

DATE:20.12.2014

THE HINDU

14,990 people given 59,964 goats

As many as 59,964 free goats have been supplied to about 14,990 beneficiaries at a cost of Rs. 19 crore over the past three years.

For 2014-15, it has been planned to distribute 22,156 goats at a cost of Rs. 7.31 crore to 5,539 beneficiaries in 84 village panchayats, according to R. Mohanarangam, Joint Director of Animal Husbandry,

Nirmala Parimalam of Anthanallur village in the district is a beneficiary of free goat scheme of the government. She was given a male goat and three female goats in 2011.

The goats yielded 26 kids. She sold 14 of them and got Rs. 50,000. Free goat and milch animals scheme had provided livelihood to rural women and improved the rural economy.

In Tiruchi district, 1,350 milch cows have been distributed at a cost of Rs. 4.65 crore in 27 village panchayats over the past three years. D

uring 2014-15, 247 milch animals have been distributed in five village panchayats at a cost of Rs. 87.93 lakh.

Mr. Mohanarangam said that training was given to beneficiaries in rearing goats and milch animals. Those who rear the animals well are given Rs. 3,000, Rs. 2,000 and Rs. 1,000 worth of fodder as prizes.

Milch animals have yielded 1,648 calves in the district in the last three years and goats have yielded 80,812 kids. Milk production has increased in Tiruchi district because of the supply of free milch animals. A total of 7,300 litres of milk was procured per day in the district.

Rain guns are given to farmers for raising the fodder grass as inter crop in banana fields. Mahalakshmi, wife of Jaganathan of Pettavaithalai, is one of the beneficiary who got rain gun.

The gun estimated at Rs. 25,000 was given to her with a subsidy of Rs. 18,750. The beneficiary has to pay Rs 6,250.

Mahalakshmi said that she used the rain gun for spraying water to fodder grass raised as inter-crop in banana field.

Salem farmers express concern over disease affecting paddy crop

The Ponni paddy crop standing on about 500 acres in the Panaimarathupatti and surrounding villages in the district have been affected by the mysterious 'Yaanaikomban' disease.

The farmers of this area who brought this to the notice of the authorities at the monthly farmers grievances day meeting, called upon the State Government to provide adequate compensation to the affected farmers.

A.R. Shanmugam of Panaimarathupatti, member of the District Agricultural Production Committee, raising this issue and said that nurseries were raised by the farmers of Poolampatti, Koodakkal, Kuppanur, Molapparai villages with the seeds procured from the Government seeds depot.

The disease has attacked the crop 70 days after transplantation, causing much anxiety to the farmers.

Mr. Shanmugam and M. R. Natesan, State General Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Yezhai Vivasayigal Sangam, displayed the affected paddy to K. Maharabushanam, Collector, who presided over the meeting.

Mr. Natesan also presented a petition urging the Collector to inspect the affected fields and recommend adequate compensation to the affected farmers. The Collector directed the agriculture department officials to take steps to study the situation.

R. P. Ramasamy, district president, Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, said that despite monsoon rainfall, the Vasishtanadhi river remains dry, leading to acute water scarcity in Attur block. He said that two dams – Puzhudikuttai dam near Belur and Kariakovil dam in Pappanaickenpatti, have been retaining the water which should have been let into Vasisthanadhi river.

As per the government guidelines, water could be retained in these dams only to a level of ten feet. Now the Kariakovil dam has more than 30 feet water, Mr. Ramasamy said and demanded the immediate release of the same in the Vasishtanadhi river.

C. Vaiyapuri, president of the United Farmers Association of Tamil Nadu, said that the work of extending the Thalaivasan market has remained suspended following court orders.

The district administration should take steps to vacate the stay.

Sundaram of Vaiyappamalai said that the State Government fixed a procurement price of Rs. 2,650 per tonne of cane in 2013-14. While the cooperative sugar mill is providing the government price to the farmers, a private sugar mill is refusing to pay the government fixed prize, he complained.

He also brought to the notice of the authorities about the non release of subsidy to the farmers who adopted drip irrigation system in the year 2013-14.

The Collector should draw the attention of the horticulture department officials for the same. Officials assured that the subsidy will be released to the farmers by February.

Perumal of Puliankurichi said that paddy crop is ready for harvest and pleaded for opening of direct procurement centres in the district.

Vetrimani of Kottavadi said that PWD has already got notification for the holding of elections for the Ayacutdars Association. The elections should be conducted in a proper manner.

The disease has attacked the crop

70 days after transplantation, causing much anxiety to farmers

Urea consumption touches a new high

Paddy farmers in the district have consumed a record 9,640 tonnes of urea till the middle of this month, highest consumption in the last 20 years as they were gearing up for a bumper harvest, thanks to good monsoon and timely availability of fertilizer and inputs.

Addressing the farmers' grievance redressal meeting here on Friday, Collector K. Nanthakumar said the urea consumption has created a record as the farmers have increased the area of paddy cultivation, thanks to good monsoon so far and release of water from Vaigai dam. During 2013-14, farmers had consumed 5,575 tonnes of urea.

Anticipating the demand for urea, the District administration coordinated with the Director of Agriculture and other agencies and received 900 metric tonnes every week during the peak season. Presently, the total stock of urea stood at 1,200 tonnes and the district would maintain adequate stock to meet the demand of chilli and cotton growing farmers in the coming months, official sources said.

The district has received 10 per cent more rainfall till the middle of this month and expected more rains during this month from the north east monsoon, the sources said. Against the annual average rainfall of 827 mm, the district has already received rainfall of 925 mm, sources added. The meeting began on a happy note with farmers appreciating the district administration for the timely supply of fertilizers and other inputs, when farmers in the delta region complained about short supply of urea.

After experiencing severe drought for two successive years in 2012-13 and 2013-14, the farmers were happy that they received good rainfall this year. They also thanked the district administration for securing the district's share of Vaigai water well on time and exuded confidence of a good harvest this year.

The Collector said the procurement of paddy would begin after January 15 in all the Primary Agriculture Co-operative Credit Societies (PACCS), which had godown facilities. Paddy crops in Thiruvadana and RS Mangalam areas would be harvested during Pongal, while the harvest would go on till March in other areas.

On farmers' demand for payment of drought relief for the year 2013-14, the Collector said the National Agriculture Insurance Company has informed that the relief could be distributed during the first or second week of January.

Farmers buy 9,640 tonnes of urea, the highest consumption in last 20 years

Palm jaggery price goes up

C. Vaiyapuri, president of the United Farmers Association of Tamil Nadu, drew the attention of the authorities to the steep hike in the price of palm jaggery in the district. The palm jaggery price has skyrocketed of late and the commodity is at present sold for Rs. 200 per kg in the open market. Palm jaggery is a natural food with abundant calcium nutrient. It is abundantly used in the preparation of Siddha medicine, he said. The government should initiate steps for augmenting the production of palm jaggery in the State.

Mr. Vaiyapuri said it was wrong on the part of the government to slap a ban on toddy tapping in the State in 1987, which hit the production of palm jaggery, leading to the present situation. He made a forceful plea for lifting the ban on the toddy tapping. This will help in augmenting the production of palm jaggery, Mr. Vaiyapuri said.

Farmers concerned over proposed eco-sensitive zone in Kodaikanal

Urge government to exclude farmlands from the purview of eco zone

The proposed Eco-Sensitive Zone around Kodaikanal sanctuary will wipe out all livelihood activities of tiny and marginal farmers in Kodaikanal and paralyse tourism activities. The government should withdraw such proposals keeping in mind the interests of farmers or exclude farmlands from the purview of eco zone, said N. Parthasarathy, State secretary of Bharathiya Kisan Sangh at the agriculturists' grievance day meet held here on Friday.

Several measures to be taken by forest officials in the proposed zone were impractical and will affect agriculture activities. Farmers cannot produce mango, banana and coffee on hill.

Farmers have to obtain permission from the forest officials before changing the crop every season. Above all, closure of ghat road for vehicular traffic between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. will adversely affect transport of agriculture commodities to the plains from the hill. Moreover, all dams on the Kodaikanal hill will be brought under the eco zone and dam maintenance too will become a tough task, he said and appealed to the authorities to exclude residential areas and farm lands from the eco-sensitive zone.

