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THE HINDU

Maintaining a nursery along with farming fetches better income



SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT Several nurseries can be set up in a village within a few kilometer radius supplying quality seedlings.

Growing only one or two crops seldom proves to be remunerative for farmers.

Along with the crops an additional activity needs to be taken up to increase income. For some it could be rearing animals; for others it could be maintaining a nursery for supplying ornamental plants and fruit seedlings.

In fact maintaining a nursery is one of the main requisites for agriculture because a good nursery is very essential for supplying the right type of seedlings to farmers who plant it on large areas.

Easy on maintenance

And another fact is that compared to animals or birds, nurseries are quite easy to maintain, don't need extra hands or special care or huge investment, though in some cases some farmers invest in setting up a greenhouse.

Mr. S.Thinakarassamy from Kooliyankadu village of Pudukkottai district, owns three acres of wetland and three acres of dry land. With a strong desire for learning the latest techniques in nursery production, he attended several training

programmes on propagation of ornamental plants, like grafting casuarinas, eucalyptus, grafting of jack and cashew and other fruit crops through the Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Vamban, Pudukottai and started a nursery on a small scale.

He was advised to construct a polyhouse in his farm and started propagation of ornamental plants like durantha, crotons, jasmine and medicinal plants like Coleus and supplied to Pudukottai town. Meanwhile, he was approached by farmers of nearby villages for fruit and forest plants.

“I learnt grafting and layering skills from KVK and started commercial propagation and sale of plants particularly chikoo, guava, cashew, jack, casuarina and eucalyptus.

“I also started producing and distributing the high yielding cashew varieties grafts (VRI 2 & 3) to farmers to fulfil the Government sponsored waste land development scheme at Pudukkottai district,” says Mr. Thinakarasamy.

Popular

Today Mr. Thinakarasamy is one of the trusted and famous nursery men in Pudukkottai district for sourcing seedlings. He also carries out planting in the farmers field on contract basis.

“The socio-economic status of the farmer improved after he entered into the nursery venture. Since he started the nursery in 2007 he has sold more than ten lakh seedlings and earned a net profit of Rs. 7, 14,750 every year and bought a new two wheeler and subsequently a three-wheel vehicle for nursery and transporting seedlings. Currently, he is engaged in establishing a separate nursery for medicinal plants,” says Dr. V.Krishnamoorthy, Assistant Professor, Horticulture.

Inspiration for others

Seeing Mr. Thinakarasamy’s quantum leap from subsistence to well to-do farming, another farmer, Mr. B.Thamilsekaran also started a small nursery unit for propagation of Jack grafts. Now he is a famous nursery man in his village for supplying Jack grafts. His earning is around Rs. 500 per day.

The annual income is Rs. 3.51 lakhs which is 50 per cent more than his actual income from other sources.

The advantage of maintaining a nursery as business according to Dr. R.P. Gnanamalar, Programme Coordinator, is that it is remunerative and can be conducted in a small area even behind the farmer's house with minimum investment, making it highly suitable for adoption by small/marginal farmers.

More than 250 seedlings in plastic bags can be accommodated in a sq. metre area. The initial investment for procuring the seedlings on wholesale might work out to Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 15, 000 for fruit and flower varieties from government authorized nurseries.

And farmers can sell it to individual persons for Rs. 10 more a seedling than the price of purchase.

Several nurseries can be set up in a village within a few kilometer radius supplying quality seedlings to other villages.

Effectively plan

With availability of good quality planting material from local nurseries, farmers can effectively plan their planting requirement in advance or delay planting time without suffering any yield loss.

Farmers interested to start similar nursery can contact Dr.V. Krishnamoorthy, Assistant Professor (Horticulture), mobile: 9787356981 and Dr.R.P.Gnanamalar, 9789727822, Programme Coordinator, KVK, Vamban, Pudukkottai and Mr. Thinakaran, Koolayankadu, Alangudi, Pudukkottai: 622303,

Alps adapt to rising temperature

Ski lifts have been dismantled and people have been relocated

With temperatures rising faster in the Alps than the rest of the world, alpine countries are working together to adapt to climate change and hope to set an example.

The country's temperatures had risen twice as fast as the global average since 1880, with the number of sunshine hours in the Alps increasing by 20 percent.

While this may please holidaymakers or locals enjoying longer summers, it is also likely to cause more landslides and forest fires, affecting the agricultural sector and local economy, the Austrian Assessment Report found.

Alpine countries are already shifting their focus to adaptation solutions, acknowledging that climate change will not be stopped or turned around anytime soon.

Low-lying resorts have long invested in snow cannon to ensure white slopes during the ski season but some have radically changed their marketing strategies -- like Switzerland's Stockhorn ski region, which dismantled its ski lifts to refocus on winter hiking and snowshoeing.

Authorities in northern Austria relocated some 250 households which sat close to the Danube and were badly hit by flood waters in 2002.

"Danger zone plans" are regularly drawn up to identify no-build areas at risk of floods, landslides or erosion, while the mountainous Tirol region has invested some 125 million euros to build avalanche defences over 17.5 kilometres of roads, so they can remain open all year round.

Meanwhile, farmers in Germany are being encouraged to grow crops that are more resistant to heat and dry spells.

Shrinking glaciers


Glaciers, the most common symbol of climate change in the mountains, have shrunk by 15 percent in Austria over the last 15-20 years, according to Andrea Fischer, a glacier expert at the Interdisciplinary Mountain Research Institute in Innsbruck.

Snow levels and flora are moving up mountains and river water is dwindling as glaciers retreat.AFP

Store ragi now and sell it in February-March, farmers told

1.88 million tonnes of ragi produced in India during 2013-14

PRODUCE AND PRICE



- Price of fully cleaned ragi will rule around Rs. 16-18 a kg from December to February: AMIBPC
- Tamil Nadu has the highest productivity of 2.73 tonnes per hectare
- Ragi is substituted with maize in feed preparation whenever the price of ragi is lower than maize
- Huge ragi production this year in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu may cause a further decline in prices

The Agro Market Intelligence and Business Promotion Centre (AMIBPC), Tiruchi, has advised farmers to store the harvested ragi and sell in February – March.

Econometric analysis of the back office of the AMIBPC has indicated that the price of fully cleaned ragi will rule around Rs.16-18 a kg from December to February. There is little chance of the price increasing in March, the AMIBPC said in an advisory to farmers.

The advisory was issued based on the analysis of the ragi prices at the Tindivanam regulated market over the past 10 years by scientists at the AIMBPC back office at the Centre for Agricultural and Rural Development Studies (CARDS) in the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University.

Ragi is mainly grown in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand and Maharashtra. During 2013-14, India produced 1.88 million tonnes of ragi from 1.38 million hectares with an average productivity of 1.64 tonnes per hectare. Tamil Nadu has the highest productivity of 2.73 tonnes per hectare. Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Vellore, Salem and Erode districts together accounted for 96 per cent of the total area of 70,294 ha under this crop during 2012 -13. The area and production showed declining trend though the productivity was on the increase in Tamil Nadu.

