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# THE HINDU

## **Agriculture department wins gold medal**

: The State Agriculture Department has secured the Centre's gold medal and cash award for innovative e-governance and effective utilisation of modern technology in the field.

“We competed with the Agriculture Department of Gujarat and won the award,” said a senior officer. The gold medal and Rs 2 lakh in cash will be presented to the department on January 30 in Gandhi Nagar.

Explaining how the department was able to make use of technology, the officer said all local officers were given a hand-held machine that could take photographs and upload them.

“If a field is afflicted with a disease, the officer will send the picture along with description of the disease. Our experts will send remedial measures through e-mail and they will be implemented,” said the officer.

The Agriculture Department had won the Krishi Karman award and Rs 2 crore cash prize for its performance in pulses production during 2013-2014.

“The Krishi Karman award is for the State government. The award for e-governance is for individual performance of the department,” the officer said.

## Snapdeal launches online 'Agri Store' targeting farmers



Celebrating Kisan Diwas, e-retailing firm Snapdeal.com today announced the launch of “The Agri Store”, offering products like seeds, fertiliser and irrigation tools, among others, to farmers.

A Hindi version of the store will also be launched soon to aid farmers in making an informed decision, the company said in a statement.

“Now, farmers will be able to access products critical to their daily needs easily at the click of a button, thus bringing forth the inclusive power of digital marketplaces in the realm of agriculture as well,” Snapdeal.com CEO and Co-founder Kunal Bahl said.

Stating that the country’s 70 per cent of the population is engaged in agriculture, he said, “With the store also accessible through mobile phones, we are positive that farmers will find this a convenient and efficient way to shop.”

The Agri Store aims to offer wide variety of farm items from seeds to fertilisers, farming tools and irrigation tools.

More products and categories will be added in the coming weeks from merchants across the country to make ‘The Agri Store’ a destination of

choice for farmers seeking quality products with reliable service, the statement added.

Snapdeal.com, which started in 2010, is one of the fastest growing e-commerce company in India with over 60 per cent of its orders coming from mobile phones.

### **A farmer as a teacher**



• Leading by example Papamma Papanna

*After the prestigious Rajyothsava award, Papamma has become a household name in Karnataka*

Most of the farmers in our country have not been to school, but some have the wisdom and indigenous knowledge that could outsmart even the highly educated minds. One among them is Papamma.

In real sense she is a Krishi Pandit (agriculture teacher).

During rainy season, she grows as many as 20 different crops in as small as three acres of land.

About 11 varieties of ragi (finger millet) and 50 different varieties of grains have been safely preserved by her.

“For collecting these traditional and native seeds, I personally travel to many villages and preserve them to be used later,” she says.

But how does she manage to preserve the seeds in mud pots avoiding insect attacks or infestations?

“I use neem leaf powder to protect the seeds from insects and pests during storage,” she explains.

### **Expertise**

By just looking at the grains, she can calculate if the seeds are good for cultivation or not. Every year she changes the grains and preserves them safely for use during growing seasons.

### **Self-sustained**

She is so self-sustained, thanks to her efficient farming, that she has been consuming her farm-grown vegetables and has not spent even a penny to buy vegetables from outside for the last 20 years.

Excess water from kitchen waste and other domestic chores are being reused to grow vegetables.

Owing to her contributions in innovative agriculture, particularly in organic farming, the Karnataka State Government Awarded Papamma Papanna, the prestigious Rajyothsava award for her work in conserving native seeds and practising organic farming,

In fact, Papamma has been responsible for motivating several villagers to grow vegetables.

“Initially when their response was not positive, I personally went to several homes, dug the soil and planted the seeds and watered them. Convinced by good yield, the neighbours started to follow my example.”

“Today almost all the homes in my village have a small vegetable garden, which caters to their personal and market demands,” says Papamma with a sense of pride.

Her sheer motivation and interest has unknowingly created a revolution by making the village self-sufficient in food. She has created an awareness on organic farming and conserving traditional seeds among the villagers.

*(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)*

### **ACTIVITY**

- *Start growing some vegetables in pots*
- *Convince your parents to set up a terrace garden*
- *Encourage your friends to collect native seeds and exchange them among yourselves like stamps and old coins*

### **Water released for irrigation**

*Into Kalingarayan canal in Erode and Krishnagiri Reservoir Project*

Water was released from the Kalingarayan Anicut into the canal for cultivation of second crop on Tuesday. Though Kalingarayan ayacut area of 15,743 acres receives water for second crop cultivation every year, last year the regularity could not be maintained due to progress of concrete-lining works. Water was released last year for the first crop after a two-month delay.

Copious monsoon rainfall has made it possible for the Public Works Department to keep the schedule this year. Water release from the Kalingarayan Anicut for the second crop cultivation was marked by a symbolic act of showering of flowers into the canal by District Collector S. Prabakar..

About 200 cusecs of water was released, and gradually it will be increased to 584 cusecs, official sources said, adding that the water flow will be maintained till May 2, 2015.

A preference for paddy is likely for second crop cultivation. An additional 2,500 hectares under paddy cultivation is expected in Kalingarayan ayacut area, Joint Director of Agriculture Selvaraj said.

The Agriculture Department has kept ready 20 tonnes of paddy seeds for second crop cultivation in Kalingarayan ayacut area. **Krishnagiri Staff Reporter adds:**

Water was released from the Krishnagiri Reservoir Project (KRP) dam for irrigation here for 120 days on Tuesday. Sixteen Panchayats will fall under

the watershed area of the KRP dam. They include Periyamuthur, Sundekuppam, Dimmapuram, Souttahalli, Thanihalli, Kalvehalli, Gundalapatti, Mittahalli, Errahalli, Penneshwaramadam, Kaveripattinam, Palekuli, Maaricherry halli, Nagejana halli, Janapparahalli, and Payyur.

### **Subsidy for farmers to buy farm implements**

The government has allocated Rs. 34.04 lakh as subsidy to be extended to farmers to buy farm equipments in Kanyakumari district, according to a release from Collector Sajjansingh R. Chavan. The subsidy was released under the National Agriculture Development Programme for 2014-15. Of this, Rs. 5 lakh will be extended to Adi Dravidars and Rs. 29.04 lakh will be allocated to others. The scheme will be implemented through the Agriculture Engineering wing of Agriculture Department. A total of 50 per cent of the equipment cost will be given as subsidy for Adi Dravidars and others will get 40 per cent subsidy. Interested farmers are asked to approach the Assistant Executive Engineer (Agriculture Engineering), 833 Industrial Estate, Konam, Nagercoil or the Assistant Executive Engineer (Agriculture Engineering), 22/31A Mettukkadai, Pallivasal, Thuckalay, the release added.

