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## TNAU launches contract plywood farming

### MoU to promote cultivation of melia dubia as raw material



*G. Madan Kumar (left), Managing Partner, Ambi Ply Panels and Doors, exchanging an MoU with R. Rabindran (right), Registrar, TNAU, in the presence of K. Ramasamy (second right), Vice-Chancellor of TNAU, at the Forest College and Research Institute, Mettupalayam.*

Recognising the potential of *melia dubia* as a raw material for plywood industry, Forest College and Research Institute of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University is to promote the cultivation of such plantation in farm holdings.

A memorandum of understanding to this effect was signed with Ambi Ply Panels and Doors at the institute in Mettupalayam on Wednesday.

The MoU will facilitate a consortium-based contract plywood farming model, conceived and designed to be implemented in the State involving farmers, plywood industries, research organisations and financial organisations, as members of the consortium.

The model will assure buy back and assured price supportive mechanisms for the *melia dubia* growers.

It will also create sustained supply of quality raw material to the plywood industry throughout the year.

The cultivation of this crop is expected to reduce the atmospheric carbon dioxide levels through carbon sequestration.

The consortium model will also help protect the reserve forests of India by reducing the pressure on them for the supply of raw material.

The model was launched by V. Irulandi, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Social Forestry and Extension), Government of Tamil Nadu, and was marked by exchange of MoU between the university and the company.

G. Madan Kumar, Managing Partner, Ambi Ply Panels and Doors, Mettupalayam, inked the MoU with R. Rabindran, Registrar, TNAU, in the presence of K. Ramasamy, Vice-Chancellor of TNAU at the Forest College and Research Institute, Mettupalayam.

Farmers, who become part of the consortium, will be able to get Rs. 6 lakh to Rs. 8 lakh from one acre within six years.

The institute has conducted research trials for over a decade and promoted the species in a large portion of farmlands.

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### Showcasing the latest in farm technology

The fifth edition of AgriTech India kicked off in Bangalore on Friday.

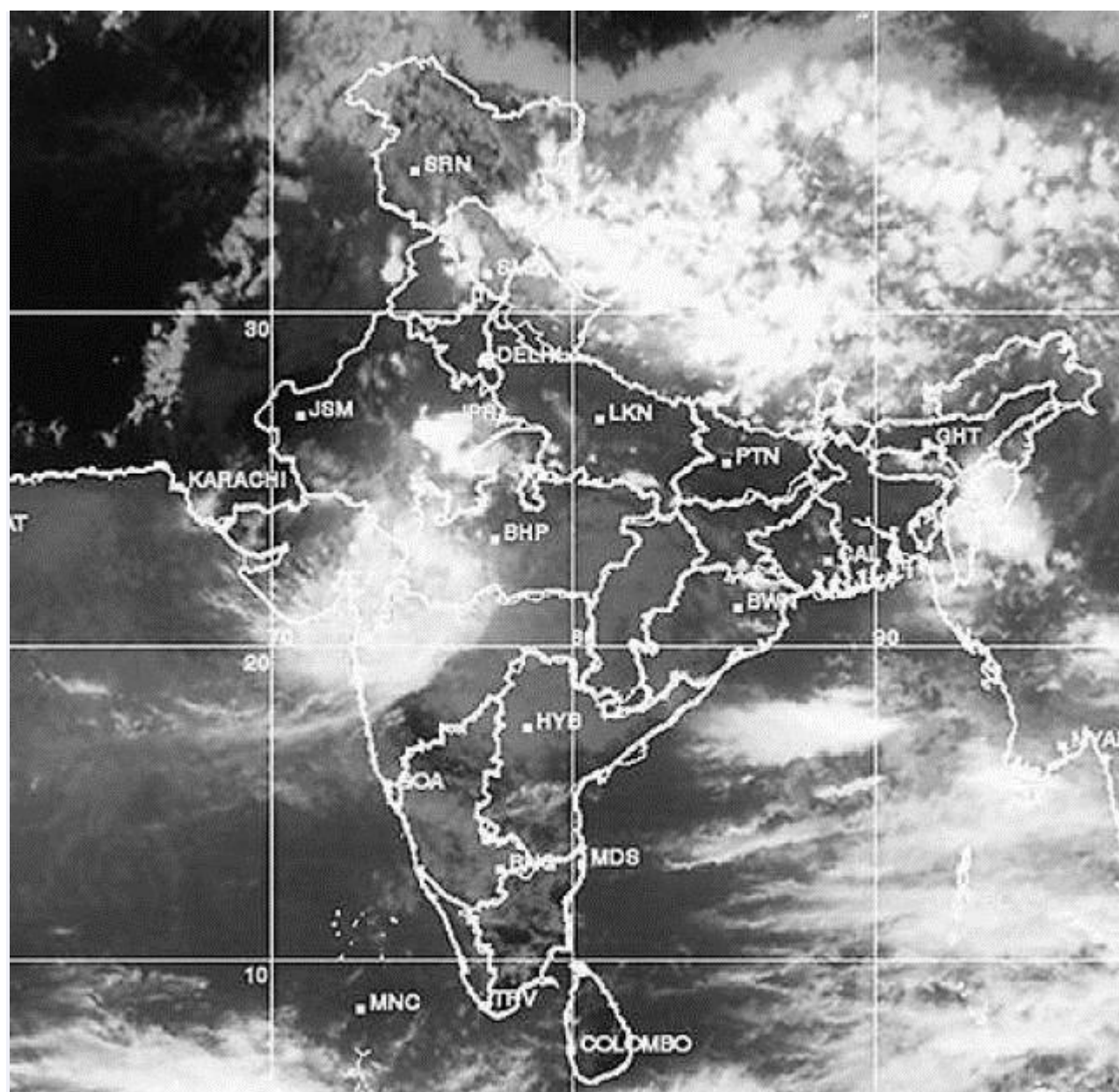
The three-day event is aimed at demonstrating availability of new machinery and technology to farmers, stakeholders in food processing, dairy development, feed and livestock sectors, and retail dealers.

Minister of State for Food and Civil Supplies Dinesh Gundu Rao inaugurated the exhibition at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre and called upon farmers to make use of new technology to increase farm production and check wasteful expenditure. He told farmers to form cooperatives to address the problem of fragmented landholdings so that they could use machines to increase the yield.

S. Jafar Naqvi, chief coordinator, AgriTech, said the three-day expo would be particularly relevant to the State, where farmers grow a number of crops but have technical constraints in enhancing productivity.

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## Weather



*INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on August 23rd.*

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	32	26	1	508
New Delhi (Sfd)	33	25	tr	749
Chandigarh	30	26	1	717
Hissar	33	25	0	507
Bhuntar	33	20	0	391
Shimla	24	17	tr	745
Jammu	34	25	0	1040
Srinagar	30	18	0	209
Amritsar	35	27	tr	741
Patiala	30	25	0	680
Jaipur	31	25	tr	615
Udaipur	31	24	1	618
Allahabad	31	27	1	882
Lucknow	32	24	1	646
Varanasi	33	27	5	603
Dehradun	32	24	0	2447
Agartala	33	25	0	676
Ahmedabad	33	25	0	739
Bangalore	28	20	0	384
Bhubaneshwar	34	28	0	613
Bhopal	28	22	12	1079
Chennai	35	27	0	439
Guwahati	36	26	0	629
Hyderabad	29	22	0	512
Kolkata	33	27	8	1307
Mumbai	31	27	0	2019
Nagpur	37	23	32	1308
Patna	33	27	0	297
Pune	29	21	0	532
Thiruvananthapuram	31	24	tr	870
Imphal	33	23	0	758
Shillong	27	18	0	708

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

## RAINFALL

RAINFALL: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at a few places over Himachal Pradesh and east Rajasthan and at isolated places over rest of the region. The chief amounts of rainfall in cm are: (3 cm and above) HARYANA: Jhajjar 11 and Safidon 8, HIMACHAL PRADESH: Palampur 6, Dehragopipur and Dharamshala 4 each, EAST RAJASTHAN: Dhariabad 6, Pratapgarh 5, Bakani 4 and Kishangarhwas, Asnawar, Gangdhar, Sapotra, Arnod and Niwai 3 each, EAST

UTTAR PRADESH: Karwi 4 and Attarra 3 and WEST UTTAR PRADESH: Lalitpur and Mahroni 7 each and Garotha 3.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 25th August 2013 : Rain/thundershowers may occur at many places over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and east Rajasthan during next 48 hours and decrease thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places over rest of the region except west Rajasthan where it may be at one or two places.

HEAVY RAINFALL WARNING: Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places over east Rajasthan on 24th and 25th August.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 25th August 2013: Generally cloudy Partly cloudy sky. Light rain/thunder development may occur in some areas.

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### **Fish culture a profitable venture**

“Pisciculture or fish culture is a profitable venture if we have good rains”, said K. Sekar (53), a fish farmer of Edakuppam Madhura village in Ananthalai village panchayat near Walajapet.