Ragi is substituted with maize in feed preparation whenever the price of ragi is lower than maize price. Ragi production in Karnataka, demand by the end users and maize price are the major factors which decide the price of ragi in Tamil Nadu. It fetches peak prices during February- March and lean prices during August- September. Arrivals from Karnataka and Tamil Nadu coincide during January. Trade sources have indicated that this year huge ragi production is expected in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu which may cause a further decline in prices. The current farm gate price of maize is Rs.1,200 per quintal whereas ragi is being sold at Rs.1,700 per quintal. This will not support the increased use of ragi in the feed preparation, the advisory said.

6,300 tonnes of urea distributed to farmers

More consignments expected in the coming days: official



S. Raja Mohamed, Deputy Director of Horticulture, handing over hybrid seeds to farmers at Kurukkalpatti.

Consignments of urea, weighing 1, 354 tonnes, were received here on Tuesday. So far, 6,300 tonnes of urea had been given to farmers of Tirunelveli district, Joint Director of Agriculture, C. Chandrasekar, told *The Hindu* on Wednesday.

The Tuesday's consignments were despatched to 40 private dealers in 13 blocks. He said the district required 9,500 tonnes and more consignments were expected in the coming days. A total of 5,000 tonnes of urea had been distributed to farmers through 163 primary agriculture cooperative credit societies and 1,300 tonnes through private dealers.

Teams comprising 19 Agriculture Officers, 19 Deputy Agriculture Officers and 84 Assistant Agriculture Officers had been deputed to monitor the despatch of urea. Mr. Chandrasekar added that top dressing with urea was under way in paddy fields and it would be completed in 15 days for short-duration crops and 20 days for medium-term crops after transplantation.

Horticulture inputs

Horticulture inputs were also being distributed to farmers in full swing, S. Raja Mohamed, Deputy Director of Horticulture, said.

Under National Horticulture Mission (NHM), the government had allotted Rs.3.23 crore to raise horticultural crops such as mango, acid lime, cocoa, flowers, chillies and vegetables. Hybrid seeds for bhendi, bitter gourd and chillies were distributed to farmers.

Farmers identified under the NHM during 2014-15 were also given chemical fertilizers.

Meet takes stock of farm input position

Steps are being taken to ensure adequate availability of all agricultural inputs for farmers during the current month, District Collector M.Mathivanan said here on Wednesday.

Speaking at a review meeting organised with Revenue, Agricultural, and Cooperative Department officials on distribution of farm inputs, Mr.Mathivanan said that the distribution was continuously being monitored to ensure adequate availability, and to ensure seamless farming operations in the district.

During November, it was initially planned to disburse 8,000 tonnes urea to farmers in the district, however, 10,253 tonnes of urea was procured from various agencies, and 8,147 tonnes were disbursed to primary agricultural cooperative societies while another 2,106 tonnes were given to private fertilizer dealers, Mr.Mathivanan said.

Now, around 2,900 tonnes urea was available for distribution, he said. All agricultural inputs were available with the PACS and private dealers to ensure trouble-free farming operation in the district, the Collector said.

Joint Director of Agriculture Mayilvahanan, Joint Registrar of Cooperative Societies K.C. Ravichandran, Tiruvarur RDO R. Muthu Meenakshi, Mannargudi RDO S.Selvasurabhi, Assistant Director of Agriculture (Quality Control) A. Uthirapathy, and Agricultural Officer R. Udhayakumar took part.

Maize in the midst of a Centre-State row

Issue may generate heat in State legislature and Parliament



Minister of State Krishna Byre Gowda has termed the Centre's stand on the issue of bailing out maize farmers from the price crash situation by offering a minimum support price, as 'shocking'.— file photo

Maize now appears to be at the heart of a disagreement between the Centre and the State. Minister of State for Agriculture Krishna Byre Gowda termed it "shocking and strange" that the Union government refused to support the State's proposal and bail out maize farmers from the price crash situation by offering minimum support price.

The Centre rejected the proposal on the grounds that maize is not part of the Public Distribution System, but the State government has decided to go ahead with the procurement on its own without depending upon the financial support from the Centre that normally bears major portion of the procurement cost.

The episode is bound to generate political heat as it has unfolded just when Parliament is in session and only a few days left for the State legislature session to begin. Mr. Gowda said the State had asked its MPs to take up the issue in Parliament.

He pointed out that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had already written to the Centre expressing dissatisfaction over its stand and expressed fear that this may discourage farmers from growing crops which are not part of the PDS.

Mr. Gowda said the maize procurement would begin some time in the middle of the month. Pointing out that the government had spent about Rs. 1,150 crore for procurement of 7.8 lakh tonnes of maize under the market intervention scheme last year, the Minister said this year too the procurement cost may remain at the same range. The government had incurred a loss of about Rs. 300 crore last year after disposing of the maize crop procured from farmers.

Think before you eat!



The food that you eat is what you give back to the Earth. It is the food cycle which most of you have studied in your biology chapters.

But do you know whether the food you consume is healthy or unhealthy?

When I say unhealthy, it is not about those roadside foods. What I mean is the method of growing food.

Farmers use two methods to grow crops in their fields. One is the organic method and other is the inorganic method. Organic methods involve using naturally available inputs like dried leaves, cow dung, rotten fruits, water, etc as manures. The other is usage of chemicals called fertilisers which are available in abundance and sprayed indiscriminately on plants to make them bear more fruits and vegetables and grow healthy.

But all these salts do not disappear into the soil. They remain dormant in the plants, inside those vegetables, in those fruits which you think are healthy and thus consume. And they enter into your system and cause many health problems. So it is important that you know what type of food you eat. Ask your parents to always check the quality of food grains they buy and insist on buying organically grown foods.

Have you noticed?

I am sure you must have read reports in newspapers on how carbide crystals are used to make mangoes ripen and also about the action taken by the municipality to destroy those fruits citing health hazards to the consumers.

When you cut open a cauliflower, you might have noticed worms wriggling inside it. In some households, they immerse the cauliflower in hot water mixed with turmeric to kill the worms.

In some cases, you can see the worms dead inside them. This is more dangerous because the farmer or vendor must have dipped the flowers in some deadly pesticide to retain that white colour which in turn has killed the worms. When you eat it, the chemicals get into your system.

So now you see how these things work? That's why several environmentally interested people are espousing the cause of natural farming. Because it is safe -- both for the environment as well as the humans.

(M.J. Prabu is The Hindu's Agriculture correspondent. He writes the popular Farmer's Notebook. Write to him at prabu.mj@thehindu.co.in)

DID YOU KNOW?

- *India imports nearly two crore fertilizers from abroad every year and one lakh pesticides a year*
- *The permissible level of using these chemicals is 145 kgs per hectare (2.5 acres is an hectare) but many States are using more than 211 kg*
- *The more glossy a tomato or brinjal is, chances are that it is has been grown using chemicals. Organically grown ones do not have such lustre.*

Blow to Medak farmers

Drought-like situation results in heavy crop loss

The drought like situation prevailing in Medak district has dealt a severe blow to the farmers who have incurred huge losses. According to the estimates of the Agriculture Department the yield dropped by 50 per cent in some crops and 60 per cent in other crops.

The officials in their reports stated that losses were expected to be more in maize, cotton, black gram, red gram and soyabean.

For instance, the estimated output of maize per hectare was supposed to be between 40 to 45 quintals but actual yield was only 15 quintals.

