

## A software application to aid farmers

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It is easy to think of applications for visually challenged people in the context of “text-to-speech” software (TTS), but now there is an application which uses TTS to help out farmers. The Sandesh Pathak application, developed jointly by C-DAC Mumbai, IIT-Madras, IIT Hyderabad, IIT Kharagpur, and C-DAC Thiruvananthapuram will enable SMS messages to be read out loud, for the benefit of farmers who may have difficulty in reading.

“It is usable by people who cannot read. A large population of farmers belongs to this category. So when they receive an SMS message either containing agriculture-related advice or some other thing, this app will read aloud the content,” says Pranaw Kumar, Senior Technical Officer, C-DAC, Mumbai who has been involved in developing this software.

The app which is available for download from the Appstore of the Mobile Seva Project of government of India, is an Indian language SMS Reader. It takes the received SMS message as input and reads it out aloud. It supports five Indian languages — Hindi, Tamil, Marathi, Gujarathi and Telugu. It also has options to select the language and speed of the voice as normal, slow, slower, fast and faster.

It uses the text-to-speech synthesis systems developed by the Indian Language TTS Consortium. To make it especially useful for farmers, “the TTS engines of all these languages have been tested on the agriculture domain-related texts and fine-tuned accordingly,” he says.

The app is part of the project launched by the Indian Government to help farmers read messages which may be of the following types: advice to solve farming problems — insect, disease, fertilizer or weed management; information on weather — such as forecasts; and updates on latest technology — for improving yield and much more.

It is also possible that the text message may contain words in different languages, for example botanical names of plants or fertiliser names. Would the software be able to tackle this?

Pranaw Kumar says, “If the names have been transliterated in the language of the text it is possible for the app to read it out, but currently it is not equipped to read out messages which are bilingual. However, efforts are on to improve it to a version which has bilingual capacity.”

In Phase two, where the plan is to include more languages, more institutes have been roped in — IIT Guwahati, IIT Mandi, SSN College Chennai, DA-IICT Ahmedabad, University of Guwahati and IISc, Bangalore. Work is on to make the app bilingual and to develop it in 13 languages, including Malayalam, Kannada, Rajasthani, Assamese, Manipuri, Odia and Bodo and also 13 flavours of English (with regional accents).

These Indian Language TTS systems have been developed under the Indian Language TTS Consortium which is led by IIT-Madras, under the leadership of Prof. Hema Murthy. C-DAC Mumbai is also a member of this collaboration.

## Managing pod borer in blackgram

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Blackgram, commonly known as urdbean is cultivated in about 3.30 million hectares in the country.

Among the various pests and infestations attacking the crop, insect pests are a major problem affecting the yield.

Spotted pod borer is a widespread problem. Webbing together of pods, inflorescence and leaves by a dull white or yellowish caterpillar, presence of frass on pods, stem and shoot near the larval entry holes are common symptoms.

### **Blue butterflies**

Blue butterflies are another major pest. The larvae of these butterflies chew on the leaves, but preferably feed on buds, flower and young pods. The infested pods show irregular or oblong boreholes. The caterpillar looks like a slug.

Small, blue, beautifully sculptured eggs are laid singly on buds. Larvae are medium in size green in colour, oval and flat in shape.

Pupation occurs inside the soil or on plant debris. One generation is completed in about five weeks. A female lays about 120 eggs.

Gram pod borer is popularly called as American boll worm. The borers feed on leaves, flower buds, flower and pods. They bore round holes on pods. The larva can be seen feeding with the head alone thrust inside and rest of the body hanging out of the pods.

A single larva can destroy 30-40 pods before it reaches maturity.

Owing to feeding on developing grains, the yield of pulses is considerably reduced.

### **IPM**

— Apply 50 kg potash per hectare to crop raised with closer spacing (20x10cm) to reduce the incidence.

— Remove weeds as and where found . Collect and destroy the egg masses and pupae.

— Set up light traps. Set up pheromone traps @ 12 nos per hectare to reduce gram pod borer incidence.

— Release egg parasite, *Trichogramma* spp., and egg larval parasite, *Chelonus blackburnii* for control of gram pod borer.

Apply any one of the following insecticides like Emamectin benzoate 5 per cent SG 220 g per hectare, or Neem Seed Kernel Extract (NSKE) 5 per cent twice.

