

## Motivating farmers to grow millets

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COIMBATORE, February 4, 2014 - A two-day training on millet production was held

*Farmers and members of self help groups during a field visit organised by Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in Coimbatore.-Photo:Special Arrangement.*

With the premise that people in the earlier times used millets in their regular diet for a healthy life, the State Government was keen on bringing people to adopt such a lifestyle change.

To give an impetus to this, it was funding and implementing schemes and programmes to motivate farmers to increase production of millets and also enable them make value-added products out of millets.

A two-day training on 'Millet Production and Value Addition' was held here at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University for farmers and self help group women, which focussed on knowledge transfer and skill demonstrations.

The Department of Millets of the university conducted the programme. The participants were encouraged to opt for millet growing as it required less water and was best suited for conditions of water scarcity. They were also asked to focus on marketing techniques so that the produce was sold to the right person at the right place. Importance of pricing for value-added products was also stressed.

They were told to maintain the expenditure record for each crop to assess the actual profit gained. Trainees from Coimbatore, Erode, Dindigul and Karur, were exposed to critical technologies for enhancing the productivity in millet crops, viz., sorghum, pearl millet, ragi and other small millets. A field visit was also part of the training.

Preparation of value-added products using small millets was taught at the Post Harvest Technology Centre of the university.

## Farmers demand crop loan waiver

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NAGAPATTINAM, February 4, 2014 - *Members of Federation of Farmers Association staging a road blockade in Vedaranyam on Monday*

Farmers federations staged road blockades in three locations here in Vedaranyam on Monday demanding declaration of Vedaranyam as drought-

hit region.

Federation of Farmers Associations, a non-partisan organisation, of Vedaranyam staged road blockades in Ayakaranpulam, Kuravapulam and Sembodai demanding compensation for crops affected in 2013 and 2014. Expressing displeasure over the total absence of field inspections to verify their claims, farmers refused to budge until an assurance to write off crop loans was given to them. More than 1000 farmers participated in the protests in

Ayakaranpulam, forcing the Revenue Divisional Officer Sivapriya to visit the spot. Refusing to take oral assurances from the officials, farmers demanded that the Collector T. Munusamy visit the venue.

Later, the Collector spoke to the farmers over phone and assured them of relief soon.

## Farmers to stop milk supply to Aavin from today

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SALEM, February 4, 2014 - "Members of the Tamil Nadu Milk Producers Welfare Association will stop supplying milk to the Cooperative Milk Producers Societies, supplying milk to Aavin, indefinitely from Tuesday (February 4).

The decision was taken as the Government of Tamil Nadu has not called us for talks," State president of the association, K.A. Sengottuvel, told newsmen here on Monday.

He alleged that the secretaries and office-bearers of the milk producers' societies and officials from Aavin have been forcing milk producers to supply milk to Aavin.

State general secretary of the association M.G. Rajendran said that about 4.5 lakh farmers are supplying 22 lakh litres of milk to Aavin every day through 8,200 milk producers' societies.

"The quantity of milk that was supplied to the government run enterprise has reduced from the daily supply of 27 lakh litres a day during 2012-13," he added.

## Navalur farmers demand water for one more month

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THANJAVUR, February 4, 2014 - Farmers of Navalur village near Sengipatti submitted a petition to Collector N.Subbaiyan to take steps to release water into Uyyakondan extension canal for one more month to save the standing crops at the grievances day meeting held here on Monday.

V.Jeevakumar, a farmer from Royamundanpatti, who led the farmers, said that last year Navalur village people could not take up cultivation due to lack of water.

This year, water was released from Mettur dam on August 2 and the farmers have raised samba crop on 500 acres of land.

Now the crop is in a good stage but requires water for another month for survival, he said.

## Pressure on farmland

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The government, it appears, is yet to find ways to address conflicting demands on land. Instead of quickly charting a comprehensive approach to land utilisation, it continues to speak in different voices and at cross purposes. The latest addition to the policy confusion is the move to consider Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in agricultural land bought for real estate purposes. Existing Foreign Exchange Management Act regulations prohibit the use of FDI funds to buy farmland. However, real estate companies have tried to bypass these restrictions. Last year, the Enforcement Directorate imposed a fine of Rs. 8,600 crore on Emaar MGF for allegedly using foreign funds to buy agricultural land. The Ministry of Urban Development now wants to ease these restrictions, and the government has constituted a three-member Cabinet committee to look into it. The reasoning behind this move is that 100 per cent FDI is already permitted in developing townships, housing and other

infrastructure projects. Hence, it would be only logical to extend it and allow the purchase of agricultural land for construction purposes. The other arguments are that restrictions create bottlenecks and delay projects, and that buying of agricultural land on the outskirts of a city is inevitable and necessary.

On the face of it, relaxing FDI norms may appear to be a rational step, but in the absence of a clear-cut land use policy and plans, it will hasten unrestricted acquisition and unplanned conversion of farmland and lead to hoarding of land. In 2013, the Ministry of Rural Development published a draft National Land Utilisation Policy. It convincingly argued that the shrinkage of per capita ownership of agricultural land and the demand to produce more food — 245 million tonnes in 2013 to 307 million tonnes in 2020 — necessitates the protection of fertile land. The National Policy for Farmers, announced in 2007, insisted that the government conserve productive land and allow any change in use only under “exceptional circumstances.” These two policies make no distinction between foreign and local investment. The government has not acted on a recommendation to revive land use boards, which could provide guidelines to State governments. Nor has it implemented the idea of delineating and integrating land utilisation zones under the development plans. These measures are necessary to map the availability of land and coordinate demands for it. It is imperative to correct any institutional deficiencies and strengthen local level land-management plans to ensure an orderly process of urban development and prevent detrimental effects on agriculture and environment.

## At science meet, PM pitches for GM crops

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JAMMU, February 4, 2014 - *Urges people not to be swayed by “unscientific prejudices”*



*Prime Minister Manmohan Singh presents an award to scientist Yash Pal (right) at the Indian Science Congress in Jammu on Monday. Second from left is Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. — Photo: PTI*

Underscoring the need to ensure food security, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Monday favoured genetically modified crops, urging the people not to

be swayed by “unscientific prejudices” against them.