Farmers from Vedasandur and Gujiliamparai too condemned the failure of PWD in storing water in Azhagapuri dam. Even after a decade, PWD did not take efforts to repair the old shutters, they said.

Collector N. Venkatachalam said their problem could be solved only after the erection of radial shutters in the dam. But World Bank experts, who visited the dam, shunned such proposal as it was not essential and advised them to strengthen the dam and the shutters. A sum of Rs.1.2 crore had been sanctioned to strengthen the dam and replace all old shutters to improve storage. After the strengthening work, the dam could withstand an inflow of even seven lakh cusecs. The dam had recorded highest inflow of four lakh cusecs so far. Tender had been finalised and the work would commence shortly, he added.

They also appealed to construct a check dam before the main dam to recharge the groundwater.

Farmers from Natham showed the pest-affected guava fruit and said strange pests attacked fruits on a large scale in guava farms. The Collector assured them that he would depute a team of horticulture officials to solve the problem. Farmers from Oddanchatram and Palani blocks complained about encroachment in tanks and sought desilting of the supply channels.

Loan Eligibility Cards for all tenant farmers: Minister

Minister for Agriculture P. Pulla Rao said the government will issue Loan Eligibility Cards (LECs) to all farmers, including tenants, and they will have time up to March 2015 to avail interest-free crop loans.

Responding to a question during the Question Hour in the Assembly on Friday, the Minister said 3,39,214 LECs were issued to the tenant farmers during 2014-15. When YSRC MLA Y.Visweswara Reddy said only Rs.58 crore was sanctioned for LEC holders till now, and that the LECs sanctioned are a fewer than last year, Mr.Rao said a committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of Chief Commissioner of Land Administration for issue of LECs.

Replying a query by MLA A.Suresh about the amount of grant due from the 13 Finance Commission Finance Minister Yanamala Ramakrishnudu said Rs.2,783 crore was due from the Centre, while the amount received stood at Rs.1,234.28

crore. However, the State government has granted Rs.2,273.5 crore in advance, so that works under various departments were not affected.

To a question on fee reimbursement for the AP students studying in Telangana, Minister for Social Welfare Ravela Kishore Babu said the department does not have details about the number of such students. However, he assured that the reimbursement would be fulfilled as per their 'Local' status.

He put the total number of students who have applied for the reimbursement at 14,549, including fresh applications.

However YSRC MLA P.Anil Kumar said Aadhaar cards were being sought as proof for obtaining the benefit. This was only to avoid reimbursement to OBC and EBC students, he alleged.

Bitter season for sugarcane cultivators

Flowering of sugarcane a blow to jaggery production



A sugarcane field at Marayur in Idukki in full bloom.— Photo: Giji K. Raman

(IDUKKI): It is flowering season for sugarcane — a bad omen for farmers in the two jaggery-producing grama panchayats of Marayur and Kanthalloor where nearly 750 hectares of land is under sugarcane cultivation.

Massive flowering reduces the output of juice, which, in turn, hits jaggery production. According to P.N. Vijayan, who has 15 acres under sugarcane cultivation, this is the first time since he shifted to sugarcane cultivation eight years ago that the entire crop has flowered. He says flowering would result in 30 to 40 per cent production loss.

This is in addition to the fall in the price of jaggery, which has plunged from Rs 3,000 a sack of 60 kg to Rs 2,500.

According to estimates, flowering sugarcane on one acre of land can yield production of only 3,000 kg to 4,000 kg whereas the average production is between 4,000 kg and 6,000 kg.

Jaggery production is round-the-year work in the two panchayats and the massive flowering is attributed to the unexpected and continued showers during the final phase of growth. Farmers say the level of flowering had never reached this extent in recent times.

“Most of the farmers, especially in Marayur, grow the single-crop of sugarcane. Jaggery is produced in household units and marketed directly to businessmen. Marayur jaggery is already facing threat from low-quality jaggery from Tamil Nadu which is sold under its label. Loss of production would result in a flood of low-quality jaggery here,” says P.G. Sojan, member of the Kanthalloor grama panchayat.

According to him, the low quality jaggery is bought at a price of below Rs.40 and repacked as ‘Marayur jaggery,’ which is priced at over Rs.50 a kg. The massive flowering will result in low production giving space for low quality jaggery to be sold here, he says.

According to official estimates, there is 750 hectares of land under sugarcane cultivation. The average production is 7.5 tonne a hectare.

Climatic changes

Climatic changes in the two panchayats have affected sugarcane cultivation. Many farmers have shifted to other crops such as areca nut and coconut.

The groundwater level has fallen considerably and with high cost of labour and low prices, farmers face a dilemma of whether to continue with sugarcane cultivation, says Sivan, a farmer having three acres of land.

He says it is bad experience for him this time, though a few matured canes could flower during this season. “Now the entire field is filled with flowered sugarcane,” he says.

According to Marayur agriculture officer Murugan, the flowering season of sugarcane is September to December. “Normally, isolated flowering is noticed,” he says adding that the flowering would result considerably in loss of juice and jaggery production.

Horticulture Dept. planning ‘mega rejuvenation’ of crops with GI tag



Horticulture crops that have the Geographical Indication (GI) tag may get a big boost as the Department of Horticulture is planning to propose a ‘mega rejuvenation’ of the crops by involving farmers cultivating them.

In a bid to revive and expand GI crops such as Mysuru Mallige (a jasmine variety), Mysuru Chiguru Yele (betel leaf) and Nanjangud Rasa bale (a banana variety grown in Nanjangud area), the department has constituted farmers’ groups for each crop in places where they were once predominant.

Each group has over a dozen farmers a road map is being prepared to rejuvenate the crops and expand the area of cultivation through various interventions.

Efforts to preserve and protect horticultural crops that are indigenous to Mysuru were in progress but unhurriedly. The uniqueness of the Mysuru Mallige is its enduring fragrance. The Nanjangud Rasa bale has a distinct taste and each fruit costs between Rs. 8 to Rs. 10 in Mysuru. It is available only in a few shops. The ‘Chiguru Yele’ is known for its one of its kind taste.

Senior assistant director of horticulture Krishna Kumar told *The Hindu* that the rejuvenation and expansion of GI crops should be taken up on a “mission mode” so that crops are revived for future generations.

“The area of cultivation of these crops had declined and the crops are at present grown only in a few pockets. So, it’s time to take up fresh initiatives which will be decisive. We are planning to propose new programmes under the Central scheme RKVP,” he disclosed.

The Nanjangud Belegarara Sangha consists of 35 farmers hailing from Nanjangud taluk, while 17 farmers from Ubdur and Mysuru Yele Tota are part of the Mysuru Chiguru Yele Belegarara Sangha. There are about 12 farmers from Yelwal and surrounding area in the sangha of Mysuru Mallige.

The sanghas had helped establish friendship among the farmers to achieve the common goal, he said.

“With help from these farmers, we intend to boost cultivation and expand the cultivation area of the crop. It’s a challenging task as the returns are not very lucrative,” Mr. Kumar explained.

A sum of Rs. 4,000 is being given to each Chiguru Yele farmer in Udbur for rejuvenating the crop in 14 acres.

High-quality seedlings of GI crops such as rasa bale, jasmine and betel leaf were made available by the department for those interested in growing them in their gardens. The cost of each seedling is Rs. 10. While jasmine and betel vine seedlings are available at the Horticulture Farm in Kukkarahalli Lake, banana plantlet is available at Rangasamudra farm on Bannur Road.

Farmers’ groups constituted in areas where the crops were once predominantly grown

For green growth

Karnataka is the eighth largest and fifth most industrialised State in the country. It contributed 5.46 per cent to the GDP of India (as in 2011-12). During the 11th Five-Year Plan period (2007-2012), the State’s Domestic Product grew by 7.2 per cent with services alone contributing 60 per cent to the State’s economy followed by industry and agriculture.

Will the State be able to sustain its growth on the trajectory it has charted for itself in the years ahead? Increased pressure on natural resources and climate changes are forcing a rethink. Though the State with 61 million populace is not exactly on the verge of a precipice to warrant a doomsday scenario, it also cannot ignore the threats and postpone measures to tackle challenges faced on the environment front. How then to reconcile economic growth with environmental sustainability?