Similarly, the yield of cotton dropped to three to four quintals per hectare as against 20 quintals. Same was the case of red gram of which the yield fell down from six quintals per hectare to between one and one and half quintals.

According to a rough estimate the farmers have to generate a revenue of Rs. 560.68 crore by cultivating maize in 1.07 lakh hectares with an output of 40 quintals per hectare, but they were able to get only 210.25 crore as the yield fell by 15 quintals per hectare.

The minimum support price (MSP) offered by the government is Rs.1,310 per quintal. In the case of cotton crop cultivated in 1.25 lakh hectares in the current season, farmers generated a revenue of Rs. 234.37 crore and incurred an estimated loss of about Rs. 703.12 crore as the yield dropped from 20 quintals to five quintals per hectare. The MSP was fixed at 3,750 per quintal.

Regarding red gram cultivated in 25,000 hectares the yield dropped from six quintals to two quintals due to which the farmers lost about Rs. 43.5 crore. Instead of getting Rs. 65.25 crore from their produce with the best yield, the farmers were able to produce red gram worth Rs. 21.75 crore only.

The estimated loss in three main crops is Rs. 1,097 crore, the officials, who wanted to remain anonymous, said.

New tur variety promises higher yield

An improved tur variety by University of Agriculture Sciences-Raichur (UAS-R) is gaining popularity among farmers for its higher yield.

The variety known as 'TS-3R', developed by the university under National Food Security Mission, promises a yield of eight to 10 quintals per acre, while the traditional seed gives only about five quintals of yield.

Farmers selected

In order to educate farmers on this new variety, the university selected around 26 farmers of Basavanabagewadi taluk of the district to cultivate the new variety. The seeds were planted on nearly 30 acres belonging to each farmer during the third week of June this year: around 10 kg of seeds was used per hectare.

Sources said that while the traditional variety bore only three grain in each shell, the improved variety has five grains. Speaking to *The Hindu*, T. Manjunath, Joint Director, Department of Agriculture, said the new variety had several advantages over the traditional variety.

“Besides higher yield, it is pest resistant. The pink colour of the grains does not attract moths, which is a common problem in tur. With reduced pest attacks, farmers could save money on spraying pesticides,” he said. He said that though the cost of cultivation was quite similar in the traditional and improved varieties, higher yield of TS-3R would ensure additional revenue to farmers.

Mr. Manjunath said the seeds of the TS-3R variety were best suited for black and deep-black soil types as it gave a higher yield on this type of soil, adding that districts like Vijayapura were ideal as the region had huge tracks of black soil.

He said this year the department had distributed around 1,192 quintals of TS-3R seeds, and there were plans to increase the quantity in the coming days.

Promoting urban organic farming



Various products and technologies for organic farming are on show at an agricultural fair which got off to a start at Jubilee Hall in Kozhikode on Wednesday.— Photo: S. Ramesh Kurup

Practical and cost-effective ways to promote organic vegetable farming among the urban populace is the focus of the agricultural fair which got off to a start at Jubilee Hall here on Wednesday.

The fair showcases different products, technologies, and literature which will help people take up organic farming.

From Japanese methods of organic farming using effective microorganisms (EM) to the very traditional Indian ways, the event displays a range of new materials and innovative methods for a farm enthusiast.

V. Sidhique, an organiser, says EM can be used for a variety of purposes including agriculture, animal husbandry, aquaculture, mushroom farming, horticulture, floriculture, and waste management. Different compositions of EM solution, appropriate for various activities and fields, are available at the fair.

A stall by 'Green Allies,' a city-based group which deals in organic products, has on offer a scheme to set up a backyard vegetable garden urban households. The group will provide technical assistance and support. Under the moderately priced scheme, a household will get 11 varieties of vegetable plants in 25

earthen pots. It includes okra, tomato, green chilly, spinaches, bitter gourd, and pumpkin.

“We will set up the entire garden and provide services for an year,” says Shikanth Kaniyath of Green Allies.

The fair also has a variety of stalls displaying planting material, organic fertilisers, honey products, and certified organic produces from Indian and foreign companies.

District Collector C.A. Latha inaugurated the four-day fair organised by Green Veg, a city-based collective of organic farming enthusiasts.

It is aimed at giving a boost to organic farming initiatives in the region, the organisers say. We are planning to hold demonstrations and classes on different farming methods. The use of mini-poly houses and vertical farming methods will be covered, Mr. Sidhique says. Those interested may contact: 99479 91428

Tobacco Board for quality in cultivation

Tobacco Board Regional Manager M. Sriramamurthy has called for stress on quality in tobacco cultivation in the northern light soils (NLS) region in West Godavari district.

Led by a team of technical personnel from the Board, he undertook a field visit in Koyyalagudem and Jangareddygudem mandals in the district on Tuesday and Wednesday as part of quality check. Interacting with growers, he recalled that international buyers had expressed reservations over accepting tobacco exports from the country owing to crop protection agents (CPA) residues. He exhorted farmers to add export value to their produce by adopting the best farm practices.

Popularising pest and disease control through bio-engineering and bio-pesticide/cultural methods as a substitute to the application of chemical fertilizers is the best method to keep the tobacco produce away from the CPA residues, he added.

“The Board has decided to develop the NLS region as a model project area with quality as the main focal point. The on-farm trial (OFT) plots chosen under the model project programme will be enriched with transfer of research and technology from labs in a grower-friendly manner,” he said. B.N. Mitra, Manager (Extension) and C.K. Prabhu, Auction Superintendent were present.

Garlic variety suitable for hilly regions

The National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation has recently developed the first new garlic variety Agrifound Parvati-2 recommended for cultivation in Jammu & Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh.

Maturity date

The crop matures in 220-240 days after planting and keeping quality is moderate. Bulbs are attractive, compact, round and white.

It is tolerant to stemphylium blight, purple blotch and environmental stress conditions. Average yield is about 20-21 t/h.

Right season for planting in hills is August-September. About 700-800 kg cloves are required to plant one hectare and care should be taken to select bigger cloves preferably from the outer side of the bulbs.

Long slender cloves present in the centre should not be used for planting since cloves do not give properly developed bulbs.

The seed rate depends on bulb size, clove size, clove weight and number of cloves per bulb. It has been recommended to apply 25 t/ha FYM at the time of field preparation and mix well in the soil. For a normal soil 100 kg N, 50 kg P, 50 kg K and 50 kg S per hectare through chemical fertilizers has been recommended.

Complete dose of phosphorus, potash, sulphur and half of nitrogen should be applied before planting. Another half dose of nitrogen should be applied after a month of planting. 15 x 10 cm spacing has been recommended.

Garlic needs irrigation at an interval of 8-10 days during vegetative growth and 10-15 days during maturation.

Harvesting

The crop is considered ready for harvesting when the tops turn yellowish or brownish and shows signs of drying up.

It can be stored in bundles along with foliage or in hessian bag or leno bags after foliage cut in ventilated godowns.

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State seeks package for rubber replanting

Chief Minister Oommen Chandy informed the Assembly on Wednesday that Kerala had demanded a special package for replanting in the rubber policy.

He was replying to a calling attention motion moved by Mons Joseph.