“Use of biotechnology has great potential to improve yields. While safety must [also] be ensured, we should not succumb to unscientific prejudices against Bt. crops,” he said, inaugurating the 101st session of the Indian Science Congress here.

Dr. Singh urged scientists to engage more with society and explain socially productive applications of biotechnology and other alternatives. The government remained committed to the use of biotechnology and other new technologies for agricultural development. He said the government would soon come out with another national mission on high performance computing on an outlay of Rs. 4,500 crore and was planning to establish a national geographical information system on an outlay of Rs. 3,000 crore. India would soon join, as an associate member, the European Organisation for Nuclear Research, CERN, where international projects such as the research on ‘god particle’ was going on, and was planning to host the third detector for the global Gravitational Wave Experiment. “A national mission on teaching to enhance the esteem of our teachers is also being launched.” The Prime Minister also announced the names of five eminent scientists, who have been selected for the recently instituted Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowships.

The fellowship is open to scientists who are either Nobel Laureates or Fellows of the Royal Society, or members of the United States or French academies of science. The selected scientists are entitled to a fellowship of \$1,00,000 and a research grant of Rs. 55 lakh. They will have to do research in an institution here for 12 months, which can be spent in instalments over three years. The host institution would also get a grant of Rs. 10 lakh for providing laboratory and other facilities for the research.

The scheme provides for 25 fellowships. Five have so far been selected. They are mathematical scientist Professor Srinivasa Varadhan of New York University, computational biologist Professor M. Vidyasagar of University of Texas, life scientist Professor Azim Surani of University of Cambridge, astronomer Professor Srinivas Kulkarni of Caltech, and geo-scientist Professor Trevor Charles Platt of Bedford Institute of Oceanography. Four of the winners are Fellows of the Royal Society and one is an Abel medallist.

Seeking to project the achievements of his government over the past 10 years in science and technology, he noted that the Sixth Pay Commission had improved the conditions for academics and scientists. "International surveys have shown that India scores well in structures for scientific personnel. Our gross expenditure per full-time R&D personnel is increasingly comparable in purchasing power parity terms to some of the more developed R&D systems of the world."

Science and Technology Minister Jaipal Reddy said the government would soon launch a Rs. 250-crore scheme for scaling up innovations to serve the needs of the common man, and an overseas scholarship programme for bridging gaps in critical and frontier areas of research.

## Warning against procuring paddy

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NAGAPATTINAM, February 4, 2014 - The district administration has warned private dealers against procuring paddy without bills from farmers. A press release issued by the district administration warned traders not to purchase paddy from farmers without proper receipt and licence from sales tax department. Some lorries carrying such paddy did not have procurement bill, trip chit, and sales tax certificate number, the release said. Vehicles transporting paddy should have proper books testifying to procurement through proper channels, must possess insurance, FC/RC, and licence to operate the vehicle. Action will be initiated against violators, the release said.

## Vegetable, fruits traders on strike

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NEW DELHI, February 4, 2014 - In a development that could lead to an increase in prices of fruits and vegetables over the next few days, the traders at government-regulated Mandis went on an indefinite strike on Monday against the circular issued by the Delhi Government to scrap the 6 per cent commission levied on farmers for selling their produce at the mandis and charge it from the registered traders instead.

While the strike called by the traders evoked a mixed response at other mandis, business at the Azadpur Mandi, the biggest in Asia, almost came to a halt. Even as the arrival of fresh fruits and vegetables was severely hit due to the strike, the Delhi Government officials said they are considering invoking ESMA.

"The order for invoking ESMA is ready. Talks with the traders are still on. We would invoke it when required," said PWD Minister Manish Sisodia.

The Delhi Government last week directed the mandi administration to implement the order of the High Court that set aside the laws amended by the previous Sheila Diskhit Government in 2010 that made all farmers selling their produce at government-regulated mandis to pay 6 per cent commission.



# Many food business operators yet to register

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SALEM, February 4, 2014 - With February 4 being the deadline for obtaining licence or registration from the Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) for all the existing Food Business Operators in the district, more than 20 per cent of the operators are in the verge of missing the due date.

Of the total 28,500 identified operators in the district, 18,000 have registered themselves while 3,000 have obtained licences from the FSSAI. The Authority has made it clear that the date will not be extended as 30 months have been given for completing the process. As per the Food Safety and Standards Act, all food operators with a yearly turnover of less than Rs. 12 lakh have to get themselves registered and apply for licence if their turnover exceeds Rs. 12 lakh.

# Workshop on food processing begins

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WARANGAL, February 4, 2014 - A six-week entrepreneurship development programme on food processing began at the Alluri Institute of Management Sciences here on Monday in which 30 women were taking part.

Confederation of Women Entrepreneurs' (COWE) Executive Committee member Ms. Jessica said that they were encouraging women with viable ideas and also providing the necessary funds to start enterprises on their own .

The programme was inaugurated by AIMS Director B. Prakash .

# World Food Program can't meet demand in Syria

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CANBERRA, February 4, 2014 - WORLD FOOD PROGRAM CAN'T MEET DEMAND IN SYRIA  
Aid agencies have been overwhelmed by demand for food in Syria, with thousands surviving without a regular supply of nourishment for more than a year because of civil war in the Middle Eastern country, a United Nations official said.

U.N. World Food Program chief executive Ertharin Cousin was in the Australian capital Canberra on Monday for talks with the new Australian government about the financial needs of the world's largest humanitarian organization which she leads.

The Rome-based American said gaining access to besieged areas was the biggest challenge in feeding the 6.5 million people in need within Syria's borders. Another two million Syrians who had fled the conflict relied on food aid in neighboring Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Turkey and Egypt.AP

# Water level

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The water level in Periyar dam stood at 111.20 feet (permissible level is 136 feet) on Monday with an inflow of 105 cusecs and a discharge of 105 cusecs. The level in Vaigai dam was 35.22 feet with no inflow and a discharge of 40 cusecs. The combined storage in Periyar

credit was 1,011 mcft. There was no rainfall in the region during the 24 hours ending at 8.30 a.m. on Monday, PWD officials here said.