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## Onion farming takes root in Thrissur district

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*One lakh seedlings given to farmers trained by Krishi Vigyan Kendra yield a bumper crop*



THRISSUR, April 17, 2014 - The Thrissur Krishi Vigyan Kendra's efforts to promote onion farming in the district are reportedly yielding results.

More than one lakh seedlings given to farmers trained by KVK have yielded a bumper crop this season, according to Ranjan S. Karippai, head of Thrissur KVK.

"The KVK had initiated trials in onion farming two years ago. In the first step,

the viability of onion cultivation was ascertained. Once in-house trials proved that the North Indian crop can be raised in our soil and climatic conditions, the KVK identified the varieties best suited for the State and formulated appropriate farming protocols. Training was imparted to farmers and seedlings raised in the KVK farm were distributed to them," he says.

Chathiyath Vijayan Menon, a former Central government employee based in the city, was one of the farmers. "I have seen onion farms in India and abroad, but never did I believe that the vegetable can be grown in the humid conditions of Kerala. I attended the training out of sheer curiosity, took 300-odd seedlings and planted them in grow-bags placed on my terrace. I have received a yield of 70 kg onion this season," says Mr. Menon.

P.S. Radhakrishnan, another farmer, says that that poison-free vegetables may be had in this age of commercialism only if people resort to homestead farming. Having tasted the success of onion farming, he is planning to cultivate the vegetable in more land the next season. Sathy Chandragupthan of Perinjanam, recipient of a State award for farming, says it is easy to cultivate onion. "Onion crops require very little care. Once the crop grows, it needs only controlled watering," she says.

KVK scientist Jalaja S. Menon, who has researched on onion farming, says that the three months from November-December or March to April is the best season for onion cultivation. Dr. Karippai says that onion farming will be extended to more locations in the district next season.

The Thrissur KVK is also exploring the possibilities of collaborative ventures with other KVKs and research stations of KAU to promote onion farming in other parts of the State.

## Nutrient-rich forests absorb more carbon

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M. GOVARTHAN

The ability of forests to sequester atmospheric carbon depends on nutrients available in the forest soils, shows new research. To really understand the carbon cycle, you have to look into issues of nutrient cycling within the soil.

## An experiment proves that small farming is economically feasible

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*Special ArrangementNEW  
ATTRACTION: The project is supported by Christian Aid with technical support from Change Alliance.*

Thottiankulam village on the Sevaiyur-Tuticorin highway in Virudhunagar district is bone dry all through the year. Farmers, mostly small and

marginal, have either left the place seeking work in towns or have moved to other vocations.

In the midst of the vast expanse of empty fields dotted with palm trees here and there, a small patch of greenery catches attention. A group of people are busy tending to the green patch of vegetables, all grown organically.

### **Short term**

The green patch which has been attracting a number of visitors driving on the highway has been made possible by an organisation called Saal (Sustainable Agro Alliance Limited) in Madurai, which has been encouraging struggling small farmers to take up short-term vegetable cultivation.

This programme, supported by an organisation called Christian Aid with technical support from Change Alliance, is fast proving to be a significant intervention in terms of gathering adequate and robust evidences to confirm that small-holder agriculture is feasible.

“The key mantra behind successful production lies in creating better environment. The first step in this process is to focus on the soil and not on plants. A healthy soil gives good yield. And in our system we take care to conduct soil analysis, enrichment using cow dung, cow urine, and humus obtained from dried leaves, agriculture wastages etc to make the barren land productive,” says Mr. B. Jeyabala Murugan, Chief Executive Officer, Saal.

The next step revolves around building an immune system for the plants. The seeds and seedlings are treated with good fungicides and bacteria to form a layer around the roots. This protective layer bestows immunity against soil borne diseases.

Border crops, inter crops, trap crops and multi cropping are also taken up. Farmers are taught to prepare herbal pest repellent using locally available materials.

### **All about arithmetic**

“Our organic process is all about maths. We can predict yield as long as we follow the guidelines for vegetable variety, field size and plant population. It guides us to achieve desired production,” says Mr. S. Henry Joe, Operations Officer.