For the first time, an emerging think-tank has come out with a report titled *Green Growth Strategy for Karnataka*. The report is a collaborative project between Bangalore Climate Change Initiative-Karnataka (BCCI-K) and the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), Seoul, South Korea. The report was produced by a host of researchers who worked under the guidance of former Minister B. K. Chandrashekhara. It was released by Chief Minister K. Siddaramaiah earlier this week.

The report identifies several key areas of growth that are exerting pressure on the environment in the State, namely agriculture, transport, water and energy. The State has to keep up with the demand for growth as well as the stress on resources in the wake of climate change which threatens to push up temperature by as much as 1.5 to 2 degrees Celsius by 2030. It sets out a strategy for green growth in the face of the challenges.

Dreams may turn sour

Karnataka recorded an impressive 5.6 per cent growth in agriculture against a national average of 3.3 per cent during the 11th Five-Year Plan period. The performance was quite impressive. Yet not everything is hunky-dory on the front. Thirty seven per cent of irrigated land is supplied with underground water and most pumps in use are energy inefficient. Agriculture consumes about one-third of the total grid-supplied electricity in the State which has to be totally subsidised, leading to a Rs. 48 billion subsidy expenditure in the 2012-13 budget. The dream of poverty alleviation threatens to turn sour due to increased vulnerability to climate change. Droughts, floods and stagnant farm incomes may not enable the State to realize 4.5% growth in the agricultural sector as envisaged by the agriculture policy. Between 2006 and 2011, a total of 4.2 million hectares of crop was damaged due to natural calamities.

In fact the most poverty-afflicted districts of the State are the ones that are most vulnerable to climate change.

Ninety of the 170 and odd taluks in the State are identified with depleting groundwater. Of these half are at critical level. The energy subsidy bill for agriculture is likely to increase with the projected decline in groundwater. The current budget has earmarked Rs. 6,100 crore toward subsidies on electricity for agricultural uses.

Karnataka is among the top producers of iron, steel and cement in the country. Industries consumed nine million tonnes of oil equivalent of energy (Toe) in 2010 or 57 per cent of the total. Energy costs can account for up to 40 per cent of manufacturing costs in large industries.

Power needs

The State's 61 million people live in over 10 million houses consuming 19 per cent of total electricity supplied with the demand growing at 10 per cent annually. People have low access to modern cooking fuels i.e., one out of three

urban households and nine out of ten rural households do not have access to LPG as a primary cooking fuel. Overall, the commercial sector has 11 per cent share in the State's electricity demand, growing at 17 per cent annually. Bengaluru has about 100 million sq. ft of commercial floor space and electricity consumption is much above the approved threshold. At its peak the State suffers from 13 per cent deficiency of power.

Transport

People in urban areas of Karnataka log in 100 billion passenger-km of commuting annually, of which 50 per cent is met by buses and 30 per cent by two-wheelers. Bengaluru itself has over 40 per cent of the total number of vehicles in the State. The city is primarily designed for motorised travel, offering least walkability. Private vehicles in the city are increasing by 25,000 a month despite the city having the largest fleet of buses i.e., 6,000.

Forestry

Karnataka ranks fourth in India with regard to area under tree cover with 11 per cent area covered with forests and close to 70 per cent of forest cover classified as dense. It has the highest per capita forest cover (i.e., 0.059 hectare) among the six South Indian States. Decadal analysis shows a decline in the area under dense forests while the area under open forests is increasing, suggesting degradation of forests and fragmentation of animal habitat.

Environment

Almost 10,000 tonnes of solid waste is generated and 80 per cent of it is collected and sent to landfills on an average day in the State. Methane emission is of the order of 60 kilo ton. Besides, 1,300 million litres of domestic and commercial wastewater is generated per day. Out of this only 30-40 per cent gets treated. Untreated wastewater flows to the water bodies, polluting the lifelines of the State. Particulate matter concentration in Bengaluru is already above the National Ambient Air Quality standards. Sulphur-related gases and particulate matter from thermal power plants are likely to cause significant health problems for the people in the State in future. Per capita emission of Green House Gases (GHGs) is calculated at 1.3 tonnes of carbon dioxide.

Challenges

The report 'Green Growth Strategy for Karnataka' suggests a roadmap for the years ahead when global warming is expected to cause several changes. The suggestions include:

1. The State's high wind resource potential urges setting up of wind parks and improved evacuation potential. The State can add 9000 MW of wind power by 2030.
2. The State should shift from fuel-based public transport to electric buses under the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP 2020). Going for electrification of 25,000 buses owned by the State road transport corporation will bring down particulate matter by 25 per cent.
3. In farming, adoption of solar-powered micro irrigation offers a significant green growth opportunity. The technology can result in fuel saving to the tune of 3.54 billion litres, provided that all the diesel pumps are replaced by solar pumps.

Expert team visits fish ponds, interacts with farmers

A team of aquaculture experts visited the fish ponds being cultivated by the Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Aquaculture (RGCA), a research and development wing of Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) at Maanikonda village in Krishna district on Friday.

The team, which took part in the 'India Tilapia Summit – 2014' in Vijayawada on Thursday, interacted with farmers and MPEDA authorities on farming carp, shrimp, Tilapia and other varieties through various scientific methods. The delegates including Additional Director of Fisheries of Government of Tamil Nadu, S. Noorjahan Beevi, Centre for Ocean Research (Satyabhama University, Chennai), scientist R. Vijayan, West Coast Frozen Foods Private Limited, Mumbai, technical head Nitin Nikam, N.A. Basheer Ahamed representative of Shrimpex Centre, Kerala, aqua farmer Anjan Kumar Dandapat of Balasore in Odisha and others were among those who visited the fish tanks.

RGCA all-India Coordinator Jaideep Kumar, MPEDA Deputy Director S. OKandan explained the team about Tilapia hatchery and the ponds spread over 30 acres for research and development.

Ms. Noorjahan said: “The tour will help us to discuss on various farming methods being followed for increasing production. The MPEDA activities are good in AP. Tamin Nadu Fisheries Department will send more farmers to A.P. to train them on Tilapia cultivation.” Mr. Vijayan said the visit created a platform for scientists, officials, farmers, entrepreneurs to discuss various issues.

Agri-farmers can take up aquaculture for additional income, says officers

Training for farmers

World Vision on Friday organised ‘Farmers training programme on crop management’ with an objective to create awareness on ‘seed village programme’ among farmers. D. Prameela, Joint Director (Agriculture) suggested ways to procure quality seed.

Sugarcane growers sensitised on farm mechanisation tools



Brian Robath, an Australian expert in sugarcane planter technologies, demonstrating a mould board plough at Tanuku.- Photo: By Arrangement

The management of the Andhra Sugars, a leading sugar manufacturer in the State, has deployed a couple of German-made farm implements—mould board Plough and power harrower—for demonstration on its premises.

A large number of cane growers falling under the jurisdiction of the factories at Tanuku, Bhimadole and Taduvai in West Godavari district, KCP Sugars in Vuyyuru and Delta Sugars in Krishna district were sensitised on the basic functioning of the implements during the demonstration.

Mullapudi Narendranath, Joint Managing Director, Andhra Sugars, said the demo was intended to sensitise the growers to switch to farm mechanisation right from land preparation to harvesting to overcome acute shortage of manpower and cut down costs.

A technician from the Lemken, which manufactured the tools, said the MB plough could make furrows with 1ft depth for planting the cane. Farmers are forced to switch to alternative crops from labour-intensive sugarcane, in view of increasing wage component. The daily wage for harvesting and loading of a tonne of cane per worker has shot up from Rs 250-300 to Rs 450-600. The MB plough can prepare 4-5 acres of land for cane seed planting per day, relieving the growers of the problem of manpower to a greater extent.

Centre to increase subsidy for tea bush rejuvenation



The Centre has recast the Special Purpose Tea Fund (SPTF).

This will lead to 100 per cent jump in subsidy given to the industry for rejuvenating its age-old bushes.

Under the changes, which have been cleared by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs and are set to be notified, the subsidy component of the entire programme has been enhanced to 30 per cent of the cost of replanting from 25 per cent.

Unit cost

The unit cost of replanting has also been increased to Rs.6 lakh per hectare, including crop-loss, from Rs.3.50 lakh earlier.

Taken together, the changes translate into doubling of the subsidy to Rs.1.80 lakh from Rs.87,500 per hectare.

