guwahati 1,43,031 (1,56,906) and Siliguri 1,20,764 (1,22,947).

Liquoring Assam CTC leaf grades sold irregularly around last levels, while dusts were firm to dearer. The remainder was irregularly lower.

Better Dooars sold at firm to dearer rates, while the rest was irregular. Tata Global was the mainstay and there was fair support from Hindustan Unilever on the leaf teas and active enquiry for the dusts.

Western India dealers operated on the liquoring sorts. North India and local sections were selective. Exporters operated on the larger brokens and fannings.

Due to a link failure at Kolkata last week, the CTC leaf and dust sales were carried forward to this week.

Orthodox offerings met with good general demand and sold at easier rates. There was good support on tippy and liquoring varieties from Continental buyers. Exporters to the CIS were active.

Darjeeling whole leaf grades maintained levels, while brokens and fannings declined owing to reduced export enquiry. Tata Global, Hindustan Unilever and traditional exporters were the mainstay. Local dealers operated for cheaper brokens and fannings.

### **Andhra Pradesh forecasts paddy output of 107 lakh tonnes**

As the kharif season closes in Andhra Pradesh, the State Government has forecast paddy production of 107 lakh tonnes.

Of this, the public agencies would procure 13.71 lakh tonnes. The State would set up 1,170 procurement centres.

These centres would procure paddy at Rs 1,250 a quintal for the general variety and Rs 1,280 for the grade A variety.

For superfine varieties, the State has announced a special price of Rs 1,500.

### **Volatile futures freeze spot edible oils trade**



Mumbai, Oct. 12:

Edible oils trading came to a standstill on Friday in Mumbai in view of a volatile futures market. Since stockists had covered the need in the earlier part of the week, they too did not feel the necessity to trade on the oils and oilseed market.

On the other hand, imported palmolein remained subdued, while soyabean refined oil extended gains by Rs 5 on Friday following global cues. High volatility in domestic and global futures markets weighed on the physical market. Tight availability of wash cottonseed oil and lower arrivals of new crops pushed up cotton refined oil by Rs 3 and rapeseed oil by Rs 10 for 10 kg. Groundnut oil rose by Rs 5 despite weak reports from Saurashtra – Rajkot where groundnut oil *Telia* tin ruled steady at Rs 1,780 and loose 10 kg declined by Rs 10 to Rs 1,170. Palmolein and sunflower oil were flat.

Malaysian crude palm oil futures crashed in the earlier part of the day but later the near-month futures recovered and closed higher. .

Towards the day's close, Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 524 for Oct 15-Nov 15, super palmolein Rs 581, soya refined oil Rs 658. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 520 for Oct 20-Nov 30, super palmolein Rs 581, soya refined oil Rs 655 and sunflower refined oil Rs 700. Allana's rates were Rs 522 for palmolein and Rs 575 for super palmolein.

On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, soyabean refined oil November futures was down by Rs 2.85 to Rs 647.90, December was Rs 649.10 (Rs 654.20) and January was Rs 654 (Rs 659.20).

**Malaysia's crude palm oil** November futures settled higher at MYR 2,480 (2,453), while December closed lower at MYR 2,500 (2,523) and January at MYR 2,542 (2,586) a tonne.

**The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates were (Rs/10 kg):** groundnut oil 1,140 (1,135), soya refined oil 655 (650), sunflower exp. ref. 645 (645), sunflower ref. 700 (700), rapeseed ref. oil 835 (825), rapeseed expeller ref. 805 (795) cotton ref. oil 675 (672) and palmolein 521 (521).

## Sugar tender rates drop on continuous selling



Mumbai, Oct. 12:

The sugar market was mixed at Vashi on Friday. Sugar S-grade declined by Rs 10 a quintal on higher liquidation by stockists, while the M-grade increased by Rs 10 as selling pressure eased.

*Naka* rates for M-grade declined by Rs 20.

Tender rates dropped by Rs 10-15 on continuous selling by producers.