The final step is helping in marketing the produce. Effective marketing is the ultimate step for success in any agriculture work. With all the hard work done in the farm, if the produce is not fetching the due price then everything is a waste. Saal has facilitated some innovative, transparent and reliable market access to the growers.

### **High demand**

“Local production, local consumption is our motto and our value chain process encompasses farmers, consumers and traders. Our pricing policy is based on a mix of conventional and niche market segments to increase consumption and thereby achieve higher demand, which help operate supply chain efficiently,” says Mr. John Suresh Kumar, Senior Programme Officer.

Already in three adjoining districts the organisation has established a supply chain for organic vegetables. The balancing of supply and demand is done through an online programme to track, trace and synchronise production and marketing and communication strategy

“We provide the farmers with live education in the farm, offer them bio inputs in initial stages of process, provide expert guidance in their field and attend to emergency situations. Those who have adopted this process have noticed that their plants are not only immune to diseases, they are better tolerant to changing weather conditions. The plants are better drought tolerant (could survive for more than seven days without water.),” explains Mr. John.

### **Shelf life**

The life of the vegetable crops has extended significantly — say, from four to eight weeks — and they are able to get yield continuously. This extended vegetable yield has helped earn more income through better pricing in the market.

The small patch of organic greenery has also been seeing a number of insect activities and visits by birds, butterflies, and bees, creating a sort of biodiversity in the region.

The farm, on day-to-day basis, is managed by a supervisor, farm manager and six trained farmers. Presently more than 120 organic vegetable growers from Madurai, Virudhunagar and Dindigul districts are part of a similar programme and 100 more are expected to join soon.

For more information and personal visits interested readers can contact Mr. John Suresh Kumar, Senior Programme Officer on email: [jnujohn73@gmail.com](mailto:jnujohn73@gmail.com), mobile: 8287755019.



# Moolakothalam's dry fish market soldiers on

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CHENNAI, April 17, 2014 - Over the last half-a-century, much has changed in and around the busy Basin Bridge junction. But a row of tiny shops selling dry fish ( *karuvadu* ) continues to have its address intact. It is this row of shops that marks the beginning of Walltax Road from the Basin Bridge junction.

The area, which is known as Moolakothalam, is popular for its dry fish market. There are about 30 shops that sell several varieties of dry fish. Shopkeepers said the market has been in existence for more than 50 years.

D. Amirtharaj's association with the market began in 1967 when he set up a shop here.

"People, especially those in north Chennai, associate Moolakothalam with this market. The place has both wholesale and retail shops," he said. Almost all varieties of dry fish such as *nethili*, *vala*, *vanjiram* and all types of *podu karuvadu* are available here.

***Almost all varieties of dry fish such as nethili, vala, vanjiram and all types of podu karuvadu are available here***

## Water level

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The water level in Periyar dam stood at 109.90 feet on Wednesday with no inflow and discharge of 100 cusecs. The level in Vaigai dam was 26.31 feet with no inflow and a discharge of 40 cusecs. The combined storage in Periyar credit was 502 mcft.

There was no rainfall in the region during the last 24 hours ending 8.30 a.m. on Wednesday, according to PWD sources.

The water level in Mettur dam stood at 43.09 feet on Wednesday against its full reservoir level of 120 feet. The inflow was 306 cusecs and the discharge, 1,510 cusecs.

The water level in the Papanasam dam on Wednesday stood at 38.95 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 35.65 cusecs and 204.75 cusecs of water is discharged from the dam.

The level in the Manimuthar dam stood at 68.46 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 6 cusecs and 100 cusecs of water is discharged.

### **Kanyakumari**

The level in the Pechipparai dam stood at 13 feet, while it was 36.80 feet in Perunchani, 2.82 feet in Chittar 1, 2.92 feet in Chittar 11, 2.20 feet in Poigai and 41.50 feet in Mamabazathuraiyaru.

# Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Thursday, Apr 17

Max Min

33° | 26°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 79

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:55

Sunset: 06:21

Barometer: 1009

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Friday, Apr 18

Max Min

37° | 27°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday

Apr 19



38° | 28°

Partly Cloudy

Sunday

Apr 20



31° | 27°

Cloudy

Monday

Apr 21



30° | 27°

Overcast

Tuesday

Apr 22



30° | 26°

Overcast

Wednesday

Apr 23



30° | 27°

Overcast

## THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

# Bringing Organic Spaces Closer Home



Shainika, Kavita and Varsha from the Spaces team | Martin Louis

just women on a mission to bring Chennaiites closer to nature inside their homes, they also have a smart business model to ensure the career change was well worth their while. Simply put, they make your personal space a happier place — no matter what the size of residence. Perhaps that's why the group calls themselves 'Spaces'.

