

## Ramnad farmer blazes new trail

### *Sugarcane nursery boasts high yield*

: P. Ramanathan, a 42-year-old farmer, sits beside a heap of seed sugarcane in his coconut grove, chipping buds from the cane stalks.

The farmer from Akramesi, a remote village near Pandiyur in Nainarkoil block, is all smiles. He is the first farmer in the district to raise a single bud chip sugarcane nursery, a cost-effective alternative to conventional cultivation.

### **Optimistic**

It has been just two months since he started raising the nursery with the help of Sakthi Sugars, a private sugar mill, but Mr. Ramanathan is optimistic. The single bud sugarcane growing system is gaining popularity among the farmers as a low-cost option.

In the conventional system of sugarcane cultivation, four tonnes of seed cane are cut into pieces with two to three buds and the stalks planted in the furrows. This has posed problems for the farmers in transporting, handling and storing of the seed sugarcane.

In the process, the seed sugarcane undergoes rapid deterioration, reducing the viability of the buds and sprouts. To overcome the snags, reduce the overheads and increase the yield, the Sustainable Sugarcane Initiative (SSI), inspired by the System of Rice Intensification (SRI), had been developed and is fast catching on in Dharmapuri and Erode districts, B. Ilangovan, Deputy Director, Horticulture said.

## **Shade net house**

Mr. Ramanathan is raising the nursery in a shade net house, with a capacity to grow three tonnes of seed sugarcane, and with two hand lever machines for chipping buds provided free of cost by Sakthi Sugars.

“From one tonne of seed sugarcane, we can chip 80,000 buds, which means we can raise as many seedlings in the nursery,” the farmer points out.

If he bought one tonne of seed sugarcane for Rs.2,400, he would spend another Rs.2,000 to chip the buds, soak them in a solution of calcium chloride, urea and a fungicide before placing them in trays for sprouting.

Still, he makes a profit of nearly Rs.4,000 per tonne, selling the seedlings each at Rs.1.30 and reselling the budless sugarcane for crushing. After soaking for 10 minutes, the buds are covered in a wet gunny bag and kept indoors for five days before they are placed in sprouting trays filled with manure and stored in the shade net house for the next 15 days.

After sprouting, the seedlings are exposed to sunlight for another 10 days before being removed for planting, he said. He started raising the nursery two months ago, and has already sold 30,000 seedlings. Currently, he has an order for supplying 1.5 lakh seedlings. In 40 days, he expects to chip buds from seven tonnes of sugarcane and raise 5.6 lakh seedlings. This could increase manifold, if he uses an electric powered machine.

## **Gets a boost**

Mr. Ramanathan got a boost recently when Collector K. Nanthakumar, along with a retinue of officials, visited his nursery and was all praise for his venture. Under the system, 100 per cent germination is assured, Mr. Ilangovan assures sugarcane farmers.

He said the incidence of pest attack and disease was also reduced significantly.

The National Agriculture Mission helps farmers set up shade net houses and provides a subsidy of Rs.600 per square metre. For wooden shade net houses, the subsidy is Rs.410 per square metre. Nurseries for tomato and chilli could also be raised in shade net houses.

At the moment, there are few takers among the local farming community. But with Mr. Ramanathan blazing a new trail, hopefully innovative methods of farming will be the wave of the future.

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- *He is the sole farmer in the district to raise a single bud chip sugarcane nursery*
  - *“From one tonne of seed sugarcane, we can chip 80,000 buds”*
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## **Conserve soil, water: Collector tells farmers**

*Five-day training programme for farmers begins*



*The Nilgiris District Collector, Archana Patnaik, releasing a farmers' training manual in Udthagamandalam on Monday.— Photo: M. Sathyamoorthy*

Farmers should function with foresight.

Emphasising this while inaugurating a five-day training course for farmers on “Resource Conservation Technologies for Sustainable

Horticultural Production” organised by the Central Soil Conservation Research and Training Institute (CSCRTI) under the aegis of the National Horticulture Mission (NHM) here on Monday, The Nilgiris District Collector, Archana Patnaik, said that agriculturists should ensure that farm activities were sustainable and 30 years or more down the line they would not be subjected to shortage of resources. They should play their role in conserving soil and water which are the main resources.

Pointing out that about 7,600 hectares were under horticulture crops in the district, Ms. Patnaik urged farmers to focus on productivity.

Appealing to the participants to make optimum use of the training course, she observed that if they start adopting the methods being promoted by the CSWCRTI and the Department of Horticulture they could become role models. It would make the job of replication easier.

She opined that the institute and the department should explore the possibility of making a few farmers master trainers.

The head, CSWCRTI, O.P.S. Khola, who presided said that the survival of mankind depends on the conservation of water and soil. He added hill areas in particular should give maximum importance to the two resources.

The government has evolved several programmes for the benefit of the farmers.

The Deputy Director of Horticulture, N. Mani, said that Rs. 1.32 crore had been sanctioned for The Nilgiris under the NHM for 2012-2013.

The training course will benefit 100 farmers.

Course Coordinator and Senior Scientist, CWCRTI, S. Manivannan said that the objective was to train farmers to adopt advanced soil and water conservation and horticulture technologies.

It would include water harvesting and recycling, advanced cultivation practices in fruit, vegetable, cut flower and spices farms apart from areas under plantation crops. They would be familiarised with the latest developments in farm activities like plant protection, mechanisation and value addition.

The release of a training manual by Ms. Patnaik marked the occasion.

## **Farm plan for tribal people on paper**

A Rs.103.41-crore agriculture package for improving the 'livelihood and food security' of the tribal people of Attappady has been pending with the government for two years.

The package, prepared on a directive of Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar, was announced by Chief Minister Oommen Chandy during his visit to Attappady on August 31, 2011.

The objective of the package was "to address the livelihood and food security of the tribal and marginal farmers of Attappady". It was aimed at making "Attappady the food hub of Kerala" by promoting organic farming.

Another objective was to develop an Attappady brand of organic agriculture. From the outlay of Rs.103.41 crore, Rs.48.46 crore was earmarked for market development; Rs.15.59 crore for soil and water conservation; Rs.16.06 crore for livestock development; Rs.9.40 crore for promotion of agriculture and allied enterprises; and Rs.9.81 crore for minor irrigation.

The agriculture package was to be taken up as the second phase of the Rs.219-crore JICA funded eco-restoration project which was implemented by the Attappady Hills Area Development Society (AHADS).

“The eco-restoration project, which ended in March 2010, having contributed to considerable improvement in soil, water and vegetable cover of degraded Attappady, needed a second phase to promote land-based livelihoods, inducing the tribal land owners to take up commercial agriculture,” a package report said.

### **Central team**

On the basis of a proposal submitted to the Centre to sustain the gains of the eco-restoration project, a Central team visited Attappady in July 2011.

On the basis of its report, Mr. Pawar instructed the State government to prepare a proposal on the basis of the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, National Horticulture Mission and the National Mission for Minor Irrigation.

Mr. Chandy during his visit to Attappady on August 31, 2011, announced that an agriculture package would be implemented by AHADS from 2012.

The report said Attappady, having vast stretches of cultivable land, had got scope for promoting integrated organic farming. Organising farmers in three cooperatives under the three grama panchayats and federating them into a producer’s company to ensure better marketing and self-sustenance of the enterprise had also been envisaged in the proposal.

The package was expected to generate 15,11,236 man days over five years.

## Bankers told to sanction fresh loans to farmers

Collector Siddharth Jain on Monday urged the bankers to reschedule the crop loans taken by Cyclone 'Nilam'-hit farmers for kharif-2012 and sanction fresh loans to them. In a statement, Mr. Jain said the farmers those who have obtained crop loans between April 1, 2012 and October 31, 2012, and suffered crop losses due to Cyclone 'Nilam' were eligible to avail the facility. The Reserve Bank of India issued orders to this effect. Meanwhile, Mr. Jain said all the details pertaining to claims, disbursement of compensation to the beneficiaries and status of pending claims under the Apadbandhu scheme will be displayed on the district official website soon. He received memoranda from the petitioners during the grievance redressal meeting held at the Collectorate here on Monday.