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 51.77 feet on Monday, against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 647 cusecs and the discharge 508 cusecs.

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Monday stood at 79.60 feet (maximum level is 143 feet).

The dam had an inflow of 309.03 cusecs of water and 1,154.75 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam.

The water level in Manimuthar dam stood at 82.60 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 23 cusecs and 170 cusecs of water was discharged.

**Kanyakumari** - The water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 17.40 feet, 49.15 feet in Perunchani, 8.50 feet in Chittar 18.59 feet in Chittar 114.20 feet in Poigai and 54.12 feet in Mamabazathuraiyaru.

## NABARD's credit plan envisages an outlay of Rs.6,293 crore

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MADURAI, February 4, 2014 - The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has envisaged allocation of an outlay of Rs.6,293 crore in its Potential Linked Credit Plan (PLCP) for Madurai district for 2014-2015.

In a press statement, R. Shankar Narayan, Assistant General Manager of NABARD, said this year NABARD had envisaged 14 per cent hike over the last year's outlay of Rs.5,520 crore.

### **Plan**

The PLCP had earmarked allocation of a higher amount for agriculture and allied activities to achieve inclusive growth, it said.

The credit plan had projected an allocation of Rs.1,939 crore for distribution of crop loans, Rs.1,570 crore for minor irrigation works, land development, dairying, farm mechanisation, plantation and horticulture and creation of storage space by setting up rural godowns, Rs.1,244 crore for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector and Rs.1,540 crore for "Other Priority Sector" loans such as for housing, education, consumption, traders and small road transport operators, said the statement.

## Environment meet focuses on biodiversity

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*VISAKHAPATNAM, February 4, 2014 - Speakers at the meeting addressed diverse environmental concerns through presentations and talks*

As part of the steps being taken to strengthen the green movement and spread the message among people, the People's Organisation for Welfare in Rural Environment (POWER), along with the Department of Biochemistry and Biotechnology of BVK Degree College, launched the 'National Environment Awareness Campaign 2013-2014' here on Monday.

### **Theme of biodiversity**

With the theme being 'Biodiversity', the campaign addressed diverse environmental concerns through presentations and talks.

The invitees spoke on biodiversity and its conservation at length. Associate Professor of Department of Botany, Andhra University, P.K. Ratna Kumar, screened a digital presentation covering environmental topics.

From a conservation viewpoint, he said: "The rich ecosystem is being disturbed by increase in population, industrial expansion, global warming and other risk factors. The loss of biodiversity affects the existence of many species, including human life. It is important to conceive innovative ideas while keeping the traditional practices alive. As a team we should take all the necessary steps to protect our environment before it is too late."

#### **Students voice views**

The event saw some college students voicing their views on different types of biodiversity such as genetic, species and ecosystem.

According to them, rising pollution levels, spread of urban areas and fading traditional lifestyles were a few reasons that were causing a steep decline in biodiversity.

#### **Disadvantages**

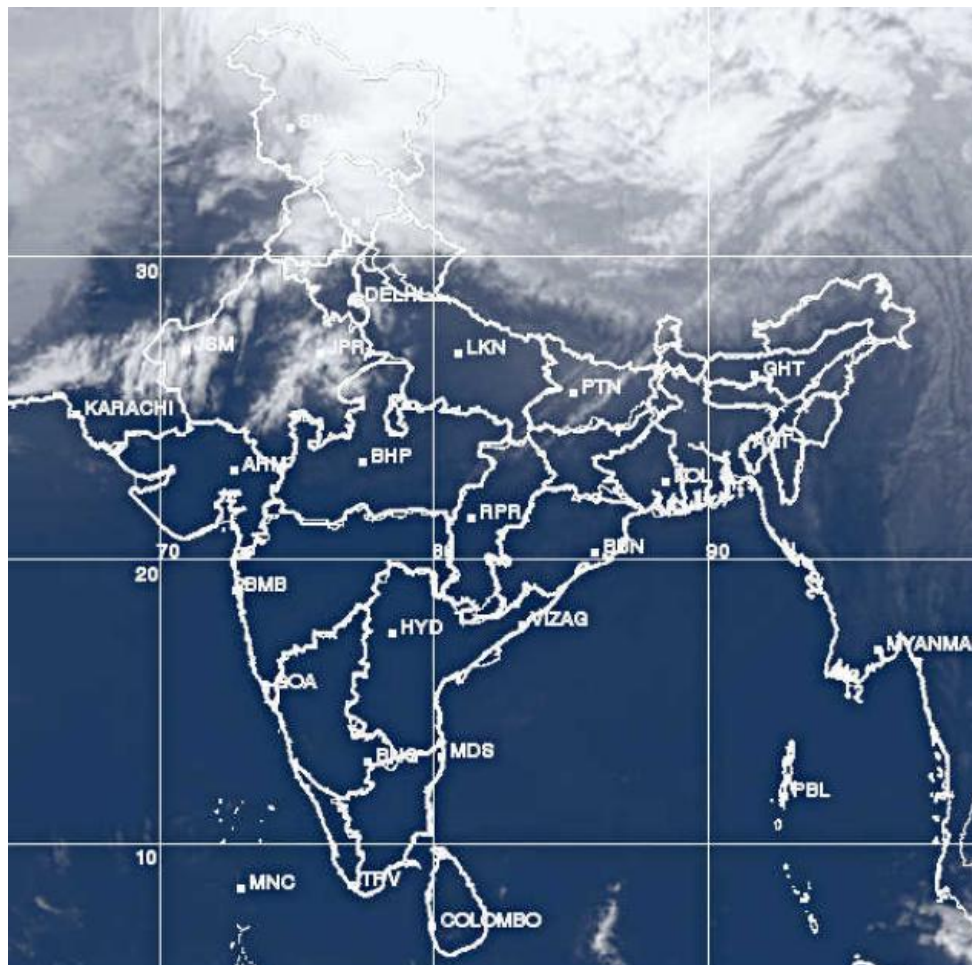
Disadvantages of monoculture and over-harvesting, exploitation of certain species and the impact of biodiversity on food, medicine and industrial material apart from the strategies to conserve the same were discussed on the occasion.