On a conducted tour to see the pisciculture activities in Walajapet panchayat union with the support of the Fish Farmers Development Agency (FFDA), the reporters came to know that it was about rearing edible fish varieties such as Catla, Rohu, Koi Carp, Common Carp, Mrigala, Grass Carp and Silver Carp on a 1.75-acre farm, and ornamental fish varieties such as gold fish and Molly fish on small tanks. The FFDA gives a subsidy of 25 per cent or Rs. 60,000, whichever was lower, to a fish farmer who seeks a loan for pisciculture.

***FFDA gives 25***

***per cent subsidy or***

***Rs 60,000, whichever is lower, to a fish farmer***

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### **Increase in cotton price hits textile sector**

With the landing price of cotton in Coimbatore shooting up to more than Rs. 50,000 a candy, cotton yarn prices have also gone up. This has resulted in slow demand of yarn from weavers and garment manufacturers.

According to industry sources, prices of hank yarn has increased by Rs. 4 a kg, warp yarn by Rs. 10 a kg and hosiery yarn by Rs. 7 a kg during the last one month.

M. Kumarasamy, a job working power loom weaver at Somanur, says that yarn supply to the job working power loom units has reduced during the last two months because of the yarn price.

The master weavers supply yarn to the job working units once a week. They have reduced the quantity supplied every week because of the price.

According to A. Sakthivel, president of Tirupur Exporters' Association, the hosiery yarn price went up last month too. Earlier, the power shortage problem was cited as the reason for increase in yarn prices.

Now, the power situation has improved, he said.

According to a Southern India Mills' Association representative, cotton prices have increased drastically during the last two months.

Cotton availability is a problem as it is the end of the cotton season.

Yarn prices were stable during the last two months and have increased now only because of the cotton prices. Improvement in the power situation in the State has resulted in higher yarn production and there is no shortage in yarn availability. The offtake by weaving and garment units is low because of the prices.

K. Thirunavukkarasu, president of the South India Spinners' Association, told *The Hindu* that the smaller textile mills here supply yarn mainly to weaving units in Maharashtra.

With rupee depreciating against the dollar, the cost of synthetic fibres has increased by nearly Rs. 12 a kg.

However, the demand for synthetic yarn is very low in Maharashtra and hence its prices have reduced by nearly Rs. 5 a kg.

### Water released from Bhavani Sagar Dam



*MIGHTY FLOW: State Ministers and a host of dignitaries shower flowers at the outlet of Bhavani Sagar Dam from where water was released for irrigation on Friday.— PHOTO: M. GOVARTHAN*



Though late by eight days, the opening of sluices of Bhavani Sagar Dam on Friday brought cheers to farmers irrigating 1,03,500 acres in Erode, Tirupur and Karur districts.

Four State Ministers – N.D. Venkatachalam (Revenue), K.V. Ramalingam (Public Works Department), V. Senthil Balaji (Transport), and M.S.M. Anandan (Forests) – joined the District Collector K.V. Shanmugam at a function to release the water in the presence of a host of MLAs, the Erode Mayor Malliga Paramasivam and other dignitaries.

Starting with 500 cusecs the discharge would be increased gradually to 2,300 cusecs for the next four months. As on Friday morning, the dam level was 85.30 feet with inflow of 1,404 cusecs. Storage in the dam was 18,663 million cubic feet against its full capacity of 32,800 million cubic feet.

The dam has an ayacut area of 2,47,247 acres in the three districts.

Of this 2.07 lakh acres are in Lower Bhavani Project area.

Of the remaining, 24,504 acres are irrigated by Thadapalli Arakankottai channel and the rest by Kalingarayan channel.

At the same time last year, the water level at the dam was 37.63 feet. Due to the failure of crops, the State Government had to provide relief for the farmers. This time around, the abundant rainfall in the catchment areas in the last two months and the release of surplus water from the Piloor dam into the Bhavani Sagar Dam has ushered in hopes for a healthy agricultural season for the farmers cultivating rice, sugarcane, turmeric, and coconut in the three districts.

The State Government has requested farmers to use the water judiciously.

The delay in release of water by five days would not affect the first crop irrigation, said S. Periyasamy, district president of the Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam.

However, the Lower Bhavani Farmers' Association has questioned the delay. According to C. Nallasamy, president of the association, the dam has 18 tmc (thousand million cubic feet) water, and hence, timely release of 10 tmc could have been made.

Also, water from the Bhavani Sagar Dam must be let out only for Kuruvai crop and not for Samba, as per the Cauvery Tribunal Award, Mr. Nallasamy said, adding: "It is unclear why the PWD is misleading the government."

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## Water level



The water level in Periyar dam stood at 130.10 feet with an inflow of 390 cusecs and a discharge of 1,756 cusecs on Friday. The water level in Vaigai dam was 55.81 feet with an inflow of 1,344 cusecs and a discharge of 1,860 cusecs.

The combined storage in Periyar credit was 7,574 mcft. There was no rainfall in the region.

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## Farmers boycott grievance day meet

### **Nagercoil municipality's decision to draw water from Puthen dam draws flak**

Farmers as well as the representatives of various farmers' association boycotted the farmers' grievance day meeting and staged a dharna in front of collectorate here on Friday protesting against the Nagercoil municipal council's decision to draw water from Puthen dam.

At the Nagercoil municipal council meeting held three days ago, the councillors had passed a resolution in connection with drawing water from Puthen dam by digging open well to quench the thirst of the residents of Nagercoil municipal areas. The meeting was chaired by chairperson of Nagercoil municipal council, M.Meena Dev.

However, this decision of the municipality was objected by the farmers at the grievance day meeting held at collectorate which was presided over by District Revenue Divisional Officer S. Palanisamy.

The farmers told him that the water in dams was meant for irrigation purpose and it should not be diverted for other purposes.



In the meantime, Executive Engineer, PWD (Water Resource Organization), U.Subramanian said that as per the Water Management Act, the water should be first used for drinking purpose, second for irrigation purpose and third for the needs of industries.

While speaking the chairman of Kodayar irrigation project (WRO), A.Vins Anto said that the people of the district were mainly dependent on agriculture and its allied activities. Hence, it was unfair on the part of the district administration to draw water from dams for drinking purpose. Instead they should come forward to implement Kuzuthurai river combined water project or Ulakkaiaruvi drinking water project to cater the needs of the residents of Nagercoil municipal limits and the surrounding areas.

A farmer from Vadaserry, Neelakandan said that during rainy season rain water was allowed to flow into the sea, this could be stored by constructing check dams at Pazayaru.

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### **Litmus test for acid lime farmers**

**Adoption of drip irrigation has transformed the fortunes of many farmers in Perambalur**



*A woman displays waste acid lime fruits near a grove that is withering away due to water scarcity in Siruvachur of Perambalur district. — photo: A. Muralitharan*

G.Paulraj of Siruvachur stands near a 60-foot-deep well with his fingers crossed.

To his right are rows of acid lime trees that have escaped extinction in the area. On the fringe are a few trees that have started to wither away.

The well, where work is under progress, promises to breathe a new lease of life. So far, Paulraj has spent over Rs.5 lakh on the new source of water.

The investment is not for the income of about Rs.1 lakh he hopes to reap from acid lime per year but to save the trees he has been nurturing since 1995.

The scene is not unique to Siruvachur. Elsewhere in the district, in places like Chettikulam, Esanai, Naranamangalam, Agaram, and Thondamanthurai, acid lime trees that have died for want of water are cut down. At some places, the green hue of groves is transforming into deep brown. Unlike other crops, with the exception of coconut, if the trees are lost — acid lime is lost forever.

The crop has to be raised anew and the trees start to yield fruits after an agonising wait. This year's prolonged dry spell has cast a pall of gloom in areas cultivating acid lime.

Acid lime cultivated in Perambalur district is transported to the wholesale market in nearby Tiruchi every day.

On better days, farmers harvest lime fruits almost daily and sell the stock at prices ranging from 50 paise to Re. 1 a piece. Depending on availability and demand, lime is sold at higher prices in the retail market.

The crop is raised on 400 hectares of land in the district and over 100 trees occupy an acre of land.

R. Krishnamoorthy, another acid lime farmer, has been able to save his crop through use of drip irrigation. Though he has sustained his crop for about 15 years in drips, he says this year's water scarcity is very acute.

Sustained water supply is essential to protect acid lime but areas that depend solely on well irrigation have reported failure. But farmers anticipate good rainfall next year. Mr. Krishnamoorthy wants the government to provide quality seedlings, agricultural inputs, and subsidy to raise the crop to rejuvenate acid lime in the district.

The government should supply free seedlings, as was the case in Cuddalore district when cyclone Thane struck, to revive acid lime cultivation, says Raja Chidambaram, State secretary, Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam.

A change in mindset can bring about a transformation in acid lime cultivation. Officials are confident of expanding the area under cultivation through adoption of drip irrigation. The Department of Horticulture has been conducting awareness programmes all over Perambalur district on the need to switch to drip irrigation to save water-intense crops. "We are ready to offer drip irrigation facility at 100 per cent subsidy for small and marginal farmers who own

below five acres of land under National Horticulture Mission and free saplings,” says M.Indira, Deputy Director of Horticulture (in charge). Over 500 hectares of land in the district has so far been covered by drip irrigation.