Shainika Murthy, head of planning and execution at Spaces says, "Varsha and I have had this idea for a long time. But it was over a year ago that we decided to leave our jobs and do something which we wanted to do." Shortly after Aparna, Uma and Kavita joined the gang.

How often do you hear of IT professionals leaving their jobs to set up balcony gardens? The answer is um... never. Twenty-something Shainika, Varsha, Aparna, Uma and Kavita are not

Although the set up is barely a year-old, these ladies have helped folks set up all kinds of gardens ranging from herbal spots and floral landscapes to those designed around a limited space such as kitchen plant boxes, terrace gardens and potted balcony spaces.

Shainika explains what got them started in the first. "I think a lot of people in the city don't have gardens despite a passion for it, because they just don't have the space." And one has to wonder how a software professional like herself can bring more to the table. While they haven't been formally trained, she says "honestly it's just a big passion for all of us". Clearly their interest in the subject has paid off, with the company offering everything from gardening consultancy and landscaping to products such as garden tools and fun accessories to dress up your pot.

Varsha who takes care of campaigns, design, posters and so on points out, "The organic nutrients and other organic products are available in bulk in the market because of which many people do not buy them as they need small portions. We source it from retailers and solve this problem."

The team adds that they have successfully set up gardens in houses as well as corporation schools to educate the children about the environment and also received support from Rotary Club. They also shared that they won a competition conducted by Bhoomi and earned their support for a project designed by themselves called 'Green labs.' "Through this project, children can set up their own gardens in school," explains Shainika. She elaborates, "It's an activity-based course with a proper syllabus and we are trying to introduce this course in schools as a part of their curriculum."

For more on Spaces, log on to [www.gardeningredefined.com](http://www.gardeningredefined.com) or [www.facebook.com/Spaces.gardening](https://www.facebook.com/Spaces.gardening)

## THE HINDU Business Line

### Thundershowers may spread to more parts this week

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#### **Thiruvananthapuram, April 16:**

Most parts of the country have slipped under an extended cover of thundershowers over the past month, helping sustain a rainfall surplus to date. The rain surplus as on Wednesday last added up to five per cent, with 21 out of the 36 Met subdivisions falling in the 'excess' or 'normal' category.

#### **Persistent deficit**

But fringes in the west, south-west and south, east and north-east continued to sit out and wilt under persistent deficit. Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and parts of the north-east are the worst-hit.

Only the north-east need entertain any

hopes of reversal during the week ahead, according to international model forecasts.

This means that the projected line-up of thunderstorms from north to south will continue to evade Gujarat in the West, Tamil Nadu in the South and Odisha in the East.

In contrast, almost the entire half of north India, most of central India and the western half of peninsular India will witness continued thundershower activity during the week.



It will be particularly active over Kerala and adjoining coastal Karnataka, projections suggested.

### **Known pattern**

The emerging pattern of thunderstorms sits well with the known pattern of pre-monsoon weather in which rising heat causes air to go up over land creating troughs of lower pressure criss-crossing it.

Moisture-laden winds from the surrounding seas blow into these troughs and interact with the prevailing hot air to set up localised thunderstorms.

Peninsular India has started to heat up appreciably with isolated places in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra already coasting into the mid-40-degree-Celsius mark. But thunderstorms and thunder squalls in north-west India have prevented the region from heating up in tandem.

### **Heating capped**

The process is forecast to be delayed further since cooler western disturbances, low-pressure systems from across the border, are forecast to troop into Rajasthan/Punjab later into this week too.

India Met Department has forecast that heat-capping thunder squalls (seasonally known as 'aandhi') will rip through the plains of north-west and east India.

The causative disturbance will meander into the landlocked north-east and interact with incremental supply of moisture from the Bay of Bengal to the south-west and spark off violent squalls and thunderstorms.

This will effectively signal the onset of *Kal Baisakhi*, the annual thunderstorm season in the east and north-east, which will extend right into the eve of onset of the monsoon over Kerala later in June.