Principal of the college G. Chandrasekhar Naidu and secretary of POWER Abdul Raqueeb participated in the event.

***Speakers at the meeting address diverse environmental concerns through presentations and talks***

## Weather

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INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs. Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on February 03.

## Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Rain: 0

Humidity: 83

Wind: normal

**Tuesday, Feb 4**

Max Min

30° | 21°

Sunrise: 06:34

Sunset: 06:10

Barometer: 1012

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

**Wednesday, Feb 5**

Max Min

30° | 22°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday

**Feb 6**



31° | 22°

Partly Cloudy

Friday

**Feb 7**



24° | 21°

Overcast

Saturday

**Feb 8**



24° | 20°

Cloudy

Sunday

**Feb 9**



24° | 20°

Overcast

Monday

**Feb 10**



24° | 20°

Overcast

## Vegetable prices may go up on short supply in Delhi, warn retailers

Vegetable prices are likely to rise this week as wholesalers across the board have gone on strike protesting the Delhi government's decision to stop the 6% commission charged by distributors from farmers.

Retailers in the city stated that even though they were selling at the previous rates on Monday, they would be forced to charge higher prices or not sell at all from Tuesday owing to the stoppage of supply from wholesalers. "We will be forced to charge at least double for some of the essential vegetables such as tomatoes and onions. We may not even have anything to sell from Tuesday onwards," said a retailer in south Delhi's Kalkaji.

Distributors and wholesalers, who shut shop, claimed that the government's suggestion to pass the burden of the commission onto the consumers would backfire.

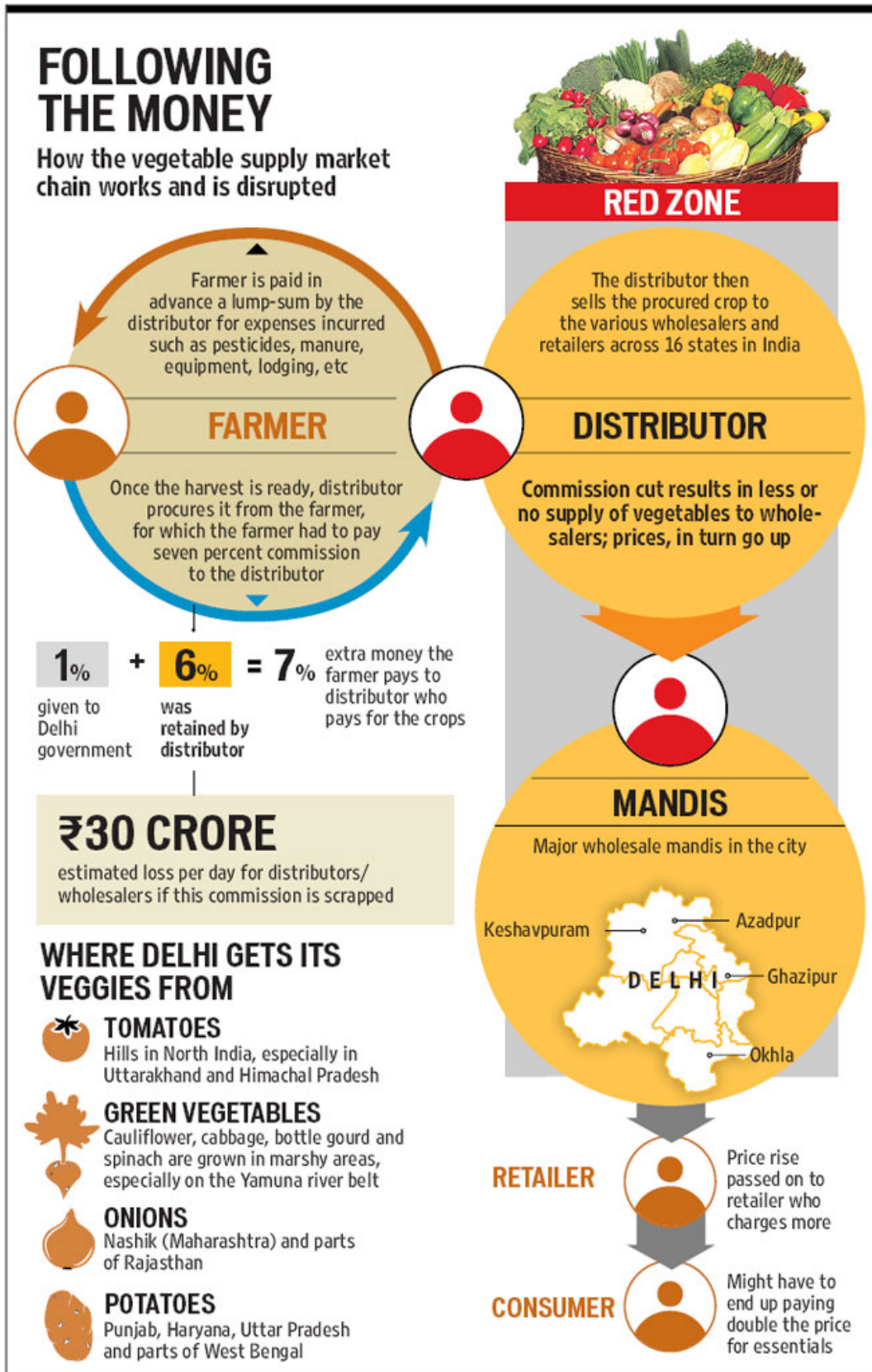
"We pay the farmers in advance for the expenses they incur such as pesticides, manure and other equipment required for the crop. When the crop is harvested, we procure it from them and receive a commission. After that, we sell it to the wholesalers across the country, who in turn sell it to retailers and then consumers. Why should we not charge that commission when we pay for the crop?" said Manoj Kriplani, a distributor at the Azadpur Mandi.

There still remains a bleak ray of hope for consumers as Safal Dairy retailers, in the city, stated that their prices would remain unaffected.



“Safal has its own procurement mechanism so we don’t anticipate any rise in prices in the coming days. We should not be affected much by the strike called by wholesalers,” said a Safal Dairy retailer.