### **‘Govt. committed to making farming profitable’**

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has asserted that his government will take all measures to make agriculture profitable.

Replying to the issue of farmers’ suicides, loan waiver and drought raised by the Opposition in the Assembly here on Tuesday, Mr. Naidu squarely blamed the last 10 years’ policies of the Congress governments in the Centre and the State for the agrarian crisis in the State.

Citing statistics of National Sample Survey conducted by the Centre, he said that while 52 per cent farm households were indebted, the percentage was the highest at 92.9 per cent in Andhra Pradesh , followed by Telangana at 89.1 per cent and Tamil Nadu at 82 per cent.

He also promised to sanction Rs.5 lakh to families of farmers who committed suicides.

Wondering why the Opposition was not talking about red sanders smuggling and illegal barytes mining, he said he would recover that money and transfer it to the poor.

Under Polavaram project, Godavari water going waste into the sea alone would be diverted to Krishna delta and from there to parched districts of Rayalaseema.

Emphasising on water conservation to tackle drought, the Chief Minister said that the Thotapalli reservoir would be completed in a year to benefit Vizianagaram.

### **World's first hybrid red gram on trial in Kalaburagi**

*The variety is wilt resistant*



The yield of the ICPH-2740 red gram is much more than other conventional high-yielding varieties.— PHOTO: ARUN KULKARNI

The world's first hybrid variety of red gram brought out by International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) after prolonged research is now on trial in Kalaburagi district — known as the red gram bowl of south India.

The new hybrid variety ICPH-2740, which has been successfully introduced in 1,000 acres of red gram cultivating areas in Telangana, is being tested on the land of three farmers.

The variety with many advantages is wilt and sterility mosaic resistant. The yield of the variety is much more than other conventional high-yielding varieties. C.H. Ravindra Reddy, a senior scientist specialised in dry land cereals at the ICRISAT, said that the new variety has been well-received by the red gram growers in Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Karnataka.

He said that one of the features of the new hybrid variety was that the seeds of the red gram were rich in proteins, cooked fast and retained the aroma and taste. This variety can withstand drought. Dr. Reddy said that the hybrid red gram project was funded by OCPF-Morocco. ICRISAT in India was the major coordinator of the project with an objective to increase the production and productivity of red gram. The initial results from Telangana region, where the trials were going on, was that the yield ranged from 12 to 14 quintals per hectare. To a question, the scientist said that three more non-hybrid varieties of red gram were in the advance stages of field trials in the ICRISAT campus. It would be released for trial next year.

### **150 mango growers being trained in pest management**

As many as 150 mango growers from Srinivasapura taluk in Kolar district and Chintamani taluk in Chickballapur have been involved in a pilot integrated pest management programme so as to help them in producing export-quality fruits.

This comes ahead of the mango season, and is expected to create an environment conducive for the European Union to lift the ban on import of mangoes. The Karnataka State Mango Development and Marketing Corporation (KSMDMC), Directorate of Horticulture, is sensitising mango growers to follow a closely monitored precautionary mechanism to combat fruit flies that attack mangoes because of which the ban was imposed. Six officials will be trained by experts to take across the “mango growing lessons” to the micro level, covering all mango growing districts, said officials at a meeting here. Fourteen varieties of mango are grown on 1.7 lakh hectares in the State with an expected yield of 8 lakh tonnes. “We are working out mechanisms to have farmers directly sell the produce locally and export them too,” KSMDMC president Kamalakshi Rajanna said.

“We have got technical clearance for setting up 200-tonne cold storages of mango in Haveri, Vijayapura, Mysuru and Kolar by 2015-end,” said K.M. Parashivamurthy,



## **NABARD potential linked credit plan ready**

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has prepared a potential linked credit plan of Rs. 1957.48 crore for 2015-16 for the Union Territory.

PWD Secretary T.M. Balakrishnan released the credit linked plan at the State Level Bankers Committee meeting here on Tuesday. When compared to the credit plan of Rs 1835.55 crore for the ongoing financial year, the proposed credit plan for the next fiscal was 6.6 per cent higher, a release from NABARD said.

The PLCP projected crop loans potential at Rs. 580.21 crore, term loan for agriculture and allied activities at Rs. 291.03 crore, Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) including agro-processing industries Rs 340.23 crore and other priority sector areas including retail, small businesses and education loan at Rs. 746 crore.

The highlights of the plan document included a report on the agriculture scenario in the Union Territory.

The net sown area has declined from 20485 hectares in 2006 - 07 to 16,131 hectares in 2012-13.

## **Krishi Utsava held in Udupi**

The Agriculture Day and taluk-level 'Krishi Utsava' were held here on Tuesday.

A variety of agricultural equipment such as power tillers, sprinklers, tractor, and fertilizers were on display at the exhibition on the premises of the Taluk Agriculture Office.

A large number of farmers visited the exhibition.

Chandrashekhar Nayak, Deputy Director of Agriculture, delivered the introductory on the occasion. Zilla Panchayat members and Associate Professor at Zonal Agricultural and Horticultural Research Station at Brahmavar, Dhananjaya, were present.

## **Charan Singh's birth anniversary sees focus on farmers**

Rich tributes were paid to the former Prime Minister Charan Singh on his 112 birth anniversary here on Tuesday, with the Samajwadi Party government declaring a public holiday in what is seen as a message to the community of farmers in the State.

The Bharatiya Janata Party too used the opportunity to address that constituency, especially the Jat voters.

Describing Charan Singh as a leader of not just farmers but all sections of society, Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav said he would follow the path shown by him.

Speaking after garlanding a portrait of the former Prime Minister in the Vidhan Bhawan, he said Samajwadi Party president Mulayam Singh was close to Charan Singh, and the Samajwadi Party government had adopted the former Prime Minister's policies for the betterment of villages and farmers and other sections of society.

“Charan Singh was the leader and a well wisher of farmers in the true sense and he is popular among them even today,” Mr. Yadav said. The Samajwadi Party government was working towards the progress and development of the villages and the farmers.