XII Plan allocation

The XII Plan had allocated Rs.400 crore for plantation development, of which Rs.290 crore was to be spent on SPTF, a senior Tea Board official told *The Hindu*.

While 50 per cent of the replanting cost was given as loan, 25 per was subsidy and the balance was to be raised by the company, he said.

The SPTF was aimed at the organised tea industry, which is spread over four lakh hectares, leased out to 1,600 tea estates, in Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Nearly 38 per cent of Indian tea bushes are over 50 years old, which is considered to be the economic threshold of a tea plant. Not only productivity, but quality too is linked with the age of a tea-bush and rival countries like Kenya get a leg-up in the international market due to younger bushes.

Although the scheme led to an increase in the rate of replanting, it was still below the ambitious target set by the Centre as companies were wary of the crop-loss involved in the process, as uprooted plants needed 5-7 years to start yielding a crop. Industry wanted compensation for this.

Call to invest in food processing industry

'There is a great export potential for vegetables grown in the district'

Stating that Hassan has a greater potential for investment in food processing sector compared to other districts, the former president of the Hassan Zilla Panchayat B.R. Satyanarayayana on Friday called upon the industrialists to exploit it.

He was speaking after inaugurating a seminar to spread awareness about export opportunities.

Hassan was known for production of good quality vegetables.

“There is a huge demand for Hassan vegetables outside the district. If a system can be evolved to export vegetables, our economy will improve. Besides, food processing industries will save farmers from throwing away vegetables on the streets whenever there is a steep fall in their prices. Food processing industries

will help farmers keep the products safe till they get the desired price in the market,” he said.

H.J. Hamsaraj, president of the Hassan Small Scale Industries Association, said there was an urgent need to set up an airport in Hassan.

“Our farmers can export the vegetables to Dubai, Singapore and other countries and earn better profits, if an airport is established here. The company which got the contract to build the airport is delaying its execution by citing dearth of land as the reason. They have already got adequate land for the runway and that is what is needed now. However, the contractor wants land for a hotel and a golf court too,” Mr. Hamsaraj said.

Govt’s offer of help to paddy farmers

The Krishna district authorities will now procure paddy directly from the field to help farmers save transportation charges during the ongoing kharif season. Joint Collector J. Murali on Friday reviewed procurement at various Paddy Procurement Centres (PPC).

Officials will help farmers store their produce in government-held godowns until a better price is offered.

“Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu will review paddy procurement in the district through video conference soon,” Mr. Murali said.

A festival to promote Indian cocoa

With Christmas round the corner and New Year just a few days away a chocolate festival titled, ‘The Bitter Bliss 2014’ opened at the M and N Chocolate Museum at Indunagar, near here, on Friday.

Pointing out that it would go on till January 4, chocolatier and festival promoter Fazloor Rahman told *The Hindu* that the objective was to sing the praises of the Indian cocoa. Stating that Indian cocoa mostly grown in the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh has enormous potential, he said that if cultivated properly it can even compete with the cocoa of Ghana, which is among the best in the world.

About 12,000 farmers were engaged in cultivating cocoa in India. He added that the festival aims to educate growers about the latest developments on the cocoa

front and also create awareness among the consumers about good and ordinary chocolates.

A 88 kg chocolate fruit and a 40 kg chocolate bar are among the exhibits.

The re-use mantra



The Hindu

Treated waste-water can be pushed through a Vortex system to reduce odour



Treated waste-water can be pushed through a Vortex system to reduce odour

Mimicking nature's cleaning process through DEWATS and the Vortex system.

Waste-water is emerging as a new challenge and opportunity in the cities of India. After large quantities of clean water is shipped into the city to meet the growing thirst of a large population and economy, 80% of it goes out as a stream rich in nutrients and organics.

Unmanaged, they lead to pollution of rivers, lakes, groundwater, soil and air with their noxious vapours. The collection, conveyance and treatment is a complex affair taxing the capabilities of even large institutions.

One remedy seems to be small decentralised systems which take treatment to levels as prescribed by the pollution control boards as well as enable reuse for such non-potable purpose as toilet flushing and for gardening. These systems use less energy, are compact and use biological methods to treat wastewater.

However, if the system is anaerobic, smell and odour in the end is an inevitable consequence which leads to complaints from users.

The Vortex system developed by the Auroville Centre for Scientific Research, near Puducherry, is a happy development on the odour reduction front. Working on the principle elucidated by the great naturalist and biomimicry experimenter Viktor Schauberger, Lars Kostedde of CSR has developed several experimental systems.

In a paper jointly written by Tency Baetens, Gilles Boulicot and Lars Kostedde a simple explanation is given on how the system works.

How it works

A Decentralised Wastewater Treatment System or DEWATS is the beginning of the process of cleaning and reusing wastewater. The DEWATS system consists of

- Pre-treatment in a settler tank where the sludge and scum are held and a small amount of digestion happens by bacteria. This can be preceded by an oil and grease trap if needed.
- Primary treatment in a baffled tank where the wastewater is made to go through anaerobic bacteria blankets which eat up material and clean the water

- Secondary treatment which can be done conjointly with the primary treatment or fixed to the end of the primary treatment. Here further anaerobic bacteria action on the wastewater is facilitated.
- Finally the VORTEX can be applied to this secondary treated wastewater.

The Vortex is a large transparent acrylic tube covered on the top with a small vent hole on the side for air. It has a funnel and a diaphragm at the bottom and a pump inlet through which the treated waste-water is pumped in. Due to the design of the system a beautiful vortex, like a whirlpool or a tornado or a waterspout, is created inside.

This natural formation enables the water to absorb oxygen heavily. The dissolved oxygen level in the water goes up reducing parameters like BOD (Biological Oxygen Demand) and COD (Chemical Oxygen Demand) which is what is demanded by legislation for the release of treated waste-water. BOD less than 20 mg/l is easily achieved and design efforts are on ensure that it is less than 10 mg/l also.

Efficient

The Vortex system uses minimal power, reduces BOD, is a great landscape feature and occupies very small space. It reduces and almost eliminates odours, kills pathogens and reduces nitrate levels too.

The water from the Vortex can be led into a designed pond with lilies, lotus and other plants. Fish can be introduced to reduce mosquitoes. The water can then be tapped from the pool for landscaping purpose and for toilet flushing. There is also the possibility that treated waste-water from conventional treatment plants can also be pushed through a Vortex system to reduce odours and to improve dissolved oxygen levels.

Persistence pays off

It is the persistence of Auroville CSR and its ability to experiment which has resulted in the development of such a system.

Institutions, apartments, layouts, small towns and even large cities with decentralised sewage treatment plants will find the Vortex useful.

Incorporating, treating and reusing waste-water for ecological and other purposes will clean up our rivers and lakes and provide water for reuse. This would be water wisdom.



weather

INDIAN CITIES | INTERNATIONAL CITIES


Chennai

Chennai - INDIA






Today's Weather

Saturday, Dec 20
 Clear
 Max 29° | Min 24°
 Rain: 0
 Humidity: 89
 Wind: normal
 Sunrise: 06:22
 Sunset: 05:44
 Barometer: 1014

Tomorrow's Forecast

 **Sunday, Dec 21**
 Partly Cloudy
 Max 29° | Min 25°

Extended Forecast for a week

Monday Dec 22	Tuesday Dec 23	Wednesday Dec 24	Thursday Dec 25	Friday Dec 26
				
28° 24°	30° 23°	30° 23°	27° 25°	27° 25°
Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Food for your healthy bones

Nutrients like calcium and vitamin D are essential if you want to build strong bones. While calcium helps strengthen bones and teeth structure, vitamin D improves calcium absorption and bone growth.

One of the main reasons of osteoporosis is a calcium and vitamin D deficiency . Hence, it is important to have a diet that is rich in these two nutrients. Here are some foods you should consume regularly ...

Milk With high quantities of calcium and vitamin D, make it a habit to drink a glass of milk every day . Making a face at the sound of having milk?

Substitute it with yogurt or cheese.

Bananas Packed with calcium as well as potassium, bananas are an excellent way to improve your immune system, metabolize proteins and prevent calcium loss from your body .

Green vegetables Vegetables like spinach, spring onions, fenu greek, cabbage and broccoli are excellent sources of calcium. The vitamin K present in spinach boosts bone mineral density

Nuts Almonds and groundnut contain a generous amount of potassium that is known to prevent loss of calcium through urine. Walnuts are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which are important in slowing down the rate of bone loss and speeding up bone formation.