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### Programme on drip irrigation

An awareness programme on drip irrigation techniques was held here on Friday. C.Manoharan, District Collector, addressing officials, spoke on optimum utilisation water. He also explained the subsidy being sanctioned to farmers by the horticulture department. K.M.Shajehan, Joint Director of Agriculture, and M.Vijayakumar, Assistant Director of Horticulture, were present.

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### Special veterinary camp

A two-day special veterinary camp will be held in the district from August 30 for ensuring healthcare of livestock. The focus of the camp will be on fertility of milch animals and de-worming of goats and sheep. In a press release issued here on Friday, C.Manoharan, District Collector, has appealed to the farmers to utilise the camp.

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### SSI sweetens deal for sugarcane growers

**‘Farmers can achieve a yield of 80 tonnes an acre against the normal average of 40 to 45 tonnes’**

After achieving significant success in promoting System of Rice Intensification in paddy, the Agriculture Department is seeking to popularise the Sustainable Sugarcane Initiative (SSI) method of cultivation in sugarcane.

Sugarcane growers, officials of the department say, can almost double their yield by adopting SSI method of cultivation, which requires less seeds and water in comparison to the conventional method. Farmers can easily achieve a yield of 80 tonnes an acre against the normal average of 40 to 45 tonnes, they say.

The department, which has taken up the promotion of the SSI in the district in a big way for the first time this year, hopes to cover at least 1,125 acres under the method. (Sugarcane is expected to be raised in about 13,750 acres in the district this year.) To achieve this objective, the department is offering subsidy to farmers for installing sub-surface drip irrigation systems and providing them Rs.10,000 worth of water-soluble fertilizers and other critical inputs free of

cost an acre. Explaining the salient features of the method of cultivation, Gururaj Singh, Joint Director of Agriculture, said SSI method of cultivation requires substantially lesser seedlings as single budded seedlings are used instead of the two/three budded sets used in conventional method. "Thirty-day old seedlings are planted in rows at a gap of five feet making it easier for farm mechanisation, which helps in bringing down the labour cost drastically," he said. Farmers are given a subsidy of Rs.44, 000 an acre for installing the sub-surface drip irrigation systems under the National Agriculture Development Programme.

*Farmers are given subsidy of Rs. 44,000 an acre for installing drip irrigation systems under National Agriculture Development Programme.R.Chandrasekaran,Deputy Director (Central Schemes), Agriculture*

*Black and white*

*SSI method of cultivation requires lesser seedlings*

*Around 1,125 acre to be covered under the method*

*Water soluble fertilizers directly delivered to roots using drip irrigation*

*Drip irrigation for a five-acre field could cost Rs. 3.50 lakh*

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## **Mettur level**

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 117.6 feet on Friday as against the full reservoir level of 120 feet. The inflow was 8,019 cusecs and the outflow 15,005 cusecs.

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## **Banana growers demand early disbursal of compensation**

**Gale, accompanied by heavy rain, destroyed 7,77,849 plants in Tirunelveli district**

The delay in disbursing compensation for crop destroyed by a gale that swept the district four months ago was raised at the monthly farmers' grievance day meeting held at the Collectorate on Friday.

Banana plantations at Kunnaththur, Kalakkad, Manjuvilai, Keezha Paththai, Mela Paththai, Padmaneri, Thirattur, Karuvelankulam, Thoppur, Salaipudur, Chidambarapuram and the surrounding areas were completely destroyed when a gale, accompanied by heavy rain, tore through the southern parts of the district.

According to a survey by the district administration, banana cultivated in 380 hectares in Nanguneri taluk and 213 hectares in Ambasamudram taluk, along with 21,650 banana plants in

Palayamkottai taluk, were destroyed. In total, banana growers in the district lost 7,77,849 plants in the weather event.

“Farmers, who had grown banana against all odds, lost the crop in the gale. Since the farmers had suffered a huge loss, the government should release the compensation early,” said Kasamuthu of the Communist Party of India.

Raising a separate issue, CPI functionary P.Perumbadaiyaar, alleged that the loans repaid by the members of the Village Forest Committees in the Kalakkadu Division of the Kalakkad–Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve were not remitted in the banks as Forest officials had “misappropriated” the amount. He demanded an inquiry into the matter. ‘Kurichi’ Ganesan, a farmer, complained that Revenue Department officials were denying farmers identity cards under the Farmers’ Social Security Scheme, and certificates to small and marginal farmers. Collector Samayamoorthy said officials would be instructed to address these grievances.

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- *The plants were destroyed when a gale tore through the southern parts of the district*
  - *Farmers, who had grown banana against all odds, had suffered a huge loss*
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### Water level



Water level in the Papanasam dam on Friday stood at 119.55 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 509.49 cusecs and 1,504.75 cusecs of water is discharged from the dam.

The water level in Manimuthar dam stood at 63.76 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 19 cusecs and 255 cusecs was discharged.

### Kanyakumari

The water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 25.70 feet, 63.60 feet in Perunchani, 10.59 feet in Chittar I, 10.69 feet in Chittar II and 30.59 feet in Mambazathuraiyaru dam.

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### **'Allocate sufficient quantity of cotton to bring down yarn prices'**

The Tirupur Exporters and Manufacturers Association (TEAMA) has requested the State Government to put pressure on the Centre to allocate sufficient quantity of cotton from Cotton Corporation of India to the spinning mills in Tamil Nadu, so as to bring down yarn prices.

This apart, the Association had called upon the Union Government to immediately ban the exports of cotton and yarn from the country.

"The sudden increase in the yarn prices, announced by spinning mills in the region on Wednesday, is mainly the result of the escalation in domestic cotton prices due to its non-availability in requisite quantities to meet the consumption demands within the country.

### **Raw material**

"In this scenario, the ban on cotton export alone can ensure that the raw material becomes available in plenty to cater to the demands of the mills within the country. While imposing the ban on cotton export, the Centre should also make sure that the cotton producing farmers get attractive prices for their produces," TEAMA president M.P.Muthurathinam said.

Mr. Muthurathinam was of the opinion that the State Government should compute the needs of the mills before projecting the requisition for 'assured quantity' of cotton from the Centre.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist), in a press statement, had blamed the wrong economic and trade policies adopted by the Union Government for the frequent upward revisions in the yarn prices.

"The Centre has been allowing uncontrolled exports of cotton without looking at the domestic requirements," CPI (M) district secretary K. Kamaraj said.

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### Grievances meet for fishermen

A special grievances day meeting will be held for fishermen in Tiruvarur district at the collectorate on September 3. The meeting will begin at 11 a.m., said a press release by S. Natarajan, District Collector, issued here on Friday.

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### African snails pose threat to crops

**Available pesticides are of no use against the virulent attack**



*African snails feeding on crops at Jainapur village in Chikkodi taluk of Belgaum district. — PHOTO:*

*MALLIKARJUN DANANNAVAR*

After floods and incessant rain, farmers in Chikkodi taluk are now facing an attack of African snails (*Achatina fulica* Bowdich).

Farmers at Jainapur village in Chikkodi taluk have been having a tough time dealing with these snails, known as 'basavana hula' in Kannada, for the past five to six years. Thousands of snails have raided standing crops in hundreds of acres, bringing down crop yields and causing losses to the growers.

Fields of sugarcane, soyabean, groundnut, green gram and other crops have been infested with snails, and farmers find it difficult to remove them manually as there aren't proper pest management methods.

Farmer Eregouda Majalatti says these snails lay nearly 75 to 100 eggs at a time, which hatch in about two weeks to one month. "These snails have created havoc in our village in the last three to five years and we are unable to manage them," he said.

While some farmers are removing them manually or by spraying salt, their breeding is too rapid to be controlled by traditional methods.

He said last year Agriculture Department officials visited the village and suggested a pesticide, which did not help.

The department and agriculture universities should come out with effective measures to deal with these snails at the earliest, he added, and requested the government to consider distributing compensation to affected farmers.

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### Collation of traditional plant wealth

Did you know that the bark of the Maramanjil ( *Coscinium fenestratum* ), a woody climber found in the hilly regions of the State, is a time- tested antidote for snake venom? Or that Kattukachil (*Dioscorea bulbifera* ), the wild variety of the common yam, is a potent antimicrobial against *E.coli* and *Staphylococcus aureus*, the pathogens responsible for food poisoning?

Not many among the younger generation would know that Vishnukranthi ( *Evolvulus alsinoides* ), a common weed found in open and grassy places, is a powerful remedy for fever and gastric ulcer. It is a little known fact that most parts of the lotus plant, including young leaves, petioles, buds, flowers, rhizomes, seeds, stem, and roots, are edible.

The rich diversity of medicinal herbs and edible plants found in Kerala is the highlight of the Students' Handbook on Medicinal and Food Plants jointly published by the Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment and the Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute. Released by Chief Minister Oommen Chandy here last week, the colourful and informative book is designed to drive home the importance of biodiversity and encourage children to participate in conservation activities.