## Power problem pushes shrimp farmers to the brink

*'The sector earns a foreign exchange of Rs.6,000 crore'*



*At their wits end: Shrimp growers make a frantic bid to save Vannamee culture at Pandillapalli in Prakasam district.— Photo: Kommuri Srinivas*

The international market condition is quite encouraging for those into Vannamee culture in the district with early mortality syndrome

(EMS) causing huge losses in far-east and south-east Asian countries.

Yet, shrimp farmers are unable to fully exploit the situation to their advantage due to power cuts for up to 12 hours each day and load shedding in between as the species requires operation of aerators round-the-clock for survival.

The sector, which earns a foreign exchange of over Rs. 6,000 crore to the State, deserves a better treatment at a time when their counterparts in other countries enjoy huge subsidies on broodstock, feed and power, opines the Tangutur Aqua farmers Association Secretary Ch. Harikrishna while overseeing the running of generators in his pond.

“We are not asking for any reduction in power tariff like others. We are ready to pay commercial tariff for our operations. Our only plea to the State government is to ensure uninterrupted power supply to make the best out of the present favourable market condition and ensure more foreign exchange earnings to the country”, he says while talking to *The Hindu* .

“Power accounts for Rs. 70 of the total production cost of Rs. 280 per kg. One kg. of the produce with 40 counts fetches Rs. 360 to Rs. 370 in the market now. We produce between five to six tonne per acre on an average”, he adds.

The shrimp culture had been hit because of EMS in, among other countries, China, Vietnam, Malaysia and Thailand, he points out.

### **Uphill task**

“It is an uphill task for us to energise the aerators using generators for 12 long hours and switch over to generator at times of interruptions in between”, Association president P. Madhubabu laments while seeking support from the government as 80 per cent of shrimp farmers had an average holding of three to four acres only.



The loss used to be Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 40,000 per acre only when Tiger shrimp was cultured.

But the loss will be between Rs. 3 to four lakh in the case of Vannamei culture which is more capital intensive, says a farmer P. Subba Naidu, while making frantic efforts to save the white-legged shrimps from dying due to lack of enough oxygen in water, by maintaining two spare generators.

“We are staggering shrimp production to avoid losses” , explains another farmer B. Haribabu.

“When we started aquaculture this year we were promised power for 10 hours during night and two hours in the day time, says a shrimp grower P. Shankar from Motupalli.

“We have sleepless nights now in view of interruptions even during night time when it is practically impossible to switch over to generator every now and then”, adds Shankar with five acres under aquaculture.

Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sangam district secretary N. Ranga Rao wants the government to provide power to shrimp farmers on a priority basis for them to scrape through this season.

Over 1,500 shrimp farmers are involved in Vannamei culture in 3,000 hectares in the coastal mandals in Prakasam district.

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- *Government urged to ensure uninterrupted power supply*
  - *One kg. of the produce with 40 counts fetches Rs. 360 to Rs. 370 in the market*

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## **‘Disburse quality seed to farmers’**

The primary reason for farmers making losses was spurious seeds and the government should take all the necessary steps to prevent unscrupulous individuals and firms from selling them and protect

the interests of the cultivators, Nationalist Congress of India State working president B.Deshkanth Reddy.

Mr Reddy held a meeting with leaders of his party here on Monday.

In a statement released after the meeting, Mr Reddy said that quality seed should be disbursed to the farmers through the district outlets of the AP State Seeds Development Corporation.

He said the Nationalist Congress would not tolerate any hardship of loss to the farmers and would launch an agitation if they were put to trouble.

He said all who were ready to do public service in accordance to its goals were welcome to join it.

Party State president B.Ravi, Hyderabad city president Jaihind, Vijayawada urban president Paruchuri Karunakar, general secretary B.Srinivas and others were present.

## **Wealth tax raises hackles in agricultural Punjab**



The Parkash Singh Badal Government in Punjab has convened a special Assembly session to pass a resolution against the Centre's move to impose a hefty wealth tax on agricultural land

# **Fake enrolment in milk producers' societies alleged**



Women farmers converged on the Collectorate here, along with cattle distributed free by the government, and submitted a petition to Collector C.Samayamoorthy on Monday, seeking his intervention to ensure enrolment of their names in the milk societies that are supplying milk to Aavin.

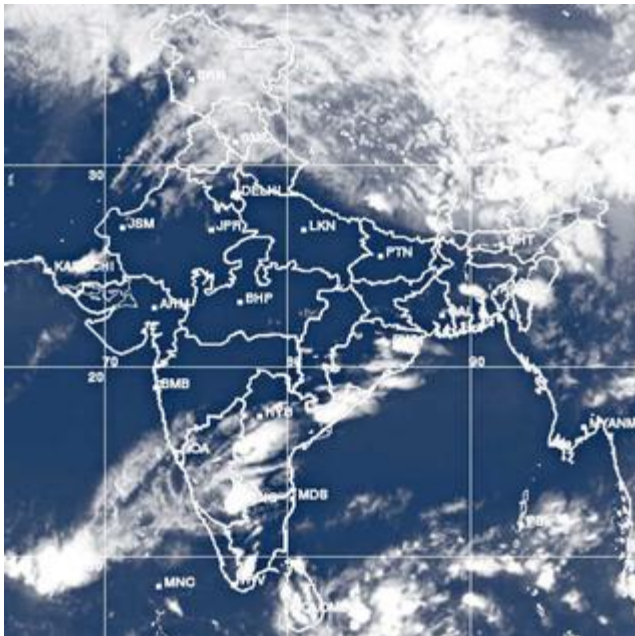
The women had received the cattle under the Chief Minister's Special Scheme, which was launched with the objectives of increasing milk production in the State and improving the living standards of poor rural women. The women belonged to Kaansaapuram, Ittaeri, Konganthaanpaarai, Melathediyoor, Ponnaakudi, Govindaperi, Sangampatti, Kurichikulam, Chiththarchathiram, Muramban, Mela Pandiyapuram and Paaraikottam. The farmers said they had been supplying 10,000 litres of milk daily to Aavin, yet Aavin officials were refusing to enrol them as members of the milk cooperative societies.

“The Aavin officials had created 150 fake milk producers' societies and enrolled bogus members as the polls for electing office-bearers for these societies are to be conducted shortly. If the 70 genuine societies are approved and we're enrolled as their members, those supported by the officials cannot get elected,” said V.Aadhi Lakshmi of Kaansaapuram Milk Producers' Cooperative Society.

The women said the Collector should order a comprehensive probe by the District Revenue Officer or a Deputy Superintendent of Police into the matter.

Meanwhile, a group of residents from Ward 17 of Kallidaikurichi town panchayat submitted a petition to the Collector requesting him to take immediate steps to remove a mobile phone transmission tower that had been erected in their area without proper permission from the officials concerned.

## Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on April 29th.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	39	26	0	26
New Delhi (Sfd)	37	25	0	22
Chandigarh	34	24	0	26
Hissar	38	21	0	41
Bhuntar	29	15	0	139
Shimla	22	14	0	113
Jammu	33	20	0	36
Srinagar	20	11	0	171
Amritsar	36	20	0	10
Patiala	36	24	0	25
Jaipur	38	25	0	14
Udaipur	39	23	0	15
Allahabad	43	25	0	11
Lucknow	39	19	0	1

Varanasi	42	25	0	21
Dehradun	32	20	0	38
Agartala	32	26	0	111
Ahmedabad	42	27	0	6
Bangalore	35	23	0	25
Bhubaneshwar	40	28	0	52
Bhopal	41	24	0	53
Chennai	39	27	0	32
Guwahati	25	21	0	110
Hyderabad	40	28	0	51
Kolkata	36	28	0	32
Mumbai	33	26	0	0
Nagpur	44	25	0	24
Patna	40	25	0	14
Pune	41	23	0	3
Thiruvananthapuram	35	26	0	110
Imphal	29	18	0	118
Shillong	23	16	1	100

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (tr-trace) and total rainfall in mm since 1st March.