Demand in physical market was slightly weak due to middle month but traders were positive about improvement in retailers demand from next week ahead of Navratri and Dasara.

A Vashi-based wholesaler said ample supply from mills continued in the market which led to inventory building . There is no lifting pressure on stockists now.

He said that as mills tender rates dropped, prices at upper level is expected to stabilise current level.

In Vashi market, spot prices have declined by Rs 90-100 and at mill level they have slid by Rs 100-150 a quintal this month.

In Vashi market, arrivals were about 68-70 truckloads (each of 100 bags of quintal each) and local dispatches were about 65-66 loads.

On Thursday, about 16-17 mills offered tenders and sold 78,000 – 80,000 bags (each of 100 kg) to the local traders in the range of Rs 3,340-3,430 (Rs 3,360-3,430) for S-grade and Rs 3,440-3,540 (Rs 3,450 - 3,550) for M-grade.

**The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates:** S-grade Rs 3,512 – Rs 3,541 (Rs 3,522 – Rs 3,581) and M-grade Rs 3,572- 3,701 (Rs 3,562- 3,701).

**Naka delivery rates:** S-grade Rs 3,480 -3,510 (Rs 3,470 -3,520) and M-grade Rs 3,520-3,620 (Rs 3,540-3,640).

### **N. India continues to prefer Nizamabad turmeric**



Erode, Oct. 12:

Turmeric exporters are still waiting for fresh upcountry orders.

“The exporters anticipated fresh orders last month itself but it did not happen. Instead, merchants in North India prefer stocks from Sangli and Nizamabad due to cheaper availability. Now, exporters are waiting for the orders before October 15 and hence, no exporter is buying the stock,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

Only stockists are buying the turmeric by quoting Rs 5,600-6,000 a quintal. If they stop the procurement, prices may come down to Rs 5,000-5,500.

Now, only medium variety turmeric arrives in the market for sale, so buyers are quoting a lower price.

Traders said many farmers are retaining their produce. It is said that more than 15 lakh bags of turmeric are with farmers. This will be brought to the market next year for sale.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety turmeric was sold at Rs 4,011-5,839 a quintal, the root variety Rs 3,721-5,219.

**Salem Hybrid Crop:** The finger variety was sold at Rs 4,919-6,400 and root variety Rs 4,799-5,274. Of the 736 bags, 192 were sold.

At the Regulated Marketing Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,693-5,869; the root variety Rs 4,489-5,296 a quintal. Of the 815 bags arrived, 657 were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,069-6,238, the root variety Rs 4,739-5,400.

All the 810 bags found takers.



At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,050-5,829, the root variety Rs 4,410-5,259. Of the arrival of 243 bags, 234 were sold.

### Cotton wilts on tepid buying by mills



Rajkot, Oct. 12:

Cotton prices declined today by Rs 300-400 a candy (of 356 kg) on the back of higher supplies projected by the USDA and slack demand from the mills.

According to market sources, cotton price may continue to decline further by end of this month.

New crop offered at Rs 32,500-33,200 in Gujarat. The A grade S-6 cotton was at Rs 33,500-34,000 and B grade cotton at Rs 33,000-33,500.

Prices of V-797 ruled at Rs 27,000-27,500.

About 12,000-13,000 bales (of 170 kg each) arrived in Gujarat and 25,000-27,000 bales arrived in India.

New crop fetched Rs 32,000-33,000 a candy in Maharashtra.

The A grade cotton low micronaire was at Rs 32,500-33,000 A grade high micronaire cotton 29+ MM quoted at 33,000-34,000 .

Kapas or raw cotton was traded down by Rs 10-15 to Rs 800-835 a maund (of 20 kg) in Rajkot.

Cotton futures in New York fell touched their 3-week low on Thursday after the US Department of Agriculture raised its 2012/13 global ending stocks forecast for the fibre to a record high for a third consecutive month.

While consumption was thinning, the data indicated that US, Chinese and Indian production of cotton were all expected to go up.

The benchmark December cotton futures in New York were down 1.5 per cent at 71.02 cents/lb.