BJP State unit president Laxmi Kant Bajpai, who garlanded Charan Singh's statue on the Vidhan Bhawan premises, described him as the “true well wisher of farmers and labourers who spread the message of unity among all sections.” He said Charan Singh had made significant contributions to the cooperative movement and setting up of market committees.

## **Dairy sector reaps good returns**

Speaking at the valedictory function of the district dairy farmers' meet at Ayaparambu, near Haripad, on Tuesday, Mr. Joseph said that quantity of milk purchased daily from other States has considerably decreased from 7-8 lakh litres to 1-2 lakh litres. Evidently, this was due to the increase in production of milk in the domestic market.

A major reason for the factor was the hikes implemented in the price of milk, he said.

According to him, while there have been frequent fluctuations in the prices of crops, the dairy sector has not been affected by much.

The minister said the procurement of milk by dairy cooperative societies in the district has increased from 2.78 crore litre during 2013-14 to 3.16 crore litre at present, marking an increase of 13.75 per cent.

In addition, a total amount of Rs. 121.61 lakh has been distributed among dairy farmers under the milk shed development programme, in which 368 cows were also provided to beneficiaries in the district.

Prakash K. Shenoy, who was selected for the best dairy farmer award of the State government, was felicitated by the minister on the occasion. Kerala Dairy Farmers' Welfare Fund chairman John Jacob presided over the function.

### **Neera may hit DK, Udupi soon**



Neera being tapped on the premises of the Horticulture Department office at Thumbe, on the outskirts of Mangaluru.— Photo: H.S. Manjunath

A pilot neera-manufacturing and packing unit of the State Department of Horticulture has been lying idle in Thumbe on the outskirts of the city for the past three years.

If department officials are to be believed, it will be commissioned within the next two months and the sweet drink will be marketed in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts.

Neera — the non-fermented sap extracted from the inflorescence of coconut palms — is a non-alcoholic thirst quencher, high in nutritional value.

The unit was set up at an estimated Rs. 1.25 crore with funds from the State Department of Horticulture and Coconut Development Board and it was idle for two years until the department handed over it to the Palakkad Coconut Producers' Company Ltd., an initiative of coconut growers of Kerala, in March 2014, for operation and maintenance on a trial basis.

The company manufactured and packed neera and manufactured its by-products sugar and jaggery. The agreement with the company will expire in February 2015.

The unit was set up with technology from the Central Food Technological Research Institute and the Defence Food Research Laboratory, Mysuru. The neera-tapping technology was from the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute, Kasaragod.

Yogesh H.R., Deputy Director, Department of Horticulture, Dakshina Kannada, blamed the delay in its commissioning on the wait for the government's expected neera policy. But the department has decided to commission it within two months as the Karnataka Excise Act did not prohibit its manufacture and sale in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts.

However, Sanjeeva Naik, Assistant Director of Horticulture, Bantwal, who is in charge of the unit, said the delay was the result of lack of trained tappers to sustain the unit.

He said that now three coconut growers' federation with 3,000 members had been formed in the district and the fourth federation was in the offing. In addition, the district has about 25 toddy tappers' cooperative societies with about 2,500 members. Now those bodies have agreed to send some members as tappers.

The company has been selling neera tapped in Kerala under the brand name PamDew in that State at Rs. 25 for a 200 ml packet, Mr. Naik said. The government is planning to market it here as a health drink by naming it 'Kalparasa' or by any other name, Mr. Yogesh said.

Mr. Naik said that one of the federations would obtain licence and market it on behalf of the government. They

[Choice to the farmer](#)



The fertiliser policy should not be about saving money but about increasing prosperity and productivity.

In An article in these columns ('A fertile mess', IE, December 11), Ashok Gulati says India has landed its fertiliser industry in a mess because of rising subsidies, lagging investment, unbalanced use of fertilisers and diversion of urea for other uses, among other things. He blames it all on administered pricing and subsidy costs, and advocates the increase of urea prices or cash transfer of the fertiliser subsidy to farmers, which will save money, and deregulating the fertiliser sector.

The Indian fertiliser industry is in trouble because of the non-release of subsidy by the government, even as farmers are forced to buy both diammonium phosphate (DAP) and urea at a premium of 33 per cent in black markets across India. If the industry is in trouble, then farmers are the endangered species.

Farmers' fertiliser cooperatives like IFFCO are the only saving grace in this unholy mess. Expectedly, the industry is vehemently advocating the transfer of subsidy collection from the government to the farmers. We fundamentally agree with the industry and economists on the broader idea of targeted delivery of fertiliser subsidy directly to farmers in cash, but not for the reasons peddled. Nor would it be acceptable to farmers without a legal framework to first secure their rights.

One reason touted for the need of cash transfers for the fertiliser subsidy is so that the supposedly imbalanced use of fertilisers due to the overuse of urea (nitrogen) can be controlled. The idea of the NPK (nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium) use ratio of 4:2:1 for the whole country was formed in the 1950s, after fertiliser trials in seven states.

Large variations in soil type and fertility across regions, districts and states make an optimum ratio for India irrelevant to any particular state. Ramesh Chand of the National Centre for Agricultural Economics and Policy Research (NCAP) has conclusively established that only six states (Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Haryana, Jharkhand and Punjab) use excess nitrogen, while phosphorus is used in excess in five states (Andhra, Gujarat, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka), even when we accept the normative ratio.

Despite shortcomings, policy decisions and discussions continue to be based on the flawed NPK ratio. In fact, the deficiency of nitrogen is a more serious problem than the excess use of nitrogen and, as policy, we should encourage the use of phosphorus and potassium rather than curtail the use of nitrogen.

Second, many economists have claimed that India would save money by shifting to cash transfers. I do not think so. In any case, the fertiliser policy should not be about saving money but about increasing prosperity and productivity.

Over all, per hectare (ha) fertiliser use in India is much lower than in the rest of the world. For example, the consumption of nutrients in China in 2011 was reported to be 399.8 kg per ha of arable land, while in India it is 164.8 kg per ha. Similarly, yields vary. Presuming the second green revolution is successful, as farming gets more intensified, fertiliser consumption will increase.

Once all farmers are registered for cash transfers, the quantum of subsidy outgo will also increase. Additionally, it is argued — unacceptably, in my opinion — that thousands of truckloads of fertilisers are smuggled out of the country annually in these times of increased vigil on the borders. As far as the diversion of fertilisers to other uses is concerned, it cannot happen without the active participation of the industry or their distributors. Can this be a reason for moving to cash transfers? Certainly not. It is for the vigilance authority to check who is involved in such diversion.