The Delhi government asserted that mandis in the city had received a supply of vegetables, despite the strike. “It is not true that the wholesalers have not got any supply. While Azadpur mandi did not get any supply, the other mandis got 50% of what they usually get. We are trying to amicably resolve this but if they continue to flout the order, we will be forced to take action. Even though we have asked wholesalers to challenge the order in the Supreme Court, they have asked us to do it. That is something the government cannot do,” said Girish Soni, Delhi’s development minister.



GRAPHIC: MUKESH SHARMA

## Turning tide of onion prices sinks farmers

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RAJKOT: Unable to recover even the production cost of their crop, farmers from Kotda-Sangani and surrounding villages in Rajkot district staged a protest on the main road here.

They threw onions on the Rajkot Road, demanding that the state government should take steps to save them from financial ruin.

According to former NCP MLA from Gondal Chandu Vaghashiya, who led the protesters, onion growers have not been able to earn enough as the prices have gone down drastically to be around Rs 7 per kg. This is not sufficient to cover farmers' costs," Vaghashiya said.

Just a month ago, onion prices were sky-rocketing. "As the prices touched Rs 80 per kg, several farmers spent over Rs 20,000 per bigha to plant an onion crop. Now the prices have dipped leaving these farmers high and dry," said Mansukh Dafda, a farmer from Kotda-Sangani village, Rajkot.

"This is a serious issue and the state government must ensure that farmers get at least minimum support prices. The government should procure onions from us. Farmers must get at least Rs 150 for every 20 kg or they will suffer huge losses," said Praful Senjaliya, farmers' leader from Amreli. Senjaliya too said that farmers were expecting good returns from onion produce and had worked hard for it.

"It happens every time and with every crop in the state. There is no mechanism to help farmers to get enough prices in the time of high production. If this situation continues, it will push farmers away from agriculture," Senjaliya warns.

"Two years ago as well, onion growing farmers had to destroy their crops in villages of Rajkot district due to lower prices of onions," said Shailesh Sorathiya, a farmer from Kotda-Sangani.

Sources said that large number of farmers in Talaja, Mahuva, Rajula, Upleta, Kotda-Sangani and other parts of the Saurashtra region has sown onion and thousands of tonnes of the produce is now being dumping every day into various agriculture marketing yards in the region.

## 2-day agriculture utsav from February 6

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HUBLI: [Shri Kshetra Dharmasthala Rural Development](#) Project, [Krishi Utsav Vyavasthapan Samiti](#) and the Hubli taluk agriculture department will jointly organize a two-day district-level agriculture utsav and progressive thinking convention at Nehru Stadium in the city on February 6-7.

Rajanna Koravi, president of Krishi Utsav Vyavasthapan Samiti, told reporters here on

Monday that the utsav is being organized to provide a platform for farmer-to-farmer as well as expert-to-farmer interactions. Farmers will also share their success stories and experts will take about effective farming methods.

The agriculture utsav will be inaugurated by Dr D Veerendra Heggade, dharmadhikari, Shri Kshetra Dharmasthala, in the presence of Sri Gurusidda Rajayogendra Mahaswamiji of Moorusavir mutt.

Six sessions on agriculture and its allied branches by experienced and successful farmers as well as experts will be held over the two days to help farmers become self-reliant and get a high yield of their produce, said Koravi.

A chilli mela, where farmers will directly sell their produce, a farm equipment exhibition, agricultural stalls and cultural programmes will be the special attractions at the utsav, he added.

## Farmers' Loan Waiver Scheme Hits Fraud Hurdle

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A scheme introduced five years ago to benefit impoverished farmers pushed to the brink of starvation is coming back to haunt the UPA government as details of a massive fraud emerge. The farmer's loan waiver scheme, once touted a trump card for the UPA government, has become a source of embarrassment, mere months before the general elections. The government has admitted massive fraud,

irregularities and tampering of data by officials in the `65,000-crore welfare project. The government recently told the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) that action will be taken against those found guilty of pushing tampered and ineligible farmers' lists and so far it has initiated 3,679 cases against erring babus responsible for irregularities to the tune of `230 crore. The PAC report, which examined the Comptroller & Auditor General's (CAG) report on Debt Relief Scheme in January 2014, will be tabled in the coming session of Parliament. Admitting massive irregularities before PAC, Department of Financial Services said; "Now the fact is somebody who is not eligible got it and somebody who is eligible did not get it or alternatively there was a case of tampering or alternation. This could not happen unless the bank staff concerned made a mistake and a mistake which was apparent on the face of it." The loan waiver scheme was initiated by the UPA government in 2008 to write off bank loans of 3.69 crore small and marginal farmers in 35 states and Union territories. Approximately 60 lakh other farmers were offered debt relief in form of waiver of 25 per cent of the eligible amount on condition that the farmer would pay the remaining 75 per cent under a one- time settlement scheme. The Department of Financial Services under Ministry of Finance had appointed Reserve Bank of India and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) as nodal agencies to monitor the implementation of the scheme in respect of the respective banks under their due control, including rural banks and cooperative societies. Of the total beneficiaries, 1.85 crore owed money to government-owned banks and 1.88 crore to lending institutions under NABARD. No money changed hands or was paid to beneficiaries. The implementing agencies simply wrote off the dues and claimed reimbursement from the government.



Responding to PAC concerns about largescale fraud, the government said in at least 301 cases, it has detected tampering of records of beneficiary farmers and five FIRs were lodged. In 449 cases, responsibilities have been fixed by the lending institutions. The probe indicated funds were also misused in writing off personal, vehicle loan, purchase of land and loan for shops in connivance with branch officials, who were supposed to help the farmers suffering from heavy debt burden. According to sources, PAC also flagged the case of over 21,000 accounts which have no acknowledgement from farmers or any other proof indicating shoddy implementation of the scheme.

“Large number of eligible farmers might have been eventually deprived of benefits of the scheme due to perfunctory approach and the scheme could not achieve the intended goals,” PAC observed, terming the scheme a failure.

Sources said an official of Department of Financial Services who recently deposed before the committee did not dispute all these irregularities. “The issues largely raised by the CAG were correct. I do not think that government has any intention of disputing the veracity of the points raised by CAG,” the official told the PAC.