### Weak arrivals, buying support lift pulses



Indore, Oct. 12:

Enthusiastic buying support in pulses and weak arrivals have lifted prices of almost all the pulses and pulse seeds in Indore mandis in the past two days.

However, masoor (best quality) prices, which had risen to Rs 3,500 a quintal on Wednesday on improved queries and slack arrival, slipped to Rs 3,475 on decline in demand. Masoor (medium) ruled stable at Rs 3,250-3,300.

According to Prakash Vora, masoor prices in the coming days will likely to remain range-bound between Rs 3,300-3,500, given availability of large stock of imported masoor in the market.

But at the same time, there is also a possibility of masoor prices going up by Rs 100-200 a quintal with further rise in demand during the coming festive season, said another trader. Rise in buying support in spot masoor has lifted masoor dal (average) to Rs 3,925-50, masoor dal (medium) at Rs 4,025-50, while masoor dal (bold) ruled at Rs 4,100-4,125.

Improved demand and weak arrivals have also lifted **urad** prices in local mandis by Rs 200 a quintal in the past two days with prices of urad (best quality) at Rs 3,600-3,800 a quintal, while urad (medium) ruled at Rs 3,100-3,500.

Similarly, improved buying support ahead of festival season, has also lifted urad dal (medium) at Rs 4,300-4,400 (Rs 4,200-4,300), urad dal (bold) at Rs 5,100-5,200 (Rs 4,900-5,000), while urad dal (mongar) was Rs 5,800-6,200 a quintal (Rs 5,800-6,100).

Similarly strong buying support in pulses and rise in arrival of better quality **moong** have also lifted moong prices with moong (best quality) ruling at Rs 5,000-5,200 a quintal, while moong (medium) ruled at Rs 4,200-4,300 a .

Given rise in demand in the best quality moong, its prices may zoom to Rs 5,500 a quintal in the coming days, said a trader.

### **Marginal fall in pepper futures**

The pepper market declined, albeit marginally, on Friday on increase in arrivals and reports of easier overseas markets and all the contracts ended slightly below the previous day's closing.

About 50 tonnes of farm grade pepper arrived and were traded at Rs 406, 410, 413 and 415 a kg depending upon the quality, grade and area of production.

Added to this, latest reports from other origins indicated easier markets with offers at far below the Indian parity. Besides more and more material is being deposited in the exchange platform and exchange stocks have gone up to 4,179 tonnes. These factors reportedly pushed the market down, market sources told *Business Line*.

Pepper marked for staggered delivery so far has reached 1,574 tonnes. Upcountry demand continues to be met by supplies by stockists based in Rajasthan, they said.

Oct contract on the NCDEX decreased by Rs90 to the last traded price (LTP) of Rs43,850 a quintal. Nov and Dec contracts also dropped by Rs 80 and Rs 135 respectively to the LTP of Rs 43,800 and 43,300 a quintal.

### **Turnover**

Total turnover increased by 549 tonnes to close at 1,858 tonnes. Total open interest went up by 157 tonnes to close at 7,530 tonnes.

Oct open interest decreased by 202 tonnes to close at 1,642 tonnes while that of Nov and Dec increased by 206 tonnes and 126 tonnes respectively to 4,339 tonnes and 1,128 tonnes showing switching over and additional buying. And yet the market dropped.

Spot prices remained unchanged on matching demand and supply at the previous levels of Rs 40,600 (ungarbled) and 42,100 (garbled) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market was at \$8,500 a tonne (c&f) for Europe and \$8,800 a tonne (c&f) for the US.

### **Maize prices firm up on tight supplies of US corn**



Chennai, October 12:

Maize (corn) prices gained marginally on Friday in line with the rise in corn prices in the global market. Corn futures soared on Thursday following reports of tight supplies by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

In its monthly crop report released on Thursday, the USDA estimated the corn crop to be 10.706 billion bushels (of 25.40 kg each), down slightly from the 10.727 billion bushels it projected last month. The harvest would be the nation's smallest in six years. Corn yield has been trimmed to 122 bushels a hectare from 122.8 bushels a month ago. That would mark the lowest yield in the US since 1995.