Prunes Prunes contain a fibre called inulin that helps the body to absorb calcium faster and also strengthens bones.

Sardines and salmon Sardines are known to have high levels of both vitamin D and calcium. Salmon contains hearthealthy omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin D.
Eggs Don't go overboard with egg consumption. An egg a day is considered healthy, according to experts. And don't throw away the yolk -that is where the vitamin D is.

Why pregnant women should have yogurt

Yogurt is not only tasty, but is also healthy, especially for pregnant women. And reinstating this fact is the results of a new study, which suggests that yogurt containing probiotic bacteria may protect children and pregnant women against heavy metal exposure. The researchers found a significant protective effect of it against mercury and arsenic in pregnant women.

According to lead researcher Gregor Reid, this is important as 'reduction in these compounds in the mothers could presumably decrease negative developmental effects in their foetus and newborns'.

The researchers created and distributed a special yogurt containing lactobacillus rhamnosus bacteria and observed the outcomes against a control group. Their lab research indicated that the bacteria had a great affinity for binding toxic heavy metals. The results obtained in the children studied showed benefits like lowering toxin levels.

Some More reasons why they must include it in their diet

Pregnant women need a whole lot of calcium reserve as the foetus in their wombs uses this calcium to grow and develop their body structure. Yogurt is extremely rich in calcium and is a great way to build bones.

Yogurt is also abundant in folic acid and proteins. Most importantly, the good bacteria in this diary product prevents stomach upset and yeast infections, thus soothing a pregnant woman's tummy.

Quick ways to enjoy your fix:

- Nothing can taste better than plain yogurt. Have it as it is to enjoy its flavour.
- You can also blend it with fruits and vegetables to make yummy smoothies.
- Yogurt can be used as a substitute for sour cream and mayo in sandwiches and salads. Not only is it healthy, but is also low in calories.
- You can also layer your cereals with yogurt and add fruits to it for a healthy snacking option.

Top 15 diabetic diet tips for Indians

Diabetes control is governed by following the right diabetic diet. What to eat and what not to eat is important for diabetes control and diabetes cure or diabetes reversal.

These are the top 15 diabetes diet tips from diabetologists and nutritionists. Even if you are pre-diabetic or borderline diabetic, or diabetes is part of your family, it is important to follow a diabetic diet to prevent diabetes.

Diabetologist, Dr. Sanjiv Bhambani with Moolchand Medcity suggests, "A diabetes diet should be high on fibre, must contain milk without cream, buttermilk, fresh seasonal fruits, green vegetables, etc." But remember to consume these components in moderation.

Diabetes diet for Indians should have the ratio of 60:20:20 for carbs, fats and proteins. The doctor explains, "Per day calorie intake should be between 1,500-1,800 calories with a proportion of 60:20:20 between carbohydrates, fats and proteins, respectively." He adds that a diabetes diet should "have at least two seasonal fruits and three vegetables in a diet plan."

Though dry fruits may seem like a healthy snack, it is not a good option for diabetics, as the fructose can spike your sugar level. Go for fresh fruits rather than dry fruits for diabetes control (but there are some restrictions... we'll come to it). But you can still opt for nuts as a healthy snack.

The doctor shares his recipe for diabetes diet for Indians:

- One teaspoon of methi seeds soaked overnight in 100 ml of water is very effective in controlling diabetes.
- Drink tomato juice with salt and pepper every morning on an empty stomach.
- Intake of 6 almonds (soaked overnight) is also helpful in keeping a check on diabetes.

Rekha Sharma, President and Director of Indian Dietetic Association, shares some major diabetes diet pointers that one should follow at home or at a restaurant.

Whole grains, oats, channa atta, millets and other high fibre foods should be included in the meals. If one feels like consuming pasta or noodles, it should always be accompanied with vegetable/sprouts.

Milk is the right combination of carbohydrates and proteins and helps control blood sugar levels. Two servings of milk in a daily diet is a good option.
Diabetes Control: Diabetic Diet Tips

High fibre vegetables such as peas, beans, broccoli and spinach /leafy vegetables should be included in one's diet. Also, pulses with husk and sprouts are a healthy option and should be part of the diet.

Pulses are important in the diet as their effect on blood glucose is less than that of most other carbohydrate containing foods. Vegetables rich in fibre help lowering down the blood sugar levels and thus are healthy.

Good fats such as Omega-3 and monounsaturated fats (MUFA) should be consumed as they are good for the body. Natural sources for these are canola oil, flax seed oil, fatty fish and nuts. These are also low in cholesterol and are trans fat free.

Fruits high in fibre such as papaya, apple, orange, pear and guava should be consumed. Mangoes, bananas, and grapes contain high sugar; therefore these fruits should be consumed lesser than the others.

Small frequent meals:

A large meal gives rise to higher blood sugar in one's body, therefore it is essential to take small frequent meals to prevent both higher and very low blood sugar values and keep them constant. Small in between snacks can be dhokla, fruit, high fibre cookies, butter milk, yogurt, upma/poha with vegetables etc.

A person with diabetes should follow a diet which is low in carbohydrates, high in fibre and contains adequate amounts of proteins, vitamins and minerals; and avoid fatty foods and sweets. He/she should also take frequent small meals (5 meals pattern).

What not to do:

Artificial sweeteners can be used in cakes and sweets for diabetic people (in moderation).

Have lots of fluid.

Limit intake of alcohol.

Should you have non-veg?

In non-vegetarian diet, seafood and chicken can be taken rather than red meat as red meat contains higher amount of saturated fats. Also, patients with high cholesterol should avoid egg yolk and red meat.

The diabetes diet for Indians includes carbohydrates, proteins and fats. As always, a balanced and planned diet can build and improve personal health. A controlled diabetes diet may seem like a drag and bore, but a good cook can add life to a diet. Time to call up mom and experiment with diabetes diets!

One pot dishes for lazy cooks

A few dishes that save time and trouble both, no slaving over a hot stove anymore!

Here are a few dishes that are not just quick and easy but high on taste, flavour and nutrition too. And the great thing about these one-pot dishes is that all the ingredients are according to taste, so - no measurements!

Sausage hot pot: Everybody loves sausages! And they are handy and can be kept in the deep freezer for when emergency (read: laziness) strikes. If not feeling upto cooking, one can simply boil a pot of chicken or vegetable stock, add seasoning and chopped veggies like tomatoes, onions, potatoes, pumpkins and even the ones we don't like to eat, like bottle gourd (they don't lend much to the taste but give the stew good consistency). Now the best part is, that stews don't require the sausages to thaw - you can simply take them out of the freezer and put them in the boiling concoction of pure goodness! Of course, it helps if they are allowed to sit for a while, but if you're feeling too lazy or have no time, simply dunk the frozen franks in and watch the magic happen as they become soft and juicy.

Dill and lentils: People who have a hard time trying to eat spinach or feed them to their children, this is a great way to do so! Fragrant, flavourful dill combined with split yellow gram makes not only a nutritious pot dish but is great as comfort food too. Just heat a little ghee in a nonstick skillet and saute some ginger-garlic paste and some finely chopped green chillies for some minutes. Add washed and soaked yellow gram and finely chopped dill and saute again for some time. Add some water, season with some salt, lower the heat, and cook covered its less watery. Serve hot and enjoy!

Cauliflower and cheese: Okay, so this isn't exactly a one pot dish, but its still simple. Everyone loves bechamel sauce, so why not put some of that love to good use! Cut the cauliflower florets into tiny pieces and pan fry them till they are golden brown and slightly crispy. Make your cheese sauce and add enough crisp cauliflower to cover the sauce. A favourite with kids adults alike! Once you master this, try experimenting with different veggies like crisped carrots or french beans also!

Recipe: Raw banana koftas

Preparation time:30 mins

Cooking time : 20 mins

Serves: 4

Recipe Ingredients:

250g raw bananas

200g potatoes

200g tomato puree

4 cloves

1" cinnamon stick

2-3 green cardamom

2tsp cumin seed

3tsp pepper corns

1 tsp Ginger paste

1tbsp ginger juliennes

3 green chillies

1tbsp desi ghee (clarified butter)

Sendha namak(Rock salt)

Recipe Method:

Boil the raw bananas and the potatoes till done. Peel the raw bananas and the potatoes. Mash the two together and add rock salt to taste and mix well it should be smooth like a dough. Divide the mixture into 12 parts and roll into smooth balls deep fry the balls in hot oil or desi ghee and set aside.