## DRY WEATHER

**RAINFALL:** Rain/thundershowers have occurred at isolated places over Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

Weather was mainly dry over rest of the region. **MAXIMUM**

**TEMPERATURES:** The maximum temperatures changed little over the region. They were below normal in Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, west Rajasthan and west Uttar Pradesh and normal in rest of the region.

The highest maximum temperature in the region was 42.9°C recorded at Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh ).

## FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 01st May

**2013:** Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places over Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh during next 24 hours and at one or two places thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Uttarakhand. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Punjab and north Rajasthan

during next 24 hours and mainly dry weather thereafter. Weather would be mainly dry over rest of the region.

**FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 1st May 2013:** Mainly clear sky.

## **Water level**

The water level in Periyar dam was 112.50 feet (permissible level is 136 feet) with an inflow of 100 cusecs and discharge of 100 cusecs on Monday. The water level in Vaigai dam was 36.65 feet (71) with nil inflow and discharge of 60 cusecs. Rainfall recorded in the following places are as follows (in mm): Periyar dam 8, Thekkadi 19.2, Gudalur 22, Shanmuganadhi 2, Uthamapalayam 4, Veerapandi 26, Marudhanadhi 7, Sothuparai 46 and Kodaikanal 28.

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Monday stood at 62.25 feet (permissible level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 107.59 cusecs and 394.75 cusecs was discharged from the dam. The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 83.20 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 18 cusecs and 130 cusecs was discharged.

### **Kanyakumari**

The water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 14.85 feet. It was 23.75 feet in Perunchani, 2.89 feet in Chittar 1, 2.98 feet in Chittar II and 0.3 feet in Poigai dam.

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## Weather

Chennai - INDIA

### Today's Weather



Sunny

**Tuesday, Apr 30**

Max 34° | Min 28°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 53

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:48

Sunset: 06:23

Barometer: 1008

### Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

**Wednesday, May 1**

Max 38° | Min 27°

### Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday May 2	Friday May 3	Saturday May 4	Sunday May 5	Monday May 6
38°   28°	38°   27°	39°   28°	38°   27°	37°   28°
Partly Cloudy	Overcast	Overcast	Cloudy	Overcast

## THE TIMES OF INDIA

# MGNREGS workers available for private farms, but few takers for it

CHENNAI: Small time farmers are likely to get some relief during harvest when the state government rolls out its decision to lend MGNREGS workers to farmers with small holdings. The cost of the labour will be borne by the government and will come out of the MGNREGS coffers. All a farmer has to do is to apply for help, say officials. But, its introduction in a year of bad harvest has found few takers for the government's latest offer from its basket of goodies.

For the past three to four years, farmers have been complaining about the lack of available labour during harvest and plantation season as all local farm labourers were snapped up in the 100 days rural employment guarantee scheme. Four years ago, the government allowed MGNREGS workers to do water-works like digging ponds and irrigation facilities on private farms, provided the farmer applies for it. Now they have extended this to other farm work too.

"The new scheme was implemented this year," said Coimbatore district collector M Karunakaran. "They may use MGNREGS labourers for leveling work, harvest and plantation. Only farmers with marginal holdings or from SC/ST may apply. The government will bear the labour charges." It is interesting to note that a Comptroller and Auditor General report released recently found that Tamil Nadu, which ensures that 98% of the workers receive cash payments under the scheme, had completed only about 43% of the works undertaken between 2007 and 2012.

This modification to the scheme is implemented in all states across the country, said a rural development official. A government order to this effect was issued last year. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme began with digging for public water works, like irrigation channels, tanks and ditches. But to ensure utility in work too, the government has now branched out to waterworks on private lands, tree planting on panchayat lands and now, harvesting and plantation.

However, this too, say farmers, merely looks good on paper and difficult to put into practice. "The news of the government



offering such a facility has not yet percolated down to village levels," said Arupathy Kalyanam, general secretary, Federation of Farmers Associations of Thanjavur, Nagapattinam and Tiruvarur district. "Even if it does, there wouldn't be too many takers for this. So far, whenever we have hired MGNREGS workers, they were reluctant to put in more than three hours of work as that is what they have got used to under MGNREGS. They demand extra money and work still remains unfinished."

Geologist turned farmer, S Ranganathan, general secretary of Cauvery Delta Farmers' Welfare Association said the impact of this GO was pretty low this year. "There was not enough harvest in the first place for anybody to avail the scheme," he said. "Due to the drought like conditions in 2012, harvest season this year came and went in the blink of an eye. Since paddy cultivation uses up a lot of water, many farmers did not cultivate at all. For the rest who did, the crop was not good. So there was not much harvest work."

## Farmers to get 10-hour power supply for irrigation in MP

BHOPAL: Along with 24X7 power supply to domestic consumers, 10-hour power will be supplied to farmers for irrigation - 6 hours in day and 4 hours in the night. This was informed at a review meeting of [energy department](#) chaired by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan here on Monday. Energy Minister Rajendra Shukla and chief secretary R Parasuram also attended the meeting.

Chief Minister Chouhan directed to ensure constant monitoring of 24X7 power supply. Top priority should be attached to consumers' satisfaction. Under-construction power projects

should be completed within time-limit. Ideal situation of changing out-of-order transformers immediately should be created. Information about flat rate scheme for power bill payment should be disseminated to every farmer.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that people should be completely satisfied with power supply. He lauded efforts of the department to ensure 24X7 power supply. He said that this will increase development and prosperity in the state.

It was informed at the meeting that power supply has increased by 11% during year 2012-13 and will increase 29% in year 2013-14.

## **50% farmers sign MoUs for Nagpur Improvement Trust mega township**

**NAGPUR:** The 1,000 hectare mega township project of Nagpur Improvement Trust (NIT) near Jamtha is making fast progress with over 50% farmers signing memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with the agency for acquiring the land. Meanwhile, NIT has sent the development plan of the township to the state government for approval.

Deputy director of town planning Sujata Kadu told TOI that there were around 300 farmers whose land was required for the township. "More than 150 people have signed MoUs. We have made progress in last two months in this direction. In February end, the number of MoUs was around 30," she added.

The owner will hand over his entire land to NIT, which will develop it and give back 60% to the owner. The owner will have to pay development charges to NIT. In case he does not have the money, NIT will return only 50% land. [The choice](#) rests with the owner. The owners of land in sanctioned layouts will get back 75% of the land but they will have to pay more money than the farmers.

"MoUs will enable us to know the area we will have in our possession and that to be returned to land owners," Kadu said while explaining the importance of the MoUs.

Some land owners are reluctant to go for the scheme. However, as NIT is executing a public project, the government can acquire the land by paying meagre compensation. But NIT does not want this contingency to arise.

The township is [spread](#) over 10 sq km and covers five villages Kiriti, Khadka, Sumthana, Panjara and Shivmadka on Outer Ring Road. The civic agency plans to provide housing for two lakh people in the township. Once completed, it will be the biggest in Central India.

Meanwhile, NIT officials are holding meetings with representatives of Halcrow India Ltd for giving final touches to the development plan of Nagpur metro region. "It will be more or less same as the regional plan," Kadu said.

# Wealth tax: Farmers write to PM, demand probe

JALANDHAR: Punjab farmers, who have been told to pay wealth tax, have written a letter to Prime Minister [Manmohan Singh](#) seeking his intervention in the issue and demanded a thorough probe into the way [income tax](#) department officials selectively sent notices to people.

"Many people, who could have come under the [wealth tax](#) bracket as per to the I-T department's guidelines, were let off. Please order a probe to find out how these provisions were invoked indiscriminately," the missive said.

The letter -- signed by seven affected farmers, led by SAD district unit president Gurcharan Singh Channi -- pointed out that even the income tax department's own figures reflected that wealth tax was at par or even more than the income from the agriculture in a year.

"Levying of this tax not only defies logic but also is in total contrast to the statement made by you in 1992 as finance minister," they argued while giving relevant excerpts of Manmohan Singh's speech in Parliament in 1992.