## W. Asia, China demand will drive farm exports

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But ITC agri-business head sees India turning net importer in the long run



**Chennai, April 16:** Agricultural exports, particularly spices, fruits and marine products, are likely to increase along with foodgrains as demand from West Asia and China continues to increase, according to S Sivakumar, Group Head – Agri and IT Businesses, ITC Ltd. But in the long term, India could turn a net importer as domestic consumption is increasing.

“Indian exports will continue to grow as China has turned a large importer. In the long run, however, we could turn a net importer since consumption here is rising,” he said during an interaction with *Business Line* and *The Hindu*.

ITC’s agricultural exports have quadrupled to \$40 million in the last few years with marine products shipments

growing rapidly, he said. “But we could become a country which could export something (specific variety of a commodity) and import something (another variety of the same commodity),” Sivakumar said.

For instance, India could export special varieties of rice that are in demand abroad.



(Basmati, Ponni, Sona masuri and hand-pound red rice from Kerala are in demand in the export market. On the other hand, there is demand for varieties such as the Jasmine rice from Thailand.)

“Even in fruits, we can export organic mangoes which are in great demand in Europe,” he said, adding that India would be able to sustain its high-value exports.

“On the other hand, the poultry sector in India is growing fast, resulting in higher consumption of soyameal,” he said. Rising domestic demand for soyameal could have an effect on its exports.

(Already, the poultry industry is demanding curbs on exports of soyameal in view of surge in its prices.)

The agri-business division of ITC was witnessing 10-15 per cent growth in the last couple of years with the income rising to Rs. 8,000 crore.

### **Tepid e-choupal**

ITC, which pioneered the concept of electronic marketing for farm products in the country with its e-choupal, has been unable to make much progress with the concept since 2008.

About six lakh farmers have been roped in the e-choupal module.

This is because of new policies such as stocks limits on various commodities imposed by the Government to tackle surging inflation.

“We are now trying to leverage tablets and 3G services to reach out to a large number of farmers. It will help agri extension personnel reach farmers without a desktop computer,” Sivakumar said.

### **Processed foods**

With Indian consumers upgrading, the need for value-added food products is increasing, leading to greater demand for processed foods. This provides a strong potential for consumption dividend in Indian markets, the ITC agri-business official said.

“Let us take the example of atta. The total potential market at the current level of consumption, in the packaged milled form, is 25 million tonnes,” he said.

If 95 million tonnes (mt) of wheat are produced in the country, producers consume 35 mt and industrial users making bread and other products consume another 10 mt.

About 10 mt are retained as seed and other value chain linked requirements. Some wheat flows to low-income consumers, PDS and for Government welfare programmes.

About 25 mt can be consumed by people who technically buy quality products. “Today, packaged atta consumption is 2 mt, branded and unbranded put together,” Sivakumar said.

It would not be convenient for a family to buy wheat and get it milled in a neighbourhood flour mill every week. The market size for packaged atta in 2002, when ITC entered the market, was less than 350,000 tonnes.

“That was because the products available then did not meet the consumers’ needs.

Consistency was absent too. Other convenience products such as biscuits and cookies are also increasing rapidly, especially in rural areas where the home-made snacks are giving way to ready-to-eat food,” he said.

Instant preparations – whether Indian cuisine or global such as noodles and pastas – are also expanding rapidly.

“We are at the beginning of the take-off phase in unleashing this consumption dividend,” Sivakumar said.

Asked about his views on genetically modified organisms, he said GM crops required more research and trials besides the approval protocol had to be strengthened.

## Higher tea volume on offer at Coonoor sale this week

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**Coonoor, April 16:** A volume of 12.54 lakh kg, some 60,000 kg more than last week, is being offered for Sale No: 16 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association to be held on Thursday and Friday.

Of this, a volume of 8.34 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 4.20 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades. As much as 11.48 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 1.06 lakh kg, orthodox variety. A volume of 2.01 lakh kg of teas unsold in previous weeks is being re-offered this week.

In the Leaf auction last week, Hindustan Unilever Ltd and Godfrey Philips India Ltd bought medium varieties. Indcoserve showed some interest on smaller grades. Exporters chose mostly plainer grades.