As many as 25 plants are featured in separate chapters under the heading 'Can you identify me?'. The reader is given clues to identify the species by its local/ botanical/popular name. The physical characteristics, distribution, propagation, name of the plant on multiple languages, medicinal properties, food value and pharmacological findings are also included, along with a note on traditional uses and references found in legends.

According to P.G.'Latha, Director, JNTBGRI, the handbook is part of a package of publications brought out under a project titled 'Systematic Documentation of Traditional Knowledge Related to Plants used for Food and Medicine' funded by the Department of AYUSH, Government of India. The package includes a journal of traditional and folk practices featuring 12 articles based on research and case studies and three books titled 'Learning from Traditional Knowledge', 'Kani Model of Access and Benefit Sharing' and 'Concept of Drug Development based on

Traditional Knowledge/ Ayurveda substantiated with Modern Science and Technology'. S. Rajasekharan, principal investigator, said the project was aimed at protecting traditional knowledge and encouraging scientific studies in intellectual property rights.

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### Grow other crops also, rubber farmers told

Stating that rubber has emerged as a major commercial crop across Kerala, State Rubber Board Chairperson Sheela Thomas has urged farmers to go for inter-cropping in rubber estates to tide over market fluctuation and to ensure food security.

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### Pesticide residue found in rice

Excessive amounts of Malathion, a general use pesticide, have been detected in a rice sample collected for inspection from the Food Corporation of India godown at Valiyathura here.

Traces of uric acid, indicating presence of pests, were also found in three to four samples, of a total of nine samples that were collected in raids conducted on August 1.

According to Food Safety officials, the presence of Malathion was detected during tests conducted at the Pesticide Residue Research and Analytical Laboratory of the Kerala Agricultural College at Vellayani here while traces of uric acid, which were in amounts that made the rice and wheat grains 'unfit for consumption', were found in tests at the Government Analyst Laboratory, Thiruvananthapuram.

Officials said the FCI staff had admitted that they used pesticides such as Malathion, DDVP, and Deltamethrine to keep away pests.

"Apparently, the quantity they used was much above stipulated limits, which is why Malathion could be detected in the grains though it was sprayed over the sacks in which the grains are stored. The concentration was very high," officials said.

The Food Safety Department will shortly submit a report on the issue to the State and Union governments. However, action might be initiated only after Onam, officials indicated, adding that more intensive raids and elaborate examination of samples would be taken up after Onam at the godown and other similar food grain storage installations in the capital district.

Incidentally, the raids on August 1, during which the contaminated samples were collected, had witnessed unruly scenes when FCI employees and loading workers refused to let the Food Safety officials in.

The raid was conducted after the Valiyathura police intervened and both the Food Safety Department and the police had booked cases in connection with the incident.

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### Rubber Board to create a common platform for all stakeholders

#### PLATFORM FOR STAKEHOLDERS

The Rubber Board is planning to bring together all the stakeholders in the sector under a common platform. According to official sources, the Board has decided to organise an annual event, 'India Rubber Meet (IRM)', for the purpose. The meet, structured on the lines of similar events in countries like Malaysia, would deliberate on issues like rubber market and industry outlook, economy, regulations and legislations, technology, innovations and so on. According to Board officials, the IRM has been visualised as an annual gathering of rubber industry stakeholders for facilitating networking and information sharing. It will enable the stakeholders to take stock of emerging trends.

*To organise an annual event, India Rubber Meet, to facilitate networking and information sharing.*

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### Training in coconut climbing

As many as 1,296 people from the district have completed the coconut-tree climbing course conducted under the aegis of the Coconut Development Board as part of its attempts to find an answer to the severe shortage of trained hands for harvesting coconuts. The project 'Friends of Coconut Tree' has received an overwhelming response across the State, a release said. The scope and opportunities of these trained hands will increase manifold once *Neera* is produced commercially in the State.

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## Farm operations pick up



*IN ACTION: Labourers engaged in paddy transplantation in the fields near Pamarru mandal in Krishna district. Agriculture activity has picked up with Krishna district receiving good rainfall for the last few days.— PHOTO: V. RAJU*

## Market vagaries leave little choice for tobacco growers



*For a fair deal: A grower displays tobacco produce at an auction platform in Jangareddygudem in West Godavari district. —Photo: A.V.G. Prasad*

Tobacco trading in the northern light soil (NLS) area this year leaves the growers swinging between joy and sorrow -- joy for reaping a windfall for bright grades and sorrow for the low grade produce.

The introduction of e-auctioning for tobacco trading on all the nine platforms in Jangareddygudem, Gopalapuram, Koyyalagudem and Devarapalli in West Godavari district brought cheers to the growers as the initiative helped them reap a high price of Rs 199.60 per kg of the bright grade bales at some point of time. The average price of high grades hovered around Rs 150, against Rs 120 last year, thanks to the e-initiative. The e-auctioning apart, drop in the tobacco area in Brazil helped the demand shoot up within the country leading to higher prices.

### **Short-lived joy**

However, euphoria among the growers proved to be short-lived when it came to trading of the low-grade produce which was priced at as low as Rs 10 per kg.

The low-grade produce, which is one of the 63 grades in tobacco cultivation in the NLS area, is used as raw material for manufacture of non-filtered cigarettes for local consumption within the country.

The kind of bales of poor quality which was sold for a throwaway price, known as black perishable leaf (BPL) grade, was not even fit for making non-filtered cigarettes, Tobacco Board Regional Manager Srinath said. The low-grade produce accounted for not less than 10 per cent of the total yield in the NLS area this time. "We had to reject a good number of low-grade bales with advice to the growers to use them in paddy and oil palm fields as manure for want of takers in the market," the Regional Manager told *The Hindu*. The untimely rains—after planting in October and before the harvesting in January—were cited as the reason for higher volumes of low grade bales flooding the market this year. The unseasonal rains also reportedly led to a drop in yield by 10 per cent.

### **Uneven yields**

V.V.S. Prakasa Rao, general secretary of the NLS Area Tobacco Growers Welfare Association, said the growers could dispose of the low-grade bales last year without any problem as the Tobacco Board authorities allowed trading of both the high grade and low grade produce in the ratio of 3:1 in one go in the absence of price ceiling.

The yield reporting seven-12 quintals was quite uneven in the areas marked by homogenous soil conditions such as Jangareddygudem, Koyyalagudem, Devarapalli and Gopalapuram in the



district. The NLS area spread over 90,000 acres in West Godavari, Khammam and partly East Godavari districts, produced 60 million kg of tobacco of all grades this year.


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## hindustantimes

### Weather

Chennai - INDIA

**Today's Weather**



Cloudy


Rain: 0  
Humidity: 79  
Wind: normal

**Saturday, Aug 24**

Max | Min  
34° | 26°

Sunrise: 05:57  
Sunset: 06:25  
Barometer: 1006

**Tomorrow's Forecast**








Rainy

**Sunday, Aug 25**

Max | Min  
34° | 26°


**Extended Forecast for a week**

Monday Aug 26	Tuesday Aug 27	Wednesday Aug 28	Thursday Aug 29	Friday Aug 30
				
34°   26° Cloudy	35°   26° Cloudy	35°   26° Cloudy	35°   26° Cloudy	35°   26° Cloudy

**Airport Weather**

Chennai

Rain: 7    Sunrise: 05:57  
Humidity: 84    Sunset: 06:25  
Wind: normal    Barometer: 1006



# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## Onion traders made Rs 150 crore in four days



*After creating an artificial shortage by hoarding the crop since July, traders, big farmers and dealers in several cities raked in a whopping Rs 150 crore when their stock hit the markets on August 12.*

PUNE: In the four days from August 12 to 15, five lakh quintals of onions moved out of enormous storage facilities in Nashik and elsewhere in the country to flood the wholesale markets, TOI has learnt.

After creating an artificial shortage by hoarding the crop since July, traders, big farmers and dealers in several cities raked in a whopping Rs 150 crore when their stock hit the markets on August 12. This triggered a price rise in the retail markets that stung badly.

Since that day, people have been buying onions that usually cost about Rs 12 per kg at Rs 50 per kg. In the days that followed, prices peaked to Rs 80 per kg.

Traders who had bought the crop from farmers at an average rate of Rs 1,500 per quintal in June and July sold it for Rs 4,500 per quintal in those four days, TOI found out after interviewing many onion farmers, exporters, middlemen, representatives of the Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC), National Agriculture Cooperative Marketing Federation of India, National Horticulture Research and Development Foundation and government officials.

When state officials inspected the godowns in Lasalgaon and Pimpalgaon in Nashik district, the stock had already been sent to the wholesale markets, sources said.

Traders said there was no wrongdoing on their part. "The charges against us are false. The crop is perishable and risks in storing it are very high," said Sohanlal Bhandari, president of Nashik District Onion Traders' Association.