In his speech, the then FM Manmohan Singh had said, "There is no distinction at present between productive and non-productive assets. The [Chellian Committee](#) has suggested that in order to encourage the taxpayers to invest in productive assets such as shares, securities, bonds, bank deposits, etc and also to promote [investments](#) through [mutual funds](#), these financial assets should be exempted from wealth tax... I propose

to accept this recommendation and I hope this change will encourage investment in productive assets and discourage investment in ostentatious non-productive wealth."

The farmers argued that from his speech it was evident that there was no intention of the government to levy wealth tax on agriculture land which is a productive asset even if it falls in urban area.

"Instructions may also be issued to withdraw the wealth tax charged wrongfully by the officers of the Doaba region of Punjab or anywhere else," the farmers demanded.

## Congress, BJP demand scrapping of wealth tax on farm land

NEW DELHI: Political parties from across the spectrum have joined hands to urge the government to reverse the decision to impose [wealth tax on farm land](#) which falls within 8 km of a municipality.

A delegation of [Congress](#) leaders led by Punjab PCC chief Partap Singh Bajwa and Haryana chief minister [Bhupinder Singh Hooda](#) met party president Sonia Gandhi to demand that the "draconian" provision which is seen as "anti-farmer" be scrapped.

Senior [BJP](#) leader and former finance minister Yashwant Sinha has also shot off a letter to finance minister [P Chidambaram](#) calling for "an urgent review".

He asked Chidambaram to move an urgent amendment to the finance bill and "undo this wrong to agriculturalists with retrospective effect".

The government had decided to impose wealth tax on all farm land within a distance of 8 km from the local limit of a municipality, notified area or corporation. Many view it as a backdoor attempt to tax the farm sector which is in the domain of the state governments. Demand for taxing the farm sector has emerged repeatedly over the years but governments have shied from debating the "politically sensitive " issue and have said that the issue is within the jurisdiction of state governments.

Sinha said the provision was being wrongly interpreted and tax officials were approaching farmers whose land "unfortunately falls within the jurisdiction of a municipality and is not covered by exemption".

"I understand that in Punjab alone, many agricultural land have been attached by the tax officials for non-payment of wealth tax," Sinha said in his letter to Chidambaram.

Punjab chief Parkash Singh Badal had also voiced concern over the issue and had said the country was being brought to the brink of economic crisis and social disorder.

Senior Shiromani Akali Dal leader and Rajya Sabha MP Naresh Gujral said I-T officers were calculating wealth tax on the basis of circle rates and slapping huge demand on farmers. "It is a mistake. The law has to be amended retrospectively," Gujral

said.

He said Prime Minister Manmoahn Singh as finance minister had assured the nation that wealth tax would only be imposed on any non- productive asset." Why is it being imposed on farm land which is a productive asset for the farmers?" Gujral said.

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THE  NEW  
**INDIAN EXPRESS**

## 'Nutrition needs to be married to agriculture'



*M S Swaminathan interacting with K Vijay Raghavan at the inauguration of an international consultation on molecular genetics in the city on Monday | Albin Mathew*

"If India's agricultural sector has to flourish, a land-to-land transition, where farmers spread knowledge about healthy cultivation practices, has to come up in lieu of the current lab-to-land knowledge transfer," said noted scientist and researcher M S Swaminathan. He was speaking at the inauguration of an international consultation on molecular genetics at the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation here on Monday.

The consultation, a three-day event, was organised to coincide with the 60th year of publication of the double-helical structure of the DNA as propounded by Watson and Crick. The consultation aims to review and look ahead with the notion that advanced molecular genetics could contribute significantly to the areas of food, agriculture and health security. As many as 56 Indian and foreign scientists participated in the event.

Known as the 'Father of the Indian Green Revolution', Swaminathan, during the course of his address, stressed on the concept of food security and how native foodgrains such as millets needed to be popularised among the younger generation if they were to be consumed by them. "Nutrition needs to be married with agriculture if we are to make significant progress in food security," he said. The scientist also outlined some of the Public Distribution Systems (PDS) in place in various States that seek to quell poverty and deaths due to hunger. Speakers on the occasion underlined how the perceived lack of a regulatory system is resulting in people being unable to derive full benefit from advances in molecular genetics. Secretary to department of Biotechnology of Government of India Dr K Vijay Raghavan was among those present on the occasion.

## Trust the mushroom for a right physique





*For meat-lovers, scientists are mining the potential of mushrooms to produce “meaty” flavours in foods, animal-free.*

If you want to lose weight and get back in shape, bank on the mushrooms, rather than on meat. A new study finds that replacing meat with mushrooms in one meal per day help reducing overall body fat, and maintaining this new improved physique over time.

Researchers of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in the US recruited 73 adults, mostly women in their 40s, in a year-long randomised clinical trial on white button mushrooms and weight loss. It was found that the subjects who ate one cup/128 grams of mushrooms per day in place of meat lost on average about three kilos, while showing improvements in body composition, compared to subjects who ate their standard diet. Each day, the mushroom-eating subjects consumed 123 calories and 4.25 grams of fat less per day.

The new findings build on previous research that shows increasing intake of low-energy-density foods such as mushrooms in place of high-energy-density foods, such as ground beef, can help you lose weight while still feeling satiated.

For meat-lovers, scientists are mining the potential of mushrooms to produce “meaty” flavours in foods, animal-free. After fermenting oyster mushrooms with the addition of amino acids and sugars and heat-treating the different samples, scientists from the US and China found that the mushrooms produced flavour profiles that ranged from meaty to sweet, earthy, musty, pungent and caramel—which could result in improved all-natural, vegetarian meat-flavoured food products down the line.

## GM banana poses a new threat to crop diversity



*"GM bananas are, a waste of time and money, an unnecessary risk and a strategy to take control of the banana in its centre of diversity and the region with highest production and consumption," says Vandana Shiva, noted Green activist.*

The banana diversity of the state, probably the richest in the country, stands threatened with a possible entry of genetically modified banana from Australia through a research collaboration. In view of the threat that can affect the whole country, several Green organisations have called for a 'No genetically modified Banana' campaign from May 1.

"Ignoring the many existing alternatives our indigenous biodiversity and knowledge offers, to address the public health emergency of iron deficiency, it is learnt that India's Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) has signed an agreement with Queensland University, Australia, for a research collaboration that will increase the iron content in banana," said Bijukumar of Centre for Innovation in Science and Social Action (CISSA).

It is also learnt that the Indian Department of Biotechnology has signed an agreement with the University of Queensland to do similar research/field trials over the next 4 to 5 years and launch the GM bananas within 6 to 10 years in India.

“GM bananas are, a waste of time and money, an unnecessary risk and a strategy to take control of the banana in its centre of diversity and the region with highest production and consumption,” says Vandana Shiva, noted Green activist and leader of the campaign. The various organisations that will take part in the campaign include Navdanya, Mahila Anna Swaraj, Diverse Women for Diversity, Initiative for Health and Equity in Society with Guild of Services, Centre for Innovation in Science and Social Action (CISSA) from Kerala, Azadi Bachao Andolan, Appiko, and even Gene Ethics, Australia.

“We have to grow nutrition by growing biodiversity, not industrially ‘fortify’ nutritionally empty food at high cost, or put one or two nutrients into genetically engineered crops. We don’t need these irresponsible experiments, that create new threats to biodiversity and our health, imposed by powerful men in distant places, who are totally ignorant of the biodiversity in our fields and thalis, and who never bear the consequences of their destructive power,” said Vandana Shiva. The campaign leaders alleged that there was a perverse urge among the biotechnology brigade to declare war against biodiversity in its centre of origin. “After the Bt brinjal attempt, GM banana is being introduced to the two countries where banana is a significant crop and has large diversity. One is India, the other is Uganda, the only country where banana is a staple,” they pointed out the irony. Along with the No Genetically Modified Banana Campaign there is also a move to start a movement titled ‘Seeds of Freedom, Gardens of Hope’ to grow GMO free, iron rich, nutrient rich plants.