Dry roast the cloves, cinnamon stick, cumin seeds, pepper corns and cardamoms. Remove from pan and allow to cool slightly. Coarsely grind the spices. Heat the ghee and add the ginger paste.

Saute the ginger paste and add the tomato puree. Add half the ground spices and 1 cup water and bring to a boil. Simmer for 4-5 minutes. Add the ginger juliennes, remaining ground spices, slit green chillies. Season with rock salt and pour over the prepared koftas (raw banana balls). Serve hot.

Cooking up a Christmas snowstorm!



Cooking up a Christmas snowstorm!

It's that time of the year, when festive aromas of freshly baked cookies, cakes, spicy mulled tea, traditional bread, pudding, as well as rich roasts fill the house.

This time around, why not add some creativity to the traditional fare. Go with the usual and tuck into little gingerbread men. Or better still, bite into Rudolph or send someone a sweet 3-D Santa. Here's what's baking around the city in the run-up to December 25...

Innovative cakes and cake pops X'mas is synonymous with its cakes — Italian Panettone (with sugar, raisins, orange and lemon zest), Yule Log, Plum Pudding and nutty Scottish Dundee cakes, but it is stollen (for recipe, see box) — the traditional German cake that is perhaps the most popular of them all. Sweet specialist, Shradha Mehra Virani, says, "We've given the traditional Christmas cake a makeover, by whipping it up with some chocolate and orange rind this year, and serving them as individual cupcakes, instead of only full loaves or cakes." Trying new flavours is another big draw. "Red Velvet Marshmallow is another popular flavour. Other new flavours are nut-chocolate plum and raisin, and ginger spice in chocolate. Last year's hit, Nut Chocolate Praline Cupcakes with caramel frosting is making its way into numerous X'mas stockings this year too. And we also made edible Rudolfs, Santa hats, trees and presents, which were a sell-out." While dessert maker Amal Farooque is doing mini Christmas pops with Santa and Rudolph, another dessert expert, Ayushi Shah, has come up with Snowman Cake Pops that are sphere-shaped cakes on a stick. "It's the usual classic mould of Santa on a stick. You use white cake balls and

confetti sprinkles for eyes. Kids simply love these," she says.

As rich as... a Christmas pudding! How can it be Christmas without a moist fruit and nut-laden pudding? While it is usually steeped in liquor, you can also make one without it. The puddings are made much ahead of Christmas with spices like cinnamon, cloves, ginger and nutmeg (to give it that aroma). It has to be steamed as owing to its contents, it is very dense. One story goes that traditionally, each member of the household stirs the pudding while making a wish. It is served with hot vanilla custard.

3-D cakes are the flavour of the season Confections are getting a fun three-dimensional twist this year. Say hello to 3-D Santas and other figures in Belguim chocolate. These cakes are made by using handpainted, regular designs with 3-D sugarcrafted decorations like sugar Santas and gifts. Says baker Suchit Mahajan, "These cakes are very popular. We've been getting a lot of orders for 3-D snow queens, Santa and his sleigh, X'mas trees and gift boxes on cakes. When it comes to kids, Frozen is the most popular theme." Says dessert specialist Shradha Agarwalla, "Cakes in chocolate or red velvet with 3-D Christmas figures always grab attention. Santa Claus, snowmen, trees with ornaments, candy canes and elves in 3-D, make it look real. Figures like these on a dense, gooey chocolate cake or cupcakes can really get people into a festive mood."

Gingerbread cookies Little gingerbread cookies are a big part of the Christmas baking tradition. The crispy treats come in shapes of people, stockings, Santas and more. Mumbai-based patisserie specialist, Sanjana Patel, says the dessert is perfect for those who want to have sweet and still watch their sugar intake. "These cookies are a whole lot lighter than, say, a cupcake or truffles. They are made with ginger and a gingerbread spice powder — cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, sugar, star anise, pepper and a little orange rind — all powdered together. The spices are added to the dough and the batter is made. It is cut into different shapes, then baked at 160 degrees, after which you can do the royal icing fondant work on it to make the face, dress, etc. With swirls of icing and sprinkles, the cookies can look very festive. With a slightly spicy taste, these are best had on their own or with a cup of tea or coffee. Adds Sanjana, "You can even make mini gingerbread cookies. Just be careful not to burn them in the oven heat, as these smaller cookies bake very quickly," she adds.

Pumpkin cake The veggie desserts trend that was the dessert highlight in 2014, is also coming on to the festive menu. Baker Tara Kapur votes for the Pumpkin Cake. "Christmas is a time when houses are filled with ingredients for fruit cakes. Convert this into a Pumpkin Cake and it makes for an addition to the festive menu. This is a fruit cake, which is very American and was introduced to the family by my aunt, who is married to an American. It is made of red pumpkin and is full of goodness with walnuts and raisins. It's lightly spiced and packed with flavour. The best part is that it's low in sugar and fat."

Make your own

Baked apples Goosey, warm baked apples are part of the traditional Christmas fare. Ingredients Butter — ½ cup Powdered sugar — ½ cup Raisins — ½ cup Walnuts and almonds — ¼ cup Cinnamon — a pinch

Method: Remove seeds from apples. Mix in the butter and sugar. Add chopped nuts and raisins. Place in a buttered baking dish and cover with lid or aluminum foil. Bake at 550°F for an hour. Serve warm with applesauce or vanilla ice cream.

Stollen Stollen is a German cake, eaten at Christmas. Baker Rachelle Andrade shares her recipe... Ingredients Flour — 500 g Yeast — 20 g Sugar — 40 g Salt — 10 g Milk — 250 ml Eggs — 2 Cinnamon powder — 3 g Butter — 285 g Vanilla essence — 5 g

Fruits Cherries — 100 g Raisins — 100 g Black raisins — 100 g Orange peel — 100 g Lemon peel — 100 g Almonds — 100 g Rum — 100 ml (optional)

Method Soak the fruits in alcohol (you can use fresh orange juice instead) for a week. Make a dough (without butter). Add butter in four intervals so that it gets absorbed well into the dough. Let this rest for 30 minutes. Add the fruits gently into the dough. Leave aside for 45 minutes. Divide the dough into 250 gms each, flatten and place a 50-60 g log of marzipan in the centre. Fold the dough over it to ensure that the marzipan is not seen. Place on a baking tray and allow it to rest for 45 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 170 degrees C. Bake for 25 minutes. Once you take it out of the oven, make holes in it with a toothpick while it's still hot. Brush with melted clarified butter and dust with icing sugar. Once cool, wrap in butter paper and foil. Eat it a day or two after baking.

Recipe: Cafe citrus and spice

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 5 minutes

Serves: 8

Ingredients:

Peeled zest of 1 orange

Peeled zest of ½ lemon

8 sugar cubes

1 small stick cinnamon

½ tsp. whole cloves

½ cup brandy

3 cups hot, freshly brewed dark roast coffee

Method:

Rub orange and lemon zests over sugar cubes. Put 1 sugar cube into each of 8 demitasse cups or small mugs. Combine orange and lemon zests, cinnamon stick, cloves, and brandy in chafing dish. Ignite mixture with long match, being careful to avoid flame. Add hot coffee to flaming mixture, stir, and ladle servings into prepared cups.

Drinks recipe: Coriander & coconut mojito

TOI gets you some simple and healthy tender coconut water mocktails to beat the scorching summer heat

It has been your summer staple for years now, but how many of you know that the good ol' nariyal pani is loaded with vitamins, minerals, electrolytes and antioxidants.

Then again, it's not only your grandmom's favourite remedy against dehydration, but also of Hollywood and Bollywood celebrities like Madonna, Sienna Miller, Claudia Schiffer, Deepika Padukone, Nargis Fakhri and Evelyn Sharma, who swear by coconut water as an energy drink. So now, mixologists in Kolkata have taken it on themselves to give the humble drink a tangy

makeover. They have been busy this season trying to stir up some unique mocktails with the natural drink as the key ingredient. Tolly actress Ridhima Ghosh said, "I find coconut water very refreshing. At home, I prefer it in its natural flavour, but lately, some Kolkata eateries have been giving it a twist, and I love it. Now I have more options of healthy drinks to chose from."

