

## Book fair at TNAU from today

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COIMBATORE, February 11, 2014 - A mega book fair will be organised by the Directorate of Publications and Public Relations of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University on the university premises from February 11 to 13.

According to a release, Vice-Chancellor of the university K. Ramasamy will inaugurate the book fair, in which more than 20 leading publishers and book sellers will take part and display a wide range of books in agriculture and allied sectors for the benefit of students, research scholars, scientists and public.

A special discount of 20 per cent will be made available.

During the inaugural function, the University will institute 'Institutional Membership' with British Council Library, Chennai, for mutual exchange of books and publications.

### **Interactive session**

Three former librarians of the university will also be honoured on the occasion. The portrait of S.R. Ranganathan, father of Indian Library Science, will be unveiled.

An 'author-publisher' interactive session has also been planned.

During the valediction on February 13, TNAU scientists who have published maximum number of quality books in various disciplines will be honoured with merit certificates.

The fair is being held at Techno Park II of the university and entry is free.

## 180 farmers participate in Nagpur agriculture exhibition

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RAJAHMUNDRY, February 11, 2014 - A total of 180 progressive farmers are participating in the three-day National Agriculture Exhibition (NAE), which was inaugurated by President Pranab Mukherjee in Nagpur on Sunday. The Agriculture Department, East Godavari district, has made arrangements in 18 mandals for the benefit of farmers to view the inaugural session of the NAE through webcasting by arranging big screens in MRO offices and in Sub-Collector's office, Rajahmundry.

During the inaugural address, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee said that India has secured number one place in production of paddy and wheat because of not only fertile lands, but also the interest and efforts put by the large number of farming community. He recalled that the second Green Revolution started in Bihar, West Bengal, Assam and Chhattisgarh has resulted in producing 51 per cent of paddy.

As Mr. Mukharjee spoke in Hindi, agriculture officers J.L. Kiran Jyothi, Assistant Director A. Santha, Durgabai, D. Venumadhav and Sivasankar explained to farmers in Telugu.

## Year-long farm programmes

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THRISSUR, February 11, 2014 - The Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Thrissur, will launch on Tuesday year-long activities in connection with the International Year of Family Farming. Training will be imparted on production of safe-to-eat vegetables in homesteads. M.P. Vincent, MLA, will inaugurate the activities. District Panchayat President C.C. Sreekumar will preside. Kerala Agricultural University Vice-Chancellor P. Rajendran will be the chief guest. KAU Director of Extension P.V. Balachandran will deliver the keynote address. According to KVK head Ranjan

S. Karippai, training in honey-bee rearing, mushroom cultivation and value addition, rabbit rearing and integrated homestead farming are other activities planned for the month.

## Selected for Dairy Farmer Award

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Ch. V.K. Narasimha Rao, a farmer and founder of Sri Prakash Group of Institutions, was selected of the AP Animal Husbandry for the 'Dairy Farmer Award'.

The award will be presented to him at the national-level agricultural fair to be held at the Central Institute on Cotton Research (CICR) at Nagpur from February 9 to 13.

## Action against farming of banned fish species

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*Banned: Magar, the African catfish, that is grown extensively in Chittur taluk of Palakkad.*

PALAKKAD, February 11, 2014 - Large-scale farming of the banned and exotic variety of Magar (*Clarias gariepinus*), also known as the African sharptooth catfish, is being reported from Chittur taluk and some other parts of the State. In Chittur alone, the fish variety is being farmed on 1,000 acres (area of ponds put together approximately).

The Departments of Fisheries, Health, and Police had raided some of these places recently.

Deputy Director of Fisheries S. Mahesh told *The Hindu* here on Monday that a number of complaints had been received from the people through the District Collector about the clandestine rearing of the fish.

Chicken waste was the feed used and this contaminated wells in the locality, he said. Fisheries sub-inspector P.S. Sinob, part of the raid team, said they had issued stop memos to some of those who had taken up fish farming in leased

ponds at Vannamada, Karumanda Gaundar, Athikode, Kozhijampara, and Eruthiampathy. This fish variety was air breathing and could be grown in marshy areas with little water. It attained three to five kg in one year. The fish was for sale in districts such as Madurai and Tiruchirapalli where sea fish availability was limited, sources said.

Roy Wilfred, Junior Health Inspector, Public Health Centre, Vannamada, who first reported the matter to the Fisheries and Health authorities, said farming was taking place in 1,500 acres in Chittur.

“No hatchery could be located in Chittur and the farmers secured fingerlings from outside the State,” Mr. Wilfred said. The fish was not sold as a food item locally. Some people felt that it was being used for biological research. But we did not have authentic information about the actual purpose of farming, Mr. Wilfred said.

The Fisheries and Aquaculture Department of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations, in their assessment of Magar, had stated that ‘this alien, carnivorous, and predatory species is a threat to native fish varieties. This hybrids exhibit aggressive behaviour and large variations in body weight. They also have cannibalistic behaviour.’

The National Committee constituted under the chairmanship of the Joint Secretary (Fisheries), Government of India, to oversee and regulate the introduction of exotic aquatic organisms in Indian waters, at its first meeting on December 19, 1997, had directed State governments and Union Territories to ‘take immediate steps to destroy the existing stocks of exotic Magar and big head fish which had been introduced without official sanction in the country.’

It had also directed the identification of all hatcheries to enable destruction of the fish variety.

The letter in this regard said, ‘exotic Magar should not establish in the natural environment and cross with the endemic species *Claris betranus*.’ A strict controlling measure should also be taken to avoid the spread of exotic diseases.’

## Farm schemes to be launched

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THRISSUR, February 11, 2014 - The Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Thrissur, will launch on Tuesday year-long activities in connection with the International Year of Family Farming. Training will be imparted on production of safe-to-eat vegetables in homesteads. M.P. Vincent, MLA, will inaugurate the activities.

District Panchayat President C.C. Sreekumar will preside. Kerala Agricultural University Vice-Chancellor P. Rajendran will be the chief guest. KAU Director of Extension P.V. Balachandran will deliver the keynote address. According to KVK head Ranjan S. Karippai, training in honey-bee rearing, mushroom cultivation and value addition, rabbit rearing and integrated homestead farming are other activities. — Special Correspondent.

## Farmers' body stages protests demanding compensation

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KARUR, February 11, 2014 - Cadres belonging to the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam affiliated to the CPI (M) staged demonstration in three places in Karur district on Monday to highlight their charter of demands that included declaring certain areas drought hit and awarding compensation to farmers.

While the Sangam Kulithalai Panchayat Union secretary Perumal led the demonstration at Kulithalai, the Sangam Thogamalai Panchayat Union secretary Rathinam led the demo at Thogamalai. Krishnarayapuram Panchayat Union secretary of the Sangam Raja was at the forefront in the demonstration held at Lalapet. The demands included declaring affected

areas in the district drought hit, awarding compensation to the affected farmers, and granting free house site pattas to farmers, and farm workers.