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## Govt floats financial bids for 1 mn tons wheat export

**Last month, the Centre had allowed export of an extra 5 million tonnes (MT) wheat of 2011-12 crop from its godowns via private trade to ease storage burde**



The government today said it has invited financial bids from private traders for export of nearly one million tonnes of wheat stored in the FCI godowns in Punjab and Haryana.

Last month, the Centre had allowed export of an extra 5 million tonnes (MT) wheat of 2011-12 crop from its godowns via private trade to ease storage burden.

"Food Corporation of India (FCI) has invited the financial bids for sale of wheat of crop year 2011-12," an official release said.

The base price of the wheat to be exported Under Open General Licence (OGL) from the Punjab and Haryana will be Rs 1,484 per quintal, it said.

The financial bids have been invited for 5,40,000 tonnes of wheat in Punjab

and 4,09,826 tonnes in Haryana.

Meanwhile in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha today, Food Minister K V Thomas said that FCI had invited technical bids for empanelment of private exporters.

FCI has received four technical bids for Punjab and 10 technical bids for Haryana, he said.

"The government has recently allowed sale of up to five million tonnes of wheat till June 30, 2013 from the central pool stock in Punjab and Haryana pertaining to the stock of 2011-12 through private traders for export purposes," he said.

This channel has been opened to speed up evacuation of surplus old stock of wheat in central pool, he added.

Thomas also said there is no proposal to export rice from the central pool.

The Minister also informed that nearly 3 MT of wheat has been exported from the first two tranches of 4.5 MT allowed last year through PSUs.

"No import of wheat and rice has taken place on government account during the last two years," he said.

As on April 1, the government had wheat stock of 24.20 MT, as against the requirement of 7 MT. In case of rice, the stock was 35.46 MT, as compared to the buffer norm of 14.2 MT.

Wheat stocks have risen in the FCI godowns due to record procurement followed by bumper crops in the last two consecutive years. Wheat output is expected to be 92.30 MT in the 2012-13 crop year (July-June).

# Traders not impressed as sale prices higher than global rates

**Around 409,826 tonnes of wheat has been offered for export from FCI warehouses in Haryana, while 540,000 tonnes has been offered from Punjab based warehouses**

The Food Corporation of India (FCI) has invited bids for sale of almost 950,000 tonnes of wheat from its own stocks at a floor price of Rs 1,484 per quintal non-inclusive of transportation from Punjab and Haryana. The wheat is meant for export under the Open General License (OGL).

The wheat, which is almost two years old was procured in 2011-12 crop marketing year that concluded on March 31, 2012. According to an official statement released today around 409,826 tonnes of wheat has been offered for export from FCI warehouses in Haryana, while around 540,000 tonnes has been offered from Punjab-based warehouses.

This is the first time that FCI has invited bids from private traders for export of wheat stored in its warehouses. Earlier, only state-run trading companies like STC, PEC and MMTC were allowed to sell wheat from FCI godowns. In total, the government plans to export around 5 million tonnes of wheat through this method.

Earlier, it has managed to export another 4.5 million tonnes of wheat also from its stocks, but that was all through state-run trading firms. The exports have been necessitated because the corporation is carrying a record stocks of almost 60 million tonnes of foodgrains as on April 2013 as against the required 21.2 million tonnes.

Out of this wheat stocks are estimated to be around 24.2 million against the buffer stocks and strategic reserve requirement of 7 million tonnes, rice stocks are estimated to be around 35.4 million tonnes as against a requirement of 14.2 million tonnes.

The foodgrains stocks are expected to swell to a mammoth over 92 million tonnes by end of June as the government plans to purchase another 44 million tonnes in the new procurement season that has started from April 1, 2013. However, leading traders and private companies are not enthused by the move to liquidate wheat stocks at such high prices.

<b>Wheat offered for export from FCI stocks to private traders</b>	
<b>Rohtak</b>	20,000
<b>Hisar</b>	3,04,796
<b>Karnal</b>	85,030
<b>Punjab</b>	540,000
<b>Total</b>	949,826
<i>Source: Government of India</i>	

“There is very distinct possibility of many traders participating in the new tender as the terms and conditions are absurd,” a senior official from a leading multinational grain trading firm said. He said the biggest reason for this is that there is no price parity between the rate at which government is liquidating its stocks and the international prices.

“Wheat in global markets is now priced at below \$300 per tonne, while the total cost of purchasing wheat from government stocks (Rs 1,484 per quintal plus transportation charges and other incidentals) is somewhere around \$320 per tonne. So who will purchase two-year old wheat at a higher price and export it at less price,” the official explained.

He said to encourage private participation in export of wheat from state-run godowns; the government should reduce the price at which it offers this wheat.

# Coriander up more than 1% on rising demand

**Restricted arrivals mainly pushed up coriander prices**



Coriander futures for May rose by Rs 95, or 1.39%, to Rs 6,917 per quintal in 22,140 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange (NCDEX), the June contract gained Rs 96, or 1.38%, to Rs 7,044 per quintal in 19,820 lots.

Prices rose as speculators created fresh positions tracking firm trend at spot market on pick-up in demand.

Restricted arrivals mainly pushed up coriander prices at futures trade.

# Crude palm oil falls 0.5% on profit-booking

**Weak overseas trend influenced crude palm oil futures here**





Crude palm oil futures for May declined by Rs 2.50, or 0.54%, to Rs 460.20 per 10 kg in 236 lots.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the April contract traded lower by Rs 1.30, or 0.27%, to Rs 464.70 per 10 kg in 33 lots.

Prices fell as speculators booked profits at prevailing higher levels.

Weak overseas trend also influenced crude palm oil futures prices.

On the Malaysia Derivatives Exchange (MDEX), palm oil dropped by 1% to \$757 a tonne.

## Chana down 0.6% on rising supply

**Prices moved down as speculators trimmed**



Chana futures for May fell by Rs 19, or 0.55%, to Rs 3,451 per quintal in 89,900 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange (NCDEX), the June contract traded lower by Rs 19, or 0.54%, to Rs 3,523 per quintal in 81,270 lots.

Prices moved down as speculators trimmed positions triggered by rise in supplies from the new season crop and expectations of higher output.

## FCI offers wheat for export to pvt trade

**Private companies and traders are not enthused by the move to liquidate wheat stocks at such high prices**



The Food Corporation of India (FCI) has invited bids for sale of almost 950,000 tonnes of wheat from its own stocks at a floor price of Rs 1,484 a quintal, non-inclusive of transportation cost from Punjab and Haryana. The wheat is meant for export under Open General Licence (OGL).

This wheat was procured in the crop marketing year which concluded on March 31, 2012. According to an official statement today, 409,826 tonnes of wheat is being offered for export from FCI warehouses in Haryana and 540,000 tonnes from Punjab-based warehouses.

This is the first time FCI has invited bids from private traders for export of wheat stored in its warehouses. Earlier, only government-owned trading companies such as State Trading Corporation, Projects and Equipment Corporation or Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation were allowed to sell

FCI wheat. The government has a plan to export around five million tonnes through this method.

Earlier, it managed to export another 4.5 mt of wheat from its stocks but all of that was through state-run trading companies. The exports are because FCI has a record stock, of almost 60 mt of foodgrain as on April 1, as against the required 21.2 mt. Of this total, 24.2 mt is wheat, against the needed buffer stock and strategic reserve requirement of seven mt; rice stocks are estimated to be 35.4 mt, as against a requirement of 14.2 mt.

The foodgrain stocks are expected to swell to a mammoth 92 mt by end-June, as the government plans to purchase another 44 mt in the new procurement season that has begun from April 1. However, leading traders and private companies are not enthused by the move to liquidate wheat stocks at such high prices.

"The terms and conditions are absurd," said a senior official from a leading multinational grain trading firm. He said there was no parity between the rate at which the government was liquidating its stock and international prices. "Wheat in global markets is now priced below \$300 a tonne, while the total cost of purchasing wheat from government stocks (Rs 1,484 a qtl, plus transportation charges and other incidentals) is around \$320 a tonne. Who will purchase two-year-old wheat at a higher price and export it at less?" he asked.