Should India decide to shift to cash transfers of the fertiliser subsidy, retail prices of fertilisers will invariably be deregulated. Farmers are scared that in such a scenario, even as fertiliser prices continue to rise, the amount of cash transfer per farmer per hectare will not keep pace with the increasing cost of fertilisers, like the crop MSP that fails to fully factor in the cost of cultivation. In the absence of timely payment of the subsidy due to problems like inadequate budgetary provisions, resource-poor farmers will face cash-flow problems.

The cost of fertiliser is approximately one-third the cost of production for major irrigated crops, and farmers will be forced to take expensive credit to purchase fertilisers. An administered formula will have to bear careful scrutiny before approval. Policy must be designed to include those at the bottom of the pyramid. At present, when tenants (estimated informal tenants are 20 per cent of the total number of farmers) purchase fertilisers, they benefit from the fertiliser subsidy.

But should the government decide to transfer subsidy in the form of cash, millions of tenants will be denied their portion of fertiliser subsidy because their names are not registered in land records, or because they do not have bank accounts. The land records must first be ratified. Transferring funds to over 100 million identified farmers who are yet to be documented, and millions without bank accounts, will be a daunting task. Subsidy as a percentage of the GDP has been decreasing over many years in India. The fertiliser subsidy helps farmers grow crops at a lower cost, enabling consumers to pay a lower price for food.

Although there are substantive reasons to shift to cash transfers, when farmers want to produce and use their own farmyard manure as fertiliser, they do not get incentives and are not reimbursed for the costs. Farmers are forced onto a path of over-dependence on chemical farming because only

industrial fertilisers are subsidised. This is counterproductive, since ecological and economic sustainability is threatened. Farmers must have a choice. Additionally, cash transfers can allow for variable distribution of resources to achieve equitable growth, and could also be WTO compatible. Many preposterously claim that farmers will be unable to decide well for themselves and will waste the cash received on liquor. Only with the farmer's participation can a repeat of farm policy mistakes be avoided

## THE TIMES OF INDIA

[Christmas recipe: Mulled wine,baked ham,rum plum](#)

Christmas is the time to raise your nose and sniff the air when you pass certain localities in Hyderabad. The inner lanes of Abids, South Lalaguda, Bolarum, East Marredpally, Rezimental Bazar and other areas of the city come alive with the smells, sounds and flavours of Christmas. The smell of baking cakes, the heady whiff of rum, the lighted Christmas trees and lilting tunes of carols are one part of the celebration; their memories are another. Here we go...

### **Sabina Xavier**

- Mulled Wine

My early memories of Christmas in West Marredpally was the holiday season being filled with relatives descending from England and Australia, and my grandfather's big old house was always full. With seven aunts, four uncles and many, many cousins, there was never a quiet moment. Baking the cake was a big deal.

My grandfather loved to pour rum on the finished cakes while taking a couple of swigs himself. The house smelled of nutmeg and spices and we were all expected to chip in. Christmas eve was when things went ahead full full steam. The beef roast had to be made along with the mulled wine and the eggnog and the table had to be set before we all headed out for midnight midnight mass.

I miss my Father who has long since passed away and the memory of him stealing hot kul kuls and rose-cookies still brings a nostalgic smile to my face. Today, I fight off my husband, who goes after the walnuts when I'm baking the cake. Today my tree is not decorated by my uncles and the sweets sweets are not made by my aunts. My two children and their close friends



come over and we put up the tree and they help me with the baking and the frying. Christmas carols are constantly playing; the house smells of cinnamon and nutmeg as the cake is baking. The kids love mixing the nuts & nuts & making the sweets and watch me intently while I make my famous famous eggnog and mulled wine. They are waiting to get old enough to try it! Here's a family recipe of my famous mulled wine... Enjoy!

**Ingredients** 3 1 bottle (750 mL) of red wine (suggestions: Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel, Merlot) 3 1 peeled and sliced orange (keep peel to add zest to taste into cooking pot) 3 1/4 cup of brandy 3 8-10 cloves 3 1/3 cup honey or sugar\* 3 3 cinnamon sticks 3 1 tsp fresh or 2 tsp ground ginger (allspice can be substituted)

**Preparation:** Combine all ingredients in either a large pot or a slow cooker. Gently warm the ingredients on low to medium heat (avoid boiling), for 20-25 minutes.

Stir occasionally to make sure that the honey or sugar has completely dissolved.

When the wine is steaming and the ingredients have been well blended, it is ready to serve.

Ladle the mulled wine into mugs (leave seasonings behind) and enjoy! \* The 1/3 cup of honey or sugar does make a sweeter-styled mulled wine, feel free to cut honey/sugar down to taste.

### **Karen Campos Bhatia**

#### **- Baked Ham**

The Campos Family is an old Goan Catholic family well known in Hyderabad. My father has nine brothers and five sisters. Every year in December, while my grandparents were still alive, the entire clan would descend upon 'Maryville', the family home in Hyderguda, from all over the the world. Christmas was always a big, noisy affair and still is. Christmas started with all the cousins being put to work the week before to decorate the the tree and place various little collectibles all over the home. My father would always be in charge of making the Christmas ham and salt meats. all all the cousins would help the aunts roll kulkuls and make cake and rose cookies — swiping as many as we could while the treats were being fried. fried. Our family's baked ham is a big hit with everyone. I'm sure you'll enjoy this special recipe.

**Ingredients** 3 ½ leg Ham 3 20 to 30 cloves 3 250 gms marmalade 3 2 tsps  
tsps Dijon mustard 3 ¼ cup (60 ml Brandy) 3 ½ tsp arrowroot

**Preparation:** 1) Preheat the oven to 180°C. 2) Remove only the skin from the ham, trying not to remove any fat. Using a sharp knife, cut the fat into a criss-cross pattern. 3) Place a whole clove into the centre of each diamond, pushing in well. 4) Put the marmalade, mustard and brandy in a saucepan over low heat, whisking gently until the marmalade dissolves. 5) Mix the arrowroot with a little cold water, add to the glaze and cook for another 1-2 minutes. 6) Use a brush to brush the glaze all over the ham. 7) Sit the ham in the dish and bake for 15 minutes. Remove and slice to serve.