With US corn production down for the third year in a row, usage will be tightened tremendously. Exports are forecast at 1.15 billion bushels in 2012-13, the lowest in 37 years. Meanwhile, corn imports are forecast at 75 million bushels, three times the average.

This projection of unusual tight supplies and lower yield and acreage has sent prices north. US corn futures on the CBOT surged more than 5 per cent to a three-week-high on Thursday. CBOT December corn futures gained 38-1/4 cents, at \$7.75/bushel.

On the NCDEX, maize for October delivery crept up 0.14 per cent to Rs 1,396 a quintal. November and December contracts inched up by 1 per cent each to Rs 1,308 and Rs 1,336.

In the spot market at Davangere (Karnataka), maize was quoted at Rs 1,408.35 a quintal.

### **Brent crude jumps to \$116 per barrel**

Crude oil market extended gains in Asian trade today as better-than-expected US initial jobless claims and rising tensions in West Asia buoyed prices, analysts said.

New York's main contract, light sweet crude for delivery in November, rose 29 cents to \$92.36 a barrel and Brent North Sea crude for November delivery advanced 10 cents to \$115.81.

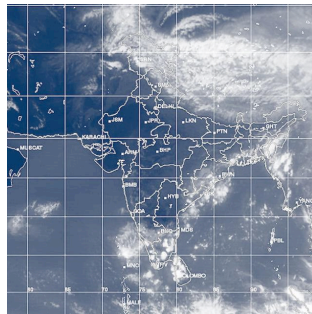
Crude continued its overnight rally as hopes of a US economic recovery rose on the improving jobs picture, while West Asian ructions continued over Turkey's interception of a Syrian Air jet, analysts said.

“Yesterday’s improvement in initial jobless claims meant that economic data supported risk assets,” said Jason Hughes, head of premium client management in IG Markets Singapore.

“The escalation in tensions between Turkey and Syria meant oil gained back all of the previous day’s losses,” he added.

New claims for US unemployment insurance benefits plunged unexpectedly last week to 339,000, the lowest level since February 2008, at the outset of the Great Recession, the Labor Department had reported yesterday.

### Heavy rains forecast for TN, Kerala



Heavy rain has been forecast over Kerala and Tamil Nadu during next two days ahead of the arrival of North-East monsoon or ‘monsoon in reverse.’

An extended forecast for the next seven days said that rain or thundershowers would lash many places over extreme south peninsular India.

### HEAVIER IN TN

One or two places over coastal Tamil Nadu are expected to witness heavy rains, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. Meanwhile, global forecasts said easterly winds have brought North-East monsoon over South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand, just to the east of Andaman Sea.

Vestiges of predecessor South-West monsoon prevail over Andaman Sea, but should soon give way for easterlies blowing in from the Gulf of Thailand.

Andaman Sea is the gateway for North-East monsoon. An ‘easterly wave’ will help reverse the flows here to being easterly winds over the next few days.

Over peninsular east coast, a trough (elongated area of low pressure) lay extended in readiness from Odisha to south Kerala.

### INITIALLY WEAK

It featured a cyclonic circulation over south Kerala and adjoining Tamil Nadu, which has been triggering brief wet spells on Friday. The Climate Prediction Centre of US National Weather Services suggests seasonal rains (North-East monsoon) may not drive up to full strength over peninsular India and south-east Bay of Bengal at least until October 23.

As had been forecast, the withdrawal of predecessor South-West monsoon all on a sudden gathered pace on Friday.

It signed off from Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, north Arabian Sea, Bihar, Vidarbha, parts of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Marathwada, madhya Maharashtra, Konkan, Goa and central Arabian Sea.

### EXIT PHASE

The withdrawal line passed through Forbesganj, Hazaribagh, Champa, Bramhapuri, Nanded, Pune and Alibagh.