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### Ragi, jowar and wheat to be given to Annabhagya beneficiaries

BANGALORE: Come October, the [below poverty line](#) (BPL) beneficiaries will have the option of getting ragi, jowar or wheat instead of rice under the [Annabhagya scheme](#).

Expanding the scope of Congress's flagship scheme, the cabinet on Friday approved to give ragi, jowar or wheat. Under the scheme, implemented on July 10, a [BPL](#) beneficiary will get 30 kg of rice at rupee one per kg. As there has been demand from people of north Karnataka that their main diet is jowar and people from southern Karnataka asking for ragi, the cabinet has agreed to give the same from October.

"This scheme will also benefit the state farmers as ragi and jowar will be procured from them. We have enough stock of wheat," law minister T B Jayachandra said. The government will also give boiled rice to the BPL families living in coastal belt.

A beneficiary eligible for 10kg rice will have the option of buying 4 kg rice, 4 kg ragi/jowar and 2 kg wheat. Under 20 kg rice scheme, a beneficiary can buy 11 kg rice, 6 kg ragi/jowar and 3 kg wheat. Under 30 kg rice category, an individual will get 17 kg rice, 5 kg wheat and 8 kg ragi/jowar. "A beneficiary is free to choose full amount of ragi, jowar or wheat under his quota," Jayachandra said.

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### With 30% rainfall deficit, Bihar faces drought

PATNA: With rainy season slowly heading for an end, Bihar as on date has a rainfall deficit of 30% and 33 districts out of 38 are facing drought-like situation. Over 10 lakh hectares of paddy fields are still lying barren even as cultivation season is almost over, implying that there would be a major slump in paddy production this year.

As per the latest figure available with the state agriculture department, only 77.34% of the total target cultivation area in kharif season of 36 lakh hectares has been brought under paddy transplantation till August 22. "This year paddy cultivation has been done on 26.29 lakh hectares only against 30.25 lakh hectare in 2012 due to acute shortage of rain," said deputy director, agriculture, Ashok Prasad. Despite this grim scenario, the state is yet to be declared drought-hit.

BJP legislature party leader Sushil Kumar Modi on Friday said, "The state government is neither declaring the state drought-hit nor is it making adequate arrangements to overcome the situation. In 2010, when Bihar had 21% deficit rainfall, the state was declared drought-hit, but now when the state is experiencing 30% shortfall, nothing is being done. This only shows the anti-farmer attitude of the government."

Though the rainfall deficit in the state has narrowed from 38% to 30%, most of the districts in south Bihar and south-west Bihar have high rain deficiency. In many districts, the deficiency is over 50%, said Met director in charge BP Mandal.

The state till August 22 has received 512mm rainfall against the normal average rainfall of 730mm. However, districtwise the figure varies. Of the 33 districts facing drought-like situation, Sheohar is the worst affected as it has 68% rainfall deficit, followed by Muzaffarpur and Patna which have a deficit of 54 and 52 per cent respectively. Against an average 662mm rainfall, the state has got only 315mm. Bhagalpur, Darbhanga, Banka, Aurangabad and Jehanabad have a shortfall of 31, 28, 34, 37 and 32 per cent.

Given the scanty rain during peak paddy transplantation period, the state government commenced the diesel subsidy scheme from July 24.

But farmers complain that the procedure for getting diesel subsidy is quite cumbersome. "Getting diesel subsidy is too complicated and is hardly of any immediate help to farmers. According to the scheme, the farmers are supposed to procure diesel on their own, attach the bill with the subsidy form and submit them to the kisan salahkar (farmers' adviser) for reimbursement. The subsidy amount reaches the farmers after several weeks," said a farmer, Gopal Singh, of Sattar village in Patna district.

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# DECCAN Chronicle

## Onion flavour missing



Chennai: Onions have made Chennaittes cry once again. But this time it is not for the rising prices of onions but for the missing onion flavour in every dish served at home and restaurants.

"I have cut down omelette from my lunch menu. Not that it makes me fat but it is making my purse lose weight," rued P. Murugan pointing out that omelette price has increased by Rs 5 for the onions added to it.

The onion pachidi served along with biriyani has also been disappointing its fans. "Carrots and cucumber have replaced onion in the side dish in my hotel. However carrot price also remains a concern," said Srinivasan, who runs a military hotel. However it has been a different scenario with the wholesale market.

"Onions comes at just Rs 40 to Rs 50 a kilo nowadays at Koyambedu," said Chandran, president, Koyambedu market association. Around 40 lorries from Andhra Pradesh , Karnataka and Maharashtra land every day and the business at Koyambedu is going on well," he added.

The government run farm fresh vegetable shops have also been maintaining the onion prices. "Onion was sold at Rs 40 per kilo on Thursday. This is because of the absence of middleman till the veggies reach the market here," said an employee at a government vegetable shop.

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# Business Standard

## Shrimp ailment to hit global supply



Early mortality syndrome (EMS), the disease which caused serious damage to the shrimp industry in countries such as Vietnam and Thailand, is now spreading widely. Outbreak of the disease in China and Indonesia is now reported, causing a sharp fall in the supply of the commodity which triggered international price rise.

Chinese production was very badly hit due to the disease in 2009. Some countries had even banned import of shrimp from southeast Asian countries. According to reports, it would take at least eight to 10 months to recoup the production loss. Production in Malaysia, too, has been affected due to EMS.

Shrimp prices have reached record in Japan and traders now see no hope of price relief going into the year-end holiday season. According to reports, global shrimp production will be down 10 per cent this year. Global prices have risen \$1-2 per kg, on an average, this month.

According to market analysts, the present market condition might be a boon to exports from India and Ecuador, where disease has not spread so far. The average global price has increased to \$9-9.5 a kg (for 20-30 count) from \$7-7.5 a few weeks ago.

Processing plants in east Asian countries have to depend on import from India in order to meet their commitments with European and US importers. Countries such as Vietnam and Taiwan are importing more shipments from India for export purpose. Rise in local demand in Korea also caused warming up in global prices. Chinese import has also increased around 28 per cent



during the past six months. Supply from Thailand, the world's second largest shrimp producer, may fall about 50 per cent this year from a normal production size of 500,000 tonnes a year.

To protect Mexican shrimp aquaculture from disease, the Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food ordered temporary suspension of shrimp from China, Vietnam, Malaysia and Thailand.

The Philippines had stopped import of live shrimps from May onwards. The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) of the Philippines has also banned the entry of crabs and lobsters, which can carry and transmit the disease. BFAR said it is also monitoring the spread of EMS in Singapore, Myanmar, Brunei and Cambodia.

Meanwhile, a research team led by Donald Lightner at the University of Arizona found that EMS is caused by a bacterial agent, which is transmitted orally, colonises the shrimp gastrointestinal tract and produces a toxin that causes tissue destruction and dysfunction of digestive organ known as the hepatopancreas. It does not affect human beings.

Lightner's team identified the EMS pathogen as a unique strain of a relatively common bacterium, *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, that is infected by a virus known as a phage, which causes it to release a potent toxin.

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### **Soybean up 2.2% on global cues**

#### **Soybean prices for November contract spurted by 2%**



Soybean future prices firmed up by Rs 72 to Rs 3,350 per quintal in futures trade today on increased buying by traders in line with firm overseas cues.

Marketmen said rise in price in international markets, supported by low supply and rising domestic demand mainly improved the sentiment here in futures trade.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, soybean for October gained Rs 72, or 2.20%, to Rs 3,350 per quintal, with an open interest of 84,850 lots.

Prices for November contract also spurted by Rs.66.50, or 2.02%, to Rs 3,360 per quintal, clocking an open interest of 86,060 lots.

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### **Coriander down 0.3% on sluggish demand**

#### **Coriander for delivery in October shed 0.19%**



Coriander futures showed weakness with prices falling by Rs 20 to Rs 5,640 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators trimmed positions, tracking a weak trend at spot market on sluggish demand. At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange, coriander for delivery in September declined by Rs 20, or 0.35%, to Rs 5,640 per quintal with an open interest of 22,400 lots. Likewise, coriander for delivery in October shed Rs 19, or 0.19%, to Rs 5,753 per quintal in 9,310 lots. Market analysts said the fall in coriander prices at futures trade was due to reducing of positions by speculators following a weak trend at spot market on sluggish demand.

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### Cardamom gain 0.3% on rising demand

#### **Rising demand in the spot markets influenced cardamom prices in futures trade**



Cardamom prices rose by 0.37% to Rs 764.80 per kg in futures market today mostly supported by rising demand in the spot market. At the Multi Commodity Exchange, cardamom for delivery in September gained Rs 2.80, or 0.37%, to Rs 764.80 per kg in business turnover of 588 lots. Market analysts said rising demand in the spot markets mainly influenced cardamom prices in futures trade.