## Farmers seek compensation for crop loss

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*Say they've been suffering loss for five years in a row due to monsoon failure*

TIRUNELVELI, February 11, 2014 - Holding withered corn plants, a group of farmers from Kurinjakulam under Kuruvikulam union in the district submitted a petition to Collector M. Karunakaran on Monday seeking compensation for crop loss they suffered for the fifth consecutive year owing to monsoon failure.

The farmers have been persistent in their efforts to raise crops. They have planted corn, green gram, black gram and cotton on 1,400 acres with the hope that the monsoon rain would bail them out at least this year. While the intermittent drizzle during the last northeast monsoon gave life to the crop to some extent, the subsequent dry spell spoiled the crops. The scanty rainfall failed to recharge the groundwater table and their attempts to draw water from the wells to save the standing crops went in vain.

S. Srinivasan, one of the farmers, said: "we have taken loans from cooperative and other banks to raise the crops. Some of us have borrowed from moneylenders. Unfortunately, nature has dashed our hopes. We're in a dicey situation as our mortgaged jewels may be auctioned owing to non-repayment of crop loan. The government should bail us out by way of compensation or loan waiver."

The farmers also complained that none of them received the crop insurance though they paid the premium regularly.

### **Ostracism**

Alleging ostracism, K.P. Balasubramanian, a Dalit from Pallamadai near Maanur, submitted a petition to Dr. Karunakaran seeking his intervention to protect his family from "aggressors" belonging to his own community. Mr. Balasubramanian, an undergraduate in commerce, alleged that he and his family were being ostracised by a group of people in his village since 2004 and they were being prevented from fetching water from the public tap.

"We cannot buy anything from the grocery shop or the eatery in the village. We are not allowed to participate in the temple festival and family functions," he said.

## Agriculture students hold protest

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NEW DELHI, February 11, 2014 - A group of agricultural students organised a protest under the aegis of the All India Agricultural Students' Association (AIASA) here on Monday. They were demanding the creation of 'Indian Agriculture Service' on the lines of other central services. The association also wants the subject of agriculture to be included in the Concurrent list of the Constitution. Presently, State has the legislative control over the subject. - Staff Reporter

# Farmers still facing problems at maize purchase centre

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*Farmers staging dharna outside Maize Procurement Centre in Chitradurga.*

CHITRADURGA, February 11, 2014 - Though the State government has initiated steps for the smooth purchase of maize by opening maize procurement centres in three different places of the

district, small and medium farmers have not benefitted from these centres owing to the negligent attitude of officers concerned and the exploitation of middle men.

Since these centres opened, farmers have been complaining about the inordinate delay in purchasing the maize brought from different parts of the district. These farmers are made to wait for minimum five to six days to weigh the maize and another six days to load the same in lorries for transportation. Till the maize is loaded in lorries, it was the responsibility of the farmers to look after the safety of these bags.

Mallikarjun, a farmer who had brought maize to the centre about six days back, said that in the absence of facilities such as drinking water, toilet, and canteen they were finding it very difficult to spend the days at the centre. There were many instances wherein the farmers had sold their maize to nearby retailers at Rs. 100 to 200 less than the support price fixed by the government.

“The farmers have also noticed that the receipts are given for lesser quantity than what they had supplied. This clearly shows that the officers concerned are deceiving farmers by deliberately delaying the receipts,” he alleged.

Another farmer Hemant Kumar said that middlemen in the APMC were exploiting farmers assuring them of early weighing and loading of maize to lorries. “The middlemen clearly tell farmers about their unholy nexus with officers and the sharing of commission between them,” he said.

A farmer requires a minimum of Rs. 200 for his food and other expenditures per day. If the same situation continued, farmers would be in difficult position and would be forced to sell their maize to retailers at lower price. On the other hand, lorry drivers and owners allege that they were not ready to transport maize bags till their dues were cleared, he added.

There were many instances wherein the farmers had staged protests outside the maize purchase centre and Chitradurga MLA GH Tippareddy had also instructed officers to purchase the maize immediately.

But the officers concerned were least bothered about the instructions of the MLA and the authorities concerned, he said.

## Shadow budget lays stress on agriculture and education

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CHENNAI, February 11, 2014 - To improve the livelihood of poor people, the State government should focus on agriculture, education and health care sectors instead of distributing freebies such as television, livestock, grinders and mixies, said Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) president S. Ramadoss here on Monday.

The 12th shadow budget drafted by PMK has pegged the planned expenditure for the State for 2014-15 at Rs.43,400 crore, of which Rs.15,103 crore representing 34.80 per cent has been earmarked for agriculture and rural development.

Briefing reporters, Dr. Ramadoss said the government should provide quality seeds, fertilisers, pesticides free of cost to farmers, a tractor per village panchayat and form Agriculture Price Fixation Board to ensure that farmers received best prices for their produce.

To make Tamil Nadu, a power-surplus State, he advocated allocation of nearly Rs.6,000 crore for the energy department, setting up of Power Project Implementation Department and expediting abandoned power projects of 12,000 MW.

From next academic year onwards, the government should introduce syllabus equivalent to CBSE, ICSE or ISCE in all the schools, fix pass mark for backward classes and most backward classes between 35 and 50 per cent in Teachers Eligibility Test and improve the standards of government hospitals.

“Apart from presenting budget every year, the government should come out with Action Taken Report, Outcome Budget and Gender Budget. The publication of these reports would lead to favourable investment climate. The Centre had started adopting it. The State might not do it as the schemes implemented by it have not created any impact in the society,” he said.

## ‘Forward trading has ruined Indian agriculture’

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*Participatory note system has facilitated black money: Swamy*

HUBLI, February 11, 2014 - BJP leader Subramanian Swamy said if the party came to power in the Centre, it would withdraw forward trading in farm sector and also the system of participatory note.

Speaking to presspersons here on Monday, Mr. Swamy said India was the only country in the world where forward trading was allowed in the agriculture sector.

It was “a wrong step” taken by Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram. Forward trading has ruined Indian agriculture, he felt. Similarly, the participatory note facilitated the investment of black money into the stock market, he claimed.

Both provisions have been “fatal” to the Indian economy; BJP would withdraw them if it comes to power.

Mr. Swamy, while demanding an inquiry into Sunanda Pushkar’s death, felt elements from Pakistan, Dubai and South Africa were involved.

He said Ms. Pushkar wanted to expose the “real faces” behind the IPL scam, and added that he would approach the court if a probe was not ordered.

He also ridiculed efforts made to form a third political front comprising of non-Congress and non-BJP parties; he felt such efforts would meet with failure.

The proposed third front has neither an economic programme nor a common agenda. What they have is a significant number of leaders aspiring to become the Prime Minister, he said.

## Banana prices shoot up as number of fruits arriving in market dips

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*Monsoon failure and shrinking area of cultivation makes fruits costlier*

DINDIGUL, February 11, 2014 - Banana is no more a poor man’s fruit, thanks to spiralling prices over the last few days. The prices are expected to go up further in the future.

The retail price of banana has touched an all-time high of Rs.10 a fruit. Poor arrival of banana to the wholesale fruit market at Batlagundu has shot up the prices of the fruit.