In a written note to PAC, Department of Financial Services gave details of action taken by the authorities to recover funds. It said the recovery of `2.38 crore has been made in 908 cases where benefits were granted to ineligible beneficiaries. In addition, recoveries have been made amounting to `3.61 crore in 1,358 cases where excess benefits were extended to the beneficiaries. Although, the amount recovered so far is too small comparing the massive irregularities, government has assured re-verification of entire 34, 277 branches under RBI and over 9,000 under NABARD.

The panel is understood to have slammed the government’s myopic approach in conceiving and implementing a scheme involving financial concessions to the tune of more than `65,000 crore, adding that the vital lists of intended beneficiaries were prepared in a cavalier manner as these were replete with mistakes, leading to serious financial lapses.

“The PAC has asked the government to submit an action taken report, fixing the responsibilities of those responsible for irregularities by June 2014. Government further assured the PAC that it was committed to re-examine every single case and take corrective action. But, considering the very large number of beneficiaries, this is going to take some time,” a source said.

## THE HINDU Business Line

### Soyameal exporters face the heat

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Large S. America bean crop slows enquiries as buyers wait and watch

**New Delhi, February 3:** Export enquiries for soyameal have been to drop ahead of the impending large soyabean harvest in South America, as buyers adopt a wait-and-watch mode.

Large harvests in Brazil and Argentina – estimated at 90 million tonnes and 50 million tonnes (mt) respectively are seen having a bearish impact on global prices,

but domestic prices are largely seen holding on to their levels on lower market arrivals.

“There’s no significant buying happening now as future sale for meal is not taking place.

Every buyer is waiting and watching to see where the market stabilises and is resorting to



need-based buying,” said Rajesh Agarwal, Spokesperson and Coordinator for the Indore-based Soyabean Processors Association of India, the apex body for soya industry. The Indian soyameal is already out-priced in the world market by upwards of \$25 a tonne or above 5 per cent.

### **Slowdown in orders**

Factors such as lower market arrivals – with farmers holding back their produce mainly in the key producing States of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan amidst a lower-than-expected crop size – have driven up prices of soyabean in the country. High prices paid by Iran after it started sourcing primarily from India amidst sanctions by the West have also contributed to the rise in domestic prices.

High domestic prices of soyabean have taken a toll on soyameal processing. “Processing parity is poor and quite a few plants have shut down,” said Raju Choksi, Vice-President at Anil Nutrients Ltd, an exporter of soyameal, conceding that there was a slowdown in orders.

### **Crop size**

Against the estimated crop size of 12.2 mt by the industry, market arrivals, so far, have been a little over five mt, Agrawal said. “The arrivals this year so far, are approximately lower by about 15 per cent over corresponding period a year ago,” Agarwal said adding that majority of the processing units have been operating at negative margins all through the season due to high prices.

Excess rains in central India have shrunk the soyabean crop size this year and the industry has pegged it at 12.2 mt against the earlier projections of 12.9 mt. The Agriculture Ministry has pegged the soyabean crop higher at 14.67 mt.

Soyabean prices in the key market of Indore have been hovering around Rs. 3,900 levels for a quintal, a tenth more than early October. On NCDEX, contracts maturing on February 20 ended marginally lower at Rs. 3,854 a quintal.

In the first nine months of the current fiscal, 2.06 mt (1.91 mt) of soyameal have been exported. Iran is the largest buyer of Indian meal, which is also bought by Japan and Europe in large quantities due to the non-genetically modified character.

## Quality issue drags tea prices at Kolkata sale

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**Kolkata, February 3:** The North India tea market was mixed last week. While prices at the Kolkata auction centre in sale number 5 declined, the biggest CTC market at Guwahati saw prices ruling stable.

“The average price of tea in Kolkata dropped on quality issues,” an industry expert said, adding that prices at the

Guwahati centre ruled stable or increased marginally in some cases owing to lower offerings.

In Kolkata, some 21 per cent of the orthodox offerings remained unsold, while 24 per cent of the CTC offerings were not bought.

The average prices of Darjeeling tea, however, increased moderately in anticipation of lower offerings for the next couple of weeks, the expert said. Meanwhile, in Guwahati, about 20 per cent of the CTC leaf offerings remained unsold. At Siliguri, some 29 per cent of the CTC leaf was unsold.

While the average price of CTC leaf at the Kolkata centre ruled at Rs. 122.72 a kg ( Rs. 129.25), the average price for orthodox was Rs. 116.93 ( Rs. 122.92). Darjeeling tea ruled higher at Rs. 147.46 a kg ( Rs. 137.64) at the Kolkata centre.

At the Guwahati centre, the average price of CTC leaf and dust ruled at Rs. 106.99 a kg ( Rs. 108.26) and Rs.108.42 a kg ( Rs. 106.95), respectively. CTC leaf and CTC dust prices, respectively, ruled at Rs. 105.96 a kg (110.58) and Rs. 111.19 a kg ( Rs. 111.76) at Siliguri centre.

## Pepper prices at new high

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**Kochi, February 3:** Spot pepper prices scaled new highs on Monday. Prices on the futures market on the National Multi Commodity Exchange also shot up. Export prices are surged, market sources told *Business Line*.

Strong upcountry demand amid tight availability pushed prices up. Only nine tonnes of farm-grade material arrived and 11 tonnes were traded. Upcountry demand was met directly from primary markets on cash-and-carry basis. High range pepper was traded at Rs. 535 a kg, while that from other regions at Rs. 520 and above a kg.

Indian parity in the world market shot up to \$9,000 a tonne c&f for Europe and \$9,250 c&f for the US. Indian pepper remained totally outpriced.

Spot pepper prices shot up by Rs. 500 a quintal to close today at Rs. 52,200 (ungarbled) and Rs. 54,200 (garbled) a quintal on strong demand amid tight supply.