Admitting that the crisis gripping the rubber sector was of a serious nature, he said the situation could not be allowed to continue. Referring to reports that the tyre industry was driving down rubber prices, he said the industry would also be affected if farmers moved to other crops. The government, he said, was talking to the Rubber Board and rubber goods manufacturers in an effort to resolve the crisis. Kerala had demanded a ban on rubber imports and enhancement of import duty from the existing 20 per cent. A delegation from the State including eight Ministers, had met the Prime Minister to apprise him of the issue.

Growers hit hard by falling rubber prices

Rubber growers in Udipi district have been hit hard as the price of rubber has decreased and even the annual increase in the acreage under cultivation in the district has taken a dip.

About 8,500 hectares of land is under rubber cultivation in Udipi district. Nearly 5,000 hectares of it is in Kundapur taluk, while it is about 3,000 hectares in Karkala taluk and over 200 hectares in Udipi taluk.

Less land under rubber

According to the Regional Office of the Rubber Board of India in Kundapur, the rate of increase of land under rubber cultivation has come down in the last three years. It increased by 300 hectares in the district in 2012-13, but went up only by 165 hectares in 2013-14 and by just 50 hectares in 2014-15.

This is because the price of rubber, which was Rs. 245 per kg two years back, is now Rs. 114 per kg.

D. Narayana Swamy, Deputy Commissioner, Regional Office, Rubber Board, Kundapur, said the dip in the prices of crude oil and the value of the currencies of major rubber producing countries were the major contributing factors driving the price of rubber down.

When the rubber prices went down, the farmers shifted to other crops, which brought them more returns. The per capita consumption of rubber in India is 1.12 kg. “When the pace of development increases, the demand for rubber goes up,” Mr. Swamy said.

‘Huge loss’

But the fall in prices has left farmers high and dry. Bittaj Sunny, who has been growing rubber in 10 acres of land at Kuchur village near Hebri for the last 13 years, said that the annual rubber production in his plantation was 16 to 18 tonnes.

“This fall in prices has hit me hard. To break even I must earn Rs. 150 per kg of rubber, but the prevailing price is Rs. 114. It is a huge loss. Even banks are not willing to give loans to rubber growers now,” he said.

B.V. Poojary, who grows rubber in six acres of land in Perdoor village, said that he had taken up cultivation of rubber for the first time. “The fall in prices has shocked me. It is a big blow for me. I hope that the prices may rise in coming years. Farmers always bank on hopes,” he said.

The rate of increase of land under rubber cultivation has come down in the last three years

High moisture in paddy robs growers of MSP

Abnormal moisture level in paddy has resulted in deprival of minimum support price (MSP) for growers in the current kharif season.

According to information, grain moisture was reported at 30 per cent in Narsapur revenue division, the highest in West Godavari district. According to the fair average quality (FAQ) guidelines of the Civil Supplies Department, moisture up to 17 per cent is permissible and the produce with more moisture content fetches returns much lower than the MSP for growers.

The government introduced a 'novel' paddy procurement policy in the district from the current season with the involvement of SHG women by eliminating middlemen. Still, a majority of farmers were preferring millers to the SHG women for disposal of stocks for a variety of reasons. The government announced an MSP of Rs. 1,400 for a quintal of superfine variety. According to reports, the price was failing to cross Rs. 1,050 at the paddy procurement centres run by SHG women in Bhimavaram area. Collector Bhaskar Katamneni at a review meeting here on Wednesday admitted that the produce lifted by the millers was priced at Rs. 1,200 a quintal because of the moisture problem. Mr. Bhaskar said the district administration was trying to address this problem by deploying dryers. Only one dryer has been under operation by a private person in Maruteru at present. A few more machines would be shortly requisitioned from Guntur district, the Collector said.

Research station sought at Kadiyam

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has promised that the government will consider the appeal of nursery farmers and owners to sanction a research station to Kadiyam. A delegation of nursery farmers led by All India Nursery Association vice-president Pulla Veera Venkatrao met the Chief Minister and gave a representation about their problems. Mr. Venkatrao appealed Mr. Naidu to grant 100 per cent subsidy on solar power unit.

Field-level water quality issues taught to fish farmers



G. Sugumar, Dean, FCRI, addressing a training programme in Tuticorin on Wednesday.— Photo: N. Rajesh

A three-day training programme on field-level water quality issues and management practices in aquaculture systems commenced at Fisheries College and Research Institute here on Wednesday.

The programme is funded by the National Fisheries Development Board to ensure fisheries development in the State.

G. Sugumar, Dean, FCRI, in his inaugural address, emphasised the importance of water quality and management aspects for successful fish farming.

He said the aquaculture sector was a growing industry, which attracted more farmers, who found water quality issues as one of the major hurdles in the success of fish and shrimp farming. Hence, such issues in water quality management were addressed.

This programme would be helpful to fish farmers, prawn farmers, ornamental fish farmers and farm technicians also.

The trainees would also be taken to field visits to adopt better farming methods. The Dean also said that two more training programmes of similar kind would be conducted at FCRI before March 2015.

The training programme coordinator, A. Srinivasan, Professor and Head, Department of Fisheries Environment, said the programme would cover all the water quality management aspects concerning freshwater, brackish water and ornamental fish culture systems.

S. Anand, Assistant Professor, welcomed the gathering. Thirty participants from various districts attended the training. D. Manimekalai, Assistant Professor, proposed a vote of thanks.

Climate deal: What you need to know

The Earth has changed a lot: it's hotter and wilder

In the more than two decades since world leaders first got together to try to solve global warming, life on Earth has changed, not just the climate. It's gotten hotter, more polluted with heat-trapping gases, more crowded and just downright wilder.

The numbers are stark. Carbon dioxide emissions: up 60 percent. Global temperature: up six-tenths of a degree Fahrenheit. Population: up 1.7 billion people. Sea level: up 3 inches (7.5 centimeters). U.S. extreme weather: up 30 percent. Ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica: down 4.9 trillion tons of ice.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

- 1) Atmospheric levels of three greenhouse gases from burning coal, oil and gas are the highest in 800,000 years.
- 2) Global temperatures for the 10-month period from January to October were the hottest on average in 2014 since record-keeping began in 1880.
- 3) Since the start of the Industrial Revolution in 1750, about 2,000 billion tonnes of the most plentiful greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide (CO₂), have been emitted.
- 4) From 1880 to 2012, the global average surface temperature rose by 0.85 degrees Celsius (1.5 degrees Fahrenheit).
- 5) The global mean sea level rose by 19 centimetres (7.6 inches) from 1901 to 2010.

WHERE ARE WE HEADING?

- 1) Depending on how much carbon is spewed into the atmosphere, the global mean temperature could rise by 0.3 C to 4.8 C this century, and sea levels by 26-82 cm.
- 2) Wet countries will become more prone to heavy rain and flooding and dry countries more exposed to drought. Poor tropical countries and small island states will see their coastlines carved away by rising seas.
- 3) The impacts could translate into species loss, hunger, homelessness, the spread of disease and wars for natural resources.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Nations have agreed to limit warming to 2 C over pre-Industrial Revolution levels. A tighter target of 1.5 C comes under review next year.

Meeting these goals carries a cost, as countries have to switch from cheap, plentiful and polluting fossil fuels to cleaner renewable sources.

The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says a 2 C pathway requires annual greenhouse-gas cuts of 40-70 percent by 2050, compared to levels in 2010 -- and to zero or below by 2100.