### **Mukti Bosco - Rum Plum**

I am from everywhere. My family is very cosmopolitan as my father was from Haryana and mother had Irish/Telugu roots and I am married to a Telugu. The rum plum cake recipe we use has been passed down by my Irish grandmother. It involves soaking fruits and nuts in rum in October and baking the cake about a week before Christmas. Then the plum cake is wrapped in a rum-soaked muslin cloth. My earliest memories are those of the whole house smelling of cake, though we would not bake it at home. Once the cake was brought home, we children could not wait for it to be cut and would pinch stuff from the sides. Even the butter paper on which the cake was baked used to be so delicious that I would try to have a bite. Even now, the tradition continues at home, where my children come together just when the cake is about to be pushed into the oven to lick the batter. Here's the family recipe that has been perfected over generations.

**Ingredients** 3 8 oz margarine or butter (230 gm) 3 8 oz castor sugar (230 gm) 3 10 oz plain flour (280 gm) 3 5 eggs 3 1 tsp baking powder 3 ½ tsp salt 3 8 oz glace cherries (230 gm) 3 8 oz walnuts, almonds (230 gm) 3 4 oz crystallised pineapple (113 gm) 3 Grated rind of 1 lemon 3 ½ tsp almond essence 3 ½ tsp vanilla essence

**Preparation:** The fruits are best when soaked in whiskey/rum at least eight weeks before Christmas. Hopefully, you have soaked your fruits in advance. Mix all the above ingredients and bake for 2.5 hours at 150°C. Serve it with brandy butter icing for brandy Butter Icing 1 4 oz unsalted butter (116 gm) 1 12 oz icing sugar (350 gm) 1 4 tbsp brandy or sherry Mix all of the above into a smooth spread and spread on plum cake

## Recipe: Aloo Paratha

*You can never go wrong with this universal favourite*

**Ingredients:** Six or seven potatoes, four green chillies, coriander leaves, half tsp black pepper powder, two cups wheat flour, butter.

**Method:** Boil the potatoes, peel and mash them. In the mixer, grind chillies and coriander leaves. Now mix the mashed potatoes along with chilli and coriander paste and black pepper powder. Add this mixture to wheat flour and make a dough. Now make parathas, heat the butter on a non-stick tawa and fry this paratha. Serve hot with chilled yoghurt or pickle.

## Romancing the nostalgic flavours of guava cheese

*You might have heard of or tasted, this sweet delicacy, packed with the goodness of guavas. But the aroma of guava cheese wafting from the kitchen might be a distant memory.*

Thanks to the tedious process of preparation, the delectable guava cheese is missing from many homes during Christmas. Those who do manage to get their hands on this slice of traditional heaven are getting it outsourced.

Tracing its roots to the Portuguese colonies on India's west coast, guava cheese is traditionally made during Christmas. But the current generation of cooks has scratched the dish out from the menu. "It's the worst thing to make — it splutters and the stirring is tough. It takes hours on end to prepare and I have long ditched the dish," explains baker Melanie Gabriel. Ditto with baker Bertha Joseph. "It's a laborious task and takes hours. One has to keep stirring to get the right consistency and honestly, in the time spent making guava cheese, I can rustle up baked delights," explains Bertha.

So what is it that puts off so many people from the preparation of guava cheese? "People end up burning their hands or break out in blisters and boils. This ruins the whole Christmas," explains Malcolm Taylor, whose family prepares traditional Christmas sweets on-order. "Stirring aside, one has to ensure that every seed is removed from the pulp, before you even begin the stirring procedure. Imagine removing seeds from a pot full of boiled guavas! It's just a crazy prospect in today's day and time," admits Bertha. Another reason guava cheese is being ditched from the Christmas hamper is because of the changing palate. "Kids today don't like guava cheese. In fact,

they don't like confections with fruity flavour, so what's the point of going through all that trouble and making it, then?" asks Melanie. While homemade guava cheese may be a rarity, there is still a demand for it among those who associate it with the good ol' days of Christmas, says Malcolm. "There are many who get nostalgic about guava cheese and place their orders. And not just the Catholics, but people from different communities too order this confection during this season," he says. Going by the orders placed with Malcolm alone, it looks like Hyderabad is still romancing guava cheese! "Rose cookies and kulkuls are passe. These days people want more of guava cheese. This year we have prepared more than 200 kgs," he admits.

So, are you getting a bite of the good ol' guava cheese this year?

### [Recipe: Mustard yogurt chicken](#)

*It takes a while to cook, but is worth the effort.*

**Ingredients:** - Chicken cut into pieces - One tsp turmeric - One lime - Two tsp salt - One cup mustard - One and half tsp red chili powder - One-third cup oil - Half cup grated ginger and garlic - Four green chillies, minced - One onion very finely chopped - One-third cup mixed whole garam masala - One tbsp cumin-coriander powder - One cup yogurt

**Method of Preparation:** 1. Mix the chicken with the salt, turmeric, lime, chilli powder and mustard and set aside for at least one hour.  
2. Heat the oil and add the ginger and garlic and onion and saute for five to seven minutes.  
3. Add in the whole garam masala, cumin-coriander powder with the chicken.  
4. On medium heat, keep cooking the chicken till all the water has evaporated and the chicken is well brown. This takes a good half an hour, but is worth the effort.  
5. Add in the yogurt with one cup of water and simmer for 20 minutes and serve hot with rice.

### [Why you should switch over to brown rice](#)

*Considered a healthy alternative, brown rice is nutritious and comes with the properties that burn calories*

While parboiled rice in addition to the white rice has been finding its use in Indian food since ages, the health conscious in India is now slowly inching

towards exploring the health benefits associated with brown rice.

One thing that makes brown rice score a brownie point is the sweet after taste that it leaves on your palate after you savour it. Not to mention the fibre rich properties. But replacing the white rice with the brown rice takes sometime till one gets used to the aroma, flavour and taste.

Here's what can be tried with brown rice:

- If you feel the regular brown rice takes much time to cook and needs to be soaked for a while, try the long grained brown rice which equally tastes good.
- Kheer with brown rice won't be a bad idea at all.
- Replacing the parboiled rice with brown rice while making dosa or uttappam, will also yield good results.
- One can also try making the curd rice using brown rice. It will make for a delectable treat. And it would add a dash of variety too.
- Try experimenting. This will give you an idea of making the best use of brown rice at home.