So go ahead, now you have more reasons to add to the coconut water memories with your sweetheart!

Sage and Coconut infusion

AFRAA

Ingredients:

Coconut water: 120 ml

Sage: One bunch

Saffron threads: ½ teaspoon

Honey: 15 ml

Lemon slice: Two pieces thinly sliced

Cayenne pepper: ¼ teaspoon

Cinnamon sticks

Apple juice: 60 ml

Method:

Pour Coconut water over sage, saffron, honey, lemon & cinnamon stick and pepper. Allow to infuse for 10-15 minutes. Add apple juice and store it in fridge for another 10 minutes. Serve over crushed ice garnish with coconut flakes and cinnamon stick

Price: `250

Caribbean cooler

CORNER COURTYARD

Ingredients:

Tender coconut water: 100 ml

Bengal lime juice: 5 ml

Olive brine: 5 ml

Method:

Mix all the ingredients and stir well. Garnish with slice of Bengal lime and green and black olives

Price: `200

Coriander & Coconut Mojito

JHAAL FAREZI

Ingredients:

Coconut water: 100 ml

Coconut diced: 8/10 pieces

Coriander sprigs: 8-10

Castor sugar: Two tsp

Lime juice: 10 ml

Method:

Put castor sugar, diced coconut, lime juice and coriander in a glass and muddle it. Put cracked ice into the glass and add coconut water. Stir the drink and serve.

Garnish with
coriander sprigs.

Glass: Collins

Price: `175

Tasty Beach

BAKSTAGE

Ingredients:

Fresh coconut water: 150 ml

Lime juice: 10 ml

Sugar syrup: 10 ml

Green chilli: One

Coconut chunks: One spoon

Method:

Pour the ingredients into a cocktail shaker. Muddle all of it nicely. Give it a good shake for 30 seconds and pour it into a glass. Garnish it with green chillies and sliced coconuts. It is ready to be served.

Glass: High ball/ Coconut shell

Price: `175

Summer Cooler

benjarong

Ingredients:

Water from one tender coconut

Chopped Mint leaves: 5 gm

Honey: 1 tbs

Lemon juice: 1/2 tbs

Ice cubes: 2-3

Lime based soft drink

Method:

Take the tender coconut water in a glass. Add chopped mint, honey and lemon juice and mix well. Finally, add the fizzy soft drink. Garnish with sweet lime and a cherry.

Glass: Collins/ Coconut shell

Price: `140

Mintchee cooler

THE STADEL

Ingredients:

Coconut water: 300 ml

Fresh deseeded Litchi: 3 pieces

Mint syrup: one spoon

Lemon chunks

Mint leaves

Method:

Muddle mint leaves and lemon in a glass. Add litchi juice with a dash of mint syrup and top it with tender coconut water. Garnish with a wedge of sweet lime and orange rinds.

Glass: Tall Collins

Price: `175

THE HINDU BusinessLine

Chocolate-coated prosperity



The HinduBean stock Sabapathy harvests cocoa pods at his farm in Sethumadai village, near Pollachi, Tamil Nadu K ANANTHAN

Cocoa has enriched the lifestyle of one lakh farmers in the four southern States

When Cadbury India (now Mondelez India Foods Ltd) representatives approached Sabapathy, a coconut farmer at Sethumadai village, 16 km from Pollachi in Tamil Nadu, with some cocoa seedling to be raised as an intercrop in his coconut grove, Sabapathy says he was not interested at all.

“They did not give up and I ultimately gave in,” he says, recalling the incident from 13 years ago.

“Mine was the third field brought under the Cocoa Sustainability Programme in this belt. In the initial years, I did not do much other than water the plants. Representatives from the company visited the farm at regular intervals to assess the health of the crop.

“When the crop was in its fifth year, it started bearing fruits. The company promptly helped me harvest the fruits, and trained me in processing and drying the nut. The dried bean fetched ₹45 per kg. This was in 2004-05.”

“This got me started. I’ve planted around 1,600 cocoa seedlings in my eight-acre coconut farm, comprising 650-odd trees.

Hailing from an agricultural family and with no formal education, Sabapathy says he broke away from his father's practice of cultivating only short-duration crops such as groundnut, chilli and cotton, and turned his holding into a coconut farm.

The paucity of farm hands has forced many farmers in the Pollachi belt to look for less labour-intensive crops.

From Sabapathy's farm, we drove over rugged muddy roads to reach Nandagopal's farm at Aalankadavu village, about 13 km from Pollachi.

A Business Management graduate, this farmer is a relatively late entrant to cocoa cultivation. "I visited horticulture expos in Coimbatore and Chennai, and some of the coconut gardens in the vicinity, before venturing into cocoa cultivation."

Moving around his farm with a cutter and harvesting the slightly yellow, giant-sized guava-like cocoa fruit, he says proudly, "This is the fifth year."

His farm, which is just a hop away from the Coimbatore-Pollachi main road, has over 700 coconut trees, 1,500-plus cocoa trees, 350 nutmeg plants, a jackfruit tree and flowering plants.

Farmers say intercropping cocoa with coconut and areca nut had helped double their income. "From ₹45 a kg in 2004, the bean today is quoting at ₹210 a kg," says Sabapathy

Selvakumar, though, claims to have taken the lead in cocoa plantation in Pollachi region. A visit to Elluru in Andhra Pradesh convinced him to take up cocoa, he says. "Initially I bought 1,000 seedlings and later added another 800."

Local sourcing

KP Magudapathy, Associate Vice-President, Cocoa Operations at Mondelez India Foods says the company is committed to cocoa farming in India for close to half-a-century now.

Why India?

As a leader in chocolate manufacturing, Cadbury was initially fully dependent on cocoa imports. That was, and remains an expensive proposition. "We have

still not been able to source our entire raw material from the domestic marketplace,” says Manu Anand, Managing Director, Mondelez India Foods.

The company currently sources about a third of its bean requirements locally.

Back in 1965, the company had introduced cocoa on an experimental basis in Kerala, partnering with State agricultural universities. Research showed the land and climate in South India was most conducive for cocoa cultivation.

Next year, Mondelez will celebrate 50 years of cocoa plantation in India. The commercial cultivation helped augment the income of coconut farmers in the adjoining states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

“Earlier, we used to rely only on the income from our coconut farm. The Eriophyte mite attack shattered our dreams as productivity dipped and, with it, the rate of the nut.

“After intercropping cocoa with coconut, our income has doubled. The leaf droppings (dried leaf) from the cocoa plants enrich the soil. There is roughly about 8 tonnes per hectare. Imagine spending on fertiliser! We are able to save a lot, as these leaves are left to mulch and this helps retain soil moisture too,” says Selvakumar.

That’s not all. Sale of coconut does not fetch ready cash. “The trader seeks a fortnight to settle dues, but for cocoa bean the company pays immediately,” says Selvakumar.

The palatial bungalow inside his coconut grove, two high-end cars parked in the portico, and the pedigree dogs on guard against outsiders speak for themselves.

Selvakumar says he yearned to educate his children (a son and a daughter) in the best of institutions. “My son, an engineer, is working in a top IT company today. He has moved to the US with his family, and my daughter lives in the city.

“I am not sure if either of them will come to live in this farmhouse after me. But mind you, you cannot enjoy this luxury or peace in city-life,” he says as we take leave.

The Cocoa Sustainability Programme, called “Cocoa Life”, has transformed the lives of over one lakh farmers across the four southern states, says Anand of

Mondelez India. The company today operates 11 nurseries in this region, providing cocoa seedlings to over 5,000 farmers annually.

The Government, on its part, provides assistance to cocoa farmers under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture.

But despite these efforts, the company has not been able to source its entire bean requirement from the domestic market. Going forward, it hopes to do so.

The writer visited the cocoa farms at the invitation of Mondelez India Foods Ltd

Deadline to get certification for organic product exports extended

Mumbai, December 19:

The Government has put off the requirement to get mandatory certification for exports of organic products indefinitely.

The norm for mandatory certification was to have come into force on December 18. In a public notice issued on Friday, the Directorate-General of Foreign Trade said implementation of the procedure for export of certified organic products has been deferred till further orders.