For a "likely", 66-percent, chance of meeting the target, carbon concentrations in the atmosphere should not exceed 450 parts per million of CO₂ equivalent (CO₂eq) by 2100.

The level was 430 ppm CO₂eq in 2011 and heading, on current trends, for 750-1,300 ppm CO₂eq by 2100. This leaves a "budget" of about 1,000 billion tonnes of CO₂ to emit in total. AP and AFP

WILD WEATHER: Since 1992, there have been more than 6,600 climate, weather and water major disasters worldwide, causing more than \$1.6 trillion in damage and killing more than 600,000 people, according to the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters in Belgium, which tracks the world's catastrophes.

ON LAND: The world's population in 1992 was 5.46 billion. Today, it's nearly a third higher, at 7.18 billion. That means more carbon pollution and more people who could be vulnerable to global warming.

THE OCEANS: The world's oceans have risen by about 3 inches since 1992 and gotten more acidic by about half a percent, thanks to chemical reactions caused by the absorption of carbon dioxide.

THE AIR: Scientists simply point to greenhouse gas emissions, mostly carbon dioxide, that form a heat trapping blanket in our air.

China has tripled its emissions from 3 billion tons to 11 billion tons a year. The emissions from the U.S. have gone up more slowly, about 6 percent, from 5.4 billion tons to 5.8 billion tons. India also has tripled its emissions, from 860 million tons to 2.6 billion tons. Only European countries have seen their emissions go down, from 4.5 billion tons to 3.8 billion tons.

Include more adaptation efforts in Paris climate deal: India



[AP](#) Delegates attend the opening ceremony of the Climate Change Conference in Lima, Peru, on Monday.

With the ministerial-level talks to begin next week at the UN climate summit here, India today said its position remains very strong on the need for a balanced inclusion of adaptation efforts in the 2015 Paris agreement and less focus on mitigation.

Sushil Kumar, interim head of the Indian delegation at the talks, said the first two days of the 12-day conference are “off to a good start” with discussions on adaptation and finance underway.

He said that on Wednesday countries participated in sessions for the adaptation and finance groups.

“Developing countries are talking quite a bit about adaptation, but not developed countries,” he said.

Ministerial-level talks will begin next week which will be attended by Environment Minister Prakash Javedkar on December 7.

“The Indian position is to remain very strong on the need for a balanced inclusion of adaptation in the 2015 Paris agreement and less focus on mitigation efforts,” said Mr. Kumar.

The conference has to agree on a draft agreement which would form the cornerstone of a historic deal to be signed in Paris in December 2015 and take effect by 2020.

Kumar said that India will “need to bring [climate change issues] into development planning” and “disseminate whatever is in the IPCC report” at the state-level within India.

The state-level action plans are important because each will have different concerns depending on whether it is a coastal, desert, or tropical climate.

Kumar said these tailored state plans are crucial for India to put together a “comprehensive and robust” Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC).

A meeting of the Union Cabinet on Tuesday gave its approval to the negotiating position for the 20th Conference of Parties (COP—20) on climate change which is expected to conclude on December 12.

CoP-20 is expected to focus on the elements of 2015 Agreement and INDCs.

“The approach seeks to protect the interests of the country in climate change negotiations based on the principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and its Kyoto Protocol (KP). It

would also enhance the solidarity among the developing countries on these issues,” a statement said.

So far 29 Indian states have submitted their action plans on adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change with 21 state plans already approved.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Why breakfast is so important

Busy lives and absurd daily routines have made diets go haywire. But if you keep your breakfast in place, good health is assured

They say breakfast is the most important meal of your day. Here is why it is important not to skip your first meal of the day.

It helps in building your memory. After a long gap post dinner, your stomach not only needs something to give you energy, but also your mind which is craving for some boost too. Breakfast sharpens your short term memory.

And while the body is craving for some energy to kick start your day, you have already put it rolling. As a result the body refuses to work. And morning is the time you need the most of your body essentials working their best.

And the effects skipping breakfast is the most vital of it all. When there is a lack of food, mind starts to conserve the limited energy it has stored from the last meal. This stops it from providing the kind of results you are expecting out of it.

It's not just the brain that is getting affected, but studies have shown that people who have had been skipping breakfast for a long time have higher cholesterol levels and higher insulin levels. This, in long term, can be really dangerous.

7 best foods for weight loss

If you've been striving to lose weight and haven't been able to do so, here's how you can...

Lose weight faster. Even if you are dieting, chances are that you are wondering what to eat, to boost your weight loss. We select seven foods for you that will help you shed those pounds faster than you've thought.

1. Almonds: Did you know that these nuts are packed with the best nutrients and vitamins? Just a handful of almonds will give you the right boost of energy and will also keep hunger pangs at bay. Avoid the ones that are coated with chocolate or salt.

2. Apples: We all know how an apple a day will keep the doctor away, but do you also know that it helps keep fat at bay too? Apples are said to contain four to five grams of fiber per serving, so they are sweet as well as crunchy and keeps you full for a long time. They also contain antioxidants which add essential vitamins and minerals in your body.

3. Avocado: Though they are known to be fatty, but you need not worry. Avocados are loaded with fiber and proteins and helps in weight loss. They contain 'good' monosaturated fats that keeps you full for a long time.

4. Bell Peppers: Red, yellow or green - you can choose any, bell peppers contain vitamin C, and gives you the right amount of vitamins. You can have them raw, as a salad or in a bowl of soup.

5. Cinnamon: Instead of adding sugar to your beverages or meals, try adding a pinch of cinnamon for increased energy and a slower release of insulin in your system. Cinnamon has a sweet taste and is completely guilt-free.

6. Eggs: If you are having egg whites, you are surely going to lose oodles of weight. They contain proteins and keeps you feeling full for a long time. Thus egg whites are said to be the best choice for breakfast.

7. Quinoa: If you are craving carbs during your lunch or dinner hours, you can always go in for quinoa. Said to be an alternative for rice, it's rich in proteins and fiber and is a wonderful food that aids in weight loss.

Recipe: Capsicum Curry

It can be whipped up easily

Ingredients: Three medium sized green capsicum, two onions (cut into small pieces), one tbsp chopped coriander leaves, half a cup of peanuts, four red chillies, half tbsp coriander seeds, salt, oil.

Method: Cut the capsicum and remove the seeds, keep it away. Fry the peanuts, red chillies, half of the chopped onions and coriander seeds in a pan, grind it. Heat oil in a pan, then fry the remaining onions. Add capsicum and salt, keep on low flame for about 15 minutes. Add the peanut paste, cook for about five minutes and add chopped coriander leaves.

Cook these delicious winter food specialities!

Feeling that nip in the air? It's time to get cooking with the best of the seasonal produce.

The markets are awash with roots and tubers — yams (kand), colocasia roots (arbi), Elephant foot yam (suran) turnips, carrots, onions, garlic, radishes, turmeric and ginger. Nutritionist Kajal Bhatia tells you why you should tuck into these. "For one, hardy roots are nutritious, yet low in glycemic index. Hence, they help regulate sugar levels and are good for diabetics and weight watchers alike. Rich in phytonutrients and vitamins, these are also versatile and can be cooked in a variety of techniques like roasting, steaming or baking. Some, like sweet potato, yam and arbi, can also be used post exercise and on endurance runs, to energise and provide fuel for workout routines," she adds. Here are popular dishes made with these winter powerhouses....