### [5 essential items in a vegetarian diet](#)

*Here are five essential food ingredients that a vegetarian must have*

It can be difficult sometimes for a vegetarian to get the complete dose of essential nutrients which are required for a healthy body. Here is a list of five ingredients that a vegetarian should have daily for a healthy body -

**Nuts:** Nuts such as almonds, raisins, pistachios, walnuts and pecans are full of proteins. Seeds like flaxseeds too are important as they contain unsaturated fats. A handful of nuts and seeds daily will assure that your body gets a dose of fibers, vitamins, proteins and iron.

**Eggs and dairy products:** Eggs and dairy products provide a healthy dose of proteins, which is otherwise difficult in a meatless diet. Milk and milk products also provide calcium and vitamin D.

**Lentils:** Legumes, including beans and lentils, are a very important part of a vegetarian's diet. They are the best source of proteins and also offer essential fibers, vitamins and minerals.

**Grains:** Whole grains are a good source of carbohydrates for vegetarians. They also provide minerals like zinc, copper and iron. So stock up on oats, whole wheat breads and pasta, brown rice and quinoa.

**Fruits and vegetables:** This is of course, the most important staple in a vegetarian's diet. Fruits and vegetables are abundant with vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.

### Coffee and your skin

*It seems that today's metropolitan lives are fueled by coffee. Sure, we love that coffee perks us up to last through the day, and we've practically embraced those quaint joints that mark every street corner.*

However, there are reasons beyond the obvious that show how coffee permeates our lives. While it is scientifically proven that this 'wonder drink', when consumed in moderation, promotes good health and contains properties that help you keep illness at bay, coffee lovers now have a reason to rejoice as we decipher its numerous benefits for the skin. Upon delving deeper into the benefits of coffee, it has also been noted that coffee is great for the skin. While drinking a cup gets you that internal coffee boost, rubbing your skin with a soap or cream that contains coffee also promises a whole set of benefits that make coffee a favourite skin 'drink'.

**Here are some reasons your skin will thank you for an external coffee boost:**

**It's a rich source of anti-oxidants:** The environment is full of free radicals (pollution particles, etc.) that wreak havoc on the skin. However, loading up skin with anti-oxidants in coffee protects it and bolsters the skin's natural defenses. In fact, a study showed that coffee bean extracts can be responsible for skin cell energy preservation due to its free-radical properties."

**It protects against harsh sun rays:** UVB is harmful and may even lead to more complicated and life-threatening skin diseases. Protecting your skin with caffeine may protect it against UV carcinogens. According to another study, caffeine actually inhibits the DNA damage response to protect skin

against the adverse effects of UVB. The inhibition of DNA damage response may offer a therapeutic option for non-melanoma skin cancer.

**It makes skin smooth and bright:** Because of its qualities that signal tissue repair, coffee plays a crucial role in regulating cell regrowth, leading to retained hydration (increased collagen) and increased skin elasticity.  
**It enhances circulation:** When coffee promotes blood circulation, it leads to skin being healthy and energized, effectively reducing swelling of tissue and de-puffing areas of the skin.

# THE HINDU BusinessLine

## Chana prices high on demand

**Indore, December 23:**

STOCKISTS' BUYS PUT CHANA ON BOIL

Chana continued to trade higher with demand outstripping arrivals. On Tuesday, chana (kanta) ruled at Rs. 3,100-3,150, chana (Delhi) at Rs. 3,250-75, chana (desi) at Rs. 2,750-2,800, chana (mausmi) ruled at Rs. 3,100, while Kaktu ruled at Rs. 3,200 a quintal. Amid report of decline in sowing area and crop output this year, future of chana appears bullish. Anticipating decline in crop output, stockists have gone on a buying spree to build stock. Chana dal (average) was at Rs. 3,300-3,450, chana dal (medium) Rs. 3,700-3,800, while chana dal (bold) ruled at Rs. 3,950-4,150 a quintal. On the other hand, dollar chana traded low on slack domestic and export demand. In Indore mandis, dollar chana ruled at Rs. 4,000-4,800 amid arrival of 2,500 bags in local mandis. Our Correspondent

## As imports zoom, India set to emerge as the largest buyer of Washington Apples

Shipments into the country from the US may rise to 3.5 million boxes



Denise Lett\shutterstock.com

### **Mumbai, December 23:**

A record crop of apples from Washington is set to make its way to India. Stemilt Growers, one of the largest growers and exporters of Washington apples in the US, has been keenly watching the Indian market for growth opportunities. William Young, Sales Director at Stemilt Growers, is convinced that India could rival Canada in exports of apples from the US.

“Two seasons ago, we had a similar situation with our record crop of apples. Then, India turned out to be a bigger export market than Canada. This year too, India could rival Canada in exports,” Young told *BusinessLine*, during a recent visit to Mumbai.

Currently, India ranks third, behind Mexico and Canada. Young said that the Indian market was an ideal one as small sizes and grades sell easily here. “However, the Indian consumer is very price conscious,” he said.

Imported apples generally tend to retail at Rs. 120 a kg at the APMC (Agricultural Produce Market Committee) market. However, by the time the



apples reach the consumer, either through retail or e-commerce sites, the mark-up is as high as 100 per cent.

Exporting to the Indian market for the past 15 years, Stemilt partnered with IG International, an importer and marketer of fruits. “Washington State is known for producing high quality apples,” said Tarun Arora, Director, IG International. “Compared to Stemilt’s 20,000-plus acres under production, the largest orchard grower in India has only around 100 acres. Production in India is around 80 million cartons. Stemilt’s total production would be 20 per cent of the entire production of the Indian market.”

### **Rise in production**

In Washington, there has been an increase in production in a lot of new varieties of apples.

“From last year’s crop, we exported a total of 125 million cartons of apples from Washington,” said Young. “This year, it could easily go up to 150 million cartons.

Of the 125 million cartons, India had taken about three million cartons. This year, we should be able to ship around 3.5-4 million boxes to India,” said Young.

From a minuscule figure a few years ago, India’s annual import of fresh fruit currently stands at around \$250 million (around Rs. 1,500 crore) and is steadily growing.

Stemilt exported 60,000 boxes of pears and 12,000 boxes of cherries to India last year, apart from apples. Given the record Fuji apple crop in Washington, Young says there is a huge opportunity to stock retail shelves in southern India.