If the idea was to encourage private participation in export of wheat from state-run godowns, the government should cut the price, he said.

## **Ruchi Soya Industries diversifies into tomato processing**

**The first processing unit will be set up in Maharashtra with an initial investment of Rs 44 cr and commercial production will begin by June 2014**

Ruchi Soya Industries, a fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) company focused on edible oil, soya products and margarine, plans to foray into tomato processing. The company has entered into a joint venture (JV) with Japanese tomato processing company Kagome Co Ltd and with Mitsui & Co Ltd, which has presence in trading, investment and services. The JV will be called Ruchi Kagome.

In the new JV, Ruchi Soya will have 40 per cent stake and 60 per cent will be held by a special purpose vehicle (SPV) created by Kagome and Mitsui, which own 66.7 per cent and 33.3 per cent share each in the SPC.

The first processing unit will be set up in Maharashtra with an initial investment of Rs 44 crore and commercial production will begin by June 2014. Land for the unit has been identified.

The JV plans to launch premium tomato purees, sauces, ketchups and other world-class products in India. Ruchi Kagome will work closely with Indian farmers. It will distribute higher yielding seeds and share global knowledge to educate local tomato producers, and set up local support centres.

Dinesh Shahra, founder and managing director of Ruchi Soya, said, "We are planning to launch a range of tomato products. These products will be marketed in both the business-to-business (food services) segment and the business-to-consumer (retail) segment."

The company will also educate farmers on choosing better crop suitable for processing and may also enter into buyback arrangements, subject to commercial viability.

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# THE HINDU Business Line

## High prices keep bidders off FCI wheat tender



*Muted response: Labourers cleaning the wheat at a mandi. Exporters feel that shipments from the Government stocks were unviable at the price offered by FCI.*

**New Delhi, April 29:** The Food Corporation of India has found no takers for its initial tender to sell about one million tonnes of wheat to private players for exports as the price is high. The Government had fixed a floor price of Rs 1,484 a quintal for offloading about five million tonnes of wheat from the 2011-12 crop from FCI warehouses in Punjab and Haryana, for which the first set of tenders were floated.

“There was no response to our tenders today. We plan to re-tender the same later this week,” FCI Chairman, Amar Singh, told *Business Line*.

The FCI had tendered 4.09 lakh tonnes (lt) of wheat from its godowns in Haryana and 5.4 lt from Punjab. Recently, the Government had approved exports of five million tonnes from the Central pool stocks by private exporters to make storage space for the new crop that’s being currently harvested.

### **Higher prices**

However, exporters feel that shipments from the Government stocks were unviable at the price offered by FCI as the global prices have started softening. At current FCI’s price of Rs 14,840 a tonne,

wheat for exports including the transportation and handling costs, would cost about \$315 a tonne free-on-board, while the grain from Black Sea origin commands a lower price of around \$280 .

Moreover, the availability of wheat at a lower price than the minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 1,350 in the mandis of the Uttar Pradesh has prompted the exporters to buy from the country's largest wheat producing State.

In some of the mandis of Uttar Pradesh such as Baharaich and Haathras, wheat traded at around Rs 1,330- 1,340 a quintal, marginally lower than the minimum support price on Monday. Exporters, stockists and domestic millers have been actively buying from the UP mandis since the harvest has begun in the current season.

Exporters such as ITC, Emmsons International and Cargill among others have been actively buying from the UP market, where the Government's procurement mechanism is relatively weak when compared to States such as Punjab and Haryana.

### **inventories**

Though the private exporters have been demanding the Government to revise the floor price downwards in tune with the global market, the Centre is undecided on the issue. The re-tendering on Wednesday is expected to be on the same price of Rs 1,484 a quintal.

So far, the State trading agencies – STC, MMTC and PEC have totally exported about 3million tonnes of 4.5 million tonnes allowed from the Government stocks.

Wheat stocks with the Government stood at 24.2 mt as on April 1, and by June 1, the stocks are expected to rise to 62 mt as procurement is in full swing in Punjab and Haryana.

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# 16 MPs want Govt to withdraw Bill on biotech regulator

**Hyderabad, April 29:** Sixteen Members of Parliament have opposed the Biotechnology Regulator Authority of India (BRAI) Bill that was introduced in Parliament after the recess. They alleged that the Government was trying to circumvent the opposition on genetically modified crops across the country. They have asked the Government to withdraw the bill and introduce a bio safety protection law in its place.

In a letter written to Union Minister for Science and Technology, they said the nation-wide debate on Bt brinjal, the first GM food crop to have been considered for commercial launch in the country, highlighted the objections and concerns of various sections on such crops.

The BRAI Bill proposes a single window clearance mechanism for GM crops in the country. At present Genetic Engineering Approval Committee receives and gives permissions for field trials after the companies received no-objection certificates from the respective States.

Put on hold for long, the Government introduced the bill on the first day of the session, when it resumed after a break.

“This debate also saw about 12 State Governments, including some large brinjal cultivating States, strongly opposing introduction of GM crops,” they said.

They felt that the introduction of the Bill was unexpected as the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture recommended to the Government that the BRAI was not the way forward to regulate GM crops.

“We need to protect and enhance bio safety and to ensure democratic processes are adhered to when dealing with issues as important as food, farming and environment in the country,” they said in the letter.

Those who signed included Basudev Acharya (CPM), Thambidurai (AIADMK), Nama Nageswar Rao (TDP) and Arjun Charan Sethi (BJD).

### **ABLE-AG response**

Association of Biotech Led Enterprises-Agriculture Group (ABLE-AG), however, welcomed the bill.

“The biggest advantage of BRAI is that it will bring single-window clearance on approvals. We hope this will bring about the much-needed alignment in Central and States policies on biotech crop regulations. This will help avoid unnecessary regulatory delays,” Ram Kaundinya, Chairman of ABLE-AG, said.

The association, which represents companies working on agriculture-based biotechnologies, said that it provides for transparent mechanism to inform the public on clinical trials and regulatory decisions made by the authority.

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## **Milk may turn dearer by 5-8% on drought**

**Ahmedabad, April 29:** Due to the drought in parts of Maharashtra and Karnataka and international conditions, milk and milk products can become costlier by 5-8 per cent in the next three months, according to Devendra Shah, Chairman, Parag Milk Foods Pvt Ltd.

Talking to reporters here after the national launch of cheese spread in six flavours on Monday, he said that the prices of milk and other dairy products are expected to rise from June-July. The company manufactures milk products under the brand-names of “Go” and “Gowardhan.”

He said that the drought situation in Maharashtra is grim. The dairy companies of the State had recently collected Rs 4 crore for the farmers as part of their corporate social responsibility activity.



Parag, which had recently opened its exclusive outlets in Mumbai and Pune, plans to open 10-150 such retail outlets in Gujarat alone in the next two years as the State has the highest per capita consumption of cheese, a reason why the company chose to launch its new products nationally in Ahmedabad.

Parag Milk had recently invested Rs 165 crore in expanding its cheese business. It had set up a cheese processing plant with a capacity to produce 40 tonnes of cheese daily. Its own dairy farm has nearly 3,500 specially-bred Holstein Friesian cows. Cheese has a shelf-life of nine months while paneer's life is three months.

Replying to questions, Shah said India produces about 25,000 tonnes per annum of cheese, worth Rs 650 crore, a fourth of which is exported to West Asia, South-East Asia and other regions. This market is growing at 20 per cent annually. Within the milk products industry, cheese comprises 7-9 per cent of the market.

## **Tea export earnings up 20%**

**Coonoor, April 29:** India's tea export earnings in 2012-13 increased by 19.91 per cent over the last fiscal, reveals an analysis of the latest data available with Tea Board and exporters' organisations.

This has mainly due to 2.85 per cent increase in the volume shipped despite the unit price rising by 16.59 per cent.

The average price for Indian tea rose to Rs 179.76 a kg from Rs 154.18 in 2011-12. This was the highest average price fetched by Indian tea so far in the world market.