## Cotton rules firm above Rs. 46,000/candy

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**Rajkot, February 3:** COTTON ABOVE RS. 46,000/CANDY

Cotton price remained unchanged on the back of normal export and domestic demand. *Kapas* or raw cotton also traded flat. Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton was quoted at Rs. 46,600-46,700 for a candy of 356 kg. *Kapas* was traded at Rs. 1,050-1,085 for a *maund* of 20 kg and gin delivery *kapas* stood on Rs. 1,085-1,100 a *maund* in Rajkot. About 60,000-62,000 bales of cotton arrived in Gujarat and 2 lakh bales arrived across the country. On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, *kapas* April contract increased by Rs. 4 to Rs. 980.50 a *maund*, with an open interest of 18,037 lots. A Rajkot-based cotton broker said that demand was normal as buyers were buying hand-to-mouth. Our Correspondent

## Rice may gain aroma

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**Karnal, February 3:** The rice market witnessed a steady trend with prices of aromatic and non-basmati rice varieties ruling unchanged on Monday. Traders expect the market to witness some changes and prices may improve marginally over the next few weeks, he said. In the physical market, Pusa-1121 (steam) sold at Rs. 9,200-50, while Pusa-1121 (sela) quoted at Rs. 8,150 a quintal. Pure Basmati (Raw) quoted at Rs. 12,500. Duplicate basmati (steam) was sold at Rs. 7,000. Pusa-1121 (second grade) was at Rs. 7,050, Tibar at Rs. 6,100 while Dubar at Rs. 5,000. In the non-basmati section, Sharbati (Steam) sold at Rs. 5,000 while Sharbati (Sela) was quoted at Rs. 4,800. Permal (raw) sold at Rs. 2,300, Permal (sela) at Rs. 2,350, PR-11 (sela) sold at Rs. 2,900 while PR-11 (Raw) was at Rs. 2,800. PR14 (steam) sold at Rs. 3,200. Our Correspondent

# Turmeric pales on lack of orders

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**Erode, February 3:** Spot turmeric prices in Erode markets dropped marginally on Monday following sluggish upcountry demand.

However, demand for root variety increased. "Prices in the futures market dropped 2 per cent on Saturday and this reflected in the spot market. Traders quoted lower price. Further, merchants in North India have stopped giving orders. Current prices will prevail for a few more days. Prices may rise around the middle of this month when traders can expect fresh demand," said R K V Ravishankar, President of Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

# Spot rubber prices rule flat

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**Kottayam, February 3:** Spot rubber prices were unchanged on Monday. Growers and dealers were unwilling to sell their produce following the news that the Kerala Government will procure rubber from the open market to support the prices.

Major consuming industries, however, continued to abstain from the market, as they are reported to have ample stockpiles and the absence of genuine buyers and sellers kept the market neutral during the day. Transactions were at a low key.

Sheet rubber was quoted steady at Rs. 142 a kg by traders and the Rubber Board. The grade closed unchanged at Rs. 139, according to dealers.

February futures slid to Rs. 142.45 ( Rs. 142.99), March to Rs. 144.88 ( Rs. 145.10), April to Rs. 148 ( Rs. 148.19) and May to Rs. 150.95 ( Rs. 151.15) for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) weakened to Rs. 134.35 ( Rs. 135.21) at Bangkok. February futures closed at ₹221.2( Rs. 136.31) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates Rs. /kg: RSS-4: 142 (142); RSS-5: 140 (140); Ungraded: 137 (137); ISNR 20: 139 (139) and Latex 60%: 115 (115).

## Business Standard

# Land woes plague organised tea sector

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The manufacturing sector isn't the only one facing land hurdles. Now, the organised tea sector, too, is grappling with similar problems.

Tea requires large tracts of arable high land. "State governments don't have land to allot; so, in the last five years, the organised tea sector has not grown," says Azam Monem, additional vice chairman of the Indian Tea Association and director, McLeod Russel (India).

Also, tea bushes in the organised sector are 50-70 years old. "The only way forward is replanting and uprooting," said A N Singh, chairman of Indian Tea Association and managing director and chief executive of Goodricke Group. That, however, is a tough decision for proprietors, as replantation and rejuvenation would lead to a two-three per cent crop loss, say most sector representatives.

Does this mean the sector is headed for a J-curve? Experts feel it is possible, considering the organised sector essentially stands for quality; if the sector doesn't expand, prices are likely to remain high. Data released by the [Tea Board](#) of India could corroborate the basis for this notion. Last year, the sector clocked record production of 1,200 million kg, against 1,126 million kg in 2012. However, average prices in the April-December 2013 period have been flat at Rs 130.39 a kg. Clearly, domestic consumption is on the rise.

“Three sales (auctions) have been dropped in Kolkata and three are likely to be dropped in Guwahati, despite record production. The year, however, had started with a deficit of 100 million kg,” Monem said.

Higher prices may not necessarily translate into higher realisation. For the organised sector, costs are disproportionately high.

## TEA OUTPUT

State	2012	2013
Assam	590.12	618.14
West Bengal	279.30	315.26
Total North India	886.95	957.44
South India	239.38	242.60
All India	1,126.33	1,200.04

Source: Tea Board of India

Also, it's not that there is no growth in the sector—the [unorganised sector](#) (which accounts for more than 300 million kg), doesn't bear social costs and is expanding. The unorganised sector comprises small tea growers or bought leaf factories that process tea for small tea growers.

Representatives from the organised sector are peeved that the unorganised sector is getting away without having to pay for the bulk of the costs. “Some of them can hardly be called small growers, as the producing area could be as high as 500 acres and as small as an acre,” says an expert.

# Tea output up 9% in Apr-Dec to over 1.1 bn kg



India's [tea](#) production in the April-December period of the current fiscal rose by 9 per cent to 1,116.98 million kg on account of higher output in Assam and West Bengal.

Production in the same period of the 2012-13 financial year was 1,025.01 million kg. According to the [Tea Board](#) data.

The country's total tea output was up by 3.62 per cent at 1,135 million kg in 2012-13.

Output in Assam, the largest tea-producing state, was up 5 per cent to 607.83 million kg in the April-December period of 2013-14, from 577.13 million kg in the year-ago period.

In another major tea producing state, West Bengal, production rose by 11 per cent to 290 million kg from 262.06 million kg.

The combined production of tea in the south Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka increased 16 per cent to 195.97 million kg from 168.42 million kg.