Conditions are favourable for further withdrawal from Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, parts of West Bengal, Sikkim, the north eastern States, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and central Arabian Sea during next three days.

### Open interest limits restored in soybean, refined soy oil

With the cut in open interest (OI) in widely traded agricultural commodities hurting growth, the



Forward Markets Commission (FMC) has restored the pre-cut position limit in two of four agri commodities effective this Wednesday.

Open position or OI is the maximum quantity a trader can hold in his account for futures actions. To reduce volatility in soybean, refined soy oil, chana and rape seed/mustard seed, the commodity derivatives market regulator had cut the OI limits for both clients and members. It had also restricted traders from holding more than a specified quantity of these commodities across all exchanges. This means the quantity of OI was reduced from “individual exchanges” to “across all exchanges”.

The overall client-wise maximum OI in soybean and refined soy oil was cut to 20,000 tonnes and 17,000 tonnes on April 10 from 30,000 tonnes and 25,000 tonnes, respectively. For the near month, it was brought down to 5,400 and 4,000 tonnes from 8,000 tonnes and 6,000 tonnes, respectively.

The overall member-wise aggregate limit for all contracts has now been restored to 150,000 tonnes from 100,000 tonnes earlier in soybean and to 85,000 tonnes from 125,000 tonnes



earlier in refined soy oil contracts. “The rise in OI would bring more depth in the market, where traders would have additional quantity to hedge their risk,” said Dilip Bhatia, chief executive of Ace Derivatives & Commodity Exchange.

Soybean, a kharif crop, is currently being harvested. The Soybean Processors’ Association estimates a new record in output at 12.5 million tonnes as compared to 11 mt last year, despite a two – month delay in monsoon rainfall. Hence, the scenario for soybean and refined soy oil is clear.

Apparently, FMC has not restored OI in chana and RM seed, the two rabi crops in which sowing is currently on. The regulator might be waiting for a clear indication of output for a final decision in these two commodities. Meanwhile, price volatility in all four commodities had come down in the past six months, with frequent regulatory interventions.

According to Naveen Mathur, associate director of Angel Broking, the near month as well as aggregate open position limits were reduced for soybean and refined soy oil in April to curtail the excess volatility and to avoid cornering of stocks.

However, considering the normal conditions in the past two months, FMC has again revised these position limits upward. This would definitely help in bringing more participation and, thereby, depth in the market, he added.

#### BACK TO NORMAL

|                  | Applicable from April 10, '12 (Client level) | Before April 10, '12 (Client level) | Near-month Applicable from April 10, '12 (Client level) | Near-month Applicable from April 10, '12 (Client level) | Applicable from Oct 10, '12 (Client level) | Applicable from Oct 10, '12 (Client level) |
|------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
|                  | Overall                                      |                                     | Near-month  |   | Overall                                    | Near-month                                 |
| Chana            | 15,000                                       | 20,000                              | 3,000   | 4,000   | No change                                  | No change                                  |
| RM seed          | 15,000                                       | 25,000                              | 4,200   | 7,000   | No Change                                  | No Change                                  |
| Soybean*         | 20,000                                       | 30,000                              | 5,400   | 8,000   | 30,000                                     | 8,000                                      |
| Refined soy oil* | 17,000                                       | 25,000                              | 4,000   | 6,000   | 25,000                                     | 6,000                                      |

\* The limits have been made exchange-wise and not across exchanges  
(Figures in tonnes)

For chana and RM seed, the limits are still across exchanges

# Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS  
13.10.2012 A.M

**Jeera prices fall on rising arrivals, profit booking**



Jeera prices came under pressure as arrivals increased in the spot market. Jeera prices fell by Rs 15-20 per 20 kg in spot,

while the same recorded a decline in the futures market due to profit booking by market participants.

However, according to market sources, the downfall in jeera price was limited as demand for export as well as in domestic side remained steady. At Unjha, medium quality jeera gained by Rs 15-20 to trade at Rs 2,420-2,520 per 20 kg on Friday, while best quality raw jeera stood at Rs 2,715-2,815 per 20 kg. Arrivals stood at 5,000 bags and traded around 6,000-7,000 bags.