Prices moved up keeping with general inflationary conditions and the increased demand for Indian tea due to shortage in the supplies from different countries. In effect, the volume shipped rose to 220.46 million kg (mkg) from 214.35 mkg.

With higher volume being shipped for higher price, the overall earnings increased to Rs 3,962.92 crore from Rs 3,304.82 crore. This increase of Rs 658.10 crore marked a growth of 19.91 per cent.

The same trend was witnessed for North Indian tea where the volume shipped increased to 125.36 mkg at from 118.74 and average price to Rs 226.18 a kg from Rs 196.85 resulting in the overall earnings to rise to Rs 2,835.44 crore from Rs 2,337.39 crore.

In the South, the volume exported fell marginally to 95.10 mkg from 95.61 mkg but prices rose to Rs 118.56 a kg from Rs 101.19, thereby taking the overall earnings to Rs 1,127.48 crore from Rs 967.43 crore.

## Cardamom rules steady on buying interest

**Kochi, April 29:** Cardamom market remained steady to slightly firm last week on some buying interest despite good arrivals at the auctions held in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

According to the trade, there is a common belief now that the prices of the commodity have reached such low levels that chances of further fall are slim. It would be better to buy than waiting for any further decline, market sources in Kumily and Bodinayakannur told *Business Line*.

Besides, they said, the Guatemalan cardamom is also allegedly being illegally sold at prices of the indigenous produce. Selling illegally imported material involves risks. Therefore, the dealers are said to prefer the domestic material. As a result, all are buying.

Exporters are also covering and they are estimated to have bought around 60 tonnes of the good variety capsule last week.

Arrival of 7mm and above good colour cardamom has declined while the buyers were also limited. As a result, its prices have slipped to Rs 750-800 from Rs 800-850 a kg.

Prices of 8mm bold also declined to Rs 850-900 a kg on limited demand, they said.

The individual auction average showed a marginal improvement at some of the auctions and was vacillating between Rs 570 and Rs 630 for over a month now.

Much of the material arrived in the market at present are of inferior quality from the last round of picking and that has been keeping the prices low. This kind of material was also responsible for the poor prices, they said.

Total arrivals at the Sunday by KCPMC stood at 69.6 tonnes and the entire quantity was sold out, P.C. Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC. told *Business Line*. The maximum price was at Rs 976 and the minimum at Rs 430. The auction average moved up to Rs 624.62 from Rs 613.11 at the previous Sunday auction, he said.

Total arrivals and sales during the current season from Aug 1, 2012 to April 28 were at 11,872 tonnes and 11,320 tonnes respectively. Total arrivals and sales during the corresponding period last year were at 16,610 tonnes and 16,038 tonnes respectively.

The weighted average price as on April 28 stood at Rs 734.13 against Rs 615.03 on the same date last year.

**Prices of graded varieties (Rs/kg):** AGEB 870-880; AGB 620-630; AGS 610-620 and AGS -1: 580-590.

## Spot rubber rules flat

**Kottayam, April 29:** Spot rubber continued to remain unchanged on Monday.

An almost similar trend in domestic futures and the absence of global guidance kept the sentiments neutral in the local market. Volumes were thin.

Sheet rubber finished flat at Rs 161 a kg, according to traders. The grade was quoted steady at Rs 160 a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to Rubber Board.

In futures, the May series weakened to Rs 160.25 (160.44), June to Rs 159.95 (160.41) and July to Rs 157.79 (158.18) while the August series increased marginally to Rs 156.80 (156.10) a kg on the National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE).

RSS 3 (spot) improved to Rs 157.03 (156.52) a kg at Bangkok.

The Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM) remained closed on account of 'Showa Day'.

**Spot rubber rates (Rs/kg):** RSS-4: 161 (161); RSS-5: 156 (156); Ungraded: 152 (152); ISNR 20: 150 (150) and Latex 60 per cent: 102 (102).

## **Coromandel , IRRI in pact to promote rice research**

**Hyderabad, April 29:** Fertiliser maker Coromandel International Limited has concluded an agreement with the International Rice Research Institute for cooperation in promoting and disseminating improved rice research technologies in India. The technologies will cover all aspects of rice cultivation, including seed quality, nutrient and crop management, water management, farm machinery and post-harvest processing.

The partnership will facilitate Coromandel to bring new rice production technologies and best practices to rice farmers in India through its extensive network.

Kapil Mehan, Managing Director, said: "The partnership will facilitate introduction of world-class rice production technologies in India for improving yield and quality which in turn will lead to higher incomes for rice farmers and increased quality rice production within the country."

Dr Robert Zeigler, Director-General of IRRI, said the institute had many partners in India who have facilitated widespread adoption of new technologies.

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# Mixed trend in Kochi tea auction

**Kochi, April 29:** A mixed trend persisted for almost all varieties of tea at the Kochi Tea auction. In sale No: 17 dust category, the quantity on offer in the CTC grades was 11,47,500 kg.

The market for clean, black, well-made, grainier varieties with good liquoring properties ruled barely steady and tended to ease at Rs 2-3. The quantity on offer in the dust grades was 7,000 kg with Highgrownns dearer.

In the best CTC dusts, PD varieties quoted Rs108/126, RD grades ruled at Rs 120/148, SRD stood at Rs 126/149, while SFD at Rs 130/153.

The leaf sale also witnessed a mixed trend and the quantity on offer in the Orthodox grades was 95,000 kg.

The market for Nilgiri Brokens and fannings was firm to dearer, while corresponding whole leaf was irregular and sometimes lower.

Medium bolder brokens and whole leaf was firm to dearer. Small brokens, fannings barely remained steady and sometimes tended to ease.

The quantity on offer in the CTC grades was 94,000 kg. The market for good liquoring varieties was fully firm.

Clean, black, well-made fannings and smaller brokens also followed a similar trend.

Plainer teas were irregular and lower and witnessed some withdrawals.

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# Sugar seen gaining on retail demand



**Mumbai, April 29:** Retail offtake of sugar is expected to rise the next two days as Maharashtra traders are likely to intensify their strike against the local body tax.

Sources said that the traders, including those in sugar, dry fruits, spices, gur, colour and chemicals, coconut and others business, have decided to join the strike from May 1.

The trend was reflected in the futures market, where prices were up by Rs 23-24 on expectation of higher physical demand ahead of the indefinite bandh from Wednesday, said sources.

On Monday, sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale market ruled steady with the fine quality gaining marginally and the fair quality dropping a tad as local demand was thin.

In the spot market, prices dropped by Rs 5-10, while naka rates showed a mixed trend. Mill tender rates ruled unchanged due to subdued demand. In the Vashi market, new arrivals were about 62-63 truckloads, while local off take was about 63-64. On Saturday

evening, 8-10 mills offered tenders and sold 25,000-30,000 bags at Rs 2,900-2,970 (Rs 2,900-2,970) for S-grade and Rs 2,980- 3,060 (Rs 2,980 - 3,090) for M-grade.

### **On the National Commodities and Derivatives**

**Exchange,** sugar June futures were up by Rs 24 to Rs 2,980 (Rs 2,956), July contracts were Rs 3,010 (Rs 2,987) and August was Rs 3,035 (Rs 3,024) till noon.

**The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were:** S-grade Rs 3,072-3,171 (Rs 3,076-3,171) and M-grade Rs 3,200-3,361 (Rs 3,162-3,381). **Naka delivery rates:** S-grade Rs 3,020-3,050 (Rs 3,000-3,050) and M-grade Rs 3,080-3,180 (Rs 3,080-3,200).

## **Cotton may bloom as ginner's hold back produce**



**Rajkot, April 29:** Cotton price could tend to gain as ginner's look to hold back their stocks, anticipating higher demand. They are looking to demand from domestic mills in view of a rise in yarn exports.

The other reason for them to hold back is the poor response to Cotton Corporation of India's sale of stocks from its inventory. Of the 25,000 bales on offer from the corporation, there has been demand for just 1,000 bales.

On Monday, cotton gained marginally on the back of good demand from mills and short arrivals.