## Edible oils rise with bullish futures market

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**Mumbai, April 16:** Edible oils ruled firm on Wednesday on back of higher volumes, tracking extended gain in the futures market.

Imported palmolein and soyabean refined oil increased by Rs. 2 and Rs. 3 for 10 kg each. Rapeseed oil was up Rs. 3.

Groundnut, sunflower and cotton oil ruled steady but undercurrent was firm.

Tracking bullish futures markets local stockists continued with fresh forward commitments. Liberty sold 1,800-2,000 tonnes of palmolein at Rs. 607-608 and soyabean refined oil 200-250 tonnes at Rs. 655. Ruchi sold 500-600 tonnes of palmolein at Rs. 607-610 and sunflower oil 250-300 tonnes at Rs. 655-658.

Allana offloaded 400-450 tonnes of palmolein at Rs. 608 and sunflower refined oil 450-500 tonnes at Rs. 654.

Vikram Global Commodities (P) Ltd quoted Rs. 632/10 kg for Malaysia super palmolein.

Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs. 610, super palmolein Rs. 631 and soyabean refined oil Rs. 660. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs. 610 for April-May, soyabean refined oil Rs. 660 for May and sunflower refined oil Rs. 660 for May.

Allana was quoting palmolein Rs. 609 for April-May, soyabean refined oil Rs. 660 for May15-31 and sunflower refined oil Rs. 660 for May.

Resellers were quoting palmolein at Rs. 604 ex JNPT and Rs. 608 in Mumbai.

At Rajkot, groundnut oil *Telia* tin was Rs. 1,100 ( Rs. 1,110) and loose (10 kg) at Rs. 690 ( Rs. 695).

Malaysia BMD crude palm oil's May futures settled higher at MYR 2,736 (MYR 2,692), June MYR 2,700 (MYR 2,663) and July MYR 2,684 (MYR 2,647).

BCE spot rates ( Rs. /10 kg) were: groundnut oil 740 (740), soya refined oil 655 (652), sunflower exp. ref. 605 (605), sunflower ref. 657 (665), rapeseed ref. oil 676 (673), rapeseed expeller ref. 646 (643) cottonseed ref. oil 655 (655) and palmolein 606 (605).

## Sugar extends gains on hopes of higher demand

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**Mumbai, April 16:** Sugar prices extended their gains on the Vashi wholesale market by Rs. 10-30 a quintal on Wednesday.

However, *naka* and mill tender rates rule unchanged as producers started selling.

Traders were optimistic about higher demand in the coming days due to summer.

While the crushing season will be over soon, the coming months are to witness peak summer and festivities. Arrivals at Vashi market were 60-61 truckloads (Each of 100 bags) and the local despatches were 63- 64 loads.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S-grade Rs. 3,232-3,380 ( Rs. 3,202-3,375) and M-grade was Rs. 3,350- 3,506 ( Rs. 3,342-3,502). *Naka* delivery rates were: S-grade Rs. 3,190-3,260 ( Rs. 3,190-3,260) and M-grade Rs. 3,260-3,400 ( Rs. 3,260-3,400).

# Markets and digital future

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Markets comprise key elements such as buyers, sellers, price discovery, risk transfer etc. A well-functioning market is usually thought of as one that has a robust proportion of all these elements and has a platform to bring these elements together in one place.

While the evolution of multi-faceted exchanges is construed today to be a sign of economic progress, in my opinion, the future will likely be quite a different paradigm. In future I see markets will

focus more singularly on the platform (data) where the elements (price, risk, etc) are originated.

I surmise that the need for traditional exchanges will actually greatly diminish, as it is apparent that the future will be driven by data, with lower frictional costs and reduced barriers to operations.

Consider the future where computing capacity will be disproportionately higher than now, and the access to market data will be greater than ever. In such a scenario all the information that we consider key to a well-functioning market – namely, buyers, sellers, price discovery, and risk transfer – will be available via a platform that can be accessed by nearly anyone who wishes to access it.

Exchanges will move away from servicing outputs such as views of price and risk and towards servicing the foundation - data. In theory, the exchange may move from Chicago to your desktop. Thus, we can imagine moving from a world of “many-on-many” model (many participants on exchanges) to a “one-on-one” model (participant to participant).