*Not so affordable: The slump in the arrival of banana has pushed up the prices of the fruit varieties in Batlagundu wholesale market. — File photo*

Monsoon failure for the last two years and shrinking area under banana cultivation are some of the reasons cited for the poor arrival, opine traders.

A majority of farmers have abandoned the banana crop and shifted to perennial

crops owing to shortage of water and depletion of storage in Marudhanadhi and Manjalar dams.

Arrival of banana from Dindigul and Theni districts has come down sharply. At present, the wholesale market depends on banana grown in Kulithalai and Lalgudi in Tiruchi district. Normally, the market receives around 7,000 to 10,000 banana bunches every week. But the arrival to the market recently got slashed to 1,000 to 2,000 bunches only.

### **Banana price**

When contacted, banana commission trader Thomas says that prices of 'Rasthali' variety of banana hovers between Rs.600 and Rs.900 per bunch, from Rs.300, registering a three times hike within a short span of time. 'Sevvazhai' is being sold at Rs.900 and prices of 'Karpuravalli' oscillate between Rs.400 and Rs.500 per bunch. 'Poovan' variety is being sold at Rs.300 to Rs.400 per bunch. "Earlier, we had struggled to sell one bunch even at Rs.100. Prices of these fruits rose by 200 to 300 per cent from its usual price," say traders.

Increase in the arrival of banana alone will bring down the price.

Expanding the area under banana cultivation and improving the yield will help stabilise the prices. But the present scenario will not change in the near future, add traders.

At present, a single banana fruit is being sold at Rs.10 in the district, shocking all sections of the people.

Batlagundu is one of the major banana markets in the State. Traders here send bananas to Kerala, Karnataka, Hosur, Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli and Chennai.

The market functions twice a week.

***A majority of farmers have abandoned banana crop and shifted to perennial crops owing to shortage of water***

## Vigilance sleuths seize two tonnes of spurious cotton seed



*Vigilance officials counting the suspected spurious cotton seed bags seized at Nagarjuna Sagar in Guntur district on Monday.- Photo: T.Vijaya Kumar*

**NAGARJUNASAGAR (GUNTUR DT.), February 11, 2014 - Sleuths of Vigilance and Enforcement Department confiscated two tonnes of suspected spurious BT Cotton seed on Monday.**

The seeds packed in gunny bags were being transported from Addanki in Prakasam district to Mahaboobnagar district, said Guntur Regional Vigilance and Enforcement Officer R.N. Ammi Reddy.

On a tip-off, the team led by Vigilance Circle Inspector K. Vamsidhar and Agriculture Officer K. Venkat Rao intercepted the van carrying 32 bags (packed with 75 kg. substandard cotton seed each) and seized the material along with the vehicle.

Police took the vehicle driver into custody for questioning.

The samples of the seized material would be sent to laboratory for examination, said the RVEO. In a separate raid, the vigilance authorities seized 220 bags of rice meant for Public Distribution System (PDS), which was being transported illegally at Macherla in Guntur district on Monday.

The accused was shifting the stocks into market after refining the rice, said Mr. Ammi Reddy.

## '50 irrigation projects pegged for early completion'

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HYDERABAD, February 11, 2014 - The Government has prioritised 50 ongoing major and medium irrigation projects for early completion and it is proposed to create new irrigation potential of 50.77 lakh acres during the next four years, Finance Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy said here on Monday. While presenting the Vote-on-Account budget for 2014-15 in the Assembly, he said that another 15.48 lakh acres would be stabilised during the same period. From 2004-05 to 2013-14, the irrigation potential created under major and medium irrigation projects was 19.40 lakh acres of new ayacut and stabilisation of 3.96 lakh acres.

He said Jalayagnam programme was being implemented to create new irrigation potential of 97.07 lakh acres besides stabilisation of 22.45 lakh acres and for providing drinking water to 2.54 crore people in 6,553 villages. Till now 17 projects were completed and water released in 24 projects creating partial irrigation potential. The remaining projects were in different stages of progress.

The State was progressing rapidly and becoming a viable destination for national and multinational companies and recently attracted major investments worth Rs.15,000 crore. During 2013-14 till September last, 4,339 Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have been established with an investment of Rs 7,025 crore, providing employment to 59,864 persons. Besides, 75 large scale industries with an investment of Rs.8,273 crore have commenced production in 2012-13, providing jobs to 25,600 persons.

Mr. Ramanarayana Reddy said AP achieved an IT exports turnover of Rs.51,285 crore in 2012-13 and was providing employment to 3.27 lakh persons in the sector. Referring to Information Technology Investment Region (ITIR) project, he said it was expected to generate direct revenue worth Rs.3.11 lakh crore with an investment potential of Rs.2.19 lakh crore and IT export worth Rs.2.35 lakh crore. It would create direct employment for 15 lakh persons and indirect jobs for 53 lakh people.

Giving an overview of various welfare and developmental schemes undertaken by the government, he said the National Urban Health Mission would be launched soon to strengthen health facilities in the urban areas.

***Move to create new irrigation potential of 50.77 lakh acres during the next four years, says Anam***

## Thanal scheme for fisherfolk

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KOZHIKODE, February 11, 2014 - The Kerala Fishermen's Welfare Fund Board has invited entries from fishermen for its special grants under the 'Thanal' welfare scheme. The entries should reach the board on or before February 21. Beneficiaries who are yet to furnish their details for biometric cards can utilise this opportunity, a press release said.



# Water level

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Water level in Periyar dam stood at 110.90 feet (permissible level is 136 feet) with no inflow and a discharge of 105 cusecs. The level in Vaigai dam was 34.68 feet (total level is 71 feet) with no inflow and a discharge of 40 cusecs. The combined storage in Periyar credit was 939 mcft. There was no rainfall recorded 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 51.18 feet on Monday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 139 cusecs and the discharge 1,000 cusecs.

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Monday stood at 68.35 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 94.44 cusecs and 1,154.75 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam.

The water level in Manimuthar dam stood at 81.42 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 17 cusecs and 90 cusecs of water was discharged.

**Kanyakumari** - The water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 16.15 feet, 46.90 feet in Perunchani, 6.89 feet in Chittar 1, 6.93 feet in Chittar 11, 3.80 feet in Poigai and 54.12 feet in Mambazathuraiyaru.

# New biotech policy soon, says CM

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*'Present policy needs changes to keep pace with development'*



*Chief Minister Siddaramaiah; Minister for Infrastructure Development R. Roshan Baig, Chairman and Managing Director Biocon Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw; and Minister for IT & BT S.R. Patil at the inauguration of the Bangalore India Bio in Bangalore on Monday. — Photo: Sampath Kumar G.P.*

BANGALORE, February 11, 2014 - Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said on Monday that the State government will be finalising a fresh policy framework for the biotechnology sector later this year.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the 14th edition of Bangalore India Bio, the flagship event of the Indian biotechnology sector, Mr. Siddaramaiah said the present policy, adopted by the State in 2009, "required changes in order to keep pace with developments in the industry". Mr. Siddaramaiah said the new policy would be based on the recommendations of the State's Vision Group on Biotechnology, which is headed by the Biocon Group's Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw.