Jeera for November delivery touched a low of Rs 14,225 and traded lower by Rs 42.50 at Rs 14,382.50 per 100 kg with an open interest of 16,641 lots on National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX).

NCDEX December jeera contract fell by Rs 45 to Rs 14,715 per quintal with an open interest of 8,913 lots. NCDEX accredited warehouses jeera stocks gained by 60 tonnes to 9294 tonnes.

According to Mumbai-based Kedia Commodity, Jeera prices remained weak as farmers increased their supplies in the spot market, taking advantage of the recent rise in prices, but fresh overseas enquiries supported prices.

"Downside appears limited on the heels of receding carryover stocks against strong demand from exporters. The export demand of jeera remained strong in local markets due to weak supplies from Syria and Turkey," Ajay Kumar Kedia of Kedia Commodity maintained.

The total jeera stocks are currently estimated at around 400,000-500,000 bags, down almost 300,000 bags from the last year in the same year.

Senior technical strategist of Lakshmeshree Commodities said, "A breach of Rs 14,500 levels and if it sustains that level, jeera can head to Rs 15,500 in near term. It has been on falling volumes and the rally from the lows of Rs 13,500 is picking volumes near the breakout point, which is a clear sign of bullishness. We recommend a buy on Jeera November contract above Rs 14,500 for targets of Rs 15,500 initially which will be reviewed around Rs 15,500 levels. Traders should maintain stop below Rs 14,100 levels."

According to markets sources about 75 per cent exports target has already been achieved.



# THE TIMES OF INDIA

TODAY FARM NEWS  
13.10.2012 A.M

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## Flower business all set to bloom across Trichy

TRICHY: The Srirangam wholesale flower market in Trichy, known for its famous garlands, is gearing up for an increase in flower sales from the start of the Navaratri festival that is round the corner. Flower sales saw a decline during the Tamil month 'Purattaasi' when no temple festival and auspicious functions take place at homes. Interestingly, there is always a demand for flowers irrespective of rate.

This flower market has been satisfying the needs of people for many decades. Flowers like Jasmine, Champanki, Chrysanthemum, wild jasmine and Pichi are made available for making garlands to offer to deities. Srirangam garlands are unique for their precision. These garlands are made using banana tree fibre by tying Viruchi (red), Champak (white) and Maruvam or Thulasi or Saamanthi (white) flowers.

Even though the garlands are usually made with these flowers in all places, Srirangam garlands are welcomed for their quality.

However, flower sales have not been impressive in the current month as it is considered inauspicious to hold festivals in temples and functions at homes. Hence the flower price is under control as of now. But it is expected to skyrocket once Navarathri begins on October 16.

"Wholesalers in the market are receiving flowers from Ettarai, Thoppu, Kuzhumani and Mannachanallur in [Trichy](#) district as well as from Salem and Bangalore. We are getting Rs 150 to Rs 200 for 1 kg of Jasmine. People can now get Jasmine for Rs 10 per 100 buds. But the price would go up shortly. A kg of Jasmine will cost Rs 1,000 approximately during Navaratri. Likewise, the rate of other varieties of flowers would also be hiked. Nevertheless, people, especially women, love to wear them," said P Arunachalam, a flower vendor from Srirangam.

He also said, "Though people always like flowers, cultivation in Trichy district has declined due to labour shortage in the fields. Since flowers are imported from Bangalore and Salem, we are able to do business. Moreover, there is always a demand in the market for Manoranjitham, Senbagam and Paarijatham flowers which are known for their fragrances."

A shop run by V Raju in the market brings pride to the Srirangam wholesale market as he has been supplying approximately 40 kg of 'Viruchi' flower to the Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanam (TTD) for poojas daily. In addition to that, as many as 30 specially designed 'Sigamani', 'Saligramam' and 'Thirubababaram' garlands are being sent to TTD twice a week.