## **Information flow**

Every buyer and seller produces and consumes data, creating what I consider to be a net ‘surplus’ or ‘deficit’ of information. Consider the case of a large chocolate manufacturer called firm A.

Currently, firm A will need to access an exchange where cocoa is traded to participate in the chocolate trade. While doing so, firm A is supplying data (intent to buy cocoa, the price, volume and many such variables) and is also demanding data back (world prices of cocoa, location of cocoa, etc).

Arguably, the marginal value of the information supplied by firm A is greater than the marginal value of the information demanded by the firm A, as the former is private and latter is public.

The difference between the private and public information is what I call a ‘data surplus’ for that firm.

In today’s world, once firm A participates on the exchange, it gives away this surplus.

In the new world I envision, this data surplus will be in demand and monetised, which will give rise to few scenarios. Firstly, a data-deficit firm (a cocoa supplier to this firm A) would be happy to pay for this surplus and in doing-so, make itself data neutral. Secondly, a value-adding data analytics firm could provide analytic services for firm A in return for the data surplus.

Thirdly, a speculator can buy the cocoa risk of firm A, while paying for the data surplus.

In any case, the price at which the cocoa supplier sells cocoa, the analytics firm sells its services, and the speculator buys risk all appreciate the data surplus created by the firm A.

The need for data is the common denominator among all these participants and across these scenarios, we can see they move away from a traditional “many on many” model to a “one on one” model, focusing on data that ties all of them together.

## **Conclusion**

Firms will increasingly compete to create valuable data surplus to help them be leaders and be successful in the market, and firms that can leverage these data better will survive longer.

I borrow this notion from the macroeconomic principle of deficit and surplus where the balance of payments is key.

Similarly, the balance of data is key to a firm's overall strategy its longevity in business.

The writer is based in London and is the founder and Managing Director of OpalCrest

## Business Standard

# Groundnut oil production may touch 700k tonnes

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Production of [groundnut oil](#) may cross 700,000 tonnes this year in India following a bumper output. In addition, lower export of peanuts have diverted the crop to [crushing](#), which has increased the [oil production](#).

According to industry sources, India produces on an average 3,00,000 tonnes of groundnut oil every year, but in this year, production of groundnut oil is likely to exceed 700,000 tonne.

"It is a fact that groundnut oil production has increased due to higher availability of groundnut for crushing. Production of groundnut has almost doubled this year," said B V Mehta, executive director of Solvent Extractors Association of India (SEA).

He said that over 700,000 tonnes of groundnut oil production is possible as most of the groundnut crop has been diverted to mills for crushing.

Availability of both groundnut and groundnut oil has resulted in fall in prices of groundnut and it may decrease further in the coming days, according to traders.

Mehta said, "Groundnut oil price has decreased constantly this year. We have asked the government to allow export of the oil and are hopeful that the government will agree with us. Export will give some stability to the market and farmers will get good price for their commodity." If government allows export, India can export nearly 50,000 tonnes of groundnut oil.

In the past three months, price of groundnut oil has decreased by Rs 100 to Rs 690-695 per 10 kg in Gujarat. While, in retail market, price of groundnut oil (new tin) has declined by Rs 160 to Rs 1,275-1,280 per 15 kg.

Also, growth in consumption has given some relief to the groundnut mills of Gujarat which are functioning normally. The reduction in prices of groundnut oil by around 36 per cent has resulted due to rise in demand.

Suresh Kaneria, managing director of Kaneria Oil Industries said, "With fall in prices, people who had diverted to other edible oils, mainly cotton seed oil, are now back to groundnut oil. This has increased the consumption of the oil by 50 per cent in this year." There are about 200 groundnut oil mills in Gujarat. However, over the last two years, hardly 40-50 mills were



operational because of low production of groundnut, high prices and reduced demand of the commodity.

Moreover, good export demand for peanuts had created scarcity of groundnut for crushing. With rise in demand, more than 150-175 mills are in working condition.

The Solvent Extractors' Association of India recently issued kharif crop estimate of the Central Organization for Oil Industry & Trade. The report stated kharif groundnut production for 2013-14 would be 4.71 million tonnes as against last year's 2.62 million tonnes. According to industry sources, low export is also one of the reasons for higher production of groundnut oil.