He said a new state-of-the-art biotechnology park would become operational in two years. The Chief Minister said the biotech and healthcare industries, with a combined turnover of \$100 billion, required better regulation but should also be investor-friendly. He said the government had sanctioned 12 “finishing schools” for training the workforce in the biotech industry and is satisfied with their functioning. “The model has been appreciated by the industry,” he observed.

Mr. Siddaramaiah pointed out that while almost one-fourth of the revenues of the Indian biotech industry is generated in Bangalore, more than half of the “core” Indian companies are based in Bangalore. Among them, five are the top 10 companies.

### **Bioscience incubator**

Srivatsa Krishna, Principal Secretary, IT and Biotechnology, said the country’s first bioscience incubator is being established at the Bangalore Helix biotech park at Electronics City. Mr. Krishna said the State government has contributed land and Rs. 20 crore for the facility. The Union government has also provided Rs. 20 crore, inclusive of interest accumulated on the principal amount contributed by it. The facility is likely to be completed by June, he said.

Mr. Krishna said the State is also in the race to host a synthetic chemistry lab in Bangalore. “Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh are also in the race,” he told presspersons on the sidelines of the event.

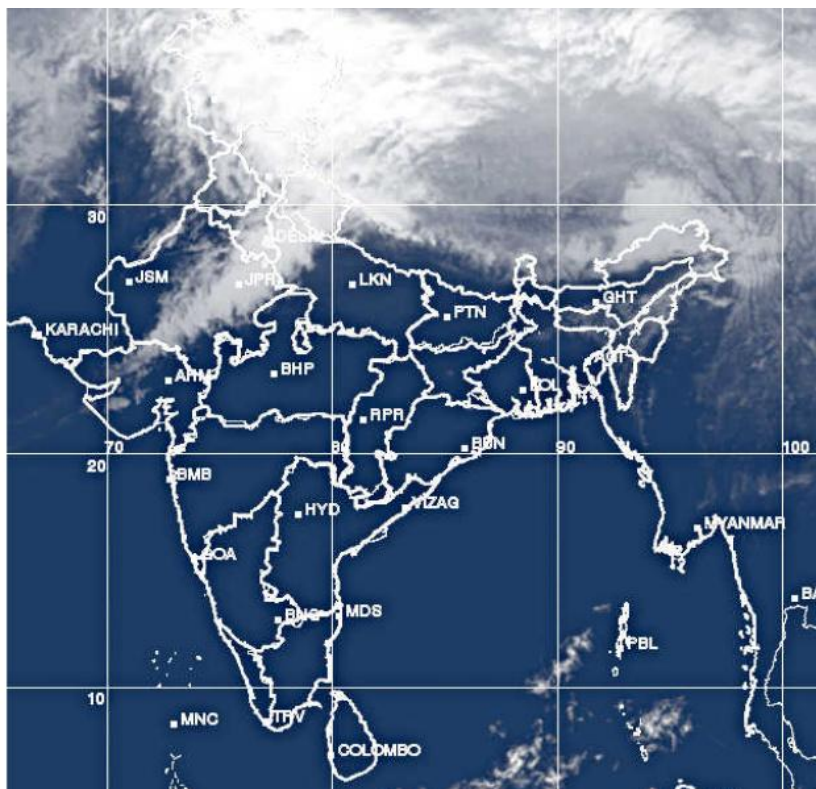
Ms. Mazumdar-Shaw said the government had played an important role in ensuring the emergence of Bangalore as a crucial hub in the global BT business.

“The State government has played a progressive, far-reaching and futuristic role in placing Bangalore on the global biotech map,” she said. Predicting that innovations designed in China and India would play an important role in addressing the problems of the future, she said, “Innovation is going to come from the east.”

Nobel laureate Sir John Gurdon said the policies adopted by the State government have been responsible for Bangalore’s emergence as a global hub for biotechnology. Its status as a “science hub” also played a part in the success, he said.

## Weather

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INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs. Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on February 10.

# Weather

Chennai - INDIA

## Today's Weather



Sunny

Rain: 0

Humidity: 78

Wind: normal

## Tuesday, Feb 11

Max Min

30° | 21°

Sunrise: 06:33

Sunset: 06:13

Barometer: 1010

## Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

## Wednesday, Feb 12

Max Min

32° | 18°

## Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday

Feb 13



32° | 18°

Partly Cloudy

Friday

Feb 14



25° | 22°

Cloudy

Saturday

Feb 15



25° | 23°

Overcast

Sunday

Feb 16



27° | 23°

Overcast

Monday

Feb 17



28° | 23°

Overcast

# India set to post its highest ever food output

India is set to post its highest ever food output with a likely production of 263.2 million tonne of food grain this year, agriculture minister Sharad Pawar has said.

Advertisement

The figure is about 4 million tonnes higher than the previous record of 259 million tonnes two years ago.

Nearly two-thirds of Indians depend on farm income.

The higher output could cool prices and boost rural earnings, with the farm sector growing at a robust 6%, two percentage points higher than the official target of 4%. Together, these trends represent a good bet for the government to fix the economy, its biggest worry, analysts say.

Food prices were higher by 13.68% in December 2013 as compared to the same period a year ago, down from a rise of 19.95% in November 2013.

A fall in food prices could come as a major respite for households as they form the largest chunk of monthly expenditure and affect the poor most. Vegetable prices have also fallen after the recent spike in onion prices, government data says.

The record harvest comes on the back of four consecutive normal monsoons and higher crop prices offered by the government in the form of minimum support prices.

Cropping patterns show farmers in many regions shifted to cash crops for higher income, signalling aspirational goals in the rural hinterland. Currently, rural consumers account for nearly half of all television sales, according to a Citibank analysis.

"If farms are happy (sic), then the biggest chunk of India will be happy," said Rajiv Ahuja of Comtrade, a commodity market analyst.

## Non-seasonal rain affects farmers in Siang valley

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ITANAGAR: Moderate to heavy rainfall, accompanied by gusty winds, lashed Siang Valley and parts of Dhemaji in north Assam during the last 24 hours, giving a tough time to the farmers in the region. The shower, which came as a relief after a long dry spell, turned torrential on Saturday night, creating problems for vegetable growers.

The region witnessed an extended dry spell during the winter, which hit the production of tea leaves and other horticultural products in the region.



## India January inflation seen easing on food, fuel prices but still elevated

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*During December, wholesale prices rose 6.16% annually while consumer prices climbed 9.87% in India. (AP)*

**SUMMARY** During December, wholesale prices rose 6.16% annually while consumer prices climbed 9.87% in India.

India's high inflation probably eased to a seven-month low last month as food and fuel prices showed signs of moderating, providing some respite to the central bank which has been hiking interest rates to curb soaring prices, Reuters polls showed on Tuesday.

Ominously, though, factory activity likely contracted 1.0 percent in December due to sluggish mining activity and weak consumer demand.