UNDHIYU

The Gujarati delicacy of 'undhiyu' is almost synonymous with the winter season and in Mumbai — at smaller areas like Bhuleshwar — you will see shops and eateries carrying banners of 'Undhiyu malshe' (Undhiyu is available here). The one-pot dish, that means 'upside down', has a smorgasbord of seasonal vegetables and spices that are simmered on a low flame for hours to get the aromatic result. We delved into its making at Hiralal Kashidas Bhajiawala, an 80-year-old family-run establishment in CP Tank. Owner Gaurang Shah, whose grandfather started the place, says it's the hot-seller during this season, with 50

kilos sold per day. The sweet and mildly-spiced dish is made with special ingredients — fresh green garlic, papdi from Katargam in Surat, ringanna (brinjal), Rajgiri banana, sweet potatoes, kand (purple yam) and chibda (called arya kakdi) — all brought down fresh from Surat each morning by the Flying Rani train. What's the secret to its popularity? "You have to get the ingredients right," he says. "Groundnut oil is a must and no water must be added while cooking. Top it with a generous amount of grated coconut, garlic and coriander." He shares an easy cooking process:

- Heat oil and first add the papdi as it's tougher to cook, then potatoes, brinjal and cucumber.
- Cover it and add some water to the lid, so the heat spreads evenly through it.
Add masalas like dhania-zeera, crushed green chilli, grated coconut, coriander, ajwain, hing, sugar, haldi and salt.
- Now add in the semi-fried muthiyas (wheat balls).
- Stir it well with a kharpi (ladle).
- Once it is cooked, overturn the contents into another vessel to help it mix well.
- Serve hot with the toppings.

PONKH

Little compares to the sweet, delicate flavour of ponkh, a tender green jowar. It is available only from November to February. Food blogger Anaggh Desai says it's a must-have for him. "Ponkh is washed and best had raw with four kinds of sev — plain, kalamari, tikha and lissan — as well as green chutney and sakariya dana (sugar). It has been a ritual in our family that ponkh with all accompaniments, is imported specially from Surat at least twice during this season. In fact, in Surat, they have ponkh parties and make ponkh pulao and ponkh barfi too, all of which are delicious. It lends warmth to the body in winter."

SARSON DA SAAG

This quintessential Punjabi dish is made from sarson (Hindi)/sarro (Punjabi) or mustard leaves, spinach and bathua (wild spinach, if available). It is iron-rich and must be cooked slowly, which brings out its distinct texture, aroma and taste. Says blogger Amrita Rana, "Traditionally, a wooden mathni is used to mix and pound the saag while it is cooking in a heavy bottomed vessel for an enhanced flavour. But nowadays, people prefer to pressure-cook the saag and later, blend it in a food processor. This piping hot saag is served with makkai di roti (cornmeal flatbreads), freshly churned white butter and chunks of gur (jaggery)."

Here is her recipe to try:

Wash mustard (3 cups) and spinach leaves (2 cups). Remove stalks and chop roughly. Heat ghee, add onions and saute. Add ginger, garlic and green chillies. Saute and add the mustard and spinach leaves. Add salt and a cup of water, and bring it to a boil. Reduce the flame, cover and boil these greens for 35-40 minutes, stirring few times in between. Greens should be mushy and will get reduced drastically. Take cornmeal (makkai ka atta, 1 tbsp) with ¼ cup of water and mix it with the greens. Cook for 10 minutes. Before the tadka, blend the saag lightly to get a chunky texture. Heat some ghee in a small pan. Add cumin seeds, a pinch of hing and red chillies. Add this tadka to the saag. Serve it hot with makkai di roti, gur and freshly churned white butter.

NALLI NIHARI

If it's winter, you must savour the piping hot and flavoursome bone marrow gravy — nalli nihari! Khalid Hakim, of Noor Mohammadi at Bhendi Bazar, says this was traditionally a breakfast dish, once loved by emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar. "The meat is cooked on coals for almost eight hours with masalas, laung, javitri, jaiphal and sonth (ginger powder). When done, the tender meat actually falls off the bone. It is topped with finely chopped ginger and chillies."

PAYA SALAN

Another nourishing delicacy is paya salan (goat's trotters), slow cooked to give you bone-strengthening goodness. Informs Khalid, "The payas are cooked for hours, so the marrow, juices and meat become gelatinous. Ginger and garlic are added, plus garam masalas and dahi. Saute onions and add it to the payas, with the regular powdered spices. It must be roasted well. Finally, simmer this and enjoy it with naan or rice." He also lets in on an old wives' tale. "The true taste of paya lies in how sticky your fingers are when you eat it," he smiles.

[Recipe: Pasta minestrone soup](#)

The cold months are the best time to indulge in a warm soup that not only tickles your tastebuds but is also healthier. Serve this soup with crusty bread sticks.

Preparation time: 45 minutes

Serves: 4

Ingredients:

2 peeled and chopped carrots
1 peeled and chopped potato
2 peeled and chopped celery sticks
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1/2 finely chopped onion
4 cups of vegetable stock
1 can of red kidney beans
4 finely chopped tomatoes
1 packet of fusilli pasta
Salt and freshly ground pepper
Chopped parsley for garnish

How to make it

- Add onions, carrots, potatoes, celery sticks and crushed garlic cloves in a saucepan. Stir the mixture constantly on a high flame for five minutes.
- Add a can of red kidney beans, vegetable stock and tomatoes in the saucepan. Put the lid over it and let the soup boil for 30 minutes. Stir occasionally to ensure that the beans don't stick to the bottom of the pan. Once boiled, let it simmer for another five minutes or till all the vegetables are tender.
- Add salt and ground pepper according to your taste.
- Boil the pasta separately. Add salt and two drops of oil to the boiling water to make sure that the pasta doesn't stick to each other.
- Once cooked, add pasta to the simmering mixture.
- Stir well and garnish with parsley.
- Serve with toast, garlic bread or crunchy bread sticks.

Recipe: Fried mozzarella

Deep fried mozzarella fingers

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 10 minutes

Serves: 2-3

Recipe ingredients:

- 300g mozzarella cheese - 2 eggs - 1 cup Flour seasoned with salt and pepper - 1 cup plain bread crumbs (dried)

Recipe method:

Cut the mozzarella into 1" slices. Further cut the slices into 1" fingers. Pat off the extra moisture.

Lightly whisk the eggs.

Press the cheese fingers in the seasoned flour to coat well. Dip them in the egg and then the breadcrumbs. Dip them once more in the egg and then the breadcrumbs.

Heat the oil and deep fry the fingers in medium hot oil to a golden brown. Serve immediately.

[Recipe: Baked samosa](#)

Indian samosa with a twist.

Preparation time: 15 mins

Cooking time: 45 mins

Serves: Makes 12

Ingredients

Onion 1 small, finely chopped

Garlic 2 cloves, crushed

Ginger a small chunk, grated

Cooking oil spray

Curry powder 3 tsp, mixed with 1 tsp mustard seeds

Potatoes 250g, peeled and diced small

Green beans 75g fine, cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ cm lengths

Frozen peas 50g

Filo pastry 4 sheets or 12Samosa Pattis

Method

The onion, garlic and ginger in a spray of oil for 3 minutes then stir in the curry powder and mustard seeds. Add the potatoes and beans with 400ml water. Cook for 20 minutes until veg. is soft and liquid evaporated. Add the peas for the last 5 minutes. Heat the oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6.