The development is likely to provide relief to the textile industry which is gearing up to tap global markets. The Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council (Texprocil) had told the government that the new order would halt export of organic textile products.

RK Dalmia, Chairman, Texprocil, said the move will give exporters and buyers sufficient time to adopt and adapt to the changes in future.

“It will help to cast aside fears of buyers since many of them were not willing to embrace the new procedures,” he said.

The cotton export body had said that the new norm would increase the transaction cost as the industry out of compulsion by buyers is already taking Global Organic Textile Standard certification for organic products export.

Cotton blooms on limited supply

Rajkot, December 19:

Cotton prices improved a tad on Friday on limited supply and hopes of export demand emerging.

Raw cotton or *kapas* prices also gained as buying by ginners improved.

Traders said that some export enquiries have emerged in the last few days. Moreover, farmers are not selling in a big way, expecting prices to rise further. Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton increased Rs. 100 to Rs. 33,200 to Rs. 33,300 for a candy of 356 kg. About 45,000 bales (170 kg) arrived in Gujarat and 2.10 lakh bales across the country. At the same time a year ago, cotton supply in Gujarat was 65,000 bales.

Kapas increased by Rs. 5 to Rs. 820 to Rs. 850 for a *maund* of 20 kg. Gin delivery *kapas* was traded on Rs. 845 to Rs. 860 a *maund* in Saurashtra. Cottonseed gained Rs. 5 to Rs. 7 at Rs. 350 to Rs. 360/maund.

Poor arrivals boost pulses



Indore, December 19:

Slack arrival and buying by millers have lifted prices of almost all pulses and pulse seeds in Indore *mandi* s in the last week.

Weak arrival and improved demand have lifted masur prices by Rs. 300 with masur (bold) on Friday being quoted at Rs. 6,050-6,100, while masur (Madhya

Pradesh) ruled at Rs. 5,500-5,600 (up Rs. 300). Masur dal (average) was quoted at Rs.7,000-7,050, while masur dal (medium) ruled at Rs.7,100-7,150 and masur dal (bold) at Rs. 7,150-7,200.

Urad and its dal have also been witnessing uptrend in Indore *mandi* s for the past few days amid slack arrival and strong demand from neighbouring states.

In the past one week, urad almost gained Rs. 300 with prices of urad (bold) being quoted at Rs. 6,000-6,100, while urad (medium) ruled at Rs. 5,400-5,600.

Urad dal (medium) prices settled at Rs. 6,750-6,950, urad dal (bold) at Rs. 7,000-7,100, while urad mongar ruled at Rs. 7,700-7,900. Compared to last week, urad dal is also up Rs. 200

Moong has been ruling firm for the past few days on slack arrival and subdued buying with moong (bold) being quoted at Rs. 7,900-8,100, while moong (medium) was quoted at Rs. 7,000-7,400. Moong dal improved by Rs. 400 in the past one week with moong dal (medium) quoted at Rs. 8,900-9,100, moong dal (bold) at Rs. 9,200-9,300, while moong mongar ruled at Rs. 9,800-9,950.

Spot rubber market direction-less

Kottayam, December 19:

Spot rubber market was in a fix on Friday as there was no guidance on the pricing.

The Government has not published any official notification regarding the decisions taken at the meeting convened by the Chief Minister Oommen Chandy with tyre companies on Thursday. Rubber Board did not publish their usual price quotes though it was reported that they would declare prices after adding 20 per cent customs duty and five per cent purchase tax to the international price.

In the futures, January contracts improved to Rs. 122.10 (120.15), February to Rs. 122.99 (120.97) and March to Rs. 124.00 (121.53) per kg for RSS 4 on National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) weakened to Rs. 105.84 (106.08) per kg at Bangkok. December futures expired at ¥184.0 (Rs.97.56) per kg on Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Speculative buying lends colour to turmeric

Erode, December 19:

TURMERIC RISES ON SPECULATIVE BUYING

Hybrid and local varieties turmeric improved on Friday on speculative buying by traders, who expect prices to rise further. at Rs. 7,000 a . Of the 7,000 bags that arrived, 4,980 were sold. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales yard, the finger turmeric was sold at Rs. 3,589-7,449 a quintal, the root variety at Rs. 3,547-7,000. Salem Hybrid: The finger variety was sold at Rs. 6,100-8,049, the root variety at Rs. 6,000-7,169. Of the 1852 bags on offer, 877 bags were sold. At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger turmeric was sold at Rs. 6,488-7,587, the root variety at Rs. 6,335-7,197. Of the 2,239 bags put up for sale, 2,097 were traded. Our Correspondent

Agri exports wilt on Russia's rouble woes

(quantity in tonnes, value in ₹ crore)

Surging farm produce exports to Russia						
	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
Guargum	11,046	307	5,388	292	10,970	300
Fresh Grapes	4,936	41	16,789	131	24,503	226
Cucumber & Gherkins	46,289	113	45,959	142	57,828	212
Total agri and Processed foods*	1,07,244	661.91	1,50,784	847.16	2,14,198	1,174.54
Coffee	33,112	484.76	24,802	408.85	16,184	257.38

* Includes rice, dairy, vegetables and meat products. Source: Apeda and Coffee Board

Shipments of gherkins to Russia has virtually come to a halt.

Bengaluru, December 19:

The Russian economic crisis is beginning to impact the Indian agricultural and processed food exports.

It could affect corporates such as Mahindra & Mahindra and Tata Coffee. Specialised and perishable products such as gherkins and grapes seem to be the early casualties.

Shipments of gherkins to Russia has virtually come to a halt as a sharp fall in rouble against the dollar is forcing Russian buyers to cancel their contracts.

Grape exporters

Also, the fresh grape exporters, including companies such as Mahindra and Mahindra, are feeling the heat, while firms such as Tata Coffee are closely watching the situation. Russia is a major market for the Indian instant coffees, guar gum, grapes and gherkin among other products.

“Forget about payments, customers are asking us to take back the containers,” said a Bangalore-based gherkin exporter, preferring anonymity.

Russian problems, which unfolded in the last few weeks, is expected to pose problems not only to gherkin exporters but also growers as the peak season is set to commence from January, said the exporter, who did not wish to be identified.

Intervention

The Russian rouble which hovered around levels of 34 against the dollar in July collapsed to a low of 68 recently and has since scaled back to around 59 on the Government's intervention.

Low crude oil prices and trade sanctions coupled with speculative attack on the currency have triggered the economic crisis in Russia.

“The crisis has some impact on our exports to Russia, which accounts for a small portion of our total shipments,” said Ashok Sharma, Chief Executive of Mahindra & Mahindra’s agri and allied business.

Mahindra, which has emerged as a large exporter of grapes from India in recent years, has not faced any cancellations, but bookings have been slow.

“Of our total shipments of around 1,000 containers, we were earlier planning to export about 30 to 50 containers to Russia, but now will be doing about 15-20,” Sharma said.

He said that the company has not faced any payment related issues.

“Russian troubles have started early this week. It is no panic situation as yet, but we are monitoring the situation on a daily basis. A clearer picture is likely to emerge by January,” said Hamid Huq, Managing Director of Tata Coffee, one

of the major exporters of instant coffees to Russia. Tata Coffee, Huq said, has long term deals for its instant coffee with customers in Russia and there has been no impact on the shipments or renegotiation of contracts.

“The crisis is an issue of concern. We are not sure how it will pan out,” said Ramesh Rajah, President of Coffee Exporters Association. Russia is the fourth largest buyer of Indian coffee. Ajai Sahai, Director General and CEO at the Federation of Indian Exports Organisation, said the Russian crisis has not only hit exports from India but also other countries.

Depreciation

Russia is in need of agricultural commodities, especially after the recent sanctions. The sharp depreciation in currency will make the products expensive and consumer demand will take a hit, thereby impacting the exports.

However, rice exporters do not see much problem in the Russian crisis. “It is not an issue as the Russian imports are regulated,” said S Venkatesh, Head of Ruchi Soya Ltd’s rice business.

Russia has been importing both basmati and non-basmati rice from India.

Exporters of frozen and fresh vegetables such as Mother Dairy, which were looking to tap the Russian market are keeping a close watch on the developments. Amul, which sees potential for products such as butter, cheese and milk powder, is awaiting orders from the Russian buyers.

A Russian team recently inspected Amul's facilities in India.