If confirmed, such a figure would signal the third straight month of contraction and the longest streak of shrinking manufacturing activity in Asia's third-largest economy since December 2008.

Reuters surveys conducted from Feb 4-10 showed inflation, as measured by the wholesale price index, likely eased to 5.80 percent last month, while retail price growth slipped to 9.40 percent -- the slowest since May.

In December, wholesale prices rose 6.16 percent annually while consumer prices climbed 9.87 percent.

That should be welcome news for the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), since its recent rate hikes have come against the backdrop of weak economic growth and stalled investment under the corruption-scandal battered Congress party government of Manmohan Singh, which faces an uphill battle in elections due by May.

"The central bank should draw comfort from the gradual deceleration in inflation," said Radhika Rao, an economist at DBS in Singapore.

"But until consumer inflation makes a decisive turn south, the central bank is likely to maintain a tight policy stance, even at the expense of short-term growth."

The RBI has hiked its benchmark interest rate three times since September in a bid to tame stubbornly high inflation.

In addition to a surprise rate rise last month, it has effectively begun to target inflation based on consumer prices, a dramatic shift in approach for a central bank that has struggled to manage the balance between growth and inflation.

In doing so, it cited a "glide path" towards lowering the CPI below 8 percent by next January and 6 percent a year later -- targets that were laid out in sweeping proposals to revamp the way monetary policy is conducted in India.

Food prices continue to rise, however, as the country's poor infrastructure means produce takes longer to reach markets, with large amounts spoiling on the way.

But with a good harvest bringing down vegetable prices, economists said inflation could be headed lower.

## THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

### Keeping Unique Cattle Breeds Alive

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*The rare cattle breeds that were exhibited by Earth Care Foundation at Atholi Biopark | T P Sooraj*

The rare cattle breeds brought under the roof of 'Gramadarshanam 2014,' an agriculture seminar and exhibition of indigenous cattle breeds at Atholi Biopark, Kozhikode were a real treat to the eyes. Taking it as a rare opportunity, people from across the district thronged the exhibition stalls to have a look at the natives. The programme was organised by Earth Care Foundation, near Atholi Biopark.

"This programme can be considered as an attempt to save endangered species from extinction," says chairman of Earth Care Foundation, P V Krishnan Kutty. Elaborating more

on the programme he says, "To our wonder, housewives were seen enthusiastic about dairy farming. Almost all the visitors expressed their desire to be dairy farmers," he says.

Vechur cow, the smallest cattle breed in the world which was nominated for the Guinness Book of World Records, is a major attraction at the exhibition. "I have only heard about the rare breed.

I got the opportunity to know more about it at the exhibition," says Radhamani, a visitor. The Kasaragod Dwarf breed, a little taller than the world's smallest breed Vechur, a native of Kerala, Cheruvally cattle, indigenous to Cheruvally, Mundakkayam and Kanjirappally regions of Kottayam district, Ponwar cow, a draught cattle breed and a native of Pilibhit district of Uttar Pradesh, Kangeyam cow that derived its name from Kangeyam taluk in Tamil Nadu, were some of the few breeds on display.

"There is an increasing trend among the rich these days to own cows. Most of them prefer to have Vechur and Kasargod Dwarf, while some of them are very particular about having Ponkanoor cow in their cattlesheds," says N V Balakrishnan, who had exhibited his cow at the exhibition.

He owns around 12 varieties of cows. The organisers have put forward a lucrative offer of giving a first-hand experience to visitors interested in cattle rearing. Those coming with a recommendation letter from the representatives of local governing bodies can look after a native breed for a fixed period. Based on the satisfaction level they can either buy the breed or give it back to the Earth Care Foundation.

Vadakara Dwarf, Malanad Gidda, Ponkanoor cow, Khilari "There used to be not so many takers for indigenous breeds earlier. With the awareness spread on the quality of these breeds, there has been a considerable demand for them," says Padmanabhan Ooralunkal, general convenor.

With the confidence gained through the first exhibition, the organisers say that in the coming years also Gramadarshanam will be conducted in Atholi.

## THE HINDU Business Line

### Kerala to pay Rs. 2/kg more for rubber procurement

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**Kottayam, February 10:** Spot rubber prices continued to improve. Sentiments on Monday were ridden by the Government's decision to procure rubber at Rs. 2 a kg above the market price to be fixed by the Rubber Board against Rs. 1 a kg announced earlier. Hence, there were no genuine sellers in the market as growers and dealers preferred to hold their stocks to sell at higher levels later.

#### **Prices improve**

Sheet rubber improved to Rs. 146 (144.50) a kg, according to traders. The

grade was quoted firm at Rs. 145.50 (144.50) and Rs. 142.50 (141.50) a kg respectively by the Rubber Board and dealers.

In the futures market, February contracts firmed up to Rs. 147.10 (146.91), March to Rs. 149.83 (149.50), April to Rs. 153.98 (152.47), May to Rs.155.90 (154.31) and June to Rs. 155.85 (154.27) a kg on the National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE).

RSS 3 (spot) inched up to Rs. 131.11 (130.98) a kg at Bangkok. The February futures increased to ₹222 (Rs. 135.45) but then weakened to ₹221 (Rs. 134.84) a kg on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates (Rs. /kg) were: RSS-4: 146 (144.50); RSS-5: 144 (142); Ungraded: 141 (140); ISNR 20: 142 (141) and Latex 60%: 117.50 (117).

## Upcountry buyers support Coonoor tea

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**Coonoor, February 10:** The prolonged snowfall in Russia and rest of the CIS, Europe, Japan as also the US limited exporters' operation at Sale No: 6 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auction.

"Overall, we have only fewer enquiries from our importers and that too for plainer less-priced teas," an exporter told *Business Line*.

### **Selective purchases**

There were only selective purchases for Russia at Rs. 60-86 a kg. Most shippers to Pakistan were also silent contending adequate availability with their importers. Some bought for Rs. 73-97.

With North Indian teas reeling under end-season wafer-thin offerings amidst threat of cancellation of a few auctions in February and March for want of volume, domestic traders were active at Coonoor auction and upcountry buyers bought brighter-liquoring teas.

Overall, 82 per cent of the 13.40 lakh kg was sold with prices remaining flat.

Homedale Estate tea, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped the CTC market when Mittal Tea Company bought it for Rs. 210.

Crosshill Estate got Rs. 201, Vigneshwar Estate Rs. 198 and Shanthi Supreme Rs. 193. In all, 95 marks got Rs.125 and more.

Among orthodox teas, Kodanad topped at Rs. 260 a kg followed by Highfield Estate Rs. 250, Corsley Rs. 249, Kairbetta got Rs. 245 and Chamraj Rs. 230. In all, 47 marks got Rs. 125 and more.

## Shortage of exportable grades to hit cardamom exports

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**Kochi, February 10:** Shortage of exportable grade capsules will affect cardamom exports from the country in the coming weeks, according to the trade.

Export sources told *Business Line* on Monday there are orders from overseas markets, mainly Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, "but we are unable to make any commitment for high volumes for want of sufficient material."