Assam, West Bengal and South India are the major regions that account for about 90 per cent of total tea output in the country.

Meanwhile, as per the Indian Tea Association estimates, India's tea production increased by



6.5 per cent to 1,200 million kg last year, against 1,126.33 million kg in 2012.

India is the world's second-largest producer and biggest consumer of tea.

## Coffee exports up 38% in Jan on strong global prices

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The country's [coffee](#) exports rose 38 per cent to 26,161 tonnes in January on account of firm global prices, according to the [Coffee Board](#) of India.

The country had shipped 18,979 tonnes in the same month of the previous year, the data showed.

In value terms, exports rose to Rs 393.70 crore in January this year from Rs 304.70 crore in the year-ago period, even as unit realisation was down at Rs 1,50,496 per tonne.

"Exports remained high as global prices improved and have remained stable since last one month. International prices have gone up on expectation of lower crop in Brazil," Board's Chairman Jawaid Akhtar told PTI.

Currently, harvesting is underway in the country and normally small growers try to sell off their produce. This is also one of the key reasons for higher exports, he said.

Akhtar, who also heads International Coffee Organisation (ICO), said the production forecast for Brazil, the world's largest coffee producer, has been revised downward for this year to below 48 million bags from earlier 58 million bags.

With this development, [arabica](#) prices in the global market rose to around 130 cents per pound now from 110 cents per pound a month back, he added.

According to the latest Board data, shipment of [robusta](#) coffee rose over 90 per cent to 10,101 tonnes in January this year, from 5,306 tonnes a year ago.

Export of arabica coffee were up over 46 per cent to 9,200 tonnes from 6,290 tonnes in the review period. But export of instant coffee remained down at 6,838 tonnes as against 7,356 tonnes in the same period.

Maximum coffee was exported to Italy (5,675 tonnes), followed by Germany (2,621 tonnes), Belgium (2,109 tonnes), Jordan (1,674 tonnes), Turkey (1,646 tonnes) and Russian Federation (1,309 tonnes) in January 2014, the data showed.

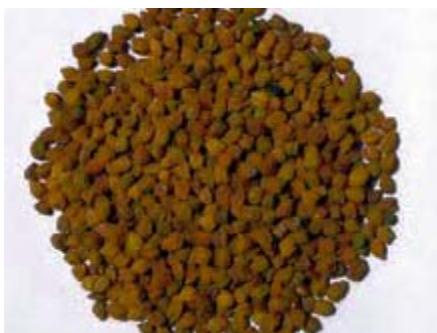
During the April-January period of this fiscal, the country's total coffee exports increased to 2,41,956 tonnes as against 2,25,570 tonnes in the year-ago period.

Currently, arabica harvesting is almost over in the country, while robusta picking is continuing.

The Board has pegged total output at 3,11,500 tonnes for 2013-14 crop year (October-September), down by 2.1 per cent from 3,18,200 tonnes produced in 2012-13.

# Chana down 0.70% on increased supply, weak demand

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[Chana](#) prices moved down by 0.70% to Rs 2,835 per quintal in futures trade today as participants trimmed positions amid weak demand in the [spot market](#) against increased supplies from producing regions.

At the National Commodity and Derivative Exchange, February delivery fell by Rs 20, or 0.70%, to Rs 2,835 per quintal with an open interest of 54,700 lots.

The March delivery lost Rs 18, or 0.60%, to Rs 2,994 per quintal in 71,430 lots.

Analysts said participants trimmed positions, driven by a weak demand in the spot market against increased supplies from producing regions mainly kept pressure on chana prices at futures trade.

# Sugar gains 0.49% on spot demand

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Sugar prices rose 0.4% to Rs 2,662 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators built up fresh positions after pick up in demand in the spot market supported by ongoing wedding season.

However, ample supplies in the physical market limited the gains.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, March sugar rose by Rs 13, or 0.49%, to Rs 2,662 per quintal with an open interest of 22,320 lots.

Similarly, the [February delivery](#) traded higher by Rs 4, or 0.15%, to Rs 2,647 per quintal in 14,740 lots.

Analysts said the rise in sugar prices was mostly attributed to pick up demand in the spot markets supported by ongoing wedding season but ample supply, restricted the gains.

# Potato falls by 0.8% on subdued demand, higher supply

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[Potato prices](#) fell by 0.83% to Rs 1,076.50 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators offloaded their positions following sluggish demand in spot markets against increased supplies.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), potato for delivery in far-month fell by Rs 9, or 0.83%, to Rs 1,076.50 per quintal in business turnover of 26 lots.

Likewise, the potato for delivery in March traded lower by Rs 5.40, or 0.51% to Rs 1,045.50 per quintal in 69 lots.

Market analysts said speculators offloaded their positions due to sluggish demand in the spot market against increased supplies from producing regions mainly influenced potato prices at futures trade.

## Cardamom climbs by 2.4% on strong spot demand

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[Cardamom prices](#) climbed 2.38% to 774.50 per kg in futures trading today after speculators created huge positions, supported strong domestic as well as export demand.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), cardamom for delivery in February shot up by Rs 18.00, or 2.38% to Rs 774.50 per kg in business turnover of 425 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in March gained Rs 18.70, or 2.38% to Rs 804.30 per kg in 369 lots.

Analysts said fresh positions built-up by speculators after upsurge in domestic and export demand in the spot market mainly pushed up cardamom prices at futures trade.

## Crude palm oil weaken by 0.2% on sluggish demand

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[Crude palm oil prices](#) weakened by 0.20% to Rs 539.20 per 10 kg in futures market today as speculators offloaded their positions, tracking a weak trend at spot market on sluggish demand.

Further, adequate stocks availability in the physical market also put pressure on crude palm oil prices.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), crude palm oil for delivery in March declined by Rs 1.10, or 0.20%, to Rs 539.20 per 10 kg in business turnover of 8 lots.

Similarly, the oil for delivery in February shed 90 paise, or 0.17%, to Rs 533.80 per 10 kg in 8 lots.

Market analysts said offloading of positions by speculators on sluggish demand in the spot market against adequate stocks position, mainly led to decline in crude palm oil prices at futures trade.

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