"I am proud to send flowers from our shop in Srirangam to TTD for the past 10 years. We consider it virtuous to send flowers to Lord Venkatachalapathy," said Raju.

"Nowadays, most modern-day [women](#) refrain from wearing flowers. Flowers are being used for poojas as a large number of people prefer to go to temples in search of peace of mind. Many of them use flowers for decorations at home. Earlier, full moon day and new moon day were chosen for poojas. Of late, people are choosing 'Theipirai Ashtami' (the eighth day after the new moon day) as per instructions from astrologers. So, the market for flowers is always good," added Raju.

### Renovation works at Gokulam dairy farm to begin soon

MALAPPURAM: Development works at the Gokulam cattle farm near Vengad in Malappuram will begin soon as the special committee appointed by the high court has asked the [Guruvayur Devaswom Board](#) to complete the work in a time-bound manner. The committee has approved the master plan for development of the farm at a meeting held at the district collectorate on Thursday.

The committee has asked the devaswom board to submit a report on the progress of the work at the next meeting of the committee. The committee comprises agriculture and animal husbandry officials, district collector, police representatives, advocates and members nominated by the high court. [Deputy collector](#) P K Venugopalakurup presided over the meeting.

The decision to renovate the farm and to categorize the cattle in the farm based on their age and provide separate shelters for each category of cattle was taken at a special meeting convened by the committee at Gokulam in June, after the visit of [high court judge](#) K Vinod Chandran to the farm.

The meeting had also asked the devaswom board to resolve the issue of staff shortage in the farm and decided to seek the help of employment exchanges in Kozhikode, Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram to recruit people.

The committee had earlier recommended the government to appoint a farm manager with the rank of assistant agriculture officer to run the daily activities of the farm as the existing management appointed by the devaswom board was found incapable to run the farm.

### **Tomatoes to get tastier with vintage flavour**

*Scientists have discovered the genes that influence [flavour](#) and [colour](#) in wild and traditional tomato varieties.*

The discovery could make more [tomatoes](#) taste like heirlooms, said the international research team headed by a [University of California](#), Davis, plant scientist.

The finding has significant implications for the U.S. tomato industry, which annually harvests more than 15 million tons of the fruit for [processing](#) and fresh-market sales.

"This information about the gene responsible for the trait in wild and traditional varieties provides a strategy to recapture quality characteristics that had been unknowingly bred out of modern cultivated tomatoes," said Ann Powell, a biochemist in UC Davis' Department of Plant Sciences and one of the lead authors of the study.

"Now that we know that some of the qualities that people value in heirloom tomatoes can be made available in other types of tomatoes, farmers can have access to more varieties of tomatoes that produce well and also have desirable colour and flavour traits," she said.

For decades, plant breeders in the tomato industry have selected varieties that are uniformly light green before they ripen, in order to produce tomatoes that can be harvested at the same time.

However, this characteristic is accompanied by an unintended reduction in sugars that compromises the flavour of the fresh fruit and its desirability for processing.

Powell's UC Davis research team began studying the genes influencing tomato fruit development and ripening after spending two summers screening tomato plants for transcription factors that might play a role in both fruit colour and quality. Transcription factors are proteins that regulate genes, or turn them on and off. These factors themselves are manufactured or expressed by genes.



The UC Davis researchers were particularly interested in tomatoes they observed in the field that were unusually dark green before they ripened.

Partnering with researchers at [Cornell University](#) and in Spain, who were mapping regions of the tomato genome, the scientists discovered two transcription factors, called GLK1 and GLK2, which control the development of chloroplasts. Chloroplasts are the structures in the plant cells that enable plants to photosynthesize, converting the energy of sunlight into sugars and other compounds that influence flavour and colour.

The researchers scoured a collection of mutant and wild species of tomatoes established at UC Davis by the late Professor Charles Rick beginning in the 1950s.

They discovered that dark green tomatoes that naturally express GLK2 produced ripe fruit with increased levels of sugars or soluble solids, important for processing tomatoes, as well as higher levels of the health-promoting compound lycopene.