Availability of 7mm plus capsules is very thin as much of the material coming to the market/auction centre is small in size, market sources in Bodinayakannur said.

Exporters, therefore, could buy only around 25 tonnes of cardamom last week, they said.

### **Bullish sentiment**

Meanwhile, as the weather has been unfavourable from the beginning of January without any signs of summer showers, there is a bullish sentiment building up in the market.

Consequently, the market was firmer last week in all the auctions.

On Monday, 52.5 tonnes of cardamom arrived at the Bodinayakannur auction centre and almost entire quantity was sold. The maximum price was Rs. 873/kg at the auction because of the comparatively inferior quality of the material. The average price was Rs. 653.12/kg.

"Only in areas where irrigation facilities are available, some more capsules are available for harvesting. As it is the last crop, capsules are small in size," Pushpajan, a grower in Idukki's Rajakumari area, said.

On the other hand, growers have not resorted to holding back their produce fearing a price fall, given the rise in production during the current season. Exporters are also expected to stay in the market, buying whatever exportable material is available till September/October till the Guatemalan crop hits the market, they said. However, the continuous uptrend in prices might turn the produce unattractive to exporters, some in the trade claimed. For the first time in three months, the individual auction average crossed Rs. 600/kg and vacillated last week between Rs. 640 and Rs. 675/kg. During the current season which began officially from August 1, 2013, to February 9, 2014, stood at 14,048 tonnes against 7,984 tonnes as on February 9 in the last season. Sales were 13,715 tonnes and 7,581 tonnes, respectively. The weighted average price as on February 9, 2014 stood at around Rs. 595.37/ kg against Rs. 772.74/kg as on the same date last year.

## Weak demand drags cotton

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**Rajkot, February 10:** Cotton prices dropped on the back of weak buying by domestic spinning mills and exporters. According to market sources, demand decreased after price rose last week. Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton declined by Rs. 200-300 to Rs. 42,800-42,900 for a candy of 356 kg. *Kapas* or raw cotton was moved down Rs. 7-10 to Rs. 1,050-1,075 for a *maund* of 20 kg, while gin delivery *kapas* was traded on Rs. 1,080-1,090 for a *maund* in Rajkot. About 65,000 bales of cotton arrived in Gujarat and 1.92 lakh bales arrived across the country. Our Correspondent

## Selling pressure dissolves sugar

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**Mumbai, February 10:** Sugar prices dropped by Rs. 10-20 a quintal for old stocks at the Vashi spot market on Monday on higher sales. New stocks were sold at prevailing prices with fine variety quoting Rs. 5 higher. Naka rates were steady. Mill tender rates were down by Rs. 10 on routine demand. Mills desperately sold S-grade below Rs. 2,500 to manage cash. Domestic futures prices were up by more than Rs. 20 till noon on expectation of the Government announcing some relief to sugar sector. Arrivals at Vashi market were around 58-60 truckloads (of 100 bags each), while local dispatches were 57-58 loads. On Saturday, 19-20 mills offered tenders and sold 74,000-75,000 bags at Rs. 2,480-2,600 ( Rs.2,510-2,600) for S-grade and Rs. 2,650-2,800 ( Rs. 2,660-2,800) for M-grade. Our Correspondent

## Turmeric may touch Rs. 8,000/quintal over the next few weeks

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**Erode, February 10:** TURMERIC MAY TOP RS. 8,000/QUINTAL

Spot turmeric prices at Erode decreased Rs. 100 a quintal on Monday despite lower arrivals. One reason for the decline in prices was slack response from traders, who are yet to get orders from North India. "The arrival of turmeric was low on Monday, as only 2,000 bags arrived for sale. Further, the price decreased slightly and the sale was only 50 per cent due to non-receipt of fresh demand from North India," said RKV Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association. Regarding the sale, he said: "Every year, about 60 lakh bags (65 kg each) will be sold in the country. This year also, we are expecting a sale of 50-60 lakh bags." Considering this with the current demand, he said that the price may increase to Rs. 8,000 a quintal over the next few weeks. Our Correspondent



# Edible oils gain as stockists book fresh orders

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## **Mumbai, February 10:** EDIBLE OILS GAIN ON FRESH ORDERS

Prices of edible oils ruled firm on Monday, tracking extended gains in the futures market amid higher physical demand. Spot prices increased by Rs. 3 for 10 kg for palmolein, as the Malaysian palm oil February and March futures jumped by 50 and 40 ringgits/tonne, respectively. Other soft edible oils ruled steady and groundnut oil dropped by Rs. 10 in the local market. Towards the day's close, Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs. 592; super palmolein at Rs. 616; and super deluxe palmolein at Rs. 636. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs. 587-592; soyabean refined oil at Rs. 655; and sunflower refined oil at Rs. 670. Allana was quoting palmolein at Rs. 593; super palmolein at Rs. 614; soyabean refined oil at Rs. 657; and sunflower refined oil at Rs. 675. Our Correspondent

# Rice market to witness hand-to-mouth buying

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## **Karnal, February 10:** MARGINAL FLUCTUATION LIKELY IN RICE

The rice market witnessed a steady trend with prices of aromatic and non-basmati rice ruling flat on Monday on restricted trading. With not much buying taking place in the market, rice prices were unchanged, said Amit Kumar, proprietor of Ginni Rice. Following steady domestic demand and easy availability of stocks, retail and bulk buyers are placing orders based on their requirement, he added. In the physical market, Pusa-1121 (steam) was sold at Rs. 9,200-50, while Pusa-1121 (sela) was quoted at Rs. 8,150. Pure Basmati (Raw) quoted at Rs. 12,500. Duplicate basmati (steam) sold at Rs. 7,000. Pusa-1121 (second wand) was at Rs. 7,050, Tibar at Rs. 6,100 while Dubar at Rs. 5,000. In the non-basmati section, Sharbati (steam) was sold at Rs. 5,000 while Sharbati (sela) was quoted at Rs. 4,800 a quintal. Our Correspondent

# Demand steams up tea prices at Kochi sale

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**Kochi, February 10:** Good demand supported prices of some varieties of tea at the Kochi auction last week. In sale no: 6, the quantity on offer in CTC dust varieties was 9,87,500 kg.

## **Better demand**

With a better demand, the market for good liquoring teas with clean black appearance was fully firm to dearer by Rs. 3-5 and sometimes more. Others were irregular and sometimes lower.

However, medium and plainer grainier varieties appreciated in value especially teas with blacker leaf appearance.

The quantity of offer in orthodox grades was 7,500 kg and the market was lower with heavy withdrawals.

A small quantity sold was absorbed by exporters.

In the best CTC dusts, PD grades fetched Rs. 96/115, RD varieties ruled Rs. 106/131, SRD quoted Rs. 119/140 and SFD stood at Rs. 122/154.

# Business Standard

## Maharashtra sugar factories in crisis, seek interest-free loans

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In the wake of falling prices, sugar producers in [Maharashtra](#) are incurring losses worth Rs 800-1,200 a bag. Besides, due to mismatch between the cost of production and lower sugar prices, 97 factories, 58 cooperative and 39 private ones, as on December 31, 2013, have to pay Rs 479 crore towards fair and remunerative price ([FRP](#)) for sugarcane purchase.