Spray a sheet of filo pastry with oil then cut into three strips. Put 2 tbsp of mix at the top of a strip and fold over itself into a triangle. Continue folding down the length of the pastry to make a samosa shape. Put on a non-stick baking tray. Repeat with rest of pastry and filling. Bake for 18-20 minutes until golden brown.

Recipe: Mutton kebabs

It is delicious delicacy.

Ingredients: 300 gm mutton mince, five finely chopped onions, three green chillies grinded into a paste, salt, three tbsp rice flour, oil.

Method: Mix the ingredients and keep aside for about 40 minutes. In a kadai, heat oil, make flattened balls and fry till colour changes to deep brown. Drain off the excess oil and serve hot with mint chutney and sliced onion.

Business Standard

India's vegetable oil import to set new record at 12 mt this year

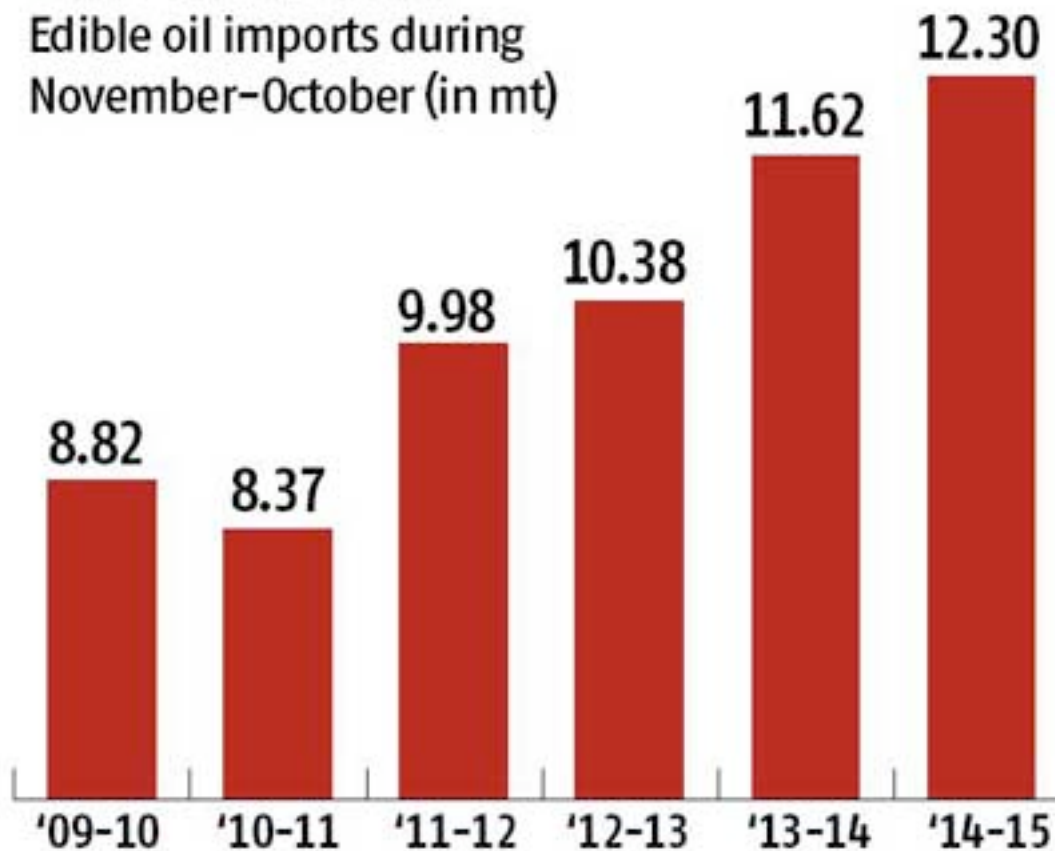
India might import larger tonnages of crude palm oil (CPO), which will bring domestic refiners back to business

India's [vegetable oil import](#) is likely to hit a new record this year at 12.3 million tonnes (mt) due to continuous rise in demand amid falling prices and lower output from domestic sources. At this level, however, vegetable oil import will

rise six per cent from 11.62 mt in the previous year. Delay in the monsoon, coupled with an overall deficit of showers this season, has resulted in the sharp decline in the oilseeds output this kharif harvesting season. The first advanced estimate of India's oilseeds output at 19.66 mt, a sharp decline from 22.41 mt in the previous year and 21.83 per cent of the target. The decline in oilseeds production would lead to decline in the vegetable oil output, while the sharp upsurge in demand on falling prices is set to widen the deficit. "Domestic crushing has got off to a slow start. As a result, India is likely to continue to suck in larger imports of palm, soya and sunflower oils. The country will store domestically produced oilseeds and will front-load oil imports. India's consumption of vegetable oils will be strong on account of low prices and a feel good factor prevalent with the new government. Consequently, we forecast India's veg oil import to create a new record at 12.3 million tonnes for the oil year 14-15," said Dorab Mistry, director, Godrej International. India might import larger tonnages of crude palm oil (CPO), which will bring domestic refiners back to business. Consumption of vegetable oils, however, will be strong on account of low prices and a feel good factor prevalent with the new government. "At per capita consumption of 14.4 kg, total vegetable oil requirement stood at 18.28 mt in 2013-14 which is expected to rise to 19.30 mt in 2014-15 at an overall consumption growth rate of 5.6 per cent," said B V Mehta, executive director, SEA. Rising import would translate into India's growing dependence on overseas producers. At 12.3 mt of record import, India's dependence on overseas suppliers would grow to 65 per cent of its annual vegetable oil consumption.

OIL ON BOIL

Edible oil imports during
November–October (in mt)



Source: Solvent Extractors' Association (SEA)

India imports [CPO](#) largely from Indonesia and Malaysia for blending with other vegetable oils produced from local oilseeds. Both countries cut export duty to nil to push their surplus quantity into India. Falling prices have been a major factor for import surge. For example, average RBD (refined, bleached and diodized) palmolein price fell sharply to \$727 in October from \$938 a tonne in March. Similarly, CPO price fell sharply to \$704 a tonne from 951 a tonne, crude soybean oil to \$838 a tonne from \$1,000 a tonne and crude [sunflower oil](#) to \$878 a tonne in October from \$974 a tonne in March.

“The recent drop in prices has made life extremely difficult for India’s oilseed farmers. We must remember that Indian farmers are poor due to the small size of Indian farms and their low productivity. Current oilseed prices in India make

oilseed planting uneconomic. Therefore, the industry in India is urging the new dynamic government, to come to the rescue of the beleaguered oilseed farmers. An import duty of 10 per cent on all crude oils and 25 per cent on all refined oils has been suggested. If such steps are not taken, there will be extreme distress among Indian oilseed farmers when they bring their harvested crop to market,” Mistry said.