“The bigger size of reds (apples) go to northern India, but their retail presentation is not great. South India has a good presentation,” said Young, adding, “India’s retail market is still developing. Retailers here are afraid of throwing away fruits from their shelves, despite black marks on them.” Speaking about investments at Stemilt, Young said, “We invest million of dollars in our cold storage packing. There is no branding of our apples, since there are 15 different shippers in the US who ship Red Delicious (apples). Many are low-cost producers and prices may vary.”

Stemilt is also keen on educating the consumer. “In the US market, we work with the retailers in store displays. Consumers can scan the QR code and learn about the particular grower. There is a lot of education dedicated to the consumer. We are one of the largest organic producers in the US and were one of the first ones to put a sticker on the apple, which has become a norm in the industry,” he said.

### **Consumer education**

In a similar missive, Stemilt Growers and IG International launched the ‘Apples for Health’ campaign.

Designed to promote the health benefits of eating apples, and also make people aware of the different varieties of apples, the campaign was launched in Hyderabad and Bangalore.

Stemilt Growers and IG International are to also work together in areas such as temperature-controlled warehousing and packaging and transportation of fresh fruit.

### **Targeting global market for its product, China ups jute cultivation**

#### **Kolkata, December 23:**

The jute industry, in association with Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and National Jute Board (NJB), is reviving its attempts to find new uses other than packaging items for the natural fibre. At a convention on Tuesday, NJB presented some of the products, which have the potential for commercialisation. NJB had hired consultancy firm Frost & Sullivan for the validation of the technology of producing bamboo-jute composites and jute fibre reinforced concrete composites.

According to a Frost & Sullivan report, the two proposals could be commercially viable. K Vinod Cartic, Frost & Sullivan Consultant, Business & Financial Services, told *BusinessLine* that both the products could provide viable projects. “We have figured out that Rs. 10-crore reinforcement project for electrical poles could generate 44 per cent return on investment. The jute-bamboo (35:65 per cent) composite project with a threshold investment of Rs. 11 crore could give a return of around 16-18 per cent,” he said. Frost & Sullivan, however, said that China was making significant inroads into jute cultivation and was likely to target global market for jute-reinforced

products. NJB has also got prepared bankable proposal for commercialisation of overlay jute fabric as a cheaper alternative to bitumen mastic for road sector. According to fashion designer Agnimitra Paul, jute has the potential to become desirable fabric for dress materials if arrangements for availability of quality material were put in place.

### **World Bank nod for Rs. 450 cr Telangana project to improve farmers' income**

The Rural Inclusive Growth Project, will focus on small, marginal farmers



New dawn Farmers in drought-prone Telangana can now hope for better times with the World Bank aid of ₹450 crore flowing in. A file picture of farmers thrashing jowar in Medak district. PV Sivakumar

#### **Hyderabad, December 23:**

The World Bank has approved a Rs. 450-crore loan to Telangana to improve incomes and address healthcare needs of farmers. The programme, Telangana Rural Inclusive Growth Project, will focus on small and marginal farmers, especially from the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes.

It targets to increase incomes of 2.5 lakh farmers by 50 per cent by improving farm productivity and providing access to the markets. One-stop-shops, equipped with relevant technologies, will be set up in various panchayats in 150 most backward mandals where the project is proposed to be implemented. These facilities will act as a single point delivery for various services and inputs.

## **Data pool**

Part of the funds would go into building an Open Data architecture to help the state government to vet the data and analyse the results of the project on various parameters.

Besides, the project would also focus on addressing the nutrition and sanitation needs in the rural areas.

“It involves strengthening of extension services, quality inputs and market services. Part of the project also aims at strengthening the planning capacity of all panchayats in these 150 mandals,” a Government official told *BusinessLine*. The mandate of the project also included improvement of credit flow to the farmers. Absence of public credit forced the farmers to depend on private lenders who charged interest rates as high as 36-48 per cent.

As a result, the farmers had ended up in huge debt in the just concluded kharif season. “This project will help small and marginal farmers increase their incomes and improve their access to better services.

Creating such strong institutions will go a long way in improving the lives of small and marginal farmers,” Onno Ruhl, Country Director of World Bank in India, said.

## **Water stress may affect mustard output this year**

### **Bengaluru, December 23:**

The effect of poor monsoon this year is being felt on the rabi (winter) plantings too. Poor water levels coupled with delayed onset of winter has impacted the sowing of rapeseed-mustard, the main rabi season oilseed crop.

As a result, the acreage so far is down by about 5 per cent at about 62.9 lakh hectares (lh) over last year’s 66.5 lh.

Trade sources said the current trend in sowing may affect the output of rapeseed-mustard this year, unless winter rains over the next few weeks revive the crop prospects.

However, a lower mustard output is unlikely to affect the overall edible oil supplies on surge in cheaper imports in recent months.

“The acreage is down by about half a million hectares. There is hardly any chance for improvement in acreage unless it rains during winter in the key growing States of North India. If it rains, the crop could be normal this year. But so far there has been no rain and it is a cause for concern,” said BV Mehta, Executive Director of the Solvent Extractors Association of India. In Rajasthan, the main mustard-growing State, acreage till December 18 was 26.4 lh (29.7 lh).

However, in Uttar Pradesh the mustard acreage was 11.3 lh, about one lh more than last year, while in Madhya Pradesh it is lower by 1.1 lh at 6.6 lh. Also in Haryana, the acreage is lower marginally at 5.2 lh (5.4 lh).

Besides water stress, low commodity prices are also an issue, affecting the sentiments.

The edible oil industry had estimated last year’s mustard output 72 lakh tonnes. Unless, the acreage picks up and the standing crop improves, mustard output could be lower than last year, Mehta said adding that it was too early to quantify the drop in production.

“Mustard sowing has started late this year and the crop is unlikely to be better this season,” said Umesh Verma, spokesperson for Puri Oil Mills, a North-based mustard oil producing company.

Recently, the Central Organisation for Oil Industry & Trade (COOIT) estimated this year’s kharif oilseeds production including cottonseed and copra at 276.4 lakh tonnes, some six per cent lower than last year’s 293.5 lakh tonnes.

# Business Standard

[Rabi potato production expected to go up](#)

**Last year, low domestic and global production had led to retail prices rising to Rs 40 a kg**

[Potato](#) prices are expected to fall on account of higher production, in India and abroad.

This [rabi](#) season, domestic production is likely to be marginally higher than last year on account of favourable weather. So far, production has been seven per cent lower than last year, due to untimely rain and Late Blight disease.