Factory owners, who held a meeting with Cooperation Minister [Harshvardhan Patil](#) on Monday, sought early availability of interest-free loans from the Maharashtra State [Cooperative Bank](#) according to the package, announced by the Centre.

According to the Centre's package announced recently, the amount of loans to clear dues owed to farmers for cane purchases would be equivalent to the last three seasons' [excise duty](#), cess and surcharge on sugar paid by factory owners.

A state cooperation department official, present at the meeting, told Business Standard: "Factories argued that all those participating in the current year's crushing season be provided an interest-free loan, had they paid excise for last three crushing seasons. The minister agreed to organise a meeting with the bank on Wednesday, so that an early decision can be taken. According to the Centre's package, the factories will get a moratorium of two years and will have to repay the loan in the next three years. During this period, the Centre and state governments will bear the interest burden."

During the current season, 157 factories, 96 cooperative and 61 private ones, have so far crushed 42.5 million tonnes cane, to produce 4.8 million tonnes of sugar at an average recovery of 10.92 per cent.

Ankushrao Tope, former chairman of the Federation of Cooperative [Sugar Factories](#) in Maharashtra, said sugar factories were not in a position to pay FRP within 14 days after the purchase of cane due to weak financial condition.

"Factories have no money to pay FRP. On the top of it, they are incurring a loss of Rs 800-1,200 a bag as price is Rs 2,460 per quintal. In such a situation, if factories get an interest-free loan, they will get partial relief. Factories will be in a position to partially meet their day-to-day expenses and also pay FRP and harvesting and transportation charges."

Tope, however, insisted that the Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank should soon take a decision in this regard.

Further, sugar factories pleaded the state government to issue necessary notification with regard to exemption of three per cent sugarcane purchase tax. "Although the state cabinet has taken a decision in this regard, the government's notification is still awaited. Waiver in three per cent sugarcane purchase tax will also provide relief to the cash strapped sugar industry in the state," said Tope.

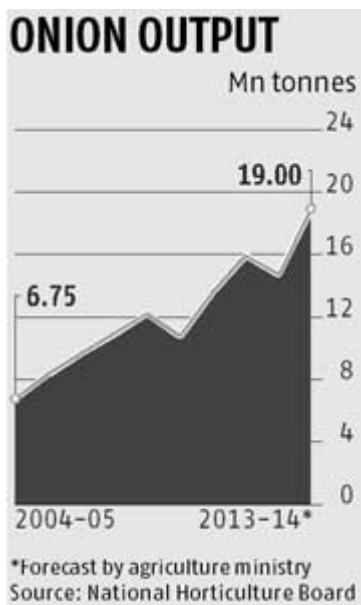
# Farmers to dump onions if prices fall further



[Onion farmers](#) are preparing to destroy truckloads on the streets of [Pimpalgaon](#) and [Lasalgaon](#), Asia's two leading mandis of the product, in protest if prices fall further.

Data compiled by the National [Horticulture](#) Research & Development Foundation (NHRDF) showed onion price in the Lasalgaon market had fallen 30 per cent this month to Rs 6.2 a kg on Monday against Rs 8.7 a kg on February 1. In Pimpalgaon, the price dipped from Rs 8 a kg to Rs 5.5 a kg.

From Rs 60-80 a kg in the wholesale market and Rs 80-100 a kg in the retail market in October, prices have plunged to Rs 3-12 and Rs 8-16 a kg, respectively, across the country in four months. The wholesale price of the fair average quality is moving between Rs 3 and Rs 6 a kg across all these markets, with the late summer crop quoted the lowest due to a short shelf life and the normal winter one the highest on export quality.



"Farmers are desperate as they brought in more area this year due to the retail price of Rs 100 a kg last year," said Atul Shah, director, Agricultural Produce Market Committee, Pimpalgaon.

The climatic conditions being favourable this year on adequate soil moisture, the [agriculture](#) ministry estimated a 13 per cent rise in output at 19 million tonnes this year against 16 million two years ago.

"If the government does not incentivise exports, prices will fall further to Rs 1-2 a kg, equivalent almost to the transport cost, making no sense to bring the commodity to mandis.

Therefore, the government must lift the minimum export price ([MEP](#)) as importers see that as a hurdle," said Ajit Shah, president of the Horticulture Exporters Association.

From \$1,150 a tonne, the government cut the MEP in phases to \$150 a tonne. According to sources, the ministry has forwarded the MEP suggestions from exporters to the commerce ministry. The decision for lifting may be announced soon.

Exporters are facing problems in terms of non-availability of containers and congestions of ports. Also, these were availing incentives earlier under the Vishesh Krishi Gram Upaj Yojana (VKGUY).

"Exports are exempted from mandi tax. Despite that, when exporters come to mandi for booking the required quantity, [APMC](#) officials harass them with a penalty of up to Rs 60,000 a truck. Also, mandi officials drag exporters into litigations," said Shah.

R P Gupta, director of NHRDF, says prices have been falling on a sudden spurt in arrivals. In the Mumbai mandi, total arrivals have surged to 1,375 tonnes on Monday from 885 tonnes early this month. Arrivals are going to intensify from new regions.

"Even after government measures and large quantity purchases from warehouse keepers, prices are unlikely to move up in the near future," said Gupta.

## Shrimp exports rise 90% to Rs 14,364 cr

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A big increase in the rupee value of exports of shrimps was recorded during April-December in the current financial year. Earnings increased 90 per cent to Rs 14,364 crore. These were Rs 7,565 crore a year ago. The share of shrimps in total seafood exports' earnings scaled to 65 per cent. This was 51 per cent a year ago. The overall exports of shrimps during the period were 229,010 tonnes, worth \$2,396 million. Exports had a growth of 27.5 per cent in quantity and 70 per cent in

dollar terms on a year ago. The unit value realisation increased 34 per cent, according to the [Marine Products Export Development Authority](#).

According to Anwar Hashim, an exporter and former president of Seafood Exporters Association of India, this performance was due to two major factors: A serious fall in the production and exports from southeast Asia and the lowering of countervailing duty on Indian shrimp in the US. Production in southeast Asia had been affected due to the spread of a disease called Early Mortality Syndrome. Supply from Thailand, world's second-largest producer, dropped 50 per cent from the normal production of 500,000 tonnes a year. Other leading producers like Vietnam and Malaysia had been hit, too.

Processing plants in east Asia had to depend on Indian exports to meet their commitments with Europe and the US. Vietnam, China and Taiwan imported more from India the last year, mainly for re-export. The rise in local demand in South Korea also heated global prices, he said.

The US was the largest market for Indian shrimps in dollar terms. It imported 51 per cent of the exports. This was followed by 16 per cent to southeast Asia, 16 per cent to the European Union (EU) and five per cent to Japan.

[EMS](#) also caused prices to increase across the world. Average global prices increased to \$9-10/kg (for the 20-30 count, an export grade). These were \$7-7.5 earlier.