Increasing import of refined oil has idled a majority of installed capacity of Indian refinery. During the oil year 12-13, refined oil import contributed to over 21 per cent of total import of 10.38 million tonnes. In 2013-14, however, the share of refined oil diminished to 13.5 per cent of the overall vegetable oil import of 11.62 mt.

Plant to convert sea water into potable water at Tuticorin

The work has been initiated to set up the plant, which has a capacity to generate 2 million litre potable water per day

A new low temperature thermal desalination (LTTD) technology plant would come up at the Tuticorin thermal power station in Tamil Nadu. This will convert sea water into potable water. Harsh Vardhan, minister of earth sciences, in a written reply informed the Rajya Sabha that the work had been initiated to set up this plant, which has a capacity to generate 2 million litre potable water per day. In this methodology, the warmer surface sea water is evaporated at low pressure and the vapour obtained are condensed using the colder deep sea water.

Lima climate talks get ugly as developing countries slam UN officials

Developing countries accuse co-chairs of subverting negotiations



As Climate talks began in Lima in Peru, Greenpeace activists from seven countries projected a pro-solar message at the Temple of the Sun in Machu Pichu, Peru. Activists have urged all the nations to work for a 100 percent renewable energy future by 2

Diplomatic battles at [Lima climate talks](#) got ugly on the second day, with many developing countries ramping up their attack on the two UN officials chairing the talks, alleging bias and subversion of process. Developed countries, led by the US, demanded that references to their grouping making predictable, enhanced and adequate finance available for poor countries be dropped from the draft text of the 2015 Paris agreement. Switzerland insisted that unless a paragraph calling for new commitments of finance after 2020 was left out of the text, there would be no agreement in Lima, reported officials of Oxfam America, which is taking notes at the talks. Developing countries demanded that the two co-chairs — Artur Runge-Metzger, selected earlier from the EU negotiating team, and [Kishan Kumarsingh](#) from Trinidad and Tobago — start formal negotiations on the basis of the text from the nations and not others' cherry-picked ideas, which they found biased. The UN officials did not relent. The push-back from the grouping has become stronger — developing

country were relatively polite on day-one — as talks moved on to closed-door meetings on the second day. Malaysia, speaking on behalf of the G77+China group, criticised the method used by the officials. China went hammer and tongs, too. It said the approach the past year had not been real negotiations, and added that it was concerned by the co-chair's proposal that the "secretariat takes notes" of the countries' proposals and, subsequently, "take it back home to cook in their kitchen". But the co-chairs did not relent. Runge-Metzger said "we will get to that stage", suggesting that they would continue to drive the negotiations in the near future and not the countries. The talks were suspended on Tuesday night and would continue on Wednesday, when India is slated to speak. "We are going to raise serious concerns about this process on Wednesday. It is just not right. The co-chairs are being more than unreasonable," said an Indian official speaking to Business Standard from Lima. Meena Raman of Third World Network, an observer organisation at the talks, said: "In a co-chair driven process, they can pick and choose what proposals they take on board ... and not reflect all the options and views on the table." Runge-Metzger defended their way of working: "This is not the last time to go through the text. We are choosing this methodology of work for the next four days so that it is clear where the sticky points could be..."

THE HINDU BusinessLine

TN sugar firms seek govt help to pay growers' dues

Want revenue sharing model adopted in the State from the current season

Chennai, December 3:

Private sugar mills in Tamil Nadu have petitioned the State government for financial support to pay sugarcane dues for 2013-14 to farmers and adopt a viable revenue sharing model for cane pricing this season.

Palani G Periasamy, President, South Indian Sugar Mills Association – Tamil Nadu, said due to the unviable pricing of sugarcane in 2013-14 (October-September) compared with sugar prices, mills have paid the mandatory price announced by the Centre and only a portion of the State Advised Price.

The State government had fixed the sugarcane price at Rs. 2,650 a tonne including transport charge of Rs. 100. This was Rs. 550 more than the Centre's Fair and Remunerative Price of Rs. 2,100.

Private sector sugar mills in the State had paid farmers about Rs. 2,350 a tonne last season, ensuring that the mandatory price is paid. The private sector industry does not have the financial strength to pay the balance Rs. 300 a tonne.

Private mills crushed 118.5 lakh tonnes of cane during the season. All sugar companies have sustained losses over the last six quarters and are cash-strapped, he said.

With the average sugar price realisation being Rs. 28,000 a tonne, sugar mills lost Rs. 500-700 on every tonne of cane crushed, said Periasamy. Mills had managed to pay the FRP only with the soft loan sanctioned by the Centre, he said.

Most of the other sugar producing States have moved to a revenue-sharing formula based on the price of final product including sugar, bagasse and molasses. He hoped the Tamil Nadu government adopts a progressive approach to sugarcane pricing and opts for a similar formula.

Sugar mills have invested over Rs. 75-150 crore to set up distilleries and about Rs. 6 crore a MW for co-generation power plants attached to the mills.

But the policies associated with alcohol or power are not supportive. Alcohol from other sugar producing States moves in cheaper than locally produced product and alcohol has stockpiled with sugar mills, he said.

The electricity utility tariff of Rs. 3.15 a unit for co-gen power is also unviable.

Power plants are idle during the off season as it is not possible to generate power with coal at this tariff, he said. Tamil Nadu mills have also lost their competitive edge compared to their counterparts in neighbouring States as the government has levied a 5 per cent VAT on sugar.

Sugar from neighbouring States comes here and to Kerala, which was previously a market for Tamil Nadu mills, he said.

Coming ... red, yellow and green alerts on farm produce availability

IFPRI for nutritional security, while making protein-rich food affordable



PK Joshi, Director, South Asia, International Food Policy Research Institute PV SIVAKUMAR

Hyderabad, December 3:

Red, yellow and green – the familiar colours that make up our signals and help streamline traffic at junctions – are going to do a similar job in the food supply chain.

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) will shortly introduce these warnings for the Union and State governments, providing them alerts on the availability of agricultural commodities.

Colour codes

The timely alerts should allow the governments to take necessary remedial measures well in advance, and are expected to be introduced in the next few weeks.

Red would mean the situation is dire, yellow an upcoming problem that needs to be addressed and green abundant availability. Facilitated by the Institute, the

dedicated portal already monitors macro and micro economic issues related to food security with a real-time update on commodity prices.

Tech and agri

The institute is also looking at studying the need to improve institutional innovation and use of e-commerce in agriculture to increase the efficiency of the sector.

“We are using technology to piece together information on agricultural commodities from across the country. We will compile them to assess the situation and alert the Government. We closely track news to monitor issues related to food, food inflation, affordability and supply chain issues,” PK Joshi, Director (South Asia) of IFPRI, told *BusinessLine*.

He was here recently in connection with a brainstorming session aimed at identifying areas for research on the factors that influence food inflation.

Pulses intake

He said that one of the priority missions for the institute was to increase intake of pulses to achieve nutritional security along with food security. The institute is doing pilot projects in Gujarat, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to study issues that are specific to the respective States. The workshop, attended by stakeholders from academia and the private sector, felt that affordability of food is a concern, and said that the food should reach the unreached.

Policy push

It came out with a recommendation that agricultural policies must be modified to improve nutritional security.

It called for efforts to reduce urbanisation of agricultural lands in Telangana and to give incentives to improve cultivation of vegetables, cereals and pulses so that the price of food reduces.