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### Chana down 0.1% on subdued spot demand

#### **Offloading of holdings by speculators triggered by subdued demand in the spot market against adequate stocks position resulted in the fall of chana futures**



Chana prices softened by 0.13% to Rs 3,038 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators reduced their holdings amid subdued demand in the spot market against adequate stockists position. At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, chana for delivery in September month fell by Rs 4, or 0.13%, to Rs 3,038 per quintal with an open interest of 1,38,920 lots. Similarly, chana for delivery in October traded lower by the same margin to Rs 3,123 per quintal

in 79,470 lots. Analysts said the fall in chana futures was due to offloading of holdings by speculators triggered by subdued demand in the spot market against adequate stocks position.

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### Crude palm oil up 0.3% on firm demand

#### **Crude palm oil for delivery in August edged up by 0.19%**



Crude palm oil remained higher for the second day with prices rising by Rs 2.10 to Rs 537.50 per 10 kg in futures trade today as speculators enlarged positions, driven by a firm demand in the spot market. At the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude palm oil for delivery in September month gained Rs 2.10, or 0.39%, to Rs 537.50 per 10 kg in business turnover of 229 lots.

Similarly, the oil for delivery in August edged up by rupee one, or 0.19%, to Rs 540.70 per 10 kg in 151 lots. Market analysts said speculators enlarged positions, driven by a firm demand in the spot market mainly helped crude palm oil to trade higher at futures trade.

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# THE HINDU Business Line

## Copra gains with coconut oil



Copra prices increased by Rs 400 a quintal at the regulated market in Avalpoondurai following rise in global coconut oil prices.

“Copra prices increased due to the increase in price of the coconut oil in the international market,” said R.M. Palanisamy, a coconut oil trader.

He said that still the price of palm kernel is lower than the coconut oil, as many biscuit and other firms are buying huge stocks of palm kernel oil. Though coconut oil crushers have huge stocks of copra with them, they are still buying copra to expand their inventories.

The copra farmers have said that the Government through various agencies should procure their copra at a minimum price of Rs 70 a kg (Rs 7,000 a quintal).

On Friday, at the Avalpoondurai Regulated Market Committee, 1,058 quintals arrived and within few minutes, all the quantity was sold.

Only coconut oil crushers from Tamil Nadu attended the sale.

The absence of the Kerala crushers caused concern.

At the sale, the first grade copra was sold at Rs 5,275-5,425, second grade Rs 4,185-5,275.

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### Cultivation of iron-rich pearl millet gains traction as farmers turn health conscious



Over 30,000 farmers in the country have taken up cultivation of a new variety of pearl millet that is rich in iron. The variety was released for commercial use in Maharashtra last year.

Growers' move to take up cultivation of the iron-rich pearl millet, marketed under the brand name Dhanashakti, is significant since they seem to have taken up the issue of iron deficiency leading to wide-spread anaemia in the country.

In guidelines for control of anaemia issued earlier this year, Unicef said that India is one of the countries where there is high prevalence of anaemia.

According to Unicef, 79 per cent of the children in the country below three years of age suffer from anaemia caused by iron deficiency. About 70 per cent of the children below five years of age are also affected by this problem.

Also, some 60 per cent of women aged between 15 and 49 are anaemic due to iron deficiency.

The iron-rich pearl millet was developed through conventional breeding by the International Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (Icrisat) under the HarvestPlus Programme. The plant variety also provides more zinc, yields more besides being disease- and drought-tolerant.

According to Washington-based International Food Policy Research Institute, results from a study under the HarvestPlus Programme indicate that children could get their full daily iron needs from just 100 grams of flour derived from this pearl millet variety.

According to the Food Policy institute, a study published in the Journal of Nutrition showed that pearl millet, called kambu in Tamil and bajra in Hindi, bred containing more iron could provide young children with their daily iron needs.

Pearl millet is an important staple food in semi-arid regions in the country, where iron deficiency is widespread. Lack of iron affects mental development and increases fatigue. Severe anaemia, due to iron deficiency, increases the risk of women dying during childbirth.



A study conducted among iron-deficient children showed that traditional food varieties such as uppuma and roti made from the new pearl millet variety helped them absorb more iron than from an ordinary millet variety. The additional zinc content also took care of the children's daily zinc needs. Zinc shortage among children could lead to stunted growth and make them prone to common infections.

The research team was led by Michael Hambidge, Pediatrics Professor Emeritus at the University of Colorado in Denver. Hambidge said that the results of the study offer a potentially important, strategy to battle malnutrition.

On the Indian side, Bhalchandra Kodkany of Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College was the principal investigator.

The journal also said that a study conducted on marginally iron-deficient Beninese women found that they absorbed twice the amount of iron from this nutrition-tailored pearl millet.

Pearl millet is grown on some nine lakh hectares every year. During 2012-13 season that ended in June, its production dropped to a five-year low of 8.74 million tonnes against 10.28 million tonnes the previous season. The record production was in 2003-04 when 12.11 million tonnes were produced.

With the response from farmers being encouraging, farm scientists in the country are now trying to develop more iron-rich pearl millet varieties that will have even higher levels of iron.

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### Global black tea output up 9.36%

July production data for black tea production from Sri Lanka, Malawi and Bangladesh show a rise of nine per cent this calendar year compared with the same period a year ago.

"Accordingly, our compilation places the cumulative global black tea production so far this calendar at 913.38 million kg (mkg) from 835.23 mkg last year," Rajesh Gupta, publisher of annual Global Tea Digest, told *Business Line*.

This is an increase of 78.15 mkg .

Sri Lanka's July production dropped to 22.60 mkg from 25 mkg in July 2012.

However, helped by higher production in earlier months, the cumulative output in the seven months increased to 194.86 mkg from 189.23 mkg. Malawi's July production rose to 1.70 mkg (1.10 mkg).

However, because of lower production in earlier months, the cumulative output was 31.87 mkg against 33 mkg last year.

In July, Bangladesh produced 9 mkg against 8.30 mkg in July 2012.

The cumulative output rose to 24.19 mkg from 23.63 mkg last year.

Overall, the global climatic condition now is favourable for tea production and the unseasonal rains in Africa are helping higher crop in Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda this month.

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### Short covering lifts spot rubber

Spot rubber improved on Friday. According to observers, prices strengthened on covering purchases at lower levels following initial gains in domestic futures. But the market failed to react in tune with the late declines on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

Moderate gains in the trend setting global indices and the absence of genuine sellers in the local scene kept the sentiments positive.

Sheet rubber increased to Rs 185 (Rs 184) a kg at Kottayam and Kochi, according to traders and the Rubber Board.

September futures weakened to Rs 178.65 (Rs 180.38), October to Rs 174.75 (Rs 175.76), November to Rs 171 (Rs 172) and December to Rs 171.50 (Rs 172.40) on the NMCE.

RSS 3 (spot) improved to Rs 169.61 (Rs 165.76) at Bangkok. August futures closed at ¥ 259.1 (Rs 167.57) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

**Spot rubber rates Rs/kg:** RSS-4: 185 (184); RSS-5: 182 (182); Ungraded: 174 (173); ISNR 20: 169 (169) and Latex 60 per cent: 158 (159).

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### Coffee planters seek more sops from Commerce Ministry in 12th Plan

Coffee planters, mainly in Karnataka, have urged the Commerce Ministry to finalise and announce the 12th plan proposals of the Coffee Board.

The planters under the banner of Karnataka Planters' Association (KPA) met Secretary of Commerce Ministry S.R. Rao and Additional Secretary J.S. Deepak at Chikmagalur during the latter's tour of coffee-growing regions in the State, and urged them to finalise the Plan at the earliest. "All capex plans of growers have been put on hold and are worried as activities relating to the schemes of the Plan are getting delayed," said Nishant R. Gurjer, Chairman, KPA.

In addition to the Plan approval, KPA also urged the Ministry for enhancement in the rate of subsidy and open up the schemes to cover small, medium and large growers. Also to enhance subsidy cost for replanting to all sectors including companies and co-operatives. Growers also highlighted the crop damage due to heavy monsoon this year.

Gurjer said, “Due to exceptionally heavy rains which lasted for more than 70 days in the coffee districts of Chikmagalur, Kodagu and Hassan, plants were affected by Black Rot and Stalk Rot disease due to which there was berry dropping. This is the heaviest rainfall in over 20 years.”

Also, due to water logging, coffee plants were affected by ‘Wet foot disease’ due to which not only there was dropping of berry but also leaves.

“Due to this, the crop for the year 2013-14 and the next crop for the year 2014-15 will drastically drop and a post blossom 2013-14 figure of 3,47,000 tonnes of Coffee Board will not be reached,” he said.

### **Action Plan**

Planters also urged the ministry officials to initiate an ‘Action Plan’ for research and development to be taken up by CCRI for the next five years. “CCRI needs to focus and develop new high yielding arabica strains (resistant to leaf rust) and robusta strains – which is good in the cup,” Gurjer.

“An effective control measure for the White Stem Borer is imperative to prevent the conversion of arabica estates into robusta. With severe constraints on water resources, the development of drought resistant varieties of robusta will mitigate the dependency on irrigation,” he explained.