"Nature presents numerous important genes and their variants, like uniform ripening, that breeders employ to facilitate the needs of growers, processors and consumers," said Jim Giovannoni, a [USDA](#) plant molecular biologist with the Boyce Thompson Institute at Cornell University.

"Understanding the genes responsible for these characteristics facilitates the challenging process of breeding crops that meet the needs of all components of the food-supply chain," he added.

The study will be reported in the June 29 issue of the journal *Science*.

### **De-control sugar sector, says panel**

NEW DELHI: Food minister [K V Thomas](#) on Friday said his ministry will take a time-bound decision on the Rangarajan panel's recommendation for decontrolling the sugar sector.

A panel, chaired by Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council chairman [C Rangarajan](#), released a report on Friday recommending that major government controls on the sugar sector be done away with.

"The report has been submitted to the prime minister. We will take a time-bound decision once it is examined by the PMO and comes to us," Thomas told the media.

Pushing for reforms, the [Rangarajan panel](#), which includes seven other experts, recommended that the government let mills sell their produce in the open market and stop purchase of sugar from industry at below market prices for ration shop supplies. At present, mills are obligated to supply 10% of their production at cheap rates to the government.

The committee, set up by the PM in January, advocated that mills share 70% of their revenue with sugarcane farmers but recommended against any ban on export-import.

Releasing the report, Rangarajan said, "There is a whole gamut of regulations related to the sugar sector... sugar is like any other commodity, there is no need to have controls. Levy sugar obligation and administrative control on non-levy sugar need to be dispensed with immediately."

Over a longer period of reform, the panel has advised doing away with cane area reservation and minimum distance criteria. It also pushed for removal of controls on by-products such as molasses.

Previous attempts to decontrol the sector fell through, the last one being in 2010.

### **The political significance of mangoes and bananas**

Robert Vadra's [tweet](#) about 'mango people' in a 'banana republic' unfairly accusing him of having done shady deals with a major property developer has created a storm in a tutti-frutti cup. Both Team Kejriwal and the BJP have taken not only the First Son-in-Law of the Nation but also the Congress to task for his supposedly disparaging reference to the country's aam admi as 'mango people' and his comparing India to a 'banana republic'.

A BJP spokesperson has asked the Congress if it agrees with Vadra's fruity description of India and Indians. But so far, no one seems to have sought to find out from the archetypal aam admi whether he feels slighted at being translated into a 'mango man'. Indeed, instead of feeling insulted the aam admi might well feel flattered at being equated with what is often called the 'king of fruits', varieties of which - such as the alfonso - sell for astronomical prices way out of reach of aam admi's aam pockets.

A parallel case was that of Shashi Tharoor's tweeted reference to 'cattle class' travel, which according to some needlessly raised political hackles. Considering the sacred status accorded to the 'gau mata' in India, 'cattle class' travellers might be deemed to be even more privileged than those in first class, particularly if the carrier they are using happens to be the government-run [Air India](#), which is arguably international aviation's most notably exploited milch cow.

Similarly, being called a 'banana republic' may be no bad thing. While the term derives from a pejorative reference to small tropical countries whose main export is the fruit which belongs to the plantain family, in the Indian context the banana plays a key role in several social and religious ceremonies and as such has auspicious connotations. While the phrase to 'go bananas' denotes a lack of mental balance, the fruit in question is largely what you make of it, as corroborated by a remark attributed to [Rajiv Gandhi](#) when he was prime minister that in order to raise Indian productivity 'humko yeh bhi banana hai aur woh bhi banana hai'.

At a time of soaring food prices, however, politicians are understandably chary of references to fruits and vegetables, knowing only too well that the path to electoral victory is strewn with slippery banana skins and that public displeasure at their performance can emphatically be expressed by the throwing of tomatoes, preferably of the rotten variety. All said and done, India's 'mango people' know their onions and are only too aware that given half a chance, or even less, their netas would have them all be turned into pumpkins, the local name for which is kaddu, a colloquialism for a gullible yokel.