A Junagadh based groundnut trader and exporter said, "Overall demand in international market for groundnut is very poor. India's export has declined because of weak demand from China. Moreover, some changes in export rules for groundnut has also depressed the export demand from India."

As per Indian Oilseed and Produce Export Promotion Council (IOPEPC) data, during April-September 2013, India exported 1,89,867 tonnes groundnut. In the corresponding period previous year, India had exported 5,35,670 tonnes groundnut.

According to exporters, this year India's groundnut export could be around 4,50,000 tonnes.

## Chana up 0.2% on spot demand

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[Chana](#) prices moved up by 0.23% to Rs 3,100 per quintal in futures market today on pick-up in spot demand against tight supply.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), chana for delivery in April rose by Rs 7, or 0.23%, to Rs 3,100 per quintal with an open interest of 6,780 lots.

Likewise, the commodity for delivery in May edged up by Rs 2, or 0.06%, to Rs 3,152 per quintal in 95,140 lots.

Analysts said fresh positions built up by speculators after demand picked up in the spot market, mainly led to rise in chana prices at futures trade.

## Cardamom up 0.3% on strong demand

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Continued its rising streak for the third-straight day in line with a firming trend at spot markets, [cardamom](#) gained another 0.32% to Rs 914.80 per kg in futures trade today as speculators enlarged positions.

Tight stocks following restricted arrivals from producing regions also supported the upside.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), cardamom for delivery in May rose Rs 2.90, or 0.32%, to Rs 914.80 per kg in business turnover of 133 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in June traded higher by Rs 2.90, or 0.31%, to Rs 943.10 per kg in 35 lots.

Analysts said besides strong demand in the spot market, lower arrivals from producing regions mainly kept cardamom prices higher for the third-day at futures trade.

## Jeera up 0.7% on rising demand

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[Jeera](#) remained higher for the second straight day and prices advanced by 0.76% to Rs 9,940 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators enlarged positions.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), jeera for delivery in April gained Rs 75, or 0.76%, to Rs 9,940 per quintal with an open interest of 270 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in May traded higher by Rs 65, or 0.65%, to Rs 10,050 per quintal in 9,921 lots.

Analysts said speculators enlarged positions supported by rising domestic and export demand in the spot market that kept jeera prices up for the second day at futures trade.

## Turmeric up 1.4% on rising export demand

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[Turmeric](#) prices rose for the second day by gaining 1.49% to Rs 6,670 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators enlarged their positions on rising export demand in the spot market.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), turmeric for delivery in May gained Rs 98, or 1.49%, to Rs 6,670 per quintal with an open interest of 12,275 lots.

In a similar fashion, the spice for delivery in April traded higher by Rs 96, or 1.48%, to Rs 6,598 per quintal in 300 lots.

Analysts attributed the continued rise in turmeric futures to rising export demand in the spot markets and reports of rains damaging the crop in growing areas of South India.

## Sugar up 0.4% on summer season demand, lower output

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Maintaining its upward trend, [sugar](#) prices rose further by 0.40% to Rs 3,225 per quintal in futures trade today as participants engaged in creating speculative positions on increased offtake by bulk consumers in the spot market.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), sugar for delivery in May rose Rs 13, or 0.40%, to Rs 3,225 per quintal with an open interest of 56,020 lots.



Likewise, the sweetener for delivery in April traded higher by Rs 2, or 0.06%, to Rs 3,199 per quintal in 9,140 lots.

Analysts said apart from rising demand in the spot markets from bulk consumers such as soft-drinks and ice-cream makers in the spot market following

beginning of summer season, fall in sugar production led to persistent rise in sweetener prices at futures trade.

Meanwhile, country's sugar production has dropped by 7% to 21.5 million tonnes in the first six months of the current marketing year due to lower output in key producing states.

## Crude palm oil down 0.1% on subdued demand

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[Crude palm oil](#) eased by 0.18% to Rs 565.50 per 10 kg in futures market today as speculators reduced holding on sluggish demand in the spot market.

Besides, against adequate stocks position put pressure on the prices, analysts said.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), crude palm oil for delivery in April declined by Re one, or 0.18%, to Rs 565.50 per 10 kg in a business turnover of 46 lots.

Similarly, the oil for delivery in May shed 50 paise, or 0.09%, to Rs 562.40 per 10 kg in 117 lots.

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