### **‘Biotech Bill should seek to regulate, not promote GM crops’**

The Coalition for GM-Free India has opposed the Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India Bill. While the Government argues that the Authority would regulate biotechnology, the Bill seeks to “promote the safe use of modern biotechnology by enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of regulatory procedures”.

“The concern is about the ‘fait accompli’ approach towards modern biotechnology. There is no role for promotion in a regulatory body. The main purpose of a Biotechnology Regulation should be to protect the health (human and animal) and environment from the risks posed by modern biotechnology and its applications,” the association said.

The coalition, which represents 250 organisations in the country, submitted its response to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and technology, Environment and Forests. The panel sought public opinion on the proposed Bill.

The Coalition felt that the country instead needed a National Biosafety Protection Authority to ensure safety and health.

“Regulation of modern biotechnology is much more problematic than regulation in other sectors like telecom or electricity, because it pertains to a living modified technology. The fundamental basis of regulation lies in the risks associated with modern biotechnology,” it said.

It also objected to the Ministry of Science and Technology introducing the Bill. “The Ministry of Health or Ministry of Environment and Forests should have handled it,” it pointed out.

It observed that recommendations and observations made by MoEF, Agriculture Task Force, Parliamentary Standing Committee and Technical Expert Committee of the Supreme Court (which raised flag on several issues related to genetically modified organisms) were ignored and negated in Bill.

### Spot pepper up on tight supply

Pepper futures running contract dropped on Friday in correction. The trade claimed that they were pushed to higher levels, while the spot moved up on tight supply amid good demand.

On the spot, 17 tonnes arrived and 20 tonnes were traded at Rs 405-406 a kg.

September contracts on the National Multi Commodity Exchange fell by Rs 354 to Rs 44,000 a quintal, while October moved up by Rs 111 to Rs 44,790.

Total turnover increased by four tonnes to 25 tonnes.

Total open interest declined by one tonne to 46 tonnes.

Spot prices moved up by Rs 100 to Rs 40,500 (ungarbled) and Rs 42,500 (garbled) on limited activities.

### Rice, pulses acreage climbs; cotton, sugarcane sowing flat

Kharif acreage		(in lakh hectares)	
	This Year	Last year	
Rice	324.73	315.43	
Pulses	99.63	85.32	
Coarse Cereals	189.35	165.34	
Oilseeds	186.60	162.02	
Sugarcane	48.53	50.06	
Cotton	111.34	111.53	
Jute & Mesta	8.31	8.36	
<b>Total</b>	<b>968.48</b>	<b>898.05</b>	

Source: Ministry of Agriculture

Kharif acreage, so far, is higher by eight per cent at 968.48 lakh hectares (lh) over the corresponding period last year, aided by a 14 per cent excess rainfall across the country.

Planting is complete in over 90 per cent of the normal area of 1,068 lh.

#### **rice coverage**

Rice acreage was higher at 324.73 lh with States such as Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat and Haryana reporting more area under the cereal.

However, States such as Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Odisha have reported lower acreage.

In pulses, the acreage under tur or arhar is higher by about a tenth at 36.55 lh as Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat have reported higher areas.

#### **Urad acreage flat**

The acreage under urad bean is almost flat at 21.36 lh, while the acreage under moong is higher by more than a fourth at 21.49 lh (16.99 lh).

The area under moong has doubled in Karnataka, while it has increased by over 50 per cent in Rajasthan to 9.15 lh (6.2 lh).

Under coarse cereals, maize has seen a record acreage this year with the area exceeding 80 lh (71.26 lh).

States such as Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh have registered higher acreage over last year.

Total area under kharif millets such as jowar, bajra, ragi and small millets is higher at 109.29 lh (94.07 lh).

#### **record soyabean**

The total oilseeds acreage at 186.59 lh against last year's 162.01 lh is boosted by a record planting of soyabean during this year. Soyabean is sown on a record area of 121.80 lh, while groundnut is planted on 41.24 lh.

Even castor, sesamum and sunflower have seen a rise in acreage.

The area under sugarcane has largely stayed flat at around 48.53 lh, marginally lower than last year's 50.06 lh, primarily on account of lower area in Maharashtra and Karnataka.

#### **Cotton stagnates**

Despite a lower acreage, the cane yields are expected to be higher this year boosted by well-spread and excess rains in the key cane growing States.

Despite an early progress in the cotton acreage, the area this year would remain flat at around 111.34 lh.

While Gujarat and Karnataka have registered a higher area under the fibre crop, States such as Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Punjab and Rajasthan have reported lower acreages as farmers in these States have switched over to alternative crops such as guar and soyabean among others.

### Cotton may wilt on higher plantings



Cotton prices dropped on the back of poor export and mills demand.

According to market sources, demand has slipped after prices moved up sharply earlier this week.

It may fall further as sowing activity across the country is good.

Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton decreased by Rs 300-400 to Rs 46,500-47,000 for a candy of 356 kg.

*Kapas* or raw cotton price declined by Rs 20-25 to Rs 1,150-1,170 for a *maund* of 20 kg and gin delivery kapas was traded at Rs 1,170-1,185.

About 2,000-2,500 bales of cotton arrived in Gujarat and 4,500-5,000 bales arrived in the country on Friday.

A Rajkot-based cotton broker said that the price gained over the past one week and demand began to peter out since the last two days. As a result, price slid on Friday.

Moreover, sowing is good this year and production is expected to be higher.

According to Gujarat State Agriculture department data, cotton has been sown on 2.66 million hectares this year against 2.24 million hectares during the same period last year. Cotton was cultivated on 2.47 million hectares last year.

Meanwhile, the registration for cotton yarn exports has jumped 55 per cent in the first four months of the current financial due to resurgence in Chinese demand. If the trend continues, cotton yarn export could hit a new record this fiscal.

Data compiled by the Directorate-General of Foreign Trade showed traders and exporters had registered for a shipment of 488.15 million kg between April and July 2013, compared with 314.19 million kg in the corresponding period last year. Export registration for cotton yarn almost doubled from 245.84 million kg in the April-July 2011 period.

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#### Saurashtra producers offer groundnut oil at discount



Edible oils are set to drop further with producers in Saurashtra region of Gujarat offering groundnut oil Rs 100 lower than current prices for delivery next week.

This will curb any uptrend in other oils since the gap will narrow.

Stockists in Gujarat are releasing from their inventories quickly on hopes that kharif groundnut will arrive early and the production will be higher, according to an observer.

In Mumbai, palmolein and soyabean refined oil declined by Rs 6 and Rs 12 for 10 kg respectively.

Rapeseed oil was up by Rs 4, while groundnut, sunflower and cotton refined oils ruled steady on slack demand.

At the end of the day, Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 592, super palmolein at Rs 622 and super deluxe at Rs 642, soyabean refined oil at Rs 670 and sunflower refined oil at Rs 830.

Ruchi offered palmolein at Rs 610, soyabean refined oil at Rs 665 and sunflower refined oil at Rs 825.

Allana quoted palmolein at Rs 595, super palmolein at Rs 620, soyabean refined oil at Rs 670 and sunflower refined oil at Rs 820.



In Rajkot, groundnut oil further declined by Rs 40 to Rs 1,370 (Rs 1,410) for *telia* tin and loose 10 kg by Rs 25 to Rs 875 (Rs 900).

**On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange**, soyabean refined oil's September futures quoted at Rs 688.30 (Rs 686.05), October at Rs 661.80 (Rs 658.55) and November at Rs 653.50 (Rs 650.85).

**Malaysia BMD crude palm oil's** September contracts ended at MYR 2,407 (MYR 2,402), October at MYR 2,375 (MYR 2,366) and November at MYR 2,359 (MYR 2,356).

**The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were:** Groundnut oil 950 (950), soya refined oil 665 (677), sunflower exp. ref. 730 (730), sunflower refined. 820 (820), rapeseed ref. oil 726 (722), rapeseed expeller ref. 696(692) cottonseed ref. oil 665 (665) and palmolein 582 (588).

**Vikram Global Commodities (P) Ltd** quoted Rs 630 for 10 kg for Malaysia super palmolein for September delivery.

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### Pulses set to turn dearer as Re plunges



With the rupee plunging to record lows and import set to become costlier, prices of almost all pulses have increased.

In addition, fear of damage to kharif crops due to fresh spell of rain in Madhya Pradesh and neighbouring States has helped price rally.

Arrivals of pulses in mandis have declined owing to rain.

Masoor (bold) in Indore mandis on Friday ruled at Rs 4,500 a quintal, while masoor (medium) was quoted at Rs 4,100-4,200.

Prices in the past fortnight have gone up by almost Rs 250-300.

Dependency on imports may push masoor to as high as Rs 5,000, he added.

Uptrend in masoor has also lifted its dal with masoor dal (average) being quoted at Rs 5,150-75, masoor dal (medium) at Rs 5,250-75, while masoor dal (bold) ruled at Rs 5,350-75.

Uptrend also continued in urad amid report of damage to new crop due to fresh spell of heavy rains in the State.

Urad (bold) ruled at Rs 4,000-4,050, while urad (medium) ruled at Rs 3,500-3,800.