### [CVD](#) withdrawal, a boon to India

The US had reduced CVD to zero in September. It had imposed a CVD of 5.85 per cent on imports from India. This had affected exports in the first quarter of 2013-14 .

The contribution of cultured shrimp to total [shrimp exports](#) was 78 per cent. Their exports showed a growth of 32.5 per cent in quantity and 84 per cent in dollar terms, on a year ago. Vannamei shrimp exports grew to 134,372 tonnes from 69,565 tonnes and to \$1,473.9 million from 541 million compared to a year ago, [MPEDA](#) data said.

## Indian coffee prices trade higher at auction

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[Coffee](#) prices in India edged up at a weekly [auction](#) last week, in line with international markets and helped by [export](#) demand.

Arabica plantation PB grade prices were higher by Rs 1,900 per 50 kg compared to the previous sale, while prices of A grade and C grade were higher by Rs 1,550 and Rs 1,660, respectively.

About 107,650 kg of coffee from the total 237,958 kg on offer were sold. Arabica coffee accounted for 163,684 kg, while robusta made up 74,274 kg.

Arabica coffee prices in New York for March delivery were higher by 25.70 cents per pound. Robusta coffee prices in London for March were higher by \$113 per tonne compared to the previous auction.

Coffee exports from India jumped to 96,219 tonnes during the period October 1-February 7, compared with 73,062 tonnes in the same period last year.

Coffee output in India may fall 10.23 per cent to 311,500 tonnes in the year starting October 2013 due to untimely rains in southern Karnataka state, the major producer, the government-run Coffee Board said in its post-monsoon crop forecast.

### **India tea drops on poor quality**

Average tea prices in India, the world's second-biggest producer, eased at last week's auction due to weak demand for poor grade leaf from packeters. The CTC (crush-tear-curl) grade leaf was sold at Rs 120.17 (\$1.93) per kg last week, down 2 per cent from the previous auction, while the dust grade edged up 1.3 per cent to Rs 116.95 per kg.

"Large amount of stocks were unsold. Demand was weak for poor quality leaf from picketers. They have already bought enough to cater their medium term requirement," said a Kolkata-based dealer. India's tea production in 2013 rose by 6.5 percent from a year earlier to a record 1,200 million kg, the Indian Tea Association said in a statement, as small growers in the north-eastern part of the country plucked more leaves.

### **Sugar moves up in futures trade**

Sugar prices moved up by 0.40 per cent to Rs 2,734 per quintal in futures trade today after speculators due to pick up in demand in the spot market supported by the ongoing wedding season.

However, ample supplies in the physical market capped the gains. At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, sugar for delivery in March rose by Rs 11, or 0.40 per cent to Rs 2,734 per quintal with an open interest of 21,500 lots.

The sweetener for delivery in February also traded higher by Rs 10, or 0.37 per cent to Rs 2,689 per quintal in 13,450 lots. Analysts attributed the rise in sugar futures to pick-up demand in the spot markets supported by ongoing wedding season but ample supplies restricted the gains.

## **Cardamom up 1.7% on upsurge in spot demand**

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Cardamom prices rose 1.70% to Rs 814.10 per kg in futures trading today as speculators created fresh positions after upsurge in demand in the spot market supported by ongoing marriage season.

Tight stocks position in the physical market following restricted arrivals from producing regions further fuelled the uptrend.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), cardamom for delivery in March rose by Rs 13.60, or 1.70% to Rs 814.10 per kg in business turnover of 411 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in February edged up by Rs 3.50, or 0.51% to Rs 695.80 per kg in 4 lots.

Market analysts said fresh positions built-up by speculators following upsurge in demand in the spot market against restricted arrivals from producing regions mainly pushed up cardamom prices at futures trade.

## Sugar up 0.4% as demand picks up

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[Sugar](#) prices moved up by 0.40% to Rs 2,734 per quintal in futures trade today after speculators due to pick up in demand in the spot market supported by ongoing wedding season.

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

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), sugar for delivery in March rose by Rs 11, or 0.40% to Rs 2,734 per quintal with an open interest of 21,500 lots.

The sweetener for delivery in February also traded higher by Rs 10, or 0.37% to Rs 2,689 per quintal in 13,450 lots.

Analysts attributed the rise in sugar futures to pick-up demand in the spot markets supported by ongoing wedding season but ample supplies restricted the gains.

## Refined soya up 0.7% on rising demand

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[Refined soya oil](#) prices up by 0.78% to Rs 682.40 per 10 kg in futures trade today as speculators enlarged positions, driven by rising demand in the spot market due to ongoing wedding season.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), refined soya for delivery in March rose by Rs 5.25, or 0.78% to Rs 682.40 per 10 kg with an open interest of 1,06,990 lots.

Similarly, the oil for delivery in February gained Rs 3.90, or 0.57% to Rs 688.20 per 10 kg in 17,510 lots.

Analysts said speculators enlarged their positions, driven by rising demand in the spot market triggered by ongoing wedding season mainly led to rise in refined soya oil prices at futures trade.

# Palm oil up 0.6% on global cues

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Taking positive cues from the global market, [crude palm oil](#) rose by 0.62% to Rs 550.50 per 10 kg in futures trade today as speculators enlarged positions.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), crude palm oil for delivery in March rose by Rs 3.40, or 0.62% to Rs 550.50 per 10 kg in business turnover of 169 lots.

Similarly, the oil for delivery in February gained Rs 1.80, or 0.33% to Rs 548 per 10 kg in 126 lots.

Analysts attributed the rise in crude palm oil futures to a firm global trend on concern that dry weather in Brazil may damage soybean crop in the world's biggest exporter, trimming global cooking oil inventories.

Meanwhile, palm oil for April delivery increased 0.9% to 782 dollar a metric tonne on the Malaysia Derivatives Exchange.

# Potato down 0.7% on sluggish demand

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Amid subdued demand in the spot markets against higher supplies from producing belts, [potato](#) prices fell by 0.70% to Rs 1,155 per quintal in futures trade today.

At the [Multi Commodity Exchange](#), potato for delivery in April fell by Rs 8.10, or 0.70% to Rs 1,155 per quintal in business turnover of 51 lots.

Potato for delivery in March also declined by Rs 4.40, or 0.39% to Rs 1,110.80 per quintal in 100 lots.

Market analysts said offloading of positions by speculators triggered by sluggish demand in the spot market against increased supplies from producing regions that kept pressure on potato prices at futures trade.

# Chana up 1% as demand picks up

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[Chana](#) prices rose by 1.06% to Rs 2,858 per quintal in futures trading today as speculators enlarged their positions, tracking a firm trend at spot market on pick up in demand.

At the [National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange](#), chana for delivery in February rose by Rs 30, or 1.06% to Rs 2,858 per quintal with an open interest of 37,230 lots.

Similarly, the commodity for delivery in April traded higher by Rs 14, or 0.47% to Rs 3,004 per quintal in 81,950 lots.

Analysts attributed rise in chana prices at futures trade to fresh positions created by speculators driven by rising demand at spot markets.

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