However, weak export demand capped the rise.

Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton traded higher by Rs 100 at Rs 37,200-37,500 a candy of 356 kg. Kapas or raw cotton increased by Rs 5 to Rs 910-955 for a *maund* of 20 kg and Kadi delivery cotton traded at Rs 960-990.

About 20,000-22,000 bales of cotton arrived in Gujarat on Monday and 60,000-62,000 bales arrived across the country. Cotton ready delivery quoted at Rs 4,000-4,090 a quintal in Punjab, Rs 3,955-3,970 in Haryana and Rs 3,955-3,970 in Rajasthan.

A Rajkot-based cotton broker said: "Demand reported to be normal but ginnerys were reluctant to sell at prevailing prices due to limited arrivals."

Cotton prices in India are expected to rise this week on short-covering after recent falls in prices, while thin release by CCI is also seen supporting prices. "Cotton prices may recover this week. Sales from CCI was very thin and below expectation because they had kept prices higher than the market rate," said Arun Dalal, a trader from Ahmedabad. On Monday, the May cotton futures ended 1.32 per cent higher at Rs 18,430 for a bale of 170 kg each on the Multi Commodity Exchange.

It has fallen more than six per cent since the beginning of the month. Cotton production is estimated to be 34 million bales in the current crop year. Some analysts expect selling pressure to mount at higher prices due to weak exports and forecast of normal monsoon. In New York, the most active July contract on the Intercontinental Exchange was up 1.59 per cent at 85.59 cents a lb at 12.47 GMT.



# Edible oil trade cautious ahead of export data



**Mumbai, April 29:** Traders are waiting for further direction from Malaysian palm oil futures that edged lower on Monday after four straight sessions of gains. Traders remained cautious ahead of export data, though.

Sources said sentiment in local market cooled down after Ruchi offloaded palmolein at lower rates tracking bearish Malaysian CPO futures.

On Monday, the edible oil market witnessed a bearish trend, tracking sharp decline in Malaysian palm oil futures.

Groundnut oil declined by Rs 10 in line with a sharp drop in Saurashtra due to increased selling pressures.

Ruchi sold about 700-800 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 503 for ready and weekly delivery. Liberty's rates were higher.

Arrivals of soyabean in Madhya Pradesh were 35,000 bags and mandi prices were Rs 4,000-4,025 and plant level Rs 4,050-4,075. Mustard seed arrivals were 4.50 lakh bags and prices were Rs 3,025-3,500.

Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 510-513 for weekly delivery and Rs 513-516 for May. Super palmolein at Rs 545 and sunflower refined oil Rs 778.

Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 517 ex-Patalganga for May and soyabean refined oil Rs 678 for May. Allana quoted super palmolein at Rs 545. In Saurashtra –Rajkot, groundnut oil further declined by Rs 30 to Rs 1,800 (Rs 1,830) for *telia* tin and by Rs 20 to Rs 1,170 (Rs 1,190) for loose 10 kg.

### **On the National Commodities and Derivatives**

**Exchange**, soyabean refined oil June futures were Rs 693.35 (Rs 692.65), July Rs 678.00 (Rs 677.40) and August Rs 672.50 (Rs.671.45).

**In Malaysia BMD**, crude palm oil June futures contracts dropped to MYR 2,282 (MYR 2,335), July ended higher at MYR 2,273 (MYR 2,316) and August at MYR 2,264 (MYR 2,300) a tonne.

**The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg)**: Groundnut oil 1,190 (1,200), soya refined oil 675 (675), sunflower exp. ref. 685 (680), sunflower ref. 770 (775), rapeseed ref. oil 692 (692), rapeseed expeller ref. 662 (662) cottonseed ref. oil 645 (647) and palmolein 505 (510).

**Vikram Global Commodities, Chennai**, has quoted for Malaysian super palmolein Rs.545 ex-Chennai; \$907 CIF JNPT, May delivery; \$908 CIF Haldia, May delivery.

# Outlook sluggish for wheat futures



**Karnal, April 29:** Wheat futures are likely to be sluggish in the coming weeks in view of arrivals gathering pace. Projections of a record wheat crop have also turned the market bearish with signals of higher global output adding further to the trend.

In the spot market on Monday, prices were unchanged. But prices on the National Commodity and Derivatives exchange improved by Rs 2.50 to Rs 1,387.50.

Wheat arrivals dropped to around 20,000 bags at the Karnal grain market terminal on Monday against arrivals of 60,000 till last weekend.

The quality of the stock was medium and government agencies made the procurement.

In the physical market, steady domestic demand kept dara wheat and flour prices unchanged on Monday. Dara wheat quoted at Rs 1,410-1,415 a quintal. Mill delivery was at Rs 1,410 while delivery at the chakki was at Rs 1,415.

At the Lawrence road market in Delhi, a benchmark for the country, wheat mill quality traded at Rs 1,445-1465.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat futures traded positive on good buying support.

Wheat for May contracts increased by Rs 7 and traded at Rs 1,476 with an open interest of 10,640 lots. It had touched a high at Rs 1,480 earlier in the day.

June contracts went up by Rs 6 and traded at Rs 1,500.

### **Flour Prices**

With a steady trend in wheat, flour too remained unchanged and quoted at Rs 1,670. Similarly, Chokar ruled flat and sold at Rs 1,250.

### **Procurement in Punjab**

Government agencies and private millers procured more than 4.33 million tonnes till April 28.

Out of total procurement, 4.31 million tonnes were procured by Government agencies at the minimum support price while 21,728 tonnes were purchased by the private millers and traders.

### **Exports**

STC has invited bids for lifting 949,826 tonnes of wheat from its warehouses for exports by private traders.

## **Turmeric set to fall on poor upcountry orders**



**Erode, April 29:** Turmeric prices are set to drop further in the absence of orders from North India. Growers, too, in anticipation of slack demand are bringing less of the produce to the market. On Monday, prices of spot turmeric in Erode dropped. “The turmeric market in Nizamabad has started functioning from Monday and many traders from Erode quoted lower prices and got consignments from there. The price of the yellow spice in Nizamabad is cheaper by Rs 1,000 a quintal, said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,996-7,684 a quintal, the root variety Rs 3,506-6,329.

**Salem hybrid crop:** The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,509-8,609, the root variety Rs 5,099-6,899. Of 987 bags, only 25 per cent was sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 7,137-8,007, the root variety Rs 6,434-7,152. Of the 628 bags, 544 found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 6,299-7,920, the root variety Rs 5,905-6,899. Of 543 bags offered, 524 got sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 6,801-8,169, the root variety Rs 6,330-7,200. All the 143 bags were sold.

# Pepper crawls up on buying interest



**Kochi, April 29:** Pepper futures on Monday moved up marginally on buying support from short position holders and ended slightly above the previous day closing.

May contract opened at Rs 35,250 a quintal to drop by Rs 60 to Rs 35,290 in the opening hour itself and touched the highest price at Rs 35,495 up by Rs 205 from the lowest price. The last traded price was at Rs 35,385.

On the spot, 65 tonnes fresh pepper arrived and 48 tonnes were from Madikeri in Karnataka, which were traded at Rs 320-335 delivered at Kochi under 'H' Form while balance 17 tonnes were from the high ranges and was traded at Rs 343-345. The selling pressure from Karnataka pushed the spot prices down by Rs 100.

May contract on the NCDEX moved up by Rs 60 at Rs 35,405. Total turn over increased by Rs 138 tonnes at 312 tonnes. Total open interest decreased by 75 tonnes at 908 tonnes.

Spot prices on selling pressure dropped by Rs 100 at Rs 34,100 (ungarbled) and Rs 35,600 (MG 1).

Indian parity in the international market was at \$6,800 a tonne (c&f) for prompt shipments while May was at \$6,700 (c&f). Meanwhile, an overseas report today said the prices remained

unchanged at \$6,700 (f.o.b.) for Lampong ASTA ; Brazil ASTA  
\$6,350 (f.o.b.); and Vietnam ASTA at \$6,450 (f.o.b.).

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