In the past fortnight, urad prices have almost gone up by Rs 650.

If the present spell of rains continued for some more days, urad prices are bound to go higher in the coming days, said another trader.

Uptrend in urad has also lifted its dal with urad dal (medium) being quoted at Rs 4,400-4,500, urad dal (bold) at Rs 4,500-4,700, while urad mongar ruled at Rs 5,200-5,400.

Moong (bold) ruled at Rs 5,000-5,200, while moong (medium) ruled at Rs 4,500-4,800.

With better crop prospect and rise in acreage, traders were expecting bumper crop output in both moong and urad this year.

### Sugar extends gain on hopes of higher demand



Sugar prices ruled steady at national level on ease and need-based, month-end local demand on Friday while on futures market, it extended gain on hope of higher physical demand from next month.

Sources said that activities were subdued on ample supply and need-based local demand.

As market carries ample stocks of over 120 truckloads (each of 100 bags) stockists kept away from taking big risk. Their inventory buying was also low.

In domestic futures market, the bullish trend continued for October and November contracts continued on hopes of higher demand for festivals.

November futures on the NCDEX rose by Rs 8 taking total rise of Rs 65 in the last four days. Arrivals in the Vashi market were 62-63 truckloads (each 100 bags) while local dispatches were 61-62 trucks.

On Thursday, 18-20 mills offered tenders and sold 38,000-40,000 bags at steady level at Rs 2,910-3,000 (Rs 2,910-3,000) for S-grade and Rs 3,010-3,110 (Rs 3,010-3,110) for M-grade.

**On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange**, sugar September futures were up by Rs 8 to Rs 3,029 (Rs 3,021), October was higher by Rs 8 to Rs 3,055 (Rs 3,047) and November inched up to Rs 3,081 (Rs 3,073).

**The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were:** S-grade Rs 3,042-3,142 (Rs 3,042-3,142) and M-grade Rs 3,162-3,372 (Rs 3,162-3,372).

**Naka delivery rates were:** S-grade Rs 3,005-3,060 (Rs 3,005-3,060) and M-grade Rs 3,120-3,210 (Rs 3,120-3,210).

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#### Turmeric rules stable despite rising inflow



Turmeric prices ruled stable in Erode markets on Friday despite higher arrivals.

Arrivals increased to 5,521 bags and 65 per cent was sold.

“Sales in all the four markets were encouraging, but prices did not improve.

This is due to the lack of fresh demand from North India,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

Many traders purchased the hybrid finger variety quoting higher price as quality crop arrived for sale.

Sales of other varieties were also high.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,058-5,784, the root variety Rs 3,709-5,317.

**Salem hybrid crop:** The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,411-6,868, the root variety Rs 4,784-5,611.

Of the 1,294 bags that arrived, 679 were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,949-5,879, the root variety Rs 4,779-5,569.

Of the 777 bags put up for sale, 592 found takers.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,549-5,919.

The root variety was sold at Rs 4,500-5,439.

Of 1,333 bags on offer, 1,324 were traded.

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#### Wheat futures likely to be range-bound next few days



Wheat futures are likely to trade in a tight range in the coming days, while dara wheat in physical market is also unlikely to see much fluctuation, according to traders.

Wheat futures witnessed a mixed trend on Friday. On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat for September contracts dropped by Rs 2 to Rs 1,584 a quintal with an open interest of 8,400 lots.

The grain touched a high at Rs 1,590 earlier in the day.

September contracts got some support at Rs 1,583, while resistance was at Rs 1,592.

October contracts improved by Rs 3 to Rs 1,594.

In the spot market, after witnessing a continuous fall in recent past, spot prices on the exchange rallied by Rs 35 to Rs 1,535.

According to the market experts, wheat futures have been ruling in a tight range and it may continue to rule in ranges even in the next few days too.

In the physical market, moderate buying kept dara wheat unchanged and quoted at Rs 1,470-1,475.

Around 1,000 bags of wheat arrived and stocks were directly offloaded at the mills.

Mill delivery was at Rs 1,470 while delivery at the chakki was at Rs 1,475.

Similarly, desi wheat variety remained unchanged and went for Rs 2,600-2,650.

Radhey Sham, a commodity expert, told *Business Line* that only need-based buying is taking place in the market and wheat prices may continue to rule around current levels even in the next few days without much fluctuation.

### Flour Prices

With the demand being steady in the region, flour continued to rule flat and quoted at Rs 1,700.

Similarly, Chokar ruled flat and sold at Rs 1,150.

### Rice exporters to hit domestic market with snacks



India may be the largest exporter of rice, but of late, rice exporters are eyeing the domestic market with a slew of 'healthy' value-added rice-based snacks.

Non-tariff related barriers and volatility in exchange rates are driving export-oriented players such as LT overseas, Radikal Overseas and Best Foods to go beyond the pure play rice commodity segment.

Today, most of them are looking at the 'healthy snacking' ready-to-eat category to derive better gross margins in the domestic business.

“Though certain countries have objected to the chemicals and pesticides used by rice exporters, the food category is not witnessing a slowdown. The Food Security Bill will also benefit food companies like ours. We intend going beyond rice to becoming a foods company under the Radikal umbrella. We are now getting in to rice-based snacks on the health platform,” said Sidhant Chaudhary, Managing Director, Radikal Overseas.

The three-year-old company is exploring new categories such as rice-based cup noodles in the ready-to-eat segment and is also considering an initial public offering (IPO) in the future to fund its entry in this segment.

Considering that rice is still treated as a commodity, getting margins has been difficult for branded players. They are now looking at more value-added products. Being a low margin product, it has also not been easy for these branded players to compete with smaller rice mills.

Even LT Overseas, with its Dawat brand, plans to enter the healthy snacks category with its MyMy brand under a separate subsidiary. “We have yet to launch MyMy in the market. Initially, there will be adequate investments behind the brand. The rupee volatility is too high and we want to play it safe and have hedged our risks with forward trading. Gross margins have always been better in the ready-to-eat segment compared with staples and we want to leverage our presence in the branded food category in the domestic market,” said Anil Khandelwal, Director, LT Foods. Currently, LT Overseas’ sales turnover is equally divided between the overseas and domestic market.

Best Foods, one of the largest rice exporters, had 70 per cent of its turnover skewed towards the export market, but has decided to enter the domestic market piggybacking on its network of stores in the kiosk format. “Consumption patterns are changing with regard to rice and having built our Best brand for the past three years, we have now launched it in the domestic market. We have 39 stores in Delhi and the NCR region,” said Aayushman Gupta, CEO, Best Foods.

The Best branded kiosks showcase its ready-to-eat range such as dal makhani and kebabs along with rice variants.

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### **New farming scheme boosts Mizoram’s growth**

A farming scheme that aims to benefit over 125,000 families in the state has helped boost Mizoram’s growth rate, Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla said. With the implementation of the new farming scheme, Mizoram has registered a growth rate of 11 per cent during the 11th Plan period (2007-12) against the national growth rate of 7.8 per cent, Lal Thanhawla said.



An official, quoting the chief minister, said on Friday that the Mizoram government's flagship scheme New Land Use Policy (NLUP) has boosted Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) growth rate to 11 per cent.

In the NLUP, over 125,000 families would be given financial assistance and training for a permanent farming instead of 'Jhum' cultivation," Lal Thanhawla said while addressing a meeting of various stakeholders.

Tribals in the north-eastern states practise 'Jhum' or slash-and-burn method of cultivation. This shifting form of farming usually involves cutting down of entire forests in the hills and allowing the slashed vegetation to dry on mountain slopes prior to burning. Rice is grown along with vegetables, maize, cotton and mustard, among others.

Tribals constitute 27 per cent of northeast India's 45.58 million people.

The chief minister said that "the per capita income in Mizoram for the year 2010-11 at current prices is Rs.50,956 which has shown a considerable increase... evidently the economy of the state is on the rise".

The Mizoram government launched the Rs.2,873 crore NLUP in 2010 to solve food scarcity by moving away from 'Jhum cultivation' to stable farming.

NLUP aims to support 125,000 "Jhumia" (shifting cultivator) families in four phases so that they settle under stable agriculture.

A major aim of NLUP is to develop and give all farmers in the state suitable, permanent and stable trades. It also aims to make all farmers self-sufficient in rice, vegetables and extend monetary help.

"Packages of activities targeting commercial farming, primary processing, promotion of livestock, pisciculture, sericulture, plantation of cash crops and similar activities have already uplifted the economic welfare of the beneficiaries," the chief minister said.

He added: "The Planning Commission had earlier appreciated Mizoram government for its achievements under NLUP scheme and was assured more support to carry forward the programme."

### **Economy**

He said that the "scheme has made significant impact on the economy by providing alternative and sustainable livelihood opportunities to farmers by reducing their dependence on jhumming".

In the first phase of NLUP, 45,139 beneficiaries have been covered and in the ongoing second phase 45,000 families would be covered while in the third phase 19,861 tribal families are



expected to be covered and in the fourth and final phase 15,000 beneficiaries would come under this scheme.

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