About 80 per cent of the crop is sown in the rabi season.

For 2015, India's overall production is likely to stand at 42 million tonnes (mt), according to initial estimates by the National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation (NHRDF). Though this is lower than peak production, fresh crop arrivals have eased prices. With the crop partly harvested, wholesale prices have already halved to Rs 10 a kg compared to a month ago, says NHRDF Director R P Gupta.

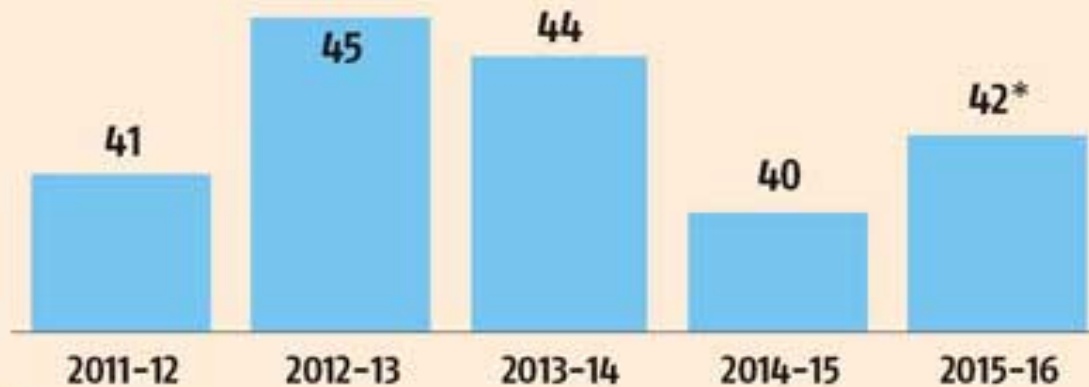
“For 2015, production is likely to be higher. Acreage, too, is about five per cent higher,” said Gupta. For 2014, production has been estimated at 40 mt.

Last year, low domestic and global production had led to retail prices rising to Rs 40 a kg. That year, India had exported potatoes to Pakistan for the first time, due to an acute shortage of the crop in the neighbouring country during the Ramzan season.

Globally, China is the largest producer, accounting for about 20 per cent of the overall crop. For 2014-15, production in China is estimated at 101 mt, five per cent more than in 2013-14, according to a report by the US Department of Agriculture.

## NOT-SO-HOT POTATOES

Production in million tonnes



\*Estimated

Source: National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation (NHRDF)

With the prices easing, inter-state restrictions on transport of the crop have been done away with. Due to an unprecedented rise in prices, [West Bengal](#) had, on August 5, sealed its borders to the movement of potatoes. This had led to disruption in the supply chain.

“This year, potato production is very good. In other growing regions such as China, Pakistan and European countries, there are reports of bumper production. In 2015, we estimate production will be 25-30 per cent more than last year,” said Ajit Shah, president, Horticulture Exporters Association.

In Uttar Pradesh, harvest of the crop has begun, with a reported increase of about five per cent in production. The state’s annual production stands at about 14 mt. For West Bengal, production is estimated at 10 mt, against nine mt last year.

With the prices easing, inter-state restrictions on transport of the crop have been done away with. Due to an unprecedented rise in prices, West Bengal had, on August 5, sealed its borders to the movement of potatoes. This had led to disruption in the supply chain.

## Coffee exporters want rupee-rouble route for exports to Russia

**For Indian coffee exporters, the Russian market is the third-largest destination, after Italy and Germany**

Coffee exporters have sought the commodity be routed to Russia under a rupee-rouble trade mechanism.

Several exporters have postponed their consignments due to a fall in the rouble, which has depreciated 50 per cent in two quarters. While the depreciation has hurt Russia's capacity to import, a sharp fall in crude oil prices has hit that country's foreign exchange income, as Russia is a major exporter of crude oil.

Due to the fall in demand from Russia, coffee prices in the international market have softened. Prices of the arabica variety have fallen about 20 per cent in two months.

Exporters feel in an environment when the currency is highly volatile, allowing coffee shipment under the rupee-rouble route will be helpful, though the rate of the rouble has to be decided.

Against 40/dollar six months ago, the rouble now stands at 60/dollar.

Exporters have discussed the issue with the Coffee Board. An official of the board said, the reaction was mixed, with some exporters sending consignments, while others had postponed these. "However, they feel the Russian crisis is likely to have a deep impact. I feel if Indian coffee exports are allowed under the rupee-rouble arrangement, it will be helpful," the official added.

For Indian exporters, the Russian market is the third-largest destination, after Italy and Germany. Annual exports to Russia stand at 28,000-30,000 tonnes.

The Coffee Board official hoped "with the winter setting in, it is likely coffee demand from Russia might be revived, as it is a daily consumption item".

Globally, production is falling. It is expected Brazil, a major producer, will record a decline.



## Tea season to end in 15 million kg shortfall

**This year, the average price of CTC tea is Rs 146 a kg, against Rs 137 a kg last year**

At the end of this season, the [tea](#) sector might record a shortfall of 15 million kg, owing to unfavourable weather.

A shortfall in production has led to higher prices for good varieties. This year, the average price of [CTC](#) tea is Rs 146 a kg, against Rs 137 a kg last year. Though prices are expected to remain firm, lower export might limit the impact on overall price trends.

In October, cropping was lower by two-three million kg and November and December were likely to see a further fall of five million kg, said representatives from the sector. The poor cropping is a major concern in Assam. The Dooars region accounts for about 20 per cent of the production in north India.

“There has been no rain since October,” said Azam Monem, vice-chairman of the Indian Tea Association.

Despite lower production, auctions in Kolkata, Guwahati and Siliguri were on course which, Monem said, could be attributed to lower exports. Till recently, exports were down about 10 million kg. Data by the Indian Tea Association showed in September, exports were down 2.2 million kg.

“This year, exports could be lower by 25 million kg,” Monem said. This is primarily due to India recording poor cropping in May-August (the prime period for exports) and Kenya registering record high production, affecting CTC-consuming countries such as Pakistan and the UK.

For the second consecutive year, Kenya clocked in record cropping. Last year, Kenya produced 432 million kg. As a result, the country sold 40% less tea and prices have crashed, making it a cheaper alternative to Indian tea. Exports to [Russia](#) and [Iran](#) have been hit, as India produced less orthodox tea in the first six months of the year. Last year, exports from India stood at 219 million kg.